

Grape Evolution



Euston Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive, cooperative activities that encourage students to learn about and respond to, natural resource management and the importance of agricultural production.

wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/

Petaurus Education Group

Petaurus Education Group identifies, develops and delivers a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and community groups to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local level. The group was established by Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre in late-2014 to support its operations and education activities.

wirraminna.org.au/petaurus

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

envirostories.com.au

Western Local Land Services

Established in 2014, Western Local Land Services delivers agricultural advice, natural resource management, biosecurity and emergency management in western NSW. Western Local Land Services is proud to support the Creative Catchment Kids book series. The program gives school students the opportunity to learn about natural resource management issues and engage with their local community. We hope you enjoy this book and promote it to your friends, family and community.

western.lls.nsw.gov.au

Grape Evolution

Authors

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Teacher: Mrs. Stephanie Tedd

School: Euston Public School

Land, Water & Community

In 2017, students from western NSW involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their local community. These stories highlight actions that local community members have taken to look after their land and water resources for conservation, agriculture or cultural heritage purposes. The program was generously funded by Western Local Land Services and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Creative Catchment Kids - Land, Water & Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeeKdesigns education program.





Euston is a small, border town, located in the south-west corner of New South Wales.

Euston shares a border with Robinvale, Victoria. The two towns are separated by the mighty Murray River. This makes the location ideal for growing produce.

Euston has a population of around seven hundred and ninety-five people and is well known for producing table grapes, with growers exporting large amounts overseas annually.

A grape is a fruit, specifically a berry, that grows on a woody vine. Grapes can be eaten fresh, as table grapes; or they can be used for making wine, jams, juice, vinegar and dried fruit such as raisins.

Grapes occur in clusters or bunches that can contain as few as fifteen berries and as many as three hundred.

Australia has planted around one thousand six hundred and forty two square kilometres of grapes with Euston exporting over twelve million bunches (or clusters) grapes annually.

The grape growers receive between six and thirty dollars per kilogram for their grapes during the season.



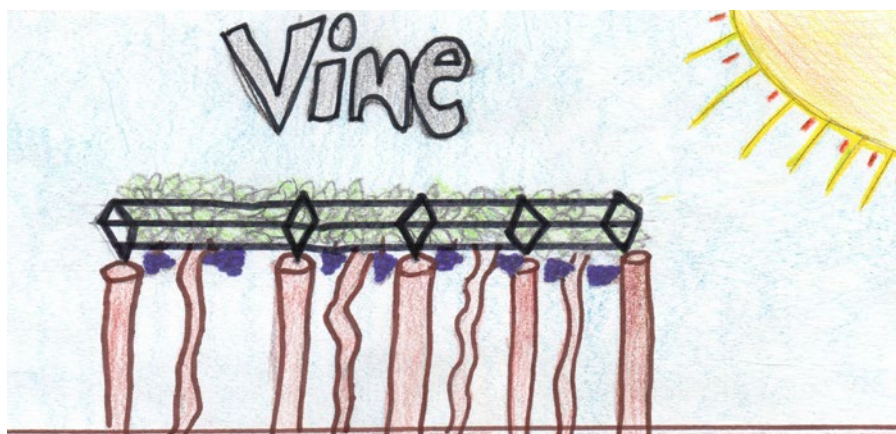


When a vine is planted, it takes twenty months until the first grape harvest.

Grapes need to be watered all throughout the year and chemicals and fertilisers help them to grow.

Grapes need mixed weather conditions. Mild winters with minimal rainfall are best and summer temperatures ranging between thirty and forty degrees, support growth.

The best seasons to pick table grapes are summer and autumn.





The grapes rely heavily on the Murray River to grow.

'Drip systems' allow water to drip slowly into the roots of plants. They provide irrigation water from the river to produce the fresh, crunchy, delicious grapes you eat.

Every acre (five hundred vines) needs 3.2 megalitres of water per season to produce export quality grapes.



In the 1950s, Euston was farmed with cattle and sheep. European migrants, mainly Italian, brought their farming knowledge and skills to the area. The soil was worked by horse and plough, crops were irrigated by furrow (flood irrigation) and produce was transported to markets by the growers.

Joe Cucia planted the first grape vines in Euston in the 1960s. These were wine grape varieties and the sultana which produced dried fruit. Tractors and cultivating equipment were used to farm crops.



In the 1970s, a new chemical, gibberellic acid was introduced. It was used on the sultana variety to make the grapes bigger and juicier, and so the table grape industry was born.

Grapes were packaged into styrene boxes and transported to markets.

In the 1980s, cool rooms were built so grapes could be stored and transported by refrigerated trucks, long distances and stay fresh.

There were lots of chemicals used in early farming, but they were too toxic for the grapes and the workers.

One chemical still used today is sulphur. Sulphur is used to treat mildew and mites. Sulphur is also used to keep the grapes fresh.





In the 1990s, plastic covers were introduced. This stopped the grapes rotting from too much rain and sun.

The early 2000s saw technology such as air-conditioned tractors and company websites help growers to share their products.

This decade, new grape varieties, such as fairy floss, are being produced and social media helps growers to promote their businesses, worldwide.



Grapes are packaged in fruit crates and cartons, each containing 10kg for export. The individual packaging for transport occurs in a variety of ways such as: bunch bags, punnets and 'coffins', a small polystyrene container that protects the grapes during transport.

The grapes travel by ship, aircraft, truck and railroad.

Before the grapes are transported, they are stored in a shed that's cool and dry with good ventilation; ready for export to overseas markets, such as China.



The grapes are still pruned the same way today. The old canes are cut off the wire and pulled out during winter while the good canes are trimmed. Canes are then rolled along the wire, ready for the next year's crop.

Grapes are still picked the way they have been picked since the 1960s - by hand.





Overall, Euston has a wide range of grape varieties to offer the consumer, both locally and internationally. Come and see for yourself!





2017 Year 4, 5 & 6, Euston Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

