

What food do you grow in your backyard?

(An open survey for World Environment Day June 5 2014.)



Do you grow some food in your backyard? Perhaps fruit? Vegetables? Herbs? Perhaps in pots like the garden in this photo?

If you are a gardener, growing some food in the backyard for your family's use, did you know you are a part-time 'family farmer' - regardless of your garden's size, whether it is urban or rural, new or old, or your age? Did you know that such family farming is an important way to care for our planet?

Warracknabeal environmental educator Jeanie Clark is wondering about the range of food plants being grown in Wimmera backyards and needs the help of Wimmera family farmers to find out. So she has set up a survey about this as an activity for World Environment Day (WED) June 5 for the Wimmera. The results will contribute to her [enviroed4all](http://enviroed4all.com) family farms website. It is being created as an educational resource for the 2014 International Year of Family Farming. For this, she has been collecting first-hand family farming experiences, called snapshots. The latest of these is

about two small backyards in Horsham, including the artistically designed one in the photo.

Her survey aims to involve people in WED and to see what trends there are in the food plants of this small scale part-time family farming. What is the diversity of our backyard food plants? Which are common? Which are rare? Backyard family farmers, both urban or rural, new or old, from pot-plant sized gardens up, are invited to take part on Wednesday or Thursday as a WED activity for the Wimmera. All that is needed is for the family to send an email to enviroed4all@gmail.com or on twitter to [enviroed4all@enviroed4all](https://twitter.com/enviroed4all), stating their town or district name and a list of the food plants growing in their garden so far this year. Jeanie will collate this into the food plants grown in backyards of the Wimmera.

How does this fit with WED? "The United Nations aim for WED is to encourage worldwide **awareness** and **action** for the **environment**. Many people do not realize that when they grow food for their family's use in their backyard, they are acting for the environment," Jeanie said. "How we obtain our food affects how we use the environment. Growing food in the backyard, eg lemon trees, rhubarb and parsley, is a valuable and encouraged action to care for the Earth. With no motorized transport needed from the paddock to the plate, to generate greenhouse gas emissions, backyard food gardens have a very low carbon footprint and food miles! This makes it an action to slow climate change – an example of how we can 'think global, act local'."

Whether or not people participate in this survey, Jeanie hopes to inspire people to value backyard food growing with this survey and two examples about small backyard and part-time 'family farms' in Horsham. They come from Horsham Ladies Probus and feature a couple of citrus fruit trees, a couple of vegetables and herbs in pots. They have just been completed and published on her IYFF [enviroed4all](http://enviroed4all.com) family farm snapshots website collection. An earlier Horsham snapshot on this website has a wider range of summer vegetables and herbs. All have been tended by women, who had not previously seen themselves as family farmers – a common realisation from snapshot participants so far. Guidelines for these extended contributions can be found on the "join us" page of the website.

In 2014, there are two International Years which this survey links to:

- Family Farming (IYFF) *Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth* - raises awareness of animals or plants grown by a family, at least partly for the family to use as food, and with the labour of the family. Size of farm, full or part-time production, and location in rural or urban areas do not matter when defining family farming. It comes in many forms, one of which is the backyard food garden. Although the world population is now mainly urban, family farming is still the dominant form of food production, and contributes importantly to both feeding people and caring for the environment.
- Small Island Developing States (IYSIDS) – raises awareness of global environmental changes that damage small islands first, eg rising sea levels. Globally, food from backyards helps reduce the rise in greenhouse gases and sea levels.

What are the aims of this WED 2014 in the Wimmera activity? 1 raise awareness that this small, local form of agriculture has global benefits! 2 have a big enough response to produce a reliable statement about food plants grown in our back yards. 3 encourage more people to sow some food plants as a caring action for the environment at their place. I hope you can join in!

From :
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Jeanie's IYFF [enviroed4all](http://enviroed4all.com) family farms website is
<http://familyfarms.enviroed4all.com.au/snapshots/>
Please note this is an unfunded project.
UN WED website is <http://www.unep.org/wed/>



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