



# COMMON GROUND

## ORGANIC GARDEN SUPPLY AND EDUCATION CENTER

### WINTER/SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

#### Volunteer Spotlight



Marie Louise Rouff

Early in 2008, I wandered into the Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center in Palo Alto. I had just leased a plot from the city of Palo Alto at the Community Garden and needed seedlings. I loved the place and next thing I knew I offered to volunteer for the Center.

I am a painter. I paint small and large works, some very large abstract paintings. I have painted for many years and recently found it difficult to keep the fire of art-making going. Now, every Tuesday at the Common Ground Center I care for the tender seedlings that are for sale. I sweep, clean up and tend to the little curbside garden. All of it is quiet meditative work that helps restore the balance in my life. I am realizing that making art is not only about painting.

I feel appreciated and nurtured by the staff who seem to notice every one of my efforts to contribute to the vast mission that they

#### Edible Garden Series: from Design to Harvest

Drew Harwell

5 Saturdays

January 17, February 7, March 7, April 11, May 2

10:30 – 2:00 \$295

Class limit 20 students – register early

Learn garden design and planning, composting, soil testing and preparation, seed propagation and transplanting, watering, and how to nurture healthy edible crops. You can create a garden oasis of beautiful edibles in the front, side or back of the home. Master harvesting techniques and learn what compost crops to plant after harvest.

Permaculture design and GROW BIOINTENSIVE methods harmonize together in this special series. Home owners and professional landscape designers will gain valuable knowledge to create gardens of nutritious and delicious organic food in your homes and communities. Make lasting friendships! Learn about proper tools, supplies, books and resources throughout the course.

*Drew is the talented and wonderful Common Ground Demonstration Garden Manager and the former manager of the Stanford Community Farm and has gardened in the Ecology Action Research Garden/Mini-Farm in Willits.*

have set for themselves: To bring back the love for and benefits of organic gardening to the people of the Bay Area.

I also volunteer for Common Ground's Demonstration Garden, a splendid 16-bed vegetable garden that is managed according to the best Biointensive methods. I hone my gardening skills "hands on," the

best way to learn, under the expert guidance of Drew Harwell. I apply these skills to my garden plot at the Palo Alto Community Garden with stunning results: beautiful, healthy organic vegetables of all kinds that we enjoy at home and distribute to friends. Needless to say I am in better physical shape than I have been in years.

559 COLLEGE AVE.  
PALO ALTO, CA 94306  
650.493.6072

WEBSITE:

[commongroundinpaloalto.org](http://commongroundinpaloalto.org)



OPEN: Monday- Friday, 10:00 - 5:30; Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 - 5:00

# WINTER/SPRING 2009 CLASSES

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

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## ROSE PRUNING AND CARE

Carole Kraft                      Saturday, January 10  
10:30 – 1:30                      \$37

Encourage beautiful, profuse flowering with winter pruning and proper care. Learn about the very best soil and amendments for healthy, happy roses. Mulches also discussed. The class will go to a nearby garden for a demonstration and some hands-on pruning. **YOU BRING:** a snack, pruning shears optional. *Carole is an energetic and articulate horticulture consultant with 24 years of experience.*

## \* INTRODUCTION TO GROW BIOINTENSIVE

Dan Royer-Miller                  Saturday, January 24  
10:30 – 12:00                      \$26

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 more self-sustaining. Learn the principles of double-digging, composting and soil-building, intensive planting, companion planting, carbon-farming (compost crops), calorie-farming, and open-pollinated seeds. *Dan is a third-year apprentice at Ecology Action's Research*

## \* GROW BIOINTENSIVE SEED PROPAGATION

Margo Royer-Miller                Saturday, January 24  
2:00 – 4:00                        \$28

It all begins with a seed! Learning GROW BIOINTENSIVE seed propagation techniques will help you have a more productive and efficient garden. This class will highlight how to choose the best soil mix, transplanting, pricking out seedlings from flats, proper watering, and planting by the phases of the moon. *Margo is a third-year apprentice at Ecology Action's Research Garden in Willits, CA.*

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\* A GROW BIOINTENSIVE® class



## \* AMARANTH TO WHEAT and all points between

Dan Royer-Miller                  Saturday, January 31  
10:30 – 12:30                      \$28

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. We will discuss the many varieties, their characteristics and attributes, how to bring them from seed to maturity, and what to do with them afterward. Come learn how simple grains are to grow and use! *Dan is a third-year apprentice at Ecology Action's Research Garden in Willits, CA.*

## \* GROW BIOINTENSIVE COMPOSTING

Margo Royer-Miller                Saturday, January 31  
2:00 – 4:00                        \$28

GROW BIOINTENSIVE composting is the basis for growing the healthiest, most nutritious, and most disease-resistant plants. Besides being the easiest and most effective way to compost, it is so fun and satisfying that we must warn you composting can become addictive! We will go to the Common Ground Demonstration Garden and build our own compost pile. **YOU BRING:** a five-gallon bucket of "green material" (grass clippings, weeds, and/or non-meat kitchen scraps). *Margo is a third-year apprentice at Ecology Action's Research Garden in Willits, CA.*

