

IICA Bahamas Today

Volume 8
October - December
Fourth Quarter 2008

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Happy 10th Anniversary IICA Bahamas:

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The IICA Bahamas Office 1998 - 2008

The 8th Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2008:

Location: St. Vincent & The Grenadines

Theme: "Get involved! Show that 'Twas always Agriculture" fueling the economy!"

The Bahamas Agricultural Forum for Youth was established to enhance Bahamian Agriculture by providing a medium for young and budding agriculturalists to enhance their income earning capacity individually and collectively and enhance both their quality of life and communities through effective plans and programs that promote economic advancement. It was also designed to facilitate the development of leadership and negotiating skills and the ability to work collaboratively with other stakeholders to desired goals. Other goals of BAFY include the development of strategies aimed at promoting the viability of agriculture to obtain increased youth involvement, strengthening of entrepreneurship skills and abilities and increasing the capabilities to develop and market agricultural commodities while promoting sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.

For further information about BAFY, the various 4H clubs and agricultural programs, everyone is welcomed at our blog at <http://bahamasagriculturalforumforyouth.blogspot.com>. BAFY is committed to the advancement of Bahamian Agricultural through the increased participation of youth in the sector.

By
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The Cooperative Congress

On October 15-16, 2008 at the Wyndham Cable Beach, the National Co-operative Congress took place under the theme: “Fostering Partnership for Economic Development”.



Day one had the theme “Development of Producer/Service Cooperatives” with opening remarks given by the Honorable Minister Lawrence Cartwright. In the following session, Ralph Paige (Alabama) spoke on the Alabama experience with developing co-operatives in the black communities. The focus has been on improving the quality of life for Black farmers and rural low-income families. They have developed low-cost housing, formed community credit unions and cooperatives, training research and provided hurricane assistance.



The panel discussion focused on the “Impact of the Global Crisis in the Cooperative Sector”. The day ended with a presentation from Mr. Ian Goodfellow on “The Goodfellow Farm Experience”.

Day two of the congress was celebrated as World Food Day and International Credit Union Day. The primary speaker for the day was Mr. Serge Gosselin who spoke on the Desjardins (credit union) Movement in Canada. The speaker shared that he has been a member of his credit union since he was five years old at \$5 for his shares. The union is available in primary and secondary schools, in the college system and for adults in the community. The system he described integrated the marketing of credit unions into the community, where young and old could be members.

Goodfellow Farms

The panel discussion spoke to “The Way Forward for Co-operatives”. After this, there was an open session to brainstorm ideas for the future development of both financial and non-financial groups under the co-operative group.

There were many good ideas for the non-financial co-operatives – where the Agricultural Co-operatives are under the Producer-Supplier Council, including:

- Trainings and workshops in new technology (e.g. Hydroponics and Greenhouse),
 - Create a marketing co-operative to distribute and sell agricultural products,
 - More assistance to non-financials from financial co-operatives.
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Team Visit to G.H.S., November 14 (IICA Team with Ms. Johnson and Mr. Miller – Agriculture Science Teachers).



Photo across: Well labeled crops in the GHS plot (Beets).

Feature Article: The Amazing Hibiscus

Hair breakage, dandruff... Your solution could be in your yard!

You were amazed recently. The neighbour you knew from childhood had hair that rolled up tight as soon as it came out of the scalp. To put it frankly, his hair was “peasy” and would not grow. You saw him the other day with dreadlocks down to his back and Africa pinned to his shirt. “Wow! How did his hair get so long?” you wondered. I’ll tell you how...he is using a secret long known by the ancient people of India, China and Egypt, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries. Some of these places may be far away but their secret may be growing in your front yard, the Hibiscus.

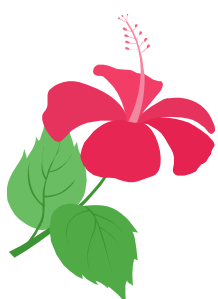
As Bahamians we frequently use this shrub for landscaping and on special occasions for decorating tables, but your hedge and its flower are more than just beautiful; they hold a number of healing properties that you should be aware of. From improving digestion, reducing inflammation in arthritis sufferers and as a diuretic for kidney patients to partnering with the neem plant in the fight against all types of cancer, this underestimated shrub deserves a second look.

Of notable interest is its intrinsic ability to tackle a number of hair and scalp conditions. Women of southern India, China and Jamaica use the red hibiscus (*rosa-sinesis*) as a remedy for hair breakage, itchy scalp, dandruff and to combat graying. It carries in its leaves mucilage, a chemical that stimulates hair growth and softens the scalp and in its flowers flavonoids, and proanthocyanidins, antioxidants that relieve pain and fight age inducing free radicals. Hibiscus’ astringent properties helps to reduce pore clogging and excessive oil gland secretions balancing the ph of the scalp. It eliminates toxins and stimulates blood circulation to allow access of essential nutrients to the hair follicles.

