

# Newsletter

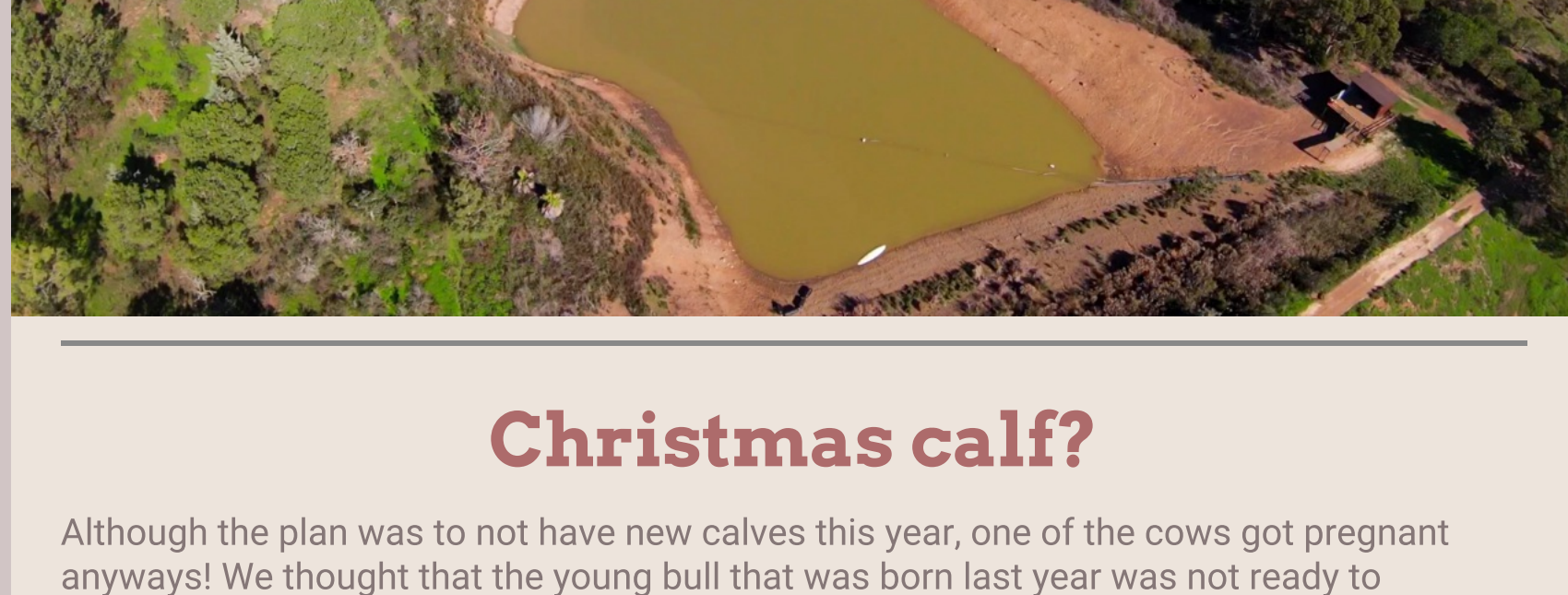


Dear reader,  
The upcoming Christmas and the New Year make us slow down and reflect on everything that has happened this last year. This newsletter is a glimpse into the main developments at Vinha Velha.

**Important:** It could be that you can't see the whole newsletter as an email or maybe you can't see all the pictures. If so, please click the link at the bottom to open it in a new window.

## A rainy winter.. So far so good!

In our last newsletter we mentioned the extreme dry situation at Vinha Velha – a cycle with few rain that had been continuing for some years. This summer the situation was so pressing that the vegetable production was scaled down drastically. Well, this winter fortunately is different from last one. We've had quite some good rains: so far we measured as much rain as the whole last winter (300ml) and we still have January and February to come! The newly dug lake is fully functioning and water is pumped up to the bigger lakes to slowly fill them up, but this will still take some time. We are not out of trouble yet, but there is good hope for more water to get through the dry summer.



