

# Spring Newsletter



## Spring has Sprung!

Spring has come early this year and we are enjoying the fruits of our fall Community Gardening Day. Daffodils, grape hyacinths, and crocuses are in bloom, brightening up the front of our school. Many additional more are still to come.

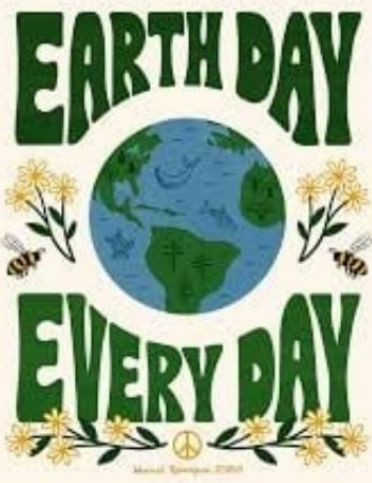


## A Newsletter...

There is so much great stuff going on that we thought it would be easiest to communicate it all to you via newsletter. The goal will be to send new issues out as activities merit. It provides an opportunity to highlight all of the great work going on and also display images of our progress.

## Earth Day Celebration: April 26th

The Green Team is helping to organize Bradford's first Earth Day celebration on Friday, April 26th, which will be held in the gym from 9am to 2:50pm. Each grade will have 40m to enjoy fun arts and crafts, learn about organizations in our community that focus on the environment, and read about pioneer young environmentalists. We will also kick off a new tradition of planting a tree on Bradford's grounds.





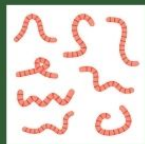


## SUPPORTING TEACHERS

On December 4th, Bradford teachers welcomed Dallas Hetherington from C-Change Conversations, a non-partisan organization that focuses on climate change education. Dallas provided an important and informative overview of our current climate crisis.

On Monday, March 25th, Van Vleck Director of Education, Michelle Weissner, provided Bradford teachers with ideas and examples of how to utilize Bradford’s outdoor space as a unique experiential learning environment. Teachers will have the opportunity to discuss challenges and ask questions on how to begin teaching lessons in an outdoor space, as well as how to enhance and expand lessons for those teachers already comfortable bringing their students outdoors.

## CURRICULUM SUPPORT



In February, 10 classrooms received worm hotels, curriculum support, and books to learn more about these crawly creatures and how they work to compost our soil.



In March, 12 classrooms received seed trays and are learning all about plant lifecycles. They will attempt to grow different kinds of veggies and flowers and then plant them as seedlings into our raised beds. Big thanks to Zi Mei for supporting us with many seeds!



6 teachers have thus far signed up to monitor seedlings in a full or half raised bed this Spring!

## Bradfest 2024

For the first time this year Bradfest included a live auction item supporting Bradford’s Raised Bed program. The winning bid came in at \$450! The money will go to materials such as vegetable and herb seeds and seedlings, compost, mulch, and 2 climbing trellises.



# A NEW APPROACH TO RAISED BEDS

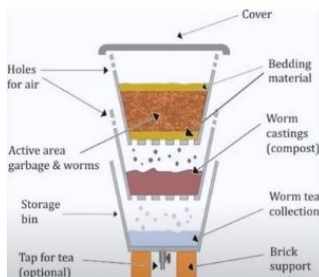
## »»» HISTORY OF RAISED BEDS AT BRADFORD

In years past, individual teachers have been responsible for organizing and planting a raised bed. The feedback we received from teachers has been that more teachers would get involved if they were provided a plan and materials. What has happened in years past is that we end up with multiple beds that have the same contents. We have 11 total raised beds, each of which are in a different status of functioning. We have decided to wait to fix any more of the bins until the playground redesign is more clearly defined as we do not currently still know if any of the bins will need to be moved.

## »»» WHAT IS COLLECTIVE GARDENING?

A collective gardening approach involves coming up with an overall master plan for the beds (what goes where) and supporting teachers in their involvement in the beds.

