



# Omaere

## Parque Etnobotánico

### Puyo Ecuador

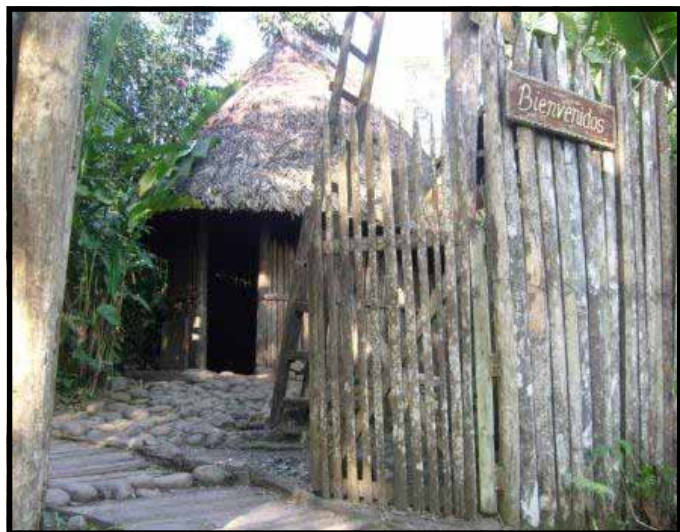
Welcome to the *Omaere "Omaero"*, a Newsletter for the friends of the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park (April 2009 - Puyo, Ecuador)

#### Inside the "Omaero"

- The new web page
- Ecological Toilets
- Natural Medicine
- The Morona Santiago Reserve
- The Omaere Foundation

On March 1, we celebrated five years of having recovered the Park from the hands of lawless indigenous leaders, and we figured it was about time to start something to try to keep in touch with the hundreds of visitors, volunteers, supporters, and friends that we have made over the years. In this, our first ever edition of the Omaero, you will read about our newest accomplishments.

In at nutshell ... The Park is doing well, receiving many students and tourists. Teresa Shiki, a Shuar woman, is treating many patients with the traditional



plants of her people. Chris is building more dry toilets and ironing out new designs. We have had many great interns

and volunteers. Also, Alan is in kindergarten and Janeth has a new baby (Felipe)!

### *¡New Omaere website comes online!*

We are proud to announce that the new Omaere website is online, [www.fundacionomaere.org](http://www.fundacionomaere.org), thanks to the help of Peace Corps volunteer, Matt Bare. Matt works in environmental programs in Puyo, teaching environmental education, working on networking with local NGOs, and helping out the Puyo Orchid Garden and Omaere.

We were also fortunate enough to have the help of a French volunteer, Patricia, giving three languages to choose

from. Omaere had a website in the past, but managed to get lost during the various changes over the years. In any case, the new one is much more up-to-date.

It includes all the topics we deal with in Omaere: visiting info, park location, natural medicine, indigenous cultures, and ecological toilets. It was a collaborative effort, with ideas and text from Chris, Teresa, Patricia and Matt, and with technical assistance from the Peace Corps network. Several people contributed photos.



#### *How can you help?*

Do you have a blog, website, or know someone who does? You can put a link to us on your blog or site and help increase publicity. Ever wondered why when you search on Google for Puyo, or some other location, you only get results of hotels and travel agencies, rather than small organizations or companies? That's because search engines give higher priority to the sites that are most popular and have more links, thus leaving out the smaller, more independent organizations. So put up a link for us, we'll give you a free cup of Guayusa next time you come to the park!

## Grand Opening of the *Omaere* Ecological Dry Toilet



Finally, Omaere's up-scale dry toilet is finished and is being used! This model, made out of ferrocement and ceramic tile, is located near the entrance to our park

in Puyo. The construction took longer than planned, given the semi-constant flow of visitors and patients, plus Chris was often busy building dry toilets elsewhere. We have worked hard to make this toilet as elegant as possible, so that users can see that urine-diverting dry toilets are a civilized and desirable option ...

