

## Growers News for the Week of February 5, 2018

**In the gardens last week**, the students of Ms. Warnack's two science and math classes enjoyed a nice day. Rain, Harvey, and cold weather have all interfered with gardening a number of times this school year. Very low freezing temperatures (for Houston) for two days in January did kill many plants that normally would make it through the winter here. That has set back harvests significantly. We did harvest a bit of broccoli, some herbs, lettuce, spinach, and turnips last week. But, the take home bags have been very meager. Many students did bring home sugar cane last week, although it, too had been damaged by the freeze and was not nearly as sweet as normal. Most of the nodes had also frozen, making them useless for planting sugar cane this spring. All of our plants have been cut to the ground and mulched. We anticipate that the roots are alive and the tops will re-grow this summer.

**Lots of replanting is happening.** Students were challenged to read the planting chart in their gardening manual and tell us what they thought we could still replant to get a crop this spring. They decided broccoli, collards, cabbage, spinach, radishes, turnips, lettuce, and sugar snap peas could still be replanted. Consequently replanting of those crops started last week and will continue for the next few. New transplants of broccoli and cauliflower were found at Lowes and these were planted on Thursday. Seeds of lettuce, sugar snap peas, carrots and turnips were also planted last week. Onion sets are always planted in January and the students did finish that activity last week. Over 1000 onion sets have been planted in the gardens. These Texas 1015Y onions are ideal for the Lake Houston area and will be ready for harvest in May. While a thousand may seem like a lot, for every student to be able to take home a few, we do need to have that size crop.

**Planting potatoes** was the subject in class. Even though we refer to these potatoes as white or Irish potatoes, neither is actually a good moniker. The potatoes range in color from white, red, orange and purple, and definitely did not originate in Ireland! They also were reminded that a sweet potato is not really a potato at all and that Yams are not sweet potatoes either. Planting of the potatoes will begin this week. Seed potatoes have been purchased and prepared for planting by Mrs. Sanders. This year as in the past several years students will be planting a red potato called LaSoda.

**Students finished planting acorns** in four inch pots. Well over 150 acorns of the Obtusa Oak have been planted. By the end of the school year, each student who wishes to adopt one of these small trees will be given that opportunity. Over the past ten years well over 1000 - 15 inch oak seedlings have been adopted by students. We don't know how many of these have survived but we hope this program has helped to restore some of the trees lost to draught and storms. This activity is in conjunction with **the planting of the class oak tree to be held on February 22**. Almost all students have earned \$3 to help to purchase this year's class tree. The tree will be a Monterrey Oak and will be planted on the playground area. Several trees have been lost there in the past few years and it was decided that void should be filled.

**Fig Jam:** The proceeds from our canning of summer produce helps to fund the gardens at Oak Forest. We still have fig jam and a few other things available. (Buy four for \$20 and get a 5<sup>th</sup> jar free!) E-mail: [josanders@verizon.net](mailto:josanders@verizon.net) if you can help us out. The Growers need funds more than ever to replace all the plants lost to the recent freezes. If you can help, please donate for jam or you can always donate to the non-profit OFE Growers, at PO Box 5125, Kingwood, TX 77325.

The **OFE Growers** love 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](mailto: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](http://www.ofegrowers.org). The web site is constantly changing. Recently a complete layout of the newly repositioned gardens was added. <http://www.ofegrowers.org/garden-layouts.html>.

Seen on campus this week were several students picking up trash as they were headed to the orchard. **Way to go!** Let's all show our Falcon Pride by eliminating litter on campus and recycling as many items as we can.