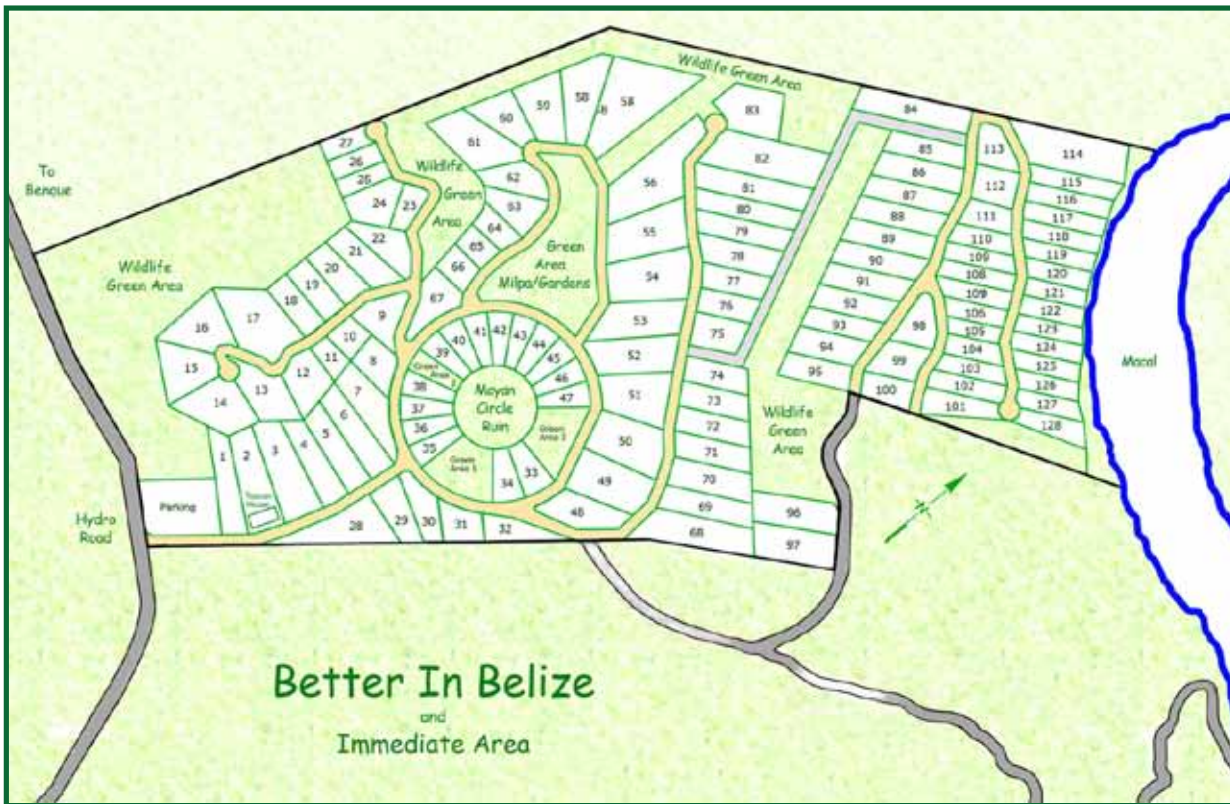


# Your Better · in · Belize Newsletter

BIB - A Lively Eco-community In The Jungle

Summer 2019



## Participate!

A dynamic eco-community like ours needs a lively newsletter, and I need your help. Send suggestions, photos and articles or questions to:

[irene@natureworkspress.com](mailto:irene@natureworkspress.com)

Thanks in advance!

Renie Brady



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## Clean Out Your Overstuffed E-Mailbox

At BIB we rely on the internet for communications. You likely have WAY too many old messages in your email box. To delete gmail emails, instructions are at <https://www.laptopmag.com/articles/delete-gmail-messages-bulk>. Or google "How to delete multiple emails. Then you can start all over again!

## Please use Our Eco-community Dishes for Food Events



If you're hosting a potluck, please use our "party-pack" of eco-friendly dishes and the resident dishwasher. Just pick up the dishes at Renie's house (#7), and for the privilege of not having to cook anything for the potluck, she'll take the dirty dishes home after the party and wash them. If you don't invite Renie, you can still borrow the dishes if you return them the next day clean (they're in the box

by her front door). If she's not home, leave a note so she'll know where they are.



contributed by Renie Brady

## Garden Share Chat Time

Renie Brady at Garden Share

In mid-May we had a really colorful Garden Share with the usual plantains (a starchy banana), tomatoes, cashews, a huge green jackfruit, and a single soursop fruit. Renie made off with the jackfruit and soursop since no one else was interested in them. But then, feeling guilty, she thought she'd better admit that she was SOOOOO glad no one else wanted the soursop, because with a little effort you can produce a delightful drink that is not only delicious and cooling but amazingly healthy as well. And now she's pretty sure she'll never get another one because they'll always get snapped up by other eager soursop juice drinkers after people read how to prepare it below. Oh well, that's life.....

