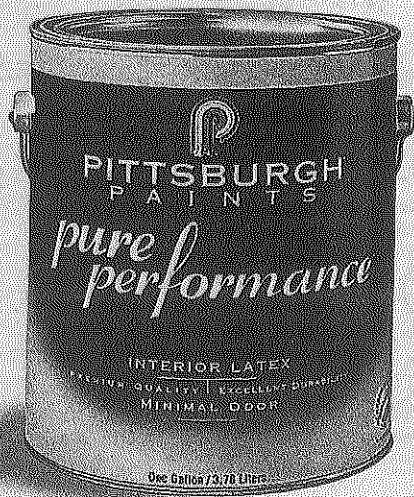


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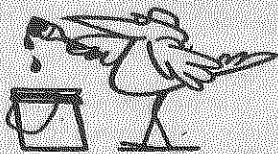


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## GreenIssue



# The Dirt and Nothing But

## GROW A FARMER

Since its inception, the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems' Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture has always had those enrolled in the program sleep on UC Santa Cruz grounds. In the beginning, enrollees slept in teepees and later in tents at the UCSC Farm. However, this summer's session marks the final session wherein the current sleeping arrangement will be allowed. As such, the CASFS has launched the Grow a Farmer fundraising campaign, in order to gather the estimated \$250,000 needed to build permanent tent cabins on site for future apprentices.

"The apprenticeship experience is really about being involved with a piece of land," says Beth Benjamin, a volunteer for Grow a Farmer and one of the apprenticeship's first participants. "Being there when the sun rises and when it goes down. Hearing the morning doves in the morning and the quail."

Grow a Farmer has teamed with local restaurants and chefs in Santa Cruz and throughout the San Francisco Bay Area to help raise the necessary money. Even a restaurant in Portland, Ore., Pizza Fino, has pledged to hold a fundraising event to help the CASFS program.

According to Benjamin, that is because the apprenticeship produces so many knowledgeable

organic agriculturists, who then spread their love and knowledge of growing wholesome, healthy and environmentally responsible produce all around the country.

"It's very heartwarming to see all the people who have participated," she says.

Benjamin studied under Alan Chadwick, founder of the UCSC Farm and Garden, and in 1971 founded an agricultural learning center of her own. Camp Joy in Boulder Creek has programs to teach both adults and youth about everything it takes to create and maintain an organic garden—how to plant, when to harvest, as well as pointing out which insects are beneficial and those that are harmful.

She believes that educational programs, such as those offered by Camp Joy and the CASFS are more important now than ever before. The more people know about growing their own food, she says, the more locally grown food will be available, which will cut down on pesticides and fossil fuels used by industrial agriculture.

"Transporting food across the country is unsustainable," she says. "Smaller scale farming situations should be encouraged." **INV**

Learn more at [growfarmer.org](http://growfarmer.org).

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