

Voices from the forest

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NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH & SOUTHEAST ASIA

A Case from the Brazilian Amazon Accommodating Communities' Interests in Public Policies for NTFPs



FOOD FROM THE FOREST
Edible Wild Plants, Insect Recipes,
Nutritional Facts

When Is A Forest A Forest?

Why is forest definition important for developing countries like the Philippines?



Major Higaonon traditional leaders or *datu* of the corridor during the conference's opening ritual.

PHOTO BY MIKS GUIA-PADILLA

CARING FOR TRADITIONS TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE

The Higaonon's Initiative to Protect their Mountain Forest Sanctuaries

One of my favorite places is Mintapod, nestled on the slopes of the Kimangkil Mountain Range, Bukidnon province, Mindanao in southern Philippines. I love it not only for its breathtaking beauty but also because the indigenous peoples living there, the Higaonon, have managed to maintain the Indigenous Knowledge Skills and Practices (IKSPs) that

protect its forested mountains. It is only fitting that the Mintapod Declaration was affirmed and signed there. The Mintapod Declaration is an agreement of five Higaonon ancestral domains, represented by their traditional leaders called *datu*, to protect the sanctity of the mountains in the range, foremost among them

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Mount Kimangkil; the other mountains are Balatukan, Kalanawan, Pamalihi and Sumagaya. For the Higaonon, these mountains are where the spirits guarding nature live.

This Declaration was a highlight of the Kimangkil Indigenous Peoples Corridor Conference (KIPFCC) held on 1-3 April 2009 at Cagayan de Oro City, some 200 kilometers north of Mintapod. There were over 80 participants from the Higaonon indigenous communities, and from support groups and government offices.

The Conference is part of the project called "Building Forest Corridors through Sustainable Ancestral Domain Management" supported by the European Commission. This project aims to contribute to forest protection by strengthening IP communities, where much of the remaining forest stands in the Philippines can be found. Such strengthening is accomplished by addressing in an integrated manner community development needs in the areas of tenurial security, livelihood enterprise, capacity building in legal remedies, and of course reforestation and forest management.

Assisting in these needs are four NGOs, each with a specific expertise, working closely together: AnthroWatch, NTFP-EP, Upholding Life and Nature (ULAN), and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE). The project's sites are in geographical areas wherein neighboring ancestral domains form an indigenous peoples corridor. It is hoped that by helping to strengthen highly motivated communities within these corridors, in the near future adjacent ancestral domains will be encouraged to strengthen themselves and therefore also protect their forests. The project is on its third and final year, and conferences like this in the project sites are a way of consolidating and learning from the project's experiences.

The Mintapod Declaration is an example of community initiative that the project is supporting. Amay Matangkilan Cumatang, leader of the management structure tasked with leading the protection of the sacred mountains, emphasized that recognizing the Higaonon's right to continue practicing their traditional ways of forest management will help in keeping the over 70% of forest cover intact. And aside from being an integral part of their cultural heritage, the Higaonon are aware that the watersheds of the major rivers of four provinces (Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Agusan and Cotabato) are within that area. They explain that by supporting these indigenous peoples' initiatives, there is support for the broader population as well, today and in the future. The five ancestral domains which have signed on to the Mintapod Declaration, namely: the Agtulawon-Mintapod Higaonon Cumadon, Kalanawan Tribal Council, Minalwang Higaonon Tribal Council, Pamalihi Tribal Council and the Mamacila Apo Ginopaka Tribal Council represent over 5,000 Higaonon families.



The Higaonon *datu* with Juan Echanove, Environment, Sustainable Development and Food Security Programme Officer of Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines.

PHOTO BY MIKS GUIA-PADILLA

There are other highlights which made the KIPFCC special. It was heartening to observe how eager the Higaonon were to get together and discuss common concerns according to their perspectives and in their language. The Higaonon's ways of holding a gathering were upheld, from the opening ritual to energizers that consisted of spontaneous traditional dancing.

It was equally heartwarming to see the support of organizations, apart from the project partners, in the planning and conduct of the conference, among them Fr. Vincent Cullen Tulugan Learning and Development Center, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, Samdhana Institute, Balay Mindanao, Green Mindanao, Environmental Science for Social Change and Kahiusahan sa mga Higaonon (KHI – a Higaonon federation).

But the KIPFCC is not like a fairy tale that has a sure happy ending. Three months have passed, and the euphoria generated by the conference has abated. Immediately after the conference and as of this writing, we continue to receive news about the relentless entry of mining and logging projects (that will potentially destroy large tracts of forests in the Kimangkil Range), which have had successes in confusing or dividing community members. In the midst of uncertainty, our hope is that the indigenous peoples and support groups will recall and adhere to the principles and plans affirmed in the KIPFCC.

➔ **Miks Guia-Padilla (AnthroWatch)**
Project Manager, Building Forest Corridors through Ancestral Domain Management



PHOTO BY ABE PADILLA

Mt. Kimangkil, massive yet fragile; a Higaonon on the watch.

WHEN IS A FOREST A FOREST?



Current discussions on forest definition are gaining ground in the Philippines. This comes with the realization that a country's definition of forests has serious implications on its eligibility in forest carbon projects. Forest carbon, such as that sequestered by trees in a reforestation initiative under the Kyoto protocol¹, has become a commodity with market value. This forest carbon market could possibly grow in the post-Kyoto climate agreement if forest conservation (and not only forest rehabilitation) projects come on board².

Why is forest definition important for developing countries like the Philippines?

Some countries, like the Philippines, have adopted the FAO definition on forests. Forests are defined as:

"land with an area of more than 0.5 hectare and tree crown (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10 percent, with trees reaching a minimum height of 5 meters at maturity in situ. It consists either of closed forest formations where trees of various stores and undergrowth cover a high proportion of the ground or open forest formations with a continuous vegetation cover in which tree crown cover exceeds 10 percent. Young natural stands and all plantations established for forestry purposes, which have yet to reach a crown density of more than 10 percent or tree height of 5 meters are included under forest as are areas normally forming part of the forest area which are temporarily un-stocked as a result of human intervention or natural causes but which are expected to revert to forest.

It includes forest nurseries and seed orchards that constitute an integral part of the forest; forest roads, cleared tracks, fire-breaks and other small open areas; forest within protected areas; windbreaks and shelter belts of trees with an area of more than 0.5 hectare and width of more than 20 meters; plantations primarily used for forestry purposes, including rubber wood plantations. It also includes bamboo, palm, and fern formations (except coconut and oil palm)."³

The definition has recently come under scrutiny primarily for two reasons:

1) 10% minimum tree crown cover which implies a very low percentage of trees in any given area would qualify as a forest. Some would call this "a collection of a few trees" rather than an actual "forest". It wouldn't be the image of a forest that would spring into one's head. Definitely not.

¹ Through the Clean Development Mechanism, developing countries may receive financing for climate mitigation projects.

² The Conference of Parties of the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is considering the inclusion of a mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD).

³ Most countries that are members of UN-FAO adopted this as the standard for defining and reporting what is forest. UN-FAO used this definition when it did the 2005 Global Forest Assessment. The UN-FAO Global Forest Assessment 2010 is still using this because there has to be consistency across countries on forest resources.

2) The second is the fact that the definition is devoid of any ecological parameters. Many forest conservation groups are uncomfortable with such a definition as a forest, in our understanding, is more than, as said above, "a collection of a few trees" but is a diverse ecosystem with different elements and functions which also should be recognized and promoted.

