

# GARDEN NEWS

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**Fall 2014**

This fall again saw every class, grades K-6, out in the garden for experiential, hands-on learning! A special thank you goes out to the garden parents who help make this outdoor interaction possible every year. The garden also saw visits from our new superintendent, Dr. Bowers, and BOE president Joe Curto, who were each given tours while plants (and insects!) were still at their peak.

The garden's **ABC scavenger hunt** at the PTA back-to-school picnic proved a successful and fun way to engage students and parents alike, helping everyone discover the botanical beauty and diversity a school garden can offer.

With winter officially just around the corner (and really already here!) many of the garden's tender perennials have been moved to sanctuaries both inside and outside of Haldane. The banana is again vacationing with Comerford's 1<sup>st</sup> graders, pineapple and begonia with Satterlee's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, ginger with Pray's class, and a range of plants have been moved to the greenhouse for care by Wick's 6<sup>th</sup> graders. And everyone's beloved garden snails and goldfish, Dorito, are vacationing with Windels' 4<sup>th</sup> graders!



**Love Lies Bleeding  
Amaranth**

This **winter** we hope classes will brave the cold and continue to explore the garden, for there is much to still see and do outside! For instance, students can look at structural elements like stems, leaves, seedpods, and berries, as the garden committee purposefully does not cut back plants until spring. Some plants stay green all winter long (like kale), and there are always animal tracks to be seen after snowfall. Winter is typically a time of rest for the garden, but when temperatures fluctuate sometimes plants will begin sprouting when least expected! We hope teachers and garden parents will continue to stage winter activities and **share successful lessons** and projects students do in the garden and in the classroom by e-mailing: [info@growinghaldane.com](mailto:info@growinghaldane.com).



**2nd grade garlic planting**

## OCTOBER: FALL GARDEN MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

**Kindergarten:** Kindergarten classes tasted veggies, edible flowers, and herbs, using their five senses to investigate the garden. They explored the sensory bed for smells, textures, and colors, walked through the living willow fort, and pondered the Dr. Seuss bed of crazy and unusual plants. Mrs. LeMon's class harvested ingredients to make pizza, coleslaw, and kale chips! They also explored different leaf shapes and discussed why some plants lose



*Mrs. Cretara's Kindergartners with tree drawings*

leaves and others remain 'evergreen'. Her students are now growing greens (lettuce & spinach) in the greenhouse with help from Mr. Wick's 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Mrs. Wilde's class had a thanksgiving lesson on the importance of seeds for the pilgrims and made seed wreaths for the holiday. Mrs. Cretara's students planted bulbs, examined flowers, and discussed visible changes in the fall season. Students drew pictures of trees with nesting animals and insects after looking at real roots, bark, branches and leaves in the garden and discussing which critters might burrow into trees or under bark.



*The perfect cabbage for coleslaw*



**1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** First graders collected seeds to save for spring planting (e.g. sunflowers, marigolds, heart pea, mirabilis). Students designed their own seed packets with written planting instructions - some classes even folded their own origami seed envelopes. Classes discussed seed shapes and sizes, exploring many different topics: How are they dispersed? How do we know if a seed is ready to harvest or still immature? How big is the plant compared to the seed? What seeds do people eat? Mrs. Hocker's class toured the garden and wrote/drew in their journals about their observations. In fact, they have kept journal entries of each garden visit! They also planted crocus bulbs in individual containers to keep at home until spring. And using iPads, they filmed plants in the garden, then recorded their voices reading a plant description they wrote. With iMovie they hope to put together a short documentary chronicling all they have learned in the garden this year!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** Second graders planted tulip and garlic bulbs, learning how some plants store their energy in different underground root structures such as bulbs (onion), tubers (potato), rhizomes (ginger) and corms (taro). Students also top sowed winter cover crops over the tulips. They toured the garden shed to talk about the importance of garden tools and to identify specific uses for each (trowel vs. spade vs. round shovel, etc.). Mrs. Scrocca's and Mr. Peparo's students did a lesson on measuring with yard sticks, looking at the length and height of garden beds and certain plants (including the yard long beans of course!). And Mr. Peparo's class did the ABC scavenger hunt too!



*Second graders planting tulip bulbs*



**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:** Third graders dissected and identified the reproductive flower parts of nasturtiums and petunias, great examples of flowers with both male and female parts. Students then got to eat the peppery nasturtium flowers! They also discussed seed dispersal methods, like hitchhikers, exploders, parachutes, digestibles, and floaters. Mrs. Pray's class has been mentoring Mrs. Wilde's Kindergartners in the garden too, reading them stories and going on scavenger hunts to use their senses! Mrs. Satterlee's class was introduced to the garden with a Second Step listening exercise and combined scavenger hunt.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Fourth graders explored why Native Americans planted The Three Sisters Garden (corn/beans/squash) and ground corn into cornmeal. They then went on a scavenger hunt for other plants native to the Americas that Columbus and other early explorers might have first seen on their travels, many of them grown and used by Native Americans (e.g. Jerusalem artichokes and Maranka gourds). Students also explored the Useful Plants bed to find other historically important plants.

