

Greening & Growing together

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2015

Crafty Gardeners

If you visit Serenity Gardens at the rear of the Pope's Road Housing complex at Woonona, you will see that the community garden is not just tended by loving gardeners, but also talented artists. The wonderful thing about the Pope's

Road gardeners is that they love to share their talents and interests with other gardeners in the Illawarra.

Resident and gardener June James has been experimenting with making stepping stones. In January she arranged a stepping

stone making workshop to coincide with a Community Greening plant giveaway. The results were outstanding with participants from gardens throughout the Illawarra taking home a stepping stone that they had created.

Another resident gardener Daniel is preparing for a workshop that he will lead about Gardening by the Moon. He is currently experimenting with gardening by moon charts and comparing results with random gardening so he will be able to demonstrate the differences.

The Illawarra group have a program of activities planned throughout the area for the year. Newcomers are welcome and can contact June on **0421 602 100**.

If you would like details on making the stepping stones with pictures, contact Elizabeth and she can email you the details. **elizabeth.docking@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au**



Photo L to R June, Christine, Halina and Stasha

Autumn Tips

It's a great time for planting easy-to-grow spring bulbs that'll help to brighten up an area, for sowing vegetables, or even planting your favourite shrubs. With the onset of cooler weather maybe improve your soil with some manure or start on a new project.

Autumn is also the best time to plant out trees and shrubs, as the soil is still warm and there are fewer hot days. This allows the plants roots to establish and by next

spring the plants will certainly be growing well.

Fertilise trees and shrubs, lawns, indoor plants and fruit trees such as citrus. It's your last chance before the weather cools down.

Place indoor plants outside in the warm autumn rains (in a shady spot, if possible). Otherwise, wipe individual leaves with a damp cloth soaked in a mix of half milk & half water to remove any dust.

Vegetables/herbs to grow now!

If you live in temperate areas of Sydney, the month of April is a fabulous time to plant or sow the following: artichokes, beetroot, broccoli, kale, cabbages, cauliflowers, carrots, celery, coriander, endives, garlic, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnip, peas, potatoes, radish, rocket, silverbeet, English spinach and turnips.

So what are you waiting for? Get Gardening!



Reiby Juvenile Detention Centre



At Reiby Juvenile Detention Centre, Youth Community Garden (YCG) has worked collaboratively with the school staff within the Centre, Juvenile Justice Staff, the local Dharawal Community and Aboriginal elders to turn a bare area of grass into a significant green space for learning, discussion and ceremony. All stakeholders had input into the design and plants were sourced from a variety of locations. The detained young men

have enjoyed planting the different species of plants and learning about how they are used in everyday life for food, fibre, tools and weapons, medicine or as calendar plants.

The young men were involved in all aspects of the development of the garden, from excavation to planting and maintenance of the garden. The garden is used regularly for the indigenous young men to meet with visiting elders and prominent Aboriginal members

of the community. YCG has been present at some of these meetings where the young men discuss life and their potential to positively contribute to their communities and we have talked about the significance of the plants in the garden and the Aboriginal culture's connection to the plants and the land. The pathways in the garden are symbolic of making good choices. The garden is often used to discuss making the right choices for the future and the consequences of making previous poor choices.



• Top: Uncle Ivan smoking ceremony;
• Above: Reiby learning circle.

To date the garden has been used as learning and healing area for Aboriginal students. There are also plans for the other incarcerated cultures to use the garden for ceremonies and meetings.

Claymore Makeover

Some children from Claymore left the Junction Works Community Centre on a sunny summer's morning for a day at the local pool. When they returned to the centre that afternoon, there was a lovely surprise as the front gardens had undergone a makeover, courtesy of some local garden volunteers.

The volunteers Steve, Nora, Ivan and May did an outstanding job preparing the gardens for planting in the week's prior to the makeover. On the day, with help from Elizabeth from Community Greening, the group planted pots

of sweet potato that Elizabeth propagated from her backyard. Next year the sweet potato tubers will be ready to be dug and enjoyed during community dining events.

