



# Gardening with Class



A newsletter of the San Diego Regional School Garden Resource Center

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## Congratulations, CISG Recipients!

Thanks to the California Instructional School Garden (CISG) grant, 320 San Diego County schools are digging a little deeper into garden education. The noncompetitive awards, ranging in amount from \$2500 to \$5000, will be used to purchase equipment and supplies and for professional development. The grant was offered by the California Department of Education. San Diego is the lucky recipient of 8.2% of California's total awards, which amounts to over \$1.3 million dollars. Approximately 80% of awardees in the county were elementary schools, with the remainder being middle and high schools. Congratulations to all grant winners, who should receive their funds in October or November, and have until June 2009 to spend it. Professional development opportunities in San Diego will be announced in the near future. For now, look for curriculum ideas and other support in the pages that follow!

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## Spotlight on Local School Gardens

Over 200 schools throughout the county have worked with the Master Gardeners of San Diego County to create vibrant learning resources at their schools. Here are just two of many success stories.

To schedule a free consultation with a Master Gardener at your own school, visit [www.mastergardenerssandiego.org](http://www.mastergardenerssandiego.org).

### • *Central Elementary – by Master Gardener Meredith French*

Central Elementary is located in central San Diego on Polk Street. It has an active school garden program under the care of Agustin Lozano, who divides his time between Central and nearby Kimbrough Elementary. Michael Shefcik, school groundskeeper, has also played a large part in maintaining and expanding the garden. Central is K-5, with older students especially participating in school garden projects. Their objectives are to learn how to eat more healthfully, to learn how various vegetables grow, and how to care for them. The garden grows corn, flowers, strawberries, herbs and chilis among other things.

Principal Staci Monreal (smonreal@sandi.net) has assembled an active advisory committee to help guide the school towards an emphasis on health and wellness. Teachers have integrated ecology and nutrition lessons into garden-based and classroom-based curriculum.



(continued on pg. 2)



### School spotlights...(continued from pg. 1)

- *VIP Village's Plant it Earth!* - by Master Gardeners Marilyn Wieland and Loretta Cory

South Bay Union School District's VIP Village has an exquisite children's garden. Preschoolers spend one day a week here, learning about their role in preserving our earth and its many resources. This 7500 square foot children's garden, located on Fern Avenue in Imperial Beach, serves 600+ preschoolers and their families each year. It is maintained through a strong partnership among community agencies, VIP Village families, and staff. Their program emphasizes exploration, ecology, and an appreciation of a garden's beautiful and nutritious bounty. For more information please call Jeanette Zimmerman or Laura McLean at (619) 628-8690.

## Autumn is All About Apples!

This easy recipe is excellent with pork chops or roast pork loin, and will help add fruits and vegetables to your diet. For dessert, try a family apple tasting with several varieties of apples, or dipping choices!

### Apples and Onions

#### Ingredients:

6 apples	Canola oil
3 onions	1 tsp thyme

#### Directions:

1. Core 6 fresh, crisp apples (such as Macintosh), cut in half and slice into 1/4" slices. Peel and slice 3 onions in 1/8" slices.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon canola oil in a skillet or frying pan. Add onions and saute for 1-2 minutes. Add apple slices with 1 teaspoon dried thyme.
3. Saute for 4-5 more minutes until onions are wilted and a little browned and apples are tender. Spoon over pork.

## Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork—K-1 Curriculum from UCCE

The Youth Nutrition Program at the University Cooperative Extension has a new curriculum to offer this year for Kindergarten and First grade teachers in qualified schools called "Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork." This curriculum meets Nutrition Competencies and CA State Content Standards. Like other curricula offered through the Youth Nutrition Program (TWIGS, Nutrition to Grow On), the curriculum uses gardening activities to demonstrate where food comes from. Each lesson includes suggestions for linking the lesson to real life situations not only in the garden, but in the school cafeteria and local farms. The teacher is guided through the curriculum with articulate introductions and outlined objectives, background information and itemized lists of supplies and preparations needed for each lesson. The nutrition concepts build through the curriculum and are current with the latest nutrition pyramid. Each of the 30-45 minute lessons is complete with a snack that the children can participate in making. A bonus feature—the curriculum has prepared family letters describing the activities undertaken in class in Spanish and English. These allow the gardening and nutrition concepts to be shared with the child's family. Contact Mindy Swanson, Youth Nutrition Program Representative/Garden Liaison at (858) 495-5260 or [msswanson@ucdavis.edu](mailto:msswanson@ucdavis.edu) for more information about this or other garden-based curricula. Mindy can provide the curricula, training and support for free to qualifying schools.



