



Casebrook Intermediate apple harvest

Orchards in Schools Autumn 2019

Progress report from Coordinator Mary Tingey

"The apples are not like the apples from the supermarket. They taste fresh and juicy."

Xanthe, Waitakiri School

The number of schools participating in the programme is growing along with the trees.

This year we welcome Breens Intermediate, Bishopdale School, Wigram School, Marshland School, South New Brighton School to the programme.

This is the first year in which the prune plums fruited. The taste is divine. Schools which planted in 2016 or earlier are now having crops big enough to share.

Planted 2015 St Martins, Gilberthorpe, Northcote, Addington, Oaklands.

Planted 2016 Waitakiri, Rawhiti, Wharenuui, Cobham Intermediate, Casebrook Intermediate, Kaiapoi Borough.

Planted 2017 Isleworth School, Haeata Community Campus, Fendalton Open-air School, Elmwood Normal Primary School, Wairakei School, Chisnallwood Intermediate.

Planted 2018: Burnside Primary School, Hornby Primary School, South Hornby School, Russley School and Avonhead School.

"The strawberries are better than the shop ones. They are so sweet." **Myla** Hornby Primary

Winter Garden Tips

- Watch and record the buds sleeping in their Winter coats. Enjoy the patterns the buds form on the branches.
- Mulch and compost around your trees and add worm tea to the soil.
- An orchard is a perfect place for bird feeders.
- Create artworks - children's art helps make the orchard their place: e.g. signs, murals and tree hangings.

Spring Garden tips

- Watch and record bud burst as your orchard comes to life.
- Sow and plant under your trees.
- Kaiapoi Borough School sowed lupins to care for the soil after the rebuild. Other schools sow wildflowers, vegetables and strawberries to keep the soil moist and the weeds away.



Chisnallwood Intermediate apple tasters



Casebrook Intermediate

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The day I visited, the children were busy transplanting strawberries, lavender, lemon balm and nasturtium seedlings to put under their trees. They also collected calendula marigold seeds and scattered them under the trees and raked them in. Under other trees the children broadcast a barley/lupin/mustard seed mix to help maintain healthy soil around the trees and keep the soil covered over Winter. All the children had the opportunity to pick and eat an apple. They learned that apples are ripe when they can be plucked off the tree very easily. They picked a bucket of apples for the Foods Programme.

Northcote School has a healthy vegetable garden growing beside the orchard. Under the trees nasturtiums were rambling and rhubarb was flourishing. The school is keen to encourage art in the orchard. They will begin by installing a model whare in the garden.

Chisnallwood Intermediate

Even though this school only planted in 2017, they have a good crop of pears. The school has added donated raspberry plants and black boy peach trees to their orchard. They have started three new gardens in the orchard.

The Enviro Group had the first taste of apples from their trees.

Sophie said, **"The apples were delicious; sweet and sour."** Maike said, **"We are growing herbs in the orchard for the foods room."**

The Enviro Group decided that they could cut up the apples and hand them out to others at playtime or they could supplement the canteen fruit salad. They also thought that the apples would be good for children who didn't have much for lunch.

Riccarton Primary School

The trees are producing plenty of apples and peaches. The children eat some peaches fresh and freeze some for their cooking programme. The day I visited the children were harvesting apples. Some to eat fresh and some to be dehydrated for Winter. It is such a pleasure to eat fruit straight off the trees. The children have an active vegetable and herb gardening programme beside the orchard. The children also harvest and dehydrate herbs which they sell at Riccarton Market.



Waitakiri School

This year the children harvested 40 prune plums. They said that they were really big, sweet and delicious.

Tayla said, **"We picked fruit for the teachers and students. We picked two buckets; one for big apples and one for little apples."** Sophie said, **"We grow fruit and we eat it. It's yum."**

The teacher reported that the children are more keen to work in the orchard now that they have tasted their first big crop. The school plans to build a pataka so that school fruit and community produce can be shared.



Waitakiri School



Rawhiti School plums a plenty

Kaiapoi Borough School

The fruit trees at Kaiapoi Borough School were moved to their new location to accommodate the school's rebuild. The trees are loving it and responded by growing well over Summer. The children are painting labels for their trees.

