



## News From The Learning Garden (#6)

January, '04

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 from all of us at The Learning Garden. Many important and enjoyable events have happened at the garden since the last newsletter, and many more will be happening in the coming season.

### **Food Forest Grows**

Planning and development of The Learning Garden Permaculture Food Forest continues on schedule. Over the last few months a large raised bed has been build along the north side of the garden facing Venice Blvd. Through the LEAF grant from the California State Board of Education, numerous trees of all types, including fruit, nut, and medicinal, have been purchased and are awaiting planting.

### **Agape Church Earth Ministry and TreePeople To Plant Food Forest Trees**

On Valentine's Day, February 14th, members of the Agape Church Earth Ministry, directed by Karen Sugarman, and TreePeople will be planting the trees of the Food Forest. The event will commence at 9 am, and all are invited to participate. We expect a large turnout of enthusiastic volunteers, who will be helping to create one of the largest Permaculture-based agro-intensive food producing sites at a public school in the country. Once the trees have been planted, future planting events will further develop the forest by adding large and small understory plants, vines, groundcovers, and root crops. We anticipate that by this time next year, the entire north and west boundary of the garden will be producing a large amount of food and natural medicines for the school and community, as well as serving as an important educational site for organic bio-intensive Permaculture methods.

### **Benefit Concert By Manose**

On October 12th Nepal's renowned bansuri flautist, Manose, entertained an audience at The Learning Garden. The music was beautiful and mesmerizing, and the garden was lit by moonlight and tiki torches. Many thanks to Manose for an enchanting evening, and to Emily Snider for organizing the event.

### **Agape Church Men's Ministry Work Day**

On November 15th, thirty-five energetic and hard-working men from the Agape Spiritual Community donated a half day of labor to The Learning Garden. In a short period of time an incredible amount of work was accomplished, including removal of literally tons of

concrete, heavy weeding, and massive cleanup. Thank you, Men's Ministry! You are always welcome at The Learning Garden.

### **News From The Garden Master**

Through the generosity of Learning Garden benefactors, Garden Master David King was able to receive a salary for the last six months. During this time, he has accomplished numerous important jobs large and small. He sends the following details. "Thanks to the ongoing efforts of countless volunteers, the area of the garden that is now under cultivation is well over half of the 60,000 square feet available to us. Most plants are now propagated here from organic seeds or cuttings. The garden is approaching its full potential as an oasis of peace and learning in the city. The teachers and students from the high school now regularly enjoy the garden, and more members of the community are getting involved in new ways." On October 8th, David gave a presentation to the Board of Directors of Yo San University. His speech emphasized the benefits of the garden to the school, including increased publicity and enrollment of students, holistic herbal education through hands-on experience with living plants, increased health and wellbeing for the students, and integration of Chinese medicine into the public school system. Thank you David, for your tireless and invaluable assistance helping to make The Learning Garden a great success!

### **Yo San Students Earn Class Credits At TLG's Chinese Herb Garden**

Yo San students can now receive up to half of their required Herb Pharmacy hours by working with the medicinal plants at The Learning Garden. Denise Cicuto sends this personal comment about her experience in this program, which is typical of the sentiments that are frequently expressed by the students here at the garden. "I have found working in The Learning Garden to be not just an added bonus, but an essential ingredient to helping me learn about Chinese herbs. Getting a chance to see and work with the herbs solidifies their identity in my mind when I go back to the classroom. Some of my favorite Chinese herbs are ones I have planted in The Learning Garden. It is also rewarding to know that my one hour a week in the garden helps to make a difference in the progress of this wonderful project. I encourage other Yo San students to come out and do their Herb Lab hours in the garden or volunteer whenever they can." Thank you, Denise, for your contribution to the development of Chinese medicine.

### **The Learning Garden Home to Over One Hundred Chinese Medicinal Plants**

The Chinese medicinal garden at The Learning Garden has grown to include over a hundred species of herbs. Some of these have been planted as long-term root crops, such as codonopsis, an important immune and energy tonic. Others are annuals which are now being reseeded, while others are awaiting spring planting in the greenhouse. Robert Newman, plant collector extraordinaire, has played an important role by supplying a number of rare species, as well as supporting the gradual development of this aspect of the garden through education. Many thanks, Robert!

### **The Learning Garden Inspires Venice High School Horticultural Students**

David King sends the following observations about the increasing interest in organic gardening among Venice High School students. "The Venice High School horticulture students have found a new respect for gardening that has invigorated the efforts in their own plots. By seeing the development of other parts of The Learning Garden,

students are increasingly interested in making their own projects more productive, successful, and attractive. The horticulture program at the school has expanded dramatically, with at least thirty more students enrolled in two new classes. As a result, the amount of land now being gardened by the high school students has increased by at least fifty percent from last year."

