

Simonton's Garden of Awesomeness

Garden Club 2nd Meeting

Thursday, February 21 (3:15 PM - 4:15 PM)

Please head to the school garden for the meeting.

The first after school garden club meeting was well attended. There were 30 Simonton 4th - 6th grade students at the meeting. Plus, there were a couple of younger students as well.

The meeting was initially held in Jaimi Driscoll's classroom. During our time in the classroom, there were introductions, conversations about the plants currently growing in the school garden, and a brief introduction to the health benefits of some of the garden vegetables. Ms. Driscoll, a garden club sponsor, gave some garden instructional information. Mr. Licon, garden coordinator, provided insight about an upcoming garden club project which is planting potatoes using the four tire method. To use as a visual teaching aid, Abigail allowed Mrs. Crosslin to display and talk about her bug poster. The poster included terrific graphics and photographs of beneficial garden bugs such as the lacewing, ladybug, syrphid fly, and the ground beetle. The promotion of natural bug removal vs. using pesticides was incorporated into the conversation also.

After various gardening related discussions, everyone went to the garden. The garden club participants seemed happy to look at the plants and ask questions about them. Mr. Licon spoke about the irrigation method for the garden boxes. Following up the first garden club meeting in the school garden made sense because it is where the future meetings will occur. Several hands-on garden related events such as soil preparation, seed planting, and potato planting will happen in the garden soon.

Simonton's Garden of Awesomeness is a great place to be and a positive learning environment worthy of our time. The garden club is an extension of the school garden. The club motto is, "Educating future gardeners while growing a community." This quote sums up the connection between the Simonton gardeners and the greater community in which we live.

Garden Update: Volume 3

Project 1: Follow-Up About Garden Prep Work

One important project referenced in the Garden Update: Volume 2 is the preparation of two garden beds for winter crops. In January, Zvida Growers donated nine bags of soil and two bags of mulch to the school garden. Rose Flaherty provided a truck for transporting her Rototiller to the garden. January 12th and January 16th Justin Licon delivered the Rototiller to the garden and used it to work the soil amendments into two garden beds.

Project 2: Follow-up About Seed Planting

An inventory of the garden seeds is available on a spreadsheet. However, the seed planting schedule is still being created.

In mid January, Sherri Crosslin went to Zvida Growers to obtain the four trays of plants which were being cared for in a greenhouse. Then she took the plants to Simonton Elementary and handed them over to Mike in Simonton's maintenance department. Mike delivered the plants to the school garden for safe keeping. Later in the day, the salad mix, chives, snap peas, and snow peas were transplanted into two garden beds. Seven Simonton students, Mary Spooner, Justin Licon, Sherri Crosslin, and Mary Crowder participated in the transplanting event. One Simonton student stated, "Transplanting was a fun time for some Simonton kids to get to know each other while helping in the garden."

The transplanting of the Brussels sprouts and broccoli occurred the following day. Mrs. Crosslin moved the remaining plants into the prepared garden beds to finish up the transplanting process.

Project 3: Follow-up About Building Up a Compost Pile

January 12th, Mrs. Crosslin incorporated additional food scraps and plant material into the compost pile. This is an ongoing project that keeps growing.

Project 4: The Garden Page

The newsletters are initially prepared by Mrs. Crosslin. Mrs. Rowley and Karla provide some assistance making the newsletter content flow a little better. Karla set up the web page for the school garden which includes some information about the after school garden club. Additionally, Karla includes garden photographs which are sent to her for the garden page.

Project 5: Tree Planting

Arrangements for an upcoming tree planting event are in the works. The garden is able to accommodate seven to eight fruit and eight to ten shade trees. Donations of trees and/or money are being requested for the purchase of fruit and shade trees. So far, one 5 gallon dwarf Early Grande Peach tree and one 15 gallon citrus tree are being supplied to Simonton's Garden of Awesomeness.

Project 6: Brick/Paver Dedication Pathway

Preparations are being made to create a brick/paver pathway in Simonton's school garden. For example, the pathway will include engraved messages of thanks, memorials, quotes, poems, and various other messages. The dedication project will serve several purposes one of which is a way to raise funds to pay for the pathway as well as future garden enterprises.

Donations

January 2013

- On behalf of the school garden project, Justin Licon purchased some drip irrigation parts and garden gloves. The money for the purchases came from the December 2012 monetary donation from Castlegate Community Association.
- Zvida Growers donated nine bags of soil and two bags of mulch to the school garden. Arturo, of Zvida Growers, made a delivery of the supplies to the school.
- On two separate occasions, Rose Flaherty loaned Justin Licon the use of her truck and Rototiller.
- Bill Faires, owner of San Tan Landscape Management, agreed to prepare a rough estimate plan of the school garden space.

February 2013

- San Tan Landscape Management donated and delivered 10 tires to the school garden for the upcoming garden club potato planting project.
- On behalf of the Simonton PTO, Mary Crowder agreed to donate one 15 gallon citrus tree to the school garden.
- February 6, Boaz, of Zvida Growers, agreed to donate more soil to the school garden. The soil will be delivered to the school Friday, February 8.
- February 6, the Simonton PTO president, Mary Crowder, agreed to donate one 15 gallon citrus tree to Simonton's Garden of Awesomeness.
- Bill Bond, owner of Avocado Nursery, agreed to donate a dwarf Early Grande Peach tree to the school garden.