

Waiting for the rain...

Imagine a bright, sunny, slightly cool Saturday morning in early November. Two groups of kids are out playing, packing in as much fun as possible before the grown-ups start to interfere again. One group, aged maybe 7 to 10 years, run about shouting, climbing, playing to the rules of the moment, but they're distracted by the activities of the other group. The other group doesn't usually hang around here, and they look like they're having much more fun. They're playing with mud and clay and water, and are totally absorbed in what they're doing. This group, aged maybe 20 to 60 years, are making seed balls, scores of marble-sized lumps of dirt and seeds, which they'll later gather up and scatter out on the ground around the fruit trees growing in the garden.

Part of the fun for the second group, that the first group couldn't see, was their ability to envision what will happen when (!) the first heavy rains come along. The protective package of clay will start to dissolve and the rainwater will encourage the seeds to germinate. Soon all sorts of useful plants will start to build up the ground cover which is the next stage of development for our edible food forest at Mesa Harmony Garden.

The idea for seed balls came from an unlikely revolutionary, a Japanese farmer by the name of Masanobu Fukuoka. Back in 1975, he wrote a book about his work as a farmer, and his idea of 'natural farming' which he also refers to as 'do-nothing' farming. He discovered that he could achieve yields at least as good as those on the average Japanese farm despite flouting conventional wisdom: he used no machines, no prepared fertilizer and no chemicals. In fact, he never tilled the land and encouraged weed growth. His advice to the young students who flocked to work on his fields was simply to live in nature and apply themselves to their daily work.

This remarkable book, 'The One-Straw Revolution', was extremely influential in the development of modern-day ideas of *Permaculture*. It's available from the public library.

**Next volunteer work day: more trees to plant...
Saturday, December 3rd, 9am – 12:30.
Corner of Meigs Road and Dolores Drive.**

Visit our website for more information about the garden, and to join our email list
www.mesaharmonygarden.org

Please support our work by volunteering, or by sending donations (we're a 501(c)3 nonprofit) to:
Mesa Harmony Garden, c/o Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109