

WAYS AN ORGANIC GARDEN CAN RELATE TO YOUR CLASSROOM TEACHING

ECOLOGY

- * Find evidences of the interrelationships between a location's soil, plants, animals, and the health of its people.
- * What insects, reptiles, birds, plants, mammals occur or could occur at your garden? What are some of the interrelationships among these things? (E.g., what insects can you observe on lettuce over a four hour period and why?)
- * How can different slopes and sun exposures affect plants and be used to grow various types of plants?
- * What effects on water retention does the soil type have?
- * What are some different ways to water gardens? Which are preferable for which plants?

ORGANIC GARDENING

- * Select a pesticide problem, develop its history, trace its effects. Discuss non-poisonous alternatives.
- * What is companion planting? Design a research problem to test various "companions".
- * Experiment with different kinds of mulch, compost. Find sources of these materials in Ann Arbor, the cheapest and most ecological ones. What new ones can you develop?
- * Start a compost pile in your classroom, school, home. What different things do you discover? What organisms live in a compost pile?
- * Study the interrelationships of some animals with an organic garden - an earth-worm farm, rabbits, an aqua culture (fish), others.

NUTRITION

- * How is the nutritional value of plants affected by the type of soil, by picking times, by preservation methods?
- * How can you get crops earlier than average? Later?
- * How do you store, dry, can, or freeze foods? Compare ancient and modern methods, methods used by people in other parts of the world.
- * What wild foods are edible and in what form? Try "eating off the land" around Ann Arbor.
- * What combinations of foods increase their nutritional value?
- * What new sources of nutrients can you discover? Experiment with a meatless diet.
- * Study other cultures of the world and their diets. Why do they eat the way they do - for economic or religious reasons? because of the type of soil or climate or the number of people? Are their diets healthy? are ours?
- * Try growing and tasting new herbs. Cook a pumpkin pie. Grow bean sprouts.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- * What per cent of Ann Arbor's solid waste problems could be handled by composting? Go to the landfill.
- * Design a viable way for a city's organic wastes to be composted and used.
- * What are the economics of composting by various methods - what is the value of the potential products such as methane gas, fertilizer, heat?
- * Study what is being done to use methane gas as an alternative for running engines. Build an engine.
- * Study the cooperative food markets in Ann Arbor - their economics, the feasibility of supplying them with organic crops, the number of organic farmers in the area, the change in food buying habits.

- * Can organic farming compete economically with "agri-business"?
- * What are some problems of farming on a gigantic scale? of mono-culture farms? of feed lots?
- * Can the country be fed organically?
- * Study agricultural methods of other countries.
- * What are some of the agricultural manifestations of social movements such as the strike led by Cesar Chavez?

ARTS - CRAFTS

- * What plants can be used as dyes? Collect some from your garden, other places in Ann Arbor, and use them.
- * Study the various types of plants used for cloth, rope, paper. Make some.
- * How do other cultures use plants for their artistic and survival needs?
- * Try printing with your vegetables, leaves, etc. Try weaving with them or doing photographic studies.

For more information, help, etc., contact the Ecology Center, 761-3186 - Ann Hanchett