

Creating a food garden... it's fun and easy!

This [Junior Landcare](#) guide is designed to provide teachers and students with an understanding of how to undertake Junior Landcare projects in and around the school.

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

Over 1,000 Junior Landcare schools across Australia, including [Junior Landcare](#) Award winning schools grow their own vegetables and pick and eat them straight from the garden, just after a quick wash under the tap.

One school that has created a food garden used by all classes is Youngtown Primary School in Launceston, Tasmania.

Check out their blog at <http://youngtownoutdoorclassroom.blogspot.com>

The school uses both raised garden beds and no-dig gardens in which they grow frost tolerant vegetables and herbs.

'[Raised beds](#)' refers to any type of garden bed that is higher than the surrounding ground. Some schools use ready-made garden boxes from local nurseries. Others may build boxes or create garden beds with borders in which they add manures and soil, or just create mounds of soil to add their plants to. At Youngtown Primary, the students created the garden beds themselves!

[No-dig gardening](#) involves building a garden bed above ground surface at the school. Remember...you do not need to dig a no-dig garden.



To construct a no-dig garden, you can:

- Build a box frame with timber boards or bricks.
- Cover the bottom of the box with a layer of dead leaves or seaweed (if on rocky ground), or thick layers of recycled newspapers.
- Cover the leaves, seaweed or newspaper with lucerne hay.
- Sprinkle with a dusting of organic materials like compost or manure.
- Cover with a layer of loose straw, then add a thick layer of organic materials like compost or manure above this.

Getting started with planning a food garden

If your school does not have a food garden, you might need to:

- Create a vision for your garden, think about the purpose of it, research and decide on the type of garden to build.
- Locate the best spot for the garden, remembering the garden will need access to water, sunlight and shade, and that many plants do not like to be grown in windy areas.
- Design the garden thinking about its size and shape.
- Work with the school grounds-person, parents and teachers to build any raised garden beds or create your no-dig garden designs.
- Vegetables grow best in rich, well-drained soil. If using raised garden beds prepare the soil in the garden beds, digging the soil often to break up the clods, adding





decomposed organic matter to improve the soil's quality, drainage and moisture and reducing the need to water. To give the plants a head start, students can also dig old manure and well rotted compost into the top 15cm of soil.

- Plan what you intend to grow and when. Refer to a [planting guide](#) for your area.
- Students can plant vegetable seedlings and herbs into moist well-prepared soil all year round. When planting veggie seedlings, space them out on top of the soil, use a trowel to dig a hole just big enough so the plant's root section can be inserted, place it in the hole and fill it with soil.
- Place the seedling in the hole by hand and create a saucer shaped depression to act as a dam, and water in the plants gently.
- Water all the crops to keep them moist on a regular basis.
- Tend to the garden mulching regularly. Mulch is a layer of material placed over the soil surface. It keeps the soil

moist, saves watering, keeps weeds down and insulates the plant's roots against heat and cold. Try pea straw or lucerne hay as they will eventually break down and nourish the soil too.

- Remove weeds using a hand fork or hoe and add all weeds that are not diseased to the compost. Make compost with leaves, straw, food scraps, lawn and garden clippings. Add manure to the compost to assist with the composting process. Keep it moist (not wet) and turn it once every 1–2 weeks. (Refer to 'School composting...it's fun and easy').
- Feed plants during the growing period with a seaweed-based solution diluted in water.
- Check plants for pests and diseases and never compost any garden material that is diseased.
- Create signage for the garden and its plants.

Have fun!

Australian Curriculum Links

Year 5 and 6 Design and Technologies

Strand: Design and Technologies knowledge and understanding

Investigate how people in design and technologies occupations address competing considerations, including sustainability in the design of products, services and environments for current and future use [ACTDEK019](#)

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](#)

Year 6 Science

Strand: Biological sciences

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

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

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.