

Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

WINTER IN THE GARDEN

At last, the garden is taking a long winter nap to rest as we journey through the cold months ahead. While our garden is fairly empty, we still have a bed of garlic that has taken root and will be ready to harvest in the summertime. The garden isn't completely empty, though, because winter birds and bunnies are still exploring the frozen outdoors. So let's get ready for all learning and playing we still have left to do!

LEARNING FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Welcoming Winter

As the days get colder, we're noticing a lot of changes to the plants and wildlife in our garden. After brainstorming some of the characteristics of winter, we decided to practice our observation skills. While reading *Snow*, by Marion Dane Bauer, we took note of the bare trees, brown grass, and cloudy skies. We then ran around the garden with our winter identification sheets and used our five senses to complete our signs of winter scavenger hunt. We then got to work documenting the signs of winter we observed in our very own



snowglobes! We're excited to continue welcoming the winter season as we play in the snow, and maybe drink some hot cocoa!

Animal Migration and Hibernation

When we set out to observe the signs of winter, we noticed that the garden is much quieter than it is in the summertime. Fewer birds are chirping, and there are no buzzing pollinators to be found. To investigate where the missing animals have gone, we read *Winter Survival*, by L.R. Hanson. We learned about the animals that hibernate, migrate, or stay around for the winter. Every animal has a different winter survival strategy. We then set out to the garden to act out the different survival strategies of our New England animals. We flew like monarch butterflies and birds to go south where it's warmer. We hibernated like bears, raccoons, and skunks. We



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even pretended to wiggle under the ground like worms and bugs! We're lucky to have our warm school to stay inside when it's cold and snowy in the garden!

The Snow Is Falling

It is finally getting snowy outside, so we make sure to bundle up tight with coats, scarves, hats, and gloves. Snow looks so beautiful, but what even is snow?

This week, we learned about how snow forms and explored some fun activities to do in the snow. We read three different books, with lots of interesting information and cool snowy pictures. The



first book was *SNOW!* by Jill McDonald. This book gave us an inside look at how snow forms on a snowy day. Then we

looked at real snowflake pictures from *The Story of Snow* by Mark Cassino with Jon Nelson.

Lastly, we had to see what a snow day was all about. We read *Here Comes the Snow* by Angela Shelf Medearis, which showed us the fun we can have in

the frosty cold. After the books, we colored in a page of snowflakes. Each

snowflake had 6 sides just like in real life. For more frosty fun, we used watercolors

to reveal snowflakes and animal tracks on our snowy papers. It might be the start of the snowy season, but there is lots of snowy fun to look forward to.



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Who is looking?

It's the new year, which means it is time for new perspectives. The best way to do that is by looking through the lens of others. This week, we took a look at how other animals and humans see the world. How many colors can we see? Is the world blurry or clear? Well, it depends on who is looking. In the book, *Who's Looking? How Animals See the World* by Carol Matas, we get to see how babies, ants, beavers, fish, bunnies, robins, owls, wolves, and many more animals see. Some animals, like robins, can see more colors than humans can! Bunnies have eyes on the side and can see almost 360 degrees. Some animals saw in black and white, and others had better smell than sight. After the book, we needed to color in how we see the word, because no one person



sees it the same way.

Huddle Up!

As January continues, we will be waddling into colder weather, just like the penguins! Penguins are birds that live in the southern hemisphere in snowy, cold climates. They eat fish and huddle together for warmth. In the classroom, we read a silly story about Pete the Penguin. In *Penguin Pete's New Friends* by Marcus Pfister, Pete goes fishing but gets distracted by all his new Arctic friends. Once we learned about Pete's adventure, we pretended to be penguins like Pete. We waddled in place, then huddled up just like penguins do. When we finished being penguins, we colored our own penguin friend. Outside was snowy, but just like penguins, we love snow. We played in the snow, built a snowman, and threw snowballs. Penguins must have lots of fun in their snowy homes.



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Animals in the Snow

Snow is still falling outside as January comes to an end. Piles of white snow cover the garden. But there is something in the snow... bunny footprints! The bunnies are still here, enjoying the snow, along with us. We hope they like our snowmen and snowangels. This week, we looked at which animals are still in the snowy garden: bunnies, birds, owls, deers and more. To see them all, we read *Stranger in the Woods* by Carl R. Sams II and Jean Stoick. This book showed us real pictures of all the animals in the snow. These curious animals found a snowman in the woods.



different animals, jumping, flapping, and

We wonder what the garden critters think of our snowmen. After the book, we moved around the room as



spinning. To wrap it all up, we colored in our own snowman and garden critters. We love the snow just like the animals that stay in the garden year-round.



Winter Fun!!

Look at the fun we had in the snowy garden. There may not be any more vegetables growing, but we can still explore, learn, and have fun in our outdoor spaces!

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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!**

- Find our environmental education book [HERE](#)
- Discover winter STEM activities [HERE](#)
- Learn how to feed the winter birds [HERE](#)
- Explore the science of snow [HERE](#)

Thank you to our many wonderful alumni donors and friends!

