

Hello Friends of ECOSF,

We thank you for your patience despite our absent correspondence over the past couple months. We have had our hands and hearts full of work in gardens and projects throughout the city so much that we haven't been able to get into the office and share the details. We've got highlights of recent projects and news of projects to come as well as many volunteer, educational opportunities this month! Are you welcoming winter and its thirst quenching rains as much as we are? With a little more consistency we can turn off any irrigation systems that have been keeping our fall gardens productive and let Mother Nature do what she does best. Among others you might think of doing in your garden before the end of the year include:

- ☒ Cut back evergreens for holiday decorations.
- ☒ Clean and sharpen garden tools for the New Year.
- ☒ Protect any tender plants from frosty nights and bringing indoors any heat preferring plants grown in containers.
- ☒ Plant garlic cloves either from store bought or selected varieties for their flavor. Softneck varieties are best for California. Look for "California Early," "California Late," or "Silverskin."
- ☒ Transplant sweet peas, leafy salad greens, Asian greens: mustard, tatsoi, bok choy, and any brassica family crop: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi, or kale for spring harvest.
- ☒ "Chop and drop" (prune healthy limbs back to last year's or longer growth) nitrogen fixing evergreen trees and shrubs such as acacia or *Ceanothus* to mulch fruit trees and other large shrubs for a nutritive winter addition.
- ☒ Plant a cover crop of Lana Vetch, Australian Winter Peas, and bell beans to add organic nitrogen to the soil. A good local mail order source for seed is John Jeavon's [Bountiful Gardens](#), which is a non-profit project of [Ecology Action](#) that offers heirloom, untreated, organic seeds.
- ☒ Start researching which fruit trees will do best in your space and place an order for January through May delivery of rootstock. [Sandy Bar Nursery](#) has exceptionally grown organic rootstock of many rare varieties, and [Raintree Nursery](#) has many unusual and exotic fruits from around the world.
- ☒ Spray your peach, nectarine, and almond trees for peach leaf curl with a lime sulfur (calcium polysulfide) spray. It's considered the least toxic for organic use, but it is a skin and eye irritant so wear glasses and gloves and only mix enough to use at one time. Available at most garden supply stores.

Celestial Sightings

Have you looked up into the night sky recently? If so you might have noticed [Jupiter](#), which has been accompanying the Moon in our evenings since November 12th and will be departing December 10th. It is the largest of the planets and the brightest celestial body after the Sun, Moon, and Venus. The 12th of the month will be a Full Moon with the New Moon disappearing on the 27th. On December 14th, you can witness the peaking of the [Geminid meteor shower](#). Considered by some to be the best light show of the whole

year. Just four days later, Mars is nearest the Earth and easiest to see, and on the 23rd, the Moon and Mars dance together from sunset to sunrise. But of course the [Winter Solstice](#), the shortest day of the year when the Sun blazes across the Tropic of Capricorn, occurs on Monday, December 22nd. Be sure to gather with friends and have some merriment for the coming of longer days and shorter nights.

Nature Awareness

Perhaps you're looking for an outdoor ecological adventure of exponential proportions this month? December also happens to be the peak month for [Monarch Butterfly](#)'s fall migration to roost among lupines along the California Coast from Cape Mendocino to Baja California. Amazingly, an estimated 100 million Monarch's find their way to the same 100 winter roosts each year having never been there before, navigating the 1000's of miles it takes each fall-winter. Some of the best places to spot them in large colonies is the [Natural Bridges State Beach](#), which is a great site for viewing lots of marine wildlife as well, and [Pacific Grove's George Washington Park](#). If you're looking to spot animals with larger wings, then maybe the [108th Annual Christmas Bird Count](#) is for you. Started on Christmas Day, 1900 when ornithologist Frank Chapman and friends decided to scatter across the Northeast to see how many birds they could "bag" or count in contrast to the unsettling enjoyment had by hunters who had a tradition of competing for the biggest bag of dead birds on Christmas Day. 108 Years later, the scientific and educational (and enjoyable) event begins on December 14th and goes till January 5th, 2008. It is put together by the Audubon society locally although volunteers from every state and province through the US and Canada and around the world take turns watching various regions in a 15 mile circle, twenty-four hours a day to collect data on the species and number of birds seen. Accuracy is ideal as the findings are published each year in a catalog larger than a Manhattan phone book. This unique publication is often utilized by scientists to chart population changes and can often be indicators of the health of ecosystems around the world. There are over 40 volunteer viewing sites in Northern California alone with the San Francisco site being held on December 27th. (You have to register with the Audubon volunteer coordinator Dan Murphy (murphsf@comcast.net) by Friday December 8th if you'd like to participate). There are also viewings in Oakland and throughout the Bay Area.

