

Garden to Table

## Garden to Table Newsletter September 2010

### From the Chair.

Spring is just around the corner and everyone is looking forward to all that it brings in the garden and to the lighter, fresher dishes that we'll enjoy as the weather warms. In my own small courtyard garden I have planted a fresh lot of lettuces, my favorite lamb's lettuce, new rocket plants and beetroot.

As I pull out the winter brassicas, I am converting the 4 raised beds to square foot gardens - using string to divide each into 30cm squares. Each of these becomes a small garden in its own right and should make my plots much more productive than they have been. The other thing I am about to adopt is the biodynamic way of planting by the moon. I have long been fascinated by this and once I have my calendar I will follow this system in the hope that my vegetables will really flourish.



I've still got lots of cavalo nero and rainbow chard to pick, the broad beans have been slow but I am still hopeful I'll get a reasonable crop. My snow peas that I planted as seed at Easter produced just a few peas but that might be because I kept picking the tendrils to add to winter salads and stir fries. However I am very proud that a couple of them appear on the cover of the new spring issue of Dish. I look forward to visiting the schools soon to see what is springing up there as the weather warms up.

Recently the kitchen specialists and I got together for a training session. We looked at ways of using broad beans, dishes that are made using various wrappings, such as paper, pasta, banana leaves, different fresh pasta shapes that can be done by hand and we made ricotta cheese, something that is easy for the children to do and fun too.

I do hope you'll be able to join us for one of our two events on October 28<sup>th</sup> during Stephanie's visit to Auckland. More information below.

Regards

Chairperson

## Visit from Stephanie Alexander.

The Garden to Table Trust is excited to announce the upcoming visit of Stephanie Alexander next month.

The celebrated chef and author and of course, founder of the Kitchen Garden Foundation to which we are affiliated, will be visiting our three pilot schools and also attending two fundraising events: a gala dinner at St Matthew in the city and an Author's Lunch at the Langham Hotel, both on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

We are looking forward to showing both Stephanie and Kitchen Garden Foundation CEO Ange Barry, all that has been achieved in the two years we have been operating here in New Zealand.

For information about how you can purchase tickets to attend the fundraising events please visit our website [www.gardentotable.org.nz](http://www.gardentotable.org.nz)

## Official Launch.

Though it seems a while back now, the Garden to Table Trust is still receiving wonderful feedback following our official launch in March.

Held at one of the pilot schools, East Tamaki Primary, guests were enthusiastically greeted by year 5 and six children participating in the programme who then led tours around both the garden and kitchen classrooms.

More than 100 people attended the event including our wonderful sponsors, principals and teachers from other schools, local council representatives, media and people genuinely interested in the programme.

The pride on the faces of the children as they showed their charges around was absolutely priceless and several visitors mentioned that they had learned a thing or two from the children.

TVNZ's Breakfast Television came out to cover the event at a sobering 5.15am and televised live interviews with the children throughout the morning. The children were hugely excited about being on TV and shared their knowledge and experiences expertly with presenter Alison Pugh.

Since then Garden to Table has attracted a lot of attention ranging from people wanting to volunteer to work with the programme, schools who want to become a part of our family, media who are interested in what we are doing and businesses and organisations who want to support our work.

## **Information Day.**

In June the Trust hosted an information day for schools and volunteers wanting to become involved in the programme. Visitors toured both East Tamaki Primary School and Meadowbank Primary school to see the programme in action. The feedback we had was wonderful and everyone seemed very enthusiastic about Garden to Table and what the children were able to achieve. Visitors came from as far south as Diamond Harbour and as far north as Kerikeri which was wonderful to see as we are keen to expand the programme outside of Auckland.

## **Applications for new schools.**

The Trust is now inviting schools to apply to become a part of the Garden to Table family either as a fully funded school or as a subscription school. If your school is interested in applying, or would like more information, please email us at [info@gardentotable.org.nz](mailto:info@gardentotable.org.nz)

## **Evidence shows cooking and gardening at school makes for increased student learning and enthusiasm.**

Two recent reports suggest that children who experience gardening and cooking at school on a regular basis benefit across all areas of learning and have a better attitude toward school.

