



Member News

Autumn



How are the children growing?

Building a sensory garden
A story by Sally Joyce
Joyce Mowing & Gardening

Three months on from our first big garden design, the question is, how is the garden growing?

More importantly, how are the children growing?

The positive feedback that we have had about how much the children at Wiangaree Public School, LOVE their new Sensory Garden is music to our ears.



Principal, Amy Berriman, says that “The garden provides a space that allows every student to interact with it differently each day, depending on how they want to play, explore and discover. We love that this garden provides the opportunity for students to learn the value of lifelong outdoor recreation for enjoyment, health and wellbeing.”

Not only are the students using this sensory garden for PLAY, PLAY and more PLAY, the teachers have jumped into harnessing this space for outdoor lessons and they love it! There is no better way to learn the FIBONACCI SEQUENCE than from staring at a sunflower.



During playtime, the children are loving squashing Lemon Grass in their hands and brushing against the Marigold who's leaves smell like passionfruit, clambering through the rock beds and tasting the tiny fairy-sized watermelons called Cucamelons and patting purple velvet leaves. The 'magic beans' are growing. What a delight! There are more than 60 different plant species in this garden – over 200 plants in total. Each one chosen for a reason.

The site itself dictated mostly to us what it wanted. We looked for the natural fall of the land – very steep, and added to this a dry creek bed, a slippery dip, clamber net, wooden stepping blocks and logs, but our emphasis was on what magic the plants themselves will create in time. We asked the children what they wanted and we delivered many of their wishes.



Joyce Mowing and Gardening is a husband-and-wife team. We are old-fashioned gardeners with a creative edge. We were both raised by gardeners a builder and a farmer. We have a passion for advocating for children's rights to play and thus create. As an artist, Sally has created flower installations in fine-art galleries and worked professionally as an Exhibition Designer for Museums and outdoor Zoo enclosures.

Since having our own children, our work has gravitated towards our children's Kindergarten, creating murals and servicing their gardens and supporting *The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden* program and environmental projects in schools. We have endorsed the ENORMOUS value in creating both beautiful, but also well afforded messy play spaces in schools and have seen real benefits. Incorporating art, gardens, plants and children into big and little spaces inspired by nature's elements has been a natural evolution of our skill set and our values at this time in our lives as parents.

This garden is still in its growth infancy so the best is yet to come as the plants grow and reach their flowering and fruiting potential. We look forward to hearing more about how the children are reaching their own growth potential in this space created with a vision by Wiangaree Primary School.

“Plant an idea and watch it grow!” ®