

At He Manu Hou gardening supports and develops new skills for Tamariki:

- Responsibility - caring for plants.
- Understanding - tamariki learn about cause and effect: for example, plants die without water, weeds compete with vegetables.
- Self-confidence - achieving their goals and enjoying the food they have grown.
- Love of nature - a chance to learn about the outdoor environment in a safe and pleasant way.
- Reasoning and discovery - Tamariki learn about the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction.
- Physical activity - Tamariki move with confidence, doing something fun and productive.
- Cooperation - including shared play activity and teamwork.
- Creativity - finding new, exciting ways to grow food and process food.



Our mara at He Manu Hou



New top soil for our garden. We worked really hard to unload and transport all the soil but – we are a great team and we did it together!



Garden supports holistic, inclusive, play based learning based on four principles; Whakamana/Empowerment, Kotahitanga/Holistic development, Whānau tangata/Family and community, and Ngā Hononga /relationships.

Our relationship with the land is deeply personal and spiritual. Papatuanuku (earth mother), Ranginui (sky father) and their offspring, amongst others, Tane Mahuta (the forest guardian), Tangaroa (guardian of the sea), Haumietiketike (wild foods) and Rongomatane (cultivated crops), are ancestors. These atua (gods) form part of our individual and collective genealogy (whakapapa), which is shared with the creatures and plants that inhabit the earth. This interconnectivity ensures an ethic of care for those to whom they are spiritually bound and entwines their destinies.



The value of kaitiakitanga establishes relationships between people as well as a persons' relationship with the spiritual realm, and the environment. Kaitiakitanga focuses on rights, responsibilities, relationships, and the role of kaitiaki (guardian) over the natural environment. An important aspect of this is reciprocity between the kaitiaki and the land. The kaitiaki cares for the land ensuring its sustainability and the resource sustains the kaitiaki.



When young children learn kaitiakitanga, they learn to respect, care for, and protect people, places, and things. When they care for the natural environment, in the daily flow of centre life, they develop skills and knowledge that support them in caring for nature throughout their life. This creates a strong sense of identity and connection to the land and generates a deep-seated responsibility to care for and protect it. By promoting children as kaitiaki who care for their land and all within it, a rich, authentic, clean, green environment assures the land is protected and nurtured as the taonga (treasure) it is. This is why we include gardening the care of our local environment and the care of animals within our program.



Gardening is holistic and provides hand on experiences for all. Gardening mahi supports development and growth of skills including: Responsibility - caring for plants. Understanding - as they learn about cause and effect (for example, plants die without water, weeds compete with plants) Self-confidence - from achieving their goals and enjoying the food they have grown. Gardening is a great physical development activity. Young children can practice locomotor skills, body management skills and object control skills while they move from one place to the other carrying tools, soil and water.



Exploring plants/gardening enables tamariki to explore a multitude of curriculum areas such as science and nature. Math and language. Social skills as we learn to work as a team.

Our connectedness with the natural environment ensures our world is sustainable for our tamariki and further generations

Within Aotearoa/New Zealand many early learning centres decided individually to action sustainability within their environment.

Practical hands-on learning based on values and beliefs of connectedness with the natural environment and ensuring a world that was sustainable for children and further generations has led to the development of gardens, worm farms, recycling and a focus on place based learning. In doing so we are teaching our tamariki to be kaitiaki of papatuanuku, connecting tamariki to nature, seasonal cycles, and developing an awareness of eco-systems.

Planning a garden, planting the seeds and watching them grow give tamariki a sense of purpose and responsibility. ... Furthermore, studies show that when children have contact with soil during activities like digging and planting, they have improved moods, better learning experiences and decreased anxiety.

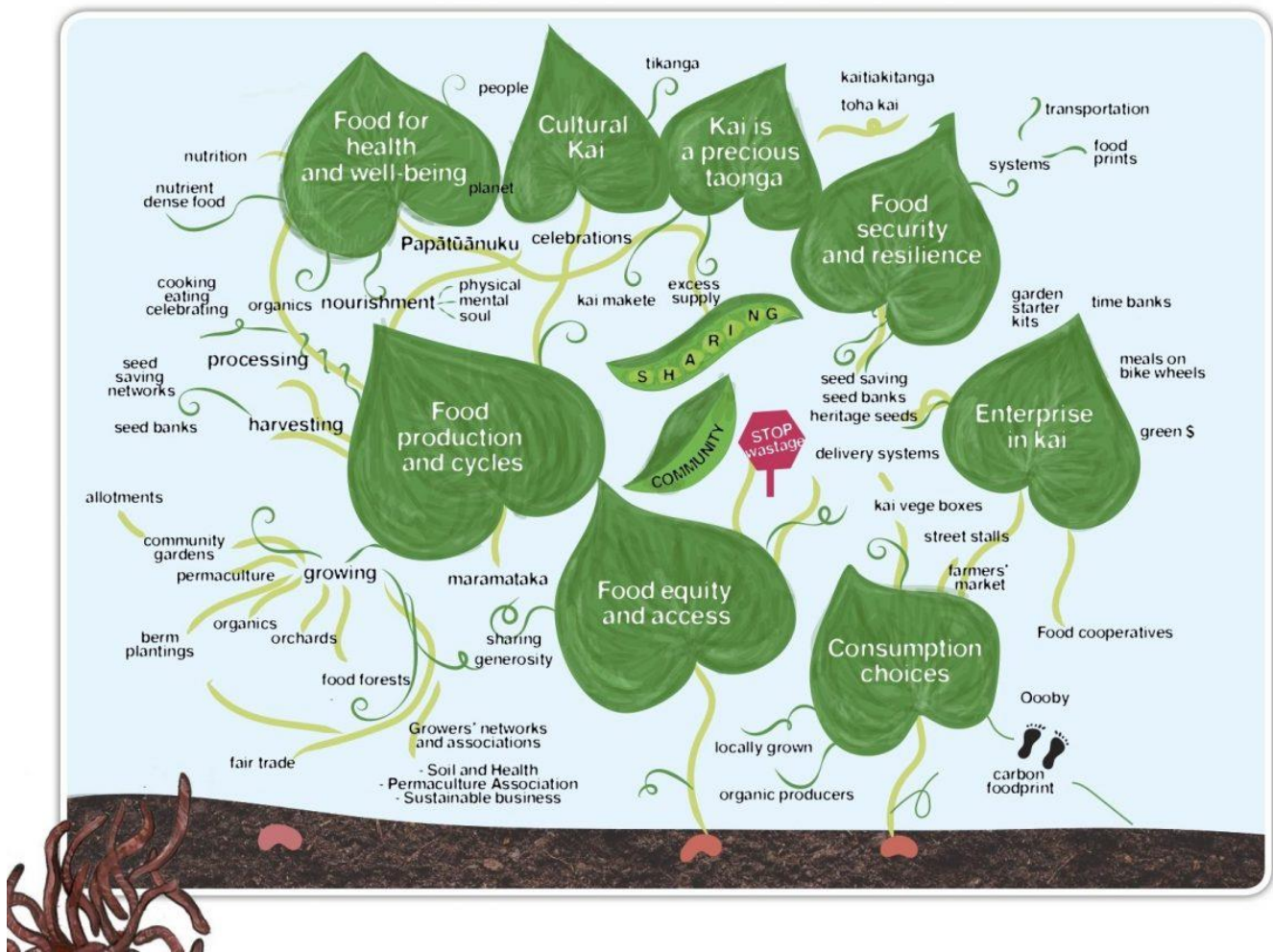
Gardening is a process. It helps tamariki in a variety of ways;

