

Growers News for the Week of January 22, 2018

Many years ago Robert Burns wrote in a poem “**the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.**” We assume today he would have also included women. In any case, plans to plant onions last week quickly went “awry” due to the weather and three days of missed classes by the students. On Thursday it was decided not to have gardening classes as there was still snow on the gardens, ice in all the buckets, and the temperature in the twenties made gardening impractical. On top of all that due to a shipping error the onions did not arrive until Friday. Consequently we have re-scheduled planting for this week and next.

In the Classroom: The next lessons that will be covered in class will be about potatoes and planting a tree. As we don't know yet how this freeze affected our garden, we may be replanting some of our crops. We hope to resume our normal class schedule on Thursday. Let's hope for the best.

Fifth Grade Tree: Students are being encouraged to bring in their \$3.00 donation for the purchase of the oak tree that each fifth grade class gives to the school. This donation should be earned by the students, not given to them. Any classroom that has 100% participation will be treated to a dessert party. The **Arbor Day celebration will be on February 22 at 1:30.** Mark your calendar to attend as this is one of the big events each year for the 5th graders. Each year the students also plant an acorn. “From the tiny acorn a mighty oak grows.” This year they will be planting an acorn for *Quercus obtusa*, a native tree of East Texas, commonly called an Obtusa oak, a close relative of the laurel oak. By the end of May when the students graduate from Oak Forest they will be able to take their oak tree home to plant at home or some other spot. Normally the trees are 15 to 20 inches tall by then. So, be thinking where you could plant a tree. One question we always ask the students: What kind of tree does an acorn grow into? It is amazing how many respond: acorn! We have been doing this at Oak Forest for 15 years. We do have about a dozen varieties of oak trees on campus and hopefully many of the little trees sent home with students are also happily growing in the neighborhoods.

We would still like your clean bags of leaves, especially mulched ones, and pine needles. We use them to make compost, to mulch around trees on campus, and to cover the paths in the gardens. If you are putting them out for the trash man, please consider bringing them to school and dropping them along the fence in the east parking lot near the sign asking you to “drop them here”.

Fig Jam: The proceeds from our canning of summer produce helps to fund the gardens at Oak Forest. We are still trying to liquidate about 50 more jars of fig jam. (Buy four for \$20 and get a 5th jar Free!) Help us if you can. E-mail: josanders@verizon.net if you can help us out.

The **OFE Growers** are an all volunteer non-profit organization created specifically to fund and administer the gardens and nature programs at the school. We can always use additional volunteers. Let us know if you would like to help and learn to garden at the same time. Mrs. Krenek is our president. Do talk to her or send her an e-mail at: deborah.krenek@humbleisd.net, if you have questions. You can also learn about the OFE Growers and see pictures of the students in action in the gardens by going to their web site at: www.ofegrowers.org. Additional features are continuing to be added to the website. Recently a complete layout of the newly repositioned gardens was added. <http://www.ofegrowers.org/garden-layouts.html>.