

Mattawan Later Elementary Native Prairie Garden

Our garden out in the courtyard now includes a second area filled with native plants purchased with funds donated from families during the Open House Garden Party. The new area was planted by 5th grade students on Friday, October 22. Please stop by and check it out!

This teaching garden is an outdoor classroom for all children to explore and all teachers to use. Updates like this one will be shared with our teachers and students each month...and with families through the Tuesday News.

With volunteer support and donations, our garden will develop over the next several years to offer even more learning opportunities. Contact the Later EI office if you'd like to be involved with or make a donation.

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

Will our native prairie garden plants die in the cold winter months?

- The plants of the prairie garden are slowly going dormant, or temporarily "asleep." Many have already turned tan or brown, and the rest shall soon follow.
- Prairie plants are adapted to cold winters and their above-ground parts die back every year. It is the roots, below the ground, that are the key to their survival. In fact, in the recent weeks, the plants have been storing great amounts of energy in their root systems.
- Next spring, as the temperature rises, the grasses and wildflowers will once again sprout from the roots and reach for the sun.
- Some of you may notice that the prairie garden is being left for the winter; it is not being clipped back, mowed or "cleaned-up" in any way. The primary reason for this is to provide habitat for insects, birds, and other fauna during the winter. What animals have you seen so far?



Plant root systems