

EARTH DAY 1996

How does the production and consumption
of food affect our planet and ourselves?

They say that "You are what you eat." How fitting, then, that this year Earth Day should focus on food and the environment

WANTED: LSP (large, single planet) looking for FLCPP (fun-loving, concerned, passionate people) to share in a hands-on, sometimes down-and-dirty relationship. Do you like leisurely afternoons gardening, stimulating public forums, decadent dinners and community events? Let's meet for an afternoon in April. Long-term commitment preferred.

BY LAURA STEC, T.M.

If we think about family relations during Christmas, and country relations around the 4th of July, it's only natural to consider the relationship we have with our planet around Earth Day. Why not use Earth Day as a time to practice giving a little back to the planet that takes such good care of us?

The theme for Earth Day '96 is "Food and the Environment - The Planet on your Plate." We will educate people on how the production and consumption of food affects the health of the planet. A coalition of gardens, groups promoting sustainable agriculture, groups educating on a plant-based diet, restaurants, and others will encourage "eco-eating" around the Bay. Here's what we will focus on:

Education - Our Earth Day Team (please join us!) will hit the speaking circuit and offer programs to both schools and businesses. Local restaurants will also be on board promoting their eco-concerns with colorful in-house displays and seasonal Earth Day menus.

Gardening - We will push hard to recruit 1,000+ volunteers for Bay Area gardens. They'll help the hands-on spring planting effort on Earth Day weekend, April 20 and 21. Workshops on organic gardening techniques will inform, inspire, and incite home gardens to sprout up everywhere!

Sustainable agriculture - We will educate people about sustainable agriculture through a public forum, tours of sustainable farms, and information about current legislation promoting sustainable agriculture.

Great food! - If you like good food, this Earth Day is for you!

East Palo Alto Garden flourishes

BY DENISE LADWIG

The number of families participating in the East Palo Alto Community Garden reached 14 by the end of the summer. How rewarding to hear how much their 400-square foot gardens have supplemented their diets!

This fall, 18 children from the community began their own 1/6-acre market garden. On December 2 they proudly made their first sale of lettuce and peppers to Flea Street Café. Jesse Cool, the owner, and Duane, the head chef, then invited the kids to the café to see how their produce was used. This new business connection/friendship is offering the kids an incredible, well-rounded learning experience.

For the first time, the garden project is continuing year-round. Some of the families

There'll be "Noontime Food-Fests" for corporations, cooking classes with great information and yummy tastings, and "Babette's Green Tie Feast" (part of the Decadent Dinner Party series). We'd love to have you join our cooking team!

Please remember: one of the most positive impacts you can have on today's society begins on your dinner plate. Please join us for an upcoming Earth Day meeting (the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm), or give us a call for more info.

May your relationship with our planet always be filled with love and good-tastin' vittles!

have chosen to have winter gardens, and the kids, with the help of volunteers, will continue to plant, harvest and sell lettuce, chard, peas, onions and garlic on into spring.

The EPA Garden is now also established as an education center! Twenty-five fifth graders from Beechwood Elementary School in Menlo Park came for an all-day tour in October. Our creative volunteer teachers, Laura Stec, Marisha Banister and Jenna Bayer used a hands-on approach to teach about plant physiology, food, health, and the environment. What a beautiful lesson we witnessed when the local children escorted some of the visiting kids to their gardens and gave them gifts of fresh corn and home-grown chilies.

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ORGANIC GARDEN PROJECT

EPA Weeks Street Garden yields vegetables
for sale at Flea Street Café.

THIS FALL, KIDS FROM THE EAST PALO ALTO ORGANIC GARDEN BEGAN THEIR OWN MARKET GARDEN BY SELLING LETTUCE AND PEPPERS TO MENLO PARK'S FLEA STREET CAFÉ.

years' focus went to getting the EPA Garden established.

Leland Francois, Glen Garfunkel, and Paul Gardener have offered invaluable mentorship to countless youths. Over a dozen volunteer organizations and 200 volunteers worked collaboratively with BAA clearing and planting the EPA site. This additional land will allow for 20 or more families to plant this spring.

There is incredible potential for further growth and development within this project. Think about getting involved in a direction that inspires you: outreach, teaching, marketing, or digging! Help plant the concept of sustainable agriculture and reap the harvest of beautiful friendships along the way.

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The Harvest Festival on October 29 was another occasion for sharing. Over 80 local residents and garden volunteers enjoyed a scrumptious and bounteous potluck, plus great music thanks to Tex and Jason's band Strange Things and Mabukaka and friends. There was also face painting, a clown making balloon animals, two piñatas and a local farmer who brought his chicken and a goat to milk. What fun!

On November 3, the Garden Project was featured on the front page of the Peninsula section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Savannah Blackwell did an exceptional job reporting what the garden has offered to participating families and the community at large. Ocaris Lopez generously donated her time as a translator, enabling us to get to know a few of the families better. This summer the project also received coverage in *The Mercury News*, the *Palo Alto Weekly* and on Cable Co-op.

BAA's Urban Agriculture Program has been blessed with big-hearted, dedicated, and hard-working volunteers. Thanks to Jack Hogan, Elizabeth LeCount and many others, the Midtown Garden has been well cared for while so much of this

GARDENING CLASSES

COMMON GROUND/ECOLOGY ACTION IS HOSTING SOME WONDERFUL GARDENING CLASSES THIS WINTER, MOSTLY ON SATURDAY MORNINGS. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 415-328-6752

JANUARY	13	Grafting Fruit Trees
	20	Garden Planning
	20	Companion Planting
	27	Rose Pruning
FEBRUARY	28	Complete Diet Mini-Farming
	3	Fruit Tree Pruning
	10	Fruit Tree Pruning
MARCH	17	First Aid Herbal Gardening
	24	Remineralizing Our Gardens with Rock Dust
	25	Seed Propagation and Soil Mixes
	2	Plan Your Summer Garden
	9	Container Gardening
	16	Double-Digging and Garden Bed Preparation
	23	Seed Propagation
MARCH	23	Composting
	30	Spring and Summer Vegetable Gardening

East Palo Altans question Romic

by Sandeep Vaidya

East Palo Alto residents cannot tell you which incident with Romic Corp. finally pushed them over the edge. Was it the illegal discharge of hazardous waste into San Francisco Bay in November? Could it be the plight of Rodrigo Cruz, a Romic employee who suffered apparent brain and respiratory injuries in February while performing his duties? Or was it that Romic has been operating its hazardous waste recycling plant on a site for which no environmental impact report (EIR) has ever been done? The residents cannot give you an exact answer, but they are convinced Romic must go.

Romic recycles industrial solvents, oil, and liquid residue from electronic, auto, printing, and paint plants. This does not impress local residents who wrote in a press release, "We have had more than our fair share. We intend to find out what effect this place is having on our health and the health of the unborn." Local activist groups like the EPA Community Against Toxics (EPA CAT) and Ujima Security Council have recently succeeded in getting the EIR process started.

Barbara Mouton of EPA CAT has done some research of her own. "There is an unusually high incidence of carcinogenic illnesses among the people of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park," she said. "The problem of hazardous emissions by Romic is not restricted to these communities. Sooner or later people living in Palo Alto and as far as San Jose and South San Francisco will be affected." In one area of East Palo Alto she discovered that 12 people had died of cancer in the last 10 years.

On January 11 the East Palo Alto Sanitary Board will meet to decide further action regarding Romic's illegal discharge of a non-poisonous cyanide product into the bay. Amounts discharged were about 40 times the permissible limit. Call EPA CAT at 415-324-4892 for more information.

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the Planet
on your Plate

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