

July Gardening: Harvest, Plant And Compost



HOME GARDENING

Ed Bernhardt

July is usually one of the best months of the year for gardening in Costa Rica. Ticos refer to this time as “*el veranillo de San Juan*” (“little summer of San Juan”), a period of less rain and more warm, sunny days before the heavy rains begin in August.

Most of the crops planted earlier this year are now beginning their harvests. Fresh corn is one of the special treats at this time of the year, as well as beans, squash, garden vegetables and tropical fruits. It's also a good time to continue planting flats of garden greens, onions and tomatoes for the months ahead.

Try planting hardier vegetables at this time, such as cabbage, kale, collards, green bunching onions and Chinese cabbage. These crops grow well in the rainy season, whereas lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers do well in container plantings under the eaves in sunny locations or in a greenhouse. Beans, sweet



Golden Kernels: Garden-fresh corn is a special treat this time of year.

potatoes, peanuts, squashes and radishes can be planted directly in the garden beds now.

The optimal lunar planting dates for the month are July 6 to 11. Weather reports predict another turbulent season of heavy tropical storms this year, likely due to global warming and the vanishing rain forests that once kept the balance in the water cycle – more reason to plant trees this year to help change our present direction on the planet.

July represents the latest “safe” date for planting trees, as young trees need sufficient time to root well in the soil before the dry season arrives at the end of the year. Fruit trees such as citrus, mangos, avocados, star fruit, coconuts and rambutan are good choices for home lots. Check with your local nurseries for grafted fruit trees appropriate for your location. To give each young tree a good start in life, prepare each planting site with a five-gallon bucketful of homemade or commercial organic fertilizer.

July continues to be a great time to make compost fertilizer from those grass clippings, leaves and biomass collected around the home. Although I now mow the lawn twice a month, I don't see it as a chore, but more as an opportunity to harvest green gold for making rich organic fertilizer. Free fertilizer helps lower the cost of growing homegrown food, which in turn means lower food bills each week.

Until next month, have a *pura vida* July in your home garden. ■

For more information on tropical home gardening, contact Ed at thenewdawncenter@yahoo.com.

C.R. Plays Official Cricket Tournney

By Matt Levin

Tico Times Staff

Costa Rica participated in its first-ever sanctioned international cricket event recently, and the squad managed to come back from the tournament with one win and a Most Valuable Player award.

The Costa Rica Cricket Federation joined Mexico and the Falkland Islands – Cuba was scheduled to play but dropped out of the tournament – for four cricket matches in Mexico City as part of the inaugural International Cricket Council (ICC) Americas Division IV tournament June 14 to 18. Costa Rica won one match and lost three. Batsman Ben Smith was the tournament's MVP.

“It was a giant step up for us,” said Richard Illingworth, president of the federation. “It wasn't necessarily better than any of our own tournaments that take place in Central America. But it's a giant step forward because it was official.”

Although Costa Rica has been an affiliate member of the ICC since 2002, this was the first official international tournament in which the country has played under the cricket world governing body.

Cricket first came to Costa Rica in the late 1800s, with Jamaican immigrant railroad workers in the Caribbean province of Limón. It sustained popularity until dying out during World War II, Illingworth said.

The federation hopes this tournament will symbolize a new era of cricket in Costa Rica. Illingworth said his organization is working on expanding the number of clubs in the country and finding more permanent practice grounds.

Bat Out of Costa Rica: Tournney MVP Ben Smith bats versus Falkland Islands in Costa Rica's first sanctioned international cricket tournament, played last month in Mexico City.



Photo courtesy of Paul Cardwell

The team itself has an interesting mix of players – including English, Indian, a New Zealander, an Australian and three Ticos from the Limón region. Illingworth said the team's top player ended up unable to attend the tournament in Mexico. However, Illingworth concluded that while the team “should've done better, it was not a disgrace itself by a long way.”

There were two formats: 50 overs one-day internationals, which last about six hours, and Twenty20 (overs), which take about 150 minutes. Costa Rica lost both 50 overs games, but defeated the Falkland Islands by 65 runs in the Twenty20 match. The Mexican national team finished the tournament undefeated (4-0).

In the 50 overs game against Mexico, Smith managed to earn the man-of-the-match award despite the loss. He produced a century (104 runs) in the Mexico contest, and finished with 201 runs overall.

Costa Rica has looked to reinvigorate the cricket tradition in the country since the ICC started attempting to increase its membership in the early 2000s. Funding from the ICC helped the federation build a foundation. Illingworth is now building on that base. The federation is bringing in an ICC-funded instructor to host camps offering basic cricket instruction in Limón. The Roblealto camp, a cluster of temporary shelters for close to 100 children near Heredia, north of San José, also gives cricket lessons, and the sport is taught and played in many other parts of the Central Valley.

“We're re-establishing the game,” Illingworth said. “We're revising the game in this country. It's one of the first sports played in the province of Limón and therefore one of the first sports played in the entire country.”

For more information about cricket in Costa Rica, e-mail info@costaricacricket.org, or call Richard Illingworth at 2268-2903 or 8981-7710 or Sam Arthur at 8705-8097. ■

Foreigners Tip Scales in Surf Circuit Finals



Ellen Zoe Golden

After five years of competing in the National Surf Circuit, Jacó's Luis Vindas has finally won the Costa Rican championship title he has long wanted.

It happened after last weekend's grand finals event at La Curva in the Central Pacific's Playa Hermosa, where the 25-year-old surfer finished ninth in that competition but managed to mathematically earn enough points to grab the national title.

Vindas was riding high in the rankings thanks to first-place wins earlier in the season in Esterillos and Santa Teresa. Though he went into the finals a favored son, he had to finish higher than the quarterfinals to take the title and faced a slew of surfers who could take the championship mathematically if he finished lower.

On Saturday, he fell out of the quarterfinals, leaving the way open for reigning champion Carlos Muñoz, 16, and Gilbert Brown, 25, to take it all if they could win the date.

But fate lent a hand in the form of South African visitor Brandon Roberts, 23, who beat Muñoz and Brown in the final heat to win the date. The points added up for Vindas to win the national championship. Muñoz placed second, 24-year-old Luis Castro third and Brown fourth.

“The truth is that today was the most anguish-filled day of my life, because this morning I thought maybe the title I dreamed



Photo by Iván Barquero

A Win Is a Win: Luis Vindas celebrates his national surf champion title after winning by the numbers at last weekend's National Surf Circuit finals in Hermosa.

of for many years had gone away. Now I am very happy that I am able to say I am national champion of Costa Rica,” Vindas said.

Vindas' sister, Lisbeth Vindas, 27, presented a little drama of her own as she battled 17-year-old Nataly Bernold for the women's championship. Both needed a win last weekend to walk away with the title, but neither came up with it, falling instead to U.S. surfer Jordan Hundley, 24. Bernold came in second and Vindas third in last weekend's event; however, Vindas had 10 points more than Bernold going into the finals, and was therefore able to walk away with her eighth national women's title.

In the junior category, Muñoz earned his third consecutive national championship, a record in that division.

The National Surf Circuit is open to foreigners, allowing drop-ins like Roberts from the Association of Surfing Professionals. However, the circuit's cumulative point system, in which points are accrued from the best four of seven dates per year, ensures surfers must regularly compete and place throughout the season in order to win the national title.

For the full results of the championship, see the Surf Federation of Costa Rica's website at www.surfingcr.net. ■