

OFE Growers Newsletter for March 31, 2022

This week we completed the lesson on tomatoes and peppers and now we enter a period of STARR preparation and testing which means we won't be in the school to present lessons on gardening until the week of April 21st. The lesson at that time will be on Insects and Pest Management. As you know we don't use strong chemicals in our garden as it is important NOT to have our garden plants full of these chemicals and ultimately be consumed by our students, and their parents. This is a form of indirect consumption and can contribute to a lot of ailments during our lives.

The gardens are looking super great at this time. The beds are filled with beautiful green vegetables and continue to provide a bountiful harvests of lettuce, swiss chard, carrots, sugar snap peas, turnips, and radishes! Newly planted beans, cucumbers tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers are taking their places in our spring time garden as well. The onions in the Annex are really doing nicely and if you look close to the base you can see the bulbs beginning to push up out of the ground. They might get as big as baseballs by May when we will harvest them. I'm really looking forward to that harvest.

The white potatoes have been held back this year by the cool variable weather which has had an effect on the sprouting of the 'seed potato'. We dug up a few of the potatoes and while there has been little to no rot, the eyes are not showing any growth. Potatoes need to have their dormancy (resting period) interrupted by being stored in warm place for a period of time to stimulate eye growth. So the Annex potatoes have been dug up and planted near the surface of the soil to help use the sun to warm the soil and the potato to stimulate potato growth.

In the Orchard, we have dug up the potatoes and are replanting a portion of these potatoes in other beds in the Orchard for the same reasons.

As a final note, the Orchard's new citrus is showing an abundance of flowers on all the trees. While it looks fantastic, these small new trees will not be able to support all these buds and will probably drop a lot of them as time goes on. During the summer, we will also have to remove a lot of the remaining buds as their turning into fruit will overly stress the tree and be too heavy for the trees to support causing broken limbs and split trees.

As mentioned earlier, STARR preparation and testing, will affect our lessons but we may still be able to meet outside to garden. Let's hope we can do this, stay tuned.