

Last week, we started the lesson on soils and also started planting white potatoes in the Orchard. This week we will finish the lesson on soils and also complete the planting of white potatoes, this time in the Annex. The timing of planting these crops is critical especially if we plan to have potatoes before your school year ends. It is also important for next year's classes as right after the harvest of the white potatoes we will want to plant sweet potatoes. As you may remember this is the pay it forward part of our efforts because it will take all summer long for the sweet potatoes to be ready for harvesting for next year's 5th graders. This is a busy time for we gardeners as we need to be harvesting vegetables like lettuce, kale, collards, carrots, sugar snap peas, broccoli, cabbage, turnips, and cauliflower and at the same time preparing for and planting the onions, potatoes, and pruning fruit trees before the sap begins to flow. Right now a special push has been ongoing to prune the lemons, oranges, figs, kumquats, and grapes! Do you think this might be why it is said that a farmer's work is never done! And it's easy to get behind. I think you can see that it's serious work as not getting the pruning done means possibly a poorer crop or stressed trees and not planting at the right time could possibly mean a smaller crop as well. But that said the garden is a great place to be isn't it. The bees are beginning to come around as more plants flower. The plants are a vibrant green and if you take a moment you can often smell the different types of vegetables growing in the garden. I bet you already have noticed how different the broccoli beds smell from the herb beds. I mention that comparison because the next time you are in the garden take a moment to use your sense of smell (if you haven't already).

This week we purchased our arbor day tree, *Quercus canbyi*. It is now in the orchard resting peacefully as we begin to prepare it's new home. It's the eighteenth tree that Oak Forest's 5th graders have donated a tree to the school and this will be the first year that the seniors can come back and see what they put in the time capsule when they were 5th graders. See if you can tell where we will be planting this beautiful tree next time you are outside!

We are looking forward to another great week of gardening and fun being outside enjoying nature and gardening together. Stay safe and see you Thursday,