



# SCHOOL FOOD GARDENS

Students fill the new garden beds with soil

Starting a school food garden from scratch at

## ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The food garden at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School started in late 2014 when it was just bare grass with one huge heritage Eucalypt and a disused pergola. Today the garden has veggie beds, fruit trees, flowers, a covered seating area, shed, compost bays and a water tank. Last year students began building a chicken house and the students can't wait for the chickens to come this year.



*"Being part of the development of the garden over time is a powerful experience for students...for the kids who are starting in Prep now, seven years later they'll be graduating and they'll see and remember the development of the space as part of their memory of school."*

**Sue Brown, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator**

### CREATING THE GARDEN VISION

One of the things that attracted the school to Cultivating Community was the creation of a long term vision for the garden that involved the students in its ongoing design and development.

Students have been involved from day one in the establishment and maintenance of the food garden, from filling garden beds to planting fruit trees. One of the first tasks for students was to fill up the new raised beds with soil and compost, which the students loved doing. 'My favourite job was moving soil in the wheelbarrow' says Quinton in Grade 4.

Students had to dig out a lot of grass to create the perennial flower garden; there were even competitions to see who could pull out the longest unbroken piece of kikuyu. The space has been transformed into a citrus and flower garden where there are now over 10 different kinds of flowering perennials which attract bees; and two very young lemon trees.

A 'lasagne garden' approach was used to create an apple orchard, with layers of different materials for the worms to eat to improve the dusty, sandy soil. Each class then taste tested 5 different apple varieties and voted on their favourite, with Golden Delicious and Pink Lady being the winners. Two years later the worms have done their work and broken it all down to create rich soil for the apple trees planted.

*“What Cultivating Community brings is the vision for the garden. In ten years it will be something we could never have imagined.”*

**Sue Brown, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator**

## GROWING RICHER AND FULLER

With the garden now established students enjoy cooking with the fresh produce. In autumn there were so many pumpkins students made pumpkin soup and pumpkin scones for the whole school!



Students have time to smell the flowers and care for snails

It's not just the students who are learning in the garden, whenever they take home some veggies they have grown, some seeds they have collected or a plant they have propagated their parents and families are learning too. The school food garden provides a stimulating environment that builds ongoing relationships and fosters community spirit.

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Cultivating Community's first funded food garden project with schools was in 2000 working with kids from across three housing estates to grow food both at home and at school. From this very first seed sown 16 years ago the School Food Garden Program was born and has evolved into a program that still assists schools today to develop a food garden program that is tailor made to fit each school culture and community. To find out more about our program contact Cultivating Community today.

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