



Greening & Growing together

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2015

Seven Years of Oasis Good Fortune

For the past seven years Oasis Horticulture has been providing free trays of seedlings for Community Greening and Youth Community Greening projects. Our gardeners feel they are extremely fortunate to receive these plants and treasure the flowers and vegetables that they produce.

Ten trays of seedlings are delivered to Eden Gardens each week, five flower trays and five vegetable trays. The Community Greening horticulturists then distribute the plants state wide to priority schools, juvenile justice centres, community gardens and community nurseries in areas with a high population of Housing tenants and to garden projects in areas in need of support. The seedlings are regularly used as an educational tool, with participants picking up valuable gardening tips to grow their plants successfully.

While Oasis may consider the plants a little tall to go on retail shelves and have sufficient shelf life, to our gardeners they are perfect. It is not unusual for the seedlings to be in a garden within minutes of their delivery.

State Sales Manager from Oasis Springwood, Sharon Fairbairn, is proud that the nursery can supply seedlings to people who may not be able to acquire them without their donations. She said 'Oasis Horticulture is proud to be able to support Community Greening and Youth Community Greening with the wide variety of projects they ... continued on page 5



Tallowood nursery volunteers receiving plants donated by Oasis.

Winners are Grinners

The Bidwill Community garden scooped the pool in the recent Blacktown City Garden Awards. The volunteers were thrilled to pick up Best Garden in Ward 5, Best Community Garden and Best Community School Edible Garden. Congratulations Marjorie, Angie, Greg, Lisa and Pete and Anthony and the Juvenile Justice clients. Job well done!

Also congratulations to Lalor Park Community Garden for their second place. The volunteers at this garden were challenged with a destructive break-in days before the judging, so they had to spend time repairing and replanting. Also Housing resident Luc LeClair was rewarded with a second place for his stunning garden that has also been a winner in the Toongabbie

garden competition conducted by Community Greening.

Start getting your garden ready for your Council's garden awards this year. Having this aim will provide motivation to get your garden in shape and extra reason to be proud.



Bidwill volunteers with their award certificates. Missing from photo is Lisa Blunden.

Botanical Buzz

An Aboriginal artwork by Wiradjuri man Aaron Towney at Shoyoen, Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden has helped strengthen the relationship between the Dubbo Aboriginal community and their Sister City Minokamo.

Aaron has developed a deep affinity for Shoyoen (the Japanese Garden) since becoming one of Dubbo City Council's horticultural apprentices over three years ago.

After weeks of planning and research it took Aaron roughly two and a half hours to complete his design in the Japanese rock garden (Karesansui) also known as the Zen Garden. The Zen Garden is Japan's most distinctive and ancient type of garden. The deceptively simple and stark arrangement of rocks in a 'sea' of white pebbles collectively forms a religious work of art reflecting the spiritual tenets of Zen Buddhism.

The visitor does not physically enter the Zen Garden but can use the garden as a meditative tool to seek clarity of thought and enlightenment. Whilst tending this garden, raking the pebbles and removing fallen leaves, Aaron felt inspired to share his personal



•• Aaron Towney's design in the Zen garden in Dubbo.

journey towards re-connecting with his Aboriginal heritage.

Staying within the style of the garden, Aaron used coloured rocks and ancient Aboriginal symbology to depict a traditional Aboriginal family going about their daily activities. An Aboriginal woman searches for food with a digging stick whilst a father and his two sons hunt a kangaroo with spears.

The artwork is a deeply meaningful

gesture of respect to his family and to the Zen Garden.

Although this artwork is his most complex and personal, it is not his first artwork in the Zen Garden. Aaron created an artwork depicting the Dreamtime Rainbow Serpent in honour of the visit by delegates from Minokamo during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the Sister City relationship between Minokamo and Dubbo.

Right To Food Conference: Update

Community Greening (CG) had an enjoyable time presenting and participating in discussions at the recent *Right to Food* conference. It was great to see some groups that CG have worked with along the way and also make connections with some we have not. The food co-operative was one of the projects featured at the conference.

