

Lessons in the Gardens – Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha



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Overview

The Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha offers a wide range of hands-on outdoor learning opportunities for early childhood, primary and senior school groups. Our lessons are aligned with both the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines and Australian Curriculum, and have been designed to suit specific early childhood, prep, primary and secondary levels. Help your students see science theory in action, explore geographical concepts, immerse themselves in botanical art and develop sustainable approaches to living with our trained and knowledgeable education staff.

We are currently in the process of re-writing the lessons to suit the v9.0 Australian Curriculum and are adding these as they are completed. Teachers are encouraged to contact the Education and Interpretation Coordinator on BotGardensEd@brisbane.qld.gov.au for more information.

Please note: you can use 'Ctrl f' (for PCs) or 'Command f' (for Macs) to search this document for specific words.



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Other Australian curriculum areas and Cross-curriculum priorities (Years Prep – 12)

For school-aged learners, jump start their imaginations and creativity by taking inspiration from the shape, colour, form and texture of leaves and flowers, or creating botanical masterpieces from found materials. Explore Aboriginal or Japanese culture through their use of plants for aesthetic and practical purposes, or get active and healthy by making your own garden for school.

Lesson Details	Overview
Years Prep – 6 Hands on art Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 1.5 hours	<i>Years Prep – 2:</i> Students explore shape, line, colour, and texture in hands-on art activities that focus on nature as a source of artistic inspiration. <i>Years 3 – 4:</i> Students examine the artistic possibilities of using natural images and vegetation. Through sketch and making their own creations from natural materials, they experiment with patterns, balance, structure and contrast. <i>Year 5 – 6:</i> Using natural materials, students apply their understanding of visual arts processes and materials to create ephemeral environmental artworks. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 The Arts Visual Arts • Years Prep: - Developing practices and skills ○ Students learn to use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas (AC9AVAFD01) - Creating and making ○ Students learn to create arts works that communicate ideas (AC9AVAFD01)

Lesson Details	Overview
	- Years 1 – 2: Developing practices and skills - Students learn to experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials (AC9AVA2D01) - Years 3 – 4: Developing practices and skills - Students learn to experiment with a range of ways to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials (AC9AVA4D01) - Years 5 – 6: Developing practices and skills - Students learn to experiment with, document and reflect on ways to use a range of visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials (AC9AVA6D01) Creating and making - Students learn to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning (AC9AVA6C01)
Years Prep – 6 Aboriginal games and food plants Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 1.5 hours	Students play a selection of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander games; experience tasting several native food plants and take part in string-making. Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 and v9.0 Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures



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Lesson Details	Overview
Years 4 – 6 Aboriginal use of rainforest plants (primary) Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 1.5 hours	Investigate how specific plants were/are used by Aboriginal communities for food, tools, and medicines. Students examine and taste some native food plants, explore native plants' use as fibres and consider the diverse role of plants in Aboriginal culture. Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 <i>and</i> v9.0 Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
Years 7 – 12 Aboriginal use of rainforest plants (secondary) Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 2 hours	Investigate how specific plants were/are used by Aboriginal communities for food, tools, and medicines. Students examine and taste some native food plants, explore native plants' use as fibres and consider the diverse role of plants in Aboriginal culture. Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 <i>and</i> v9.0 Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
Years 4 – 6 The Japanese Garden (primary) Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 1.5 hours	Examine the cultural significance of Japanese gardens and investigate the garden's design features. Students use the setting as inspiration for Japanese sumi-e painting and haiku poetry. Optional subcomponent: The Bamboo Grove and Bonsai House can be included in this lesson. Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 <i>and</i> v9.0 Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia



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	ACARA v8.4 and v9.0 Languages Japanese F – 10 Sequence Additional options: In combination with your lesson, associated Japanese cultural experiences can be provided by the Japanese Cultural Centre. Their schools' program includes the following educational activities. These are generally 30 minutes each in duration and are combined to produce two activities in an hour. • Tea ceremony • Shakuhachi (flute) music • Martial arts (Aikitaijutsu) • Shodo (calligraphy) • Sumie (brush painting) • Origami • Yukata fittings • Haiku Enquiries and bookings need to be made with Tomoko White (jccbrisbane@yahoo.com.au). Schools are asked to notify the botanic gardens if they choose to engage this service. This will enable areas in the botanic gardens required for the Japanese Cultural Centre performances to be reserved for you. Some schools opt to further their students' cultural experience by organising bento boxes. Some of the organisations utilised by schools previously include: • Nonbei Sake Bar and BBQ Schools are asked to notify the botanic gardens if they choose to engage this service. This will assist in the botanic gardens being able to provide delivery information to the service provider.



