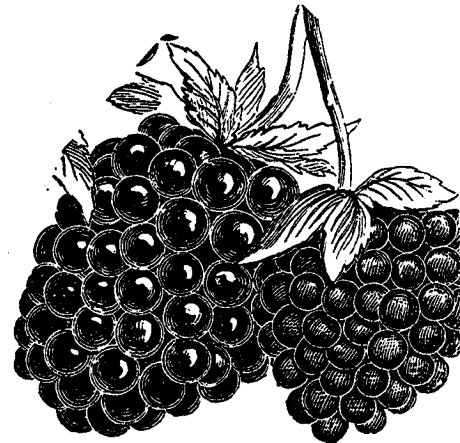


Local Dirt

February 20, 2002

The Newsletter of the Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative



Member Gardens:
Berkeley Alternative High School
Berkeley Youth Alternative's Garden Patch
Ecohouse
The Edible Schoolyard
Karl Linn Com. Garden
Northside Com. Garden
LeConte School Farm & Garden
Malcolm X School Garden
Ohlone Community Garden
Oxford School Garden
People's Park Garden
Peralta Com. Garden
Spiral Gardens
Strong Roots Gardens
U.C. Berkeley Student Garden
Willard Greening Project
Washington School Garden

Affiliates and Supporters:
Alameda Co. Food Bank
Americorps
American Community Gardening Association
Berkeley Ecology Center
CALCorps
Center for Ecoliteracy
City of Berkeley
Occidental Ecology Center
West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corp

Next Meeting:

Monday, March 4th, 6:00 – 8:00

Potluck!

1718 Ninth Street, Berkeley

At our December meeting, we discussed the proposal that B.C.G.C. join with other groups and the city of Berkeley to develop a portion of the Santa Fe Right of Way, with a one-time opportunity, namely a HIP grant. We heard many details from city staff. We did endorse this. Later, in January, we heard from the Berkeley Way Neighborhood Association that they are very opposed to taking down a fence (for safety reasons), on the north side of University Avenue. At another meeting it looked like there were ways we could all compromise to meet everyone's needs. There will be other meetings; we will keep you posted!

Compost Give-Away to the Berkeley Public

March 16th, Saturday, there will be a Compost Give-Away at the Berkeley Farmer's Market. Bring your own bucket or large trash bags to shovel compost into. The large bin will be behind the City Hall building, off Center Street, near Milvia. Free!



March is National Nutrition Month

March 12th: at the Berkeley Farmer's Market (Tuesday, at M.L.K. and Derby Streets) there will be cooking demonstrations at 3:30, 4:30 and 5:30, with free samples, recipes hand-outs, food games and prizes, and a container gardening demonstration.

March 16th: at the Berkeley Farmer's Market (Saturday, at Milvia and Center Streets, downtown) there will be cooking demonstrations at 11:00, 1:00, and 3:00, with also free samples, recipes hand-outs, food games and prizes.

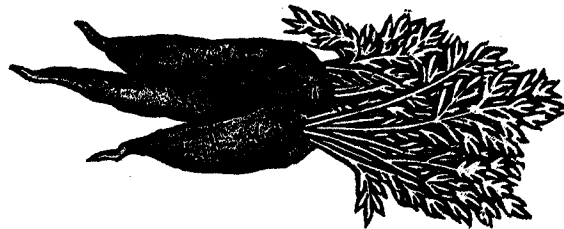
Bring your kids! A fun place to show students that eating "5 A Day" doesn't have to be a chore. ("5 A day" refers to the goal of all Californians to eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day, as one of the ways to be healthy and lessen the likelihood of getting cancer.)

Creating Habitats and A Place Called Home

A new native plant group has been formed at Peralta Community Garden! We're creating a demonstration, native, plant garden in a community garden and also doing a coastal prairie restoration project on the Olone Greenway, next to the garden (between Hopkins and Gilman streets). Interested gardeners can join this group for their monthly planting adventures, by calling Carole Bennett-Simmons at 527-6708 or Mike Menning at 559-9421. Regular meetings are planned for Peralta Community Garden on the 4th Saturday of the month.

Berkeley School Gardens Funding Problems

Berkeley school gardens have prospered these past two and a half years because the school district (BUSD) and dedicated individuals have made the California Nutrition Network grant work so well. In many of the elementary schools there are garden classes, cooking classes, and nutrition education. Two out of three middle schools totally integrate what is grown in the garden into the kitchen. But certain schools are in jeopardy of losing their funding, because they won't qualify to receive these funds. The way they qualify to the state is that they must show at least 50% students who get the "free and reduced lunch" program. Some schools are working hard to document the numbers they need, but it's possible that by this time next year there will be little outside funding for these wonderful programs. Many of the people on the school district's Child Nutrition Advisory Committee are trying to help this situation as much as they can. As much as BUSD wants to help and believes in the worth of these classes, the district itself is in dire financial straits, and must do major cutting all around, to even balance their budget. These are hard times for a school district that is very proud of it's accomplishments in the past ten years.



A School Garden Greenhouse is Finished!

The Malcolm X School Garden has completed their small, but beautiful, cobb greenhouse. Designed by John Fordice, and made with many student, teacher, and volunteer hands....this little gem of a building was finally finished after 8 months of work. Now Eric (Mr. Volunteer!) has put the glass doors on, and the students put on a roof, it is totally complete. Seedlings have already begun to grow on the shelves, and the students are patiently waiting for their wildflower seeds to start blooming on the small rooftop!