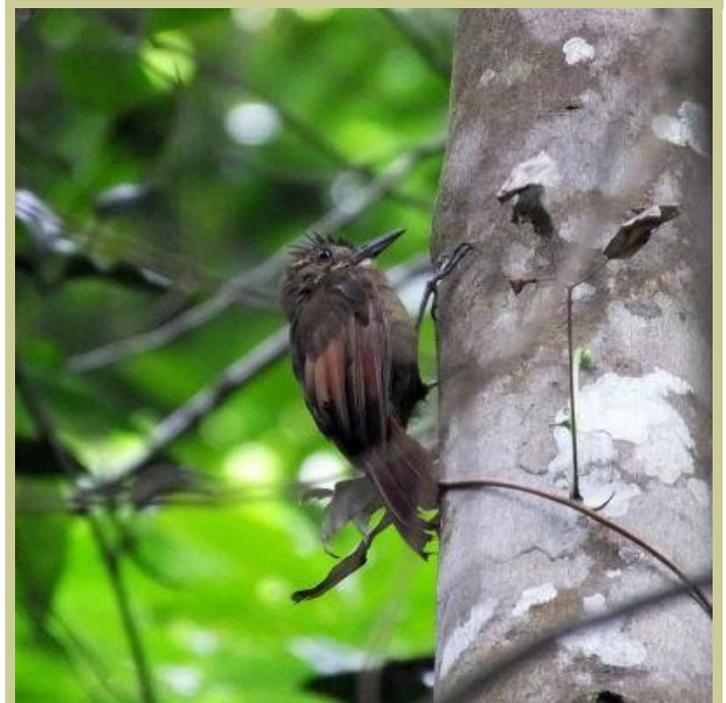


# Rancho Mastatal Updates

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## Second Quarter 2014

*The second three-month period of our year tends to be one of transition from the frenzied nature of the busy season and its hospitality demands to numerous weeks dedicated to project work and reflection and then back to a flurry during our mini high season that starts in June. This year proved no different with our dry season wrapping up with our intense April natural building workshop series, May dedicated to planting and building, and June ushering in a series of group visits from a variety of educational institutions including Sustainable Summer and the Lakeside School. The year has been rapidly hopscotching by with thoughts already turning to our upcoming visit to the States. Before then though we will be ushering in a new group of caretaking interns that will be holding down the fort in our stead. The next few months will be heavy on not only groups but also a fairly intensive training period that will prepare our new interns for what lies ahead. As always there are plenty of exciting developments to bring you up to speed on. Enjoy the news and drop us a line to let us know what you're up to when you can.*



Creeper

photo by Birding Club of Costa Rica

This month's update includes:

[RM Program News](#): Sacred Hooch

[Building Report](#): Smedium Scale

[Conservation Update](#): Need Turquoise Cotinga near San Jose? Visit Rancho Mastatal!

[Farm Facts](#): Make Use of the USDA's Unofficial Support of Permaculture

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## RM Program News

### *Sacred Hooch*

One of the biggest changes that we implemented this season at the Ranch was a move to full-scale alcoholic beverage production in the form of wines, hooches and sacred beers. We've never been keen on supporting large, irresponsible and unsustainable businesses and that now includes the largest brewery and distillery in Costa Rica, for the most part. As much as we try to downplay the role of alcohol in everyday life, many visitors to and residents of the Ranch enjoy a well-deserved adult beverage after a long day of working,

playing or hiking in the hot tropical sun. As we delve ever deeper into the world of fermentation, naturally, our path brought us to alcohol. Many microbes naturally convert sugars into grog, without any cajoling or support from humans. As much as we love vinegars, sodas, kamboocha and kefir, only recently have we conquered the formidable task of pushing Imperial and Cacique out our front door. The success of our recent push toward alcohol self-sufficiency came with plenty of planning, foresight, commitment and dedication from those living on Ranch premises. At our peak this year we were producing 20 gallons of tasty spirits each week. The tropical environs certainly help as the microbial life that do the dirty work of converting the local tapa dulce into ethanol love the temperature and general climate of our region. We can turn over a batch in only a week. The benefits of this recent flurry of activity include supporting local sugar cane farmers and producing a healthy beverage that helps to take the edge off after an intense day of living at the Ranch. I was raised to believe that making your own alcohol was expensive, time-consuming and difficult. Nothing could be further from the truth and we encourage you to get onboard and give it a shot.



