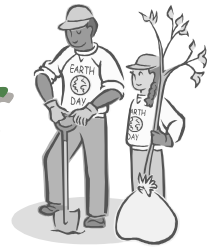




# Gardening with Class



A newsletter of the San Diego Regional School Garden Resource Center

Published by the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County

Fall 2008 Issue

## California School Garden Week “Celebrate the Harvest” October 25 to 31, 2008

Each year the California School Garden Network (CSGN) encourages schools to celebrate and raise awareness of garden-based learning by showcasing their school gardens, participating in special activities and events, and inviting their communities to become involved. Visit [www.CSGN.org](http://www.CSGN.org) to access a variety of tools that will help your school celebrate School Garden Week, including a list of event ideas, step by step guide for garden celebrations, a press release template, and a media tip sheet. Let us know what you are doing—you may end up in a future newsletter! Read below to see how one local school celebrated their garden last spring.

## Healthy Hawk Week at Alamosa Park

By Nancy Jones, retired from Vista Unified, [Nancyjones@vusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:Nancyjones@vusd.k12.ca.us)  
School Garden Coordinator, Alamosa Park Elementary

During the week of May 27-30, 2008, Alamosa Park Elementary (in Oceanside for Vista Unified SD) celebrated Healthy Hawk Week with stimulating physical challenges and nutrition education. Each day was designated for students to bring a color to eat: orange, green, and red veggies and fruits. The classes tasted and enjoyed the variety of healthy foods available. On Tuesday, VUSD Nutrition Education Supervisor Amy Haessly provided a Fear Factor tasting of uncommon veggies and fruits: she challenged the students to taste dried cranberries, hominy, spinach, honeydew melon, and sugar snap peas. Haessly is a Registered Dietitian and was a great resource for our week’s activities.

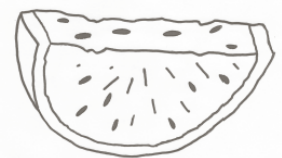
Also on Tuesday, our Green Thumb Garden Club at Alamosa (students in grades K–5) hosted Garden Tours through our blooming array of nutritional edibles. The Tour featured the different spring veggies and fruits growing in our school garden, from apples and avocados to tomatoes and turnips. After the Tour, parent volunteers provided a Insect Fear Factor Challenge, where students learned about and handled worms, sowbugs, green fruit beetle larvae, and snails, all from our compost and garden beds (no tasting on these!). Four hundred students toured the garden over a six-hour period for a wonderful day of garden learning.

One helpful feature of the Garden Tour was the colorful garden signs showing the main nutrient of each veggie or fruit. This set of over 40 signs, called **Nutrition in your School Garden from A to Z**, was designed by me and can be colored by your students and laminated for display in the garden. A full set of blackline masters can be downloaded from the RCD’s website ([www.rcdsandiego.org](http://www.rcdsandiego.org)). California Instructional School Garden grant schools can use these reproducible blacklines to teach garden nutrition to fulfill the goals of the program.

### Inside this issue:

<i>Healthy Hawk Week at Alamosa Park</i>	1
<i>San Diego County Agriculture</i>	2
<i>Carrot Colors Rooted in History</i>	2
<i>Vermicomposting Resource</i>	2
<i>Announcements</i>	3
<i>Garden-based Curricula</i>	3
<i>Make Yours a Water-wise School Garden</i>	4

Sample!



*Watermelon gives us Vitamin C. Vitamin C is required for strong gums and healthy tissues.*  
\*1 cup = 13% RDV (Recommended Daily Value)

(continued on pg. 4)

# San Diego County Agriculture

By Eric Larson, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau

Because most residents of San Diego County have a freeway or beach orientation as they go about their daily activities, little thought or notice is given to the farming that thrives in our region just a bit off the beaten path. In fact, among the more than 3000 counties in the United States that report farms in their midst, San Diego County has the twelfth largest farm economy. 309,000 local acres are devoted to agricultural pursuits.

The parade of local products that combine to gross more than \$1.5 billion in sales a year is led by nursery & floral crops that account for 65 percent of the farm receipts. Fruit crops are the next largest sector at 15 percent. The farming profile is rounded out with vegetable crops accounting for 12 percent of production and eggs and milk at 4 percent. As for national crop rankings, San Diego County is the nation's leader in both avocados and nursery crops.

San Diego County farming is set apart from most of the nation in two ways; farms here are small and water is expensive. With farms far below state and national averages in size, high-valued crops like strawberries, tomatoes, avocados, mushrooms, flowers, and nursery plants that maximize production per acre must be grown. Looking forward, the rising cost of a limited supply of water will shape the decisions farmers must make about their crops and planted acres.

