

## Growers News for the Week of April 16, 2018

Another glorious day in the garden, and students were busy harvesting and planting. Cool season vegetables are becoming a thing of the past as warm season produce is coming on. The last of the cool season herbs such as cilantro were cut and sent home. Lettuce, kale, carrots, sugar snap peas, broccoli, some squash and loquats were harvested as well.

A number of oak seedlings were transplanted into larger pots. These will be available at the end of the school year for adoption. Too, students were given the opportunity to take home a pumpkin plant or a celosia plant.

A potato plant was “robbed” to see how the potatoes were coming along. A golf ball size potato was found when Mr. Opperman dug down with his hands under one of the plants. The plant was left intact as it will continue to develop more potatoes until harvest in mid May. In class, Mr. Langridge showed the students the potato and an onion which was already going to seed. Since we want onions to continue enlarging their bulbs, seed pods are removed as they use energy that should be going to the bulb.

In the gardens, more squash and okra were planted. In the orchard students discovered a critter had dug out much of the okra planted two weeks ago. This will delay our okra harvest as it will have to be replanted this week. It is not too late to plant okra but since it takes about 60 days before it produces okra pods, it may be too late for this year’s 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mrs. Sanders, a retired high school math teacher, presented a math lesson to the students. Yes, there is math in the garden! Practical math problems were presented for the students to solve. She will continue with Ms. Warnack’s students this week.

Christina McKinney reports that she is raising 19 Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies as well as 37 Polydama Swallowtails, along with many Monarch butterfly larvae. These will all be released at the school gardens when they hatch from their chrysalides. She feeds them leaves of their respective host plants, much of which is gathered from plants in the gardens. On a side note, her photographs of her children and the monarch butterflies the family has raised will be featured in a book, Monarch Magic by Lynn M. Rosenblatt. This will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the printing of the book. Way to go, McKinneys!

The OFE Growers love volunteers! Now is the time for 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents and grandparents to join us as volunteers for next year. Let us know if you would like to help and to learn to garden. 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.

**On May 24<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM the OFE Growers will have their annual meeting. Please attend if you would like to offer input into how we function next year or if you have any questions. We do need parent input, physical, and financial help if the gardening program at OFE is to continue.**

Let’s all show our Falcon Pride by eliminating litter on campus and recycling as many items as we can. If everyone picks up one piece of litter daily we will be spotless! Have you recycled your soda can or water bottle and picked up a piece of litter today. **Be an example!** If you don’t, who will? Please also bring your cardboard and paper including junk mail, newspapers and magazines to the school. The paper retriever in the east parking lot is waiting to be filled. Did you know the school makes money based on the pounds of good recyclable paper and cardboard put into that bin? Clean plastic bottles and aluminum cans are recyclable in the bin by the school dumpster. No plastic bags please. And do put paper and cardboard in the Paper Retriever along the fence. No glass please.