



# Greening & Growing *together*

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2018

## Hello again!

Since the last newsletter the Community Greening and Youth Community Greening teams have been busy preparing spring gardens across the state including Orange, Moree and Lismore.

In this newsletter you will hear about a new partnership with Eucalypt Australia, spring gardening tips and how to create a wicking garden bed.

But that's not all – our very own Norbert was featured in a Branch Out episode exploring the benefits of communities with gardens and our new research. Have a listen and let us know what you think!

See you around the Garden,

**Phil Pettitt**



## Save the date

Join us at the annual

# Community Greening End of Year Event

**on Wednesday 5 December 2018.**

Join us on a tour of the new carnivorous plants display "Plants with Bite" inside The Calyx at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

Afterwards, we will have a "bite" of lunch if you still have an appetite!

Arranging your own transport to the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney is required. Commuters can be met outside St James train station at 10 am or at Queen Square, near the Queen Victoria statue to walk you to the Gardens (or Woolloomooloo Gates at 10:30am).

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 gardens 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 or participant, please

**RSVP by 20 November 2018**

to reserve your place!

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# Wicking Garden Beds

With such low rainfall across NSW our Wicking Garden Bed workshops have been in high demand for new projects and assisting in retro fitting old gardens beds- though this is a lot of hard work.

Wicking garden beds can supply water to the plants from below rather than above. Moisture is drawn up through the soil due to capillary action or 'wicking'. This allows moisture to be more evenly distributed throughout the soil, creating better growing conditions. Water can also be stored below or topped up if you are going on holiday or will be away from your garden for an extended time. Plants and seed still need to be watered in the regular way until they are properly established.



- Building a wicking garden the liner is very important, care must be taken not to damage the plastic liner and hold it in place, shown here the ladies take great care at the Liverpool Women's Resource centre.

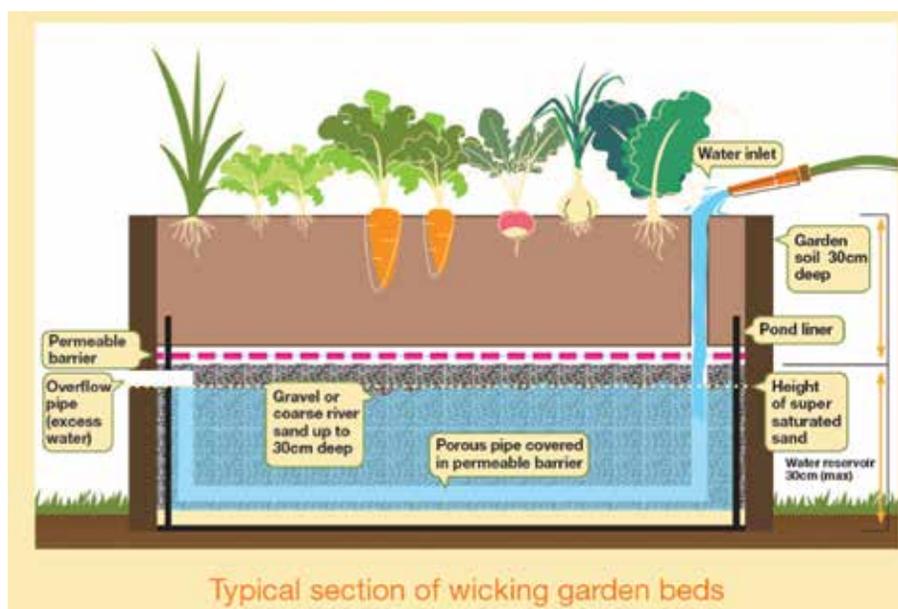
At Community Greening we often replace the gravel (a very heavy material to use) with upside down plant pots or plant trays (stacked one inside the other) as a strong lightweight alternative. You could also use commercially available more expensive drainage cells to support the soil and provide a space for the water storage.

We also suggest not using any stakes (or if you do use great caution) in these garden beds as the liner or waterproofing could be compromised. These gardens work in a similar way to placing a saucer underneath a pot except it works on a larger scale for your vegetable garden and is protected from the sun's evaporation.

If you have a social housing Community Garden or want to start one and would like to know more get in touch with us for your Wicking Garden Bed workshop.



- After filling with pots, and some landscape fabric, the ladies showed some muscle and filled the gardens with soil.



- Image and information courtesy of Lake Macquarie City Council.

## Advantages of wicking garden beds:

- They use around 50% less water than a conventional garden bed.
- Weeds find it harder to establish, as the surface soil is much drier.
- They are great for busy lifestyles as they require less frequent watering.
- Roots from below (like trees and shrubs) are not able to steal the plants water and nutrients
- Fantastic in the hot western Sydney area and the far west of NSW

"the award winning community garden"

**73 Fullagar Road  
Wentworthville**  
(behind the tennis courts, access pathway next to canal)

You're invited to  
**Open Day**  
**Saturday 20 October 2018**  
**9:30 am to 2:00 pm**

✓ fresh vegies    ✓ trash w/ treasure  
✓ craft and cakes    ✓ sausage sizzle  
✓ jams and pickles    ✓ devonshire teas  
✓ plants and seedlings    ✓ curry stall

**Bring your shopping bags!**

# YCG talks Eucalyptus

Apart from National Eucalyptus Day, there aren't many opportunities to talk about the humble gum. So just how many species of Eucalyptus trees are there? Why are they called gum trees? How did Aboriginal people use Eucalyptus trees? Where does the word Eucalyptus come from?

