

GARDEN NEWS

Spring 2015

The garden grew by leaps and bounds this spring as students K-5 got their hands dirty during the annual spring garden month of May. The PTA garden committee was busy behind the scenes sowing, mowing, weeding and prepping beds. Dorito the beloved goldfish returned to his outdoor pot amongst the water hyacinths, and the garden now boasts a few dinosaurs in a new prehistoric bed showcasing plants that were growing on earth long before humans appeared... As for the willow fort, it's back too, along with the carnivorous pitcher plants, crazy Dr. Seuss plants, the Bread Bed... the garden is complete!



Fourth graders enjoyed **Garden Recess** this spring, which allows any student interested to spend their recess time doing garden work. Sandy McKelvey, Fiona Fortuna, and Kathy Gordineer worked with students to clear out last year's Bread Bed and successfully replant it as this year's Three Sisters Bed – dead fish heads and all! They also constructed and planted one of the three “Red, White & Blue” potato towers new to the garden this year (pictured left). Dorito's summer home pictured below.



Spring Grade Level Highlights

K – LeMon & Wilde's students toured the garden to identify living vs. nonliving things and planted their bed with pizza vegetables: tomatoes, basil, peppers, parsley and onions. **LeMon's** students read *Oh No Monster Tomato!* by Jim Helmore and grew tomato seedlings for the garden. They sowed sugar snap peas and tasted self-sown radish, dill and lettuce from their bed. They planted Amaryllis bulbs outdoors, dug in the dirt to look for insect life, and learned how to suck the 'honey' from honeysuckle flowers! They began their own seed collections and listened to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, imagining what might exist at the top of the beans they planted! **Wilde's** class also started seedlings in their classroom (basil, bell pepper, tomato) and got some help from their 3rd grade reading partners when transplanting these to their Pizza Garden, also learning about wheat (pizza dough!) and perennial oregano growing nearby.

Cretara's students continued writing & illustrating in their garden journals and read many books about nature and gardening. They tasted different vegetables, learned about compost, plant names (genus & species), plant parts, and did an indoor 'dramatization' of natural forces at work in life cycles: sun, rain, wind, seeds, storms, etc. They sampled and planted various seeds in their class bed including legumes (beans & peas) and zucchini (another possible pizza ingredient!).

LeMon's students pictured left sampling dill; Wilde's student list of non-living things found in the school garden.



First – All classes planted seeds and seedlings in their class bed. **Quick's** class added flowers to the old rubber boots, learning the basics of potting and repurposing. They read *Insect Detective* by Steve Voake and went out to hunt for roly polies (pill bugs) and other insects, collecting them in an observation tank to then identify. They learned some amazing facts about how earthworms help gardeners and created an indoor worm farm to observe “worms at work”. **Comerford's** class also went on the hunt for pill bugs (relatives of hermit crabs!), replanted the tires, transplanted the banana plant, and added a repurposed wooden 'pallet' of flowers to the garden! **Hocker's** class regularly wrote and illustrated in their garden journals, drawing inspiration from garden visits and books read, and using new garden-based vocabulary words they'd learned. Students voted on what to grow in their class bed, weeded and prepped for planting, then wrote poems about the seeds they'd chosen. All spring they used their five senses to explore the garden and draw comparisons about how much the natural world changes over time.



First graders hunting for pill bugs and other creepy crawly garden life!

Second – All classes planted sunflowers and made observations of changes in the garden throughout spring. **Peparo's** class sowed various veggie seeds in their class bed and when planting sunflowers learned about Helios, Greek God of the sun and the story of Persephone, whose mythological spring arrival and fall departure explains the changing seasons. On another visit they heard other Greek creation myths about plants like daffodils (Narcissus & Echo) and roses and poppies (Adonis & Aphrodite). Students read *Living Sunlight* by Molly Bang and drew energy cycle chalk diagrams: how energy gets transferred from sun to plants to animals to people. As soon as the ground thawed, **Scrocca's** class planted sugar snap peas, carrots and radishes. For Earth Day, they learned about foods you can regrow from veggie scraps. Students "forced" stem scraps from carrots, beets, radishes, turnips and lettuce in small containers, then once sprouted transplanted them into the garden. In May, students planted June bearing and Ever bearing strawberries, plus blue potatoes and onion seedlings. They also did a fun experiment in pairs, tracing their shadows with chalk, then going back to their outlines every 5 min and observing their shadow had moved due to the earth's rotation around the sun!



Mr. Peparo's students measuring tulip growth and drawing chalk diagrams of energy cycles.

