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Session n°21:

Advancing agroecology for Caribbean SMEs

Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

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Coco Hill Forest Regenerative Agroforestry

Soil Regeneration, Forest Restoration and Agroecological Resilience in Barbados

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IICA & COLEAD Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

What We Inherited: The Cost of Conventional Practices

Contextualising the Caribbean Agroecological Shift

Soil Degradation

Severe land slippage and topsoil loss across the Scotland District demands urgent intervention

Loss of Biodiversity / Ecological Imbalance

Deforestation, monoculture sugar farming, and introduced species disrupted native species balance, straining natural ecosystems

Import Dependency

Decline in local production left Barbados heavily reliant on imported food

Figure 1.

The Coco Hill Model

Design and Action

Macro Permaculture

Long-term forest design shapes the hillsides and manages water

Micro Syntropy

Rapid nutrient cycling and high-density crop production

Agritourism

Guided hikes and education to share regenerative practices with a growing community

Tertiary Production

Processing harvest into value-added products, creating export revenue

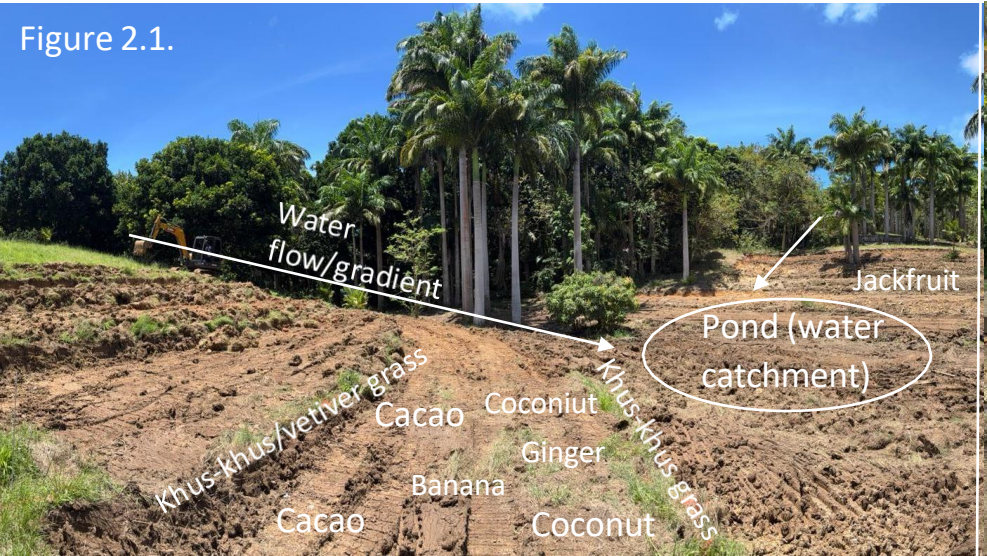



Figure 2.2.


Figure 2.3.

Regenerative Principles & Practices

12 years of restoring a fragile landscape

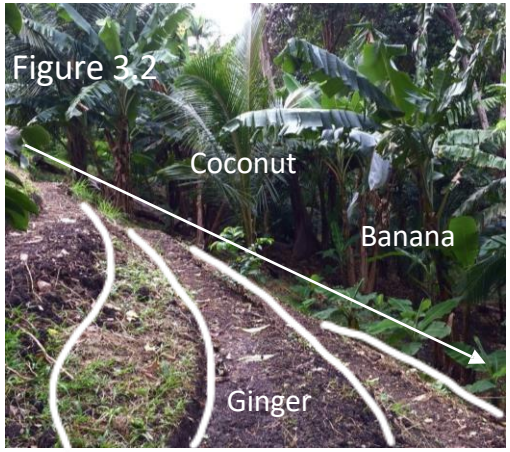
Principles

- Soil Regeneration
- Reforestation & biodiversity
- Food security & sovereignty
- Reversing the damage done by colonial-era sugar plantation monoculture

Soil building using cut and drop, composting and mulching in situ

Figure 3.1

Terrace, edge and multilayer farming



Water management with French drainage systems

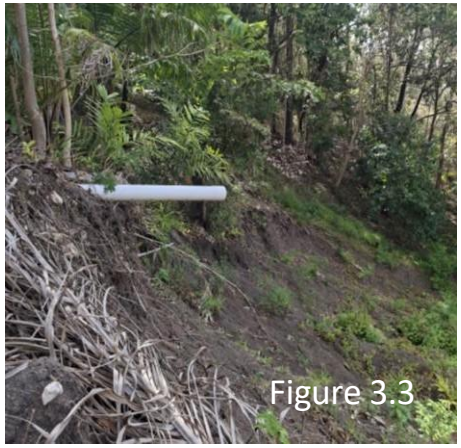


Figure 3.3

Coconut (and various plant) repository

Figure 3.4

Figure 3.5

What Changes When You Farm With the Land in Mind

Observed outcomes

Soil Health Improves

Visibly richer, darker soil — better texture, water drainage and microbial activity across the site.

Biodiversity Increases

More crop variety from food forest layering; increased birds, insects and natural pest regulation.

More Resilient Systems

The agroforest handles dry spells and heavy rain better than most monoculture farms

"The practices compound over time — each season the land gives more than the last."

Figure 4.1

Figure 4.3


Figure 4.3

Ongoing Challenges

Climatic, Economic, Structural and Social Barriers for Coco Hill Forest

Climate & Environmental

Economic

High upfront costs of transitioning from conventional systems

Consumer demand not yet matched by supply chains

Financial fragility from over-reliance on agrotourism revenue

Structural & Policy

Policy frameworks favouring conventional agriculture

Insufficient extension services for regenerative methods

Weak institutional support for agroecological research

Limited access to local agroecological training and certification

Social & Institutional

Loss of traditional land-based agricultural

Isolation as a single NGO without a broader national agroecology network

Systems change requires sustained effort before momentum builds

Agroecology as a Model for Caribbean SMEs

The Future of Local and Regional Food Systems

Knowledge Sharing & Community

Expanding research, data collection, and workshops to grow a network of regenerative islandwide and regionally

The Caribbean Has What It Needs

Our climate, biodiversity and traditional ecological knowledge are assets. Agroecology is a framework for activating what is already here

Agroecology

+

Agritourism

+

Tertiary Production

=

Ecological Recovery + Economic Viability

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Thank you

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