

IN AIYE'S GARDEN

A photograph of an elderly man, likely of Ethiopian descent, working in a garden. He is wearing a patterned sweater and a colorful headwrap. He is holding a large green banana leaf, and other similar leaves are visible in the background. The scene is set outdoors, with natural light.

*Propagation
and
processing
'enset'
in the
Gamo highlands*

A film by Eyob Defersha



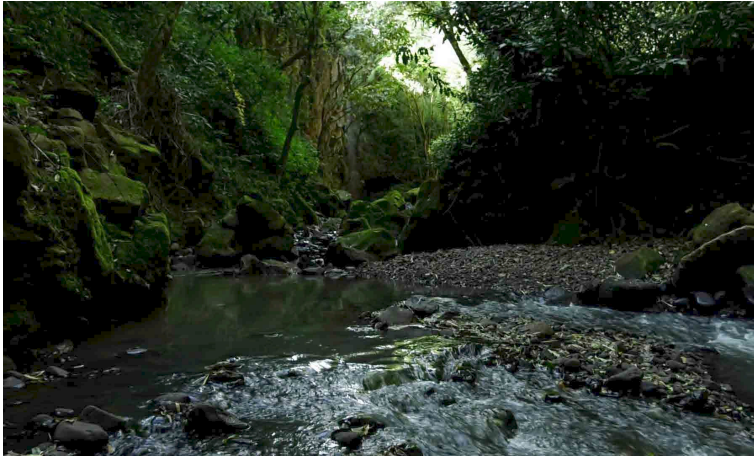
*For some time already
I had studied what it means
to live with 'enset'.
In November 2017 we came
to begin filming at my
grandmother's homestead.*

A Film in the MPI series
GUARDIANS OF PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES
(Editor: Ivo Strecker)

*

Selected Images, Dialogues and Commentary





This is the land of the Gamo people,
a land with mountains.

A river flows through our village,
with fresh water to drink.



Our cattle also come to drink here.

We have wide communal
grazing lands with a stream
that never runs dry.





We grow various crops:
'enset', barley, wheat, potato.
All these are planted
in their places.

Barley, wheat, beans and potatoes
are important,
but 'enset' is the most important.
It is always there in wet and dry seasons.

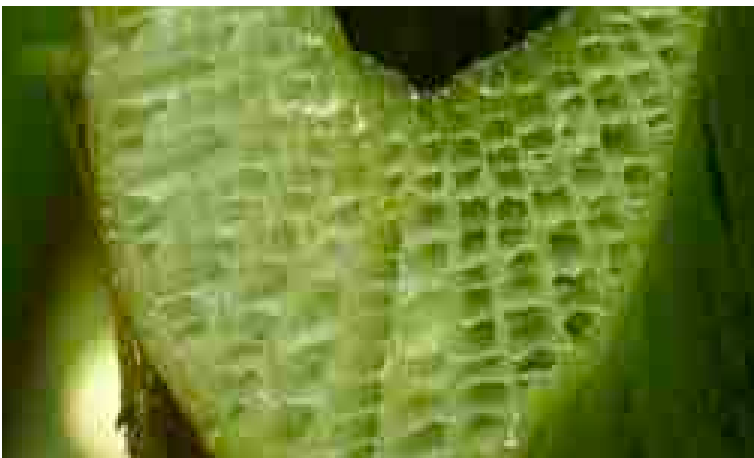




An 'enset' garden looks like a forest.
It gives grace and beauty to the house.



'Enset' has a big stem.
Because of its deep roots 'enset' never fails.



It carries large amounts of water
in the bark and roots.
Some water is caught in between
the leaves and the stem.



Because of this,
'enset' never dries up completely.



Here I planted different kinds of 'enset'.
 There are different varieties of male 'enset', which have their own names.
 Here you can see two different varieties from which I can make food.
 These are called 'Beshera'. This and the bigger one are called 'Sorge'.
 I planted these two varieties because of the soil of my garden.
 All these are 'Beshera' and 'Sorge'.
 There are also some 'Bora' varieties but the rest are 'Sorge' and 'Beshera'.
 Previous varieties did not grow well, so I uprooted them and planted these ones.



