

Our Gifted Garden

by Bernadette Wilson

Does your school have a garden? Our school does. In fact, our school entered a garden in the Ellerslie International Flower Show!

Like lots of New Zealand schools, Raumati South School is an **Enviroschool**. Students in Enviroschools learn how to grow healthy plants and how to protect the environment for the future. Our school garden has won lots of awards for being **sustainable**. (That means the garden grows plants without harming the environment or using too much water or taking the goodness out of the soil.)

The Ellerslie International Flower Show began in Auckland in 1994, but it now takes place in Christchurch. Each year, garden designers set up their garden displays and thousands of people come to see them. There are prizes for the best gardens.



Planning the garden

The students and teachers who plant and care for the garden are called the Go Green team. The flower show was going to be held in March, so we had six months to plan and prepare our garden. We wanted to make it really special. Mr Stewart and Mrs Turner helped us to design it. (They organise our Go Green team.)

The rules said that the garden had to be 6 metres long and 6 metres wide. We wanted to have vegetables, herbs, and fruit as well as other plants. We also wanted some New Zealand native plants so that we could have lizards and wētā. Every class came up with ideas for things they wanted to see.

Then we drew a plan of the garden.

Our Garden



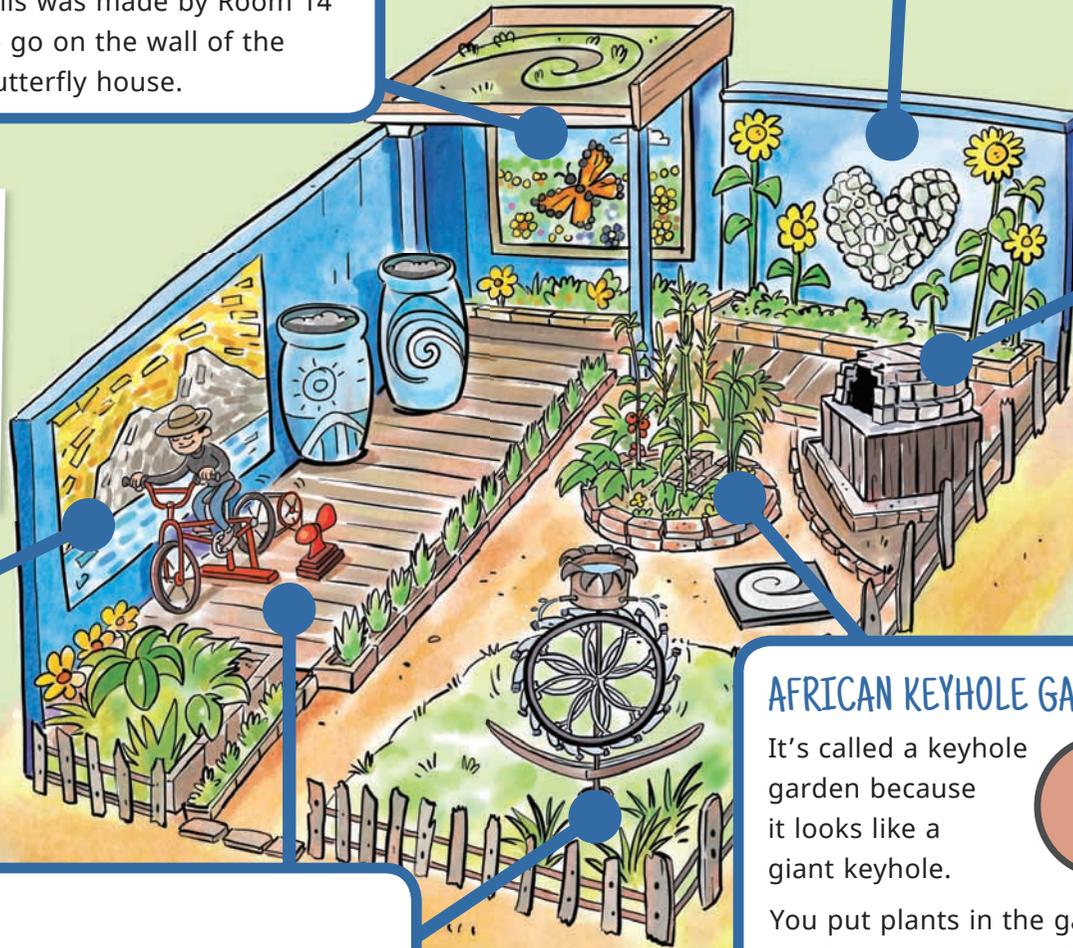
BUTTERFLY ART

This was made by Room 14 to go on the wall of the butterfly house.



MURAL

This mural, showing scenes of the Kāpiti Coast, was made out of driftwood.



PUMICE HEART

All the children at Raumati South School wrote their names on pieces of pumice and glued them onto this heart-shaped board.



