In 2010, Northam Senior High School applied for a Small Community Grant from Wheatbelt NRM to produce a bush tucker garden on the school’s paddock. The school had a small parcel of land that was once a town landfill location. It was showing signs of erosion and aesthetic degradation as a result of more traditional animal husbandry practices as part of the school’s agriculture program. As a part of the school’s commitment to a curriculum focus of sustainability, there was a recognised need to look into how Indigenous edible plants could be grown commercially. A bush tucker garden that might eventually produce commercial quality, niche foods for the school’s hospitality trade training centre was seen as a relevant path to move along.

The project involved students from the Education support, Year 10 at Risk and Year 11/12 Agriculture. It was hoped that it would provide an educational experience for students at Northam SHS while developing a partnership with experienced aboriginal members of the community.

Local businesses were canvassed for their support (from providing mulching services to assistance with reticulation) and local Aboriginal Elders were used as experts. The involvement of these groups was also strategic in promoting sustainable edible food in the wake of a changing climate. School staff were empowered by taking a serious step in the direction of alternative food production while students were taught not only the specifics of the plant’s biology but of the importance of sustainable food initiative in a changing climate. Design and plant selection began in May, and there was more work required on the soil quality than expected. Field trips were taken in June and July to see the plants in their natural environments and to nurseries. Plants were put in during September, while mulching took place during October and November. The garden was launched in December.

Information was gained on the usage of various plants and there was an increased understanding of Indigenous agricultural practises.
In 2011 Northam Senior High School again applied for funding to continue its Australian Food and Medicine Garden. The original area of the garden was greatly expanded and included a meeting place with a BBQ pit for students and staff to congregate and enjoy education in an outdoor environment, complete with edible and healing plants. The garden site development is being recorded on Facebook at [http://www.facebook.com/media/albums/?id=134514389957408](http://www.facebook.com/media/albums/?id=134514389957408). The page is being built by the students under teacher supervision. It can be found by searching for Northam SHS sustainable garden project. It is planned to continue to expand the garden over the next 2-5 years until a disused section of the school's town paddocks becomes a "sustainable harvest".

The integration of different groups of students, from Science, Agriculture and Education Support, worked particularly well and enabled students to get involved in active landcare whilst learning about a variety of Australian food and medicine plants. Many students were so keen on the project that they worked during their breaks. Once again there was lots of research into Australian bush tucker and medicine plants. Ground works began in May, and in line with organic gardening principles, the weeds were removed mechanically, which proved to be a challenge bigger than was expected. Plants were bought in July, with planting between July and September. The BBQ area was completed at the end of September. Students were heard to say, "Are all these plants edible?", "So that plant will cure my cold better than a tablet?" and "Can we stay out here and work?"

An experiment was set up to compare the rootstocks of native limes from different producers, to measure the tolerance of the rootstock. It was believed that the cheaper rootstock was less tolerant. Results have not yet come in for this.