

# Woodvale Primary School

• Waterwise Program • Compost • Worm Farms • Eco-centre

## Background

Woodvale Primary School in Perth's northern suburbs is an excellent example of how two environmental programs can complement each other. The Waste Wise and Waterwise programs are apt partners to educate Woodvale's students in the ways of environmental responsibility and sustainability.

Three inspiring teachers paved the way for Woodvale Primary School's success in the Waste Wise Schools Program. The school had made inroads in the Waterwise program since 2002 and saw Waste Wise as a natural progression and extension of their environmental principles. Waste Wise began at the school in 2005.

## Compost and Worm Farms

A speaker from the Wanneroo City Council was a welcome guest for composting champions Year 4/5 students, to explain the delicate balance of organic waste, moisture and aeration for the perfect composting process.

"Brain food" (fruit and vegetables consumed in class), lunch and canteen scraps and leftover food donations from home are broken down in the compost bins located around the school.

Monitors from each class drop off scraps, then wash, dry and return the containers. Food scraps are mixed with shredded newspaper, sawdust and green waste.

The school found that cutting up the food was time consuming so scraps are now broken down in the compost systems first, and then the nutrient-rich compost is fed to the worms.

Responsibility in setting up eight worm farms for the school was left to the students who rang local businesses for quotes and donations. Their work has resulted in pride and commitment to the care of the worm farms.

## Enterprise

Enterprise and marketing is another important aspect of Waste Wise and an enormous level of research and technology skills have gone into PowerPoint promotions, poster advertisements and labelling of the worm products. Sales are held at school assemblies, before school or through an order system.



VEGETABLE SCRAPS ARE WEIGHED BEFORE COMPOSTING.



THE "COMPOST MATE" IS A HANDY TOOL USED TO AERATE THE COMPOST. VEGETABLE SCRAPS ARE CHOPPED BY ROSTERED YEAR 5-7 CLASSES FOR COMPOST AND WORM FARMS.



STUDENTS DESIGN CREATIVE LABELS FOR THE REUSED JUICE BOTTLES CONTAINING FERTILISER.



STUDENTS FROM THE YEAR 4/5 CLASS HAVE BEEN BUSY MAKING POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS WITH IMAGES, HYPERLINKS AND COMPREHENSIVE FACTS ABOUT WORMS.



“With enterprise you can turn waste into cash and this can be used to fund lots of other worthwhile projects.” *Michael Dowling, Year 4/5 teacher*

## Curriculum Integration

Students have used their Maths and Technology skills to develop Excel tables and computer-generated graphs for information posters.

**Approximately 1.5 tonnes of food scraps is diverted from landfill per year, according to calculations in a Year 4/5 audit.** This information and other calculations were included in a school newspaper report promoting the financial and environmental benefits of the worm farms and compost to parents and the school community.

## Eco-centre

Woodvale Primary School will soon boast its own Eco-centre thanks to the busy-bee efforts of parents and communication skills of their children who sought quotes for materials to build and run the centre.

The Eco-centre will house equipment, compost bins, worm farms, a seedling propagation area, permaculture garden plots and possibly chickens. The school's water tank will be moved to sit alongside the Eco-centre.

## Waste Wise and Waterwise Programs – partnering for the environment

Waterwise gardens have been progressively developed around the school since 2002 with students designing and planting the gardens as well as seeking quotes for materials and equipment from local businesses.



*WATERING AT WOODVALE WAS REDUCED WHEN A GRASSED AREA LEADING TO THE OVAL WAS REPLACED BY A TIERED PAVED AREA.*



*STUDENTS CARE FOR WATERWISE GARDENS WITH THE SCHOOL'S MULCH AND WORM WEE.*

In 2005 the school received a \$40,000 Community Water Grant.

**Since the inception of Waste Wise at the school in 2005, the Waterwise gardens are enjoying the benefits of Waste Wise products, including mulch, worm castings and compost.**

Integrating these two programs has helped students understand the connection between various environmental issues.

## Savings and Benefits

Approximately \$1000 has been made or saved for the school over the past year from donated materials and sales of worm products.

## Awards and Public Recognition

- 2005 – Local news coverage for the successful worm farm program and for the launch of their Community Water Grant.
- 2003 – The Waterwise project featured in the Garden Week lift-out for The West Australian newspaper.
- Enterprise Education Awards (environmental focus) – Excellence Award.
- 2003 – Finalist in Education Innovation Awards.

