

# Our Community Garden Project



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Our Goal: To extend to our community garden to provide opportunities for learning about edible/ indigenous plants

## Background:

- Aboriginal people hunted and gathered native plants and wildlife to make food and medicine.
- Bush tucker helped build communities and acted as a sustainable source of food and medicine in Australia for years.
- We can extend children's understanding of where food comes from
- Embed Aboriginal culture into our curriculum
- Understanding native and edible plants
- Document our journey

# Links to the Early Years Learning Framework

Planting child-friendly indigenous plants and linking this to learning about our local cultures, promotes a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being. It nurtures and supports respect for diversity, not just of plants but of people too.


Growing an indigenous garden at our centre not only leads to environmental benefits through improving biodiversity, but it also provides children with access to a wonderful natural environment (EYLF Outcome 2: *Children are connected with and contribute to their world*).

It teaches children to care for and learn about plants in their local area and develop skills to respect their environment and community.

National Quality Standard Quality Area

# 3

## physical environment



Welcoming indoor and outdoor spaces enable children to play, learn and develop their knowledge and skills.

[www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) 1300 422 327

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A garden is a place for possibilities, play and inquiry, safe risk taking, the building of relationships and a deeper understanding of diversity. The reciprocal learning observed in children's interactions with nature and people convinces us of its importance in sustaining society's commitment to the early years.

We want our adventures with gardening to be an important aspect of our program, continually devising and implementing learning experiences about sustainability and the world of plants. Our educators will provide opportunities for children to learn about the joys of gardening in the hope that we will develop the next green generation.

Through this we are provoking children's curiosity and desire to investigate. We are encouraging them to be active, observe the natural world, investigate scientific concepts and be responsible for living things.

KCC is so fortunate to have an outdoor space such as our community garden that was born a few years ago that provides children and educators a space to enjoy together in multi ages. Research tells us that childhood memories of contact with nature involve a deep sensory imprint of texture, smell, color, sound and taste.

Our view of the garden as a play environment, is one with which children can not only explore, it is simply a place to be.



# Why pick indigenous plants for our garden?

Since white settlement, many indigenous plants have been removed or out-competed by introduced plants. Indigenous gardens provide an opportunity to reflect on, respect and value the rich culture in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

Indigenous plants fit in with the natural environment as they are suited to the local soils and climatic conditions. As they use less water this saves money. They also attract and protect native wildlife and help to conserve native plants of the area.

Here's some other reasons to plant indigenous gardens:

- They require less pesticides and fertilizers.
- They attract beneficial pollinators like birds, bees, and butterflies.
- They are relatively easy to grow and once established, require little maintenance.
- Indigenous gardens look beautiful and can handle some tough love from kids once established.
- They make great sensory gardens for children to see, smell, touch, hear and taste different plants.



Our review of our QIP as a team in April 2022, highlighted that there was an opportunity to further embed indigenous culture into our service as we explored our "Acknowledgement of Country".

## Our Planting

Through some research we found Edible Eden Design local supplier for plants and signage. By purchasing some additional plants to add to our garden with signage that identifies the plant, latin name, how it grows and it uses. This will support our education.....



Sea Celery

(*Apium annuum*)



Native Leek

(*Bulbine bulbosa*)



Lillypilly

(*Syzygium species*)



Ruby Saltbush

(*Enchylaena  
tomentosa*)



Beach Bananas Plan

(*Disphyma  
Crassifolium*)



Midyim Berry

(*Austromyrtus dulcis*)



Native oregano or thyme

(*Prostanthera  
rotundifolia*)



Chocolate Lily

(*Dichopogon strictus*)



Pigface Inland

(*Carpobrotus modestus*)



Native Lemongrass

(*Austromyrtus dulcis*)





# Planting

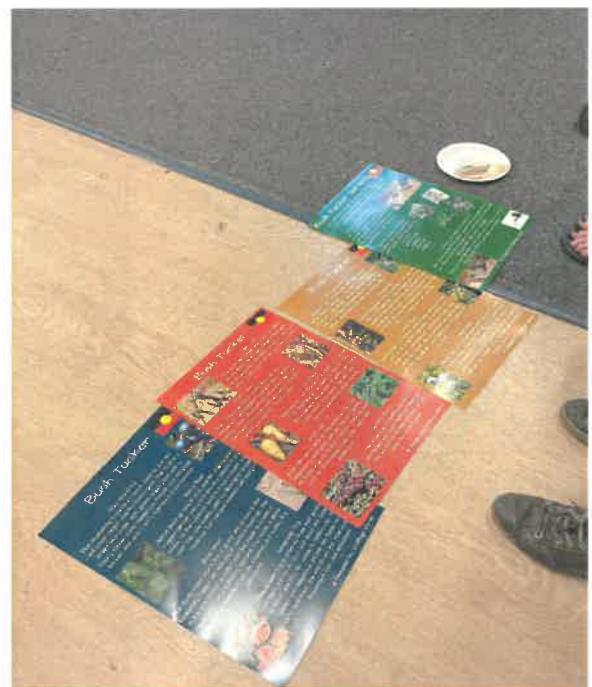
Karen from Edible Eden Design came to the centre on Friday 3rd June to deliver our plants and signs. Karen had a tour of the garden, shared her ideas and we discussed what other signage we could use to support our garden design / learning environment.

- Sign to be installed at the garden entrance to welcome people into the space
- New plants have been planted including adding a lemon tree
- We added some visual interest with metal art (animals, flowers)



# Wolithiga Wares with Colin Atkinson

- Made contact with Colin as some of us attended a session with him many years ago to organize him to attend our next staff meeting on Monday 20th June
- Colin will share his knowledge about indigenous plants and their uses (both medicinal and edible)



Our new sign as you enter the garden.

This provides information to those who enjoy our garden about some of our plants that are "for food, tools, medicine and shelter" as used by the First People of Australia



Some of the children helped put the new signs in our garden



# Melbourne Bushfoods



We have purchased some dried spices of the following;

- Pepperberry
- Lemon Myrtle
- Wattleseed
- Pepperleaf
- River Mint
- Saltbush
- Strawberry Gum
- Aniseed Myrtle

We are going to use these in our meals in the daycare and cooking experiences with the children during Naidoc Week in July.

Upon reflection, we have discussed there is an opportunity for us to embed into our daily menus in the childcare. We will try some different recipes and then try to incorporate 1-2 items into our weekly menus (5 week cycle)

# Bush Tucker Recipes