## A Soursop Juice Tutorial from a Dubious Cook

If you don't like to cook, and on a hot day that's almost a given, you might still enjoy the gentle process of making soursop juice. Also known as the guanabana (say gwuh-NAW-buh-naw), the soursop is available from June to September, when it's often really hot, and is the perfect refreshing drink for a slow, lazy afternoon.

### To prepare:

Slice the soursop down the middle the long way and remove the long fibrous piece in the center.

Then remove the skin – if it's super-ripe, you can just pull or scrape it off with your fingers. The little fruitlets are delicious, so it's fun to eat as you work. You'll have to spit out the fibers.

In a large bowl or dishpan, squish everything with your fingers to break the fruit up, and squeeze the seed out of each fibrous white fruitlet. Depending on the soursop's size, this can take from five to fifteen minutes

(this big one took 15 minutes). I like to think of it as "zen time," a time for contemplation, listening to music, making plans, whatever. It's also a good sit-down job, and a great job for kids or for visitors looking for a fun tropical experience.



Add two or three cups of water after taking out the seeds, then reach in and squish everything with your hand and let the mashed glop set for a few minutes to soak the goodness out of the fibers.

At this point, you can go all mechanical and put the whole thing in the blender (remove errant seeds first) or you can stay simple and strain it into a pitcher, mashing the fruitlets against the side of the strainer with your fingers.



Soursop is also an herbal medicine in Belize. Both fruit and leaves are used to treat stomach ailments, fever, parasitic infections, hypertension and muscle aches. Soursop is also taken as a sedative.

If you want the best medicinal effects, leave out the sugar, which is a known inflammatory agent.

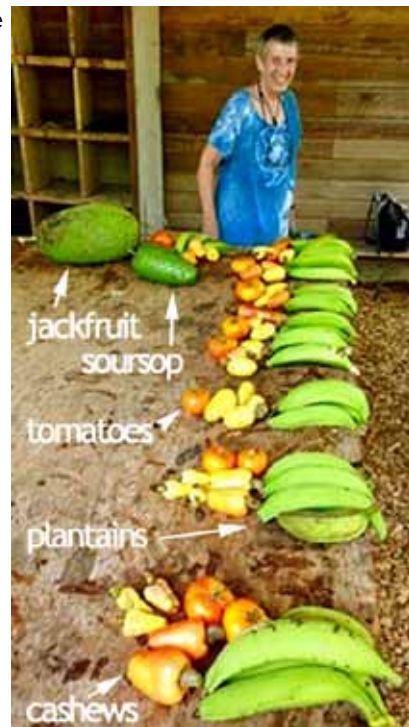


photo by Dawna Bemis



soursop photos by Renie Brady

Add sugar and water until the texture and taste please you.

Some recipes add condensed milk to make a smooth, thick drink, or ½ t. nutmeg, a little lime juice, or vanilla flavoring. I make mine with only a bit of sugar.



contributed by Renie Brady

## What the Heck is Biochar?

In mid-April, three BIBers, Doug DeGirolamo, Ian Gerbode and Sue Waite, attended a 1-day Biochar workshop in Santa Elena to learn how to make biochar.

Biochar is similar to charcoal, except that charcoal has oil in it, which makes it suitable for the bar-be-Q, while biochar has no oil, and is about as pure as carbon gets. Activated and mixed with ordinary soil as a soil amendment, it does some amazing things. Here's a quote from the Biochar Journal

It turns out that the stable carbon matrix that biochar is made of has all kinds of interesting properties. This carbon matrix can hold on to things – water, air, metals and organic chemicals. And it also has unique thermal and electrical properties that are still being explored. Finally, the highly porous physical structure of biochar provides habitat for microorganisms.

With so many different properties, biochar is bound to have a lot of different uses, but one function that all biochar applications (other than burning it for fuel) share is carbon sequestration. By fixing easily degradable plant carbon into long-lasting charcoal, carbon dioxide is slowly but surely removed from the atmosphere.