The area by the carpark was beautified with hardy perennials and succulents, some from our sponsors Oasis and others grown specifically for this project by Elizabeth. All beds were given an organic fertiliser boost and the soil treated as it had become water repellent. The final activity was spreading and watering in sugarcane mulch.



• Clockwise: Elizabeth, Nora, Steven and Ivan.
• (May chose not to be photographed)

The volunteer working team were very proud of the final result; they beautified a weedy community space and are now growing a food source for locals. The volunteers continue to keep the gardens in check while encouraging people at Junction Works to weed, water and reap the rewards of the gardens.

Riley Street Garden Group

Community Greening received an update from the Riley Street Garden Group on their latest garden project - a tiny courtyard at 100 Foveaux Street. The group reports that the courtyard was overgrown and had a tree that was causing significant structural damage so required removal. The tree looked out of place in the tropical oasis. Housing NSW were very prompt in removing the majority of the tree, some follow up roots were made short work of by the Riley Street Garden Group. The space is now fabulously re-landscaped and has been finished after eight months in the planning. Firstl, a small grant

from Housing NSW allowed the group to construct garden beds and remove existing old damaged lattice work that obscured the sunlight. More recently a grant was approved enabling the gardeners to buy soil and pavers to make better use of the garden space. Finally with the assistance and generosity of Community Greening and Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre the residents have been able to finalise planting. It is a low maintenance colourful garden designed and installed by residents themselves with a little advice from Community Greening. The garden now provides an enjoyable green and floral courtyard for some 20 tenants and all for under \$2,000.



Photos: above, before and below, after.

Northcott Garden Grand Opening

On 31 October 2014 the Northcott Community Garden at the John Northcott Estate, Surry Hills opened with Lord Mayor, Clover Moore fixing the final tile letter on the community garden sign. This garden had been a desired project for this high-rise complex over the last four years to give tenants an opportunity to get out of their units, get involved in gardening, engage with their neighbours and socialise. Through a City of Sydney recovered grant, help from Community Greening, Housing NSW, LAHC, and Pine St Art Studio, the community saw their dreams become a reality. The Garden



Surry Hills residents and workers enjoy the opening of their Community Garden.

engages people in gardening, socialising, creative arts, celebrating tenant life, remembering tenants past and present, connecting with neighbours, and beautifying a neglected area within the complex.

A great day was had by all; everyone helped plant the garden beds, make tile art, chatted and enjoyed a BBQ. The event was a testament to what can be achieved as a community working together.

New Parents at Thornleigh

Gardeners at Oakley Gardens Thornleigh Housing complex are proud adoptive parents of a family of compost worms. The worm farm home is in a shaded corner of the community food growing space.

Chief Mama Jan reports that 'the babies' are eating well, they enjoy

watermelon skins, mango, pawpaw, eggshells and coffee grounds. Daddy Brian is excited that the little ones are putting on weight and are active. Poppa Glen ensures worm bedding is well aerated, stirring the mix now and again and keeping the bedding moist, particularly on hot days.



L to R: Proud parents Alison, Jan and Roslyn. (Brian and Glen are camera shy)