The smoke rising from the house,
 helps the 'enset' to grow well.
 It keeps the house warm
 and is also good for the cattle.



We collect the household waste in the garden.

The manure and the ash help the 'enset' to grow.

We use the manure as fertilizer for the 'enset' garden and for the barley field.

First we cut like this



Then a man digs a deep hole in which it's inserted with manure.

Later I will show you how I bury it.

Two months later the young 'enset' begins to grow. Many 'enset' will grow from this one.

About ten to twenty new 'enset' plants will grow from this. It will sprout in all directions.

This work is done in the dry season.

They will be transplanted after one year. First the offshoots will be separated one by one.

Then each will be planted in its own hole. These will stay there for one year.

Then the seedlings will be transplanted yet again.

After cutting the leaves the sprout is planted in a well prepared hole.

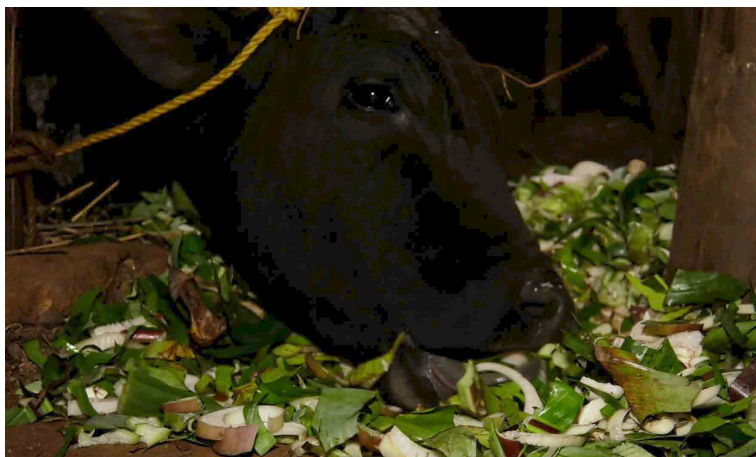
The last transplantation follows three years later.

The female 'enset' can be harvested after three years, but the male type takes longer.

The origin and mother of 'enset' is this.



Cattle like to eat the 'enset' leaves.



We have come to learn more about 'enset'.

Welcome

Can you tell us the origin of 'enset'?

As I heard from my fathers, and older friends....

Now -

trees, grains, and 'enset' have their own origins.

God created all edible plants.

Humans had no part in it.

We humans have selected the most delicious.

I never met anyone who knew from where 'enset' comes.

I believe it is a gift of God.

God created all humans and their environments.

This is my answer to your question.

So you believe 'enset' is a gift of God?

Yes!

There are times of hunger, and there are times of plenty.

In times of drought 'enset' saves us and our Cattle.

'Enset' helps us survive when drought or too much rain destroy our crops.

With 'enset' we never get hungry.

During war 'enset' also helped us to survive.

Because of the fighting we fled from our homes.

When we returned we still had our 'enset'.

Until barley, wheat, and other crops ripen, 'enset' nourishes us. It gives us the energy to farm our fields.

Tell us more about 'enset' in times of war.

During war we used different kinds of 'enset'.

Our houses and farms would get burned.

The flames destroyed the leaves
but the roots escaped the fire.



Aiye, what happen to the hoe?
Our neighbours have used it.

Get out of the way!

The root is still holding!
It still holds at the back!



It may fall on you!

Don't put it on the soil!





I can't find the scraper!





Now I mix it with the previous one.
This way the 'kocho' ferments very fast.
The root part also gives good taste to the 'kocho'.



It is covered to protect it from air.
If air comes in the colour darkens
and the 'kocho' begins to smell bad.





First the 'kocho' is called 'raw kocho'. After the first mixing, it is called 'habala'. This has been mixed twice and is now called 'harto'.



Finally I place it into a pit to ferment for a month.





This is fibre
from which I will make a rope.
I got it from 'enset'.

*Which 'enset' gives you
the best fibre?*

All my 'enset' gives good fibre.





This is porridge
made from 'itima'
liked by everyone.
It is offered
particularly to women
after they have given birth.
We prepare it with milk and butter.



This is 'kotsa'.
To make 'kotsa', we roast it
first over the fire.
It gives energy for men
working in the fields.



