

Fruit From The Tree

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You know the old saying, “the fruit doesn’t fall far from the tree”? As my son John grows into adulthood, I see that old axiom coming true more and more. A lot of you old-timer MGs have watched my kid grow up over the years. He is now engaged to a wonderful young lady and a senior at Humboldt State majoring in, you guessed it, forestry and wildland fire management.

This semester, one of John’s classes is forest restoration and he has a test plot in an area scarred from clear cutting. The plot is filled with the resultant invasive weeds, so a few weeks ago, John called me to ask the details of my cardboard and paper grocery bag weed suppression project. So what started out as a vegetable garden experiment is now gracing a hillside somewhere in Humboldt County.

On Wednesday, I was driving back from a prescriptive fire council meeting in Chico and my cell phone rang. It was John with another Master Gardener question. Using my hands-free device, we peeled away the miles coming up with ideas for an organic, compostable tree seedling pot. We tossed around ideas like toilet paper tubes, newspaper pots, and the like.

Remembering back to a 4H project, he hauled his blender into the forestry lab and whirled up some newspaper strips, water, and shredded redwood bark. However, they couldn’t figure out how to keep the slurry “glued” together long enough for the seedlings to be transplanted. A plant pathologist friend of mine suggested adding organic cornstarch or rice flour as the “glue” so that will be the next addition to the recipe.

Bernice sent out an inquiry today about how we feel MGs reach the public and it really gave me pause for consideration. You really wonder what makes a difference and how long that may take to come about. You just never know, eh?

Interested in becoming a Master Gardener volunteer? Sign up to be notified of our fall orientation meeting by completing the Master Gardener interest survey at http://ucanr.org/be_mg or call our main office at 209 223-6838. Training will start in January and continue through early May.