

Winter 2024 SISD Greenhouse Update

Brandy Schmitz-Prefontaine, SISD Greenhouse and Agricultural Manager



SISD is producing fresh locally grown snacks and side dishes year-round on Prince of Wales Island!

We were thrilled to have an abundance of bountiful, lush, productive winter produce including lettuce, tomatoes, basil, green onions, kale, cabbage, Swiss chard, and tea garden selections growing strong going all the way into mid-December going to our youth and elders in our SISD cafeteria's, food banks, and selling out at our community annual bazaar's in Thorne Bay and Coffman Cove this winter for snacks and side dishes. While everything else is still growing in the soil beds, the lettuce was growing bountifully up until December 17th, 2024!

We had many SISD greenhouse team epic successes and challenges throughout this year! We have battled the persistent antagonist aphids! (They wash off their favored lettuce leaves but are persistent little buggers much to our dismay!) and we have waged war by beginning to remove their habitat from around our greenhouses



SISD Island Fresh Produce and Intro to Agriculture Students selling out of lettuce at Thorne Bay

and have purchased new modern sticky traps that should catch them! We shall see!

We have been making it around the sites interviewing, inventorying, reviewing, making site by site plant lists and taking requests for seed and hanging basket orders for Valentines Day, Mother's Day Plant Sale, Winter Sowing, and making restoration and community engagement and site clean-up and potluck plans for Earth Day Week in April for this coming spring!

After attending the DEC/UAS Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course in early December we now have three teachers, two paraprofessionals, 10 High School Intro to Agricultural Students, and Greenhouse Manager Certified!

While there were substantial successes we are bouncing back after a catastrophic event that occurred sometime between December 17th-22nd dropping our pH from 7.2 to 5.0 resulting in the mortality of 35 of our 10-12" Koi Goldfish, with over a dozen of our fish unaccounted for, with vandalism of our raft grow bed in our greenhouse. We have increased our greenhouse security and are continuing to make security improvements at all of our sites.

We have been reporting and closing out existing grants, completing end of year reporting, and applying for future grants. It is with excitement that we share that our wonderful team comprised of our Grants Specialists Astrid Richard-Cook, Child Nutrition Program Manager Mariia Taylor, Superintendent Rod Morrison, and myself have weaved together and



submitted a wonderful USDA Grant Application that if funded will lead us in a great direction with the restoration of the equipment and facilities that will serve to bolster our students, staff, and volunteers capacity to learn and grow while continuing to produce bountiful produce for our youth and elders providing local food security for our communities! I am so very grateful for our team's time, effort, and energy put into this program and project and the timely submissions!



**December 16th, 2024!
Still Growing!**

