

# Firefly Scientists' Garden



Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## NOVEMBER IN THE GARDEN

The first chills of winter are creeping in, but the breezy, chilly weather does not keep us from getting outside and enjoying the outdoors! We may have turned back the clocks, losing an hour of sunshine, but we still have the joy of learning about the creatures, plants, and environment around us.

## LEARNING THIS MONTH

### Harvesting Potatoes

We started our month out by harvesting some of the last of our produce. Our potatoes, which had previously struggled with the harsh summer, were flourishing and ready to harvest.



*Micah showed us a diagram of a potato plant*

The Voyagers had plans to cook up some delicious pumpkin soup, so we read *A is For Artichoke*, hearing about different cooking words to prepare us for the many flavors and processes we were going to utilize. We were excited to gather potatoes and herbs to make our soup even more delectable. The Navigators

read *Up in the Garden Down in the Dirt* to ready us for nice and dirty hands. Everyone then learned about the different parts of a potato plant. We saw that potatoes are not roots; they are tubers (that connect to roots).



*Digging for potatoes!*

Together, we lifted off the potato cage and used our favorite tools, our fingers and hands, to dig around and locate our glorious red potatoes.



*We found some big ones and some super tiny ones. Big and small, we can't wait to eat them all!*

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*Some of our harvest!*

## Understanding Compost

With many of our plants shriveling up from the chill and with the fall of gorgeous, multicolored leaves, our compost heaps in the garden are getting much use.



*Listening to a story about compost*

During this lesson, we revisited the idea of compost. Asking questions like: what can

we compost? What is compost? Why do we have compost? How does compost help the garden? We read *Compost Stew*, learning about all the different types of objects and living things that can go into a compost in order to make a healthy pile.

Each student was given the opportunity to sort an object into one of two categories: compost or not compost. Does a leaf go in the compost? Yes! Can a mask go in the compost? No!



*Compost or not compost?*

After sorting through, we added our new compost collection to the big pile outside, and we continued our exploration by searching around the garden space to find more compostable organic matter.

## Air-dry Clay Prints

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Time for an art project! In an exploration of the beauty found in the drying up plants and falling leaves, we created air-dry clay pendants to memorialize the shifting of the seasons. We discussed how every season has its beauty and how we can easily make clay and other art projects to preserve what we see.



*Everyone took their turn.*

First, we listened to the instructions and waited patiently at our tables. We added flour, salt, and water to make a salt dough. Each person took their turn to mix and knead the dough until it formed a smooth ball. Then, everyone pulled off a chunk and rolled a smaller ball.

Once our dough was complete, we made our way to the garden. After we gathered leaves and other nicely textured natural objects, we pressed them into our clay. Our Navigator, Voyager, and Pathfinder friends enjoyed feeling the squishy clay and seeing how the leaves' vein imprinted the dough.



*"Squish!"*



*We added leaves, sticks, and even peach pits!*

## Window Box Greens

The Navigators, Voyagers, and Pathfinders planted indoor window boxes with tons of tiny seeds. Before we filled our boxes with soil and seeds, we listened to *Waiting For Wings*, a story that shares how butterflies grow up and drink from flowers. We discussed the variety of

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flowers that butterflies eat from, and we noted how each of these flowers come from different seeds. In the winter, we know that some butterflies migrate and others become less active, and we know that it's often too cold to grow seeds outside. Our answer to this is - indoor planting!



*Reading inside before heading to the garden*

We all put on our scientist hats, turned on our looking eyes, and observed a variety of seeds, recognizing how some are small and some are big, some are wrinkled and some are smooth, some are round and some are teardrop shaped. We asked questions of the seeds - what do they smell like? What do they sound like? What colors are they?



*"It feels like chocolate!"*

Outside, we worked together to fill a window box with soil. Then, everyone had a turn to sprinkle in some arugula and lettuce seeds or green beans. We watered the box and cheered our seeds on "Yay, yay, yay!"



*We worked together to pour in the water.*

After our lesson, we always have time for some exciting new finds. This past week, we found ice crystals with Sarah in the top layer of soil!



*Let's dig for ice!*

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## Toddlers In The Garden

As we have been taking more and more plants out of the ground, we brought some marigolds in to fill our sensory tables. We plucked the flowers from the stems, opened them up to feel the seeds, and sprayed them with water to wash them!



*We have to wash the flowers!*

## Family Garden Day

This month, families came together to put our garden to bed. We uprooted plants, turned over the soil, and covered it with a thick layer of mulch and cardboard. We were also able to feed the remaining green leaves to our worms!



*Parents and children hard at work!*

We are so grateful for the extra hands, and for having a chance to enjoy a morning in the garden together. Now that the garden is all tuckered in, it can rest for the winter. When it starts to warm in the spring, we will come back together to wake up the garden! Please reach out to Sylvia if you have any questions at [skohnlevitt@lebergcc.org](mailto:skohnlevitt@lebergcc.org)

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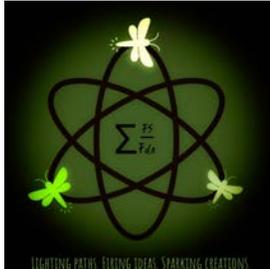
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