Third – All classes released the butterflies they'd raised from caterpillars into the garden. They also looked at butterfly-attracting and caterpillar-hosting plants and seeded more butterfly-friendly flowers in the courtyard. **Pray's** class worked in the garden clearing out beds and planting amaryllis bulbs in preparation for next year's Great Amaryllis Race. Students discussed what crops should go in their Asia Bed and planted ginger, garlic chives, cabbage, Pak Choi, etc. On one rainy day the students enjoyed just *talking* about the garden and their own outdoor adventures, telling stories and posing questions to their garden parent. Another day they reviewed reproductive flower parts while learning how to harvest/taste nectar from honeysuckle flowers just like butterflies do! **Satterlee's** class planted their Brazil bed and talked about the difference between native plants (Mimosa or Sensitive Plant), plants grown as cash crops (coffee), or plants used in culinary dishes (cilantro). They sampled fresh cilantro and pineapple and talked about other "bromeliad" plants. As part of their unit on the water cycle students also taste tested bottled vs. tap water! **Moeller's** class learned about plants' role in the water cycle. Students saw firsthand (sealed plastic bag around branch) how much water transpires or is released from leaves back into the atmosphere. They learned how much water a mature tree drinks on a hot summer day (80 gal!) and how this water is transported from roots to leaves through 'xylem' (or annual tree growth - a new xylem ring for every year!). This tells us not only how old a tree was when cut down but how plentiful water was for

that year (wide ring = lots of water). Students brainstormed about water conservation in small groups, realizing how fortunate they are to have easy access to plentiful, clean water. They also planted their Europe bed and learned a lot about the history of potatoes, which though native to S. America, had great significance in European history (Irish Potato Famine).

Third graders released Painted Lady butterflies (left) into the garden and planted Nation beds (Brazil bed below right).



Fourth – All classes planted their bed with vegetables representing different edible plant parts (roots, leaves, stems, seeds). **Hartford's** class also visited the garden to learn about erosion while **Dudar's** class looked at water drainage issues in the garden, brainstorming ways to resolve runoff from the blacktop. His students have also been working this spring to repair the rain barrel. **Windels'** class measured and gridded their section of the bed into square foot plots before planting seeds.

Fifth – All 5th graders joined **Mrs. Grom** outside for some challenging Garden Math! Students got into pairs and were assigned different raised beds. They had to find the area of the bed in square cm, then convert the answer to square meters. Then they had to calculate the volume of soil in the beds in cubic centimeters and cubic meters. It came as a big surprise to everyone that to convert cubic centimeters to cubic meters you have to divide by a million! Lastly, they had to determine how much soil and compost they would need to fill their bed with a 70/30 ratio. It was a lesson that applied to a real world situation. For extra credit some students also worked to find the volume of water the rain barrel can hold!



5th graders (left) doing garden math and 6th graders (right) having a salad party post harvest!

Sixth – Mr. Wick’s students shared the seedlings they grew in the greenhouse with different grade levels (tomato, marigold, basil, lettuce, zinnia) along with tender perennials they’d overwintered (pelargonium, begonia, kalanchoe, aloe). In June they harvested lettuce and garlic scapes from their bed for a salad feast, adding other herbs they found in the garden.



Cafeteria Bed

The garden committee will replant the Cafeteria Bed outside B1 & B2 classrooms again for our new Food Services Manager, Nancy Norton. We received paste tomatoes, basil, parsley and thyme at a great discount from Vera’s Philipstown Market for another Haldane marinara sauce, to go with the garlic, onion, oregano ingredients already growing in the school garden. Big thanks to Vera’s!

Millbrook visits Haldane

On June 15th representatives from Millbrook Central School District came to see Haldane’s Farm to School Program in action! They observed a Chef in the Classroom lesson in the Home & Careers Room and toured our school garden, learning more about the Farmer in the Classroom program and how Haldane integrates garden-based learning into the elementary K-5 curriculum. We hope Millbrook is now motivated to begin a Farm to School Program of their own!

Farmer in the Classroom

Farm to School this spring highlighted spinach (Cretara and Dougherty) and peas (Grom and Battersby). During Library Special, students were visited by a “Farmer in the Classroom” to learn about that vegetable’s cultural and medicinal history. They then harvest and/or plant the veggie in the school garden. Unless there is an allergy concern, every student tries the vegetable in a couple of forms and many students ask for extra helpings! The following week the students cook the vegetable with a Chef in the Classroom (from the CIA). Finally, all elementary students get to taste test the dish in the cafeteria and vote thumbs up or down. The results? Spinach pesto was an overwhelming success!



Mrs. Comerford’s first graders replant the tires and create a repurposed flower ‘pallet’!

Coming June 22: Strawberry Fest!

The garden now has two types of strawberries growing in beds: “June bearers” bear all their fruit all at once during the month of June, while “Ever bearers” bear smaller numbers of fruits all year long. To celebrate our new strawberry beds, Farm to School will provide each class K-5 fresh strawberries to be eaten and prepared however they like, for feasting outside in the garden! By next year, we hope to have our own June bearing strawberries ripe for harvest. Did you know Mrs. Sniffen grew up on a strawberry farm?! Ask her to tell you what she knows about strawberries!

LOOKING ahead...

- Volunteers have already signed up for weeks to water and maintain the garden this summer - Thanks!
- Consider being a garden parent for K-5 this fall especially if you have gardening/teaching experience.

BIG THANKS to...