In your garden and landscaping, biochar can provide important moisture retention. Our annual spring droughts make this an important issue. At BIB we sometimes lose landscape plants during drought periods, and we use up a lot of precious rainwater from our tanks trying to save the rest.



In a recent experimental plot of mangoes being used to test biochar properties, 120 mango trees were planted in ordinary soil, then biochar was worked into the ground around one hundred of them. During a drought that ensued, all the mangoes growing in the biochar-treated soil thrived, whereas the 20 without the biochar died.

Using information gained in the workshop, Doug, used his engineering and welding skills to turn two big steel drums into a double-walled biochar furnace which can produce five gallons of biochar from 20 gallons of sawdust.

Here's the process in photos, and Doug or Ian will be happy to advise you on how to make your own the first time:

Fill the inner furnace can with chips or other combustible material



When it stops off-gassing (ask Doug what that means) let fire go out. Open when cool, 2-3 hrs.



Fill the space between the cans with scrap wood, twigs, whatever will burn.

Light up and let it burn, adding fuel for about 3 hours



photos by Renie Brady

The biochar furnace is set up in the milpa, and people may make their own biochar. Doug will also barter biochar for something he wants in trade.

Biochar isn't ready to use straight out of the furnace. It's sterile and has to be activated – which means it needs to have compost, manure, and/or urine added to it to inoculate it with micro-organisms. But that's pretty simple to do:

- Fill a 5 gallon bucket with freshly-burned biochar pounded or ground into small fragments.
- Add about a pint of compost, manure and/or urine to a 5 gallon bucket of biochar and stir
- Let it sit for about six weeks.

When it is ready, it will smell loamy and will have tiny white root-like things throughout it – these are micorrhizae (say mi-co-RIE-zee), and are a sign of fertile, healthy soil.

A little biochar goes a long way. Mix it with your garden soil, about 5% biochar to 95% soil, plant your greenery in it or dig it in around already planted stuff and you should soon see an improvement in the health of your landscape or garden. Use more biochar if you want.

NOTE: Renie is adding biochar to the peatmoss her composting toilet to encourage an even more scentless aura – and the results are VERY promising. Composting toilets and humanure systems like the one Doug is going to create for his container home should be good alternatives to flush toilets. And the resulting compost from those – wow!

contributed by Renie Brady

## Waterhole Neighborhood Scholarships and the Student Center need your help



The Waterhole Neighborhood Scholarship committee, formerly Belize Scholarships, administered by volunteers at BIB, has been holding meetings and making decisions about awarding scholarships, paying tuitions, and helping parents with their children's school supplies for the coming school year, 2019-2020.

With the help of kind-hearted donors, we have managed to cover all the tuitions for about twenty students from pre-school through high school.



Mt. Carmel High School gives full scholarships to rural children, and Mopan Technical High School gives partial and full scholarships as well, so this helps a great deal.

Our next goal is to pay 75% of the supplies costs for all the children, which is a lofty goal considering we have only a small percentage of it on hand at the moment. By August we'll need quite a bit more, and can only hope that if we continue to point out the need, more people will be encouraged to help out. Last year we only managed to pay about 35% of the supplies costs.

In addition to school supplies, kids also have to supply liquid soap, toilet paper, paper towels, a package of garbage bags, a ream of typing paper, and must pay to use the bathroom. All those things add up. We need to help these kids. Can you chip in? Would you put up a poster about our program in your business, church, or town hall?

Here is what one of the kids, who is six, asked his mom to write on his scholarship application: "I need to go to school so I can do my work. If I don't, the school bus will leave me behind." This little boy, like all the kids along Hydro Road, takes his schooling VERY seriously. If you'd like to help these plucky kids catch their school bus, make a donation at <https://waterholescholarships.com/donate>. You can download a poster there to help us find donors.



Students doing homework in the Student Center

*photos and article contributed by Renie Brady*

## Is There Extra Room in Your Luggage?

If you are headed this way and can make room in your luggage (or pay for an extra bag) the students at Mt. Carmel High School in Benque would be over the moon if you could bring gym shoes for them. We're not talking new shoes, here, unless you have funds to spare for such wonderful things. No, the kids are asking if anyone has lightly used gym shoes they could use for P.E. and sports in the gym, because it is simply impossible for many families to purchase gym shoes in addition to street shoes for their teens' growing feet.



Miss Anselma, the principal, with donated gently-used gym shoes

Street shoes aren't allowed in the gym because they damage the floor, so some kids can't complete their high school curriculum without some help from generous folks like us. Can you gift some gently-used shoes to bring another big smile to Miss Anselma's face? She needs shoes for both boys and girls, sizes, 7½ to 9½.

