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Photo courtesy Gloria Samperio

Speakers at the First International Hydroponics Congress held earlier this year in Costa Rica included (from left): Pedro Furlani, Carlos Arano, Gloria Samperio, Rebecca Nelson, Miguel Urrestarazu, Howard Resh, Alfredo Delfin and Feddy Soto.

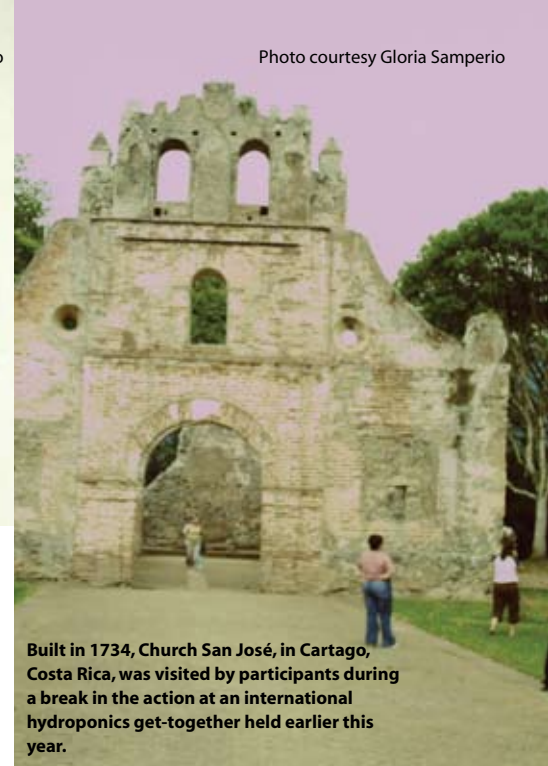


Photo courtesy Gloria Samperio

Built in 1734, Church San José, in Cartago, Costa Rica, was visited by participants during a break in the action at an international hydroponics get-together held earlier this year.

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HYDROPONICS

## Costa Rica hosts First International Hydroponics Congress

By Gloria Samperio Ruiz

Laura Perez is a tireless Costa Rican woman. Not only is she the mother of three children, she's also president of her own gardening company, Corazon Verde. Lately, she has turned her natural restlessness to learning about hydroponic cultivation. She became convinced that hydroponics had a lot to offer Costa Ricans, and in 2002 started to teach it.

In March, after years of thinking and planning, Laura Perez realized a dream by organizing the First International Hydroponics Congress in Costa Rica. The event was held at Earth University, in Cuasimo de Limon, and 115 people attended, from Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, United States, Colombia, Honduras, Bolivia and Panama.

In response to economic globalization, Costa Rica, like other countries in Latin America, has had to undergo economic and cultural changes to keep pace with developments in other countries. Laura Perez sees hydroponics are one tool that can help Costa Rican producers continue to develop the agricultural sector in an environmentally responsible way.

The Congress was inaugurated by Manuel Cerrato, Dean of Academic Issues, Earth University, in representation of Jose

Zaglugl, university rector, and by Byron Miranda, representative of the Costa Rican office of the Inter-American Agricultural Cooperation Institute and by Laura Perez.

Guest speakers included internationally renowned specialists. Names and topics follow:

**Alfredo Rodriguez, Peru**—Hydroponic tomato, potato cultivation.

**Miguel Urrestarazu, Spain**—Peppers and tomato fertigation; environmental conditions for hydroponics production.

**Gloria Samperio, México**—Germinates production for human consumption; hydroponic forage production.

**Carlos Arano, Argentina**—Principal hydroponics systems; lettuce in NFT.

**Fredy Soto, Costa Rica**—Advantages and disadvantages of hydroponic substrates.

**Howard Resh, Canada**—Hydroponic sweet pepper, cucumber production.

**Pedro Furlani, Brasil**—Hydroponic mineral nutrition; vertical strawberry production.

**Rosalía González, Caribbean**—Organoponic cultivation.

**Felipe Arauz**—Phytosanitary hydroponic problems.

**Rebecca Nelson and John Pade, United States**—Hobby aquaponics; commercial aquaponics.

Exhibitors displayed products and distributed information. They included: Carillanca, Pima, Earth University and agri-products mini-show, National Bank of Costa Rica, Costa Rica Technological Institute Editorial, Costa Rica University Editorial, Pachuca-Mexico Polytechnic University, Inifat, Hidroplant, Hogar Calasanz, National Learning Institute IICA, Vertiponia, Olefinas, Acuaponics, Crystal Chemicals, Prolife, Agrinova, Coinsa, Corazon Verde National Center, Rizk Alla Brothers Ltd.

Laura Perez had help organizing the event from Roberto Salom, Daniela Araya, Daniela Arrieta, Esteban Arias, Carlos Leiva, Carlos M. Ortiz, Andrea Salom, Lorena Jiménez and Rolando Zamora. Sponsors included Earth University, National Bank of Costa Rica, FAO, Ministry of Production, TACA Airlines, Gran Hotel, University of Costa Rica, Olefinas, Cristal Chemical UNA, INA, National Learning Institute IICA, and the International Agricultural Cooperation Institute. 🍃

*Gloria Samperio Ruiz is president of Asociación Hidropónica Mexicana, A.C. For more information, go to [www.hidroponia.org.mx](http://www.hidroponia.org.mx).*