

# GARDEN NEWS

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**Winter, 2012**

Haldane's sustainable garden just keeps growing! It may officially still be "winter," but the Garden Committee has kept busy and signs of spring are everywhere: Lenten Rose (*Helleborus*) is blooming and bulbs planted last fall are already sprouting. That means it's time for another update with *Garden News*!

To start, some inspiring correspondence we received:

*Dear Garden News,*

*We really liked the Fall Garden Newsletter. Thank you for mentioning the things that we did in the garden. We also wanted to let you know what else we did this year. We picked the big butternut squash and made soup in the Home & Careers kitchen. We picked a large bin of lettuce and gave it to the Haldane cafeteria to use for salad. This Monday we are going to pick carrots for carrot-cake muffins. We will give the extra carrots to the cafeteria for the salad bar or for soups. We will prepare our garden for winter after we harvest the brussels sprouts (if we are lucky to get some this year). We are thinking of growing vegetables that we can contribute to the salad bar next year or vegetables that are included in salsa. We love working in the garden!!*

*Sincerely, Edward, David, Erin (from Mrs. Geller's Class)*

*Dear Garden News,*

*I had the opportunity to take my first grade class out to the garden in September. The garden is right outside my classroom window, but I never get to truly enjoy the beauty of it. I had the curious first graders bring clipboards outside and record an "I wonder" about the garden and nature. We tied this activity into learning how scientists ask good questions. They loved it!! Thank you for all the hard work. I am confident that we will be outside observing, recording and admiring the garden this year.*

*Christine Comerford, First Grade Teacher*

## **UPCOMING GRADE LEVEL PROJECTS**

Exciting projects are in the works for this year's growing season! Be sure to take your students out for a tour to see what other grades are working on:

- **Kindergarten:** Mrs. Cretara's class will plant a pumpkin and ornamental gourd patch so that incoming students this fall can harvest the vegetables and repeat the project next year.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Grade** will plant pickling cucumbers and turn them into pickles in fall!
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** will plant sunflowers and also measure and compare growth of plants started from seed and bulb in the garden.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade** will observe insect-attracting plants in the butterfly garden to complement their butterfly unit.

- **4<sup>th</sup> Grade** plans to grow plants that store "edible" energy in their different parts (roots, seeds, leaves) for human consumption. They will grow radishes and carrots, snap peas and purple beans, spinach and rainbow chard.
- **Mrs. Geller's Class** will grow cherry tomatoes, radishes, and lettuce for the cafeteria salad bar and will also plant blue and white flowers for a Haldane-color garden!
- **Chef-in-the-Classroom** will have a raised bed planted with vegetables that the chef will use in the classroom. Seeds for this bed will be planted during the Health Fair: delicata squash, brussels sprouts, beets, basil, broccoli, kale and potatoes.
- **Mrs. Horn's 6<sup>th</sup> grade Environmental Science Classes** are studying and making models of a rain garden. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff the opportunity to be absorbed into the ground instead of flowing into storm drains where it might cause erosion, water pollution, and flooding. The class is talking to a garden designer, an engineer involved with storm water management, and an environmental architect. They are writing a grant proposal for funding and hope to start building the rain garden this spring.

## **GARDEN CLUB SPRING PROJECTS**

The Garden Club meets Mondays after school in the garden, weather permitting. This spring the club is going to fill the garden with new plants and explore new themes, such as:

- Colorful annual flowers and a **tropical-themed bed** with Elephant Ears, Cannas, giant Dahlias and other odd-shaped, big-leaved plants good for art and exploration.
- **Vine tee pees** for fun and height, constructed with colorful lablab, scarlet runner beans, etc.
- **A Three Sister's Garden** of multi-colored Indian corn, rattlesnake snap beans and butternut squash. This project ties in with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Native American unit. We may even have Indian corn for the Green Corn Festival in November!
- A selection of **historically "useful plants,"** such as cotton, peanut, soy, broom, and woad (a plant used for indigo dye).
- The **addition of plant labels** (in English and botanical Latin) so anyone walking through the garden can read which plants are which.
- **A Bird Gourd Project:** Cathy Bakker, a HHLT educator, will help grow gourds with our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, dry them, and make beautiful bird feeders from them, leading to lessons on habitat and feeding behaviors.

## **GARDEN WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS AT HALDANE**

**After-School Staff Development (ASSD):** Hudson Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) environmental educators will offer an ASSD garden workshop in March, presenting grade level gardening ideas for teachers based on the Science 21 curriculum. The Garden Committee has put together a **Garden Handbook** for the event (with project ideas, curriculum resources, and a to-scale garden map) which is available now on our website for download ([www.growinghaldane.com](http://www.growinghaldane.com)). Teachers still interested in attending should contact Mrs. Sniffen or Mr. Harrington.

**Teacher Walk-Through:** In March, the Garden Committee will offer a brief walk-through for teachers who have not yet had a chance to tour the garden. Date TBA.

**Health Fair:** Friday May 4<sup>th</sup> is the Health Fair, along with Eco Week Community Night at Haldane. Our Sustainable Garden will have a combined display with Farm-to-School, Glynwood, and the Cold Spring Farmer's Market.

## **CYBER-DEVELOPMENTS**

**New website:** Check out our new garden website ([www.growinghaldane.com](http://www.growinghaldane.com)), with forthcoming links on the Haldane Central School District and Haldane PTA websites! We'll be posting photos, project updates, our new Garden Handbook, and past newsletters to keep everyone informed. The website will also be a place where we hope teachers will leave comments and share lesson ideas.

## **GIVING THANKS AND LOOKING AHEAD**

### **The garden is grateful for new donations:**

- Thanks to Lourdes Laifer for the lattice donated by Home Depot for growing bird gourds, beans, and vines.
- Thanks to Kory Riesterer for the compost thermometer to gauge how "hot" the pile gets and how well decomposition is progressing.
- Thanks to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents Michael Robinson and Dar William for donating most of the seeds for spring planting this year.

### **The garden still needs some additional items:**

- Any soil additives would be welcome: compost, peat moss, or manure.
- Contributions toward the purchase of two picnic tables with benches, so students have places to sit when taking notes or making sketches.
- Donations of native Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) for our Butterfly Garden.



### **Contact us at:**

[info@growinghaldane.com](mailto:info@growinghaldane.com)

### **Haldane Garden Committee**

*Co-chairs:*

*Melissa Angier & Beth Sigler*

*Members:*

*Diana Geller, Lourdes Laifer,*

*Danielle Pack McCarthy,*

*Carina Frantz*

*and Kory Riesterer*