*photos and article contributed by Renie Brady*

## Herbal Immersion Workshop

Recognizing the usefulness for people living in the bush (US!) to have a working knowledge of local medicinal plants, I recently petitioned the HOA Board for funding to attend the recent Herbal Immersion Workshop hosted by Rosita Arvigo, a widely respected herbalist living near Chaa Creek Resort and author of the book *Rainforest Remedies*.



ups, as salves and tinctures. I was able to absorb enough knowledge to come back and share what I had learned in several different ways (see page 6).



article contributed by Renie Brady

Because Belize seems to be pretty much a tropical medicinal garden, I felt this was a great opportunity to collect information and share it with anybody at BIB who would find it useful and interesting.

The 5-day workshop was held at Rosita's home in late March, attended by eleven eager students. Rosita lectured using her book as a guide, led us outside to find and identify medicinal plants both in the garden and wild in the forest. Demonstrated using plants raw (prickly pear cactus pads) and as soaks, in syr-

## Student Center Sewing Classes

This spring the Student Center has hosted two sewing classes for the neighborhood kids and parents.

Miss Dee Shanley, sewing teacher at the Succotz High School, guided eight youngsters, ages seven through seventeen, and one mother in the making of zippered bags, headbands, handbags, tortilla warmers, and beaded bracelets. They gained sewing experience using various sewing machines.



Miss Dee with students from the first class



Students learned to use patterns and cut cloth. Lunch was provided both days for the students.

Miss Dee was pleasantly surprised at the progress the students made, saying that their results were

comparable to those of the high school students she teaches at Succotz. More classes are planned for next September by popular demand.



Above, student models a headband she made. Below Miss Dee teaches sewing techniques to eager students



photos and article contributed by Renie Brady

## Medicinal Plant Workshops at BIB

One of the more frequently found-books in households at BIB is *Rainforest Remedies* by Rosita Arvigo, a handbook for finding wild medicinal plants in the rainforest of Belize and how to use them to cure or lessen your physical aches, pains, and other problems.



photo by Gina McCarthy

Having attended Rosita's Herbal Immersion workshop in late March, (see page 5) and wanting to share with BIB residents some of the things I learned, I hosted a Medicinal Plant Walk April 3, with a strong turnout of 11 residents. We started at my house and walked toward the milpa, stopping at plants I had marked (with the help of Millie Martinez, friend and local expert) along the route to show them how to recognize them and discuss their varied uses.

There seems to be herbal assistance for just about every conceivable physical problem. I found six just in my dooryard along the walk, half of them volunteer plants, others I had rescued and transplanted from areas destined for road-widening in the past because they were pretty.

In just a few hundred feet along the medicinal plant walk I laid out (starting at the end of my driveway) we found fifteen well-known medicinal plants: aloe vera, bull-horn acacia, prickly pear cactus, snake plant, and allspice, to name just a few, with powers to alleviate the pain of headaches, cuts and bruises, sunburn, rashes, ulcers, snakebite, colic, diarrhea, sore throat.....the list goes on.

I'll be leading a Medicinal Plant Walk later in the lower part of BIB, which will be easier access for people living "below the fold."

I also want to tag medicinal plants in the Milpa and also along the roads, to make sure the plants don't get accidentally weed-whacked.

Sue Waite hosted a Medicinal Plant Decoction and Tincture Workshop I gave at her house, attended by 7 BIBers.



using jackass bitters wound powder

photo by Jenny Lodes



tinctures  
photo by Moona Resonance

We decocted and also infused Jamaica Tea, also called Sorrel Tea, and experimented with Jackass Bitters and Gumbo Limbo, for which I also made tinctures, now quietly steeping on a shelf at my house.

Participants returned home with little bottles of jackass bitters decoctions (teas) just in case they wanted to try

them out on bodily afflictions. A shot of jackass bitters (which comes by its name oh-so-honestly) can be almost tasty if combined with sorrel tea.

I made handouts for Jackass Bitters (a useful medicine for intestinal parasites, infections, wounds, fungus, ringworm, and head lice. It's also a nice natural insecticide and fungicide

to use on diseased plants) and Gumbo Limbo, useful for treating symptoms of poisonwood exposure, and against fevers, urinary tract infections, insect bites, sunburn, rashes and skin sores.

Dawna has put the handouts on the BIB Homeowners site at <http://bibowners.com/category/fromthegarden/>, so you can download and print them out to keep handy.