*Fun with fermentation*

## Building Report

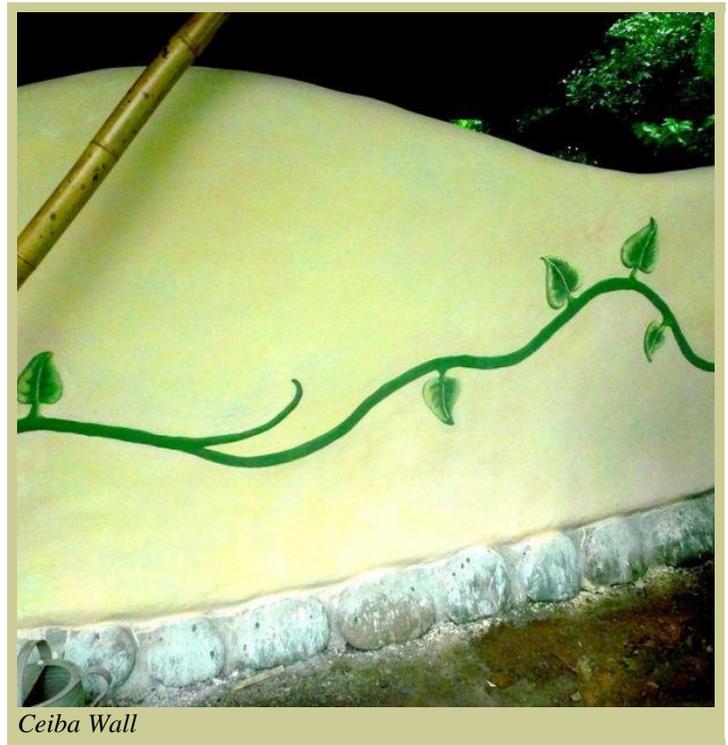
### *Smedium Scale*

We've begun to take some bold steps in making large-scale whole foods processing a reality at the Ranch. Now that our hard work in the orchards and growing spaces throughout the property are paying bigger dividends each year, it's forced us to start compleplating what our lives will look like during times of abundance. We've been pushing the boundaries and capacity of our current kitchen as we increase our fermentation and other processing activities. More and more each week we need a dedicated space to deal with the products coming in from our and surrounding farms and next year we'll be looking to tackle some of our biggest culinary hurdles to date. LAURA and RACHEL dedicated

countless hours this season designing the new kitchen space and preparing for the foundation pour in September, the electrical installation in October and the timber frame addition next February. Much of our focus early next year will be dialing in this space so that we can dig ever deeper into the world of whole foods processing.

Normally you wouldn't call a few acres of food production a "large" or even "medium" scale operation, but when it comes to processing thousands of pounds of fruits, greens, and tubers, it doesn't feel so small. This year when the mangos started ripening, shit got real. Picking, peeling, chopping, and fermenting eight bushels of mangos is a lot of work, especially when you're using tiny potato peelers and are avoiding Kattia because you stole all her cutting boards.

This is the challenge of smedium scale—that sweet spot between small and medium scale—that involves the growing, harvesting, processing, preserving, and preparing of food that will provide three hearty meals each day for the Ranch's "family" of 40. It's too much food to deal with in a little corner of a home-scale kitchen, but not enough to invest in large scale machinery. As a result we'll be building something a bit in between; a kitchen with appropriate scale (smedium scale) tools and equipment. The new space will house fuel-efficient wood stoves, movable tables, large sinks with hoses, brewing equipment, grinders, and an oil press. Most of the equipment will be simple and homemade, and designed to accommodate bulk produce. We hope that this will help us to improve efficiency in the kitchen, better utilize our abundance, and let Kattia have her cutting boards back. The kitchen will also function as a classroom for students and guests to learn about food processing, soap making, and other essential homesteading skills.



