

# OFA

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# NEWS

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## Mubaira farmers embrace biochar



*OFA biochar consultant, Tafadzwa Nyamande (in green T-shirt) looks on as a group of smallscale farmers mix compost with biochar*

**OVER** 100 small-scale farmers in Mubaira, Mhondoro benefitted from a biochar training workshop by Organic Farming Academy which also donated the biochar.

The villagers were mobilised through the Hope for African Communities(Zimbabwe).

Speaking on the collaboration with OFA, Hope for African Communities chairperson Silvia Sanyanga said it will enable the building of community resilience in the face of climate change effects like drought.

“This collaboration is aimed to improve household food security through improving soil fertility and crop yields and sequestering carbon through biochar.

“The partnership focused on training and capacity-building programs for local farmers, enabling them to adopt biochar uses and application techniques. This approach not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also empowers communities to improve their livelihoods and food security,”Sanyanga revealed.

She added there has been a positive response from the farmers who view the initiative as 'a new experience and an opportunity for them'.

Organic Farming Academy biochar consultant Tafadzwa Nyamande was also impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm the farmers exuded during the training.

“It is encouraging to see a group of farmers who are willing to learn new things and this is exactly how it turned out in Mubaira.

“They were committed during the training and could not wait to receive the biochar so they could try using it this rainy season,” said Nyamande.

A similar training on biochar production, uses, and application techniques was done in Birchenough in September and was attended by agriculture extension officers and farmers from Deure Irrigation Scheme.

This year alone ,a total of over 500 small-scale farmers across Zimbabwe have been trained in biochar.

## Trainers get acquainted with biochar



*CarbonConnect co-founder Nando Knodel and OFA biochar consultant, Tafadzwa Nyamande demonstrate how to produce biochar using a cone-shaped pit at CIMMYT-Zimbabwe premises .*

**THE Organic Farming Academy(OFA)** trainers Tatenda Manyadza and Doreen Ngwenyama underwent biochar production training in November at CIMMYT-Zimbabwe.

The training was conducted by our partner, CarbonConnect's co-founder Nando Knodels with the help of our biochar consultant, Tafadzwa Nyamande.

The biochar production technique on which they were trained uses an open-earth cone-pit method.

While explaining the processes to the trainers, CarbonConnect's Nando Knodel revealed that the method is ideal for small-scale farmers to produce their biochar.

Here is how biochar can be produced using the cone-shaped pit as explained by Nando;

**You must first dig a cone-shaped pit with a surface diameter around 1 meter and 2 meters deep. Start a fire at the base of the cone using small twigs. Once it burns strongly, add slightly larger wood pieces.**

**After the initial wood develops a layer of white ash, add more wood. Repeat this process till you reach the top of the cone, using larger pieces of wood each time.**

**Once the top layer started turning white, the fire had to be quenched by water leaving charred remnants-biochar.**

Knodel emphasized that to produce quality biochar there is the need to use the right feedstock and woody materials are highly recommended.

CIMMYT Zimbabwe's Cropping Systems Agronomist Dr Isaiah Nyagumbo commended OFA for embarking on this biochar production saying it has the potential to address poor soils in Zimbabwe.

"This is quite a noble initiative since biochar helps to improve soils when recharged with nutrients. Here, we have many areas with poor soils and biochar can be an ideal remedy," Dr Isaiah Nyagumbo said.

Biochar production, uses and application has already been added to the OFA training modules.

## OFA Xmas and New Year wishes

### Dear Friends and Stakeholders ,

As the year draws to a close, we at Organic Farming Academy extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones this festive season.

### Christmas Cheer:

May this Christmas fill your homes with joy, your hearts with love, and your tables with fresh, wholesome, and organic bounty. Together, we celebrate the gift of nature and the communities that nurture it.

### New Year Hopes:

As we step into a new year, let us continue to cultivate a greener, healthier, and more sustainable future. May 2025 bring you abundant harvests, fruitful collaborations, and the joy of growth—both in the fields and in life.

Thank you for being a part of OFA's journey to promote organic farming and lead in innovations to fight climate change through biochar . Your support inspires us to sow seeds of positive change every day.

**Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!**





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