

# GARDEN NEWS

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SPRING 2016



**E**ach spring feels busier than the last with this spring no exception... there is much to report!

We hope students and staff will continue to visit the garden even over the summer months, and we'd like to thank in advance those families who have signed up to water the garden while school is out. Plants require continued care and attention so our sincere thanks to the Haldane community for volunteering their time and energy to keep our school garden thriving!

*ABOVE: First graders taste nectar from honey-suckle blooming in June in the Haldane School Garden.*



This spring the Garden Committee is especially thrilled to announce that in the fall, **garden education** will officially become a regular part of the Elementary School Library program! As part of their usual library special, each class grades K-5 will also have at least one monthly garden lesson during library time. We are grateful to Celia Thomas, who retires from her position as Elementary Librarian this year, for being the inspiration for this new program. Mrs. Thomas often participated in garden and Farm-to-School lessons during library time, featuring age-appropriate literature that emphasized the outdoor learning happening right outside her library windows. Our sincere thanks also go out to Haldane's administration for their support of this innovative program, which will more formally integrate garden education into the elementary school day, ensuring rich, experiential garden learning continues for all of Haldane's youngest students.

*RIGHT: Mrs. Quick's First graders sample the edible "weed" purslane during a lesson in the garden.*

*BELOW: Fifth graders participate in a special garden presentation on awareness, learning about ways in which we depend on all our senses for survival, whether animal or human, prey or predator!*





Growing Haldane participated in both the **Health Fair** and **Discovery Night** this spring, showcasing plants grown hydroponically and traditionally in the greenhouse by sixth graders. “Brainy” Nasturtium seed giveaways were also passed out to students to encourage “growing their minds”!



4th and 5th graders have been enjoying **Garden Recess** every Wednesday this spring. A volunteer garden parent provides tasks for students who want to plant, weed, water, or do other necessary garden work. But it is recess, so everyone is also welcome just to play or relax in the garden if they like! Mr. Harrington was a guest participant during one Garden Recess as he joined students in planting cucumbers and learning about edible weeds in the garden. The takeaway? Mr. Harrington prefers wild amaranth to purslane!

As in past, the garden’s theme beds have been replanted and the living willow fort rebuilt. More fish (6!) have joined Dorito in his summer garden home from Mrs. Comerford’s 2nd grade class **Aquaponics project**. And four large snails have also joined in to help keep the pot clean!

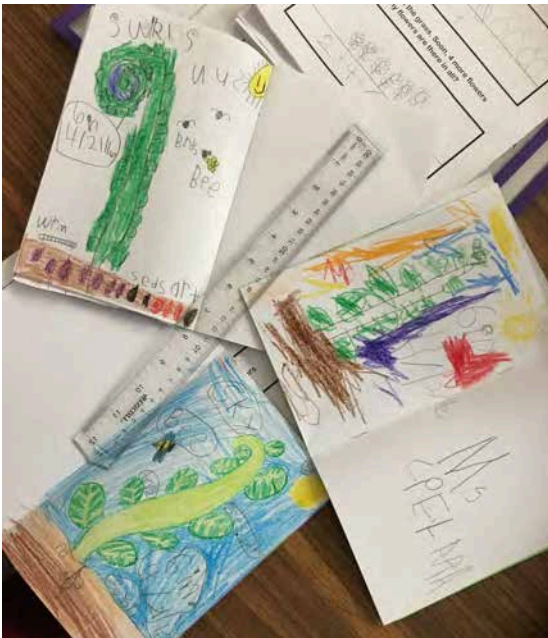
Thanks to the **PTA** for their donation of a native **Serviceberry shrub** (*Amelanchier canadensis*) in honor of HS Principal Brian Alm’s many years of wonderful service at Haldane!

Thanks also go out to 4th Grade **Girl Scout Juniors Troop 1605** for making over 20 "sit-upons" for the garden. These portable waterproof cushions will enable groups of students to sit anywhere in the garden, no matter if ground is wet or cold. They are perfect for story time, journal observations, and for times when the picnic benches are damp from rain or dew.

