



**Homegrown Farms
at Genesee Lake School**

A MyPath Company

Goat Gazette

March - April 2025

Greenhouse Update

The greenhouse is nearly full with annual and perennial plants. Since early March, students and staff have helped with the planting process. Assembling pots, filling with soil and planting the little plants have been great projects for all to be involved with. Thank you all for the helping hands. We appreciate the assistance and we know many life-long skills were learned during these hands-on, sensory-enriched experiences.



Our first wholesale deliveries will be in early May. GLS staff will have opportunities to come shop in the greenhouse in May. See attached flyer for more information.

Upcoming Plant Sales in the Greenhouse

Friday, May 9 - 8am-4pm GLS Staff Only
Annual Mothers Day Sale

Final Plant Sale May 14-16

Common Perennials - Suggestions for your Natural Habitat / Garden

Providing food and habitat for insects and birds

Purple Cone Flower - *Echinacea purpurea*

Prairie Coreopsis - *Coreopsis palmata*

Asters - *Symphyotrichum*

Common Milkweed - *Asclepias syriaca*

Little Blue Stem Grass - *Schizachyrium scoparium*



Lemon Cake

The lemon trees in the Aqua/Hydroponic area of the greenhouse have been fruiting for several weeks. Finally they were ripe enough to use! Donna, one of our cooks, made yummy cupcakes with the lemons. A fresh Farm to Table sweet treat! Thank you Donna and Farmer David, for all your efforts with the lemons.



Production Field Update

Seeds of the early season plants were planted in early February. They have been germinating in the growing hut. On April 16, onions, red + green cabbage, broccoli, radishes, scallions and kohlrabi seedlings were planted by students and staff. These plants can endure the still-cool temperatures of air and soil.

The weather is still cool and wet, but we are hoping to plant potatoes, more broccoli, carrots, cabbage, celery, radishes, and beets in the coming weeks.

The high tunnel in the west field is planted. Radishes, beets, and carrots are sprouting and growing well. Cucumbers and tomatoes will be planted the first week of May.

Thank you to Ms Jessica's Class- Room 204- for your helping hands in planting!



New Bees

New packages of bees arrived to the farm in mid-April. These were added to two (empty) hives. One hive survived the Winter. One hive did not. We now have 3 working hives. Each hive has 1 Queen, hundreds of drones (breeding males) and thousands of worker bees (non-breeding females). The bees feed on a sugar-water syrup until more food is available from plants.



Can you SPY the QUEEN BEE?

Queen Bees are bigger than her fellow bees. They have a longer abdomen, longer legs and a 'shiny', hairless back.



Three Pillars Partnership

This season we once again are partnering with Three Pillars Senior Living Community for garden-based projects. Residents came to our greenhouse in April to plant seeds for their bouquet garden and also planted plants into 45 hanging baskets for their campus. Throughout the Summer, a group of students will go to their bouquet garden to assist with planting, tending to and harvesting flowers for bouquets that are placed around the inside common areas. A wonderful multi-generational project.



Earth Day, Everyday - Earth Day Was April 22

At Homegrown Farms we have made a great effort this year to plant more native plants to benefit butterflies, bees, bats and many other insects. These native plants are their food source and habitat. This is helping our Earth and all that live here throughout the year.

What can you do during your days at GLS to help our Earth?
Today and everyday....

- Use a **reusable** water/coffee bottle. -**Recycle** cans, plastics.
- Turn off lights, fans** in rooms that are not in use.
- When eating a school-provided meal, please use a blue tray when possible.



***when we throw items "away", they don't go away....
items sit in landfills or fill our oceansfor years and years.***

Vocational Department at the Farm

Homegrown Farms offers endless opportunities for students within the Paid Internship Program to learn and develop various vocational skills. At the farm, there are jobs that are needed year round such as animal chores. The greenhouse assistant and field assistant change seasonally, among many others!

While completing animal chores, students are expected to clean and re-fill the water buckets for both the chickens and goats, and make sure they are fed. Student workers are also in charge of collecting, cleaning and packaging the eggs. When working in the greenhouse, students have a wide range of tasks like planting, staggering the plants on the bench and removing spent blooms. In the field, students have the opportunity to plant and harvest the produce grown.

