

Boo!

Autumn has officially arrived, and with it the relenting of summer fog (depending on your proximity to the ocean) and often the longest stretch of warm, sunny days before the wet chill of winter sets in. There is still lots of fruit ripening and summer veggies to pick and enough sun late into the day to establish some winter crops if you haven't had a chance to do so already. Garlic and artichokes are best planted this time of year. Softneck varieties (of garlic) like 'California Early' and 'Silverskin' do best in our climate and you can braid them for a beautiful kitchen ornament next summer. It is also a great time to plan and plant a native garden, sow native wildflowers or a cover crop like fava beans, if you have any space not currently under cultivation. [Larner Seeds](#) in Bolinas is a great source for local, native seeds of all types and varieties. As always, you can sow or transplant hardy brassicas, lettuce, and beet family favorites like chard, spinach, and beets, as well as many herbs like dill, cilantro, and chives. You can also begin thinking about varieties and placement of fruit trees to be planted bareroot in January and February. It's good to start a cover crop right in the spot you plan on having a tree so the soil is rich and fertile when you do. If you're looking to transition from cultivation to preparation, this is a good time to gather all your spent veggies and flowers to start a fall compost pile, or better yet, build a "bomb-proof" lasagna garden bed ala Toby Hemenway. Here is his recommended steps to building soil from the ground up while suppressing weeds and making the best use of garden scraps or lawn clippings:

1. Flatten down and grass or weeds - don't remove anything - everything will decompose into rich soil nutrients. Thoroughly soak the area to begin the decomposition process.
2. You can aerate the soil with a fork if necessary, and add some dolomite lime, or oyster shell, or any other amendment you have and would like to use.
3. Lay down a weed barrier, ideally cardboard 3 sheets thick. You can always find free cardboard from grocery stores or appliance retailers if you don't have any laying around, but be sure to only use brown cardboard and remove any staples and tape.
4. Pour on a thick layer of mulch at least 6-8 inches high.
5. Now make the lasagna by adding a few inches of compost, or better yet some fresh or aged manures, then a few inches of mulch, then compost, then mulch until you're up to 24 inches or more. You can also use chicken scraps or any garden refuse.
6. Keep moist until the rains begin and then it's best to wait until spring to plant in when it should be completely decomposed and full of rich, fertile, organic matter. Your plants (and the earthworms and other soil microorganisms) will love you for it!

If you want to try something really amazing, consider mulching in some Elm Oyster (*Hypsizygus ulmarius*) mycelium available through [Fungi Perfecti](#). A perfect over-wintering garden mushroom that has been found to more than double the yields of brassica's like Broccoli and Brussels Sprouts when companion planted. For detailed information, check out [Mycelium Running](#), the ground breaking (and perhaps revolutionary) book by Fungi Perfecti's founder, Paul Stamets. For those of you who are members, this book is available in our lending library and is one of the most amazing texts on fungus to grow at home, in the garden, restore ecosystems, clean up oil spills, and possibly save the world!

## LOCAL ECOLOGY

If you're crossing the Bay this time of year, you'll probably notice Pickleweed (*Salicornia virginica*) brightening the salt flats with their red hue and along riparian corridors, the fall colors of Big Leaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), Willow (*Salix spp.*), and Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*). Feeble Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) displays its fuzzy flowers and while Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) bears cones that provide a major food supply for squirrels and birds, Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and many other Oaks bear acorns that once sustained native populations for thousands of years. You might catch male California Sea Lions (*Zalophus californianus*) congregating on coastal rocks, and young Elephant Seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) gathering onshore (but don't disturb them if you happen to find them on the beach). Sadly, what you probably won't see much of are the Chinook, also known as King (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho (*O. kisutch*), and Steelhead (*O. mykiss*) Salmon that once numbered in the tens of millions and have now declined to the tens of thousands per year due to over fishing, human population expansion and development, logging, and many of the [1,494 dams](#) found throughout the state of California. These magnificent victims of civilization, much like the indigenous tribes that relied on them for food while protecting their population numbers, leave the open ocean where they have spent several years maturing and absorbing vital ocean nutrients before heading up the (formerly) fast-flowing rivers of Northern California to spawn in the few remaining sediment-free riverbanks. They played a vital role for forest ecosystems as their non human predators, the now extinct California Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*), a formidable "ecosystem engineer", would feast on the salmon - after they had a chance to spawn - and spread their rich ocean nutrients throughout California's diverse conifer forests. This tragedy is not getting any better with the lowest numbers in 15 years for Central Valley Chinook runs. For more information on their predicament and what can be done about it, check out these articles from [Save Our Wild Salmon](#) or get involved and take action locally with groups like [Salmon Protection and Watershed Network](#) (SPAWN), The [Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project](#), and the [Alameda Creek Alliance](#). They need your help! To read about Salmon Decline in North America from its historical context, [read this](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct. 4th - Saturday - 11am-4pm : **Monroe Elementary School Garden Work Day** -
- Cob Bench building : The fun never stops! Cob building in the sun doesn't get much better, especially with friends and family and the goal of completing the student's outdoor classroom. It's coming along very nicely, but we want to get it done before the rains begin so we could really use your hands and feet!
  - Enjoy a potluck of local, homegrown, and homemade foods, including solar oven baking! Bring something to share!
  - Salad bar gardening : We'll be adding to our salad bar bed we planted last month - the lettuce and spinach look great, and the carrots and radishes are taking very nicely. Learn about crop rotation, succession, and fertilizing for maximum yields and quality.
  - Lasagna Sheet Mulching: We'll be preparing a massive lasagna bed of garden debris and

manure for the spring - come learn how to do it!

