

UC Santa Cruz

News & Notes of the UCSC Farm & Garden

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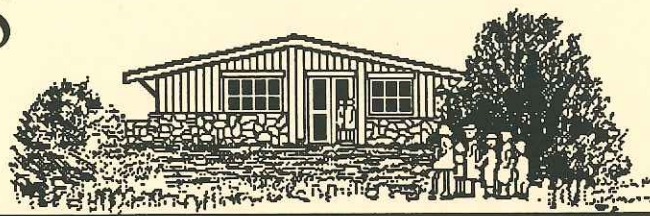
UC Santa Cruz

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NEWS & NOTES

*of the UCSC FARM
and GARDEN*



Issue 62

February 1994

Jeff Arnett & Beth Benjamin, Editors

All Nature seems at work;
Slugs leave their lair.
The bees are stirring—
Birds are on the wing,
And winter slumbering
In the open air
Wears on his face
A dream of Spring.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



FEBRUARY

BIOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES

Thursday, February 24th, 7:30 PM

Louden Nelson Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz

Sean Swezey, Agroecology Program researcher, will share ideas on environmentally sound pest controls and discuss the program's work with local growers.

MARCH

STARTING A SPRING GARDEN

Sunday, March 13th, 12 noon - 2 PM

Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Orin Martin, Agroecology Program Garden Manager, offers ideas that will help you get your vegetable and flower garden growing. Learn how to select and start seeds, enrich your soil, prepare garden beds, and much more at this free workshop.

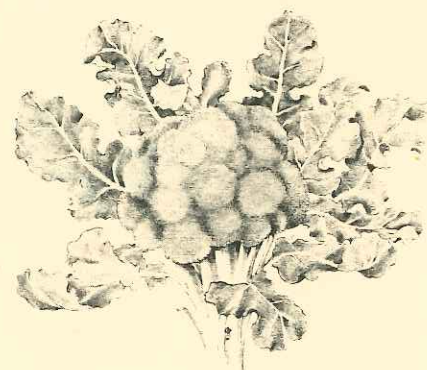
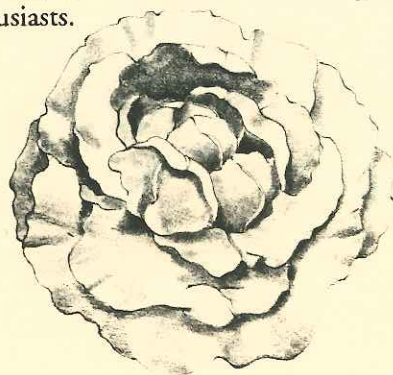
Noteworthy news . . . Apprentice Program Coordinator **Al Johnson** is off to Russia for three weeks with a team of American agricultural educators to train instructors in sustainable and organic farming techniques. Al has promised to describe his goodwill, good earth adventure in detail in the next *N & N*.

Agroecology lab assistant **Matthew Werner** is writing a book about a subject close to the feet of most Friends — earthworms. Tentatively titled *Earthworms First*, he wants to “answer all the questions anyone ever had about earthworms.” Matthew invites readers with questions, curiosities and conundrums re: earthworms to send them to him c/o Agroecology (FAX: 408/459-2799) or call him at 459-4661 . . . Singing another tune, Matthew also reports that fans of Carry It Home (whose folk music enlivened the Squash Festival of '92) will be glad to hear of the group's new incarnation, Mariposa, whose album “First Light Of Dawn” is available from Catalpa Records, PO Box 1314, SC 95061-1314.

Frinds can look forward to UCSC's Banana Slug Days, April 22-24, thanks to director **Christina Valentino**, who has paved the way for our participation. Docent tours will highlight the wonders, slugs and all, of the Farm & Garden while a user-friendly Friends' booth will greet alumni, parents and other visitors.

Belated squashays to all who made last November's Squash Festival a squashful success, particularly **Jim Leap** and **Randy Rice** for organizing the festivities enjoyed by some 150 squashionadoes. And hosannas to our hostess of December's Holiday Tea, Director **Mona Martin**. Her hospitality in the warm cheer of ID, along with **Sirima Sataman's** merchandise acumen, resulted in ringing sales for the Friends' coffers. Cheers, too, for other friendly elves too numerous to mention who teed off the Holiday Tea. Some Friend's merchandise is still available at ID.

