

## Nau mai | Welcome

It's a surreal time we find ourselves in and our thoughts are with you, your colleagues, families and students at this time.

The end of the last term and this new term will look a lot different than we have been used to, but hopefully this strange situation may also offer some opportunities.

While we know you will be busy with this new way of working we want to be there in the background supporting you.

This Greenchat is just a short edition, but alongside it comes our new resource "Explore & connect with nature - at home!". This is a compilation of ideas and activities that you can pull out and share with your students, helping them to explore their backyards and connect with nature in some way. We have tried many of these with our own families and we hope you find something that works for you.

We are all available via phone, email or even Zoom if you would like to connect with us.

Until next we meet, take care of yourself and each other.

Arohanui,  
Annie, Angela & Anna  
The MDC Education Team

## Enviroschools Student Workshop



After a successful teacher workshop with guest expert Bek Galloway, we were excited to welcome 64 students and their teachers to a "Leading change" workshop. The workshop's aim was to give student leaders skills and activities to take back to their Envirogroups and schools. Bek ran two sessions helping students to learn about purposeful action and perspectives. Our Education Team ran some leadership games and we had presentations from four schools and one kindergarten sharing the process they had used to take action in their schools or communities.

Picton Kindergarten gave a presentation on their monarch butterfly project, including how they learnt to tag the butterflies. Angus from Linkwater School shared his newly built community notice board that focuses on taking care of local waterways. Rapaura School talked about their planting day for climate action working with the Climate Youth Action team. Renwick School told us how they had run a workshop teaching teachers how to carry out a mini BioBlitz, then run one for their whole school. Hannah represented the MGC Environmental Sustainability class and told the students about how to take part in Sustainable Coastlines' 'Litter Intelligence' citizen science programme.

Each of these actions included some significant learning, time and research. We applaud the hard work of these amazing young leaders as well as the teachers and groups that supported them.



## Living Landscapes at Mill Flat

Classes in Taylor Hub of Whitney Street School explored Mill Flat while on camp at Pine Valley in March. The short bush walk that loops to the North of Mill Flat is a treasure trove of insects, birds, plants and fungi to discover and explore.

Students became plant detectives, observing the plants around them closely. Each chose a plant that interested them, and drew a picture of the leaf noting its colour, shape, edges and veins. They looked for berries or flowers, and noted what they looked like too. When finished, students swapped their work with a friend, who tracked down the plant using the clues their friend had given them. Then they finished the activity by using books to identify the plant that they had described.



Toutouwai | NZ Robin



Kanono was a favourite of the children to draw and describe. It is part of the coprosma family, and has the largest leaf of all the coprosma species. Kanono likes to live in the shade of other trees and prefers damp well sheltered places, where it may grow as tall as 6 meters. Birds eat the orange berries which appear from February through to May.

Some gorgeous little toutouwai (NZ Robins) kept us company all morning. Much like the piwakawaka, the toutouwai was friendly and trusting, dancing around us curious to see what we were up too. Classified as 'at risk with declining populations', we were lucky to see four of them.

Angela is available to come and run some Living Landscapes activities with your class: as part of a camp or day trip to the bush, or in tandem with Anna's stream study sessions. Get in touch to book her in!

## Stream studies in the sunshine

March saw a flurry of stream studies as some schools made the most of the settled weather. Canvastown School's Year 5-8 students investigated the health of the Wakamarina and Pelorus rivers - both sites within easy walking distance of their school. Year 4 students from Whitney Street School investigated the stream life of Pine Valley Stream while on camp. Year 11 science students from Marlborough Girls' College collected data from a Taylor River site, in order to compare river health at the site this year with that in 2019.



A student from Whitney Street School (that's you CJ!) found a really interesting white flatworm in Pine Valley Stream at Mill Flat. It was quite large for a flatworm, stretching out to around 8 cm long, and was not even particularly flat,

making it hard to even identify as a member of the flatworm family.

