



Colleen
Carroll, EdD



naturetalks

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bringing people and nature together

Colleen Carroll, EdD



Colleen is a gardener and educator who planted her first seed, a sunflower, at three years old. That childhood fascination with nature, gardening, and everything outdoors led to her career path as an environmental educator, author, and CEO of NatureTalks.

Founding NatureTalks

Colleen founded NatureTalks with a simple, single mission:

to help people connect to nature. Her special style of educating is as a storyteller for gardens and gardeners.

This storytelling began in the 1990s. Working on her masters in Social Ecology, Colleen traveled across the state of Hawaii, visiting Molokai, Hawaii, Oahu and Maui to gather stories from teachers and administrators about the joys and challenges of creating school gardens. These stories were published as *Growing an*

Educational Garden at Your School: A Study of the Hawaii Experience. It remains the only book on school gardens in Hawaii and its content has passed the test of time. Fifteen years later, it is still requested by teachers involved in today's gardening revolution.

Research & Writing

The culmination of much of Colleen's research came together in a book called, *It's About More Than Trees*, which takes the reader to some of our nations' most neglected yet beautiful neighborhoods. This book, rich with colorful photographs and vivid case studies offers an inside look at inspiring urban greening projects across the nation.

Though the settings and social issues at the project sites vary, they have one thing in common: urban greening was used as a catalyst to improve living conditions. Some participants grew gardens to teach nutrition and help residents become more self-sufficient. Others cleared dump sites and beautified neglected areas to eliminate crime and bring color and hope to violent neighborhoods. Dr. Carroll's insightful narrative about each site describes the challenges that leaders and participants face as well as successes they celebrate. Anyone who loves plants and is committed to social change will find a plethora of ideas about how to plant hope in any soil, in any neighborhood.

***It's About More Than Trees* has just been converted for the Kindle and is available on Amazon for \$9.99**



Sharing Stories

In the “Power of Plants to Transform Your Community,” Colleen has developed a presentation that shares the powerful stories of gardeners and how they transformed their communities. The presentation can be tailored to your unique setting with a focus on food security; safety; beauty and building stronger community. This presentation is ideal for conferences or civic groups interested in getting started on a greening project.

Contact Colleen to schedule *The Power of Plants* or one of her other featured talks: *Before you Dig* and *What is the Environment Anyway? Gaining Insights*.



Stories Connecting Children and Nature

Colleen continued gathering stories and her doctoral studies in Australia, on children’s perceptions of the environment and how everyday experiences influence their notion of environmental issues, prepared her well for interviewing, writing, and completing extensive studies.

The result- *What is the Environment Anyway? A Study of Children’s Perceptions of the Notion of Environment* - stemmed from an awareness of the deluge of “environmental education” bombarding our children and a systematic examination to discover the essence of what our children perceive as the environment.

Once again, Colleen’s insights were several years ahead of the mainstream.



Today

Currently, Colleen is gathering stories closer to home. *Look What I Grow in my Backyard! Stories from Hawaii's Gardeners* showcases inspirational gardeners and their stories. Going beyond the traditional how-to book, Colleen's book captures how each individual creates a garden with a unique combination of plants that provide food, medicine, shade and/or beauty. The beautiful photos and captivating narratives show how each gardener imprints his or her own personal style in the landscape.

Presentations

Does your gardening convention need a visually captivating presentation or an inspirational workshop? Nature Talks has both.

NatureTalks offers innovative ways for people to connect with nature. Our presentations and workshops are designed to reach across geographic boundaries and to help you reach out to your community through greening. Three favorite topics are described here, each of which can be tailored to meet the specific needs of you and your community.

Concerned about the safety and appearance of your neighborhood? ask NatureTalks how community gardens have decreased crime rates, helped neighbors connect, and beautified vacant lots.

the power of plants to transform communities

Workshops and presentations can be tailored from a half-hour visual journey to half-day intensive training and workshop. This is a great conference topic for community gardeners and urban greeners. It's a visual and inspirational look at gardens and gardeners in a range of geographic settings across the U.S. This presentation works well with community development and empowerment workshops. A one-hour talk is an excellent way to kick off your garden start-up or entice attendees to a garden annual event or membership drive.

The Power of Plants to Transform illustrates how individuals across the country have used greening to stop crime, improve health, reduce dumping, clean up toxic soil, grow healthy food, educate youth, and build stronger communities.



School children stop to admire the corner garden in their neighborhood. Image from NatureTalks' book It's About More than Trees.

before you dig: planning your school & community garden

Curious about what a garden could do for your school or community organization and unsure where to begin? Connecting people with nature yields a rich potpourri of benefits. Learn how to plan a project geared to the unique needs of your school, church, or community center. Contact NatureTalks before you dig!

In a school garden, students gain an appreciation and understanding of nature and improve social skills like team building. Studies in nutrition, social studies, history, and sciences are easily accomplished in a garden setting.

This presentation is geared for administrators, teachers, and parents who want to expand the in-class curriculum to include the surrounding campus. A school garden can be as small as a few containers or as large as the entire grounds. Workshop participants receive a signed limited edition copy of *Growing an Educational Garden at Your School: A Study of the Hawaii Experience*—while supplies last.

children's perceptions on the environment: gaining insights

This presentation gives you easy-to-use techniques that can help you learn your students' concerns about the local and global environment. How do you know which environmental issues concern your students? Contact NatureTalks to create an environmental program tailored for your classroom or school

Environmental Education can be used across the curriculum- in social studies, science, health, and math classes.

Specialties include creating environmental curriculum geared to local issues. Dr. Carroll, NatureTalks Director, has over twenty years experience teaching environmental education. Her in-class curriculum, "The Growing Seed: Wiliwili Project," received a National Award for program excellence from the American Association of Botanical Gardens.



Contact colleen@naturetalks.net to schedule an event.

To learn more about Colleen's books, talks, research and writing, visit www.NatureTalks.net





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