

Enviroschools Ōtākou

Newsletter Mahuru 2020



Creating sustainable communities through kai



Garden mahi

There is nothing quite like getting your hands in soil to connect with Whenua, as it is the land that nourishes life. As the days get longer with more warmth, the garden is calling to us once again. **Clutha Valley School** has started to grow their seeds. They are using egg trays as pots and housing them in their tunnel house for a warm start while there is still a chance of frost. **Waitahuna School** has also been in the garden, planting and feeding their fruit trees and making sure the strawberries get a good start so they can grow enough to go around.

Keeping a garden going at school can be challenging. Your Enviroschools facilitator has lots of ideas for keeping it simple and achievable.

Getting the strawberries off to a good start at Waitahuna School



Opoho students on the way to reducing those food miles

Food miles

There are many reasons for growing food at school. **Ōpoho School** junior students brainstormed all the different modes of transport needed to get an apple to their lunchbox if that apple came from Australia. They then went out and picked an apple from a tree in the school grounds. The students concluded they could make a big difference if they grew more of their own fruit and vegetables and have since planted more fruit trees.

Check out the 'World in a Lunch Box' activity in the Enviroschools kit (p. 120).

Nau mai haere mai

Enviroschools' kaupapa is creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together. COVID-19 is giving

Talk to your facilitator if you want some help to empower your students and community through the context of kai.

Robyn Zink *Regional Coordinator*

many of us a renewed appreciation of kai and how important kai is to a healthy, peaceful and sustainable world. This newsletter showcases

a few of the many ways in which tamariki, schools and communities across Ōtākou are creating the future they want through kai.

Gardens for educating our future-focused learners about feeding themselves and the world around them

Identifying the current situation

Queenstown Primary School (QPS) has had a vegetable garden for a long time, but it was hidden around the back of the school. Students could only go there with a teacher in tow. Lots of the staff and the students didn't even know the garden existed. The QPS Envirogroup wanted to do something about this. The whole school did a "mapping of our school", which was run by the Envirogroup. This was displayed in the school office for families to see and add their comments.

Exploring alternatives

The students took these ideas and set about finding out about the fruit and vegetables that grow well in the Queenstown climate. QPS is getting new classrooms in the next few years so the students had to think about where the classrooms are going and what areas would be shaded with the new buildings. They pooled their ideas and decided on the best location. The students then built models of what the garden could look like before taking their proposal to the principal and the BOT.

Taking action

Once approval was given the students got busy preparing the ground for the tunnel house and the fruit trees. This involved a lot of digging. A teacher buried a sword and some bones in the area, which created a mystery and added layers of story to the garden – and then there was more digging.

"I worked on the garden from the start, it makes the school look really interesting. I love working in the garden at lunchtime." John (aged 8)



Building the fence above the garden

"The tunnel house is awesome, students built it and I feel proud seeing it with plants growing. It changes all the time." Flynn (aged 9)

Your facilitator has lots of ideas and resources for engaging your whole school community in developing projects.

Fruit trees were planted, and Mitre 10 donated material for the tunnel house and raised beds. The students worked out what needed to be done at each stage to make sure the garden would work. As they were digging, they found that stray balls came flying in from the playground above. They knew this would be a problem in the garden so set about designing, building and decorating a fence above the garden. Other students created signs to remind everyone what is happening in the garden. Susan McIntyre, the teacher who works with the Envirogroup, knew that for the garden to be sustainable it had to be linked to learning. Students at QPS created a Mahi Pai for the garden that reflects the school values of **Care, Respect and Integrity.**

Care for the whole student garden, our plants, insects and tools.

Respect the structures, tunnel house and the work of the gardeners.

Always use **integrity** in the QPS Garden, work, harvest and consider others.

Reflect on change

Susan has found the Enviroschools programme works best when the process engages everyone in the school community – adults and young people. One of the ways QPS has been able to do this is to explicitly link sustainability and the Enviroschools kaupapa to the school values. She also said that "because the school garden has been student driven it has taken a long time, but the learning has been amazing and they have got buy-in from the whole school."

Compost and waste

Many schools are shocked when they see how much food waste they find when they do a waste audit. Getting food waste out of rubbish bins not only saves the school money but turns this 'waste' into a rich resource. Students at **Waiwera South** have been busy making compost bins to turn food scraps into compost to feed their garden.

Oamaru Intermediate School has come up with a great system to collect food scraps for their school chickens. Buckets are put out at morning tea and lunch time with signs reminding students what chickens like to eat. At the end of the break students from the Envirogroup give the scraps to the chickens, who in turn give the school eggs for their cooking classes.

