

JCCA Bush Tucker Garden and Dual Naming Announced

John Curtin College of the Arts is excited to announce the development of Meearn Boodjah, our bush tucker garden, and Dual Namings in Noongar for buildings and spaces on campus.

This long term, community driven project will continue to grow and develop over the coming years with ongoing collaboration and work with local community to source grants, bring in local knowledge and expose the College community to some of the rich food cultures of the Whadjuk people of Walyalup.

We are four years into the project which we will continue to cultivate and grow.

Back in 2018, Jessica Sherrell, Senior Classroom Teacher of Technologies, had been collaborating with Marissa Verma from Bindi Bindi Dreaming, to incorporate bush tucker ingredients and recipes into the curriculum for Food students.



JCCA Foundation Technologies staff, in partnership with My Esaa Parka skin Binle Binle Dreaming knowledge, with initial help from Peta Scorer (Assistant Head of Learning – Science) and the College’s Roots and Shoots Club, had been managing a herb and vegetable garden in the Year 9 quad and nearby surrounds for a number of years.

Jessica was inspired by her work with Ms Verma and developed a vision for the garden.

A new direction which would include growing, harvesting and cooking local bush tucker ingredients.

Community guests, staff and students gathered for a Welcome To Country, Smoking Ceremony, Speeches and a dance performance on Thursday 3 November, to announce the project.

Guests included Noongar Elders Margaret Collard, Annette Bennell and Joy Collard, Fremantle Council representatives Ali Doherty, Shannon Lyons and Ethan Kelly and Fremantle Arts Centre representatives Caris Harper, Sarah Wilkinson and Anna Reece.

Additionally students and staff from Quairading District High School visited the College to attend the ceremony and tour the grounds.

Cultural ceremonies including a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony were performed by Noongar Elder sisters Freda Ogilvie and Betty Garlett, both John Curtin alumni, followed by a performance by Gifted and Talented (GAT) Dance students Malachi Hayward (Year 7) and Conway Chunnary (Year 11), accompanied by Malachi's grandfather, Ken Hayward on didgeridoo.

We are incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Noongar Elder Freda Ogilvie who offered consultation on naming the garden and our buildings based on their use or purpose, such as Kaartidjin (knowledge) for the Learning Centre and Dookerniny (cooking) for the Canteen.

Elder Freda has been an invaluable support and source of knowledge during the development of this project and we are so appreciative of all of the time she has dedicated to working with and teaching us.

Students and staff have been hard at work planting native edible plants and creating signage for the bush tucker garden in the Year Nine quad.

Plants currently in the garden include Native Lemongrass, Wilyawa (Red Eyed Wattle), Bain (Coastal Pigface), Panjang (Dune Moses Wattle), Murin Murin (Maroon Bush), Dumbari (Quandong), Warrine (Native Yam), Berry Saltbush, Geraldton Wax and Purngep (Old Man Saltbush).

This garden and its produce will be utilised in Food Technologies classes.

The development of the project has been a collaboration between staff and students of the Visual Arts Department and Technologies Department as well as students of Maali Mia, the College's First Nations student group.

Shaaron Du Bignon, a Visual Art teacher at the College, held special classes with past and present Year 9 GAT Visual Art students together with Noongar artist Sharyn Egan to draw the beautiful botanical line drawings which Nada Lopicich, Visual Arts Technician, then developed into designs to be used as signage for the garden.

Walter Maguire (Teacher – Design and Technology, Technical Theatre Production) and his Year 11 Certificate Production students produced and built the signs which were installed recently.





This project has truly been a collaboration, with assistance from many departments in the school.

It would not be possible without the hard work of our grounds people who have been tirelessly weeding, staking, pruning, watering and mulching all year to maintain and cultivate the healthy garden we have today.

The College P&C also contributed greatly, successfully applying for a Healthway's grant that injected some much-needed funds into the project.

Meearn Boodjah is fitted with a garden set, including a planter box, bench and table thanks to our win in the Colgate Community Garden Challenge in 2020.

The set is made of oral care waste products collected and recycled by the College.

We received this prize for recycling the most oral hygiene products of any school in the competition.

"Well done and thank you to our community for this excellent result that we will continue to benefit from for years to come" Assistant Head of Learning- Science, Peta Scorer.

This space will be used by all of our community, allowing us to come together as a collective and share culture.

"First Nations communities have always known about the important connection between people and the land.

In recognition of this, we hope to invite many Noongar Elders and other First Nations educators into this space to continue to share their knowledge of Caring for Country with staff and students.

In particular the relationship between plants and animals, the six Noongar seasons and knowledge and use of plants for bush tucker and medicine.

We envision the space will continue to grow, welcoming more native animals and insects, encouraging sustainability and most importantly to be a place of learning about our First Nations culture. " – Jess Sherrell, Senior Classroom Teacher of Technologies.