

# Greening & Growing together

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2019

## Hello Spring

Hi there,

My name is Darren and I thought I would give Phil a break from writing the newsletter and take this chance to introduce myself.

From train stations, to hospitals, to rooftops, to large open paddocks, and small containers on a balcony, I quickly realised that Community Greening knows no boundaries. The Community Greening program reaches far and wide as it endeavours to create communal gardens across NSW.

It's hard to believe that I've been part of the Community Greening team at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney for over a year now. As they say, 'time flies when you're having fun'.

While it's been a blessing working with the dynamic team of Phil, Elizabeth, Brenden, Peter and Paddy, it's the people and their gardens that constantly inspire and motivate me with their creativity, dedication and resourcefulness. The pride that many gardeners take in creating gardens that not only provide them with food, but spaces that nurture the mind and spirit is second to none.

In my first year, I've visited many gardens and met many people from all walks of life. I've been down to Albury, up to Goonellabah and Casino and out to Cobar, not to mention, my regular visits to places such as Balmain, Surry Hills, Rydalmere and Macquarie Fields just to name a few.



- Darren with the ladies from Wesley Missions Kensington property making some pretty
- impressive mini succulent gardens

I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to bring my passion for nature and gardening to the role. Whether building a worm tower, planting a fruit tree or digging for sweet potatoes, it's the smiling faces and the heartfelt words that make it all worthwhile. One of my favourite comments comes from a lady studying to become a teacher. She said, 'when I put my hands on the soil I remember where I came from... it's like a spiritual thing for me'.

It's been an honor working for the oldest scientific institution in Australia and contributing to a program that makes such a difference to so many lives. I look forward to working with many more people as together we discover the amazing benefits of gardening.

Hope to see you around the garden soon.

Darren



- Darren working side by side with Linsley at
- Community Gardens Gladsville

# Become a Habitat for Wildlife Member



• Alexei filled the rock habitat station and placed the butterfly bath

Do you enjoy the company of a kookaburra laughing as you garden? Hearing the buzzing of bees busy pollinating flowers in the veggie gardens? Seeing little blue wrens splashing in the birdbath placed close to some bushes? Maybe you get a thrill when you see a blue tongue lizard retreating to its safe-haven you have created in your garden.

Community gardeners can show their support for wildlife by becoming a member of Community Environment Network's (CEN) Habitat for Wildlife.

CEN says, "urban areas can be very important habitats and by connecting isolated pockets of habitat, wildlife corridors are formed. These are vital connections for many species of birds and animals, enabling them to move from one area to another."

CEN invite you to take a role in restoring our urban landscapes – for both the beauty and health of our

environment. CEN encourage you to make our landscapes a habitat not only for humans but also the wildlife that we want to connect with.

## The benefits of the Habitat for Wildlife program include:

- Information about wildlife friendly gardens
- Membership Certificate
- Natural Connections folder packed with information about improving your garden for native wildlife and birds
- Information on the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and how you can help
- A sign to put on your gate or fence to tell your friends and neighbours that you are a Habitat for Wildlife member. (How cool is that!)

Some Community Greening projects are well on the way to creating habitat for wildlife, including Mission Australia's Benjamin Short Grove in Orange who are becoming members.

They have installed frog ponds, numerous bird baths, rock habitat stations, butterfly baths and an insect hotel. A feature of the grounds are mature stands of black sallee eucalypts that are important habitat for local wildlife.

More details can be found at <https://cen.org.au/projects/habitat-for-wildlife>

Membership is \$20 with benefits galore for you and your local wildlife. Let a Community Greening officer know if you need a hand with signing up.



• Mature trees are important for habitat for wildlife.

# Community Gardeners Build Worm Farm

Doonside, Bateau Bay & Tumby Umbi Community Gardens have built their own worm farms out of recycled material. Made from a laundry sink, wooden pallets & a garden hose, these guys are putting their kitchen scraps to good use.

Groups now have abundant worm juice using recycled plastic bottles to store and use when needed for their seasonal plants.

Doonside Community Garden are extremely proud of their worm farm. They have been bottling it up, labelling them with instructions on "how to use" and handing them out for their community event days.

## Benefits of having a worm farm

- Scraps turned into liquid gold
- Fertilize your garden
- Adds nutrients to your soil
- Great pets for those who cannot have any
- Bateau Bay Community Garden fill a 3 litre bottle in two weeks and regularly feed their worms.



- Patrick Hayes, one of our Master Gardeners. He is looking forward to his first concentrated bottle of worm juice.



- Tumby Umbi Community Garden a few bits and pieces out the back of the Community Hub.

## Did you know?

There are roughly over a million species of worms in the world, living in a variety of habitats. Worms have no legs and if you accidentally chop them in half you don't have two worms.

The head of the worm is located closest to the swollen part of the body. Worms feel no pain as they are invertebrates, which means they have a very small brain and no backbone like crayfish, octopus, snail & butterflies.

Compost worms are both male and female and can eat up to half their weight.



- Bateau Bay community gardeners build their worm farm with Brenden



- Bateau Bay Community Garden fill a 3 litre Bottle in two weeks and regularly feed their worms.



## Save the date!

We have set the date - TWO actually - for the annual Community Greening gathering. Please join us at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney on either Tuesday 3 or Wednesday 4 December 2019. We are hosting a behind the scenes visit to the nursery with lunch served afterwards.

Arranging your own transport to the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney is required. Commuters can be met outside by a Community Greening team member at St James train station at 10.00 am or at Queen Square, near the Queen Victoria statue to walk you to the Garden and Woolloomooloo Gates at 10:30 am. Please let us know if you would like to be met at this spot.

Parking passes will be available ONLY with prior notice.

Considerable walking will be required (but is not essential) within the Garden so come with suitable footwear, water and sun protection. More details will be given when you RSVP.

If you would like to come along and you are a current Community Greening volunteer/participant, please contact us by 29th November 2019 to reserve your place- **PLEASE MENTION IF YOU WILL BE ATTENDING ON TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER OR WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER!**

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