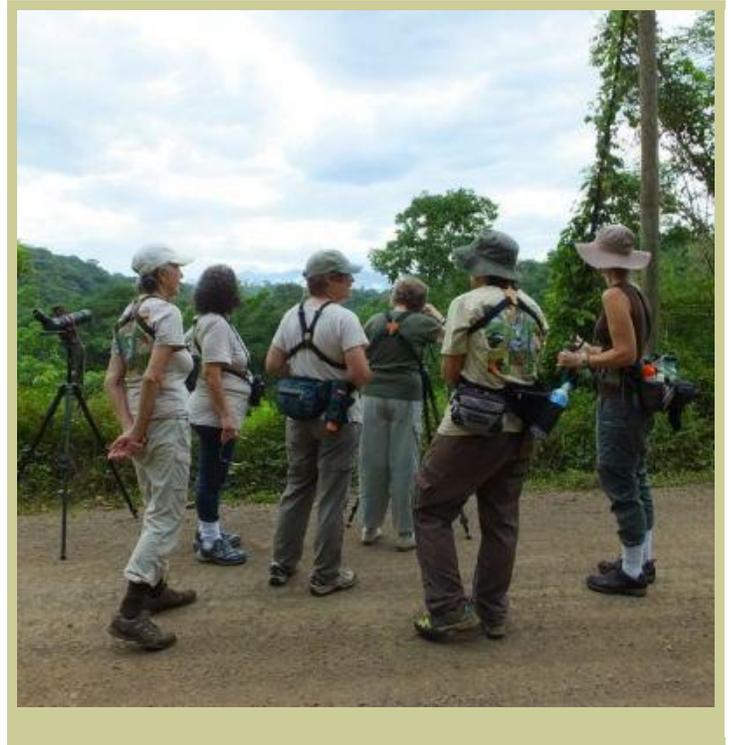
*Ceiba Wall*

## Conservation Update

### *Need Turquoise Cotinga near San Jose? Visit Rancho Mastatal!*

*This contribution is from birding guide  
Patrick O'Donnell*

□ All of us birders love cotingas. Along with the manakins, those weird, beautiful birds are the neotropical convergence answer to the birds of paradise, and like those Papuan feathered crazies, a lot of cotingas are brightly colored, make weird noises, have weird shapes, and would be proud, card carrying members of the feathered fancy fab club if there was such a thing. The only problem with cotingas is that several are kind of hard to see, especially the shiny blue ones. This is no fault of their own because they evolved to live in large areas of primary rainforest and not patches of forest in a hot, chiggery sea of cattle and grass. □ □



Since they can't live in pastures, some of these amazing birds have also declined and have even become endangered. In Costa Rica, the Yellow-billed is critically endangered, the Bare-necked Umbrellabird is endangered (and maybe on its way to being critically so), and the Turquoise is Vulnerable. Since there are few reliable sites for the Turquoise Cotinga, especially possible as an easy day trip from San Jose, it was a happy surprise to see this beauty at and near Rancho Mastatal the past weekend. I wondered if the species might be present but didn't have high hopes because it's usually rare and hard to find just about everywhere in the country (the exception being Luna Lodge and other sites in the Osa Peninsula). □ □

On our first morning of birding, my scope scanning of a forested ridge hit paydirt when the bright blue image of a male cotinga appeared, as per usual, right at the tip top of a tall tree. Luckily, it stayed long enough for everyone in our group to parse the distant blue bird out of the green background. We were pretty happy to see this tough species once so it was a surprise to get another one on the walk back to Rancho Mastatal! This other bird seemed far enough from the first to be a different individual and was seen perched high in the bare branches of a dead tree. We would have easily missed it if it hadn't fluttered and revealed itself with one of the only sounds it makes, that of twittering, twinkling sounds made with the wings. After hearing that sound and catching some movement in the tree, it dawned on me that we had another cotinga! Even then, it wasn't easy to find because most of the bird was obscured by a branch. Eventually, we positioned ourselves for more scoped views before it flew off into the forest. □ □

There were no more cotingas that day but on the following morning, while watching the canopy near the goats at Rancho Mastatal (yes, goats, it's a working organic farm), a bird flies into the top

of a Ceiba and becomes another male cotinga in the binocs! More scope views, this time closer, to appreciate the gem-like colors before it flew away. This could have been the same male as the one in the dead tree on the previous day but when it comes down to it, we had three sightings of Turquoise Cotinga with rather little effort. I don't know how big or small the population is at that site but even if you don't find a fruiting tree, Rancho Mastatal lends itself to seeing this and other canopy birds because there is more than one excellent spot to view the canopy of the forest and tall trees (including figs that could be amazing when fruiting), both on the grounds of Rancho Mastatal and along roads next to Cangreja National Park. □ □