Director **Loretta Meyers** reports that **Jim Nelson's** winter pruning workshop on 1/9 found nearly 100 pruners peppering our well-informed expert (Jim's a local organic farmer and orchard manager) with questions during the 4-hour pruningfest. Loretta was especially impressed with the intensity of Jim's “heart and soul” presentation. Along with his appreciative pruners, we applaud Jim's contribution to local gardening enthusiasts.



Congratulations to Director **Jered Lawson**, recently accepted into the F & G apprenticeship program and whose intriguing piece on CSAs graces this *N & N*. Jered reports that the Homeless Garden Project is expanding their own CSA Shareholderships from 105 to 130 this year and therefore seeks new members. If you're interested in receiving their fresh produce (and supporting the productive work of the homeless) call 426-3609.

Urban gardeners and other friends of the San Lorenzo River be alerted to alarming plans from the always dangerous Army Corps of Engineers. According to a recent *SC Sentinel* article, the Corps “has proposed stacking concrete blocks and installing floodwalls on existing levees along two miles of the San Lorenzo River as it passes through downtown Santa Cruz. Friends' director **Gary Kliewer**, chair of the San Lorenzo Restoration Committee for the city of Santa Cruz, was quoted as saying of the plan, “Yes, it would be ugly,” without the city's environmental restoration plan. Interested Friends can contact Gary or the City of Santa Cruz for more information.

For Friends who fancy friendly bugs, predatory mite rancher **Ron Rider** has published a booklet that outlines the care and feeding of his stock. These mighty mites munch on the two-spot and Pacific-red spider mites, considered the world's #1 agricultural pests. As **Sean Swezey** of the Agro. staff (and our resident entomologist) said of Rider's mites, “We've barely been able to keep up with it (the two-spot mite) and obviously we need this alternative.” Rider's free booklet is available from the Central Coast Insectary, 391 Hames Rd., Corralitos, 95076-0234, or call 726-1853.

Thomas Whitman (back to the Farm for a few months of building projects,) reports that although the Farm and Garden has power tools, they've never owned a generator. The crew is desiring to keep noisy construction away from the farm center and adjacent classroom spaces. A generator for the equipment barn to make this possible would be highly appreciated. Can anyone help with this? Contact Agroecology and leave Thomas a message.

GETTING TO KNOW THE APPRENTICES

On January 18th I spent the afternoon at the Farm overlooking the plowed fields and a view of the ocean, next to the orchard, while the apprentices pruned the apples trees nearby. I asked each apprentice if it would be all right to interview them for this article. Each person agreed and spent about twenty minutes talking with me.

I was particularly curious about their experiences being apprentices in the 1990's and how their responses compared to the ones I might have had when I was in their shoes, as an apprentice in the 1970's. I wondered whether the reasons for choosing to participate in the program had changed or remained the same over the years and what their unique concerns, experiences and dreams were.

I interviewed all the apprentices who are currently participating in the program. Vanessa Campbell and Christina Sullivan are just finishing their second years while the following apprentices are just beginning their second years: Brett Gustafson, Greg Hawkins, Amy Linstrom, Becky Lynch, Bill Smith, and Jenny Tollenaere.

The four questions I asked each person were:

- *What was your goal when you came to the program and what brought you to the Farm and Garden?*
- *What is the most challenging thing about being in the program?*
- *What is the biggest lesson or most profound concept you have learned while being at the Farm and Garden?*
- *What are you learning in the Apprenticeship Program that you will incorporate into your life or take with you?*

The following answers were taken directly from the notes I took while each apprentice talked with me. To the best of my ability the following relates what they shared with me.

What was your goal when you came to the program and what brought you to the Farm and Garden?

VC "When I came here I knew that I wanted to have a farm. I had two choices at the time: working on a farm in D.C. or coming here to work and learn. I figured, of the two, the Farm and Garden would give me a broader range of experience in organic agriculture."

