

Taking Action

LLCI011-036

Education in Aussie Eatables

Hay Public School

Developing a native bush foods section in the educational garden at the local Hay Public School.

The issue

The school was using an interactive garden established in 2008 with plants from multiple cultures but didn't have Australian native foods represented in their mix. Students were learning about vegetables, herbs, fruits and berries as well as learning skills in food preparation and cooking but not about native herbs, spices, fruits, vegetables, weaving tools and pollinators. The school also have limited funds and knowledge to establish additional sections of the garden.

The solution

Through the assistance of the local Landcare coordinator the school applied for a community pop-up grant run through Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc to establish a native foods section of the educational garden. They were awarded a \$2000 grant to assist in purchasing materials and plants. They also received funding through a bursary given to them from the school for the closure of another club. They researched bush foods and spoke to native nurseries about suitable plants. Additional materials were donated and staff and volunteers spent hours planning, designing, decorating and executing the creation of the native foods garden.

The impact

The local school now has an established native's garden for 18 months which serves as an interactive educational tool to 185 students. The school utilises the native foods section of the garden and incorporated it into the kitchen and garden lessons at least 6 times a week. The garden is also accessible to any class outside of their lessons. The school has created sections in the garden to educate on native food plants, weaving plants and pollinator plants as well as having a bee hotel and aboriginal art. Whilst the garden is still growing the plants will be functional to the school as they mature.

Learnings

The school was successful in creating a usable, child friendly educational garden with limited funds and plenty of passion and commitment from staff, the local Landcare Coordinator and volunteers. Sourcing native food plants was a challenge, inadequate knowledge of bush foods for the Riverina region meant that there are limited plants local to the region (beyond saltbush varieties).



Key facts

- 185 children benefit from the garden on a weekly basis.
- 20 native plants were included in the garden.
- The garden is used at least 6 times a week.
- The garden was developed with a \$2000 grant, volunteers and donations.

Project Partners



The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Program that enables the promotion of these case studies on the Gateway, is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW

