



ECHO®

Volume 1 Issue 2
July 2015
Edited by: Brad Ward
bward@echonet.org

Central America & Caribbean Network News

Inside this issue:

Agriculture training in Haiti

ECHO Ag Conference

Technical Note Spotlight

Hands on Training

Network Events Calendar

This newsletter is for you!

Send announcements and your stories to bward@echonet.org for inclusion in an upcoming newsletter.

ECHO Seedbank Resources

- Online seed catalog
- Free sample packets for active development workers

Visit the ECHO Community

Your global Agriculture network
ECHOcommunity.org

Episcopal University in Haiti educating tomorrows agriculture specialist with creativity and perseverance.

In the midst of many challenges, the Episcopal University in Port au Prince, Haiti is continuing to find creative ways to train tomorrow's agriculture leaders. ECHO staff was recently invited to visit the university's training center and farm in Leogane and saw firsthand the blessing of good soils and the difficulties of teaching in buildings that suffered extensive damage in the earthquake over 5 years ago. Since the earthquake, the university has had to rearrange the agriculture curriculum due to the fact that student dorms are no longer habitable. In the face of this reality, the university has focused its "on farm" curriculum on subjects that lend themselves to two day a week visit by the students



and professors. The new focus includes subjects like composting, bee keeping and fruit tree grafting. With the potential of infrastructure repair on the horizon, the university is looking to add robust training in rural assessment, rural economics and vegetable seed production and banking. The university also hopes to create a

thriving, commercial farm where students can experience the realities of farming as a business and gain hands-on knowledge in sustainable farming practices. The diligent efforts of the university's staff and students are a powerful testimony of moving forward with hope even when the circumstances are tough.

Registration is now open for [ECHO's Annual International Agriculture Conference](#)—Nov. 17-19, 2015—Fort Myers, FL

Technical Note Spotlight

ECHO regularly publishes Technical Notes to address important agriculture development issues. Here is a short excerpt from the most recent Technical Note on the topic of tropical root crops. It is available on ECHOcommunity.org in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Tropical root and tuber crops are consumed as staples in parts of the tropics and should be considered for their potential to produce impressive yields in small spaces. They provide valuable options for producing food under challenging growing conditions. Cassava and taro, for instance, are excellent choices for

drought-prone or swampy areas, respectively.

Cassava, *Manihot esculenta*

Cassava can be grown almost anywhere in the tropics, but is very frost-sensitive. Cassava can survive in dry conditions for a very long period of time and still go on to produce a good crop. It can be an extremely heavy yielder.

Sweet Potato, *Ipomoea batatas*

The sweet potato is a tremendous producer and has great potential in the tropics. However, of the roots and tubers,

sweet potatoes are probably the most sensitive to insect pests. Sweet potato is often rotated with rice and sorghum; only growing sweet potato once every five years in a field can help to break the life cycle of the weevil.

Yam, *Dioscorea* spp.

Although cassava is grown more widely than yams, yams have the potential to out yield cassava. Yams prefer a long wet season; however, they grow in a wide range of climates and are considerably drought tolerant. Yam provides very good food that is appreciated by almost everybody that tries it.

Hands on training in Honduras

Twenty people attended a two day training in Honduras held at the Camino Global training center and demonstration farm in Siguatepeque. Among the attendees were one university professor, two NGO extension agents and 17 small farmers. The professor and extension agents contrib-

uted greatly to the training time with local wisdom and experience. Topics included thermophilic (hot) composting, vermiculture, seed improvement strategies, basic sheep care, first aid and castration.



Network Regional Event Calendar

November 17-19, 2015 ECHO International Agriculture Conference, Fort Myers, Florida

***** Early bird registration discount available through September 30th, 2015*****

July 27-31, 2015 Tropical Agricultural Development I: The Basics, ECHO Farm, Fort Myers, Florida

August 17-21, 2015 Tropical Agricultural Development II, Appropriate Technologies, ECHO Farm, Fort Myers, Florida

Help our network stay connected. Send information about upcoming events to bward@echonet.org.

**Hundreds of ECHO technical and educational resources are just a click away.
Check out ECHOCommunity.org today.**