

Fern Hill Primary School

GROWING IDEAS



Commitment level:



Equipment List

- Forks
- Spades
- Hoes
- Hand tools
- Composters
- Water butts
- Watering cans



Project Timeline

2001

The Secret Garden formally opened

2007

The Discovery Zone opened

2008

Wildlife Garden and pond established

2009

Runners-up in School Food Matters competition



PROJECTS

The Secret Garden: Officially opened in 2001, The Secret Garden offers a raised bed to each class. The school operates an 'open access' system which allows children from all years to enjoy the Secret Garden at break time.

The Wildlife Garden: A large pond and natural garden is the perfect home for all sorts of beasts and bugs. Large wood piles attract beetles and lice and the pond has newts, frogs, fish and dragonflies. This is the perfect partner for the Secret Garden attracting insects to help with veg growing.

The Discovery Zone: This area was opened in September 2007 and houses everything a child could need for the outdoor learning experience. Magnifying glasses, bug catchers, nets for dipping, clipboards and pens are all on hand for children wanting to explore the Wildlife Garden.



Commitment level



Each class nominates two garden monitors who are responsible for the day-to-day gardening tasks on a rota basis.

Parents contribute to maintaining the gardens by pitching in on two work-days; one in the spring to prepare for the growing season and one in autumn to tidy up and bed down for winter. Teachers, learning support officers and teaching assistants all get involved in the projects and the Head, Diana Brotherston, is clearly passionate about food growing and has her own raised bed. Holiday watering is covered by the caretaker and a few very keen volunteer parents who are given access to the school grounds.



Successes



Fern Hill has had great success with beans; runner beans, French beans of different varieties – green, yellow and black. Potatoes, courgettes and marrows are also consistently successful.

Funding



- PTA have contributed to all of the projects
- Rocket Garden received as prize in SFM competition
- £50 grant from SFM Waitrose Community Matters project
- Contributions from the school fund for plants, seeds and compost

Eating & cooking



Children at Fern Hill enjoy using produce from The Secret Garden in cooking lessons.

They successfully made vegetable soups, and any surplus is distributed amongst the staff and pupils. Fruit and vegetables have also been used as visual aids for assemblies and in appropriate learning projects in class.

National curriculum



- Y4 Art Still life drawings of wildflowers
 Y1 Art Collage of fruit and vegetables grown on allotment in the style of the artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo
- KS2 Science – Germination Project
 KS1 Bee project covering Maths, Literacy and Science
 KS1 Science – growth, mini beasts

Disappointments & challenges



Timing is always an issue both in terms of teaching time and the growing schedule.

Teachers are challenged to work food growing into a busy curriculum, and the school is often frustrated by produce cropping in the school holidays. The school was awarded a wonderful Rocket Garden as a prize in the SFM competition, but it arrived just before half term and suffered during the holidays.

Outcomes & results



Diana Brotherston smiles at the memory of a KS2 child discovering that the pods in a runner bean are pink. This constant voyage of discovery continues to delight teachers and children alike.

Whatever next?



Fern Hill's Nursery plans to build its own vegetable plot so that it can be easily accessed from their classrooms.

They would like to have the vegetable plots levelled to help with drainage

Diana Brotherston dreams of a sprinkler system to help with the challenge of holiday watering, and of growing enough to sell on to the parents in their own Market garden stall.



What we grow



- Runner beans
- Potatoes
- Corn
- Broad beans
- French beans
- Radishes
- Salad leaves
- Tomatoes
- Courgettes
- Marrows
- Apples
- Blackcurrants
- Strawberries
- Sunflowers
- Blackcurrants

Top Tip

Don't water your plants in the heat of the day as the water will scorch the plant's leaves.



SCHOOL FOOD MATTERS

GROWING IDEAS

www.schoolfoodmatters.com
www.kingston.gov.uk/growing_ideas

