

LeConte Garden and Cooking Program



LeConte Farm and Garden

Students returned to the garden this fall to find vines laden with tomatoes, beans hanging from our bean tunnel, tons of persimmons ripening on the tree, and a garden full of beautiful flowers. Our fall lessons explored the differences between plant sugars and refined sugars, uncovered what it means to eat seasonally, and provided hands-on opportunities to learn about plant anatomy. Our bountiful Fuyu persimmon tree provided all the persimmons for both cooking class recipes and farm and garden tastings! As the garden transitioned into winter we learned about citrus fruits, acids and bases, fats and fiber, and the benefits of an active lifestyle. Lemons from our tree and Brassica greens, such as broccoli, chard, and kale, were enjoyed in the winter recipes. Our carrot beds produced a quartet of carrot colors – purple, red, yellow, and orange. Our spring season brought us lessons on legumes, food groups and the importance of macro nutrients, whole foods vs. processed foods, and the benefits of eating salad greens. Another wonderful year of farming and gardening for our health!

Farmer Ben Goff, Farm and Garden Instructor

LeConte Cooking

Kids have been cooking and eating with gusto here at Le Conte. This fall students began the year by making a delicious salsa of ripe tomatoes harvested from the garden. In October, students had the opportunity to make pear apple sauce and persimmon pomegranate salad. In order to ward off the chill of November, we made winter squash soup and baked pumpkin muffins. In December, children delighted in the curried parsnip soup with many thumbs up! January colds and the flu were fended off with citrus fruits. We celebrated African culture with Ethiopian Gomen, a dish made out of collards, and Lunar New Year with vegetable dumplings. In our cooking classes, Chef Kathy emphasizes the importance of eating a variety of locally grown produce and highlights the vitamins and minerals found in fruits and vegetables that we use in our recipes. This year we introduced homework for our 3rd, 4th and 5th graders to resounding groans! These simple assignments reinforced key nutrition concepts while providing an opportunity for students to apply their writing skills.

Check out the recipes that we made in the School Lunch Menu Calendar distributed this fall. This year, Chef Brenna received a grant from the Berkeley Public Education Foundation (BPEF) to distribute her cookbook *Better than Ice Cream*, a collection of favorite Le Conte recipes to the majority of students. Bon Appetit!

*Chef Kathy Russell, Cooking Instructor
& Chef Brenna Turman, Cooking Assistant*

