

2017 Garden Recognition Second Year



Poinciana Elementary

2825 Airport Rd. S.
Naples, FL 34105

School Profile:

- Collier County Public Schools
- PreK-5th grades
- 662 students

Garden Profile:

- 3 years in operation
- Kindergarten participates in garden
- No staff paid to assist garden
- Some parent assistance with special projects

General Garden Information:

We truly love creating an atmosphere where the children love to learn and appreciate everything that is natural around them. We love that children go home inspired to share it with their parents and want to grow food at their own home. Our garden has been a great opportunity for us to learn and teach. This is a passion for both of us lead garden teachers and now our students are passionate as well. Imagine looking outside at beautiful flowers, plants, and trees, and then seeing children caring for them with smiles spread ear to ear. They come in on Monday morning and their parents bring them to school early because they need to check on “their” garden. It has become such a center of our learning environment that we hope to have the funds year-to-year to keep it a wonderful place to learn, grow, and inspire the next generation.

The garden consists of seven raised beds and is about 70% edible plants, including two lemon trees. We have one bed with butterfly weed and one bed with sunflowers. In Kindergarten we learn about the life cycle of butterflies and why certain environments are necessary for their survival. Butterfly weed allows the students to see caterpillars and we also release the butterflies that we have as a class. In the sunflower bed, students plant seeds of their own and watch them grow. They keep a journal and measure the growth of their own plant. In another bed, we have pumpkins that we plant in the spring for fall harvest. Other beds include veggies and herbs.



Naples
Botanical
Garden

Student Involvement & Education:

About 40 students are currently helping in our garden program. These students participate in the garden program daily; some students use the garden in the afterschool Sports Club program. Other students at the school use the garden for observation purposes in science. Some students just to go the garden to read and enjoy the outside learning environment feel of the garden.

In Kindergarten, we incorporate our garden into science, reading, writing, health, and math curriculum. We have had lessons on planting, plant needs, and how they help people and animals. We read books about gardens, plants, how things grow and change. In health, we talk about healthy eating and what foods are good for what parts of our body and how choosing the right foods will keep you healthy. In the math curriculum, we count how many seeds we plant and then how many actually sprout. We measure and record the growth of some plants and sometimes we are creative and use what we grow to write word problems. In reading and writing we write expository text first-hand. The kids write about what they did first, next, then, and last. They are able to incorporate wonderful adjectives because they are part of the experience. We also use the garden for reading lessons to just be outside.

Garden Product:

We use produce harvested from our garden to make soups, salads, and fresh pesto sauce; we also eat the produce raw.

Parent Engagement:

We encourage parents to come in and garden with the students. We also encourage parents to donate necessary materials. We send pictures in emails and in our weekly newsletters to inspire and encourage the parents to talk with their student and be excited with them.

Goals:

Our goals for the garden in the future are to have more plants and beds so that other grade levels will be able to participate as well. We would like to have more fruit trees and more vegetables growing year-round. We want the students to be so excited about gardening that they want to try foods that they wouldn't normally try. We would like to expand the garden and incorporate more classes so that it becomes a school garden and not just for Kindergarten.

Additional Notes:

We spent last year's Recognition award on keeping our garden growing and teaching the students how to work in a garden and cook food from their garden. We bought plants for an air garden; we bought and grew an herb garden and we bought tomato plants. We bought soil and seeds for cucumbers, carrots, two different types of lettuce, eggplant, tomatoes, jalapeños, different types of peppers, kale, and many more vegetables that are flourishing in our garden.

We started a program at the school called "adopt a pot." Classes volunteered to choose a pot around campus and keep it watered and cared for throughout the school year. The classes were encouraged to make signs to show what was growing and which class was sponsoring the pot for the year. This has really brought the garden to a school-wide connection across grade levels.

Special events in the garden this year included Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Program recording action shots of the kids working. We also had an article in the Children and Families magazine about our garden and the kids cooking from it. Champions for Learning awarded us with \$200 to help with the cost of building an outdoor learning environment for the students in the garden.

Contact:

Janell Matos, Teacher, matosj2@collierschools.com

Joanna Campanile, Teacher, campaj@collierschools.com