

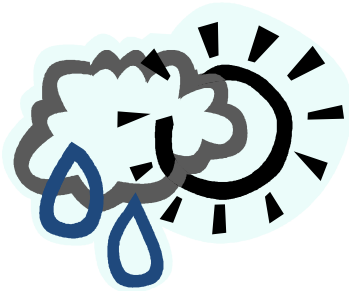
Mattawan Later Elementary Native Prairie Teaching Garden  
Our teaching garden is an outdoor classroom for all children to explore and all teachers to use.  
See more on the Later EI website home page, under "News/Info."  
Interested in joining the Garden Planning Committee? Please contact the Later EI Office.  
In January, we'll be planning for spring!

## What's going on in the Garden ... in December?



Gifts from our garden ...

This time of year we celebrate in many ways, and we find joy in giving good wishes or special gifts to our families, friends and others in our community. Did you know that our Native Prairie Teaching Garden gives us gifts too?



Improved water quality - Prairie plantings absorb more rainfall than many other landscapes. This improves our water quality by helping to prevent runoff and erosion, which is fairly common with turf lawns and traditional landscapes. Plus, the deep roots of many prairie plants filter the water as it moves through the soil. The roots can absorb pollutants and chemically bind them or beneficially alter them.

Improved air quality - Research has proven that planting tall grass prairies can rapidly restore "soil-organic carbon" lost from surface soils through cultivation and human disturbance. As the years pass, the prairie planting will hold carbon into the soil and help reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in our atmosphere – which means cleaner air for us to breathe!

Reduced chemical pollution - Our native plants garden will thrive without the use of fertilizer, herbicides, fungicides or insecticides. We enjoy the benefits of the garden without contributing to soil, air and water pollution.

Natural beauty - Prairie plantings provide visual interest throughout the year. Whatever the season, we can observe and enjoy new growth, blossoms or even how the plants provide texture and contrast to a winter blanket of white snow.



In January, we'll explore more of the garden's gifts to us ... including some interesting history!

Thanks to everyone who has given donations, time, energy and effort  
to the garden this past year!

Happy Holidays!