A food co-operative was identified by over half of Warwick Farm residents as a potential intervention to address the issue of food insecurity in Warwick Farm. As a result, the Food 4 Life Market was launched in July 2009 by the Salvation Army in partnership with Sydney South West

Area Health Service.

The food market aimed to decrease food insecurity in the area by increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier food options of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, milk, meat as well as canned and frozen foods, at an affordable price (\$15 a bag). The market is open to all Warwick Farm residents, with one membership per household. The market operates on Tues, Thurs and Fri and members are entitled to shop once per week. An additional aim of Food 4 Life was to create a community hub where members can socialise with neighbours and friends, receive healthy eating advice and recipes as well as information on community

events. In addition the Salvation Army offers counselling services and referrals to other agencies, for example Centrelink and Housing NSW, to help with issues.

The Food 4 Life Market is run by volunteers recruited from the community. Training is provided to them by Liverpool TAFE Outreach, to develop their skill as volunteers. This strengthens community actions and creates connections not only between volunteers and market customers, but within the community as a whole. Food 4 Life creates the opportunity to address the social isolation that can result from food insecurity.

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Food and cooking project snap shot



Community Kitchen's Salsa recipe

Salsa is the Mexican word for sauce. It usually refers to a tomato-based condiment used to dip or to add flavour to dishes.

Ingredients

- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, chopped
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley



Method

Combine all ingredients and toss well. Makes 2 cups and serves 4.

Hint

Salsa will keep for 3–4 days, covered, in the refrigerator.

Variation

For a spicy Mexican Salsa add 1 ripe avocado, 1 small red chilli, seeded and chopped (or pinch of dried chilli flakes) and 1 tablespoon fresh coriander.

Add 4 tablespoons of Tahini (sesame paste) mixed with 4 tablespoons of water and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice.

HEALTHY TIP:

Eat fruit and veggies in season, they are cheaper, plentiful and of the best quality.

The aim of the Minto Multicultural Healthy Community Kitchen is to promote access to healthy nutritious and affordable food and sharing knowledge about cooking skills through exchanging recipes. The kitchen also promotes modification of traditional multicultural meals to make them healthier as well as creating opportunities for friendships and social support amongst the Pacific Islander communities in Minto.

Families from Fiji, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Hawaii, Spain, and Vietnam who live around Minto gathered weekly to prepare good, affordable and culturally appropriate and modified food to make it healthier.

The families participating in the community kitchen reported positive changes in a range of factors including access to food, cooking skills, modification of food, motivation to cook at home, reduced intake of takeaway food, budgeting and the promotion of healthy cooking habits.



Joshua, Tiba, Mere and Naomi with some of the fresh food at Food 4 Life.

Alison Pringle, a well-respected community member, started as a volunteer at the market and is currently the Market's Manager. Alison said '... more than 2000 local people use the Market.'

You can call Alison for further information on 8798 5928.

Above: one of the Minto Multicultural Healthy Community Kitchen gatherings.

St Canice's Kitchen rooftop garden

St Canice's Kitchen is set to build a rooftop garden in Kings Cross that engages asylum seekers and supports the local homeless community.

For the past three years, Rob Caslick has run the Inside Out Organic Soup Kitchen at St Canice's Kitchen in Kings Cross with a mission to serve wholesome organic food to the homeless in this area. Situated above the Kitchen is a refugee support service and it was a conversation between the two businesses that inspired the development of the rooftop garden above them.

The primary role of the garden is to give people on bridging visas the opportunity to participate in something meaningful. 'We discussed the idea of activating this rooftop to engage with those seeking asylum who are living in our local community and to give them a sense of purpose during the time they submit their application for a humanitarian visa and when they are accepted for residency. This can often take up to five years! Five long years of waiting and not being allowed to work,' said Caslick.