- Gardening engages all of the senses. ...
- Gardening encourages healthy eating. ...
- Gardening enhances fine motor development. ...
- Gardening introduces kids to scientific concepts. ...
- Gardening fosters family bonding. ...
- Gardening teaches responsibility. ...
- Gardening helps learn to plan and organize.



As stewards of the land we have a partnership/treaty (reflected in both Treaty of Waitangi and Te Whariki) in which we must uphold and abide by a resolve to care for and respect our land. This process helps us make connections to Papatuanuku as we work together to prepare and maintain our gardens. Thus, we are able to spiritually connect with the land and with aroha can prepare our earth, plant, nurture and reap the benefits. Gardening is a process that takes time and needs patience but it has been well worth the wait as we now harvest our produce to share with whānau and to cook some “Yummy stuff”! It’s a bit like the rhythm of life, some days there is nothing, and on other days it is overflowing. It expresses the current season and what is locally grown in our gardens here.





Holistic development - kotahitanga

Physical, emotional and psychological well-being of children.



Mahi tahi as we prepare and care for our garden gives us a physical work out as well as enhancing our social and emotional skills as we learn to share, take turns, be mindful of one another and careful of our mara and hua whenua. Spiritually we become connected to the whenua.

Relationships – Nga Honga



A sense of community develops as we work together to care for our mara and process our hua whenua and hua rakau (vegetables and fruit). The process enables us to work as individuals for a common cause. To be respectful of one another's ability to contribute. We all have our own way of doing being and knowing but it is our ability to enjoy time together and learn from one another - ako that is important.

Family and community -Whānau Tanagata

With our Mara producing hua whenua and hua rakau we are able to create and provide produce for our whānau. Tamariki also experience the concept of kaitiaki -for the community gardens - which we also harvest for whānau but in return we ensure we compost off cuts and keep the area tidy.



Belonging – Mana whenua



A sense of belonging is created through kinship as together we take on the role of kaitiaki of our mara. What do our whānau and tamariki bring - funds of knowledge which help create a sense of partnership. Our tamariki have the opportunity to learn through collaborative participation.

Well Being – Manu atua



Growing our own hua whenua enables us to create healthy kai with and for our tamariki. Healthy food ensures our bodies and brains are ready for learning. When tamariki learn about healthy food choices in the early years we can begin to create healthy habits for life.

Contribution – Mana Tangata

Familiarity and confidence comes with experience. Our tamariki are encouraged to contribute and participate in all aspects of our gardening process. Hands on experience gives them ownership of the process and understanding of the outcomes of these processes. The value we place on contribution upholds whanaungatanga.



Communication – Mana Reo

In all areas of our mahi, tamariki, Kaiako and whānau are learning together. Each of us bring our prior knowledge and experience enriching others around us. Together we learn the language of gardening in Te Reo. We learn the language of mahi tahi (collaborative work) and of processing our produce.





Thank you Whaea Raukura for explain the words for fruit and vegetables.

Hua whenua - vegies = food from the ground. Hua rakau are foods from the trees hence fruit!

Exploration – Manu Aoturoa



While gardening we are exploring our relationship with papatuanuku. We are exploring the world of science as we watch our empty garden replenished in preparation for the amazing growth of the tiny seeds and plants we put in. We also saw what happened to our beautiful mara when hit by a freak hail storm. Cooking is also scientific exploration as we watch solids become liquids, freezing and thawing, hot and cold, solid and liquid.

What an amazing world we live in!!! We have so much to learn and tamariki learn best through hands on exploration.

Tamariki at He Manu Hou are engaging in positive practices that support sustainability, health and an environmentally rich understanding of their role in the protection of the longevity and productivity of papatuanuku through their involvement in the process of gardening.

Poipoia te kakano kia puawai'

Nurture the seed and it will blossom.

Nicki Crabbe

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