## Spring Lesson Highlights

**Kindergarten:** Mrs. Cretara's class has continued keeping garden journals and especially enjoyed learning about pea shoots during their Farmer in the Classroom visit this spring. Mrs. Wilde's students have made regular Wednesday visits to the garden, helping with spring planting and continuing to observe and listen for birds of all kinds. They read stories in the garden and had fun watching things grow and change. Discovering sprouts and bugs when digging in the dirt and running around the living vine fort remain favorite garden activities for these young naturalists!

*BELOW: (L) Kindergarten garden journals and (R) First graders gathered around a table full of earthworms on plates!*



**First:** In keeping with their Hudson Valley native animal unit, first grade classes learned all about earthworms for Earth Day, with each student receiving their own worm to handle, measure, and observe. The worms were then released into the garden to do what they do best for garden soil... For another lesson students learned all about pill bugs - relatives of hermit crabs! They hunted for pill bug habitats in the garden, finding them under rocks and mulch, counting their legs and body segments, learning that 'roly polys' are not really bugs or insects at all but native invertebrate animals. Students also toured the garden this spring to find inspiration for writing their nature Haiku poems.

**Second:** Students continued to visit the garden to measure plant growth and observe seasonal change. Second graders reviewed their unit on bulbs and saw how the tiny garlic cloves they planted in fall grew into tall garlic plants that will soon be mature bulbs ready to harvest in summer. Studying Greek Mythology, students learned why ancient cultures used religion and storytelling to explain natural phenomena like the reason for the changing seasons: the myth of Demeter and Persephone. Later they all got the chance to plant onion sets (another kind of bulb!) and munch on the many edibles in the garden like spinach, lettuce, chives, and pea shoots. They visited the garden again to plant sunflower seeds, learned why sunflowers, or *Helianthus annuus*, are named after Helios, the Greek God of the Sun, and why the energy cycle begins with sunlight, making life on earth possible.



**Third:** Spring is a rich time in the garden for 3rd grade’s science and social studies curriculum. Students learned all about plants and their many different pollinators as part of their butterfly unit, later releasing their ‘painted ladies’ into the garden’s courtyard. They even got to taste the sweetness of some real nectar from honeysuckle flowers! They learned how the water cycle and plant life cycle are interrelated, and how both plants and humans ‘conserve’ water. In addition, students learned where fruits and vegetables were originally cultivated. **Mrs. Satterlee’s** class studied South America: pineapples and beans from Brazil. Students tasted freshly cut pineapple then learned to propagate its leafy crown in a pot of soil to hopefully re-grow into a new pineapple plant. They also planted black beans in the garden, the main ingredient in Brazil’s national dish, *feijoada*. **Mrs. Scrocca’s** class studied Asia: mangoes, peaches, ginger and rice. Students tasted mangoes, peaches, and pickled ginger, then planted rice, yard long beans, and ginger roots. **Mrs. Moeller’s** class studied Europe, learning that very few of the vegetables we enjoy eating today originated there. Even though we think of The Irish Potato Famine, potatoes originally came from Peru and were brought to Europe by the Spanish Conquistadors. Mrs. Moeller’s class planted several different varieties of potatoes in two large potato bags. Cabbages and beets are the most popular vegetables from Europe, so students planted beet seeds and observed the cabbages they’d planted earlier in the year.



*RIGHT: A butterfly rests on dianthus flowers in the Bird & Butterfly bed.  
BELOW: Fourth graders sample greens and sow seeds in raised beds.*

**Fourth:** After researching plants used by Colonial Americans for food, medicine and household chores, **Mrs. Hartford’s** students learned a lot about plants’ many different uses. They observed (and felt, tasted and smelled) many of these “Colonial plants” growing in the garden, then sowed seeds and planted more. All three 4th grade classes also returned to the garden this spring to plant the 3 Sisters Bed with corn, beans, and squash and, of course, some dead fish for fertilizer!