Other benefits of birding this area are: □ □

- Not too far from the San Jose area: While it's not a mere 40 minute drive, it probably takes around two hours or so along a curvy road that leaves from Ciudad Colon. □ □
- Birding en route is alright: The first part of the road is awfully deforested but eventually passes through patches of nice habitat along with one area that might be the best site in the country for Costa Rican Brush Finch (we had 4 or more in an hour on the side of the road). This is the patch of habitat just after Salitrales. □ □
- Birding at all hours: The national park sticks to the same 8 AM opening office hours as other parks but you can see most of the same species along a couple of quiet roads that pass by the edge of the park. We had the cotinga on one of those roads (main one between Mastatal and Salitrales). □ □ □
- Several other humid forest birds: This area is more humid than accessible forests in Carara. Therefore, birds like Golden-naped Woodpecker, Baird's Trogon, Fiery-billed Aracari, Black-bellied and Riverside Wrens, and Ruddy Quail Dove are fairly common. As for Blue-crowned Manakin, that pretty bird is one of the most common species in the area! □ □
- Lots of herps: Frogs seem to be more common here than other sites. The park should really be checked for possible populations of Harlequin Toads and other rare species. □ □
- Rancho Mastatal: This very special place mostly focuses on giving hand-on courses to learn how to live more sustainably with our surroundings, especially in the tropics. They are actively doing this, work with the local community, and grow a huge variety of organic crops. I would describe the food as being "organic gourmet" and if you like all natural foods with creative recipes, you will love this place! Lodging is also offered and they have some nice trails. □ □

If you need the cotinga and brush finch, and would like to bird an under-birded place with a lot of potential, take a trip to Rancho Mastatal and nearby. Even if you don't stay at the Rancho, there is plenty of excellent birding at the edge of the national park, and can ask about using the Rancho Mastatal trails.

## Farm Facts

### *Make Use of the USDA's Unofficial Support of Permaculture*

These are the first two paragraphs of an article written by Scott Gallant for the Permaculture Research Institute. For the entire article, please go

to <http://permaculturenews.org/2014/08/22/make-use-usdas-unofficial-support-permaculture/>

□□ Even though they do not know it, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is supporting permaculture. You won't find this word brandied within any official publications, and most extension agents would give you a quizzical look if you brought up a concept such as zonation, yet there exists a language and support system for many of the most important practices in permaculture farm-scale design.

These practices fall into the category of [agroforestry](#), a farming technique recognized and supported by the USDA. In order to foster the adoption of agroforestry techniques, funding was secured by the [National Agroforestry Center \(NAC\)](#), the [University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry](#), and the [University of Minnesota Extension](#) (both USDA land-grant universities) to host a four day train-the-trainers Agroforestry Academy. This past July I attended this intensive workshop as an educator/trainee.

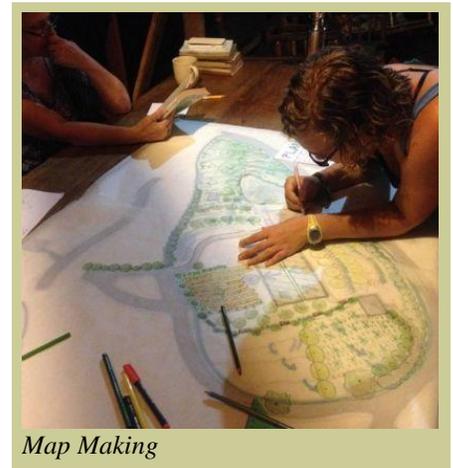
□□ For the remainder of the article, please go to <http://permaculturenews.org/2014/08/22/make-use-usdas-unofficial-support-permaculture/>.

