

VCS Garden Report – 2016 Growing Season



The seventh growing season of the Victor Schools Garden has come to an end. **This year we had 70 student volunteers helping out in the garden – and a total of 267 volunteer hours helped make this season successful!** We began our season April 23rd, 2016, when junior high and high school members of the “Go Green Garden Team” joined volunteers from the community to help the Village of Victor’s Arbor Committee in planting forty trees along School Street. We continued our gardening efforts at the VCS Garden through October 2016. Our volunteers included students from the Intermediate, Junior High, and High School (including our special needs students)... Our “Go Green Garden Team” demonstrated tremendous dedication – even while enjoying their summer vacations, they returned to campus to participate in this project.

Our growing season was off to a great start, thanks to the efforts of some of our high school students. They led a composting effort at school, then spread their compost in our raised beds to enrich our soil. What a great way to kick-off our growing season!

This year our harvest was used in our school cafeterias, Home & Career Skills classes, and at Culinary Club and our Garden Club meetings. **We also donated nearly all of our summer harvest to the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard!**

We are thankful to Chip White of White’s Farm Market for his generous donations of seedlings, seeds, knowledge and support. We also appreciate the support of Lucas Greenhouse. We continue to benefit from the support and guidance of our Master Gardener, Deb Sanders, and our consulting Chef Mike Speranza. Thanks to the Building and Grounds personnel, we had water for our plants and wood chips for our paths.

This summer had some dry spells, but our student volunteers were up to the challenge! We practiced companion planting to help our plants grow successfully.

This year we grew: garlic, oregano, basil, sage, chives, parsley, rosemary, rhubarb, tomatoes, onions, lettuces, spinach, cucumbers, pole beans, beets, zucchini, bell peppers, jalapeno peppers, carrots, radishes, and celery. New to our garden this year: parsnips and potatoes. The potatoes were especially fun to harvest!

We strive to help increase student awareness of nutritious foods and increase their confidence in growing food. To sample our harvest using produce grown in the garden, students prepared garden salad with balsamic vinaigrette, basil pesto, pesto pizza, pizza bagels, fresh tomato salsa, homemade tomato sauce, zoodles, zucchini cookies, zucchini tots, soup, bruschetta, garlic cheesy bread, strawberry-rhubarb hand pies and strawberry-rhubarb crisp, mashed potatoes, and loaded potatoes. Students also practiced food preservation by dehydrating and freezing herbs and blanching green beans to use throughout the school year.

Our future plans include:

- Students will be researching other plants that may be suitable for our garden.
- Students will take on additional leadership roles during garden sessions.
- We will continue to expand our student volunteer base.

Please check our website for more information on the VCS Garden and photos of students in action:

garden.victorschools.org

Thanks for your support to keep our garden growing!