Also part of the Vocational Department are the Job Coaches. Job Coaches work to ensure that our students are completing every task, while also helping them as needed to gain independence. Our goal is to assist our students in becoming more confident, not only in the specific job they are currently doing, but with their overall vocational skills and capabilities. Job Coaches work closely alongside the farm staff to determine what tasks need to be done around the farm and how to do them correctly with the student.

-Corey & Leslie, Job Coaches





Controlled Environment Agriculture Update

Tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuces continue to grow throughout the aqua and hydro systems. All of that produce goes to the school kitchen. The banana trees have been tended to after their great production of fruit the first part of the year. The avocado and lemon trees continue to grow and flourish. Students have been helping harvest lettuce, wash the growing rafts and transplanting banana trees. Students are now able to snack on cherry tomatoes and smaller peppers. The CEA space is an exciting and inspiring part of the school farm!

Full Cycle Fish! Fish Hydrolysate

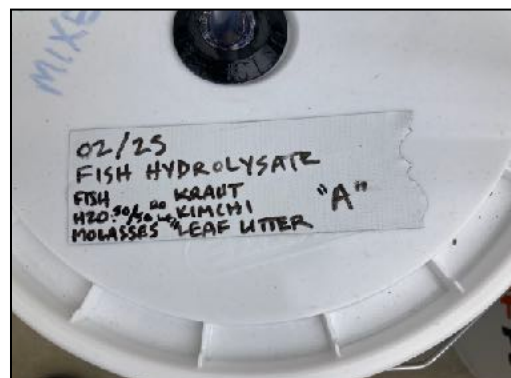
A new project in 2025 for the CEA greenhouse, intended to extend the benefits of our fish after they are harvested and truly bring their lives full circle, is to turn them into fertilizer! After the fish are harvested and cleaned, the remains are now used to make what's called *fish hydrolysate*, a type of 'living' fertilizer.



This is created through a cold fermentation process in which beneficial microbes break down the fish carcasses into a highly concentrated, nutrient dense liquid. This differs from *fish emulsion* in that it is not heated, allowing the beneficial amino acids and bacteria to remain intact. The process can take anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks. This concentrate is shelf stable for up to one year and can be diluted with water and applied to containers or soil, making available the needed macro- and micro-nutrients required to grow healthy plants and quality produce.

From birth to beyond, our home grown fish provide a multitude of services and benefits to the GLS community including unique student & group home engagement opportunities, year-round fresh produce and protein, and now Home Grown Farm-made fertilizer.

-David, CEA



Sand County Foundation Native Seeds Project

The last several weeks, the seeds students in Miss Julie's YP Class started earlier in the Winter have been taken out of their cold stratification and moved into the warm greenhouse. Milkweed, big blue stem grass, brown-eyed Susan and other plants have now grown into seedlings.

In April, we had a visitor from the Sand County Foundation, where the grant for our seeds came from. Ms Hailey is the Education and Outreach Specialist.

Students showed Ms. Hailey the trays of seedlings and learned more about each plant and what insects use that plant and how. . We then went outside and played a pollinator/ nectar game. Students were butterflies and bees pollinating flowers and bringing nectar to their home. Then, night time came and students were then bats and moths, and again pollinated plants and brought nectar back to their home.

Everyone enjoyed the hands-on, active-learning experience.

Thank you, Sand County Foundation for the seeds and to Ms Hailey for visiting us!

This Summer, insects and bats will be pollinating the plants these students started in the Winter!



PLANT SALE....

RECYCLE EMPTY PLANT POTS

Please return the empty plant pots.

NO 4 packs, please. (pictured here)

You may leave by the door on west side of the greenhouse.

We will wash the pots and re-use for next season.

Thank you.



Everyone is welcome to visit the Farm.

Please remember, this is a working farm.

Please, supervise students at all times.

Please, be respectful of the animals, plants and all property.

Please, do not feed the animals or go into any buildings, unless with Farm Staff.

Thank you



PLEASE MIND THE SPEED LIMIT and STOP SIGN

The area around the farm and the road are becoming more active with students, staff and farm equipment.

Thank you.



Farm Staff

Erika - Farm Director

Alicia - Farm Operations Coordinator

Liesl- Farm Operations Assistant

Shana- Farm to School Educator

David- Controlled Environment Agriculturist

Matt- Production Field Manager



Farm Experiences

