



*You are probably very used to the image of coffee growers drying cherries on patios, aren't you? Well, although it might look a quite simple task, this process stage is vital for keeping coffee quality.*

In coffee producing regions that have a long term history dealing with this crop, it is natural that skills be transferred from one generation to the next, mainly when it comes to family agriculture. This seems to be quite interesting, doesn't it? However, there have been many improvements toward post-harvest cares during recent years and that is why COOMAP decided to offer to its members...

## Post-Harvest Cares Course For Natural Coffee **Focused** On Women...

But before we get into this learning opportunity content, allow us to explain why this course is focused on WOMEN, after all chances are big that you're already frowning on it right now...

### There are three **main reasons** for it:

# 1

The first one is that since men who take care of crops have learned how to do it when they were very young, it's hard to get them to change the way they work... being really honest and simplistic, many men are a bit stubborn, while **women are more open to learning new things.**

# 2

The second reason is that **women normally pay more attention to details** and this is directly linked to post harvest cares, like maturation sampling, lots traceability and how to avoid the most common problems in coffee quality. Different from many male growers, women usually don't take the path of least resistance.

# 3

Finally, during harvest times, **many women are in charge of patios.** That is probably the main reason why after learning about this course, several of them decided to sign up for it. **In fact, out of the 21 participants, 13 of them were women.**



They also had the chance of learning about coffee grading, harvest planning and managing skills. The course even taught students about environmental cares, work security instruction and numerical reasoning

We believe the more women get involved with coffee crops, the **higher coffee quality will be.** It is also an empowering project because through the instruction they get, they realize even more their important role in the **family business.**





# Grower of the Month!

A very **empowered woman**, community leader, matriarch: this is the shortest way possible to describe Maria do Carmo Alves Tavares, or as most of people in our town call her: Dona (Ms.) Maria, from Macuco. (Macuco is a neighborhood in the rural area of Paraguaçu, the town where COOMAP is located, and it is also a bird).

Dona Maria was born in 1956 and her father was also a COOMAP member. He used to work at coffee farms in the neighborhood and he also used to plant rice and garlic. In order to have her own income source, her mother used to wash clothes as a job. The family had a cow in order to provide milk, especially for the kids. All of this work was necessary because it was hard to raise a family at that time.

When she was a teen, she met Gerônimo Tavares at a wedding party and not a long time later they became husband and wife. So that the family could have a place to live, Mr. Tavares sold 4 oxes and bought a small piece of land at Macuco neighborhood, where they live until nowadays, after **almost 50 years together**. Since we are talking about marriage time, it is worth saying that after 11 years of marriage this beloved couple already had 7 children!

In order to raise all these kids, Dona Maria and her husband used to work at different farms during harvest times and also on planting new crops season. Times were really hard, but when her children got old enough to start

working, they bought their own land and, **encouraged by their parents, planted their coffee crops.**

Dona Maria has always been a family leader and everybody who's around her says that she's always been very supportive, active and ready to solve problems – hers, her family's and her neighbors'. This is so true that even in order to buy fertilizers, there are COOMAP members from Macuco who count on her to conduct negotiations. She seems to be this community's mother... that kind of woman who knows how to balance tenderness with severeness. Even the employees at COOMAP say that is it very common for her to stop them at the store hallways in order to ask how they and their families are doing.

Probably one of the hardest periods of her life was 2021, when her daughter passed away after getting sick with COVID-19. While dealing with this unbearable pain, her coffee crops were hit by the frost and it caused substantial damage to them. But even facing these very unpleasant moments, she keeps a very busy routine.

She takes care of her coffee, corn and marolo crops. MAROLO?! Yes, a regional fruit that is the symbol of Paraguaçu. Dona Maria and her husband sell it in the neighborhood cities. During the Marolo Festival, an event that happens once a year in order to celebrate this fruit, Dona Maria is always present... and working a lot!

She says that her life has always been full of work and until nowadays it still is. In fact, she mentions that **she never rests**: "I believe that those who are born to have a fast pace of life, will always be working. But I really can't complain. I'm really thankful to God!", she says.

When we asked her to talk about the importance of coffee in her life, she said: "**Coffee has been our main product.** It's the green gold for my family and me. Coffee was a way for improving the lives of many families around here. When I was young, many people used to go to Paraná (a state in the south of Brazil, where there were many coffee crops until the mid-seventies) in order to work harvesting coffee. But then, people started planting this crop here and this not only provided jobs for lots of people but also allowed them to buy small farms in order to plant it. And during all this time **COOMAP has been like a father for us**, by providing everything we need and even selling our production for us".

**COOMAP sure is glad to be able to support members like Dona Maria, who have a strong sense of cooperation and fraternity. This is our people: strong workers who cultivate work and harvest great results!**



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