

Nau mai | Welcome

Nau mai and welcome to GREENchat for Term 4, 2021.

In our final newsletter for 2021, we share some special longer-term projects that have been going on at Picton School and Grovetown School this year. We find out about the learning that Tua Marina School students did during a visit to the potager garden at Pollard Park, and get some nature-inspired ideas for celebrating the festive season from the tamariki at Springlands Kindergarten.

We have some changes in our team to announce for 2022...and make sure you save the date for our Term 1 teacher workshop - details on the back page.

Remember to take a look at how we can support you on the MDC website:

► www.marlborough.govt.nz/environment/environmental-education/school-education-programmes

And don't forget about our Enviroschools websites and our padlet collections too!

► www.enviroschoolsmarlborough.co.nz

► enviroschools.org.nz

► padlet.com/EnviroschoolsMarlborough/MarlboroughMenu

Wishing you all a safe & happy holiday!
Annie, Angela, Anna & Ramona
The MDC Education Team

Planting tōtara at Picton School

Enviroschools Lead Teacher Lianne Adams shared this story about a very special tree-planting project with us: it originally appeared in the 'Kaitiaki Corner' of the Picton School newsletter.

Have you noticed our "Notable Tree" next to our

school letterbox? Well it is a Tōtara Tree and Mr Andrew John has estimated it to be about 140 years old. A couple of years ago Mr John worked with Ms Boudier and the Room 1 children to collect seeds from our beautiful tōtara tree. Mr John then took the seeds home and planted and cared for them on our behalf.

Yesterday Mr John and Anna Polsen (from Kaipupu Point Trust) helped our school Kaitiaki group and Rimu Room children to plant the young tōtara plants in our school grounds. The children were very excited to plant the "baby trees" and it was wonderful to see their enthusiasm. They were also amazed to see the tree in a photo of the school taken in the late 1800's.

The tamariki said a special Karakia to help the tōtara trees grow strong and to acknowledge Tāne-Mahuta - Ātua of the forest. This Karakia was a koha to us from Amai Thompson, Cultural Manager of Waikawa Marae. We also had Amai come along and talk to the tamariki about the significance of tōtara trees to Māori and about Tāne-Mahuta and tikanga around our plants and trees. Kia ora Amai.

Our Kaitiaki group have worked with many community groups this year to help us learn about sustainable practices and environmental studies, however, Mr John and Anna Polson have been especially supportive of our school. We would like to thank them very much for their support. A big thanks also to Mrs Smith and Mr Mealings who are always working behind the scenes to help our tamariki with any gardening and planting activities. They spend a lot of time "making things happen".



Photo: Brya Ingram | Stuff

Springlands Kindergarten's festive 'nature tree'



Are you looking for some ideas for a more natural Christmas? Then I bet you will be inspired by Springlands Kindergarten's nature tree.

The clever kaiako and tamariki have been working together as part of their Enviroschools kaupapa and nature play to collect natural materials with help from whānau to create decorations for their kindergarten Christmas tree as well as for their trees at home.

As part of this learning they have made feeders to hang on the tree for the manu. So far they have tried using honey and bird seeds as well as peanut butter and are looking at other sustainable ways to use in this process.

Our facilitators have been so impressed we are going to try making these trees ourselves.



Tua Marina students learn about gardening at Pollard Park

Students from Tua Marina School wanted to learn a bit more about the process of gardening, how seeds start, how do they turn into fruits or vegetables, and how pollination works. To find this out they came to visit the Potager/Backyard Garden at Pollard Park.

Our green-fingered expert and Enviroschools facilitator Angela shared some cool activities to help the children learn more about these processes in nature. This included matching seeds to plants and learning about the lifecycle of a plant before the students went in search of examples of this in the Pollard Park backyard garden.



They found apple blossoms, tiny apples and the nasturtiums under the trees to help keep the bugs at bay.



They saw silver beet going to seed and learnt how to collect this as well as trying some of the parsley. They learnt that parsley is sometimes called a 'super food' for humans because it contains lots of great natural ingredients including Vitamin C and antioxidants.



The students were going back to school with lots of ideas on what seeds they might like to plant in their school gardens or in the classroom and we are looking forward to seeing what they harvest.



The traps are back at Grovetown School

Grovetown School's Waihi class has embarked on a special project this year to save the fantails in their school forest.

