Community Garden 3231 Newsletter February 2015

PLEASE NOTE
Working Bees this month are on:
Saturday 7 February
Sunday 22 February

The summer vegetables are producing well, mainly due to the dedication of those on the watering roster and the weeders! Thanks everyone. Tomatoes will be coming along shortly with more lettuce, spring onions, beans, cucumbers, zucchini followed by pumpkins. (If you peep under the leaves along the Fraser Drive fenceline, you will see lovely big, green pumpkins of all varieties. More on these, next Newsletter

Thanks to Barbara Evans this issue has a lot to do with … TOMATILLOS.

Read on …

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- A word from Gretel
- New Year BBQ photos
- A look around the garden
- Recipes

A word from Gretel

The King Parrots are enjoying our tomatoes! They are very good at getting under the netting, but luckily they are also good at escaping. Don't forget to eat the wonderful produce in your garden.

It's been a busy month – CG3231 made a submission for Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Planning for the Future arguing our case for staying on Fraser Drive. It was interesting preparing the submission – I talked with a number of our neighbours who are all positive about the garden. Tania and I are meeting with the planning team on Thursday and they are going to visit our garden earlier in the day.

I visited the Anglesea Community Garden – it was interesting comparing their garden with ours. They have a fantastic orchard and a large netted berry area. We are going to share newsletters and information more regularly.

See you in the garden! Gretel

New Year BBQ - 23 January

Friday 23 January was coolish, but a group of gardeners and friends came along to the BBQ at the Garden to welcome in the New Year, albeit a little belatedly.

Tania definitely has a touch! Just look at that fabulous pink tablecloth that brightened up the white plastic table. Everyone brought along their meats and vegetables to barbecue, nibbles, salads and wines to share and chatted. A bit of a breeze got up soon after we'd eaten and it sent people scurrying home fairly early. It was a pretty clear night for star-gazing though … was anyone still there when Mark brought along his telescope? Sorry Mark, if you turned up and there was no one there. I was one who left early.

Garden Team notes

Gretel, Keith and the Building Team have made a great sign for the compost bins. We thought that we might adopt this for the other signs we are proposing. What do you think? Have you any suggestions for refinements? Please let us know or write a note on the whiteboard at the Garden.

Things to do in the garden this weekend:

- Weed asparagus bed (down the bottom), if not already done
- Fig (near Fraser Drive gate - net
- Quince (near Fraser Drive gate - net
- Tomato beds - net

T O M A T I L L O S (*toma-teeyohs*) – Barbara Evans

You'll find the community tomatillos on the north fence in between the strawberries. Tomatillos are ready to pick when the fruit fills out and splits the calyx. Pick from the bottom of the plant upwards – the lower ones will ripen first. The fruit will still be bright green or maybe purplish if it's from the purple tomatillo plants (with purple colouring on stalks and calyx).
They need to be washed to remove the sticky coating.
They are usually not eaten raw.

I know three simple ways to cook them, which I'll list in my preferred order:

1. Spread on a sheet of foil (they might split and it keeps the pan clean), sprinkle with a little oil and roast at around 220° C (or grill - see recipe below) until soft and blistered – maybe 15 mins. Then scrape all the cooked flesh into a bowl and discard the skins, unless you want to retain charred skins for the taste.
2. Put fresh tomatillos into a blender and puree briefly – a little chunky is better than a very smooth paste. Then put in a pot and simmer gently for about 15 mins.
3. Boil in water until soft – but they often split and the contents become mushy or lost in the water.

Ed. Have a look at the five delicious and interesting-sounding tomatillo recipes Barbara has included, in `Recipes'. It's great to know how a salsa should be! And the scrambled eggs with tomatillos sound exciting.

A walk around the garden

You may notice that at this time of year people have their plots well covered for protection from birds competing with them for their tomatoes and other fleshy summer vegetables. Hopefully we'll get the community tomato beds netted soon.

Permanent plot numbers
Walking around the Garden the other day I noticed new permanent numbers on the plots (right). They look good and complement the letter `numbering' system for the community beds.

The pumpkins are flourishing and have in fact escaped over the fence and when last I saw them were heading for Fraser Drive. I daresay someone has now tamed them back to the Garden.

I hope everyone has been getting as much pleasure from the cornflowers as I have. They make a pretty border alongside the bay, finger lime, kaffir lime and elderberry. Scarlet runners are flowering in Keith's plot too.

The grapevine is going gangbusters! Thanks to the building team for getting the pergola built in time and it loves the wires you've put up for it to grow along the verandah as well.

The scarlet runners growing on the experimental jute climbing frame are on the run. Some have reached the top already. Aren't they clever to climb up by themselves? Someone reminded me of the children's story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

A worm farm in the making …

You will have noticed that Graham has been busy building the worm farm under the gum tree. The bath is well supported by a heavy frame and we watch by as it progresses.

Thanks for your good work so far, Graham.

RECIPES - thanks to Barbara and Tania

Tomatillo recipes

Roasted Tomatillo and Garlic Salsa

INGREDIENTS

450 g fresh tomatillos, husks removed and washed
1 head garlic cloves, separated and peeled
3 fresh jalapeño peppers
1 bunch fresh coriander
1/2 cup water, or as needed
salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Preheat the grill. Arrange the whole cloves of garlic, tomatillos and jalapeños on a baking sheet (with sheet of foil). Place under the grill and cook for a few minutes. Remove garlic cloves first, as soon as they are toasted, to avoid developing a bitter flavor. Continue to roast jalapeños and tomatillos until evenly charred, turning occasionally. Set aside to cool. Don't remove the charred parts of the tomatillos or the peppers. They add a really nice flavor.

