

# COMMON GROUND

## ORGANIC GARDEN SUPPLY AND EDUCATION CENTER

559 College Ave. • Palo Alto • California 94306 • 650.493.6072  
www.commongroundinpaloalto.org



SPRING 2003

# SPRING CLASS SCHEDULE

## ASK JOHN JEAVONS

*Q: What can I do to improve my Mid-peninsula soil fertility?*

A: One of the best ways to improve Mid-peninsula soil fertility is to add 1/4" to 1" of cured compost (made *with* soil) to your growing bed after it is double-dug. A recipe for this GROW BIOINTENSIVE compost and for an easier double-digging process can be found in Ecology Action's *How to Grow More Vegetables*. Common Ground also carries the how-to video *Dig It* on this double-digging technique. Another important thing to consider is adding five pounds of a slow-releasing source of crushed granite, or one pound of sunflower seed hull ash, a fast-releasing fertilizer for potassium. This is because most Mid-peninsula soils are low in potassium, and this element is important for good, strong root growth. It is especially key since roots are the controlling part of plants.

Eventually you may also want to have a professional soil test from the Timberleaf Soil Testing Service. If you have a few hundred square feet or more of growing area, such a test can actually *save* you money. It can do this by often reducing the amount of compost and organic fertilizers you need to buy — *and* by reducing the amount of produce you need to purchase at the grocery store as your yields increase due to an improved soil. Phone (909) 677-7510 and ask Timberleaf to send you a free soil test information kit. We recommend that you have the "Basic" and "Trace Mineral" tests performed. The total cost will be \$55. These will result in your soil being tested for over 20 factors. You will also receive a detailed explanation on what the results mean — in plain English — and recommendations on what to add to make up for deficiencies in your soil.

## NEW STORE ITEMS!

- **Worms:** We now offer high-quality red wiggler worms by the pound. They are good for your compost pile and/or your worm composting. Order at the store, and we will have them delivered directly to your home.
- **New and improved tool selection:** Due to the inspiration of our gardening class teachers and customers we have an expanded tool collection, including lightweight pole pruning saws, soil samplers, Womanswork gloves, and much more.
- **Seeds:** We have a large selection of 100% certified organic herb, vegetable and flower seeds.



Bob Griffin

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

**Bob Griffin** is a creative thinker and talented individual who has helped us solve problems on a number of occasions. Recently, Bob selected and installed improved lighting for the store, and built a beautiful and functional holder to display our long-handled tools. We thank Bob for helping to make Common Ground a more pleasant place.

STORE HOURS: Tues. - Fri. (10:00 - 5:30); Sat. and Sun. (10:00 - 5:00). CLOSED Monday.



# SPRING CLASSES 2003

Please register and prepay in advance by mail or in person.

Seniors and low-income persons may request a \$3 discount on classes. Some classes do extend beyond the scheduled time.

## DRIP IRRIGATION Frank Niccoli

10:30 – 12:30, \$19      Saturday, April 5

This hands-on class demonstrates the simplicity of installing and maintaining a drip system. We will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of drip irrigation versus a spray system. Pressure reduction and filtration as well as irrigation controllers will be discussed. *Frank has a degree in horticulture and teaches at Foothill College and for the Landscape Contractors Association. His company, The Village Gardener, has won numerous awards in flower design, landscape management and installation.*

## STARTING YOUR SPRING VEGETABLE GARDEN Christof Bernau

10:30 – 12:30, \$19      Saturday, April 12

Tender spring greens, crunchy snap peas, vibrant carrots, buried treasure in the form of fingerling potatoes, and the long wait for the gloriously juicy crimson jewels we call tomatoes are all subjects to be discussed in this class. The bounty and success of these crops all depend on your early Spring planning and preparation. *Christof Bernau is Garden Manager at the UCSC Farm and Garden Program, a project of the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. Christof has more than ten years' experience growing food, flowers and ornamentals.*

## \*INTRODUCTION TO GROW BIOINTENSIVE John Jeavons

10:30 – 12:30, \$19      Saturday, April 19

How do you get sustainably high yields of vegetable, grain and other food crops, while building the fertility of your soil? Learn the principles of the Ecology Action method of GROW BIOINTENSIVE gardening, including the double-digging of beds, composting and soil-building, intensive planting, companion planting, carbon-farming (the use of compost crops), calorie farming, and the use of open-pollinated seeds. We emphasize a whole-system approach that allows soil fertility to be built in a relatively short period, so that fertilizer inputs (other than compost) become unnecessary, or almost so, thereby making the garden and farm sustainable. *John is known internationally as a leading researcher, teacher, and consultant on small-scale food production using the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method. He is the Executive Director of Ecology Action and author of the book, How to Grow More Vegetables, Fruits, Nuts, Berries, Grains and other Crops, which is in its new sixth edition and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide.*

