

# Greening & Growing together

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2019

## Food Lab Success for Community Gardener



Tomato Festival Sydney 2018 Roni with Manuel , Wayne, Brenden and Costa

Roni Ali is a long time Community Greening community gardener and also a local volunteer, avid veggie and herb grower for 8 years (particularly cultural foods from where she grew up in Fiji), a cook for her neighbours, a caterer for many tenant groups over the years and a prolific sharer who has given produce grown from the community gardens to many people.

Last year she attended the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney Tomato Festival and submitted her own original recipe, after seeing a workshop on stage she turned to Phil and said, "I can do that! Get me a timeslot on stage next year!" So, we did just that and this year we helped make her dream come true. Roni presented her Cooked and Fresh Chutney recipes at the Tomato Festival Sydney in front of a

live audience on stage with her hero Costa Georgiadis.

After seeing her present on stage, Phil suggested she enrol in FoodLab Sydney's first ever course, but she was hesitant at first. After all, it is 10 weeks of TAFE 8.00 am starts at Ultimo twice a week - this would make most people think again about pursuing an opportunity.

Despite a few health challenges along the way and having to navigate her way through the city, Roni has done incredibly well and the Community Greening Team and FoodLab Sydney are all very proud of her! Maybe you can tell!

Drawing on the experience of FoodLab Detroit, the Sydney branch FoodLab is a community of people working to make our city a better place to live and eat.

It's all about providing training and support for people who want to start careers and small businesses in food. FoodLab can supply you with the tools for change like learning kitchen skills, business know-how, community and mentor connections, sustainability practices – so that you can realise your idea for a future in the industry and in doing so, create a more vibrant local food economy.

Roni will continue Part 3 of the course which focuses on Business Start-ups, she hopes to do some part time volunteering with a social enterprise to help more people in the community and inspire people of all ages to get gardening! A great success story - here's to Roni doing more awesome things!

# Hello, welcome to Sunny Sydney Winter

It's a great time to improve soil with compost or why not start a weed tea - not sure how? Ask Community Greening for a workshop at your local garden!

While you are at it, plant a few deciduous fruit trees, vines or maybe a complete food forest in time for spring!

Don't forget keep your eyes peeled for caterpillars and check under leaves for their yellow cylindrical eggs. To prevent them from eating your veggies before you can, try sprinkling self-rising flour over

cabbage, kale, cauliflower and broccoli to kill caterpillars as an organic pest control (an organic farmer told me this tip a few years ago).

It's the perfect time start planning your spring vegetables too. In warm areas of your garden when frost danger has past start to sow or plant the following: Beetroot, Capsicum, Carrots, Choko, Cucumber, Dwarf Beans, Eggplants, Jerusalem artichoke, Lettuce, Okra, Pumpkin, Radish, Spinach, Spring onions, Squash, Sweet corn, Sweet potato, Strawberry, Tomato, Watermelon and Zucchini.

That's all from me for now, keep reading to hear from Community Greening gardeners for more tips, updates and milestones.

See you around,

**Phil Pettit**



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## Connecting with the Senses. Beach sand goes bush.



• Sand therapy beds made by the Tallowood men's shed.

**M**ost of us love the sensory feeling of squelching wet sand between our toes or are calmed by sieving sand between our fingers. The Central West town of Orange is a long way from the coast, so recently a bit of the coast was taken to them – a raised sand bed for adult sand and nature play.

Built by the handy men from the Tallowood Men's shed, the raised sand pit was delivered to Mission Australia's Benjamin Short Grove, to be placed in the courtyard where most Community Greening sessions are staged. The residents played a part in sanding and staining the sand bed and new raised garden beds also made by the Men's Shed.

Some of the residents have dementia or a disability and sand therapy will help them use their fine

# Sustainable Outreach

## A poem by Peter Dawe

Sustainability Outreach 2019

And again we were heading out West.  
The van was packed with soil and plants  
And we were prepared for the endurance test.

The solid rain was welcome for the region  
But not ideal for nearly 800km of travel  
Over winding passes and barren fields  
On roads of bitumen and gravel.

Then after sunset and 12 hours of travel  
We pulled in to our first destination.  
The Copper City Motel – Cobar  
We were in need of some amber hydration.

It was great to catch up with old friends and new  
And to see where we'd come from on the map.  
We settled in for a meal and some quiet refreshments  
But devastation – there was no beer on tap.

We survived and bunkered down for the night  
In preparation for the long day ahead.  
Some slept better than others apparently  
Due to the chainsaw from a particular bed.

Day two was brisk and the rain had cleared  
As the Community Greening group went a separate way  
Darren, Josh and Pete stayed at Cobar Primary School  
Paddie and Phil went to Wilcannia for the day.

Wilcannia was a further 3 hours away  
And the town is doing it pretty tough.  
Paddie and Phil donated and set up a Vegepod  
To the domestic violence centre so food, they'd have enough.  
A local resident's response was priceless  
"this is so fantastic to have the garden near  
we are applying for funding to start a garden  
as there isn't much food out here"

Wilcannia is such a remote community  
A food desert it has become  
So Community Greening by building capacity  
Will assist with gardens to create a healthy outcome.