On the first issue on the 10% minimum tree crown cover, critics say that this definition would draw forest conservation efforts towards more degraded forests (with only a "collection of trees") without targeting closed canopy or old growth forests which are in danger of conversion. A low minimum percentage of tree crown cover would also mean that afforestation / reforestation areas would have to be on almost barren areas (below 10% tree crown cover) before they become eligible in Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) schemes⁴ implemented under the Kyoto Agreement.

As for the second concern on ecological parameters, it is feared that if natural forests that have high conservation value are not incentivized, forest carbon market schemes could favour plantations instead of achieving the full potential of providing co-benefits such as biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services.

As a consequence, many conservation groups involved in the climate negotiations are wary of the potential problem of the conversion of natural forests to plantations; further galvanized by market mechanisms.

Those in the forestry sector are recommending the demarcation of "conservation" forests for biodiversity purposes from "production" forests which may address the issue of forest conversion. Though this action may clarify land use, it would still be insufficient in making much of Philippine forests eligible for existing forest carbon enhancement projects available under the Kyoto Protocol. Often local communities, particularly indigenous communities are also wary of existing conservation regimes like protected areas which may increasingly limit their use of natural resources.

It is important for the Philippine government to consider the implications of a forest definition that would enhance investments for ecosystem benefit, climate benefit, community benefit and biodiversity benefit.

If these implications are not considered, we risk seeing the trees but not the forest, we risk seeing the carbon but not the other ecosystem values that forests provide.

► **Ester B. Batangan and Crissy Guerrero, NTFP-EP**
(N.B. Thanks to Mr. Romeo T. Acosta, former Director of the Forest Management Bureau in the Philippines, for his valuable technical comments on this article.)

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have been a prime source of livelihood for millions of communities around the world. In the case of Brazil where half of the land mass is covered with natural forest, staggeringly twenty million people are residing and depending on one fourth of its total natural vegetation. Therefore it is important for any public policy initiatives on NTFP in Brazil to address the plight of these highly vulnerable and forest-dependent communities. I will attempt to describe the impact of the national and state policies on small holder communities in the Brazilian Amazon.

There are more than 200 indigenous peoples groups, many traditional communities and small holder forest-based communities depending on NTFPs in Brazil. These marginalized groups are referred to as “People, traditional communities and small holders” (PCTAFs).* The products used by these groups are called “products of socio-biodiversity”, which include NTFPs. These products serve as livelihood and “engine” of countryside economic growth catalyzing conservation of natural resources. Recognizing and promoting “products of socio-biodiversity” would be a form of addressing the needs of excluded social groups, respecting their cultural differences, and assisting them in achieving the various dimensions of sustainable development.

These products actually have huge potential to generate jobs, income, services, and environmental products with sustainable competitiveness. As inputs to the primary production in the value chain, they generate approximately 480 Million Real (USD 262M), and contribute an estimated 0.48 percent to the national primary production. This segment of the value chains involves about 8.5 million people, contributing significantly to the economy by offering products that can be used for food and medicinal purposes, cosmetics and crafts, among others. The total value of these products generated from PCTAFs cannot and should not be underestimated.

Policy Initiatives on NTFPs in Amazonas

There are five national policies under various ministries providing larger incentives to PCTAFs. The National Policy on “Territories of Cidadania” under the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty identifies priority territories for the improvement of access to basic services, rights to health, shelter and food. Three policies under the Ministry of the Agrarian Development such as the policies on ‘Organic Agriculture’, ‘Technical Assistance and Rural Extension’ and ‘Agriculture Small Holdings’ talk separately about PCTAFs.

The ‘National Policy of the Sustainable Development to People and Traditional Communities’ of the Ministry of the Environment aims to reach about 5.2 million people who depend on NTFPs. The policy has three objectives: (1) access of the territories and better quality of life, (2) better production capacity and sustainability, and (3) market support.

At the regional level, the State of Amazonas has been implementing the ‘Zona Franca Verde’ Sustainable Development Program since 2003

Accommodating Communities’ Interests in Public Policies for NTFPs: A CASE FROM THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

*PCTAFs - They comprise different cultural groups and other recognized communities that are properly organized, occupy specific territories, and use natural resources for cultural, social, religious, ancestral and economic activities. These groups use indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices that they pass on to future generations.

Mangyans and Agtas of the Philippines Smitten by the Queen Bee!

For long, NATRIPAL in Palawan was the lonely forest honey pioneer in the Philippines, but recently, it seems more indigenous groups in this country are becoming interested in honey for livelihood. This is true for the Buhid-Mangyan and the Agta-Dumagat who underwent training on honey harvesting, processing and marketing.

Said Bernie Balmes of the Upland Marketing Foundation, Inc. (UMFI)-Forest Corridor Project in Oriental Mindoro, "The Mangyan noticed there is less honey produce in the forests of the province. Just the same, the Sadik Habanan Buhid (SHB) indigenous group in Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro believes the honey processing and marketing business remains a viable and sustainable enterprise. They expect to harvest more honey in the coming months."

Recently, two members of SAGIBIN, a federation of Agtas in the Sierra Madre (Luzon), visited NATRIPAL to learn

more about the proper harvesting and processing of honey. The visit has encouraged SAGIBIN representatives to pursue the honey business and to echo what they have learned to the other members of their group. As their honey season would end in September, they plan to start the business immediately. NATRIPAL and NTFP-EP are committed to continue supporting the initiative, whenever needed.

Certainly, bee stings and rains will not deter the Mangyan and the Agta-Dumagat from pursuing a successful honey business.

➔ **Ruth P. Canlas, NTFP-TF**
(Full article in NBTA, July 2009)

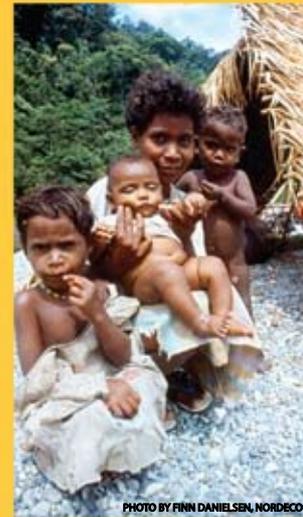


PHOTO BY FINN DANIELSEN, NORDECO

Accommodating Communities' Interests in Public Policies for NTFPs: A CASE FROM THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

to counter deforestation, expand and protect the State's protected area network, improve rural livelihoods, increase employment opportunities in urban areas from sustainable production and provision of environmental services, and strengthen local, national and international partnerships. The strategy of the Amazonas state to address the limitations of the value chains is to select products that have great importance for communities and to implement initiatives that would favor the development of these products. Since the implementation of this strategy, the following has been accomplished:

- products have been prioritized per consultations with communities in various conferences;
- changes in the economic incentives law has been implemented to include forest products;
- payment for environmental services has been initiated for rubber tappers (US\$ 0.30/kg of rubber);
- prohibition on the cutting of two oleaginous trees (Andiroba and Copaiba); and
- exemption of NTFPs from states' sales taxes.

Success factors to NTFP Policy implementation in Brazil

Though there are many challenges to be overcome, these can be resolved through strategies that involve government's united action with communities and other local actors. The key reasons for the success of these policies in Amazonas are as follows:

- Communities' interests were included and considered when making policy decisions;
- There were proper dialogues or consultations with different interest groups;
- The national and state level policies are coherent and address the communities' need and interest;
- The level of preparedness and capacity of the communities were considered in the project proposals and policies, and;
- More proactive involvement of the government officials from the beginning led to the ownership and success of NTFP policy implementation at the community level.

Requirements for NTFPs resource access in Brazil

There are basic requirements before communities can officially access NTFPs.