Recent Highlights

So what HAVE we been up to these past few months? Besides keeping edible schoolyards growing at Jefferson, Monroe, and Francis Scott Key Elementary schools, we've also spent dozens of hours in K-5 classroom workshops in each of these schools. In doing so, we've provided an opportunity for the students to become more literate and in tune with their local ecology, food systems and principles to ecological gardening including planting their own vegetables, sowing cover crops, pest identification and management (hand removal), species identification, art in the garden, medicinal and culinary herb selection, harvesting crops, nutrition, and food preparation. We are also happy to have just begun an ongoing natural building project with 4th and 5th graders at Jefferson Elementary School. This past Monday was the first of a series of educational

workshops on cob building at Jefferson. The students are learning about the traditional and sustainable practice of earthen construction by building a cob bench for their fellow kindergarteners to enjoy. They are learning the value of sourcing materials locally and opting for natural, renewable materials over imported and factory produced products. The clay, which makes up part of the mix, has been brought in from the subsoil excavated to build a foundation for the new playground on 19th and Wawona. We will be sealing the bench with a beeswax and linseed blend to weather proof it. If you would like to learn more or get experience with building a cob bench, come down to the school on Monday December 10th and 17th from 1pm till 3pm, or [contact us](#).

Tori Jacobs had the educational and ecologically enlightening opportunity to participate in two great workshops offered by the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center in Occidental, CA over the past few months. First she went to the week long [School Garden Teacher Training Program](#) that has been helping teachers, gardeners, and volunteers learn how to establish and sustain school garden projects, and to integrate garden curriculum with state standards for the past 10 years. She had the opportunity to meet and connect with others in the surging school garden movement from throughout the Bay Area and California. Then she embarked on OAEC's world renowned two week [Permaculture Intensive](#), modeled after the 72 hour pioneering course taught by Bill Mollison over 30 years ago. For more information, click on the links to see the curriculum and details of these and many other exciting programs offered by this beacon of regenerative and restorative ecosystem design. Tori has also been collaborating with community visionaries, non-profit leaders, and organizers from all over the Bay Area as well as the folks from [City Repair](#) in Portland, OR in preparation for The Big One, a Community Transformation Convergence. For more information or to get involved go to [TheBigOneIsComing](#).

In September, ECOSF held a workshop on Permaculture Guilds with Native Edible and Medicinal Plants at [Other Avenues Worker-Owned Health Food Store](#). With the help of the participants we planted 4 different sidewalk plantings representing native plant communities of California including the Coastal Coniferous Forest with their Redwoods, Huckleberries, Wild Ginger, and Hazelnuts and Riparian areas that include California Wild Grape, Mugwort, and Blue Elderberry. The project is not yet completed and we would love your help wrapping it up, see our upcoming events for more details!

We also have had the pleasure of working with some of the residents of the Dudley apartments, a permanent supportive housing program of the Hamilton Family Center. Located on 6th St in the SOMA, the neighborhood isn't exactly a green patch of pasture, so we're working with the staff and residents to help breath some new life into the building and the neighborhood by offering exclusive workshops to the residents to provide an enjoyable community building experience around the areas of nutritional cooking, energy efficiency, non-toxic household products, and are hoping to help bring in some air purifying plants such as golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*), philodendrons (various species), and Boston ferns (*Nephrolepis exaltata*) which the EPA suggests if maintained properly can completely rid the air of pollutants on a daily basis. We recently completed a Vegan-In-Season Cooking class their with Alyssa Cox, an accomplished Natural Chef and personal "cuisine curator extraordinaire" who has whipped up

nutritious and delicious meals for the vegans and vegetarians on multiple Warped Tour's, and volunteered her time for the folks at the Dudley. Check out her website [EarthenFeast](#) for catering or personal chef services.

Upcoming Events

Are you ready to fight the greedy-gravitational pull of holiday consumer consumption and volunteer with your local community-building-ecology-action organization instead? If so, join us for a variety of volunteer projects this month:

