

Slash and Char Book

Slash and Char as Alternative to Slash and Burn - Dissertation now available as book

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Dissertation

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The extraordinary fertility of manmade Terra Preta soils in the Brazilian Amazon provided the incentive to study soil charcoal amendments on soil fertility, nutrient cycling and soil biology.

The existence of Terra Preta suggests that tropical soils, which are notorious for being infertile, can be greatly improved. The agricultural practice of slash and char produces charcoal out of fallow vegetation instead of converting it to carbon dioxide through burning. Slash and char improves soil quality by soil char-coal amendments simultaneously transferring atmospheric carbon dioxide into recalcitrant soil organic matter pools. This newly described agricultural practice has important implications for the earth's carbon budget, and sustainability in tropical agriculture.

This dissertation comprises inter-disciplinary research on ancient Terra Preta soils and soils recently amended with charcoal. In addition, data and information were gathered at local charcoal production sites and indigenous soil fertility management was described.

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