## Christmas calf?

Although the plan was to not have new calves this year, one of the cows got pregnant anyways! We thought that the young bull that was born last year was not ready to reproduce yet- did he prove us wrong! He impregnated one of the cows, and she is carrying longer than expected already- maybe we'll have a Christmas calf!



## Agroforestry

### A new regenerative path

Mattie and his team of Restore Nature Foundation have been breeding on something. Their passion to regenerate ecosystems and activate people for this led them to dive into Syntropic Agroforestry. This approach offers potential solutions for the extreme conditions of Southern Portugal. It combines restoring the native forest ecosystem with producing a big variety of vegetables and fruits by growing vegetables and trees in the same planting bed. They are strategically placed, giving them all their most favourable conditions: considering the amount of light they thrive in, companion plants they like around them and their lifecycles. The ones with short lifecycles create the conditions for the ones with longer life cycles. The soil is covered at all times with a thick layer of fine organic material to prevent evaporation and protect and feed the life in the soil. The core idea is to observe and imitate the natural cycles of the ecosystem, like the indigenous tribes in the Amazon rainforest have been doing for a long time.



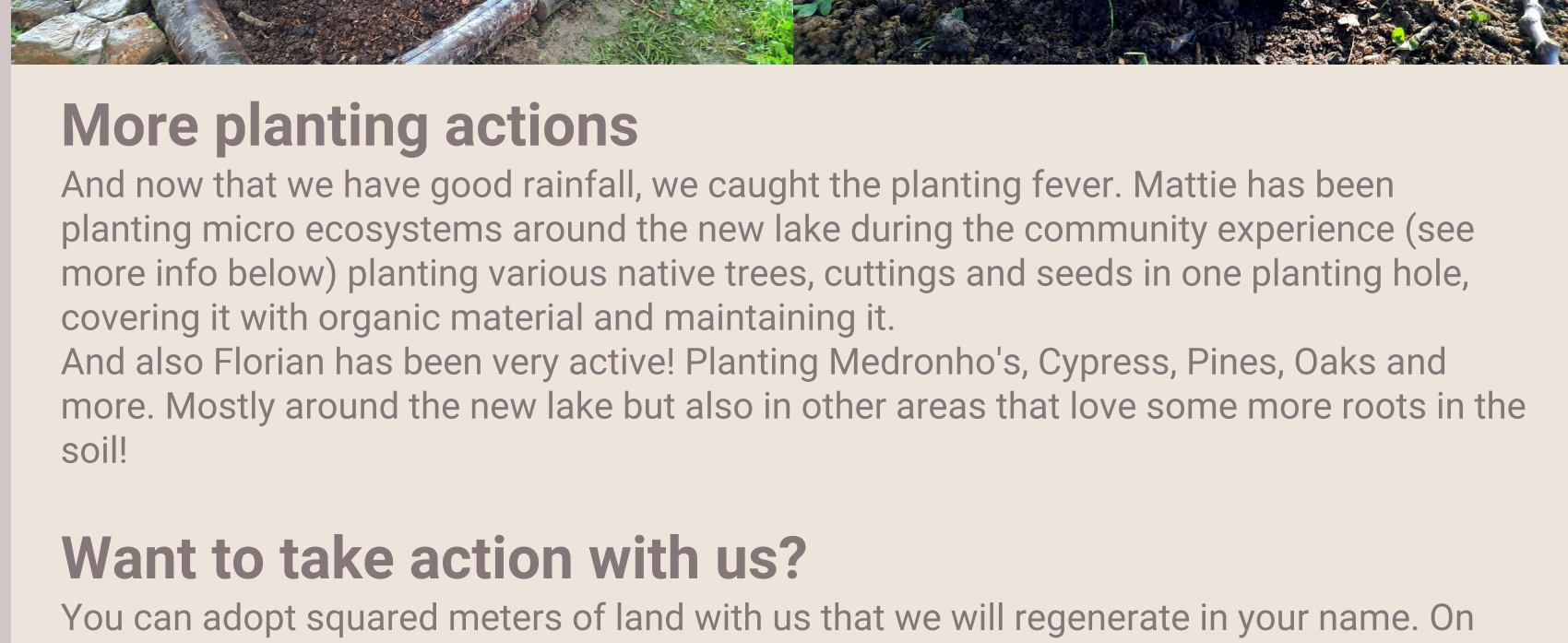
### Bringing this method to the Algarve!

