

# GARDEN NEWS

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*Spring, 2012*

There's so much to experience right now in Haldane's Sustainable Garden: sprouting vegetables, spring-blooming flowers, soil amended with peat and compost, and freshly mulched perennial beds. The garden is more than ready, so don't wait to come out -- visit before the school year ends!

## **NEWSY AND NOTEWORTHY**

Notice anything 'afoot' in the garden this year? Both the Chef's Bed and Mr. Dudar's class bed are using **Square Foot Gardening** or French Intensive Gardening techniques. This type of gardening attempts to maximize yield given minimal growing space. You'd be surprised how much can grow in just one square foot of earth!

**CAUTION:** *Poison Ivy is growing along the chain link fence in the garden! Please keep students away from these weedy areas by the fence. We will eradicate the poison ivy over summer break.*

**Reminder:** Please keep garden gates closed to prevent deer and other unwanted wildlife from digging, trampling, and eating our students' hard work. New gate signs have been posted.

**New garden 'intake' form** for next year: As early in the semester as possible, we will ask all interested teachers to fill out a new form requesting beds or project assistance in advance, so we can make sure everyone has the opportunity and supports necessary to use the garden come springtime. Our goal is to more effectively streamline communication between garden committee and teaching staff.

## **GRADE LEVEL PROJECTS in progress**

- **Kindergarten:** Mrs. Cretara's class added manure and garden soil to the new pumpkin patch then planted their pumpkin seeds in earth mounds.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** Mrs. Comerford's class has been helping weekly with general garden tasks like mulching, weeding, and planting shrubs and annuals. They also constructed a vine tee pee and planted cucumbers in the first grade bed.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:** Using 'Square Foot Gardening' methods, Mr. Dudar's class has planted one square foot for every student, with choices of edible, fragrant, or butterfly attracting plants. Students wrote down their reasons for plant choices and checked seed packets to calculate how many plants per space. Seedlings include sweet peas, watermelon, lavender etc. Students also did some creative writing based on their plants, displayed in the garden.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Mrs. LeMon's class planted examples of different 'edible plant parts': spinach (leaves), radishes (roots), and sugar snap peas (seeds). Each student participated in all aspects: working the bed with hand rakes, planting seeds into soil, and watering them in.
- **Mrs. Geller's Class,** aka 'The Salad Growers': This class planted radishes, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and kale. Their goal is to make salads for themselves and to give some of the vegetables to the cafeteria for the Friday Salad Bar.
- **Mrs. Horn's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes** are growing seedlings in the greenhouse this year. Plans are in the works to renovate the Haldane greenhouse for year-round use.

## **GARDEN CLUB PROJECTS in progress**

- ***Chef-in-the-Classroom:*** This program's raised bed currently shows basil, sugar snap, broccoli, lettuce, spinach, and kale. Look for squash, beets, and potatoes to sprout next.
- **Historically useful plants:** Our historical bed now offers such well-known, useful plants as soy, broom, hops, and coffee along with some common plants of lesser known historical use: thistle (to stuff mattresses), jewel weed (for bee stings) and feverfew (for fevers).
- **Herb bed:** This year the bed is half perennial (strawberry, rhubarb, asparagus, oregano, chive, etc.) and half annual (cilantro, dill, basil, fennel, parsley, nasturtium, etc.).
- **Caveman gourds (*Maranka*)** have been planted in front of the new trellises along the fence along with Cardinal Vine and climbing Scarlet Runner Beans.
- **Tropical Bed:** Look for a giant banana plant in this bed along with other tropicals such as elephant ears, cannas, dahlias, sweet potato vines, hibiscus, and coleus.

## **HALDANE EVENTS**

For **Health Fair & Eco Night** the garden display table offered students a fun guessing activity about which seeds would grow into which nutritious vegetables. Visitors could also observe up close the progressive growth of a Kale plant.

Sandy McKelvey attended a Growing Classroom Workshop on teaching Garden-Based Learning at **Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture**. She gathered a lot of great ideas for fun and easy-to-implement lessons for use in our school garden. A link to sample lessons (from [www.lifelab.org](http://www.lifelab.org)) is now posted on our website at [www.growinghaldane.com](http://www.growinghaldane.com).

4<sup>th</sup> graders recently used the garden for **poetic inspiration**: Thanks to a HSF grant, Hudson Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) poets Irene O'Garden and Lisa Mechaly read poems in the garden and helped students write their own.

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER**

**Calling all volunteers!** Adopt the Haldane Garden for one week this summer to help weed and water plants. Teachers, parents, and students can contact us by e-mail if interested.

Next school year, **Glynwood Farm** will donate an abundance of fresh vegetables grown especially for Haldane's cafeteria. Farm to School is looking for volunteers at the end of summer to help process produce for winter storage. *Imagine Cindy's homemade marinara sauce made with organic, local tomatoes!* Contact Sandy McKelvey at [sandy@odara.com](mailto:sandy@odara.com).

## **SPECIAL THANKS to...**

- Kathy Gordineer for watering cans and brooms; Jennifer Zwarich for Autumn Sedums.
- Manitoga's gardener, Emily Phillips, for several native plant donations; Wave Hill's Laurel Rimmer for multiple plant donations, especially for the sensory and tropical beds.
- Tom Rolston of Cold Spring Depot for butterfly bushes; Jerry Allen of Philipstown Tree Service for woodchip mulch; Andy Reid for roto-tilling the pumpkin patch.
- The unknown donor of a new compost bin - let us know who you are!
- All the parents and students who've helped to dig, move mulch, water, plant, and weed after school this year. There are too many of you to list but you know who you are!

**And the garden could still use...**

- Contributions toward the purchase of two picnic tables with benches.

**Haldane Garden Committee:** Beth Sigler, Melissa Angier, Melany Campanile, Carina Frantz, Lourdes Laifer, Diana Geller, Kory Riesterer, Danielle Pack McCarthy.

**Contact us at** [info@growinghaldane.com](mailto:info@growinghaldane.com).