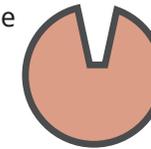
PIZZA OVEN

This was made of bricks and cement. You heat it by lighting a wood fire inside the oven.



AFRICAN KEYHOLE GARDEN

It's called a keyhole garden because it looks like a giant keyhole.



You put plants in the garden beds around the outside. In the centre is an area where you put all your vegetable and fruit scraps to make compost. The compost helps to hold water and keep the soil moist. These gardens are used in Africa where there is not much rain.

WATERWHEEL

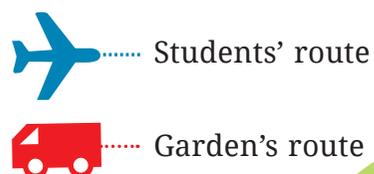
Room 17 designed a waterwheel to water the plants. Their teacher, Mr Aiken, had a pump. We used an old bike to generate the power to make the pump work.



Making and moving the garden

We got to work making all the things we wanted in our garden and getting the plants ready. We worked in school time and over the summer holidays as well so that we would be ready by March.

When March arrived, we packed up our garden and carefully put it in a big truck to go to Christchurch. It's not easy to move a whole garden! Fourteen students from the Go Green team went to Christchurch too, as well as some teachers and parents. The truck (with the garden inside) went on the inter-island ferry and then by road to Christchurch, but we went on a plane.



Judging the gardens

When we got to Christchurch, we worked as a team to set up the garden. We had two days to get it ready for the judges.

The judges came and looked at our garden and asked us lots of questions. They wanted to know what everything in our garden was for and how each thing worked.

After they had looked at all the gardens, the judges went away to decide on the prizewinners. We were feeling nervous but excited. We thought our garden looked great, but had the judges liked it too? Finally, they announced the winners – we had won a silver award!



The people's choice

When the judging was over, the show was opened to the public. Crowds of people came, and most of them stopped to look at our garden. We took turns speaking to them about it.

Everyone loved the bicycle and the way it made the waterwheel turn. Lots of people had a go on it – including some well-known ones. Visitors to the show could vote for their favourite garden, and guess what! They chose our garden. So we won another award – the People's Choice award! That night we were on the TV news. Our families and everyone at Raumati South School were really proud of us.



Giving our garden away

Five days later, it was time to take the garden apart again. When the flower show ends, people can buy things in the gardens that they like, but we had decided to gift our garden to Wharenui School in Christchurch because it's an Enviroschool, too.

Early the next morning, we were welcomed with a pōwhiri at Wharenui School. Then we worked with the students and parents to rebuild the garden – just as it was before.

It was sad to say goodbye to our special garden because we had spent so much time looking after it. But we know Wharenui School will care for it in the same way. And one day, some of us might return to Christchurch and see our Gifted Garden.

All Black Kieran Read tries out the bicycle that powers the waterwheel.



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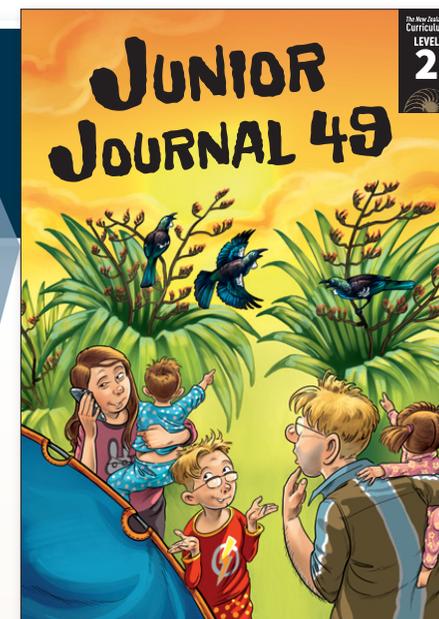
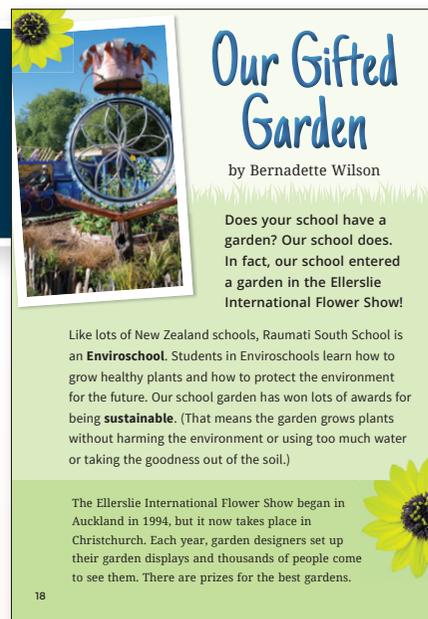
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