

OKAEE News

Swinging into the new school year!

O k l a h o m a A s s o c i a t i o n f o r E n v i r o n m e n t a l E d u c a t i o n

PLANTING A FALL GARDEN

BY ELICIA LIGON

It's not too late to get one last hurrah for the year out of your home or school garden. If the weather acts as predicted you may be able to harvest greens from your garden for Thanksgiving!

Brooke Disney planted a fall garden with her 7th grade students in Oklahoma City in 2006. She decided to do this when she realized that many of the students did not know that the food they ate could be grown in just regular ol' dirt, in just a regular yard, and could be eaten directly out of the ground with just a little washing. Of course, to fit in something that might be perceived as useless to the types of people highly concerned with standardized test results she had to align gardening with PASS and lesson plans.



The students began by working out the hypothesis they would like to test using lettuce, spinach or kale. Brooke chose these plants due to their quick growing time and they were recognizable to the students. (Digression alert—I have met many students who think that a Brassica FastPlant is a special plant that grows in special pots with special light and special soil. They were convinced that only those plants grew that way...) Many at this grade level were looking at simple differences. Does a bed that gets more water have more plants? What if the plants are watered at different times of the day? Do different types of lettuce grow at different rates? This could easily be adjusted to older students looking at more complex relationships or younger students simply learning how plants grow.

Once they knew what they would study, each group planted their seeds in Dixie cups with potting soil. They began their plants indoors to give them a head start—the plants could grow while the students worked on preparing the planting beds. Fortunately, her school yard came equipped with four raised beds that another teacher had installed three years earlier. Unfortunately, they had not been well maintained over the summer. The students had to pull weeds, turn the soil, and add some topsoil to the slightly depleted beds. They then set up plots for their various studies, including one group that set up a large shade cloth over one of the beds.

Once the beds were prepped and the plants were growing, they were transplanted into their permanent sites. Students were assigned to water before or after school to avoid using class time for simple maintenance. Every Friday a portion of the class time was set aside to measure the height of each plant and record comments on growth. It took six weeks from planting for the plants to be at a good size to eat - so at the end of that time a large green salad was prepared and the students ate their science projects. Although they did not all enjoy eating lettuce, kale, and spinach, they now understood where the plants that we buy at the store were from, and learned a few scientific methods to boot.





FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Greetings from your President,

I hope that the first of this year's education calendar finds you excited about the opportunity to share new things with the students you teach. While we are all busy, I thought that I would offer you something else to squeeze into your schedule. I want to discuss ENVIROTHON with you.

Envirothon is the largest High School Environmental competition in North America. The "big" competition is sponsored mainly by Cannon USA and Cannon Canada. Teams representing each state and the Canadian Provinces gather to compete. On the local level, Oklahoma Envirothon is sponsored by several State agencies, local government agencies, private companies and organizations like OKAEE.

To compete, a team of 5 High School students complete 5 field tests over Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a special topic. The teams must also give an oral presentation over a given problem. The special topic changes from year to year. This year's topic is "Impacts of Recreation on Natural Resources". Some previous topics were Water stewardship in a changing Climate, Alternative energy, and Cultural Resources.

This competition is great for FFA natural resource teams, AP Biology students, Environmental clubs, 4-H groups, Home School groups ect... Should you find yourself thinking this may be something for you and your students to be a part of just visit the WEB site at www.envirothonok.com. Those of you who are not involved with High School students should not feel left out. You can help coach or train a team and you can also volunteer at the State Competition in April.

I hope that all of you will visit the Envirothon web site and tell others about this opportunity for our students. We on the OKAEE board believe in Envirothon and have been proud supporters for several years.

I hope that OKAEE is providing you with the resources you need. Please visit our WEB site at www.okaee.org.

Robert Gibbs

Save the Date!



The 2008 OKAEE Expo will be on Thursday, February 7th at Northeastern State University's Broken Arrow campus. Keep an eye on www.okaee.org for details and registration information.

OKLAHOMA FALL EVENTS

October

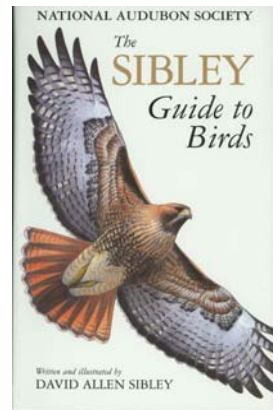
6: Hinton Agriculture Expo featuring exhibits related to agriculture, crop research & development, and ag education. Tours will be led to local farms, animal facilities, and the historical museum. Call 405/542-3920 for more information.

14: [Payne County Audubon Society](#) Nature Day. Come up to Stillwater and visit Sanborn Lake on Nature Day. There will be numerous hands-on displays related to all aspects of the natural world. Noon-4:30.

