



# Río Muchacho Organic Farm



**Río Muchacho Organic Farm** sits on 11 green hectares in a small valley on the coast of Ecuador, 15 minutes from the popular beach town of Canoa. It has been developed as a sustainable farm and learning center based on *agroecology* and *permaculture* principles.

The property has areas of food forests in addition to a large vegetable garden, pasture and agroforestry areas, models of alternative energy, rotational animal raising areas and a meditation/yoga garden overlooking the river. There are over a hundred crops rotated throughout the year, and the farm is home to many pigs, chickens, dogs, ducks, cats, goats, composting worms, cows, guinea pigs and horses.



There is accommodation for around 50 people in creatively built rooms and cabañas, with one to ten beds which house guests such as Ecuadorian students, short and long term volunteers (both national and foreign), tourists, volunteer groups, and permaculture students. The farm also has a workshop, where visitors have the opportunity to make crafts with local materials.

Visitors to the farm come to just enjoy the peace of the countryside, the local culture, fresh organic food and sustainable living or to do one of the tours or programs offered by the farm. Ecotourism is an important component which helps support the community environmental education and the farm offers fun 1-3 day tours, Spanish courses and cultural exchanges which include a bit of everything.

The farm has an important role in education and three times a year, an intensive one month Permaculture Design course is offered, along with 1-14 day courses for local farmers, students and teachers.

There is always a colorful blend of locals, tourists, students and volunteers sharing their skills and abilities.

## Organic Farming and Permaculture

We consider *organic farming* a philosophy as well as a practice. It does not only mean that crops are cultivated without the use of agricultural chemicals, but that the farm develops a natural equilibrium so it does not need the use of any of these kinds of sprays.

To achieve this, the principles of organic farming should be followed. We work to return all organic material to the soil and NEVER burn. Organic matter is the most important part of organic agriculture so feeding the soil, not the plant is key. Healthy soil grows healthy plants which contribute to the growth of healthy people.



*Permaculture* means permanent, sustainable culture and land use. It is a design system based on common sense, logic, energy conservation and optimum use of all components. It involves linking alternative technologies with animals, crops, architecture and social structures, to create a sustainable system of interaction between humans, animals, plants and the Earth.

Our composting toilets, banana circles and water recycling systems, along with other alternative energy solutions and farming techniques, are some examples of Permaculture.

# Environmental Community Primary School



As in many parts of the world, here there is an urgent need for education that not only prepares children for future employment, but prepares them with good human values and teaches them to responsibly manage the natural resources that they will be entrusted with.

The creation of Río Muchacho Community Environmental School was in response to the lack of an adequate educational institution and the urgent need for environmental education. Work to create the school began in 1992 and 1993 was the first school year.

Each year there are between 35-45 students, pre-school to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There are 3 teachers who teach several grades each.

The curriculum is based on the national model, but is carried out with alternative teaching methods. The aim is for the classes to be more practical and creative, and incorporating human values and environmental issues as an integral part of learning.

The theoretical class structures are complemented with practical work. The environmental education focuses on issues affecting the children's immediate



environment e.g. care of the river, deforestation, erosion and non-sustainable agricultural practices.

Within the school grounds the children have a tree nursery, and each year they produce fruit and forest trees. The students learn about growing vegetables and practice growing them in the school gardens. Composts are made for use in the vegetable garden and nursery. A lot of emphasis is put on rubbish management and separation; the organic goes either to the compost toilet, the garden compost or the banana circle; the little inorganic waste produced by the school is reused or taken for disposal.



## TOURS AND PROGRAMS

1. Tours of one, two or three days
2. Spanish courses: 1-3 weeks
3. Cultural exchange programs for foreign students
4. One-month intensive course in Permaculture and Organic Farming
5. Group volunteer projects
6. Volunteer program for individuals
7. Eco-camps for Children
8. Training programs for local community groups in organic agriculture, rural tourism and environmental education.
9. Adventure and relaxation for school groups, and local companies
10. Accommodation and organic meals in a tranquil environment

## CONTACT RIO MUCHACHO:

[www.RioMuchacho.com](http://www.RioMuchacho.com)



[info@RioMuchacho.com](mailto:info@RioMuchacho.com)



[Facebook.com/RioMuchacho](https://Facebook.com/RioMuchacho)



[RioMuchacho.Wordpress.com](http://RioMuchacho.Wordpress.com)



[Twitter.com/RioMuchacho](https://Twitter.com/RioMuchacho)