**Fifth:** 5th graders were treated to a special garden presentation on awareness this spring: how animals (and people!) depend on all their senses for survival, whether prey or predator. Students learned how humans use their senses to track animals when hunting, and how we should always be fully aware, and present, in our surrounding environment. Big thanks to garden parents **Pam and Russ Ritell** for facilitating this engaging outdoor lesson! Meanwhile, **Mrs. Grom's** math students calculated the perimeter, area and volume of all the raised garden beds this spring, while **Mr. Dougherty's** students had a social studies lesson connecting the garden to their history of slavery unit. Students learned that many foods typical to the American diet today did not originally grow here but were brought from other parts of the world by European colonial powers and then cultivated on U.S. farms. The slave trade introduced to America many foods from Africa which became part of the cultural tradition of African American cuisine, contributing to the overall American diet. Students planted four of these crops in the garden: watermelon, millet, okra, and black-eyed peas. They also learned about the history of injustice in our food system, beginning with the exploitation of slave labor and continuing even today with a cheap labor supply that sometimes still involves child labor in the U.S. and beyond.

**Sixth:** **Mr. Wick's** 6th graders continued hydroponic growing systems and sowed other annual veggies and flowers in the greenhouse for spring transplanting to the garden. They generously weeded and prepped the cafeteria bed for kale and basil seedlings to be planted outside the B1 and B2 classrooms too!

*BELOW: (L) Garden Parent Russ Ritell takes fifth graders through an engaging garden lesson on awareness. (R) Poppies and irises bloom in the spring garden.*





## Authentic Learning Projects

Mrs. Hartford's 4th graders completed their new composting bins in the garden and are now streamlining systems to get cafeteria waste into the bins and turned regularly. Thanks again to the many individuals and businesses who helped with this project this year, especially **Jeff Silverstein** who recruited the help of fellow Haldane parents **Will Duncan, Mike Alayon, John Hull, and Quinn Chandler** for actual construction of the bins! Mrs. Hartford's students have been making posters and setting a schedule for composting for the last few weeks of school and are brainstorming ideas on how to get all students involved with composting at lunch next year. And big thanks to all the many Kindergarteners who helped paint the bins too!



## Farm to School Update

This spring's **Maple Syrup Pancake Cafeteria Lunch** was a big hit with students and celebrated the efforts of Mrs. Scrocca's 3rd graders who tapped their own sap this year in Haldane's "Sugar Bush".

The first annual Farm to School **Burgers & Berries BBQ Night** had a large turnout and featured burgers from Slope Farm; salad greens, radishes, and turnips from Glynwood; and strawberry shortcake with strawberries donated from Julia Sniffen's family farm in CT and shortcake made by Mr. Dougherty's Home and Career middle school students, all topped with Hudson Valley Fresh whipped cream. The event will fund local beef in Haldane's cafeteria next year. Many thanks to all the local businesses that donated food for the event: Foodtown, Freihofer's Bread, Nature's Pantry, Glynwood, and Hudson Valley Fresh. Thanks to **Dave Llewellyn** and **Laura Danilov** for the live music. Special thanks to all the volunteers preparing for the event – kids, staff, and parents - and to **Sandy McKelvey**, **Carolyn Llewellyn** and **Julia Sniffen** for organizing.



The second annual **Strawberry Fest** took place June 13-17 and each class grades K-6 not only enjoyed devouring 4 quarts of strawberries in the garden but also learned about the history and botany of this amazing plant. Some classes listened to the Cherokee strawberry creation myth and even chanted strawberry Haikus along the garden pathway! Other classes enjoyed strawberry smoothies, hand-cranked strawberry ice cream, and strawberry salad (with school garden lettuce!). Students sampled plenty of other garden edibles too: purslane, parsley, sugar snap peas... Mrs. Quick's class even discovered 3 plump Eastern Swallowtail caterpillars feasting on the dill plants, so of course those students had to sample the dill for themselves!

