



Belize—A land of Plenty

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Points of Interest:

- Photographs
- The Healthy Corner, Cacao — A cultural drink that is very healthy!
- Schedule of Upcoming Events

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January Teacher Training a Huge Success

On Friday January 4th and Saturday the 5th over 25 educators participated in the bi-annual Plenty Belize Organic Garden Teacher Training Workshop held at the University of Belize Toledo Campus.

The workshop focused on the basic principles of Managing an Organic School Garden. Topics included:

- Composting, Mulching, & Soil Preparation;
- Seed Box Preparation and Planting
- Plant Nurseries;
- Transplanting,
- Trees;
- Use of DVDs and Technology in the Classroom;
- Integrating the School Garden as a Classroom Laboratory;
- Using the School Garden in Preparing for the PSE



Abib Palma leading a training session about Composting and Mulching

Participants felt they had gained a lot of information from the training that would be useful for their schools.

We would like to thank everyone for attending and participating in the training, we all had a great time.

The second Training will take place March 28th and 29th, all are invited!

Welcome to the First Plenty Belize Newsletter!

Welcome to the first edition of the Plenty Belize Newsletter. This is a publication that we plan to issue bimonthly. It is to let you know what Plenty has been doing and plans to do in the near future.

Here are Plenty we are always so busy with all the different projects that we have going on. We just wanted everyone out there to be aware off all the different projects that we currently have going on.

The purpose of the Newsletter is not only to bring the happenings to you, but to provide you with an opportunity to become involved too.

We hope that you enjoy the first ever Plenty Belize Newsletter and if you have any suggestions then please do not hesitate to let us know!



Plenty Field Officer Abib Palma work to install the Solar Panel in Corazon Creek Village

"This water is then available for the school garden and is run through a filter for use for drinking using the drinking water system previously installed by TOLCA"

Solar Power Installed in Otoxha and Corazon Creek

Otoxha and Corazon Creek villages have their first taste of electricity! Both villages have recently installed solar power systems for their Roman Catholic Churches.

The Church matched funds raised by parishioners to purchase the new Solar Power systems. Plenty Belize donated the expertise and labor needed to install both of the systems.

Both Churches received the same setup: one 85 watt Kyocera Solar Panel, a Prostar 30 Amp Charge Controller, one Renco Deep Cycle Battery, wiring,

fuses, grounding rod and other necessary materials for installation.

The newly installed systems will allow each village to power their lights and keyboards, which up until now have run off of generators.

It will also enable villagers to hold events and meetings into the evening without being concerned for the expense of fuel!

The parishioners were very excited in both villages to learn how to operate the new Solar Power Systems and anxious to put them into use.

Conejo's First Solar Lights and Water Pump!

With funding from Donor Jamie Bennett of Arizona, USA, Plenty Belize has installed a solar power system at St. John the Baptist RC School in the village of Conejo.

The system is powered by two Kyocera 85W solar panels wired to produce 24VDC. The system does two things.

It powers a submersible 24V Shurflo water pump that pumps water from the school well to a large rotoplast tank on the roof of the school. This water is then available for

the school garden and is run through a filter for use for drinking using the drinking water system previously installed by TOLCA. The water pumps into the tank whenever the sun is shining, unless the tank is full — then the solar power is used to charge two Renco batteries. This power is used to run the fluorescent lights installed in two of the classrooms.

Special thanks both to donor Jamie Bennett, and the community members who came out and helped with the installation.

Solar Water Pump installed at Pueblo Viejo Primary School

Plenty Belize raised funds from Onaway Trust and others to cover the cost of installation for the new Solar water pump at Pueblo Viejo Primary School.

The Shur-Flo 12 Volt water pump is powered by a Kyocera 85 Watt Solar Panel.

This systems is used to pump water from a large collection vat into a black plastic storage tank that sits on top of

the school.

With the new pump and roof-top storage vat there is now enough pressure to use the flush toilets!

There is enough water to use a hand washing station and water the Organic School Garden! The school and community will benefit greatly from this wonderful system.



Ermain Requena and Mark Miller installing the Solar Panel at Pueblo Viejo Primary School

Plenty Hosts Julian Cho Interns

During December and January Plenty Belize hosted 3 Fourth Form Agriculture Students from Julian Cho Technical School.

Tanya Smith, Darina Lopez, and Verlene Cayetano worked with Plenty staff over a 3 week period. The interns started on December 10th and completed their

internship on January 4th.