***"We've worked hard to make this toilet as elegant as possible"***

and that it is feasible to live well without defecating in water. The bench and floors are made with beautiful "porcelanato" ceramic tiles, and there are actually two toilets: one for sitting and one for

squatting.

We would like to thank Alan, Andrea, Anna, Diego, Euclides, Florian, Fredy, Galo, Guenaël, Jeremy, Luis, Mary, Mateo, Miriam, Nadia and her boyfriend, Patricia, Tania, Tor, Valerie, and the participants from Venture Co. (who also helped with materials), as well as everyone else who made possible this dry toilet.

Ecological Dry Toilets allow us to return to the soil the nutrients in our excrement without transmitting diseases or producing bad odors, and without the need for water, chemicals or petroleum. On your next visit to Omaere, you will be able to contribute directly to the land! (Read more about it on the [Omaere web page](#).)



Andrea y Tania add the finishing touches to the toilet

### OTHER ECOSAN NEWS

During the last year, Chris has participated in the construction of several dry toilets, including

- Twelve with the local government of Rio Tigre, a community near the frontier of Peru, an hour flight into the jungle from Puyo. These toilets were made primarily out of local materials, with support from CODENPE, an Ecuadorian government department that does development projects with indigenous communities.
- Twelve in the Kichwa community of Cuya Loma, between Tena and Misahualli, in a project developed by the [NGO Global Pediatric Alliance](#).
- Seven in the fish ponds of Puerto El Salvador, inside the Ecological Reserve Manglares Churete, near Naranjal in the province of Guayas, organized by Peace Corps volunteer John Wilson.
- Three in the Damointaro Waorani

Community, including some very simple and easy models that are nonetheless very effective. The effort was organized by the Oxford anthropologist, Laura Rival. (Chris was also given the Wao name of "Nung-i".)

- Several more in various Shuar communities of Pastaza, directed by the [Shuar Community Health Project](#), a student run program from the University of California Berkeley.



Other communities that have contacted us about building ecological dry toilets, and for whom we are looking for collaboration and funding include:

- The local government of Shell, who wish to build 400 toilets, especially in the watershed above the public swimming areas.
- The upper watershed of the Rio Puyo, which provides drinking water to the city of Puyo.
- Various rural Shuar and Kichwa communities in Pastaza.
- The community of Union y Progreso, in the buffer zone of the Reserve Rio Bigal and the National Park Sumaco Napo Galeras, in the northern Amazon region.
- San Jose de Chamanga, a town of 5,000 fishermen without potable water, on the edge of the Cojimies wetlands in Esmeraldas, on the coast of Ecuador.

People that are interesting in collaborating in one way or another with the construction of ecological dry toilets are more than welcome. Ecological dry toilets could also serve as an excellent thesis study for university students, focusing on the contribution that dry toilets can make to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce chemical fertilizer use, and reduce energy use in the treatment of waste? water. Read more on Chris's blog at [inodoroseco.blogspot.com](#)

## Teresa treats patients around Ecuador

Using traditional medicines and treatments of the Shuar culture, Teresa is constantly receiving patients both local and foreign. Some of the most common conditions include kidney problems, diabetes, and fertility problems, but recently an exceptional case has found its way to Teresa. In 2008, Arnaud, a young man from Macas (a city three hours south of Puyo) was involved in a car accident and suffered massive body trauma, and was left paraplegic and unable to feel or move his body from the neck down. Months of treatment in a public hospital in Quito did little for him, except debilitate his immune system and make his recovery more difficult. The patient is Shuar and his family

had heard of a Shuar woman who worked with traditional medicine in Puyo. They came to ask for Teresa's help, and she began to treat the patient using medicinal Amazonian plants.

Now, after a few months of treatment, Arnaud can now feel his whole body and has regained about 30% of the movement of his arms. He also has more energy to eat and continue his physical therapy. The majority of the remedies that Teresa has been using for this patient come in the form of juices, teas and decoctions that he

drinks, although she also applies plants in poultices. These treatments come from a combination of plants, one of which is Escancel (*Alternanthera* sp.). Teresa plans to continue working



with this patient until he fully recovers and can resume walking normally. Read more about natural medicine in Omaere on the [Omaere website](#).