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Years 7 – 12 The Japanese Garden (secondary) Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 2 hours	Examine the cultural significance of Japanese gardens and investigate the garden's design features. Students use the setting as inspiration for Japanese sumi-e painting and haiku poetry. Optional subcomponent: The Bamboo Grove and Bonsai House can be included in this lesson. Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 and v9.0 Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: • Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia ACARA v8.4 and v9.0 Languages Japanese F – 10 Sequence Japanese, QCAA 2025 v 1.3 Years 11-12: • Unit 2: Exploring our world ○ In Unit 2, students move beyond their personal world to how they engage with the wider world. They do this by exploring options for personal travel and exploration in Japanese-speaking communities and Australia, and by considering the associated cultural conventions. Students consider the ways that Japanese culture has contributed to the world, and reflect upon their experiences, compare options and express preferences, while appreciating diverse cultural values. • Unit 3: Our society; culture and identity ○ In Unit 3, students investigate their place in society. They consider groups in the community and how identity is linked or challenged by membership of these groups. Students also explore the role of the arts as a contributor to the formation of culture and identity, and how sporting and leisure activities both reflect and shape our lifestyle.



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Years 3 – 6 Let's grow! Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha Duration: 1.5 hours	What better place to learn about sustainable gardening than a botanic gardens? Surrounded by the natural world, students can learn how plants support one another, discuss the importance of growing and eating local foods, use fresh seasonal plants to create a healthy snack, learn about fibre plants or composting and worm farming, design a garden that mimics natural systems to produce food and other useful products, or discover how to improve their school's soil to support healthy gardens and the Earth's systems. Teachers select three components from the six following: Companion planting: Students learn how many plants work together to reduce the amount of maintenance a garden needs, improve the soil and attract beneficial insects. Students make a paper pot and take home a seasonally appropriate seed or seedling for their home or school garden. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Years 3 and 4 - Health and Physical Education Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing (AC9HP4P10) Making active choices - Students learn to participate in physical activities in natural and outdoor settings to examine factors that can influence their own and others' participation (AC9HP4M05) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: - Sustainability



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	<i>Eating local, seasonal foods and food miles:</i> Students learn how eating local and seasonally available foods is a healthier and more sustainable food choice. They will discover how far some foods must travel to and within Australia, including those not seasonally available or suited to our local growing conditions. Students sample seasonal foods; a choice of either Australian native foods or 'traditional' herbs and vegetables may be selected. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Health and Physical Education, Years 3 and 4 Making healthy and safe choices • Students learn to interpret the nature and intention of health information and messages, and reflect on how they influence personal decisions and behaviours (AC9HP4P09) • Students learn to investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing (AC9HP4P10) Making active choices • Students learn to participate in physical activities in natural and outdoor settings to examine factors that can influence their own and others' participation (AC9HP4M05) Health and Physical Education, Years 5 and 6 Making healthy and safe choices • Students learn to investigate different sources and types of health information and how these apply to their own and others' health choices (AC9HP6P09) • Students learn to analyse how behaviours influence the health, safety, relationships and wellbeing of individuals and communities (AC9HP6P10) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: • Sustainability



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	Composting and worm farming: Students discover how they can start a compost bin or worm farm at home or school. They learn about the importance of these two recycling methods, explore why they need similar and different inputs to remain active and healthy, and understand that the end product is healthy soil. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Health and Physical Education, Years 3 and 4 Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing (AC9HP4P10) Making active choices - Students learn to participate in physical activities in natural and outdoor settings to examine factors that can influence their own and others' participation (AC9HP4M05) Design and Technologies, Years 3 and 4 Technologies and society - Students learn to examine design and technologies occupations and factors including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs (AC9TDE4K01) Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to describe the ways of producing food and fibre (AC9TDE4K03) Design and Technologies, Years 5 and 6 Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to explain how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments (AC9TDE6K03) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: - Sustainability

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	Food forest design: Students explore how to design a home or school garden that replicates natural forest systems. They learn how this design can create a garden that is easier to maintain, while also producing food and other useful products. Local environmental conditions and weather patterns are discussed, with an activity illustrating placement of design elements. A mix of native and exotic plants can be used in this component, with the option to create a food forest using only native species. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Health and Physical Education, Years 3 and 4 Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing (AC9HP4P10) Design and Technologies, Years 3 and 4 Technologies and society - Students learn to examine design and technologies occupations and factors including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs (AC9TDE4K01) Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to describe the ways of producing food and fibre (AC9TDE4K03) Health and Physical Education, Years 5 and 6 Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to analyse how behaviours influence the health, safety, relationships and wellbeing of individuals and communities (AC9HP6P10) Design and Technologies, Years 5 and 6 Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to explain how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments (AC9TDE6K03) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: - Sustainability



