

# In the Heart of a Seed

## -- There's Money

by

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The prolonged droughts during the past years will surely create adverse effects on the country's economic growth. This situation should arouse our people to think seriously about the evil effects of this far-reaching problem. We have plenty of water, even more than what we need during the rainy season, yet, we still find our rivers dry when we are in dire need of irrigation water. Millions upon millions of pesos are spent for engineering purposes to control the rampaging flood waters during the rainy season, still millions of pesos in the construction of irrigation dams and ditches to water the thirsty farms, but it seems that all of these have been to no avail, because of undue neglect on the unfavorable conditions of the rugged terrain upstream.

In spite of all the efforts that have been exerted to minimize the occurrence of destructive floods; despite all efforts to harness water for irrigation purposes, our country has not yet attained an appreciable level of success. Still our rivers overflow their banks, taking away with them their ever-mounting toll of human lives and property. During the dry season, everything is dry, including the irrigation dams and ditches. The hydro-electric power plants could only deliver half or just one-third of their rated power capacity during the lean months because of lack of water pressure that would turn the turbines which produce the energy to generate electrical power.

These are glaring signs indicating that somewhere there are mistakes which should

be corrected if our country ever expects to move forward. Engineering ingenuity alone is not enough to solve the problems posed by floods, drought, and brown outs. The construction of dams, dikes and irrigation canals are just short-time remedial measures. The cure to this national illness is something more. It is the proper husbanding of engineering and reforestation that is needed to check the existing adverse conditions right in the heart of the problem.

The soil on the steep mountain sides that have been exposed to the elements are rapidly eroding towards the agricultural lands. The trees that were cut down and removed or burned should be replaced so that the soil could be kept in place and the water storing capacity or these mountains be restored, maintained and improved. This must be done as an adequate solution to the problem of floods and droughts that are perennially pestering the country. The construction of dams and canals alone are not enough. More weight and emphasis should be given to the preventive measures. It should be remembered that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

The Philippines is primarily an agricultural country. The prevailing situation of its natural resources are the determining factors to this effect. If our country is agricultural, why is it that there is a great lack of even the most fundamental staple food? Why is the Philippines still importing rice from other countries when most of its ricefields are idle and unproductive during the greater portion of the year? Do these conditions

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mean that it does not have the needed resources that will enable its people to produce enough food for themselves?

According to the latest findings, there is enough area of land wherein food can be produced. There is more than enough manpower and an abundance of the needed technical know-how in carrying out the objectives of self-sufficiency. Again, the question bounces back. Why can't the country raise enough rice? Why is it that most of its ricefields are idle and unproductive?

Then again, the answer to this question is—lack of irrigation water. Rice is essentially a water-loving plant. We can hardly produce rice during the dry season simply because there is no water to tap for irrigation purposes. Why is it that there is no water? Because the forest, which is the best guardian of this much needed water is not there anymore. Much of our forests have long been gone due to the combined forces of forest vandals.

Meanwhile, on top of these adverse national conditions which are brought about by our inability to raise enough food for ourselves, the population of our country is rapidly increasing. According to the latest statistics, our population is increasing by about 20,000 heads a week. In the year 2000, the population of our country is expected to be somewhere around 40 million. To feed this population, agriculture and industry should start increasing its production tempo, now!

Unemployment is also one of the biggest national problems. This can be easily proven anywhere in this country. In a city or a busy town, seven out of ten strong and able-bodied persons are jobless.

Such are the prevailing unfavorable conditions in our country today. Lack of food, rapidly increasing population and a big mass of unemployed man-power, which stays idle and unproductive for perhaps, an indefinite period of time. Is it because there is really

nothing worthwhile that can be done? Some people claim that one of the aggravating circumstances that contribute to the immensity of the national problem of mass unemployment is the tendency of our people to flock to over-populated cities and there look for jobs. They seem to have overlooked the fact that if it is the productive job that they want, they don't have to leave the farm. Most of these people who flock to the cities are disappointed because they cannot find good job. It would have been better if they stayed in the farm.

On the other hand, even the farmers who have chosen to stay in the farm are themselves idle too, most of the time. Our farmers are busy only during the planting and harvesting seasons. In between these periods of activities, they are inactive. Is it because there is no one around to lead them and show them that right on their very doorsteps there are plenty of things that can be done? There are leaders. We have able representatives of good offices like the PACD, PRRM, NACIDA, and the Commission on Agricultural Productivity who can do a lot to help them in the barrios.

While the picture before us are far from satisfactory, while all the things around us appear hopeless, there is no need to despair. The Philippines is a rich country. We can make our country as progressive as we want it to be, provided we act. Our country has the capacity to support even more than twice our present population. This is more than possible. Japan and other densely populated countries, especially those that are in Asia and the Far East have survived and proven their ability to support their teeming populations. We can do the same. We can do even better than these countries. It is not as hard as it seems. A well planned and unified nationwide activity is the key to national progress.

