

For their first library/garden education lesson, Ms.Comerford's 2nd grade class had welcome-back tour, and then "choice time" to engage with the plants and the ecosystem in the ways that engaged them the most.

We are corn tassels are blowing in the wind! Students learn about how the male pollen from the top of corn plants is shaken by the wind, then drifts down to meet the sticky female silks atop the immature corn. Each single strand of silk that meets some pollen stimulates one corn kernel to grow. A silk that is not touched by pollen results in an immature corn kernel. Once you know this, eating corn on the cob is never the same again! This corn dance is laying the groundwork for in-depth botany lessons these students will have a year from now in third grade.

The snack-and-dig bed is a perennial hit. Edible pea shoots, arugula and lemon clover satisfy our snackers. Free reign to dig and explore in the soil is pure joy for others. Most students enjoy both!

Free choice time! Here you can see some students in the snack-and-dig bed, one enjoying the sassafras tree (edible leaves of three different shapes on one tree!), some examining two slugs found on a log and another on his way to grind dry corn into flour.

These students were not deterred when we couldn't locate the mortars and pestles. They quickly found rocks to grind the dried corn into meal. This idea came up when students examined the Bread Bed. The Bread Bed has grains from all over the world growing in rows. Students see the seedheads forming. Today they learned that flour got its name because it is made from grinding seeds that form from the *flower* at the top of these grass plants.

Students enjoyed playing in the wigwam structure that 4th grade students built last year. Inside they found these dropped blooms. Again, what they found with their own interest and engagement fits right into the curriculum they will explore deeply next year. Flowers wilt and drop when the seeds are ready to disperse.