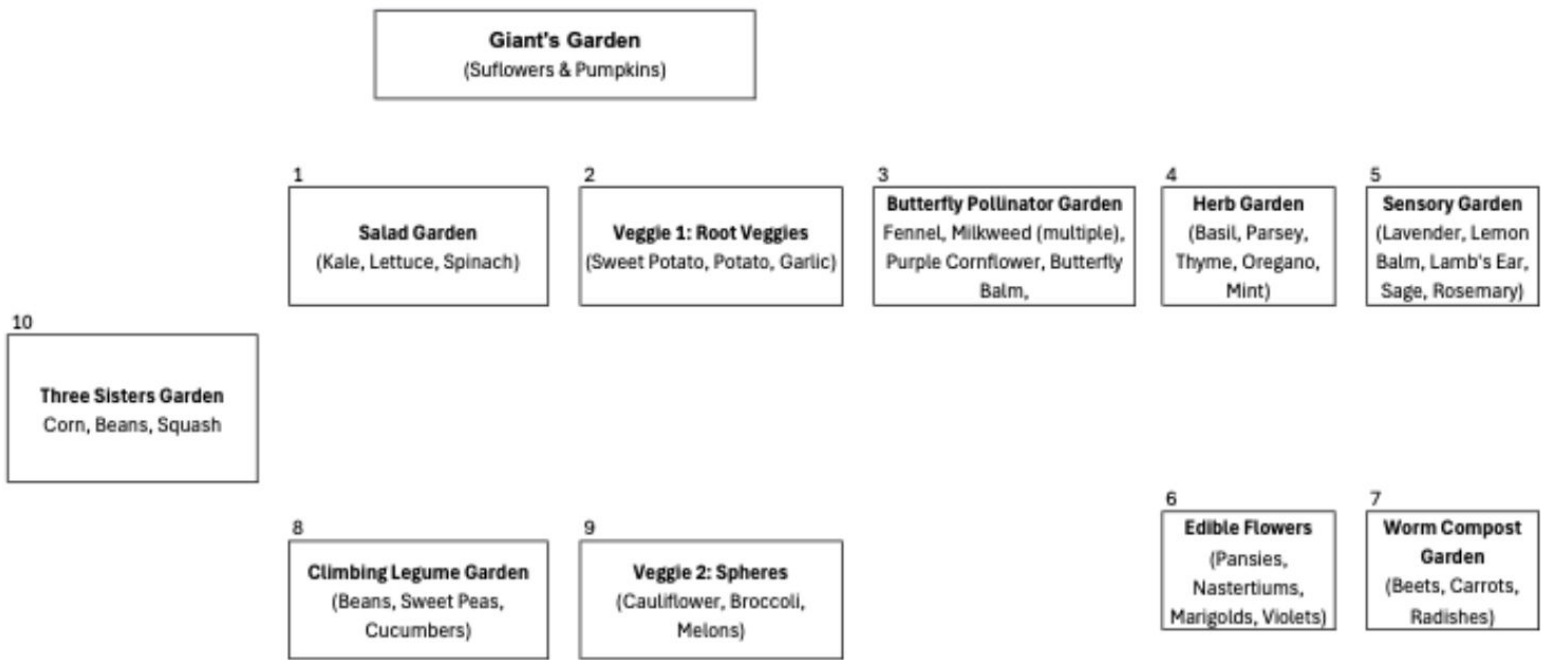
- First, we have identified vegetables and plants that are harvestable during school months (April - June in Spring and September through November in Fall).
- Second, we have organized the beds via themes (see below): sensory, pollinator, climbing, edible, herb, etc. to hopefully engage and interest as many students as possible.
- Finally, we hope that through the Plant Lifecycle curriculum program for teachers, classes will grow their seeds into seedlings, affording students the opportunity to plant their seedlings in the garden.



## »»» WORM COMPOSTING

The raised bed outside of Dr.Cahill's room will be the home of our new worm composter. Many thanks to Ben Watson for installing and overseeing this project. We hope as a result, to generate nutritious soil that will help supplement all of our garden beds.

# BRADFORD'S RAISED BED COLLECTIVE GARDENING PLAN





# ISABELLA'S GARDEN

## »»» ACCREDITATIONS

We have officially applied to be added to the Pollinator Pathway and recognized as a Monarch Waystation. To be recognized as a site on the **Pollinator Pathway**, an entity must be a pesticide-free site and offer native plants that provide nutrition and habitat for pollinating insects and birds. **Monarch Waystations** are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Our garden currently has three different kinds of milkweed and we are hoping to expand that to six this year.

## »»» SIGNAGE

We hope to have our official sign and the mosaic border installed later this Spring. We are working with the North East Earth Coalition (NEEC) to develop similar signage to display in front of our garden to educate children and the public on what cultivars are present and why native and pollinator plants and gardens matter.



