

WICKER COMPOST BINS FOR ORGANIC SOIL

In a region suffering from over extraction of trees, it is not feasible to make compost bins out of wood boards. Wicker compost bins using renewable natural resources and Mayan traditional crafts can be used to raise worms at worm farms and on site at family kitchen gardens.

Wicker compost bins are hand made by local elderly basket makers. The wicker baskets are a Maya Ixil traditional utility basket container made by the elderly men in Chajul, Guatemala that have no other source of income. Each wicker compost bin will be made to hold a compost heap that can be used at a worm farm or customized to the space and physical needs of larger gardens or small kitchen gardens.

One half to one pound of worms added to the average size kitchen garden can reduce fertilizer costs by 50%, increase the organic components in the soil, and increase the production of fresh vegetable servings.

Two Ixil Maya Elderly basket crafters will be supported to start a micro business to make wicker compost bins for the Worm Farms and for family kitchen gardens... The wicker compost bins are made from renewable resources found in nature in the area. Using wicker compost bins eliminates the use of plastics used by some compost bin manufactures. Widows, others with no resources and their children, will have increased access to nutritious organic vegetables. Critical family income is increased through cash or barter of surplus produce in the local markets. Seed banks and vegetable starts will be combined with education to provide for sustainability. Widows and others with no resources and their children will have new access to barter for medicine and pay school tuition for their children.

“The Maya Cosmovision of agriculture supports organic compost which increases the natural fertility of the soil while keeping the balance between living and dead items. Soils, like water or solar power, are one of the basic elements for the development of life on Earth. All terrestrial living beings, including the human species depend on any of them. We find living beings that inhabit it as earthworms, living beings that take their food from the Earth like plants and these already feed on other living beings forming a string of benefits, that is, direct or indirectly all living beings depend of the soil.”

Manuel Laynez, Maya leader, Chajul, Guatemala

Potential Long Term Impact

Elderly wicker craftsmen will have the opportunity to make an income through a microenterprise that uses traditional renewable resources from the surrounding forest, and provides a compost bin to raise worms. Worms are a sustainable investment for organic kitchen gardens' soil improvement.