For educators and the public, the Farm Bureau's website at [www.sdfarmbureau.org](http://www.sdfarmbureau.org) is a great place to discover information about buying local, find links to classroom resources, and learn more about San Diego County's farm community.



*WE'RE #1! San Diego County is first in the entire nation in avocado production.*

## Carrot Colors Rooted in History

By Vincent Lazaneo,  
Urban Horticultural Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension

DID YOU KNOW that carrots were first grown over 2000 years ago? And, the first cultivated types were probably purple! They were selected and grown in middle Asia near Afghanistan around 600 AD. The yellow carrot, which is a mutation of the purple type, was probably grown in Iran or Syria in the ninth or tenth century. White carrots, which are variations of yellow types, were also grown. Carrot cultivation spread from Arab countries to Spain and Italy and then to all of Europe by the fourteenth century. The first orange varieties emerged in Holland in the seventeenth century; they had a good flavor and their popularity grew. North American settlers brought the orange carrot with them from Europe, and it remains the most popular carrot color in the western part of the world.

Surprise your students when they pull up a red, purple, or white carrot. While packets of orange-colored carrots are sold in most garden centers, other colors are available from some online seed catalogs: [www.kitchengardenseeds.com](http://www.kitchengardenseeds.com) ('Purple Dragon', 'Atomic Red', 'Snow White'), [www.kitazawaseed.com](http://www.kitazawaseed.com) ('Cosmic Purple', 'Kyoto Red', 'Silver Yellow'), [www.territorialseed.com](http://www.territorialseed.com) ('Rainbow', 'Yellowstone', 'Red Samurai', 'White Satin').

Carrot seeds are very tiny and are slow sprouters – it can take up to 12 days, or even longer if the soil is cold. They can be planted in our area from fall to spring.

*Want to learn more? - visit [www.redsandiego.org](http://www.redsandiego.org) to read Vince's Tips for Growing Straight and Pretty Carrots!*

### San Diego's first GREEN school fundraiser!

**Go Green Book** is San Diego's first eco-friendly and health focused savings book and green fundraiser! This is not your average coupon book. People can use it to create a green home; dine on healthy food; buy eco-clothing; get fit and healthy; and have fun exploring the natural world around San Diego. Call 760-489-2757 or visit [www.gogreenbook.org](http://www.gogreenbook.org) for school fundraiser and purchasing information. On top of raising money for your school, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of **Go Green Book** also goes to our School Garden Resource Center!



### Vermicomposting for Pre-K - 12<sup>th</sup> grade

The Solana Center for Environmental Innovation provides hands-on learning about composting, recycling, worm anatomy, ecosystems, and more!

Classroom Presentations are conducted by a Master Composter. Program fee includes a desktop bin complete with worms, *Guide to Vermicomposting for Teachers*, and technical/program assistance.

The cost is \$345 per classroom, \$75 for each additional class. This program meets funding requirements for school garden grants. Schools located in San Diego and Encinitas are eligible for grants sponsored by the City of San Diego & the City of Encinitas.

After experiencing the classroom presentation, interested schools can take the next step & establish a school-wide Lunchroom Vermicomposting Program.

Compost bins, thermometers, and books are also available for purchase at the Solana Center or online at [www.solanacenter.org](http://www.solanacenter.org)

For more information contact Leslie Barnes, Compost Program Coordinator at (760) 436-7986 ext. 217 or email [leslie@solanacenter.org](mailto:leslie@solanacenter.org).



## Announcements!



*This newsletter is now online at [www.rcdsandiego.org/programs/schoolgardens/html](http://www.rcdsandiego.org/programs/schoolgardens/html). It can also be emailed directly to you. In addition, email recipients will receive timely monthly announcements. Contact [diana@rcdsandiego.org](mailto:diana@rcdsandiego.org) or call (619) 562-0096.*

- **Save the date!** The 10th Annual "Gardening with Class" School Garden and Nutrition Conference will take place at the Del Mar Fairgrounds on Saturday April 18, 2009.
- **Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden** This workshop provides a comprehensive introduction to school gardens. All participants receive the book *Gardens for Learning* published by the California School Garden Network, & a binder with resource materials. The next workshop will be in November. Check the RCD website for dates & registration information. [www.rcdsandiego.org](http://www.rcdsandiego.org)
- **School Gardens GRANT CALENDAR** now on the "School Programs" web page of the Master Gardeners Association of San Diego, [www.mastergardenerssandiego.org](http://www.mastergardenerssandiego.org). Due dates throughout the year.
- **Love Your Veggies** This national grant of \$15,000 supports new elementary school programs that increase children's access to fresh fruits and vegetables on campus. See website for details. [www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org](http://www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org) Due date Nov. 7, 2008.
- **Be on the lookout for exciting local fall festivals!**
  - ⇒ City Farmer's 20th Annual Pumpkin Growing Contest [www.cityfarmersnursery.com](http://www.cityfarmersnursery.com)
  - ⇒ Water Conservation Garden's California Friendly Gardening Festival [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org)
- **California Native Plant Society Plant Propagation Workshop** Saturday, Nov. 8, 2008 at Recon Nursery in Imperial Beach. Registration preference given to teachers/school volunteers. [www.cnpsd.org](http://www.cnpsd.org)
- **"Imagine This..." Annual Creative Writing Contest** sponsored by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Submission deadline Nov. 1, 2008. Information at [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org).

