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New funding initiative helps 'grow' Organic School Gardens Program in Australia

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) has partnered with Vitasoy Australia to provide start up grants for Primary Schools to assist with the establishment of an organic garden, as part of the Organic School Gardens Program (OSGP).

As one of four new sub programs within the OSGP, the **Vitasoy Australia Starter Schools Program** has provided ten Primary Schools across Australia with monetary grants towards the purchase of gardening materials and equipment.

With school gardening programs rising in popularity around the globe, Vitasoy Australia says they are 'proud to support the Organic School Gardens Program to help children on their journey towards better health and wellbeing through the practical experience of watching food grow in their own school garden'.

Jane Burns, OSGP manager says, "Vitasoy's Starter Schools Program provides schools with a wonderful opportunity to set up a school garden program, adding to, and enriching, their current curriculum".

Since its inception in May 2010, more than 800 schools have registered for the free national BFA Organic School Gardens Program. The OSGP is the only school garden program based on recognised organic standards in Australia. The program aims to teach children aged eight to 12 about the benefits of growing their own fresh and organic food through the creation and maintenance of an organic school garden, with lesson plans focusing on organic systems for plant, human and animal health and the environment.

"There is overwhelming research which shows the advantages of schools incorporating gardening into the curriculum including positive social skills, influencing healthy diet choices, academic achievement and fostering environmental stewardship," Ms Burns said.

The BFA will share the schools' stories and celebrate their successes with school garden launches and program updates on the BFA Organic School Gardens Program website at www.organicschools.com.au and in BFA Group publications Australian Organic Producer and Australian Certified Organic Magazine.

For more information on the Biological Farmers of Australia's Organic School Gardens Program, please visit www.organicschools.com.au. The BFA acknowledges the generous support of Vitasoy Australia as the Starter Schools Program Partner.

2011 Recipients of the Vitasoy Australia Starter Schools Program grants:

North Ryde Public School (NSW)
 Mary Brooksbank School (NSW)
 Ubobo State School (QLD)
 Goornong Primary School (VIC)
 Newhaven College Junior Campus (VIC)



Silvan Primary School (VIC)
Dodges Ferry Primary School (TAS)
Good Shepherd Catholic Primary (ACT)
St Brigid's Catholic School (SA)
Clifton Hills Primary School (WA)

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