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CALENDAR

*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! Winter 2006-2007

LIFE LAB PARTNERS WITH CSGN TO OFFER A NEW TOOL FOR SCHOOLS

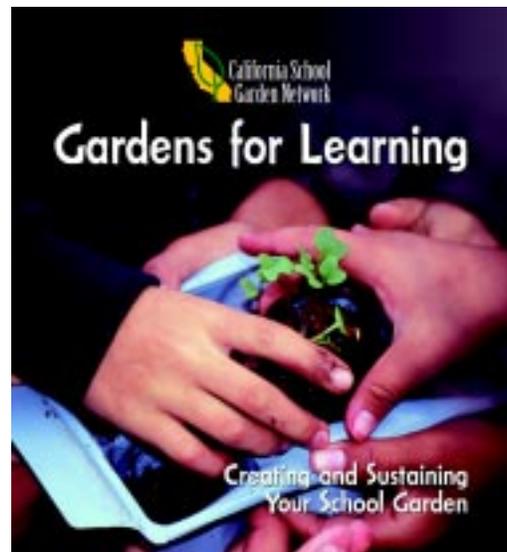
Life Lab Science Program has been promoting garden-based learning for almost thirty years. During this time, there has been a huge increase in the number of schools using gardens as hands-on educational tools for teaching healthy eating, environmental awareness and scientific concepts. Many new organizations and resources are now available for helping schools get started. Life Lab is proud to be a lead partner in the California School Garden Network (CSGN). Following is an excerpt from the introduction to the new CSGN publication *Gardens for Learning: Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden*.

What is a school garden? A school garden is an innovative teaching tool providing educators with opportunities to incorporate hands-on activities for a diversity of interdisciplinary, standards-based lessons. The garden engages students by providing a dynamic environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn. It is a living laboratory where lessons are drawn from real life experiences rather than hypothetical textbook examples, allowing students to become active participants in the learning process. Through the garden, students gain an understanding of ecosystems, appreciation for food origins, and knowledge of plant and animal life cycles. At the same time, they learn practical, horticultural skills that last a lifetime.

What does a school garden look like? School gardens come in all shapes and sizes with a common focus on growing plants. A school garden may be as small as a few pots of herbs growing in a windowsill or as large as a half-acre vegetable garden in your schoolyard. Gardening programs are flexible enough to fit the needs and resources of every school.

Why garden with kids? Educational philosophers since the seventeenth century have promoted the use of gardening to achieve learning objectives and support mental, emotional, and social development of youth. Students enjoy gardening activities, and teachers and parents say that gardening programs:

- Address multiple learning styles
- Provide opportunities for interdisciplinary lessons
- Improve environmental attitudes
- Promote good nutrition and physical exercise
- Teach patience and responsibility
- Instill a positive work ethic
- Increase self-esteem
- Build classroom relationships, improve team work and school spirit
- Beautify the environment



Curried Winter Squash Soup

1 leek, chopped, white part only

1 large onion, chopped

1/8 cup olive oil

Pre-roasted flesh of one winter squash* (or 20 oz can of pumpkin puree)

4 cups vegetable broth

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon curry powder

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon ginger

1 bayleaf

1 cup coconut milk

Heat olive oil in a soup pot. Sauté the chopped onion and leek ten minutes.

In food processor or blender mix sautéed onion & leek with the baked squash until smooth, add broth as needed.

Pour back into the soup pot.

Add the remaining broth, salt and spices. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes, uncovered.

Stir often.

Remove the bay leaf and stir in the coconut milk. Stir over medium heat until the soup reaches a good serving temperature.

Serve garnished with chopped cilantro or chives. Enjoy!

*** Squash-roasting instructions:** Choose a small pie pumpkin, red kuri squash, butternut, or other winter squash (2 or 3 for a smaller variety). Preheat the oven to 350° F. Cut the squash in half, clean out the seeds and stringy stuff, and poke the skin a few times with a fork. Rub olive oil onto the cut edges and place cut edges down in a baking pan. Bake for 30-45 minutes, until a fork easily pushes into the flesh. Now you're ready to scoop the flesh out of the skin and use it for soup (or eat it!)

TOOL FOR SCHOOLS - CONTINUED...

In addition to anecdotal evidence, a growing body of research-based literature supports the use of youth gardens as a beneficial teaching tool. Research has found participation in youth gardening programs can make the following impacts:

- Improve self-esteem and attitudes toward school
- Improve social skills and behavior
- Improve environmental attitudes especially in younger students
- Increase group cohesion
- Improve interpersonal relationships
- Increase students' interest in eating fruits and vegetables and improve students' attitude towards vegetables and fruit and vegetable snacks
- Significantly increase science achievement scores
- Increase self-esteem, develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, help foster family relationships and increase parental involvement.
- Improve life skills including working with groups and self-understanding

This CSGN publication is available for free in hardcopy for California educators and as a downloadable PDF from www.csgn.org.

