
November 2022 Newsletter Issue 9



Leon, the Ground-dweller

What's Growing On?



**LEARNING
THROUGH
GARDENING**

Hi friends,

My thoughts in November invariably go to gratitude; I am sure that many of you have similar thoughts.

I am so thankful to be able to work with such a wonderful group of educators who put one hundred percent of themselves into the work of educating students. I am grateful that you share the same vision as me and are making the additional effort and putting in the extra so that your students have the gardening experience as youngsters. I hope you realize that you are planting the “seeds” of elementary school memories for these students. Without you, they may never have had the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and the excitement of growing your own food. The lessons learned in the garden will stick with them and many will, hopefully, continue growing fruits and vegetables and sharing the experience with others!

I am also incredibly thankful for the garden pictures shared with me. Please keep them coming, it is wonderful for me to be able to share them with our donors so that they can see how their donations benefit a wide variety of students across the state!

On a different note, please let me know if you have any interest in pizza boxes. Pizza boxes, which can be difficult to recycle, work great a weed barrier in garden pathways. If you would like some, I have a source to secure them, just reach out!

This newsletter is jam-packed with information. Please read it over carefully, as there are some new and exciting changes to the LTG program.

Happy Planting!

Nancy

Upcoming November Events:

November is Gratitude, Family Stories, Pepper, and Sweet Potato Awareness Month

1st – World Vegan Day

13th – Kindness Day

14th – Pickle Day

18th – Apple Cider Day

23rd – Eat a Cranberry Day

24th – Thanksgiving Day

25th – Maize Day

Important Announcements:

- “Give Plants a Chance: Why start a School Garden?” Come and see me at the NJEA Teacher’s Convention in Atlantic City!
- The application window has opened for schools to apply to Growing Together! Be sure to tell your friends if they are interested in starting a school garden at their school! Applications due December 31, 2022.
- 2023 is bringing back two new and improved contests: GARDEN OF THE YEAR and FIRST PEAS TO THE TABLE! Details in this [newsletter!!](#)

Growing our Curriculum!

We are so excited to have been awarded a Farm to School Grant from the USDA. Learning through Gardening in conjunction with NJ Agriculture in the Classroom will be producing a **four-video series**. Each video will feature a live streaming trip to the farm where students meet farmers across New Jersey and learning about the sources of their food and about what it is like to be a farmer, directly from the farmer. We want to educate students so that they become adults who work to keep New Jersey green, growing, and nourished. Each video will also have pre- and post-activities to introduce and extend learning and agricultural literacy, STEM, and nutrition lessons.

I am looking for volunteers: teachers and classes grades k-2 to participate in the live streaming of our video series and accompanying curriculum? Would you like be a part of this amazing experience? Please reach out, I would love to have you on board!

BEST PRACTICE WORKSHOP:

An additional BPW will be held on Friday, February 17, 2022, at 9 AM, at the Eco-Complex in Bordentown! Lesson plans, best ideas, composting and vermicomposting will be covered, and you will make a classroom-sized vermicomposter!

Registration is open, now! [Click here!](#)

FYI: This is the same workshop as October



These are just a couple of our newest vermicomposters from Van Holten School!

Apply for a Youth Garden Grant!

In early 2023, 50 organizations will be awarded \$500 in funding and a collection of gardening supplies for their youth garden program....Check it out!

Remember to update your information and join Growing Together! as an Ambassador School if you haven't already done so...to receive plugs for the upcoming calendar year!

For schools who have been a Growing Partner School or a Growing Associate School. The application is just an update for our records! All applicants are happily accepted!

[Click here for the application.](#)

New Affiliation program has been established:

Growing Fellowship, for schools with established gardens wishing to join our network of schools!

Details and application on our website!

Come Grow with Us!

NEW: Ambassador schools in good standing no longer need to request "winter" lessons!

Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Winter

Gardens, like people, need regular rejuvenation after periods of hard work. This explains why many plants go dormant or grow slowly in winter. Additionally, it is why soil life cycles through nutrients much slower in cold conditions.

Nature has built-in a rest period. Just like you wouldn't be rejuvenated by resting bare, idle, and bored, out in the cold - neither will your garden!