## \*DOUBLE-DIGGING John Jeavons

2:00 – 4:00, \$19      Saturday, April 19

Loosening the soil 24 inches deep to build soil structure is easy if you know how! Plants grow better, the garden needs less water, and weeds come out more easily. Double-digging is the first step in a GROW BIOINTENSIVE garden. This class includes a hands-on demonstration at a nearby garden. *John is known internationally as a leading researcher, teacher, and consultant of small-scale food production using the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method. He is the Executive Director of Ecology Action and author of the book, How to Grow More Vegetables, which is in its new sixth edition and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide.*

## ANNIE'S SPRING AND SUMMER BLOOMERS AND COOL RARITIES

Annie Hayes

10:30 – 12:00 \$17      Saturday, April 26

Annie's nursery, Annie's Annuals, has introduced dozens of exciting, unusual, and easy to grow flowers to local gardeners. Her presentation will help you select and cultivate these beautiful plants. Examples of some of her favorites will be on hand.



## \*GROW BIOINTENSIVE SEED PROPAGATION Mike Shannon

2:00 – 3:30+ \$17      Saturday, May 3

Learn GROW BIOINTENSIVE seed propagation techniques that will help you have a more productive and efficiently managed garden. We'll learn about soil mix, using flats, transplanting, watering, and planting by the phases of the moon. We'll also have some hands-on practice for pricking out seedlings. *Mike apprenticed at the Ecology Action research farm from 1998 to 2001. He teaches Biointensive classes throughout the Bay Area and is developing a demonstration garden in Woodside.*

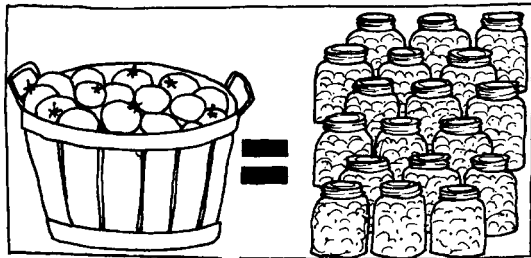
\* A GROW BIOINTENSIVE Class. This class is part of Common Ground's series in GROW BIOINTENSIVE agriculture.

## HOW TO START AN ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDEN

Jody Main

10:30 – 12:00 \$17 Saturday, May 10

By following nature and our own instincts, organic gardening is easy! This class includes bed preparation, plant care, seasonal herbs, and recommendations for wonderful heirloom vegetables to grow this summer, as well as great crops for “putting up.” Jody’s extensive experience includes manager for writer Ros Creasy’s test garden, teaching school gardening, and demonstrating her own recipes at Country Sun Natural Foods.



## GARDEN MYSTICISM

Frank Niccoli

3:30 – 5pm \$17 Saturday, May 17

Throughout the ages man has defined his place in the physical and spiritual world by his surroundings. Edible plants, bodies of water and land forms became to man a symbol of his life. Certain of these became endowed with mystical qualities. We will explore various religions and how plants became revered and have been used in rituals. Frank has a degree in horticulture and teaches at Foothill College and for the Landscape Contractors Association. His company, The Village Gardener, has won numerous awards in flower design, landscape management and installation.

## FENG SHUI IN THE GARDEN

Shannon Turner

10:30 – 12:00, \$17 Saturday, May 24

In this introductory workshop you will learn how to create a garden that is supportive to your life intentions, the energetic qualities of different plants and flowers, and how to create a beautiful and harmonious space for entertaining out of doors. Shannon Lee Turner is one of the few Americans with a strong foundation in multiple Feng Shui traditions. She has lived and worked in Asia, speaks fluent Japanese and has studied Asian philosophy and spiritual tradition for over twelve years. In the past three years, Shannon has won five awards for her work, with numerous mentions in both the national and local press.

## VEGETABLE GARDEN SOLUTIONS

Pam Peirce

10:30 – 12:00, \$17 Saturday, June 7

Bring your questions to this problem-solving workshop. A slide show will help you recognize common local pests and diseases, and you’ll get plenty of tips for dealing with them organically. We’ll also look at local beneficial creatures. Pam Peirce is the author of Golden Gate Gardening and co-author of Rodale’s Pest and Disease Problem Solver. Both are sold at our store.