*"Omaere"  
means  
"nature of the  
rainforest"  
in the  
indigenous  
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language*

### The Morona Santiago Reserve

The Omaere Foundation has acquired a rainforest reserve of 200 hectares, located in the south-eastern edge of Ecuador, near the border with Peru and the community of San José de Morona. We hope to develop low-impact ecotourism and an indigenous Shuar natural health center (open to all patients with interest in natural treatments). The reserve is important for biodiversity conservation and is open to scientific investigation. This reserve, with its beautiful primary rainforest, lakes, and corresponding wildlife, is located on the banks of the Río Kankaim (also known as the Río Morona).

In order for us to advance with this reserve, we are looking for collaborative partners, such as NGOs, universities, tour operators, and interested individuals. Neighboring Shuar communities are also very interested in participating in this project. More information can be found on the [Morona Reserve](#) website.



**Land for Sale** — The Fundación Omaere is selling two parcels of land that had previously been used for projects.

1. Cotacachi, Imbabura, in the Sierra region of Ecuador: half a hectare of arable land, ponds, reforestation area, and dry toilet, located in the Barrio Cushcagua, on the banks of the Río Pitzambiche.
2. Tena, Napo, in the Oriente region: two large lots located in the Barrio Pepita de Oro, close to the Río Tena and the swimming area "Las Sogas."

*Prices are negotiable.*

Omaere "Omaero"

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Omaere  
Puyo, Ecuador

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## More info for the Walk in Parque *Omaere*

*We have written out the basic text of information to be imparted to tourists during the walk in Omaere, for new guides to study. Eventually, we want to complete this document with illustrations, scientific names, and bibliographic and internet citations, to be able to publish it and offer it to our visitors. (Many thanks to Matt and Carmen for the impulse to get this done.)*

## Future Improvements for *Omaere*

We would like to carry out the following works in Omaere, when we achieve the necessary resources and manpower. We are always open to work with volunteers, please email [omaere@gmail.com](mailto:omaere@gmail.com) with questions. Inquire at [omaere@gmail.com](mailto:omaere@gmail.com) as well about making donations.

- Placement of crushed rock on our most visited trails, with edges of large round river rocks.
- Recover some trails that are overgrown and establish new trails in the eastern part of the Park.
- Prepare a proper place where Teresa and other traditional specialists may attend to patients with natural medicine.
- Improve the housing for staff and volunteers.
- Install rainwater capture and storage to provide excellent quality water and disconnect ourselves from the municipal water system. (This is more feasible now that we have our Ecological Dry Toilets working, since water consumption is thus reduced to about half.)
- Build a stronger fence and gate at the entrance (about 30 meters), possibly in ferrocement with the same palm wood being visible.
- Build once again the Waorani and Zápara houses.



Link to us!

[www.fundacionoamere.org](http://www.fundacionoamere.org)



## The Fundación *Omaere*

**Omaere** means "nature of the rainforest," in the Waorani language, one of the indigenous groups of the Ecuadorian Amazon. The Park and the Foundation were founded in 1993 by Teresa Shiki, an indigenous Shuar woman, together with two French women, on a 15-hectare parcel of land purchased in the outskirts of Puyo. Then they started planting the most important plants to Amazonian Indians and constructing traditional houses, where visitors can learn about how people live and use plants in the Amazon. Up to 10,000 people visit us each year, the majority being Ecuadorians, making Omaere one of the most important places where people can easily and economically learn about Amazonian plants and people. The Omaere Foundation is directed by Teresa Shiki (president, 593 80330383, [tereshiki@yahoo.es](mailto:tereshiki@yahoo.es)) and Chris Canaday (vice president, 593 85250864, [omaere@gmail.com](mailto:omaere@gmail.com)).