

Northern Rivers Primary School garden network

Online meeting 26th February 4pm

Hosted by Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD)

| SCHOOLS REPRESENTED | APOLOGIES |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Dunoon Public School | Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School |
| Clarence Valley Anglican School (CVAS) | |
| Bexhill Public School | |

NNSWLHD Health Promotion team representative – Corinne Martin

Welcome and acknowledgement of country

Corinne welcomed Mark Warwick, Lifestyles Supervisor - Bunnings Lismore as guest speaker for the meeting

Introductions

Those present were interested in hearing from Mark about compost towers, worm farms, establishing a new garden and water pumps for a rainwater tank.

Guest presentation - Bunnings

The second half of Mark's presentation can be listened to via the meeting recording. A summary is below.

New garden beds

- Layer compost, soil, blood n bone and finish with a layer of potting mix for new garden beds. Sand is also good at the bottom for free drainage.
- Gypsum can be added to help break up impacted clay soils.
- Mark has also used sugarcane mulch underneath to build up raised garden beds, then added layers of soil, compost, newspaper, blood n bone – known as lasagna gardens. Finish with potting mix. The layers slowly breakdown adding nutrients to the soil and may need building up again.

Existing gardens

- Each time you plant new crops, nourish the soil by adding compost or 5 in one fertiliser
- Good to use some seedlings so students can see them growing quickly and also planting from seed.
- Flowers e.g marigolds are great for repelling pests and attracting bees and insects for pollinating. Bunnings have a butterfly friendly flower mix

Composting tips

- Turn regularly to aerate
- Can add a small amount of newspaper, blood n bone or lime

- Compost heap should generate heat if working efficiently – this should kill weeds and other pathogens
- Compost is ready once no more heat is being generated

Bunnings donations

- Contact activities officer at your local Bunnings for any equipment/ materials requests. They will need a request on official letterhead. Include information such as some photos and activities you hope to run with students.
- Mark is also happy for anyone to contact him at the Lismore Bunnings store in order to source products or order in bulk.

Tank water

- Make sure any tank water is suitable for watering edible plants. It's a good idea to get tank water tested for any pathogens, especially if the water has been sitting there a while. May need to drain water tank first.

Gardening products

Mark went through some useful gardening products.

- Wettasoil – allows water to penetrate into soil during dry periods
 - Eco-oil – organic alternative to white oil for pests. Also attracts beneficial insects e.g ladybirds.
 - Eco pyrethrum plus – safe to use around kids and on veg
 - Slasher – organic weed killer – kills weeds mechanically
 - Popul8 supports plants growth and attacks pathogens e.g phytophthora (causes root rot)
 - Seasol – vitamin tablet
 - Powerfeed – plant food
 - Plantstarter (multicrop) – establishes roots more quickly when growing from seed or cuttings
- It may be possible for schools to apply for a Bunnings store power pass trade account. Need ABN.

Actions

- Corinne to send details of activities coordinator at Lismore Bunnings to Annie at Dunoon Public.

Other information

- There is a current whatsapp school garden group that all schools are welcome to join.
- Anyone interested in joining the WhatsApp group can email corinne.martin@health.nsw.gov.au with their mobile phone number.
- Meeting minutes, recordings and resource links can be accessed here [Schools and early childhood services - Health Promotion](#)

Meeting closed 5.20pm