



Community Garden 3231

Newsletter

May 2018

Growing food, friendships & community

From the Coordinator

I love watching people at working bees – there are lots of smiles and conversations about many different things from politics to travel as the jobs get done. Clearly the social aspect of the garden is something members value. Some of the chatter is even about gardening as people share what they know.

To help people learn more, we plan on having a short session during working bees about something relevant



to the season – we started at the last working bee.

Megan's arms were irritated by sap from the fig tree.

Mary Anne showed how Aloe Vera can relieve intense

itching. While that demonstration wasn't planned, come along to the next working bee and learn how to make a wicking pot from an old metal bin. Possible future topics are: growing asparagus, sharpening secateurs, weed identification, growing carrots etc. What do you want learn about?

The king parrots may have been frustrated when the tomatoes finished but now they are enjoying chillies and the green manure seeds! Remember to cover the seeds with soil or rake them in well.

The committee is planning the AGM for August – we'll hold it in the Pub again, provide some food and drinks and have an interesting guest speaker.

By the way, May 5 is World Naked Gardening Day. Hmm.

See you in the garden

Gretel

UPCOMING EVENTS

WORKING BEES

Saturday 5th May

Sunday 20th May

Waterers needed for May

Please volunteer by putting your name on the roster.

Walk, Talk and Gather

Workshop – Saturday 5th May, 1pm - 3pm

Why We Garden Organically

Garden Team member Kim Neubecker outlines the philosophy behind growing organically in our community garden.

The easiest way to start thinking about organic gardening is to understand the underpinning principle: that you feed the soil that feeds the plants.

We feed the soil so that it is a living substance full of micro and macro flora - everything from tiny organisms that can only be seen under a microscope to animals the size of earthworms that break down manures and plant material to release minerals into the soil to be taken up by the plants' root systems.

In our community garden, compost is a major part of this process but there is also always manure and straw to add to garden plots which contribute to soil health in the same way.

Another underpinning principle of organic gardening is that the healthier the soil, the fewer problems there are with plant pests and diseases. In the recent past it was possible for anyone to buy really dangerous pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. These products not only affected the health of humans, they also damaged soils, and



had far-reaching effects on wildlife. In our community garden we are committed to excluding dangerous compounds. You will see us using some products such as Dipel for caterpillars but if you ask we will explain what the product is and why we have decided it is safe to use. The Australian Certified Organic Association, whose produce must meet stringent standards, has a similar list of exceptions that are used for the commercial production of organic food.

We are very lucky - our community garden is on a clay-loam in a shallow, fertile valley. It is unusual to have fertile soil in Aireys Inlet. We are committed to maintaining its health and fertility by looking after the soil in the ways outlined above.

Vegetables are some of the hungriest and thirstiest plants known. Just think of them as being very greedy. Healthy, well-fertilized plants produce healthy, nutrient rich food for us to eat. This in turn helps to keep us healthy.

So by gardening organically, in a community space with other people, we contribute in a positive way towards our dietary health by eating our produce, our physical health from the exercise needed to grow the food and our emotional well-being from the time spent outside with like minded companions.

Community Garden 3231 is run on organic principles. This means that we are committed to gardening and producing food without using most industrial fertilisers and pest control.

We do this to produce food that is nutritious, to conserve finite resources that are commonly used in industrial chemical production, to source inputs within our local area and to encourage a diverse population of birds, insects and reptiles within the confines of the garden.

We do use:

- Snail pellets
- Lime
- Blood and bone
- Animal manure
- Straw
- Compost ingredients eg green waste, paper waste, soil, manure.
- Dipel



We don't use:

- Glyphosate weed killer (commonly marketed as Zero or Roundup)
- Poisonous herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. These are much harder to buy now but are still available. If you feel the need to spray your plot and are not sure if the product you want to use is OK, ask a garden team member.

How we feed our plants.

We feed our plants by feeding the soil. The way we do this is by adding compost which we make onsite, growing green manure and digging it in, adding animal manure or for a quick fix, a bit of blood and bone.

Q & A for the Garden team

Q. How do I know when quinces are ready to pick?

A. Depending on the variety, fruit generally is right for picking from February through into autumn.

When a quince is ripe you know it. It's marvellous. It will have turned from green to a uniform yellow and boast a superb aroma. If skins are still covered with a kind of fur, they are not ready to be picked. Only when they are shiny and a clear-golden yellow are they ready to be harvested.



MAY IS COMPOST MONTH! – Jo Murray

International Compost Awareness week is 6 – 12 May. Yes, it's a real thing!