## FRUIT TREE PRUNING

Kevin Raftery                      Saturday, February 7  
10:30 – 2:00                        \$41

Learn how to maximize tree health, fruit production and dead wood identification. Espalier care also discussed. Meet at Common Ground, then proceed to a local orchard – rain or shine. **YOU BRING:** pruning shears, bag lunch and a notebook. *Kevin is a Certified Arborist with a degree in horticulture. He teaches at Foothill College and has been associated with Common Ground for over 30 years.*

## FRUIT TREE VARIETIES

Nancy Garrison  
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, February 14  
\$28

Learn which varieties of peaches, nectarines, plums, pluots, apricots, apples and pears are the delight of connoisseurs. Be introduced to the best of the best-tasting deciduous fruits that grow in this area and learn where to source your own plants. *Nancy has been conducting and attending fruit tastings for the last 26 years in her diverse home fruit garden and in research facilities around the state. She has collaborated with Andy's Orchard and Dave Wilson Nursery and oversees the rare fruit plantings at Prusch Farm Park.*



## \* COMPLETE-DIET MINI-FARMING

John Jeavons  
10:30 – 12:30+

Saturday, February 21  
\$28

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, which has been translated into 7 languages and is used in over 141 countries.*

## \* ECONOMIC MINI-FARMING

John Jeavons Saturday, February 21  
2:30 – 4:30+ \$28

Learn the needs, concepts, techniques and crops that can lead to successful economic mini-farming, beginning right in your own backyard. Recommended reading: *Backyard Homestead* and Ecology Action's Self-Teaching Mini-Series Booklets #18 and #26 available at Common Ground. *John is the Executive Director of Ecology Action and author of How to Grow More Vegetables, now in its 7th edition and used in over 141 countries around the world.*

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*Many thanks to Jennifer Hewitson for allowing us to use her original art seen on pages 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.*

## SCHOOL GARDEN BASICS

Susan Stansbury, Jody Main, Margaret MacNiven  
Saturday, February 28  
10:30 – 1:30 \$37

Be inspired by the founders of the Woodside School Garden who will share a slide show story of how the garden started. Learn ways to get children excited and participating in all aspects of a school garden, even composting. Learn to know, love and guide kids in seasonal plantings, organic plant care, soil preparation, planting seeds and seedlings.

Organizing harvest festivals and sharing ideas with the community will be discussed. The story and workbook of the Woodside School Garden, *The Children's Garden*, is available for purchase at Common Ground.

*Susan Stansbury, Executive Director for Conexions, co-directs Valley of the Hearts Delight, which provides support to school gardens throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Jody Main, co-founder of the Woodside School Garden, is a local organic food and garden writer, educator, and consultant. Margaret MacNiven, co-founder of the Woodside School Garden, began enjoying the fruits of her double-digging during the 70s in Common Ground's test garden.*



## ROOTS DEMYSTIFIED or GET DOWN AND DIRTY WITH YOUR ROOTS

Robert Kourik Saturday, March 7  
2:00 – 4:00 \$28

Change your gardening habits to help roots thrive. Learn how to make any plant flourish, using methods based on the knowledge of how roots actually grow. Class attendees will explore the subterranean areas of every gardener's world, revealing the complex and secret lives of roots and root systems, debunking worn-out gardening myths, and providing down-to-earth advice on root-efficient planting and cultivation methods. *Robert has written ten books on a variety of topics including drip irrigation, environmentally sound homes, edible landscaping, and lavender. His articles have appeared in numerous national publications, including seven in The New York Times. He has received two national awards for the best article of the year from the Garden Writers of America Association.*

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

Carol Cox  
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, March 14  
\$28

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.*

**\* DOUBLE-DIGGING and GARDEN  
BED PREPARATION**

Carol Cox  
2:00 – 4:00

Saturday, March 14  
\$28

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 and weeds will come out easily. This ever-popular class includes a hands-on demonstration at the Common Ground Demonstration Garden. *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.*



**GROWING A SALAD GARDEN**

Jody Main  
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, March 21  
\$28

Grow bountiful crops of sweet buttery lettuce, spicy scallions, peppery radishes, and other crispy greens throughout the spring and early summer. A small bed can keep a family of four in bountiful salads that can include: Italian misticanza, arugula, radicchio, French mesclun, chervil, endive, frise, Asian baby greens, bok choy, mizuna and spinach. Create a mix of braising greens by growing kale, chard and spinach together. Class includes easy planting, harvesting and kitchen preparation instructions. A salad and dressing demonstration, snack and recipes 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.*



**GROWING GREAT TOMATOES**

Nancy Garrison  
10:30 – 12:30+

Saturday, March 28  
\$28

Learn which tomatoes have really great flavor and reliable production and are able to hold up under regular garden conditions. You will learn her favorite trellising methods, soil preparation, what NOT to do, and how to avoid the brown crispy foliage blues so a bountiful harvest will be yours until frost. Tomatoes featured will be the result of her 25 years of hands-on tomato research. *As the University of California Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor and Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Nancy has been and continues to be involved in tomato variety evaluations.*

