

On Tuesday February 28th, the 5th grade class planted a *Quercus Shumardii*, or Shumard Oak in celebration of 2023 Arbor Day. Every year since 2004, the 5th grade class has given to the Oak Forest Elementary School an Oak tree in celebration of Arbor Day. The Shumard Oak has beautiful fall colors and can grow from 40 feet to 60 feet tall. It has been known to grow 2 feet a year under optimal conditions. As we head into spring and then summer it is important that this tree gets watered regularly as the root ball reaches out and makes its new home permanent. So each week for the remainder of this school year we need to make sure that we have a watering team that will keep this oak adequately watered.



The weather has been warmer than usual the last couple of days and that has our potatoes growing rapidly in both the Annex and the Orchard. Please take a look to see for yourselves.

This week we will be studying root crops (pgs 16 & 17) and completing our soil sedimentation experiment. Once all the data has been recorded a complete data set determined by the 5th grade classes will be included in the newsletter. This will help us amend the soils in particular beds to improve the growing conditions for our garden crops.

The discussion about root crops has focused on why the crop is referred to as a root crop. Since nothing in nature is done as a lark (for fun or no reason), can you think why plants store food? There are many reasonable answers to this question (so be bold). We also found out that some plants store their food source in the stem (i.e. onions) and others in the roots (carrots, turnips, and beets). We also tied into our discussion what soil type would be best for root crops (you might see questions of this nature on a test). Finally we reviewed where we might find information about planting practices such as seed spacing, seed depth, and best time for planting in a particular geographic region.

The garden is beginning to look and act like a spring garden with lettuce, radishes, and leafy greens ready to be harvested. We need to continue to plant our spring crops such as cucumbers, squash, broccoli, cauliflower, beans, and tomatoes so that we have a harvest or two before the really hot weather comes.

Have a great weekend, and looking forward to next time together when we discuss Tomatoes.