Place jalapeño, tomatillos, garlic and coriander in a blender and blitz. Add a little water to the mixture if necessary to facilitate blending. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate until serving.

Scrambled Eggs with Tomatillos

INGREDIENTS

Olive oil
250 g tomatillos (about 4-5), papery husks removed, rinsed, roughly chopped
1/3 cup chopped onion
1 (or more if you like it hotter) fresh or canned jalapeño chili pepper, minced
Splash of lemon or lime juice

4 to 6 eggs
Salt and pepper
Chopped fresh coriander for garnish

METHOD
Heat a tablespoon of oil in a medium-sized skillet on medium heat. Add the chopped tomatillos, onion, jalapeño chili and a small squeeze of lemon or lime juice.

Cook gently on medium to medium-low heat for about 5 -7 mins stirring occasionally until the onions have softened and the tomatillos are no longer bright green.

Add the eggs directly to the pan (no need to whisk first). Break up the yolks with your stirring spoon. Cook gently, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan. Salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat when the eggs begin to set, but are still moist, about 3 minutes. Serve immediately. Sprinkle on cilantro for garnish.

Mexican Pizza with Corn, Tomatillos, and Chipotle Chiles
INGREDIENTS
Pizza Dough…
1½ Tbsp Chipotle puree
1 large red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
Olive oil
Salt and Pepper
200 g tomatillos, husked, washed and chopped into small pieces
2 ears of corn, shaved, about 2 cups of kernels
¾ cup canned black beans, drained
Fine cornmeal for dusting
1½ cups crumbled cotija cheese (or 1 cup cheddar and 1/2 cup Monterey jack)
½ a large avocado, thinly sliced
2 Tbsp chopped coriander

METHOD
Season the chopped tomatillos with salt and pepper and set aside.
Heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Drizzle in just enough olive oil to coat the bottom. Add the onions and cook until tender and starting to brown, about 10 minutes. Remove to a plate and set aside.
Add a little more oil to the pan followed by the corn. Season the corn with salt and pepper and cook until tender, 3-5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Roll out the pizza dough onto pan and sprinkle with cornmeal. Drizzle a bit of olive oil over the dough. Spoon a little (or a lot!) of purée over the dough, followed by a thin layer of cheese. Next add the corn, onions, tomatillos, black beans and the remaining cheese.

Bake pizza in the oven until crust is golden and crisp. Remove from the oven, lay the avocado slices on top and sprinkle with cilantro.

Fettuccini with tomatillo and coriander pesto

INGREDIENTS

450 g tomatillos, husked and quartered
2 cups packed coriander, washed and dried (retail a little for garnish)
2 cloves garlic (or more if you like it)
1/4 cup pine nuts (+ pan toast a few for garnish)
1 jalapeño (or more if you like it hot), seeds removed
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 Tbsp fresh lime juice
salt

METHOD

Fettuccini - home made is best ☺ Cook it how you usually do.

To make the pesto, add the jalapeño, pine nuts and garlic to food processor and pulse to combine. Next, add the cilantro, 3/4 of the tomatillos, lime juice, and a little salt and run the processor. While this is happening, drizzle in the olive oil. Season with some more salt and pepper if necessary.

Toss the pasta with the pesto and taste for seasoning. Serve with chopped coriander and pan toasted pine nuts on top.

Roasted Tomatillo Salsa Verde

INGREDIENTS

500g tomatillos, husked and washed
1 large onion
5 cloves garlic, in skins
2 jalapeño peppers
1 Tbs vegetable oil
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup packed coriander
1 large avocado
some lime juice (optional)

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 220° C. Peel and chop the onion into quarters. Place the tomatillos, onion, garlic and jalapeños on foil on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with oil. Roast in the oven for 15 minutes—until the exteriors are blistered but the insides are still slightly raw.

Scoop out the flesh of avocado. Cut roasted jalapeños in half and discard seeds. Squeeze out garlic flesh.

Place tomatillos, onions, jalapeños and garlic in a food processor. Pulse until mostly smooth. Add cumin, salt, coriander and avocado. Pulse until the avocado is just

pureed into the mixture.

Adjust seasoning; add a dash of lime juice at the end if you like it a bit more tart.

Capsicum and Carrot Russian salad

I**ngredients**
6 green capsicums, top cut of and seeded removed
6 grated carrots medium size
Garlic chopped
Tomato paste
Salt and pepper
Sugar a few tablespoons to taste
Lemon juice

Grate carrots and stuff the capsicums loosely.
You need enough carrots to have plenty extra in the pot.
Mix tomato paste, boiling water, garlic, salt, pepper and sugar and pour into the stuffed capsicums and the rest into the pot.

You need enough to just about cover them.
Cook slowly for 40 minutes or so,then I cut the capsicums and cook abit longer.
The aim is to get a rich sweet sour taste,so adjust sugar and use abit of lemon juice.

The quantities are adjustable ,I think originally my mother used to fry the onions and garlic first so you could try that as it probably gives more flavour!!!

Good luck
Tania