

The Seeds of Learning

Through the years of going to school at Henry M. Brader our children, Morgan and Jesse have come home with a lot of different projects, but their favorites were always something that grew. Morgan in kindergarten grew a zinnia flower from seed; we planted it in our garden and it grew 2 feet tall. Jesse's favorite was the pea plant that actually produced some peas. Even their MAD science classes after school had a "growing lesson," Morgan came home with a cabbage plant. But their favorite seed is a seed that they planted at home. One of their favorite fruits to eat is apples, all different kinds, from sweet to tart. After polishing off a juicy snack of a Gala or Red Delicious, they collected the seeds from the core of the apple and we placed them into Dixie cups on the kitchen window sill. We decided to see if we could actually grow an apple tree. We planted two seeds and got two little sprouts in each cup.

Within a few months these little trees were ready to go outside to the deck to be put into 4" clay pots. The fresh air, sunshine and outside environment is much better suited for a tree than our kitchen. Their new home became our back deck over the past few years. It was 2 summers ago when we "lost" one of the apple trees to an unknown critter that snuck into the backyard, either a rabbit or a groundhog, which managed to ravage our potted plants. It ate the cabbage, tendrils from a pumpkin plant, and sadly one of the apples trees to the point where it didn't grow anymore. Luckily, the other apply tree did survive the "All You Can Eat Buffet" that we supplied some woodland creature and replanted it into a much bigger pot for protection. Our little tree has managed to come back from the attack and grown very well. From a little 2 inch seedling in the window in 2010, to a tree that now stands 4 feet tall in 2013; it is just about the same height as Morgan! Knowing that we get animals that will eat our tree, we decided that planting it in the backyard wouldn't be safe.

Morgan decided to ask Mrs. Sharon Brubaker, Librarian and Head Garden Coordinator at Brader Elementary, if we could donate the tree to the school. Morgan and I met with Mrs. Brubaker to determine the best location for the apple tree. It was decided that the best place to plant the tree was in the butterfly garden next to the peach tree that has been dedicated to the school's namesake Henry M. Brader. With the recent passing for Mrs. Brader, it is our family's hope that the school would like to honor Mrs. Brader for her contributions and dedicate this apple tree in her memory. That way future students can see the seeds of learning grow and prosper throughout the years as this tree nurtures, gets bigger and stronger, and adapts year after year to the challenges of life, much like the students in the "halls of learning" next to the garden. We hope the current students and staff at Brader will enjoy watching this tree grow and change, just as we like to see our children grow and change with what they learn at Brader Elementary.

Wendy Wagner