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Zoonie Organics

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Zoonie Organics had an adventurous spring. Over 70 students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in small groups spent their Tuesday and Thursday lunch periods working in the school garden. Supported by great community donations from parents, Masonic groups, Evergreen Arborists (donating 10 square yards of bark for weed control) and Napa Recyclers (donating 5 cubic yards of organic mulch). Seeds came from -------, and vegetable starts from UC Davis and Woodland Community College agriculture programs. Zamora students worked hard to weed, plant, harvest and prepare tastings. That was the good news. A broken water main resulting in no garden water for two hot weeks put most of our effort into hand watering our 22 beds. Then there was the spring invasion of gophers that ate almost all our broccoli, cauliflower, fava beans, snow peas and romanesco. They left the onions for last. After exploring several options, Green Team students decided on a permanent organic solution. With help from UC Davis students they dug out 10 of our 22 raised beds, laid down hardware cloth at the 1-foot level, and refilled the beds so we could plant summer veggies in June for harvest in August through October. Over the summer volunteers are caring for the tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, melons, corn, herbs and pumpkins planted from (donated) Ark Institute organic seeds just before the end of school in June.

The *Sow It Forward* grant brought us eight tomato cages, lots of organic seeds, and the purchase of a stainless steel food prep table and prep materials we now use to prepare tastings of our garden produce. In the fall we will wheel it into classrooms for cooking demonstrations featuring our garden?s summer produce. Thanks to the *Sow It Forward* grant and some active volunteers, Zamora Elementary is no longer the only school garden in our school district; we?ve added five more school gardens and a support group for teachers and volunteers called *Kids Dig It: Garden Learning*. Partnering with the newly formed county-wide *Yolo Farm to Fork*, a private nonprofit effort to bring fresh, healthy local produce to county-wide school meals and families, we will continue to sow it forward cultivating an expanding group of edible school gardens.

Image (optional):

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