Schools and children participating The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Programme were evaluated over a two and a half year period by Deakin University and the University of Melbourne and their findings were released in July.

These included:

- ❖ There was strong evidence of increased child willingness to try new foods including a significant difference between program and comparison schools.
- ❖ There was evidence of statistically significant increases in knowledge, confidence and skills in cooking and gardening.

- ❖ The SAKG Program helped create links between the school and the community. This was often noted as one of the program's most important outcomes.
- ❖ The program was considered particularly effective at engaging non-academic learners and children with challenging behaviours.
- ❖ Because of its dynamic approach the program addresses health inequities in a way that is difficult to achieve in health promotion programs.

The full report can be found on the SAKF website [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

In the United Kingdom, research recently conducted by the National Foundation for Education Research following a commission from the Royal Horticultural Society, shows that gardening in schools encourages children to:

- ❖ Become stronger, more active learners capable of thinking independently and adapting their skills to new challenges at the school and in the future.
- ❖ Gain a more resilient, confident and responsible approach to life so they can achieve their goals and play a more positive role in society.
- ❖ Learn vital job skills such as presentations skills, communication and team work and fuel their entrepreneurial spirit.
- ❖ Embrace an active and more healthy lifestyle as an important tool for success at school and beyond.
- ❖ Develop the ability to work and communicate with people from all ages and backgrounds.

The report can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society website [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

# School News.

## Peninsula Primary School.

Thanks to the wonderful design created by Unitec Head of Landscape Architecture, Renee Davies, the children at Peninsula Primary School should very soon be harvesting produce from their brand new seaside themed vegetable garden.

With inspiration from gardening gurus Tony Murrell and Lynda Hallinan the year six children came up with their own ideas based around the theme of a vegetable garden by the sea. Their designs included octopus gardens, shell pathways, starfish shaped garden beds, butterfly gardens and even a taniwha! Renee collated all of their ideas onto one fantastic plan and the garden is about to begin construction as this newsletter goes to print. In the next issue we hope to bring you a visual diary of the progress.

In the kitchen, specialist Michelle Barton taught the children to cook with the silverbeet, broccoli, cabbages and cauliflower they had planted late in Term 2. Among the dishes they prepared were a silverbeet quiche, vegetable stirfry, cauliflower fritters and very ambitiously, cauliflower soufflés which the children loved.

The children are now preparing their food in a new allocated kitchen classroom space, which is due to undergo a refurbishment, rather than the cramped hall kitchen and have appreciated the appliances donated by Fisher & Paykel and Kitchenaid.

## Meadowbank.

Garden specialist Wendy Masters and her students will have a lot of fun trying to keep the birds away from the 200 strawberry plants they have just put in. Donated by a neighbour these plants show just how Garden to Table can bring communities together. Wendy and the children have planted them in some quite unexpected places and we are hoping the birds will leave just enough to make some gorgeous pots of jam and delicious salads and desserts.

Plenty of rainy days meant that the children had time to create art for their gardens. They now sport pot plant scarecrows and a year 4 class has painted large signs for each of the new raised beds. These gardens will soon be added to a school map which will be copied and given to volunteers and visitors.

Meadowbank is hoping to add a tunnel house to its resources as an all weather teaching and activity space so that on days when the weather is too wet to go outside the children can work under cover planting seedlings and garden art work.

Kitchen specialist Jane Silvester says she has founds hundreds of new ways to cook silverbeet thanks to the bumper crop they had over winter.

The Garden to Table students were also charged with the task of catering for the school production. Jane and the children made lemon curd tartlets from lemons donated from parents, silverbeet and spring onion Eccles cakes. Jane says this enthusiasm shows the programme is being valued by both staff and pupils and gives children another source of pride in their work.

Organisers of the Kai to Pie exhibition currently being staged at Auckland Museum recently filmed Meadowbank students in the garden answering questions about where vegetables and fruit came from and what they knew about gardening. The children came across very sincere, interested and inspired by the whole garden to table process. One lovely comment came from a boy making custard on the stove top. He was discovering the right consistency and said "it tasted warm and comforting" and that "it tastes like ice-cream". Custard of course is the base of any good ice-cream.

