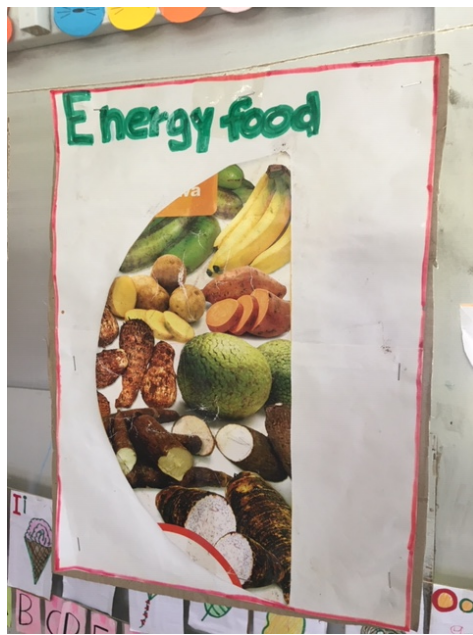


Mimosa Kitchen Garden

Why is a kitchen garden so important to Mimosa?

Teaching children how to fuel their bodies appropriately should be a fundamental life skill, and an integral part of what they learn. The resurgence of interest in school kitchen gardens is helping promote this, along with increasing children's sense of confidence at growing something, their nutritional understanding and interest, environmental awareness, enjoyment of being outdoors, being part of a team etc.

Being involved with growing, harvesting and cooking plants can assist in encouraging children to adopt healthy eating behaviours for better health and learning.



Not a Tiny Teddy or chip packet in sight. We have a lot to learn from the kids in Vanuatu:

Where we are now (May 2019):



First day: March 20th 2019



Friday lunchtime Gardening club



So what is the Gardening Club about?

- First session we did was 20 March, with a massive weeding session
- Every Friday lunch time I now run a very informal Gardening Club. So far we have done weeding (lots of it), tilling the soil, planting (small plants, and seedlings), more weeding, watering, talking about what we are growing, small bugs, feeding, and more weeding...
- Any child can just turn up and join in
- No real structure, I give some basic direction along the lines of today we are weeding, planting, seedling, watering etc (plus, try not to chop each other's fingers off with the fork, and other things along those lines)
- Brilliant to give some kids who are a bit lost at lunch time some sense of belonging and achievement.
- We have fun and the kids who come just love having freedom to dig etc and be outdoors
- Main challenge is that I'm not really sure where it is going, not everyone is included or has the opportunity to join in (as they only see its on if they are in the area of the garden), Im the only one currently doing it!

Where to now: How to create a successful kitchen garden at Mimosa

Research and experience shows that the success of a kitchen garden in a school is very much dependent on the children being involved in all parts of the process.

Planning, building and establishing the garden, right through to harvesting, cooking, recycling and even cleaning up afterwards gives them ownership and therefore pride and passion about food and gardening.

The key though is to just getting

started: https://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/sites/default/files/2015_September_Gettings_tarted_Affordablegardens.pdf

Option 1: Continue as we are with the kitchen garden

- We need to do some planning around seasonal plants and also install some basic irrigation to cover the holidays and hot summer days.
- We need to look at pest elimination
- Low cost and low risk option
- Minimal staff and volunteers required
- We already have enough gloves, and small forks for the kids.
- Timeframe: Now
- Cost: minimal

Option 2: Focus on growing the gardening club at lunchtimes/ before/after school only

- We need to do some further planning around seasonal plants and also install some basic irrigation to cover the holidays and hot summer days.
- We need to look at getting rid of pests, planning crop rotation, feeding etc
- We need to explore how to manage the compost bin and possibly look at creating a worm farm too.

- We need to think about whether we are going to teach and progress the kids that come regularly, rather than just let them dig in the dirt each session! (which some are more than happy to do!). **Main learning themes to focus on in the garden:**
 - Understanding where our food comes from
 - Gardening skills and sustainability
 - Physical activity and outdoors learning with others
- A few more members of staff and volunteers required
- Consideration around whether to split years / classes to different days / times / spaces
- We would need to create a bigger garden space. This could maybe involve a working bee with parents and a donation of sustainable and recycled products to create the garden (e.g. sleepers, compost, seedlings, plant food etc etc).
- Input from experts (or at least someone who knows more than me) around soil and mulch types, what we should be planting with what etc
- Purchase more plants, a few more tools and an irrigation system
- Timeframe: Next month or two
- Cost: unknown at this stage but we could put a shout out to parents for spare plants, tools etc, with a focus on upcycling, recycling etc

Option 3: Larger space and incorporate gardening into lessons during school time:

- The focus with this option is again very much in the garden. In addition to the requirements above this would also involve the school more to educate/upskill the teachers and schedule the learning into class time.
- Upskilling the teachers. Either Stephanie Alexander PD or using resources such as the Healthy Kids Association http://healthy-kids.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/J_KGKC-Stage-2-Lessons-Pages-1-20.pdf
- Sample of Sequence of Garden lessons for Stage 1: 1. Check your soil type 2. Test and Prepare Soil 3. Soil Porosity 4. Cycles in our world 5. People and their beliefs 6. You are what you eat
- Have a dedicated team of volunteers to support the teachers and classroom work
- Consideration around the space requirements and whether we should allocate a space to each year group, or even grow a garden as a house. There is great benefit in having different ages work together in the garden (the kids can get involved in the planning of this).
- Great resources on Healthy Kids Association: <http://healthy-kids.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/C-KGKC-Kids-Grow.pdf>
- Time frame: TBC, maybe next term?
- Cost: TBC, depending on PD training required, how many resources we can source before

Option 4: Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden with the focus now on cooking as well as gardening

- Garden requirements as above, but the emphasis is now on the kitchen in equal measures as the garden itself. **Main themes learnt in the kitchen**
 - Cooking
 - Healthy eating
 - Health and safety
 - Sustainability

- Manly West school currently deliver this program to Year 3 and 4 in alternate semesters. We could arrange a site visit to get some ideas.
- Cost? 1-year membership \$275 (includes \$165 join fee and \$110 annual renewal) OR 2-year membership \$350. This provides us with discounted sessions for PD days.
- Main consideration with this option is where will the cooking lessons take place? Do we already have

Option 5: Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden, plus a social gardening club too

- As above but also still have a social lunchtime gardening club for those who want to come along still and love it.

Further thoughts / ideas

A kitchen garden doesn't need to be confined to simply growing veggies and cooking, it can and include:

- Bee keeping
- Chickens
- Birdboxes
- Scarecrows
- Living and learning in the environment
- Building (seating, greenhouses etc)

etc

Funding / Supplies

- Mimosa Families:
 - Working bee
 - Old equipment, timber, tyres etc
- Grants:
 - Bunnings
 - Yates – Growing good gardens grant
 - Northern Beaches Council – compost bins and worm farms?
 - AMP Tomorrow Fund – Simon?

Fundraising:

- P&C
- Special events (eg Lou and Jess sponsorship for our run)

Resources:

Stephanie

Alexander https://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/sites/default/files/2015_September_Gettingstarted_Affordablegardens.pdf

Healthy kids Association <https://healthy-kids.com.au/teachers/kitchen-garden/>
http://www.kitchengardens.det.nsw.edu.au/kg/assets/dig_in_guide.pdf