

Growers News for the Week of February 12, 2018

Last Thursday was a good gardening day for Mrs. Krenek's classes. Potato planting was the major task for the day. The large orchard bed was planted with the seed potatoes that had been prepared by Mrs. Sanders. Students dug a deep hole for each seed potato, used MicroLife 6-2-4 fertilizer and rock phosphate to give the plants a good start, and covered each potato with two inches of soil. Over time as the potatoes grow, more soil will be added to force the stem of the plant to grow longer with the expectation of producing more tubers (potatoes). Other students planted radish seed to replace the ones that froze recently. Frozen banana vegetation was cut back and composted as well.

Mr. Langridge taught each class how to plant a containerized tree in preparation for the big Arbor Day tree planting on February 22. He introduced the students to the oak tree that they will be planting. A Mexican White Oak, also known as a Monterrey Oak will be the class tree. These oaks are beautiful spreading oaks that grow fairly quickly with evergreen leaves. The crown of the trees is a nice rounded form. Their maximum height is around 40 feet. Many landscapers are discovering this oak variety as they make a great medium –size tree for home landscapes. It is a Mexican species, but has been found to be native to some canyons in Texas. Mr. Langridge threw out an interesting statistic: It takes 8 trees that are 40 feet tall, to make enough oxygen for one person for a day! Given that statistic, we should all be planting more trees! We do our part here at Oak Forest!

No harvest bags went home with students this past week. The only vegetable harvested was the beautiful Veronica Romanesco cauliflower. Mrs. Sanders took several heads home on Tuesday and cut them into smaller pieces for the students. She also purchased purple Graffiti and golden Cheddar cauliflower to add to the Romanesco. A beautiful tray was offered to the students for snacking in class. Due to the extreme cold in January we will have small harvests for a few weeks.

So far students in three classes have all brought in their three dollar donations for the purchase of the class tree. Classes with 100 percent participation will earn a dessert party hosted by the Growers. The Growers ladies are already dusting off their favorite dessert recipes for the party to be held in March. Our desserts usually get rave reviews! Be sure to encourage your student to earn his/her three-dollar donation toward the tree.

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 5th jar free!) E-mail: 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, 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. The web site is constantly changing. Recently a complete layout of the newly repositioned gardens was added. <http://www.ofegrowers.org/garden-layouts.html>.

Let's all show our Falcon Pride by eliminating litter on campus and recycling as many items as we can. It makes our campus shine! If everyone picks up one piece daily we will be spotless!