They also visited the local school and preschool  
Before driving further out to Broken Hill  
Here they touched base with past community projects  
And checked out gardens previously set up by Phil.

Meanwhile back at Cobar Public School  
A team of environmental educators had assembled  
And whilst accumulatively their knowledge was vast  
A motley crew they certainly resembled.

Joining Youth Community Greening  
Would be other environmental experts from far and near  
Some talking about the outback's biodiversity  
Others about water, waste and pollution in our atmosphere.

From the RBG staff, it was about the plants  
Everything from seed, flowers, pollination and tree  
And our own Darren from Community Greening  
Taught the students about the blue banded bee.



Josh showed the kids the importance of plants  
To the Indigenous people of this land  
Peter showed them how to make gardens more sustainable  
Making growing food and plants easy to understand.

After a long day of back to back lessons  
We bid farewell to Cobar Public School.  
The students had learnt much about the environment  
And we got to see their aquaponics set up, which was cool.

Before heading off onto the open road  
We checked out Cobar's open cut gold mine.  
And from our vantage point at Fort Bourke Lookout  
We saw the enormity of the design.

The next stop would be the township of Nyngan  
Only a couple of hours drive away.  
Nestled on the slowly moving Bogan River  
Where the Major Mitchell's Cockatoo did play.

The next day Nyngan Public School was waiting  
And what an inviting school it was to see.  
The presenters prepared for the workshops ahead  
We were welcomed and acknowledged the Country.

The school had outdoor learning spaces  
The envy of schools across all the Savanna.  
They had chickens, wicking beds and aquaponics  
As well as an Indigenous garden the shape of a goanna.

We spent another long day of teaching and learning  
With the kids from the Bogan Shire  
And as the day was drawing to a close  
The presenters were beginning to tire.

But there was still a reasonable distance to drive  
To reach our next stop – Tullamore  
And the extent of the drought was all too visible  
Parched earth, thin sheep were impossible to ignore.

The earth lit up as the sun went down  
And we convoyed into the small community  
The rooms were tight, but the meals were hearty  
As we embraced this unique opportunity

We assembled at Tullamore Central School  
Rugged up due to the crisp cool weather  
We were also joined by Tottenham and Trundle Schools  
And the three schools combined working well together

This day rolled along like the ones before  
With our wide-eyed host students eager to learn.  
They engaged in all aspects of environmental learning  
And a great day was by all concerned.

At the days end we packed up and said goodbye  
Our last presentations had been staged.  
Between us 150 workshops over the week  
And over 600 people had been engaged.

From Broken Hill to Tottenham  
And crossing all the wide brown land between.  
Sustainability 2019 had been delivered  
Truly a memorable event it had been.



# Connecting with the Senses cont'd...



Completed bed at Benjamin Short Grove

motor skills plus enhance their eye and hand coordination. All residents can experience the therapeutic benefits of using the sense of touch and being creative with sand and nature.

Creative sand interaction has been encouraged with Elizabeth from Community Greening making fired clay textured spheres to create patterns in the sand. Also included in the package delivered with the sand bed was driftwood

and pumice found on beaches. Nature collections will continue with feathers, interesting stones, gumnuts and an assortment of natural materials the residents can use as part of the relaxing sand experience. In some sessions, materials are placed to be seen through a picture frame, offering a creative and original masterpiece that can be altered and recreated.

The sand therapy beds made by the Tallowood Men's Shed have proved

so popular that they have built a longer, lower bed at the Tallowood site, ready for adults and children's programs. Another is on order for a new Community Greening project in Orange.



Sand and nature art

For people wanting to see a sand therapy bed in Sydney, consider visiting the newly opened 5 Senses Garden within Rhodes Park, Concord West. The setting is relaxed with wonderful facilities – perfect for a group excursion if you have transport.

# Master Gardener Update

The Riverwood Master Gardener Course and Liverpool/ Campbelltown courses have just completed next available courses will be Sydney (Royal Botanic Garden) 6 days over 2 months starts 16th, 17th & 18th September and 14th, 15th & 16th October 2019. Auburn Course will start 17th September Tuesday for 6 weeks at the Auburn Friendship Garden and Community Centre on Macquarie street Auburn. Newcastle Course runs 6 days over 2 months and starts 21st, 22nd and 23rd October and 11th, 12th & 13th November 2019.



• Riverwood Master Gardeners

The Riverwood group really loved learning some new permaculture techniques and have a new love of soil and composting. If you would like to join the courses get in touch. You can just complete the course or you can continue participating in workshops and new project's activities with the Master Gardener groups. The Liverpool and Campbelltown Group recently spent the day helping the Central Coast group propagating 20 trays of organic seedlings at the KBT Community Nursery.



• Liverpool Campbelltown Master Gardeners

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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.



**Community Greening**  
People, Plants, Places

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