

## Wickedly Good Veggie Gardens

August 2014

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Child Side School has been using wicking garden beds for over five years. The term wicking is used as the garden beds use capillary action to draw water from a built-in reservoirs that supplies water from the bottom up. Capillary action is the same force you see when you partially put a tissue paper into a glass of water and the water climbs up through the paper.

Wicking garden beds have many advantages in minimising waste as they reduce water loss through evaporation so are water efficient; the soil condition does not degrade as quickly from accumulation of salts as the evaporation rate is reduced; nutrients are not leached out into the underlying soil so stay rich for longer and not as much fertilisers need to be added; plants do not compete for water so can be more densely planted and being raised beds they are easier to maintain and better for you back!

In addition to providing hands-on experience in growing, harvesting and preparing our own food; the wicking garden beds provide a wealth of opportunities to integrate these real life processes in our daily learning, making it more relevant and interesting. This is a continual educational process at Child Side as our organic kitchen garden is a daily focal point for meal times, and we think it is important that every day the children get involved in preparing and sharing meals together. It sounds so simple and yet it is such an important aspect of life that is so often ignored.

The educators and children at Child Side have been so impressed with wicking garden beds that with the help of parent volunteer two more garden beds have been installed. This has allowed the children an additional educational opportunity by researching the vegetable growing season to identify the best ones to plant to maximise the harvest from these new wicking garden beds during the winter months.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2014 is World Kitchen Garden Day, and whilst we may not be going into school on the day to celebrate this international day, we do promote the many environmental, health and education benefits of home-grown foods and celebrate our organic kitchen garden and wickedly good wicking garden beds every day.

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For more information about World Kitchen Garden Day visit:

<http://kji.org/world-kitchen-garden-day>



Parents Stuart Atkinson BJ Richards helped install the two new wicking garden beds



Hailey Atkinson, Bella Bergemeister and Bella Richards planting out one of the new wicking garden bed