



## ***BEIT QAD PERMACULTURE CENTRE MONTHLY UPDATE*** ***News and activity highlights from September 2014***

### *This month at Beit Qad:*

- Beit Qad Permaculture Centre has had an exciting September, we have seen the finalising of the solar panels that now mean the centre and farm meets all of its energy needs through safe, renewable and clean energy taking us one step closer to being fully self sufficient. The solar panels not only meet our basic electrical needs such as lighting, but it also allows us to run our hydroponic pumps on solar power, moreover we are producing enough energy each day to charge batteries which can take over the main electrical circuit and run the pumps at night, thus we are now a 24 hour centre!
- This month has also seen the harvesting of many different fruits and vegetables such as peppers, aubergine, spring onions, chillies and passion fruit as well as fresh mint and parsley from the herb garden. This month has also seen an excellent yield of honey from our beehives, which is available for sale.



- Beginning at the end of September and continuing until October 15<sup>th</sup>, Beit Qad will be hosting 5-7 trainings for local farmers funded by the Arab Fund. These trainings will involve field demonstrations on the use of organic pesticides and organic farming best practices. Trainings such as these encourage the widespread use of sustainable and organic farming methods throughout Palestine leading to us to become increasingly self-sufficient and thus increasing food security. By involving local farmers we hope to increase the amount of sustainable practices being used here in the West Bank.



## Medicinal Herbs

This month has been an excellent month for herb production at Beit Qad, Different types of herbs all with unique qualities have been dried and packaged at Beit Qad ready for medicinal sales. Herbs and plants have been used for centuries to treat ailments and physical illness. Thyme is one the most commonly found herbs and was used as far back as the Ancient Egyptian era acting as an antiseptic ingredient before the invention of modern antibiotics. In teas it can help cure coughs and chest infections and oil of thyme is often used as a muscle relaxant. The following herbs are being cultivated at Beit Qad:

- Sage
- Thyme
- Parsley
- Mint
- Lavender
- Rosemary
- Za'atmaneh
- Basil
- Louisa



### **Reflections from Kamal Daibes, Beit Qad Manager:**

*'Our organic farm makes us different to all food available in the local markets; we have delicious and natural produce that we are keen to share with Palestine. September is the start of the winter planting season here at Beit Qad for both the open lands and the greenhouses. This month we will plant green onions, spinach, cabbage, carrots, parsley, mint, rocket, and radish and most excitingly, for the first time, we will be planting chamomile. A small flavourful flower, which has natural soothing qualities and is best prepared as tea. It takes 4-5 months for the flower to cultivate and we are very excited'.*

## **This months most rated fruit**

### ***Passiflora:* Passion Fruit**



Passion fruit has many great health benefits as well as being a naturally delicious fruit, they contain high levels of vitamin C, fibre and iron making them an excellent reducer of high blood pressure and contributing in general to good health and a strong immune system. The essence of passion fruit is also known for its ability to reduce anxiety in people. The fruit can be eaten raw, cooked or made into juices and can be an excellent addition to a simple salad.