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environmental stewardship
by promoting science and
garden-based education for
all learners.***

THE GARDEN TIMES

Watch learning come to life in the garden!

Winter 2005

A VISION REALIZED

Four years ago when we broke ground for the Life Lab Garden Classroom, we had a vision of creating a model for garden-based learning. We imagined that visitors would come from near and far to be inspired and create similar spaces in their own communities. It was one of those “if we build it, they will come” sort of endeavors. We filled the garden with ideas for making learning come alive, including an observational beehive, organic production field, aromatic plants, a human sundial, a Garden Kitchen, a “Rot Zone,” a house full of chickens and spaces for inquiry and play. Now, after just three years, the verdict is in; we built it—and they came! The Garden Classroom has exceeded our expectations, attracting visitors from all over the world.

Here are just a few examples of the diversity of people who have visited the Garden Classroom: Forty elementary school teachers from Chile came for a bilingual, two-day workshop on creating school gardens. Students from the Culinary Institute of America in New York City came to cook in the Garden Kitchen and learn about food and farm systems. A Member of Parliament from New Zealand visited and was so inspired he left loaded down with Life Lab Science curriculum to take back to schools in his country. On a regular basis, large groups of Japanese farmers and businessmen tour the garden and learn about the school garden movement in the United States. Just the other day, a teacher from a small French village bought Life Lab curriculum, in the hopes of building a living laboratory like the Garden Classroom. Recently, a teacher from Texas wrote to tell us that her Life Lab Garden is in full swing. She, like many others who experience a workshop in the Garden Classroom, left inspired to create her own school garden. This autumn, groups of children from the Second Harvest Food Bank explored the site, gathering and preparing fresh, healthy food into kid-tested recipes such as steamed rainbow-chard rolls with plum sauce (see recipe inside). And of course, the garden continues to touch the lives of school field trip groups, summer camp children and families strolling through on a lazy weekend.

What new visitors will the New Year bring to the Garden Classroom? We look forward to finding out and welcome you to join us! Check out some of our upcoming events (see back page), including our fabulous Benefit Dinner in August or our weekend classes for families. Until then, feel free to come to the Garden Classroom for a beautiful walk, some fresh air, and a chance to reconnect with the ever-growing community of people who know the importance of gardens.



Rainbow Chard Rolls

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 8 large chard leaves
- 4 cups of seasonal vegetable filling: onions, carrots, potatoes, squash, peppers, parsnips, celery, etc.
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 2 tsp. chopped tarragon or 1/2 tsp. dried tarragon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup of water

Directions:

1. Finely dice the vegetables for filling. Cut the chard stems off (including the thick part at the base of the leaf) and finely dice. Heat oil in large skillet. Add the diced veggies, diced chard stems, chopped garlic and tarragon. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and cook for 20 minutes. Add the lemon juice.
2. Blanch the chard leaves in boiling water for 4 minutes, then set on a towel to drain. Place the leaves, smooth side down and add 2 heaping tablespoons of filling just above the stem notch. Fold the sides over the filling and roll up the leaves.
3. Enjoy!



DISCOVERING MEANING IN THE GARDEN

For the past four summers Life Lab has worked with a group of students who have roots in agriculture. These students are considered “migrant” as they often travel back and forth between Mexico and the US with their families in search of agricultural work. This interruption in their education, along with the challenges of learning a second language, often leave them falling behind in school. One response to this problem is the AVANCE program (run by Monterey County Office of Education’s Migrant Education Program) which sends 40 migrant middle school students from the Salinas area to UC Santa Cruz for a month each summer to live in the dorms and focus intensively on math, study skills, computers and science. Life Lab provides the teachers and students with science that is fun, meaningful and connects to a background in agriculture: garden-based science.



Twice a week this summer, the AVANCE students came to the Garden Classroom. Our staff led the students through a process of inquiry, an approach that engages learners in exploring the world, asking questions and making discoveries. The students focused on designing an experiment to answer a question they had developed from their observations of the

garden. Students wondered: What types of food do snails prefer? How do bean plants react to different liquids? What habitat do worms like best?

After a month of in-depth investigations, the students made some exciting discoveries. Snails will eat almost anything, but they prefer lettuce. The bean plants preferred tap water over a fertilizer mixture. The worms liked plain-old garden soil best. And in a greater sense, the students also discovered a new way to think and understand their world. Their answers did not come from a textbook, the internet or even a teacher. With the students’ strong experimental designs, the snails, worms and bean plants naturally gave away their secrets. So, as the students went through the process of questioning and experimenting, they became empowered as “real” scientists. They were fully engaged in this process of discovery, of making meaning for themselves. It is often easy and useful to tell our children “the answers.” However, it is also very important to teach them how to think for themselves. The garden is a place where this type of learning can flourish.

