



STINAPA INFORMATION

BONAIRE OR ARIZONA?

Last summer my brother and his family came to vacation with us. It was their first trip to Bonaire. They just loved the island, both the land as well as the underwater part. What caught their attention was the fact that Bonaire was much greener than they had expected. This was because some travel guides mention that Bonaire, with its many cacti and dry shrubs, looks like the state of Arizona. So they were expecting a savanna landscape. My brother visited in July, so he hasn't even seen Bonaire in the rainy season, when green shoots sprout out all over and the Kibrahacha lights up the landscape with its bright yellow flowers. Also because rain was abundant the last couple of years, Bonaire indeed looks extra green. Thank goodness. But will Bonaire look the same when today's children will be sixty years old? Probably not. How come? Bonaire is located in the 'Dry Tropics', just like Aruba and Curacao. That is very different than like in the Leeward Islands, which are in the 'Wet Tropics'. Saba even has a tropical haze-forest! The foundations of Bonaire's landscape are the trees. Those are extremely important. They convert nitrogen into oxygen for instance, which we can breathe. Because relatively little rain falls in these areas, our trees' lives are not so easy. The indigenous ones, like the Wayacá, Watapana, Lokiloki and Palu di Boneiru, have adapted to the dry climate of Bonaire. They are born and raised local trees. They need only little water, but grow ever so slowly. And although our indigenous trees might not always look the most attractive to some, they are an indispensable link in our nature. When you look around you will see a lot of indigenous trees. That's right, but unfortunately those mostly are older trees, and that is exactly our problem. There are hardly any young trees. That is because most young trees never got a chance to grow due to all the goats, pigs and donkeys eating them. Is that a problem you ask? Yes it is, because when a 'local' tree eventually dies, there will not be a similar tree to take its place. Then the 'nature island' Bonaire will slowly become a barren desert. And then it will look like Arizona. Do we want that? No, because we can not exist without a healthy nature: "We live from nature".

Written by Trix van Bennekom, translated by Marcel Nahr.

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NOS TA BIBA DI NATURALESA



Traha huntu na un desaroyo duradero pa Boneiru