*ABOVE: (L) The first fruit ripens in Haldane's strawberry bed and (R) delicious strawberry treats await students' visit to the garden for the second annual Strawberry Fest.*



This spring's **Farm to School featured veggies** were potatoes, pea shoots, and spinach. 2nd graders learned about the potato's fascinating history, made potato-print art, a delicious tri-color potato salad, and more! Kindergarten and first graders loved munching on pea shoots, learning why peas are one of the most important foods in human history, and making pea-shoot pesto with Chef Evelyn. Mrs. Cretara's class named the tray of pea shoots they had in their classroom "Swirls" which were lovingly cared for and eaten with gratitude. 6th graders and high school students learned about spinach's journey from Persia to most of the inhabited areas on earth. They ate raw spinach, a spinach egg bake, and enjoyed spinach smoothies in addition to making spinach salad with Chef Evelyn.

Haldane's own Sandy McKelvey attended the **National Farm to Cafeteria Conference** in Madison, WI this spring and came back re-energized with lots of great information to share. With over 1,000 attendees representing most of the states in the country there was much to learn! A highlight was visiting an urban agriculture operation called Growing Power in Milwaukee which has six large greenhouses for aquaponics, with lake perch growing in the lower tanks and vegetables in the upper tanks. Nothing goes to waste! They also have laying hens and dairy goats, and they make their own soil from compost and vermiculture (worms!) for growing micro greens. The group is located in a high crime/high poverty section of Milwaukee and they train and employ over 100 at-risk youths to run the operation. Learn more at: <http://www.growingpower.org/>

*BELOW: A spring crop of radishes, planted on St. Patrick's Day, are harvested in mid-May.*



## DONATIONS needed:

- Please contact the garden committee if you can donate any **hand trowels** or **hand pruners** by start of school this fall!



## BIG THANKS to...

- **Haldane PTA** for their ongoing ‘umbrella support’ of the garden, along with **HSF** and **HHLT** also for ongoing support and original garden start-up grants!
- All of this year’s **Garden Parents!** Michael Enright, Cindy Cohen, Alex Dubroff, Sara Yano, Jeff Silverstein, Carolyn Llewellyn, Sandy McKelvey, Cally Kordaris, Eliza Matthews, Peter Sanders, Heidi Stephens, Aaron Wolfe, Fiona Fortuna, Erin Bell, Tammy Michalek, Tara O’Sullivan, Shawna Chandler, Yvonne Mee, Kathy Gordineer, Pam Ritell, and Melissa Angier.
- **Chas C. Hart Seed Co.** for donated year old garden seed: <http://hartseed.com/>
- **Maria Elena Hardman** for heirloom tomato seedlings, **Laurel Rimmer** for a new “popcorn plant” or *Senna didymobotrya* and **Charles Day** for bag of organic fertilizer. Laurel Rimmer also donated the living fort’s willow branches courtesy of **Wave Hill Garden** in the Bronx!
- **Tomann family** for new kid-sized tools (shovels/rakes/hoes!) and **Resi** and **Llewellyn** families for new garden hoses. **Watman** family for greenhouse cell pack containers and growing medium.
- **Shawna Chandler** for brainy Nasturtium seed give aways!
- **Carina Frantz** for willow fort construction and care!
- **Jeff Silverstein, Will Duncan, Mike Alayon, John Hull, Quinn Chandler, Mark Tippet, Carolyn Llewellyn, Ms. Cendali, C&E Paint, Glynwood, and Lowes** all for helping Mrs. Hartford’s 4th graders with the new compost bins! And big thanks to **Mrs. Hartford** too!