Inventories of NTFPs undertaken before harvesting are required for products which need management plan. The management plan is necessary only for products which need transport authorization (DOF). DOF is an obligatory license for the transport and storage of forest products and by-products of native origin. It is required for forest products that are actually cut. Exempt from these requirements are NTFPs such as gum-resin plants, ornamentals, medicinal and aromatic plants, seedlings, roots, bulbs, lianas and leaves of native origin of different species.

There are two modalities for the payment of forest charges or taxes for collecting NTFPs. Taxes are paid if products are commercialized. Inside the state the taxes can vary from 15 to 17 percent of the value of the product, and outside, taxes start at 11 percent. In the case of NTFPs that need transport documents, the value of payment depends on the volume and area explored.

The outcome of these policies shows that it is possible to increase the value of NTFPs thereby providing economic alternatives for the communities, as well as to contribute to the reduction of deforestation. The experience in Amazonas, where 7 community cooperatives were supported by the government for the value addition of the Brazil nut, shows a dramatic increase in income for forest peoples.

Food from the Forest

Seeds must hide in the ground to become whatever is in them.
(Jalaluddin Rumi)

To most indigenous communities in South & South-east Asia, gathering of forest food, hunting and fishing, traditionally are vital adjuncts to farming.¹ All together, these activities form an integrated system of resource utilization, catering to elementary subsistence needs. Food from the forest (FFF) is key as an emergency food buffer during time of famine or seasonal scarcity. These foods provide nutritional supplements such as side dishes and snacks to cultivated staples. In the latter function, the importance in terms of protein and micro nutrient intake cannot be overestimated. In fact, the nutritional quality of forest food is comparable and in some cases superior to domestic varieties.²

Where in the past the forest environment could be considered a good provider, in many locations destructive developments have led to a collapse of the food's resource base. In addition, dominant society often looks down on wild gathered food and the consumption of it may therefore be perceived as an expression of low status.³ On the other hand, over the last few decades, 'modern' processed and comparatively nutrient poor food items have gradually entered tribal areas and have often become a significant staple of day-to-day diets. Finally, because of overall cultural erosion, the relevant knowledge base in indigenous societies may also be less developed as it used to be in previous times.

Meanwhile, the importance of FFF to provide food security is commonly underreported if not outright ignored by development organizations and government agencies alike. Therefore, to fill this gap, the Voices from now on will feature a regular Food from the Forest page with recipes, stories, nutritional facts and more.

Contributions are welcome.

➔ Jenne de Beer

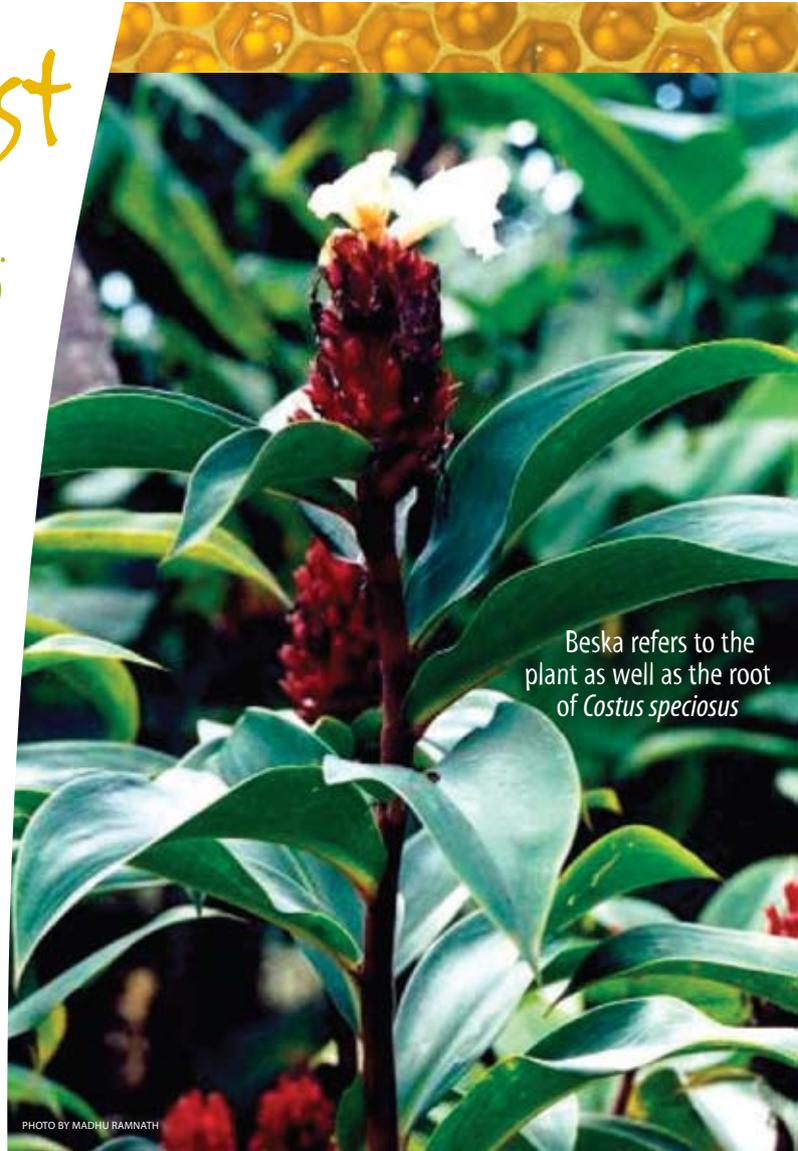
¹ In (former) hunter-gatherer societies the role of forest foods quite obviously is even more prominent.

² See, for example, Caldwell *et al.*, 1972 on wild green leaf vegetables mitigating riboflavin deficiency in rice-based diets and Dounias *et al.*, 2007, who compare the diets of peri-urban and remote forest dwelling Punan communities in East Kalimantan. The authors conclude that the more remote the community, the more diversified the diet and the better the nutritional status and physical fitness.

³ This is not everywhere the case. In the Russian Federation for example, FFF is even today widely appreciated and, comes autumn, city folks flock to the country side to collect mushrooms, berries and the like.

References

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Dounias, Edmond *et al.* (2007). From sago to rice, from forest to town: the consequences of sedentarization for the nutritional ecology of Punan former hunter-gatherers of Borneo. In *Food & Nutrition Bulletin*, Vol.28, no 2 (supplement). The United Nations University.



Beska refers to the plant as well as the root of *Costus speciosus*



Dinner at Long Luping in Sarawak, Malaysia

The Beska-Kenil Chutney

In the Durwa and Koitoor tracts of Bastar and Malkangiri districts in eastern central India, people are extremely fond of a species of red-ant (*kenil*) of the genus *Crematogaster*.

These are ants that make small nests in the leaves of trees, especially sal trees (*Shorea robusta*), have eggs and larvae that are fatty, and are available throughout the year. These ants which are found in most parts of tropical Asia are high in ascorbic acid and therefore have a sour and pungent taste. They are recommended for common colds or when you need a vitamin C boost against stress. However, getting a nest of ants can be a painful task as one gets bitten before one is through with the job and climbs down the tree.

Many greens and vegetables – jackfruit, pumpkin, drumstick, various *Amaranthus* - are cooked lightly and then a gravy made with a red-ant and rice paste. The gravy is usually spiced with red chilies and tamarind and it is the *kenil* that gives the additional unique flavour. Such a side dish to rice is known as *nuka-raba* in Durwa and as *amat-sag* in most parts of Bastar.