Unemployment is only an apparent problem. Actually there is no such thing as unemployment. There are always plenty of

things that can be done and from them profits can be derived. Poultry, piggery, gardening, fish culture, dairy-farming, and other related domestic activities can be productive ventures. There are so many things that an enterprising person can gainfully pursue even with very small capital. Cottage industries for men, women, and even children are successfully thriving in many towns and barrios in our country. There is no reason why other barrios and towns cannot do the same. They can produce commodities other than the ones that are already flooding our markets. Home industries, like the bakya and sash factories of Cainta and Paete, the production of wooden novelties in Mountain Province, the weaving industries of Ilocos Sur, duck raising and balut production in Pateros and other towns along the banks of the Pasig River are very good examples of what an average family can engage into. Even a very unobtrusive business—yet very profitable, like the production of bagoong and bucayo in some of the towns in the province of Pangasinan are gainfully thriving. In addition to these, it is worthwhile trying to find the gems of truth that are embedded in the twisted rhyme: “In the heart of a seed” . . . there is money.

Extra money can be earned just by collecting and selling viable seeds of trees like narra, teak and mahogany. There are interested buyers of these seeds and the prices they offer are reasonable. People who are raising ornamental plants like palosanto, various species of palms, agoho, Benguet pine, pink shower, golden shower, the Bauhinias, or even the “acacia” or raintree are certainly in great need of seeds of these ornamental plants. Big timber concessioners like the Aguinaldo Development Corporation, Nasipit Lumber Company, the Aras-Asan Timber Company and others, are in need of big amounts of mahogany, narra, teak, and Albizzia falcata seeds. Paint factories, like the Elizalde are buying lumbang nuts for the production of paint and varnish. Match and toothpick factories are in-

terested to buy seeds of gubas, kupang, and lanete. The Reforestation Administration buys plenty of seeds of forest tree species for reforestation purposes.

Offers from abroad come to the Reforestation Administration every now and then. Most of the time, these offers are turned down because there are no legitimate forest tree seed collectors to whom these offers can be referred. Exportation of seeds to foreign buyers is very lucrative because the importers pay in U.S. dollars so that there are times when the profit is multiplied as high as four times, depending upon the current rate of exchange from dollars to pesos.

There is really money in the collection of seeds. This is a good small business because it can be started even without capital. This can be used as a good “sideline” during the time when farmers are not occupied in their farming activities. Seed collection can be a family enterprise. Practically, all the members of the family can participate in this work. The grown-up boys and men can climb, if the trees are tall, while the women and children can gather the seeds as they fall on the ground.

Aside from selling these seeds to the different interested buyers, seeds can also be used for the propagation of ornamental plants. Selling ornamental plants is a profitable business. With the rapid development of suburban areas, people have started to be landscape-conscious. This can be easily noticed from the overnight mushrooming of ornamental gardens along the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue and the Super Highway.

Seeds can also be manufactured into toys and novelties. The seeds of pitogo, chesa and pili, for instance, can be cleaned and painted or varnished and made into key chain markers. Ipil-ipil seeds are made into different fancy necklaces, bracelets, chockers and earrings.

According to Mrs. Adela Gutierrez, the proprietress of a Gift Shop in Escolta, Manila, she is exporting to the United States

₱45,000.00 worth of fancy articles made of ipil-ipil seeds every month. She said that these articles have become a craze among the American ladies. Necklaces, earrings and bracelets sell like hot cakes at \$10.00 to \$20.00 a set.

The cones of Mindoro pine and Benguet pine can be painted and sold as decorations. These are good substitutes for mistletoes for Christmas trees. There is indefinite number of articles and novelties that can be made out of these seeds. Perhaps, the only limit to this is the inventive ingenuity and resourcefulness of man.

The profitableness of seed collection has been proven in Arayat, Pampanga and Mount Makiling, Laguna. There are persons who would prefer to collect seeds rather than be employed temporarily at ₱4.00 a day. These people claim that they are earning much more in seed collection and on top of this, they are not under the command of anybody. In other words, they are their own boss.

Those who are interested to make additional income by collecting seeds of forest tree species, they are welcome for consultation at the Reforestation Administration in Diliman, Quezon City, or any of the Reforestation projects which is nearest their place. They will be told what to do, what seeds to collect, and how much they are going to be paid for the seeds that they will be able to collect. They will also be instructed how to treat, dry and store these seeds so that what they will collect will be fresh and viable.

This coming dry season, many people will have nothing to do. At the same time, many economic trees will also be bearing fruits. They could make their spare hours profitable by collecting forest tree seeds. It will not only be financially rewarding but they will also feel a sense of accomplishment in the thought that they are also doing their share in helping restore the forest that have been destroyed by unthinking people.

**Plywood Exposure . . .**  
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Table 4. Analysis of variance of bagtikan.

Source of Variation	D. F.	Sum of squares	Mean square	F
M	1	44.01	44.01	N.S.
S	1	10.27	10.27	N.S.
T	1	9.75	9.75	N.S.
A	2	23.56	11.78	N.S.
M x S	1	1.76	1.76	N.S.
M x t	1	4.09	4.09	N.S.
M x A	2	83.71	41.85	N.S.
S x T	1	0.27	0.27	N.S.
S x A	2	142.43	71.22	N.S.
T x A	2	138.23	69.11	N.S.
M x S x T	1	2.33	2.33	N.S.
M x S x A	2	102.82	51.41	N.S.
M x T x A	2	73.10	36.55	N.S.
S x T x A	2	50.88	25.44	N.S.
Error	2	40.20	20.10	
Total	23	727.41		