

# Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## APRIL IN THE GARDEN

As the temperature warms up, the garden starts to erupt with vibrant colors - greens, yellows, purples, reds. We took advantage of the sunshine and engaged in the outdoors with our constantly changing and flourishing surroundings. The final frost is just around the corner and the beginning of April marked the start of our planting season, leading to ample opportunities to discuss the garden and its visitors.

### Welcoming Birds



*Everyone did a great job preparing the pinecones!*

One of the markers of spring is the return of resounding birdsong. Many migratory populations make their way back to our temperature climate and local, residential communities' eggs start to hatch. However,

during the beginning of spring, there is less ability for these birds to forage for food. To help ease their challenges, the Voyagers and Navigators created pinecone birdfeeders, utilizing sunbutter and bird seed to provide food for this leaner month.



*"Smells yummy!"*

We learned about different types of birds and their habits during our changing seasons. When we finished making our cones, we either brought our feeders home or hung them up around the garden. The birds seem to be singing even louder now!

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*"Now the birds have food!"*

## Bunnies in the Garden

This month the garden welcomed some new visitors!



*Taking a look at the bunny nest*

While preparing garden beds for our spring plantings, intern Sarah found a nest of baby bunnies. We took our peeks and made sure to give them space to grow!



*The babies cuddle up together.*

The bunnies grow up so fast, so they have since hopped away, but it was a wonderful experience for the children to see how different animals utilize the space before all of our veggies are planted.

## Planting Outside

Continuing our exploration of seeds and how they grow, the Voyagers and Navigators helped plant our spring crops of radishes and carrots in the raised beds.



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*There are so many types of seeds!*

We read how there is a huge variety of seeds, big and small, round and rough, soft and hard. We talked about how as the days are warming up, we can start to grow our favorite types of vegetables outside.



*Looking at the tiny carrot seeds*

After carefully tucking the seeds into the soil, we are so excited to watch them grow and have our tasty, crunchy snacks to eat!

## Drawing Flowers

All the spring blooms have burst in the garden, welcoming us whenever we venture inside! Their colors and shapes are so beautiful to observe, and together, we created pieces of art to try and capture the moment.

We reviewed the parts of a flower, how all of the rainy springtime weather helps them to grow, and talked about our favorite flowers. We also discussed the changes we have been seeing these past few weeks as various flowers have grown around the garden.



*We sat and observed.*

Then, armed with clipboards, paper, and markers, we took to the garden, taking in the wonders and variety of flowers; from

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dandelions, to grape hyacinths, to daffodils, to bluebells, we loved to draw them.



*The daffodils were a favorite choice!*

## Greenhouse Planting

The Voyagers and Navigators helped the interns start our favorite summer seeds - squash, watermelon, and corn. They filled trays with soil, planted seeds, watered, and placed tags.



*Watering our newly planted seeds*

The warmer weather makes the greenhouse a cozy place for seedlings to grow before we transplant them in the garden after the last frost. Friends especially enjoyed walking inside the greenhouse to feel the warm air in contrast to the chilly air outside.

## Toddlers in the Garden

The Explorers and Adventurers have continued to explore the garden each week, and now that there is new growth, we have fresh weeds to feed our worms! Everyone does a wonderful job gently feeding and picking up the worms.



*Tearing up leaves for the worms*

Outside of the worm bin, which contains Red Wiggler Worms, we have been peeking under logs to see earthworms in the dirt, and have



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discussed how many different kinds of worms we can see!



*What's under this log?*

## Family Garden Days



*Working hard to dig up the yucca's deep roots*

We had another successful family gardening day this month! Parents and students alike helped us dig up our huge yucca plant, and we then hauled it across the playground to our new raised bed, which parents built last month. The newly transplanted yucca will continue to grow next to our swingsets, offering us ample opportunities to observe its unique leaves. A huge thank you to the families that donated a Saturday morning to help with this project. We appreciate it so much! The next workday is on May 14th from 9:30 to 11:30 am. If you would like to participate or have any questions, feel free to contact Sylvia ([skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu](mailto:skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu)), the Environmental Education Associate Director.



*The yucca adjusting to their new home*

## STANLEY UPDATES

April has also been a busy month down the street at Stanley Elementary School! We collaborated with Stanley teachers to host a

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series of April Afternoons in the Garden, where children and their parents participated in various gardening projects such as clearing weeds, setting up a new compost bin, and transplanting seedlings into pots for Stanley's upcoming plant sale (see below for more info.)



*Potting Waltham Butternut squash, a local variety!*

A before and after shot shows just how much of a difference we were able to make in the garden, clearing space for new plantings.



*A fresh garden ready for new crops*

## Volunteering at Stanley

We were also very thankful to have Brandeis students volunteer with us two weekends this month to help in continuing to improve the garden space, making it more accessible for Stanley families. Students from Symbiosis, a group of volunteers from Brandeis's Waltham Group, helped to trim trees and laid down a mulch path, making it easier to walk behind the school to reach the garden.



*Volunteers next to the new path*

On another weekend, we cut down invasive plants and began to lay down sheets of plastic for a process called solarization, which traps heat above the weeds to prevent them from growing. This will keep the garden free from prickly and quick growing plants, making the garden a safer space for the students, while also



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giving us more room to plant yummy food for families to take home!



*You can see the heat trapped under the plastic!*

During an afternoon in the garden, former Lemberg students who now attend Stanley as kindergarteners excitedly discussed how they could not wait to make kale chips like they used to back at Lemberg! It is so rewarding to watch nature continue to be a part of their lives as they attend a new school. A huge thanks to the volunteers and donors who help make this work possible.

## Stanley Elementary Plant Sale

Mrs. Cox and the students at Stanley Elementary have been busy all spring, starting seeds under the grow lights in the school library. So many plants have filled up the windowsills and shelves, it's turning into a library of plants. Stop by the sale on May 21 and take something home for your own garden:

The Stanley Elementary School would like to invite you to our second annual

## PLANT SALE

FEATURING OUR \$5 STUDENT GROWN  
FLOWERS, VEGETABLES & HERB PLANTS

SATURDAY, MAY 21ST, 2022

9AM-1PM RAIN OR SHINE

05.21.22

W.F. Stanley Elementary School  
250 South Street  
Waltham, MA

We will also have activities for kids, craft sale tables\* and A

COFFEE TRUCK

All proceeds go to The Stanley Learning Garden

\*Tables are \$25 for any crafters out there\*

[kimberlycox@walthampublicschools.org](mailto:kimberlycox@walthampublicschools.org)

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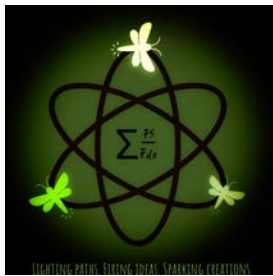
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