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Mauritian Overseas Gazette

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Editor: Peter Chellen (Former Editor of Mauritius News 1983 - 2015)

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Views expressed by contributors are their own

Environment Innovation: From Coastline to Compost

Turning Seaweed into a Climate-Smart Resource in Mauritius

Along the endless coastline of Mauritius, seaweed is a common sight. Washed ashore in large quantities throughout the year, these countless species of plants and algae that grow in the ocean, play an important role in coastal ecosystems by providing habitat for marine organisms and helping to mitigate the effects of erosion.

However, when excessive amounts accumulate on beaches, it becomes a challenge, affecting water quality, coastal ecosystems, and the recreational and tourism value of beaches. With around 435 species recorded in Mauritian waters and climate change expected to increase seaweed accumulation, the key question is no longer how to dispose of this biomass but how to use it more effectively.

Seaweed composting offers a practical solution by transforming coastal waste into a valuable agricultural input. Naturally rich in macronutrients, micronutrients, amino acids, vitamins, and plant growth hormones, seaweed contains many elements required for plant development. Instead of being sent to landfills, collected seaweed can be processed into nutrient-rich compost that improves soil health and supports sustainable agriculture. On this score, seaweed composting adheres perfectly to circular economy principles by converting waste into a productive resource that benefits both the environment and farming systems.

In Mauritius, this innovation is being led by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) under the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries. The Belle Mare Research Station hosts a dedicated seaweed composting unit designed for research, demonstration and training. Covering around 120 square metres and built at a cost of approximately Rs 1.6 million, the facility can produce between two and four tonnes of compost per cycle. It also functions as a practical learning site where compost production techniques are tested and shared with farmers and entrepreneurs.

The composting process begins with the collection of freshly stranded seaweed, ideally within 48 hours. Common species used include *Ulva* (such as *Ulva lactuca* and *Ulva reticulata*) and *Sargassum*, both suitable under local conditions. The seaweed is thoroughly washed to remove sand, salt, and marine debris. It is then mixed with carbon-rich materials such as bagasse, dry leaves, sawdust, or wood chips, along with poultry manure, which provides nitrogen and supports microbial activity. The recommended ratio is seven parts seaweed, three parts carbon material and two parts poultry manure.



Using the hot composting method, the mixture is arranged in piles where microorganisms break down the organic matter. The compost is regularly turned to maintain oxygen flow and moisture levels are carefully controlled. Over a period of 14 to 16 weeks, the mixture gradually transforms into a stable, dark, earthy-smelling compost ready for maturation and agricultural use.

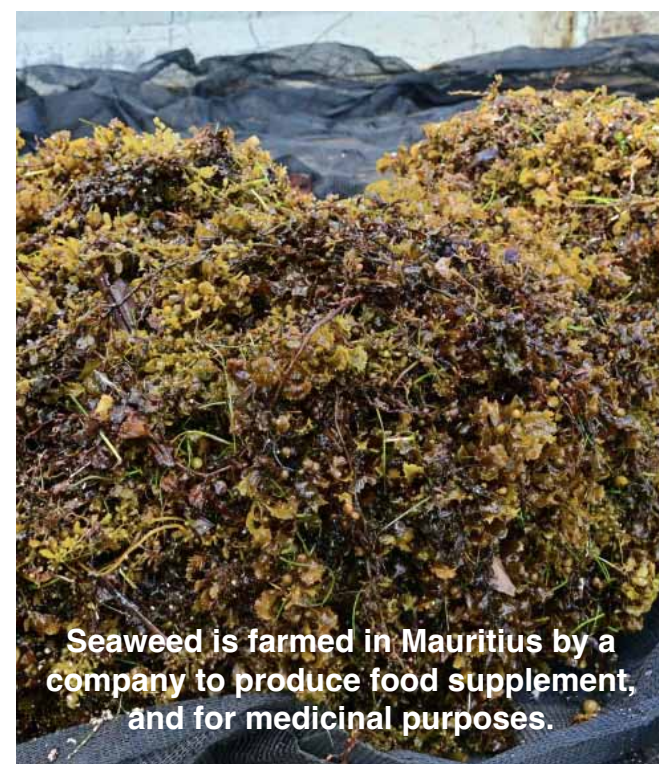
The benefits of seaweed compost extend beyond waste management. It improves soil structure, increases water retention, enhances microbial activity, and supplies essential nutrients to crops. Trials conducted by FAREI have yielded positive results in vegetable and fruit production. It is also suitable for seedling preparation, potting mixes, mulching, and landscaping. By reducing reliance on imported chemical fertilisers and using locally available biomass, this eco-friendly practice upholds Mauritius' shift towards a more sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

Through Training of Trainers programmes and hands-on workshops at Belle Mare Research Station, around 200 farmers and women entrepreneurs have already been trained in seaweed composting techniques. These sessions combine scientific knowledge with practical skills, enabling participants to adopt and adapt the technology for their own use.

