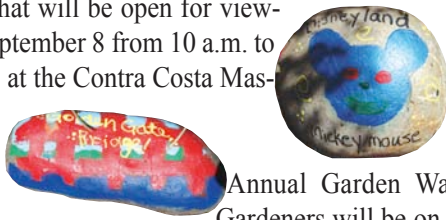


Master Gardeners Annual Garden Walk

By Cathy Tyson

Looking for instruction and inspiration for your home garden? You don't have to go much further than the St. Perpetua School's Garden of Learning, lovingly designed and tended by Master Gardener Monette Meo. This is just one of the six unique gardens that will be open for viewing on September 8 from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Contra Costa Mas-



ter Gardeners

Annual Garden Walk. Master Gardeners will be on hand at each

and every garden to answer questions. According to Eileen Linn, special topics such as composting, propagation, bees, invasive plants and healthy gardening will be addressed. Tickets and propagated plants will be available at St. Perpetua the day of the Walk. Tickets are also available in advance of the Walk, see contact information below.

Some lovely grape vines and soothing wind chimes greet visitors to the St. Perpetua Garden of Learning. Made completely of recycled materials, this organic whimsical garden features tons of fragrant flowers, strawberries, zucchini, seven kinds of tomatoes, a pink lemonade lemon tree, blueberries and much more, along with a solar powered fountain/pond, Peter Rabbit's reading room, a butterfly habitat, California native section, a greenhouse, cold frame and vegetable teepees. Throughout the space student's artwork can be found, mosaics, a kid-sized colorful picnic table, and hand painted river rocks.



Master Gardener and teacher at St. Perpetua, Monette Meo is a force of nature. Back in 2004, she received permission to transform a patch of dirt into something wonderful. This particular area had lots of sun and great drainage, but little else. With help from husband Greg and son Michael, they started with the raised beds and went from there. "Part of me is here in the garden," says son Michael.



It's a labor of love for Mrs. Meo. She sets aside Thursdays as baking day during the school year and sells homemade zucchini bread as well as other baked goods and lattes on Fridays at school to raise money to maintain the garden. In addition, she puts up jams from the blackberries, makes pesto, tomatillo salsa, even 76 quarts of homemade minestrone soup all with ingredients from the garden to support the project. These will be available for purchase.

"The kids are really getting it," she says, referring to the connection of the garden and where their food comes from. Lessons that she gives her students include good bugs/bad bugs, how to propagate from seeds and cuttings, how the solar-powered pond works, and the how and why of "dead heading." The kids also help bring in mulch and work on composting.

In addition to the fabulous St. Perpetua garden, the Walk features a "colorful combinations" garden in Lafayette and a "ter-

raced treasure" garden in Orinda plus two Martinez gardens along with one more in Walnut Creek.

Admission to all six gardens is \$15 in advance, and goes up to \$20 after August 31. The themed gardens are all different, there's one on a hillside, one salvia-focused, one with alternatives to lawn, and more. All are close enough to drive to in the allotted time. For more information contact



The gate to the "Garden of Learning"

Photos by Andy Scheck

MGgardenwalk2007@yahoo.com or call Barbara Abbott (925) 672-2315.



Master Gardener Monette Meo with her son, Michael Meo

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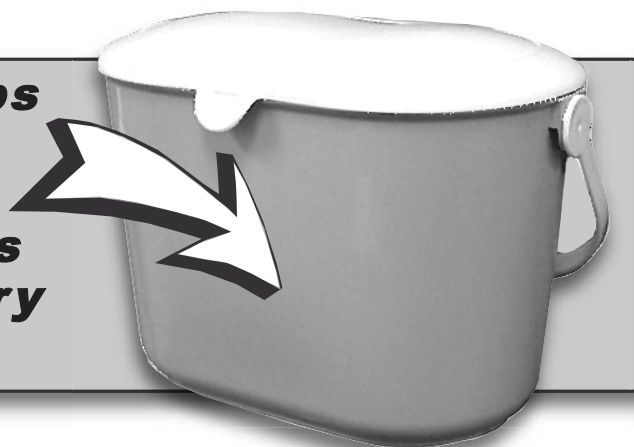
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