

Garden History

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Before this area became the garden you see today, this space had two storage units at the back corner and was filled with weeds as tall as I am. In 2006, the district allowed some parents to make this garden. Join us, and we'll share why we LOVE coming to the garden every month to discover, learn, and have fun.

Coinker and Water Harvesting

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Coinker, our only farm animal, collects donations for garden programs.

While studying the water cycle in the Water in the World program, 5th graders discovered that 1,000 gallons of rainwater pour through this downspout from the roof in 1 day of rain. They wondered how we could use this water in the garden. These rain gutters, rain chains, cisterns, and underground "soil sponges" allow us to use this water effectively. Thanks to our curious 5th graders, we now conserve thousands of gallons of water each year.

Worm Composting

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Every Thursday, 2nd graders get to study and feed the worms. During lunchtime, 2nd graders chop fruit and vegetable scraps that aren't eaten by students and feed these leftovers to the worms. The worms eat the scraps and leave "worm castings". The nutrient-rich worm castings are mixed into the soil in the garden beds. It's the ultimate form of recycling.

Hot Composting

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Once a week, our 4th-grade students assist aerobic bacteria to create compost. Aerobic bacteria is a fancy name for bacteria that thrive in oxygen-rich environments and help recycle nutrients from dead plants. The more aerobic bacteria in the pile, the hotter the pile gets! The piles begin as grass clippings, dry leaves, and used coffee grounds and transform into fertilizer for the plants. The process takes 10-15 weeks, depending on how hot the piles get and how often the piles are turned. Our crops are abundant and tasty because we mix the compost into the soil.

Farm to Table

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Each class grows a variety of fruits and vegetables in their own bed around the garden. We harvest, eat, and sell our produce as the crops mature. We sell all food not eaten by our classes at Produce Sales every month after school. We can earn Green Bucks to use at the Produce Sales, if we work hard and stay focused during our monthly garden time.

The California Native Butterfly Garden

Hello, my name is _____. I'm a 5th grader at Tustin Memorial Academy. Each spring, the 2nd graders study the life cycles of plants, earthworms, and butterflies. They explore the Butterfly Garden and journal about their discoveries during the Life Cycles in the Garden program. Milkweed and other butterfly plants are food for the caterpillars. This area also provides shelter for each caterpillar to grow a chrysalis and transform into an adult butterfly. Butterfly chrysalises hang from these wood rails several times during the year.