



Amargo and Anteaters?

Leslie's Amazon Amargo Tale

During one of my visits to an Indian tribe in the Amazon, I became extremely itchy within about an hour of hitting the village. A quick perusal of myself and my hosts revealed a severe lice and flea infestation of the whole village (and my person!). They kept many jungle animals as pets which roamed freely throughout the village who were the probable cause of the problem. I had noticed a stand of [amargo trees](#) when hiking into the village that morning and it was the first thing I thought of in my hour of need. With some helping hands, several got to work digging a large pit in the soft sand on the riverbank while others chopped up an entire amargo tree with machetes. I lined the pit with the waterproof rain tarp I use to cover my hammock at night, filled it with river water and tossed in the amargo wood chips. The next day (after a night of scratching – but hey, at least it didn't rain) everyone took turns bathing in the make-shift amargo hot-tub. I insisted all the pets take turns too—cats, dogs, monkeys, coatis (looks a bit like a raccoon), parrots, pigs, and sloths—even a giant anteater who we saved for last; he was huge and smelly! I still get a chuckle remembering those soggy forlorn animals and the chaos of chasing them all down and getting them into the pit. It took four of us to wrestle the anteater in; however, he certainly had no problem exiting (rather quickly without any help). But it worked like a charm. I was itch-free and bug-free for the remainder of my visit. My not-so-itchy Indian friends were grateful too, despite a few bruises, bite-marks and scratches from several less-than-appreciative soggy pets. That anteater just wasn't amused at all.