## SPRING 2023

## SUMMER 2023



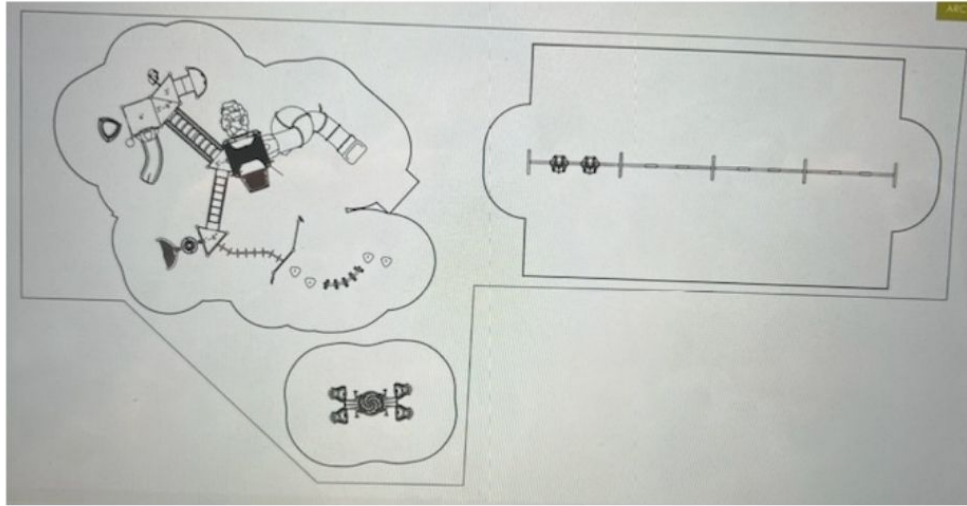
## Current Natives/Pollinators in Isabella's Garden:

- False Indigo, *Baptisia Australis*
- Chokeberry, *Aronia Melanocarpa*
- Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus Occidentalis*
- Golden Ragwort, *Packera Aurea*
- Black Eyed Susans, *Rudbeckia Hirta*
- Liatris, *Liatris Spicata*
- Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea*
- Bee Balm, *Monarda*
- Salvia, *Salvia*
- Golden Alexander, *Zizia Aurea*
- Lupine, *Lupinus*
- Agastache, *Hyssop*
- Foxglove Beardtongue, *Penstemon Digitalis*
- Fritillaria, *Imperialis Rubra*
- Anemones, *De Caen*
- Smooth Blue Aster, *Symphyotrichum Laeve*
- Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia Cardinalis*
- Highbush Blueberry, *Vaccinium corymbosum*
- Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*
- Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*
- Butterfly Milkweed, *Asclepias tuberosa L.*
- Culver's Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*
- Winterberry, *Ilex Verticillata*
- False Goat's Beard, *Astilbe chinensis*
- Iris
- Purple Beautyberry, *Callicarpa Dichotoma*
- Black Cohosh, *Actaea cimicifuga*
- NY Ironweed, *Vernonia noveboracensis*
- Seaside Goldenrod, *Solidago sempervirens*
- Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*



## ➤➤➤ PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENT

There has unfortunately been no contact on behalf of the board of education to Bradford since December. These are the most up to date renderings the school possesses. The first is a bird's eye view of the current playground footprint and what the envisaged layout. The second are graphics depicting what the main structure could look like.



## ➤➤➤ CREATING OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SPACE

New outdoor tables and umbrellas will be added to the courtyard in the coming month and shaded area outside of the library, which will provide new available outdoor classroom space.





# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

## Join the Green Team!

Email

[BradfordGreenTeam@gmail.com](mailto:BradfordGreenTeam@gmail.com)

to get involved

## Provide Support to your Teachers enabling them to take their classes outdoors more frequently!

- At times teachers find it difficult to take a class of 20+ kids outdoors to work in a raised bed or do an activity as only 4 kids can be doing the activity at the time and the other 16+ get distracted.
- Bradford teachers say they could benefit from parental presence/ involvement (similar to coming in for a holiday celebration - 30m-1hr commitment), where other activities are organized to hold the rest of the class's attention who are not involved in the primary activity.
- Reach out to the Green Team if you are interested in supporting your teachers in taking their class outside!



## Support Bradford's Earth Day Celebration on April, 26th

- **Sign up to run an event table:** All tables are already organized. These jobs will be responsible for any necessary prep ahead of the event.
- **Collect materials for GarbageArt jewelry making:** Save any bottle caps, soda tabs, or anything that could be used to string jewelry until April 26th!
- **Volunteer at an event table:** Sign up to volunteer at a table for Earth Day: <https://bit.ly/BradfordEarthDay>
- **Collect items for Earth Day:**
  - Single use plastic bottles
  - Bottle tops, soda tabs
  - Anything to that could be strung to make jewelry!



## Spring Community Planting Day mid-May

- **Support our Spring Fundraising Drive:** We will be organizing a cheddar up to enable us to purchase native plants for the face of the school (more info coming soon).
- **Join us for our Spring Community Day** (tentatively mid-May) to plant above flowers and spread mulch!



<https://bit.ly/BradfordEarthDay>