

**QUARTERLY**  
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Nepenthes - Photo by Bernard Dupont

Over the past three months, we have focused on local initiatives that allow us to test ideas and build partnerships aligned with our values.



**ecotica**



Soil assessment for the Tumbuh healing garden

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## SHARING OUR COMPOSTING EXPERIENCE – HEALING GARDEN COLLABORATION

One of our current projects is a collaboration with Talk Mental Health Indonesia as part of their Tumbuh (“grow”) healing garden program. In this project, we contributed as consultants, supporting soil management and helping shape a space where both people and nature can heal and grow together.

We also suggested the implementation of composting on site. We are advocating for composting as a more sustainable way to deal with kitchen waste and garden plant residues.

We see it as a first step to change behaviours. For those unfamiliar with local practices, composting is practically unheard of in this part of the world. The common practice consists of gathering fallen leaves and other plant residues into a small pile to burn it.

Often including discarded plastic waste in that heap. While kitchen scraps are mixed with household waste resulting in a higher-than-average content of organic matter in collected municipal waste. The impact on already oversaturated landfills is considerable.

We are happy to report that our recommendations led to the construction of a small composting station on site. Despite delays due to heavy rains and the Ramadan period, the compost bin is now completed and ready for use. As a next step, we are preparing a hands-on composting workshop for the internal team as a pilot, before opening it to the wider public. This will allow us to test and refine the learning experience to ensure it is practical, accessible, and impactful.

A glimpse into the process behind the compost bin construction.





## SUSTAINABILITY TALKS

We also initiated our Sustainability Talks through a sustainability-themed English-speaking discussion session in collaboration with Space English. On February 28, Putri represented Ecotica in a 1.5-hour English-speaking discussion session, exploring simple, everyday actions individuals can take toward a more sustainable lifestyle. The session was highly interactive, with participants sharing their own experiences and perspectives, creating a space for mutual learning and reflection.

Building on this momentum, we are currently developing the concept of a Climate Café in Yogyakarta, an informal, open space where people can gather to discuss climate change, including topics such as ecoanxiety, while exploring practical pathways toward climate action.



Participants engaging in the discussion

The Climate Café is a replicable format that has been implemented in various contexts globally. We aim to adapt this approach to the local context, creating a welcoming environment that connects environmental awareness with emotional well-being. We are currently exploring potential formats, venues, and partnerships that align with our values, ideally open-air, close to nature, and reflecting climate-conscious practices. We are also exploring potential collaborations, including with Talk Mental Health Indonesia, to further integrate a mental health perspective as the concept develops.

## ECOTICA TEAM UPDATE



The certification ceremony on December 13, 2025  
Tiruvanthapuram, India

After sharing what we have been working on over the past three months, we would like to highlight a personal milestone within our team.

Over the past year, Putri, co-founder of Ecotica, participated in the Impact Leadership program at kanthari in Thiruvananthapuram, India. As part of the 2025 cohort, she began the program in April 2025 and completed it in March 2026.

Through the program, she strengthened key skills in project management, proposal writing, and strategic planning. An experience which connected her with a global network of changemakers, whose perspectives continue to inspire and shape our work.

We are happy to share that Putri has completed the program and is now better equipped to continue her journey at Ecotica.

## WHAT'S NEXT: ON-SITE SURVEY IN BORNEO

In our search of potential partnerships and for locations that would welcome our projects, we identified two different areas on the island of Borneo. One site is located near the east coast of the island and has a rather unusual characteristic. It seems to be a former Kerangas area, which we will explain.

Often, when the name of Borneo is mentioned, it conjures the image of our oldest rainforest with majestic tall trees. Iconic buttress roots



Kerangas - Photo by Bernard Dupont

over a deep bed of fallen leaves covering the soil. The habitat that orangutans call home. We would like to share another image of Borneo which is not that of the rainforest or peatlands.

There is yet another type of ecosystem that is mostly unknown to the general public. It is known as a type of heath forests in academic literature. Its common name in

the local language of the Dayak is Kerangas, which means "land that cannot grow rice".

It differs from the rainforest in many ways. The natural ecosystem is made of smaller vegetation, slow growing trees and woody shrubs, with more open spaces in its canopy. A common occurrence in those heath forest is *Nepenthes*, also known as pitcher plants or carnivorous plants for their insectivorous nature. Overall, there is much less biomass in a Kerangas forest than in a rainforest (also in a recent past, large animals would visit those forests). One important aspect that has led to the evolution of such different life forms in the same neighbourhood is the soil. Its sandy soil of eroded quartz is extremely acid (pH 3 - 4) as well as nutrient poor, thus shaping the whole ecosystem and life forms developing new survival strategies.

We said former Kerangas because the tropics is also where most land use conversion happen. Often driven by commodity crops agriculture and increasing population pressure.

Kerangas, a fragile ecosystem that slowly fades under human encroachment despite not providing favourable conditions for farming. Unsurprisingly, converted Kerangas lands proved infertile and local farmers thusly experienced crop failures and economic hardships. It would be fair to say that this should not come as a surprise. Indeed, experts on tropical soils have warned us decades ago in academic literature that Kerangas forests should never be converted to permanent agriculture.

### So, now what can we do with these former Kerangas?

It is a simple question that has generated countless hours of in-depth research through available scientific literature for us.

#### **Nepenthes - Photo by Bernard Dupont**

Our goal at Ecotica is to find the point of equilibrium, where nature and humans can coexist in a sustainable manner. In practice, for a former Kerangas plot it would mean to initiate nature conservation and restoration initiatives. Simultaneously, useful-to-humans plants would be included in the mix to avoid another land use change, boosting its chances of survival in the future.

We are already full of ideas, hopes and exciting questions to be considered. If this has piqued your interest, make sure to follow our upcoming on-site survey.

If you are interested in collaborating, supporting, or exchanging ideas, we would love to connect. Reach us at [www.ecotica.org](http://www.ecotica.org).

Best regards,  
Team Ecotica