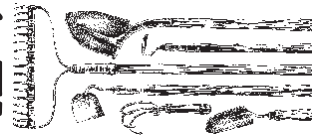
**HOW TO START YOUR VEGETABLE  
GARDEN**

Jody Main  
10:30 – 12:30

Saturday, April 4  
\$28

The lessons from our forests guide us in gardening the easiest way of all . . . naturally . . . organically! Class will include methods of organically planting and caring for vegetables and herbs. Also covered are wonderful heirloom vegetables to grow this summer, traditional Native American methods of planting the Three Sisters (corn, beans, squash) for gardens large and small, seasonal herbs, great crops for putting up, and summer harvesting techniques. Plant list and recipes included. *Jody is a local food and garden writer, educator and consultant. Her specialty is edible landscape design.*

# Product Highlights!



## Organic, Heirloom and Open-Pollinated Seeds for Sale!

"One seed is ten thousand seeds." Choose from the widest variety of organic and open-pollinated seed packets available in one gardening center. Your favorite seeds are here at Common Ground, including vegetables, culinary herbs, medicinal herbs, California native plants, flowering ornamentals, lawn mixes and cover crop seeds.

## Nitrile Touch Glove for Kids! – New!

Machine-washable, breathable back, comfortable and flexible palm. These form-fitting gloves are the closest thing to not wearing a glove and still protecting your hands!

## "THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN – An organic gardening primer" by Jody Main

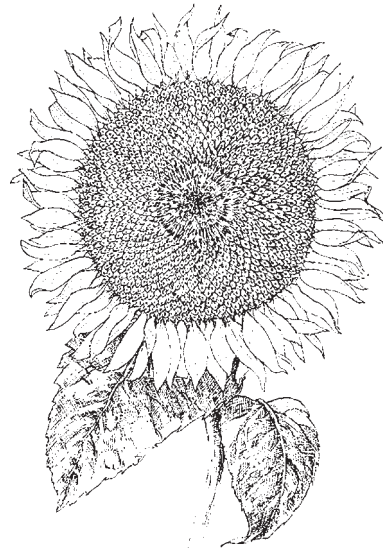
The text and engaging photos follow the celebrated history of the Woodside School children's garden to introduce readers to the concepts of organic gardening and the joy of gardening in community with children and adults together. Be sure to attend the SCHOOL GARDEN BASICS class which Jody is co-teaching.

## "WORMS Eat Our Garbage – Classroom Activities for a Better Environment" by Mary Appelhof, Mary Frances Fenton and Barbara Loss Harris

This book is filled with fun activities to teach worm anatomy, classification, lifecycle, and physiology. Learn how to care for worms and to collect useful castings and liquid tea for your garden while learning riddles and a song to sing together about worms and worm composting. Perfect for introducing environmental awareness to school-age children.

## LARNER SEEDS – Seeds of California Native Plants "Golden State Native Grass Erosion Control Mix"

This mix, composed of three quick-growing native California bunchgrasses, has been designed to provide quick cover on bare slopes created by road cuts, erosion, and construction. These species make good nurse crops for longer-lasting, slower-growing grass species such as *Nassella pulchra* and *Festuca idahoensis*. The combination will also provide excellent feed and cover for wildlife. Sold in 1/2-pound bags with planting instructions.



## More Product Highlights as recommend by:

**Sunset Test Garden Coordinator, Johanna Silver,** likes Common Ground's self-serve roll of "Agribon Reinforced Row Cover" because it keeps the seeds and seedlings moist while she is away from the garden. It is lightweight and needs no support. Johanna likes it because it protects the seedlings from the birds. Also available in convenient pre-packaged "Harvest-Guard." Creates a greenhouse environment for bigger, better and earlier crop yields.

**"The Worm Lady" and Common Ground Teacher, Alane Weber,** gets excited about the Japanese Serrated Hand Sickle. This versatile sickle is "fabulously precise and very sharp." It slices efficiently through a bed of compost crops including fava beans and thin-stemmed grains. For weeding, the 7-inch curved blade easily slices off deep-rooted plants such as dandelions 4 inches below the soil. This tool is extremely well built and long-lasting.

**Common Ground Demonstration Garden Manager, Drew Harwell,** enjoys using the time-tested traditional English Spear & Jackson D-Handled Digging Fork, which boasts quality and solid construction. Drew invests in tools with longevity and feels secure with the 10-year guarantee.

## Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center

... offers:



*Design and layout by Glenda Jones*

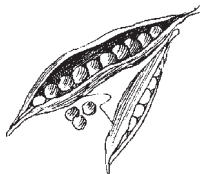
- Hands-on classes and events in organic gardening and sustainable lifestyles
- Seeds and plant starts – hundreds of edible, medicinal, native and ornamental varieties
- Organic composts, fertilizers and mulches – a broad selection
- Tools – the highest quality
- Natural disease- and pest-control products
- 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](http://www.commongroundinpaloalto.org)**

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