



## Early February 2026 Kids Garden Club Meeting

Reported by retired educator, volunteer Margaret Whitney

This week the students were working in teams to water the beds and cooperated nicely - sharing in every aspect of the process! Nice!

Due to the cold snap we had, the cukes withered away but we've planted more seeds and we're just waiting for them to germinate. The pickle making will have to wait for next season. Our tomato plants are getting huge and producing more and more red tomatoes each week. The Zinnia are flowering, carrots are growing bigger and the strawberries are getting more color.

Last week we harvested fennel greens, thyme, a handful of cukes and a bunch of potatoes! You'd think they were digging up gold! They were so excited! There wasn't enough harvested to share among the members, so we came up with a plan. I took the produce home and returned the following Monday with a tasty snack made with the produce.



So, this week the kids enjoyed home-made Fennel Cucumber Dressing with celery sticks. They were reluctant at first to try it but discovered they liked it. After tasting the dressing, they ranked the recipe and took it home to share with their families. They all gave it the highest rank. Next, they sampled the potatoes we harvested which were fried up in butter and seasoned with fresh thyme: They LOVED them!



Carol McDonald (master gardener) continues to bring coloring pages, new plants, knowledge and enthusiasm to the group! She has wonderful gardening wisdom, and the kids listen to every word! She's THE expert and she is very much respected for her knowledge. Thank you, Team Punta Gorda and the YMCA for continuing to make this project possible.

***Margaret Whitney and Carol McDonald are co-chairs of this exciting ongoing project. The Cooper Street YMCA Recreation Center is located in Punta Gorda. Learn more and follow the growth of the YMCA Rec Center kids garden at [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org).***