

## Bird Homestead Welcomes Carver Center Students to Dig In and Learn

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Twenty-three second-graders planted and tended vegetables, while learning about healthy food and where it comes from. Hung and Mottola also gave an introduction to botany and the qualities of beneficial insects. In a lesson on composting, the educators presented basic soil science and explained how microbes and earthworms help break down organic materials and enrich soil fertility.

No pesticides are used at the Bird Homestead in order to keep the food and the environment healthy. Henry Bird (1869-1959), a prominent entomologist, was an early proponent of avoiding pesticides in vegetable gardening and a pioneer in the use of beneficial insects to protect crops.

The Bird Homestead nonprofit provided instruction free of charge, thanks to generous donors who contributed to the Anvilla P. Cunningham Fund for Gardening Education at the Bird Homestead. This fund honors the memory of Mrs. Cunningham, an accomplished gardener and botanist. She grew flowers, vegetables, and herbs at her home in Rye for nearly six decades, and worked with alpine plants at NYBG.

“We are grateful to all the donors who make this program possible,” said Anne Stillman, president of the Bird Homestead nonprofit. “Guided by our outstanding teachers, the children have gained an appreciation of the natural world and healthy eating that they will remember for a long time.”

*Photo by Anne Mottola*