

Coming soon!
Details on how every Later EI student can
"act green" to help our garden and celebrate
Earth Day 2011 on Friday, April 22.

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."

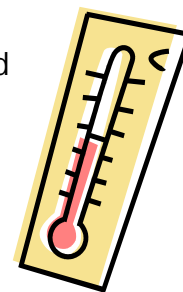
What's going on in the Garden ... in March?



As the seasons change, our garden experiences change too. The daylight is lengthening and the solar altitude is increasing. Although the air may still be cold and snowy, certain plants in our garden are already "waking up."

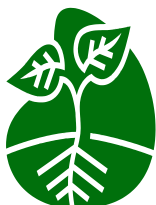
What happens when air temperatures get cold at night?

- Often, during this time of year, temperatures dip below freezing at night and rise above freezing during the day. These are called freeze and thaw cycles. These cycles actually create the potholes on our roads!
- For our garden, these cycles serve an important role. Freeze and thaw cycles help drive seeds from the previous season into the soil and prepare them for germination later in the spring.



Does the soil need to "warm up" before plants grow?

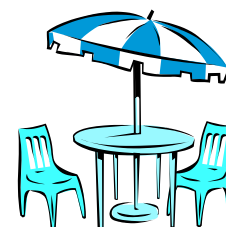
- Almost all of the wildflowers and grasses in our garden are triggered to begin growing based upon the soil temperature. The soil temperature affects the many plant species differently.
 - The plants which have a higher tolerance for cold temperatures typically will begin growing much earlier, often in April. These early sprouting species have foliage which is resistant to freezes.
 - Some prairie species do not begin sprouting until mid to late May, or even later. These later sprouting species cannot tolerate freezing temperatures and thus have evolved to sprout at higher ground temperatures.



If there is a "late freeze," what happens to the plants that have begun growing?

- If an unusually late freeze occurs, many of our prairie species will be "top-killed," which means the growth we see above the ground will die. However, our plants are resilient! A late freeze will not kill the plants. Instead, the plants will immediately begin to re-sprout.

Thanks to a donation from Landscape Forms,
a local site furniture company, we now have
two large round tables with seating for
students to use!



Visit our garden & check it out!