The resulting harvested produce will be utilised in the Soup Kitchen to further give back to the community. Caslick is also in talks with Kylie Kwong to grow herbs for her new restaurant in Potts Point and other local restaurateurs who are interested in being able to purchase locally grown produce — thereby providing funds for garden maintenance and upkeep.

The garden has been designed under the concept of 'welcome'. Caslick and his team thought the best way to achieve this was to plant as many edible native plants as they could fit in with the message of 'welcome to our country, this is what we have to offer'. One of the people seeking



• No dig garden workshop at St Canice's garden with Phil Pettitt.

asylum is an agricultural engineer by trade and is working alongside Caslick on this project.

Delivering a rooftop garden on top of an historical building is expensive due to its structurally complicated nature. Caslick and his team undertook a crowd-funding initiative raising over \$20k in just 10 days — with the help of high-profile supporters including chef and author Christine Manfield and celebrity gardener Costa Georgiadis. Thanks to the support of the City of Sydney a total of nearly \$50k has since been raised — more than triple their goal.

Since the project was announced, Caslick has been inundated with emails from people to help build the garden. 'I've been immensely blessed by the amount of people who are willing to donate their time and experience to see this project come to life. I'm so thankful to have Built onboard providing their expertise when it comes to the major building works. The site is tricky and it needs an extraordinary level of care, skill and know-how to ensure it's done to the highest standard,' said Caslick. 'And we

also want a really beautiful result which I knew we could achieve by working with Built.'

Built and other key players such as the architects Woods Bagot and landscapers PEPO Botanical Design have worked hard to create an innovative design and build that will be submitted for design awards.

The community planting day was held on 18 October 2014. Activities on the day included a no dig garden and planting workshop with the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney's Community Greening team and lunch by the InsideOut crew. Plants came for free from Green World Nursery and Alpine Nursery, Alpine Nurseries being a great supporter and sponsor of Community.

Gardens Online

John D Dailey President TLC Garden wrote in to let us know the Turrumurra Lookout Community Garden — the first in Ku-ring-gai — has both a website and Facebook page that might be of interest to you: www.tlcgarden.org.au or www.facebook.com/pages/TLC-Garden/318635698227162

Oakley Gardens Thornleigh

Jan Crocker, tenant representative of Oakley Gardens Thornleigh, wrote in to share this story.

Tenant participation began around 12 months ago when we formed our committee with a view to improving the quality of life in our complex, breaking down the barriers, and engendering a spirit of friendship and community.

To encourage participation we invited Mrs Bettan Todd from the Catholic Community Services, to conduct fortnightly discussion groups, and from time to time invite outside speakers. In preparation, we removed all the accumulated junk and rubbish from the Community Hall and cleaned it thoroughly. We also arranged through Housing to have ongoing cleaning in place and this is now happening.

At this time, one of our tenants, Mr Brian Andrews, who had been doing a wonderful job of maintaining and improving the gardens in the complex, commented that it would be good to have a vegetable garden. We then decided to apply and received a grant of \$4,000 which was auspiced by David White from the Inner Sydney Regional Council. David has been extremely encouraging and we count ourselves lucky to have his support.

Through David, we were put in contact with Phil Pettitt, Community Greening Co-ordinator, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, who helped us to build the garden which is now completed and flourishing and we have booked regular workshops with Elizabeth from Community Greening. These have been advertised via a poster on the door of the community hall stating that all are welcome to attend.

We organised an official opening of the Community Garden on Wednesday 12 November 2014 and invited the Member for



• Phil Pettitt, MP Matt Kean, Bettan Todd Catholic Community Care, David White
• CSTPRS, Brian Andrews and Jan Crocker.

Hornsby Mr Matthew Kean MP to do the honours. We had a guest list including David White, Phil Pettitt, representatives from Housing NSW, Bettan Todd, others from Catholic Community Services, representatives from Hornsby Council including Queenie Lau, a clinical dietician from Hornsby Hospital, also other area health professionals who have been supportive, police officers we have come to know through incidents here, and a selection from the wider community.

