

EVERYBODY COOKS WITH BANANA VINEGAR IN THE CARIBBEAN

A TRIBUTE TO KOPALI ORGANICS

Bananas grow bountifully in Costa Rica, but because of the introduction of conventionally grown bananas into the market by large commercial companies, a sort of economic and agricultural warfare has been inspired in the region by demand for cheap, "perfect" bananas.

Results of large agribusiness in Costa Rica have been deforestation through clear-cutting and mass spraying of dangerous insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and chemical fertilizers. Crops are dusted regularly to insure perfect, yellow bananas that resist bruising. In these areas, increasing physical defects and cancer rates are major indications that crop dusting is causing serious health and environmental implications. Despite warnings that people should avoid the areas when low-flying crop dusters are spraying, residues are left behind and dusting occurs directly on top of schools and homes.

A few farmers have been holding out by taking care of naturally raised banana farms. Farmers of these small plantations are working to remodel area agroforests. Despite their efforts, these farmers are unable to compete with the large companies in any viable market.

The positive consequences of active organic farming co-operatives have been innovations in sustainable growing, and healthy crops and communities. Recently, a European co-op, Acapro, was created in hopes of establishing a more livable income for farmers of organic bananas, but has been able to only slightly affect prices. Kopali Organics has, in response, aided in the creation of a value-added, non-perishable product that is created inexpensively by the farmers themselves, packaged, and marketed in the U.S. for a reasonable profit for the farmers.

This product is Kopali's Organic Banana Vinegar – a 100% organic vinegar grown on living soil free of harmful chemicals. Sales of this product support the co-op and these farmers by offering a fair price, and introduce this delicious, healthy vinegar to Americans to enjoy.

In the creation of banana vinegar, the fruit sweats and ferments naturally once harvested and forms a banana wine, which further ferments into a smooth, fruity vinegar. Kopali has put great effort into aiding in the development of this product, investing over a year into its creation, approval by the U.S.D.A., packaging and distribution to Whole Foods Markets across the U.S.

From start to finish, the bananas are grown organically in the shade of fruit and rainforest trees. The nearly-finished fermented product is then sent the Costa Rican capital of San Jose where it is pasteurized and balanced for acidity. Here, it is bottled and shipped to the U.S. for labeling. Kopali worked with a Costa Rican artist to create an authentic, eye-catching package, which represents the beauty and culture of the region.

The co-op, which represents these small plantations, is working with farmers to support their own microbial testing. Thus far, the success of these natural rainforests rests on sales of banana vinegar to America through Kopali Organics and Whole Foods Market.

Organic Banana Vinegar has a tangy flavor enriched with the taste of fresh, tropical bananas. It is easy on the palette and makes a lively companion with salads, fruits and vegetables, such as cucumbers, avocados, and apples. Kopali's Organic Banana Vinegar also lends a tropical kick to marinades for pork and chicken.