Fortunately, we were able to take some good photos and a video of it moving (<https://youtu.be/fDfl8xc-w3U>), and after uploading it to iNaturalist and emailing a New Zealand flatworm expert, it was identified as *Prorhynchus putealis* - a little-studied flatworm that has a tendency to disintegrate with even small changes in water temperature. It is very rare, but is mainly found deep in the stream bed in places where groundwater is coming up from underground. This is the furthest north that this flatworm has ever been found. It was exciting to find something so unusual!





## Rai Valley Area School's garden is on the move



The Kids Edible Garden at Rai Valley Area School has been through some big changes recently. The school playground had a much-anticipated makeover but needed the space that the garden used. The edible garden beds needed to find a new home.

The children were fully involved throughout the process, gaining new skills in garden design. For each new site that was suggested, the children had to consider things like 'how much sun or shade does the space get?', 'how big are the garden beds going to be?' and 'will we be able to reach the middle of the gardens?'.

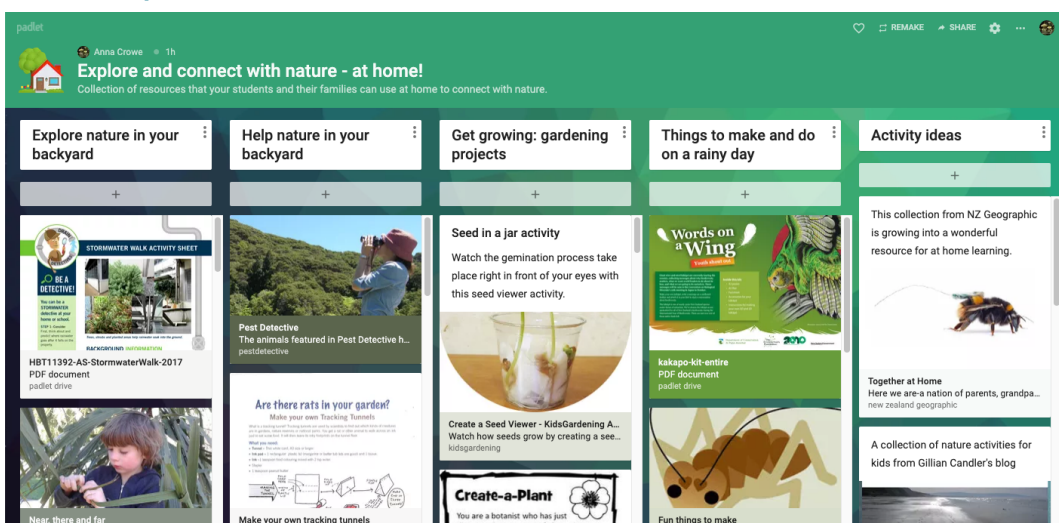
The children also helped with the hard work of shifting the garden beds, digging out and potting up the strawberry plants so they could be replanted later, digging out the old soil, shifting the bed frames and spreading new soil. The community pitched in with diggers and tractors to lighten the load.

The gardens are now ready to be replanted, and the children can't wait to harvest their first crop of vegetables.

## Resources for teachers: Explore and connect with nature - at home!

We have compiled a collection of activities and resources around the theme 'Explore and connect with nature - at home' in a padlet.

In the past few weeks our inboxes and social media feeds have become full-to-bursting with ideas and activities for teaching and learning in the online space and at home. This collection aims to gather the best of these in one place for you, so you can browse if you are looking for ideas.



Click here: <https://padlet.com/EnviroschoolsMarlborough/rmeyn1v2mgwe>

We realise that this new way of working and the volume of suggestions can be overwhelming, so we encourage you to get in touch with us via phone or email if you'd rather we supported you individually - we are all working from home and would be happy to talk and do our best to help in whatever way we can.

### Our team

There are three of us working in the MDC education team to support you and your students, as well as Ramona Millen, who facilitates the Enviroschools programme in kindergartens. 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.



**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.



**Angela Wentworth | Kids Edible Garden Coordinator & Enviroschools Facilitator**

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



**Anna Crowe | Freshwater Educator & Enviroschools Facilitator**

Anna is a scientist and is pretty good in a pair of gumboots, sharing her knowledge and expertise of the watery world. She also manages our digital communications, and supports schools on their environmental journey.



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