

Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

www.litzsinger.org

in this issue

- 2 Stories from the Schoolyard: Fall Photo Collage
- 3 Glass House Quiz: The Sky is Falling!
- 5 2017 LREC Teacher Conference
- 5 LREC Announcements & Local Events

Students enjoying their schoolyard at Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School. See additional photos of kids in their schoolyards on page 2. Photo by Eddie Jones.

November 2016

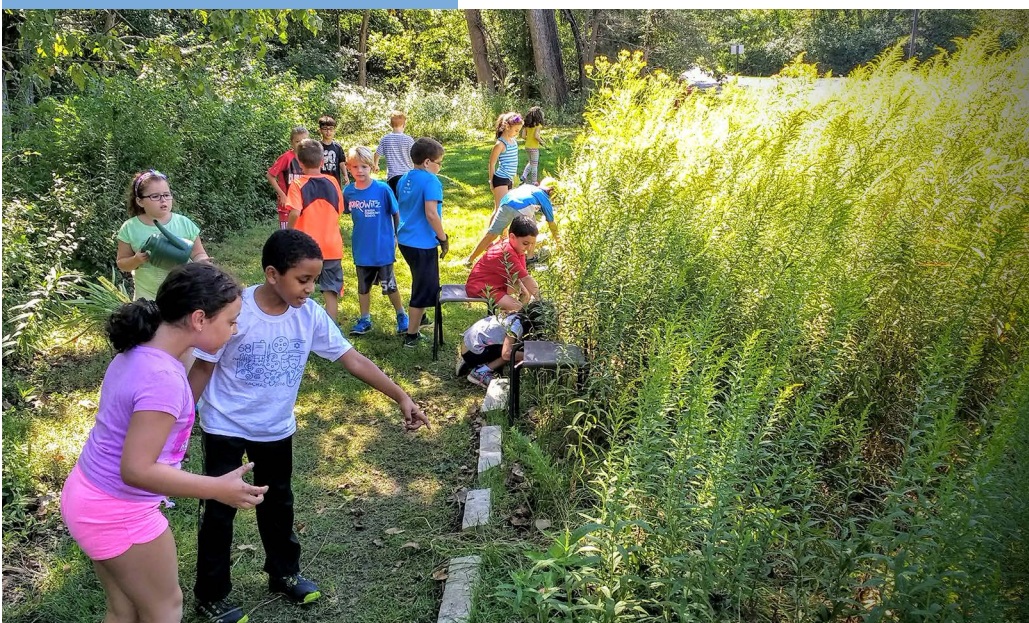
Growing Toward Democracy

by Bob Coulter

By the time you receive this, our long (and at times sordid) election season will be winding down. With that, we can put away simple notions of democracy like voting and get on with the real work of promoting civic engagement. I encourage all of us to embrace John Dewey's framing of democracy as "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience." With this more expansive form of democracy, we can move beyond simply expressing our preference periodically and then letting others solve our problems for us. Instead, democracy—seen as civic engagement—calls each of us to take responsibility for the world we want to bring about.

With this, we need to be sure we don't exclude the kids. While we have to be 18 to have our voting preferences counted, everyone can build up the community in age-appropriate ways. From kindergarten kids planting a garden in front of the school to middle school kids mounting

a community campaign against idling your car, each of us has a role to play. Though our teacher partnerships, we hope to work with you to find the best way to engage your kids. How can we help? 🌱





Stories from the Schoolyard: Fall Photo Collage

by Leslie Memula

Schoolyards around St. Louis have been bustling with activity this fall! Enjoy this photo collage of students (and teachers) using their garden space as an extension of their classroom. We can't think of anything more important than students taking a lead role in improving their schoolyard and making it a better place for all! 🌱



Glass House Quiz: The Sky is Falling!

by the Glass House Staff

It's been nuts around here... literally. Some of us feel a little like Henny Penny (Chicken Little) as we dodge falling black walnuts. All these walnuts falling have made us start thinking about other tree nuts falling around LREC and beyond. Which ones grow here? Why do we have more nuts some years than others? Is everything with "nut" in the name actually a nut?

We figured it was time to find out, so we did some research and turned what we learned into a quiz. We hope you enjoy taking our nutty quiz.



One of LREC's fruitful black walnut trees.
Photo by Deanna English.

- 1. Which of these is actually an edible nut?**
 - a) bladdernut
 - b) groundnut
 - c) butternut
 - d) nut sedge
- 2. Missouri is a large producer of black walnuts. Approximately what percentage of wild black walnuts sold in the world come from Missouri?**
 - a) 25 percent
 - b) 45 percent
 - c) 65 percent
 - d) 85 percent
- 3. What is a "mast year"?**
 - a) a year when lots of ships masts are made from nut trees
 - b) a year when nut trees produce more nuts than normal
 - c) the year of the mast moon, which occurs every 15 years and is the best time to harvest nuts
 - d) both a and b
- 4. Match the nut with the use:**