On the last weekend of the AVANCE program, the students’ parents joined them in the Garden Classroom. The students presented their findings, just like “real” scientists, with posters full of graphs, charts and text. Parents beamed as they watched their children, who were once lacking confidence and falling behind in school, speak with conviction and excitement about their summer of academic discoveries in the garden.

LIFE LAB’S HOLIDAY WISH LIST...

Data Projector, Gift Certificates to local feed stores to support our chickens; Gift Certificates to garden stores, Cash Donations, Web Design Services, Peace on Earth



LIFE LAB'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT DINNER... A DELICIOUS SUCCESS!



Life Lab celebrated its 25th birthday in style with many friends and supporters in the picturesque Garden Classroom. Tables were set among the flowers and a feast of local fresh foods was served. Supporting Life Lab never tasted so good! Money raised at the event is directly supporting our educational programs.

By the end of the evening, guests were already wondering when the next dinner would be. So...we decided to make this an annual event! Join us on August 27th, 2005 for another amazing evening of fine dining in our garden.

CHEERS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

With much gratitude we thank all the individuals and businesses who so generously supported this event.

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The Garden Company
Ashtanga Yoga Institute
Disneyland Park, California
Rod McLellan Company
Lundberg Studios
Best Western Seacliff Inn's Severinos Restaurant
Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association



Rainbow Chips

This activity is a great "warm-up" to get your students looking closely at the garden. Parents can also try this activity at home!

Materials: A variety of color paint chips from the hardware store (free!). Cut into individual color squares.

Directions: You can begin by telling the story below or just start by have the students find a partner. Give each partner group a "rainbow chip" and have them try to find that EXACT color somewhere in the garden. The partners have to agree on the color match. Then, they report back their findings, return the chip and get another. Repeat the activity until each group has found about 3 colors. If students can bring back their matching object without harming the garden, start a display of objects and their color paint chips (see photograph).

Optional Story: (Embellish as you like!) One day I was walking through the forest and it started to rain. I came upon a meadow, and the sun started to peek through the heavy clouds. Then, a huge double rainbow appeared! It was so vivid that I saw hundreds of different colors. Suddenly, the rainbow shattered in the sky, and all the pieces fell to the earth. I ran over to the pieces and began picking them all up and putting them in a bag. Would you all like to see the rainbow chips?



Field to Market to You — January - June

A two-part field trip program highlighting food system education, environmental consumerism, and local agricultural history. A collaborative program with New Leaf Community Market. Call 466-9060 x126

Educator Workshop: Inquiry in the Garden, February 25

Participants will engage in an inquiry-based, garden investigation and learn strategies for guiding students. 8:30-4:00, \$125. Pre-registration required.

Educator Workshop: Bringing the Garden to the Kitchen, February 26

Learn great ways to link your garden to healthy eating activities. Participate in hands-on activities and lessons that will demonstrate how to tie the garden and food to today's educational standards. 8:30-4:00, \$125. Pre-registration required.

Chickens and Eggs, March 19

Children and their families are invited to visit our hens, cook with eggs, dye eggs with natural materials from the garden, and explore the garden for eggs. 1:00-4:00, \$15 for Life Lab Members/\$20 general public (per child)

School Field Trips Begin, March 31

Tuesday - Friday, 10:00-1:00, 2nd Grade - Middle School, \$125 per class, 30 child maximum

Spring Break Gardening Day Camp, March 21 - 25

Children 7-11 are invited to join us on the farm for spring gardening, cooking, and crafts. 9:00 - 1:00 \$200/\$230

Spring After-School Garden Days, April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4, 11 (Wednesdays)

Children 7-11 will work with our garden staff, tend to our hens and honey bees, sow spring seeds and cook in our garden kitchen. 3:30-5:30, \$20 per class or \$95 whole series for LL Friends/\$120 general public.

Educator Workshop: Monterey Bay Science Project Regional Spring Conference, April 9

Annual one day regional science conference showcasing aspects of science content and teaching and educational gardening. Location: CSUMB. Call (831) 459-5395, \$40

Fourth Annual Spring Fare in the Garden Classroom, May 14

Fantastic local farm fare, make and bake your own mini pizza, and enjoy our Garden Classroom overlooking the Bay. Fun for the whole family. 2:00 pm-5:00 pm, \$5, children 12 and under free.



Wheat Grinding & Pretzel Baking is just one of the birthday activities to chose from.

Celebrate...

your child's birthday in the Life Lab Garden Classroom. Enjoy garden art, games and cooking activities.

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