



## **CASITA VERDE GUIDELINES**

### **WHAT IS CASITA VERDE?**

Casita Verde is an ecological centre in Ibiza, the official headquarters of the Association Ibiza Ecologic and could be described as an 'Experiential centre for the study and application of permaculture techniques'. It is situated in and around a rented house, near the highest point of a beautiful valley in the municipality of San Jose on the Mediterranean island of Ibiza. The property has a distant sea view towards the setting sun and many traditional features of typical Ibicencan landscape.

Since the foundation of Casita Verde in 1993, the original farm and outhouses have been gradually transformed by a group of international volunteers, from a small country dwelling with over 5 hectares of land, into a fully functional and modern environmental education facility. With a growing number of supporters from all over the world, Casita Verde presents many opportunities to see and feel how a more sustainable way of life is within reach of every one of us.

### **WHAT IS IBIZA ECOLOGIC?**

Ibiza Ecologic, was founded in January 1996, as a non-profit association based at the model ecology centre Casita Verde. The group is devoted to demonstrating sustainable lifestyle techniques in harmony with their surroundings, just as the island once enjoyed in its pre-tourism history. The Association offers an interesting opportunity to visit an active ecological centre, where visitors can see in a direct and amusing form that a more sustainable lifestyle is not only desirable but also possible. Using a blend of modern technology and green philosophy, the association believes that the islands of Ibiza & Formentera could easily become a centre for innovative initiatives, including a great reduction in our dependency on fossil fuels and the subsequent pollution of our planet.

## **WHAT IS GREENHEART?**

The Greenheart which we use as our main emblem, is a symbol of our love and respect for the planet Earth. It was first introduced as a car sticker in 2001, but has since become an expanding movement, spreading from the Casita Verde into other continents. In the USA for example, the Greenheart is extensively used by the non for profit companies 'Greenheart Exchange, Greenheart Travel, Greenheart, Shop and Greenheart Connects', based in Chicago. It also appears in the registered logo of the Casita Verde centres, which are being developed in various parts of Europe.

## **OUR GENERAL PHILOSOPHY**

Many human beings are seeking to reconnect with mother Earth again, after discovering the futility of modern western lifestyles. Our main intention here at Casita Verde is to show others what we have learned collectively in our search for a greater understanding and respect for our environment, as well as towards each other. This initiative is very likely to take many of us to a whole new level of social consciousness, as well as positively changing our future possibilities to live in harmony with our beautiful world.

## **WORKING IN COMMUNAL PROJECTS AT CASITA VERDE**

There's always lots to do at Casita Verde regarding the improvement of its facilities, plus the constant maintenance of existing installations and extensive gardens. However, there are also less physical jobs like:

designing new ideas for environmental education programmes

preparing artistic materials for events

computer and office work

researching and translating

learning & exchanging healthy cooking skills...

As a resident volunteer we require a minimum 5 hours work a day commitment, except in the case of special fundraising events, where depending on the kind of event being undertaken, we may request an additional effort from our volunteers. In some cases, we may allocate some pocket money to the volunteers involved, depending on the quantity of funds raised and the efforts made.

Generally, there is a level of flexibility with working times, hence each volunteer can arrange their own work time to better suit their needs and availability. However, this would need to be discussed with the directors first in order to be coordinated.

It is of course necessary that each volunteer makes a daily effort to participate in one or more of the current work projects, in order for the centre to continue its natural evolution.

Please check the jobs list with the coordinators and choose something you are willing and able to do.

If you leave the premises, please tell someone else so at least one person knows you are out.

During the volunteer exchange, we offer practical knowledge of the following:

- constructing alternative living spaces with recuperated (upcycled) materials
- Living in an international ecological community
- Study and application of permaculture techniques
- Production and presentation of healthy food
- Building and renovation with recuperated materials
- Water conservation and recycling techniques
- Alternative energy use and systems maintenance
- Participation in a variety of current 'Greenheart' projects
- Discussion and debate on relevant environmental subjects
- Operation of a weekly open day event at the "Casita Verde" model Ecological centre, which we hope will give everyone a chance to demonstrate their imagination, skills and interest.

In order for the centre to function economically, we all collaborate throughout the weekly fundraising event each Sunday, including the pre-preparation of food on Saturday afternoons where necessary. We take Mondays off and then do an average of five hours per day Tuesday to Saturday. A weekly tour with the whole crew and an orientation meeting upon arrival should ensure that you understand what we are trying to achieve, as well as decide what you can offer and where you would like to participate.

