

Second grade brief green classroom emails to help with planning (2007-2008)

As a volunteer, I jotted these down and sent them to the classroom teacher each week. pjm

last week summary:

intro/ garden tour/harvesting of basil

question: something new in the garden ...

9/24:

- voluntary responses from last week
- question: what makes a seed grow into a plant?
- brief discussion of soil and seeds

- demo on sifting compost

- if time, divide into two groups and have half

group one: plant seeds in four inch containers and water with rain water

group two: add compost to garden bed area, work in, plant seeds

tasting- pesto

10/1 summary

discussed what makes seeds grow into plants:

stages - warmth and moisture to signal seed germination and breaking through seed casing, next need nutrients from soil and conditions for root growth.

new question: What are underground plants (how different from leafy tops)?

introduced foods that grow underground - potatoes, carrots, yams, garlic, ginger root

planting with moon phases - waning (underground plants and transplants to establish root growth)

transplanted: broccoli, cauliflower,

seeds: carrots, turnips, beets, radishes, and a few garlic cloves

pulled okra - garden bed full

next week:

question: how to decide what to plant when?

mulching, weeding, watering, recording, tasting

summary:

discussed thoughts about underground plants and leafy plants (had read tops and bottoms book previous week)

new question:
how does one decide what to plant when?

observed progress in garden and new gcp double-dug plot
tasted pepper (chile dulce) from garden

lesson: transplanting
transplanted seedlings started previously - mainly collards, some chard and possibly a spinach seedling or two
also transplanted: mustard, collards and ?? from plants donated for gcp plot

10/22
discussion:
what to plant when could include - frost dates, soil/air temperature, water, moon phases, tradition, pests, what you like to eat (and how much)

new question:
Mulch - what is it and why use it?

lesson:
planting seeds directly in the garden
thinning

action:
plant above ground plants - bush beans, lettuce, chard
thin seedlings (and rinse for tasting) from previous planting
record what we have growing in each plot
divide up plots for care by pairs

10/29
question:
how does one know what to plant when? (students had not thought/written about this one yet)

action:
started journals (let's make sure the entry was dated)
divided into groups and transplanted/thinned seedlings (turnips, chard, arugula),
removed harmful insects from plants
introduced work pairs

Sal (assistant/neighbor will join us for about three weeks)

11/5
discuss planting choices: season, preferences, moon, etc.
review last week's work

new question:
what is mulch and why use it in the garden?

action:
mark off sections of garden for each gardener pair using pebbles/sticks etc.
weed, thin/transplant, observe what is growing and if anything missing
plant seeds (lettuce, snap peas)
record work garden progress
11/5 summary:

discussed planting choices (previous question) but did not introduce new question

divided up and marked gardens into sections by pairs
transplanted, planted seeds (lettuce, radishes, onions), weeded, watered
discovered rain tanks had been emptied
recorded
a bit chaotic

11/19 plan:
new question:
mulch, what is it and why use it?

review: have recorders read what we did
lesson: how to water
take stock of individual (pair) plots in each bed
-maintain: weed, space, water
-plant: lettuce, snap peas
transplant to bring home in 4" pots: cilantro

11/19
asked mulch question
lesson: how to water, process - one person from each pair goes and fills can halfway then simulates rain and hands off to next pair
transplanted and weeded some
recorded what had sprouted: onions, radishes, snap peas
tasted arugula

11/26
new question:
what is growing in your garden? how do you know what is what?
lesson:
how to mulch
how to transplant (review) - cilantro in 4" pot

I will have a list of all that we have planted in the gardens and each pair will need

to write down what they think is in their plot in the journal.

We will have three tasks for each pair:

- 1- guess what is growing in the garden and write it down
- 2- collect leaves and mulch
- 3- transplant cilantro to bring home

11/28

some mulching and some reviewing and transplanted cilantro to take home

12/3

new question:

what would you like your garden to look like?

lesson:

transplanting in the garden

plan:

- 1) make name plates of what is growing: we will have gardeners contribute the names of all the plants and start writing them on popsicle sticks (with sharpies)
- 2) meanwhile, I will work with one pair at a time identifying what is in their plots and making work plans
- 3) harvest and clean lettuce (from other garden) and arugula from our garden to make a salad

12/3

made signs for our gardens on wooden sticks
planted lettuce seeds, pulled weeds and transplanted chard
played game "we are making vegetable soup"

12/10

new question:

how do you know when to harvest something in the garden?

work on getting plots organized:

- 1) continue labeling work
- 2) weed and make space for new plantings
- 3) seed, transplant, label
- 4) plan and draw dream gardens in journals
- 3) Maybe you can have the student gardeners reflect on all of their work and ask a few questions to write about and share their thoughts on wednesday

themes we covered (in no particular order):

- root versus leafy plants
- soil composition
- what plants need
- compost

- mulch
- transplanting
- harvesting, food preparation and tasting
- starting seeds - direct sowing and in four inch pots
- rainwater harvesting
- garden design/planning/maintenance
- seasons and when to plant what
- beneficial and harmful insects

Oh, last week we pulled weeds and planted some corn in a common area and planted flower and herb seeds in pots.

question ideas:

- Describe three things you learned in the green classroom that you did not know before this year.
- Name two jobs you love doing in the garden?
- What plants do you remember planting from seeds? Draw a picture of the seed and the plant when ready for harvesting.
- What root plants did you enjoy harvesting and/or tasting? What leafy plants did you enjoy harvesting and/or tasting?
- What surprises did you find in the green classroom?
- What part of gardening did you find most challenging? Most rewarding?