The Youth Community Greening program has received funding from Eucalypt Australia to inform young people in the Sydney metropolitan area about the wonderful world of Eucalypts. They have a vision, which is - "a public inspired by and appreciative of eucalypts".

Over the last few months Peter and Terry have delivered the program to over 400 students in 8 schools across South West Sydney. Peter has been discussing the evolution and adaptations of Eucalypts and their importance in the Australian landscape. Terry has been passing on his extensive knowledge of how plants were traditionally used, particularly the uses of Eucalypts for tools, weapons and medicine. The program has also planted almost 50 trees in schools.



• Terry talks Eucalyptus to the Belmore Boys High school students



• Mcallums hill PS plant eucalyptus trees in the large open spaces at their school

There are over 800 species of Eucalypts and they are found across Australia in all different climatic regions and ecosystems. In the south eastern region grows the Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*), which is the tallest flowering plant in the world. They are called gum trees because of the gum (kino) which exudes from any break in the bark. The bark can vary from the deeply fissured iron barks to stringy barks and smooth barks. The name Eucalyptus comes from the Greek words eu-, well, and kaluptos, cover, meaning "well-covered", describing the woody fruit protecting the seeds.

Different Eucalyptus species traditionally had different uses throughout the various regions of Australia. Throughout the Murray-Darling basin canoes were made

from the River Red Gums, but in other regions stringybarks were used. Eucalypts were also used to make boomerangs, shields, didgeridoos, coolamons and shelters. Numerous medicines were obtained from different parts of the tree and the oils from Eucalypts are still widely used for respiratory ailments.

Eucalypts dominate the Australian landscape, but how much do we really know about them. There is fossil evidence of Eucalypts dating back 45 million years and pollen deposits from over 34 million years ago. It's important that we understand the significance that Eucalypts have in our history and culture and the Youth Community Greening program is enjoying inspiring an appreciation of this iconic group of species.

# Spring into your garden NOW

It's the perfect time to sow or plant the following:

Vegetables: beetroot, capsicum, carrots, choko, cucumber, dwarf



beans, eggplant, Jerusalem artichoke, lettuce, okra, pumpkin, radish, spinach, spring onions, squash, sweet corn, sweet potato, strawberry, tomato, watermelon and zucchini.

Flowers: alyssum, amaranthus, aster, California poppy, celosia, chrysanthemum, cockscomb, dahlia, gerbera, marigold, nasturtium, petunia, portulaca, verbena, zinnia.

Spring is also a great time for planting most fruit trees and flowering trees, shrubs and climbers.

Don't forget to water well and ensure your soil is thoroughly moist before planting and remember to water after planting as spring has come early and the ground is very dry!

Tip: A drop of dishwashing liquid in the watering-can will help moisten

## Growing communities with gardens

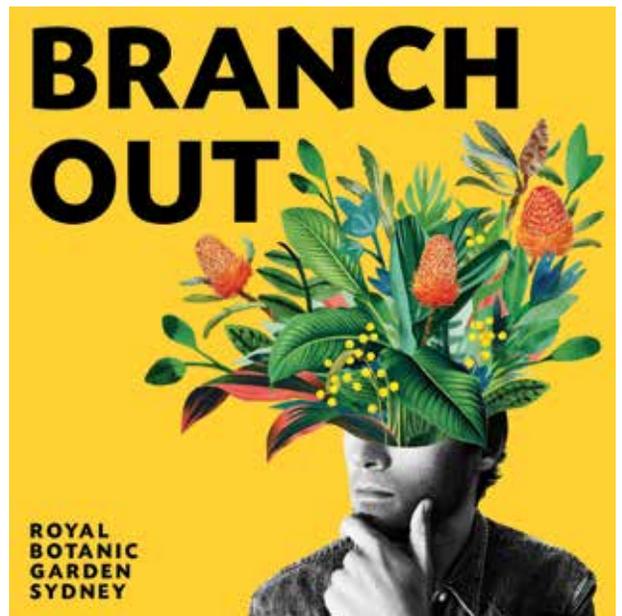
Branch Out with a new podcast and discover the surprising world of plants with science and stories from the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney. In the eighth episode of Branch Out, you'll hear from Norbert and how the garden brought his local community in Surry Hills together.

You'll also hear from Dr Son Truong one of the researchers from Western Sydney University who studied the mental, physical and social benefits of the Community Greening – and of course from Phil Pettitt too!

Listen to the episode on our website or search for Branch Out in your favourite podcast app.

[www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/branch-out/branch-out-gardens-grow-communities](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/branch-out/branch-out-gardens-grow-communities)

[www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/stories/2018/growing-communities-with-gardens](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/stories/2018/growing-communities-with-gardens)



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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.



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