CS "I was interested in learning to cultivate and work with plants. I have been here (in the U.S.) for thirteen years; I am from Brazil. I want to go back to Brazil and work with homeless kids and live on a farm... I was an accountant in San Francisco before this and found an interest in herbs. I was going to do an apprenticeship in herbs, but I found out about the Farm and Garden."

BG "I had known for about six years I wanted to be a farmer. I liked the outdoors and worked on my grandparent's farms. I wanted hands-on learning more than book-learning and this program was the one that offered that... I knew living in a tent would be all right because I had worked in Colorado with the Outward Bound program and had already lived without many amenities."

GH "I had worked at a farm for two seasons in Colorado. My interest was to come here, find out how this program's curriculum and administration functions and take it back to Colorado, but I see new opportunities now that I am here. I am looking at my strengths, leaning more about myself and my goals. The opportunities I see range from urban rehabilitation gardens, market gardening, teaching, doing sustainable community design to having a bed and breakfast. I want to be somewhere that I will flourish and bloom."

BL "This program was a culmination of a lot of things. It was the last six months of an 18-month plan to do horticultural internships and apprenticeships. The first three months I spent in Japan preparing roses for domestic sale, then Davis for two months farming doing field production, then Filoli Gardens doing ornamental gardening for the formal gardens. I came here for the culmination to this education."

AL "I hope to go into business as a market gardener or have a farm. I'd like to stay in California; I am from Los Gatos but have moved around from San Diego to Colorado. I'd like to sell at the farmer's market or to restaurants and have an orchard. I see that this area is saturated (with organic growers), so I realize that I may need to be flexible. But I plan to pursue it."

BS "I wanted some real hands-on experience with growing my own food. I felt like I had lost touch with that process. I wanted to live in a healthy environment, work and live cooperatively, and I wanted to build my capacity to work with other people and my understanding of plants."

JT "I was teaching in the public schools in Claremont. I wasn't teaching environmental education which is what I like and I missed being outdoors. My idea is to be able to weave the two together. I want to work with kids, give them life skills, a sense of responsibility, and taking care of themselves... I used to tell my kids 'I want to be a gardener' and they would ask perplexedly 'why?'... I'd like to work at an environmental education place and be the gardener or caretaker. There would be animals: chicken, goats, sheep and draft horses."

What is the most challenging thing about being in the program?

VC "As a second-year the challenging thing was to try and meet all the demands of the new apprentices and to answer their questions, all they wanted to know. The social part was pretty challenging as a first-year. I feel more relaxed now knowing my way around the Farm and Garden and Santa Cruz."

AL "It's challenging because I want to learn so much and do so much but time is limited. I can get frustrated with not enough time. Also the group decisions take time; consensus is not always the most efficient way."

BL "It's challenging fitting everything in, maintaining the gardens and fields, and especially studying; the six-month aspect is overwhelming. At a certain point I realized how little I really know....The social part is also challenging and the responsibility to the community."

What is the biggest lesson or most profound concept you have learned while being at the Farm and Garden?

VC "The biggest lesson I've learned is being aware of the seasons, how plants will come back after winter, how weeds change from summer to winter; being aware of the different seasons, always changing. I've really learned that. Until you get down and crawl around, you can't really learn that because you're not connected to it."

CS "Learning about myself and my limits. Discovery of what life is, what evolves, the plants, insects and bugs, seeing how they are all connected and seeing our relationship with them. Also here is where you learn to share- to share food, knowledge, happiness, everything."

BG "For me, a profound idea was breaking down my preconceptions about conventional farming versus sustainable. There are things to learn from everybody. The biggest lesson I've learned is how overwhelmed I am with all the knowledge there is to know. I feel I am just a beginner student."

BL "For me it was coming to a point of almost unconditional respect for people in the program, working with each of their own ideas and at the same time holding on to what I think is true. Working with 37 other people made me open to changing values and opinions and open to friendships."

