

Proposal for a Community Organic Garden
and a Complementary Seminar Series

submitted to the
Institute for Environmental Quality
University of Michigan

by the
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In several university towns on the west coast students have initiated gardens near the central campus district. The success of these garden projects has demonstrated to the community that intensive chemical treatment is not necessary to produce green grass or large yields of vegetables. Perhaps of even greater significance, community organic gardens provide an opportunity for students, faculty, and everyday citizens to participate in a project directly related to many critical environmental issues. The Ecology Center in cooperation with the Institute for Environmental Quality, the University of Michigan, and community organizations intends to plant a four acre organic garden in central Ann Arbor. Complementing the garden project, a series of seminars will be conducted on organic gardening and the environment.

The Santa Cruz Garden - The first student-operated organic garden was started a number of years ago at the University of California at Santa Cruz. In a remarkable demonstration of organic technique, students and community people succeeded in producing flowers and vegetables in quantities four times greater per acre than are realized in commercial agriculture. An English horticulturist, Alan Chadwick, pioneered the "French Intensive Method" of gardening at Santa Cruz. Under his direction a cadre of workers converted a steep slope into a beautiful garden, thriving without power tools, inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

In the article "The Lesson of a Garden," William Bronson relates the methodology and planting patterns used in the Santa Cruz Garden. The soils are constantly enriched with two years' composted manure and bone meal. Wood ash is used for many vegetables and is worked in with compost on a regular basis. With each new crop the bed is reworked with compost and the special nutriments necessary for the soil conditioning process. In the Santa Cruz Garden there is an absence of row planting, the theory being that if plants are placed close together there is a greater evenness of moisture and temperature than is possible to attain by row planting. The close proximity of sister plants creates a climate for the plants which maximizes growth potential. Visually the Santa Cruz garden is attractive with a variety of plant species and an abundance of birds.

Goals for the Ann Arbor Garden Project - It will be impossible to grow the wide range of crops cultivated in Santa Cruz with Ann Arbor's climate. However, our cold winters and warm summers give us a unique opportunity to test the "French Intensive Method" under different conditions, as well as test a variety of techniques for organic farming. In addition to involving students as in Santa Cruz, the Ann Arbor garden will challenge the community to participate. The objectives of the garden project may be summarized in the following categories:

1. An enrichment of the student experience at the University by offering an opportunity for individuals to implement their training.

2. Increase of student-faculty interaction by sponsoring student and faculty advisory committee meetings to plan the garden.
3. The generation of information which will be useful to the research of students in disciplines as varied as sociology and engineering.
4. Development of community awareness of environmental problems and promotion of citizen action which may help avert an eco-crisis.
5. The demonstration of successful gardening techniques to the many farmers and home owners who are convinced that chemical techniques are necessary for proper growth.
6. Creation of a garden which is a showplace for both scientific and chemical-free farming.
7. Provision of an opportunity for all the residents of Ann Arbor to work together on a true community project.
8. Demonstration of new lifestyles harmonious with the natural environment.
9. Provision of a pilot project which will encourage small gardens around the city.

Seminar Series on Organic Gardening and the Environment - The

Ann Arbor garden project is designed as a comprehensive unit in environmental education. In conjunction with the farming of the garden, a biweekly series of seminars will explain the theory behind organic techniques, and the potential of organic farming as a solution to environmental problems. It is hoped that this seminar series will bring nationwide expertise to Ann Arbor, and will generate broad community interest in organic gardening. In addition, the series should draw upon local talent for special programs. Workers in Eden Organic Food Store may sponsor a workshop on organic cooking, or local organic farmers may explain their techniques. The following individuals have been suggested as seminar speakers:

1. Jerry Goldsmith, executive editor of Rodale's Organic Gardening
2. Alan Chadwick, founder of the Santa Cruz garden
3. Joseph Schaeffer, environmental engineer who has used sewage as fertilizer on a massive basis
4. Daniel Janzen, ecologist, University of Chicago, specialist in agriculture in underdeveloped nations
5. "Rabbit" Goody, manager of the Boston Ecology Center, and founder of three organic farms which serve the Boston area.
6. John Remsberg, PhD. candidate in botany with experience in organic gardening.

Structure of the Garden Project

Program Committee - The program committee is composed of faculty, students, Ecology Center representatives, and members of the community. This committee plans the garden, schedules the seminars which complement the gardening, recruits volunteers to work in the garden, and hires a garden director. Planning for the garden and the seminar series is finalized by the program committee after a joint meeting with the faculty advisory committee.

