



News from the Learning Garden #2

December '02

The Learning Garden is a collaboration between Venice High School, Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the local community. Its purpose is to bring high quality nutrition and medicinal plants into the public school system, to deepen the level of education for students of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and to educate the community about the benefits of plant-based healing systems.

Greetings to everyone.

Many wonderful developments have taken place at the Learning Garden since the last newsletter.

Tai Chi platform completed

With the help of skilled workers and volunteers, landscape designer and permaculture genius Stephen Gates has completed the Tai Chi and Qigong platform. Classes have been taking place on an ongoing basis. The border around the beautiful stone platform will be planted with medicinal plants sometime in the near future.

Pond Completed, Again

After many months of technical difficulties, the pond is now fully operational. A number of exotic water-loving herbs are flourishing in their new home, including blue flag iris, yerba mansa, water mint, lotus, calamus, coltsfoot, and the true Asian gotu cola. A large population of gambusia swims happily under the prolific duckweed. The waterfall is on a timer, and actually comes on regularly, thanks to the dedicated efforts of several skilled volunteers. Many thanks also to Richo Cech of Horizon Herbs, for supplying us with the water plants.

Chinese Herb Garden Takes Root

The spring and summer seasons saw continual activity around the Yo San Chinese herb garden. The raised beds are now completed, and the sunken kiva classroom is finished. Many herbs are now growing in their new home, thanks to the efforts of the Yo San students who participated in the Adopt-A-Plant program.

Yo San Garden Receives Plant Donations

A large shipment of Chinese medicinal plants was donated to the Yo San garden by Cindy Riviere of Plant It Herbs. Many thanks, Cindy! We are quickly discovering which species are aggressive and self-sustaining, and which are not.

David King Becomes Garden Master

David King has left his position at UCLA to become the resident Garden Master and Master Gardener at the Learning Garden. He continues to teach regular botany and gardening classes for Yo San and the general community, and is now overseeing the ongoing maintenance at the garden. He has also sought out and received donations of gardening materials from local businesses. Thank you, David, for your dedication and support!

Keiko Cronin Leaves Yo San

We sadly say goodbye to Keiko Cronin, Academic Dean of Yo San, who is returning to private clinical practice. Keiko has played a major role in helping the growth of the Learning Garden, and we hope that she will continue enjoying the garden in the months ahead. Many thanks, Keiko!

Robert Newman Joins the Learning Garden

Robert Newman is an expert on the cultivation and identification of Chinese medicinal plants. Once the head of the Nanjing Botanical Garden, he has played a crucial role in bringing many rare and important species of medicinal herbs to the US. Robert has graciously accepted our invitation to work at the garden, and to share his valuable knowledge with the students. Welcome, Robert!

Emperor's College Joins the Learning Garden

Last week an important meeting took place at the Learning Garden between David Crow, Keiko Cronin, Lawrence Lau, and three senior administrators of Emperor's College of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Recognizing the need for more students, volunteers, and community involvement, Emperor's was invited to participate in the development and maintenance of the Learning Garden. We are looking forward to the next phase of expansion, education, and activity that will happen as they become more involved. To all at Emperor's: welcome!

Jackie Domac Succeeds With LEAF Grant

After a controversial struggle and national media attention, Jackie Domac has succeeded in procuring a large grant from the State of California to help fund the battle against sodas and junk food on the Venice High campus. The Learning Garden will be receiving \$10,000 as part of this grant, for the purpose of planting fruit and nut trees around the perimeter of the garden. Congratulations Jackie! Hopefully, the funds will make their way through the bureaucracy before we retire.

David Crow Continues Promotion of the Learning Garden

Over the past several months, David Crow has had many opportunities to speak at various events, and to share the photographic story of the Learning Garden. The message of the garden as a model of grassroots, community-based healthcare has been positively received and appreciated by his audiences. He is beginning work on his second book, which will feature the garden.

Volunteers and Donations Requested

Over the spring and summer months, a tremendous amount of work was accomplished, thanks to the generosity and labor of many dedicated people. The Learning Garden needs your help, both at the garden, and financially. We are ready to move forward on

several new developments, including renovation of the old irrigation system and planting of the Ayurvedic herb garden, but we have no funds to do this. Please join us in our efforts to create a healing sanctuary for the students of Venice High, a place of higher learning for those studying traditional herbal medicine, and an environment of beauty for the neighborhood. Here are some of the ways you can help:

1. Financial donation. Checks should be made to Venice High School PTSA, and sent to Julie Mann, 2454 Louella Ave, Venice, CA 90291
2. Forward this email to everyone who might be interested in supporting the Learning Garden
3. Come and participate at the garden. For details of the winter schedule, contact David King at DavidL.King@verizon.net

Questions or Comments About the Learning Garden?

Feel free to call David Crow at 310-822-6812, or email him at the address on this letter.

Please Forward This Newsletter to Anyone Who Might Be Interested in the Learning Garden