## Community Stories

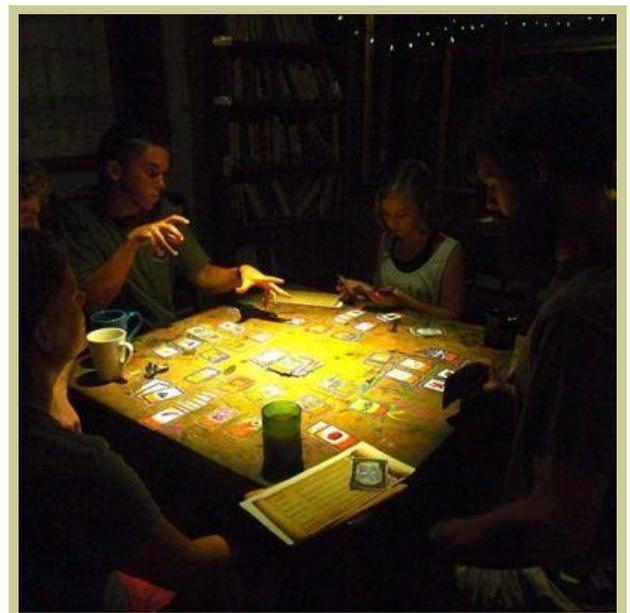
### *Box of Spells*

Box of Spells was the third game we had made. We had started our trip in Thailand, travelled through Asia and Australia and by now were in a cabin in Colorado heating snow on a wood fired stove to make tea. □□ Each country was defined by what curiosity we could pick up; be it a painted wooden flute or a dragon embroidered sarong. These treasures would often become the inspiration for a story or a song or more recently... a game we would create. Songs, stories and games made for our favourite travel companions. They gave us comfort and a sense of familiarity no matter how musty the hostel or how long we would ride those overnight sleeper trains. □□ Our adventures were coming to an

end. I had committed to a year on the road and my time was almost done. It was a snowy March in 2001; we were winding down. There wasn't much to do over those days. We would walk in the crisp silence that the trails around the cabin seemed to exude and then spend our evenings listening



Map Making



Box of Spells

to an old cassette of Peter Ustinov narrating Peter and the Wolf to the music of Prokofiev, whilst drawing. □□ Then as that little fire crackled, Kent found some old, lined index cards and it started from there. He suggested making a card game and we discussed our favourite games, the gaming mechanics and what we thought would work. We set about creating three categories of buildings as a starting point. It was fairly rudimentary. Just some simple sketches beautified – if you could call it that - by colouring pencils. Some of those initial cards were hastily drawn or meaningless. Some of them incorporated the places we had visited during our travels. Over the next three days the game seemed to unfold and as each card was created another idea was generated. We drew, we discussed, we played...and we kept playing. □□ Our lives took us in different directions for a while but in 2003 we reunited in Granada, Spain rented an apartment looking over the Alhambra and Sierra Nevada mountains and worked on refining the cards, rules and artwork, making a prototype over the following year. □□ Box of Spells was introduced to the ranch in 2007 but it took us until 2014 to host our first tournament. Organised by Gooch, the tournament took place over a week and involved the cream of the crop of players. Potions were mixed, spells were cast, buildings were enchanted, treasures were accrued, items were protected, relics attacked and at the end of the day our very own ROBIN pulled through to defeat the best of them. □□ Here are our player interviews: □□ RJ □□ Q: How far did you get in the tournament? □ I was knocked out in the first round. In my defence I had not played Box of Spells in the last 2 months I was a little rusty. □□ Q: What do you have to say about your opposition? □ Watch out for Robin she's a sly one. Jules has the inside advantage knowing all the cards and spells by heart. They were some fierce, powerful ladies. □□ Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan? □ It's a great game with lots of strategy and you can make people dance. □□ ROBIN □□ Q: How far did you get in the tournament? □ I won of course.

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition? □ They put up a good fight but I smoked them.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?  
Because I'm a witch.

GOOCH

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?  
Second tier.

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?  
It was more about the way the cards fell. One person drew a lot of treasure. I had little treasure and no defence.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?  
Because it brings my nerdy fantasy life into reality.

LOGAN

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?  
I think I lost on the first round. No I did lose on the first round. But me and the other first round

losers decided to have a consolation round so we could keep playing and enjoy the festivities of the tournament.

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?

They were cut throat, back stabbing and playing to win and they accomplished all of the above with smiles on their faces and panache.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?

(aside – in a geeky voice) Because I love shhtealing treasure, cashhting shpells and living out my fantasy dreamsh.

KENDAL

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?

I made it to the semi-finals with JULES and ROBIN

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?

Brutal. I got taken out early in the game with only 60 points because ROBIN played End of Time....SO cruel!

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?

There is lots of strategy involved and it's so clever and creative. I like the moon cottage and The Vale they are pretty cards and The Moon Cottage reminds me of home. I love casting spells, of course.

STEPHANIE

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?

I was the runner up...unfortunately.

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?

