



At left, some of the harvest from the Santa Cruz Gardens School garden is proudly displayed by Angie Gonzales, Carrie Schraeder, Lawrence Sanchez and Steve Ventorini, while Thom Dunks stands in background and Patty Dunks, far right, holds Anthea. Picture above shows Angie and Carrie gathering dried cornstalks.

They Introduce Children To Other Growing Things

By BARBARA BURKLO
Sentinel Staff Writer

The title of a new, informative and well-written book by Santa Cruz teachers and gardeners Thom and Patty Dunks may be misleading.

It's called GARDENING WITH CHILDREN, but as you look through, you'll see it could be a successful guide to teaching any age how to garden well in a limited space.

So don't let the title turn you away if you are interested in learning how to garden for yourself.

It has been noted by writers and librarians that often the simplest yet the most complete source of information on a subject can be found in the children's section of the library.

This book, though written for adults who want to garden with children, is like that.

Thom, a second and third grade teacher at Santa Cruz Gardens School, has for several years been involved with school garden projects. In fact, he and another teacher, Wayne Morgan, pioneered the garden concept in the Soquel Elementary School District.

Here is the Dunk's philosophy on gardening with children, as taken from the book:

"There exists a wonderful beauty to this earth so subtle that it often escapes the eye of the casual observer. Seldom are young kids casual in the exploration of the world. It's those close up

harvest, and includes a great deal of philosophy, as well.

The couple's two-year-old daughter, Anthea, has been encouraged to have her own little garden — the Dunks describe it in the book this way:

"Our daughter has been spending many waking hours in the garden during this summer before her second birthday. She very intently involves herself in the daily garden routine.

"As we go about our tasks, she sows seed, waters plants (along with just about everything else in sight) and pulls small weeds right along with us. Of course, as she's unable to distinguish between a cultivated garden plant and a weed, a little supervision is always in order.

"But then, as Ralph Waldo Emerson so aptly put it: 'A weed is simply a plant whose virtues are yet unknown'."

At the end of the book is an appendix which lists common garden vegetables, their companions and their antagonists.

(For instance, did you know that cucumbers like beans, corn, peas, radishes and sunflowers but don't like potatoes and aromatic herbs — or that soybeans get along with everything — or that strawberries like bush beans, spinach, borage and lettuce as a border, but don't like cabbage?)

The concept of school gardens was popular in



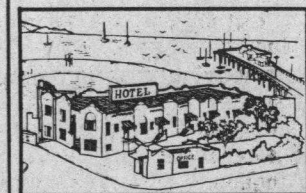
"The child whose sensitivities are developed sees the entire universe mirrored in a leaf, a blossom, or a single drop of dew," says Thom Dunks.

People and Places

OUR HISTORY PART 1.

We looked with amazement at this fanciful building on the Capitola Beach. It should have been on the Mediterranean somewhere, Italy, France, Northern Africa. Vividly colored dragons, porpoises, medusa heads on the walls. We decided to restore the Capitola Venetian, make it a landmark.

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tions of their natural surroundings. It's those close-up views of life's dance that characterize the young one's vision.

"The sweeping landscape, the breathtaking view inspires the more mental or abstract, perspective of the adult. The child whose sensitivities are developed sees the entire universe mirrored in a leaf, a blossom, or a single drop of dew. The experience results in discovering worlds within a world."

Both graduates of San Jose State University, the Dunks, after a brief period of Thom's teaching, went into their own candle business at home. They at the same time established their own garden. As they developed their skills there, and Thom decided to return to teaching, they decided to combine the two if they could.

Patty's taken a supportive role in the school garden projects. These days, they're working with Tomas Fuentes, coordinator of a plan for student-planted gardens in the Santa Cruz City Schools to furnish produce for the school cafeterias.

The Dunks believe in the bio-dynamic, French intensive approach to gardening, brought to UCSC by Allen Chadwick. They use mainly raised beds and no machine labor.

"We double-dig all the beds," Patty says. "First, we dig down to 12 inches with the spade, then the next 12 inches with a spading fork. Preparing the soil to 24 inches makes it easy for the roots to find their way into the soil."

GARDENING WITH CHILDREN gives detailed information, from how to choose a site to the final

Europe at the turn of the century, and the inspiration for the same activity in this country's few years later.

The book gives all kinds of references and anecdotes about the authors' experiences in gardening with young folks.

One year Thom conducted a compost contest, and weighed each child's contribution as they brought in their offerings. The winner brought in 253 pounds, which she had collected.

The kids have had to learn how to deal with birds and with gophers, as well as with insects. Hand picking and collecting slugs and snails helped keep that population down.


An annual tradition for one of the school gardens was for the kids to make and serve "harvest soup" - made of all the vegetables they harvested in the fall.

"The thoughts gathered within these pages arise from the memory of many rich outdoor experiences shared with children in our community," reads the preface.

And the book bears many photographs of these experiences, with kids and gardens growing along together.

Calendar

Florice Harvey will entertain the All States Club with a noon potluck Tuesday at her home, 1510 El Dorado Avenue.



Thom Dunks and Steve Ventorini clean out the depleted garden in photo above.

Special Delivery Party

