To all parents, learners and interested parties

Exciting new project for the school and everybody can join in!

Young and not-so-young can become involved in this project. It means that parents and their children (learners from our school) and even smaller children can come and help with our own herb garden whilst enjoying the open air experience. We also do not expect you to just buy something this time (at least not yet), but we want physical participation.

We have decided, after many hours of deliberation and meetings (almost like the G8 seminars on global warming and an environmentally responsible way of life), on a herb garden located on that small piece of land next to the netball fields at the back of the school.

This small piece of land will be ideal for this purpose as it has full sun and is close to a water supply point that can be used for irrigation. It will however also be out of the way of busy feet and children playing during breaks. All the classrooms on the second floor will have a brilliant view on the spectacular end product!

We are planning to sell our herb plants at a reasonable price to the public and nurseries. We can also use our herbs for our hotel-and-catering course and any catered event that our school may present. The herbs can also be dried and processed to be supplied to markets in our vicinity.

A wonderful idea when we are criticised from all directions for our lifestyles which contribute to global warming due to the carbon dioxide footprint of the food we consume. What can be better than to use fresh herbs, cultivated by our own community?

The first questions were obviously the following:

Who will be our potential customers? We hope and rely on you to fulfil this role, as our community!

How do we start a herb garden like this? This is certainly more than just a few plants stuck in the ground and this is why we grabbed a few of our neighbourhood nurseries to help us with their brilliant knowledge and advice. Any parent who can offer more of this please contact the school.

A few sponsors have already offered their help for the rental of machinery to do the initial ground work as well as the supply of the seedlings and seeds for the herbs. We want to thank the following plant suppliers: New Life Nurseries, Plants For Pleasure Nursery, Van Rensburg kwekerye, Hodgen Plant Hire and Great Garden Compost Depot.

The herbs that we have decided on were selected because they are popular and will make sense from a marketing perspective, but also because they will grow easily. The following herbs were selected for our wonder garden:

Sweet Basil – In pastas and salads. Grows into a beautiful green shrub with small white flowers. Also get a peach coloured variant that makes a nice contrast. Prefers full sun and soil rich in compost.

Rosemary – In food. Dark green shrub with small blue flowers. Prefers full sun and soil rich in compost. Spanish variant has straight twigs and people use it to make kebabs.

Lavender – Smells divine, makes potpourri. Bake lavender shortbread biscuits, use in bath water and it will calm you. Use in herbal pillow for wonderful night’s sleep. Different leaf shapes, grey to lilac and different flowers. Nice variety. Prefers full sun and soil rich in compost.

Thyme – Excellent in meat dishes. Small ground cover type plant. Prefers full sun and soil rich in compost. Different fragrances and leaf colours.

Parsley – Very popular but must be planted in a pot or own bed and must be newly planted every year.

How it will benefit your child? On a basic level it will bring our children back to the fresh air and it will also, hopefully, ignite a small spark of interest in how the earth works and where our food comes from. This can be seen as a fundraising project, but think WIDER than the obvious and see it as a community education project and in-service training for our teenagers for their life ahead.

Basic planning for the herb garden:

1.The small plot where the garden is to be planted has already been fenced and laid out.

2.The soil must be treated and allowance must be made for enough drainage and nutrients.

3.Plant the baby plants and give lots of attention and care. The spacing of the plants is very important as herbs do not like to be squashed into a small space.

4.Best time for planting is from August to April and that is why we hope to be ready for action by August!

5.The plants must be watered regularly and compost must be worked in once a month. Please note that this requirement falls within our detention schedule.

6.Herbs must also be trimmed regularly.

Please contact me if you want to be involved!

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