OUR NEW INTERN

In, July we welcomed our new environmental intern Emily, a rising senior at Brandeis studying Health, Science, Society, and Policy as well as Environmental Studies. She has a passion for farming, food education and teaching kids about the environment.

Thank you to all of the families that attended our most recent work day on July 7. With your help, the weeds didn’t stand a chance.

JUNE & JULY ACTIVITIES

What Have We Been Up To in the Garden?

Garden Buddies
The Running Brook Camp middle school buddies are here. The teens are paired with Lemberg buddies. For the first activity, they went on a multi-sensory scavenger hunt to explore what we have in the garden. This experience helped our friends understand what is currently growing in the garden and how to recognize different plants. It gave Lemberg kids a chance to find and identify plants by color, texture, smell and size and make friends with a teen they’ll see until mid-August. Additionally, it helped introduce some of the middle school buddies to vegetables they had not seen growing and had never tasted before.
Next, the buddies created scarecrows to help fend off pests in the garden. They worked together to design, build, stuff, and dress the scarecrows. In the end the scarecrows turned out great and the kids have grown quite attached to them!

The third week was an exploration of composting. Everyone learned about the decomposition process by chopping plants for the compost pile, making fertilizer from worm castings and examining bugs, fungi and other decomposers. The kids have already shown great interest in the worm box in the garden, so this project allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of worms in the decomposition process and to learn more about the life cycle of food and plant waste.

**Food in the Garden**
In June and July many of our plants are beginning to fruit. The kids have been enjoying eating green beans, sugar snap peas, radishes, basil, chard, carrots, and the first zucchini. As they pick and try new things, the environmental education team helps them notice the taste, smell, and recognize specific features of the plants. Maybe they’d like to tell you what they can remember about the food they are trying.

The garden team has also been working hard to come up with raw recipes for the kids try out for their snacks. Recently, the Navigators made a nut-free basil pesto that they really enjoyed. First, they helped pick most of the ingredients from the garden and then inside the classroom they were able to smell, taste, and feel all the ingredients. The Navigators were excited that
they helped collect the ingredients used in the recipe and felt connected to the finished product since they knew where it came from. We hope to integrate more recipes like this into snack time as new veggies are ready to harvest.

COMING UP

The visiting Chinese students have arrived and will be with us for several more weeks. They are joining the garden activities, accompanied by their teacher who helps with translation. They’ve jumped right into all the environmental experiences with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Looking forward, we are excited to see more fruits and vegetables blooming. This will be a great opportunity to learn about the life cycle of plants, how to identify ripe plants ready for picking, and how to properly remove fruit from the plants. The kids will also be gaining an understanding where exactly food comes from.

**Planting**

All around the garden the kids have been such a great help planting corn seedlings, pole beans, edamame, and peas. They especially enjoyed the pole bean and edamame planting because those plants are inside the playground area. Everyday, they can watch the plants grow and help water them. This has taught many of them about the mechanics of planting as well as how to care for plants as they continue to grow.
JOIN US IN THE GARDEN
PARENT WORKDAY

Saturday, August 18th from 9:30 to 11:30 am

Weather permitting, earn parent hours helping with garden and playground projects.

Email Beth with questions or to RSVP: belowe@brandeis.edu

THIS MONTH IN THE GARDEN

Bug Hotel

There are always so many interesting bugs in our garden, so this month with our buddies, we built a hotel to see what kind of bugs would make a home inside. We found small tubes and containers, and our Running Brook buddies helped the kids fill them with grass clippings, string, some vegetables, and other interesting textures. We put our hotel up in the Fairy Garden, and we’re hoping to observe the critters who crawl in, then put them into a compost pile where they’ll have lots of food and shelter, and other bugs to play with.

Harvesting

As the summer season continues, more and more fresh produce is available from the garden. The children frequently show interest in coming to the garden to pick the ever-changing varieties of food we have. For some, their favorites are the leafy greens such as kale and chard, while for others the fresh tomatoes and cucumbers are the most desired. There is something for everyone to enjoy!

This month we’re beginning to harvest fruit: blackberries, raspberries and grapes. Watching fruits and vegetables grow has taught the kids so much about plant life cycles. Frequently, children on the playground can be heard telling the other kids not to pick something and then describing how to recognize what is ready. Overall it has been a great lesson filled with yummy, healthy treats for the children.
Food Projects

With all this ripe food there has been an increase in food projects for the classrooms. Last week the Voyagers learned how to make tzatziki sauce they could eat for snack. They picked most of the ingredients fresh from the garden and then worked together to follow the instructions for the dipping sauce. This helped the kids hone teamwork skills, patience, and make connections between what they see in the garden and what they eat from their plate.

The garden team has also been hard at work making vegetables from the garden into child-friendly snacks. For both morning and afternoon snacks, the children have seen cinnamon sugar eggplant chips, zucchini muffins, apple muffins, and potato salad, and they always come back for more!

Parent give away box

This month marks the beginning of the parent give-away box in the main office on the first floor. Nearly every day, the garden education team puts out freshly picked produce from the day for your family to take home and enjoy. Ask your children about what they like best and what recipes they’ve tried at Lemberg. They feel very connected to the garden and many of them have picked some of the produce in the box themselves.