I think it is very formidable going against ROBIN; she's been playing for nearly a decade. I've only been playing two months.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?

I like games of manipulation. I like pitting my opponents against each other. Wha Ha Ha Ha Ha!  
(Witchy laugh)□

JULES

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?

I got to the semi-final. It has been said though that I can invent games but can't play them...Pah!

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?

I was on a winning roll. I was confident and then BAM! ROBIN goes and ends the game a quarter of the way through with the End of Time card. It felt unfulfilling.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?

It gives you the opportunity to cause mischief. It relies on strategy and luck. You get a chance to guess what kind of game players your opponents are. Do they attack? Do they protect? Do they collect? Do they create allies or enemies? I also love it because it is a pictorial depiction of my travels. It is the best form of relaxation for me.

STOVIE

Q: How far did you get in the tournament?

1st round.

Q: What do you have to say about your opposition?

We were quiet and sweaty – there was a solemn mood but an undertone of fiery intensity, we didn't speak...and I hadn't even cast Mutiny.

Q: Why are you a Box of Spells fan?

(Places hand on heart) I think it is because I enjoy looking at the art. Even when something is cast against me I still admire the card for its beauty. It is a very intelligent and witty game.

*Jules*

## Intern/Guest Gossip

### *Fermentation Fervor Residency Program with Sandor Katz*

After years of fermenting everything from jackfruit to taro roots, I finally get my big break! With the encouragement of the Ranch community I am accepted (along with our good friend and former Ranch intern EILEEN!) to a three-week residency program on the theme of “Fermentation Fervor” with the mustachioed man himself, SANDOR KATZ. As our friend SILLY AL COLONES put it when he found out, “Ladies, you hit the bigtimes.”

Sandor Katz is the author of Wild

Fermentation and The Art of Fermentation, along with several other excellent books including a

biography on Whoopi Goldberg. He is known as an international expert on home-scale live-culture fermentation and is a guru of DIY microbe wrangling. After the publication of Wild Fermentation, Sandor took his microbes on the road cross-country in a “Fermentation Road Show” to spread the word about the wild benefits of fermented foods. He now speaks in venues and institutions across the world. For people who live on small farms like the Ranch, he is basically a cult hero. He is also known as a trend setter in the world of facial hair (for which he is also a cult hero). □



*Sandor with LK and Eileen*

In order to get to the residency program, I must make an epic journey from the Ranch to the faraway land of Tennessee. This part is always hard for me. Transplanting myself from the slow roads and glittering jungle of rural Costa Rica to the dull roar and dead pavement of airports and cities is like stepping out of a time machine into a brave new world. “Are the cars supposed to be like this?” I always wonder, baffled, as I try to cross the street. This world is fast, and strange. Plus I feel like I might throw up I’m so excited to meet Sandor! □

My plane leaves at one in the morning from Alajuela and I finally, successfully, arrive in Atlanta. I am relieved they didn’t confiscate my 15 pounds of turmeric, galangal, and jungle vines (exotic spices from a tropical land!). I take a train and hop on the Greyhound towards Tennessee. I sleep a large part of the way, with an extra pair of pants wrapped around my neck for warmth. I’m not used to air conditioning. When the bus driver announces my stop I start popping La Iguana cacao beans to wake myself up. Don’t want to be drooling in my sleep when Sandor picks me up.

□The bus stop in Murfreesboro is really a gas station where people get on and off. I grab my bag from under the bus and look around. There he is!! The mustached man, walking toward me!!! I walk forward to shake his hand, but he gives me a hug! I’m not a great hugger but I try my best. We walk to his car together. I’m grinning, and biting my lip to try to keep from grinning, and grinning. There’s his Corolla!!!! He has his dog Kitty in the seat. The ride is a blur. Cars really do move fast these days. I haven’t seen temperate forest in seven months, and I feel relieved at how green it looks out the window after the grey and black of the airport and highway. Tennessee looks like a nice place. Sandor and I talk about where we’ve travelled, mango ferments, his upcoming course in India with Vandana Shiva. I feel ill the whole time. Every time I look over at him I start grinning again. Riding in the car with Sandor!!!! □

We turn off the main road and wind into green hills. Sandor drops me off at the Walnut Ridge farmhouse where I’ll be staying for the workshop. Sandor and a crew of neighbors and friends have been restoring the structure by chinking the log beams with cob, and building a new deck. Everything around the house is green, like the jungle, but quieter, calmer. □

I go inside and hug Eileen hello. We giggle hysterically, I get my stuff out of the car, and meet Sandor’s cat Tibicos. (The word tibicos is another name for Water Kefir, a type of fermented soda we make at the Ranch.) I pull out my jungle treasures and pass around cacao.