Hornby Primary School children sowed wild flowers under their fruit trees which created a riot of Autumn colour. The children were collecting the seeds from the wild flowers to sow next year.

Some of their fruit tree ties had loosened in the winds. The children retied them. The children also grew peas, spring onions, beetroot, pak choi, carrots, beans, broccoli and radish in the gardens under their fruit trees. They also had big juicy strawberries growing under the trees.

Kushla said, "I like to do garden days because I like to see the flowers and it's beautiful."



Hornby Primary School

Rawhiti School's late Autumn garden still had evidence of a productive Summer. There were a few apples left high on a tree, feijoas, Chilean guavas, one huge pear, spent pumpkin plants, spent beans with dried pods and lush silverbeet.

The garden group had been carrying out such Autumn tasks as cleaning the shed. New raspberry plants had been planted. They had a good crop of apples and made apple crumble and apple spirals. They also ate them fresh off the trees. Next year they hope to sell excess fruit at a stall for parents.

Elmwood Normal School's trees have grown beautifully. During my visit in mid May some apples were still clinging high up in the trees which we had planted in 2017. We discussed how the leaves were falling off for Winter. We collected granny smith apples from an old tree which the children are going to cook. We also collected feijoas.

Bertie said, "The leaves are changing colour on the trees." Fletcher said, "The pear tree branches stand up straight."

Russley School

I was met by Catherine and Michael who are the Enviro Team. Their trees, which were planted last Winter, have grown well and look healthy. When one pear was damaged by vandalism, a parent bought a replacement.

The children measured the growth; one splendour apple had grown 30 cm and a hetlina apple had grown 10 cm. The children noticed that the trees on one part of the grounds grew better than those in another part. Michael and Catherine hope to form a working group (with the help of the student council) to remove grass from under the trees and mulch them with leaves.

They also want to plant daffodil bulbs under the trees. They wish to fertilise the trees with worm juice. They are going to paint the posts by the trees to label them and to enliven the orchard.

Fendalton Open-air School

The trees have now grown so well that the ties can be removed. They are going to use the stakes to paint tree labels and decorative art for their orchard and garden space.

Heli and Dahel described the composting system that they use, "We take the green bucket from each classroom weekly. We take it to the 'open' compost. We take off the cover and put in all the scraps."

Isleworth School

I visited in the lunch hour when the children were busy gardening. Emily, one of the older children was helping the younger children to place compost and mulch around the trees.



Burnside Primary School

Burnside Primary School

The children measured the new growth on their trees. One pear had grown 60 cm while another had grown 33 cm. A plum had grown 85 cm and one apple 17 cm. The trees were all looking healthy and vigorous. The garden group plans to plant blue lupins under the trees.

Wharenu School

Their trees produced plenty of peaches and apples; **"some of the most delicious peaches ever"**. Wharenu School moved the orchard last Winter temporarily into the old school garden for their rebuild. The trees were not at all perturbed. They have grown like rockets. The old school garden must have beautiful soil. The trees will be moved to their permanent home this Winter.

Cobham School

The SPEC group have been making worm tea and using it to help the orchard and school gardens grow. This year their trees produced black boy peaches and lots of apples. In the garden beside the orchard the students grew pumpkins, rhubarb, potatoes, nasturtium, lettuce, coriander, parsley and sage. They made rhubarb and ginger muffins. They also picked their herbs and lettuce to make a delicious salad.



St Martins School

South Hornby School

Some of the fruit trees are growing in their garden beds. This year they planted strawberries around some trees. The strawberries are such a hit that they will transplant the runners under other trees. Another bed was brilliant with wild flowers and even late into Autumn the white alyssum was still flowering. The school picked peaches and apples which were so delicious that they were shared as fresh fruit.

St Martins School

The Courgette Group and I looked for buds tucked up in their Winter jackets. We also discussed how leaves breathe and make sugar from sunlight.

The children hunted for feijoas. They keep a beautiful garden diary. They wrote down the names of all the trees in the orchard. They had a good crop of pears and black doris plums. Last year they had a huge crop of apricots but there were hardly any apricots this year.