

Foothill Hydroponics News!

Dedicated to Education • Research • Fun!

Issue #1 • FALL 1997

Welcome new Hydroponic friends!

Dear Hydroponic Enthusiast,

As you may be aware, we have been sponsoring an annual symposium for 12 years at the Beverly Garland Hotel in North Hollywood. We always look forward to seeing each of our dear and valued customers there.

Each year, about 10% of the 1,200 customers on our mailing list have attended the seminars. Since many of you have limited time, or other obligations that prevent you from attending, we thought that by sending out a newsletter we could better spread the news of recent happenings in the Hydroponics field.

We are currently involved in an educational project, in partnership with the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture. The driving force has been

Carol Spoelstra, State Director of the Agricultural Literacy & Fairs Alliance. Carol, with her incredible initiative and love of soilless gardening, has helped forge a new path in public sector and private sector cooperation in the use of Hydroponics as a learning tool.

Together, we are promoting the teaching of Hydroponics as an educational tool for science lessons, in elementary, junior high and high schools.

We endeavor always to be learning ourselves, and would appreciate your feedback, so that we can modify this seasonal newsletter to best fulfill your needs.

Happy Gardening!

*Mohsen Daha, Manager,
Foothill Hydroponics*



Hydroponics . . .

is an exciting, state-of-the-art growing technique that anyone, anywhere can master. Join us as we explore and share the limitless world of "soilless" growing!

Hydro-partners for better education

The new partnership between Foothill Hydroponics and the Agricultural Literacy and Fairs Alliance (ALFA) will help to reshape California's educational landscape.

Across the state, educators and lovers of agriculture are joining together as never before to reintroduce plant and animal raising into the Golden State's elementary and high school curricula. Not just "book learning," but actual hands-on planting and cultivating right in the classroom.

Right at the front of the movement, Foothill Hydroponics and ALFA are currently working together to fashion exciting new projects that introduce students of all ages to soilless growing techniques. Each project teaches students firsthand about nutrients, propagation, genetics and other plant science subjects.

Thanks to the generosity of Foothill Hydroponics owner Mohsen Daha, ALFA will have the latest information and materials to share with participating teachers across the entire state. Teachers will receive the material free if they agree to show their students' work at their local fair.

Mr. Daha's extensive knowledge of hydroponics and many years of experience and experimentation will be invaluable to ALFA's ag literacy program. His vision for the future of California's youth is enhanced by his willingness to do what

he can to implement that vision.

To that end, this newsletter will help participating teachers keep abreast of the latest information and resources they can use to maximize their hydroponic adventures. It is a direct link to one of the premier hydroponic sources in the country, if not the world.

Foothill Hydroponics and ALFA will let you know of the dazzling new hydroponic techniques, whether it's the work of NASA scientists or

Dutch vegetable growers. At the same time, Mr. Daha will continue to experiment at his North Hollywood store, with periodic reports in future issues. And if you're in the Los Angeles area, don't hesitate to call for a guided tour of the futuristic hydroponic systems in operation right now.

As California's population continues to grow, and more people live in large, crowded cities, hydroponics could very possibly provide a key solution to water and land use problems. By equipping our youth with hydroponic knowledge and skills today, we may be ensuring a better and brighter tomorrow for California.

*Carol Spoelstra, State Director
Agricultural Literacy & Fairs Alliance*



Give your plants that " Xtra Edge™ "

As we all know, soil quality differs drastically from region to region — and even from yard to yard. One of the beauties of soilless gardening is the ability to precisely control the quantity and balance of various necessary plant nutrients in the Hydroponic solution.

your plants. No matter how poor or imbalanced your soil is, you will be able to raise lush and beautiful plants, adjusting the nutrient mixture for maximum effect during your plants' various growing phases.



"XTRA-EDGE nutrient provides 22% Ammoniacal & 78% Nitrate Nitrogen when the growth formula is combined with the MICRO formula!"



"As your plants begin to develop flower buds, switch to BLOSSOM formula plus MICRO formula for 10% Ammoniacal & 90% Nitrogen!"

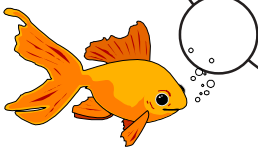
Xtra Edge™ combines a host of important mineral nutrients into a mixture you add to tap water to maximize the growth and characteristics of

Contact Foothill Hydroponics for free information about this new gardening product.

A point to . . .

?Hydro-Ponder?

In Florida *the Top 2*
air freight export items
are Farm-raised
Aquatic Plants
and
Tropical Fish! ❄️



Source: *Freshwater and Marine Aquarium*

Hydro-Points

. . . of interest

TAKE A FREE GUIDED TOUR!

Would you like to tour a working Hydroponic garden and see for yourself how this futuristic growing method works? Foothill Hydroponics will be glad to show you their on-site soilless garden between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

As an added incentive, they are offering teachers and students a 20% educational discount on growing media, nutrient and their entire line of Hydro-Trays (see graphic)! All you need is some proof that you are a student or teacher.

NEW MAGAZINE RESOURCE

There is another new Hydroponic magazine available to you, called *GROWMAG*. It is published in England and supplements the U.S. publication *The Growing Edge*, as well as the Australian *Practical Hydroponics & Greenhouses*.

The premier issue came out this spring, with the second issue (now available here in the U.S.), featuring an extremely good article on Red Spider mites.

TWO ACRES "UNDER GLASS"!

