

Greening & Growing together

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2017

Welcome Bloomberg!



Community gardeners Anna and Paul kept going in the rain with Phil and volunteers from Bloomberg's Sydney office

We are delighted to welcome Bloomberg as a Supporting Partner of Community Greening. Bloomberg has sponsored the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney since 2008 and we are excited to have them on board as a supporter of Community Greening.

On Thursday 30 March, twelve Bloomberg staff braved stormy Sydney weather to join community gardeners to weed, mulch, compost, and tidy the Cook, Solander and Marton gardens in Waterloo.

Despite the rain, the Bloomberg volunteers worked extremely hard, continuing past their scheduled volunteering time to move a huge pile of mulch donated by the City of Sydney Council. The volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to get to know some of the community gardeners, who proudly showed off their individual gardens, told their gardening stories, and gave tips on how different plants can be used. Some of the Bloomberg volunteers even left with bunches of freshly grown basil, kindly offered by Jennifer at the Cook Community Garden.

The Bloomberg volunteers will be back again to help at the Marton, Solander, and Cook working bees on Thursday 29 June and will be looking forward to meeting plenty more community gardeners. The details are as follows:

**Working Bee:
Thursday, 29 June 2017**

9am - 10.30am: Marton Community Garden, located in Waterloo.

3.00pm - 4.30pm: Solander and Cook Community Garden, located in Waterloo.

Digging the Dirt on Stephen Peirson

When Claymore locals visit their Community Garden, the person they are most likely to see tending the veggie patch is Stephen Peirson. Steve became a regular volunteer with his mum Nora around 2009, starting in a garden on the hill overlooking Claymore. While this site had a lot of great assets for gardening, the locked location on the hill was not great for attracting a regular band of volunteers. In more recent years, the community garden was relocated to the more accessible community hub behind Gumnut Cottage and the community laundry.

Steve is very community minded and it was this trait that inspired him to get involved with the garden. He gets personal satisfaction from beautifying community spaces and sharing produce from the garden with the locals. Last year's crop of sweet potatoes Steve grew were a very big hit!



• Stephen at the Claymore Community
• Garden

Back in his youth, Steve completed a Certificate in Horticulture that has assisted him with his volunteer work and he now has years of experience growing crops and tending the worm farm.

During the heat of summer, Steve regularly waters the raised beds. He says that watering is the easiest job in the garden for him but he gets the most pleasure from inspiring others to start gardening and providing them with tips.

Nora is now restricted in what she can do in the garden but together they still enjoy the fruits of their labour. Their favourite is the choko that they boil and flavour with salt and pepper.

Steve enjoys having company in the garden and each year he looks forward to Community Greening's end of year excursion. Pop in to see the garden when you are in the area and say g'day. If there is an abundance of produce available, Steve may give you something to add to dinner or an addition for your garden.

Urban Master Gardener Course



Community Greening conducted their first Master Gardener Program in partnership with TAFE Outreach in March at the Royal Botanic Garden. The five-day intensive course held onsite at the Sydney Gardens was funded by the Office of Environment and Heritage's Volunteer Grants Program. This pilot program will form the start of a network of community volunteers that go

on to support their own and new Community Greening projects into the future. Successful participants received a statement of community engagement and an official Royal Botanic Garden volunteer pass, which gives discounts at the Garden's shops and cafes. The course is based on the American style Master Gardener volunteer programs and is aimed at supporting the work of Community Greening. A lot was learnt by all of the first fourteen graduates. Six of the first Master Gardeners have already put their skills to work by helping to build three raised, water efficient, wicking garden beds in a social housing block in Lilyfield.

For one of the participants, the course was her first tertiary education experience at the tender of age of 63! "I was at a stalemate and this course has given me practical help and suggestions on how to proceed and helped me form more networks", she said.

The first two Master Gardener courses have booked out and future courses are on the cards for Campbelltown and Newcastle areas. Get in touch if you are interested.