19: [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#) Teacher Appreciation Day. All pre-school through grade 12 teachers are invited to visit the museum and learn about programs for school groups. Museum educators will be available to answer questions about planning field trips to the museum, programs for school groups, using traveling resource kits, professional development opportunities for teachers, and online resources. Classroom giveaways and other “goodies” will be available throughout the day. Admission for pre-school—grade 12 teachers is free. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

19-21: Friends of the OU Biological Station 2007 Celebration. David Sibley, world-renowned ornithologist and author of many birding guides, will be the keynote speaker. For more information go to <http://www.ou.edu/uobs/FriendsRegis.pdf>.

20: [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#) Hide Tanning Workshop 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Experience the process of turning raw hide into soft leather, ready for sewing, beading or other use. Participants will cooperate to clean, de-hair, brain, buck (soften) and smoke a deer hide. We will demonstrate hide decoration and view a small portion of the museum’s ethnology collection. You will leave with a small piece of the hide that you have tanned and additional resources. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. To register, please call the education department at 405-325-4712. Cost is \$35 for members and \$45 for non-members.



20: Project WET for college credit at the University of Oklahoma, Norman. Class runs from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information or to enroll call Debbie Hubbard at (405) 325-1947.

November

1,8 and 15: [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#) class Global Climate Change: Impacts—Past... Present... and Future! Travel through time observing Earth’s major climatic transformations—*past...present...and future*—with an emphasis on global impacts. Join University of Oklahoma faculty and researchers on this thought-provoking journey. This three session program will introduce you to the impacts of climate change on plants, animals, and environments. We will also discuss ways that ecosystems may adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. To register, please call the education department at 405-325-4712. Cost is \$35 for members and \$45 for non-members. Classes run 7-8:30 p.m.



10-11: Women in the Outdoors at Tenkiller State Park. All women 14 years or older can come learn outdoor skills from outstanding instructors. Everything from dutch oven cooking to basket weaving will be taught. Please call 918/489-5641 for details.

14-17: NAAEE Annual Conference, “Explore New Horizons for Environmental Education” in Virginia Beach, Virginia. For more information go to www.naaee.org.

21: Free day at the [Oklahoma City Zoo](#)! The Zoo welcomes the winter months by offering everyone FREE admission on Wednesday, November 21.

If you have an event coming up between January and May of 2008 that you would like to have on this calendar, please email elicialigon@hotmail.com with the date, a brief description, and contact information by December 1, 2007.

Many different types of tortoises and turtles will be out at Payne County Audubon Society’s annual Nature Day.

EVENT HIGHLIGHT: PAYNE CO. AUDUBON SOCIETY NATURE DAY

The Payne County Audubon Society is hosting their 10th annual Nature Day event. Nature Day is designed to be a hands-on educational event for children and adults. It is held at Sanborn Lake in Stillwater—this year it is on Sunday, October 14 from noon-4:30 p.m.

Nature Day emphasizes getting into the outdoors by providing nature hikes on the 1-mile trail around the lake, going out in a canoe, fishing, and visiting various exhibits. The exhibits vary from individuals with live animals to organizations offering education and assistance. Definitely on hand will be a display of snakes, turtles and tortoises, honeybees in a see-through hive (unless it's too cold), skins and skulls from The Wildlife Society, an erosion trailer, the Gem and Mineral Society, the Native Plant Society, and recycling exhibits from Sustainable Stillwater. Many other exhibits will also likely be on display, though they are not yet confirmed. Fishing clinics and guided canoe tours will be offered throughout the day.

Nature Day is free and open to anyone. If you live within driving distance of Stillwater, try to make a day of it and bring the whole family out to play and explore at Sanborn Lake.

For more information, visit www.paynecountyaudubon.com.

PAYNE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY'S
NATURE DAY
 Sunday, October 14th, 12 - 4:30 pm
 SANBORN LAKE
FAMILY FUN

Don't miss this opportunity to experience the wonders of our Earth.

Bees Tracks Bugs
 Butterflies Face Painting Eco-Activities Tree Climbing
 Native Plants Trees Erosion Model Rocks & Minerals
 Skins and Skulls Kites Birds Plant Walks
 Dirt Worms Snakes Insects "White Tornado"
 Nature Crafts Feathers Fishing Water Critters Fossils

...All this and MORE hands-on, interactive exploration!
 Pack a picnic lunch and stay for the afternoon!

NATURE DAY IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL NATURE LOVERS.

To get to Sanborn Lake, go north on Boomer Road, turn left (West) on Airport Road. Between the Nat'l Guard Bldg and the ball park, turn left (south). Go ~1/3 mile. The road ends at NATURE DAY!

Rainy spot: Stillwater Parks and Rec Armory at 9th and Lowry

Questions? Call Crystal 880-7117
 Email auncrynk@hotmail.com



It's your OKAEE!

When OKAEE was thinking about professional development opportunities and events for our members we came up with a lot of ideas. Let's go hiking in the Wichita Mountains! Enjoy an evening seminar on wetlands and get a little dirty! Bring your unused teaching supplies and swap them with other teachers at a swap meet! Become certified in Project WILD or WET.

We need to know what you want. What would you like to learn about and when do you want to do it? Start thinking and look for a survey in your email this fall!