

In September 2020 I arrived in Ferragudo, following the love.... I live now in the centre of the lovely village. I used to live in the North of the Netherlands, in the fields, between the farms in nature and used to have my own vegetable garden. I loved working in it, feeling the soil between my fingers and the thankfulness when you are able to pick your ingredients for a daily meal.

And here is where Rob en Liesbeth jumped into my life....

After arriving here, I strongly felt the need of green, trees and nature around me again. So I started searching for a place to give a helping hand on a farm. Pretty soon I found the lovely website of Quinta da Fonte Velha. I sent an e-mail and met Rob en Liesbeth. It felt good! Their lifestyle, their way of gardening and working with the land, based on permaculture, interests me a lot. I never got much further than reading, thinking and dreaming about it. On the quinta I am able to feel, experience and learn! From that moment on I started working three days a week with them.

The timing seemed pretty good. A few months before, Rob made a nasty fall. Liesbeth did the work on her own in that time. Because there are a lot of things to do, some projects got on-hold. I arrived at the time that Rob en Liesbeth started to pick up the projects that were still waiting.

Besides these projects, also the amêndoa trees where full, alfaroba needed to be picked, romãs where so big, they started falling down from the trees. So for the first time in my live I helped with the harvest of these wonderful fruits and nuts.

The shelter for the chickens was not waterproof anymore. Out of strike, the chicken produced less and less eggs. Rob and I worked on their lovely house, and since all the holes are closed, they more than doubled the amount of eggs!! Very thankful chicken...

Since the chicken have a good house, the pigs also started to complain!! Their shelter was also not waterproof anymore!! They started to pull on the plastic that was covering their house, starting with a small hole, until it was ruined... So Rob and I also fixed their house. And now they sleep in it as "little" babies...

Besides the shelters for the animals, two small wooden bridges, the floor under the safari-tent, and what else is coming up to fix, we re-use old wood. So it is never straight, it has old nails and screws in it, but Rob and I create!! And we are happy when it is "mais ou menos" perfect!!

Besides carpenting, I also help in the vegetable garden. Cleaning, planting and learning a lot about vegetables and herbs I never saw in my life before. The way Rob and Liesbeth produce and use all kinds of compost is lovely to see. You see the plants and trees being thankful for the food they are given!! I learn here so many things, every day again!

The most important thing on this quinta is water. The quinta has its own well, which is a treasure. And besides that, Rob and Liesbeth make sure that rainwater is not running of their land, straight to the sea. There is nothing better for your land than rainwater! Amazing what they did to keep the water on the quinta, and wonderful to see it is working. After rainfall, the pond is full, and a fountain is spraining the water proudly into the air. Wonderful to see. As a Dutch, I have a love-hate relationship with rain, but now I am so happy when it rains, because after one day of rain you can see the changes already in nature!!

And when all the hard work is done, Liesbeth prepares the most lovely and surprising lunches! She turns cooking into art. I eat sometimes things I never ate before, combinations I could not even imagine, and drink tea from herbs and leaves that in my former life was called waste. Because I know the food we eat and drink were half an hour before still growing, it makes me feel extra thankful!!

Thank you Rob and Liesbeth for letting me feel so close to nature. And thank you for teaching me all these important lessons. And of course thanks for all the pleasure I feel when I am at the quinta doing the work that needs to be done!!!