

Sustainable Gardening



Elderslie High School

Growing vegetables at Elderslie High School

- Each Agriculture class has garden beds where we grow organic fruit & vegetables using permaculture practices. All year we grow different produce, depending on the season.
- This year, we have also used our vertical garden to grow a range of fruit and vegetables.

Our Gardens



- ❧ We don't use chemicals in our gardens, instead removing weeds by hand. We feed weeds and vegetable scraps to the goats and rabbits and then use the animal manure to make compost to provide nutrients for our plants.
- ❧ Our ducks help to control the slugs and snails. We used netting to keep the cockatoos away from the wheat and corn.





Compost



- ❧ We have several large compost heaps on our school farm.
- ❧ We use vegetable scraps, weeds, lawn clippings, animal bedding from our rabbits and chickens and manure from all of our other farm animals to make our compost.
- ❧ Once the material has broken down it is dug into our gardens to improve the soil and provide nutrients for our plants.



Mulch



We mulch our gardens to:

- ❧ Keep the moisture in the soil (especially important in summer)
- ❧ Keep the soil temperature more constant
- ❧ Help prevent the weeds from growing

Mulching our Gardens



- ❧ We use organic mulches so when they break down they help to improve the soil
- ❧ The mulch we are using here is old bedding from our rabbit cages.

Our Vertical Garden



- ❧ Our vertical garden shows students who only have a small backyard, or even just a balcony, how they can still grow their own vegetables.
- ❧ At school, we have our garden at the entrance to the farm so that everyone sees it and it doesn't get neglected.
- ❧ We were even able to add an automatic watering system to look after it on weekends.

Setting up our Vertical Garden

- ☞ We used good quality potting mix and added extra cocopeat to help to retain moisture in the pots



Our Vertical Garden



We planted seedlings at different times so we could have a constant supply to harvest.

We planted lettuces, spinach, tomatoes and herbs.



Our Vertical Garden



Worm Farm



- ❧ Our worm farm is used to breakdown small amounts of fruit and vegetable scraps.
- ❧ The students who work on the farm at lunchtimes put their food scraps in it.
- ❧ The vermicast is great for the garden
- ❧ We use the “worm wee” on our vertical garden.



Aquaponics



- ❧ We have an aquaponics system which combine the farming of both fish and vegetables.
- ❧ The dirty water from the fish is pumped onto the vegetable garden to provide the plants with nutrients
- ❧ The garden acts as a filter and the fresh water is returned to the fish tank.

Aquaponics



Cooking



- ❧ When our crops are ready to harvest, we take them home to share with our families, or, if we have a bumper crop, we sell them to staff at school.
- ❧ We also learn to cook fresh and healthy meals with the produce we grow on the school farm.



More cooking



- ❧ Permaculture principles teach us that we should turn problems into solutions so we used a weed that commonly pops up in our gardens to make stinging nettle gnocchi.
- ❧ We have also cooked tomato soup, mulberry jam, vegetable pizza and pear and rhubarb crumble.

Seed Saving



- ❧ We save seed from some of our heirloom crops to plant again the following year.
- ❧ This is some of our beautiful corn



Our Produce



☞ We often grow heirloom vegetables and produce that you don't usually find in the shops, like quail eggs and duck eggs.

Our Produce



✧ This is a selection of some of the produce grown on our school farm last year.