GARDEN NEWS

Winter 2015

Winter saw snow, snow, and more snow this year, but throughout the halls of Haldane bulbs grew and grew and bloomed inside classrooms K-5! The first ever Great Amaryllis Race saw classes win in many different categories: best name, first/best bloom, tallest stalk, best hypothesizing, best predicting, most patient. Grand prize went to Ms. Simek's 2nd graders for doing the most scientific work with their bulb. A few bulbs happened to be duds, which was disappointing but a learning experience in itself, and a few other bulbs took forever but eventually did bloom. Big thanks to all the elementary school teachers and students for participating!

Amaryllis stats across grades…
Tallest flower stalk: 31"
Most leaves: 6
Most blooms: 8 flowers on double stalks

Bulbs were named…

Queen Sparkle
Polly
Rosie
Sparkle
Pom Pom
Violet
Amethyst
Blossom
Clowney-Wowney
Sunshine
Amarella: Princess of the Garden
Bloodtracker
Amber
Bobby Wasabi
Super Mario
Harold
Red Wood
Lezlie

Mrs. Cretara's class bulb, named Polly!

Report from the winning class:

Simek's (Scrocca's) second graders were very excited to be part of the Amaryllis Race! To kick off the event, our class talked about and named the parts of plants. We listed the elements that plants need to grow (air, sunlight, food, a place) and discussed seeds and bulbs and how flowers and plants begin. Next, we compared our amaryllis bulb to an onion bulb and learned about the different parts of bulbs and their functions within a plant's system. We even cut open an onion to get a look inside. Throughout the unit each child kept a journal where they made predictions, recorded measurements, and kept track of the flower stalk's growth. The students made observational drawings of each stage of plant development. Once our amaryllis bloomed, they learned and labeled the parts of a flower and compared the amaryllis to

other flowers they are familiar with. We also talked about the different parts of plants that are edible for humans, and students sorted and recorded specific foods into the categories of flower, stem, leaf, bulb, root, fruit. As a culmination to the unit, we read the book: Who Grew My Soup by Tom Darbyshire and, since no celebration is complete without a snack, we had a "plant tasting party" where we ate all the parts of plants: flowers, stems, leaves, bulbs, roots, and fruits!

More Amaryllis Race highlights….

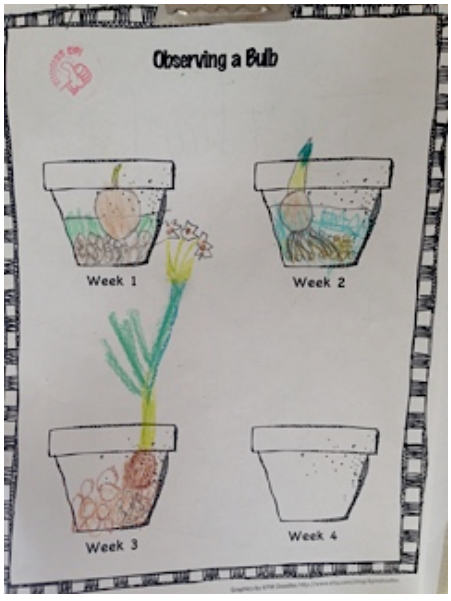
Cretara's Kindergartners… measured Polly every Friday and recorded her growth. They also made illustrations to accompany the measurements. We talked about her being a living thing and what living things need. We spoke kindly and with a gentle voice when we came in each morning. We decided to spray her gently instead of watering at the base only so she would feel like she was in nature in the rain.

Peparo's 2nd graders… measured and spent time with their Amaryllis every Monday. They also wrote notes and left them with "her" (the kids were fully convinced the plant is a girl!) encouraging her to grow.

Isler's 2nd graders… were concerned that the flowers did not match the flowers on the bulb box (ours was red, the box showed pink with white) so we talked about the processes involved in sorting bulbs and packaging them! Their hypotheses for slow growth included: room too cold, not enough sun coming through the window, too much light, too little light, too little water, and too much water. The kids wanted to sketch the plant, so we did.

Dougherty's 5th graders… hypothesized about their bulb's slow growth: the other two (fifth grade) bulbs had begun to sprout while they were still in the box, the wall next to the class window sill may have blocked sun from reaching the bulb, the bulb was overwatered when it was planted, the soil was changed halfway through the process, and the room was too cool at 68 degrees.

Battersby's 5th graders… danced with, measured, talked to, touched, and learned about the type of plant (Amaryllis) that Lezlie is. They also repotted and fed Lezlie with Miracle Grow. The kids loved watching her grow and were amazed that she grew so much in just one month!



Mrs. Quick's first graders made a prediction chart for their Amaryllis bulb (above left) but also grew and observed daffodil (Narcissus) bulbs in the classroom this winter, discussing what a bulb is, charting their growth week by week (above right), and then letting students bring a beautiful plant home with them!

