

# Permaculture Partners Newsletter



Term 2 2017

## Winter in our Permaculture Gardens

The aim of this newsletter is that each term the schools will give an update on progress with Environmental i



### Warrawong High School

There has been a hive of activity in the Permaculture Garden at Warrawong High School. Along with Cringila Public School we hosted a group of 21 students from Nowra East Public School, their teacher and Aboriginal Education Officer. The students are Garden Ambassadors for their School & Community Permaculture Garden. The event was successful in building positive connections with other school Permaculture gardens in our region.

Support Unit Teacher Abbe Hoogsteden-Gale successfully proposed the establishment of an outdoor learning space and edible garden area for students with disabilities. Miss Gale secured funding of \$3,413 through the Tradies iPromise Grant. Students will learn to grow, harvest and eat organic food and care for the environment. The project includes areas for food, bush tucker, flowers, herbs and fruit. Sustainability elements will include a worm farm, water harvesting and organic composting.



### Five Islands Secondary College

Our Team Green students here at FISC have been busy in the garden, planting and harvesting veggies, including huge broccoli, lettuce, beautiful spinach and bok choy. Students have also been hard at work completing another large seating circle in the upper part of the garden which has created a great place to sit and relax in the shade and watch the garden grow. Staff and students have been doing their part to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by making the most of our green waste bins and worm farms. Students have been doing a great job of keeping the worms happy and well fed, doing the rounds collecting the green waste twice a week.



### Port Kembla Public School

It has been another industrious autumn in the Living Classroom for the Port Kembla PS Garden Ambassadors. The confidence from building the first mineral rich slow ferment compost in a primary school has enabled the Garden Ambassadors to continue with their innovative soil building. They built eight mineral rich 'no dig' beds and in turn pocket planted the compost with a cornucopia of winter vegetables. Members of the local community were so impressed with the size and health of the produce; they promptly removed the whole harvest for their own use.

On a more positive note the first olive crop was harvested at Port Kembla PS. Twenty litres of olives were picked and the Permaculture students of Warrawong High School prepared them in a salt brine over four weeks. The olives have been bottled for storage and brought out to share with the gourmet toasties the Garden Ambassadors prepare and serve up each fortnight lunch. Special thanks to our volunteers Sara Raymond and Matt Mc Kay.





## Cringila Public School

The winter vegetables have been thriving in Cringila's four season vegetable garden beds. It's a wonder that there has been a lack of insect predation given the warm 'Indian summer' we have received this year. The extensive biodiversity plantings have been alive with insectivorous birds, arachnids and predatory insects keeping the plant-eating insects in check.

Like the impressive growth of the garden, the Garden Ambassadors too have been transforming and thriving in their leadership roles. In only five visits, the Garden Ambassadors have built the vegetable beds soils, planted vegetables and herbs extensively, fed the fruit trees, weeded and mulched the paths, pruned the windbreaks and support plants, cranked the compost, harvested the seasonal fruit and vegetables and prepared tasty meals in the outdoor kitchen with Mrs T.

They have commenced work on the fig tree islands that make up the 'Carbon Garden' designed and implemented by the 2013 Garden Ambassadors. The seasonal maintenance of weeding running grasses, deep wood chip mulching and shaping the native fig trees are the focus for the chilly late winter months.



## Warrawong Public School

Rain when you need it, cooler temperatures, weeds slowing down – autumn is here! We have had a lovely term in the garden with the summer harvest collected and the winter crops planted. The Brazilian Cherries provided a second crop, Ice Cream Beans were in abundance (at least until some birds found them!) and the citrus crops have been fantastic – a testament to the last couple of seasons of hard work eliminating stink bugs from sucking all the sap out of the orange, mandarin, lemon, lime and lemonade trees. We were also blessed with some seriously huge passionfruit after nurturing the vines over summer and giving them lots of water, mulch and chook poo!

Our garden has built up some great soil over the years, but it is still perched atop a deep layer of free draining coal-wash, so keeping the plants adequately watered is one of our biggest challenges. To help things along, the Boys Groups have been working on an irrigation system, which will really help keep the plants thriving over the dry summer months. We hope to turn the tap on (from the water tanks of course!) for the first time in August.

Finally, the arvo mob has been working on reinvigorating the worm farms as part of our preparation for hosting the end of year Permaculture Partners celebration. Everyone is really looking forward to showing off their hard work and sharing the wonderful school that is Warrawong Primary!



## Lake Heights Public School

This term at Lake Heights we have continued our gardening group as well as involving classes in the planting and maintenance of our winter vegetables and herbs.

We have purchased additional plants with our Bunnings vouchers. Keeping up the watering has been challenging but fun.



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