

A quarterly letter to friends of the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program

BNG consumer finds success at the Rose Bowl

One Indiana entrepreneur was a Tournament of Roses winner this year, even though she never came close to a football field.

Rebecca Agee of Jasonville has been interested in flowers since making a poster about them in the third grade. Her passion for plants eventually grew into her business called The Nature of Things, which supplies primarily flowers to wholesalers, mostly in the Midwest.

However, the plant that got Rebecca noticed by the Tournament of Roses committee was not a flower but buffalo grass, a turf grass native to the Great Plains. According to Richard Duble of Texas Cooperative Extension, buffalo grass is so named because it is one of the plants that provided food for the great herds of buffalo that roamed the plains.

When asked how she became involved with the Tournament of Roses Parade, Rebecca replied that her motivation was to pay tribute to her mother. The two of them used to always watch the parade

together on T.V., and after her mother had passed away, Rebecca thought it would be nice to have some of her products in the event as a memorial to her mom. So, she sent some small samples of buffalo grass to the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce in hopes that even just a few of her plants might be used.

The result of Rebecca's initial venture went far beyond her expectations. She ultimately sent 2,700 bundles of dried buffalo grass for use in the City of Cerritos float entitled "Families Make a Community." The Tournament of Roses Parade allows only completely natural plants—no dyes, paints, or preservatives are permitted. Therefore, Rebecca's buffalo grass turned out to be the perfect plant to simulate the hair on huge, animated gorillas that dominated the float.



To make Rebecca's achievement even more notable, the float was honored with the Tournament Special Trophy for exceptional merit in multiple categories.

This year's parade was Rebecca's first experience with the Tournament of Roses but hopefully not her last. BNG is working with Rebecca to help her expand her business so that her plants and her success can continue to blossom.

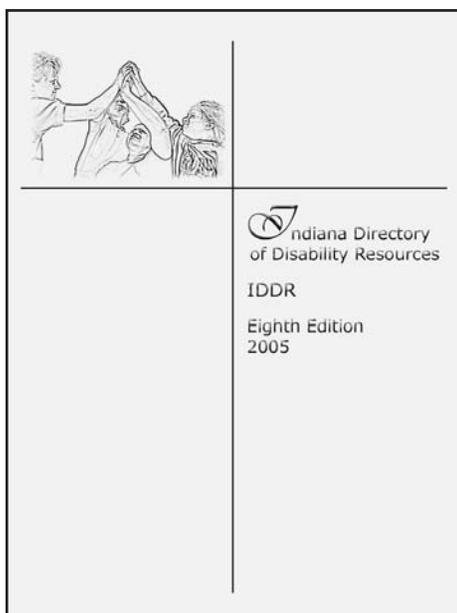
Eighth edition of IDDR available

One of BNG's most widely-distributed resources, *The Indiana Directory of Disability Resources*—or *IDDR*—is a handy desktop reference

to disability-related organizations around Indiana and the U.S. The newly updated and expanded 8th edition of the *IDDR* includes more than 70 pages of disability-related information with over 300 organizations listed.

Program descriptions include such information as street, e-mail, and web addresses; disabling conditions served; users served; services provided; and resources available. Entries are indexed both alphabetically and by disability type, and separate listings of support groups and toll-free numbers are included.

The new *IDDR* is available for \$6 plus shipping, and discounts are available for quantity orders. Call 800-825-4264 to order or for more information.



ASAE award for Toolbox CD

The Breaking New Ground Resource Center recently won a Blue Ribbon Award from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASAE) for *The Toolbox CD* as part of the ASAE annual educational aids competition.

The *Toolbox CD* is BNG's most recent edition of *Agricultural Tools, Equipment, Machinery, and Buildings for Farmers and Ranchers with Physical Disabilities*. Hundreds of copies have been distributed around the country.

The *Toolbox CD* is available for \$25, or buy the CD plus the most recent printed edition for just \$80.



BNG Project Leader: Bill Field

Program Manager: Paul Jones

Rural Rehab Specialist: Steve Swain

Raised gardens provide spring planting options

If you have a mobility impairment, arthritis, or some other condition that makes stooping and bending difficult, you may think that planting, cultivating, and harvesting a garden is more trouble than it's worth. However, if you still long for the joy of gardening and for the fruits of your labors (vegetables too), then raised garden beds may be a solution to your ergonomic dilemma.

The basic principle of raised gardening is to lift the bed enough to minimize or eliminate the need for bending. Raised beds are also an op-



tion for patio gardening or gardening in terrain that may be too swampy for a conventional garden.

A variety of materials can be used to construct the container to hold the soil for the garden bed—landscape timbers, railroad ties, stones, landscaping blocks, and even old tires or refrigerators. Table-top gardens can be built, such as the example seen below left, which was provided by City Farmer, Canada's Office of Urban Agriculture, on their Neighborgardens web page at www.cityfarmer.org/Neighborgardens.html

A unique alternative publicized by the Mississippi AgrAbility Project is the use of hay bales for raised beds. The bales are treated with water and fertilizer, and a layer of top soil is placed on them.

Many kinds of raised garden kits are also commercially available, such as the one pictured above right from D&P Industries at www.urbandependent.com that comes with a protective cover. Since raised gardens tend to be smaller than conventional ones, options like automatic watering and fertilizing systems can be feasible.



For more information, do a Web search on raised gardens or visit the Mississippi AgrAbility Project site for more information on hay bale gardening at www.msucare.com/safety/agrability/news_winter_05.html.

Arthritis Walks coming soon

The Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter is sponsoring four Arthritis Walks around the state to raise awareness and funds to help combat this disabling disease. The locations, dates, and times are:



New survey rates communities on ADA



It has been almost 15 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed into law. How well is your community complying with the ADA?

ADA Indiana—the Indiana ADA Steering Committee—in conjunction with the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community and the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is conducting an online survey—called "Making the Grade"—to help determine citizen perceptions

concerning overall ADA compliance in Indiana. In 2001, ADA Indiana completed a similar survey and published an "ADA Report Card" that showed an overall grade of C- for Indiana communities.

To complete the Making the Grade survey, visit www.thepolling-place.org. The survey deadline is June 1. To request the survey in an alternative format, or for additional information, call 800-825-4733 or e-mail adainfo@indiana.edu.

- South Bend
May 1, 2005; 1:00 p.m.
Potawatomi Park
- Evansville
May 21, 2005; 9:00 a.m.
The Riverfront
- Fort Wayne
May 21, 2005; 1:30 p.m.
Foster Park
- Indianapolis
June 18, 2005; 9:00 a.m.
NCAA Hall of Champions

To register, visit www.arthritis.org or call 800-783-2342.