I also strongly suggest that you get a copy of *Rainforest Remedies* to give you a leg up on finding cures and identifying plants. Along with my handouts, we can create a pretty good medicinal plant library.

From left to right, Francesco and Mari Anello, Dawna Bemis, Moona Resonance, Sue Waite, Mardah Resonance, Jenny Lodes holding Ztaeb Resonance, Renie Brady



contributed by Renie Brady

## On The Commons With a BioLite



Left to right: Ian, Doug, Bryan, Gina, Beth, Marvin. Oreo & Moka are under chairs.

Recently, when Doug and Ian were stoking up the biochar furnace on the Milpa-cum-Community-Center Commons, people showed up with chairs and dogs and other gear for an impromptu get-together.

BIB's newest home-builders, Gina and Marvin McCarthy and their two pups, Oreo and Moka; Bryan and Beth who were clearing a space for orange trees in the Milpa; Ian and Doug, who were tending the biofurnace; and I, who came to pester people about contributing to the newsletter, had a nice get-together.



Above, it's a grill and stovetop. Below, it's a French Press coffeepot.

Ian showed us his cool Bio-Lite, a little stove which runs on a scant handful of burning twigs, and can make coffee, cook steaks, charge your phone, then provide lights for an evening of fun in the great outdoors – or at your house if the road to Benque washes away, your butane runs out, and it has been

raining for days and the solar hasn't charged up your batteries. Not a bad emergency back-up to keep around, and nice for parties on The Commons or even out on your veranda on a hot summer night when you don't want to heat up the house with cooking.

At right, Ian is pointing out the USB port on the BioLite.



At right, Ian is pointing out the USB port on the BioLite.



## Before You Build at BIB

The first and foremost thought to keep in your mind before you even begin on your BIB building plans is that *Better in Belize is an eco-community*. That means there are some very important guidelines about how to treat the rainforest ecosystem as you plan for, build, and landscape your home. You sign on to the CCRs (Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions) when you sign your deed, and you are obliged to honor them. They may be found here (<http://bibowners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/BIB-Covenants.pdf>), and you should review them regularly.

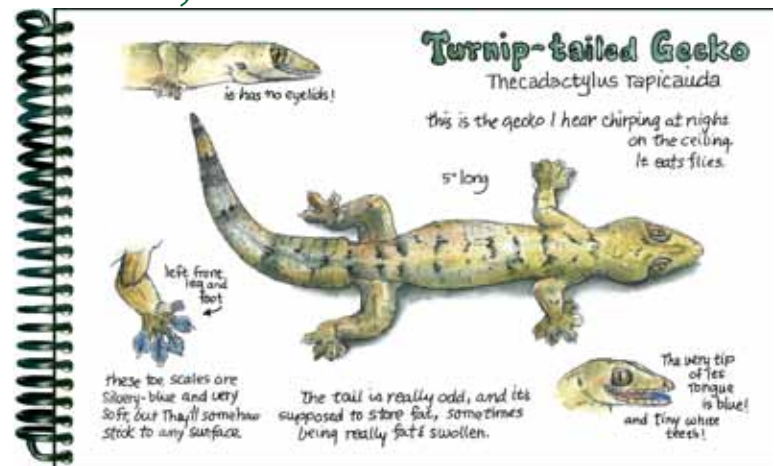
One important restriction determines what you can and cannot do with regard to the trees and vegetation on your property. For instance, the CCRs require that you leave a 10' border of *undisturbed vegetation* all around the perimeter of your property. The purpose is two-fold: to protect the ecology of the area and to provide a visual block between your house and those who pass by.

It is important to maintain the continuity of the forest so that the wildlife – birds, mammals, and insects – which are a major reason many people choose to live at BIB, can continue to find food and cover within our lots; and so the howler and spider monkeys, kinkajous, and other tree-dwellers can continue to travel from tree to tree overhead.

You need an okay from the EAB (Ecological Advisory Board) consisting of concerned homeowners, to cut vegetation on your lot. So be sure to clear with the EAB any plans that involve removing vegetation before you go ahead on any course of action with regard to building.

Unfortunately, thinning vegetation or clear-cutting then planting a fringe of ornamentals along your perimeter, even if they're native plants, does not qualify as "undisturbed vegetation," although you can ADD landscape plants and trees for color, fruits and variety.

## Watch for These Around the House



everything on this page contributed by Renie Brady

## A Message From The Board

Once again, a HUGE "thank you" to those who have paid their 2019 BIB HOA fees so promptly. The board and the entire community appreciate and thank you for your promptness.

