



Mother Teresa School

Little hands get dirty in the school garden

Signing up to Fresh Tastes has taken Mother Teresa School's garden to a whole new level.

"We're a relatively new school in Gungahlin and we had set up a small garden, but it needed to be moved to a better place," said the school's Fresh Tastes coordinator, Anne Leet.

As part of the Fresh Tastes Growing Food action area, Anne organised a hands-on gardening consultation provided by Gardening 101. It provided valuable advice on how to design and build a sustainable garden that would be more accessible for the students.

"We used the Fresh Tastes support to create a more protected area," said Anne.

The result is an impressive garden zone, with five new garden beds, worm farms and a larger area to house chickens in the near future. They even relocated an orchard of fruit trees.

Staff, students and parents have all been involved in establishing the gardens, barrowing in plenty of quality soil and setting up an irrigation system.

The school also use their appointed 'Green Rangers' students to keep the school clean and tidy, while also attending to the daily needs of the garden at lunchtimes. This is a helpful way to keep on top of the garden's maintenance.

"The kids have been busy planting, weeding and watering the gardens," said Anne. "There is a green grass area where the children meet to discuss what and where we'll plant our crops each season."

"This year we had a bumper crop of apples and peaches, which have been great for eating and stewing – the kids love being part of that."

"Last year we had a big harvest of tomatoes that we used to make our own tomato sauce. We also cooked our pumpkins for fundraising – our Year 6 classes made pumpkin soup to sell in tubs for 50 cents," Anne said. "We used the money we raised to buy more seedlings for the garden."

"It's great to see kids trying fruits and vegetables when they can pull them off the tree or straight out of the garden," said Anne.

"The garden is really important to the students – it's driven by them," said Anne. "It makes students aware of eating healthy food and making healthy choices."

Mother Teresa School is also hoping to team up with Project Independence – a local social housing development for people with an intellectual disability – to set up and maintain the chicken run in the near future.

"We're hoping to work together to ensure the hens are looked after during the school holidays," said Anne.



Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved. Fresh Tastes is part of the ACT Government's Healthy Weight Initiative supporting a healthy, active and productive community.