Eye protection in the garden

Many of us recall the old 'slip, slop, slap' advertising from long ago. However, it's not just your skin you need to worry about when it comes to sun protection, your eyes are also vulnerable to UV damage. In recent years, there have been two more additions to this important sun safe message; 'slide and seek'. The Community Greening team suggest sliding on sunglasses and seeking shade in the warmest parts of the day.

The Cancer Council warns that it's essential to protect your eyes from the effects of UV radiation and not just when the weather is bright and sunny.

How should you protect your eyes?

1. Wear close-fitting wrap around style sunglasses with large lenses that carry the Australian Standard 1067:2003 (category 2, 3 or 4).
2. Wear a hat with a brim that shades your eyes. It can reduce UV radiation reaching your eyes by up to 50%.

The short-term impacts of UV radiation can cause acute photo keratopathy. This results in inflammation, swelling and sensitivity



Chinese seniors are sensible about protecting their eyes – hats, sunglasses and umbrellas.

to light. Longer-term exposure can cause more serious damage including:

- squamous cell cancers on the surface of the eye
- cataracts, or cloudiness of the lens
- cloudiness of the cornea
- macular degeneration
- skin cancers of the eyelids and surrounding area
- pterygium, where the conjunctiva tissue grows over the cornea

Have you ever noticed...

that Elizabeth from Community Greening wears sunglasses most of the time when outdoors? She has had three operations to remove pterygiums and she doesn't want to have another one or see you go through it either!

Source: Partial content from HCF Stay Fit and Well Dec 2015



Autumn Gardening Tips

Autumn is a great time for sowing vegetables and herbs and for planting easy-to-grow bulbs that will help to brighten up an area. This time of the year is also the best for planting your favourite shrubs, especially with the excellent rainfall we've had.

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

the perfect time to give your indoor plants some outdoor time in the warm autumn rain (in a shady spot, if possible).

If you live in the temperate areas of Sydney, the month of April is a fabulous time to plan for a delicious crop by planting the following: artichokes, beetroot, broad beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers, carrots, celery, coriander, endives, garlic, leeks,

lettuce, onions, parsnip, peas, potatoes, radish, rocket, silver beet, English spinach and turnips.



Seniors doing more together

The theme for Seniors Week 2017 was 'Let's do more together'. Gardeners and friends gathered with Community Greening to enjoy many Seniors Week activities and to celebrate being a senior.

To start the week, seniors from around Ambervale came together at Junction Works nursery and garden to discover the benefits of growing your own food. The group toured the productive food garden and selected their own seedlings to take home. Seniors, volunteers and staff enjoyed a meal, Elizabeth's famous Right/Left game with prizes and lively conversation.

Bidwill and Tregear seniors went on an excursion to Nurragingy Reserve, exploring the Chinese Gardens and learning something of the history and local features of this Western Sydney oasis. A Tregear resident, Max loved being near the pond and enjoying the ambience and the antics of the local feathered residents. Courtesy of a Seniors Week grant, morning tea and lunch was supplied by Cathy and the volunteers of Bidwill Community Garden and Nursery. This topped off a busy few days for these volunteers who also hosted the national launch of Neighbour Day.

Seniors from Telopea, Bidwill and Willmot made the most of



• Seniors gathering at Willmot.

the excursion to the Australian Museum's free day for seniors, with a highlight exploring the 'Spiders Alive and Deadly' exhibition. We will all observe the spiders we see in our gardens a little more closely with our new found knowledge of their amazing features.

To cap off the week, Willmot Community Group conducted a plant giveaway, garden talk and that Right/Left game came out again to the amusement and confusion of many. The morning concluded with a morning tea for seniors at the local church hall. A cheerful atmosphere is always created when Willmot residents get together and the gathering was as well received as the seedlings from Oasis Horticulture.

Don't forget to get in early this year with a grant application to stage your 2018 Seniors Week event in your community.



• Seniors taking in the features of the Chinese Garden at Nurragingy Reserve

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