Normally, a two week probation period is followed by an assessment meeting, where both the volunteer and the core team at Casita Verde can discuss the possibilities of an ongoing volunteer programme, always depending on the current needs of the centre and the capabilities of the individual concerned.

### **GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND ORDER OF CENTRE:**

As well as the fact that we are open to the public on Sundays and that school visits are scheduled throughout the academic year, we also receive many unexpected visits. It is therefore essential to maintain all spaces clean and tidy **AT ALL TIMES**. This means that residents and visitors must keep their own spaces in good order as well as assist in maintaining the order of common spaces such as kitchens, showers, toilets, sitting rooms, garden areas etc... Please think about cleaning up for the benefit of our general image and encourage others to keep the centre in a presentable condition too. Residents may also wish to adopt a particular place and volunteer to maintain it as we would like our visitors to find it!

### **DOUBTS**

In case of any doubts, please ask!

### **DECISION PROCESS.WEEKLY MEETINGS AND OFFICIAL ASSEMBLIES**

There is a process of decision making based on guidelines established by the Coordinating Center and a number of other areas which are still a participatory process that includes volunteers.

### **DAILY COORDINATION MEETINGS:**

These meetings between all residents are held every morning to discuss challenges, find corresponding solutions, and plan the schedule of tasks and projects for the day. Typically they will take place at 9.30am from Tuesday to Friday and we do everything we can to ensure that we all feel comfortable with each other and every voice is heard. We also meet briefly every Saturday morning at 10am to plan the shopping and again on Sunday to organize the open day event.

### **COORDINATORS MEETINGS:**

Weekly meetings are held between the coordinators of the center to discuss the progress of current projects, event planning, volunteer applications and strategic decisions.

Volunteer residents should follow the strategic guidelines established, but will also be invited to provide input and suggestions based on a constant process of improvement without a commitment by the Coordinating Center to implement in the current year.

## **OFFICIAL MEETING AND ASSEMBLIES:**

All members are invited to partake in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association & any other official meetings that are held.

Other meetings are possible, whenever the necessity arises. These are usually held in the evening in a comfortable place and are designed to solve conflicts or to re-establish the harmony of the group.

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:**

All resident volunteers are expected to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to both the environment, the center and the people you have to live and work with.

In the case of a conflict, it is suggested to treat it first among the affected people and try to find a solution, then if this is not possible, you should contact the Coordinators of the center who will then allocate a facilitator or mediator.

This promotes the concept of "speaking your truth", so we encourage residents to volunteer to speak frankly and express their feelings as a means to identify situations that can be problematic and seek solutions from the point of sincerity and respect avoiding any violent or aggressive behaviour. Also, we suggest writing a letter or email as a means of expression, when for example verbal communication is not possible in the first instance.

## **FOOD, DRINK AND EATING TIMES:**

In order to save time, energy & resources, food is available three times per day. For financial reasons, a prudent use of food resources is greatly appreciated.

Breakfast 08:30 – 10.00

Lunch 14:00 - 16:00

Dinner 20:00 – 22:00

\* To avoid discomfort or noise in the morning is set 8.30 as the time to start breakfast with some exceptions such as travel or meetings first thing in which case the coordinator is required to indicate in advance.

The food made in the center is generally vegetarian. If you suffer from allergies or intolerance to food or product must be communicated to the Coordinating team prior to arrival.

Since we are trying to demonstrate that ecology really can work to improve our collective environmental impact, we do not buy meat or meat products for consumption at the centre. We also avoid buying processed and over packaged

foods, as the act of buying such products is in itself a way of supporting those industries which are destroying our environment. When someone goes shopping, they search for mainly fresh, unwrapped products whenever this is possible. Containers are taken to the shops to be filled with loose products like fruit and vegetables etc and care is taken to choose as many natural foods as there are available, as well as local fruits and vegetables in season. We tend to always choose glass bottles instead of plastic when available and if it is necessary to buy pre-packaged food, we try to find containers which can be reused in some way or another.

## **THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

We must show the world that we can live healthier and more environmentally by following our own philosophy, we therefore avoid the excessive consumption of alcohol and chemical drugs that have done so much harm to the health of the human race.