Hydroponic pioneer (and aquaculture expert) Richard LeRoy is working on a project involving two acres in the Bahamas. Some 15,000 square feet is "under glass," with a planned expansion to a total of 10 acres within a few years. Two of the main crops are tomatoes and lettuce.

AQUACULTURE IN SCHOOL

Hillsborough Community College in Florida is offering classes and an Associate in Science degree or certificate in Aquaculture Production Technology. Dr. Bill Falls is in charge of the program.

Assistance from the private sector includes help from the Mote Marine Laboratory (<http://www.mote.org/~sas/>) and the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (<http://www.hboi.edu/aquaculture/aqua.htm>).



Mote Marine Laboratory's "Controlled Environment Culture System"



Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute's "Aquaculture Development Park"

Roy Erickson loves Hydroponics

Last year, Roy shared how he got started in soilless growing.

Two years ago I was viewing a TV program about a Russian Trawler that was plowing through the ice and snow in the cold Arctic waters. In the bottom of the ship, they were growing vegetables and herbs. The planting system went the length of the ship and was able to supply enough produce to feed a crew of over three hundred seamen.

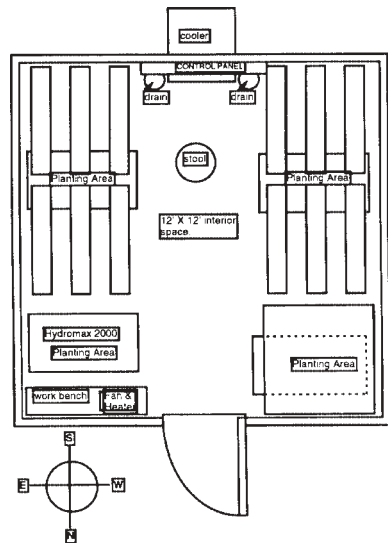
I was fascinated with the idea that vegetables could be actually grown in water without sunlight I wondered what they would taste and look like, and what would it take to find out for myself. I looked through the yellow pages and located a store "Foothill Hydroponics" (near my home) in North Hollywood. There, I found a very neatly organized display of what was required to grow soilless plants in your own home. I bought a retaining tank, trays, pump, Rockwool, nutrient, and a light. I was going to try this out in my shop and I only had a four by four foot space in which to do so. The only light source was a metal halide 400 Watt bulb. (Later changed to a 1000 Watt, metal halide lamp).

Gary, the sales manager, was very informative and helpful and sold me only the necessary equipment to get started. In the background was the owner [Mohsen Daha], a handsome Persian-American, who was busily preoccupied with checking his supplies. I was later to find out he had a fountain of knowledge that he was willing to

Hydro-Profile

share.

Armed with all the equipment I went home and set up the system according to the instructions. I also had purchased a small seeding tray and pump to start some seeds (I was going to grow my first batch of lettuce and tomatoes from



Roy's equipment layout

seeds). In a few days I could see their little heads poking up above the small Rockwool cubes. When their roots protruded through the sides of the cubes, I knew they were ready to transplant into the larger system.

About eight weeks later the lettuce was almost ready to harvest and the tomato vines were growing tall. I would have to wait another 30 days to see any tomatoes. To make a long story short I did get tomatoes and one weighed 1 1/2 pounds. They were delicious – they

tasted like a real tomato and not the type you buy in the grocery store. I was, however disappointed in the yield of only 12 or 13 tomatoes and I chalked it up to my inexperience.

Encouraged by the fact that I was able to grow something I was willing to set up a dedicated greenhouse and try it big time. I finally decided on a small greenhouse made in kit form from a local manufacturer.

To build a greenhouse and grow vegetables was a major decision for me to make. The advantages are:

1. You can grow the year-round; 2. In the same area that it would take outside you can grow five times as much inside; 3. Plants grow 1/3 faster inside the greenhouse; 4. Fresh vegetables taste great!

The disadvantages are: 1. It can be costly; 2. Requires attention on a daily basis; 3. A greenhouse seems to attract more bugs like aphids and spider mites; 4. Every crop is not a winner – you will have to be persistent and learn just what your plants need in your greenhouse. Most of all, you must be interested in Hydroponic Gardening, and be willing to devote the time necessary to bring in a satisfying crop.

At the present time my greenhouse is the state of the art for hydroponic gardening. It is equipped with: CO₂ (like a liquid fertilizer) and requires a gas outlet and digital control, a dehumidifier, an inexpensive electric heater, a water cooler, inside hose bibs for maintaining water levels in all tanks, master controls

for running pumps, aerators and halide 1000 Watt grow lights used to supplement the sun during winter months.

I'm not one of those people who has a green thumb... My wife is just the opposite. She can throw tomato seeds

out the window and next week, *voilà!*, she has tomatoes. If it weren't for people like Mohsen Daha (Foothill Hydroponics) and Jim McCaskill (Instructor) I probably would have given up a long time ago. Their encouragement and help has given me the persistence to keep working at it.

Today I harvested juicy ripe tomatoes, cucumbers by the arm load, and chervil. My egg plant and peppers are starting to blossom and it won't be long until we will enjoy them. I now understand how the Russian Trawler grew food for a crew of 300. I have experienced the satisfaction of tasting the fruits of my efforts and I look forward to experimenting with new seeds and plants and learning more so that I may continue to feed my curiosity as well as my stomach. What could make a better hobby than that?

ROY D. ERICKSON

photo: Pasadena Star News