□Over the course of the next day, the kitchen slowly fills with the dozen eager workshop participants. There are brewmasters, artists, chefs, students, and health professionals. Some work with fermentation every day, others are just starting to learn. Regardless of experience or background, all of us have travelled from around the world to learn about the wild world of fermentation with Sandor Katz. □

In the afternoon we all pile into the kitchen and class begins. The kitchen has a tall ceiling, lots of windows, and is lined with shelves full of crocks, barrels, carboys, and canning jars full of food. There is an entire shelf labelled “seaweed”. It is a fermentor’s paradise. □

Sandor waltzes around, checking crocks and smelling things. Without pretense, vegetables fly out across the table, and suddenly we are making pickles, yogurt, and sourdough concoctions. Sandor's style is relaxed and authentic. He's hanging out in the kitchen with us, and we're making food together, just like that. When we have questions, he answers them, and now and then he slips into story-telling mode, usually involving some kind of prop he picks up off the table and waves in the air. It may be a spoon, it may be a pickle, but whatever it is, it gets the point across: microbes are freaking amazing; they are a part of us and we of them; it is through the diversification of our microbiomes (the microbes that live in us and on us) that we build resilience; and we can do it, right here and now, with nothing more than an old jar and something edible.

Our schedule is full but relaxed. In the mornings we study or help in the gardens or around the house. In the early afternoon Sandor arrives and we make lunch together. Then we have an afternoon session making new fermented foods—beers and wines, pickled vegetables, miso, tempeh, cheese, soda, and many more. Tasting food as it changes and ferments is one of the highlights. At one point Sandor brings out a crock of miso we had started a few days before. He has one hand on a hip, and looks up at the ceiling in fascinated contemplation as he tastes a spoonful of the miso. “Ooooooh Its evolving in my mouth!” he tells us. He is serious. □

We make dozens of different ferments, visit farms and communities, and take field trips to food related events and venues in the area. The food we ferment depends on what is available with the seasons, and what Sandor's neighbors have at the time. We often visit the farms the food is coming from, and help in the harvest. Other neighbors come over to help, teach, trade, or share. We even capitalize on old bread that Sandor's friend Lulo found in a dumpster, (it made a delicious batch of kvass.) and leftover sheep testicles from castration day (we fried them in garlic—yes, they were good). We follow very few recipes, and rarely, if ever, use a measuring cup. The attitude is, use what you have, experiment a lot, share what you can, and have fun. “The major differences in measurements are a matter of taste,” explains Sandor. “I want people to develop recipes for themselves. Your creativity is absolutely the only limitation.” Recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation were originally developed in specific places and microenvironments. Before the globalization of food markets, artisan cheese makers might sell a cheese made from the milk of a specific cow, made at a specific time of year, aged and fermented with species of native microbes only found in that farmer's own kitchen. Each population of microbes, even ones that group themselves in visually recognizable symbiotic colonies, are different and unique. They adapt quickly and exquisitely with their surroundings. “Its like the way we are all humans, but look how different we look and act. Colonies are individuals, with individual differences. There are diversions of the family trees and they adapt differently,” Sandor tells us. So if I were to take one of those same artisan cheese recipes and try to replicate it in my own home, it would come out differently—I would be using different milk, in a different environment, with different microbes. It would probably still be good, just different. The point is, the evolution of people and food, culture and taste, did not end somewhere back in time. With a little creativity, art, and practice, we continue to develop new flavors and favorites as the seasons, our foodsheds, our microbial cohorts, and our lives evolve and transform. The process is participatory, dynamic, and ongoing.

It is clear from day one that the workshop is about food—we talk about it, make it, and eat it constantly. But it is also clear that the food itself is just one theme in the larger story. Food and fermentation are catalysts for community building, metaphors for the celebration of diversity, and poignant reminders of the cycle of life. The art and practice of food and fermentation are intertwined in the contexts of the daily rhythm and wild changes of our lives. Just as microbes literally are us (each person is made up of more microbial cells than “human” cells), the daily practices that we create in our lives become us as well. □

On the last day of the workshop we trade cultures and foods. I pass out pieces of Ranch turmeric and galangal, and we make little baggies of heirloom yogurt, miso, and sourdough. We go to Sandor’s house for one last garden party and his favorite fermented lunch, savory vegetable sourdough pancakes. It’s a delicious ending--fun, and simple, and for me the start of the next wild chapter of Ranch Fermentation Fervor.

