

News Flash: We are delighted to announce that the **Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AlTo), together with our colleagues at the Nantu Forest Conservation Program**, which works in Northern Sulawesi, **has just been awarded the 2010 Conservation Award from Mongabay.com**, a premiere website for international environmental news and information. Time, Inc. rates Mongabay as one of the 15 top environment and climate websites. Please see:

http://news.mongabay.com/2010/1207-mongabay_conservation_award_2010.html

AlTo Update, December 2010: The Giving Tree

Dear Friend of AlTo,

You'd be hard-pressed to find any part of creation that's more giving than a tree. This Tompotika fig tree does all kinds of things that are useful and/or necessary to humans: it takes in carbon dioxide and gives off oxygen, helps soak up extra rainfall to prevent flooding, stabilizes the soil to prevent erosion and landslides, helps purify water for drinking, regulates rainfall, provides shade, exudes beauty. And these are just what it does while standing, not to mention all the things people cut and use it for. When it comes down to it, **we are bonded to the trees** – we couldn't live on our planet without them.



And that's just a few of the direct and obvious benefits for humans. **When considering the additional things that this fig tree does for its neighbors in Tompotika, you could go on practically forever:** its fruits feed everything from tiny ants to red-knobbed hornbills to Sulawesi flying foxes to Tonkean macaques. Strange marsupial cuscuses eat its young leaves. Orchids and other epiphytes grow in its branches and crevices. A family of gremlin-like tarsiers roosts by day inside the tangle of its trunk. A tiny gecko hides on a limb, camouflaged by the age-old mimickry between her colors and the splotches on the bark. Mycorrhizal fungi grow on its roots, performing an array of invisible services that keep the whole forest healthy. And so on; when you begin to add it up, the tree's capacity for giving is profoundly humbling; the trees set an example for us all.

In Tompotika, this fig and the others around it are threatened by all manner of human activities. But they still stand, and with your help, AlTo will continue to honor, defend, and be inspired by them. **In this season, you may see Christmas trees in your home or neighborhood; we hope they will inspire you to be mindful of your bonds to the trees, and grateful for all that they give.** And for everyone, everywhere, we wish you peace, happiness in the things you are bonded to, and the joy of giving!

... And speaking of the joy of giving, **don't forget that any donation you make to AITo through December 15th will be matched dollar-for-dollar** by some generous (and exceedingly joyful!) AITo supporters. Please mail your check to the address below, or donate on-line at www.tompotika.org.

Happy Holidays from all the AITo team!

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