

Carwartha College's garden began when passionate staff proposed a school garden to school council 10 years ago. This was met with financial support to establish the garden which Sonia McPhie, a passionate gardener and a primary school teacher, is now responsible for managing.

In the garden you will find...

The garden consists of a variety of seasonal fruit, vegetables and herbs. Two worm farms support student learning about managing food waste with food scraps being put into compost bins. Compost produced is then used to fertilise the garden. A bright orange scarecrow made by the school staff protects the garden beds' abundant produce.

What happens in the garden...

Sonia, alongside four other teachers, conducts an open garden every Wednesday lunchtime for all students interested in getting their hands dirty and learning new skills including planting, weeding, harvesting, watering and tasting of garden produce. The produce from the garden is used in food technology cooking classes with secondary students, and the leftover produce is sold to the school community, reducing waste. The funds from sales are then put into resources for the garden.

Guided by their buddies once a week, prep students explore the garden to improve their knowledge and ability to identify different plants. The garden also provides opportunities for upper and lower primary students to engage, build relationships and develop skills such as co-operation. These activities enhance student engagement and improve relationships across the school.

Garden activities reinforce classroom learning about sustainability and healthy eating by providing real life learning opportunities and expanding knowledge and

skills. These activities include water management, reduction of food waste and recycling.

What the future holds...

In store for the garden in 2016 includes a greater focus on using the garden to highlight key sustainability practices and incorporate these within the school curriculum.

Positive outcomes...

- Social connectedness between junior and senior students
- Enhanced relationships between students and teachers
- Student skill development and increased physical activity for those assisting with garden maintenance
- Engagement with the natural environment
- The garden has led to the College's increased focus on healthy eating

Sonia's top 3 tips for success...

- ✓ A person with a passion for gardening to drive the school garden.
- ✓ Engaging dedicated individuals to support the garden contributes to quality results.
- ✓ Be willing to share expertise with students, peers and community members.



Sonia Mc-Phie in the school garden alongside her helper the scarecrow