

Everything grows better with TLC

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2013



WORKSHOP: GROW YOUR OWN FOOD AT HOME

As part of the “Love Food Hate Waste Programme” we were approached by Ku-Ring-Gai Council to run a hands-on workshop to show people how to “Grow Your Own Food At Home”.

The 30 available places were quickly booked out and a stand-by list was started. On the morning of 19th October, 30 keen gardeners descended on TLCG to learn some gardening skills. The morning was organised by Kathy Kai and Liz Gibson from KMC with Kathy on hand to introduce the morning event.



John gave a quick welcoming speech and then we ran a series of 5 activity stations with the guests rotating through all stations to get some specialist knowledge.



Tina showed “How To Start A Vegetable Garden” using the example of our newly started raised gardens.

Sue demonstrated how to nurture tomatoes through their life cycle from sowing the seed right through to picking the fruit and saving seed for next years crop. Many people took advantage of the chance to prick out a tomato seedling to take home for planting.

Mark and Frank demonstrated the dark art of composting while Sebastian taught the even darker magic of worm farming.

Julie T gave a workshop on the mysteries of propagating and dividing plants with the opportunity for people to select and plant

cuttings from the garden to take home for nurturing.



Doug gave a talk on selection of fertilisers and its relationship to soil pH plus some advice about watering.

Thanks to all our members who assisted in the planning and all who were there to help on the day, acting as hosts, keeping the event running smoothly and demonstrating those two important elements of Community Gardening ... community and gardening. The weather was kind to us with a beautiful crisp spring morning.



Over morning tea our guests had a chance to chat informally with our members and to find out more about the community garden. Our garden was looking wonderful on the day and we received many compliments about our progress to date.



The event was a huge success, and participants completed a short survey at the end of the day with the results showing people had enjoyed the event and found it useful.

In 2009 before even the first carrot was planted, the foundation group set the aim of creating a garden that was welcoming and willing to share our experiences and knowledge with the community. I think we can say we have achieved that goal and I hope we continue to create more similar opportunities in the future.





TLCG CHRISTMAS PARTY

It is nearly that time of the year again,
so time to plan our Christmas get-together.

We hope you can make it on the

7th December 2013

5 PM

for a BBQ in the garden.

Please bring along your meats, drinks
and salad and sweets to share.

More details and info to come closer to the date.

MEMBER UPDATES

JANET F-C would like to retire from her role as the coordinator for the bi-monthly garden talks. We would like to thank her for a fantastic job.

Please let us know if you would like to take over the role.

HELEN WORRALL will be relinquishing her Management Committee role and her plot in November due to ongoing Bushcare work on weekends. We want to thank her for all her efforts on behalf of the Garden!
She will still remain a member!



WINNIE has taken on the role as our "Watering Roster Coordinator".

Thank you Winnie



Please put your hands together for MICHAEL, who has been (and still is) spending many hours at the garden with the garden hose in his hands, giving our plants the much needed relief in this dry weather.

There might be more solarpanels coming soon, thanks again to FRANK. Well done! We looking forward to even more sun power!



RAINFALL



OCTOBER: 20MM

Thanks to Janet and Ian Pollock for taking the rainfall readings at the garden!

WATERING ROSTER



We need to get back into regular watering up at the Garden. Hopefully everyone can

assist at some time.

An email with the roster to year end has already been emailed to you.

This roster is up at the Garden, but you also can advise us by e-mail.

We urgently need helping hands over the coming summer months, so don't be shy.

Please let Winnie know if you can fit in. Winnie has taken on the role as our "Watering Roster Coordinator".

Thank you Winnie



REMINDER

Please make sure that the shed is locked when you leave.

"As for quantity of Plot of ground to make a Suitable Gardenlet me caution all, not to undertake more than can be well looked after...for a small Plot of ground well ordered, turns to greater advantage than a large one neglected"

The New Art of Gardening 1697.

Our native bee hive was meant to be split this month by Council. They opened it, but it was not yet ready and will be done at a later time. There are apparently over 100 on the waiting list for backyard hives, so great that assist in reducing that number, in due course, by 1 with a new hive from our healthy unit.



