

Cornelia Elementary School K-5

7000 Cornelia Drive
Edina, Minnesota 55435



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

- Garden program initiated by PTO
- Uses raised bed gardens
- Garden lessons tied to state standards
- Families, PTO, Community Education maintain garden in summer
- Garden activities tied to curriculum
- Conducts a Farmers Market in Fall to sell produce

Photos



Parents can buy fresh produce when they come to pick up students at the end of the school day. Profits help fund next year's garden.



Left, above: Garden installation was part of a Boy Scout Eagle service project.

All new rich black soil for the raised beds.

Details

General Information:

The PTO at Cornelia Elementary School felt adding a school garden was an important endeavor. They solicited volunteers to help with funding the garden and maintaining the garden over time. Having a school garden allows many students to see how fresh produce enters into their lives and gives them the sense of accomplishment. There are many ways the garden is being used in the curriculum that can bring their diverse community together with a healthy, life-long activity.

Garden Site:

The garden includes eight raised beds that are approximately 4'x8' with an additional two 2'x4' elevated beds for mobility challenged students. There is a hose-bib readily available, so access to water is very easy. Overtime, they plan to expand to include more beds, fruit trees, etc.

Garden Product:

Initial plantings in the garden were primarily vegetables and herbs but there are also some

flowers. Initial plantings included easier-to-grow produce to increase the success rate and get the ball rolling. Greens, carrots, radishes, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins, and herbs started them off, with a late summer planting of cool weather crops for harvest in the fall. Produce is used to help students become more interested in healthy eating.

Education:

There are many curriculum standards in K-5 that deal with environments, new plants, insects, etc. that are taught in the classroom to meet MN state standards. The garden gives students another avenue to learn these subjects in a much more relevant place and with a much longer lasting experience. Once teachers get experience, the plan is to use the garden for the obvious science subjects that it supports so well. The plan is to bring in the remaining curriculum to the garden. The school principal and the district administration have been extremely supportive.

Student Involvement:

Students are involved with planting, maintaining, and harvesting the garden, along with many PTO committee members. Students with disabilities have access to the garden through the use of raised and elevated beds and wide pathways to accommodate alternate transport. Students conduct a Farmers Market at Cornelia to help support the project.

Supervision and Maintenance:

This project is PTO supported and the garden committee has primary responsibility for supervision/maintenance. During the school year, a school staff member supervises the garden and serves as an advisor to the garden committee and as the contact for other staff that choose to use the garden for learning activities. During the summer months, the garden is maintained by community education, the PTO committee, and families that sign up for summer-time help. They have constructed a wooden fence around the garden area. They have a locked shed for supply storage to help reduce theft. The area is also in a lighted zone near the school, which helps to minimize vandalism.

Sources of Funding/Assistance

PTO, Jeffers Foundation, Farmer's Market, MN SHIP

Sustainability:

This project has support from the School District of Edina, the Cornelia administration and staff, Edina Community Education and the PTO for Cornelia Elementary. The project was initiated by the PTO and will be maintained in an ongoing manner through their involvement. There is a longtime second grade teacher who is the school's science point person who is also committed to this project long term.

For more information contact:

Ellen Bowden, Math/Science Teacher Admin
Assistant

ellen.bowden@edinaschools.org