

UC'S NOT-SO-SECRET GARDEN



NICK LAMMERS — Staff

Ken Goldberg's expertise in robotics led to the creation of a robot-controlled garden in Austria, nurtured by Internet users.

Robots grow real garden online

Berkeley lab controls planting in Austria

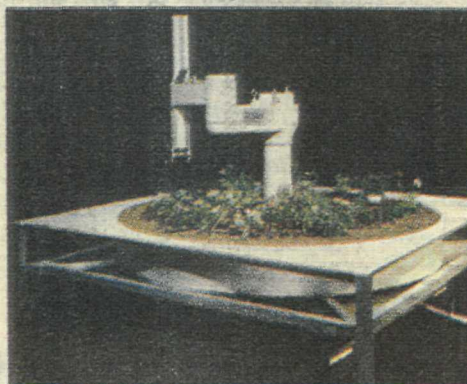
By William Brand
STAFF WRITER

BERKELEY — In its short existence, the World Wide Web has sprouted some odd things, but there's a Web site in Austria controlled from a University of California, Berkeley robotics laboratory that truly boggles the mind.

It's called Tele-Garden. But this is no mythical cyber site.

It's a real garden in a 6-foot-wide, circular planter with an industrial robot arm and a camera in the center, residing currently in the lobby of the Ars Electronica Center in Linz, Austria.

This may be the strangest garden that



The 6-foot-wide Tele-Garden is in the Ars Electronica Center in Linz, Austria.

ever was. Visitors can log on, choose a seed and direct the robot to plant it. Then they can return day after day to water their plants.

It's also no doubt the first garden in the

world that's experienced an attack by a computer hacker, says Ken Goldberg, the UC Berkeley robotics wizard who hatched the idea, along with Los Angeles artist Joseph Santarromana.

Goldberg is an associate professor who in 1995 at age 30 was named a Presidential Faculty Fellow by the National Science Foundation, which included a \$100,000 research grant. He's been working in robotics for 10 years.

"We wanted to create the software necessary to allow the simple mouse-click commands available to users of Web browsers like Netscape Navigator to control the robot," he said.

The project succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams. More than 2 million people have visited the garden since it went online in summer 1995.

Anyone with a Web browser can log

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