Beska refers to the plant as well as the root of *Costus speciosus*, a herb of the ginger family that appears after the first showers of the monsoon in many parts of tropical Asia. The leaves are spirally arranged on the stem and the white flowers with a bright red calyx are quite characteristic. The ginger-like rhizomes are slightly stringy and less strong than ginger – which is why it is possible to eat it raw in large quantities – and a popular ingredient to many types of chutney. A common preparation is the *beska-kenil* chutney, an excellent accompaniment to rice-beer and an efficient counter to hangovers, requires:



Serves 10

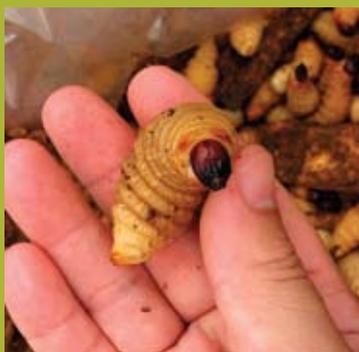
- One medium sized nest full of *kenil*
- Approx. 200 gms of *beska* (root)
- 3-4 red chilies
- Small ball of tamarind pulp
- Onion and tomato if preferred
- Two spoons of salt

Clean the ants, removing the larger mature ants and the minor debris common to most nests. Shake well in a basket while doing this as the larger ants move away from the eggs and larvae on their own. Wash and skin the *beska*, then cut into small pieces. Cut chilies, onion and tomato to size and add to washed tamarind pulp. Mix all the ingredients and pound lightly together. The end result should NOT be a paste but allow each ingredient to be individually visible. Serve in leaf-cups!

➡ Madhu Ramnath, NTFP-EP Facilitator for India

Recipes from Sarawak

Information provided by telephone by Dr. S.C. Chin, Director of the Botanic Gardens of Singapore



Karanka Ant Sambal

Main ingredient:

Large red 'Karanka' ants.

Preparation:

Fry the ants in a little cooking oil and add a tea spoon of soya sauce and some salt. Done!

What you get:

A slightly sour tasting crunchy, crispy (the ant's heads!) condiment that goes well with various rice dishes.

Sago Worm

Main ingredient:

The larvae of the sago weevil (*Rhynchophorus bilineatus*)

Product information:

These large grubs are extremely efficient transformers of *Eugeissona utilis* sago starch into more nourishing fat and protein. They are therefore locally called 'baby fat', as it will help little children grow quickly, well yes, very fat indeed.

Preparation:

Briefly fry in own gravy. (No other oils needed.) Cut in slices (as sausage), add salt and crushed chili's. Ready!

Alternatively eat raw:

Take the wrigling larvae by the head and bite. Bon appetit!



PHOTO BY MATTHEW IRELAND

What Food Can We Find in the Forest?

Leaf vegetables, mushrooms & herbs

Fruits, shoots, flowers and nuts

Tubers, rhizomes, roots and corms

Stem pith (of palm and cycad species)

Fresh water fish, turtles and frogs

Aquatic invertebrates, including crustaceans, mollusks, snails and water bugs

Terrestrial invertebrates: insect and insect products

Honey and eggs/larvae of ants and wasps

Major Wild Edible Plants of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in India

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), India, is a representative area of the southern Western Ghats and covers 5670 sq. km. The tribal people living in the area are endowed with a deep knowledge concerning the use of wild plants for food. Most of them depend on forest resources for their livelihood and consume edible flowers, roots, fibres, tubers, rhizome, leaves, etc. Many wild edible plants are nutritionally rich and can supplement nutritional requirements, especially vitamins and micro-nutrients, and are able to fill a variety of food gaps at various seasons.

Wide consumption and availability of wild plants attest their value, and are especially visible among indigenous cultures. But in recent times, the old traditions in many tribal communities are at risk of disappearing; hence, the crucial need to study such knowledge systems and find innovative ways of infusing them to the future generations.

In the early times, gathering and preparing wild food was a regular activity of many tribal households. Women and children used to regularly carry out wild food collections, but now that practice is declining. Our study also shows that at present, there is a lack of interest among the younger generations as they prefer food from the local market rather than the wild collection. It is necessary to create awareness to the young generation about the value of the wild foods in their diet. Keystone Foundation has initiated such a kind of efforts in NBR, where the village elders bring the young children every week to the forests and explain them the importance of forests, wild edible and medicinal plants, collection methods, and necessity of forest conservation. Posters and booklets have also been printed in the local language for the benefit of the community and are distributed in local schools and villages. These efforts we hope will keep the tradition of wild foods alive.

L.Rasingam & Shiny Mariam Rehel
Keystone Foundation, Kotagiri



Dioscorea tomentosa L. (Dioscoreaceae)
Noorai Kangu – Irula

A sparsely prickly, tuberous climber common on forest slopes and borders of all districts. The tubers are harvested during the summer season and eaten after boiling with salt or after deep frying.



Cycas circinalis L. (Cycadaceae)
Eendh – Irula, Kurumba

It is a short palm like tree found in some isolated pockets of the NBR and listed in the Red Data Book of Indian Plants. The seeds are leached and the kernels grounded into a paste, salt and chilly are added and steamed. Later small balls are prepared from this and eaten freshly and also stored for future. The young leaves are also cooked and eaten.

Acacia pennata (L.) Willd. (Mimosaceae)
Seengai dagu – Irula, Kurumba

An extensive armed straggler found in forest borders and scrub jungles. The young leaves are harvested during the pre-monsoon period and cooked with lentils and eaten with millets.

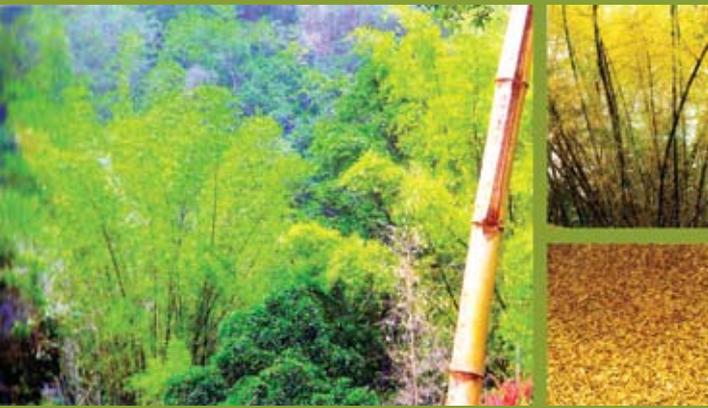


Scutia myrtina (Burm.f.) Kurz (Rhamnaceae)
Kokkimullu, Sodali – Irula, Kurumba

A straggling thorny shrub found very common in forest borders and scrub jungles from plains to 1200m. The ripened fruits are edible.

Dioscorea oppositifolia L. (Dioscoreaceae)
Rhea Kangu - Irula

It is an extensive climber found on thickets and secondary forest patches of above 750m and the tuber is the main food source for the Irula and Kurumba community. The tubers are harvested during the January-April period and eaten after boiling with salt and deep fry.



Bambusa arundinacea (Retz.) Roxb. (Poaceae)
Dodda bidur – Kurumba, Billia moonga – Irula

A tall erect green bamboo with spines found on the moist deciduous to semi-evergreen forests. The young shoots are harvested and cooked with tamarind and other ingredients and eaten with millets.

Solanum nigrum L. (Solanaceae)
Kakkae dagu – Irula

A small shrub found along the riverbanks, agricultural fields and wastelands from plains to 1500m. The leaves are cooked with lentils and taken with rice or millet. It also has the medicinal properties to cure stomach ache, chest pain and mouth ulcer. Peoples are very fond of this green vegetable and cook weekly once.