It is to be noted that seaweed collection in Mauritius is regulated. The Beach Authority is responsible for managing coastal waste collection and usually works with authorised operators. Individuals, cooperatives, or businesses enterprises cannot freely collect seaweed from beaches. Any collection activity requires authorisation from both the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Beach Authority. This regulatory framework has been set up to ensure that seaweed harvesting is carried out sustainably and does not harm or disrupt the coastal ecosystems.

On the whole, seaweed composting perfectly demonstrates how environmental challenges can be transformed into sustainable opportunities. By converting stranded seaweed into a useful agricultural resource, Mauritius is linking coastal management strategy with climate-smart farming practicespany

GIS



Seaweed is farmed in Mauritius by a company to produce food supplement, and for medicinal purposes.

Roule-t-on un ancien ministre ?

M. Eliézer François clame entre autres son droit bafoué par les autorités. La lettre ci-dessous de l'ex-ministre explique son dilemme. Le correspondant fait aussi état d'un autre problème auquel le public fait face. La communication est initialement datée le 30 juin 2022.

C'est un peu en désespoir qu'il nous prie de la publier

Subject: Ma Pension De Vieillesse & Les Toilettes Payantes Dans Port Louis.

Le Rédacteur en chef
Mauritian Overseas Gazette

Cher Monsieur Chellen,

Puisque les deux thèmes mentionnés ici sont toujours d'actualité, notamment

(1) le remboursement de ma pension de vieillesse,

(2) Les Toilettes Payantes dans Port Louis, je vous serais infiniment reconnaissant, si vous pourriez reproduire dans votre journal, à l'intention de vos lecteurs, le texte ci-joint.

Cordialement,

Eliézer François JP

Aujourd'hui le vendredi 30 juin 2023, nos concitoyens Frères et Soeurs Musulmans fêtent la Eid ul Adha, le sacrifice d'Abraham. Je leur souhaite bonne fête.

Mais, jusqu'aujourd'hui, la ministre de la sécurité sociale Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo refuse toujours de me rembourser la pension de vieillesse à laquelle j'ai droit et qui m'est due depuis le 1er février 2021, par rapport au Covid-19, la fermeture des frontières et la cessation des vols MK Air Mauritius entre L'Australie et l'Ile Maurice.

Lors de la conférence de presse du MAM le jeudi 27 avril 2023, j'avais déclaré ceci: "Nous avons le pire ministère de la sécurité sociale depuis ces 5 dernières décennies." En ce jour de fête musulmane, je me permettrai de reproduire, à l'intention de tous mes amis Facebookers, cette lettre ouverte que j'avais adressée à la ministre Fazila Daureeawoo quand elle était responsable des Collectivités Locales: -

'Lettre Ouverte à Fazila Daureeawoo, vice- Premier ministre et ministre des Collectivités Locales & Daniel Laurent, Lord-Maire de Port Louis

.' Peut-être que vous n'êtes pas personnellement au courant de la longue lutte que le Mouvement Authentique Mauricien (MAM) a menée pour la construction des toilettes décentes, partout à travers la ville de Port Louis. Même, à la Mairie de Port Louis, les étudiants qui venaient pour faire des recherches à la bibliothèque municipale et travailler dans le Computer Room, n'avaient pas accès à une toilette.

Le même problème se posait pour ceux qui venaient payer leurs factures à la Mairie. Les choses ont changé depuis ; on dit bravo à la Mairie pour ça. Cependant, depuis l'année dernière, la Mairie de Port Louis a introduit un système de toilettes payantes au Marché Central et au Jardin de la Compagnie. Cette décision injustifiée et injustifiable a provoqué des protestations et des manifestations devant la Mairie de Port Louis, devant le Parlement, au jardin de la Compagnie ainsi qu'au Marché Central.

