

Organically Grown

With the coming of spring and another growing season, the members of Organically Grown, Inc. are happy to announce that we will soon begin to market produce through our new walk-in cooler on Second Street west of Van Buren. We believe that the local organic produce that will be available for wholesale and by-the-case order has proven itself over the last few years to be the finest in Eugene.

Organically Grown was founded in 1978, the brainchild of a small group of urban and rural citizens dedicated to the advancement of organic agriculture in the northwest. Members met to coordinate seed and fertilizer purchases and to discuss the problems involved in growing crops without the herbicides, pesticides and petroleum derived fertilizers commonly used by "production" farmers.

Over the next few years the organic farming efforts around Eugene consisted primarily of several large truck gardens and a few farmers and orchardists switching over to organic from conventional growing practices. Many of the "farmers" were actually good gardeners who had decided to attempt commercial production.

These small scale growers were forced to compete against each other for a small number of markets. Organic produce was sold primarily through privately owned neighborhood grocery stores. Produce managers received calls from the various growers, who usually made their deliveries in personal vehicles.

Everyone involved could see the wasted effort due to lack of coordination, and after a 1980 season that resulted in numerous frustrations for growers and some bad feelings as well, several growers decided to coordinate their efforts and merge their sale programs. It was recognized that the best structure to use for this purpose was Organically Grown, Inc.

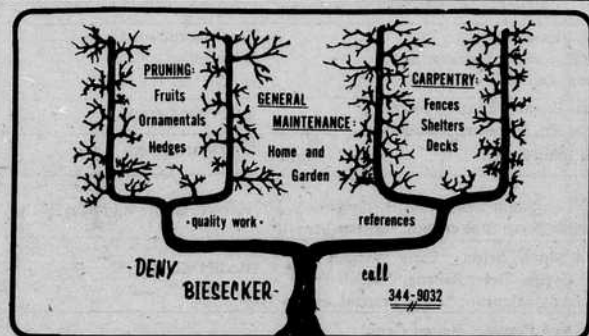
In the spring of 1981 representatives from six farm organizations began to rewrite Organically Grown's bylaws and to define their purpose as a cooperative. The Board of Directors decided that the first step had to be the establishment of a walk-in cooler and shipping dock somewhere in Eugene. The second step was to find a produce manager to organize sales, pick-ups and deliveries.

These two tasks proved to be considerable. Finding and purchasing a cooler, locating a proper site for it, and setting the cooler up there has taken nearly two years. Our manager-elect, Dan Berger, worked closely with us through the 1982 season in getting established, but recently decided to leave the area. We are happy to have had Joe Gabriel, experienced in both local growing efforts and storefront operation, agree to replace him.

Since the revitalization of Organically Grown in 1981, the membership has changed considerably as people have moved or become involved in other efforts. However, at the same time that some growers found it difficult to profit from small-scale efforts, the larger organic farms began to become more involved in Organically Grown, so that today membership is stronger than ever. This year Organically Grown will sell fruits and vegetables grown by Winter Green Farm, Berg's, DeCou's, Thistle-Brook, Perry Organics, Footbridge Farm, Craig Thomas, Stanley & Strawb and others.

All of the farmers involved in these operations are dedicated to providing Eugene and the northwest with the freshest, most vital produce attainable. Anyone who compares the price and quality of local organic produce with import produce will testify that we accomplish this.

Contact Dave Lively, 935-2572, or Keith Walton, 688-3176, for more information.



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Edible Landscape



Eugene gardener and author Kate Rogers Gessert.

When *What's Happening* set out to publish a special Garden edition, we really wanted to provide some useful and interesting information. The wisdom and experience of a local gardener or two, and maybe some inspiration. Kate Rogers Gessert, West Eugene gardener and author of *The Beautiful Food Garden*, proved to be a bountiful source of information.

Kate studied horticulture and landscape architecture at OSU and taught at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. She researched and grew over 1000 varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers during two summers at OSU. The benefits and knowledge of Kate's research and experience are well presented in *The Beautiful Food Garden*, a fully illustrated, comprehensive guide to creating gardens and landscapes as beautiful as they are practical. The hard cover book is rich with color photographs of herbs, vegetables,

flowers, vines, native plants, fruit and nut trees. Original drawings and illustrations from the book are currently being shown at Insights Gallery, 5th St. Public Market.

Kate will also be showing slides of edible landscape and gardens April 20, 7:30 pm, at the Eugene Public Library, and April 27, 7 pm at Campbell Senior Center. The slides I viewed with the Master Gardeners last month at the Lane Extension Auditorium were interesting and inspiring as well as beautiful. There were aquatic edibles like Water Chesnuts, Flowering Rush, and Arrowhead (native in slow moving local streams). I later saw these plants growing in Kate's homemade, plastic lined pond. Many slides were of perennial varieties—colorful (and delicious) Rhubarb Chard, several types of Celery, Parsley and other herbs. Dwarfed "Blue Curl" and flowering "Coral Queen" Kale were excellent examples of unique and beautiful plants well suited to the dual purpose of beautiful food. Flowers like the colorful ground-cover/border Nasturtian (edible petals) and the skyward reaching Cosmos (also colorful) were shown in various arrangements. If you are looking for gardening and landscape ideas, you will find Kate's book and her slides most helpful.

Visiting with Kate at her home, I was anxious to learn how she coped with problems shared by most local gardeners—slugs, cutworms, and heavy, "clay-like" soil. For slugs, Kate

uses beer traps with some success. Left uncovered however, the beer gets diluted by rain and watering and will no longer do its job.

Cutworms curl around the base of the plant, often just below the soil surface. They'll cut off seedlings at the ground if not discovered and removed. An organic spray is available locally that works well if cutworms infest your garden.

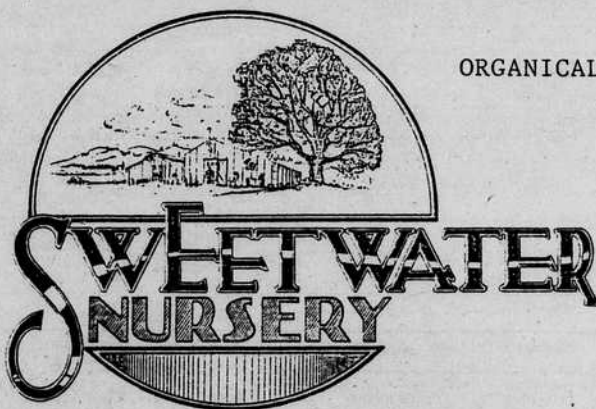
Heavy area rains, 30+ inches already this year, and the native clay-like soil are common problems. Friends of mine have installed special drain lines with only limited success. Kate suggests that the only certain solution is raised beds. Soil is the most important element in any garden, requiring about 1/3 organic matter for proper drainage and aeration. She also advises to keep the size of your garden manageable—adding manure for Nitrogen and organic matter, bloodmeal for Nitrogen, Bonemeal for Phosphorous, and lime for acid soil.

Create yourself a beautiful food garden.

—Bill Snyder



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