

Emerson Garden Based Education Program

The Emerson Junior High garden was started in 2000 and expanded more in 2005. Below are some of the ways the garden is used to enhance what is learned in the classroom.

Science -especially Biology

The classes use the garden to observe diversity and study lifecycles in plants and animals. The milkweed and monarch butterfly lifecycle are always popular. Plants are used for dissection and experiments. Composting helps illustrate biological concepts.

Math -especially Algebra

Peas are planted each year to measure and plot the rate of growth. Many garden related word problems will be used next year to help the students understand how to apply algebra formulas.

7th grade Medieval History

The classes use the garden to explore the origins of crops and how trade and exploration helped these crops to travel to other parts of the world. The European medieval peasant garden has many plants used for medicine, dyes, food, fiber, household, etc.

8th grade U.S. History

Students harvest cotton and separate seeds from the fiber while studying the invention of the cotton gin. They also explore foods brought to America with the slaves and the European settlers. The students use the garden crops to make a vegetable soup in spring and African gumbo in fall. A Lewis and Clark trail is in the works.

9th grade Geography

These classes plant and harvest many crops, learning about the climate and geography of the countries in which they were domesticated. Some of the crops are processed, cooked and tasted. Some of the topics covered during the year include: subsistence, commercial and sustainable agriculture; slash and burn farming; foods and cultures of the world; nutrition of staple crops; movement of the sun and seasons; world climates and how they compare to Davis.

Art

The art students can regularly be found in the garden. From botanical drawings to Andy Goldsworthy-type pieces of art, Art students come often.

Spanish

The classes plant many crops from Latin America. Some are used for craft and cooking projects.

Industrial Arts

The students made benches and garden signs from recycled lumber that are very appreciated in the garden.

English/Language Arts

Students have written poems about and detailed descriptions of plants in the garden.

Visiting Chef Program

Each month or so a chef visits the school to give a presentation or hands-on cooking lesson, using herbs and plants from the garden when possible. Lessons tie to nutrition or curriculum of one of the teachers.

Garden Club

This club meets about once a week during lunch. Activities vary, but usually focus on garden maintenance, food or crafts.

Wildflower area -- California native plants of the Sacramento riparian area

Used in math and biology classes to explore and measure diversity.

Data base of Emerson Garden Plants

This data base is being compiled (by Patricia Carpenter) to show how plants in the Emerson garden might be used in the various subjects to enhance the curriculum.