

# Exploring Fodder in the Curriculum



## Background

Fodder is the 'green-feed' that we give to our animals at Perth Zoo, and can be used for a variety of purposes including food, making nests and shelters, as well as for climbing.

Although the Zoo's fodder needs are increasing, our fodder sources are limited. We are seeking schools in the Perth metropolitan area to help us to develop a sustainable supply of fodder.

## Fodder in your School

### Planning your Fodder Garden

Schools can develop a stand-alone fodder garden, part of a themed environment (eg tropical garden) or integrated into the existing school landscape. Your fodder garden could be a whole-school or small-group project.

Think about who you would like to support your project. Aside from your students, you may like to consider other staff, school gardeners, parents and extended families, local council and local businesses in the planning and implementation of your fodder garden.

Regardless of the approach taken, a successful School Fodder Garden will require long-term planning and coordination.

### Curriculum Integration

Topics relating to fodder gardens can easily be integrated into many learning areas within the school curriculum. The ideas listed in this document are designed to serve as a springboard for teachers planning to integrate classroom studies with the creation of a fodder garden, and are by no means an exhaustive list.



## What can the students do?

- Propagate plants
- Identify fodder plants already in the school
- Select appropriate locations and plant the fodder plants into gardens
- Weeding, watering and ongoing care of the fodder plants
- Coordinate planting and fodder collection
- Assist with fodder collection
- Community awareness and marketing



## Research

### Diets and Animal Care

- Find out about animal care and welfare, including diets
- Discover which animals eat which plants
- Research food chains and food webs
- Research the nutritional value of various plants
  - Which part of the plants has the most nutrition?
  - What part of the plant are the animals eating?
- Find out where the fodder/nutrients end up once an animal has eaten it...
- Compare food requirement between humans and animals

### Plant Care

- Find out which fodder plants will grow best, and where, and under what conditions
- Find out how to create and maintain healthy soil
- Learn about negative aspects of plant care like pests, weeds and the use of chemicals
  - discover environmentally friendly control methods
  - experiment with ways to control growth or spread of some species (e.g. bamboo)

### Classification

- Identify plant species
  - create a 'herbarium' with plant details and samples/photos
- Create plant and animal dichotomous keys

### Threatened Species

- Find out about endemic versus native versus introduced plants
- Research threatened plant species, and what is being done to conserve them

### Adaptations

- Find out why some groups of plants can be found on several continents (e.g. Acacia species), while others are unique (e.g. Eucalypts)
- Compare the adaptations of plants (e.g. Coprosma has waxy leaves to prevent moisture loss)

### Technology

- Design landscapes, with consideration to the impact on those who use the space
- Construct a greenhouse

### Community Awareness

- Write a press release and create marketing materials to tell the community about your project

### Sustainability

- Learn about eco-footprints
- Find out about carbon offsets

## How can you Expand the Program?

- Have students identify collect fodder cuttings from their home
- Identify alternative fodder sources in your local community (eg council gardens, parklands, green waste collection, tree loppers)
- Develop a community awareness program about the Zoo's fodder needs.
- Grow tube stock of fodder plants for sale, to be grown and harvested in your local community.