

Media Release: Biological Farmers of Australia, 10th May 2011

## **New initiative supports leading school gardens**

The BFA Organic School Gardens **Leader Schools Program** is providing assistance to ten Australian Primary schools leading the way in the development of their organic school garden programs.

The 'Leader Schools' Program initiative recognises and rewards schools whose gardening program and commitment to its development are outstanding. Leader Schools are provided with materials and equipment such as organic approved fertilisers, worms, seeds and weed mats, along with additional support in the teaching of organic gardening as part of the school curriculum.

In May 2010, not-for-profit organic representative body Biological Farmers of Australia released a free national program for all Australian Primary Schools. The BFA Organic School Gardens Program (OSGP) is an education program that has been developed in line with recognised organic standards to assist schools to develop their organic school gardens and teach school children in a practical and enjoyable way about organic gardening, while also complimenting national curriculum priorities and requirements.

With an average of over 50 schools registering to the program each month across Australia, BFA has developed four support programs including 'Leader Schools' to build on schools' learning experiences, offer networking opportunities, funding, and other assistance.

With school garden programs reaching a popular high around the globe, BFA Organic School Gardens Program Manager Jane Burns says "the Leader Schools Program rewards schools who are showing a commitment and leadership in developing school garden programs with the support of a materials grant and teaching support as well promotional benefits.

"We are recognising these schools for their approach and commitment to developing and maintaining their gardening program as a part of the school curriculum. Research provides overwhelming evidence of the advantages: positive social skills, influencing healthy diet choices, academic achievement, and fostering environmental stewardship."

The Leader School Program will celebrate schools' successes with garden launch events and publication of student gardening stories, images, and videos on the BFA Organic School Gardens website and in well known publications.

There will be the opportunity for schools to participate in key events such as a media launches and events which celebrate key milestones in the Program's development.

Congratulations to the following named Leader Schools: Belgrave Heights Christian School (VIC); Bourke Public School (NSW); Bullarto Primary School (VIC); Burdekin Christian College (QLD); Chevallum State School (QLD); Clayton North Primary School (VIC); Croydon West Primary School (VIC); Exeter Primary School (TAS); The Armidale Waldorf School (NSW); Valkstone Primary School (VIC).

~ENDS~

**About the BFA Organic School Gardens Program**

Schools all across Australia are discovering the wonders of organic gardening following the introduction of BFA's Organic School Gardens program in mid-2010. The program is available free to all Australian schools and is designed for students aged eight to 12 years. Written in line with Australian organic standards, the program provides written materials for lessons taking place both inside and outside the classroom (along with comprehensive notes for supervisors and educators).

The program is available to view and download now at: [www.organicschools.com.au](http://www.organicschools.com.au).

**Media contacts:**

Jane Burns  
Program Manager, BFA Organic School Gardens  
Biological Farmers of Australia Ltd (BFA)  
Mob 0408 485585

Holly Vyner  
General Manager  
Biological Farmers of Australia Ltd (BFA)  
Ph (07) 3350 5716

**Related industry news stories:**

- 18-04-11: [Organic vs conventional agriculture: 20 year trial reveals major benefits of organic production](#)
- 03-03-11: [Coal seam gas and organic production: can they co-exist?](#)
- 25-03-11: [Buyer Beware: Insist on 'certified' when buying organic](#)
- 18-2-11: [BFA Organic School Gardens' Adopt-a-Farmer Program to star on Channel 31's Vasili's Garden](#)
- 31-1-11: [New initiative encourages Australian primary school students to 'Adopt a Farmer'](#)
- 8-12-10: [World first: ACO becomes first international body accredited to Korean organic standards](#)
- 17-9-10: [ACO develops export opportunities for Australian organic cosmetics](#)
- 13-9-10: [Organic strawberries - sweeter in more ways than one](#)
- 20-8-10: [Australian organic industry to hit \\$1 Billion retail in 2010](#)
- 09-6-10: [Obesity and diabetes 'weigh in' to pesticides debate](#)
- 04-6-10: [Greater transparency of food labelling needed: BFA](#)
- 26-5-10: [Organic lifestyle the best way to avoid cancer](#)
- 18-5-10: [Organophosphate pesticides link to ADHD – New US study](#)
- 16-3-10: [Choice of the Best – ACO Receives National Award](#)