



COMMON GROUND

ORGANIC GARDEN SUPPLY AND EDUCATION CENTER

SUMMER/FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

Product Highlights



Coconut Coir Fiber

Shredded coir fiber makes an excellent addition to seed starting mixes and is a superior alternative to peat moss in all potting mediums. Coconut Coir Fiber is an environmentally friendly, renewable resource that is easy to use and completely biodegradable. This naturally weed- and pathogen-free medium retains up to 10 times its weight in water, retains and slowly releases nutrients, and provides excellent aeration for substantial, healthy root development. It has a neutral to slightly acidic pH.

Organic Low Mow Grass Seed Mix

Grass seed for environments with both sun and shade. Certified by the Oregon Tilth, this seed mix contains Organic Gondolin Creeping Red Fescue and a touch of Pirouette Micro Clover and is easy to plant and maintain. Every 2-lb. bag is tested to ensure there are no noxious weeds in the mix, so you can be sure you're getting only beautiful grass. The instructions are right on the back of the bag with details regarding drainage, prepping the soil, and watering the seeds.

Run to the Nearest Computer . . .

and check out commongroundinpaloalto.org where you can look, learn and sometimes listen to all things Common Ground. Let us know what you think of our website. We love feedback!

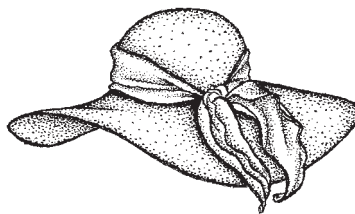
While you are there, check out the two fabulous videos created by Luke Seerveld of Seerveld Media. He spent many hours preparing these professional, informative videos that bring the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method and the Common Ground Center to web surfers everywhere. He recently brought Common Ground to YouTube as well. Thank you, Luke! Enjoy looking at the videos on YouTube, and become a fan of Common Ground on Facebook!

When searching for help in your garden, look first at the **Common Ground Business Affiliates**. The list can be found on our website and here at the Center. These local small businesses have integrity and have gained community respect.

Also, an extra-special thank you to Sergey Tsybanov for so skillfully and patiently updating the website every week.

Wild Bryde Earrings

These beautiful and fun earrings bring glamour to gardening! Wildlife- and nature-themed pieces created locally. Each earring is etched in recycled brass and hammered by hand and then plated in either 14k gold or rhodium (a non-tarnishing silver alloy). All the ear wires and posts are 14k gold-fill or sterling silver so they are great for those with metal sensitivities. Look for many fun shapes with a garden theme including various birds, insects, fruits, and veggies. They make a special present for yourself or someone you love!



Native California Wildflowers Packets

Choices include Bay Area Wildflowers, Garden Favorites, Mostly Perennial and California Poppies. Each package contains a mix of annual and perennial seeds that are great for ground cover, meadows in sunny areas, garden plots, roadsides, and anywhere you want a splash of fun color. Fabulous wildflower seeds in 1-oz., 2-oz. and 4-oz. packages.

(Books listed on next page . . .)

559 COLLEGE AVE.
PALO ALTO, CA 94306
650.493.6072

WEBSITE:
commongroundinpaloalto.org

OPEN: Monday - Friday, 10:00 - 5:30

Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 - 5:00

SUMMER/FALL 2009 CLASSES

Please register by calling Common Ground at 650.493.6072. Seniors and low-income persons may request a \$4 discount on classes.

YOGA FOR GARDENERS

Patricia Becker

Saturday, August 29

10:30 – 12:45

\$35

Please register by calling 650.324.2517 or info@avalonyoga.com

Growing vegetables and flowers is very satisfying especially when your body feels good ... during and afterwards. Come, play and learn balanced body techniques for yourself while you are gardening. We will play and practice poses to align and care for your shoulders, knees, hips and back. Learn to sit and stand with greater ease. Anusara Yoga begins with a good attitude, then alignment, then action. Anusara Yoga is based on the life enhancing and affirming Universal Principles of Alignment. Join us for the fitness and fun! Class held at Avalon Art & Yoga Center, 370 California Ave, Palo Alto. *Patricia is a certified Anusara Inspired Yoga Teacher and is the Center Director at Common Ground Garden Supply and Education Center.*