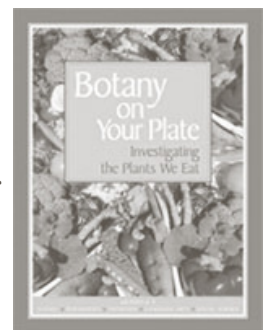
## New Curricula Available for Garden-based Learning

*Garden-based learning can help students get that hands-on experience of soil and plant science, while complementing and reinforcing newly adopted science curricula. Two new curricula are available this year that beautifully integrate standards from both science and health, and draw connections to agriculture in our county.*

### Botany on your Plate (K-4 but good for ALL ages)

- Available from the National Gardening Association  
<http://www.gardeningwithkids.org/11-3350.html>

Written by staff at the UC Botanical Garden at UC Berkeley and piloted in Oakland Schools, this curriculum integrates fruit and vegetable tastings with detailed scientific explorations of each of the major plant parts. Built into the curriculum are assessments of knowledge and attitudes, which can help you track and share with administrators how your students are meeting standards in science, math, health and environmental awareness. Most of the supplies needed to perform this curriculum are basic, and each lesson is clearly described. Great photographs & illustrations accompany lesson plans. View the first lesson online at: <http://www.kidsgardening.com/bovp.lesson7.pdf>



### Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork (separate curricula for K, 1 and 2)

- Free to qualifying schools. Email [msswanson@ucdavis.edu](mailto:msswanson@ucdavis.edu) or call (858) 495-5260

Last year the Kindergarten version was introduced to San Diego County. This year we now also have versions for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. These curricula have been aligned well with science & health standards. As does the Kindergarten version, the first and second grade versions follow through the food pyramid and introduce increasingly complex concepts with playful activities. The activities enforce the connection between four main areas - nutrition, gardening, cafeteria and the farm. Stay tuned for upcoming trainings where you will be able to create kits of prepared materials to use with this curriculum at your site.



## *Gardening with Class*

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332 S. Juniper St., Suite 110  
Escondido, CA 92025  
(760) 745-2061  
[www.rcdsandiego.org](http://www.rcdsandiego.org)

East County Office  
1524 Graves Ave., Suite A  
El Cajon, CA 92021  
(619) 562-0096

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## Make Yours a Water-wise School Garden

By Ivan Golakoff, Education Director, San Diego County Water Authority



Our community faces unprecedented water supply challenges. With reduced water supplies from Northern California and two dry years in a row, key reservoirs in the state are expected to reach historic lows by the end of the year. If conditions do not improve, many water officials predict urban water shortages for Southern California in 2009. That's the bad news.

The good news is that you can help make a difference. Join the **20-Gallon Challenge** - a call by the San Diego County Water Authority for businesses, residents, and even schools to pitch in and help reduce our region's overall water use by 20 gallons per person per day. Your garden can stay green while using less water – and it's easy to do!

To find out ways that you & your family can save water, go to our website at [www.20gallonchallenge.com](http://www.20gallonchallenge.com). Once you see the many things you can do to save water, take the "20-Gallon Challenge Pledge" & help San Diego by becoming a water-saver. Read on for some water-wise gardening tips:

### (Healthy Hawks, continued from pg. 1)

For the week, students pledged to do more healthy activities, and parents encouraged students to be more active by providing a Nutrition Olympics and Energizer activities. The culmination of the week was the Healthy Hawk Run, a Jogathon for all of our Alamosa students, who raised over \$20,000 to fund the SPARKS P.E. program.

Garden nutrition, healthy eating and vigorous exercise made a great combination during Healthy Hawk Week at Alamosa Park!

- Water your yard/fields no more than (3) times a week. Most people over-water.
- If your garden irrigation is on a timer, water only before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. to reduce evaporation & interference from the wind. Reduce irrigation cycles on your timer by (2) minutes.
- Check your sprinkler system for leaks, overspray and broken sprinkler heads.
- Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and help control weeds.
- Check soil moisture using your finger or a trowel and wait until the soil is dry 1 or 2 inches deep to water.
- Reduce the size of lawns and replace with drought tolerant plants like California native plants – great for pollinators!