

# Calling All Junior Gardeners!

Junior gardeners (ages 9 – 18) are invited to show off their green thumbs—and their creativity—at this year's Sonoma County Fair, which will be held July 27 – August 8 at the Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa.

Groups are encouraged to enter this highly popular feature of the annual Fair, but youngsters may also participate as individuals. Junior exhibitors get to not only design and plant their gardens, but they also create painted backdrops, allowing for all types of artistry. Gardens can include props, fountains, and other features to add to their array of flowers and other living plants.

"Designing and maintaining a Junior Garden at the Fair is a great way for youngsters to learn new skills while letting their imaginations run free," explains Sheila Quince. "Awards include plaques, ribbons and a cash award for each garden.

"The youngsters also do all the work—planting and maintaining their gardens throughout the run of the Fair—which also is a great learning experience," she adds.

The Fair's renowned flower show is the largest show of its kind in the United States and for decades has drawn visitors from throughout the state and beyond. In keeping with the Fair's "Grape Escape" theme, this year's flower show is titled "In Our Own Backyard, The Gardens of Sonoma Wine Country".

**Deadline to enter the Junior Garden competition is Friday, March 26.** Entry fee is just \$15 per garden, and exhibitors are provided with admissions to the Fair as well as vehicle passes to come and water each day.

Complete information on entering the Junior Garden exhibit is available by calling the Sonoma County Fair Entry Office at (707) 545-4203. The 2010 Exhibitor's Guidebook, which covers all type of entries from Lego structures to poetry, will be available May 3 at all Sonoma County public libraries, on the Fair website [www.SonomaCountyFair.com](http://www.SonomaCountyFair.com), and at the Fair Entry Office, 1350 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa.

## Listening 2 Children

By Sharon Ann Wikoff

[neways@pon.net](mailto:neways@pon.net) • (707) 543-6355

[www.SharonAnnWikoff.com](http://www.SharonAnnWikoff.com)



### The Joy of Gardening with Children

**"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."**

- from Rachel Carson's *The Sense of Wonder*

Children just love being in the outdoors. Even more, they love being involved in the discovery of the wonderful world of the outdoors. I loved planting flowers with my children. I remember that we became so involved in the planting, we lost all sense of time. My husband loved growing flowers, fruits and vegetables. He shared this passion with our children too!

Spring is right around the corner! It's a wonderful time to create some family time together...adding a bright spot of color to your yard, beginning your vegetable garden or creating an herb garden.

As I reflect back on the delight of experiencing the outdoors with my children, I wanted to share with you some of the fun experiences we had in nature with our children.

**Flower Pot Gardening:** I recall going to the Nursery with my girls, 3 years and 6 years of age, and letting them choose a variety of colorful flowers to purchase. They had much fun! When we began the planting process, each one chose one flower pot to plant! They had such fun deciding which flowers to put into it. I was their helper! We ask our children to do SO many things during the course of the week...pick up your toys, eat your dinner, get your PJ's on etc. that I have found children love it when they can ask me to do things for them! It's a fun reversal of roles!

**Writing Names with Tulips:** As I mentioned, my children's Dad loved gardening. He decided to plant each of the children's names in tulip bulbs on a small hillside just above our patio. Sure enough spring came and we got to see TROY, TAMMY AND TIFFANY in tulips! The children were delighted! It was the talk of the neighborhood!

**Seeing and Understanding the Cycle of Life:** Tami, 3 years of age, loved eating apricots. We would buy a flat of them and enjoy! Tami had just finished eating an apricot. Her Dad invited her to plant it with him in the ground near our side patio. 4 weeks later, a small shoot appeared. Tami was amazed! We watched it grow and grow week by week, month by month and year by year! The tree grew to be 20 feet high! Stories like this are still remembered fondly in our family. And I do believe that one day, Tami will no doubt continue this and invite her "little ones" to plant a seed and watch it grow!

**Gardens Makes Perfect Photo Shoots:** We decided to take family pictures. The kids Dad suggested we go into the yard. He spotted the peach tree with numerous gorgeous ripe peaches on it. He told the kids that they could each pick a peach as he snapped some pictures of them. The kids loved the idea! We got some fabulous photos from that outing! Dad took some close-ups too! In these pictures, the peaches were so vivid you could almost taste them!

Going outdoors with children is a wonderful experience. Working together to create something new is refreshing and rewarding! Be sure to begin any such new adventure with a spirit of "togetherness"! Allowing children to make choices within a framework of acceptable possibilities, allows them to experience their choices in a positive way.

### Learning Together...Planting Together...Growing Together!

Sharon Ann Wikoff is a credentialed teacher, speaker, writer and radio host. She is passionate about "Listening 2 Children." She offers complimentary teleclasses on parenting throughout the year. She can be contacted through her website: [www.SharonAnnWikoff.com](http://www.SharonAnnWikoff.com) or you can listen to any of her archived radio programs at [www.BlogTalkRadio.com/Sharon-Anne](http://www.BlogTalkRadio.com/Sharon-Anne).

## Get things done and support KRCB too!

These businesses donate to KRCB when you make your purchase.

Need your taxes prepared?



Need to shop?



Need to get away on a European river cruise?



Need to remove an old car from your driveway?



Vehicles for Charity

Find out more about getting things done while supporting KRCB Public Media at [krcb.org](http://krcb.org) –

Click on **Other ways to Give.**



TV Channel 22  
Radio 91 FM  
[krcb.org](http://krcb.org)

A service of Northern California Public Media