□*LK*

## Comida Corner

### *Picklin' in the North Country*

While back in the States, we do a whole lot of canning and fermenting. Here's a pickle recipe from our farmer friend, former intern and founder and owner of [Sandbrook Meadow Farm](#) in New Jersey ALEX SAWATSKY that we've been using for years to make some of the crunchiest and most delicious pickles out there.

What you “need”:□

8 pounds 3 to 4 inch long pickling cucumbers (don't have to be this small)

□4 cups white vinegar

□12 cups water□

2/3 cup pickling salt (non iodized)□

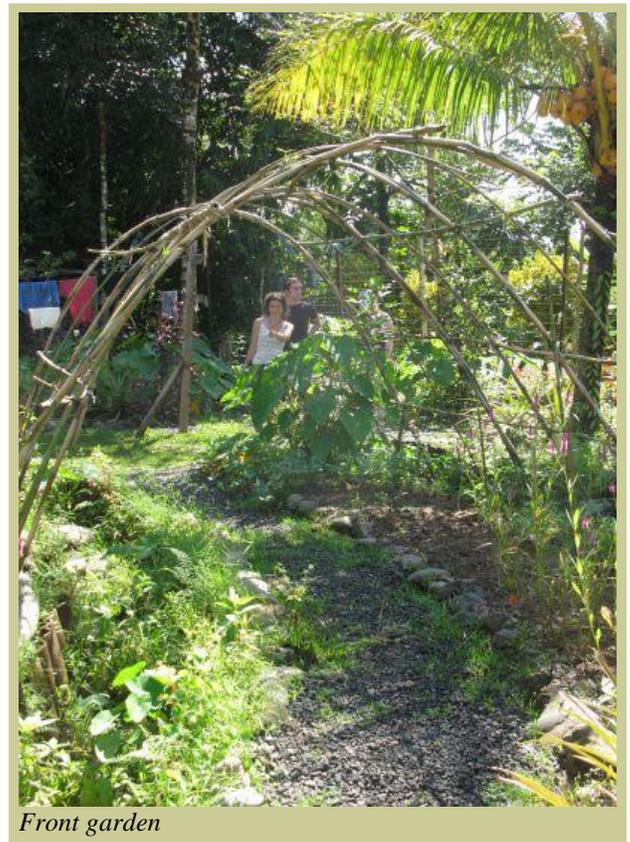
16 cloves garlic, peeled and halved

□8 sprigs fresh dill weed□8 heads fresh dill weed

Directions:

□Wash cucumbers, and place in the sink ( I use the bathtub!) with cold water and lots of ice cubes. Soak in ice water for at least 2 hours but no more than 8 hours. Refresh ice as required. Sterilize 8 (1 quart ) canning jars and lids in boiling water for at least 10 minutes.

In a large pot over medium-high heat, combine the vinegar, water, and pickling salt. Bring the brine to a rapid boil.



*Front garden*

In each jar, place 2 half-cloves of garlic, one head of dill, then enough cucumbers to fill the jar (about 1 pound). Then add 2 more garlic halves, and 1 sprig of dill. Fill jars with hot brine. Seal jars, making sure you have cleaned the jar's rims of any residue. (If you choose to waterbath them, process quarts for 15 minutes)

Store pickles for a minimum of 8 weeks before eating. Refrigerate after opening. Pickles will keep for up to 2 years if stored in a cool dry place.□□

One thing that comes up over and over in canning is never change salt, sugar, or acid amounts (because of botulism). The other additions are subjective. I usually add less dill (or none at all), a hot pepper or two sliced, a pinch of peppercorns and mustard seed. The sky is the limit here. Use your imagination, but most importantly have fun.

## Inspirational Impressions

### *Dinner Pail*

“Learn to do common things uncommonly well; we must always keep in mind that anything that helps full the dinner pail is valuable.”

□— George Washington Carver

Abrazos,□□

The Ranch Crew



*Cangreja Road*