Cissus quadrangularis L. (Vitaceae)
Naralaikkodi – Irula, Kurumba

A rambling shrub with quadrangular stem found along the forest paths, scrub jungles of deciduous forests. The young stem and leaves are used to make chutney with tamarind.

Cereus pterogonus Lemaire (Cactaceae)
Bella Kalli – Irula

A profusely branched columnar shrub found along the roadsides and fences. The flowers are harvested during the period of March to June and cooked with salt and chilly and eaten with rice.



Syzigium cuminii (L.) Skeels (Myrtaceae)
Naaval – Irula, Kurumba

It is an evergreen tree found in a variety of habitats from plains to 1400m. The ripened fruits are dark blue and eaten raw. Huge quantity of fruits are collected during June-July period and sold in the market. The honey from this tree has a bitter taste.

Food for Thought!

How can women, especially those in remote communities, improve their health and well-being?

Recommended Reading:
Where Women Have No Doctor

There are 5 important vitamins and minerals that women need: iron, folic acid (folate), calcium, iodine, and vitamin A. Iron makes blood healthy and prevents weak blood (anemia). Aside from meat, chicken, eggs and beans, these foods have a lot of iron – **grasshoppers, crickets** and **termites**. It is best to eat food rich in iron with fruits with a high Vitamin C content. Vitamin C helps the body use more of the iron in the food.

To get more iron:

- Cook food in iron pots. If you add tomatoes, lime juice, or lemon juice to the food while it is cooking, more iron will go to the food.



- Add a clean piece of iron – like an iron nail or a horseshoe – to the cooking pot. These should be made of pure iron, not a mixture of iron and other metals.
- Put a clean piece of pure iron, like an iron nail, in a little lemon juice for a few hours. Then make lemonade with the juice and drink it.

Folic acid (folate) makes healthy red blood cells. Good sources of folic acid are dark green leafy vegetables and mushrooms among others. Best to avoid cooking food for a long time as it destroys folic acid and other vitamins.

Good sources of folic acid are:

- dark green leafy vegetables*
- whole grains
- mushrooms*
- liver
- meats
- fish
- nuts*
- peas and beans
- eggs



* including those gathered from the forest

Calcium makes bones and teeth strong, especially green leafy vegetables and shellfish. Iodine in the diet helps prevent a swelling on the throat called goiter and other problems. The easiest way to get enough iodine is to use iodized salt instead of regular salt. Vitamin A prevents night blindness and fights off some infections. Dark yellow and green leafy vegetables, and some orange fruits, are rich in vitamin A.

This helpful information, and more, are found on the pages of a Hesperian publication, **Where Women Have No Doctor, A Health Guide for Women** (2006) by A. Burns, R. Lovich, J. Maxwell and K. Shapiro. The book combines self-help medical information with an understanding of the ways poverty, discrimination and cultural beliefs limit women's health and access to care. Download this free of charge at <http://www.hesperian.info>.

Another recent publication of Hesperian, *Community Guide for Environmental Health*, will be reviewed by NTFP-EP and featured in the next issue of Voices.

Partner profile

Kovel Foundation

A Journey Towards Sustainable Tribal Livelihoods

A large group of poor tribal gum pickers, specifically interested in the economics and characteristics of Gum Karaya (*Sterculia urens*), had organized themselves to enhance their quality of life through socio-economic empowerment. In 1994, they formed Kovel Foundation - a Trust by the indigenous people for research on sustainable technologies. Their headquarters is at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) India.

An apex organization of 250 Girijan Gum Pickers Associations (GGPA) spread across 15 tribal-concentrated Districts of Andhra Pradesh State, Kovel has a strong clientele of 8,500 tribal gum pickers. Faith in the capacity of indigenous community, ecological integrity, as well as accountability and transparency in governance are among its core values.

By 2012, Kovel envisions that: (a) 15,000 NTFP-dependent tribal families have been organized into self sustaining institutions, (b) technical know-how on sustainable harvesting practices of NTFP and other livelihoods have been extended enabling each tribal family to earn at least an additional annual income of Rs. 8000 (US\$168), (c) women in Andhra Pradesh have been empowered, (d) the Foundation have been identified as a national training agency on sustainable harvesting of NTFP with a special focus on gums and resins, and; (e) have extended comprehensive training on its specialization to at least 100,000 tribal families.

The Foundation is one of the few NGOs in India owned and headed by NTFP-dependent tribal/client communities who form the Board. GGPAs have contributed seed capital, and community ownership and participation has always been a high priority in planning, implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of programs.

Its Trust Board is composed of 6 elected tribal Trustees from the 6 zones across the State: one is woman belonging to a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG), 3 are nominated Trustees who are committed to tribal development, and 2 are standing invitees. The Board meets quarterly to plan and review the activities of the Foundation. The Managing Trustee through the Chief Executive Officer manages the affairs of the Trust.

Making a difference in the lives of tribal families

By helping NTFP collectors improve their socio-economic condition and by giving special focus on women in collaboration with Government and donors, Kovel Foundation has been able to positively impact the lives of the tribals in many ways. Over a period of one and a half decade, it has empowered the tribals through these interventions: institutional building, livelihood promotion, research and capacity building, and regeneration – a core strategy in promoting Gum Karaya nurseries and plantations in the tribal-owned lands.

Notably, these interventions on Gum Karaya value chain management helped increase the quality and quantity of gum as amply reflected in the current price of the produce. In 1990s, the price for first grade gum was only Rs. 30 per kilo, now it's roughly Rs.170. Similarly, the prices of second grade gum increased significantly from Rs. 26 to Rs. 125, and third grade gum from Rs.22 to Rs.100. By promoting value addition model of Amla (Indian gooseberry), i.e., processing wild Amla fruits into dry Amla through steam boiling method, the tribals are able to realize a 100 percent increase in their additional income. Kovel can also boast that the Gum Karaya intervention model has been successfully replicated in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra States.



Objectives

Realize higher prices for NTFP through research and value addition

Increase the incomes realized by the tribal through training and extension in forest resources conservation and enhancement of the quality of NTFP

Voice the grievances of the tribals at appropriate forums and act as their spokesperson



Women participating in the MACS meeting at Pedabidda

Future Plans

Promote forest- and farm-based livelihoods as a sustainable source of income for the dependent families

Further promote self-sustained Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies with forest-dependent tribal families for collective initiatives and action

Promote organic farming through Non Pesticidal Management approach as part of sustainable agriculture

Facilitate regeneration of important NTFP species in community-owned lands

Institutional Building: Promotion and strengthening of Community Based Organisations viz Self Help Groups, NTFPCAs & Girijana Mahila (women) Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS) besides Common Action Groups (CAGs)

Livelihood promotion: Kovel adopts dual strategy for developing livelihoods by intervening on Forest and Farm as these 2 key livelihoods contribute 70-80% of household income to the poorest of the poor dependent families. These strategies are: identification and facilitation of marketing NTFP/Medicinal plants, and promotion of value addition of NTFP & collective marketing through MACS and Non Pesticidal Management under sustainable organic agriculture.

Research & Capacity Building: Value Chain Analysis of NTFP, developing workable models in value addition & resource conservation, Baseline surveys, Quantitative Resource Surveys, Socio-economic Impact Assessment studies, Market studies, etc. followed by training programs to the tribals on scientific harvest management & marketing in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Regeneration: Apart from the above activities, regeneration is one of the core strategies since last few years and promoting Gum Karaya Nurseries and plantation in the tribal own lands as bunds and block plantation.



