

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 Meeting Agenda:

Attendees: Laurie Jost, Lisa Laasch, Lisa Steffen, Colin Williams, Rachael Buotto, Joe Cutkay, Lance Swanson, Beth Duffy, Claire Stout

Absent: Jen Miller

Agenda

1. Doris (Monarch lady in Pine River) will join us by phone to discuss her experience with raising Monarch Butterflies.
2. Update from Lisa on Team YES project and recent meeting; update on mushroom logs.
3. Update from Joe on February planting.

Minutes from February 11th Meeting:

- Doris (Monarch lady in Pine River) - she doesn't know about where to purchase larvae. She collects the larvae outdoors around mid-June. Watch the temperature if you release butterflies because they are very sensitive to cold. Sunshine Gardens is a good place for milkweed. Laurie has purchased from them before and will check with them about getting different kinds of milkweed. We need a lot of plants. One caterpillar can go through one leaf a day. It will take a couple of weeks to form a cocoon. Doris cuts the milkweed leaves and brings them back to the caterpillars. She does not take the whole plant. Check with Heidi about where to purchase larvae/caterpillars.
- Jim Chamberlin from Happy Dancing Turtle will come to meet with the kids about the Team YES project. Our students will submit a project brief to U of M to apply for additional funding. There is an idea of sectioning the food forest into areas with signage (e.g. berry area, etc.). Kids want butterfly houses, bat houses. Lisa is going to the Minnesota Food Forest Training on February 21st and will bring back more info.
- Mushroom logs - they are in the works-Lisa is figuring out how to use the paraffin to seal the mushrooms into the log.
- Plan what to have in the solarium for a potential governor's visit in May.

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 Meeting Agenda:

Agenda

1. Update from Laurie on solarium including: New flower and plant seeds; status of aquaponics system; timer and watering system for the two flowerbeds; update on butterfly purchase; March session with Osprey Wilds.
2. Update from Lisa on Wolfe Ridge trip; update on Team YES project.
3. Update from Joe on upcoming February planting.
4. Feedback from other EE Committee members.

Minutes from January 14th Meeting:

Attendees: Beth Duffy; Rachael Buotto; Joe Cutkay; Laurie Jost; Lance Swanson; Claire Stout; Lisa Laasch

Absent: Colin W.; Lisa S.; Jen M.

- A new hose has been ordered to attach to the timed watering system on the freestanding planters. They should be ready to go in the next week. Peas, carrots, broccoli and lettuce are currently growing in the aquaponics beds.
- Wolfe Ridge trip: scheduled and ready to go. We are putting out recycling bins in the entryway as part of the fundraising effort.
- Joe will begin planting in February. We will plant milkweed in anticipation of obtaining butterflies for the solarium in addition to Salvia, Cosmos, and Zinnia. Most should germinate within one to two weeks; he will have students go down to water the plants. He feels this is better than using the automatic watering system because they dry out so quickly in the beginning.
- Butterflies: Lance found that Monarchs eat lots of milkweed so we should plant an adequate amount. We have a poster of the different life stages of the Monarch which will be laminated and put up for students to observe. We will continue to investigate when we can purchase the butterflies (many places cannot ship during the winter months as the larvae will die) and we will begin growing the milkweed. Joe suggested we check on the germination temperature. We can provide Gatorade in a dish for adult butterflies to eat. Check into pre-ordering so that they don't sell out. More to come on that.
- Lisa got some shitake mushroom plugs for logs. She will be drilling the logs, putting in paraffin wax and we will begin growing. She should have them ready within one week and we will place some of the logs in the solarium.
- We had some e-mails back on the YES project—they also want us to bring the food forest idea to the University of Minnesota (submit a project brief) to see about funding. Lisa and Laurie will continue to discuss with them and they are signing up for a one-day forestry training to assist with our idea of the food forest.
- Lunch bunch and a couple of classrooms are using the solarium for classroom time.
- Deb Floerslinger said Tuesdays do not work for her to help out with environmental education but most other days do.

- Find out what to amend the soil with to plant the milkweed now.
- Laurie found out that banana trees grow well in a solarium setting. A tree costs about \$50.00. She will look into what is associated with growing.

Tuesday, December 9th Meeting Agenda:

Agenda

1. Update from Laurie on solarium
2. Update from Lisa on Team YES project
3. Update from Joe on Debbie Floershinger (sp?) assisting with the garden club.
4. Discuss research results regarding plants and butterflies.

Minutes from December 9th Meeting:

Attendees: Beth, Joe, Lance, Lisa L., Rachael

Absent: Claire, Colin, Lisa S.

- Laurie will check with Bud on the irrigation system and timers and where they are.
- Lisa S. got an e-mail thread back from Lakes Foundation member and she will be Zoom meeting with Lisa and her class once it is set up. Lisa will let us know and update us next time. Wolf Ridge trip will be in January. The fundraiser will help defray some of the cost.
- We will order salvia, zinnia, cosmos, and petunias since they are good solarium plants. Castile soap works well for aphids. Laurie will get seed starter – 4 quart bag) and Castile soap and investigate a natural bug repellent spray for the plants. Joe will get plants started with his students.
- Joe spoke with Debbie Floershinger (sp?). He got a \$100.00 grant for the garden club. Some of it can be used for EE.
- Braxstead Farms in Pequot or Pine River has a hydroponic system, composting, etc., and could be a good choice for field trips.
- Plants: Look into mushroom logs. Rachel found that Lavender would grow well in a solarium. We will investigate it. Milkweed would be a good option—in that event we would need monarch butterflies. One butterfly provider is sold out and said check back

in spring. Butterflies can only be shipped in fall and spring since they will die in transit in the winter—therefore, we will wait until spring to order.

- Lisa will look into mushroom logs. Lance will look into butterflies and what that entails.
 - Let Beth know when you are going to use the solarium because there are classes being scheduled and it gets too disruptive. She will put you on the Google calendar.
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Minutes from Thursday, Nov. 21st meeting:

Attendees: Joe, Colin, Beth D., Rachael, Laurie, Lisa L. and Lisa S.

Absent: Claire, Jen Miller, and Lance (archery)

- We will clean up the solarium to get it ready for planting.
- The group approved uniform outdoor classroom rules to be shared with all teachers. We discussed types of plants that would work well in the solarium. Marigolds were suggested since they deter pests. Lisa S. will look into that.
- Colin, Joe, and Rachael will research types of plants to buy and we discussed getting butterflies to help pollinate any plants. Colin mentioned not bringing plants from outside into the solarium since there was difficulty in the past with plant pests coming in and infecting other plants.
- Laurie will research costs of getting a mister to see if it would be feasible in order to keep plants watered over weekends and when we are not here. She will also research if a citrus tree would be a good option for the solarium climate.
- Joe will contact Debbie Floershinger (sp?) about being involved in a garden club and/or giving us growing advice.
- Beth is contacting Bud to see about building a cabinet for the solarium to contain supplies.
- Lisa L. is continuing to work on Team YES community action project. Blue Thumb in Baxter is one potential contact to assist with an outdoor butterfly garden. Debbie Floershinger (sp?) could also be contacted to see about assistance.