

The Newsmagazine of Long Beach Island and Southern Ocean County

Ethel A. Jacobsen Garden Gets Blue Ribbon Recognition

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(Courtesy of Ethel A. Jacobsen Elementary School)

More than 500 contestants from throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware submitted their gardens to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society as part of the group's 2020 online competition. Of those contestants, 122 were awarded the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award, including the garden at the Ethel A. Jacobsen Elementary School in Surf City.

Submissions required a detailed questionnaire and photos of the garden, and were scored, according to specific judging criteria, by PHS members.

Bianca Aniski, the E.J. garden coordinator, as well as school nurse and health teacher, shared some of the feedback from the judges. "Love that you are teaching children sustainable gardening practices and that you are Certified Naturally Grown," one wrote. "I bet you have a lot of kids enjoying fresh veggies right off the

vine."

Another noted, "So many fun vegetable varieties in your garden. Herbs and fruits, such as strawberries and figs, too!"

"Really enjoyed the 'Island Schoolyard Garden' video and looking at all of the wonderful photos on your website and social media," said a third judge. "This garden is more than just a garden – it is truly a special place for kids, and must create many wonderful, lasting memories for them. I wish I had grown up with a school garden like yours!"

One judge wished the schoolyard garden a happy belated 10th birthday, and remarked, "Teaching children the power of horticulture for a decade is certainly something to be proud of. Keep up the great work. I hope all of those 'little green thumbs' grow up to be 'adult green thumbs!'"

And, finally, Sam Lemheney, the chief of shows and events at PHS, told the school, "Congratulations on all you've done to add beauty and impact to your local communities



Ethel A. Jacobsen Elementary School

through your love of gardening."



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The schoolyard garden will be featured as part of this week's Jersey Fresh Farm to School Spirit Week at E.J., Aniski said. "On Monday we will be sharing recipes featuring Jersey Fresh produce," she explained. "Tuesday will be grade level taste tests that include salsa, pesto, cukes and lettuce. Wednesday is 'Dress Like A Farmer,' Thursday will be a 'Show Us the Garden' in words or by drawing, and Friday is 'Wear Your Favorite Fruit or Veggie Color Day.'

"We are very excited about acknowledging a decade of schoolyard gardening, so ... 'lettuce' celebrate!" —J.K.-H.