15 MILLION FOR CALIFORNIA SCHOOL GARDENS: AB 1535



California has always been a leader in the school garden movement. The passage of California Assembly Bill 1535, *The Instructional School Garden Bill*, is just one more example. AB 1535 will allocate up to \$5,000 per school for school garden supplies and \$2,500 for garden-based learning professional development, with \$15,000,000 available statewide. These non-competitive funds are being administered by the California Department of Education. By the end of 2006, school districts, State Board charter schools or county offices of education will be able to apply for grants on behalf of school sites through an electronic application.

Here are some suggestions for effective ways to use the funds to create or strengthen a school garden program at your site:

Attend one of the following Life Lab Workshops:

- Creating Gardens for Learning
- The Growing Classroom: an Introduction to Garden-Based Learning
- Plant It!, Grow It!, Eat It!: Improving Nutrition through School Gardens
- Discovering the Garden in Early Childhood Education
- Life Lab Science

Life Lab can conduct workshops at your school site or in our Garden Classroom.

Purchase Curriculum and Garden Activity Guides

Life Lab has developed a variety of publications to help you connect the garden to the classroom.

Purchase Supplies for Your Garden – The www.kidsgardening.com on-line store and catalogue are the best sources for supplies for school gardens.

More information on AB 1535 and Life Lab's workshops and publications is available at www.lifelab.org.



A TASTE OF THE HARVEST: LIFE LAB'S ANNUAL BENEFIT EVENT

On September 30th Life Lab celebrated its 27th year with the *A Taste of the Harvest* annual benefit event. The fundraiser was a great success as Life Lab friends and supporters joined together in the Garden Classroom to help sustain Life Lab's educational programs. The day was as amazing as the food, which was prepared by Chef Jon Dickinson, of Café Cruz. Guests sipped local wine and beer (donated by Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards, Zayante Vineyards, and Santa Cruz Mountain Brewers) as they bid on silent auction items of wonderful local art, gifts and services while being serenaded by the smooth jazz sounds of the Ben Cole Quartet. Many thanks to all of our supporters, contributors, and volunteers for the event - we couldn't do it without you!

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Winter Squash Tasting

Description:

Introduce each squash variety by showing the unroasted squash and asking students for descriptions of color and shape. Show what the same type looks like after roasting. As students taste each kind of squash, ask them about the taste and texture, and record their answers.



Background Information:

Winter squash is grown in the summer, but called winter squash because it stores well and is therefore a good vegetable for winter eating. It is high in fiber and vitamin A, and is a good food for children to include in a healthy diet.

Materials:

- 2 each of a variety of winter squash (such as butternut, acorn, delicata, red kuri, pie pumpkin, blue Hubbard)
- large sharp knife, large spoon
- cookie sheets/baking pans, olive or canola oil
- napkins

Preparation:

Squash-roasting: Roast one of each kind of squash in the oven (reserving one of each kind to show what it looked like originally).

***Please see Squash-roasting instructions for the Curried Winter Squash Soup.**

Let cool slightly and scoop out pieces for tasting. Squash is tastiest when served warm; if roasted ahead of time, you can reheat the squash in an oven or microwave.

NEW Winter Nutrition Field Trips Begin in February, registration starts January 2

Monterey Bay Area School Garden Workshop - January 11 Join teachers at Mar Vista School in Aptos for a workshop on preparing winter harvest crops, seed sowing, and tree planting.

School Garden Bus Tour - January 24 In collaboration with the Ecological Farming Association, Life Lab's John will lead a tour of 4 school gardens in the Monterey Bay.

California School Garden Network's Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden Workshop - March 10 @ UCSC or March 24 @ UC Davis Spend a day with your school garden team learning school gardening skills.

Discovering the Garden in Early Childhood Education- March 24 Learn how to incorporate garden activities into a pre-school program or into family life.

Life Lab / Monterey Bay Science Project Conference - April 21 A one day science conference showcasing science content and educational gardening at CSUMB.

Growing Classroom Workshop - September 27-28 Learning how to guide children in a garden setting, connecting to academic standards, program management and basic gardening and composting instruction.

Garden Classroom Science Exploration Field Trips for 1st Grade - Middle School Begin in April, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 10:00-1:00

Seeds of Wonder Field Trips for Pre-school - Kinder Begin in April, Wednesdays, 9:00 and 11:00

Spring Break Gardening Day Camp - April 9-13, 9:00-1:00

Wildlands and Watering Cans Summer Day Camp for 7-10 Year Olds - June 25-August 3

Farm and Wilderness Exploration Day Camp for 11-14 Year Olds - August 6-10

A Taste of the Harvest: Life Lab's Annual Benefit - September 29

Fall Field Trips Begin in September

Harvest Festival - October 6, 11:00-5:00

For more information, please see - www.lifelab.org



Special Thanks to our Supporters

California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
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