

***Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program***



**2010 Nominee Profile**

**Tekla Deverell, North Pender Island**

- Category:** Individual
- Project:** Gardening mentorship program for young people
- Nominator(s):** Sandra Pope, Nori Pope, Stuart Scholefield
- Letters of Support:** N/A

**Project Description:**

Five years ago, with a passion for gardening organically and sharing her knowledge, Tekla created the gardening mentorship program with the young people's agricultural section of the Fall Fair. She involved people from all parts of the community: children, teachers, the school, parents and mentors from the Pender Island Garden Club, the Farmers' Institute and beyond.

The program includes soil test kits, soil preparation, seeding, weeding, watering and harvesting. Through the program children are given seeds to plant and grow in pots at the school. They can also have a community mentor as they cultivate a section of their garden at home. The children are asked to create a photo/written journal to display at the Fall Fair along with samples of their harvest. Entries are judged and prizes awarded. In 2009, the program expanded to include a new group of children who are home schooled. In addition, a participating parent and child traveled to Powell River to meet with people who wanted to develop a similar program.

Through participation in the program, the children observe and take part in the market and Fall Fair, they develop close ties with experienced gardeners and learn the value of a strong rural community.