

Local Dirt

November 8, 2000

The Newsletter of the Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative

Member Gardens:

Berkeley Alternative High
School
Berkeley Youth Alternative's
Garden Patch
The Edible Schoolyard
Karl Linn Garden
Northside/Peralta Gardens
LeConte School Farm &
Garden
Malcolm X School Garden
Ohtone Community Garden
Oxford School Garden
People's Park Garden
Spiral Gardens
Strong Roots Gardens
Willard Greening Project
Washington School Garden



Next Meeting:

Monday, Nov. 20th, 6:00 – 8:00

1718 Ninth Street, Berkeley

Potluck, Please bring a dish to share,
Drinks provided.

Affiliates and Supporters:

Alameda Co. Food Bank
Americorps
American Community
Gardening Association
Berkeley Ecology Center
The Food Systems Project
CALCorps
Center for Ecoliteracy
City of Berkeley
Occidental Ecology Center
West Berkeley Neighborhood
Development Corp

Open Garden Day

We will have a discussion about this year's Open Garden Day (October 7th), and what advantages and disadvantages there were 1.) to have it be a Fall Event (rather than in May) and 2.) to have it be an East Bay Event (rather than a Bay Area Event). Beebo Turman will share her insights of pros and cons of having the map be published in the Berkeley Daily Planet – but she would like your opinions also. The garden coordinators' Evaluation Sheets will be tallied by Nov. 20th, so that will also be a discussion topic. Please com to our Monday night meeting!

Nutrition Education in Our Schools

We are excited to announce that Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) is renewing and expanding our partnership with the California Nutrition Promotion Network. Last year, six BUSD schools applied independently for gardening and nutrition education activities, as well as the District's Child Nutrition Service for the start-up of a Farmers' Market Based Salad Bar Program. This year we will not only continue to expand those activities, but we will also launch a comprehensive after-school nutrition and physical education program at all our schools. This will build upon the efforts of many individuals and groups throughout the district, and move toward increased collaboration in meeting our goals for healthier school communities. The comprehensive district-wide program includes: utilizing existing partnerships and collaborations to integrate health and nutrition education; hands-on learning in the garden; fresh produce-shopping field-trips; a farmers' market salad bar program; physical activities with nutrition themes; staff training and development; and the preparation of meals with whole ingredients through in-school and after-school cooking classes and family dinner events.

Congratulations to Superintendent Jack McLaughlin, Julie Sinai, Yolanda Huang, Elsie Lee Szeto, Chris Lim, the Food Systems Project, Suzanne Bernhardt, Eric Weaver, community members, and all the many school-garden coordinators and school teachers who are making this exciting program happen in Berkeley!

Community Garden News

Spiral Gardens has merged with the BOSS (Better Opportunities for Self-Sustainability, serving Oakland and Berkeley) to form a larger organization. This has come about because Daniel Miller has received a three year grant (\$50,000 for each year!)

from a U.S.D.A. Community Food Security Competitive Grant Award to expand food production, increase his retail organic nursery, support more people in transition from homelessness and substance abuse, and expand vocational training and horticultural therapy to 12 BOSS participants a year, up from 4 people a year. Daniel hopes to supply all the vegetables for the BOSS shelter, which serves over 100 people a day. A new garden would be at the triangle piece of Sante Fe Right-of-Way land, at Sacramento and Russell Streets, which would provide jobs for BOSS participants by becoming a retail organic nursery. Daniel also hopes to double the number of free gardening classes that he offers to community members – classes such as Herbal Medicine, Eco-City Building, Nutrition and Cooking Classes. Congratulations to Daniel: Way to go!



The Food Systems Project

The Food Systems Project (FSP), a project of the Center for Ecoliteracy, is partnering with the Berkeley Unified School District to improve the health of children and families by supporting school garden programs, developing food systems-based curriculum, improving food access and nutritional health in the BUSD food service, and linking family farms to schools.

Currently, FSP is providing leadership and support for the following:

- a student-driven International Food Court at Berkeley High School
- garden program development for Common Ground, the Environmental Studies Institute of the High School, Berkeley Alternative High School, Longfellow Middle School, and other elementary schools
- development of the Organic Farmers' Market Salad Bar Program, operating at 2 elementary schools, with plans to expand to four other elementary schools in the district this year
- implementation of a Whole Grain Breakfast Project at Oxford School, part of a national research project conducted by Dr. Michael Murphy of Harvard Medical School
- development of a Food Share program linking Malcolm X School and surrounding community members with farmers in the region
- linking farms to schools via development of a Farmers' Market and Farm Field Trips Program

FSP also tackles food-related policy issues through leadership in the Berkeley Food Policy Council (BFPC), which meets every second Wednesday of each month. The BFPC has just published the first issue of its newsletter, the Berkeley Beet, which includes the history and future directions of the Council, as well as monthly highlights on different organizations represented in the Council. Please contact the Food Systems Project at (510) 548-8838 for more information about our programs.

A Reminder!

~~A Reminder from Beebo Turman: I bring city compost to any school or community garden in Berkeley on the last Friday of the month, EXCEPT for November, December, and January, the wet and holiday months. The compost will be available for hand-loading by any school or community gardener, at any time. For all of you gardeners who were dissatisfied with our compost from Gilton Company (too much fiber, not enough nutrients), we now have a new compost supplier: Grover, from Modesto! Carl Rosato, from Woodleaf Farm, did a soil test of our compost last winter, says Grover is the best compost in the state: rich, dark, and smooth (sounds like a good, strong coffee)!~~

Community Garden Update

Brad Ricards, from the Parks Department, and Beebo Turman, from the Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative, are making the rounds of the Berkeley community gardens, assessing what small visual improvements could be made (such as weeding pathways, planting flowers along fences seen from the street, etc.) and also what maintenance improvements need to be made (such as repair to fencing, finding a better water source/hook-up, etc.). Each community garden coordinator will walk through their garden with Brad and Beebo, helping them understand the particulars of their garden space. If you are a garden coordinator, expect a phone call from Beebo to schedule this meeting in the next few weeks.

