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"A good solution accepts given limits, using so far as possible what is at hand"
-Wendell Berry.

There are many socio-political and economic processes behind the degradation of environmental health. These processes are designed to serve the aspirations of their participants, and so the environmental externalities and resulting environmental issues are thus cultural. New and sustainable businesses, command and control policy, and costly organic foods in our markets are effective methods to create societal change and remedy environmental issues. However, so long as these options and issues remain outside the sphere of public sight and participation, they will continue to have a limited influence on our cultural emphasis and public appreciation/support. According to the County and City Data Book [California] Consolidated File: County Data, 1944-1977, over half of the population of our state is living in urban zones (attached). As a result, our most pertinent way to expose people and generate support for environmental issues is to focus on urban and suburban development strategies that emphasize environmental awareness. Society is galvanized by issues it deems important. Since the majority of our population resides in cities without food production and wilderness, environmental issues (and the natural environment in general) are out of sight and often difficult to consider. Parks and green spaces are merely a space to view natural process, and give no large opportunity to *participate* in them. Agriculture and gardening, the process of growing food necessary for life, provide an effective space for the development of ecological literacy. If we create a venue in which students may observe, work with, and become a part of the process of food production, even at a small scale, we should expect to see a positive change in how those people prioritize environmental values. In truth, many people do not understand how or where or at what cost their food is grown, nor the tremendous impact these factors have on the environment. By creating and protecting community gardens, promoting edible landscaping, and encouraging a collaborative educational framework through which these spaces may be preserved, we can sow seeds of thought that will help our culture have the capability of wholistic understanding.

Community gardens can be integrated into society in a manner that both increases their effectiveness for encouraging ecological literacy and also ensures their preservation. This type of knowledge and activity must not only be opportunistic but part of the public student's general education. Garden programs that have had the highest level of success in terms of curricular advancements in ecological literacy and their own preservation are integrated into local educational programs. Participation may range from mere presence of gardens, so that the processes of life and growth are visible, to "edible classrooms" that emphasize direct involvement in the garden and subsequently in the kitchen. A program in California that provides an apposite model for effective educational community garden systems is the Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School's Edible Classroom in Berkeley. Former principal Neil Smith noted that "You have to compare the garden to every other good resource you have at your school, like the computer lab" (Comnes 143).

Environmental health will be improved and more widely supported with the expansion and institutionalization of garden curriculum in California public schools.

Work Cited

Comnes, Leslie. "Revolution Step-by-Step: On Building a Climate for Change." Ecological Literacy. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 2005. 135-148.

Population, Percent Urban

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Areaname	1940	1960	1960	1970
ALAMEDA	92	98.5	98.5	99
ALPINE		0	0	0
AMADOR		0	0	0
BUTTE	32	53.1	53.1	63.8
CALAVERAS		0	0	0
COLUSA		29.1	29.1	30.9
CONTRA COSTA	51.6	81.1	81.1	93.6
DEL NORTE		34	34	38.9
EL DORADO	23.2	15.1	15.1	41.8
FRESNO	42.9	67.3	67.3	75.1
GLENN		38.7	38.7	39.8
HUMBOLDT	37.2	44.6	44.6	47.1
IMPERIAL	45.4	63.5	63.5	67.8
INYO		24.6	24.6	22.5
KERN	27.4	68.1	68.1	80.2
KINGS	23.4	41.7	41.7	54.9
LAKE		0	0	29.9
LASSEN		41.2	41.2	39.3
LOS ANGELES	85.2	98.8	98.8	98.7
MADERA	27.7	46.8	46.8	49.1
MARIN	43	87.8	87.8	92.4
MARIPOSA		0	0	0
MENDOCINO	25	34.7	34.7	34.5
MERCED	21.6	36.1	36.1	50
MODOC		33.9	33.9	39.3
MONO		0	0	0
MONTEREY	42.1	58.5	58.5	74.6
NAPA	27.2	37.8	37.8	57.9
NEVADA	29.6	23.3	23.3	19.8
ORANGE	58.5	95.9	95.9	98.8
PLACER	37.9	39.6	39.6	40.5
PLUMAS		23.4	23.4	29.6
RIVERSIDE	50.6	67.6	67.6	78.6
SACRAMENTO	64	84.8	84.8	95.1
SAN BENITO	34.1	39.4	39.4	42
SAN BERNARDINO	59.6	74.4	74.4	89.8
SAN DIEGO	82.6	88.9	88.9	93.5
SAN FRANCISCO	100	100	100	100
SAN JOAQUIN	52	73.3	73.3	76.9
SAN LUIS OBISPO	35.9	55.9	55.9	75.5
SAN MATEO	71.7	97.6	97.6	98.3
SANTA BARBARA	66.4	67.9	67.9	88.5
SANTA CLARA	61.4	95.5	95.5	97.5
SANTA CRUZ	57.3	59.9	59.9	75
SHASTA	28.2	50	50	49.6
SIERRA		0	0	0
SISKIYOU		33	33	25.4
SOLANO	40.9	79.1	79.1	92.8

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SONOMA	33.5	44.9	44.9	58.6
STANISLAUS	31.8	52.7	52.7	69.9
SUTTER	26.6	44.1	44.1	52.6
TEHAMA	26.7	40.3	40.3	38.3
TRINITY	.	0	0	0
TULARE	33.1	44	44	53.8
TUOLUMNE	.	18.9	18.9	14
VENTURA	48.8	61.9	61.9	92.4
YOLO	24.4	69	69	75.4
YUBA	39	60.6	60.6	71.4