Additional Winter Highlights…

Mrs. Cretara and Mrs. Hocker's classes share the same garden parent this year, so they read several different nature/garden books over winter (including The Curious Garden by Peter Brown) and learned all about ecosystems. They also learned about how important recycling is and how air and water pollution affect the food and plants grown in our school garden. Both classes analyzed how peas are all shaped differently and drew pictures of their differences. Both classes also read vegetable alphabet books, learning about new vegetables by sketching and tasting them too. These two classes have been keeping garden journals this year and writing entries for every "garden lesson", including a list of new nature-related vocabulary words. Lessons have also included learning about apples and their seeds, and about different species of birds.

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Farmer in the Classroom

This winter, Hudson Valley Farm to School's program continued to help students explore, appreciate, and enjoy fresh vegetables. Each month, throughout the school year, two classes learn the geographical and cultural history of a vegetable and sample it in several forms during a Farmer in the Classroom visit (which is most often a farmer in the garden visit!). This lesson is then followed by Chef in the Classroom, when students team up with a student from the Culinary Institute of America to prepare a simple dish using that vegetable. Finally, the dish is offered for sampling by all students during lunchtime in the cafeteria. January brought carrots to the table. Beets were featured in February--including beet-print valentines! In March, many students who didn't know they liked cabbage were found begging for more. To learn more visit www.hvfs.org.

Mrs. LeMon's Kindergartners pictured left chopping cabbage during their Chef in the Classroom visit in March. The students made a traditional Irish dish called Colcannon in honor of St. Patrick's Day! Earlier in the school year the students harvested cabbage heads growing in the garden and made fresh cole slaw. By now these kids are *Brassica* (cabbage) experts!

Project-based Learning (PBL) and Outdoor Makerspaces

So what does all this talk about PBL and the new Makerspace at Haldane have to do with the school garden? Absolutely everything! Experiential, hands-on learning that is inquiry-based and student-led lies at the very heart of school gardens. STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) especially but also Art (STE**A**M instead) are accessible and applicable in a real-world, outdoor setting. The shift Haldane staff and students are making towards a curriculum that is more project based is happening not just indoors in the new Makerspace classroom or MS greenhouse, but also outdoors in the school garden or in the woods around James Pond. The entire Haldane campus is really one big space for creative, innovative learning and exploration, and the garden has been a model for PBL since we broke ground in 2009. Let's keep it growing!

Coming This Spring…

Spring Garden Month is just around the corner when every grade level, one week at a time, visits the garden to work on projects and lessons related to their curriculum. Teachers, if you haven't already, please let us know your class bed space/seed needs for this year and we'll do our utmost to accommodate you. As always, we'll be sending lesson ideas to grades to help teachers and Garden Parents plan the month.

Also coming this spring will be potato towers! And a prehistoric bed with plants that were alive when dinosaurs still roamed the earth…! Other favorite theme beds to return are the Three Sisters Bed, Dr. Seuss Bed, and the Bread Bed of different staple crops and grains.

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Greenhouse Update

Mr. Wick's 6th graders have once again started seedlings in the greenhouse this winter (lettuce pictured left). This year's seedlings have not grown as well as last year's and students are hypothesizing as to why that might be: different potting soil mix? Viability or type of seed sown? Temperature and/or moisture fluctuations? It's all a learning process!
(blooming geraniums or *Pelargoniums* below)

The Haldane Garden Committee is:

Beth Sigler
Melissa Angier
Carina Frantz
Diana Geller
Kathy Gordineer
Jennifer Zwarich
Alex Dubroff
Fiona Fortuna
Kory Riesterer
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Mrs. Hocker's class Amaryllis (left) was named Sparkle… Amaryllis hippeastrum is native to Brazil and a member of the Amaryllidaceae plant family along with common plants like onions and daffodils.

LOOKING ahead…

➤ Please continue to schedule spring visits online via the garden calendar at: www.growinghaldane.com.
➤ A cool Garden T-shirt and Tote Bag will be available for purchase this spring, so stay tuned for details on how YOU can help continue to **grow** your school garden!
➤ Donations are always welcome if you have gardening tools you no longer need or seeds and plants you can't use in your home gardens. Feel free to contact us anytime! The garden is especially looking for one of each of these shrubs: Red Twig Dogwood (*Cornus)* and native Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*).

BIG THANKS to…

- The continuing support and original garden start-up grants from HSF and HHLT.
- John Wayland for his ongoing work to update the garden's website.
- Jennifer Zwarich for designing the Amaryllis race certificates and Garden T-shirts/Totes.
- Alex Dubroff for donation of a shad tree *(Amelanchier canadensis)* for native plants bed.
- Chas C. Hart Seed Co. for their generous seed donation: http://hartseed.com/
- Sandy McKelvey & Carolyn Llewellyn for seed potato donations: red, white and blue!