Sounds like your new best friend? Excellent, because getting its benefits to work for you is quite simple:

- *For hair care place 4 handfuls of hibiscus leaves in a blender with 3 cup of water and blend until mixture is smooth (add more water as needed).*
- *Using a clean white cloth, strain the mixture and discard the leaves being careful not to allow any leaf bits into it. As you strain you may observe the mixture beginning to suds.*
- *Shampoo hair as normal and rinse, or for better nutrient absorption allow the solution to sit on the hair for 15 to 30 minutes before rinsing. Many people with natural short hair leave the juice in the hair for use as a hair gel as it enhances the hairs natural curl.*
- *For relaxed styles the best application is to mix a thinner mix (the consistency of water) and apply as a setting lotion with curlers. Sit under the dryer until completely dry. Style as usual.*

Now you can enjoy a thick mane and curls that hold for days! *(By Danette Malcolm/IICA Bahamas Team)*



Events for the fourth quarter:*STEMM Trade Show – October 3**Columbus Day Holiday – October 12**World Food Day – October 16**Team visit to The Department of Archives – October 17**Representatives Week – October 23**Ms. Dorcas Bowler, visit to Library – October 30**BahamArts – October 31 – November 2**Team visit to H.O.Nash – November 5**Team Visit to G.H.S. – November 14**C.O.B. Career Fair – November 6**First Bahamas Agriculture Forum for Youth (BAFY) Meeting – November 26**IICA Bahamas Office closed – December 19-January 5**Christmas Day – December 25 / Boxing Day – December 26 / New Year's Day – January 1***Bahamas National Craft Association AGM**

BNCA was founded in 2006 as an umbrella association for the various handicraft associations throughout 15 Family Islands and New Providence. Some of the aims and objectives include: coordinating association activities, training, source funding and encourage marketing and sales. BNCA has joined CANROP.

As part of National Craft Week 2008, Mrs. A. Cleare shared information on IICA's role, IICA Miami office, CANROP and Agro-tourism at the 3rd Annual BNCA AGM (October 29-30). After the presentation the floor was opened for questions, ideas and comments:

- Develop the South Andros "Coppit" tour – where tourists will have a chance to travel to where the palm is harvested and have a chance to purchase products made from the straw.
- Develop more Bahamian tea and various products like a tea bath, and several other products were discussed as possible additions for the Spa experience.
- In Inagua there is an old Sisal Plantation that should be developed into a historic site where the oral history of the area can be related and a book written.
- The public needs to be educated to the importance of the silver-top palm (preserve sites and propagate more – tissue culture).
- In Bimini there is a sulphur pool that can be developed into a community tourism site where even the rocks from the area could be sold as a product.

At the end of the day, the group was taken on a field trip to visit to the Clifton site. On 208 acres of land, the Clifton Heritage National Park preserves what is left of several Loyalist plantations from the 18th and 19th centuries. They are marrying the Lucayan, African and Loyalist cultures and are interested in souvenir and handicraft products that will reflect these and the present Bahamian culture. Looking toward working together for 2009, BAIC Handicraft Department and BNCA are very interested in: packaging and marketing to get their products into the U.S. Market, funding to attend tradeshow, looking at ways to preserve the palm and its local habitat, adding a Woodturning class to their list of training programs, and participation in CWA and BahamArts.

Greenhouse Mission:

In the month of December, we were visited by Robert Reid (IICA's Regional Specialist in Agribusiness for the Caribbean Region), Kervin Stephenson (IICA's Regional Specialist in Projects) and Derrick Smith (Jamaica Greenhouse Growers Association). They came to assist the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC) in designing a program that will facilitate the proper introduction and sustainable development of commercial greenhouse enterprises/clusters in the Bahamas, inclusive of the appropriate institutional framework for information networks that will support cluster groups. And, our greenhouse team did workshop sessions in Andros, New Providence, and Grand Bahama for interested persons to improve the competence of current and prospective farmers in best practices for greenhouse commodity production.

There are several advantages to using Greenhouse technology to produce fresh vegetables:

- Can better control environmental factors such as temperature, humidity and rain,
- Calendarize crops so that you are producing at a time when open field farmers are unable to compete (leads to higher prices),
- Increase yield by up to 60 % compared to open field production,
- Have better fruit quality (you can sell up to 95% of the total fruit set),
- Less pest problems and diseases, when you use the antivirus netting,
- Fewer bacterial and fungal problems under plastic,
- Risk reduction, you have higher possibilities of success when growing under a controlled environment,
- More efficient use of water and fertilizers, less amount of water and fertilizers per lbs. of fruit.



AgExpo 2007 Screen house display

Forestry Forum: Non-timber use of Forestry Products

December was a very busy month; we were also visited by Mr. Gustavo C. Bejarano (IICA Director of Natural Resources and the Environment) in conjunction with BAIC to promote the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. He took a special look at our Forestry product and visited with Lands & Survey, BNT, Andros and Abaco.

Here is an example of a non-timber use for our local pine: **Wood vinegar**, or pyroligneous acid, is a by-product from charcoal production. It is a liquid generated from the gas and combustion of fresh wood burning in airless condition. When the gas is cooled, it condenses into liquid.

Raw wood vinegar has more than 200 chemicals, such as acetic acid, formaldehyde, ethyl-valerate, methanol, tar, etc. Wood vinegar improves soil quality, eliminates pests and controls plant growth. It accelerates the growth of roots, stems, tubers, leaves, flowers, and fruit. Wood vinegar has also traditionally been used as an insect repellent, deodorizer, antibacterial agent, sterilizer, alkaline bath and wash, and food additive.

Images from New Year's Day Junkanoo 2009:



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