## Announcements!



*Want to join our mailing list? Have suggestions for future articles? Please email [Diana@rcdsandiego.org](mailto:Diana@rcdsandiego.org) or call (619) 562-0096, and give us your name, school / organization, & address.*

- **Save the Date!**—This year's Gardening with Class Conference will once again be held at the Del Mar Fairgrounds and will take place on Saturday, April 19th, 2008.
- Our website has a new look! Visit [www.rcdsandiego.org](http://www.rcdsandiego.org) to find links to outstanding school garden-related websites, past newsletters, & conference registration information.
- Propagation Workshop Saturday Nov.10, 9am – 12pm at Recon Native Plant Nursery (near Imperial Beach). Learn the basics of native plant propagation including seed germination techniques and vegetative propagation. Also includes a behind-the-scenes tour of Recon Nursery – one of the state's largest growers of native plants. This workshop is for members of the California Native Plant Society AND teachers/volunteers working on a school garden. RSVP to [sandiegonativeplants@yahoo.com](mailto:sandiegonativeplants@yahoo.com) Leave your school's name, address and one brief paragraph describing your garden plans or your existing garden.
- Local School Garden Grants available for 2008—For the fourth year, the Village Garden Club of La Jolla is offering grants to elementary schools in San Diego County for new or existing school gardens and their accompanying curricula. Applicants should visit [www.villagegardencluboflajolla.com](http://www.villagegardencluboflajolla.com) for further information on how to apply.
- Xeriscape Gardening—A free workshop for teachers! Learn how to set up a gardening program at your school. Sponsored by the San Diego County Water Authority. Offered monthly at the Cuyamaca Water Conservation Garden. Look for the SDCWA flyer coming soon in the mail, or visit [www.sdcwa.org](http://www.sdcwa.org).
- SDCOE School Garden Workshop on Thursday October 25th, from 4-7 PM. \$25, dinner included. Visit the San D-CREEC website at [www.creec.org/region9a/](http://www.creec.org/region9a/) for more information and to register.



## Plan your planting for a happy harvest!

You have probably noticed that there are times when certain fruits and vegetables are “in season” at the grocery store. What is not so obvious to us city-slickers is that a farmer/gardener would have had to sow seeds 6 to 12 weeks earlier in order for those items to be available now. Halloween pumpkins, for example, are currently ready for picking and carving, but the seeds were planted back in June. Pumpkins (and tomatoes, eggplants, etc.) are considered “warm-season” vegetables since they grow best during the warm summer months. “Cool season” crops on the other hand grow best in cooler temperatures. In general, this group includes root crops (*see article on page 4!*) and green leafy crops. For best results in the school garden, consider the following cool-season planting options, which will be ready for harvest in 2-3 months. Until they're ready, pick up some tasty bites from the “Harvest now” list at your local farmer's market.

**Plant now:** Vegetables - lettuce, spinach, chard, radishes, potatoes, carrots, beets, peas, sweet peas, fava beans, and broccoli. Others - Flower bulbs (for spring/summer bloom), snapdragons, pansies, calendula, and fruit trees.

**Harvest now:** Vegetables - pumpkins, squash, gourds, corn, tomatoes, basil, and beans. Flowers - Sunflowers, zinnias, and cosmos. Tree/vine products - Kiwi, pears, apples, persimmon, grapes, pomegranates, and acorns!



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## "Grow a Root - It's a Hoot!"

By Vincent Lazaneo  
UC Cooperative Extension

The edible part of some vegetables is their large root. During our cool season, it is easier to grow popular root crops like beets, carrots, radishes and turnips. We can also grow other, less common ones, such as celeriac, parsnips and rutabagas. (Note: potatoes, which grow underground and look like roots, are actually modified stems called tubers.)

Root crops are usually grown from fall to spring in coastal areas of San Diego County. The best time to plant seed is from August to October or February to March. Seeds should be sown where plants will receive sun all day. Root crops prefer sandy soils, but they can be grown in any well-drained soil. They can also be grown in a raised bed or a large container.

Prepare the planting area by loosening the soil with a shovel to a depth of 6 to 12 inches. Next, apply compost and a little pre-plant fertilizer, then thoroughly mix them into the soil. Level the surface with a rake, then irrigate to wet the soil at least a foot deep. When the surface begins to dry, mark rows 12 – 15 inches apart.

Plant seeds at the correct depth which is shown on the seed packet. Be careful not to plant seeds too close together. Cover them with fine soil and gently firm it down. Thoroughly wet the soil with a fine spray of water so the seeds will not be washed out. Water lightly once or twice a day until the seeds sprout, then water less often.

Thin seedlings when they are small to prevent overcrowding. This will allow the remaining plants to grow rapidly and not be stunted. You will find the proper spacing listed on the back of the seed packet. Except for radishes, fertilize root crops again when they are 2 to 3 inches tall. Scatter fertilizer lightly along the row, then water well.

Harvest root crops when they are large enough to eat. Mature roots can be left in the ground until needed, but they should be used before they get old and tough. The young leaves of beets and turnips are also edible.

