

Principal's Message: Mabel's Table Garden

Mabel's workstation always amazes me. Every time I walk towards it, even before I see Mabel, I first see a tall shoot with deep green leaves jutting beyond the top of her office divider.

On walking closer, I then encounter a whole assembly of little pots bursting with various types of plants meticulously arranged around her keyboard, computer screen and files. There is the delicate pink and red *frittonia*, the olive green *aluminians*, the long and elegantly stemmed *frogjoy*, creeping money plants, miniature ferns and many more¹.



Mabel at her table.

The plants are a joy to behold and I have observed many colleagues stopping by Mabel's workstation just to take in the sight of her table garden and her flourishing potted plants.

Mabel's thriving garden is, no doubt, the result of her devoted and consistent care for her plants. At lunch time, she busies herself with pruning off the dead leaves, re-potting new plants, watering and adding the necessary nutrients. The plants are also routinely rotated between her desk and a space outside the office where they can enjoy a stint in the sun.

Mabel's dutiful and loving tendering of her table garden has provided me (and my colleagues) an object lesson on the work of a gardener in nurturing her plants. It requires

time, steady effort, knowledge of the individual plants and sensitivity to the environment and its effects. In addition, a gardener must be both disciplined and responsible to do what is necessary so that the plants will thrive.

For Mabel, her plants will merely wilt and wither without her nurturing attention; but for families and for Singapore, the consequences are indeed dire if we do not nurture the future now.

As we start the new academic year, it is useful for home and school, educators and parents to reflect on our God-given role in nurturing our young generation to be responsible and contributing men and women with sound, Godly values. It is vital work which we, the significant adults in the lives of our young, must constantly tend to and not neglect if we want to ensure that the future will be one where the best is yet to be.

For Mabel, her plants will merely wilt and wither without her nurturing attention; but for families and for Singapore, the consequences are indeed dire if we do not nurture the future now.



Winston Hodge
Principal
Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)

¹ Names provided by Mabel herself