### **The Learning Garden To Be Seen On International Television**

On September 23rd, Learning Garden co-founder David Crow had the honor of speaking on a panel discussion with the Dalai Lama in New York. The event, which was filmed live with an audience of 1,500 people, is being edited for broadcast on Link TV and distribution on DVD. Footage of students working at The Learning Garden will be included in the final program, which is expected to be seen by 20 million viewers. Broadcast dates will be announced through David's Floracopeia newsletter. If you are not on his email list and wish to be so, please contact him at [medicynecrow@earthlink.net](mailto:medicynecrow@earthlink.net).

### **Los Angeles Farms Leadership Program Meets At the Learning Garden**

On October 13th, an orientation took place at the Chi Patio of The Learning Garden for students and teachers of Venice, Santa Monica, Crenshaw, and Reseda High Schools, to introduce the Los Angeles Farms Leadership Program. This program exposes students to careers in areas of sustainable ecology, ethnobotany, and organic agriculture; each month students visit organic farms, watersheds, tribal cultural centers, and research institutes. This event, which attracted thirty new students, was coordinated by Stephen Vodantis, assistant manager at the Santa Monica Farmer's Market, with the assistance of Diane Pollock, head of the horticultural education program at VHS. Many thanks to Diane and Stephen, for helping to raise student's awareness of the many possibilities for careers in these ecologically healthy fields.

### **Learning Garden Web Site Updated**

Many thanks to Kim Zanti and team for the ongoing development of The Learning Garden web site. Visitors to the site may now see pictures of the garden in progress, access archived issues of this newsletter, make donations directly to the garden, and see schedules of events. Please visit us at <http://www.thelearninggarden.org>, and encourage others to visit. We will soon have a large banner announcing the web site to the 50,000 cars that pass the garden every day.

### **Succulent, Cactus, and California Native Garden Flourishes**

Extraordinarily dedicated volunteer Christine Walker has single-handedly renovated the xeriscaped cactus garden. Until last summer, this plot was a neglected area of The Learning Garden, although it was in one of the most visible corners. Christine took it upon herself to completely restore and replant the garden with a large selection of beautiful, exotic, and intriguing species of alien-appearing cacti and succulents, that are all very content in their new home. In addition, Christine has started planting a large collection of native California species around the perimeter of the cactus garden. When fully established, this garden area will be a major attraction. Many thanks, Christine!

### **Learning Garden Featured in Qi Magazine**

Qi Magazine, a national publication which features articles on Chinese medicine, martial arts, Feng Shui, and other topics, recently published an article about The Learning

Garden. Written by Emily Snider and Deyla Tappan, the article describes the founding and development of the garden. Thanks, Emily and Deyla!

### **Learning Garden Burglarized**

The Learning Garden's office was burglarized on the night of December 14th. This was the first such incident in the garden's otherwise peaceful history. Apparently, this was a well-planned job, and part of a series of burglaries that took place at Venice High School around the same time. A number of personal items belonging to David King were stolen, but have all been replaced through the LEAF grant funds as well as generous patronage. Locks and security have been improved since, and the number of potentially enticing possessions on site reduced. We anticipate no further incidents, and are declining offers for bars in the windows and large ferocious guard dogs.

### **Volunteers and Donations Requested**

The Learning Garden needs the ongoing support of numerous individuals, organizations, and the community, both at the garden and financially. In particular, we would like to continue providing Garden Master David King with a stipend so he can work at the garden. Please join us in our efforts to create a healing sanctuary for the students of Venice High School, 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, or
2. Purchase an engraved paving stone: your name immortalized in a Learning Garden pathway for \$100. Checks should be made to Venice High School PTSA, and sent to Julie Mann, 2454 Louella Ave, Venice, CA 90291
3. Forward this email to everyone who might be interested in supporting The Learning Garden
4. Come and participate at the garden. For details of classes and events at the garden, contact David King at [learninggardenmaster@yahoo.com](mailto:learninggardenmaster@yahoo.com)

### **Questions or Comments About the Learning Garden?**

For further information, feel free to call David Crow at 310-822-6812, or email him at [medicinecrow@earthlink.net](mailto:medicinecrow@earthlink.net)

Please Forward This Newsletter to Anyone Who Might Be Interested  
In The Learning Garden

