

iracambi

Atlantic Rainforest · Brazil



Iracambi Quarterly Report July - September 2018

Volunteers

Claire and Ryan, both studying topics related to environmental planning and policy, helped us update the Serra do Brigadeiro Development Plan. Joe and Zoe, from UK joined us to help finish off the trail markings that an earlier team had begun.

Young Eco-Leaders of the Brazilian Rainforest

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/young-eco-leaders-of-the-brazilian-rainforest/>

A few months ago we participated in a competition among local schools to collect the greatest number of used batteries – the prize being a day trip to Iracambi. And the winner? The smallest school among the participants! Overall, students collected 200 kg of used batteries that would otherwise have been discarded – with disastrous results to the local water supply. So that proves that small steps can make a big difference...

In the last quarter there were several factors (school strikes, wet weather, transportation difficulties) which made it impossible for students from Limeira and Belisario to make it to Iracambi. So we went to the schools instead! But some of the other better resourced schools were able to visit us and we were happy to welcome fifty students between the ages of seven and twelve. For many of them it was, believe it or not, their very first adventure into the rainforest! One of the kids who left an indelible impression on us was Ryan, who, at seven, knows more about Atlantic Forest animals and their habitat than most adults. Maria Eduarda, who's nine, led the group down the Medicinal Plants Trail with such enthusiasm and self-confidence you would have thought she had been doing it all her life. Turns out, it was her first ever visit. As for Yara. She's sixteen, and has always been scared of the forest. Her friends encouraged her to come to Iracambi and she later told us she'd had an unforgettable experience and had completely conquered her fear.

Forests4Water

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/forests-4-water/>

Our partnership with the Muriaé city water company, DEMSUR, is going even better than we expected! In addition to analyzing water samples from each farm, the company is donating 50 concrete fence posts to 14 producers who have not yet fenced their springs. In return, we have included five farmers in the area of the Muriaé landfill into the project.

At the end of August, as part of a local network interested in water issues, Iracambi organized a course on "Planting Trees for Water" together with our neighbors and friends from the Franciscan Village in Belisário. Twenty people took part from local villages. We started with theory: the distribution and dynamics of water on the planet, water basins, legislation, key issues and challenges, and concepts and techniques of planting trees to recuperate water sources. Then we moved onto practice: how to build evapotranspiration tanks, biodigestors, septic tanks and dry toilets.

Sustainable agriculture for small farming families

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/sustainable-agriculture-for-small-farming-families/>

We've now created an organic garden at Iracambi, aimed at encouraging local farm families to adopt environmentally sustainable techniques that will generate income. We're also working on organic coffee, seed exchange, and agroforestry. Next step is to create a polyculture. Stay tuned.

Living Pharmacy Program

Iracambi's Medicinal Plants program has a whole new face – the Living Pharmacy, under the enthusiastic direction of Carla, from São Paulo. First step was to compose a herbarium, in which we identified over forty five medicinal species, both native and exotic. We also worked with one of the local elders who is extremely knowledgeable in helping us identify plants and learn of their uses. As well as planting thirty native medicinal trees as part of the medicinal forest adjacent to the organic garden. Planning of the polyculture project is now complete, and the object is to include medicinal species that can be used in the production of vegan cosmetics.

We also established an important partnership with the Oswaldo Cruz foundation as part of their PhytoNetwork Program of Brazil (RedesFito-Fiocruz). Fiocruz will help Iracambi's Living Pharmacy Program to develop partnerships and create a network of research, production and commercialization of medicinal plants native to the Atlantic Rainforest.

Public Policy

Iracambi was formally elected as associate member of the Rio Pomba/Muriaé River Basin Committee.

Visitors

With support from our long-time friends and colleagues Partners of the Americas, we hosted Ruth Warner to give intensive English lessons to the staff, and local community members. They learned a lot and had a great time doing so. Ruth enjoyed it too!

Jennie and Robin, biology professors from Washington College in Maryland, paid us a visit ahead of their faculty led student trip scheduled for January 2019. Plans for the visit are now well advanced.

Iracambi was There

Binka gave a presentation at the American Society in São Paulo, where she made a lot of new friends and contacts. Meanwhile Robin attended the IX Brazilian Congress of Protected Areas, in Florianópolis, where many speakers spoke of the increasing importance of conservation units for a population that has increasingly less contact with nature. The role of private conservation areas, such as Iracambi's, and education programs that emphasis physical contact with nature are becoming vital parts in human health as much as social and economic wellbeing. Iracambi right on point!