



Fall Garden Happenings at Conestoga Elementary

Potato Harvesting

Mrs. Altdorffer's and Mrs. Fellenbaum's third grade classes harvested potatoes from the garden as part of a plant study. After harvesting, the potatoes were prepared three different ways and taste-tested by students. Yum!



See Mrs. Altdorffer's blog site for details:<http://blogs.pennmanor.net/ealtdorffer/2012/09/13/one-potato-two-potato/>



A Three Sisters Garden: What is it?

It is an ancient method of gardening using an intercropping system which grows corn, beans, and squash crops simultaneously in the same growing area that is typically a rounded mound of soil, often called a hill.

- Corn is the oldest sister. She stands tall in the center.
- Beans are the next sister. She climbs through squash and then up corn to bind all together as she reaches for the sun. Beans help keep the soil fertile by converting the sun's energy into nitrogen filled nodules that grow on its roots. As beans grow they use the stored nitrogen as food.
- Squash is the third sister. She grows over the mound, protecting her sisters from weeds and shades the soil from the sun with her leaves, keeping it cool and moist.



4th Grade Students Visit the Garden



Mrs. Ochs' and Mrs. Graham's 4th grade classes had regular garden visits to observe and help maintain the garden- they cleaned out beds, gathered seeds, tidied up, observed many insects and smelled and tasted various herbs.



Observed in the Garden



Tomato Hornworm



Praying Mantis



Grasshopper



Swallowtail Caterpillar

Bob's At It Again!

Thank you to Bob Martin, who once again, volunteered his time and handiwork to improve the inside of our shed. Bob installed a countertop with shelving above and below, and a peg board. It looks fantastic and will provide a nice work space and help to keep our shed neat and orderly. Thank you, Bob!!!





Scenes from the Garden



Mrs. Altdoerffer's 3rd grade class harvested peas and tended to broccoli, cabbage, carrots and beets that were planted earlier in the summer: See her blog for more details: <http://blogs.pennmanor.net/ealtdoerffer/2012/09/20/peas-please/>



Mrs. Zurn's Kindergarten classes "plant a rainbow" using bulbs which will bloom this Spring. *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Elhert was read to the students, and they were introduced to bulbs and how to plant them. After Spring flowers are done blooming, students will plant annuals and perennials to keep the color going.



Mrs. Falk's 5th grade class harvested and dried herbs, using them to make pizza and mint tea.



Mrs. Graham's 4th grade science classes prepared a homemade pest-control spray for aphids using tomato leaves on the milkweed plants.

We Love Worms!



Do you know what vermicomposting is? Well just ask a student from Mrs. Brooks' and Miss Weber's classes and they could tell you. Vermicomposting is also known as worm composting. Each class prepared a worm bin with newspaper bedding after which they added about 1,000 Red Wigglers (special composting worms). Each week the students add food scraps into the bin from the cafeteria. The worms eat the food and pass it through their bodies. The end result – worm castings. These castings are a full of nutrients that help fertilize the garden soil. The picture shows the class adding the castings back into our garden soil after harvesting the castings. Who knew worms could be so beneficial!



UPDATES

Security camera and sensor light installed. Thanks to Mrs. Baker for helping make that happen.



Have you seen Ragland's Rotten Bunch in the cafeteria?



This bunch we are referring to are the second graders...of course they really aren't rotten, but we hope their food scraps will be! Led by Mrs. Ragland who generously volunteered to oversee our school wide composting program, the second graders are taking turns hauling our green composting bin from the cafeteria to the bins located in the garden. They've collected quite a bit of food scraps so far to which they add dry, brown leaves. This Spring we should have a nice pile of decaying food that will turn into rich, nutrient-dense compost! That compost will go right back into our garden soil. Not only does it benefit our garden, it also reduces the amount of trash that fills our dumpsters each day!

Mrs. Ragland even created a theme song that we hope to hear the second graders chanting some day!

Here it is:

*We are called the Rotten Bunch
We collect the waste from lunch*

*Only foods that decompose
To feed the soil as our garden grows*