

Bialik College

THE award-winning Kitchen Garden Program at Bialik College has evolved into rich learning opportunities for students across all year levels. Over the past 6 months, the students prepared the soil and plants to be ready to provide wonderful produce for the start of this year. Beautiful new signs are coming to the garden and kitchen to help those outside of the program enjoy the wonders of these amazing learning spaces. Although the official program is part of the years 4 and 5 curriculum, students from the ELC right through to the senior school use the spaces for various projects and research. An example of this is the real-world data that can be collected in the garden for science classes, such as soil temperature, pH, and trends over time. Both students and staff are encouraged to enjoy the garden for recreation too. It is a peaceful, inspiring place where one can relax and take in the wonder of nature, while eating lunch or reading a book under the shade of the patio.

A fantastic benefit of the garden is the variety of different plants that are and can be grown. Plants like chickpeas, rice, quinoa and amaranth help students understand the energy involved in growing these popular "superfoods". The intention is to extend students to make the connection between the fresh produce and the food products that can be made out of



Students in Bialik's Kitchen Garden

them. In 2015, students will be growing rice and then getting it ready to be packaged as if it were going to be sold in a supermarket. This exciting initiative will show students the journey that food products take from the garden/farm to the shelf.

The new classroom blackboard space is vibrant and allows students to visualise the complex biodiversity involved in running an organic garden. A new reflection area is under development, which includes music and visual representations of our plant and animal friends. The ability for Bialik students to be able to identify specific plants extends their understanding of the intricacies of growing food and its application to creating beautiful meals. It is very exciting for students to be able to identify produce that they have helped to grow, and then to use that produce in the meals they put

together in the kitchen space. This helps enforce the idea of healthy, wholesome eating and that there are so many ways to make healthy food look and taste wonderful.

The Kitchen Garden Blog is another tool for extending the learning process. Students and teachers use the blog to document the cycles they experience over time when working in the garden. This also gives students an outlet to be creative and improve literacy and writing skills. Recipes the students use in the kitchen are posted on the blog so they can try them out at home.

Bialik's Kitchen Garden also extends goodwill to others less fortunate in the community by providing meals to charity organisations and enabling other community gardens to share in the seed abundance. From one plant many seeds grow.