

Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

JULY IN THE GARDEN

July has been an incredibly hot and dry month, but even so we have started to see so many fruits and vegetables ready for picking. Apples, grapes, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, lettuce, swiss chard, and herbs like basil and tarragon can all be found in the garden. Our corn, beans, squash, and zucchini will be next – keep an eye out for them in the garden in the coming weeks! We are so excited to share the food that we have grown; if you are in the garden, feel free to look around and sample some of the yummy snacks!



Showing off a fresh carrot

Aside from the edible parts of our garden, we have also spent much of this month giving all of our plants some extra love via repotting, fertilizing, and trimming. Our beloved spider plant, for example, was repotted, exposing its beautiful root system. Take a peek the next time you walk past to see the offshoots (also called spiderettes or plantlets) that have begun to grow off of the main plant.



Operation spider plant surgery complete 👍

Mint Tea



Patiently waiting for a refreshing cup of iced mint tea

Summer is in full swing, so we kicked off this month with a continuation of last month's popular mint hunt with a twist. In a lesson on identification of herbs in our garden, our preschool friends were encouraged to utilize their senses to identify similarities and differences between herbs in our garden. The herb lineup consisted of peppermint, spearmint, lemon balm, and wood sorrel. After sharing observations with one another, we harvested

Firefly Scientists' Garden



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some of these herbs to make iced tea as a fun way to beat the summer heat.

Making Seed Balls



Assembling our seed balls together

This summer, our highschool interns have often been in the garden at the same time as the preschoolers, which has allowed for some lovely new friendships to emerge. Since the highschoolers have spent lots of time studying pollinators this summer, we were able to work together to make seed balls for them. Together, we discussed the importance of wildflower gardens, and how they feed our precious pollinators. We mixed dirt and clay into balls which were then rolled in a tray of native wildflower seeds. Finally, we threw the seed balls out into our garden! While we wait for them to sprout, we have had a great time exploring the garden with new friends.



Enjoying yummy garden snacks together

Harvesting and Preparing Food



Heading out to pick carrots

We have spent a lot of time this summer finding new ways to eat the foods that we love. We look for plants that are ready to be picked, harvest them, and then prepare different dishes together. We often enjoy eating right off of the vine or roasting veggies to make crunchy snacks like kale chips. This month, though, we have spent a lot of time making salads. Our amazing

Firefly Scientists' Garden



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gardeners Athos and Christie led a lesson focused on mixing ingredients to create distinct flavors. We decided to see what ingredients we could mix to make new flavors, so our friends helped craft a salad bowl with plants from our garden. The children harvested lettuce, tomato, basil, and swiss chard as their main ingredients. Afterward, we made our very own salad dressing using oil, vinegar, and fresh herbs. The kids noticed that some of the vegetables that they didn't initially enjoy tasted different once combined with other ingredients. What a discovery!



Harvesting lettuce for a nutritious bowl of salad

Toddlers in the Garden

This month we had a blast with our toddler friends. It is always a joy to witness their curiosity at play. The children have grown very fond of watching construction vehicles and trains pass by from the highest point of the garden. They were also very excited to harvest

and sample everything our garden has to offer. The kiddos especially enjoy garlic chives, kale, carrots, apples, and blackberries!



Tasting juicy green apples

The infants in the Butterfly classroom have also been enjoying the space. The smells and textures of each growing plant provide ample opportunities for sensory exploration. We love having them with us!



I spy a "butterfly" in our garden

Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center



Taking a peek at our growing vines

LEAF Youth Development Program

This month has brought the return of our Youth Development Program, the Lemberg Environmental Action Force (LEAF). Lemberg is collaborating again with the [Waltham Partnership for Youth](#) to provide a summer internship experience for local youth to explore environmental activism.



The LEAF Team

This program includes 6 paid high school interns who are working on environmental stewardship projects with guidance from Sylvia as well as Elyse Hahn, who returns to work with us again this summer after an amazing year teaching Chemistry at Neighborhood House Charter School.



Photographing pollinators at Brandeis

Last summer's LEAF interns planted over 600 seedlings of native species across two sites on the Brandeis campus to support local pollinator populations. This summer, interns have been collecting data using the app [iNaturalist](#) to photograph, identify, and document the pollinators they find thriving at these sites!