Restore Nature Foundation organized a course in Syntropic Agroforestry at Vinha Velha in October to bring this method to the Algarve. Because apart from one course long ago at Vale da Lama, this method hasn't been properly introduced here yet. 16 people from far and close joined us, and also some of the Vinha Velha's crew participated in part of the course. It was great to tap into the potential and develop an educational agroforest that we will observe and manage closely.



### Regenerative planting workshops

Vinha Velha has been reshaping their garden setup, moving the main productive efforts to 'Area Nova' instead of spreading it out over all the different gardens. Last year a new piping system was installed here to optimize irrigation possibilities. Given the harsh sun and wind exposure in this area, Vinha Velha's crew and Mattie sat together around the regeneration table. Working out a plan to create 2 connected productive syntropic lines across the area that will also serve as a windbreak over time. On top of that, we will plant a thick line of native trees and shrubs in the Northwestern corner of the land. Protecting the land against sun and wind, experimenting with new methods and regenerating soil. Mattie is organizing regenerative planting workshops around the implementation



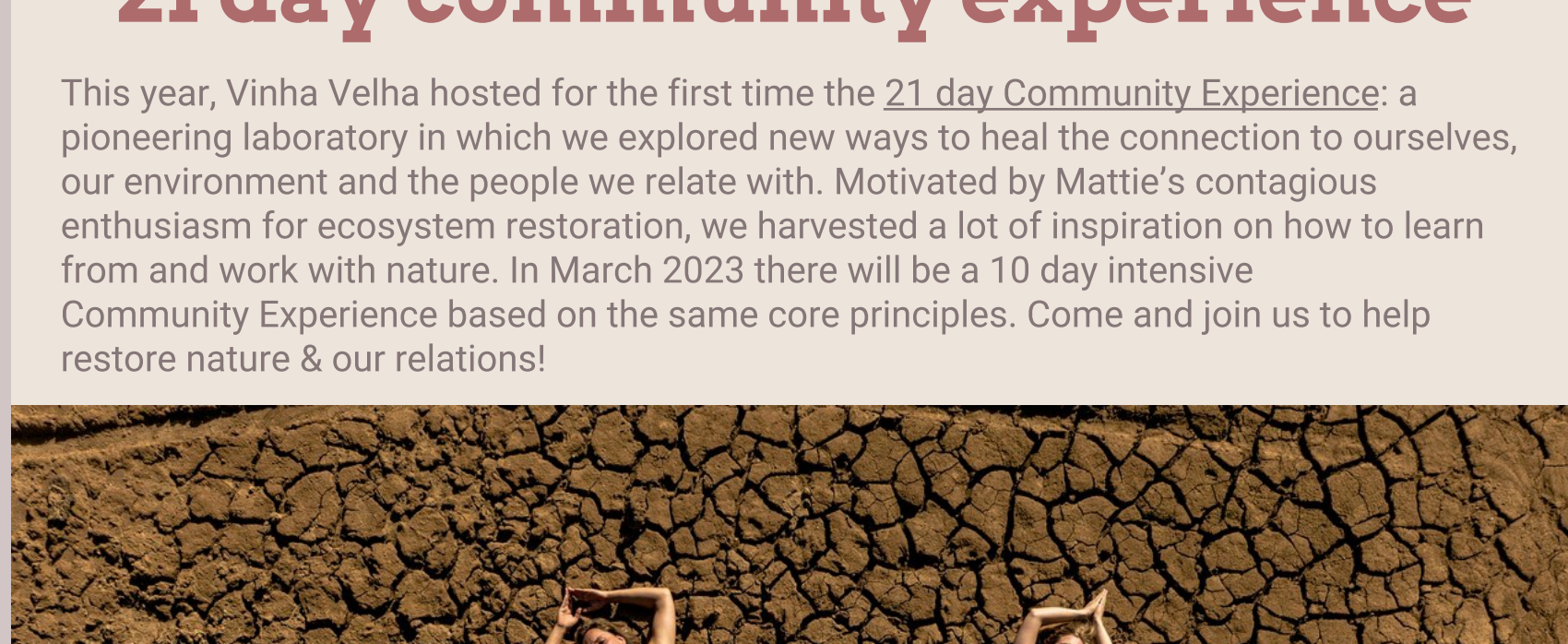
### More planting actions

And now that we have good rainfall, we caught the planting fever. Mattie has been planting micro ecosystems around the new lake during the community experience (see more info below) planting various native trees, cuttings and seeds in one planting hole, covering it with organic material and maintaining it. And also Florian has been very active! Planting Medronho's, Cypress, Pines, Oaks and more. Mostly around the new lake but also in other areas that love some more roots in the soil!

### Want to take action with us?

You can adopt squared meters of land with us that we will regenerate in your name. On every adopted meter we plant a small ecosystem with native trees, cuttings and seeds. We add compost and cover the soil around it and take care of it. See some examples below. Follow the link in the button below to take action!

Regenerate with us!



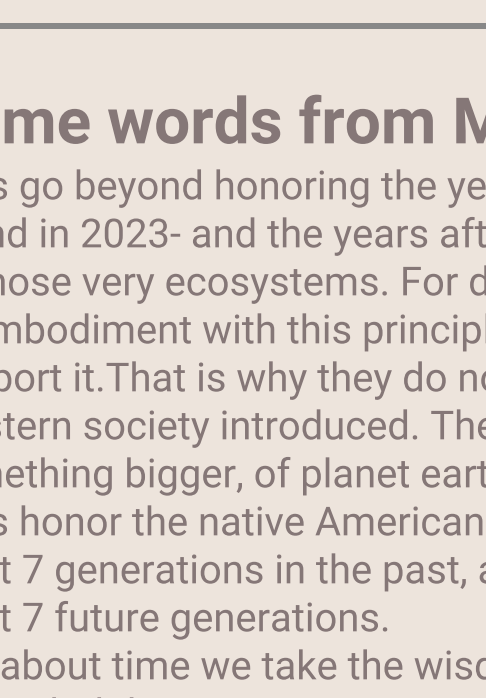
