

SCIENCE AND GARDEN NEWSLETTER

May 2010

It is that time of the year again that I take the students to the garden. A garden helps children learn the cycle of life, as well as where a lot of fruit and vegetables come from. It is something they can become involved in and will hopefully give them a sense of pride in what they have created. It may even open up a life time of love for growing flowers and vegetables. Everyone tries--and most everyone loves--fresh lettuce and spinach straight from the garden!

We have turned the soil, pulled those pesky weeds, spread wood chips on the paths and have planted flower and vegetable seeds. In the poly house we have lettuces, spinach, arugula, beets, carrots and radishes growing. The OG has planted onion sets along with swiss chard, beets and kale outside of the poly house. We have started tomatoes, peppers, squash, okra, cucumbers and a variety of herbs in the science room under grow lights to be transplanted after the last frost date.

Everybody partakes, even the 5-day preschool. They are usually the most exuberant! The youngest students learn how to pick lettuce, plant seeds, dig up the soil and weed, while the older students are challenged to plant several vegetables into one area. They learn how to read seed packages and figure out how far apart the seeds need to be planted and how deep.

The students come up with inquiry based questions such as, "What happens when the seed is planted too deep? What happens when you over water? How about not enough water? How about not enough sun or too much sun? What happens when too many seeds are in one area?" All of these questions can be answered by setting up real life experiments.

I teach them about crop rotation, transplanting and using finished compost to enrich the soil. We learn about garden pests such as groundhogs, chipmunks, rabbits, and insects. The best part for me is when I watch the students getting excited about working in the garden. I frequently am asked, "Are we going to the garden today?" I love to hear a little one exclaim, "I found a worm!" and watch everyone rush over to observe it and start digging for more.

During our all school study of Leonardo daVinci, many of the classes used the garden for sketching.



The **OG** on Earth Day helped clean up an area in their boundary of broken glass and junk. We gathered a large recycling bin with broken glass and three wheelbarrows worth of junk! It gave them a sense of pride to clean up an area that they call their own. We now are looking forward to learning about electrical circuits.



The **MC** will be starting a unit on electrical circuits after May Fair. They have been taking wonderful field trips about colonial times. During May Fair week I went to their classroom and gave them a brief lesson on botany while dissecting flowers and sketching.



The **PC** are learning about magnets, static electricity and simple circuits. They also helped make a game for May Fair called "Bowling for Mona."



The **KG** have been working in the garden, sketching bird nests, a hawk's wing and other items from nature. We will be starting a unit on "Matter and How it Changes" after May Fair.



The **5-day** preschool has been learning to sketch in the garden and in the flower garden along the back of the library.



We have been watching the Painted Lady butterfly larvae in the science room. They are now in the chrysalis stage. This activity connects to what they





learned about insects in the fall.

Hope you enjoy the pictures.
In Partnership,
Dawn