

With a start up grant, Rosewood Downs Primary School has now achieved two highly productive gardens from idle land at the back of the school. Julian, the School's Vice Principal manages the garden alongside Deborah, one of the school's teachers, who is a major support for the garden.

The community garden...

A stroll around the spacious garden will lead you to a myriad of tropical fruits and plants including berries, pomegranates, kiwi fruits, papayas, mandarins, chilli plants, avocados and much more. A brightly coloured butterfly mural, made by the students from recycled materials, frames a section of the garden.

Students enjoy their lunchtimes working in and exploring the garden, identifying plants, harvesting produce and tasting new fruit along with learning skills including planting, weeding, mulching and watering.

The school garden is used as a way to engage students with behavioural issues in the natural environment and provides an opportunity to explore and learn outside the classroom.

Kitchen garden...

Not far from the community garden is an enclosed kitchen garden that features a chicken coop housing the school chickens. A cement path leads to a fully fenced pond which is home to fish and frogs. Past the pond are herbs and plants in planter boxes.

The Year 3 and 4 students have a 'garden class' involving weeding, mulching, planting and maintaining the garden. Student involvement in the kitchen garden is part of the school curriculum with a particular focus on sustainability, healthy eating and appreciation of growing and cooking healthy food.

Community involvement...

The main garden has external access for community members and parents wanting to help out with maintenance. In total, 30 families are involved, regularly participating in garden activities. Community members are free to take produce from the garden; this creates a sense of community within the school.

Outcomes of the garden...

- Community engagement helps strengthen sustainability
- Enhanced communication between students and staff
- Learning about healthy food practices encourages students to make healthier food choices
- Children's motor skills are enhanced

Julian's top 3 tips for success

- ✓ Community involvement is essential in promoting health in schools.
- ✓ Support from leadership is required for the sustainability of the garden.
- ✓ Find a passionate leader to drive the garden to maximise the chances of success



Vice Principal Julian Growcott with the butterfly mural