

Heritage Christian Academy

15655 Bass Lake Road
Maple Grove, MN 55311



JeffersFoundation.org

Summary

- Has two large garden areas
- 'Three Sisters' garden with potatoes & popcorn
- Bethel University training
- Donates some produce to local food shelf
- Uses interactive science notebooks
- Incorporates science, math, and literacy skills
- Has a "School Garden Committee."
- Partners with a Resource Conservationist

Photos



The vegetative archway provides an attractive entrance to the garden experience. It also supports several types of tomato.

These sunflower plants were germinated in classrooms. The name of the student planter is on a wooden stick so they can be personally monitored throughout the season.



Knowledgeable parents provide instruction. This 'three sisters' garden will have complete weed control thanks to the plastic barrier sheet.

An ambitious rain gathering set-up is used for watering. Note the painted barrels. Gardens are often also used for artistic expression.



Details

General Information:

Heritage Christian Academy formed the "Heritage School Garden Committee" with dedicated administrators, teachers, and parents to realize the garden dream. Heritage refers to the project as "Seeds of Hope" because of the potential the garden has to benefit others in the community and to strengthen academic learning and biblical integration. The specific purposes of their garden are to: (1) develop lessons that include processes of science, engineering and investigation and (2) to incorporate more literacy skills and scientific argumentation in the content area of science.

Garden Site:

There are two growing plots: (1) a 6' x 60' area where "no-dig" potatoes were grown on top of the soil surface with approximately a 10-inch covering of clean, alfalfa hay mulch to provide nutrients, hold moisture, and prevent unwanted weed competition, and (2) a 24' x 60' area dedicated to a "Three Sisters Garden." Heritage has two rain barrels located on a

hill adjacent to the gardens where student can harness physical laws to water the gardens.

Garden Product:

The Heritage gardens grow two types of potatoes, two types of corn and a variety of other vegetables. Around the garden they planted dwarf sunflowers that were started by the students in their classrooms. A majority of the produce was donated to the local food shelf or to families/communities in need.

Education:

Heritage partnered with Bethel University to train teachers how to incorporate literacy skills and scientific argumentation using the book, "Teaching Science with Interactive Notebooks." Heritage faculty wrote lessons that aligned with the goals they had established. The school garden committee chose a day near Earth Day and deemed it "Garden Day" at Heritage Christian Academy. The Academy used that day to teach science lessons and to dedicate and launch the garden.

Student Involvement:

Students were involved in planting potatoes in the spring while school was in session. Sunflowers were started in small containers in the classrooms by students and transplanted in May when the rest of the warm season crops were planted. The students made a nameplate or garden stake to identify their flower so they could watch it grow.

Student/parent/teacher volunteer groups helped harvest and deliver some of the produce to a food shelf.

Supervision and Maintenance:

A core group of families and teachers devoted to the success of the garden worked along with a parent who is also a Resource Conservationist with (USDA- NRCS), and provided leadership and day-to-day care and maintenance of the gardens. In addition, he helped the Academy start a compost pile. They chose not to install a fence around the garden during the first year as this would add significant cost to the project.

Sources of Funds and Assistance:

Heritage used the grant money from Jeffers Foundation to purchase mulching materials, wildlife deterrents, seed potatoes, and "Three Sister Garden" seed. Heritage was awarded the MISF STEM grant in April of 2015 and is using the garden to promote outdoor learning in science, math, reading, writing, and engineering.

Sustainability:

The School President, Principal, and teachers have significant interest and a passion for what this garden provides as far as outdoor education and community building opportunities. The Parent/Resource Conservationist has offered his expertise to help sustain this project. They expect enthusiasm to build throughout the years from students, parents, teachers and the administration, as they are faithful in planting the first seeds and taking the first steps in growing gardens and growing well educated and healthy youth.

For More Information contact:

Amanda Kopischke

akopischke@heritagemail.org