



Lythrodontas Forest, Flora and Fauna (LYF)

Country: Cyprus

School: Nipiagogio Lythrodonta School

Participants: Four teachers and seventy-five students.



A part of the front yard of the school was untidy for several years, with a single lemon tree that withered. Through a brainstorming, the children suggested that they should “plant a forest”. So the project started through the interests, the pre-existing knowledge of the children and what they would like to learn.



The main goal of the project was to acquaint the children with the species of trees in the forest and the richness of the fauna and flora of the area, whilst instil the sense that even small actions from a small school can make a big difference in the protection of the local biodiversity. However, because the restrictions due to the coronavirus did not allow them to move outside the school, they tried to bring the forest to the school in various ways. Individual goals of the programme were the tree planting in the school, the creation of a herb garden, flower garden and vegetable garden as well as the joy of creative and playful engagement with them.

Many people from the government to local organisations were involved in the project. The Parents' Association of the school, with the advice of two members of the agronomists, organised the cleaning, the preparation of the soil and the supply of materials for the planting of trees and the creation of gardens. The Forest Station of the village gave information about the forest of the school's area, the animals, and the plants as well as about the sustainable production and consumption of the forest. The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment supplied them with large numbers of saplings and shrubs. The Community Authority installed irrigation systems and covered several of the running costs.

The 4th Palamas kindergarten of the Prefecture of Karditsa in Greece also helped, as they started cooperating on environmental issues from the last school year. They exchanged ideas for good practices and environmental games for more effective involvement of children. The collaboration was named “All together for a greener and friendlier neighbourhood”.



The realization of the project required the cooperation with people from various professional sectors and services. They also needed gardening materials and tools, as well as other related consumables. Finally, various construction materials were needed for the children's artworks, as well as electronic means for virtual tours in the forest, for music investment and games and fairy tales from the internet related to the project theme.

The project included many activities. A herb garden, a flower garden, and a vegetable garden were created. They took care of them and collected the production. Homemade recipes were cooked with the ingredients. The neighbouring linear park and churchyard needed to be cleaned and acquaintance with the trees and shrubs was done. They interviewed forest officials from the Lythrodontas Forest Station and learned about their work. They also learned about the animals and birds that live in the nearby forest. And many more activities, including art and moments of stillness into the nature.



The children cultivated attitudes and skills related to the creation and care of the three types of gardens such as consistency, responsibility, cooperation, and respect, but also critical thinking, imagination and probabilistic expression. The whole effect on the children was positive. Their enthusiasm and their impatience to see the progress of their work showed it. Many started growing a garden with their parents. Despite the sanitary situation, they welcomed well the extracurricular cleaning activities and the environmental demonstration for the forest.

Christos, as soon as he learned that we would plant wild strawberries in our garden, was very negative. "My dad said, he planted strawberries, but they died. I did not eat a single one. We will not make it here at school either." We all talked together about why maybe the strawberry plants died. We concluded that they should have a controlled temperature, neither too hot nor too cold. We learned about greenhouses, drip irrigation, organic fertilizers and illustrated what we need to do to have strawberry production stage by stage. Christos did not draw anything. He was adamant that the strawberry plants would die. He did not plant a single one. But he agreed to plant lettuce. He took care of his lettuce, and we watched him peek at the strawberry plants. I deliberately asked the children not to water the plot with the strawberries. Christos noticed it and mentioned it. I explained to him that the children had to finish their Easter homework. He was very worried. He was going up and down without saying anything. He was very upset. The next day he came running and went to the vegetable garden. I did not ask him why. Then I got a phone call from his father: He said: "Christos taught me how to take care of strawberry plants. He explained to me that ours had died from the cold and that we had to cover them in a small greenhouse. He is excited that your plants at school grow well." Entering the classroom, I mentioned that our plants needed watering. I asked: "Who has not watered the strawberries so far?" Everyone referred to Christos with the comment: "But he does not want to". He immediately answered, "I want, of course I want..."

– A teacher from the school