### East Tamaki Primary School.

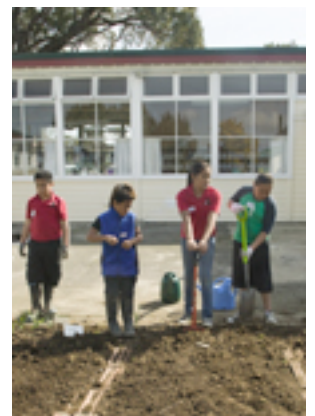
Karolyn Cooper, the garden specialist at East Tamaki Primary School sent in this report about what her students have been up to over winter.

*We have had a very busy couple of months in the East Tamaki vegetable garden. All the children in the school, including the new entrants, have now had at least one or two sessions in both the garden and the kitchen, which is great. Several teachers have commented to me that the experiences the children have during Garden 2 Table are invaluable, and it gives them interesting things to write about when they get back to class.*

*The Year 5 and 6 children all now know how to make compost, what companion planting and crop rotation are, how to save their own seeds and also which vegetables grow best in which seasons. They also know how to grow vege seedlings from seed and our green house is full of a wide variety of seedlings.*

*Many of the older children are already growing vegetables at home, and when I asked the older classes recently "Who would like to try growing vegetables at home in the future?" they all put their hands up. Fantastic.*

*We have had bumper crops of broccoli, cauliflower, green and red cabbages, leeks and carrots lately. Our broad beans are getting bigger by the day, and we are look forward to eventually eating our parsnips, turnips and garlic, which are coming along nicely. Most of the children, and all the adults are now fans of the lovely nutty Jerusalem artichokes, thanks to the foresight of one of the early volunteers who planted them along our fence line. We also have just finished eating the pesto that was made from our summer basil, and are about to start on some marmalade made from our first grapefruit.*



*We have recently expanded our strawberry patch to about four times its original size (can't wait to see the kids faces when they eat them), and have planted lots of new passion fruit and a couple of new grape vines.*

*All the quotes are now in for converting the school's old pool area into a new garden bed and potting shed. So we are now working on obtaining funding to bring that project to fruition.*

*We all continue to marvel at how much the children benefit from the Garden 2 Table programme. For them it is not just cooking and gardening skills and new taste sensations, but also language and social skills, and much more.*

*Must say I am looking forward to spring!*

Kitchen specialist Jiuan Kok has been introducing her students to interesting new vegetables like Jerusalem artichokes and broad beans and watching in astonishment as they are being gobbled up. Beetroot too has been a firm favourite over winter as have the bountiful supply of feijoas. Below, Jiuan has shared a muffin recipe the children particularly enjoyed and made using carrots from the garden.

**YOU WILL NEED** - grater, measuring cups and spoons, large mixing bowl, muffin tin, spatula

**RECIPE:**      **MORNING GLORY MUFFIN**      - sourced from [www.foodlovers.co.nz](http://www.foodlovers.co.nz)

**SERVES:**    12 large muffins

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder (rounded teaspoon)
- 2 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 2 cups carrot - grated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sultana
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped nuts (optional)
- 1 medium size apple - grated with skin on
- 3 eggs - beaten
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooking oil



## METHOD:

- 1 Preheat oven to 180° C.
- 2 Mix together all the dry ingredients - flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt.
- 3 Stir in carrot, sultanas, apple .
- 4 Mix together eggs, oil .
- 5 Stir all together till the batter is **JUST** combined.
- 6 Don't over mix - batter should look like coleslaw.
- 7 Spoon into muffin tins and bake for 20 minutes.

## Many Thanks.

Thank you to Tony Murrell and Lynda Hallinan for offering their advice and support to Garden to Table. Thank you also to Denis La Touche for the use of his photos.

Thanks also to **Fisher & Paykel** for donating kitchen appliances to our schools and **Kitchenaid** for their wonderful food processors all of which are being put to good use.

