

ORCHARDS IN SCHOOLS AUTUMN 2020 NEWSLETTER

PROGRESS REPORT FROM
CO-ORDINATOR MARY TINGEY



Rawhiti peaches get a wash-up



“

I like when seeds are
small and watching
them grow...

Ava
Rawhiti School

”



Welcome.

This year we welcome Belfast and Knights Stream Schools, Kirkwood Intermediate and Hilmorton High School.

Our trees have been growing while we were in lockdown. They shelter birds and provide them with a place to roost. Piwakawaka flit through their branches catching insects. On our return to school the apple, pear and plum trees will have dropped their leaves and entered winter dormancy. Lucky children may find feijoas ready on the ground under their trees - delicious!

Covid-19 has taught us the urgency of taking better care of the planet and ourselves. The orchards provide a wonderful place for children to learn about the birds and insects which live in plants.

This newsletter focuses on the 12 schools I was able to visit prior to the lockdown. I am looking forward to working with all schools during pruning time this winter.

“

I like coming to the garden
because we get to plant plants
and eat all the fruits and veges.

Maea
Rawhiti School

”





“

I like being in this group because I want to help my mum with her garden and get even healthier and to cook more.

Olivia
Rawhiti School

”

“

The trees look really healthy and nice.”

Amisha
Casebrook School

”



Casebrook students taste test the fruit kebabs

Weather.

In the orchard the children learn about the ever changing world around their trees.

St Martin School's orchard was stuck behind a rebuild fence without water from before Christmas. On my visit we collected Blackboy peaches; they were very tiny but eye-opening delicious, it was as though the tree poured all its sweetness and flavour into those peaches - leaving us with very sticky fingers. They also had a crop of small sweet apricots.

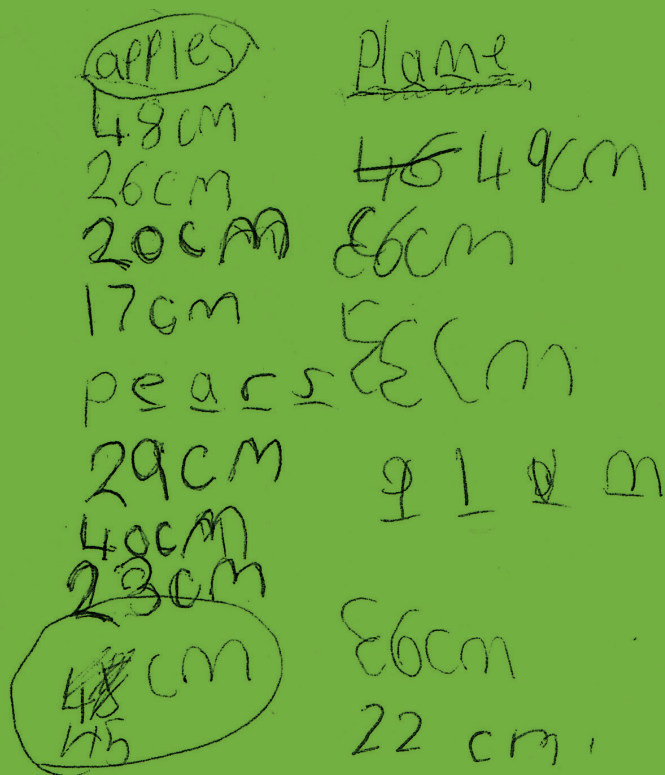
The drought created huge crops of peaches because it was too dry for the fungi which usually attack them. On the other hand pears were adversely affected. St Martins, which had had a great crops of pear before the drought, had almost none this year. The pear trees, which were planted last winter, struggled in drought conditions more than the plums and the apples. Pears need more water than apples.

This year Rawhiti suffered loss of some fruit because of high winds.



Riccarton's Black Boy Peaches

Hornby Primary measures up.



The children learn to examine the trees to identify new growth from old growth.

