

The summer season is the time to begin to plan for having produce in time for the new 5th grade academic year! In that vein, we have begun to replace those vegetables that will not survive the summer heat such as the tomatoes, squash, and yes even the cucumbers with beans and okra. Having produce for 5th graders to take home once back in school is tricky and depends considerably on the weather. There are a number of veggies we will begin to plant come the end of August and throughout the rest of the year to keep a regular flow of vegetables available for the 5th graders for home use. Veggies such as radishes, carrots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, onions, eggplant, and white potatoes and even tomatoes are all good crops for the fall gardens. Planting of each will require taking advantage of their optimal growing season and the gardens' available space. So for now, bed preparation, mulching, some rotational planting of okra and beans, and some much needed maintenance is the order of the day.

The question of what the new academic year will look like will probably have to wait until August before real plans can be formulated. To keep up with the status of the planning of the coming school year go to the hyperlink - <https://www.humbleisd.net/backtoschool2020> to get an idea of the thinking at this time. There are any number of things we need to get to for the upcoming school year as well. From a facilities' vantage point, we have begun upgrading the Ken and Jo Sanders outside classroom in support of increased outside usage and physical distancing. We have leveled and stabilized the benches for this outdoor classroom's use. Next we will be applying preservative to reduce mold growth and to reduce weathering during the year. The Deborah Krenek main garden work benches next to the red shed will also be treated with preservative for the same reasons. Individually, we also need to complete a background check for this coming year for the OFE School's security requirement. Many of us have received a notice from the HISD requesting we fill out an application (see below) for a background check. If you didn't get one that's because the school does not know you are an OFE Growers volunteer. No problem, just go to the hyperlink below and complete the application, there is no cost except one's time. In a couple of days you will get a reply that will give you clearance as an Oak Forest Elementary School volunteer. Please attend to this before it slips your mind and becomes a surprise at the beginning of the school year.

Dear Humble ISD Volunteers :)

It's that time again to complete the online volunteer application for the 2020-2021 school year.

Here is the new link: www.humbleisd.net/volunteer

Please let us know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you for volunteering,

Marilyn Mann
Community Engagement Specialist
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Gardening activities continued this last week with canning, picking figs, beans, squash, eggplant, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Soon the grapes will be ready. All our grapes are non-bunch grapes which means they grow and ripen independently. So picking is a one or two grapes at a time process. Even though the grapes are purple doesn't mean

they are quite ready to pick. They must also be soft not marble like. If you gently squeeze the green ones they will feel like little marbles (quite hard) but when they are purple and start to soften they are the sweetest and are best for canning. It can be a battle with the squirrels and birds so we need to be vigilant. Some of the grapes are now turning purple or mostly purple and that means are close to being ready to pick. We will have to check them regularly and start to pick the ripe ones. It is a slow process and will go on for a while. We have grapes in the main garden and also in water tower yard. The orchard grapes along the fence between the orchard and the water tower appear to have already been harvested by the squirrels and birds.

Finally, we need to begin preparation for actually working with the students. This preparation includes lessons to be given, and how we will involve them in performing the garden tasks that will build upon the lessons covered. I am attaching the lessons and the lessons' timing that have been arrived at by agreement with the 5th grade faculty so far. These plans are tentative but need our attention because all plans are made to be challenged and are often changed. We need to defy the present state of inertia or everything will come due at the last moment. These lessons are covered in the garden manual (which can be found on the website) and also have a power point counterpart (also now to be found along with the manual on the website) that can be used to guide the lessons' delivery. If you are interested in presenting a lesson, which I hope everyone is, please let me know which one(s) you think you'd like to do. How we are going to present these lessons is still up for discussion. The three approaches we are thinking about at this time are (1) power point presentation in the classroom, (2) a power point lesson through a Zoom meeting venue, and (3) a narrated power point lesson made available on the website so that the students can access the lesson at the direction of the 5th grade faculty. When we do our volunteer training / review in mid-August, we will discuss the outdoor team participation options. Please take a moment and review the lessons and their timing to see if you might like to participate!

I want to thank everyone for wearing masks while congregating around the shed area. I know they aren't that comfortable but it is the right thing to do. Thank you!

This week the garden schedule is as follows:

Tues 7/7 and Thurs 7/9, Denton, Eric, Phyllis, Annette, and Sydney

Sat 7/11, Hal, Eric and Denton.

If for some reason you can't make it please let Hal or Denton know before hand and thank you for your enthusiasm and much appreciated help.

Lesson Schedule 20-21

August	----	volunteer refresher			
September	3	Orientation (all classes)			
	10 & 17	Compost 9, 10			
Sept/Oct	24 & 1	Plant Seeds 13			
October	15 & 22	Leafy Greens 16			
Oct/Nov	29 & 5	Root Crops 17,18			
November	12 & 19	Potatoes 22			
December	3 & 10	Cole Crops 19			
Dec/Jan	17 & 7	Cucumbers & Squash 25			
January 2021	14 & 21	Onions 21			
Jan / Feb	28 & 4	Soils 11			
February	18	Arbor Day			
Feb/Mar	25 & 4	Pollination 31, 32			
March	11 & 25	Tomatoes, Peppers 23, 24			
April	1 & 22	Okra, Sugar Cane, cotton 29, 30	Insects and pest mng't	35, 36	
Apr/May	29 & 27	Harvest Fest			