

# Local Dirt

Sept/Oct 2002

The Newsletter of the Berkeley Community Garden Collaborative

## Member Gardens:

Arts Magnet/ Whittier Elementary  
Berkeley Alternative High  
Berkeley Youth Alternative's  
Garden Patch  
Ecohouse  
The Edible Schoolyard  
John Muir Elementary  
Karl Linn Com. Garden  
LeConte Elementary Farm & Garden  
Longfellow Middle School  
Malcolm X Elementary School  
Northside Com. Garden  
Ohlone Community Garden  
Oxford Elementary School  
People's Park Garden  
Peralta Com. Garden  
Rosa Parks Elementary School  
School of the Madeleine  
Spiral Gardens/Urban Garden Institute  
Strong Roots Gardens  
Thousand Oaks Elementary  
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 Arts & Ecology Center  
West Berkeley Neighborhood  
Development Corp

## Next Meeting of the Berkeley Community Garden Collaborative

Monday Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

South Berkeley Community  
Garden

(Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, just north of  
Russell, next to Tool Lending Library)

**Partial Agenda: Open Garden Day**

**Gardeners discussion**

*Potluck*

*<BYO Eating Utensils>*

## Heartful Garden

The Heartful Garden at the School of the Madeleine is now in its permanent home at the north west area of the school's play yard. In April, the garden boxes and flowerpots were moved into the now-vacated area that housed the school's former climbing structure. Over this summer, more boxes were built to expand the program. Science and math teachers use the Heartful Garden as an "outdoor classroom" for experiments and as a tool for teaching about nutrition, biology, and life cycles. The Heartful Garden also furnishes flowers that decorate the tables at the Sunday dinner for the hungry. Our parish church, St. Mary Magdalen, sponsors these dinners on the first and last Sunday of every month. Approximately 250 people are served at each meal.

## AgriCultural Roots Festival Oakland Museum of California, September 15, 2002 12 - 5 p.m.

The AgriCultural Roots Festival, a new community event, will celebrate and strengthen the connections of cultures to the land. Educational and

## Got Gardening Tools?

Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative  
lends tools to  
Community and School Gardens  
Call 883-9096 and tell us your needs

entertaining, the festival will feature diverse agricultural, agrarian, and culinary traditions, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and health. The event will create enduring urban-rural, deepening commercial, cultural and educational ties between urban community groups in the East Bay and small family farmers, including ethnic farmers.

**SAGE** (Sustainable Agriculture Education) is producing the festival in cooperation with the Oakland Museum of California, the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), and the University of California Cooperative Extension, Alameda County. Other community partners to date include: Alameda County Office of Education, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), Food Partners, Mo' Better Food, UC Small Farm Center, and UC Cooperative Extension in Fresno and Tulare Counties.

**Enjoy:** Performances of ethnic music and dance throughout the day; **Educational displays**, with resources and information from nonprofits and agencies on subjects including health, diet, ag-tourism, farmers' markets, school gardens, sustainable agriculture, employment opportunities, training and education programs, and green cities; Local businesses and restaurants will feature ethnic foods, beverages and sustainably-produced local products.

**Hands-on activities for children, families:** interactive cooking & gardening demonstrations will introduce ethnic foods and plants and organic gardening; **Tasting of specialty produce:** a guided tasting of locally grown ethnic foods; **Ethnic food plants:** a container garden displaying dozens of varieties of chilies, eggplants, etc.; **Farmers' market**, featuring small family farmers, including new immigrant farmers; **Student project displays** celebrating diverse agricultural traditions; an **Exhibit** showing the geography of sustainability; Local **Artisan booths** selling arts and crafts that relate to food and farming. More info: [www.sagecenter.org](http://www.sagecenter.org).

## Come to Open Garden Day!

Saturday September 21, 2002, 10 am-5 PM. Self-guided tour and celebration of Bay Area school, community, and other urban agriculture gardens. Enjoy a day in the sun with fellow garden lovers. Discover hidden gardens in your neighborhood or learn how to start your own. Taste foods prepared with garden-fresh ingredients and find out how to turn leftovers into

compost. Join one of our biking, bus, or walking tours to feel the community gardening spirit.

The bicycle tour will be a delightful and easy guide bicycle excursion of 12 parks, community and school gardens, greenways, and creek renewal sites as part of the Bay Area Open Garden Day. **Meet at 10:30 a.m. at Halcyon Commons**, (itself a grassroots-designed and built park), located on Halcyon Court and Prince Street, one block west of Telegraph and one block south of Ashby Ave. Tour will end at about 3 p.m. at BYA's Garden and Strawberry Creek Park (near No. Berkeley BART).

Participants can also join the second half of the tour at 1 p.m. while we're finish-ing lunch at the Edible School Yard behind Martin Luther King School (Rose and Grant Streets). This unique tour offers a vivid demonstration of the common threads and energy behind grassroots park, greenway, and garden initiatives and their roles in enhancing a sense of community and place.

