

Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

MARCH IN THE GARDEN

The garden keeps marching on, because it's March! March brings to the garden tasks of turning compost, pruning fruit trees, and deadheading perennials. Our garden interns are hard at work to make sure that spring starts with vibrancy and vigor. We are planning what to plant and have started utilizing the greenhouse again. There is pollen and excitement in the air, and we are so happy to see the bounties that season will continue to bring us.



Lopping off some water sucker branches!

LEARNING THIS MONTH

Melting Snow

March brought us some of the only snow we've seen this winter season, and we've tried to

make the most of it in the garden! As one student giggled, "snow much snow!" We read *The Story of Snow* and learned about the creation of snow crystals in the sky, and the variety we can find. The journey of tiny specks of ice into a cluster of crystals, which we call flakes, is quite a story!

With the Voyagers, we ventured outside with small cups of salt to see how the snow dissolves when we sprinkle, exploring melting and freezing.



Pouring out the salt to see what happens

Seeds and Seedballs

The greenhouse is aglow as it is the time for seeds to sew! As the weather has warmed up a bit and the days are getting longer, it's time to begin the preparations for spring's garden. We read and remembered all that a seed needs to grow.

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Sylvia holds the seed while we are busy scooping dirt!

Outside, we portioned potting soil into planting cells and chose seeds to poke in. Whether they were fennel, kale, cilantro, basil, or Swiss chard, every seed got a generous pour of water to help them grow. We are excited to see them sprout inside our greenhouse. We also mixed up clay, compost, and wildflower seeds with water to form seed balls which we can throw and watch grow!

Rainy Day

With a super rainy, stormy forecast and many drops of rain, we didn't go outside in the garden with the Pathfinders. Instead, we read *Umbrella* considering the different types of rain showers we see and how storms look. With paper and markers, we made colorful pictures and let

them get all washy with rain to see the blending creations.



We held our papers under the drips!

Even though it was a bit too rainy for us to go jump in puddles, we stood under the awning and let our papers catch the drips. Who says we can't have fun in the rain?



Our finished creations

Signs of Spring

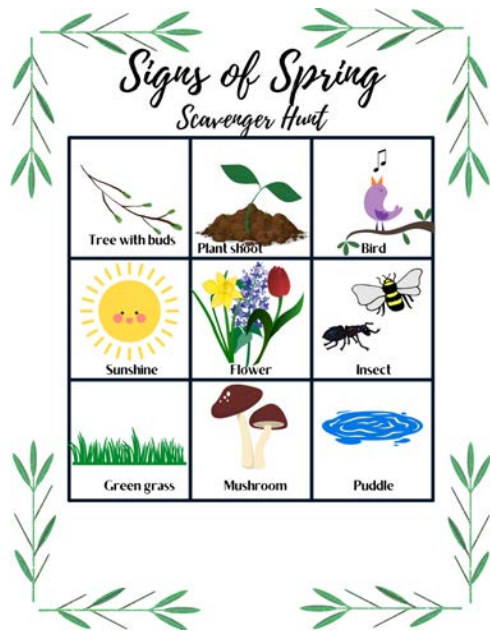
By the end of March, it's warming up here in Waltham! The trees' buds are swelling, fall's perennial plantings are poking up, birds are singing spring songs, and the sun is shining. We are so excited to see these tiny and big signs of

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spring popping up all around us. After reading *Finding Wild* in the classroom, we endeavored outdoors to explore and find our own wild!



Using scavenger hunt sheets as our guides, we searched around the garden to find these beautiful signs - insects, plant shoots, sunshine, mushrooms, and more! As one student shared, we are like predators hunting for spring!



"I found the sun!"



"It feels like a water bottle!"

What's a Plant?

A plant or not a plant? That is the question. With so many green shoots popping up around

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us, it's important to learn what's a plant and what's not a plant. We read and discussed the different parts of a plant and what a plant needs to grow. We then searched in the garden to find examples of plants and objects that are not plants. We shared why something was a plant: they're green, they have roots, they have a stem, etc.; and why something was not a plant: it's plastic, it's a rock, etc. We reviewed a plant's life cycle - from seed to germination to shoot and first leaves to adult plant to flowering and pollination to fruit and back to seed again!