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	<i>Making healthy soils:</i> Students can either conduct soil tests at school and bring their results with them, or bring school soil samples to their botanic gardens' excursion. Following the examination of their soil test results, the importance of pH, soil texture, soil water penetration and retention are discussed. Students also focus on how they can improve the soil in their home or school garden, leading to better plant health and support of Earth's systems. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Health and Physical Education, Years 3 and 4 Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing (AC9HP4P10) Design and Technologies, Years 3 and 4 Technologies and society - Students learn to examine design and technologies occupations and factors including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs (AC9TDE4K01) Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to describe the ways of producing food and fibre (AC9TDE4K03) Health and Physical Education, Years 5 and 6 Making healthy and safe choices - Students learn to analyse how behaviours influence the health, safety, relationships and wellbeing of individuals and communities (AC9HP6P10) Design and Technologies, Years 5 and 6 Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to explain how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments (AC9TDE6K03) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: - Sustainability



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	<i>Growing and using native fibres:</i> Students are introduced to a small selection of native fibre plants that can be grown at home or school. After exploring how these grow and can be processed to make useful and sustainable fibres, students use First Nations methods to make string to take home. Curriculum links: ACARA v9.0 Design and Technologies, Years 3 and 4 Technologies and society - Students learn to examine design and technologies occupations and factors including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs (AC9TDE4K01) Technologies context: Food and fibre production; Food specialisations - Students learn to describe the ways of producing food and fibre (AC9TDE4K03) Design and Technologies, Years 5 and 6 Technologies and society - Students learn to explain how people in design and technologies occupations consider competing factors including sustainability in the design of products, services and environments (AC9TDE6K01) Cross-curriculum priorities Years Prep-10: - Sustainability - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures



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Years 9 – 12 Art in the gardens Delivery location: Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha or City Botanic Gardens Duration: 2 hours	The botanic gardens are a rich source of inspiration for artists. Through exploration of plant collections and using the lens of various artists, students will practice skills and processes, including sketching, printing, photography and ephemeral art, to further their artistic projects. This lesson provides an opportunity to explore environmental issues (e.g. sustainability, conservation, threatened species) or the role of nature in human health and wellbeing (e.g. nature deficit disorder, depression). Teachers select two of the following four components: Environmental/ephemeral art • find inspiration in environmental art e.g. sculpture and architecture, and artists e.g. Goldsworthy • discover the beauty and intricate structure of the botanic gardens' plants and plant materials • create a work of art individually or in collaboration with others • record this ephemeral art via photography, sketching or journalling Sketching • discover the beauty and intricate structure of the botanic gardens' plants and plant materials • explore specific plant collections that suit your projects • collect field sketches as artworks or for further reference/development back in the classroom • learn and practice optional basics of art techniques such as nature journalling, Sumi-e (Japanese ink painting), watercolours Cyanotypes • explore the history and process of making cyanotypes • be inspired by their use in art and scientific illustration • learn and practice the cyanotype process • create cyanotype images using plant materials Photography • explore specific plant collections that suit your project needs • consider elements of art and photographic composition • gather images to use for further reference/development back in the classroom • students will need access to photographic devices (i.e. phones, iPads, cameras) and be familiar with their use



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	Curriculum links: ACARA v8.4 Visual Arts, Year 10 • Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts, or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (ACAVAM125) • Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies, and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions (ACAVAM126) ACARA 9.0 Visual Arts, Year 9 – 10 Developing practices and skills • Students learn to experiment with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to refine skills and develop personal expression (AC9AVA10D01) • Students learn to reflect on the way they and other visual artists respond to influences to inspire, develop and resolve choices they make in their own visual arts practice (AC9AVA10D02) Creating and making • Students learn to select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that reflect personal expression, and represent and/or challenge, ideas, perspectives and/or meaning (AC9AVA10C02) Visual Arts in Practice, QCAA 2024 v1.2 Unit option B: Looking outwards (others) • In this unit, students respond to issues or concerns that take place locally, nationally and/or globally, and investigate how artists or artisans respond to these in their artworks. In the role of artists or artisans, students explore issues and concerns within times, places and spaces, and the impact these have on themselves and others in the community. Students provide their own commentary on the world around them through art-making processes. • Students consider context and purpose when making and responding to artworks. Students work individually and/or collaboratively to experiment with and explore emotive and persuasive visual language,



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	media, technologies and skills used to communicate issues and concerns. They plan an artwork and demonstrate creative thinking skills as they innovate and resolve the planned artwork. • Authentic contexts are used to provide learning experiences and generate purposes for making. Through engaging with various perspectives and/or cultural or social contexts, students have opportunities to learn ways of working and to give and gather feedback, enriching their learning. • Context: community e.g. public or collaborative artwork on urban surfaces or in urban spaces; communicating issues that affect humanity e.g. environmental Visual Art, QCAA 2025 v1.3 Unit 1: Art as lens, Unit 2: Art as code, Unit 3: Art as knowledge • The City and Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha provide an amazing experience in nature that fosters curiosity and provides a stimulus for whichever unit the students are studying. Nature – aside from providing content inspiration and opportunities for student investigation – is also a source of art materials, a space in which to present art and the focus of some of humanity’s greatest controversies and challenges.