

Firefly Scientists' Garden

Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN

During the garden's winter nap, Mother Nature covered it with blankets and blankets of snow! As the garden is getting tucked in, we are learning about organic worlds smaller than the eye can see. With all the time inside, we can prepare for the spring flowers. There might not be plants to water, but there are bunnies to feed! So let's hop to it and adventure into the cold month ahead.

LEARNING THIS MONTH

Little Scientists

Who can be a scientist? Better yet, what is a scientist? You and me, that's who! Scientists are people who like to



explore and ask questions about the world. Some scientists do it for a living, while others, like us at Lemberg, do it to learn more. This week, we read *I Want to Be a Scientist* by Dan Liebman. We learned about all the different kinds of scientists, from biologists and zoologists to



astronomers and computer engineers. They might seem different, but they all ask questions and test hypotheses. Hypotheses are proposed explanations to our questions that we test through experiments. We

did our own experiments. What objects float, and which sink? We made a hypothesis each time, then tested it! Whoa, some objects floated on the water, then sank. That's science for you, always surprising us.



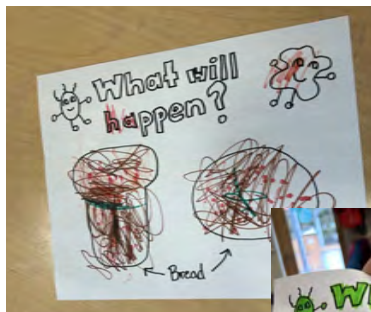
Little Microbiologists

We continued to put on our scientist hats and learned about the classroom's microbiome. Special guest Neils Bradshaw read us *Do Not Lick This Book* by Idan Ben-Barak, which was about the tiny world of microbes. We can't see

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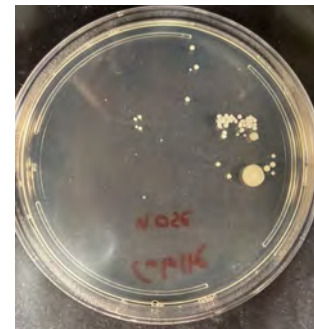
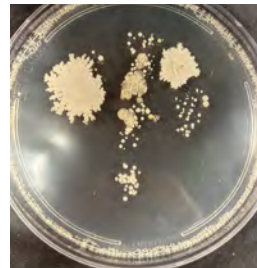
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them, but they are always with us. We continued making hypotheses about which places in the classroom are dirty. Using agar plates, we can test out our hypothesis to see what grows. To do this experiment with



household items, we used bread (bakery and shelf-stable),

water, and plastic bags. Touch a place in the class, touch your hand to the bread, put it in a Ziploc bag, and add a bit of water. Then we drew what we thought would happen to each slice. The bakery bread got super moldy, but the shelf-stable bread after four weeks still hasn't grown anything. The agar



plates showed many different microbes. Some of them were safe, like the ones in the soil, and we got to smell them. Others were dangerous, and we only saw a picture. Luckily, we got to see a close-up of the safe microbes under the microscope.



Seed Balls

Just cause the garden is sleeping does not mean we have to stop planting. This week, we learned what seeds need to



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grow from the book *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons. A seed needs soil, water, and sun! A seed will wake up once the water softens its seed coat. To plant some wildflowers before spring, we made seed balls. These are soil- and seed-filled clay balls that can be planted directly in the ground once the snow melts. Water will seep through the clay and into the seed, softening the seed coat and initiating its growth. We can not wait for the snow to melt and the flowers to bloom!

Animal Detectives

We saw something unusual in the garden, the apple trees' bark is missing! Who did that? We became animal detectives this week.



Around the trees were bunny footprints and droppings. Aha! The bunnies were eating the bark. To learn more about the animals in the garden, we reread *Stranger in the Woods* by Carl R.

Sams II and Jean Stoick. We counted how many different animals were in the book and which animals we have seen outside in our backyards. Outside, we used animal tracks to determine which creatures were still in the garden. As for the bunny problem, we gave the bunnies some yummy treats far away from our plants. This was to help them have full tummies and not from eating our garden!



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GARDEN THIS MONTH

The garden was full of snow, and we even got a couple of days off due to a blizzard! However, we were able to preplant wildflowers in our clay seed balls so they are ready for spring. Of course, we were able to bundle up and play in the frosty snow!



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Want to Learn More?

We learned about all sorts of exciting things this month! If you want to continue learning and getting involved, **check out these sources below!**

- Learn and explore science experiments at home [HERE](#)
- Recreate your own bread experiment (bakery bread works best!) [HERE](#)
- See how to make your own seed balls [HERE](#)
- Discover the animal snow prints of Massachusetts [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

- Find our environmental education book [HERE](#)
- Donate to our program [HERE](#)



Lemberg joined the Tu Bishvat Seder at Temple Beth Israel, to share with the community about our environmental program



Thank you to our many wonderful alumni donors and friends!