BS "Living in a community has shown me a lot about my capacity to tolerate various behaviors. I've learned about having people mirror myself, I've learned to be as honest and truthful in the moment with people so not to continually carry around pent-up emotions. I've learned from nature, that you gotta have a healthy body and living environment to have a healthy mind."

JT "I've learned a lot about community, how I respond or react and the role I take. This teaches me about where my interest are. Living in a community mirrors a lot about yourself."

What are you learning during the Apprenticeship Program that you will incorporate into your life or take with you?

CS "I want to take everything with me. I am going to Brazil in September and I want to start creating gardens in orphanages and teach the kids, but eventually I would like to have a farm with other people and adopt homeless children and try to be self-sufficient. My part is going to be the garden. Also I feel a lot stronger as a person and that my ideas are 'do-able', with other people of course."

GH "The whole program has shaped me as a person. I've lived with people here I never would have lived with, when we came into hard times I made it a point to be truthful. I have a great amount of respect for those who are different and respect now for every fish in the sea. Also I've finally broken a barrier of feeling not sure of how to work with plants. Now I have a pretty good conceptual grasp and know where to look. This type of information is becoming rarer and rarer, and it needs to be handed from one person to another, from hand to hand."

BL "My favorite part of the program is the enthusiasm for the movement of organic agriculture and consumer education. I'd like to move to Sonoma County and hook up with some growers who don't like the marketing end...I could see doing that. I'd love to have my own business someday."

JT "I'd like to take with me what John Farrell has shown me, a way of being in the garden, being present in the moment, keeping a balance between the garden and other things in life. I'd like to be conscious of the process and not just the end. I now have a clearer picture of that."

In a nutshell, things have changed since I was an apprentice. There appears to be more opportunities for those involved in organic farming and gardening; more programs, new markets and more interest. But the flip side is more competition for the land and selling and marketing the products. Talking with the apprentices and hearing their dreams did remind me of my time spent on the soil of the Farm and Garden. The dream to create a healthier environment, to live a more meaningful life through organic gardening and sustainable agriculture is the thread that ties all of us involved with the Farm and Garden and that won't change.

- Jody Stix Garsia
President

CSA WORKSHOPS IN DAVIS INSPIRE SANTA CRUZ CONFERENCE

When I think of how the theory and practice of the Farm & Garden is spread to other communities, I see apprenticeship graduates becoming the seed sowers of many diverse farms and gardens worldwide: Like Terry Allen, a '92 graduate and "2nd year" now in Chile, helping former owner of Esprit Doug Tompkins start a homesteader-style, self-sufficient organic garden.

And when I wonder about how most of the neophyte farmers and gardeners survive financially, I imagine them selling their bounty at farmers markets, local health food stores and restaurants, or providing the freshly-harvested produce, flowers and herbs to a committed group of shareholders. Then I think of Jane Freedman, a former apprentice who helped start the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program of the Homeless Garden Project.

It's this latter form of direct distribution, or CSA, that holds much promise for the financial success and personal/social well-being of our growing fleet of organic stewards of the soil. Recently, a workshop on CSA (sponsored by the Small Farm Center, UC SAREP, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, and the Yolo County Cooperative Extension) was held at UC Davis, attracting over 100 interested farmers, community members, academics, and concerned citizens.

With a packed room, Andrew Lorand of the Sacramento Waldorf School, got the day off to a great start by setting a historical context for CSAs — their Swiss, German and Japanese roots, and east coast introduction in 1986. Then one of the first Santa Cruz Chadwick apprentices, Steve Decater, with his farming partner Gloria, shared slides of their 70-acre biodynamic farm and 2-acre garden, talking about how their members are helping to organize a campaign to secure the land through an innovative ownership model called "Shared Equity." Before the group ventured out to visit a local CSA, there were also presentations from other CSA farmers like Judith Redmond of Full Belly Farm in Guinda, CA and Sue Temple of Fiddler's Green Farm in Esparto, CA.



