

Sustainable Destination Award Good Practice Story

A SUSTAINABLE PARADISE IN TARANUMAN FARM

One of the eco-friendly activities in Club Paradise Palawan's sustainability program called EcoConserve is producing its very own fresh herbs and vegetables from Taranuman Farm which are used as the ingredients to a wide variety of food served at Club Paradise Palawan's Firefish Restaurant. Taranuman is a Cuyonon term for farm. The 1,000 sq. meters farm is located at Sitio Iniriran, Decalachao, Coron around 15 minutes away from Club Paradise by boat and is supervised by its Farm Coordinator, Mr. Jetley Joy Pitogo.

The team of Club Paradise started organic farming last October 2018. They found the need to put up their own farm because, in the previous years, vegetables were purchased in Manila and only 50% of the shipped vegetables reach the island in good condition because the rest wilt during the course of the shipment. The organic farm not only provides a more practical solution for the resort, it also helps reduce the carbon footprint of Club Paradise. The materials used in building the farm were all recycled items. The plant boxes were reused materials from the resort such as wood scrap, empty plastic bottles, extra plastic pipes and corrugated plastic sheets. This was the infancy stage of the farm where vegetables such as lollo rosa, patchay, okra, and cucumber were grown. After attending the Basic Organic Farming Training at Taranuman, the team learned how to segregate vegetable trimmings, egg shells, fish heads, innards and bones from the restaurant's kitchen for fermentation to produce fruit juice, plant juice, fish amino acids and calcium phosphate for probiotics fertilizers. They also started to collect dried leaves and rice hull for compost to use as fertilizer, produce Organic Pesticide from vinegar, sili, hagonoy and other raw materials that are endemic in the area. The team of Jetley likewise learned how to cultivate African Night Crawlers to produce vermicast, a byproduct of the breakdown of organic matter which is an excellent and nutrient-rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner.

Since then, Taranuman started yielding fresh and organic vegetables like lettuce, basil, eggplant, chili pepper, mustard greens, kale and snow cabbage to name a few. The harvested cucumbers are used to make Club Paradise Palawan's famous Cucumber- Calamansi welcome drink, the mint leaves add that refreshing taste to the Dugong Bar's mojito and the arugula, romaine lettuce and lollo rosa make the Firefish restaurant's salads truly a delight. However, things were not always rosy at the farm. When the rainy season came, several typhoons hit Coron and in August 2019, the heavy rains caused flooding and soil erosion. The design of the greenhouse was not typhoon proof (made of bamboo and nets only) therefore it was destroyed by strong wind and rain. The seedlings did not survive due to lack of sunlight and too much water, the top soil was continuously being washed out.

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Because of this, Taranuman had no harvest for the months of July to October 2019. The Taranuman team made this unfortunate situation a learning session. Plans were immediately made to rehabilitate the farm and to make it sustainable throughout the 2 seasons of the Philippines.

Initially, raised beds on the higher ground were made using empty cooking oil cans and containers. UV plastic roofing was installed as well. Last November, a new greenhouse was constructed – with raised beds, and UV plastic roofing. The structure is now sturdier and hopefully, can withstand any typhoon. More projects are in the pipeline for Taranuman such as the installation of drip irrigation, LED grow lights, a pathway for better accessibility and connection to a water and electricity source. Veggies will not be the only focus. In fact, raising mud crabs for fattening have begun last July 21, 2019 and the initial harvest resulted in sweet, umami mud crabs! This is only the beginning for Club Paradise Palawan's Taranuman Farm. There are indeed endless possibilities in sustainability in this side of paradise.

