



Putting the International Year of Pulses into EE and EfS

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“Nutritious seeds for a sustainable future”
“Healthy soils for a healthy life”
“Feeding the world, caring for the earth.”

Have you heard of these slogans from International Years?

“Nutritious seeds for a sustainable future” is the slogan for the 2016 International Year of Pulses, as declared by the 68th UN General Assembly.

If you aren’t familiar with pulses, that’s okay. The first aim of any International Year is to raise awareness about its target and its importance to the world. So how might ‘pulses’ fit into EE or EfS? Consider the slogan!

What are Pulses

Pulses are a food group of dried edible seeds from the legume family. They include faba beans, lupins, lentils, chick peas and field peas (*see photo, L-clockwise*) and are a critical part of the general food basket.



‘Legumes’ are food plants whose seeds are enclosed in pods. Most legumes fix nitrogen into the soil as they grow, hence ‘sustainable future’ in the slogan.

Others further distinguish between

these seeds by the saying: “we sow legumes, and eat pulses”.

When cooked, they provide a non-fatty protein-rich food, hence ‘nutritious seeds’ in the slogan.

Basic resources

There are three global resources to help you decide if the International Year of Pulses will fit in with your EE or EfS program.

1. The aims of the International Year of Pulses 2016 are to:

- Raise awareness about the important role of pulses in sustainable food production and healthy diets and their contribution to food security and nutrition;
- Promote the value and utilization of pulses throughout the food system, their benefits for soil fertility and climate change and for combating malnutrition;
- Encourage connections throughout the food chain to further global production of pulses, foster enhanced research, better utilize crop rotations and address the challenges in the trade of pulses.

2. The International Year of Pulses 2016 summarises its importance in five key messages:

- Pulses are highly nutritious
- Pulses are economically accessible and contribute to food security at all levels.
- Pulses have important health benefits.
- Pulses foster sustainable agriculture and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Pulses promote biodiversity.

Where would you see your EE or EfS program fit? For me, the first is relevant to all soil users and food producers from backyards to schools to commercial farmers. The second and third key points are environmental and food issues. The final two, are about food and cooking, and fit within an interdisciplinary program.

3. The Global Pulse Federation provides a generic teaching program for middle-upper primary levels online.

This free downloadable program has six independent lessons covering pulses, health and nutrition, cooking, growing, around the world and for food security. You can access the [IYP Lesson Plans here](#).

The Wimmera

I live in the Wimmera, in the traditional “wheat-sheep belt”, a major Australian grain production region, and major global food producer. Times have changed with the drying climate. Farmers’ concerns for their soils’ sustainability over the last 30 years has led to legumes being planted by most farmers today. The Wimmera is now an important global source of pulses. For example, faba beans go to the Middle East and lentils to the Subcontinent.

Pulses are very relevant to EE and EfS here, as were (and still are) the [2014 International Year of Family Farming](#) and [2015 International Year of Soils](#) — both of which are continuing as UN Decades.

I am currently creating and sourcing funding for a 4-session interdisciplinary “Pulse” education program for primary schools to run later this year. To me, including an International Year in EE/EfS is important in connecting local learning to a current global focus, aka “acting locally, thinking globally”.

What do you think – could pulses be a part of your EE/EfS program this year?

Find out more

[2016 International Year of Pulses](#)

[IYP Promotional Resources](#)

[EnviroEd4All programs](#)

‘From Soils to Pulses’ in *Otherways* magazine

Explore these pulses and seeds:

<http://enviroed4all.com.au/wimmera-biodiversity/crops/>

<http://www.shreyasbharadwaj.com/my-life/indian-names-for-food-products>