

Hello Friends,

Summer is here, or at least right around the corner. Traditionally the first day of summer falls on The Solstice, which is also known as the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Gathering Day, Litha, Midsummer, Sonnwend, Alben Heruin, Alban Heflin, Thing-Tide, Feast of Epona, Feill-Sheathain, Johannistag, Vestalia, and All-Couples Day. "Solstice" is derived from two Latin words: "sol" meaning sun, and "sistere," to cause to stand still. This is because, as the summer solstice approaches, the noonday sun rises higher and higher in the sky on each successive day. On the day of the solstice, it rises an imperceptible amount, compared to the day before. In this sense, it "stands still."

The Solstice was referred by some as Midsummer because it is roughly the middle of the growing season throughout much of Europe. But it's not too late to sow seeds for summer crops in San Francisco. The renowned biointensive farmer and educator, Alan Chadwick, believed that the best time to sow your seeds was during the New Moon, which is when the Moon is directly between the Sun and the Earth and it appears dark without the indirect light of the Sun. It is believed that at this time, the greatest forces of nature - gravity, light, and magnetism - are at their greatest intensity as noted by the high tides of the ocean, and the high tides of water in soil, which help seeds germinate faster. The New Moon occurs on June 15th this month, and the Full Moon, which is the best time to transplant your new seedlings, occurs on June 30th. Some crops you might like to consider planting for June are corn, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squashes, and beans.

You may even like to consider the indigenous Three Sisters Garden of corn, beans, and squash. The benefit of growing these three "sisters" together is the harmony created by allowing the beans to grow up and be supported by the corn stalks while fixing nitrogen from the atmosphere into a soluble form which can be taken up by the corn and squash, while the large leaves of the squash, which is also grown at the base of the corn provides shade over the soil, creating a micro-climate that improves water retention in the soil, and decreases the likelihood of competition from "unwanted volunteers" (or as some would refer to as weeds).

There are lots of exciting events going on in San Francisco this month, including a pagan gathering and ritual for the Solstice at Ocean Beach near Taraval Street starting at 7pm. This event is put on by [Reclaiming](#), and would encourage people to gather at the end of the longest day of the year to celebrate the light and honor the turning of the Wheel of the Year back toward the darkness. They ask people to please bring clean firewood (firewood is always welcome - no pallets, nails, construction material, plywood, painted or treated wood), warm clothes, food or non-alcoholic drink to share, and a towel if you want to plunge into the ocean.

Are you feeling the need for more information about the 2007 Farm Bill currently being debated by our lawmakers? Many people disregard the importance of this bill, which is revised once every 5 years, assuming it only concerns residents in farm or rural communities. Since the purpose of the the Farm Bill is to regulate farm production, prices and subsidies, and outline provisions on commodity programs, trade, conservation, credit,

agricultural research, food stamps, and marketing, it is something that concerns and affects everyone, including farmers around the world. If you would like to learn more about the current debate and how you can get involved come to Alemany Farm this weekend, Saturday June 9th for a 2007 Farm Bill Teach-In. The forum will be from 2pm to 4pm and will include the following panelists: Anuradha Mittal from the Oakland Institute, Tim Frank from America Farmland Trust, Chris Cook, award-winning journalist and author of Diet for a Dead Planet (which is available in our Lending Library). For directions to the farm, check out their website at www.AlemanyFarm.org.

Some other interesting events going on in San Francisco and beyond this month include:

June 5th - World Environment Day. This year World Environment Day focuses on the effects that climate change is having on polar ecosystems and communities, on other ice- and snow-covered areas of the world, and the resulting global impacts, and will be held in the city of Tromsø, Norway. You can stay tuned to whats going on and learn more by visiting the [UNEP's website](#).

June 8th - World Ocean Day. Preview Ocean related films and meet several leaders in the Ocean Conservation community including filmmakers, marine biologists, and other notable guests of honor at the Gallery Lounge, a cocktail lounge and art gallery located Brannan and 4th Streets. For more information go to <http://oceandaysf.org/>

June 6th-8th - Bay Delta Tour. Put on by the [Water Education Foundation](#), this 3-day, 2-night tour takes participants to the heart of California water policy – San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Stops include the Delta Cross Channel, the federal Tracy Pumping Plant, Bay-Delta model in Sausalito, Los Vaqueros Reservoir and Suisun Marsh. Issues discussed include Delta Planning initiatives, water project operations, fish passage, ecosystem restoration, levees and flood management, Delta agriculture, drinking water quality and water supply reliability. The tour begins and ends at Sacramento International Airport, and includes a ferry ride across San Francisco Bay.

June 9th - Herb Spiral design and creation. An ECOSF Garden Party follow-up, Tori will be showing you how to design and create an edible, medicinal, herb spiral which maximizes growing space by going vertical. She will be talking about selecting rocks, and ideal plants to use and placement of them, as well as how to incorporate drip irrigation into the spiral.

If you haven't had a chance to come down to a Garden Party and would like to see what you missed, check out the photos from some of our recent Garden Parties on our [website](#). More photos are being uploaded daily, so check back often. On May 31st, Sam and Davin hosted a group of 19 students and 3 teachers from Lick Wilmerding High School for some education and volunteering at Alemany Farm. They discussed the ecological and social impacts of our industrial agricultural system and prepared the students for thinking about sustainable alternatives. The students also enjoyed weeding the strawberry beds instead of using herbicides like most commercial fruit growers, and double-digging newly cleared plots to plant instead of fossil fueled tilling machinery. If you would like us

to host a field trip like this for your group or class, please let us know.

As always, we encourage everyone to continue our collective civic engagement with community building efforts. Little movements can have big changes and we all benefit from one another's good will. Until next month, have a happy June!

Sincerely,

Davin, Sam, Tori!
Ecology Center of San Francisco