Oct. 18th - Saturday - 11am-5pm : **Baker's Alley : Cob Oven Workshop** -

- An inaugural workshop for Baker's Alley, Tori's community space that is in the making and soon will be a place for ECOSF to sell nursery stock, conduct workshops, and provide a community bread oven to build stronger relationships in the neighborhood
- We'll be constructing a cob oven and having a garden party and potluck to meet new and old members and rekindle the fire that glows in our community.
- Learn about how to site and gather materials for building a cob oven designed to bake breads, pizzas, and more in your backyard, or community space.

Other exciting events in San Francisco this month:

Oct. 3rd-6th - All Day : **Radical Women Conference**

- This 41st Anniversary Conference held at the [Women's Building](#) in San Francisco will focus on multi-racial organizing; the dynamic leadership of youth and queers; women of color and immigrant women spark a labor revival; declaring independence from the twin parties of war.
- Yes, this is an integral part of a healthy urban ecosystem and will have workshops offering skills building for women organizers; political theory; movement strategy and much, much more.
- Some of the speakers include civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart and activists and scholars from Central America, China, Australia and the U.S. For more information, or to register, [click here](#).

Oct. 4th - Saturday - 10am-6pm : **Wildlife Conservation Expo 2008**

- An event by the [Wildlife Conservation Network](#), this year's Expo brings together twenty of the world's leading conservationists from all corners of the globe to convene for the weekend and share their stories from the frontlines of wildlife conservation.
- Held at the Mission Bay Conference Center, 1675 Owens St. in San Francisco
- For complete details, [click here](#).

Oct, 4th-5th - Sat. & Sun. - 10am-6pm : **World Veg Festival Weekend**

- Put on by the [San Francisco Vegetarian Society](#) and [In Defense of Animals](#), this festival will feature outstanding speakers, healthy food demos, international vegan cuisine, live entertainment, pet adoption, and so much more!
- Located in the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Ave. and Lincoln in Golden Gate Park - we'll be there at the [Other Avenues Health Food Co-op](#) booth.
- \$6 suggested donation, but kids, students, and seniors with ID are free, as well as anyone who arrives before 10:30am - for more information, [click here](#).

Oct. 10th-11th - Fri. 5:30pm-8:30pm & Sat. 8:30am-4:30pm - **Growing Greener School Grounds Conference**

- Put on by San Francisco's Green School Yard Alliance, this event will bring together over 300 teachers and community members from around the Bay Area to learn more about creating, using, and sustaining, ecological schoolyards.

- Workshop sites at Sherman, Sanchez, and Alvarado school, and St. Mary's Cathedral Conference Center
- Prices vary, [click here](#) for complete details.

Oct. 12th - Sunday - 11am-1pm : **San Francisco Walk for Farm Animals**

- Organized by [Farm Sanctuary](#), one of the nation's leading farm animal protection organizations, this walk is one of many going on around the country in October.
- Walk and carry signs encouraging people to take action to end farm animal abuse by voting [YES! on Prop 2](#) the ballot initiative that would put an end to the intensive confinement of egg laying hens in battery cages, breeding pigs in gestation crates and calves in veal crates - affect 20 million animals in California.
- Beginning at 1 Ferry Building in San Francisco, [click here](#) for more information and a printable flyer to share with others and post around town.

Oct. 21st - Tuesday - 6:15-9:15pm : **Brower Youth Awards**

- Join the [Earth Island Institute](#) for a festive evening celebrating the achievements of six exceptional young environmental leaders.
- Held at Herbst Theater, in the Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue at McAllister in San Francisco.
- For tickets to support this special event, please [click here](#).

We hope you can come to one of our events this month, and encourage you to go to some of the other happenings throughout San Francisco as October is packed with informative, ecological, and exciting events. If you would like more information, have us list your like-minded event, or would like to plan an event or community building project with our help, please let us know. If you're doing any trick or treating this month, offer this treat to those you come in contact with: Make a list of 5 things that you recently learned or would like to share about your local ecosystem, community events and opportunities, or global ecological crises. Gather some compelling and concise facts, names and contact info on organizations taking action, and references for more information and make a 1/2 - 1 page sheet to hand out. That's how you can take action to spread the word, make new friends, and strengthen your interdependent relationships in your community. If you'd like some ideas, or help, please [contact us](#).

Thank you for your support and words of inspiration, appreciation, and suggestions.  
Happy Hot Days of Autumn!

-Davin, Sam, & Tori

Ecology Center of San Francisco