

Nau Mai | Welcome to the term 4 GREENchat. This terms newsletter celebrates a diverse range of actions that have been taken by kaiako and tamariki across our region.



Rongoā workshop for teachers

From Kawakawa to Koromiko to Manuka and more, Ripkea, Trisha and Lovey took over 20 teachers from ECE through to secondary school for a walk around the grounds at Mayfield Kindergarten. As they walked, they identified and shared their knowledge of these plants and some of their applications. They shared tikanga around harvesting, identification techniques and answered an array of questions.

This was the first of our rongoā workshops, which provided an introduction and an opportunity to gather teachers, thoughts and ideas for future workshops.

We plan to run several more next year and will provide details of these in the next Sustainable Action Ideas newsletter.



Nature Connection – Spring Creek School and Springlands Kindergarten

This term our Environmental Education team have been working alongside Springlands Kindergarten and Spring Creek School to run a Nature Connection pilot programme.

This has involved our facilitators working closely with the kaiako (teachers) to come up with a plan that identifies their purpose, overcomes barriers, and makes it possible for students to spend more undirected time in nature.

If this is something that your school or ECE centre/ kindergarten are interested in, please get in touch with our team.



Redwoodtown Kindergarten – worms



Redwoodtown Kindergarten were finding that their worm farm and compost were not looking too healthy, so they invited Ramona and Angela in to share some knowledge with the tamariki and get some advice on bringing it back to life.

After a story – Papatūānuku has a tummy ache, and discussion about what conditions worms would like to live in, the tamariki were excited to meet their earth dwelling friends.



They first wet their hands with water to ensure that the worms could still breath whilst on their hand and then for the children that were interested, they were able to get up close and personal with them.

This then led to setting up an experiment in the front garden – Bury it and dig it up.

Feeling empowered with new knowledge the tamariki and kaiako now have a functioning worm farm and compost which they are able to replenish their gardens with.

Envirogroups meeting at Koru Native Wildlife Centre

Our Envirogroups have been meeting online each term for the last two years. Although a great way to keep in contact and update with happenings in schools, it was time to meet in person kanohi to kanohi. To celebrate our year long focus on Respect for Diversity, what better place to meet than Koru Native Wildlife Centre in Grovetown where we could meet kanohi to kanohi with Giant Wētā, Marlborough Green Gecko and Kākāriki!

We found out New Zealand's wētā is the heaviest insect in the world that weighs more than an average mouse. The heaviest wētā ever recorded was a female Giant that weighed 71g! Just quietly we were all relieved to find that the wētā we were introduced to were big, but not that big. The two we saw were calm despite having been woken from their sleep and we were able to note the differences between the male and female. The most distinctive identifying feature was the large ovipositor the female used to lay her eggs.

Ellen, owner of the Centre, has a permit to breed wētā many which are released into controlled wilderness areas, such as the predator-free Puangiangi Island in the outer Marlborough Sounds.

A permit is also required to breed the Marlborough Green Gecko. These friendly creatures seemed to have a permanent smile on their faces, perhaps from knowing they were the masters of camouflage. The centre has 8 species. With an identification sheet in hand, the students took on the challenge to find at least one of each species – easier said than done.

The chatter of kākāriki Kakariki was the background music to our visit. We would normally be able to enter their aviaries however as two were breeding we kept our distance and watched them from outside. It may be hard to believe now, but during the 1800s kākāriki were considered pests by farmers and growers as they fed on grains and crops. Many were culled and their habitat destroyed as land was cleared. Now, introduced pests like rats, mice, stoats and ferrets are the kākāriki's main threat. Ellen is working alongside DOC to increase their numbers for release into controlled wilderness areas and for other programmes.

The experience was loved by everyone – students, teachers and parents helping out – each taking home several new facts and the desire to return. Overwhelming feedback was for more of these experiences so keep an eye out for details next year!



Green Initiatives: Students Leading the Way in Waitaria Bay School

At Waitaria Bay school alongside their environmental focuses, they are committed to promoting sustainability through the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle. This year they embarked on an inspiring student-led new initiative to put this into action.

The students have been diligently collecting all paper waste in the school. Once a week, they engage in an eco-friendly process to give new life to this paper waste.

Here's how it works:

1. Paper Collection: All paper waste is gathered and saved for the recycling process.
2. Soaking: The collected paper/cardboard is torn into small pieces and soaked in water overnight beginning the process of breaking it down into pulp.
3. Blending and Pulping: The soaked paper is then processed in a blender to create a smooth paper pulp.
4. Water Removal: A colander is used to strain off excess water from the pulp.
5. Creating Paper Bricks: The pulp is then placed into our paper brick press machine, moulding it into bricks.
6. Drying in the Sun: These newly formed paper bricks are left out in the sun to dry naturally.

This sustainable practice not only reduces waste but also transforms it into a valuable resource. The students are making a real difference, and the school is proud to support their dedication to a greener future.

Keep up the great work, eco-champions!



To read more stories from our region, check out our Enviroschools Marlborough website <https://www.enviroschoolsmarlborough.co.nz>

Our team

There are three of us working in the Marlborough District Council education team that can support you and your students,.

We also have some talented people in our organisation and community that we can link you with, and good connections with the team at DOC.



Angela Wentworth | Environmental Educator

Angela is a horticulturalist, and regularly has her hands in the soil with students. She also trains our Kids' Edible Gardens facilitators and supports schools with inquiry learning into things green.



Ramona Millen | Environmental Educator

Ramona has strong links with the natural environment having growing up in the Marlborough Sounds, and strives to include this love and passion through her educational role with young tamariki. Ramona strives to empower those around her with the knowledge of how to look after themselves and Papatūānuku.



Annie McDonald | Education Officer & Enviroschools Regional Coordinator

Annie is an educator, has taught at primary and secondary schools, and is passionate about showing schools how they can integrate education for sustainability into the curriculum. She gets a thrill from working with students to grow environmental leaders.



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