School Spotlight: Harambee Elementary

Harambee Elementary School in Maplewood, MN spent the fall collecting, cold stratifying, and storing native milkweed seeds from their schoolyard to plant this spring. Students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classes even prepared envelopes for seed distribution. Teachers Melissa Kleemeier, Becky Halvorson, and Jennifer Eckman attended NAMI over the summer. By successfully applying what they learned in the program, these teachers received a Garden Grant to develop a butterfly garden. The garden will have at least two milkweed species and a variety of insect observation areas. It’s no wonder why Harambee is being nominated for the Green Ribbon Schools award! Congratulations!
Monarch Garden at Sunrise Senior Living

Trinity Valley students worked with Sunrise Senior Living residents to install a native pollinator garden. (Photo: Julie Frey)

Thanks to Julie Frey and her students from Trinity Valley School in Ft. Worth, TX, Sunrise Senior Living now has a pollinator garden! Julie was one of forty-four Garden Grant recipients for 2014-2015. Students from Trinity Valley School started pots of milkweed seeds with residents at Sunrise and planted a total of 142 nectar flowers. Students are even monitoring the native milkweed for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project! Check out Monarch Project VI-Julie Frey for more pictures. Keep up the great work!

If you have pictures of your schoolyard garden and wish to share them with us, please email them to ggrants@umn.edu.

School Garden Awareness Day
On February 27, 2015 Governor of Minnesota Mark Dayton proclaimed that this date be known as School Garden Awareness Day due to the growing school garden movement in Minnesota and across the Nation.

Calling All Monarch Citizen Scientists!
Monitoring Monarchs in the Schoolyard

6th graders in Iowa monitoring for monarchs. (Photo: Bill Johnson, 2012)

Using citizen science programs to spark interest in students is an exciting and easy method that truly works! Many citizen science programs with established protocols exist and can be used in a classroom setting to spark inquiry and independent investigations. When used as a classroom tool, citizen science projects provide an introduction to experimental design and data collection while still addressing a larger research question. Students become familiar with the practice of science while contributing to a larger project. Provided you have access to milkweed, one great project for students is the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP).

Student’s participating in MLMP are actively contributing to monarch population research, as well as gaining crucial science skills like attention to detail, patience, and data management. Furthermore, institutions that monitor with students year after year contribute long-term site data that are extremely useful to researchers.

Learn more about monarch citizen science projects from the Monarch Joint Venture’s new Citizen Science fact sheet.

Get ready for monitoring with the MLMP newsletter.
The MLMP has a series of training videos that are available for free online.

Additionally, examples of all MLMP activities and datasheets are also available online. See what activity works best for your classroom!

Contact info@mlmp.org if you have any other questions.