If you are wondering what is happening to your BIB HOA fees, we recently added a new link to our website called "Happenings." Explore what is "happening" at BIB and let us know what you think.

Your board members, along with many other volunteers, are working hard for you at no cost to you. But while the board and volunteers receive no pay, the projects can be expensive. We can only accomplish them by spending your hard-earned HOA fees effectively.



Collection of current and past due fees is paramount to improving our community – which will also improve the value of your investment, regardless

of whether or not you have built your home yet.

The next big project on our agenda is to continue the road maintenance project going up to Eagle's Landing, but funds are needed before we can submit "tenders" to contractors.

Also on the horizon is the creation of a community centre in the open part of the Milpa where we've been having our Full Moon Bonfires (see the photo).

While many of us do enjoy entertaining groups in our homes, our numbers are growing too large to accommodate everyone in some of the smaller homes. Wouldn't it be nice to also have an alternative place where we can all gather together at the same time?

But we don't yet have the necessary funds on hand. Many owners are behind in their dues payments.

We appreciate your patience as we move forward on developing our lovely community to be one of the best in Belize.

Your Board Members: Ann McGregor, Bryan Weary, Kathie Miller

## Who's Who at BIB - HOA Board & Committees

### HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION (HOA) BOARD MEMBERS:

Ann McGregor • Kathie Miller • Bryan Weary

### COMMITTEES:

Safety: Gina McCarthy, Linda DeGirolamo, Sue Waite

Webmaster: Dawna Bemis

Garden: Beth Weary

Roads: Bryan Weary

EAB: Doug DeGirolamo, Renie Brady and board members

Communications (internet): Ann McGregor, Ian Gerbode

Paul Prescott, Doug DeGirolamo

## BIB Homecoming

NOTE: We're planning a "BIB Homecoming," an occasion where homeowners can come together at BIB to greet old friends and get acquainted with new members, and maybe even break ground for our Community Center. We would like to correlate that with the date the Better In Belize Home Owners Association was formed. There's plenty of time to make plans, so **SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2019**

What are your thoughts on this? Can you volunteer to spearhead this celebration? If not, can you help someone else do it? Do you have ideas of ways to make it particularly useful/fun/interesting/better for all?

Suggestions and ideas may be sent to:

[millerkathiem@hotmail.com](mailto:millerkathiem@hotmail.com)

*contributed by Kathie Miller*





## Snake Charmers Pay Visit to Doug & Linda

Doug and Linda DiGirolamo were recently visited by a couple of amorous snakes which provided an amazing show, twining around each other and swanning to and fro across the yard as they courted. They hung around for quite some time.

Best guess is that they were Western Yellow-bellied Racers, *Coluber constrictor mormon*, a non-venomous species.



photo by Doug DeGirolamo

## Snakes in the Yard? Relax!

At BIB, there are few venomous snakes you are likely to encounter. The fer de lance, locally called the yellow-jaw or tommygoff, is heavily marked, and like most venomous snakes, it has a big head and bulky jaws as you can see in my illustration at the bottom of the page. The venom glands are what swell those puffy jaws, so big jaws are a marker for many venomous snakes. The other local snake that causes human meltdowns is the coral snake. This is a small snake, 18-24", about as big around as a woman's little finger and striped red, yellow and black. You've probably heard the old adage about the stripes:

red touch yellow, kill a fellow  
red touch black, safe for Jack.

But the coral snake's fangs are in the BACK of its tiny mouth. You'd have to stick your finger down its throat to have much chance of receiving a venom dose. Don't do that. Belizeans may tell you that even touching venomous snakes will make you sick. Don't believe it. Belizeans in general fear and distrust snakes (much as we do).

If you see a *large* similarly striped snake, it's the non-venomous king snake, a major actor in the environment and to be carefully protected. And it's gorgeous.

Many people come to Belize expecting to see snakes under every rock and draping the trees like vines. In truth, some people have lived here at BIB for more than a year before they even SEE one. When working in your yard, you should keep your eyes open for snakes, and slowly back out of any encounter. Statistically, you're in more danger traveling Hydro Road in your car than of being bitten by a snake in your yard.

If the thought of snakes worries you, go online or get a snake guide and memorize what the baddies look like. After that, you will be able to consider all the other snakes you meet as friends.

Snakes play a major role and are an important element in the ecosystem. Avoidance is the best policy.

Local Belizeans have a tendency to kill ALL snakes, so if you have someone doing yardwork for you, request that they not kill snakes they come across.

