

Welcome to...

Food for Thought!

September 2010

...a periodic e-newsletter to promote agricultural, environmental, and garden-based learning enrichment for youth and families in El Dorado County.

Please share this newsletter with anyone that might be interested! Subscribe or review past issues at <http://ucanr.org/foodforthoughtnewsletter>

In this issue:

1. Ag in the Classroom – El Dorado County Launches New Website
 2. Teacher Ag Summer Institute Set for June 20-23, 2011 – here in El Dorado County!
 3. Farm Day 2011 – Save the Date! Thursday, May 5th
 4. Study Quantifies the Impacts of School Gardens on Learning
 5. 2010 California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference – November 4-6, 2010
 6. Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Healthy Schools Workshops
 7. Funding Opportunities
 8. Resources and Goodies!
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1. Ag in the Classroom – El Dorado County Launches New Website

Check out El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom's new website, www.agintheclasseduc.org. The site is designed for local teachers, students, members of the agricultural community and the general public to access current information about agriculture-related educational activities and programs.

The website features resources for teachers and information about Fields of Learning school/farm partnership program, the upcoming Teachers Agriculture Summer Institute, and Farm Day 2011. It also includes a calendar of events and activities, as well as valuable links for quick access to related information. The "What's New" section will provide press releases, online newsletters, and news "snips" on happenings of interest. Funding for the website development was provided by a Specialty Crop Block Grant awarded to the El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom (EDCAITC) by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to expand specialty crop agricultural education and outreach programs in the El Dorado County Region.

2. Teacher Ag Summer Institute for Sierra Foothill Teachers - Free (Almost!) June 20-23, 2011 plus "Back to the Farm" on August 2, 2011

Bring the wonders of local agriculture into your classroom!

This program will bring together teachers with farmers, ranchers and other agricultural and natural resource specialists to gain a deeper understanding of the food and agricultural systems that sustain the health of people, society, and the natural environment. Experiential activities set within the context of agriculture and resource management become the basis for integrating Ag with language arts, science, math and social sciences in the everyday curriculum.

The three-day Ag Institute will combine classroom-style instruction, learning stations, hands-on, in the field experiences and sample classroom activities to immerse participants in the vital world of agriculture. Break out sessions for primary, secondary and high school educators will connect the topic of the day with resources and hands-on activities to take back to the classroom setting. Resources and activities will meet California state curriculum standards to ensure ease in incorporating topics and lessons into the classroom.

Each teacher will create a lesson plan or class activity, which they will present to the entire group at the "Back to the Farm" gathering on Tuesday, August 2, 2011 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. After completing the institute and presenting at the follow-up event, teachers will each receive a \$200 stipend for attending and completing the institute. Optional continuing education credit will also be available to teachers.

Who Should Attend: Teachers (grades Kindergarten through High School) from the Sierra foothill region from Amador, El Dorado and Placer counties. Teachers need little or no background in agriculture to attend.

Topics: Environmental stewardship, conservation practices, land use, ecological services, production, marketing and distribution systems, economic and business considerations and historical context.

When:

June 20-23, 2011; the institute will begin late afternoon on Monday, June 20th and conclude at 5:00 pm on Thursday, June 23rd. Teachers will also need to attend and present at the event on Tuesday, August 2, 2011 from 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Where: Lodging and workshop sessions will be held in Coloma, CA. Facilities include group tent cabins, outdoor dining and meeting areas, showers and restrooms --- all located on the banks of the South Fork of the American River. Field trips will be held at working ranches, orchards, farms and wineries in the Apple Hill, Coloma and southern El Dorado County areas.

Cost: All meals (Monday dinner through Thursday lunch), three nights lodging, transportation to the field sites and resource materials are included and FREE to teachers attending. A \$25 participation fee is due at the time of registration.

Presented By: El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom (EDCAITC) and the University of California Cooperative Extension in partnership with the El Dorado County Office of Education, the Folsom Lake College El Dorado Center and local agricultural producers. Major funding for this project has been provided through a Specialty Crop Block Grant awarded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

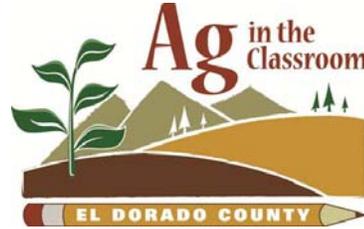
Additional information and application forms will be available online after December 1, 2010 at: <http://ucanr.org/teacheragssummerinstitute> and at www.agintheclasse-edc.org For more information contact the TASI Coordinator – Wendy West, UC Cooperative Extension 530-621-5533 wkwest@ucdavis.edu

3. Farm Day 2011 – Thursday, May 5th

El Dorado County Third Grade Teachers are encouraged to save the date for the best third grade field trip available!