We hope you continue to enjoy the items in the give-away basket and thank you all for your generous support of the garden as an education tool for your children.

Playground raised bed gardens

In the beginning of the summer we grew sugar snap peas on the playground where the kids could grab a pea when it was ready as they played. Last month, the kids planted soybeans and pole beans, and they are finally starting to fruit. Everyday we check the plants and soil to see how the plants are growing. The kids check if they need water by looking at and feeling the soil, and we look at the plants to identify new growth, flowers and fruits, and identify leaves that need to be plucked off. We also check the beds for weeds—the kids love being able to identify the small plants they are allowed to pull up.
Potato Harvest

This month we gathered around our potato cage in The Long Garden. The potato plants were shaken free from the cage, covered in compost and hay, and the kids dug through it to find pounds of multi-colored fingerling potatoes. The Lemberg students helped the visiting Chinese students feel at home in our garden as they worked together to harvest the potatoes.

Then the garden interns roasted the potatoes and turned them into a delicious potato salad filled with other fresh veggies from the garden.

Running Brook Buddies Say Goodbye

Our collaboration with the Running Brook Camp teen buddies has come to an end. To celebrate our time together, we made spring rolls from the foods we grow in the garden. The buddies helped the kids select which veggies they wanted inside the rolls, and together they wrapped their rolls in rice paper and dipped them into our homemade sauce. What a fun and delicious way for the kids to say goodbye to their buddies. Our six weeks of explorations were filled with learning and friendship for all involved.

Visiting Chinese Students

For several weeks this month, we were excited to have visiting Chinese children join the garden activities. They were excited too, and participated eagerly in harvests, tasting and food projects. Their teachers were as thrilled as the kids to explore all we have to offer in the garden.

Saying Farewell to Summer Interns

Our fabulous interns, Mennen and Viriya, will be leaving us soon. We wish them well in their next adventures and thank them for all their hard work, creativity and care. The kids will miss them, as will the garden team.
WELCOME TO OUR NEW INTERNS

Anna is a student at Brandeis with a passion for the environment and spreading that passion on to kids. She believes in the importance of exposing children to the wonders of gardening at an early age.

Allan is a senior at Brandeis looking to improve his gardening skills and expose the children at Lemberg to the beauty of nature around them. He is hoping someday to become an elementary school science teacher.

FALL IN THE GARDEN

Harvesting

As summer comes to an end, the kids have been enjoying both the cooler weather and the opportunity to harvest more produce. They often help pick cucumbers, chard, kale, tomatoes, raspberries and more. Many of them have become experts in identifying when food is ready to pick and eat which is very helpful in the garden. Others have been noticing that with the changing seasons, different foods are now available while others are not. As the fall moves into winter, we’ll continue to explore the reasons plants have specific times of the year they grow and can be picked.

Planting

The kids helped plant strawberries as well as lettuce, spinach, kale, carrots and arugula for late fall harvest and overwintering. Having watched their plants grow through the seasons, they feel more invested in their care, knowing they helped plant, water and fertilize them.
**Exploring Seeds**

Kids went on a hunt for all sorts of seeds throughout the garden, including the fascinating seed pods of many flowers which the kids opened up for a big surprise. They dissected the seed pods and some larger seeds and analyzed them under a magnifying glass, noticing different shapes, colors, textures, and sizes. The activity revealed that while seeds have many shapes, sizes and textures, they all contain everything necessary for the growth and development of a new plant.

**Our Worm Farm**

We revisited the worm bin in the garden where the worms have been hard at work all summer. To prepare for the activity, Navigators and Voyagers began with a classroom discussion about worms and read the book *Winnie the Worm Farmer*. Then we harvested worm castings and revitalized the worm bin. The first step was to remove all the worms safely from a level of the bin and then remove the worm castings to use for fertilizer. The next step was putting new cardboard bedding and food for the worms to live in until we check on them again. We used the worm castings to make liquid fertilizer and fertilized plants around the garden. This reinforced the role of worms in the garden, the importance of fertilizer for plants, and how to properly care for plants.

**FUN FOOD ART WITH THE INTERNS**

**Rainbow Food Exploration**

In the last week of September, the Environmental Interns led an exploration of rainbow foods in the garden. Navigator and Voyager friends helped construct a rainbow and discussed the different colors in the rainbow. Then we searched the garden to discover what colors can be found in food. After finding these foods, we talked about why vegetables are different colors, and why it’s important to eat many different colors of food.

**Beet Painting**

With the Adventurer and Explorer friends, the Environmental Interns will be using beets to make some artwork. Beets have a beautiful pink color and are the perfect size to create paintings or stamped designs. The goal of this exploration is to have fun while learning that garden produce can be used creatively for more than eating!
SEPTEMBER MEMORIES

Planting strawberries in the playground

JOIN US IN THE GARDEN
UPCOMING PARENT WORKDAY

Saturday: October 6, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Weather permitting, earn parent hours helping with garden and playground projects.

Email Beth with questions or to RSVP: belowe@brandeis.edu

Thank you to all of the families that attended our most recent work day on August 18. We met several new families and accomplished many things, including digging holes and bending pipe so that our team could set up a new arch to support our grape vines.

Zucchini muffins