

Earth Day Eco-Fair

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Each spring, as a celebration of Earth Day, I sponsor an all-school Eco-Fair which features 5 or more service-learning projects focused on environmental service, awareness, and beautification of school grounds. Some of the projects have included creating a theme garden area with butterflies, Shakespeare, water gardens and a timber-frame arbor, mosaic garden stones, and ornamental trees. Students have also built birdhouses, bird feeders, created "bird seed recipes," and created a cold frame "mini greenhouse." [Best practices:](#)

- Our community need was environmental awareness and responsibility and a need to develop pride in our school.
- 6th grade science focuses on water quality and included an integrated unit on metamorphosis (water and butterfly gardens). 7th grade science focuses on environmental studies and endangered environments (such as the Chesapeake Bay). 8th grade fine arts focuses on Shakespeare (thus the Shakespeare garden).
- Journal writing, discussion groups, and problem solving activities were integrated throughout the project.
- Students were responsible for planning the Eco-Fair; they acted as leaders and group coordinators.
- Parents from the community contributed expertise in environmental field as well as extra help. Community organizations were also involved (wildlife rehabilitation, landscape groups, organic farmers, etc.).
- Planning took place in many phases for the fair and for individual projects.
- In preparation, knowledge and skills were gained by having an expert landscaper talk about gardening issues. Students planned the garden as a Renzulli project (involving research) and then they taught others what they had learned.

