

# Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## WINTER IN THE GARDEN

### First Frost

Way back on November 3rd, the temperature dipped below freezing, and we had our first frost!



*Nasturtiums and Marigolds after the frost.*

This icy visitor made many of our warm-weather loving plants wilt and marked the shift of the garden's season. Each night before we leave, we tuck the vegetables in, using a warm cover to make sure they keep growing.

### Putting the Garden to Sleep

As we geared up for this year's cold season, Sylvia, Sarah and Caroline went to work putting the garden to sleep for the winter. This included harvesting all spring and summer vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumber, zucchini, lettuces and watermelons. We also composted any

plants not suitable for cold weather and gathered up the fencing and posts to store until the next growing season.



*November harvest means Swiss chard, kale, mizuna, carrots, and the last of summer's peppers!*

Just like humans need rest, so does the garden, and the winter months are essential for building compost that keeps our soil nutrient rich for planting in the spring. In December, the Navigators and Voyagers did an amazing job helping us to cover the ground with cardboard and compost, protecting the ground for the coming winter months!

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*Putting the garden to bed*

## Planting Indoor Boxes

Students visited the garden on warmer days to plant indoor boxes of mizuna greens to enjoy during the cold months ahead. The kids were



*Filling a garden box with soil*

really excited to get back to garden activities! We discussed if plants can grow during the wintertime. After reading through a book about seeds, Pathfinders happily observed differences in seed shape and size, as well as how mizuna compared to other seeds we see throughout the garden. We noted the mizuna seeds are smaller and rounder than other seeds. Then, we predicted what would happen to the seeds after they were planted in the soil. Everyone helped scoop soil into the pot, and even enjoyed putting their hands in the dirt instead of using spoons. We sprinkled seeds into the soil and watered them with bottles and cans.



*Everyone enjoyed a taste!*

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As everyone explored the garden, we looked at a grown mizuna plant in the raised beds - everyone wanted to taste the leaves!

## Toddlers in the Garden

The Hummingbirds, Explorers, and Adventurers all had the opportunity to explore the changing season in the garden. They helped us collect the final carrots from the raised beds, tasting their sweet crunch.



*There's nothing quite like a carrot from the garden!*

Each week they gave shredded paper and kitchen scraps to the worms. As they sprinkled

in the scraps, they continued to learn how worm castings act as fertilizer in the garden!



*The worms get a tasting helping of greens.*

After the first frost, many marigolds still had flowers left on their stems. But, as the weather got colder each evening, the blooms started to wilt. With the aid of many hands, we picked more marigolds to enjoy. Playing with flowers is so much fun!



*A friend showing off flowers!*

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## Indoor Activities



*Peeking in at the worms*

On cold January days, we stayed inside to feed our worms! Our worm bin is one of the many ways we compost food and garden scraps. It's a great opportunity to discuss recycling of nutrients and prevention of food waste. Friends love to feel the wiggly worms, and are excited to feed them more as new growth comes in this spring.



*Feeding the worms food scraps*

## Family Garden Workday

In November we had another wonderful family garden day! We had the huge undertaking of moving kiwi vines from the center of the garden into a new arch structure. Normally, this task would be challenging. But, with the help of our amazing volunteers, we successfully transplanted our kiwi vines! In the spring, when the vines start to grow again, we will see a creeping arch of green! As the fruits mature on the vines, they will droop down and be easy to pick and enjoy. We are extremely excited to see how they will continue to grow. Thank you again to all of our amazing volunteers! We will be sending out a new schedule for spring volunteer days soon, but in the meantime Sylvia ([skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu](mailto:skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu)), the Environmental Education Associate Director, is always available if you have any questions.



*We dug up their deep roots, moved them, and planted them.*

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*Our beautiful kiwi arch!*

## STANLEY ELEMENTARY UPDATES

We wrapped up the growing season with a garden clean-up in November, about a week after our first frost. Although there was only a small group of humans at this event, a deer and a group of turkeys dropped by!

The garden is resting for the winter months, but Mrs. Cox has been doing some indoor gardening with the children, making use of the grow racks in the school library. Meanwhile we are making plans for the new year. Stay tuned to see what's coming next!



*This deer kept an eye on Beth while she worked.*



*This Turkey brought friends (not pictured) to visit us.*

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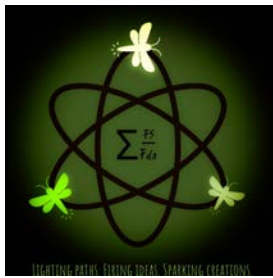
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