It started in Canada in 1995 and has been going in Australia since 2006. Now it even has Costa, from Gardening Australia, as its Ambassador.



It's key goals are:

- Increase the diversion of organics from the main waste stream through increasing awareness of, and participation in, centralised composting, kerbside, home composting, community composting.
- Accelerate the uptake of compost products in the wider Australian community, “closing the loop” and stimulating effective use of “soil-improving composts”.
- Highlight the environmental, social and economic benefits of composting including the opportunity and drive to increase carbon in the soil and reduce carbon emissions.



We have been working hard on our Community Garden compost, including collecting the kitchen waste from a variety of local businesses. We're still learning how to manage it, so it gets the right balance of greens and browns and gets enough air and water to help it all break down, but we are definitely producing some delicious (!), sweet-smelling, worm-filled compost to improve our soils.

What we need is a team of people who, rather than going to the gym to lift weights, would instead turn the compost on a regular basis to get their upper body exercise! It just needs turning once a week for each bay, in the weeks between working bees. If you can help out, please let me, Gretel or one of the Gardening team know. If you haven't yet got into composting, please consider doing so. If you don't want to compost at home then bring your organic waste and add it to Bay 1 of the compost system at any time. All you need to do is tip it in and cover it with some peastraw,

leaves or shredded paper. Wash your container out and then tip the water onto the compost to keep it moist.

If you have neighbours, friends and family who are not yet composting, why not have a chat to them and encourage them to get involved as well.

There's even a website and Facebook page (ShareWaste) where you can sign up to give your organics to someone else for their compost, worm farm or chickens. Alternatively, you can receive them from others to add to your own compost.



If you need a container to collect your organics in, there's no need to go and buy something just for this. Just find an old container that you no longer use or collect a plastic container from the garden. There are plenty of plastic containers, in a range of sizes, which have come from local cafes and they are all perfect for this – please help yourself from under the sink.

I'm always happy to talk compost, so let's chat at any time.

Items for Loan

A range of items is available for members to borrow from the garden for private use. We have large platters, chairs and small tables, wine, champagne and drinking glasses, coffee plungers, plates and cups you can borrow. A full list of items for loan is available in the Shed, plus a diary for you to record items borrowed and date returned. It's a great resource if you are short of items for an upcoming event, you can borrow rather than buy. You can also use the diary to book out items in advance.

Unfortunately no garden equipment, including the lawn mower, is available for loan.

Love Winter In Aireys 2018

Now in its seventh year, The Love Winter In Aireys festival is a highlight on the Surf Coast calendar. The Garden will host **Soup in the Garden** on Saturday 11th August 2018, a great way to spend a wintery Aireys afternoon. More details to follow but in the meantime let us know if you would like to bring a soup to the Event.

Program details for Love Winter in Aireys - <https://bit.ly/2FyBT44>

Bird friendly netting

We have a few instances recently of birds becoming trapped in some of the plots with netting.

If you do have a netted plot, check your netting for any holes (if you can put your finger through it, it's a hole) and repair if you can by darning or use pegs to cover up the hole. If you are in the garden and see a bird trapped under netting, lift the netting to give the trapped bird an exit and wait until you are sure they are out of the plot.



Gardening Australia's website includes some ideas on how to protect your vegetable patch without harming wildlife <https://ab.co/2HlkV9G>

Walk, Talk and Gather Workshop

Anglesea artist, Caroline Hawkins has offered her Walk, Talk and Gather Workshop in the Garden on Saturday 5th May from 1-3pm, after the working bee.

The workshop is hands on introductory session with the aim of discovering suitable local resources for making baskets.

Caroline will bring examples of different styles of baskets she has made for inspiration, describe the materials used in each, how, where and when to harvest



and prepare them. The session includes a walk around the local area or participants gardens to identify suitable plants and gather them.

More of Caroline's work can be seen on her www.carolinehawkins.com.au

Please send an email to communitygarden3231@gmail.com if you would like to attend the workshop.

Community Garden 3231 Facebook Page

The Community Garden3231 Facebook page is open to all to view, you don't have to be on Facebook or register to view our page. It's a great place to get some tips for both gardening and sustainable living. And to see what our great Garden Team are up to!



Recently information has been provided on our Facebook page on permaculture courses in Geelong, how to make a worm tea for your garden and buying options for made in Geelong toilet paper.

View our page <https://bit.ly/2xBXVAN>

Items for Sale

Member can purchase the following items from the Garden.

Please deposit the money and record purchase in the cash tin in the Shed.

Sheep Poo	\$6.00 Per Bag
Pea Straw	\$14.00 per bale
Green Manure seeds	\$1.00 per 1kg bag