Your Enviroschools facilitator knows lots about compost and can provide advice on systems to make sure food scraps end up in the right bin and then go to the compost or the chooks.



Courtney building her pallet compost bin



The chook bucket with the sign reminding students what chooks like to eat



These girls weren't going to leave any soup in their cups.



The chefs at Maheno school love garlic.

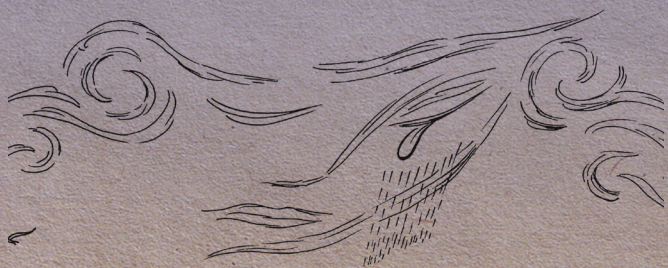
Cooking up a storm

Part of the cycle of growing food is preparing and eating what you grow. Many teachers have noticed that students are much more likely to try new foods if they have been involved in growing it or cooking it. **Cromwell Primary School** students were wondering

what to do with their silver beet. Soup was the obvious answer on a winter's day. One student described it as pond slime. But it must have tasted good as there wasn't any left over. **Maheno Primary School** has got some great cooks in the crew. They have also been

cooking up their winter veges. They weren't holding back on the garlic in their dishes.

Check out the "Where does our kai come from?" activity in the Living Landscapes theme area (p. 61)



Te Paataka Owaka

Some schools find they can't use all the produce they grow and one of the ways they share it with their communities is by setting up community pantries. After lock-down, **Catlins Area School** was considering the inquiry question "In a post-pandemic New Zealand, how can we ensure Owaka thrives?" All the school community was involved in developing ideas and a paataka (community pantry) was one idea to come out of this inquiry. Before long a fridge was modified and installed at the school gates. The philosophy for the paataka is 'take what you need and give what you can'. Over time, the school intends to deepen the learning relating to the paataka by learning to maintain and manage stock levels, planning the space inside the pantry for best use, make and photograph simple meals that can be made with pantry items and put together a cookbook.



A new life for an old fridge as a paataka

The Enviroschools website has some great stories about the paataka from other Ōtākou schools - enviroschools.org.nz

Schools Enterprise through kai

Kaikorai Valley High school students are making good use of their urban farm produce to develop their business skills and generate income to re-invest in the farm. They have been selling honey and beeswax wraps made with wax from their hives. Not only do the wraps reduce the amount of plastic coming into the school in lunch boxes, the profits have funded the new chicken feeder. Well fed chickens mean more eggs for cooking classes or to sell to the school community.

Students at **Weston School** are becoming expert garlic growers. Every year they put in a large area of garlic and sell it to the local restaurants and parents. The school has developed a reputation for growing superior

garlic and this year they made \$280.00 from garlic sales. Jenny, the Enviroschools teacher, bought new spades and plants for the garden with the proceeds. Jenny said, *"the students grow the garlic with the wonderful Linda Wilson, our grandmother in chief. We couldn't do it without her!"*

Plants are always popular at the school fair. **Cromwell School** students learnt how to make seed bombs that they sold at the school fair. **Otago Girls High School** Envirogroup potted up plants in re-cycled and decorated containers to sell at their school fair. The seed bombs and the plants sold like hot-cakes and the students at both schools wished they had made more to sell.



Learning the fine art of making seed bombs



Weston students harvesting their garlic crop

Kia ora ki te Enviroschools whanau

We would like to extend a very big welcome to 11 new Enviroschools in Ōtākou. **KingsView Primary School** (Queenstown), **Omakau** and **St. John's Primary Schools**, **Dunstan High School** and **Cromwell College** (Central Otago), **Fairfield Primary School** and **Otago Boys High School** (Dunedin), **Palmerston** and **Waitaki Valley Primary Schools**, **Waitaki Boys High School** and **Little Wonders Childcare** (Waitaki) have all recently become Enviroschools. It is very exciting to be able to support them on their sustainability initiatives.



Tell us what is happening in you school and community

We love hearing your stories and sharing them on our facebook page facebook.com/EnviroschoolsOtago and on the Enviroschools website enviroschools.org.nz

Get in touch with your facilitator if you have a story to share or want to find out more about something you see on the facebook page or website.



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