In terms of participation in the organised activity, we have nine committee members, and we are beginning to see others taking an interest in the garden. We have placed tables and chairs in the garden, and even if tenants are not gardeners we have spread the word that they are welcome to come and sit and enjoy the sunshine.

We have found time, received encouragement and are leading by example with the hope of achieving greater participation in our gardening and social activities. We believe that if we continue to make positive, inclusive change, creating a real sense of community and not reacting to any negativity, that we can make

a real difference in the quality of life for all residents. It is also our intention to include wherever possible the wider community in order to change the perceived negativity and prejudice toward public housing tenants.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/the-hills/community-garden-breaking-down-barriers-for-housing-department-tenants/story-fngr8i1f-1227119579573>

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projects they run. Through history, plants and gardening have always brought communities together and we see gardening as a hobby that should be accessible to all people. Gardening is good for your health and wellbeing and the social aspect that comes with the projects that Community Greening run is an added benefit to those in the community who take part. We are so pleased that we can help in this small way so that more people can experience the enjoyment that comes with gardening.'

All those involved with the projects that benefit from the generosity of receiving seedlings send a collective 'thank you' to Oasis for their support.

Digging the Dirt — Lloyd, Gary and David from Gladesville Community Garden



Illustration: Chris Ware

Lloyd, Gary and David have all been gardening since the garden started about four years ago in their Gladesville Housing NSW unit complex.

Lloyd really enjoys working outdoors, getting out of his unit to watch his garden grow. He loves watering his garden and ventures out to hydrate his precious plants at least twice per week. Recently Lloyd has been learning cooking skills with the group, incorporating food that they have grown into a meal. Lloyd finds it extraordinary how much there is to learn. He would also really like to grow a macadamia tree as he tasted a nut once from a fellow work colleague and thought they tasted great!

David is interested and amazed at the huge variety of plants that there are. Like Lloyd, he also gardens at least twice per week but really enjoys the monthly working bees and workshops. He finds working in a group environment really lifts his spirits. He appreciates the assistance of Christine from Ryde Hunters Hill Community Services (RHHCS) and Phil from Community Greening.

David became inspired when gardening as a young lad with his father. He was always surprised

how satisfying the work was and it was always a job they did well together. David now gets this same sense of achievement and positive feeling from coming together for a common purpose in their unit complex. His favourite plants are herbs due to their long harvest time, seasonal variety and low maintenance. Mint being one of his favourites — David could not believe how quickly it grew back after Phil's herbal tea workshop!

Gary was also inspired by his dad's ability to grow potatoes and carrots and now takes great pleasure in growing his own vegetables. Gary finds the location of the garden convenient and pulls out any weeds daily as he walks by. He also enjoys the ever changing garden and the opportunities to learn new things about growing plants. His favourite plants are the long harvesting cherry tomatoes that he loves to eat.

All three gardeners have really enjoyed the social side of this garden and have even been lucky to go on a few social outings with some other groups to Cabramatta and the Auburn Cherry Blossom festival. The group also love the opportunity to express their creativity with art workshops in their common room provided by RHHCS. Group activities are planned, using a barbeque in their common area that they have obtained recently thanks to a grant.

Stop Press!

Phil recently visited the crew from Pittwater Road, Gladesville — to find that they had won second prize in the Ryde Community Garden Competition and Mrs Jun was awarded a highly-commended. They were so proud of their glass trophy and certificate and were wrapped that they met Anna Ainsworth, owner of Eden Gardens and celebrity gardener Angus Stewart. Angus spent half an hour chatting with them. Angus knew their very own 'Garden Guru' Phil Pettitt, when Phil was Angus' student. They were also given books. They have their eyes firmly fixed on improvements so they can win first place next year.



From L to R: Sandra, Darren, Lloyd — holding the certificate and Gary with the glass trophy.



Did you know the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney and Community Greening are on Facebook? Go to the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney Facebook page.

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.



Partnership



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