

# Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## FEBRUARY IN THE GARDEN

Although the garden is chilly, the interns are excited to think about the next growing season, which is coming sooner every day. We are compiling lists of vegetables and plants that we want to grow, dreaming of carrots, kale, beans, tomatoes, and much more. Snow and ice may be settling on the garden beds, but the garden is merely waiting a few more months to boom.

## Painting Snow



*Surrounded by colorful snow!*

With the huge snow storm, the children were ecstatic to get outside and investigate the snow.

We asked questions like: how are snowflakes made? Where does snow come from? Why is snow so cold? We explored and read about the special way in which snow crystals form and how snow freezes or melts.



*Using a bucket to watch colors melt up close*

To better understand and engage with these concepts, we used paint brushes and watercolors to create colorful designs in the freshly fallen snow, observing how the snow melted as we applied paint.

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## Exploring Mushrooms

In another lesson this month, we explored the magical world of mushrooms and fungi! We discussed how mushrooms and fungi grow by shooting spores out of their gills, and contemplated some of the ways that mushrooms are different from plants. Students were eager to share personal experiences with mushrooms, whether when playing outside and seeing them or enjoying them in a yummy dinner.



*Fungi peeking out from tree trunks*

The children used their senses and made observations of some edible mushrooms, like white button mushrooms and portobellos. We made sure to locate the different parts of a mushroom like its stalk, gills, and cap, noticing how each section grows in unique ways. By placing a mushroom cap on a blank piece of paper, we were also able to make a spore print as the spores released from the gills.



*Taking turns to get a good look at some fungi*

After learning about mushrooms and fungi in the classroom, the children ventured into the Lemberg garden in search of any fungi and mushrooms of our own. We talked about the conditions mushrooms need to grow as we hunted. We even found some orange jelly spot fungi growing on a log!



*Tiny growths of orange fungi*

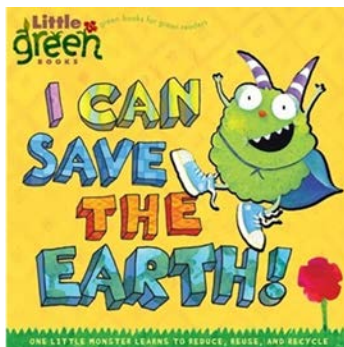
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## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

This month the children also got to learn about being green! Inside the classroom, the children read a book titled *I Can Save The Earth!* by Alison Inches. Through the book they learned about the importance of conservation, and how much fun we can have when we take time to appreciate the world around us. All the children had so much fun sharing their experiences with conservation, recycling, and what they do at home with their families to help the planet. They also learned about how recyclables are sorted apart from compost and trash. Everyone did an amazing job brainstorming which items corresponded to each disposal method and coming up with items of their own. An amazing way to be more environmentally conscious at home is to start a compost bin of your own, or bring your food scraps to our compost piles at Lemberg! It is better for the earth and makes great fertilizer if you have a garden. Composting at home is also a great way to teach your child about waste, and where their food scraps go after their meals.

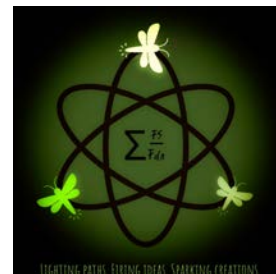


*This book is a wonderful resource for kids*

## Family Garden Workdays

As we get closer to the growing season, we are excited to bring back Family Garden Workdays. We are planning on having them on Saturdays from 9:30 to 11:30 in the morning. The dates are as follows: March 26th, April 23rd, May 14th, and June 4th. If you would like to participate in any of these or have any questions, feel free to contact Sylvia ([skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu](mailto:skohnlevitt@brandeis.edu)), the Environmental Education Associate Director. We look forward to spending time with you all outdoors again!

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