

Growing healthy plants using natural pesticide... it's fun and easy!

This [Junior Landcare](#) guide is designed to provide teachers and students with an understanding of how to cultivate healthy plants using organic gardening methods wherever possible.

The guide has been developed by teachers in schools in response to an identified need and learning that is valued in the Australian Curriculum.

Gardening and growing healthy plants are priorities for [Junior Landcare](#) schools. Students at Saints Peter and Paul Primary School in the ACT start with healthy plants with no signs of pests and diseases.

Saints Peter and Paul Primary School builds and continuously nourishes the soil by adding organic matter, such as compost and well-rotted manure to improve the ability to hold water and nutrients in the soil. If the school has clay soils, organic matter and gypsum are added to improve soil structure and drainage.

The primary school also uses mulch on its gardens, as this helps to conserve moisture in the soil and keep weeds down.

Most importantly it chooses plants that suit the conditions of its garden and considers the need for water, light and fertiliser.

Gardens are given a good soak once a week to encourage root growth deeper into the soil. Plants are best watered at the roots, not over the foliage and it's best to water in the cooler part of the day. To achieve this, Saints Peter and Paul Primary School has installed a drip irrigation system.



Weed control is an important part of gardening and weeds are carefully removed to avoid re-infesting garden beds.

Students also regularly take a wander through the garden and keep an eye out for signs of pests and diseases, which can be treated with natural pesticides.

Steps for making a natural pesticide

Make a natural pesticide to use on your garden by:

- Shredding 100g of natural soap.
- Dissolving 260g clean, fresh washing soda in 14 litres of water. (Dissolve the washing soda in a small quantity of the water and bring it to the boil; don't add the remainder of the water yet).
- Add the shredded soap.
- Heat the mixture until the soap has dissolved.
- Add the remainder of the water.
- Agitate the mixture before spraying; it does not require dilution.
- Pour mixture into a clean spray bottle.
- Use the mixture to control sucking pests such as aphids and scale.



Have fun!





Australian Curriculum Links

Year 5 and 6 Design and Technologies

Strand: Design and Technologies knowledge and understanding

Investigate how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments [ACTDEK021](#)

Year 6 Science

Strand: Biological sciences

The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment [ACSSU094](#)

Year 5 and 6 Health and Physical Education

Strand: Personal, Social and Community Health: Being healthy, safe and active

Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing [ACPPS054](#)

Cross Curriculum Priority: Sustainability

- OI:2 All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.
- OI:3 Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.
- OI:5 World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.
- OI:7 Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.
- OI:9 Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website on August 2014.

This Junior Landcare guide has been developed to support the Australian Curriculum. For further details, please visit www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

The Junior Landcare How-to-Guide is proudly supported by Junior Landcare, PIEF, and through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme