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*Life Lab Science Program
is committed to
environmental stewardship
and academic excellence
by promoting science and
garden-based education for
all learners.*

THE GARDEN TIMES

Watch learning come to life in the garden!



Summer
2006

LIFE LAB PROGRAMS SPREAD WORLDWIDE

Schools, gardens, clubs and organizations throughout the country, and in other countries, are using Life Lab's curriculum. In this Garden Times issue you will find several examples of the far-flung reaches of Life Lab.



Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Garden Columbus, Ohio

Growing to Green, established in March 2000 by the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Garden, exists to promote and support community and urban gardening throughout the city of Columbus, Ohio. It includes a special summer program for youth providing therapeutic gardening experiences.

Using the Life Lab Curriculum as a backbone, Bill Dawson, Director of Growing to Green and Grace Shillinger, a Growing to Green Volunteer, conducts weekly garden lessons for youth ages 7 to 18 attending the City of Columbus Therapeutic Recreation Program. Attendees of the program have special physical and mental challenges including conditions such as cerebral palsy and autism.

The youth visit once a week for eight weeks. They plant seeds, help maintain and harvest beds and participate in a number of activities designed to engage their senses. For most, it is their first opportunity to garden because of their urban location and their special needs. The youth are involved in the program based on interest, and counselors note that the kids "can't wait to get out there." During the first year, they had eight regular gardeners, but by the second year, that number more than doubled to twenty.

These youth often find barriers to active involvement in normal gardens, but with the raised beds and paved pathways, youth "in wheel chairs are able to get up to the beds and lead the way to the annual, perennial, or vegetable garden areas." Grace feels "gardening is a wonderful way to get challenged youth in any area to become more aware of their environment and learn cooperative skills and awareness of their senses."

Bill is also very enthusiastic about the benefits of the program. He vividly recalls the excited smile on the face of an eleven-year-old blind girl who won their Sensory Scavenger Hunt by taking advantage of her heightened sense of touch. This is just one example of how the garden cultivates self-confidence and provides opportunities for success.

Summer Salsa

Ingredients:

1 cup diced tomatoes
 1/2 cup diced green pepper
 1/2 cup finely diced onions
 1 Tablespoon minced garlic
 1/4 to 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
 salt & pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Toss together all ingredients.
2. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate.
3. Serve with warm tortillas, beans, or tortilla chips.
4. Enjoy!



More Success Stories...

Las Cañadas Huatusco, Veracruz, México

At the edge of a cloud forest in Veracruz, Mexico lies an innovative school hoping to change the world one child at a time. The school is part of the Las Cañadas Reserve where owners Ricardo and Tania Romero are dedicated to teaching others about sustainable agricultural practices to develop a model rural community that is both economically and ecologically stable.



Their mission began by turning degraded cattle pastures into an organic dairy and biointensive vegetable farm. Their next step was to take advantage of the rich, learning experiences available on their land to share their knowledge with others by developing educational outreach efforts including ecotourism programs and special

day-long visits for regional schools. To further expand their impact, their latest venture is the establishment of a school for young children.

Using Life Lab curriculum as the base, study of both natural and cultivated landscapes provides a backdrop for teaching everything from Spanish to mathematics. A small classroom building is complemented by a large outdoor laboratory where students learn traditional subjects and practical life skills in an informal setting which encourages exploration and experimentation.



The Kindergarten Initiative from The Food Trust Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

“To strengthen their connection to farms, we must give children opportunities to be farmers as well, which is why the garden is an important part of our program.” shares Bonnie Hallam, coordinator of The Kindergarten Initiative launched by The Food Trust.

Through the Initiative, teachers from fourteen Philadelphia area schools receive resources to implement a curriculum aligned with state standards and based on a “Good 4 Me” framework. The program includes a combination of flexible nutrition and gardening lessons accompanied by healthy snack preparation and trips to local farms.

“Since habits of children form early, our program is designed to teach young children about healthy eating and to connect them with the source of their foods. We want them to understand the importance of buying local produce and how our farmers help us.”

All of the garden lessons are adapted from Life Lab Curriculum, *The Growing Classroom*. With the challenge of the Pennsylvania climate during the school year, many teachers garden indoors using mini greenhouses and grow lights. Bonnie has found that the participating teachers “love growing and are excited to find a reason to do it that fits with their curricular requirements, and of course the kids love gardening too. One school with access to outdoor gardening space has even harvested enough produce to donate to a local food bank.”



