
Contributing Articles for EDN

As a member of our network, you have an opportunity to be eyes and ears for ECHO! One of ECHO's unique strengths is the ability to learn from individuals in our network and then in turn share with our broader network. We often ask for permission to quote from an e-mail or letter, either in the section of EDN called "From ECHO's Network" or as part of a larger article. Feedback from our network members adds to the relevance and credibility of the articles we publish.

Occasionally, we ask someone from ECHO's network to write an article on a particular topic for us. In these cases, when we have been able to do so, we have offered some financial compensation. We currently have some funds available to pay members of what we refer to as our "Global Office." Payment is on a per page basis, and varies depending on several factors, including the topic's relevance to our network, the author's level of personal experience with the topic, the amount of library or other research needed to gather required information, and the perspective that is communicated. Clarity and completeness of writing is also considered.

If you have an idea for an article for EDN, we strongly encourage you to submit an outline of your idea first. Some guidelines about how we choose material for EDN may be helpful as you consider whether or not you could contribute in this way. EDN is written for the purpose of sharing ideas, techniques, case studies, and new plants with our readers, with the aim of helping them have a greater impact in their work with small farmers. Keep your eyes alert to something you have done or observed that might be of considerable interest to readers in several countries other than your own. Have local farmers responded and perhaps begun adapting it? If so, why?

We assume that our readers have a basic knowledge of gardening and farming, so we do not publish articles on elementary topics that are covered in many book and magazines (e.g. how to make compost). We also do not tend to publish articles that detail the "big picture, global problems" that are so big and broad that network members are not usually involved in solving, e.g. the cause of hunger, or rampant corruption in the world. Ideally, EDN should feature several very pithy, to-the-point "notes" or articles that would help members of our network with a broad selection of ideas for projects, or would bring a perspective based on experience. That is why we call our publication ECHO Development NOTES, not FEATURES. If we consider that something is especially important, we occasionally print articles that are several pages long. If an article is too long for EDN or is of interest to only a small percent of our readers, we sometimes publish it as a Technical Note that is available on our website or (by request) as a paper copy.

Perspective is a very important word to us. The best articles go beyond just giving information on a subject; they also provide perspective as to how important the subject is, confirmation that its claims are valid, and information about where/when to consider it. For example, it would not necessarily be very helpful to just know that people use a certain plant to treat a particular disease or kill an insect pest, but it would be helpful if personal experience and observation could demonstrate that it worked. (Just because people do something does not mean it works.) If in doubt about whether or not an article about a plant or technique would be of interest, please send us a note about it!

If a relevant subject has been written about well by another author/organization, we likely would not write about it ourselves. Instead, we would try to get permission to put a link to the other organization's article on our web or possibly place it on a CD or compile an abbreviated article for EDN. Please be looking for this kind of helpful material, and let us know about it.

As you investigate a topic that could be of benefit to our network, try to anticipate what questions might arise in the mind of a reader who is contemplating trying what you have written. Then try to answer the questions while you have opportunity to do so. In EDN, we try to share enough information that a reader would be able to try any technique after reading about it.

It is very important that writers keep track of sources of information (whether an interview, book, etc), and include proper credits for ideas and wording taken from others. Include quoted material in quotes with formal reference citing. ECHO works hard to avoid plagiarism. A person can be accused of plagiarism even without intending to do so, due to carelessness in making notes and referencing information while researching material for an article.

Send outlines or drafts of proposed articles to echo@echonet.org, Attn: EDN Editor. Acceptance of an article is entirely at the discretion of EDN editors, as are all other editorial decisions, including cutting out or adding material and editing for clarification or to match EDN style. If substantial changes are made to an article, we will run it by the author for final approval.

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