

Tasty treats from kitchen garden

Kristen Re and Erin Reynolds

North Melbourne Primary School is a member of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, which recently celebrated 20 years of kitchen gardens in schools.

The program began in a single school when a committed team joined Stephanie Alexander in establishing what became a template for schools and services across the country.

While no kitchen garden is the same, the common denominator is children and their enthusiasm, and the communities that gather around them.

Students at North Melbourne Primary begin with garden classes from Prep to Grade 2 and are introduced to the kitchen program from Grade 3. Each week the children create a different menu, along with their teachers and the school's kitchen garden specialists.

When lockdown finished, the kitchen garden specialists finally met their Grade 3

students for the first time in the kitchen. It was exciting to meet face to face after a month of remote cooking classes.

Grade 3 student Winter caught the mood of the first class. "It was amazing seeing everyone again and the cooking was super fun," she said.

Top of the menu at the first face-to-face meeting was Muhalbiya al-ruz, a milky rice pudding flavoured with rosewater and cardamom, served with cinnamon spiced apple.

Nasturtium, calendula and borage were harvested from the garden to garnish the delicious dish, which immediately won top marks from Grade 3 student Phoebe. "It tastes like porridge and it was really lovely," she said.

In the second week, students had fun preparing a Mexican feast of tortillas with refried beans and guacamole. It prompted positive comments such as "Mashing avocado is fun" and "I'd never eaten Mexican and I really enjoyed it".

An unexpected benefit of lockdown was



Grade 3 students and teacher Joimi enjoy a lunchtime feast.

that the school garden had thrived. Thanks to Tess our gardening specialist, we now have plenty of greens, herbs, and edible flowers available to support our meals.

The kitchen garden program at North

Melbourne Primary is a proven winner in teaching students how to cook nutritious and tasty meals.

Kristen Re and Erin Reynolds are the kitchen garden team at NMPS.