

Term 2 2023 Garden News

Hello everybody and welcome back to the garden in term 2,

Ngahuru is definitely with us now, the hours of darkness are longer and we are getting some cooler temperatures. But there are still some beautiful sunny days for being in the garden and we have been making the most of them.

Classes have been busy weeding their garden beds and planting the seedlings that we raised in the greenhouse. We have also put mulch on the soil around our young plants to help encourage them to grow and to suppress the weeds. For our mulch we made a mixture in the wheelbarrow using lawn trimmings, compost, and seaweed. Then we spread a layer of mulch on any bare soil alongside rows or in between plants to about a finger's depth.

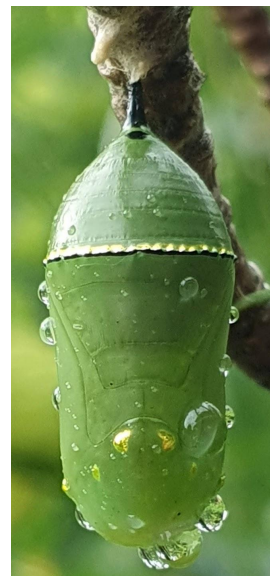
This will feed the microbiology of the soil - worms, bugs, centipedes and smaller organisms - that in turn breaks down nutrients and makes them available to plants.



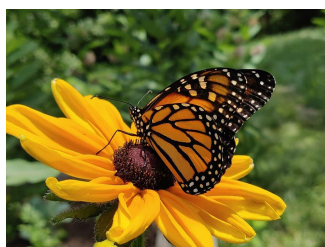
Some classes have harvested and eaten their delicious, crunchy radishes, yum!



This year we have observed monarch butterflies in our garden much later than usual. We still have some caterpillars munching away and chrysalises waiting to hatch. During mid-summer, the life cycle of a monarch butterfly goes from egg to adult in a month or so. The butterfly has a lifespan of 60–70 days during the summer, but this extends to 6–7 months if the butterfly hatches in autumn. Monarchs are sensitive to air temperature, when the air temperature drops to 12.8°C, monarchs look for overwintering sites. The butterflies look for somewhere that is sheltered from the wind, trees with a rough bark surface so that they can cling on and a nearby source of nectar is important. The butterflies mostly stay still, clinging to the tree, but on warm days they fly around to feed. When the temperatures warm up after winter the butterflies



become active again. Here is some more information about [Monarch butterflies](#)





We have also been seeing some Praying Mantis in our garden. We can tell that this one is a South African female. We can tell she is a female because her abdomen is bulging, ready to lay her eggs.



The one we saw in our garden has no spot like the one in this picture. The bright blue and purple patch on the inside of the New Zealand species front leg clearly distinguishes it from the South African species.



Some repair projects are underway in the garden. Brendon is repairing the shadehouse, replacing the holey shade cloth and putting on a new roof. The greenhouse will also get a new cover as the current one has perished in the sun and little bits of plastic are coming off it. The surround under the big tree where we sit in the garden will also be fixed. Thanks Brendon 😊

This term we are going to become a [Trees for Survival](#) school. This means we will have trees to look after and grow ready for planting. We will be able to plant our trees somewhere to help look after the environment, beside waterways or on slopes to stop erosion. We are hoping to plant some of the trees beside the Burke St stream next year.

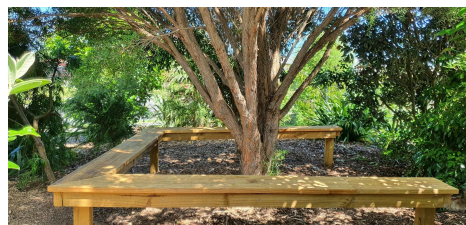
Voting is open for Tree of the Year! This is a special competition to get us thinking about the trees we love. You can go to the website to nominate your favourite tree, it needs to be a particular tree (not just a tree in general). For example you might really like one of the trees you climb at school or the one with Christmas lights at Kuranui Bay or one in your own garden. You have until the 31st of May to nominate or vote. Have a go!

[Rākau o te tau / Tree of the year NZ Aotearoa](#)

The winner of Tree of the Year is announced on Arbour day.

Arbour Day is held every year on 5 June to draw attention to the importance of trees in our world.

Plant a tree and grow our future!



May 7 – 13 is International Compost Awareness Week.

This year the theme is **For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food...Compost!**

The goal of ICAW is to raise public awareness about why we all should be composting our food scraps and using compost. We are pretty good at composting at Moanataiari School and our gardens really love the compost we make. Remember to keep bringing your containers to school from home if you are part of the Moana Composters group.

You can find some more information about how important composting is for our environment here:

[Compost Collective](#)

[Thank you for your interest in International Compost Awareness Week \(ICAW\) 2023](#)

Happy gardening everyone,

Claire

