

## Episode Seventeen: Going Back to School



Garden Wise Guys Owen Dell and Billy Goodnick explored academic opportunities to learn about sustainable landscaping in Santa Barbara in Episode 17.

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### First stop: Peabody Charter School, 3018 Calle Noguera

The school has a vegetable garden that students tend. Dave Plant (yes, Plant), the garden advisor, said the garden was started 16 years ago with two raised planters as an instructional tool in science, in which students could observe growth. Other teachers from other classes got involved, linking plant growth to the curriculum, leading to more and more planter boxes and today's large garden. They still observe plant growth. Plant said, for example, they might add worm castings to one group of plants and compare the growth to another. One time, they inadvertently added wood ash to a planter and were able to observe stunted growth.

The swiss chard, tomatoes, artichokes and everything else that's grown goes to the cafeteria, which uses mostly organic and locally grown produce in its menu. Visit [www.peabodycharter.org](http://www.peabodycharter.org) for more information on the cafeteria.



### Next stop: The Green Academy at Santa Barbara High School

Students gain an understanding of ecological issues, participate in habitat restoration; practice job skills, visit sites of local ecological importance, gain access to environmental community service opportunities, monitor creek quality, and maintain an organic garden.

Teacher Jose Caballero pointed out that environmental concepts are more relevant to this generation than they were to past generations.

The students also develop a strong work ethic. Caballero said students in the horticulture class arrive in the garden at 7 a.m. well before classes begin and do the required labor while it's still cold. "They want to do this," he said.

The Green Academy has recently become the only high school in California to grow the *Jatropha* plant, which can be processed to produce bio-diesel, allowing Santa Barbara High School to effectively grow, process, and fuel its own bio-diesel vehicle. Visit [www.sbhsdons.org](http://www.sbhsdons.org) for more information.

### Third stop: Santa Barbara City College Environmental Horticulture Program



Mike Gonela, Chair of the Environmental Horticulture Program at SBCC categorized the garden program as a trade program, generally attracting older students who learn design and sustainable landscaping. The designs focus on the smaller scale in landscaping, such as residential uses, vs. commercial lots or agriculture.

"A lot of these people are going into business for themselves," Owen pointed out.

The Santa Barbara City College Lifescape Garden at East Campus is open to the public sunrise to sunset. More information is available at [www.sbcceh.org](http://www.sbcceh.org)

#### Fourth stop: Green Gardener Program

The Green Gardener program, a joint effort between SBCC Continuing Education Division, the County and City of Santa Barbara, and other sponsors, bilingually instructs landscape maintenance professionals and homeowners on resource efficient and pollution-prevention landscape maintenance practices.



Billy explained that the program gave rise due to homeowner expectations of more sustainable landscaping practices from gardeners who were delivering services the same old way. After completion of the course and a final test, gardeners are issued a Green Gardener card and certificate of completion and then placed on the Green Gardener list (if providing gardening services) at [www.greengardener.org](http://www.greengardener.org) Gardeners attend the Green Gardener class, offered twice a year, through Santa Barbara City College Continuing Education Division (Adult Education) in Santa Barbara.

Oscar Carmona, Green Gardener teacher, said the program started 10 years ago because there was an increased concern and awareness for gardeners to be more effective in conservation, avoiding over-watering and preventing pollution runoff.

#### Fifth stop: The Santa Barbara County Water Awareness High School Video Contest

The objective is for high school students to create local water conservation related public service announcements and thereby increasing their awareness of water conservation issues and enhancing the public's knowledge of water conservation programs in Santa Barbara County.

Billy: students who are interested in video can do a public service announcement on water conservation, a topic they may not normally be exposed to, so they end up getting excited about it, Billy said.

The winning school gets the prize money of \$1,000. In 2011, it went to Cate School in Carpinteria for a video that can be seen by navigating to the list of winning high school vides at [www.sbwater.org](http://www.sbwater.org)

