

Biological Farmers of Australia

Media Release

March 16, 2010

BFA ORGANIC SCHOOL GARDENS PROGRAM NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Planting the Seeds of Learning about the origins of good food and health

With record levels of childhood obesity and poor nutrition an increasing issue among Australian children, it has never been more critical for our nation to take active steps in educating young people about the importance of eating the 'right' food for a healthy lifestyle and environment, according to the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA).

In response to continuous requests from teachers and parents alike, the BFA has this week released a free resource, the BFA Organic School Gardens Program, featuring practical and easy-to-use online resources and lesson plans.

The first of its kind in Australia, the program is available to all Australian primary schools as a free on-line resource for teachers and students.

The program has been put together with the assistance of esteemed organic gardener, farmer and author Lyn Bagnall, who has researched, designed and written the program.

BFA General Manager Holly Vyner says that gardening programs are being adopted in schools around the world as educators recognise the benefits to their students and the relevance of these programs to other subjects in the school curriculum.

"School gardens provide practical applications for nutrition, mathematics, the sciences, the environment, social studies and art, and make learning more meaningful for students," Ms Vyner said.

"Studies indicate that children who grow their own food are more likely to understand good nutrition develop a preference for eating fresh fruit and vegetables, learn environmental stewardship and gain the ability to work cooperatively. Increased parental involvement in garden programs is an added bonus," she said.

Ms Vyner went on to say that the many advantages of growing and eating organic food for encouraging long-term health are being well received by schools in the effort to combat the record levels of childhood obesity and other health concerns.

Lyn Bagnall, who has recently published the second edition of her popular book "Easy Organic Gardening and Moon Planting", says that children are the future guardians of the planet.

"Sharing our knowledge of organic cultivation will provide the younger generation with the skills and enthusiasm they need to face the challenges of producing delicious,



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healthy food, in a sustainable manner, for an increasing population on a warmer planet," Mrs Bagnall said.

"This program differs from other available resources, being based upon Australian organic standards, written for Southern Hemisphere growing seasons and, while lessons are provided on nutrition, the focus is on environmentally-friendly growing more so than home economics," she said.

The program is available to view and download now at the link: www.organicschools.com.au.

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