**In the Field.**

**Going Deeper …..**

Leigh shares the findings of his most recent inquiry.

**The First Farmers of Mount Verde.**

The earliest known plant harvesters in the Americas lived around 14,800 to 13,800 years ago. They were a group of First Nations who lived in a small sedentary hamlet in southern Chile, South America . Despite their antiquity, they had a sophisticated knowledge of plant ecology, utilizing a variety of over 45 edible plants. These included the wild ancestor of the potato, roots, edible fruits, berries, mushrooms, algae, vegetables, tubercles, rhizomes and juncus seeds; all from a variety of ecological zones including coastal areas and mountainous uplands. They used 22 kinds of medicinal plants, including sea weed and boldo leaves, some of which are still used today. They harvested these plants all year, indicating year-round occupation.

They hunted a variety of game including mammoths and ancestors of llamas. From the mammoth bones they constructed grinding tools and gouges and other tools. They twisted twine from reed grass and are believed to have made bolas.

They lived in a hamlet in a well-built wooden community structure of squared logs and beams consisting of 12 family cubicles side by side. They also had a wishbone-shaped structure possibly used as a medicine hut.