

Do you have Butterflies, Bees and Bugs in your backyard?

What is it about butterflies? Is it their colourful beauty? Their non-threatening nature? Their fascinating metamorphosis, from caterpillar to a beautiful, winged creature? Their essential pollination services they provide to our native plants? No one ever tells this insect to go away, nor are there repellent sprays on the shelves to get rid of them, in fact, having one land on you is a privilege!

All kids go through a butterfly phase at some point, and there are some adults I know who are still fascinated by them (I am one), and there are so many wonderful species to discover in Wedderburn, that this project encourages local potential entomologists to discover them.

The 'Building Bee, Bug and Butterfly biodiversity' Garden project aims to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity in our own backyards. It teaches students how they can positively contribute to sustainability and ecosystem services in Wedderburn, through caterpillars, butterflies, and native flowering plants.

Each of our community's kinder kids and families have received Pupae, Caterpillars, and local indigenous plants. The kinder kids have been able to watch the caterpillars form pupae, and the pupae grow into butterflies, ready for release into their backyards.

Each family received local indigenous plant species to build an understanding of the importance of native vegetation for our caterpillars and butterflies in the local area, and to experience the butterfly's unique life stages, by hatching caterpillars and pupae themselves and closely observing their life stages. It also encouraged the students to create an ideal environment for them by planting the native plants they need to survive.

We invited students and parents to go on a nature scavenger hunt. We encouraged them to look for tracks, scat, and evidence of animals in our local area. We gave each child a planting pack and insect discovery kit, which included local plant species grown by the local MKEW nursery, together with acacia seeds to make seed bombs, magnifying glasses, butterfly nets, bug observation jars and field guides, notes and activity sheets.

This initiative was made available through a Junior Landcare grant, made in partnership between the Wedderburn Community House, Wedderburn Conservation Management Network, Wedderburn Kindergarten, and the Loddon Shire.

We anticipate building a butterfly, bee and bug attracting garden and outdoor learning space at the front of the Wedderburn Kinder in the new year. The garden has been designed by local landscaper, James Cook, and will include a sand river, puddling rocks, local indigenous plant species, Bee Hotels, signage, seating and garden art all produced by locals including the Wedderburn Men's Shed.





