

Classes

All classes meet at the store/center/library on Saturday mornings at 10:30 and are free.

- February 14 -- Soil Preparation
- February 21 -- Compost
- February 28 -- Seed Propagation
- March 7 -- Companion Planting
- March 14 -- Insect Life
- March 21 -- Beekeeping with Jim Talboy
- March 28 -- Garden Planning
- April 4 -- Soil Preparation
- April 11 -- Compost
- April 18 -- Flowers

Special Events

Friday night, March 6, 7:30 P.M. -- A double-feature at Ecology Action:

On The Edge of the Forest -- the excellent film with E.F.Schumacher about the importance of trees.

Portrait of Alan Chadwick: Master Horticulturalist -- a 55-minute, black and white videotape of a spontaneous philosophical interview with Alan Chadwick.

Ecology Action Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 - 9:30 P.M. at 855 Clara Drive in Palo Alto. Vegetarian potluck precedes the meeting at 6:30. All are invited.

Membership Renewal

If your address label is marked with a red notation, it is time to renew. This is the last newsletter/notice you will receive. The cost of the newsletter (and library privileges) is \$6.00 for 1981. \$30.00 will help support our research, education, development and outreach program -- as well as bring you the newsletter. This \$30.00 is also tax-deductible.

HELP!

We need someone with a strong truck (and back!) to pick up 1½ - 3 tons of fertilizers in Marin as soon as possible. We can pay mileage and a modest compensation.

The window seats and some pillows in the store/center need recovering. Would someone like to earn a membership by doing this?

Medfly Updated

Comments here will be brief as we feel the media coverage in the Santa Clara County papers has been fairly balanced and accurate. The threat of aerial spray is far from gone -- with the odds varying daily (and we often suspect based more on the political balance than on the biological situation). Citizen cooperation is excellent and the stripping program is going well. However, powerful chemical interests are still pushing for an aerial spray reportedly because they do not wish a program of Integrated Pest Management to be seen as successful.

The new head of the joint agricultural program, Jerry Scribner, is very accessible, hard-working, congenial, and appears to have ended the feeling of unorganized disaster that characterized the Medfly Eradication Program for the first six months. We disagree with him only in the widening use of ground spraying, but understand that he is taking a "middle road" position and, as he puts it, "working hard to avoid an aerial spraying."

Reports we've received about the work quality of ground spray crews vary widely. They have been trained very quickly under adverse conditions: the training manuals are still being written; Baytex is turning out to be not as effective as originally presumed; problems continue with the bait being used; etcetera. Some people have said that the crews were very knowledgeable and friendly. Others have reported that the wrong plants were being sprayed (e.g. a bottle brush tree and herb gardens). In the last week more people have come home to find their yard was sprayed and they never received any notice that it was going to happen. Although spray crews may have the legal right to spray affected areas, coming in without notice gets into the area of trespassing.

Anyone who wants to be notified in advance of the spray; anyone who wants to be present when the yard is sprayed to see what is done; or anyone who refuses to allow spraying should protect themselves by posting a clear notice on their door and/or fence. Our personal position is that ground spray is advisable only in those yards found to be infested and those immediately adjacent to infested yards. We have refused to allow spraying in our own yard on the basis that it is unnecessary as there has been no host fruit for 2 months. The official position is that if someone refuses the spray, a court injunction will be issued and the homeowner will be charged for making the crew come back. Anyone refusing the spray should realize this potential risk, but our own experience has been that this is a common threat (used five years ago during the Dutch Elm Disease controversy) that is not usually carried out.

Medflies are very slow-moving insects. They will continue to infest the same tree as long as possible before lumbering over to the next food source. We suspect that Medflies may have been living in our county for several years at undetected levels due to our colder winter and the abundance of predatory and parasitic insect species in our area. If this is true (and there is a lack of information to back it up) excessive spraying (from air or ground) could do much more harm to these beneficial insects, thus adding to an increase in Medfly population. Only the elimination of host fruit for a season has a substantive chance of eradicating the problem effectively.

People are welcome to call for more information and to let us know their experiences with the spraying crews.


Many, many thanks to Phil Frank, originator of the Travels with Farley cartoon strip, who generously sent us the cartoon below describing the importance of removing the fruit from trees. Please feel free to make a copy of it and send it to people who have been slow in removing their fruit.




Ecology Action has been offered a site on which to continue our Bio-Intensive research, development, and education program. This site is just north of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Doug Maher, a soil scientist, and two staff members of Ecology Action, John Jeavons and Robin Leler visited the site and found it promising. Ecology Action would be provided with about 30 acres, the capacity to build simple, sophisticated, low-technology housing, and operating funds for the first three years. This Mexican interest comes from their understanding of their dependence on imported food and awareness of increasing food shortages. Their concern is beginning to focus on strengthening the capacity of Mexican small-landowners to produce significantly more food themselves.