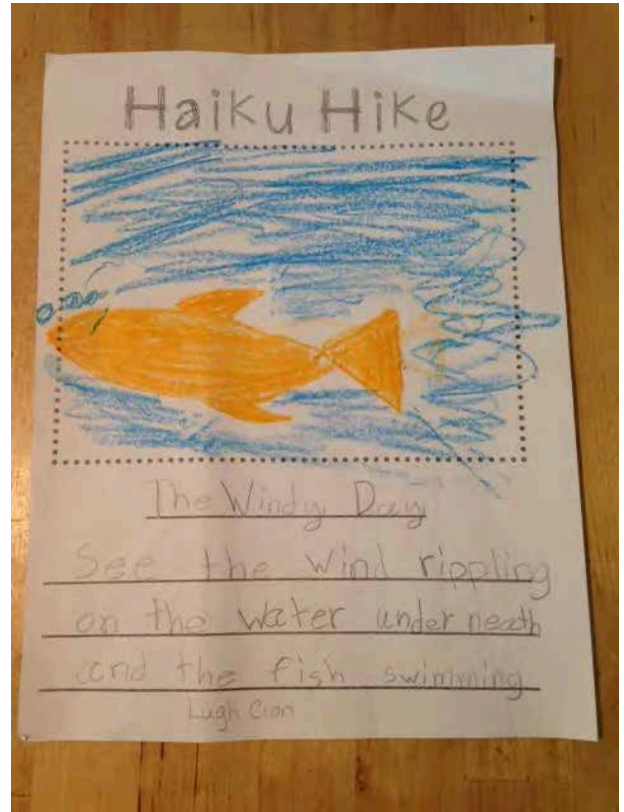
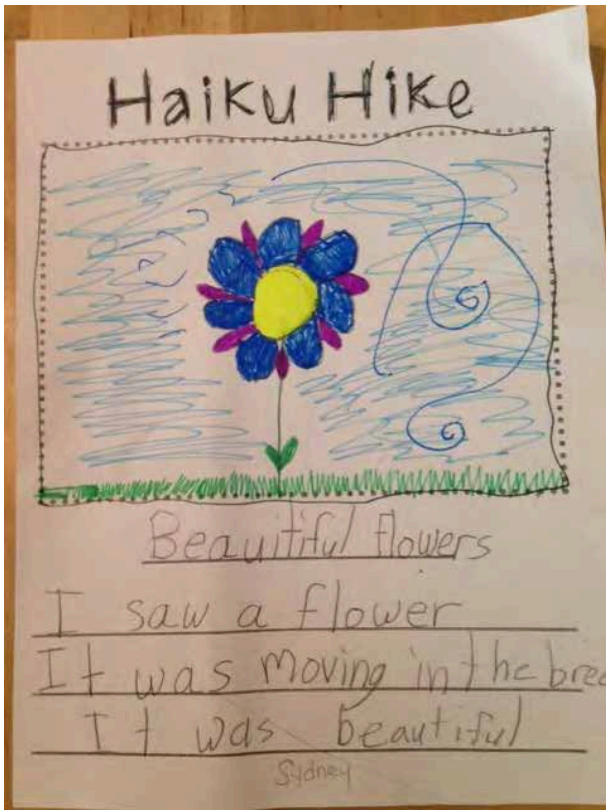


# THANK YOU KORY!

And finally, we are sneaking in a HEARTFELT THANK YOU to our outgoing Garden Committee Chairperson **Kory Riesterer** who has worked so tirelessly to help make the Haldane School Garden a beautiful and engaging outdoor classroom that enriches the entire Haldane Community. We look forward to seeing her digging and planting in the school garden with a \*bit\* less on her mind next year and we feel lucky to benefit from her continued volunteer work behind the scenes.







**The Haldane Garden Committee is:** Beth Sigler, Melissa Angier, Carina Frantz, Kathy Gordineer, Jennifer Zwarich, Alex Dubroff, Fiona Fortuna, Kory Riesterer, Carolyn Llewellyn, Sandy McKelvey, Shawna Chandler, Bettina Utz.

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