WELCOME NEW INTERNS

Sophia has returned for another semester, bringing her cheery dedication and expertise in relating to young children in the Lemberg way. We welcome new intern Elyse Hahn to the garden team this spring. Elyse is a senior at Brandeis studying Chemistry and Environmental Science. She is also an expert graphic illustrator who designed our new banner for the newsletter! Thanks, Elyse! We’re looking forward to working together through the Spring.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR WINTER

The Garden Alphabet Book

At the beginning of January, we completed the annual Garden Alphabet Book. The project is process-oriented, giving children a chance to examine garden catalogues, talk about all the vegetables and fruits they recognize, and compare their favorite tastes and textures. In addition to the language and thinking skills developed during these conversations, this project generates excitement for the coming growing season, and reinforces knowledge of plants, healthy foods, and life-cycles. Organizing the pages by letter reinforces children’s knowledge of letter sounds and shapes. The children develop fine motor skills and visual/spatial design sense while cutting out pictures and gluing them onto the book pages.

What vegetables start with the letters R, K, or T?

What’s Inside a Seed?

This month, we began a series of activities to explore seeds: What are they? How are they different from each other? What is inside them? And what happens when we sprout them?

Examining seeds from different fruits
Next, we put corn, beans and peas on damp paper inside of baggies, and placed them in the windows to observe the sprouting process.

Preparing our sprout observation packages

**Paper Tube Planters**

Continuing our seed exploration, the upstairs and downstairs classrooms got the chance to plant window boxes. Corn, beans, and peas found new homes in recycled toilet paper tubes that can be transplanted to the garden in the spring. The plants will be able to grow through the cardboard once it starts to decompose.

Filling paper tubes with soil

Our seeds need water to grow!

**Shoots and Worms**

We give a lot of credit to our wormy friends here at Lemberg. They eat our leftovers and help our garden grow healthy and strong. To our delight, some of their food took root and began to sprout. What an interesting way to finish up our seed exploration! The Voyagers and
Navigators checked in with their sprout baggies and identified the sprouted seeds, seed leaves that feed the baby plant, roots, stems, and the tiny first leaves. There were so many shapes, textures and colors: purple corn roots, hairy pumpkin roots, and twisty pea stems. The sprouted mango seed looked like a horned monster!

After reading the book Winnie the Worm Farmer, we checked the worm house, looked at worms up close, talked about their anatomy and life cycle. We found some tiny babies and could see the food travelling through the worms’ digestive systems. Then we gathered worm castings and made fertilizer, which we used on our indoor plants. In summer, the worms will make fertilizer for our whole outdoor garden. Finally, we fed the worms and put them back in the safety of their dark home.

We’d like to acknowledge and thank our generous supporters, The FS Foundation, Village Bank and the Feinberg family for this year’s gifts, making possible our wonderful environmental education programs at Lemberg.

Written by the Environmental Education Team