

OFE Growers Newsletter for the week of 12.9.2021

We have completed the Leafy Greens lesson last week and will be presenting the lesson on Onions & Garlic (pg 20 in your manual) this week. With only 2 weeks before the Christmas school holiday work in the gardens will focus mostly on garden maintenance (weeding, watering, and planting), with some harvesting, and continued pumpkin smashing. This is a fun activity and demonstrates the recycling of garden produce that goes unused. Pumpkins don't last long in our climate once harvested as the warm days cause the outer skin to soften and begin to decay. That said pumpkins do last quite a while 1-2 months even in this climate. While mature pumpkins are mostly orange they are considered green material when being composted. The reason for this is that the fruit contains a lot of nitrogen and a large amount of soft carbohydrate tissue that is high energy for the micro- and macro-decomposers that are looking for a food source. If you noticed how high the compost was after adding the pumpkin material to the compost bins, you will see the next time you are outdoors how quickly the height has changed. I expect the temperature in those bins will be much higher the next couple of days. We still have a lot of pumpkins and so will be smashing more pumpkins this week as well.

We have been putting mulch around our 5th grade Arbor Day trees using wood chip mulch made from a couple of trees that were cut down along the East side parking lot. If you have a moment you might consider the value of doing this as these wood chips are packets of nutrients and minerals that the cut trees used during the process of photosynthesis. One way of thinking about this is we are returning the exact nutrients the new trees need to grow strong and mature – a kind of timed release organic fertilizer!

Finally, the gardens are still in the need of clean mulch. Grass clippings and leaves which can be dropped off at the back of the East parking lot by the large tree near the gated soccer fields (along the black fence). There is a sign there to help locate the spot. If you don't want your grass clippings or fall leaves OFE Gardens would be happy to take them to use as mulch and raw materials for compost to be used in our school gardens. Please consider dropping them off if you can.

Thanks and have a safe and enjoyable week,

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