Use Cover Crops

An easy way to protect the soil in your beds and even improve them without needing to spend a lot of time gardening. You can seed your beds with cover crops.

You will need to water your seedlings in the fall. However, once those plants are established, then they'll prevent weeds from taking over until you are ready to garden again

come spring. Plus, you can lightly till those cover crops to feed your spring plants. Three winter cover crops are crimson clover, tillage radishes, and hard winter wheat.

Top Off with Compost

The compost will protect the soil and nourish your soil life through winter.

Layer on the Leaves

If you have an abundance of deciduous trees, you can protect your beds with several inches of leaves. If you can mulch them first, they will decompose faster.

Protect with Straw

Straw is one of the cheapest, easiest ways to keep your beds covered in winter. For raised beds that are 4-feet wide by 8-feet long, you only need about a half a bale of straw per bed.

Seed Money Campaign!

The *Learning Through Gardening* program is beginning this exciting campaign on

November 15, 2022, a donation campaign that will help us to keep our gardens growing! Please consider sharing our campaign link with anyone you know who would like to help us achieve our vision of developing understanding and appreciation of farming, agriculture, and production of fresh nutritious foods in schools across NJ!



[NJ Agricultural Society Learning Through Gardening \(LTG\) - SeedMoney](#)

Leon says, "Please help spread this link like compost!"

Planting New Seeds in 2023.... This is what is GROWING ON!

1st Annual GARDEN OF THE YEAR '23

Does your garden have what it takes? Show off your garden, make a short google slide presentation, preferably with student input, maximum 5 slides, and put your garden on display! Use the checklist as a guideline to plan your presentation.

The LTG Garden of the Year:

- Integrates garden instruction into classroom curriculum
- Harvests a variety of vegetables and fruits
- Connects with community

- Provides hands-on opportunities for students to learn about nutrition, gardening, cooking, and/or agriculture,

Applications will be accepted from any affiliate in good standing with LTG. Winner will receive a prize for their school garden valued at \$300 and a representative will be invited to the NJAS Gala to be recognized! Questions? Reach out!

Deadline to enter:
November 22, 2023!



Cucumber harvest at 13th Ave. School



Students at PJ Hill in the garden!

“Winter” Lessons get an Update!

Winter lessons will now be called Keep it Growing Kits. These KIG kits will be sent out to all partner, associate, and ambassador schools. Please remember that you must be in good standing to receive your KIG kit. Here is what you can expect:

- A cross-curricular unit on Maize to go along with Maize Day, November 25.
- A book about Christmas Tree Farms in New Jersey and some Norway Spruce seeds.
- A cross-curricular lesson on Phototropism including pole bean seeds and a STEM activity.
- Pea Seeds for our upcoming first annual “First Peas to the Table”

1st Annual “First Peas to the Table” Contest

Join the First Peas to the Table Contest and compete with other LTG gardens to grow the first peas of the year! Peas are one of the earliest vegetables you can plant in the school garden and should be ready to harvest by the end of the school year. For complete details, [click here!](#)

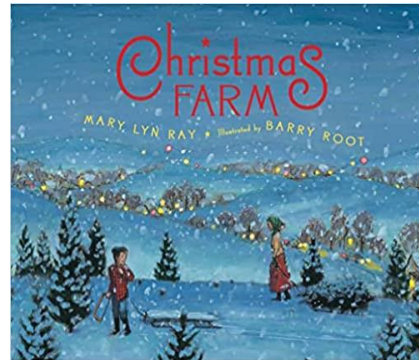
Contest Guidelines and Rules

Goal: To be the first team to grow and harvest 2 cups of peas, without using a hot house.

Contest! (More information about this is in the next article)

- Seeds for the upcoming spring garden, so you can plant your planting, including seeds to plant a Three Sisters Garden!

I am hopeful that these kits will be sent off to you prior to Thanksgiving, if not expect them shortly afterward.



Donated by NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association

Runner-up prizes given for the following categories:

- Heaviest Harvest
- Most Peas Harvested
- Tallest Pea Plant
- Most Creative Pea Trellising

