

SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

An Education Program suitable for Prep - 6

Program Snapshot

What is sustainable gardening? This program provides children with the opportunity to participate in the real (and fun) work of an organic kitchen garden and to have hands-on experiences learning the principles of sustainability.

The aim is to assist teachers and students in developing school gardens for life-long learning.

The program provides an excellent opportunity to address Victorian Essential Learning Standards across a range of Domains, while helping your students make connections to the natural world. Many of the main concepts of the *Sustainable Gardens* programs are relevant to the Science, Health, Civics & Citizenship and Geography Domains of VELS (please visit our website to see the VELS program guides). However this program can be integrated as a learning tool more broadly across the curriculum. The broad themes in this program provide flexibility to focus on particular aspects that match the needs of the teacher. It also allows scope to provide choice for students' experiences, interests and learning styles.

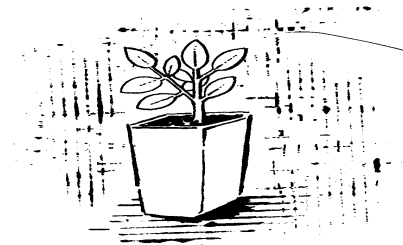
Focus Topics

- Who are the animal helpers in the garden?
- Dealing with the those regarded as 'pests'
- Understanding mulching, compost and nutrient cycles
- Learning basic propagation techniques
- Gardening as a part of a wider ecology
- Water conservation gardening



Student understandings

- An organic garden is full of biodiversity.
- Organic gardens are made up of natural systems including relationships between living things, which aid or threaten their survival.
- All living things have requirements for survival such as air, water, food and an opportunity to reproduce.
- Environmental factors affect the survival of living things.
- Human activity and natural processes can change garden environments.
- There are many ways in which we can learn and benefit from natural organic systems.



Experiences - Getting started on sustainability...

'Pests' or Pesticides

Students explore the Kitchen Garden at the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden to observe the delicate balance between herbivore and carnivore, and to discuss organic alternatives to using sprays and insecticides that effect the whole food web.

Real Work

Students spend 20 minutes in the IPFCG Kitchen Garden contributing to the 'real work' of the garden which could include mulching, pruning, harvesting, watering, planting or preparing the soil.

The Mysteries of Mulch

Mulch is a layer of material, preferably organic, which can be placed on top of the garden soil where you are growing plants (a bit like a blanket). Mulching the garden beds reduces the amount of moisture which is lost through the process of evaporation; it also slows down the growth of weeds in the soil.

There are many materials that can be used for mulch, the type of materials to use are ones that still allow the water and moisture to soak in and the air to circulate. Organic mulches are best because they will break down or decay over a period of time. Examples of good mulching materials include compost, dead leaves, shredding lawn clippings, layers of newspaper, even old carpet works well. Students get up close with mulch, as they explore a variety of garden types, also examining the role of small organisms in the soil.

Propagation Power

Many herbs are easy to propagate asexually, that is, through ways other than by seed. Taking a stem cutting is a simple asexual propagation. For some ground hugging plants it is quite natural for roots to grow from the stem. This is an adaptation that allows a plant to spread by taking root at different places. Most plants can do this with a little encouragement. Students take home their own cutting to care for.

Super Scraps

Students make connections with their role in the earth's systems when they add their food scraps to the compost heap or worm farm. Removing castings or worm juice to use on the garden is super recycling! Students find out how to care for a worm farm and explore the romance of worm reproduction!

Teachers' Resource

The Sustainable Gardening Kit is available at www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education/teacher_resources

Session Times:

Morning sessions 10.15am –12.00noon

Afternoon sessions 12.30pm –2.15pm

Please speak with our Booking Officer if these times are not suitable

Contact

The Education Booking Officer
on 9252 2358

Email: edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au

Or visit our website at
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education