*** AMARANTH TO WHEAT:** Part I: And All Points Between. Part II: From Seed to Table

Margo and Dan Royer-Miller

Saturday, September 5

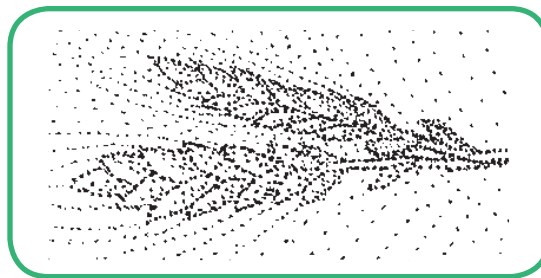
10:30 – 12:30 Part I

\$30

1:30 – 3:30 Part II

\$30

Grains are some of the most beautiful and satisfying crops to grow in the garden. Not only are they pleasing to the eye and nourishing to the body, grains are also part of the key to maintaining your soil's fertility. In the morning, we will discuss the many varieties, their characteristics and attributes and how to bring them from seed to maturity. In the afternoon, we will look at what to do with them afterward: threshing, cleaning, and processing. We'll discuss cooking grains and indulge in tasting them, too! Come learn how simple grains are to grow and use! *Margo and Dan have completed Ecology Action's three-year apprentice program and are working as Field Coordinators at the Golden Rule Garden in Willits, CA.*



PLANT YOUR WINTER VEGETABLE GARDEN

Jody Main

Saturday, September 12

10:30 – 12:30

\$30 plus materials fee \$5

Celebrate the season and plant a vegetable garden! Bring beautiful diversity to your garden with a variety of vegetables. Learn how to grow vegetables in containers and in your yard. Special attention will be paid to planning for a year-round harvest, coordinating the garden with your kitchen, finding the easiest crops to grow, including those that will produce in the shade. Plant lists will be provided. *Jody is a local organic food and garden writer, educator, and consultant. Her specialty is designing gardens that include vegetables, herbs and berries.*

* INTRODUCTION TO GROW BIOINTENSIVE

Dan Royer-Miller

Saturday, September 19

10:30 – 12:30

\$30

Learn the principles of double-digging, composting and soil-building, intensive planting, companion planting, carbon-farming (compost crops), calorie farming and open-pollinated seeds. We emphasize a whole-system approach that builds soil fertility in a relatively short time, so that fertilizer inputs (other than compost) become unnecessary, or almost so, thereby making the garden and farm sustainable. *See Dan's description in Amaranth to Wheat class.*

* GROW BIOINTENSIVE COMPOSTING

Margo Royer-Miller

Saturday, September 19

2:00 – 4:00

\$30

Composting with the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method is the basis for keeping your soil strong and healthy to grow the healthiest, most nutritious, and most disease-resistant plants. Learn the easiest and most effective way to compost. It is so fun and satisfying that we must warn you, composting can become addictive! The class will conclude at the Common Ground Demonstration Garden where we will build our own compost pile. Bring a five-gallon bucket of "green material" (grass clippings, weeds, and / or vegetarian kitchen scraps). *See Margo's description in Amaranth to Wheat class.*

TWO-DAY INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE

Doniga Markegard/Drew Harwell Sat & Sun, Sept. 26 & 27
10:30 – 4:30 \$170

Learn the tools to create a sustainable future in your backyard and beyond. Permaculture is a holistic approach to land use and design, based on patterns found in the natural world and ecological principles. We use a solutions-based method to harmoniously integrate the land with people. This course will cover sustainable living systems — including food systems, water harvesting, waste cycling, home design, climate care, holistic land management, and natural building and observation techniques. Participants will take part in a hands-on Permaculture project in Common Ground's Demonstration Garden to put theory into practice. *Doniga has extensive training in nature observation, Permaculture and regenerative design. She has a BA in Sustainable Community Development and is currently a land management consultant and landscape designer. Drew is the talented and wonderful Common Ground Demonstration Garden Manager and the former manager of the Stanford Community Farm and has gardened in our Ecology Action Research Garden/Mini-Farm in Willits, CA.*

* COMPLETE-DIET MINI-FARMING

John Jeavons Saturday, October 3
10:30 – 12:30+ \$30

Does your desire for better nutrition have you wondering if you could live off your land? This class will show you how to plan a garden or mini-farm that will produce healthy, nutritious food and be highly productive as well as truly sustainable in the smallest space possible. *John is the Executive Director of Ecology Action and the author of our book How to Grow More Vegetables, that has been translated into 7 languages and is used in over 130 countries.*

* DOUBLE-DIGGING AND BED PREPARATION

John Jeavons Saturday, October 3
2:30 – 4:30+ \$30

Double-digging is the first step in a GROW BIOINTENSIVE garden. Learn how easy, fun and productive this method can be. Loosening the soil 24 inches deep will help to build essential soil structure. Plants will grow much better and need less water; weeds will come out easily. This ever-popular class concludes with some hands-on at the Common Ground Demonstration Garden.

