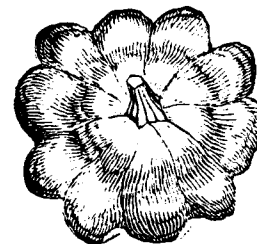


Local Dirt

September 15, 1999



The Newsletter of the Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative

Member Gardens

Berkeley High School
East Campus
Berkeley Booster's
Project Sunflower
Berkeley Youth Alternative's
Community Garden Patch
The Edible Schoolyard
Franklin Elem. School
Karl Linn Community
Garden
Northside/Peralta Gardens
LeConte School
Farm & Garden
Malcolm X School Garden
Ohlone Community
Garden
Peoples' Park Garden
RISE Urban Farm
Spiral Gardens
Strong Roots Gardens
Willard Greening Project

Affiliates and Supporters:

Alameda Co. Food Bank
Americorps
American Community
Gardening Assoc.
Berkeley Ecology Center
The Berkeley Food Proj.
CCC
CALCorps
Center for Eco-Literacy
City of Berkeley
Occidental Arts
& Ecology Center
UCCE Alameda Co.
Youth Dev. Program
West Berk. Neighborhood
Development Corp.

P.O. Box 2164
Berkeley, CA 94702
(510) 883-9096

NEXT MEETING: October 4, 1999 Monday
6:00 - 8:00, informal pot luck
at the Edible Schoolyard garden,
1781 M.L.King Jr. Way

Notes From Last Meeting, August 9th:

Those attending were; Lynn Wilder, Terri Compost, Marcy Greenhut, Erica Peng, Tom Bates, Ethan Sanford, Karl Linn, Carol Rosenberg, Gregory Frankel, Ardis Olsen, Barbara Edwards, Chris Shein, Rivka Mason, Sonya Jew, Willie Phillips, Robin Goldman, Alisa Seidlitz, Margo Schueler, Beebo Turman.

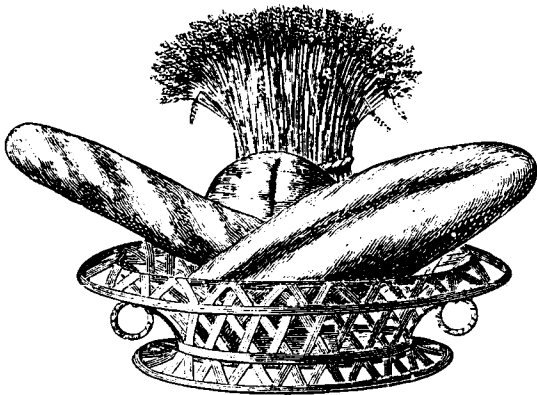
Karl kept us informed on his efforts to get Berkeley community gardens insured. Two or three options didn't work out (N.Y. insurance firm, American Community Gardening Association) but now Karl and Lisa Caronna (Director of Berkeley Parks & Waterfront) and Beebo will go to the city's legal department to see if we can get insurance through the city, the way Oakland does it for their community gardens.

Marcy gave a description of what is happening at the Malcolm X school garden (see article following). She also told us of the Berkeley Unified School District's soon-to-be-voted-on Food Policy, which is very exciting news for our students.

Beebo described the walk-through of Sante Fe Right of Way that took place on July 31st. Many members of the "Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative" and "Berkeley Partners for Parks" walked from Oregon and Sacramento Streets - in the southern end, to the northern end at Virginia Street, below the BART station.

Many of the blocks are fenced in, a few have been sold years ago to people who built housing there, a few are play areas for children with an occasional barbeque set out, and one parcel is now in closing for sale to the neighbors there. But there is a large opportunity to work with the city to proclaim these blocks, not just as "open space," but the much needed mini-park areas in South Berkeley. Andrew Thomas, who is working on the city's General Plan (written every 20 years to guide city employees), walked with us, and will have something in the second draft of the Plan about the Sante Fe Right of Way. Some people envision small community gardens, tot lots, bike paths, and more! If you are interested in helping Beebo and Zasa Swanson (B.P.F.P.) please call 883-9096.

Announcements were made, and the meeting broke up at dusk, with the soft light fading in the Peralta Garden - people still nibbling at the good food on the tile table, which matches the beautiful circle of tile benches, that lies in the heart of that garden.



SCHOOL GARDEN UPDATES

Malcolm X's new school garden is in the planning stages with two committees working toward garden design and fundraising. After the renovation of the school and the playground, the garden teacher (Rivka Mason) will have a garden 40' x 20'. It will have a small greenhouse, a shed, a sitting area for students, and of course many raised beds. Under Marcy Greenhut's strong guidance, the Fundraising Committee

is pursuing many avenues for resources and funds to have the garden ready for the children in 2000!