The project came about as part of their inquiry: 'How is our place unique?'. The class began by exploring and learning about the native, endemic and introduced animals and plants in their school. Some of the children found empty fantail nests which prompted thinking about why the nests might be empty. Some of the students' ideas were:



"rats have eaten them" - "It is too cold for the eggs and chicks so birds don't lay eggs in winter" - "the fantails think it's too dangerous because of the rats and possibly stoats so they won't lay eggs" - "the chicks have already hatched so they don't need the nest" - "the mother has flown away with the grown up chicks"

The class watched some episodes of the "Fight for the Wild" documentary and learned about what DOC does. They decided they wanted to stop any rats in their school from eating the fantails, so they brainstormed some ways they could save the fantails. This led to the decision to raise money to buy traps by selling kōwhai seeds collected from the school forest.

The class decided to package the seeds in paper envelopes and they designed labels and learned how to make paper envelopes. They researched the price of kōwhai seeds in local shops and began advertising. The seeds were on sale for three weeks before they went into lockdown and in that time they raised over \$200 for rat traps!



Next, the students created chew cards and discovered where the rats were in their school. They also discovered eight old rat traps in their school that were damaged and rusty. They fixed them up plus bought some new traps and still had plenty of money leftover for peanut butter bait.

The trapping work began and, at the start of November, the class caught their first rat! In anticipation of many more rats to come, they have decided to name each rat they catch after a letter in the alphabet, much like people do with storms or cyclones. And the name of their first rat? By consensus, they decided to call it 'Ace'!

We have resources available to support you if you are doing an inquiry around living landscapes or pest trapping. Contact us to borrow our Living Landscapes kit: a box of equipment and identification guides for investigating nature in your school grounds. Get in touch with Angela (wenties@slingshot.co.nz) for a 'Pest Detective' or 'Become Kaitiaki' session. And take a look at our 'Animal Pests' padlet for a range of resources available online:

padlet.com/EnviroschoolsMarlborough/animalpests

TEAM NEWS

Time to celebrate and say goodbye

Our talented Enviroschools Facilitator and Freshwater Educator Anna Crowe is finishing up in her roles for MDC at the end of this year. Many of you will have worked with Anna, either in the classroom or in a stream and have seen first-hand her love of the natural world which she shares so enthusiastically and willingly.

While we are sad to say goodbye to her in this space, we also want to celebrate some of the cool things she has led while in our team: from the amazing Bioblitz where all ages of students worked together with some help from Ruud Kleinpaste to identify bugs and beyond, through to this year's climate change session in our Enviroschools teacher workshop which had us all running round catching greenhouse gases which was a sight to be seen!

We know first-hand Anna has had a positive impact on so many of our Marlborough teachers and students in the last eight years and we are grateful to have been able to have someone of her talents in our team. We wish her all the best for her new adventures.



Say hello to Lela!

Congratulations to Ramona & Mike on the June arrival of their gorgeous wee 'Envirobaby', Lela. Good to see that she is already wearing the team uniform!



Ramona is going to ease into some part-time work in the new year, facilitating in the ECE sector and looking after our website and digital communications with Anna's departure.

SAVE
THE
DATE

ENVIROSCHOOLS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

teacher workshop

Tuesday 8 March | 9 am - 3 pm | Blenheim School Hall

Join our team and new Department of Conservation Community Ranger Caroline Cornelius as we look at some ways you can extend programmes inside and outside your school with some great resources and community contacts.

We can fund release time for up to 20 teachers to join us. Lunch provided. Email annie.mcdonald@marlborough.govt.nz to register.

New DOC Community Ranger Team - South Marlborough



Introducing Nicola Haisman and Caroline Cornelius - we are your Community Ranger Team for South Marlborough located at the Wairau/Renwick office.

Our role is to be "Conservation Connectors" for our community and the amazing conservation projects we have operating in it. We recognise the importance of our young tamariki as advocates and decision-makers for the future, so it is essential that we connect them with nature.

Get in touch with us for resourcing, information, and any conservation queries. Our [Marlborough Conservation Education Toolbox](#) is a great starting resource for local context or email ccornelius@doc.govt.nz.

Keep an eye out for our "Summer Series Conservation Activities" during the holidays.