## **ANIMALS**

We love animals, but prefer the volunteer residents do not bring pets as a general rule. However, possible exceptions should be discussed with the Coordinator of the center before arriving.

## **ORGANIC CLEANING PRODUCTS**

In the center, we use organic products such as toothpaste, shower gels, soaps etc, so please do not use non-organic products in the center. We like to stay free from harmful agents as far as possible, so that the recycling of water does not lead to soil contamination. If in doubt, please ask coordinators for advice.

## **ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION**

While the center has a small vegetable garden during the winter months and has many carob, olive, almond and fig trees, plus some lemons and oranges etc, it is not considered as a farm for food production or for organic farming on a larger scale. We therefore rely on products bought or exchanged with our friends, neighbors and local markets.

## **RATIONAL USE OF WATER AT CASITA VERDE**

Islands are well known for their water shortages. We have no well at Casita Verde, so in recent years we have installed an 80 ton holding tank & rain-water collection system. Apart from the fact that we have to buy in extra water during the summer months, it is always a very good ecological practice to use as little as possible in our daily living routine. (Clean, drinkable water will become more scarce as the human

population increases, so it is an integral part of our general philosophy to conserve it as much as possible).

Of course, we all have to keep clean and fresh, wash our clothes and keep the gardens in a healthy condition. However, the following simple guide should be understood by all residents and visitors :-

- When having a shower you can reduce water wastage enormously by wetting your body, stopping the water, applying the soap, then finally rinsing yourself until clean.
- Grey water is re-used to water the vegetable gardens, therefore use only natural soap products which do not damage the plants!
- Used water from the kitchen is usually applied directly to plants that need to be watered but should not be thrown onto edible plants or obviously fragile ones which may be damaged by the quantity of soap in the water. Note: Try to water a different tree or different plants each day, so that they can all receive some benefit from our limited water supply.
- Use of the washing machine facility is normally limited to mornings alone to ensure sufficient hot water is available for afternoon showering.

## **RESPECT OF COMMUNAL EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS ETC**

The equipment and tools we possess have been donated to the centre over a period of years, together with all the pots, pans and plates etc. Please take care when using communal equipment and remember to return things to their correct place so that others can find them when necessary. If anything should accidentally get broken or does not function well, please report this to the directors as soon as possible, so that it can be repaired or replaced more quickly.

## **RATIONAL USE OF ENERGY**

We recommend making rational use of energy, with special attention to turning off computers and lights when not in use and rational use in the kitchen for example by heating water only as needed.

In the bottle house office, for example, please do not leave electronic equipment plugged in at night, without first consulting the coordinators..

It is normally recommended only to use the washing machine on sunny days, following the instructions given by the Coordinating Center.

## **REDUCING, RE-USING AND RECYCLING**

One of the basic ideas of Ecological Philosophy is to reduce our consumption and generation of waste. The ECO Toilet is a perfect example of this philosophy, since it is built using mainly recycled materials, does not use water and instead of generating a toxic waste product, it actually produces one cubic metre of useful organic fertilizer every three to four months.

Striving to minimize waste going to landfill, we have installed various systems of selective recycling. Please make yourself aware of which containers are for which material and help wherever possible to ensure that visitors to the centre follow the same system.

## **TRANSPORT – TO AND FROM CASITA VERDE**

Residents and visitors should try to avoid unnecessary motorized journeys. Coordinating our movements, we can make the best use of each trip, so that everything which needs to be brought to or taken from the centre, is done with a minimum effect on the environment. This also means sharing transport systems, offering to do errands whenever possible & generally being conscious of our need to become more efficient.

For your information, vehicles belonging to the association are only available to directors and long-term residents, although we do have a selection of bicycles for the use of volunteers.

## **FINANCE**

The Casita Verde is mainly financed by the donations received during our Sunday fundraising events. We also receive donations from various sponsors, plus we receive revenue in the form of donations from students who come to participate in our Eco-ability course advertised on our main website, or via the growing number of companies offering volunteering experiences.

With the intention of reducing our impact on the environment, as well as improving our economic performance, we strive to maintain what we have in good condition, re-use as much as possible, as well as supporting and participating in local trading schemes.

**VISITORS @ CASITA VERDE SHOULD READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES, THEN SIGN THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AFTER ARRIVING AT THE CENTRE.**

Volunteer Ibiza Ecologic Team