Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program
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Stephanie Alexander, well-known chef and food writer, wants young children to learn how to grow and eat good food every day of their lives. This is already happening in primary schools around Australia and now it’s going to happen here!

I am pleased to announce that Kalinda Primary School has embarked upon a unique collaboration with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, which will support the establishment of the Kitchen Garden Program in the school. At the heart of the Program will be a beautiful, productive garden and a kitchen where the children will cook the produce they have grown and sit together to share a healthy and delicious meal.

The Kitchen Garden Program will:
• Enhance the children’s academic learning
• Introduce the children to a wide range of foods
• Teach them the necessary practical skills so that they will be able to chop and grill, stir-fry and poach with confidence
• Develop their interest in flavours and textures
• Increase their self-esteem as the results of their labours are praised by their classmates
• Teach them how to establish and maintain a garden organically
• Help them understand the connection between care in the garden, flavour on the plate and a healthy planet
• Teach them to take responsibility for their own physical wellbeing

The Benefits of the Program

The Program offers rich and varied links with the general curriculum – environmental science, science in general, insect life, water management, art and design, literacy, numeracy and respect for cultural difference, to name just a few areas. As well as engaging all the senses, it delivers increased self-esteem, respect for the earth and it requires cooperative endeavour.

Special note should be taken that this is not a lunch program. Students learn to create dishes that they share in ‘tasting’ portions – where each child and adult helper receives enough of a dish to understand what it is made of and how it tastes.
Three interrelated learning spaces

The garden, kitchen and classroom work in harmony with each other. The Kitchen and Garden Specialists work closely together, along with a Program Coordinator from the teaching staff, to plan garden activities, menus and an integrated curriculum around the garden’s seasonal growing cycle. Learnings from the children’s experiences in the garden and kitchen reinforce the academic curriculum, and academic learning is underscored by hands-on, real-life cooking and gardening activities.

In a nutshell, how does the Kitchen Garden Program work?

There are four major components to the Program:

| Growing | Harvesting | Preparing | Sharing |

Each week in the Kitchen Garden Program, children across years 3 and 4 discover the pleasure of hands-on food education through a class in a productive vegetable garden and a double class in a home-style kitchen. Led by a Garden Specialist, the children learn to build and maintain the garden according to organic gardening principles and grow and harvest a wide variety of vegetables, fruits and herbs. In the kitchen, led by a Kitchen Specialist, the children prepare a delicious meal from the seasonal produce they have grown. The finished dishes are arranged with pride and care on tables set with flowers from the garden, and the shared meal is a time for students, volunteers, teachers and specialists to enjoy each other’s company and conversation.

Getting Started

Community volunteers are crucial to the Program’s success. At a later date, when days and times are known, we will be asking for an expression of interest to assist with the Program from parents, grandparents and the wider school community.

At some stage we will also be asking for donation of various items needed to get the Program up and running ie platters, dry goods, garden tools etc.

We will keep you up to date with our progress via our Kalinda S.A.K.G. (Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden) newsletter.

This is a very exciting development for our school and one that can only be successful with the help of our wonderful school community.

Gail Pollard
Principal