We have a **Music Garden, and you can too!!**

This year at our school (Holy Family School, Lindfield, NSW), we installed a Music Garden in a previously unused section of the playground. The children love the Music Garden, and play the instruments at Morning tea and Lunchtime, and also at After School Care time.

The instruments are all weather instruments, and were made with the safety of the children in mind eg on our” Vertical Chimes” instrument , a bar encloses the metal vertical chimes so the chimes can’t swing too widely, and so no one can be injured.

All of the instruments were made by our school handyman, from pictures and instructions we found on the internet. (some of these instruments can be purchased through various companies, but they are very expensive, but please see the special note when you read the Wooden Xylophone section).

All of the materials used to make the instrument are common materials that can be found in any hardware store eg the wood for the Wooden xylophone is outdoor decking wood, and the black metal chimes are fence posts. In fact, some of the materials(aluminium pipes for the “chimes”) were actually free as they were off cuts found in the throw out bin at one particular construction business.

The construction of these instruments could easily be done on a “Working Bea” by parents of the school, or Playgroup, or Pre-school, or , by the students themselves during woodworking classes(Secondary school, obviously), or, if you have a “Men’s Shed” in your area, I am sure they would love a challenge of this sort.

You will be amazed at how people involved in the making of these instruments start looking at common materials in different ways, and start listening to the sounds and music they can make.

Our instruments are centralised in the “Music Garden”, but schools short on space could have these instruments placed all around the school eg near the front gate, outside the hall, along a path the children walk on etc.

Our Music Garden was featured in the North Shore Times on Monday 14th April, 2014


and also in the Broken Bay News on 14th April


I have tried to include ideas that will help you get started making your own Music Garden. The internet is a wonderful place for lots of ideas about outdoor musical instruments.

It would be fabulous if all schools and Pre-schools had some sort of Music Garden for the children to play and experiment with.

Happy music making!!!!

Brigid McNally

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