

## 2022 Adams School Garden Report

This year the school garden project has been an “adventure” every week due to school construction starting in the spring just about the time we were to start spring garden club. In addition to that, we experienced horrible wet weather, making it unpleasant since we did not have any shelter with the tree being removed. Our garden club committee met in late winter to decide the direction we wanted to take and ended up with one of our most successful years despite all the challenges we had to overcome.

The first thing I did was connect with the A-Z Seed program at OSU through the Nutrition Education program and secured seeds and supplies including potato starts. Connie Ash checked with teachers to see if they were interested in classroom seed starting kits and we had 6 classrooms interested. We used some of our MG funding to purchase seed starting trays and soil plus adding a variety of seeds along with instructions for each classroom. These were distributed in March.

We were informed that spring break was when the remodeling and additions were going to start for Adams School. The plans included taking away half our garden including 5 of our raised beds, the area where we had our storage sheds for supplies, grape harbor, straw bed, and the green house plus the big tree that was in our garden area. We had a few weeks to get things moved so our first project with the kids was to remove as much of the good soil and plants from the raised beds and dig up any plants that we wanted to keep. We put the soil into large pots and transplanted strawberries, herbs and other plants into the pots. We staged them along the back fence and hooked up a drip system. The kids had lots of fun digging up plants and hauling soil from the old garden space to BIG pots. We potted up lots of strawberries and herbs that were sent home with the kids. Our temporary storage sheds and supplies were moved to a storage area set up by the school, but we managed to secure a place near the garden for our supply shed. The garden area was fenced, and a gate was put in so we could access the garden from the parking lot.

The weather was very rainy and the demolition of part of the school and moving the modular classrooms was very noisy and hard for the kids to concentrate. As a result, we moved many of our spring garden club activities to other areas of the school. We had around 25 kids in both the spring and fall garden club and they were very enthusiastic to get out and do something physical after not being able to do anything during COVID shut down.

Spring activities with the kids besides moving soil and plants included making worm hotels (compositing in a jar), seed starts in egg cartons, potato bags, planting small succulent gardens in a pot, flower arrangements for Mother’s Day, and we were able to do some planting of spring veggies. (Pictures follow) The end of Spring Garden Club concluded with a garden feast

including salad with veggie grown in the garden and snack foods made by our garden committee.

The Garden team met though out the summer one morning a week for a couple hours. We were able to plant many vegetable plants in several of the raised beds. Included were lots of tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, broccoli, corn and a late starting pumpkin and squash bed that produced amazing pumpkins. We also planted flowers and some herbs. With the wet spring and not being able to work the garden like we usually do because of the constructions the weeds took over several of the beds, so we decided to cover them with cardboard and focus on the productive beds. We had a good crop of raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries that we froze to use in the fall for the kids to make jam.

We couldn't have asked for a nicer fall for our Fall Garden Club. The garden looked amazing for the kids, and we again planned activities every week to keep them busy. Not only did we weed and harvest every week and sent produce home with the kids, but we were also able to do cooking with the kids so they could enjoy the produce they harvested.

The kids were so engaged and enjoyed each week. It is wonderful when a child says, "I have never eaten a tomato right from the vine, it is so sweet". "I have never picked or shucked corn before." Never thought I would like spiritualized zucchini with pesto made from the garden basil". They loved the jams we made from the berries as well and the salsa was a hit. The corn was amazing this year. Over 12 tall and there were enough ears that every child could enjoy at least one ear.

Fall activities included a scavenger hunt to start the season looking for all the things growing in the garden and sampling berries, tomatoes, and grapes etc. along the way. We made three kinds of freezer jam from berries we harvested during the summer and each child could take home as small container to share. A big hit is making "slinky apples each week to enjoy as a snack. We made flower arrangements for Mother's Day as well as in the fall, for them to take home. Our traditional end of the year party included a huge pumpkin/squash hunt (like an Easter Egg Hunt). We grew quite a few in the garden, brought some from home and a donation of pumpkins from one of the families. Each child got to take home at least 2 pumpkins or squash as well as corn stalks to decorate for Halloween.

The fun thing to see was how engaged the kids were in the garden and how excited they were. Kids with behavioral issues became our best friends and we were thanked so many times by kids and parents for providing this opportunity. We are so grateful for the school letting us do this project and for the support we have gotten from Dawn Gonzales who is our teacher liaison.

Master Gardeners involved with either or both the spring and fall garden club activities or helped in the summer maintaining the garden were: Sue Pisias, Chere Pereira, Jamie Brown, Mary Ann Carr, Susan Tiegs, and Leslie Hauser. We also had help from retired teacher Connie Ash who has been our liaison with the school to keep us up to date on construction, Rachael Kirby, Sustainability Coalition, Charlotte Mills, retire school cook, and we also had help in the

spring from a few parent volunteers and teacher David Abraham, due to a foot injury could not help in the fall.

For budget we did not spend our allotment this year due to construction but did use some to supply starter kits for the teachers and some supplies for activities. Put in for the same amount for next year, however we do not know what the progress of the construction at the school will be and when they will restore our lost garden beds.

## **Photos of our Wonderful Program**

### **Spring Garden Club Photos**



Scavenger hunt and moving the soil and equipment from garden before demolition starts



Transplanting berries and herbs



Fava Bean Bed in Spring



Fun in the Fava Bean bed we planted last fall



Fava bean bed a good place to hide



Spring Planting seeds, veggies and tomatoes



Succulent Project. Garden Club made succulent pots for the teachers for teacher appreciation week. Also made succulent pots for them to take home from succulents left over after the plant sale.





Potato Project. Naming and weighing potatoes, then preparing the potato bag and planting the potato starts. Last picture is the kids and their potato babies to take home to grow.



Seed starting project



Mothers day bouquets



Spring end of season feast.

## Fall Garden Club Photos



Salsa making



Making freezer jam from berries harvested from the garden







Amazing squash pumpkin patch



Flowers and veggies



Weekly harvest



The corn patch, harvest and eating was a highlight for the kids. Corn plants over 12' high and enough corn for everyone to enjoy.





Making spirilized zucchini and serving with pesto from basil grown in garden



Planting Fava Beans for Next Spring



Fall Flower Arranging to take home



Fall Garden Club end of season feast and group photo with their pumpkins



**Good Bye Garden. See you in the spring. Fall clean up crew of MGs and Connie Ash**

**It was a challenging but fun year, and we are looking forward to spring to see what adventures the garden will bring. Hopefully before 2023 ends we will have a NEW garden with new beds, fence etc.**

**Submitted by Nellie Oehler, Chair Adams School Committee**