Hornby Primary School children really enjoyed measuring the new growth of their trees.

Harvest.

Some of the schools which planted in 2015, 2016 and 2017 are now getting substantial crops.

Rawhiti had an abundant peach crop which they peeled, cooked and froze.

Room 1 at Riccarton Primary School bottled their peaches this year. They also held a school-wide taste test of all the apples. Apple Ariane was the favourite. The children described the apples, Lanz said, "The apples were good." Tayah said, "The apples have an appley flavour." Lilly said, "The apples were tasty and nice and sweet."

They preserved apples by dehydrating them, which will be used in their Garden to Table programme.

Casebrook students collected a large crate of apples which they took to their Foods Room and made fruit kebabs. Casebrook also has a productive blackberry patch. The blackberries were frozen to be used in the Foods Room in winter.

At Waitakiri School Nicholas, Savannah, Georgia and Aurora collected golden queen peaches and apples. They washed them, cut them up and shared them. They described the apples as sweet and sour while the peaches were "peachy".

Children from Gilberthorpe School and Hornby Primary School also used the "sweet and sour" description for their apples.

Cobham Intermediate children picked their black boy peaches and delighted just being in the orchard and eating fresh fruit from their trees. The children picked a bag of peaches for cooking.

Canterbury Horticultural Society sends our best wishes to South New Brighton School which suffered a fire after an electrical fault early this year. At this time all but two of their trees were saved.

We also extend our best wishes to Russley School which also suffered a fire last September and is still rebuilding after that event. Russley is lucky to have all its trees just outside the builders' fence line.

If you wish to join our programme contact Mary Tingey via email: mary@aplaceoflearning.co.nz

Thanks to Southern Woods and Waimea Nurseries



Canterbury Horticultural Society

Share or download a copy of this newsletter from:
www.chsgardens.co.nz/orchards-in-schools

“

**The orchard is fun.
I learnt a lot.**

Shamanay
Casebrook School

”

Under storey.

We plant the same trees in all the schools with slight variations in variety from year to year. In every school the trees behave uniquely. It is an expression of the wonderful diversity of our planet. Each school has different shelter, air movement and soil. However the most outstanding contributor across all the schools to the health of the trees is a healthy under storey. The under storey maintains moisture and fertility.

Organic vineyards in New Zealand are using wildflower crops to replace sprays. Kings Seeds sell a Beneficial Insect Blend and a Pollinator Blend. The easiest way to create an under storey is to clear the grass and sow wild flowers. The flowers bring a diversity of insect life including bees and butterflies.

Fennel is an orchard companion. At Breens intermediate there was a large fennel plant in full flower. It was a humming mini ecosystem with bees and other insects being provided for from the burst of bright yellow flowers. The sheer diversity of life and the speeding action attracted everyone's attention.

Northcote School, thanks to grandparent Tahi, have a thriving vegetable garden under the trees. They've grown celery cabbages, broccoli and cauliflowers .



Northcote School under storey



Riccarton's Golden Queen Peaches

Getting to know our Living Trees.

Trees are alive. Each tree is a little ecosystem of plants, fungi and insects. We visit every tree in the orchard during the autumn and spring visits. We study and classify their leaves. Junior children at Elmwood School made up a leaf game. Children enjoy comparing the leaves of the plums, pears and apples. They look for shape and texture.

The children examine the trees for new growth and take measurements. The children start to see their trees as friends.

The students do a great job of maintaining their trees. At Chisnallwood and Hornby Primary they removed the stakes and ties as their trees are now well grown.

Participating Schools.

2020: Belfast School, Hilmorton High School, Kirkwood Intermediate and Knights Stream School.

Planted 2019 Breens Intermediate, Bishopdale School, Wigram

School, Marshland School, South New Brighton School.

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

Planted 2017 Isleworth School, Haeata Community Campus, Fendalton Open-air School, Elmwood Normal

Primary School, Wairakei School, Chisnallwood Intermediate.

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

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