THE SUCCESS OF AMLA VALUE ADDITION MODEL - A Testimony -

Living in the most natural resource rich forest, tribals struggle for their survival day and night. They trade their value resource for peanuts due to lack of awareness.

Tribals used to carry headloads of wild Amla fruits to a shandy place, about 5-15kms from the village. They would sell the fruits for only Rs. 1.5-2 (USD 4.5) per kilo, including cost of labor.

Baka Indramma, a 45-year old resident of Valasi Village of Ananthagiri Mandal, Visakhapatnam District in Andhra Pradesh had experienced such difficulty. She said, "I used to carry headloads of wild Amla fruits to a distant market with the help of my son. I would get Rs. 80 for 40 kgs of raw Amla fruits. Sometimes there would be no buyer so I had to throw away the unsold items at the market place itself. It would be useless and more miserable to bring the highly-perishable fruits back to the village."

Then Kovel Foundation came in with its value addition model of Amla, i.e., steam boiled, de-seeded by separating the fruit into 6 equal pieces then dried in sunlight for about 3 days. Through this process, tribals could make one kg of dry Amla out of 5 kgs of fresh fruits, enabling them to carry the produce very easily to the market place. Instead of getting only Rs. 7.5-10 from 5 kgs of fresh fruits, the tribals amazingly got Rs 20-26 per kg of dry Amla!

Indramma was the person who came forward to initiate the activity when none of the villagers had shown interest. She keenly followed the process demonstrated by a representative of Kovel. She said, "I could now easily carry 8 kgs of dry Amla to the market and earn Rs. 200 for selling the fruits at Rs. 25/kg." With this intervention, the value of the fruits increased with almost no investment at the household level according to Indramma.

Being a natural leader, Indramma started trying to motivate the others to join the activity. She did not give up. She bought raw fruits from fellow members and earned an additional Rs. 1,000 by using the value addition model. It was like a boom for all 18 families who started the activity. This was a testimony from the field for the awesome success of Kovel's value addition intervention. The positive result had spread across the area.

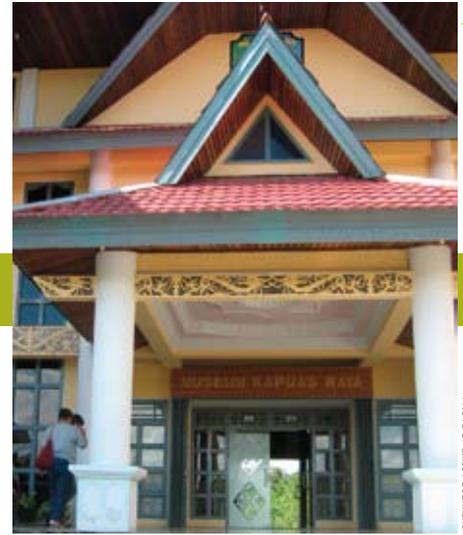


PHOTO BY CRISSTY GUERRERO

Sintang's Best Kept Secret: Museum Kapuas Raya

Last October 2008, Museum Kapuas Raya in Sintang, West Kalimantan was launched. The museum was initiated by Bupati Simon Djalil of the District of Sintang and Catholic Priest Father Jacques Maessen of Kobus Foundation. Since 2004, the Museum Kapuas Raya has also been supported by the Tropenmuseum, Netherlands. It was conceptualized as a museum where the 3 ethnic cultures of the Melayu, the Dayak and the Chinese are presented. These ethnic groups have made the River City of Sintang, what it is today. The museum is a symbol of peace, harmony and tolerance in an area where ethnic violence was once strongly felt. Though the three groups are presented in the history and culture rooms of the museum, one premier exhibit is definitely the stunning ikat textile (tie-dyed technique) room featuring Dayak fabrics in a rare collection of age-old pieces, patiently woven and exquisitely preserved. Definitely a must see! A full article will appear in the next Voices written by the Tropenmuseum's Project Manager for Museum Kapuas Raya, Drs. Itie van Hout, Senior Curator of Textiles. ➔ *Crissy Guerrero*



Ibu Alty looking at the Ikat in the glass... she loved that Ikat which just arrived from the Netherlands. Ernie looks on. They are accompanied by the curator.

PHOTO BY CRISSTY GUERRERO

Winds of Positive Change in Sarawak



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN VAN DER HOEVEN, IJCN

'Culture, Laws and Forest' workshop participants, organizers and partners

Cheers and applause resonated when land right's lawyer Baru Bian said in a booming voice and raised fist, "The natives of Sarawak have rights to their land and forest!". He was addressing a room of over 100 Penan and Lun Bawang ethnic indigenous people from 21 villages from Limbang and Lawas, north eastern Sarawak in a workshop organized by NTFP EP entitled, 'Culture, Laws and Forest'. The workshop was a collaborative effort with Sarawak Indigenous Lawyers Association (SILA) and Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA).

Baru presented and tackled the outcome of hallmark cases. The most recent was in May 2009, Madeli Salleh vs. Superintendent of Land and Surveys - the straw that broke the iron hold of the Sarawak government on a native customary land. These cases brought victory to indigenous communities throughout Malaysia. The summary of the Court of Appeal in *Nor Nyawai vs. Borneo Pulp Plantation S/B* states two crucial points: "a) That the common law respects the pre-existence of rights under native laws or customs, and b) That native customary rights do not owe their existence to statutes. They exist long before any legislation and the legislation is only relevant to determine how much of those native customary rights have been extinguished." This means a land title is not needed to show ownership of native customary land and forest.

Prior to the judgment of these cases, the courts only recognized native customary land as forest felled and occupied, land cultivated or planted with trees, and burial grounds before 1st January 1958. After years of long-standing struggle in protecting their forest, there were instances when community leaders

felt it was best to clear it for cultivation to protect their claims to their land from being taken away them; and because the forest was being cleared anyway for palm oil and pulp and paper plantations.

In recent court decisions, "NCR claim goes beyond their 'temuda' cultivated or planted areas. It includes their communal lands or territorial domain locally referred to as 'pemakai menua'; and the 'reserved virgin forests' within their 'pemakai menua' locally referred to as 'pulau', which is the forest area where there may be rivers for fishing and jungles for gathering of forest produce."

During the workshop, Nicholas Mujah, Sarawak land rights advocate representing SADIA, shared with the local communities their need to strengthen 'adat' or culture i.e., their ties to the land and forest as it is indivisible to their identity as natives of Sarawak, and to uphold their rights and claims as indigenous communities. He also presented the democratic process in Malaysia, the backbone of development of laws and government policy and stressed the need to exercise their individual rights to vote wisely.

The communities spoke of specific issues affecting them and obtained legal and extra legal advice and direction during the workshop. Both Baru and Nicholas commended the recent court decisions, but stressed that at the end of the day, the communities themselves must be united and resolute in their efforts to protect their culture, land and forest from the threat of destructive development.

► Joanna De Rosario

Local communities consulting and reflecting, during the workshop, on issues affecting them.



PHOTOS BY JOANNA DE ROSARIO

A Rattan Bridge between Indochina and Indonesia

From 5 to 15 June 2009, a delegation representing WWF, Governments and Associations from Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam (together referred to as 'Indochina') flew to Indonesia to meet with a broad range of actors in the Indonesian Rattan Industry, from farmers in Kalimantan to retailshops in Jakarta.

