

Veggie Bytes

Spring Edition

Feb – April 2018

Volume 9, Issue 1

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Greauxing Gumbo

Pre-K through 1st grade students at Marigny Elementary School in Mandeville, Louisiana are growing a really unique garden. The garden is quite expansive covering an entire courtyard and in the process of expanding beyond the school yard. Mrs. Sue McGuire leads a group of Master Gardener vol-



unteers weekly to hold classes for the students in the garden. The garden boasts several themed areas including a miniature playhouse, a butterfly garden, planted in tires in the shape of a caterpillar, a native plants area, a pollinator garden, many edibles including the normal crops such as broccoli all the way

to unusual luffas. One of our favorite themed portions of this garden was the gumbo garden which was planted with okra, filé (sassafras), peppers, onions, and parsley. The Master Gardeners cooked a gumbo using ingredients from the gumbo garden providing all students with a taste! What a great way to showcase where food comes from!



What's Growing!

February

Directly Place Seed into the Garden

Beets, turnips, mustard, parsley, radish, lettuce, snap beans, Irish potatoes

Transplant into the Garden

Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce

Start seed in classroom

Tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant

March

Directly Place Seed into the Garden

Snap beans, Swiss chard, radish, lettuce, collard greens, mustards, turnips

Transplant into the Garden

Tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants

Start seed in classroom

Cucumbers, plant after last frost

April

Directly Place Seed into the Garden

Snap beans, butter beans, radish, collards, cucumbers

Transplant into the Garden

Sweet potato slips, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant

How to Grow Tomatoes

Plant tomato seeds in your classroom starting in February.

Keep seedlings in a bright window sill. Add light from a lamp if the seedlings begin to stretch.

Seedlings will be ready for the garden in late March.

Watch the weather forecast and determine when to plant outdoors . It may be necessary to wait until early or even mid April pending a frost or freeze is predicted.

Tomatoes need 6-8 hours of direct sun light daily. Space tomato plants 18 inches apart. If tomatoes are too close together there will not be sufficient air movement around the plants. This can enhance disease and insect pressure.

After planting, water the plants in thoroughly always watering at the base of plants. Plants drink through their roots not leaves.

Tomato plants need to be fertilized regularly. Water soluble fertilizers work great but remember to follow directions. When it comes to fertilizer, more is not always better. Place fertilizer in the garden before you plant and again each time the tomato plant blooms (usually 1-2 week intervals after the first bloom until the first harvest).

Watch carefully for large green worms eating the tomato leaves. This is a tomato hornworm. If you see them, pick them off.



Lee Road School Garden

All hands on deck at this Covington school garden! Every Tuesday kids get the opportunity to get outside and get their hands dirty in the garden. Students are supervised by Master Gardeners who take the time to engage each “mini-gardener” as they help pull weeds or plant something new.



Last fall, students learned about the bean leaf roller (pictured here)



Students scouted bean plants to see how many leaf rollers they could find and also learned how to remove them... by just picking them off! Leaf roller



larvae protect themselves by rolling a leaf around their body. The larvae will stay wrapped in the leaf, only leaving at night to feed on nearby leaves until it forms a chrysalis. Eventually, it will emerge a brown toned skipper butterfly. Pictured are students showing off the beans they harvested!

Strawberry Pretzel Fluff

- 8 ounce container of Cool Whip
- 10 ounce package mini marshmallows
- 2 cups plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 3 cup strawberries, quartered
- 2 cups thin pretzel sticks, broken



In a large bowl, mix together whipped topping, marshmallows, and Greek yogurt until well-combined.

Toss in strawberries and pretzels. If you want the pretzels to stay crunchy, add until just before serving.

Cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Recipe from www.ihearteating.com

Hope you are picking lots of berries from your garden!

Zinnias 101

A successful garden needs pollinators. Zinnias can help attract them. Zinnias are an annual cut flower known for having large, brightly colored flowers. Bees and butterflies are attracted to the flowers and will also pollinate your vegetables while visiting your garden.

Directly seed zinnias into a garden receiving full sunlight (same needs as veggies). Sow seeds after the last threat of frost/ freeze Mid March S. La, April 1st North La. Intermix zinnias with your vegetable crops to really attract pollinators. They will grow fine next to one another. Water thoroughly after seeding and as the plants grow (1 inch per week).



WORD SCRAMBLE

tilnoPonlia _____

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aergigo _____

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igowrgn _____

mferra _____



pollination
blueberry
georgia
yogurt

fiber
delicious
growing
farmer

WORD SEARCH PROVIDED BY THE
GEORGIA BLUEBERRY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

LSU AgCenter

Growing Gardens!
Kathryn “Kiki” Fontenot, PhD
 163 JC Miller Hall
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803

&
Mary Sexton, MS
 161 JC Miller Hall
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803

William B. Richardson,
 LSU Vice President for
 Agriculture

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Book Review!



The first children's
 cookbook
 from *New York Times* bestselling
 author and popular
 food blogger Erin
 Gleeson, *The Forest Feast for Kids*,
 serves up kid-
 friendly vegetarian
 recipes that are
 quick, easy, and
 fun to make. This
 cookbook show-
 cases the rustic

simplicity of the fare through vibrant colorful pho-
 tography of Gleeson's beautiful home in the
 woods and of children cooking the dishes them-
 selves.

ISBN 9781419718861 barnesandnoble.com

Consider Planting Herbs

Oregano, thyme, basil...those are just a few of the many herbs we can grow in Louisiana. You can start them from seed now or purchase them in the spring at your local plant nursery. They need to be planted in a bright, sunny spot that has well drained soil. Don't plant the HERBS LISTED ABOVE if cold weather is on the way, they like to be warm. Basil is a staple herb for most gardens and with good reason; its easy to grow and will mature into a sizable plant with flowers that are a bee magnet! Most herbs are an annual, meaning they usually live one year. If space is a limiting factor, an herb pot is a good option. Plant a tall herb, like rosemary, in the center then place shorter growing herbs around the rim.