Au nom de tous les mauriciens, les citoyens en particulier, je vous adresse cette lettre ouverte. Dans tous les marchés que personnellement j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter, dans plusieurs pays, personne ne paie pour se servir de la toilette publique. Pouvez-vous, en tant que ministre des Collectivités Locales et Lord-Maire respectivement, expliquer aux mauriciens, pourquoi la Mairie de Port Louis pratique une politique discriminatoire ? A Plaine Verte il y a 4 toilettes publiques où l'utilisation est gratuite. A la foire de Gabriel Martial, à la foire de Ste Croix, à la foire de Roche Bois, à la Gare Victoria, à la Gare du Nord et aux endroits occupés par des marchands ambulants, les toilettes sont gratuites. Même à la municipalité de Port Louis où je me suis battu pour qu'il y ait une toilette, l'utilisation est gratuite. Pourquoi donc, seuls ceux qui utilisent les toilettes du Marché Central et du Jardin de la Compagnie sont obligés de payer Rs.10/ par visite ? A tous ceux qui prétendent qu'il faut faire payer pour garder les toilettes publiques propres, je leur propose de visiter les toilettes suivantes : à la Douane, Jumbo, Super U, La Croisette, etc. En votre qualité de ministre des Collectivités Locales et Lord- Maire de Port Louis respectivement, je fais appel à votre bon sens et à votre sagesse pour que cesse immédiatement cette pratique injuste et discriminatoire envers le public mauricien. Honnêtement, je ne souhaite pas que tous les citoyens devraient faire comme Le Tamil Council, avoir recours à une Injonction et des manifestations, pour faire la Mairie de Port Louis faire machine arrière. J'en profite pour saluer leur courage et leur détermination pour obtenir justice.

Rédaction :

Nous souhaitons que la publication de cette correspondance émanant de M. Eliézer François aura l'effet voulu. On peut se demander, néanmoins, qui en 2026 va prendre action pour trouver des solutions aux points soulevés par notre correspondant.



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Lest we forget

The Blue Plaques To link the present with the past

From Mylene



There are more than 1,000 blue plaques scattered across London. A commemoration established in 1866 by the Royal Society of Arts, the scheme was created to connect notable figures from the past to the buildings where they once lived or worked in London



The oldest surviving plaque, at 1c King Street in St James's is dedicated to Napoleon III who lived there during his exile.

Today this iconic programme is managed by English Heritage and each plaque is still individually handcrafted from start to finish.

In June 2026, Sir Ian McKellan, best known for his portrayal of wizard Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings trilogy, unveiled a plaque marking the childhood home of Shakespearean actor Laurence Olivier.

The house at 22 Lupus Street, London SW1 was Olivier's childhood home from ages six to 11 and is believed to be where he discovered his passion for acting.

Number 22 is across the road from Pimlico Academy - known simply as Pimlico school in my day. It is an elegant mid-terrace house, typical of the streetscape created by the master builder, Thomas Cubitt in the nineteenth century.



Vera Brittain, pacifist and feminist, also the mother of British politician, Baroness Shirley Williams (1930-2021).



Charlotte Mary Mew, English poet.

Having also grown up in Pimlico myself, only a short walk from Oliver's former home. I decided to take a trip down memory lane and visit the plaque before heading to the Pasifika Fest UK 2026, a celebration of the peoples, culture and traditions of the Pacific, held at Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh square in London.

Having seen and taken a photo of the blue plaque for MOG, I walked to Victoria station and took the 38 bus to Gray's inn Road. From there, I walked along Guilford street and Doughty street to Goodenough college. Blue plaques seemed to be everywhere along the way.

Editor's note:

There are indeed a good number of commemorative plaques placed on building frontage all over the place in London to tell us of personalities who have lived there before us and who made their marks on society.

There is a blue plaque on a building near the entrance of the popular East Street market in Southwark to inform generations that a genius like Charlie Chaplin was born near there, though the exact spot cannot be deter-

mined. I used to live off East Street and everyday I passed by this memento.

There is also a plaque on a house on Kennington Road in neighbouring Lambeth Borough to indicate where Chaplin actually lived as a poor boy.

The GLC Office where I used to work was located off Kennington Road.

Another landmark in Southwark with which I became acquainted is Lant Street where Charles Dickens lived for a while as a boy. There is a blue plaque on a building near the

Charles Dickens Primary School. As a lover of Dickens' works I was happy to find his traces in London.

Later when I edited Mauritius News, one of our contributors, Theresa, lived in Lant Street.



Pasifika Fest UK 26 (4-5 July)

Pasifika Fest UK 26 was a major two day celebration of Pacific arts, culture, and story telling.

The festival was organized by Mana Arts Co. in partnership with FANZA (The Foundation for Australian & New Zealand Arts) as a gathering of the Tagata Moana living in the UK.

Tagata Moana can be translated as "people of the ocean" or "children of the sea", it unites di-

verse island communities through their shared ancestry and deep connections to the Pacific.

Many Pacific islanders prefer Tagata Moana over the colonial terms, like Polynesian or Micronesian.

Tagata Moana an indigenous term to describe the collective identity of Pacific Ocean Peoples.



Maria Luitai and Jordan Nicholdo at the Pasifika Fest 2026