The university is monitoring their solitary bee hives in the trees also, but no activity there at present.



A WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Midori Bassetti from Turrumurra
Lindy Spets from West Ryde
Janey Prott-Keys from West Ryde
Great to have you all on board.

HAPPY GARDENING!



ANNA CHUBB

My interest in growing fruit and veggies is due to my obsession with food. Cooking and eating good food of the highest and freshest quality is a major passion of mine, so growing food is a natural part of my obsession. It's such a great feeling to be able to make a coleslaw using my own fennel, cabbage and kohlrabi! I'm hoping next year I can add some of our apples to the coleslaw.

I'm definitely a novice at growing veggies, but I'm loving learning as I go. Teaming up with Kerry has been great too - we like the same food, have the same relaxed 'see how we go' attitude and share the work.

A great benefit of being part of the garden is meeting lots of new people and making new friends. It's really great to be part of a great community!

It was a really rewarding experience being involved in the early days of the garden to get it up and running. Now the garden is established, and we're getting new members all the time, I'm really excited to see how we can grow the garden - both the gardening and the people/ community aspects - in the future.

I'm a born and bred Ku-ring-gai girl, first living in Roseville, moving to Turramurra in the early 1980s. So, I've been a Turramurra local for a long time. After moving away in the 1990's to study Town Planning in Armidale and to work in Wollongong, I returned to Turramurra in 2003 and now live in a unit in Ray Street, across the road from Coles. Because I live in a unit, the Garden is my backyard.

I was one of the lucky people who responded to Ku-ring-gai Council's call for interest in starting up a community garden back in 2009, so I've been involved in the garden since the beginning. The Community Garden TAFE course was a brilliant way for the team to design the garden and get it going, and to help create the foundations for the strong team-based approach to the running of the garden.

When the management team was established, I volunteered to be secretary and have been doing various administrative and project management things since the beginning. I haven't been around much for a last few months because of study and work commitments, but I'll be back in the thick of things in 2014!



DID YOU KNOW?

Chinese broccoli or Chinese kale has smooth, dark green stems and leaves, and small white flowers. Often steamed whole and served with oyster sauce, it may also be chopped then steamed or stir-fried. Grown from seed, Chinese broccoli requires much the same conditions as traditional broccoli varieties.

GOT APHIDS?

You can control them with a strong blast of water from the hose or with insecticidal soap. But here's another suggestion, one that's a lot more fun; get some tape! Wrap a wide strip of tape around your hand, sticky side out, and pat the leaves of plants infested with aphids. Concentrate on the undersides of leaves, because that's where the little critters like to hide.

THINGS WE LOVE TO EAT

FRIED VEGETABLE BALLS

Ingredients:

- 4 carrots
- 150g spring onion
- 65g bread crumbs
- 1tbsp plain flour
- 2tbsp cornflour
- 1/3tsp five spices powder
- 1/3tsp prickly ash powder
- 1tsp salt
- 1tsp sugar
- cooking oil

Directions:

- Grate the carrots into shreds, finely dice the spring onion.
- Put the shredded carrots, diced spring onion and all the other ingredients in a big bowl, mix well.
- Choose a right sized pot, add enough cooking oil for deep-frying, heat up the pot.
- Wait until the oil is very hot, turn to low fire. Roll up the mixed ingredients into balls 2.5cm (1 inch) in diameter. Put into the oil to deep-fry until they are golden

brown in color. Take out and put into a plate with kitchen paper to absorb the extra oil. Ready to serve.

Tips:

- You can always put more kinds of vegetables in it, such as cabbage, spinach and onion. You can also use other kind of radish instead of carrot.
- You don't need to roll the balls very round and tight, just roll it up into a loose round shape and make sure it doesn't break up in the oil is enough.
- Always keep an eye on them, to ensure they won't be burned.





YARROW

Yarrow is the third of Dorothy Hall's Big 3 herbs. Notes from talk by member Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame on 17th August 2013.

YARROW (ACHILLIA MILLEFOLIUM)

Yarrow is a perennial ground cover, with runners that are useful to prevent erosion. In the warmer months it puts up a spike of small pink or white daisy like flowers, being a member of the Asteraceae family.