This first exchange, between the 2 main rattan industry regions in the world, was organised by WWF Regional Rattan Project "Establishing a Sustainable Production Systems for Rattan Products in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam", funded by the European Commission, IKEA and German Public Private Partnership. The study tour was also made possible thanks to the assistance of local NGOs (in particular Telapak/Gekko) and the NTFP-Exchange Programme.

The aim of the study tour was for the participants from the three countries to be exposed to new ways of rattan management, processing, and design. A second objective was to study trade and related policies. Finally, the third purpose was to establish contacts between the rattan sectors in Indochina and Indonesia.

Indonesia owns the most diverse species of rattan in the world with a total of 144 known rattan species and is the biggest rattan exporter worldwide, with as much as 80 percent of global market share estimated at about \$200 million annually. Indonesia is also a country, where, in some areas, rattan has been cultivated as part of a traditional rice-swidden system for more than 100 years. Swidden farmers manage "rattan gardens" over long periods: peak harvesting of rattan is 24 to 30 years after planting. Rattan has been a major source of cash income during periods of high demand (especially during the boom of the 1980s), and has had important socio-economic functions such as providing a means for saving - a tool for risk management and a marker of land-holding. Today, however, a combination of policy and economic factors has sharply depressed prices, while rapid, externally generated changes (new roads, large-scale establishment of oil-palm and pulp plantations) have created new pressures for people living in the area.

The WWF project team and government partners never before had the opportunity to learn from other countries, but this multicultural knowledge exchange has been beneficial for all. They have been exposed to the challenges and opportunities facing the rattan industry in Indonesia and the experience may help them to implement appropriate activities back home.

Indonesia has a long history working with rattan and has a rattan industry structure in place with clear distinctions between the production (Kalimantan, Sulawesi) and processing zones (Java). Policies are in place but more support for the development of the rattan industry is needed in order for the industry to be able to compete against emerging competitors such as China and Vietnam.



Rattan natural forest (Kalimantan)



Team picture with Professor Apoump of the Center for Social Forestry, Mula Warman University



Semi-processed rattan cane are to be sold to village craft producers and other processors in Cirebon. The rattan shown originates from Sulawesi.





Meeting at Telapak Cafe to discuss with local NGOs on rattan issues and opportunities.

One of their main challenge is the gap between micro reality and macro objectives. For example, rattan collectors and traders in Kalimantan would like to be able to export directly to other countries but they are not allowed to do this. Hence, the collectors are demotivated to continue managing rattan resources well. This is a concrete example for participants from Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam on the importance of policies and all aspects concerning their implementations and possible consequences.

Local knowledge on rattan management is rich in Indonesia. Thus, the participants from Indochina learned about new techniques and agreed that without good sustainable rattan resource management it is impossible to build a sustainable resource-based industry. The participation of universities and other research centers in the innovation process and policies is crucial. In reality, both regions are not taking into account the importance of research and its results, which by being more engaged, would support and strengthen the development of the industry in both Indochina and Indonesia.

So far, the issue of Cleaner Production (CP) is not really a priority for the rattan processing companies, neither in Indonesia nor in Indochina. Current development of the "green industry" put the CP approach in a context that will allow companies to gain profit and higher their profile with minimization of pollution and reduction of negative impacts on workers and local communities. Economic return and access to market are the main driver to convince the industry to change their behaviours.

To conclude, the rattan industry is being hit by the global recession and this is affecting all countries. It is probably the right time for Indonesia as well as for Indochina to switch to innovative ways of processing, developing new design, supporting locally adapted sustainable rattan resources management and putting in place incentive systems for farmers. Overall, this should be embedded into adapted policies, at micro, meso and macro levels. Coordination between donors, associations, Governments, universities and NGOs is also crucial to ensure consistency of the approach.

Thibault Ledecq
WWF GMP Rattan Programme Manager
PHOTOS BY MR. OU RATANAK.



PHOTO BY TANYA CONLU

On July 2nd, Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald visited the NTFP-EP Office in Manila for an informal sharing of ideas. Mr. Alistair McDonald is the Ambassador of the European Commission to the Philippines.

Mondulkiri wild honey, a potential GI product of Cambodia

Last July 8 and 9, the Mondulkiri Wild Honey Network hosted visitors from the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and Cambodian NGO, CEDAC; and French NGO, GRET. As shared during the visit, the Network has already made headway in marketing their honey products in Sen Monorom town all the way to the busy capital city, Phnom Penh. More than this, they see Mondulkiri wild honey as a potential Geographical Indication (GI) product so they are eyeing possibilities of future collaboration with the Mondulkiri wild honey network, WWF and NTFP-EP.



Products from Mondulkiri: AVOCADOS, CHILI, RICE WINE and WILD HONEY



WWF field staff and GRET NGO representative looking at the 3D map of the Krung Ratuon forest and honey collection area.

To be awarded the Geographical Indication status under the future GI law of Cambodia can provide some form of protection against misuse of products. Plus, in the case of Mondulkiri wild honey, it will be specifically identified as originating from Mondulkiri. Consequently, its reputation, quality and other distinct characteristics are attributable to its geographical origin. So far, there are only two other products that are being piloted for GI designation in Cambodia: the Kampot pepper and Kompong Speu palm sugar. Mondulkiri wild honey could be next! ➡ Femy Pinto



Mr. Lao Reasey of the Ministry of Commerce tests the Mondulkiri Wild honey at the local community store.

The Goodness!

After a speech by Al Gore convinced Inez Chow that the timber shortage was worse than she had thought, the fund manager bought shares in Malaysian logging firms.

➡ Go Seng Chong/Bloomberg News



OOPS! Our apologies for the erroneous contact information of the publisher of the book, *A Field Guide of the Rattans of Cambodia* in the last issue of *Voices*. It should read: For your copy or more information, contact the publisher: WWF Greater Mekong Cambodia Country Program, # 54, Street 352, Sangkat Beoung Keng Kang I, Khan Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Tel: (+855) 23 218 034, Fax: (+855) 23 211 909, Mobile: (+855) 17 224 426; Or email Mr. Ou Ratanak, Rattan Project Manager at ratanak.ou@wwfgreatermekong.org, or visit their website at www.wwf.org.



Around the region from April 2009 - July 2009

Jenne de Beer bags the coveted Darrell Posey Field Fellowship Award for 2009-2011



Jenne de Beer, EP's Executive Director, has recently received the 2009-2011 Field Fellowship of the Darrell Posey Fellowship for Ethnoecology and Traditional Resource Rights Awards.

The Field Fellowship is awarded to individuals pursuing applied, on-the-ground activities to support resource management, and cultural, human, land, resource and other rights of indigenous peoples and local communities around the world. Awarded annually, a Darrell Posey Fellowship runs for two years, alternating each year between a Field Fellowship and an Oxford University Fellowship. The Fellowship program also includes small grants to indigenous peoples and local community groups.

Administered by the International Society of Ethnobiology, the Darrell Posey Fellowship promotes understanding of peoples' complex and dynamic relationships with their environment, and supports indigenous peoples and local communities working to sustainably manage, and secure rights to their environment and resources.

Darrell Posey was a remarkable researcher, activist, and pioneer in the field of ethnoecology. Following his death in 2001, a group of his friends and colleagues established a fellowship in his name, in order to build upon Darrell's unique vision. The fellowship reflects his academic and applied work in ethnoecology and traditional resource rights, as well as his activism on behalf of indigenous peoples in Brazil and throughout the world.

➤ *Vince Michael Docta*

East Meets West: The Ghats in India

Two meetings were organized in India by partners of the NTFP EP.

