

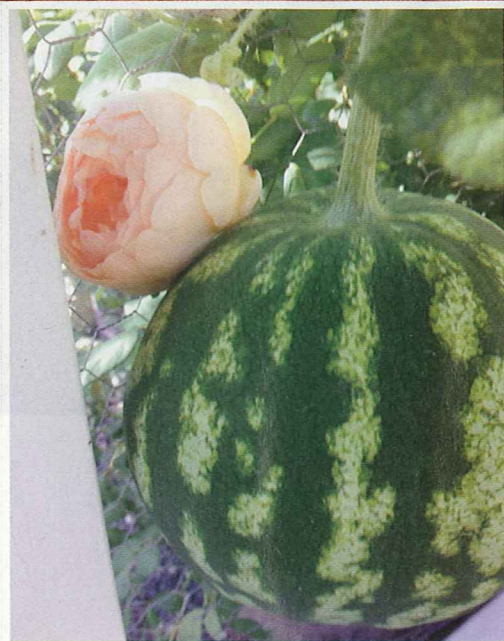
DC MAGAZINE

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red, double-breasted, flared dress, is balancing on a unicycle. She is barefoot and has her arms outstretched for balance. The unicycle is positioned on a thin, dark rope (tightrope) that stretches across the frame. The background is a beach with waves and a hazy, golden sky. Three birds are flying in the sky above the woman. The overall mood is surreal and artistic.

REGISTER

JANUARY 6, 2014

**NEW
REALITIES** BROOKE SHADEN'S
UNCOMMON WORLD



come up, I get a thrill that never goes away. It's what sustains me."

Like Cortellessa and the Bauers, Jakobs seems to truly enjoy sharing what years spent tending the soil have taught her, and those lessons extend beyond what makes the best compost. There is a unique appreciation of nature present in many gardeners and farmers—something local educators have taken note of.

Dozens of schools across the county have launched or significantly bolstered their gardening programs over the course of the past three years and the benefits are wide-ranging.

"Our garden program has a direct translation into academic and teaching success," says Shaheer Faltas, director of The Journey School in Aliso Viejo. "Over the last three years our Academic Performance Index (API) has increased more than 100 points as we've emphasized gardening and deemphasized standardized testing."

In that same period of time, students at The Journey School have seen their weekly hours in the garden double. The campus has six outdoor classrooms, in which gardening is tied in to English, science and art lessons. For schools like Journey, the garden is where students are taught



JAKOBS

"IT GIVES ME SOMETHING THAT I FIND DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN," SAYS HOLLY JAKOBS. "SOMETHING AKIN TO RELIGION. WHEN I SEE SEEDS COME UP, I GET A THRILL THAT NEVER GOES AWAY. IT'S WHAT SUSTAINS ME."

Holly Jakobs spends hours on her North Tustin property tending her garden and caring for her flock of chickens, who recently produced an egg with this double yolk (pictured).

JOURNEY SCHOOL



For schools like Journey, the garden (pictured above left) is where students are taught to value the environment and to appreciate the work it takes to produce food.



SAGE HILL



At Sage Hill School (pictured above right and below), children not only learn how to tend crops but also help neighboring schools as they develop their own garden programs.

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Liesa Schimmelpfennig, director of Anneliese Schools in Laguna Beach, views her school's garden curriculum as part of a bigger message on the importance of stewardship.

"Sometimes food is grown specifically for a lesson, other times it's earmarked for our production kitchen and used in the lunch program," she says. "We also have a student-run farmers market and donate our excess to the Laguna Food Pantry."

Anneliese Schools grow all of their herbs in-house, along with many of their fruits and leafy greens. They have a full aviary, which houses 55 laying chickens, plus geese and peacocks. It's not unusual for students to eat pasta with a sauce of tomatoes, onions and pesto that was produced completely from items harvested on-site. Still, Schimmelpfennig is even more keenly interested in gardening's broader implications.

"There are social, cultural and natural connections in the garden," she explains. "The understanding of how food ties into everything has been lost—now we're seeing that knowledge make a comeback and we see the direct benefit to our students and our wider community."