It might have been cold, but that hasn’t slowed things down in the school garden. We have been harvesting potatoes, kale, lettuce, silverbeet, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, beetroot, carrots, parsnip and oca and planted garlic, broad beans, peas and also green manure, which is a crop we will dig back in to add organic matter and improve the soil. We welcomed a new addition to our garden – a dingle-dangle scarecrow made by Lil families, complete with flippy floppy hat!

Just because it’s winter it doesn’t mean the work in the garden stops! On a sunny winters’ day our students sowed sugar snap peas into mounds of compost. The peas will climb up the frames to supply our cooking classes with delicious eating in the spring.

Moonah Recipe Book Launched Soon!

We have been busy putting together our favourite recipes from our kitchen garden program, and next term will see the launch of ‘Seasons at Moonah’, with around one hundred favourite recipes from our kitchen garden program and featuring beautiful vegetable art created by our students. The recipe book will make perfect Christmas gifts!

* A version of the great Australian song written by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, From Little Things Big Things Grow, is sung as our school song, with the opening line ‘The trees in our playground were once tiny seeds, they grew and they flourished...’, appropriate for our school kitchen garden!
This term MPS welcomed grade six students from Snug Primary School who visited to experience Moonah’s diverse cultures and share lunch prepared with produce from our school garden. The dishes served included a selection of dips, Bhat (Indian yellow rice), Lentil Dahl, Asian Coleslaw, Salad, Roti, and Silverbeet, Tomato & Potato Curry. Delicious!

At MPS we have built on the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden philosophy of teaching children positive food habits for life by connecting students’ kitchen garden learning to what is sold in our school canteen. This year our canteen has eliminated all pre-packaged food and has been relocated into the kitchen. It now offers homemade food prepared from scratch using fresh, seasonal produce, and is located right next to the garden where some of the food was grown!

Composting at MPS

...continued from term one issue

Cool or passive composting

We have four large black plastic compost bins positioned around our garden, and students deposit vegetable and food wastes from our kitchen and classrooms into them. To prevent rats and mice feeding on the food scraps, we use sealed bins which are partially buried in the soil to prevent entry by rodents. These ‘wet’ ingredients are layered with dry carbon ingredients and the bins are alive with compost worms which do a great job of breaking down the organic matter. Students know which bin is currently being filled by the handle attached to the lid. Once a bin is full, the handle is taken to a new bin ready for filling. The contents of the bins break down quickly thanks to the work of the worms.

Worm farm composting

Our four worm farms receive chopped fruit and vegetable scraps, finely torn egg cartons and ground egg shells, soft green weeds and a small amount of soil. The worms in worm farms are a different variety to earthworms as they need a diet high in organic matter. In return the worms give us nutrient-rich castings (worm poo) and liquid (worm wee) which we collect and use to feed our plants in the garden.

We use the finished compost to return nutrients to the soil
Composting saves money by reducing the amount of fertiliser we need to buy
Composting food scraps reduces the amount of rubbish going to landfill

Three reasons to compost

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