

Permaculture Partners Newsletter



Term 2 2016

Autumn in our Permaculture Gardens

The aim of this newsletter is that each term the schools will give an update on progress with Environmental Initiatives at their school that focus around their Permaculture gardens.



Warrawong Public School

There was a suite of fruits to choose from in the Autumn harvest season and a new supplier of mulch meant the garden got a much needed top-dressing of lovely wood chips, which will slowly work their magic in conjunction with mycelium and mini-beasts to form deep, dark and delicious soil!

As usual, the Support Unit were revelling in all the garden jobs, the Green Team were ensuring all the details were dealt with and the Arvo Mob were working with a ton of energy and enthusiasm.

We also introduced 'Garden Visits' whereby classes that don't always have access to the garden, come down for a one-hour science based lesson, with a permaculture twist!

The overall favourite food of the students in Term 2 was the Ice-Cream Bean and thankfully the tree was absolutely laden with them. Alas, all good things must come to an end and by Week 10, there were only just enough beans to send our gardeners happily on their holidays.



Lake Heights Public School

The Lake Heights weekly garden group welcomed some new students this term from Kindergarten to Year 2. These students have not had an opportunity to be involved in the garden this year and are thoroughly enjoying their time there. During the cold winter months the students have spent their time ensuring that all the gardens beds are mulched and fed so that we can harvest vegetables such as brussel sprouts, cabbages, sweet potatoes, beans, celery and herbs. We have also been getting planter boxes ready for the planting of passion fruit vines and have sown seeds ready for spring. The garden group will also begin sprucing up the garden with the sanding and staining of the garden's benches.



Port Kembla Public School

This term we will be featuring our fabulous garden ambassador, Maggie Olsen. Maggie is a new addition to the Garden Ambassador team for 2016, and carries a wealth of enthusiasm and knowledge of plants and all living things. Maggie is passionate about growing fresh vegetables and loves to get down and dirty whether it is building the "no dig" garden beds, turning the compost heap or chopping and dropping in the banana walk.

She is an inspiration for the younger students and she can be found during break times mentoring groups of students older and younger than herself in the art of planting, watering and weeding. Maggie is a delight for her Permaculture teacher, being the voice of reason during group discussion, demonstrating self-motivation and responsibility with garden maintenance and being caring and kind to her school community.

She can also be found after school and on weekends with her mum Evelyn, watering the new vegetables and keeping a watchful eye over the subtle changes to the beautiful Living Classroom of Port Kembla.





Cringila Public School

The students of Cringila PS have enjoyed an amazing harvest of “mega flora” including broccoli, cauliflower, pak choi, red cabbage, silverbeet and lettuce. With an unseasonal extended summer, the “no dig” garden beds have been pumping a constant flow of extra-large and fresh vegetables and herbs straight to the “Red Gum” kitchen.

Mrs Tancevski has been cooking up seasonal vegetable feasts with year 3/4T each fortnight to fuel up the industrious ambassadors. This talented group of students has brought the food-growing garden up to its legendary best and even started to focus on the western edge native garden.

The students have been developing “oxygen islands” of native figs and acacias and surrounding these with a beneficial layer of heavy mulch thus creating “Fig Avenue” at Cringila PS.



Warrawong High School

Permaculture at Warrawong HS has continued to break new ground, as the growing season for summer 2016 seems to have swallowed autumn and given winter a good warm push. In response to climate change, 7S Science has moved to the southern edge of the school to plant up an avocado and coffee food forest integrating with local Berkeley brush on a radical 1:2 slope. These students have been transforming a weedscape into a cornucopia of perennial food by collecting vine weeds and converting them into eggs (feeding them to the chooks), and dividing bamboos, salvias and vetiver grass and planting them amongst the avocado and coffee trees.

The Intensive English Centre, Permaculture Engagement class and Support Unit classes have moved into restoring the headwaters of Lake Illawarra.

These students have been weeding and reforesting a WHS storm water pipe outlet and its waterway with local rainforest species, donated from the Wollongong Botanical Gardens nursery. This is a classic “rolling Permaculture” approach to restoring damaged land, create a biodiversity corridor and South American food forest that will stretch to Warrawong PS. The four season vegetable garden has been supplying fresh vegetables and herbs to both students and more recently to staff with a “garden to staffroom” vegetable box. Warrawong HS will be laden with plenty of organic goodness until the winter finally hits.



Five Islands Secondary College

The new Permaculture garden continues to grow under the planning and guidance of Aaron Sorenson. Currently, the raised four season veggie beds are being used by TAFE Horticulture teacher David Brookfield and his students to grow and observe a range of vegetables developing from seed and completing their life cycle.

Many students have been rolling up their sleeves and taking pride in their work to continue to shape the wood chip paths that will be a feature of the garden and highlight the beautiful curvature of the design plan. Coming up in spring will be the planting of our fruit trees into the citrus grove.

A new seating circle has started, (incorporated due to the overwhelming use of our original prototype seating circle in our Rainforest garden project by FISC students), again with the use of recycled tyres and also locally cut and milled sustainable timber to be shaped by the construction students and then placed on top in the same fashion as our beautiful original. The students can't wait to see this completed.

A highlight in our Garden recently was the Five Islands Secondary College NAIDOC Celebration. It included a special opportunity for students to join our Aboriginal Mentors and plant a selection of Bush Tucker plants to commemorate the special day. The connection between the garden and our Aboriginal students and community is very important in the overall design of the garden.



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