



The Kitchen Garden Classroom: Educating Children for a Healthy Future 13
October 2008 Abbotsford Convent
Session C4: Summer Planning in the Garden

Garden specialists gathered together at the conference to pool ideas for summer planning (and planting) in the garden. In particular they were thinking about how to deal with the long holidays: planting for a productive early Term 1 harvest, dealing with watering restrictions, and garden supervision over the break. The following notes represent a summary of the ideas discussed. This advice may be useful for future holiday planting.

Planting for a productive early Term 1 harvest:

- Use a system of continuous planting toward the final weeks of term – so that crops don't ripen in bulk, but a few of any particular crop ripen at one time.
- Plant late in the school term – including in the last week of school.
- Develop microclimates in the garden – shade tolerant crops, for example, can be planted on the south side of taller crops (such as corn) and can benefit from the shadows cast.
- Check for plants that are adaptable to heat and drier conditions when you choose plants.
- Companion plant to minimise pest damage over the summer – or to have a hardy crop protect another less hardy crop from hot winds.
- Combat snails with egg shells and organic spray.
- Reminder in planting: rotate crops – follow one crop with a different crop or with a green manure crop.

Dealing with watering restrictions:

- Check irrigation systems are in good working order before the holidays
- If there are no irrigation systems in place, or to supplement a drip system, draw up a watering roster of friends of the school garden. This might include parents, students, willing staff and garden volunteers.
- Compost the garden in the last week of school, and then add new mulch – lucerne hay, sugar cane, old rice hulls, silage, manure.

Garden supervision:

- Employ a gardener or get community involvement in garden care over summer.
- Work out a harvest roster for produce that will ripen during the holidays. The kitchen specialist or kitchen volunteers might like to pick, then preserve during the holidays and bring into school early in term 1. Such volunteers would need to keep an eye on stone fruit ripening (e.g. apricots, peaches).
- Invest in a dehydrator to preserve harvest.