

# SCHOOL STORIES



## North Ryde Public School

### Could you introduce us to your school?

We are North Ryde Public School, located in North Ryde New South Wales.

### Describe your school garden.

In 2011 we received a grant from Australian Organic to further develop the school's existing vegetable garden program. The staff came together and created a garden committee to design a new program. The school gained support from the local community, visited other schools with successful vegetable gardens, conferred with volunteers and contacted local businesses for assistance.

We now have an organic vegetable garden with five raised garden beds, a new shed, a class set of gloves and tools, watering cans, a worm farm, a cover for our compost and a fantastic greenhouse.



### How does the garden fit into school life?

The garden program consists of a staff garden committee, a garden club, known as "The Garden Crew", and excellent lessons that are being taught at all stages. The school also created a digital story simulating a TV garden show, which outlines its gardening journey. It was great fun!

### Describe a problem that you have had to face or tackle.

The development of the original garden began in 1995. A local volunteer helped the school create five small ground level vegetable patches. Old milk cartoons were used as watering cans and there was one small trowel to plant seedlings. For 20 minutes each week, a class would visit the garden to weed and water the plants. While this program was working well, it was not linked specifically to environmental education goals. The program needed to become more sustainable and engaging for students.

### Do you have an interesting fact or story to share?

The school community understood how the garden could be used as a living resource for all students. The goal was to educate students about growing and harvesting their own food. Furthermore, the school wanted to encourage sustainable and healthy living.

### How has the Australian Organic Schools program benefited your school?

Our school has not only benefited from the new equipment and tools, it has also benefited educationally. Australian Organic has provided fantastic units of work which take students and teachers on a practical journey that explores the ins and outs of organic gardening. The lessons are easy to follow and add an extra element to create a well functioning organic garden program.