Outdoor Classroom Thematic Units
September Thematic Unit

Focus: Apples

STEM
*Balancing apples on top of students heads
*Apple stacking to create a tower

Literacy
*Ten Apple Up on Top by Dr. Seuss
*How Do Apples Grow by Betsy Maestro
*The Biggest Apple Ever by Steven Kroll

Math
*counting 10 apples
*apple taste test/graphing favorite apple
*putting apples in numerical order from 1-10
*apple measurements as standard unit of measure

Social Studies
*field trip to local apple orchard

Science/Mathematics
*preparing and cooking apples for applesauce/apple taste test & graphing

Outdoor cooking
*Cooking apples for applesauce in cast iron dutch oven
October Thematic Unit

Focus: Pumpkins

**STEM**
- design a fence to hold 5 little pumpkins
- teams create something to hold and carry a large pumpkin

**Science**
- open up a pumpkin to let students touch and explore all parts
- put insides in a sensory bin
- watch pumpkin shell decompose over time
- plant pumpkin seeds

**Literacy**
- Pumpkin Jack by Will Hubbell
- 5 Little Pumpkins by Dan Yaccarino
- Too Many Pumpkins by Linda White

**Mathematics**
- measuring and weighing pumpkins
- counting seeds

**Social Studies**
- field trip to local pumpkin patch

**Outdoor cooking**
- roasting pumpkin seeds
November Thematic Unit

Focus: Pilgrims/Native Americans

**STEM**
*Using sticks and other natural materials students will build a structure which resembles traditional pilgrim or native american structures. ie, wigwam, tepee, longhouse, grass hut, thatched roof, etc.
*N Native American storytelling painted rocks
*Design canoe from natural materials and test floating ability in water

**Literacy**
*Look Inside a Tepee by Mari Schuh
*Raven by Gerald McDermott
*The Very First Americans by Cara Ashrose

**Science**
*Harvesting and roasting corn on cob
*Crush up flowers, leaves, grass, etc and use as a paint

**Math**
*Colored and numbered feather hunt
*Mud kitchen first Thanksgiving meal prep

**Social Studies**
* Virtual field trip into a tepee and a pilgrim home

**Outdoor cooking**
*Pilgrim stick bread
December Thematic Unit

Focus: Gingerbread

**STEM**
*collect natural materials and build a gingerbread house
*design a gingerbread man trap

**Literacy**
*Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett
*Gingerbread Friends by Jan Brett
*The Gingerbread Man by Karen Schmidt

**Math**
*design a gingerbread man using natural materials and discuss symmetry

**Science**
*share real ginger root with students. (cut it, smell it, draw it)
*mix and make gingerbread mud cookies

**Social Studies**
*use a map to find and follow “missing” gingerbread men

**Outdoor cooking**
*Dutch oven Gingerbread cake
January Thematic Unit

Focus: Snow & Ice

**STEM**
*study snowflakes, catch snowflakes with black paper, examine snowflakes with hand lense, draw snowflake with white crayon
*spray bottles of colored water to make snow designs

**Science**
*each student creates a snowman using the exact same materials; discuss differences

**Literacy**
*Snowflake Bentley by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
*The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
*The Biggest Snowman Ever by Steven Kroll

**Math**
*counting points on snowflake
*use shapes to design snowflakes..symmetry
*snowball number count

**Social Studies**
*take students snowshoeing, watching for animal tracks

**Outdoor cooking**
*Hot Cocoa
*Sugar on snow
February Thematic Unit

Focus: Friendship

**STEM**
*conversation hearts structure building
*design a float to hold a designated number of candy hearts

**Literacy**
*The Bad Seed by Jory John
*Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
*Stone Soup by

**Science**
*Friendship dough. Each student gets a primary color of dough and chooses a friend to mix doughs together to make new color.
*Prepping and cooking ingredients for Stone Soup

**Math**
*Heart designs in the snow

**Social Studies**
*Trip to the post office to see how it runs and to mail Valentine letters to families

**Outdoor Cooking**
*Stone Soup
March Thematic Unit

Focus: Rain & Rainbows

STEM
* using paper towels as a bridge between water with food coloring watch colors will mix to show the rainbow.
* Use skittles with hot water to melt away rainbow colors

Science
* Use prism to display rainbows

Literacy
* Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
* Little Cloud by Eric Carle
* All the Colors of the Rainbow by Allan Fowler
* What Makes the Rain by Usborne

Math
* counting colors
* learn color order with ROY G BIV
* use rain gauge to watch rain collection

Social Studies
* puddle play in the rain

Outdoor Cooking
* Tin foil potatoes & cabbage
April Thematic Unit

Focus: Weather

**STEM**
*cloud in a jar using shaving cream and blue food coloring*
*make it rain using a sponge and eye droppers placed over a jar*

**Literacy**
*Raindrop Plop by Wendy Cheyette Lewison*
*What Makes a Shadow by Clyde Robert Bulla*
*Sun Up, Sun Down by Gail Gibbons*
*Wind by Carol Thompson*

**Science**
*Draw with chalk student shadows*
*use natural materials to design a structure for shade*

**Math**
*counting drops*
*simple addition*
*month long weather tracking (Lion vs Lamb)*

**Social Studies**
*visit from a meteorologist to discuss weather*

**Outdoor cooking**
*Roasted carrots*
May Thematic Unit

Focus: Gardening

**STEM**
*starting seeds in potting soil to be transferred to gardens
*plant seedlings in outdoor garden

**Literacy**
*The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
*From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons
*Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

**Science**
*watch and journal growth patterns

**Math**
*counting seeds
*measurement of seedlings
*plotting garden space

**Social Studies**
*Invite local gardener/farmer to show students about importance of growing food
*Work in gardens to plant things to be harvested in the fall

**Outdoor Cooking**
*Roasted corn on the cob
June Thematic Unit

Focus: Bubbles/Summer Preparations

**STEM**
*use dish soap and whisks to make foamy bubbles
*design bubble blowing apparatus

**Science**
*colored bubble solution to design bubble paintings
*play on rolled out bubble wrap

**Literacy**
*Cinder the Bubble Blowing Dragon by Jessica Anderson
*Mister Seahorse by Eric Carle
*The Watermelon Seed by Greg Pizzoli

**Math**
*Counting watermelon seeds
*chewing bubblegum and counting how many blows before bubble pops

**Social Studies**
*Field trip to stream and look, play and discover stream habitat

**Outdoor cooking**
*S’mores