

Greening & Growing *together*

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2016-17

Celebration of a 10 Year Partnership



Photo by Bianca Camilleri: L to R Marilyn Soulsby, Margaret Bourke and Elizabeth Docking.

In September 2006, Community Greening and The Junction Works' Tallowood Community Centre embarked on a fruitful partnership — Ambrose Community Nursery was created in the grounds of the Community Centre in Ambarvale.

Ten years on, the group of volunteers and staff that made this success possible came together to celebrate the important milestone.

On hand were some of the original volunteers and Marilyn Soulsby, now General Manager of Services at The Junction Works.

Over the years thousands of plants have been given away to the local community from Ambrose Community Nursery. Many of these plants have been donated by Community Greening's sponsors Eden Gardens, Oasis Horticulture, Plantmark and Alpine Nurseries. Other plants have been cultivated by local volunteers. Also supporting the project have been Yates, (providing seasonal seeds), Northcote Pottery (supplying beautiful pots) and Twigz (donating children's gardening materials).

A successful vegetable growing space has been created and one of the highlights is a floral garden that attracts beneficial insects to the area.

Congratulations to The Junction Works on the 10th anniversary of a great partnership and thanks to the volunteers that make the nursery and gardens the success they are today — especially Margaret Bourke whose work was acknowledged during the ceremony.

Never too old to learn

A special report by Thornleigh resident Jan Crocker

On a recent visit to Kimbriki Eco House and Garden the community garden group at Oakley Gardens, Thornleigh, was inspired by the lecture by Senior Ecologist Peter Rutherford.

Peter is a social ecologist, horticulturist and educator with an extensive knowledge of soils and microbes and the sciences of composting and worm farming.

The group's spokesperson said: 'Peter's infectious passion for sustainable living has inspired us to live even more sustainably than we already do.'

Here are some of Peter's great tips:

- you can feed citrus peel to the worms if you also add dolomite lime
- try not to put citrus and unnecessary food scraps into the garbage bin as it turns into an acidic liquid that leaches into the soil and waterways



Community gardeners listening intently to Peter Rutherford.

- use worm juice daily on plants rather than store it as it loses its effectiveness over time
- add dolomite lime and dirt to the compost, and water liberally and often
- use a loose-topped wire fence around vegetables so visiting furry pests can't get a solid hold as they climb towards the tempting feast.

Thank you Peter for a very informative and truly inspiring day!

Get together for Neighbour Day

Costa Georgiadis is well known for his role as host of 'Gardening Australia'. What you may not know is that Costa is also an ambassador for Neighbour Day.

Costa says:

'I see friendships formed over community gardens, week in and week out. Verge gardens, pocket parks, laneways ... you name it. Families, kids, adults and elders are nurturing their environment and growing things for the birds, insects and people to share. It's not just the plants that are growing in the garden, people are too. They are connecting with one another, all age groups altogether.'

The Community Greening team so often witnesses the positive impact a garden brings to a unit complex. It is not unusual for us to hear 'I didn't know my neighbours until I got involved in our garden!'

Neighbour Day is Sunday 26 March. Why not get together with your neighbours on Neighbour Day and introduce newcomers to your garden?

Register your event, get advice on how to promote it and obtain other helpful information on Neighbour Day by going to:

www.neighbourday.org



Thornleigh neighbours Alison, Susan and Jan get together every Monday in the community room in their Housing NSW complex.

Community gardeners celebrate win

Congratulations to the dedicated team at Bidwill Community Garden and Nursery for taking out 'Best Volunteer Team of the Year Award' in their region at the annual NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards.

Volunteers Marjorie, Greg and Lisa, along with their nominator Elizabeth from Community Greening, were surprised when their name was called from an impressive list of nominations including numerous SES, RFS and CWA groups from Fairfield through to the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury.

CEO from The Centre for Volunteering Gemma Rygate

commented on the impressive range of work conducted by the Bidwill team for their local community — from school holiday programs and plant giveaways, to Senior's Week events and the popular Christmas event in the community garden for local families (hundreds attend and planning begins in January for the following Christmas). This is all on top of maintaining a multi award-winning garden!

Good luck Bidwill at the forthcoming State award ceremony!

Last year June James from Woonona was awarded 'Best Senior Volunteer of the Year' for the Illawarra district.



Elizabeth, Marjorie and Greg at the awards' ceremony at the Nepean Rowers Club.

Tomato Festival Sydney

Sat 18 – Sun 19 February, 2017



Join us for this free two-day Festival celebrating all things tomato at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

The Festival program is jam-packed with exciting, fun and delicious activities for all members of the family.

Does your community garden grow the nation's best tomatoes, or perhaps you pride yourself on your home-made tomato sauces, relishes and chutneys? Put your talent to the test and check out the competitions!

Find out more: rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au



Summer gardening tips

Trees / Shrubs

Try and wait until autumn for new plantings (once the hot weather has passed). Use the time to research your new plants to determine what space they will require and their preferred soil type. Also start to prepare the soil by adding compost, aged manure and perhaps some free woodchips.

Vegetables

Through summer sow seeds or plant seedlings of: capsicum, carrot, chilli, choko, climbing bean, *corn, *cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, *melon, *pumpkin (look out for the bush varieties for small gardens), *radish, squash, sweet potato, tomato (try growing the tiny-tim or roma varieties if you're worried

about pests), *watermelon and *zucchini.

* Remember the vegetables which have large seeds are best grown by seed and are also usually the easiest to grow.



Lessons for all

In 2016, Community Greening embarked on a joint gardening and health program with SydWest Multicultural Services, Blacktown City Council and Western Sydney Local Health District.

As part of the program, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups attending SydWest completed monthly garden workshops and health talks. An enthusiastic Chinese group graduated in June, while a colourful Bhutanese group (pictured) attended classes in the second half of the year.



Some of the Bhutanese garden group at Blacktown Showground Community Garden.

For garden presenters – Elizabeth from Community Greening and Clarissa Davis from Council – the class also provided a chance to learn about the fascinating culture of Bhutan.

Here are some interesting facts passed on via the group’s entertaining interpreter Puspa:

- the Bhutanese people love brightly coloured clothes and use the warm greetings of ‘namaste’ or ‘namaskar’
- Bhutan is a landlocked country in the eastern Himalayas, bordering China to the north and India to the south, east and west

- in 1999 the government lifted a ban on television and the internet, making Bhutan one of the last countries to introduce television
- watching ‘Gardening Australia’ was a new experience for these immigrants, best watched with an interpreter as many of the older people speak little English
- most members of the group were refugees, forced to leave Bhutan due to their ethnicity
- the group members looked to be in very good health and were vegetarian – not even eating eggs (this made contributions to worm farms and compost heaps very easy)
- the Pesticides Act of Bhutan is very precise to ensure integrated pest management is pursued, limiting the use of pesticides as the last resort
- the group had a very good grasp of working with nature to ensure their gardens were organic.

This group was a pleasure to work with and we wish them great success in their gardens and lives in Australia.

Royal Botanic Garden Sydney and Community Greening are on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Follow us.



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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.



Supporters



Enquiries: **Phil Pettitt** Community Greening Coordinator **T:** 9231 8399 **M:** 0447 420 173 **E:** philip.pettitt@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au