



ARBOUR DAY WITH PRINGLE HOUSE ECO SCHOOL



I was invited along with Anina Lee and Sheraine van Wyk from Whale Coast Conservation to join Pringle House Eco School in their celebration of Arbour Day. The children would be planting indigenous plants around the new fire station in Pringle Bay.



The enthusiasm was palpable as we watched the children from the age of 3 to 14 wielding garden implements with abandon.

Watching the planting of dozens of aloes and other succulents around the perimeter of the fire station were numerous friendly dogs and a rather large sheep on the lookout for constant eating opportunities.



After a while we all went back to the school for tea and a guided tour of their nature walk in the school's large grounds. These were rich in their diversity with lots of fynbos, mushrooms, alien plants, a wetland, caterpillars, frogs and evidence of many porcupines as well.



We looked around the classrooms and were so encouraged by the high standard and variety of the work being done there. We saw many projects put together creatively and artistically using recycled "waste" both in the classrooms and outside in the grounds.



Most shelving, fittings, storage units and desks were salvaged from dumpsters or built from materials donated by companies refurbishing their own premises.



The school is bright and colourful – the children motivated and absorbed in their activities.



A stroll around the outside of the school revealed climbing frames, jungle gyms and a play house all of which were home

made from old tyres, branches and pieces of wood.



The children were even involved in building the steps up to an outside classroom using old tyres, sand and stones.



They had a simple vegetable garden with a few veggies and herbs but were struggling to keep the porcupines from eating their produce. The children had recently finished building a large compost heap in the corner of the grounds as well.



Numerous animals wandered around the grounds – rabbits, dogs, a couple of small pigs and my favourite - Montana a rather large sheep who imagines herself to be a dog.



This school really has taken the message of zero waste to heart. Just about everything is reused, upcycled or recycled. The pupils are also extremely fortunate to have such enthusiastic, resourceful and proactive teachers and parents so willing to guide these young people towards a lifestyle which will hopefully stay with them forever and be of huge benefit to others as well as to the environment.



What a wonderful place to start your school experience, Pringle House Eco School really is a little taste of what life and school really should be about.

Fiona Matthes