

Community Garden 3231

Growing food, friendships and community



Potato harvest

We've been rewarded! What a bumper potato harvest this year! Remember the fabulous work James did to prepare the bed for potatoes in August? Our resident potato specialist, Barbara, had already researched, ordered and chitted the potatoes ready for planting and then carefully guided the young plants as they grew, back-filling the soil to encourage as many shoots to sprout.

Now over January we have been harvesting the potatoes. Just look at the results! There is a moral to this story ... careful soil preparation pays dividends. You'll read more about making compost later in this issue.

Which varieties did you try?

Which would you like grown this year?



Watering roster

Many thanks to all those people who have been watering since December. It is quite fantastic to see how well all the veggies have grown despite heatwaves and lack of rain. This can only be due to those diligent waterers ... so many, many thanks again. As you know this year we have grown a lot of vegetables from seed and this makes it even more of a challenge to get them started and growing well. Watering is the key. The propagating bed has certainly given many a good start. Others sown directly, such as the root vegetables, have done well too. It's great to see our garden bursting with produce, as it is just now.

Next working bees

Saturday
6 February

Lots of fun jobs to do, friends to chat with and vegetables to harvest.

Sunday
21 February

Saturday
5 March



Pizza Night

Friday 8 January

Introducing the newly-crowned Pizza King, Graham Teague

A small group of gardeners, friends and family came to the Pizza Night on Friday 8 January armed with toppings, drinks, nibbles and a salad or dessert to share. Gretel and Tanya had made the dough for the pizzas for everyone. It started off as a reasonably mild night, but the breeze got up a bit later. Thanks to Keith's solution to the breezy verandah we were well protected when, in no time at all, he clipped up an awning across one end ... and when it got a bit dark, the lights went on ... to make for a cosy night around the pizza oven.

Graham's pièce de resistance

Pizza doesn't get much better than this, Graham!
We think you now have a job for life!
Credit is also due to Tanya who made the pizza.
What a team! Thanks for a great evening.





Coordinator's comments

It is good to see how well the garden has recovered from the very hot weather. The scarlet runner beans are covered with flowers again with beans on the way. The last working bee was fantastic: with 27 members present and a long list of jobs, it was very productive. Plus there was lots of food to take home. Check out the tomatoes in bed L. Don't forget to enjoy the vegetables you've grown.

The talk by Andrew Laidlaw at Danawa was really interesting. Hopefully you'll be able to make it to the session at Anglesea CG on February xx and at our garden on February xx.

Plot holders received an email last year offering them a bag of sheep manure for their plot. This offer was only for plot holders as the idea is that the benefit of the manure should stay in the garden.



I am keeping in contact with the Surf Coast Shire about development of 2 Fraser Drive for housing for older people. At this stage a business case is being developed. I'll let you know what I hear.

The Committee is currently revisiting the Vision and Aims of CG3231. They are on the brochure – are they still appropriate? Or what do you think they should be? Don't forget if you have ideas about social or garden activities that you let me or others on the committee know. In the mean time –

See you in the garden!

Gretel



Working Bees – 9 and 24 January 2016

Alistair's nifty sifter

How about this for ingenuity and craftsmanship?

Alistair has made a nifty sifter from a recycled chimney protector. It works beautifully when preparing beds for seed planting when you need a thin layer of beautifully fine soil to go over the top of the seeds.



Weeding and netting

This year many more fruits and vegetables have been netted thanks to the good work of the building and maintenance team. No bird is going to steal our quinces this year!

Isn't it always nice to see a happy weeder! Keith got down on his hands and knees to weed the tomatillos before they went under the netting.



New taps and hoses

The Building and Maintenance Team donned their plumber's hat and got to work laying pipes and installing taps in the lower half of the garden. This will make it a lot easier to water in the previously more inaccessible places. Thank you for responding so quickly to this great suggestion.



Compost

Jo Murray

It is virtually impossible to fill a compost heap. You can keep topping it up with organic garden and kitchen wastes and watering it down, without it getting full. Peter Cundall

Have you noticed this in our compost bays?

Do you know the benefits of compost?

Compost is the single most important supplement we can give our garden soil. It's also free, easy to make and good for the environment.

With compost, you are creating rich humus for the garden soil. This introduces beneficial organisms which help aerate the soil, while also adding nutrients to your plants, helping restore depleted soils, warding off plant disease and retaining moisture in the soil which also means less watering is required.

Did you know that approximately 50 per cent of the rubbish Australians put in their general rubbish bins could be put to better use in the garden as compost?

Composting is the natural alternative to chemical fertilisers.

So how can we make enough compost for not only the community beds but also individual plots?

That's one of the things we are going to be working on in 2016. So here's a brief run-down on how a compost system works.

All compostable materials are either carbon or nitrogen-based, to varying degrees. The secret to a healthy compost pile is to maintain a working balance between these two elements.

Carbon (brown) ingredients, such as dried leaves, peels, shredded paper and newspaper (not glossy), egg shells, pea straw, Lucerne and wood ash give compost its light, fluffy body.

Nitrogen (green) ingredients, such as manures, food scraps, green lawn clippings and green

leaves provide raw materials for making enzymes.

Approximately 60 per cent green to 40 per cent brown seems to be a good ratio.

The other two ingredients of a healthy compost heap are water and oxygen. The compost heap should be moist, but not soaking wet. We need to water each time we add new materials to our pile. Oxygen facilitates the decomposition process and importantly if compost becomes starved of oxygen, then it starts to produce greenhouse gases, so it's essential to get air into compost heaps by turning them regularly, at least every fortnight.

How can we all help?

We are looking to find as many sources of organic matter as we can.

Recently, we have started collecting kitchen scraps from Truffles Café and Megan has kindly volunteered to collect these on a regular basis and add them to Bay 1. We'll be talking to other local business and offering to compost their kitchen waste as well.

- Do you have a paper shredder at home or in the office? We'd like shredded paper too, so please bring along to a working bee or leave it in the shed when you visit the garden.
- Do you have a compost bin at home? If not, we'd love you to consider putting a container on your kitchen bench to collect your kitchen scraps and then tipping them into Bay 1 when you visit.
- Do you have access to grass clippings? These are fabulous for adding to compost heaps, so if you see anyone mowing, what about asking if we can have their grass clippings?

Compost for all

If we can all contribute to increasing the amount of compost we produce then we'll all benefit by having healthier soil which in turn will mean healthier and more abundant crops to share.

1 First delivery of compost from Truffles. Yum Yum!



2 ... goes straight into Bay 1.



3 Cover with lucerne.
Job done!



Your ideas and feedback are always welcome, so please share your ideas with the Gardening Team when you see them.