This was a Druidic herb, also used by the Norse, North American Indians and Chinese. It is native to temperate regions in Europe, East Asia and North America.

Its botanical name relates to its life saving ability. In the Greek myth of the beloved god, Achilles, the only place where he could be hurt was on his Achilles tendon. Achilles died of an arrow in his heel.

Everyone has a weak spot, where we are most vulnerable. Yarrow was known as the most powerful astringent. It was the 'soldier's herb'; their 'wound wort'. Yarrow has an anti-shock effect, through its achillic acid. It has tannins which tighten and hold, and resins which re-arrange body fluids.

Herbalists use it for psychological wounds to the heart; wounds that can prove fatal; eg. died from a broken heart; or when we feel 'cut to the quick', 'cut to the bone', for wounds from the mouth or the pen.

All this ventures into the spiritual, as yarrow strengthens the spirit as well as the 'person' and their physical body. It has the effect of 'lashing a spear to the side' as was done to support wounded soldiers on the battle-field to keep the body upright: to support the person off the field of battle.

The aura of yarrow is the shape of a gothic window. It is a bright golden yellow.

Yarrow heals physical cuts and wounds from sharp instruments. For example DH related that one time she cut her finger badly in the kitchen, it needed stitches but she used yarrow as a 'self-suture'. Yarrow can heal nicely without a scar as it can close a cut overnight. I have found the same to be true with my own cuts.

As a styptic yarrow can be useful for haemorrhoids.

The tonic effect of yarrow is powerful. Everyone has days when they just have to 'soldier on'. This is an occasion to chew a few yarrow leaves or have cup of yarrow tea. Yarrow tea should be an occasional beverage, not everyday but maybe for a few weeks to get you over the hump.

In conclusion, I hope some of the uses I have briefly touched on will encourage you to regard Parsley, Sage and Yarrow with new interest and usage.



Note: The yarrow plants in the garden are to be found down in the Food Forest near the Horehound. Recently, I discovered and uncovered the yarrow, as for the second time it had been deeply buried by a load of woodchips. Earlier in the year our rabbit army found it very much to their liking. The poor yarrow is trying very hard to recover. May its prayers be answered!

Notes prep. by Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame



November 2nd

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

November 9th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

November 16th

9:00 am – 10:30 noon
Working Bee

10:30 – 11:30

Monthly Garden Talk - Doug will talk about how to test your pH and what the result means, how pH influences nutrient uptake and how to select the correct fertilisers

November 23rd

9:00 – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

5:00pm - open

TLCG Annual General Meeting (followed by dinner at Thai Diner, Turramurra)

November 30th

9:00 – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT!

Julie and John attended the monthly meeting of the Ryde/Eastwood Garden Club on October 28th.

Julie gave a presentation regarding the Garden and issued an invite to the members to visit us sometime.

The Club gave us a \$50 donation.

Well Done

REMINDER

A key reason for TLCG being such a successful community garden is due to our continued focus on team work, with all members pitching in regularly to the running of the garden.

We want to ensure our team-based approach to the garden continues and is strengthened in 2014.

It would be great to see as many Members as possible at the meeting, as we start planning for a successful year in 2014.

It doesn't matter how long you've been a member of the Garden - we need and value your contribution!

**5pm, Saturday 23 November:
TLCG Annual General Meeting
(followed by dinner at Thai
Diner, Turramurra)**

PS: Our Committee elections will also take place at this meeting and anyone interested in a committee role should get in contact with Anna or John.

STEPPING STONES

Julie held a wonderful PowerPoint presentation at the last meeting.

If you missed out (or as a reminder) visit the website:

<http://www.habitatsteppingstones.org.au/>
and make a pledge!

WILDTHINGS

As the bee hive at our garden will soon be split, here is a very interesting article from WILDTHINGS

Week One

Our new hives are a combination of newly manufactured hardwood OATH (Original Australian Tetragonula Hive) boxes combined with recycled dead hives. For the split we use hive tools (like a chisel) to separate the two halves and place the empty half on the full bottom and a full half on an empty bottom.

