OFE Newsletter for January 6, 2022

Before the holidays, we finished the garlic and onions lesson. We also continued to recycle all those unused pumpkins from the fall harvest (around Thanksgiving time.) Did anyone notice how warm compost bed #2 was past week? When I looked, the thermometer reading was about 150 degrees Fahrenheit. This is a sign of aggressive microbial activity isn't it? The nutrient value of those pumpkins which comes from the photosynthetic process and nutrients provided by the sun and the soil's microbes is being recaptured in the form of compost for plants yet to come. This recycling of unused pumpkins is a way to take advantage of the photosynthetic process as a means to capture the sun's energy for further use on earth.

Next time we meet, we will begin the discussion of what soil is. We will ask the question of whether soil is dirt! Are they the same, soil and dirt? As I mentioned in last week's newsletter, we started planting onion sets and shortly after that will be white potatoes. We will also continue to recycle any remaining pumpkins if there are any. What do you think? Will there be any pumpkins left? Yes!

When we return after the holiday break, the days will be getting longer, right? What day marks the shortest length of day light? Or another way of putting it is what day has the longest night? Is that time almost here or has it already gone past? What signal do you think plants get from day length? See if you can name a couple? As the day length grows shorter some trees change their leaf color, maybe the leaves drop off after a while. Why do they go through these changes? What are the reasons behind these changes?

Here is some reading / investigating I am asking you to do. Go to the web and ask the question "what makes leaves change color in the fall?" You will find many articles that will peak your interest on this topic. While I thought it was interesting , (https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/fall-colors/science-of-fall-colors ), was a fun read and it begins to answer the question of the effects of day length or night length on trees and by analogy many other plants. And of course, it's just the beginning of topic. In February, we will thinking a lot about trees and how to plant them as we approach our "Arbor Day".

So lots of fun awaits and in the meantime I hope you had a very happy holiday!

See you soon!