

OFE Growers Newsletter for 11.04.2021

This week the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class harvested 513 pounds of sweet potatoes from the Orchard gardens. The total amount of sweet potatoes harvested this year was 790 pounds 2 ounces. This is a 'pay it forward' exercise as the sweet potatoes harvested this year were planted at the end of last year's academic school year by last year's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. So in a manner of speaking, last year's 5<sup>th</sup> graders presented the opportunity to harvest sweet potatoes to this year's 5<sup>th</sup> graders! It is our intention that this tradition be continued. Please go to the website to see all the pictures of the students harvesting the sweet potatoes. Smiles everywhere!!!

Remember newly harvested sweet potatoes need to be allowed to rest and cure for about 2 weeks allowing the plant sugars to be converted to carbohydrates before using. This year's harvested sweet potatoes were sent home unwashed as washing removes the protection afforded by the soil and bacterial layer that exists on the potato skins during growth. If the potatoes stay moist they will become susceptible to bacterial decay. They need to be allowed to dry; so that the skins will harden and become a protective layer around the potato. If they are washed, at home, it is important to put them in an area where the skins can dry to form this protective layer around the potato.

There are 59 pictures of this week's students harvesting sweet potatoes on the website as of this writing. Last weeks' student pictures are also on the website but are now part of the fall semester pictures.

Next week we will begin the lesson on Root crops.

See you all in the gardens!



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