* A GROW BIOINTENSIVE® class

* USING THE MASTER CHARTS IN HOW TO GROW MORE VEGETABLES TO PLAN YOUR GARDEN

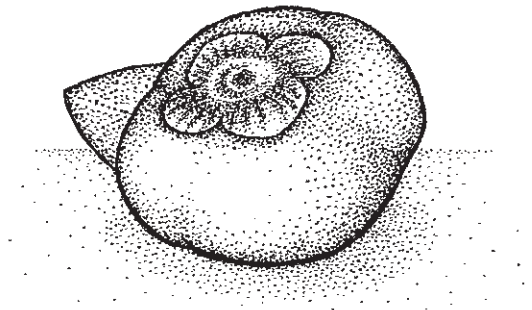
Carol Cox Saturday, October 10
10:30 – 12:30 \$30

Getting seedlings started at the right time and in the right quantities can help you make the best use of garden space. **YOU BRING:** a copy of *How to Grow More Vegetables* 7th edition (always available at Common Ground), a sharp pencil and a calculator. *Carol is an excellent teacher, co-author of The Sustainable Vegetable Garden, and Research Garden Manager at the Ecology Action Research Garden in Willits, CA.*

* SEED COLLECTION AND SAVING

Carol Cox Saturday, October 10
2:00 – 4:00 \$30

Your garden can produce the seeds you need for next year! If you save your own seeds, you can save money and preserve your favorite varieties for many years. Carol will present the basic principles involved in producing, collecting, and saving your own seeds.



GARDENING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Jody Main Saturday, October 17
10:30 – 12:30 \$30 plus materials fee \$10

Create sweet memories that will last a lifetime for yourself and your children. They will remember how you were there when they planted their first seed and when you created your first salad garden bed together! This time together will always stay in your heart and theirs. You will share in preparing and planting a salad garden bed, making and enjoying a community salad with edible flowers. You will be able to create a harvest decoration from herbs and everlasting flowers from Jody's garden. Plant a salad garden to take home. All ages welcome! Class will be held in the Common Ground Demonstration Garden. *Jody is a local organic food and garden writer, educator and consultant. Her specialty is designing gardens that include vegetables, herbs and berries.*

CONTAINER GARDENING

Susie Mader
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, October 24
\$30

Fall is the perfect time for cool-weather edible container gardens. A container garden lets you put some color, fresh herbs, vegetables and edible flowers in your life the easy way! Learn principles, techniques and how to choose containers and plants. We have everything you need to get started and maintain one or more containers of lovely plants. *Susie's approach to this always-popular subject will show you everything you need to get started. She is a long-time friend and a landscape consultant and contractor specializing in ecologically complete systems.*



WORM COMPOSTING

Alane Weber
10:30 – 1:30

Saturday, October 31
\$35

Everything you always wanted to know about worms, but were afraid to ask. Come join us and learn all about this tidy and very efficient way to turn all your kitchen scraps into botanical gold. We will take a snack break. *Alane, "the worm lady of San Mateo," has been nurturing her compost worms for 16 years and teaching vermicomposting for the County of San Mateo for the last 9 years.*

HARVEST AND HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING

Dru Rivers
2:00 – 4:00 pm

Saturday, November 7
\$30 plus materials fee \$20

You will have fun learning how to make a beautiful wreath with all organic plant materials. Bring holiday cheer home with a wonderful wreath made by YOU! Decorate and transform your garden abundance into gifts for yourself and your friends. *Dru is part owner and founder of Full Belly Farm, a 200-acre certified organic farm which began in 1985 and is located in the beautiful Capay Valley of Northern California. Dru has been teaching wreath making for decades.*

BLUEBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES, AND RASPBERRIES

Nancy Garrison
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, November 14
\$30

Learn how to successfully grow blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and mulberries for bountiful berry harvests May through late fall. Mulberries are less known but wonderful in that they are seedless and thornless, with flavor like a combination of many different berries. You will learn the best varieties of each and specific planting instructions including soil amendments and trellising. *Nancy has been researching the best varieties for this area for many years and will share her vast knowledge so you will get abundant harvests. Nancy offers a center tour of her favorite and must have products after the class.*

SOIL FOODWEB

Alane Weber
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, December 5
\$30

Super soil! The soil Foodweb consists of all the beneficial micro- and macroscopic soil critters that function harmoniously in our garden soil. They are responsible for nutrient cycling, soil production and immune system boosting. Understanding the riches in our soil will give you greater ability to utilize nature's wisdom and make better compost. *Alane is an advisor for Soil Foodweb, Inc. She runs the education program of RecycleWork's Master Composting Program for San Mateo County. Her approach is animated with humor and suffused with the integrity of sustainable care for our lands.*

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Sherri Osaka
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, December 12
\$30

