



Mattey's Garden

Past

In the fall of 1997, Mary Ann Brendel, a representative from the Williamsburg Garden Club, contacted Matthew Whaley Elementary School about participating in a program called :“Roots and Shoots.” The program pairs children(Shoots) with adult mentors(Roots) to work collaboratively on various gardening projects. The program originated in 1985 in Palo Alto, CA and was brought to Lexington, VA, by Molly and the late Dirck Brown. The garden was built through special help and contributions from the Williamsburg Garden Club, the James City County-Williamsburg Master Gardeners, the Williamsburg Tercentenary Commission, Williamsburg Kiwanis Club as well as the Matthew Whaley P. T. A., the Clark Foundation, the Christopher Wren Association, Boy Scout Troop 103, the Peninsula Home Builders Association and individuals in the community. The garden, designed by landscape designer, Gale Roberts, was a present to the City of Williamsburg and the community for the city’s Tercentenary. The garden was formally dedicated in May 1999 and was awarded the prestigious Common Wealth Award by the Garden Club of Virginia, the Beautification Award by the city of Williamsburg for the year 2001. Mattey’s Garden has received awards in 2004,2005,2006,2007, 2008 and 2009 from the Williamsburg Land Conservancy, an Award of Excellence from the Historic Triangle Jamestown 2007 Beautification Contest and the Arbor Day Award in 1999 and 2010 by the Williamsburg Council of Garden Clubs. Also in 2010, Mattey’s

Garden received the Beautification Award by the city of Williamsburg. The garden is listed on the National Garden Association's Childrens Garden Registry, has hosted numerous groups from around the state and will be featured on the Williamsburg Garden Club's Garden Tour as a part of the Garden Club of Virginia's Garden Week in April 2011.

Present

Each grade level is responsible for certain areas of the garden. Garden activities aligned with the science curriculum and the Virginia Standards of Learning are planned by the garden manager and taught by the manager and Master Gardener volunteers.

Kindergarteners learn about seeds by growing salad vegetables in their special plot. In 2003, a Herb of the Month Unit was added where certain herbs are highlighted. The students learn about the herbs from volunteers from the Colonial Triangle Chapter of the American Herb Society as well as Master Gardeners. They then taste, touch, smell, observe, plant and harvest the herbs coordinating with their study of the senses. Finally, they sample the herbs in a special snack prepared by the cafeteria manager. The Kindergarteners also work on the Butterfly Garden and have raised and set free numerous butterflies.

First graders are involved in the Master Gardener program of Seeds of Learning. Also, during the spring, the students participate in a Literature in the Garden unit. The classes read a book pertaining to the garden during the week and then have a garden activity related to the book.

Second grade has perhaps the most extensive study in the garden with the Roots and Shoots program which is an eight week program covering seeds, propagation, composting, and planting.

These lessons are taught by volunteers from the community as well as school faculty.

Third graders perform a soil test in the garden to determine the nutrients needed to provide maximum growth. . In 2011 third grade teacher, Katie Schultz, received a grant to make one section of the garden into a Water Wise Garden. After performing a soil test, the students will amend the soil, research, choose and plant water wise plants and determine ways to supplement water using a rain barrel. The students also grow Sugar Snap peas and gourds. After harvesting and eating the peas, the gourds are harvested the following fall and are then decorated and made into birdhouses in art class

Fourth graders grow plants grown in as state crops in Virginia: sweet potatoes, peanuts, corn, and tobacco . They also use the garden for studying ecosystems.

Fifth graders work in the garden weeding, deadheading and spreading compost and mulch. They learn about vascular and non-vascular plants, how plants reproduce and the parts of the plant.

In the Spring of 2011, members of the Matthew Whaley Cooking Club run by cafeteria manager, Vega Brown, will plant vegetables to be eaten by the students. Funding for this project comes from SHIP(School Health Initiative Program). Excess vegetables and herbs will be given to Grove Outreach Center and FISH who provide food for the needy in the Williamsburg area.

During the summer families volunteer to take care of the garden one week. Families are paired with a Master Gardener who teaches proper ways of weeding and watering.

There are activities beginning again in the fall and going through December, weather permitting.

Future

Mattey's Garden is will celebrate its twelfth anniversary in the spring of 2011. Plans are to build a pavilion with a "green roof" over the picnic tables so that the garden can be used in any kind of weather. Sources of funding for this project are now being sought.

Mattey's Garden was built by community members for community children to learn, to enjoy, and to pass on the tradition to others. The garden opens up the miracle and beauty of nature to all.

For more than a decade Mattey's garden has served as a way to teach children, parents and community members about the joy of gardening!