New Training Center

Together Life Lab Science Program (LLSP) and the UCSC Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (the Center) have long worked to train educators, students of all ages, and the general public in plant- and garden-based science and nutrition education. LLSP and the Center have collaborated to create the Garden Classroom to serve as a model educational garden and as a site for public outreach and training related to garden-based learning.

Since its founding, the Garden Classroom has become a popular destination for field trips, workshops, and tours, serving over 5,000 students and hundreds of educators and family visitors annually.

In 2006, the Garden Classroom became a California Department of Education (CDE) Regional Training Center in Nutrition Garden Based Learning. CDE funds for this effort will support a new program targeting public school educators and students in grades K-8 on the Central Coast.

Summer Camp Goes to the Bees!

This year at Life Lab's Wildlands and Watering Cans Summer Day Camp campers dedicated a full day to honey bees. Campers used all of their senses to learn about these pollinators.

Exploring the specific tasks bees fill according to their age, campers enjoyed acting out the roles of hive cleaner, nurse bee, royal nurse, wax maker, guard bee, and forager. They demonstrated pollen collection, nectar collection, and honey making. One lucky camper each session volunteered to wear the beekeeper's suit.

Campers tasted three types of honey: blackberry honey, clover honey, and orange blossom honey. After tasting, the campers voted for their favorite: orange blossom honey.



At the end of Bee Day campers visited the hives on the UCSC Farm. A staff member carefully opened a hive and brought out a frame of busy bees for the campers to see. Hesitant at first, the campers soon saw that the bees had more important things to worry about than who was watching them work!



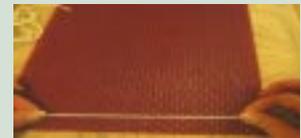
Thank you bees, for pollination, wax, honey and a fun day at summer camp!

Beeswax Candles

Making beeswax candles is a fun and easy project for all ages!

Directions:

1. Purchase beeswax sheets and candle wick, available at most craft supply stores for a minimal price.
2. Roll beeswax at room temperature, on a flat surface and don't push so hard or tight that when rolling, fingerprints and dents are created. The wax should be soft and pliable.
3. Place a length of wick along one end of the beeswax sheet.



4. Fold the end of the beeswax sheet over the wick. Tuck it around the wick and make a tight roll.



5. Gently, working from one end of the wick to the other, roll the beeswax sheet. Roll carefully and slowly at the beginning to prevent cracking or breaking of the beeswax sheet. As the candle grows, you can roll more quickly.

7. When you reach the end of your sheet, press the edge gently into the body of the candle.

8. Trim the wick at the base to be flush with the bottom of the candle. Trim the wick at the top of the candle to 1/4".

A TASTE OF SUMMER: LIFE LAB'S ANNUAL BENEFIT SEPTEMBER 16TH



A seasonal tasting benefiting Garden Classroom Programs. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, wine, and auction in the beautiful Garden Classroom overlooking the Monterey Bay. Separate children's picnic.

New Resource for School Gardens

Finally, a one-stop-shop for teachers seeking information about establishing, funding and maintaining school gardens. The California School Garden Network (CSGN) announced its new web site, www.csgn.org, in March 2006. The CSGN and its web site are the fruits of ongoing collaboration between state agencies, private companies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations to create and sustain school gardens that enhance academic achievement, a healthy lifestyle, environmental stewardship and community and social development. Life Lab Science Program is proud to be a founding member of the California School Garden Network.

“The number of school garden resources available to California teachers is bountiful,” said A.G. Kawamura, California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary. “CSGN is the first organization to consolidate all those resources in one location, giving teachers easy access to the tools they need to grow and sustain successful school gardens.”

The CSGN Web site connects teachers with school garden curriculum, experts, literature, resources, research, and available funding. As the CSGN program grows, the Web site will evolve to provide not only state-wide information but also regional resources available to teachers in their own communities.



“While the cooperation in forming the Network and launching the CSGN Web site are great accomplishments, it is just the beginning. Our goal is to have a garden in every California school,” said Tim Alderson, CSGN Chairman. “These gardens not only provide children a fun way to learn, gardens help teach students about healthy food choices.”

The Growing Classroom: An Introduction to Garden-Based Learning, Sept. 28-29

Using the Growing Classroom Activity Guide for grades 2-6, experience hands-on activities, learn basic science concepts and gardening techniques, and develop management strategies for a school gardening program. Two days 9:00-3:00. \$300

Register on line at www.lifelab.org

Monterey Bay Science Project Regional Spring Conference, April 21

Annual one day regional science conference showcasing aspects of science content and teaching and educational gardening.

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