## BUILDING AND COOKING WITH SOLAR OVENS

Don Larson

10:30 – 12:00+ \$17 Saturday, June 14

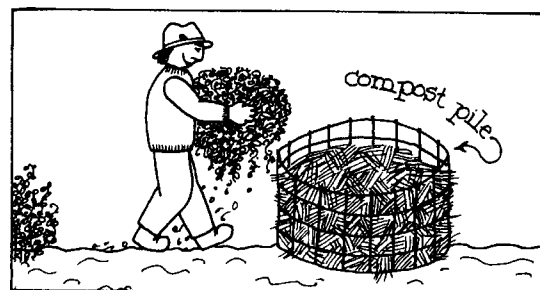
Learn to prepare gently sun-cooked meals that you, your family, and guests will love! You will learn heating and cooking techniques as well as how to modify your favorite recipes for use in a solar oven. Construction principles and suggestions for construction materials will be covered, as well as information about purchasing reasonably priced and effective manufactured ovens. Don Larson owns and operates 2 solar ovens, a solar water distiller, a solar fruit drier, and even generates his electricity using a 2-kilowatt solar photo-voltaic array.

## \*GROW BIOINTENSIVE COMPOSTING

Mike Shannon

10:30 – Noon+ \$17 Saturday, June 21

Composting is the basis for growing the healthiest, most nutritious, and most pest- and disease-resistant plants. Learn the easiest and most effective way to compost. We will walk to a nearby site and build our own compost pile. Bring a five-gallon bucket of “green material” (grass clippings, weeds, and/or non-meat kitchen scraps). Mike apprenticed at the Ecology Action research farm from 1998 to 2001. He teaches Biointensive classes throughout the Bay Area and is developing a demonstration garden in Woodside.



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# ABOUT COMMON GROUND

Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center is a non-profit project of Ecology Action, an organization dedicated to GROW BIOINTENSIVE food-raising. Biointensive gardening/mini-farming, researched and developed by Ecology Action over a thirty-year period, allows you to grow all your food while maintaining and improving the fertility of the earth. Compared to commercial agriculture, GROW BIOINTENSIVE gardening/mini-farming uses as little as 1/8 the water, 1/2 or less the purchased fertilizer, and 1/100 the energy per pound of food produced. With only hand tools and the skills and the knowledge of GROW BIOINTENSIVE food-raising, you can produce two to six times more food from your garden. This method is being taught and used in over 100 countries worldwide.

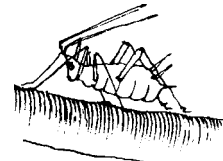
We offer gardening classes throughout the year and have an extensive reference library on Biointensive and organic gardening and related subjects. We offer many organic and open-pollinated vegetable, flower, herb and compost (cover) crop seeds for sale in bulk or packaged. We also stock organic fertilizers, fine gardening tools, books, natural pest control products, organically grown vegetable and herb seedlings and perennials.

**Please visit Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The store is closed Sundays and Mondays in the winter months.**

**Patricia Becker, Judith Jacoby, Don Larson, Jen English and Matt Tietjen**

## SPRING 2003 SATURDAY CLASS CALENDAR

- Apr. 5      **Drip Irrigation** with Frank Niccoli
- Apr. 12     **Starting Your Spring Vegetable Garden** with Christof Bernau
- Apr. 19     \* **Introduction to GROW BIOINTENSIVE** with John Jeavons
- Apr. 19     \* **Double-Digging** with John Jeavons
- Apr. 26     **Annie's Favorite Spring and Summer Bloomers and Cool Rarities** with Annie Hayes
- May 3       \* **GROW BIOINTENSIVE Seed Propagation** with Mike Shannon
- May 10     **How to Start an Organic Vegetable Garden** with Jody Main
- May 17     **Garden Mysticism** with Frank Niccoli
- May 24     **Feng Shui in the Garden** with Shannon Turner
- June 7      **Vegetable Garden Solutions** with Pam Peirce
- June 14     **Building and Cooking with Solar Ovens** with Don Larson
- June 21     \* **GROW BIOINTENSIVE Composting** with Mike Shannon



design and layout  
by Glenda Jones

\* A GROW BIOINTENSIVE Class

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Please recycle.