1) hazelnut	a) nickname of a state
2) acorn	b) frequently used as a coffee substitute
3) buckeye	c) used as a natural dye
4) walnut	d) a main ingredient in a popular spread
- 5. Name four native nut trees or shrubs you can find at LREC.**
- 6. Who are the biggest nuts at LREC.**
 - a) Bob, Stacey, Leslie, Eddie
 - b) Martha, Susan, Mary
 - c) Jamela, Deanna, Josh
 - d) all of the above

See **Quiz**, page 4



From **Quiz**, page 3

Answers:

1. **c) butternut.** Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) is in the same genus as the black walnut. Apparently it's quite delicious. Groundnut (*Apios Americana*) is a vine with edible tubers. Bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) is a native shrub with an interesting papery seedpod. Nut sedge (*Cyperus esculentus*) is a common lawn and garden sedge that most consider a weed. All can be found here at LREC.
2. **c) 65 percent.** Approximately 65 percent of wild harvested black walnuts on the market come from Missouri. In fact, Missouri is the largest producer of black walnuts in the world, and the largest processing plant is operated by Hammons Products in Stockton, Missouri.
3. **b) a year when nut trees produce more nuts than normal.** Mast is the fruit of the nut tree. Scientists aren't entirely sure what causes some trees to have mast years. Mast years appear to create a reproductive advantage for the tree since the populations of the animals that depend on the nuts suddenly have more food than they need. This overabundance allows

more nuts the opportunity to germinate. However, this also usually creates an explosion in the animal population that eats the nuts, which should readjust the following years when there is no large amount of mast produced.

4. **1-d.** Hazelnut is one of the main ingredients in the Italian spread Nutella.
- 2-b.** Acorns have historically been used as a coffee substitute.
- 3-a.** Buckeye is the nickname for Ohio.
- 4-c.** Walnuts have long been used as a natural dye that ranges in color from a yellow to dark brown.

5. **Here's a list of the ones we can think of on site.** If you think of another nut tree or shrub let us know.

- Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)
- Hickory (*Carya* spp.)
- Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*)
- Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
- Oaks (*Quercus* spp.)
- American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)
- Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*)

6. **d) all of the above.** ✎

RECIPE: Homemade Energy Mix

It's easy and rewarding to make your very own trail mix. Using native nuts makes it extra tasty. This recipe makes six cups of mix. Just combine all ingredients together and enjoy.

- 1½ cups black walnuts
- 1 cup pecans
- 1 cup hazelnuts
- ½ cup hickory nuts
- 1 cup raisins or dried blueberries
- 1 cup dried banana chips

Source: <https://mdc.mo.gov/conmag/2015/09/nuts-about-native-edibles>



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2017 LREC TEACHER CONFERENCE

Wouldn't it be great to have a break from your classroom to connect (or reconnect) with fellow innovative professionals? We have just the thing. This January we are excited to host our first teacher conference for all LREC partner teachers!

The event will take place **Wednesday, January 25, 2017**, 9am–3pm at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Breakout sessions will include:

- proven outdoor activities to engage your students in outdoor learning
- helpful tips for getting your students involved in managing your schoolyard garden, and
- ideas for connecting with community partners beyond your classroom.

Jan Buley, a professor in the School of Education at Laurentian University, will be joining us as a keynote speaker. Look for an article in our upcoming December newsletter to learn more about Jan's impassioned work in the field of place-based learning.

Email invitations went out in October. Please contact your LREC staff person if you did not receive one. Registration for this event closes **December 15**. ✍



CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

Proposals, which highlight the inspiring work you are doing with your students, are currently being accepted. Please see the email invitation for more details.

NOVEMBER

by Martha M. Schermann

Newly
Opened
Vistas
Easily
Make
Beneficial
Ecological
Results



SAVE THE DATE:

December 12

VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY PARTY

11am–2pm at Eliot Unitarian Chapel.
Come enjoy some holiday cheer as you mingle and jingle with Horticulture and Education Volunteers and LREC staff. RSVP to Martha and let her know how many people will be coming: martha@lrec.net or 314-540-4068.



LREC Announcements

November 16

Volunteer Enrichment: Learning with Seeds

1–3pm, meet at the cabin/deck. Bring your brown bag lunch at 12:30pm or meet us for the program at 1pm. RSVP to Martha at 314-540-4068 or martha@lrec.net.

November 17

Teacher Enrichment: Understanding Watersheds

4–5:30pm, at The Freedom School. (1483 82nd Blvd., University City 63132). Teachers, RSVP to your staff contact.

Local Events

November 11 and 26

Owl Prowls

7pm, at the World Bird Sanctuary in Valley Park. Learn all about owls then search for wild owls during an easy hike. \$15/adults; \$10/children. Reservations required. Learn more at <http://www.worldbirdsanctuary.org/events/owl-prowls/>.

November 12

Nature Play Event

10am–3pm, at the Saint Louis Zoo. Family event offering activities to connect to the natural world. Free. Learn more at <https://www.stlzoo.org/events/calendarofevents/>.

November 17

Project Pollinator: Beneficial Bees

2–3pm, at St. Louis County Library–Prairie Commons branch. Learn about plants and bee houses that attract native bees. Free and open to all. Registration required. To register, or for more information, call 314-994-3300.