

Students are back after the Thanksgiving break and will be gardening with Mrs. Harisis' class on Tuesday and Mrs. Fortner's two classes on Thursday. Leafy greens will again be the class lesson.

The gardens, of course never take a holiday break, so several of the volunteers put in time doing the routine chores that every garden needs to have done periodically. This past Monday, Mr. Langridge and Mr. Opperman raised one of the long planting beds with another tier of cement blocks. The deeper beds allow us to grow better root crops and plants that have deep root systems. It also aids in moisture retention.

It has actually been rather dry, even though we have had several cloudy days with a bit of rain. The gauges in the garden have recorded less than a half inch in the past three weeks. For a growing garden that is not enough. We try to use rain water when we can but occasionally, we do have to turn on the irrigation system and/or use a hose. Water from a faucet is not as good for plants or the soil organisms as rain water.

The relatively warm weather the past few weeks has really given most of the plants in the garden a boost. A bumper crop of radishes will be harvested this week. After they are pulled more seeds are planted as soon as possible. Lettuce, broccoli, kale, herbs, and lots of citrus should also be ready for harvest this week. During the cooler months, we like to use liquid fertilizers on the leaves and roots. Our favorite is MicroLife Super Seaweed. Spraying the cole plants every two weeks with this is essential in getting winter crops to mature more quickly.

If you mulch your leaves and bag them, even if it includes green grass, we would love to have it versus it being sent to the landfill. Drop your bags by the water tower in the east parking lot. Remember, students can't handle very heavy bags and we don't want them handling trash, so only clean materials, please. No brush or tree trimmings. We would love any pumpkins that you are discarding.

Any student wanting to earn extra credit, should spend some time on the Growers website working exercise #4. Correct answers, with the steps used to obtain the answer, will garner extra credit for the students as well as hone their math and reasoning skills. Go to www.ofegrowers.org, then click on Fifth Grade Program, then click on Exercises. Use the Student Comment Form and fill out the required fields. In the comment section have your student show their work with the answer. While on the web site you might want to also look at all the gardening pictures that have been taken this year.

Thank you for supporting the Growers during our preserves sale this fall. And, thank you to all the parents who attended the Friday Thanksgiving Feast before the holiday break. That noon, we sold out of our summer preserves except a few jars of fig jam. So, other than that, it is all gone until next fall. Look for us at Falcon Fest 2020. Our students and the volunteers make the best preserves, jellies and jams!