

I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday! With school back in session, I think we need to review where we left off before the holiday break. Half of the fifth grade had started the Cucumbers and Squash lesson but the other half had not. So that is where we start, still on the Cucumber and Squash lesson for one more week before we move on to the Onions lesson set. I urge everyone to go back and review the squash and cucumbers lesson as it is unique in that the flowers of these vegetables are male and female and therefore pollination requires an agent to transfer the pollen from the anthers of one flower to the stigma of another flower. Can you identify other characteristics that make these garden plants unique?

The garden continues to look gorgeous even with the cooler days and nights. The carrots with magnificent bright green tops are calling to you saying look at me I'm ready for picking. Are they? Do you know how to tell if they are or not? Our lettuce is beautiful and the turnips are literally popping out of the ground. The broccoli and cauliflower are ready to pick. The sugar snap peas are struggling a bit as they can't handle all the cold or rain, but we did harvest a couple of pods this week so look for the sugar snaps to begin to produce as long as we don't have a hard freeze! The orchard is competing with the Christmas trees for best decorations. All the citrus is laden with orange and yellow fruit. We will need to pick these as soon as you get back as the weight is beginning to cause branches to break. We should have probably thinned the young fruit during the summer so that the trees didn't have to bare so much weight. It's hard to do because we treasure the fruit so much. Often Mr. Opperman puts branch braces under the heavily laden branches to try to keep them from breaking. That works but it is impossible to protect all the branches isn't it?

Well, welcome back, we look forward to enjoying our garden! I hope you are rested and ready to take on the New Year.