- The continuing support and original garden start-up grants from HSF and HHLT.
- **John Wayland & Jennifer Zwarich** for website design and fieldstone donation.
- **PGC** for generous \$100 annual plant sale donation & everyone who purchased Garden T-shirts/Totes!
- **Amber Stickle** for bamboo donation from Philipstown Rec Center grounds.
- **Ronan Kiter** for donating his old plastic dinosaurs to the prehistoric bed!
- **Vera’s Philipstown Market** for greatly discounted tomato, basil, parsley, thyme seedlings!
- Mrs. Windels’ 4th grade students for taking such good care of Dorito the fish over winter.
- **Dar Williams** for seed donation: beans, sunflowers, nasturtiums.
- **Maisy Curto** for 2 hours of community weeding service!
- **Laurel Rimmer** via Wave Hill for willow branches and **Carina Frantz** for willow fort construction!
- The many garden parents who volunteered their time and energy this year: Melissa Angier, Carina Frantz, Kathy Gordineer, Chrissy Bernstein, Jennifer Zwarich, Cindy Hutchison, Alex Dubroff, Peter Sanders, Tara McKeever, Fiona Fortuna, Kory Riesterer, Carolyn Llewellyn, Sandy McKelvey, Shawna Chandler, Daniel Kelly, Heidi Stephens, Jane Ponton and Connie Rotardier.

The Haldane Garden

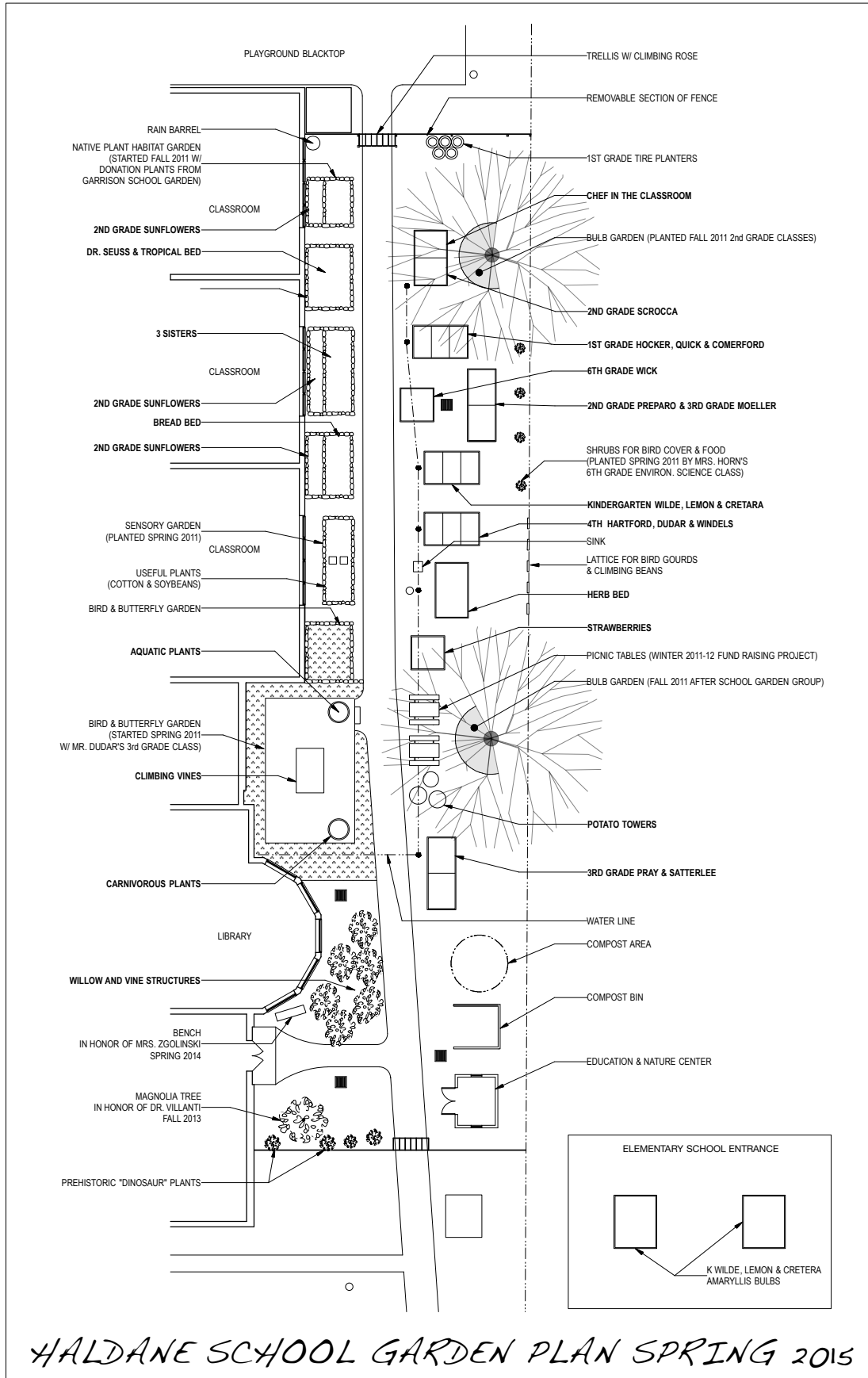
Committee is:

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Melissa Angier
Carina Frantz
Kathy Gordineer
Jennifer Zwarich
Alex Dubroff
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HALDANE SCHOOL GARDEN PLAN SPRING 2015