Every May, El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom hosts hundreds of third grade students at the fairgrounds for an all-day interactive learning event. During this fun educational field trip, students learn about agriculture in context of local farms, ranches, and forests. All activities are designed to meet California state standards for third grade curriculum. Watch for more information on how to register in early December at:

<http://agintheclass-edc.org/farmday.html>



4. Impacts of School Gardens on Learning - Study Released

In case you were wondering about the positive impacts of school gardens on both the achievements of students and the health benefits, wonder no longer! A recent study commissioned by the Royal Horticulture Society articulates and quantifies the positive effects from students having a school garden. Specifically the report documents greater scientific knowledge and understanding, enhanced literacy including the use of wider vocabulary skills. They also demonstrate increased awareness of the seasons and understanding of food production, increased confidence, resilience and self-esteem, development of physical skills, including fine motor skills and development of a sense of responsibility and finally a positive attitude to healthy food choices and better emotional well being. Thanks Pam Geisel, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardener Coordinator for passing this report on --- (you may need to cut and paste this address into your browser, since it's a long one!):

http://apps.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/uploads/documents/Impact_of_school_gardening_on_learning_821.pdf

5. 2010 California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, November 4-6, 2010 - Shell Beach, CA

Experience the latest in agricultural literacy, teaching strategies, curriculum and research to expand your professional development and celebrate your commitment to connecting students with the roots of their food source. This is an invaluable opportunity to collaborate with educators who share your passions and interests. Enjoy field trips to exciting destinations, an exhibit hall packed with valuable educational materials, innovative presentations, hands-on workshops, inspiring guest speakers and fantastic social events. Learn more and register for the conference at California Agriculture in the Classroom at <http://www.learnaboutag.org/conference>

6. Workshop - Fresh Fruits and Vegetables: A Centerpiece for a Healthy School Environment

This free two-day training is designed for school personnel and community partners. It provides tools to support an increase of fresh fruits and vegetables on school campuses

through fun, interactive, and skill-building activities. (Editor's note: I attend this training in spring 2010 --- excellent ideas and resources!). More information and registration at: <http://www.healthyschoolenvironment.org/workshop-registration> (don't delay registering, these fill up fast!)

7. Funding Opportunities

Good news—registration's open for the **Target Field Trip Grants** program (think FARM DAY field trip support)! There will be 5,000 grants of \$700 each awarded to schools for the upcoming school year. Teachers can apply any time before September 30, 2010 at: www.Target.com/fieldtrips

Garden Giving Tree – this fundraising idea is a take off on the holiday giving tree. At school open house, back-to-school night, etc. add a garden giving tree to the garden project display area: 1) create a poster featuring a tomato plant, or display a sturdy garden tree (e.g. apple tree in a pot); 2) add removable tomatoes to the poster or hang paper “apples” on the tree; 3) families chose a “fruit”, which lists an item that the garden program needs. This might be “3 packets of pumpkin seeds” or “one trowel” or even “\$5.00”. The back of the paper fruit will indicate when and where to return the item.

The Subaru Healthy Sprouts Award recognizes and supports youth gardening programs focused on teaching about our environment, nutrition and hunger issues in the United States. To be eligible for the 2010 Healthy Sprouts Awards, your school or organization must plan to garden in 2011 with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18. The selection of winners is based on the demonstrated relationship between the garden program and education related to environmental, nutrition and hunger issues in the United States. Applications are due by October 1, 2010; for information go to: <http://www.kidsgardening.org/grants.asp> (see sidebar on right side of page).

8. Resources and goodies!

A great **chicken coop** design and instructions from our friends at LifeLab at UC Santa Cruz at: <http://www.lifelab.org> (go to LifeLab News and Notes and click on “Chicken Coop Design”).

Busy Bees: Investigating the Pollination Cycle:

A new lesson plan about pollination was launched by California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom (CFAITC). Download the newest of the WE Garden lesson plan series from the CFAITC [website](http://www.cfaitc.org/wegarden) (PDF, 159), or browse the entire packet and other resources at www.cfaitc.org/wegarden.

Two great activities: “Making Seed Tapes” and “Dyeing with Plants” at: <http://www.kidsgardening.org/growonder/grow-list.php>

Looking for School Garden History? Check out these links from the Facebook page of our friends at LifeLab: http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=418030179680&id=113017678251&ref=mf

Please pass this e-newsletter along to anyone that might be interest! If you would like to subscribe or view past issues of this e-newsletter go to: <http://ucanr.org/foodforthoughtnewsletter> Newsletter Contact: Wendy West at wkwest@ucdavis.edu (530) 621-5533.