Hopefully our 2009/2010 rainy season will be wetter than the drought conditions of the past three years. But no matter what the weather holds, we can prepare for the coming dry season by collecting and storing rain water. This class explores methods of rainwater harvesting and storage from roof materials, to tanks and their costs, to landworks, and finally to using pure, sweet rainwater in your garden. We'll discuss permitting, mosquitos, and calculating the amounts of rainwater against the cost of storage. We'll show how rainwater harvesting not only saves water, but energy and infrastructure as well, and how it can be a part of every garden. *Sherri is the owner of Sustainable Landscape Designs and co-founder of the Sustainable Landscape Roundtable, an organization that encourages landscape professionals to adopt ecological practices, and a director of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.*

Book Highlights

The Landscaping Ideas of Jays: A Natural History of the Backyard Restoration Garden by Judith Larner Lowry is a great guide to backyard restoration and the rewards of growing native plants at home. Lowry organizes the book by season to give you an easy way to find out how to plan a landscape for yearlong cultivation, maintenance, and harvesting of a diverse array of native annuals and perennials. Attract birds and beneficial insects, harvest seeds for next year, and add fun features like paths and ponds, all with the help of Lowry's expert guidance.

Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods by Sandor Ellix Katz. Join the latest trend and pick up a copy. Explore the wonderful world of homemade yogurt & cheese, miso & tempeh, beers & wines, veggie krauts & kimchis, and fabulous sourdough breads — all brought about by wild yeasts that are abundant everywhere. Katz has included methods and recipes so you can get started right away on making fun and exciting food and beverages that utilize live cultures. In no time at all, you'll be sipping your own beer and eating homemade cheese on your own freshly baked bread!

Common Ground Planting and Gardening Guide for you created by us! An excellent and simple month-by-month guide, it includes guidelines on what to plant and/or transplant during each month of the year — whether in flats or in the ground. Each month also offers advice and reminders about your garden such as composting, tree pruning and much more. A best seller!

Sunflower Houses – A Book for Children and Their Grown-Ups by Sharon Lovejoy. Remember making clover chains, hollyhock dolls and firefly lanterns? Or hosting a fairy tea party? Remember checking the clock when the Four O'Clocks bloomed? These simple pleasures and hundreds more are gathered here in a magical book of inspiration from the garden. See our Children's Section.

Plants of the San Francisco Bay Region, Mendocino to Monterey by Linda H. Beidleman and Eugene N. Koziuff. Here is the definitive botanical guide to the wetlands, woodlands, coastlines, hills and valleys of the beautiful and diverse San Francisco Bay Region. Revised in 2003, this popular book continues to be the most comprehensive and authoritative identification guide to the region's native and introduced plants.

Volunteer Spotlight



Theresa Fremon

A few years back, while in an Environmental Biology course, I missed an assignment on the syllabus, and was left scrambling for extra credit. Luckily after joining members of the green community for a few Saturdays of habitat restoration, their optimism and encouragement renewed my childhood passion for the environment! Though I was about to graduate with a degree in psychology, I dreamed of studying sustainability in graduate school. My more rational side, however, cautioned me not to apply on a whim; it was hard enough to choose a school and career path in a field I was familiar with. The thought of jumping into this vast, budding environmental field left me feeling a bit petrified.

As I researched, it became clear Common Ground stood out as a pioneer and leader in the Environmental Community, and I eagerly applied to volunteer. My time at CG has been a magnificent introduction to the green community, but working with Patricia, River, and Don is a privilege which has taught me more than I anticipated. It is imperative to value efficiency, team work, education, conservation, and sustainability as well as making time to “smell the flowers,” and all that that entails. Now, with my dreams for higher education, passion for what I do, comfort, and recognition in life (e.g. becoming rich and famous), I also think that to seek out and cultivate an environment, at work and home, like Common Ground, is a priority I cannot do without!

Bequests

Common Ground has Bequest plans available, including charitable remainder trusts and annuities, for those who wish to support our presence and growth into the future.

Please contact our Executive Director John Jeavons at: johnjeavons@growbiointensive.org or call 707-459-0150 for more information about helping this valuable community resource Common Ground Garden Supply and Education Center.

Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center

... offers:



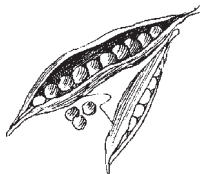
- Hands-on classes and events in organic gardening and sustainable lifestyles
- Seeds and plant starts – hundreds of edible, medicinal, native and ornamental varieties
- Organic composts, fertilizers and mulches – a broad selection
- Tools – the highest quality
- Natural disease- and pest-control products
- Books, magazines, cards and gift items
- Volunteer opportunities

Common Ground is a community-supported 501(c)(3) non-profit project of Ecology Action. Please make your **tax-deductible donation** when you visit our center or, with secure on-line donating, at:

www.commongroundinpaloalto.org

Many thanks for the original illustration by Jennifer Hewitson above and the other original illustrations by Theresa Fremon on pages 1 to 5.

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650.493.6072



Please share this newsletter with a friend!