## 21 day community experience

This year, Vinha Velha hosted for the first time the 21 day Community Experience: a pioneering laboratory in which we explored new ways to heal the connection to ourselves, our environment and the people we relate with. Motivated by Mattie's contagious enthusiasm for ecosystem restoration, we harvested a lot of inspiration on how to learn from and work with nature. In March 2023 there will be a 10 day intensive Community Experience based on the same core principles. Come and join us to help restore nature & our relations!



## Food hub Colmeia

Vinha Velha's has become part of Colmeia Food network which means their products are now available in Vinha Velha's shop. Colmeia is a food resiliency project idealized by Cooperativa da Terra, developed for and by the local community. Colmeia is a community food 'warehouse', a non-profit initiative created to serve the western Algarve – Lagos, Vila do Bispo, Aljezur, Portimão. It is a structure focused on local circuits, which seeks to solve all the logistics related to the collection, storage, and distribution of products between producers, retailers, stores, and restaurants. We want to contribute to stimulating a more resilient local economy. For more info visit the [website](#)



**COLMEIA**

Distribution Network

### Some words from Mattie

Let's go beyond honoring the yearly Christmas tree. Let's honor forest ecosystems all year round in 2023- and the years after. And by doing so, honor ourselves, because we are part of those very ecosystems. For decades indigenous tribes in the Amazonian rainforest live in embodiment with this principle, being the ecosystem, fulfilling a vital role to always support it. That is why they do not even have a name for 'nature' - a concept that modern Western society introduced. These tribes live with the understanding that they are part of something bigger, of planet earth, or even of life itself. Let's honor the native American Lakota wisdom that looks to learn from the wisdom of at least 7 generations in the past, and takes decisions that improve the environment of at least 7 future generations. It is about time we take the wisdom of our planet seriously. Happy holidays!



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