

The big news from the 5th graders and the Growers this week is that it is Arbor Day at Oak Forest today, Thursday February 13th. While this is not the true Arbor Day in the US or Texas, it is the best time in Atascocita to plant a tree. This will be the 17th tree planted and given to the school by fifth graders over the past 17 years. We hope the weather has held and the tree is in the ground along the track on the south side of the school. Planting is scheduled for 1 PM today. If you could not join in the planting ceremony, do stop by the school this coming weekend to take a look. The 5th graders are proud of their hard work and donations to make this gift to the school.

Last week since there was no school, there were no gardening classes. Nevertheless, the garden volunteers had a busy week. When there are no students, guess who has to do all the work? Since it is the peak of the winter harvest of lettuce, radishes, broccoli, kale, and a few other things, that produce that could not be saved was happily adopted by the volunteers. On Thursday of last week, too, a number of the volunteers worked to sell and distribute MicroLife fertilizer as a fundraiser for the gardens. All told, 8500 pounds of MicroLife products were sold. If you have ever looked at the gardens around the school and wondered what the secret to all the produce they turn out, at least part of it can be attributed to our use of only organic methods including all natural MicroLife. **We feed the soil, the soil feeds the plants, and the plants feed us!**

Due to Arbor Day, students will not be in the gardens. When they return next week, we expect to have record harvests. We plan to harvest sugar cane the last two weeks in February. This is always a fun day as students have to decide if they want to grow the node we send home with them or eat/chew it. Our onions are in and growing nicely. Potatoes are in but have not yet sprouted out of the ground. Mrs. Sanders says the tomato plants she seeded in her greenhouse are nearing being ready for planting. Normally March 1st is a safe date to plant tomatoes plants outside. They will die if the temperature goes below 32 degrees, but we might plant a little early if the long-range forecast does not include any freezing nights. We are always prepared to cover them if an unexpected late frost comes along.

Students should be checking the web site for Problem Number Five which will be posted shortly. In addition to earning bonus points for grades, there are prizes for timely correct answers. During the last classes, several students were awarded jars of grape jelly for correct answers. It is always fun, too, to check out all the pictures that have been posted to the web site. www.ofegrowers.org.

Many of you know that Emily Fortner is out on maternity leave. We know the students miss her and so do the volunteers. She has been the president of the Growers organization for several years. We look forward to her return. In the meantime, Brooke Smart, our Vice President, and 5th grade teacher would love to hear any comments you have about the gardening programs at Oak Forest. brooke.smart@humbleisd.net.

Take a break this weekend or any evening and stop at the school to take a look at the lovely winter gardens and the new tree, compliments of the 5th grade class of 2020!