In the end, much excitement was generated about how CSA has become one of the most innovative approaches to bringing the food eaters and food growers together into mutually supportive relationships. Andrew hinted at how CSAs are also beginning to associate among themselves by sharing information about favorite methods and seed varieties, to more complex and potentially radical ways of exchanging seeds and/or equipment, bartering region-specific items (e.g., potatoes for grain, milk for eggs), and providing surplus from one CSA to cover deficits in another.

While such inter-CSA relationships are emerging, many new CSAs are forming, especially on the west coast. There may be over 100 now in the western states alone and over 400 nationally. With such a growing interest in this new form of small farm economics and social organization, the Farm and Garden is planning to co-sponsor a conference in Santa Cruz at the end of this year. Similar to the Davis workshop, the Santa Cruz CSA conference will draw on the practical experiences of successful CSAs in the western region, as well as offer some of the latest theoretical musings that could help guide us toward a more sustainable agriculture worldwide.

—Jered Lawson

"Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things
We murder to dissect.
Enough of Science and of Art
Close up these barren leaves,
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives."

—William Wordsworth

YELLOW MYSTERY FLOWERS

There is a wonderful January mystery that helps me bridge the gap in my frosty Boulder Creek garden from the time the Christmas tree goes out the door and the violets and daphne bring their color and scent. We have a tradition of taking out our Christmas tree and sadly stowing away the ornaments on January 6 (or actually the closest weekend afterwards) and then chopping it up and having a blazing bonfire in the back yard. We just burn the branches; the trunk gets sawed up and made into a bundle that is next year's Yule log to be burned ceremonially on Christmas Eve. The next day, moving on to a more California tradition, we take a drive up Highway 1 past Davenport, just past Ano Nuevo, and find in the fields between the busy street and the dunes, the sunny yellow and orange clusters of fragrant Soleil d' Or narcissus just beginning to open. I carefully pick a bunch to take home and put in the house that has finally been cleaned of all the holiday droppings, and the new year begins for me. They usually last until the first hellebore in my shady garden begins to bloom. Does anyone know the history of why these bulbs are growing there? And while we're discussing yellow flower mysteries of the north coast, how did gorse, with its wonderful tropical coconut/honey scent and its equally horrible spiny thorns, come to the fields there? And another yellow flower question I often ask is how

did all the acacia trees get to Santa Cruz County? I know that the native Australian eucalyptus was brought to California to be used for railroad ties and for firewood. Was there a similar purpose in someone's mind for the beautiful, invasive, sneezy tree that is crowding out so many native hillsides, or did it just hitch a ride? No matter how irritating the acacia is most of the year, now is the time I enjoy the glorious color of the fuzzy egg-yolk panicles as I go around my daily errands. I'd love to have some floral historian drop me a note or call me if you know the answers to any of these drive-by yellow wonderings.

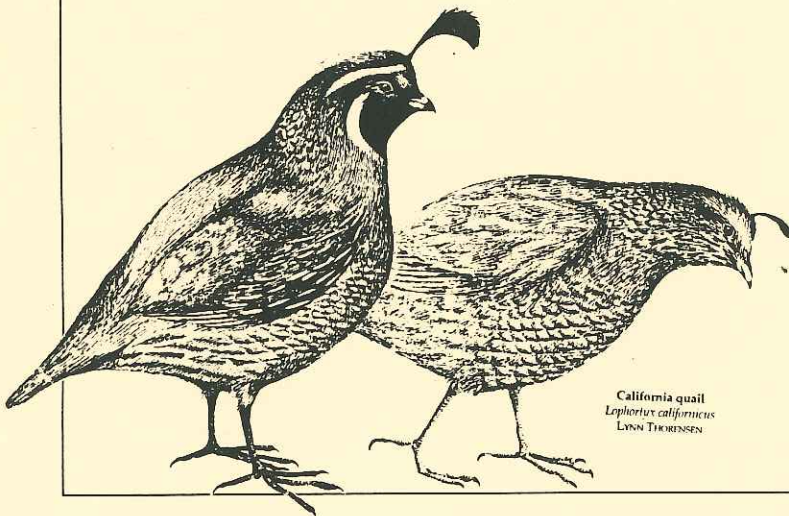
Beth Benjamin



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