Elementary students dig into agriculture

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — As many as 1,000 students in Archdale-Trinity elementary schools will benefit from a field trip paid for with funds derived from the special Archdale-Trinity supplemental school tax.

Last month Trinity High School agriculture students hosted 184 students from Hopewell Elementary School to teach them about the life cycle of plants.

Students from Trinity High Horticulture I and Small Engines classes volunteered to provide agriculture lessons for their guests in the classroom, in the greenhouses and in the school’s outdoor classroom.

Austin acted as tour guide to show a group of students all seven of the school’s greenhouses.

After reviewing the parts of a plant, Josh quizzed the elementary students.

“Who remembers what part bees and insects go to?” he asked.

“Today we are going to eat all the parts of a plant,” said Caleb as he led students in an activity in which they tasted the seeds, flowers, stems, leaves and roots of different plants.

Agriculture student Kim served up flowers in the form of broccoli.

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First-grade students from Hopewell Elementary School recently visited Trinity High School for agriculture lessons taught by Trinity High School agriculture students. In the outdoor classroom at Trinity High, Seth Wall and Sydney Brown use a hands-on visual aid to define and explain a soil profile to an eager learner. After spending the morning at Trinity High, most of the first-graders could identify bedrock, parent material, soil and topsoil layers.
Above: Trinity High School student Austin, right, explained the process of growing plants from cuttings to this excited learner.

Right: After his visit to a Trinity High School greenhouse, Hopewell Elementary School student Silas got to take home a flat in which he planted pea, oat, radish and pumpkin seeds.

Photos by Debbie Hightower

During a lab activity Hopewell Elementary School first-graders got to taste every part of a plant and tell whether or not they liked it. Pictured here, Kayleigh liked everything — except the celery.

Trinity High School agriculture students led first-graders in an activity that demonstrated how plants can grow from cuttings. Pictured here, a student takes a cutting from a mum, which was planted in a dome that was taken back to the first-grade classroom for observation.

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After trying the foods, students rated their appeal by circling a smiling face or frowning face on their score sheet. Kayleigh only circled one frown on her paper — the celery.

“My favorite part is the seeds,” said Raven as she devoured a small pile of sunflower seeds.

Another highlight of the morning for students was the opportunity to plant their own pea, oat, radish and pumpkin seeds.

Other stations provided an opportunity to learn about soil layers, parts of a plant and the life cycle of plants.

As they boarded activity buses to return to their school, each student took home a flat containing four different plants to watch and observe. Each teacher took back to their classrooms a dome with cuttings of mums to observe as they grow.

Soil, seeds and materials for the lessons were all paid for by a start-up grant from A-T Tax.

“Sometimes there are students who can’t pay the fees for field trips,” said agriculture teacher Caroline Sheffield. “A-T Tax wanted to give students a fun, educational field trip that’s free.”

Students from all five elementary schools in the Archdale-Trinity area will eventually visit the high school to take advantage of agriculture lessons.

Hopewell first-grade teacher Aliyah Proutaut said the lessons were an effective hands-on complement to classroom studies about plants.

“They’re getting it,” she said.

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