



2021 Year in Review

A Zoom Year



Membership

Individual - 20 paid members @ \$25

Business - 2 paid members @ \$100



Solagua Project - organic input, hydroponics operation in Caye Caulker to fill the gap of pesticide-free produce



Carmelita Gardens - a sustainable riverfront village in Cayo where the residents live off-grid and grow pesticide-free gardens



Sponsorship

Category approved at AGM 2020

Level **Gold** = \$600

Level **Silver** = \$400

Level **Bronze** = \$200



POB Sponsors

▶ **Gold**  **The Belize Ag Report**

▶ **Bronze** 



Speakers

First Saturday of each month -
3:00 - 4:30

- ▶ **Jan** - Panel Discussion *Issues and Pesticide-free Solutions for Farmers and Gardeners* featuring Beth Roberson, Fay Garnett and Santiago Juan
- ▶ One of our best attendances - 50 people
- ▶ The *Zoom bombing* that occurred led to changes to the protocol for speaker meetings



Speakers (Cont'd)

- ▶ **Feb** - Rosita Arvigo, DN: *40 Years of Organic Gardening Success and Failure*
- ▶ **Mar** - William Usher, owner of Belize Agro-Enterprises Ltd. (BAEL): *Effective Microorganisms: An Effective and Ecological Alternative for Soil Biological Renewal*
- ▶ **Apr** - Omaira Avila-Rostant, country director of Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI): *Overview of the Work of CARDI to Promote Regenerative Farming in Belize*



Speakers (Cont'd)

- ▶ **May** - Sponsored jointly with **Regeneration Belize** - André Leu, co-founder of Regeneration International, past president of International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM), and organic farmer, spoke from Australia: *What Other Countries are Doing to Reduce Pesticide Use and What Belize Can Do*
- ▶ **Jun** - Maya Forest Gardens Panel: *Sustainable Cultivation in Our Tropical Woodlands* (live from El Pilar) introduced by Cynthia Topsey-Ellis and narrated by Dr. Anabel Ford; featured milpa farmers and their regenerative farming practices



Speakers (Cont'd)

- ▶ **Jul** - Ed Boles, PhD, Gaylen University adjunct professor, aquatic ecologist: *Protecting Our Water*
- ▶ **Aug** - Christopher Nesbitt, owner of Maya Mountain Research Farm in Toledo: *Carbon Drawdown and Degraded Land*
- ▶ **Sep** - Umeeda Switlow and daughter, founder of Naledo, Inc.: *Turmeric 101: Grow, Process, and Enjoy Turmeric*



Speakers (Cont'd)

- ▶ **Oct** - Mitylene Bailey, PhD, spoke from Taiwan: *A Concise Guide - How, What, Where and When to Plant*
- ▶ **Nov** - Julio Saqui, owner of Che'll Mayan Chocolate in Stann Creek: *Chocolate - History, Growing, and Processing*
- ▶ **Dec** - Clifford Martinez, Director of Extension Services, Ministry of Agriculture, *Overcoming Challenges*



Committees

- ▶ Marketing - Rick Smallwood et al:
 1. Facebook page; Facebook group
 2. Membership subcommittee - **Need chair to help Karin**
 3. Web Site: info on POB and resources
 - ▶ Speakers' Recordings
 - ▶ Tropical Garden Guide



Committees (cont'd)

► Tropical Garden Guide

- May: Okra
- June: Chaya
- July: Sorrel
- Aug: Turmeric
- Sept: Sweet potatoes
- Oct: Moringa
- Nov: Callaloo
- Dec: Red potatoes



Committees (cont'd)

- ▶ Farm Relations and Certification - Robin Clarke et al:
 1. Farm relations - Dr. Sophia Clarke
 2. Certification: 2 certified farmers, long list requesting certification - after Covid restrictions
 3. Plans for testing for pesticide residue



Committees (cont'd)

- ▶ Consumer Group - Josie Flowers
 1. List of pesticide-free produce sent out weekly
 2. Over 200 on list of consumers
 3. Consumers order from and pay farmer directly
 4. Orders picked up - Hode's and Belmopan
 5. Delivery charges



Notable Highlights

- ▶ Farewell to Suzy & Bart Mickler, one of the founders of POB and manager of weekly produce distribution
- ▶ Useful information from discussions at monthly board/member meetings
 - ▶ **Industrial hemp policy input** - submitted by H.E. David Gibson, consultant and advisory board member of Regeneration Belize, urging GOB to recognize the importance of small farmers and to nurture and sustain the RB/POB initiatives for regenerative farming practices as the appropriate framework for agricultural enterprise development in Belize.
 - ▶ **Gardening hints** - develop water catchment to allow year round planting/harvesting (when others don't grow); make compost from table scraps/bokashi or buy from BAEL; use seaweed as a good fertilizer after spraying the salt off and letting it dry; use bales of straw or rice hulls (Spanish Lookout) as effective mulch; layer rice hulls with soil for "lasagna soil"; use coconut husk mulch (BBG) for fertilizer; use sheep feces - free from sheep breeding project at Central Farm- for fertilizer.
 - ▶ **Soap nuts/seeds** - Karin has both; use soap nuts in the washer as a surfactant for laundry and soak them for washing dishes or hair.
 - ▶ **Seeds** - available at Prossers, Reimers, East/West Seed Co. in Benque and occasionally at Central Farm



Notable Highlights (cont'd)

- ▶ Membership drive/seed & plant swaps - Friday mkt/Blue Moon and Hode's
- ▶ Christmas holiday social - Lower Dover
- ▶ New Years social - The Bluffs



Thank You

Questions?