

THE Greenhouse News

A program for growing and nurturing green minds



PRIMARY SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

TERM 2 2009

ENVIRONMENT DAY

FRIDAY JUNE 5, 2009

Your Planet Needs You!

World Environment Day is a really important day to celebrate at your school. The theme for this year is *Your Planet Needs You!* Who could argue with that. For schools involved in the *Leaving Smaller Footprints* program, this would be a great day to start some of the activities found in your resource booklet, get Stage 3 students to calculate your school's footprint, Stage 2 children could work on their project of developing a strategy to reduce the school footprint in one way and Stage 1 could start work on a compost bin, worm farm or veggie garden.

Alternatively Landcare Australia and Coastcare have developed a fantastic program of activities for schools to help explore and celebrate this important day. Their web site offers information leaflets on many important environmental issues, a range of activities, a countdown calendar (any days you have missed can be incorporated into activities on June 5th), media release information to help with media and photo opportunities and a wonderful whole school activity to finish the day with. For more information and inspiration follow the links to school activity kit at:

<http://www.yourplanetneedsyou.org.au/>



TERM CHALLENGE

Build a Worm Farm

What do you do with all of the food scraps generated by your school? Does it go to landfill? Disposing of food waste in landfill not only uses up valuable landfill space but it also creates a very powerful greenhouse gas that is 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide. Food that is buried and deprived of oxygen will ferment rather than decompose and this process produces the greenhouse gas methane. In a recent waste audit one school found they generated 100 kg of food scrap waste a week and this was all going to landfill.

So this term's challenge is to start a worm farm at your school, it is easy, educational and environmentally responsible. See attached information sheet

Be one of the first 10 schools to contact us with a worm farm ready to go and Council will buy a box of worms for you.

FOR SCHOOLS STILL WISHING TO REGISTER FOR THE GREENHOUSE PROGRAM CONTACT COUNCIL TO ORGANISE A VISIT.

SCHOOL VEGIE GARDENS

ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Just why are schools increasingly transforming expanses of concrete and grass into food gardens?

School gardens have become a place for rich teaching and learning. Research continuously shows that learning is enhanced in outdoor environments. Outdoor learning is restorative, calming and widely recognised as a motivator of learning on a broad level.

Learning in the garden is not just restricted to improving gardening skills. Studnets will learn of environmental issues such as the soil fertility, water management, seasonality and

sustainability. However, more traditional subjects can also benefit: mathematics is needed in dividing a plot up for different crops or for calculating planting times that allow for differing germination and growth periods; for English, narratives can



be written on the gardening experiences or instructions for gardens care; and many aspects of science can be covered such as life cycles, seasons, growth and germination and nutrition. In addition the social skills of organization, cooperative teamwork, negotiation, perseverance and leadership will all be engaged in developing a lush and bountiful garden.

In regards to *Leaving Smaller Footprints* the vegetable garden is a fantastic step towards improving school sustainability. Food miles are a significant component of our individual footprint, not to mention the environmental cost that comes with the packaging of store bought produce. It is important to show students that food can easily be grown at home, and that it tastes better and is gentler on our environment than commercially grown and sold produce.

The humble vegetable garden also allows you to close the loop. Feed your

lunch scraps to the worm farm, use the castings from your worm farm to build up the garden soil, grow, harvest and eat your wonderful vegies and then start the cycle again with off cuts and waste going to the worms.



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LEAVING SMALLER FOOTPRINTS

MORE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Start reducing that footprint now!

Heater Settings

Winter is coming and the heaters are being turned on in classrooms. Ensure that your school use these heaters sensibly. Set some guidelines indicating at what temperatures heaters and air conditioners can be used at and give a recommended thermostat setting. (It is surprising how often you see children wearing just a t-shirt in their classroom in the middle of winter because the heater is set too high.) Then sit back and watch your energy bill go down and your footprint reduce.

Tree Planting

National Tree Planting day is Friday July 31. Last year over 229 000 school children

participated, helping to improve their local environment and offset some of their school's ecological impact. Register for this day at treeday.planetark.org and be in the running to win \$1000, also don't forget to contact Council to organise trees. Council can provide all participating schools with up to 100 trees for planting.

Garden Prep

Now is the time to start thinking about building a vegetable garden so that it is ready for planting in spring. Have a look in the grants section as there some possible funding options to help with materials and tools that may be needed. Remember home grown vegetables have zero food miles that results in a smaller ecological footprint.



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

FOR GARDENS OR SEMP PROJECTS

Easy applications to fill in, get your pens ready.

Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grant

Schools can apply for grants of up \$1000 to help with developing a garden in their school. The garden can be of many types such as vegetable, bush tucker or water wise.

Yates Environmental Management Planning Grant

Grants of up to \$1000 are available to assist schools to undertake School Environmental Management Plans (SEMP) or to undertake works identifies in an earlier SEMP.

The closing date for Round 3 of both grants is August 7. For more information go to www.juniorlandcare.com/Grants.htm

FREE EXCURSION

THEISS WASTE RECOVERY FACILITY

Come and see how your recyclables are sorted.

Theiss services have a fantastic education facility at their Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Sommersby. This centre is open for school excursions.

Come and see how technology is used to sort materials via CCT TV's that are placed throughout the MRF. Students will also learn about what happens to our green and general waste and the importance of recycling.

To organise a school visit go to http://www.1coast.com.au/templates/coast_content.aspx?edit=false&pageID=3981

Gosford Council along with Thiess Services are offering schools a \$100 subsidy towards the hire of a bus to visit the education facility.

BICYCLE GIVEAWAY!

Council have a number of Rebycycle bikes for schools to give away as competition prizes. These bikes have been reborn out of old broken bikes by TAFE students. Bikes of all shapes and sizes are available from cool BMX's to road races. All bikes are in fantastic reconditioned condition. Rebycycle is a collaborative project that helps the community on many levels, it reduces waste going to land fill, it gives young people valuable skills and it helps to instil the important value of reusing and recycling. Please contact Anni Griffiths for further information and a bike (or two).

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IMPORTANT DATES

Student Project Completion

- Friday 25 September

School Judging

- Monday 14 September
- Friday 3 October

Awards Ceremony

- Monday 30 November

Other Important Dates

June

- 5 - World Environment Day
- 8 - World Ocean Day

July

- 5-12 NAIDOC Week
- 31 Schools Tree Day

August

- 2 - National Tree Day
- 25 - 31 Keep Australia Beautiful

September

- 7 - National Threatened Species Day
- 19-21 - Clean up the World

October

- 2 - Walk to Work Day

For more information contact our Environmental Education Officer, Anni Griffiths 4325 8222