February saw the revival of interest in the Western Ghats at a big gathering in Goa. The meeting brought together many activists, NGOs, researchers and government people who discussed the issues facing the Western Ghats. Noted environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna encouraged the participants to continue preserving the earth, forests and waters. Emphasized during the meeting were the importance of the biodiversity of the area and methods of supporting conservation efforts in the future. Prakruti/Appiko, Peaceful Society and Keystone Foundation organized the event.

Later in May, a two-and-half day consultation was held by various groups and individuals working in the context of the Eastern Ghats. They discussed some of the issues that have



increasingly threatened the cultures and the biodiversity of the region. The event was hosted by SAMATA and the NTFP EP- India at Anantagiri, near Vishakapatnam. The consultation surfaced some of the more characteristic features of the Eastern Ghats, as well as issues concerning fragmentation, biodiversity and adivasi culture research. It was decided that the group would move towards declaring the Eastern Ghats as an ecologically sensitive area. Special link were made amongst people working on issues related to NTFPs and forest conservation. ➤ *Snehlata Nath, Keystone Foundation*

REDD News Flash! Philippines Prepares for UN Climate Change Negotiations

NTFP-EP has helped organize the civil society movement on responsible REDD development known as CoDe REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation). CoDe REDD is a loose network of civil society groups and individuals promoting three banner messages:

- Community Development through REDD
- Communities Developing REDD and
- Conservation and Development through REDD

NTFP-EP has been invited to the official Technical Working Group (TWG) on REDD advising the Philippine government on positions in the international negotiations, particularly in the upcoming UN Climate Change negotiations. ➤ *Crissy Guerrero*

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Jenne de Beer, Ma. Cristina Guerrero, Mary Ann B. Leones

Many, many thanks to our CONTRIBUTORS for this issue: Roccio Chacchi Ruiz (NTFP-EP Intern from Brazil); L. Rasingan, Shiny Mariam-Rehel and Snehlata Nath (Keystone Foundation), Krishna Rao (Kovel Foundation, India), Thibault Ledecq, WWF (Lao PDR); Miks Guia-Padilla, AnthroWatch; Ruth P. Canlas, NTFP-TF (Philippines); Dr. S. C. Chin, Botanic Gardens of Singapore (Singapore); Ester Batangan, Joanna de Rozario, Vince Docta, Femy Pinto, Madhu Ramnath, Uch Sophay (NTFP-EP staff)

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The NTFP-EP is a collaborative network of over 50 non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in South and Southeast Asia. We work with forest-based communities to strengthen their capacity in sustainable management of natural resources.

Thank you to HIVOS and CORDAID for supporting the publication of *Voices*.



A nice surprise from the post: a maiden issue of a neatly-designed "Organic News" - a newsletter of the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) Organic India Council. Its 6 pages are brimming with news and photos on organic product launches and bazaars, and PGS membership and events. Kudos to Keystone Foundation!

Editor's Notes

On our cover issue, Mijs Guia-Padilla (AnthroWatch) gives us a glimpse of the enchanting beauty of Mintapod - the place where the traditional leaders or *datu* of the Higaonons made a pact to protect their sacred mountains and ancestral domains in Mindanao.

In Malaysia, Joanna recounts a vibrant "Culture, Laws and Forest" workshop organized in North Eastern Sarawak by EP in partnership with Sarawak Indigenous Lawyers Association and Dayak Iban Association.

If you read on, we feature some nutritious bits, which could prove to be a gastronomic delight! The first in a series of "Food from the Forest" - the newest section in Voices.

And exactly when is a forest a forest? This continues to be a red-hot debate in relation to 'REDD' in the Philippines, but not only there! Crissy and Ester jointly tackle the issue in their article and caution of the risk of seeing the trees but not the forest.

Our friend and intern from Brazil, Rocio Chacchi Ruiz describes the impact of the national and state policies on NTFPs to the indigenous and marginalized communities in the Brazilian Amazon. Find out why policy initiatives are successful in the Amazonas.

Kovel Foundation of India landed on our partner's profile section. For almost 15 years, Kovel has been assisting tribal gum pickers earn additional income from gum karaya and other NTFPs. With its wealth of experience in making a difference, Kovel deserves our compliment.

The flurry of activities of EP and partners in the past months makes our exchange news burst at the seams. Sorry, we had to slash off some contributions and reserve them for next issue! Just a quick run down: Cambodia colorfully celebrated April as NTFP month; A visit to Museum Kapuas Raya in Sintang West Kalimantan revealed its best kept secret - the stunning ikat textile (tie-dyed technique) room featuring Dayak fabrics; EP's very own Jenne de Beer bags the coveted Darrell Posey Field Fellowship Award for 2009-2011; and rattan bridges Indochina and Indonesia through an exchange visit facilitated by WWF. All this and more... Happy reading everyone!

The NTFP-EP Secretariat: Jenne de Beer, Executive Director ▶ Maria Cristina S. Guerrero, Deputy Director ▶ Tanya Conlu, Assistant Programme Manager ▶ Mary Ann B. Leones, Information Management Officer ▶ Vince Michael Docta, Resource Mobilisation Officer ▶ Sharon Padilla, Finance Officer ▶ Annielyn Paleracio, Administrative Officer ▶ Arnie C. Ocampo, Administrative Assistant
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Welcome to Tanya Conlu (Assistant Program Manager) and Mary Ann Leones (Information Officer), and Jan Jacques Camiña (part-time graphic designer), our newest addition to the NTFP-EP family. Thanks and best wishes to Peachy Ongleo and Aloisa Santos as they explore new opportunities outside EP.

Around the region from April 2009 - July 2009



PHOTO BY CRISSY GUERRERO

New Products Made By Dayak Weavers

Philippine Handicraft Expert, Mercedesita "Met" Sta. Maria trained 15 indigenous Dayak community members and NGO staff from July 25-28, 2009 in "Homeware, Deskware and Stationery Product Development" using Ikat textile (traditional tie-dyed fabric). The training took place in Sintang, West Kalimantan, Indonesia and was co-organized by NTFP-EP, Yayasan Dian Tama and the Weavers Cooperative of Sintang, Jaringan Menenun Mandiri (JMM). Through the training, the participants were able to develop new products such as pen holders, CD cases, notebook jackets, teaboxes and prayerbooks. The Dayak weavers, already being very skillful with their hands, found it relatively easy to develop these products. The challenge would be to maintain the quality of the products. JMM plans to use this new skill to train more weavers and promote value addition for textile weaving members. ➤ *Crissy Guerrero*



April NTFP Month in Cambodia

A month-long public event dubbed as "Forest, People and NTFPs" was organized in April 2009 to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of forests and NTFPs to the livelihood of forest-based communities and their contribution to the Cambodia's socio-economic development. The information sharing was made more colorful by photos and products exhibition, film showing, as well as media and partnership events. Also showcased were the launching and promotions of community forest NTFPs such as Mondulkiri wild honey in NTFPs and natural agricultural products bazaars. Simultaneously held in Phnom Penh, Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri, the event fetched a total earning USD 1,970 from the communities' products. The event gathered a crowd of more than 500 people, some of them tourists, indigenous people, and NGO partners.

Those who witnessed the event, particularly His Excellency Ty Sokun, In charge of Director General of Forestry Administration of the Royal Government of Cambodia, suggested repeating the activity yearly to promote forest-based communities' products to local and international consumers while stressing the need for forest conservation and management.

Thanks to NTFP-EP, WWF and CANDO for organizing the event, in cooperation with the Cambodia NTFP Working Group with financial support from IUCN, FAO and NTFP-EP, Manila. ➤ *Uch Sophay*