Refreshments provided by Whole Foods at Halcyon Commons, healthy produce available at the Children's Edible Schoolyard. Other tour highlights: artwork and "eco-friendly technology" in the Peralta Garden and Northside Gardens, a "Poetry Garden," a new mural and other installations on the Ohlone Greenway, and a native plants community garden. The tour is also a window on future greening opportunities, including daylighting Strawberry Creek in the Downtown, the Ohlone Natural and Cultural History Greenway, and a planned greenway on the Santa Fe Right of Way. There will be activists at many of the sites to tell us the story of their place/garden. Bring picnic lunch and water. For bike tour info, call John at 510-849-1969.

For more information about other tours, special activities, and a printable map of the gardens "open" on Saturday September 21, check [www.sagecenter.org](http://www.sagecenter.org) or call SAGE at 510-986-9400. The website also offers a complete list of Bay Area urban agriculture gardens. A project of SAGE, a local nonprofit.

## Remember Compost!!

*City compost delivered to your Community or School Garden FREE!!*

*Last Friday of month, except Nov. & Dec.*

*Call 883-9096*

## **Conferences of Interest** **Growing Greener School Grounds**

Sat. Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>

San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance

For info: 415-421-2608 –or–

[sfgreenschools@hotmail.com](mailto:sfgreenschools@hotmail.com)

## **Occidental Arts and Ecology Courses**

Permaculture

Sept. 28-Oct. 11 & Nov. 15-17

[www.oaec.org](http://www.oaec.org)

## **Oregon Herb Festival**

Oct. 19 & 20

Ashland, Oregon

800-252-0688

[www.botanicalmedicine.org](http://www.botanicalmedicine.org)

## **Gardening Discovery**

By *Karen Wikler*, Master Gardener, Alameda County

Researchers screening products to reduce populations of invasive, and extremely noisy frogs in Hawaii, have found that caffeine is an effective control of snails and slugs.

The frogs, whose croaks are comparable in decibels to a dog's bark or a vacuum cleaner, often hide in greenhouse container plants. In an early field trial, the scientists applied caffeine directly to the greenhouse soils, and to their surprise, another greenhouse pest – the slug – began to emerge and die.

The scientists ran numerous experiments to examine the effectiveness of using caffeine to control slugs and snails. The researchers found that a 2% caffeine solution applied to the growing medium of potted orchids infested with *Zonitoides arboreus* killed 95% of the snails. Likewise, 92% of the slugs that were allowed to bury themselves in pots filled with soil died within 48 hours of a 2% caffeine application. Furthermore, one-hundred percent of the snails placed on filter paper drenched with a 0.5% caffeine solution died within 96 hours, and a concentration equivalent to a strong cup of coffee (0.1%) applied directly to cabbage leaves deterred feeding by 62%.

Many plants produce caffeine, long suspected that plants synthesize the chemical as a defense against herbivory. Caffeine is not recorded as an active ingredient in any registered pesticide,

besides the experimental use permit for using dilute caffeine to control Hawaiian frogs.

While caffeine is listed as a GRAS (generally recognized as safe) compound by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, some scientists have expressed concerns that a 1-2% concentration of caffeine may be harmful to plants and invertebrates other than mollusks. More studies are in the works, and hopefully more information will be available soon.

Remember, no pest control program should ever rely on just one strategy. Even less-toxic snail and slug baits should only be used as a last resort, and only in conjunction with traps, barriers, and hand-picking! For further information on snail and slug control see the U.C. Pest Note # 7427.

### *References*

Hollingsworth, RG, JW Armstrong, and E Campbell. 2002.

Caffeine as a repellent for slugs and snails. *Nature* 417: 915-916.

Raloff, J. 2002. Slugging it out with Caffeine. *Science News* 161(26).

## **New Public Art on Ohlone Greenway**

The Ohlone Greenway Natural and Cultural History Interpretive Exhibit is being viewed daily by walkers, joggers, recreational and commuting bicyclists, people in wheel chairs, skate boarders, and roller skaters. The exhibit uses art installations, interpretive signs, and plantings to tell the many-layered stories of the place and its inhabitants in a lively and engaging manner.

- The Peralta Gateway Adobe Column commemorates the Californiano-Hispanic Period with images, text, and colorful tiles by children.
- The Agricultural Era Exhibit, under shady trees, features four steel cows with distinct personalities, tractor seats, plantings, and signage.
- "From Elk Tracks to BART Tracks," a 72 foot-long mural depicts transportation and migration from pre-settlement to the present.

Dedication will take place Tuesday, September 24, 10 a.m. to noon; public celebration Sunday, September 29, 2 to 4 p.m. Both ceremonies will begin at the Peralta Community Garden on Peralta Avenue near Hopkins Street in North Berkeley.