This is 'inchila'.
It is made from 'kocho'
mixed with barley or maize flour.
It is food for anyone in the house.

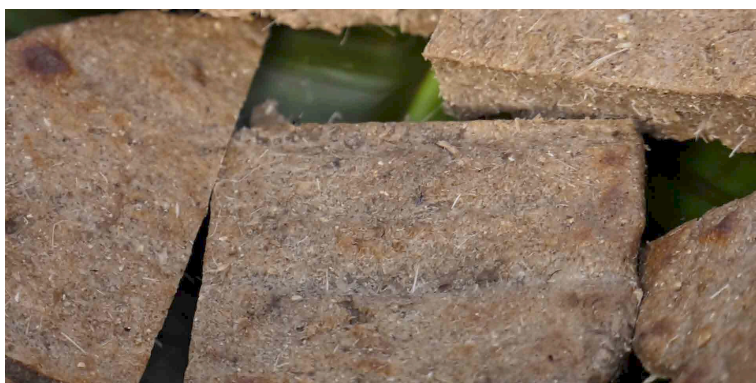
Tell me how you prepare it!

I chop the 'kocho' very finely.
Then I put it in the pot
on a layer of straw.

This is 'kotsa' from unfermented 'enset'.
It is prepared for respected guests.
It is mixed with onions, butter, garlic
and other spices.



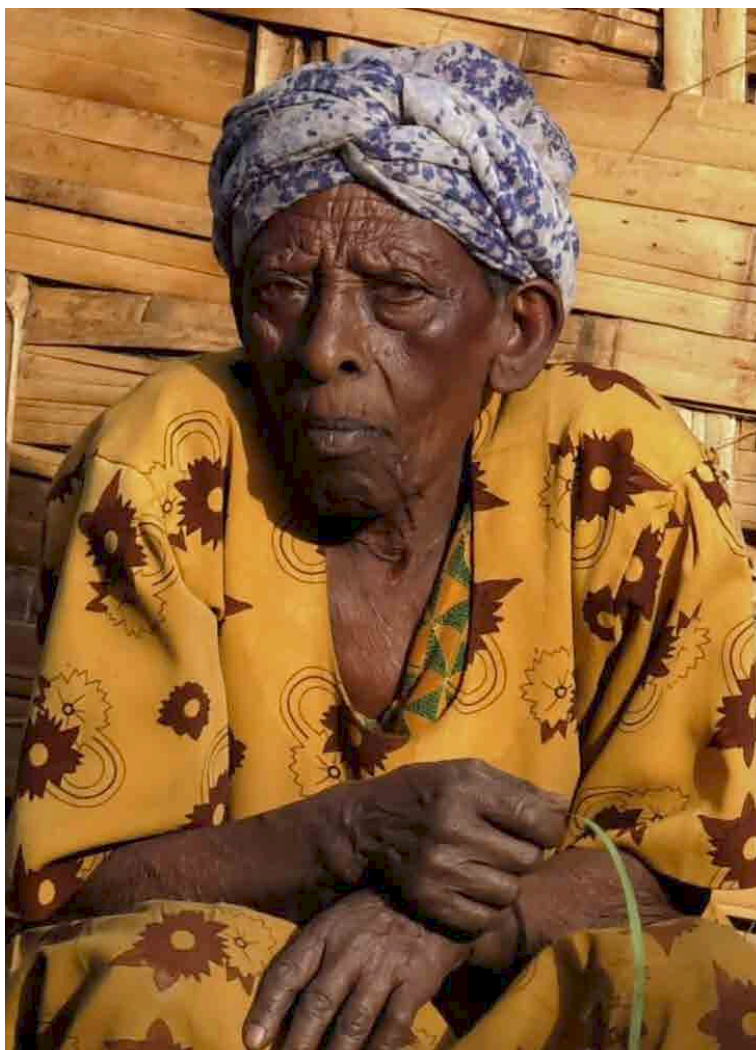
The bread is eaten in all seasons.
It is baked on a pan made of clay.
It can be eaten with cabbage, potato,
milk and hot pepper.



'Enset' is the most important
crop in our place
because it is available
until the other crops
have ripened.

'Itima', 'kocho' and 'chero'
feed us the whole year.

Our life depends on them.



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