If there is any way you can tactfully redirect that whack-a-mole impulse, it would be great!

contributed by Renie Brady



photo by Renie Brady

This is an 18" Central American Coral Snake - *Micrurus nigrocinctus*. Notice the blunt tail. It is considered mild tempered.

## Fer-de-lance / Yellow-jaw Tommygoff



illustration by Renie Brady

## Cashew Wine, Juice and Nuts



Who knew that cashew nuts come attached to a gorgeous, soft, oily-feeling fruit shaped like a bell pepper? Cashews grow right here at BIB, and recently Linda DiGiralamo and Gina McCarthy decided to try their hand at cashew wine, a typical Belizean brew. Here's Linda's advice:

Pull off cashew nut. Set aside to dry. Cut off ends of apple, and cut into 4 pieces. Add sugar. (I added 1 cup per quart of apples.) Mix sugar and let sit for 15 minutes. Squeeze apples to get as much juice as possible out. Strain liquid. I put the wine in quart jars and have them sitting out to ferment. It needs heat, but not direct sunlight. [Then throw a party!]

.....

The nut contains the same ingredient, *urushiol*, that makes poison ivy toxic. The resin also gives some people rashes. But there are recipes online for roasting them, so if you want to try making roasted cashews, knock yourself out!



photo above by Renie Brady



contributed by Renie Brady with information from Linda DeGirolamo photos by Gina McCarthy

## other things to do with cashews

You can also make a non-fermented juice — here's a recipe from online and it looks pretty good:

1. Remove nut and cut cashew apples in quarters. Blend in blender until liquid.
2. Pour blended liquid into strainer and mash down with the back of a spoon until only cashew fibers remain. Remove fibers from strainer and repeat.
3. Pour into pitcher and add water and sugar to taste.
4. Add ginger ale for fizz, or mix it half-and-half with beer.

You can eat the fruit if you want, just cut off the tip and suck out the juice.



## Volunteers Help BIB Escape Fire

photos by Jenny Lodes

Springtime in Belize is "fire season" when farmers slash and burn to remove vegetation. Some farmers don't observe the laws mandating firebreaks and attending the fire, which can cause runaway fires which threaten the forest and homes. In March, BIB was seriously threatened by fire and only the dedicated action of BIB homeowners and our



Firefighters celebrate putting the fire out

generous Belizean neighbors averted a catastrophe. Our thanks to these hardworking people who used water trucks, shovels, rakes and sticks on the fire's leading edge to put it out before it could cause damage to dwellings. Gina and Sue are working on a Fire Safety Plan.

contributed by Renie Brady

## The Container Home Saga



Doug and Jenny dig out the crane site

We all scratched our heads when we heard someone was going to build a home at BIB out of shipping containers. It's gonna be hot when the sun hits the metal, we said. It'll get rusty. Too many echoes in a tin can, we said. And how on earth would they ever get the containers out here over Hydro Road. Besides, the big crane will never

make it up the road — the previous crane to come out here rolled off into the ditch belly up. It'll never work, we said.

And it seemed as though we were right, as delay after delay, lost containers, iffy container procurers, dwindling resources and time made a dent in DeGirolamo enthusiasm.

The homeowners Doug and Linda DeGirolamo (and for awhile Bev, Linda's mom) camped out in Chris and Melissa's home waiting, waiting. But Doug, who had designed the container home, built the pillars to support it, dug out the hole (with help from Jenny) for the crane to sit in while it lifted the containers into place, and did all his engineering

research, had no doubts.

Finally, the big day came. Two semis arrived, each loaded

down with two containers. The huge, 150' boom crane slowly lumbered through the gate. They positioned themselves next to the DeGirolamo Lot #47, and with an audience of still-dubious onlookers, the crane hooked cables to the corners of the four containers (plus one already at the site), and lifted them, one by one, straight up and high above the treetops, lowering them into place on the pillars with spot-on precision.

Somewhat sheepishly, the doubters congratulated Doug and Linda, and the containers are now being slowly cut and welded into shape.

Doug has been joined in his tasks by Susanne Jefferson, and Marvin McCarthy. When asked what tasks are being done he said "Electrical, plumbing, cementing, solar, painting and getting ready for the NASA astronaut test."

I guess that just about says it all!



photos by Renie Brady



contributed by Renie Brady

## Places to Rent at Better in Belize

Where can you stay if you want to spend some time at BIB but don't have a house here? There are several B&Bs and many variations of service right here in the community, from totally hands-off – you cook and do for yourself – to all-meals-provided and activities arranged.

Prices and availability vary widely. Additional lodging can be found at Martz Farm two miles back toward Benque from BIB. If you don't mind the drive, there is also lodging in Benque and San Ignacio.

