

OFE Newsletter for December 16, 2021

The garden is looking fantastic. The leafy greens are so lush and such a vibrant green that you can't help but look at them in wonder. The broccoli is in full bloom. One broccoli was starting to open the blooms into yellow flowers. That's proof that what we consider to be a vegetable is actually an early onset flower or multiple of flowers. Can you think of another vegetable that is a flower? What about cauliflower?? The white flower buds in the cauliflower head are sometimes referred to as Curd, let's do some investigating see if you can find out more information about flowers or pre-flowers that are called vegetables.

This week in class we started thinking about garlic and onions. Do you believe the bulb is just tightly packed leaves? Where are the roots on an onion and why do some chefs suggest cutting off the root/basal area before working with the raw onion?

We also continued to recycle all those unused pumpkins from the fall harvest (around Thanksgiving time.) Was smashing pumpkins just a fun exercise or were we doing it for a reason? It makes awfully good compost. Did anyone notice how warm compost bed #2 was? I thought I saw the thermometer reading about 124 degrees Fahrenheit! Do you recall why we measure the temperature of a compost bed? And why is it so interesting that even though we were working the compost beds during the day the temperature didn't seem to drop? Scientists are always asking questions aren't they? But it is how we come to understand our world and begin to predict what might happen if we put all that cut grass from the mowed yard into a pile.

We also continued to move the wood chip mulch from the pile by the orchard into the orchard area under the fruit trees. This is marvelous compost material as well isn't it? We expect it to decompose releasing the very nutrients a tree needs because it comes from a once living tree. But while it will ultimately be compost it will first be mulch. What does mulch do for the trees? It prevents weed growth for a while, it keeps the soil moist, and shades the soil so it doesn't get too hot for the trees roots. Every step of the way is part of a plan!!!

Next week we will finish the garlic and onions discussion just in time for Christmas break. Shortly after we come back from the holiday we will be planting onions and shortly after that white potatoes. We will also continue to recycle the remaining pumpkins, take a moment to see how much the top of the compost beds have dropped! Those micro-decomposers are an active force.

See you next week, stay safe and keep asking why!