

Firefly Scientists' Garden

Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center



MAY IN THE GARDEN

The saying goes, “April showers bring May flowers,” but it looks like we’re kicking off this May in the garden with both! Rain or shine, we know how to have a good time here at Lemberg. We spent rainy days learning about the weather and world around us, and of course our sunny days outside in our starting-to-blossom garden. Anticipation for summer is growing as our plants do, and we can’t wait to garden, eat, play, and celebrate more all month and beyond.

WELCOMING OUR SUMMER INTERNS!

Piper Culp

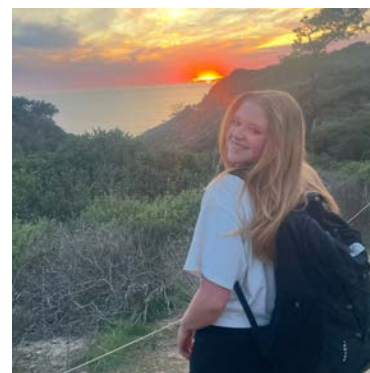
My name is Piper Culp, and I am excited to join the garden team at Lemberg this summer. I have worked in the Voyager and Navigator classrooms as a Teaching Assistant, and now I will spend this summer as a Garden Intern! I am a rising senior at Brandeis, majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Studio Art. I grew up in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, next to my grandparents' small farm, which sparked my passion for nature. In high school, I attended a vocational school where I studied Natural and Life Sciences.



There, I learned how to care for plants, keep honeybees, and conduct various lab experiments. During my last internship, I worked at a pollinator lab in Massachusetts, studying pollinators. I even got to share our research with local elementary schools, teaching the young students about the importance of pollinators. I am looking forward to sharing my passion for our environment with the Lemberg students and seeing them learn about and explore our garden.

Islay Morrison

My name is Islay Morrison and I am super happy to be helping out with environmental education at Lemberg! I am a rising senior at Brandeis University, majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Creative Writing. Growing up in the Bay Area, I loved the environment from a young age - hiking, camping, and spending time on the coast. I have enjoyed studying the environment since the beginning of high school, when I started volunteering for a conservation agency in my hometown and joined my school's Green Team. I just finished studying abroad with a marine biology field studies program, where I completed a research project focused on coral health across different depths. I even got to SCUBA dive with sharks, turtles, and eagle rays!



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It brings me so much joy to see kids connect with all aspects of nature, so I am really excited to help them do so in the garden!

LEARNING THIS MONTH

We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga

This was a VERY special garden lesson—we really got to make the garden our own this week. How did we do that? First, we read *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell to learn about one Indigenous nation, the Cherokee people, and how they celebrate the coming seasons, the garden, the world, and themselves through art and connection.



Inspired by this story, we made our own garden decorations to say “otsaliheliga” to the garden (“we are grateful”) and to ourselves! Nothing makes a garden feel more like home than representing all the lovely friends who take care of it. We made wind chimes to

catch the splendiferous spring breeze. And, like in the story, we fed our bird friends by making our very own bird feeders to hang up in the Fairy Garden! We may have got our hands dirty, but here in the garden that means we did something right!

The Umbrella

With all the rain at the start of May, we had to move some lessons indoors...but that's okay—we love watching the rain as it hydrates our garden. We thought it'd be fitting to read *The Umbrella* by Jan Brett. We got to learn all about the rainforest, a place where it's almost *always* raining. Can you imagine that? In this story, like the author's other classics, all the different animals in a given place get stuck in a small space together—in this case, an umbrella! After hearing this silly story, we got to decorate our own umbrellas full of all our favorite animals. What would you do if you saw *that* floating down the river?



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How to Plant a Seed



This week we took our knowledge of plants and gardening a step further - we got to learn about how a seed grows! While reading *I'm a Seed*, by Jean Marzollow, we acted out

what a seed needs to grow. We sprinkled our hands like rain, put our hands over our heads in a circle to mimic the sun, and stomped on the ground to represent soil. We then transferred our knowledge into planting the seeds of zucchini, cucumbers, arugula, and kale. The toddler classrooms had a special treat of practicing a silly gardening technique: chaos gardening! This tactic is a super fun way to spruce up the garden with lots of pollinating flowers. We cleared out an area in the garden, mixed a bunch of flower seeds together, grabbed a handful.... and



threw them! We can't wait to see our garden bloom with flowers, vegetables, and lots of learning moments.

Pesto is the Best-O!

Our garden is just getting started for the season, so we don't have enough crops to harvest and snack on. But luckily with some foraging knowledge, we were able to make due! Inspired by the book we read, *Plant it, Grow it, Eat it*, by Little Grasshopper Books, we

picked garlic mustard from the fairy garden to make some yummy pesto! We learned that picking garlic mustard is helpful to the environment here in Waltham because they are invasive species....so basically our snacking is saving the world. We rinsed off the garlic mustard leaves and took turns blending them in a food processor with some olive oil, salt, and sunflower seeds.

Many students approved of our culinary creation. From this activity, students not only gained knowledge about foraging, but a delicious snack.



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GARDENING THIS MONTH

May has been a fantastic month for planting seeds to sprout in the greenhouse before transplanting them into the garden. Together, we've sowed zucchini, arugula, kale, lemon cucumber, green cucumber, mouse melon, tomato, watermelon, sunflower, and broccoli seeds! So far this month we've been able to transplant eggplants and pumpkins into our garden beds where they will continue to expand their roots throughout the summer and the fall.



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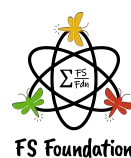
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Want to Learn More?

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

- Learn and explore more about the Cherokee Nation [HERE](#)
- See how to make your own garden decorations at home [HERE](#) (birdfeeders), and [HERE](#) (windchimes)
- With all the rain, you might be able to see a few rainbows! Learn how they form and how to see them [HERE](#)
- Make your own pesto [HERE](#) (we used sunflower seeds instead of walnuts)
- Read Mass Audubon's May Outdoor Almanac [HERE](#)

- Find our environmental education book [HERE](#)
- Donate to our program [HERE](#)



**Thank you to our many wonderful alumni
donors and friends!**