Saturday, July 29, 2017

Remarks at the Saturday morning “Fog Lift” in the Alan Chadwick Garden
Moretta Browne, Beth Burzynskig, Evan Domsic, Ella Fleming, Leigh Gaymon-Jones, Rachel Lane, Orin Martin, Vivian Santana-Pacheco
Part of the 50th Anniversary of the UCSC Farm & Garden’s “First 50” Celebration

A Good Gardener Knows

Orin Martin’s preamble
So we go to meetings in the winter, curriculum meetings, and it’s all good, but sometimes you come away thinking: If I hear the words pedagogy, situated learning, artifact (yes, someone actually used the word artifact in reference to a compost pile — no, it’s black gold!). So you think, if I hear such vocabulary I’ll go running screaming out of the room, back to the garden, as Joni Mitchell once intoned.

So, one such time, Evan, Ella, Sky and I sit down and on official Up Garden [Chadwick Garden] stationary—a brown paper bag—we start riffin’ a list of “what every good gardener needs to know.”

So here to rattle off a few items from said list — in a percussive-staccato-like style (or so I have instructed them) is this year’s second-year apprentice cohort. They are the lifeblood of the program. They light up my life. I’m sure the warmth of their smiles contributes to global warming. These are my people and I’m stickin’ with them—go! Be snappy!

A good gardener knows ...
• How to assess soil moisture by feel
• The steps to: single, double digging a bed
• How to sidefork a bed
• How to sow a bed by hand or with a push seeder
• How to transplant and water in a bed (successfully)
• How to hoe and weed a bed
• How to I.D. and then prune/train a fruit tree to the 2 basic forms: open center and modified central leader
• How to oscillate a bed or beds
• How to set up and operate t-tape and microsprinklers
• How to grow and green manure a cover crop
• How to “pinch and pump” (fertigate)
• How to harvest flowers and make a bouquet
• How to ID 15-20 common annual flowers
• The 5 types of lettuce
• The 2 subspecies of garlic and their culture
• The differences amongst: a bulb, a corm, a tuber, a tuberous root, and a rhizome
• How to take cuttings and divisions, variously
• The 3–5 day weather forecast
• That you don’t know need a weatherman (or woman) to know which way the wind blows …
• How to: plant, prune, grow, and appreciate a rose
• How to be kind to the soil (and others)
• How to cultivate an insane reverence for soil
• How to make and use compost
• How to make a soil mix and use it
• How to water the greenhouse
• What photosynthesis is (simple version) ... why it is important and how good gardeners support it
• How to mind the “corners and edges” of flats, beds, garden, farms, and the society at large (its humanity)
• How to be “a servant of the soil and morning’s early light”
• A good gardener keeps her or his felcos sharp and at the ready — ever vigilant