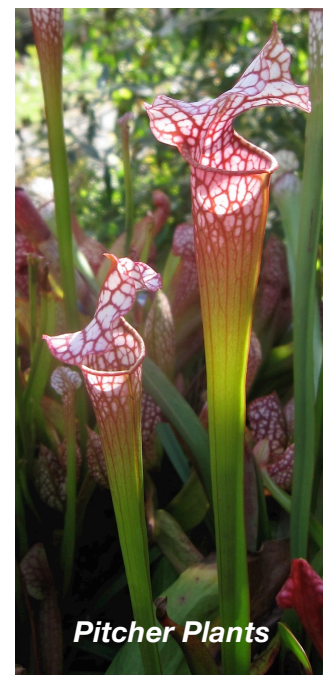
*Fourth graders grinding corn*



**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Fifth graders tested for soil pH in the various raised garden beds after doing a lesson on pH in the classroom, testing various substances to determine if they were alkaline, neutral, or acidic. Their results? The raised beds are all neutral at a pH of 7, which is good for some (but not all!) plants. Students also discussed which vegetables prefer which soil pH and how people can amend or change the soil to a pH that will work for a specific crop.



Testing Soil pH



Pitcher Plants

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Sixth graders planted blue grape hyacinth bulbs (*Muscari armeniacum*, Asparagus family) under Dr. Villanti's Magnolia tree and tulips around the vine structure. They also shoveled compost and added bags of topsoil to fill a new raised bed, later planting garlic bulbs there. They dug out many perennials in the garden and potted them up in the shed for overwintering in the greenhouse where they will care for them through the cold months. Last, but not least, they dissected the carnivorous pitcher plants to find out just which insects these plants have been slowly digesting all summer long!

### ***Farm To School (F2S) Update***

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, Haldane Elementary held its first **Annual Family Spaghetti Dinner** to raise money for the growing farm-to-school initiative. "It has been my dream to have a family spaghetti dinner at Haldane ever since I started working here," announced **Assistant Principal Julia Sniffen** at the dinner. The tomato sauce served included Haldane-grown paste tomatoes, parsley, basil and garlic! Table decorations also came from the school garden as both dry and fresh flower arrangements. F2S served over 200 people and raised more than \$1,200! Truly a community event, the dinner wouldn't have been possible without generous donations from Slope Farms, Glynwood Farms, Fishkill Farms, Beacon Bread Company, and Nature's Pantry, or without volunteer support from the parents, staff, and students that made the event so fun and memorable.



**Charlie Keegan mixes Kale Salad for the dinner**

### ***Farmer in the Classroom***

This fall third and fourth graders enjoyed the farm-to-school months with projects featuring key vegetables: tomatoes, broccoli, kale and butternut squash. They visited the crops in the garden and learned about each one's history, cultural significance, and nutritional benefits. The students ate their featured vegetable in several different ways and prepared a special dish with the chef in their classroom. This dish was later featured in the Haldane Cafeteria. To learn more visit [www.hvfs.org](http://www.hvfs.org).



**Fall Mums**

**LOOKING ahead...**

- Please continue to schedule winter visits online via the garden calendar at: [www.growinghaldane.com](http://www.growinghaldane.com). The garden’s website is getting a make-over, with more curricular links to lessons and garden activities coming in spring.
- The Great Amaryllis Race arrives at Haldane this January! Each class K-5 will be given an amaryllis bulb for use in creative, grade-level lessons. The garden committee will award class certificates for Best Bulb Name, First Bloom, Tallest Stalk, Longest Leaf, etc.
- T-shirt and Seed Sale garden fundraisers coming this spring, so stay tuned!

**BIG THANKS to...**

- The continuing support and original garden start-up grants from HSF and HHLT.
- Jennifer Daly for a generous donation in lieu of a child’s birthday gift.
- John Wayland for his ongoing work to update the garden’s website.
- Jennifer Zwarich for our T-shirt design.
- Sandy McKelvey for the donation of the wonderful food dehydrator!
- Paul Henderson and Beth Sigler for extra tools, pots, and wood stakes in the shed.



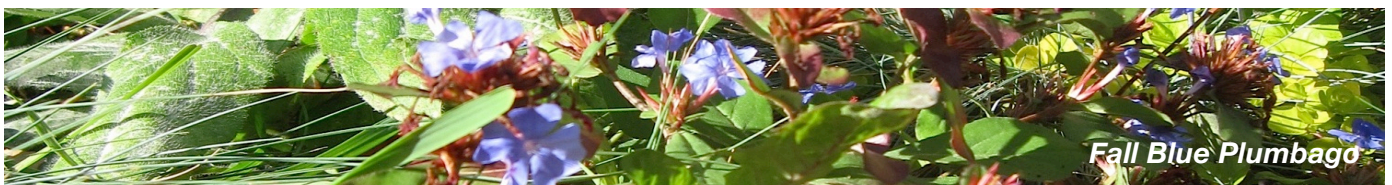
**Our compost pumpkin grew itself - and thrived!**

**The Haldane Garden Committee is:**

- Beth Sigler,*
- Melissa Angier,*
- Carina Frantz,*
- Diana Geller,*
- Kathy Gordineer,*
- Jennifer Zwarich,*
- Alex Dubroff,*
- Fiona Fortuna,*
- Kory Riesterer,*
- Yvonne Mee,*
- Carolyn Llewellyn,*
- Sandy McKelvey, and*
- Laurel Rimmer*

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**Fall Blue Plumbago**