In the beginning, He made it look so effortless: a little dirt, some water, and the whole place just lit up. It's been uphill ever since, though, as artists fumble to redefine Original. Every so often, someone gets it right, and the rest of us are tossed back on our bums, breathless.

Presenting our annual homage to the local artists whose innovation defines the very spirit of this place. Turn the page, and prepare to be awed.

Compiled by Darcy Brown-Martin, Martin Holden, and Kristin Kloberdanz
Those of us living in cramped city apartments usually have to satisfy our gardening jones with furtive glances at Martha Stewart's unattainable vines and flowers. Ken Goldberg has a better idea. Plug into his Web site, the Telegarden (telegarden.aec.at), and, with a little help from a telerobotic arm, you can water daisies and nurture hyacinths in a remote garden in Linz, Austria. The Cal engineering professor planted the seeds four seasons ago, and dedicated cybergardeners have turned it into a lush greenhouse. Goldberg's now editing a book for MIT Press called *The Robot in the Garden: Telerobotics and Telepistemology on the Net.*