The LEAF interns have been working around Waltham as well in partnership with the Waltham Land Trust. Pedestrians walking along the Charles River Walkway are able to see more of the river now that the LEAF interns have cleared out a significant amount of invasive Japanese knotweed. This helps support Waltham's native plant species and improves overall biodiversity.

Firefly Scientists' Garden



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Clearing Japanese Knotweed along the Charles

Down the block at Stanley Elementary School, the LEAF interns have done an amazing job clearing weeds and setting up a new irrigation system so that food can be grown without hand watering, which is especially helpful during the hottest summer months.



Installing irrigation lines at Stanley

Here at Lemberg, the interns have learned about pruning trees and vines, weeding, and maintaining our vermiculture worm compost bin. They have also gotten to work with the preschoolers, teaching them how to feed the worms and plant seeds for our pollinator friends, growing their own confidence in their capacity to be environmental educators.



Our annual cleaning of the worm bin

The LEAF interns have done an amazing job, working hard to protect the environment and building a sense of community within their team cohort. We have spent a lot of time discussing the inequities they observe and experience in their own lives, as they are so closely tied to the systems responsible for climate change. We are incredibly proud of our interns' passion for environmental activism as they experience the fields of environmental science and education.

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We also had the wonderful opportunity to work with Shayna Fidler, a student from Brandeis's Master of Arts in Teaching Program. Gardening with such a wide variety of students is a perfect way to demonstrate just how special a place Lemberg is to learn and grow together. **Read about her time with us [here!](#)**

A huge thanks to the FS Foundation, who funded this vital youth training opportunity for budding environmentalists.

Family Garden Day



Shoveling sand into bags

On July 16th we had another wonderful family garden day. We had sand delivered this month to re-fill our sandboxes, and with what was leftover, families helped us to fill TWENTY sandbags! These will be used in and around the garden as well as our playgrounds. Thank you to all who participated! Our next family garden days will be on **August 6th and August 27th from 9:30-11:30 am**. If you would like to

participate or have any questions, feel free to contact Sylvia skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu, the Environmental Education Associate Director.

Stanley Updates

July has brought the return of family garden days at the Stanley Learning Garden, too! Lemberg garden staff got the opportunity to interact with families and work on various projects in the garden including: planting tulip bulbs, weeding, and watering. The families also had the opportunity to harvest snow peas, kale, cilantro, basil, and more. We are proud to be contributing to organic food production across Waltham!



The lush gardens at Stanley

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Recipe Book

The Environmental Education team at Lemberg is starting a Lemberg Recipe Book in hopes to make our curriculum more inclusive and relatable to students! Our hope is that all Lemberg families will participate by submitting one recipe that can be made with some of the fruits and vegetables growing in the garden. The book would be distributed to all Lemberg families and integrated into the Environmental Education curriculum.

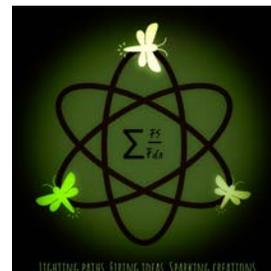
If you are a parent or family member of a student here at Lemberg, and your child would like to participate, please click [here](#) to fill out the form or visit <https://tinyurl.com/35rzs66>. This is a brief overview of the information we ask for in the form:

- 1 recipe per child- can be a family recipe, a dish from your family's culture(s), or something your child likes to make/eat at home!
 - Ideally, we want to make the recipe including ingredients from the Lemberg garden- so a dish that incorporates a fruit or vegetable would be great.
 - Ideally nut-free so it can be made and/or eaten at Lemberg.
- A short sentence from your child on why they would like to include this recipe in the book.

many children and families as possible! If you have already sent in a recipe for your child earlier this spring, no need to do so again, we have received it!

Thank you, and please feel free to reach out to Hummingbirds Teaching Fellow Cassady Adams at cassadyadams@brandeis.edu or the Associate Director of Environmental Education Sylvia Kohn-Levitt at skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu with any questions.

Thank you to our 2022 donors!



FS Foundation



The Feinberg Family

Please fill out the form by August 31st, 2022 to participate– we hope to receive recipes from as