

Firefly Scientists' Garden

Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center



NOVEMBER IN THE GARDEN

The leaves are almost all gone from the trees and the air has a chill - some days we can even see our breath! The garden is officially closing up shop, and any remaining plants are starting to wilt. The garden knows it's time to rest, and we are helping out by making everything cozy and ready for winter.



"I love you, tree."

LEARNING THIS MONTH

Rainy Day

Sometimes plans change, but that doesn't mean we can't learn from them! The Pathfinders had

the opportunity to explore rain when we had a super wet day and stayed inside.

We read *Umbrella* by Taro Yashimo, discussing different types of weather, what clothes we wear in each of them, and where rain comes from. After chatting, we used white and blue finger paints to draw what the sky looks like when it's raining. What a beautiful piece we created together!



Making Tea

It's tea time! With the colder weather, it's the perfect time for a hot cup of tea.



Our beautifully set table

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In the preschool classrooms, we investigated the leaves of lemon balm and mint, utilizing all of our senses and sharing what we noticed. We discussed what herbs are and how we use them to make tasty dishes like pesto pasta, roasted vegetables, and more. We noted how herbs are strong in flavor, so a little goes a long way.



"MMMM."

As we smelled the herbs, we talked about tea and how we can make delicious herbal concoctions from herbs in our garden.



We placed our gathered herbs into the pitcher.

Then, we moved outside and prepared our tea party table, laying down a tablecloth, gathering leaves and pinecones as decor, and ensuring that everyone had a place to sit. We harvested marigold flowers, spearmint leaves, and lemon balm, placing them into a pitcher. We added cinnamon sticks and honey, pouring hot water from a kettle on top. As the tea brewed (a new word we learned), we played in the garden, eagerly awaiting our steaming cups. When it was ready to drink, we each had a cup, and we blew on them to cool them off.



"Yummm."

Our brew was super tasty, and it warmed us from the inside out. Pinkies up, everyone!

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"Cheers!"

Putting the Garden to Bed

The first frost has come and gone, and many of the plants in the garden have stopped growing. With the changing of the season, it's now time to put the garden to rest.

We read *Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner, and discussed how the garden looks different depending on the season. In the spring, it's time for planting and the first blooms. In the Summer, we have hot sunshine, long days, and bountiful harvests. In the fall, the leaves drop, squashes are abundant, and the air gets chill. In the winter, the garden goes to sleep and nothing is growing.



"PRESS!"

Here, at Lemberg, it is clear that winter is approaching. Our once bountiful garden of vegetables and flowers has died back, and all of the surrounding trees have lost their coat of leaves. Together, we covered up our raised garden beds with a warm blanket of mulch.



We poured on a hay blanket.

First, we covered the cold soil with a layer of cardboard. Then, we sprinkled a thick coating of hay, patting it down as we went along. Finally,

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we watered the mulch to keep it secure and moist throughout the season.



Goodnight, Garden!

Worm Anatomy

Worms, worms, worms. Wiggly and wriggly, squirmy and slimy... we love them! But what exactly are worms? How can we describe them and better understand how they are similar and different from us?



We crawled like worms to get our coats!

We read *Earthworms* by Lisa J. Amstutz and learned more about the parts of a worm (the segments, the egg ring, the mouth, the tail, etc), where worms live, and their life cycle. We discussed how worms exist in the world by feeling everything around them, as they do not have eyes like we do. We looked at worms from our Worm Factory (our vermicompost bins), pointing out what we noticed and using all our senses.



"What do you notice?"

Then, we worm-wiggled our way into the fairy garden to conduct a worm hunt. We searched underneath logs and piles of leaves until we found many new friends to observe, using magnifying glasses to see the details. What fun!

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Eye see you!

Salt-Dough Nature Prints

Winter is coming, and the garden isn't growing anymore, which is a bit sad. However, we can find different ways to remember the garden's abundance throughout the cold months.

The classrooms worked in teams to create salt dough. We first chatted about the recipe we needed to mix up our clay - flour (from wheat), salt (from the sea), and water. At different tables, we scooped flour, spooned salt, and poured water into a large bowl.



"It feels powdery"

We each helped stir and combine the concoction. Then, everyone had a clump of dough to knead and roll into a ball.



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Once we finished forming our dough balls, we went outside and searched for the perfect object to remember. Friends collected leaves, sticks, rocks, pine cones, and more. We pressed them into our dough ball to produce a print. We can't wait to see our dried product and paint them to decorate our classrooms!



Press!

Stanley Garden Updates

The Stanley Garden has a new addition in the making! This month, Stanley teachers and the Lemberg garden crew teamed up to begin assembly of a new greenhouse.

The best site for the greenhouse was on a small slope, so we began by constructing a wooden frame to create a level base on which we can build the greenhouse. We then placed the frame in small trenches we dug into the ground.



Charlene helped connect the corners.



Mrs. Cox and a 5th grade friend helped assemble the frame as well.

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Everyone helped with the digging.

Next we leveled the wood frame and attached a metal screen which will help us prevent critters from digging tunnels into the greenhouse. We know the tender sprouts that will grow there in the future will need protection from our furry friends!



Stone dust was dumped into the frame base.

After that, Mrs. Cox got help from her family to attach the metal greenhouse base to the wood frame, and a large dump truck brought us a load of stone dust to fill in the bottom and create the floor for the greenhouse.

The next step is assembly.



Look at all those pieces!

Mrs. Cox and her father (an experienced builder who also built Stanley's large raised bed and shed) put the first pieces together. We can't wait to see the finished product!



The frame corners are in place.

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Family Garden Day

Thank you so much to all the lovely, helping hands who came to our final family garden day of the season on November 18th (despite the gray and drizzly skies)!



We all helped pull the tarp to the compost!

We worked together to finish putting the garden to bed and getting the garden ready for the winter. We covered our garden beds with mulch to keep them warm and weed-free, and we raked away leaves, putting them into our compost. We also had the opportunity to organize our greenhouse so everything now has a safe home to stay until we need it in the springtime.



Our nicely organized greenhouse.

We will gather together again once it warms up in the spring. In the meantime, stay cozy and dream about our future harvests!

Please reach out to Sarah if you have any questions at secksteinindik@brandeis.edu.

Thank you to our many wonderful alumni donors and friends!

