

# Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## MAY IN THE GARDEN

May is here! Hip-hip-hooray!! Pollen is in the air, and beautiful colors surround us. It is so lovely to get outside and feel the start of the warm months ahead. The garden is lively and vital, we are busy planting and transplanting, making sure everything is taken care of so that we get our bountiful harvests this summer! We had a giant shipment of rich compost that would amend our existing soil, and we received lots of help transferring it throughout the weeks!

## WELCOMING NEW INTERNS!

As the Brandeis semester draws to a close, we are happy to welcome two new garden interns who will be joining us this summer - Danny and Madeline!



*Hi Maddie!*

Hi there! My name is Maddie Reck, and I am a rising junior at Brandeis University. I am majoring in Environmental Studies and International and Global Studies with a minor in Climate Justice, Science, and Policy. I grew up in

the Boston area and spent a lot of time exploring the wildlife of Cape Cod, which led me to become a huge marine biology and gardening nerd. For two summers, I worked at the Mass Audubon Natural History Day Camp in Chatham as a counselor. My passion for teaching children about nature stems from being a babysitter/nanny, where I often found myself surrounded by the kids in my neighborhood as I taught them about the different plants and animals that we stumbled upon. I am so excited to be an environmental education intern at Lemberg this summer, and I can't wait to connect your children with the natural world around them! If you'd like to get in touch with me, my email address is [madeleinereck@brandeis.edu](mailto:madeleinereck@brandeis.edu)



*Hi Danny!*

Hey! My name is Danny DeMilia and I will be helping out as an environmental education intern this summer! I am a rising junior at

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Brandeis University, double majoring in Environmental Studies and Health: Science, Society, and Policy with a minor in Anthropology. I'm from Hillsdale, New Jersey, and I have experience with children through tutoring that I did at my local temple. My passion for the environment began at a young age, when my friends and I would explore the woods behind our houses, following the streams to try and find where they ended. I also have a strong background in all things related to the ocean as in high school, I researched coral bleaching and even acted as the TA for Oceanography at Brandeis. I hope to be able to use that knowledge to throw in a lesson or two this summer about what's beneath the waves. I am looking forward to a great summer here at Lemberg and can't wait to get things going. Feel free to contact me through my email; [danieldemilia@brandeis.edu](mailto:danieldemilia@brandeis.edu)

## LEARNING THIS MONTH

### Three Sisters Garden

The preschool classrooms had the opportunity to learn about the indigenous practice of a Three Sisters garden, specifically the interplanting of corn, beans, and squash. We discussed how this wisdom shares how the plants work together to help each other grow; the corn provides trellising for the beans, the beans are nitrogen fixing, which gives nutrients to the other plants, and the squash keeps the soil moist and free from weeds.



*"We're corn!"*

We used our bodies to act out the important roles of these vegetables - crouching low to the ground as the squash, wiggling and crawling up as the beans, and standing straight and tall as the corn.



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*We created a mound of soil with our hands.*

We then went outside to the garden, creating a mound of soil and circularly planting the corn, bean, and squash seeds. After we covered the seeds in the rich soil, we watered them. We can't wait for them to grow strong together!

## Garlic Mustard Pesto

Spring means all plants are getting a boost, growing green and tall, including weeds and invasives! We discussed what weeds are - plants that we don't want to grow - and why we want to remove them - they can take up soil space, sunlight, nutrients, and water that the plants we want to grow need! We learned a new term, "invasive," which describes plants that like to take over and push out other plants. Rather than just trashing the plants, we mentioned other ways we can use them, such as making yummy pesto!



*Searching for garlic mustard*

In the fairy garden, we looked at garlic mustard plants, observing their tiny white flowers, straight stems, and broad, serrated leaves.



*Our collection filled a whole bowl!*

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After we collected a bunch, we worked together to mix up a batch of pesto, using olive oil, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and salt. Everyone got a turn to add ingredients, and we made a great team of chefs. Once the mixture was significantly pureed, we transferred the pesto into a bowl, tasting our dip with tortilla chips. So delicious!



*"Can I have more, please?"*

## Garden Art

For Sarah's last lesson of the season, we had the opportunity to engage with one of her favorite activities - making art! We read *The Earth and I*, paying close attention to the beautiful colors and using our bodies to act out the different ways we interact with the Earth. We danced, we sang, we listened... Then, we looked around the

garden space to collect different objects to paint with - flowers, leaves, sticks, rocks, and more. Using different colors, we dipped our objects and made beautiful colors.



*Displaying the garden art in the classroom*

## Pollination Practice

All classes were able to experience the wonders of pollination! They read "The Reason for a Flower" by Ruth Heller and then headed outside for hands-on experience. Maddie and Danny held make-shift flowers that the children pollinated with their popsicle stick bumblebees. Afterwards, the children went to explore the gardens and pollinate more plants to help them grow!



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*The kids running back and forth, pollinating!*

## Toddlers in the Garden

The toddlers have been enjoying the garden so much this month! Each time they come up to visit, they help scoop compost into our wheelbarrow and help push it across the garden. They have also helped in planting peppers, and keeping everything well watered. Thanks, friends!



*Cassady helping us plant peppers*



*Teamwork between toddlers and preschoolers*

## FAMILY GARDEN DAYS



*Thanks, everyone!*



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Our family garden day on May 20th was lovely! Together we worked on weeding, transporting compost, preparing raised beds, working to build a trellis, and bringing out our ficus trees. It was so much fun to be in the garden with everyone, and we are so, so appreciative of your help and enthusiasm. We will let you know soon when we have the next Family Garden Days scheduled.

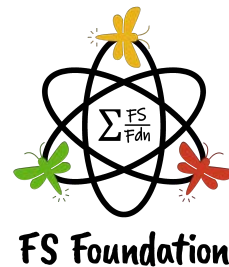
## STANLEY GARDEN UPDATES

The Stanley garden has been thriving this spring. At the end of May, we had our first garden day for students and parents. Together we weeded the beds and planted various veggies. We built and filled a new raised bed, and we harvested radishes, arugula, and mint. We'll have two more garden days in June before the end of the school year.



*Watering the squash we just planted.*

**Thank you to our many wonderful alumni donors and friends!**



*A large radish!*