- ☒ December 10th and 17th, Mondays - 1pm-3pm at Jefferson Elementary School located at 1725 Irving St, btwn. 19th and 18th Avenues.
 - Cob Bench building with 4th and 5th graders
 - Learn about natural building and the artful science of making a good cob mix, starting with an urbanite foundation, and natural weather sealants and plasters.
- ☒ December 15th, Saturday - 12pm-4pm at 3930 Judah St. btwn 44th and 45th Avenues.
 - Replanting the Chaparral and Coastal Scrub communities that have succumbed to human pressure on the sidewalk.
 - Build a sturdy kick-walk-dog proof (or at least resistant) fence around all seven sidewalk plantings to prevent further damage and improve look and function of the urban native landscape.
- ☒ December 16th, Sunday - 12pm-5pm at Double Rock Community Garden located at the corner of Griffith @ Fitzgerald in the Bayview
 - Medicinal Herb Maze completion and planting
 - Come out and help us stack another layer of urbanite for the borders of the walkable herb spiral, fill in with compost and mulch, and plant dozens of native, traditional, and Chinese medicinal herbs for the Alice Griffith Community and Bayview Farmers Market.
- ☒ For more information about these events please go to our [website](#), [email us](#), or call (415) 846-8164

Planting A Seed

One of the primary goals of ECOSF is to connect the community to outstanding local organizations, institutions and businesses that provide vital goods and services in a sustainable way. The cohesiveness of our community grows as we become more interconnected with local efforts and support more local commerce, and in that spirit of community we will be featuring an example of excellent local players in our newsletters. The first organization we will spotlight is [Garden For the Environment \(GFE\)](#), our own preeminent local gardening organization. The GFE serves as a community gardening resource and outreach organization that promotes sustainable landscaping practices and wise resource use mostly through direct training of volunteers and interns that then go out and spread the knowledge throughout the community. The problems they address range from consumption of consumer goods and finite resources like water and fossil fuels to

waste mismanagement and unsustainable food systems. Founded in 1990 as part of the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG), now fiscally sponsored by the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council, and located at 7th & Lawton in San Francisco, GFE maintains a beautiful one acre demonstration garden including edible and native plants, fruit trees, resource efficient gardening techniques, and a wide array of composting systems on display. Outdoor classrooms hold weekly workshops and Gardening and Compost Educator Training (GCETP) classes, which are taught by Suzi Palladino, and Blair Randall who also wear every other hat for the organization.

GFE Programs include:

- ☒ Monthly compost education workshops conducted at the garden and other community gardens throughout San Francisco
- ☒ Resource Efficient Landscape Education series (RELE), covering mushroom cultivation, water wise gardening, container growing, guerilla gardening, bike tours, using recycled and reused landscape materials, and more.
- ☒ School Education program offered in partnership with San Francisco Unified School District and San Francisco's Department of the Environment. – centered around compost education
- ☒ Three month intensive Gardening and Composting Educator Training program-or “getup”

The Garden for the Environment is a wonderful local resource for ecological gardening and resource awareness. Their work makes learning about gardening and many other ecological issues accessible and fun for everybody. They are a shining example of a vital organization that brings the community together, raises ecological consciousness and promotes awareness and action. We will be partnering with them on many projects in 2008 so stay tuned!

News and Media

We came across a great new independent media source we wanted to share with you: [Earthbeat Radio](#), a groundbreaking environmental news and interview program of Washington D.C.'s WPFW and Pacifica Radio. Unfortunately it isn't broadcast on a station local to the Bay Area, but you can download programs off their website and they podcast as well. Some recent interviews were with presenters at the recent [International Forum on Globalization Teach-In: Confronting the Global “Triple Crisis.”](#) Climate change, peak oil, and global resource depletion and extinction were on the agenda for discussion by great thinkers, scientists, educators, researchers, and activists from around the world, including: Vandana Shiva, Richard Heinberg, David Korten, Michael T. Klare, Bill McKibben, among others. IFG, a San Francisco based non-profit says the audio and video from the Teach-In will be posted on their website by December 14th. Be sure to check out the [November 20th](#) recording of Earth Beat radio for to hear a recorded speech by David Korten, publisher of [YES! Magazine](#) and author of [The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community](#). If you'd like to read a story we did about the recent oil spill

in the Bay and some information and ideas you may not have read in your newspaper go to [Cosco-Busan Spill](#).

Until Next Year

It has been a truly inspiring year of opportunities and events and we hope to bring you more ecological education and community building opportunities that make a direct impact on you and other residents of San Francisco. We will be working on goals, objectives, and programs for 2008 in the coming weeks and we value your input as citizens, stakeholders, teachers, students, and community members. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without your support and appreciation for the commitment we bring to San Francisco. We want to make sure our programs are focused around community needs and respond to requests from people of all demographics and interests. Please take some time to send us a note saying what you like, what you don't like, what you'd like to see, and how you'd be able to help us achieve those goals be it volunteering your expertise, ideas, or muscle, donations, or by [becoming a member](#).

We look forward to serving you and yours for years to come! Happy Solstice!