Naturally, we've received many verbal applications for staff and apprentice positions for this site -- with the motivation being about equally divided between seeing this as an opportunity to reach people who really need and want what Ecology Action has to offer (while also helping to expand the parameters of the bio-intensive method) to those who see it as an opportunity to further their interests in "Hammocking 302" and "Beachcombing III and IV".

Both an advantage and disadvantage is the semi-tropical climate. We would have to acclimatize personally as well as reeducate ourselves with a totally different soil, climate, crop patterns, and insect species -- not to mention culturally, as well. The key lies in two areas: Assurances by the owners of the land of our ability to monitor the sustainability of the soils in perpetuity; and a strong staff working to get the project going under the above conditions quickly with a common commitment. We are looking at this new opportunity very closely.



Meanwhile, back here in Palo Alto, things are becoming more active with Spring approaching. The Christian Science Monitor published a favorable write-up of our "Bio-Intensive Mini-Farming" booklet. February's issue of Organic Gardening is on intensive gardening with information about our work and our book. Mother Earth News has just put out a Spring Garden Special with a summary of our "Backyard Homestead" booklet and the 1980 Plowboy Interview with John Jeavons, as well as an enthusiastic endorsement of raised bed gardening. And we were pleasantly surprised to see How To Grow More Vegetables... listed in the fifteen book Bibliography in the just issued National Geographic special on Energy -- the only gardening book listed!



Paka continues pounding away on the typewriter. #5 in our "Self-Teaching Mini-Series" -- the U-Bar Booklet, is now out as well as the most recent (and at 64 pages, the largest!) of the series, Beginning to Mini-Farm. This sixth booklet has received highly favorable notice already and it details exactly how we would approach an economic mini-farm (including the most lucrative crops) and why we think it important. It is available for \$3.25 (postpaid, 1st class) from Ecology Action. (Free to sustaining members who request it by postcard or who have asked to be on the list to receive all new booklets as they are issued.)

Book Review

The recently published New Roots for Agriculture by Wes Jackson of the Land Institute takes a giant step in identifying the problem of agriculture and the fact that virtually all till agriculture has been and continues to be dangerously destructive to our 'earth-home'. Here you will find a compelling history of what we have done to the U.S. soils in 200 years. He describes the settling of the Great Plains as a three stage mining operation. First the harvesting of the buffalo; then the overgrazing of the grasses; and finally, the plowing of forty million acres for continuous wheat farming leading to the Dust Bowl of the 1930's. "The most recent,

and what may be the last, mining operation of the region is fossil water, much of it from the Ogallala Aquifer...stretching from western Nebraska to northern Texas, where it supports a 25-year old center pivot economy. Rain recharges the aquifer at 1/4-inch per year; farmers and developers are pumping water out at 4 feet per year!"

Also recommended is his chapter on the potential problems with alcohol fuel. All in all, this is another of the very few books to address the long-term sustainability of our agricultural system. Available for \$5.25 from Friends of the Earth, 124 Spear Street, San Francisco, California, 94104.

For more information on the Land Institute (Wes Jackson: Director), write to: The Land Institute, Rt.3, Salina, KS, 67401. Contributions are always welcomed.

Job Opportunities

- Intermediate Technology needs someone to work 3 afternoons a week in Menlo Park, California. Pay is about \$5/hour. Phone: 415-328-1730
- A Naturalist is wanted by the Special Services Department of the Naval Station at Treasure Island. Call 451-6800 (Oakland) for more information.
- The Saratoga Community Garden needs a full-time staff person to assist in training apprentices, with an emphasis on ornamentals and nursery work. Call Nana at 354-8648.

Land

Shirley Walker is looking for someone to share ownership of 31 very beautiful acres near Pescadero. Call her at 879-0574 for more information.

Resources Access

The 1981 edition of The Harbinger File is available for \$6.50 from Harbinger Communications, 50 Rustic Lane, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060. This is the best and most complete listing of the conservation-oriented groups in the SF-Monterey Bay Areas.

Short Notes

A good group, the Western Horticultural Society (528 Lincoln Ave., Palo Alto, 9430) meets the second Monday of each month in the Ampex Cafeteria in Redwood City with interesting programs. Please write them for further information.

MANAS (PO Box 32112, Los Angeles, CA, 90032. \$10 for 44 issues per year!) is a weekly journal presenting ideas and viewpoints (unsigned) which seeks to study the principles that move world societies and in so doing provide a vision for the future. For the 33 years of existence, this aquifer has never run dry. Write for a sample copy (include 2 stamps).

Goat Kidding Class, 7:30 P.M., Thursday, February 19th. Call Ecology Action for details if interested.

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