

# Firefly Scientists' Garden

Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center

## JULY IN THE GARDEN

Throughout this month, it's been a pleasure for us to watch our June sprouts grow into fully-fledged July plants. Blossoms began to peak from stems the first few weeks of this month. Now, we can even see some buds of what's to come, from baby watermelon to still-green cherry tomatoes. It's not all patience though! We've been able to sample many plants from the garden including radishes, turnips, beets, and even a few beans. Looking forward to August, when even more snacking will continue!



## LEARNING THIS MONTH

### Loving Leaves!

Our garden is full of vibrant colors, from purple to yellow, but most of all green! With leaves densely packed throughout the garden, there is green everywhere. Leaves are on the trees, the vegetable plants, the fruit trees, and even the



grass we stand on. To learn all about leaves, we read *I Am A Leaf*, by Jean Marzollo. This story showed us how leaves grow, what their job is (hint: it's to make plant food!), and how they change colors in autumn and fall to the ground (unless it's an evergreen). After the book, we ran around the garden to find leaves that were on the ground, making sure to *leaf* the ones on the trees and plants alone. With the leaves collected, we could press them into clay to make leaf patterns! We also made leaf prints by putting a leaf under paper and gently coloring it over with crayons. In between our scientific crafting, we used our senses to eat some radish leaves that we grew all by ourselves! With the leaves preserved in prints and clay, we can now enjoy summer leaves all year round.

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## Brilliant Bugs

Are they creepy crawlers or brilliant bugs? In this lesson, we learned all about insects. We began by reading *Creepy Beetles*, by Fay Robison, starting to gain an understanding of the different places we might find beetles. We reached high - towards the sky - and low - towards the grass - mimicking how beetles live tall in the trees and on the underside of leaves. Our very own Piper brought her passion to the forefront this lesson, sharing preserved bugs she had from a lab she participated in. We all got to examine bugs that looked like little turtles and fuzzy logs. Then, we got a chance to discover bugs ourselves, searching through the fairy garden, with magnifying glasses in hand. As we learned earlier, we searched as high and low as we could. We even examined the dirt beneath logs our garden teachers gently flipped! Finally, we got the chance to color in



bug cutouts to cover what became our very own, very biodiverse leaves. Now, we no longer fear creepy crawlers because we know they're just brilliant bugs!

## Friend-Biosis

This week we learned a new word: symbiosis! As we grow our friendships with one another in the classroom, this lesson helped us understand how symbiosis is a type of friendship that occurs in nature. We read, *How Groundhog's Garden Grew*, by Lynne Cherry, and *How to Help the Earth - By The Lorax*, by Trish Rabe. Both stories showed





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us how the different animal friends in the garden help each other and the plants grow. We quickly got to work with six different activities that helped us practice symbiosis, friendship, and garden kindness. Playing a freeze dance symbiosis game, we each got a groundhog or squirrel headband and wiggled with the music.



But, when the music stopped, we got to practice symbiosis by finding a friend and giving them a hug or a high five. We also had an activity based on giving each other compliments to make our friends smile! The Lorax helped us learn how we can help the Earth, and in return, how the Earth

helps us. Something we do every day, breathing in oxygen from the trees and breathing out carbon dioxide for the trees, is a wonderful way that we can practice symbiosis. Zooming out to a wider lens, we brainstormed ways that our actions can be symbiotic with nature. We practiced using public transportation by pretending to be a train! Choo Chooo!!! Did you know that trains, buses, bikes, and walking helps the Earth stay cleaner? We played our favorite trash and recycling game to remind us of ways that we can help the earth from our classrooms. For our final symbiotic activity, we helped our garden by planting new seeds. If we plant and take care of the seeds, they will grow big and produce lots of yummy veggies for us to snack on. We used the power of friendship (aka: symbiosis) to help the Earth stay clean and continue to thrive.



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## Shell-A-Brating Ponds

Oceans, rivers, lakes, oh my! Here in New England, we are lucky to have access to so many bodies of water to learn from and play in. This week, we used our scientist minds to POND-er about the creatures that live among...you guessed it - ponds! We brainstormed the diverse forms of life that swim, fly, dive, and hop among the water. To strengthen our wildlife knowledge, we read "Pond," by Gordon Morrison, which follows the journey of a pond in Boston as the four seasons pass by. Then, we got to paint our very own turtle shells to look just like the ones in the story! Wearing our beautiful shells like backpacks, we got to imagine what it would be like if we were turtles living in a pond. We sunbathed on logs, ate greens, crawled slowly, and hid under our shells. It's fun to imagine cooling down in the waters, as the summer days get hotter.





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## JULY FAMILY GARDEN DAY

Thank you to all of the friends and families who joined us for our July Family Garden Day! As a team, we were able to transplant flower seedlings throughout the garden, feed the birds, and create art to decorate the garden. We drank some lemonade and home-made iced-tea to stay cool as we worked and played! Be on the look out for more Family Garden Days to come!





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## GARDENING THIS MONTH

Gardening in July has been full of turnip, radish, and beet harvests. We help water the plants each and every day and observe as they grow and blossom. We're currently observing some eggplants and watermelons growing out of pollinated flowers and we're looking forward to our pumpkins, zucchinis, peppers, and cucumbers taking shape. We even got to taste some sweet peaches to celebrate the end of a successful month of gardening!





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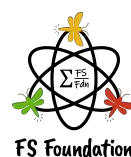




### Want to Learn More?

We learned about all sorts of exciting things this month! If you want to continue learning and getting involved, **check out these sources below!**

- Get involved with the science of leaves [HERE](#)
- Explore the different bugs of Massachusetts [HERE](#)
- Learn about different symbiotic relationships [HERE](#)
- Discover the turtles of Massachusetts [HERE](#)
- To learn some tips and tricks for creating a happy home garden, click [HERE](#)
- Find our environmental education book [HERE](#)
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donors and friends!**