The new Columbus school put in raised beds last spring, and Robin Goldman (the garden teacher) and the students are harvesting what they planted last May. They will have a Harvest Festival with friends and families. Robin hopes to build new raised beds in the courtyard soon. Go see their beautiful campus, new track field, buildings and garden at 8th Street and Allston Way.

The Jefferson garden is under the new leadership of Margo Schueler. The school moved their raised beds to a temporary site near the running track, when the Crowden School asked for their loaned side-yard back. There is much planning going on for a permanent, sunny location of their garden.

The Oxford garden will be expanding under the guidance of Barbara Edwards, who has taught there for many years but now will wear a gardener's hat, primarily. She is hoping to serve a fresh salad once a week from the greens the children have grown. ("If they grow it, they will eat it.") The Berkeley Food Systems Project is working hard to put in salad bars at many schools -

one of which would be Oxford. Principal Kathleen Lewis and her teachers are excited about the transformation of our lunch menu, which is beginning to go organic, and aims to have fresh foods from local farms at every meal.

The Willard Greening Project is doing cooking classes with the sixth graders, as well as gardening. Matt and Travis are back, as well as three new Americorps youth. The garden is thriving with: popcorn, potatoes, kohlrabi, carrots, various kinds of lettuce, kale, collards, tomatoes, beans, scarlet runners, squash, cucumbers, and all kinds of culinary and medicinal herbs. This fall the students will do a medicinal, first-aid kit!

Related School News: On August 18th the Berkeley School Board passed a far-reaching Food Policy, which stated as one of it's goals: "to establish a garden in every school, and give students the opportunity to plant, harvest, prepare, cook and eat food they have grown." Contact Beebo Turman to obtain the entire Food Policy, (510) 883-9096.

SEPTEMBER 18th: 10:30 - 4:00 at the Berkeley Farmer's Market: "The Watershed Environment Poetry Festival." Famous poets, free event, with exhibits, all at Martin L. King Memorial Park, next to the Saturday Market.

AND...if you can, take in the Harvest Festival at the San Francisco Farmer's Market on the same day!

Harvest Time

Much is being written recently about Genetically Modified Organisms (G.M.O.) and the dangers of growing and eating crops that have been genetically altered. Most Americans don't realize they are already eating a lot of corn, wheat, and soy products that are made from altered plants, because such foods aren't yet labeled as such. (Although in France, farmers are going to jail, to fight "against globalization and the right for people to eat as they see fit.") We need to educate ourselves about this issue. A small sub-committee has been formed from Berkeley's Food Policy Council to plan "an information meeting/speaker panel/discussion group" for the East Bay. Please call Beebo Turman to participate in the planning of this event.

about this topic:

TWO INFORMATION EVENINGS IN SANTA ROSA:

TUESDAY, SEPT. 28th, 7:30 p.m.

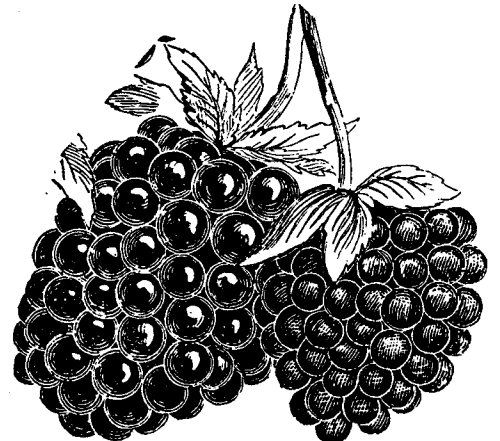
Dr. Ignacio Chapela, speaking

and

TUESDAY, OCT. 26th, 7:30 p.m.

Britt Bailey, speaking.

Call Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
for information: (707) 874-1557





A Teach-In: Nov. 6 10:00-2:00

THE FOOD SYSTEM CRISIS AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITY

Genetically engineered food, pesticide soup, hunger and malnutrition in the inner city -- or locally grown organic produce, poison-free and available to all? Our food system is at a crossroads. Our public universities should be devoting their resources to creating an ecologically sane and socially just food system. Instead, UC Berkeley has just signed a deal with biotech giant Novartis for more frankenfood research that will only fatten Novartis' profits and make all the above problems worse.

Meanwhile UC's Gill Tract in Albany languishes, a shining opportunity to establish a sustainable urban agriculture research center that could benefit all our communities. Will UC act on this opportunity? Will it sell the property? Will it turn it over to frankenfood research?

Come to a public teach-in to explore the issues and opportunities for action on urban food systems, corporate funding of public research, and the potential of the Gill Tract. Sustainable food research for people and communities? Or bio-hostile research for corporate profit?

SATURDAY, NOV. 6

10 AM - 2 PM

SOUTH BERKELEY SENIOR CENTER

2939 ELLIS (OFF ASHBY)

BERKELEY

INFO: 510.534.2552

