

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2006 1:24 AM

I flew Delta via Air France. I obtained a box from UPS for 6 EarthBoxes. I filled boxes with Chocolates and gifts. Air France weighed the box and said I was 6-8 lbs over. The cost for oversize is \$100, overweight \$100, and extra baggage \$100. The only rule I didn't violate ... I only brought one suitcase so that I saved \$100. But the Air France ticketing agent asked what I was doing with the boxes and I told him and he opened the box and we put 6-8 lbs of chocolate in my suitcase and carry on so I saved \$100. He then told security that he had opened the box and advised re contents so they would not make me open the box again to search. He also did not charge me the \$100 for oversize ... so Air France donated the shipping and waived charges for our project! Wasn't that nice?

I arrived in Chennai on Sunday @ 12:30 a.m. Customs required I open the box and show them the contents ... and were apparently disappointed that they did not find anything but plastic tubs ... and waived me on ... they only looked in the top box but I had more candy and children's books, tooth brushes and toothpaste. I was going to offer them chocolate but since we didn't get that far ... I went through quietly....

My friends met me at the airport at 2:30 a.m. and we drove immediately to Cuddapah ... about 9 hours. Arrived at Fr. Vijay's parish and attended mass. We ate and Harshini played in the mud while her mother, the sisters and all napped ... I videoed the event. It is really quite delightful to watch a child play.

Monday we planted 2 EarthBoxes with the 5th, 6th and 7th graders ... approximately 20 children. We mixed soil from the "white ant" hill, ground soil and cow dung. For fertilizer we used 1 part phosphate, 1 part nitrogen and 1 part urea. we poured 2 cups of fertilizer down the center. One box is planted 2 tomato plants, and the other box 8 chili peppers ... Fr. said in India, we cannot live without!

So the boxes are now in front of the school. Fr. said the monkeys will steal the tomatoes so we have to move the boxes close to the parish house to protect them from "rodents". Monkeys are "big problem". Monkeys steal from houses, raid gardens ... etc. Fr. said he shot a monkey just last week ... so now they are leaving his garden alone.

Question: A local farmer said that the fertilizer we used is too strong .. that we should not use fertilizer with cow dung. So I told Fr., we are taking 2 boxes to this farmer's village and we will plant those boxes according to his wishes and we will compare results. Please advise, if you have suggestions for change of fertilizer I will try to check email again before we plant on Thursday (your Wednesday night -- our Thursday day).

Thursday we take 2 boxes to Catholic home for handicapped children. These are the same children which made our Christmas cards last year. We wait until Thursday to plant boxes so Anusuya Devi can attend ... she is going to apply with UIC to take the Master Gardener course ... so this way she can participate in planting EarthBoxes in the village and also at the school for the handicapped children.

The children from Fr. Vijay's school are going to keep a journal recording the weather, plant condition, blossoms, fruit also they will record problems, leaf color, fruit failure, rodents. They will send reports to US companion school and US school will do the same. Please advise if there is any additional information they should record in their journals. Internet

access is expensive and only available in the city so for now they will write to US student via regular post. Here it takes 20 to 30 days to get a letter.

That is all for now. Please advise about fertilizer and journaling ... Thank you, thank you, thank you ... Farmer say "Good Project"!

I will check email again soon. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Sincerely,
Stacy Cooper

Sent: Sunday, December 03, 2006 11:53 PM

Update on Earth boxes:

St. Anthony English Middle School:

We are watching the boxes that we planted first. The tomatoe plants look dead ... the peppers ... 2 are dead out of 8 ... nothing is flourishing.

St. Ann's Home for Mentally handicapped children:

We planted one box using soil, no cow dung and the mixture of fertilizer. We planted chili peppers. There was a mix up regarding the availability of seedlings on site ... so we were not able to plant both boxes. Sister Prabah said that she will obtain seedlings or plant seeds in the second box. Her sisters husband passed away the same day we were there ... it was about a 4 - 5 hour journey from Cuddapah ... she is with her family and will let us know how the existing box is doing and will also plant and report the success of the 2nd box at that site.

This was such a rewarding experience. The children were wonderful and very interested in the project ... very excited to be included. They did almost all of the box preparation and planting with guidance. That is an amazing facility. The children make cards -- painted, embroidered, etc ... they use natural materials for their designs. They have been given a printing press, so they now can print their own cards, they make chalk for sale to schools, they make a chemical cleaner which is used to clean bathrooms, and they bind writing journals which are used like our pads of paper. The children won 8 medals at the National Competition for the Handicapped ... 2 of the boys won Gold medals for running ...

It was immaculately kept. The land was donated and the building was very well constructed. I am really hopeful that the planters work out well for them. They have a courtyard building ... so the planters can be kept in the courtyard and protected from Monkey theivery!

Chinamosupali Village

2 boxes were planted yesterday with a local farmer giving us some guidance ... again we used ground soil and fertilizer.

I have requested multiple times for a source for the coco peat and have been told "we don't have" ... however; a few days ago I saw a garden center and will have someone take me there

so I can inquire. I am going to try to have the children replant the tomato box at the Middle School before I leave ... I have told them that this is just part of the process and that they should record the successes and failures so we can all learn from our mistakes.

Overall, I think the project has been successful and the people here are very excited to be a part of something connected with America. They are excited about the prospects of communicating with children abroad.

I will continue to monitor the project until I leave ... I depart Cuddapah on Weds morning.

The meeting with the Micro Bankers went very well. They are wonderful people and are interested in finding ways that we can work together for the best of all. I was really impressed with the quality of the people there and their sense of duty towards helping their people overcome emotional, environmental and financial obstacles for a better future.

Thanks for all of your help and support.

I will write again as soon as I can.

Sincerely,
Stacy Cooper

Sent: Monday, December 11, 2006 9:38 PM

I forgot to add this to the last email:

Coconut husks are used as a fuel source for cooking.

They are also laid in the road and smashed by traffic until they are suitable (?) for use as mattress filling and chair stuffing!

I also stopped at a couple of garden centers ... they had no idea what I was asking for when I asked for a neutral soil medium ... all they used in their plants for sale was the red ground soil.

I am looking forward to any feedback that anyone has.

Thanks.

Stacy Cooper