

On May 11 the SCHS welcomed two local educators who spoke to us about how to get the kids in our lives into gardening.



Anjali Berger, a K-12 Education Specialist, who is currently the education manager at the Theodore Payne Foundation, and agriculture teacher Steve List from Sylmar Charter High School shared their approaches to engage meaningfully with children about the environment so that they will develop an appreciation for gardening as an activity to look forward to.



Berger's holistic approach to teaching is to allow children to explore their natural surroundings within a problem-solving framework of "repetition and novelty" that allows for experimentation, as well as success and failure. Various methods she described help develop children's brains through physical learning while building an appreciation and empathy for nature. She advocates for a hands-off approach by the educators that allows them to work side-by-side with the kids (demonstrating and guiding), without hovering or doing the tasks for them.

She showed short videos of kids building garden plots and working cooperatively, and discussed different learning modalities that gardening activities target. She also recommended the Joseph Cornell book "Sharing Nature" as a good starting point for teaching "nature awareness" activities that children of all ages can participate in.

List's approach comes from the perspective of a high school teacher who is introducing gardening to kids for whom this may be their first time tending to plants. Over the past 15 years he has cultivated hundreds of young horticulturists in the school's 2-acre Agriculture Center where students are asked to care for, maintain and harvest the food crops and ornamentals that they plant during the school year. While a large part of his focus is on edible plants, including herbs, List and his students also work in several greenhouses, and have installed plots all around the school campus, including a brand-new rose garden. He explained how important it is for his students to select projects they want to work on so they can be responsible and take ownership of the process – resulting in life lessons that go beyond simply gardening.

Additionally, List teaches his students about recycling, composting, worm farming, and community outreach through sharing what they harvest. Since he began teaching at Sylmar, he and his students have designed, built and given away 500+ raised-bed gardens to families without fresh fruits and veggies in the northeast San Fernando Valley. During the process, students have learned about urban agriculture, nutrition, edible landscaping – and values – things we can all appreciate!

Click on link to view program and Q&A that followed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8YutKIyF88>

Ibarra's 16-week internship involved cultivating and studying a variety of plants under the mentorship of his professor, Ms. Savannah Senn. In particular, there was an emphasis on sweet pea seed dormancy as evidently these seeds are susceptible to dormancy which can reduce yields. Ibarra documented various ways of getting the seeds to germinate, and detailed these methods in his slide program.

Ibarra's full presentation can be seen here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa_A0gq9fpg

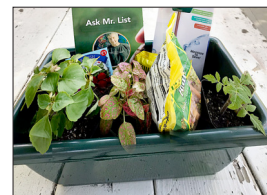
SCHS MAY DAYS AT BAKER'S ACRES

On consecutive weekends in May the SCHS returned to Baker's Acres in Tarzana for two new events - a first-time-ever kid's program and a Spring Plant Sale!



On Saturday, May 13 horticultural educator Steve List from Sylmar Charter High School brought a hands-on program for the little ones to get planting! In addition to the

"babies" they planted, the participants left with all manner of gardening goodies provided by Mr. List to keep them digging in deeper at home!



On Saturday, May 20 we returned with plant vendors and artisans who offered up a choice variety of specimens and garden-related items for sale. The success of the event has SCHS already planning for a Fall Plant Sale!

Both days were well-attended and we would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped facilitate these events, particularly board member Carol Aronson for coordinating both. And, as always, we appreciate Laura Jaramillo for opening up her nursery as a venue for SCHS to be able to present these types of live programs.

Photos courtesy of Carol Aronson.

MONTHLY GARDEN SHARE

Let's stick to the basics this month:

- Enjoy June Gloom while it lasts, but begin preparing for summer heat before month's end (esp. adjustments to irrigation).
- Protect fruit trees (and all edible crops!) against thieving critters with preventative measures.
- Stay on schedule with feeding, weeding and dead-heading.
- Continue succession planting of veggies to extend your harvest.

Sabine Steinmetz

SCHS 2023 INTERN

As a non-profit, part of SCHS's mission is to provide educational opportunities to horticulture students through sponsored internships at various institutions.

In May, our first intern of 2023, Fernando Garcia Ibarra, a Pierce College student majoring in Agricultural Plant Science, presented a short program on his internship program. The SCHS grant has helped him further his studies at Pierce with the ultimate goal of transferring to Chico State to pursue a higher degree in Plant Sciences.

Learn more about SCHS and connect with us online at:

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