

There was no gardening last week since the 5th grade tree was planted on Thursday. Regular gardening classes resume this week. Students will be studying Cole crops in their gardening manual. The winter garden is beautiful right now. The last of the citrus will be picked this week. It has been a good citrus season as many of the trees that were planted about ten years ago are maturing.

Well, what a week it was last week! On Tuesday we had an awesome group of students who dug the hole for the 5th grade tree. They determined the hole should be ten feet wide since the pot the tree came in was 24 inches across. The depth of the hole was determined to be 18 inches, the depth of the pot the tree was in. In record time they removed several tons of soil. Shortly after they finished, the sky opened up and rain continued into Wednesday. We were prepared though and covered the piles of soil with large sheets of plastic. On Thursday morning the sun came out and it was a "go" for tree planting at 1:30. At 1:25 a team of students transported the tree from the orchard to the site. At that point another team helped pull the tree into the hole, and positioned it in the center and in a straight vertical position. The next team pulled the roots apart around the edge so they could find their way into the compost and soil that would shortly be put around the roots. Compost from the 5th grade compost heap was sprinkled around the roots. Next five 40 # bags of fugal compost were added around the tree in the hole. The hard part began next as the "put the soil back crew" began the task of replacing all the soil that had been dug out. Soil had been piled on pieces of plywood around the hole so the grass would not be damaged. While this was being done, the water team brought in many buckets of water enhanced with root stimulator. Next came the mulch crew putting bags of shredded oak leaves and then pine straw on the ten-foot diameter that had been the hole. The "clean-up crew" was left with the task of taking tools back to the shed, and installing a green fence around the new tree. As all this was happening, several students dedicated and gave the tree to the school. One "oops" was quickly remedied when it was determined that the hole for the time capsule was not deep enough. A quick locating of the post hole digger took care of that. On Saturday the plaque was installed between the tree and the track. Two years ago, a water line was installed by the Growers out along the track. Shortly, an irrigation line will be routed to the tree so it can make it through its first hot Atascocita summer.

Good job, Fifth Graders who earned and donated enough money to cover all the expenses! Good job, Judy Brown for coordinating the tree planting this year! Good job, teachers for helping to build the enthusiasm for this event, the seventeenth tree planted by 5th graders on campus! Good job volunteers for helping to make this event a success!

Pictures are already on the web site: <http://www.ofegrowers.org/arbor-day.html>. Take a look!

Emily Fortner is on maternity leave and in her absence brooke.smart@humbleisd.net, the Vice President of the Growers organization, would be happy to hear from you with any suggestions or comments. You can also leave a comment on the Growers web site: www.ofegrowers.org.

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!