Here are some of the options available at BIB. Check the BIB Owners Website for more information:

<http://bibowners.com/category/rental-information/>

### Casa Gala - Lot 68

\$150usd per night, 2 bedrooms \$300usd per night  
\$15 per adult meal.

<https://www.junglesplashes.com>



### Casa Santa Maria - Lot 127

\$129usd per night based on double occupancy  
Includes breakfast - optional meals also available

[www.CSMbelize.com](http://www.CSMbelize.com) - <https://www.airbnb.ca/rooms/6775096>



### Casa Tropical Howler Hill - Lot 77

\$105usd per night based on double occupancy  
Breakfast upon request at US\$25 per adult

Contact: [millerkathiem@hotmail.com](mailto:millerkathiem@hotmail.com)



### Toucan House Eco-Lodge - Lot 2

\$85usd (winter) \$49usd (summer) room/night.

Meal option \$50usd daily for 3 home-cooked meals.

<http://www.betterinbelize.com/the-toucan-house.html> – [april123@sympatico.ca](mailto:april123@sympatico.ca)



### Jungle Escape Belize - Lot 97

\$85usd (winter) \$65usd (summer) double occupancy  
Minimum 2 night stay, enquire for weekly or longer  
meals available on request

Contact: [ritamartin@sasktel.net](mailto:ritamartin@sasktel.net)



## CPR/First Aid Certification Class



Marvin, Linda & Miriam Martinez practice CPR



Gina studies her dummy

In late May, three BIB residents, Linda DeDGirolamo, Marvin McCarthy and Gina McCarthy took a CPR/First Aid course hosted by Martz Farm.

The comprehensive class was taught by Brion Young of Cayo CPR/First Aid Plus. Over the course of the day they learned adult and infant CPR, the Heimlich Maneuver, identifying poisonous snake bites, various types of bleeding, and procedures to control this. They also learned about splinting broken bones, wound care, burn situations, emergency assessment, snake bite procedures, resetting dislocated joints, severe injury procedures and much more. They are now well prepared to offer First Aid or CPR if needed.



Marvin is given a sling.

Said Gina "This by far was the best course I have ever taken. It was the most comprehensive and the most enjoyable."

Gina is the BIB Safety Committee Chair and Linda is on the committee as well. Together,



Instructor Brion shows how to treat a gash.

This newsletter needs volunteers to contribute info about the sports, outings, home building, gardening, and activities we engage in here at BIB – kayaking, hiking, potlucks, bonfires, pontooning, music nights, etc. Please consider contributing news and information about interesting things about BIB, Belize and whatever else strikes your fancy. If others don't contribute, it's all just going to be stuff I happen across or am interested in, written with my viewpoint and opinions. It's up to you.

You don't have to be a great writer to contribute. Polished pieces would be welcome, but so are simple notes and observations. Let us know what's happening in your neck of the jungle. Suggest topics. Ask questions. Share what you know. This newsletter goes out to people here at BIB but also to owners who may not hear about BIB any other way, and we'd like to encourage them to join us in the adventure.

Thanks to all of you who contributed to this quarterly newsletter. Send your current events, tips, information, interesting facts, photos, stories, B&B listings and anything else you want to see in future newsletters to:

Renie, at [irene@natureworkspress.com](mailto:irene@natureworkspress.com).

This BIB Newsletter was assembled by Renie Brady, #7-Casa de la Tierra, 10½ Hydro Road, Benque Viejo, Cayo, Belize

they're in the process of assembling the BIB Community First Aid Kit which will contain the necessary equipment and supplies to meet various situations and make residents of BIB as prepared as possible for any emergency.

We are in good hands.



Selva Martinez, above, and Miriam Martinez, below, help the instructor demonstrate first aid.



photos by Gina McCarthy



article contributed by Gina McCarthy

## Belizean Holidays ~ Mark Your Calendar!

Tue.	Jan 1	New Year's Day
Mon.	Mar. 11	National Heroes and Benefactors Day
Fri.	Apr. 19	Good Friday
Sat.	Apr. 20	Holy Saturday
Mon.	Apr. 22	Easter Monday
Wed	May 1	Labour Day
Mon.	May 27	Sovereign's Day/Commonwealth Day
Tue.	Sept. 10	St. George's Caye Day
Mon.	Sept. 23	Independence Day
Mon.	Oct, 14	Pan American Day
Tue.	Nov. 19	Garifuna Settlement Day
Wed.	Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Thur.	Dec. 26	Boxing Day