

Report: Slim Butte Agri-Dev Community Gardens, Plenty International

Mission: Make 2008 Enlivened Potting Soil and Start Spring Garden plants

❖ **March 2008 – White Bluff, Tennessee**

- **Wednesday, 12th.** Mix compost and rock powders and load into tarp. Load coir, mixer, tubs and buckets.
- **Thursday, 13th.** Finish packing and head out. Travel 500 miles.
- **Friday 14th.** Eat and head out. Hit snow storm traveling up 385 to Chadron. Get into Tom Cook's house about 11:30 pm. Say hello to the family, then Louie Cook heads us north to Pine Ridge. Cozy beds wait.
- **Saturday 15th.** Deb Cook welcomes us. We unpack, eat breakfast and head out, on Lakota time, to Tom and Loretta's timber frame house. We slide down the road to the house and become acquainted with Pine Ridge "gumbo". With our pants tucked into rubber boots, we unload the coir and compost. Over the day the snow melts, feeding the gumbo. First thing, get some coir soaked. Make a small pile of EPS, fill four trays and start the broccoli.
 - The EPS formula we mix is 75% coconut coir (shredded husks) and 25% mix of three different biodynamic composts and five rock powders.
 - An electric cement mixer is used to mix nine gallons of hydrated coir and three gallons of compost mix. This makes a batch of 12 gallons of EPS per mixer load. Each tray uses one gallon of mix. Louie wants to fill around 300 trays. We unload enough fixings for 1,000 trays. That evening, Tom, Lupe, Virgil and I drive to Rosebud for the fourth memorial for Diane Crow Dog. I want to thank these guys, Deb and all of the families for welcoming Carlos and me into their lives.
- **Monday 17th.** The gumbo is dry! Start with the coir and hot water. Tom, Louie, Lupe, Karen (a teacher from NYC), Carlos and Dennis start hydrating 30 blocks in the watering trough and shredding it up into the blue tubs. Carlos starts a new EPS pile and mixes as fast as we can feed him the ready coir. Once the EPS mixing goal is met, we fill 15 trays with 72 cells and plant 12 trays with cabbage, 864 cells, and three trays of cauliflower, 216 cells. We fill the trough with another round of blocks to soak all night. The usual Sunday night sweat is moved to tonight. What a great experience, with stew for everyone after. Get to Louie's about midnight.
- **Tuesday 18th.** The coir is pre-soaked, a wonderful thing. Carlos starts a new pile and we all start making EPS again. After three troughs of coir are mixed up, we fill up trays for the tomatoes and peppers. Load the filled trays, tub of soil and buckets into my truck and Louie, Carlos and I drive over to Ron's. Carlos and Louie start planting the 12 trays of peppers. I started mixing eight gallons of Biodynamic Preparation 500 and some Barrel Prep. – Thun recipe. Tom and Virgil come over. Tom finishes stirring and blesses the mix. This is watered into the finished pepper trays, which are put into the heated start room. The tomatoes are finished, watered in and placed into the start room. Tom, Virgil and Carlos go set up a teepee for a family memorial. Louie and I go to Bo and Misty's house and spread the extra 500 on their garden before sunset, then home to bed early.
- **Wednesday 19th.** We figure out the total EPS needed and how much is already made and Carlos starts mixing the difference. After shredding up the coir, Louie and I go to Chadron for greenhouse plastic and pizza. When we return Carlos has made the biggest pile of EPS yet. We mix up a batch of BP 500 for Tom's garden, Tom blesses it and we spread it on the garden at sunset. We then get ready for the Wednesday night sweat. A lot colder tonight, no walking slow. A hot sweat. Thanks Tom, Joe American Horse, Louie and everyone else there. Another meal with everyone and back to Louie's.
- **Thursday 20th.** Louie wants to make some more EPS before we pack up the truck. We make a trough and a half, pack everything up and head for the Badlands. We eat lunch at the casino and set off to see the Crazy Horse monument. Had a great trip.
- **Friday 21st.** We finish packing to head home. Say goodbye to Deb. Much thanks to her. Stop by Tom and Loretta's. Say goodbyes. She braids my hair and we start for home.
- **Saturday 22nd.** Make it home safe. 1,303 miles to Tom's and 3,001 total miles.