"Can you show me?"

Nature Journals

The end of March means that the planting season has begun! To mark the occasion, we created our very own nature journals to document the plants and their growth. After discussing what we remembered about seeds needing to grow and what makes a plant a plant, we started to build our journals. With a

construction paper cover and white internal pages, we, with the help of teachers, stapled our books together. Then, we decorated and personalized the covers of our journals and headed outside. Once outside, we gathered in the apple tree garden to wake up our first raised bed of the season! Wake up, wake up! We cleared away their warm mulch blanket and planted kohlrabi seeds.



We threw off the bed's warm blanket



And pushed that blanket to the compost!

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Together, we watered them. Then, we had the chance to fill in the pages of our journal with what we did - drawing the seeds, the planting process, the watering, and more! We are so excited to continue adding to our observations.



We were very focused on our drawings.



Working carefully to plant in neat rows

Purim Pollinators

The beginning of this month brought us Purim, and the Lemberg garden team partnered with BJEP, the Boston Area Jewish Education

Program, at Brandeis for a festive worm, compost, and seed ball exploration.



Our table of information

We talked about how we can celebrate the world around us and help to take care of it, and the children were so enthusiastic. It was so fun to get to share the magic of the garden with others, and even see a few familiar faces from Lemberg!



Sylvia and Sarah got their pollinator faces on!

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Farewell, Garden Beds!

Our trusty raised beds are reaching the end of their time. They have served us well, providing us with bountiful harvests and glorious blooms. Almost ten years old, these raised beds have been with us since we moved into our current building.



Thank you, beds!

Two years ago, our lovely summer high school interns beautifully repainted them, adding color and vibrancy to the exteriors. The frozen winters and sweltering summers have taken their toll, and it's time to retire our old stand-bys. We thank them for all they provided and look forward to building new ones in the near future.

Sylvia, along with Lemberg teacher Daria Badini, went to the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers annual spring conference this March! This year, the conference was in New Orleans. They presented our garden program, the benefits of environmental education, and the amazing college students we work with who help to make all of this happen. It was so wonderful to have the chance to meet with others working in the field and share our ideas, and so rewarding to hear others' shared enthusiasm for the work that we do!



All smiles in New Orleans!

FAMILY GARDEN DAYS

N4C Conference

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Our first family garden day of the season is just around the corner - April 22nd from 9:30am to 11:30am. We will be building brand new raised beds, and couldn't be more excited! Please reach out to Sylvia if you have any questions at skohnlevitt@lebergcc.org

LEMBERG CHILDREN'S CENTER

FAMILY GARDEN DAY

JOIN US TO REBUILD OUR RAISED BEDS FOR THE GARDEN SPACE!



GET READY TO GET YOUR HANDS A BIT DIRTY

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| APRIL 22ND, 2023 | FIREFLY LEARNING GARDEN | FROM 9: 30AM TO 11:30 AM |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|

REACH OUT TO SYLVIA IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
skohnlevitt@lebergcc.org

Down the street in the Stanley Elementary school library, students have been planting seeds and transplanting the seedlings which have been thriving under the school's grow lights.

Meanwhile, outside the weather has warmed up enough for a volunteer day. Thanks to the members of Symbiosis, a Brandeis student volunteer group, we were able to clean up the path to the garden, clear out a lot of old plant material, and pick up trash on the edge of the wetland. We even removed an invasive tree!



Thank you to Symbiosis volunteers for all of their hard work!

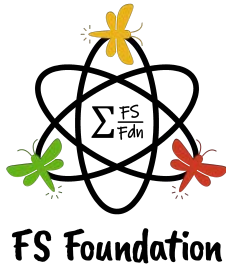
Spring at Stanley Elementary

Thank you to our 2023 donors!

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The Feinberg Family