During their time at Plenty they helped play a crucial role in preparation for the January Teacher Training Workshop.

The Interns work diligently on a variety of tasks including building seed boxes, preparing garden beds to be used during the Teacher Training, planting seeds, trans-

planting seedlings, irrigation and other agriculture related tasks.

All of us at Plenty Belize would like to thank Tanya Smith, Darina Lopez, and Verlene Cayetano for their hard work and dedication. Without you the Teacher Training Workshop would not have been such a huge success!



The Julian Cho Interns leading the Tree Planting and Care Training Workshop

Schedule of Upcoming Events

January

18/1/08 - Belize Ecological Growers Association of Toledo meeting at Plenty's Office, 9:00am
 23/1/08 - Women's Issues Network - Belize, Annual Members Meeting, in Belize City
 25/1/08 - Last day for Home Garden Contest Sign up
 28/1/08 - Plenty installs Solar in Graham Creek for SATIM
 29/1/08 - Plenty installs Solar in Crique Sarco Village for SATIM

February

6/2/08 - Ash Wednesday
 7/2/08 - Election Day
 14/2/08 - St. Valentine's Day

March

7/3/08 - Pueblo Viejo School and Village Fair
 10/3/08 - Baron Bliss Day Observed

10/3/08 - 23/3/2008 Maya Mountain Research Farm Permaculture Design Course
 14/3/08 - School Closes for Easter Vacation
 16/3/08 - Palm Sunday
 21/3/08 - Good Friday
 23/3/08 - Easter Sunday
 28/3/08 - 29/3/08 Organic Gardening Workshop
 31/3/08 - School Re-opens

April

11/4/08 - 3rd Annual Toledo Food Fair

May

1/5/08 - Labour Day
 11/5/08 - Mother's Day Banquet
 16/5/08 - Teacher's Day Observed
 23/5/08 - 25/5/08 Toledo Cacaofest
 25/5/08 - Commonwealth Day



One of the participants in the Home Garden Pilot Program

Organic Home Garden Pilot Program Set to Begin

Hundreds of Toledo Students have benefited from Plenty's successful organic school garden program, the GATE Program, and many have taken the knowledge they have gained in school and started working on home gardens.

With funding from the Weyerhauser Family, Plenty Belize is now set to pilot a program with a total of 20 families in the four villages of San Pedro Columbia,

Pueblo Viejo, Aguacate, and Conejo to assist with their home vegetable gardens.

Plenty extension officers Ermain Requena and Abib Palma will dedicate two afternoons each month to visits in each of these villages. Youths who have gone through the GATE Program in school will meet weekly and visit each others gardens, to learn and improve their gardens.

Each family will receive a small amount of tools, seeds, and/or equipments as needed by the particular family to run a successful organic home vegetable garden.

We hope that this pilot project will show the benefits of home gardens, including providing food security and improved nutrition for the families

"The Toledo Food Fair is both a fun and educational event organized in association with Plenty Belize."

3rd Annual Toledo Food Fair Scheduled

The School Feeding Program Committee will be hosting the 3rd annual Toledo Food Fair, on the 11th of April 2008. The last two annual food fairs were a major successes, with thousands of adults and school children attending.

The Toledo Food Fair is

both a fun and educational event organized in association with Plenty Belize. It aims to further inform students and adults of the district about all the different aspects of food, from the importance of eating fruits and vegetables daily, to growing their own food. The day will be

filled with displays, food, games, entertainment and competitions. The largest competition of the day will be the Home Garden Contest, which is open to all primary school students throughout the Toledo District.



Plenty Belize's shade cloth nursery

Vegetable and Flower Seedlings available here!

A new Shade-Cloth Nursery has been constructed at the Plenty Belize Office.

Plenty hopes that the nursery will provide a opportunity for residents of Punta Gorda Town to beautify their houses and the Town.

There are a variety of seedlings for sale. Currently we have Cabbage, Lettuce, Sweet Pepper, Tomato,

Cocoa Trees, Roses and Zinnias.

The selection is constantly changing so call or stop by to see what we are growing!

The flower and vegetable seedlings are available at the cost of \$0.50 each. Roses and Cocoa trees are \$2.50 each.

Since one goal of this project is to beautify Punta

Gorda we will be accepting 5 empty plastic bottles in place of the usually \$0.50 cost. So go pick up some plastic bottles off the streets of PG and bring them in for your free plants!

The Nursery will be open for business on Tuesday mornings from 9:00-12:00.