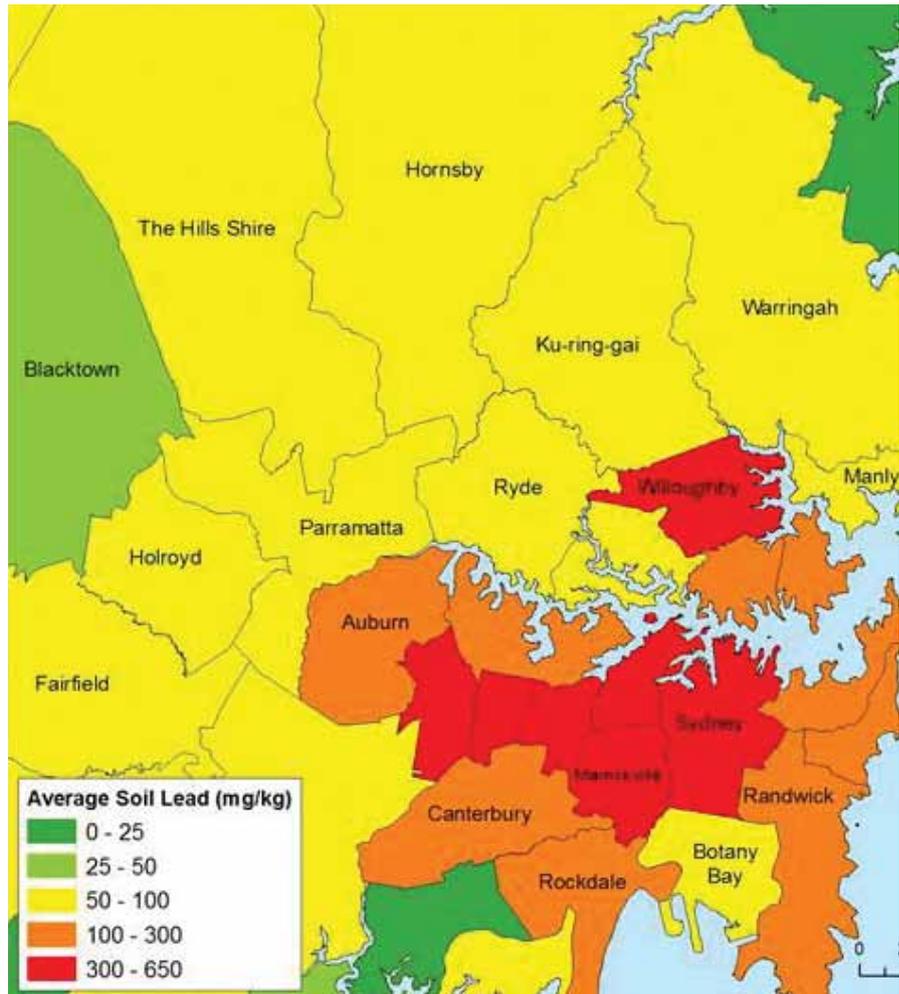
Be Lead Aware in Your Garden

The Community Greening and Youth Community Greening teams encourage gardeners of all ages to garden in a safe way, producing food that is fresh and healthy. What we want to avoid is eating food that has the potential to be contaminated.

Urban gardeners, especially those living in older residences or near main roads, where environmental lead may be present from old leaded paint, traffic fumes or other sources, gardeners should be aware that lead may be present in high concentrations in soil and dust.

If you are gardening or plan to garden where there is potential for lead to be present, we suggest you consider the following tips

- Have your soil tested. Vegesafe offer free testing. See the Macquarie University website <http://research.science.mq.edu.au/vegesafe/>
- Grow edibles in raised beds with new clean soil, lined with a geotextile. If you can't build raised beds, stick to fruiting plants and trees.
- Add plenty of organic matter to contaminated soil, to help lock away lead into insoluble forms.
- Keep soil pH above 6.5.



- Thoroughly wash all fruits, vegetables and herbs grown in the backyard
- Keep all soil covered, ensuring no bare patches. You can do so with a lawn, gravel, thick mulch or hard surfaces.
- Be wary of all of the above, particularly around the 'dripline' of the home (the area under the eaves) where contamination is often worst.
- Take care of any old paint flaking from homes, fences or planters by removing safely or painting over.



Did you know the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney and Community Greening are on Facebook? Go to the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney Facebook page.



Community Greening is a partnership program of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust and Housing New South Wales. **Youth Community Greening** is made possible with generous financial assistance from the Eden Foundation.

Partnership

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