Faculty Advisory Committee - The faculty advisory committee is a group of environmentally aware educators who feel that a community organic garden is a worthwhile demonstration project. At a minimum the committee will act as a technical resource, and many members may want to take an active part in planning the garden and accompanying seminars. The faculty advisory committee includes:

Dr. Don Grey, Institute for Environmental Quality

Dr. T. M. Rizki, Zoology Department

Dr. Erich Steiner, Botany Department

Dr. William Stapp, Environmental Education

Dr. Edward McWilliams, Botanical Gardens

Dr. Rolf Hartung, Toxicology

Dr. Robert Zahner, Forestry

Dr. Charles Cares, Landscape Architecture

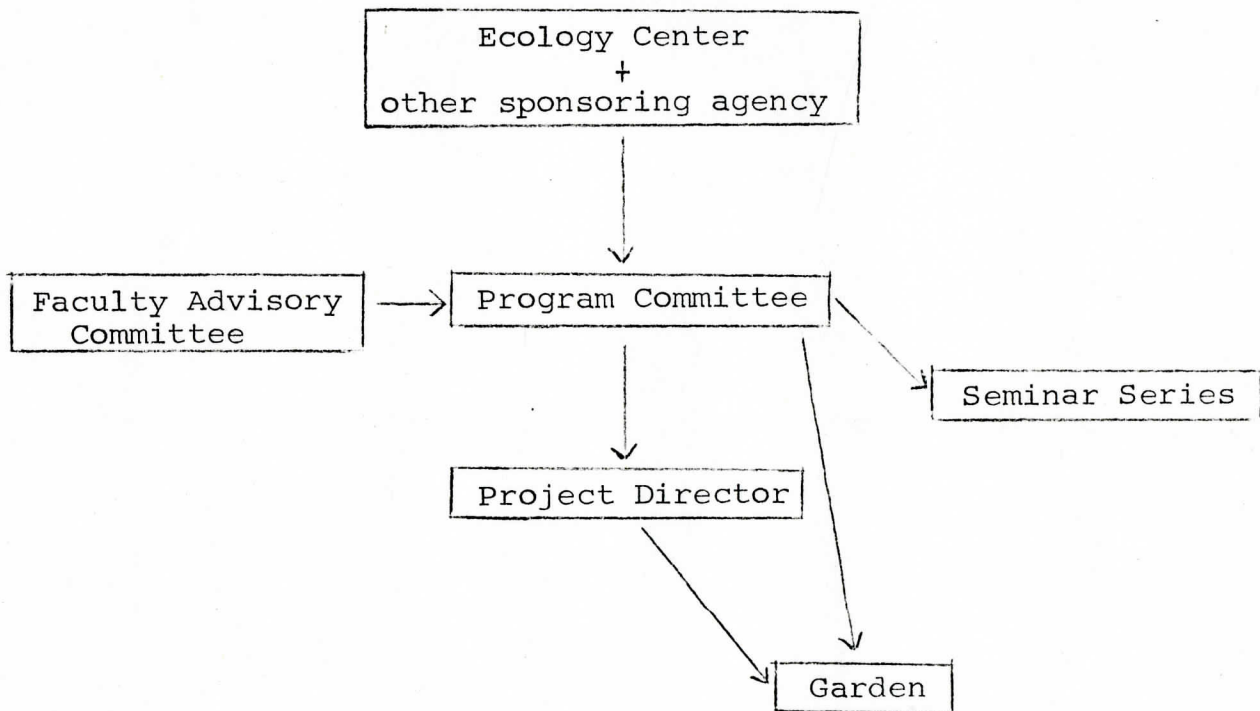
Mr. John Remsberg, Botanical Gardens

Dr. Herbert Waegner, Botanical Gardens

Mrs. Helen Smith, Botany Department

Project Director - The project director will be responsible for the management of the garden and will be expected to teach volunteers the methods of farming used in the garden. It is hoped that a student or a retired farmer will agree to serve as project director. The project director is directly responsible to the program committee.

Organization Chart



BUDGET

Garden

Staff - halftime director for six months	\$2200.00
Preparation of garden site	800.00
Importing top soil	
Grading	
Materials	300.00
Seeds	
Shovels	
Hoes	
Wheelbarrows	
Compost Shredder	250.00
Extra Garden Expenses	200.00
Building materials for tool shed	<u>300.00</u>
	\$4050.00

Seminar Series

Speakers	
Four from out of state - travel and honorarium	\$1000.00
Four local speakers	100.00
Facilities	100.00
Printing and Advertising	<u>300.00</u>
	\$1500.00

Travel

Visits to other garden projects	\$ 400.00
TOTAL BUDGET	\$5950.00