Home Garden Contest Underway!

To help celebrate the Toledo Food Fair Plenty Belize is organizing the 1st ever Home Garden Contest.

The contest is open to all primary students in the Toledo District.

Every child who enters will receive a prize. Prizes to include: 1 year of High School Textbooks, MP3 Player, CD Player, Bicycle, Garden Tools, Seeds and

other great items!

All gardens must adhere to organic methods and will be judged on the following four criteria:

1. Amount of vegetables grown
2. Number of different types of vegetables
3. Best use of composting and mulching
4. The most beautiful garden

Judging of the gardens will take place in March by Plenty staff and representatives.

Plenty will also be having a Pumpkin growing contest, \$1 per pound will be paid to the person who grows the largest Pumpkin.

If you are interested please sign up with Plenty Belize. You can stop by or call us! Applications are due by January 25th!



Student showing his garden to Plenty and Peace Corps Volunteer Danny Boyd

Cacao — A cultural drink that is very healthy!

Natural Cacao (not milk chocolate!) lowers blood pressure, reduces fatigue, may decrease likelihood of onset of diabetes, and may improve arterial blood flow.

Magnesium is concentrated eighteen times greater in the heart muscle than in the bloodstream. Magnesium is the primary mineral missing when heart problems occur. Magnesium increases the overall vigour of the heart muscle. This mineral also decreases blood coagulation

thus lowering blood pressure and helping the heart pump more effectively. Cacao, of course, is a fantastic food source of heart-supporting magnesium.

One Cup of Cacao drink will contain 8 – 10% of the daily iron needed by our bodies.

Iron is essential to all body cells. Iron functions primarily as a carrier of oxygen in the body, both as a part of haemoglobin in the blood and of myoglobin in the

muscles. Iron deficiency, called anaemia, occurs when there is not enough iron in the red blood cells. This is a common problem often made worse by pregnancy, blood loss, a diet low in iron or poor absorption of iron by the body. So eating and drinking cacao helps build our blood and is especially important for women and girls. Many of us in Belize suffer from iron deficiency, and we have part of the cure growing here in Toledo!

“Cacao lowers blood pressure, reduces fatigue, may decrease likelihood of onset of diabetes, and may improve arterial blood flow. ”



St. Benedict Students working in the Garden Mark checking out the road to Corozon Plenty's Office Garden

PLENTY BELIZE

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We're on the Web
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Plenty Belize

Mission: Promoting the well-being of the people, the communities, and the environment we share in the Toledo District of Belize

Plenty Belize is a registered Belizean NGO with its office in Punta Gorda Town. Founded in 1997 Plenty Belize has a history of working hand in hand with other local groups to address local needs in a sustainable manner. Plenty Belize has acted both as a service provider within projects spearheaded by other organizations and as a project manager.

Areas of focus:

- Sustainable development of energy, water, and food resources
- Sanitation, Nutrition, and Health Education
- Economic initiatives such as agro-business and micro-enterprise development
- Environmental Awareness and Adaptation to Global Climate Change
- Relevant Public Education
- Inclusion of Women, Youths, and Persons with Disabilities in the development of their communities and beyond
- Respect for the culture of the many indigenous peoples of the area.

The Board and Staff of Plenty Belize

Plenty Belize has a staff of 5 people, and is governed by a Board of Directors made up of 7 local people.

THE STAFF:

Executive Director Mark Miller has worked with Plenty Belize since 2001 when he moved to the Toledo District. Living in Jacintoville, Mr. Miller brings a wealth of experiences and education to Plenty, including many years of teaching, engineering, and management.

Office Manager Tasha Petillo hails from Punta Gorda and her Associate's Degree in Natural Resources Management comple-

ments her book-keeping and project coordination work.

Field Officers Ermain Requena and Abib Palma, both born and bred in Toledo villages, bring a wealth of organic agricultural and natural resources knowledge to the people of Toledo.

Peace Corps Volunteer Mike McGuire brings his Business and Geography experience to help build the Plenty Team

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Dr Ludwig Palacio
Mr Florentino Pop

Mrs Delly Martinez
Mrs Joan Palma
Ms Olive Woodeye Tate
Mr Omar Requena
Mr Gomier Longville



Plenty Belize's Board of Directors; Mrs. Delly, Mr. Pop, Mr. Longville, Dr. Palacio, Ms. Woodeye, Mr. Requena, Mrs. Palma

Please feel free to contact the office to talk to us and learn more about Plenty!