For best results it would make sense to place the new split on top of the old one and balance them. Balancing is when you swap the positions of the hives, if one of the hives seems to have less activity. This occurs until both hives are functioning at the same healthy rate of activity. Because the Ku-ring-gai program works with hives on residents property, who may only have a marginal interest in actively managing their hives, this option is essentially not available. Balancing would also entail another visit to the property which would be a time sink, due to the large numbers of hives being split in any year.

At Ku-ring-gai we remove the hive with a full top and an empty bottom from the property leaving the full bottom and empty top hive. We do this because the full bottom is the half with the existing entrance hole which is already properly protected with resin, the bees main defence. It also has the benefit of keeping all the foraging field bees. This is the hive with the greatest chance of survival and as people get very attached to their bees we leave them the half that has the best chance of survival.

Before we place the full hive on an empty bottom, a piece of fabric is placed at the bottom of the hive to absorb any spit honey. Additionally 2 strips of masking tape are fixed across the open bottom half to stop the newly split hive from "slumping" to the bottom of the empty half. A slump has potentially devastating consequences as the brood is "crushed" by the pollen and honey. The entrance is sealed with masking tape and some resin is placed on the inside of the hive next to the entrance hole to assist the bees with their resin defences.

Once the full half is put on the empty half, the two halves are taped together and it is then removed to a storage area several kilometres away. As about 8 hives are done in a morning session, for most of the hives several hours have passed since their split. The hives are then opened, the fabric removed and resealed. They are then placed in 19L foam boxes made by a company called Polyfoam. A hole is drilled through the foam to match with the hive entrance and a piece of 2.5mm stainless steel mesh is placed across the outside of the foam hole to act as a barrier.

This mesh barrier is used to exclude Small Hive Beetle (SHB), a pernicious pest that comes from South Africa, that has the ability to infiltrate newly split hives and kill them. 2.5mm allows the bees access and excludes the majority of SHB, although some SHV are small enough to get through.

The splits done in Nov 2012 are usually ready to be split again in Oct 2013. Sydney had a mild 2012/2103 summer with 44+ degree days only occurring a couple of times. Autumn and winter were very mild and an active hive is ready to be split in 11 months, probably even earlier.

Of the 35 hives designated for splitting only 3 were not ready. These 3 hives had not filled the empty half since their split 11 mths ago and had a small amount of brood in comparison to the 32 hives that were ready. When a hive is determined not to be ready it is resealed. We only decide to split or not to split by opening the hive. Weighing them is not an option as there are some many variables, some hives have 40mm thick walls, some are made of Nema Board, others from 3ply Perhaps if we'd been really organised from the start weighing would make sense, as it is, it's easier just to open them up.



In our splitting work we visit people whose hives have died to pick them up for potential reuse. Dead hives are examined to try and ascertain what happened. The deaths are usually predictable and fall into the following categories

a - The hive has blackened structure and dead maggots inside it. The inside of the hive appears crumbly and there are no dead bees - these hives have succumbed to SHB. If you find the hive while the maggots are alive it will have a hideous ranky smell (hard to describe but very sour and unpleasant) with the spoilt honey having escaped from its pots, pooling at the bottom of the hive.

b - The hive has plenty of pollen and honey stores but no brood or bees. For some reason the hive has not requeened and the hive worked until there were no more bees - we call these ones the Mohicans.

c - The hive has dead bees throughout it, lots of honey and pollen and brood. We normally ascribe this to death by exposure. Tetragonula are not very good at surviving low temperatures, which is why in Sydney we recommend that they are placed in a hot exposed position

Most of the splits went well, the hives that presented issues were:

1 - a hive that slumped, reminding me of the importance of the masking tape as I'd been slack and hadn't used any. The clue that there was a problem was the large amount of honey leaking from the hive. If you do a split and it leaks excessively, reopen it and see what the problem is. When I discovered the problem I inverted the slump putting the brood at the top. The brood was covered in honey and looked a bit dodgy, however there were still many live bees in the hive so it will be interesting to see if it survives.

2 - a couple of hives when reopened at the storage area had their brood detach from the hive and was at the bottom of the empty hive. With these hives we just left the brood alone and hope that it doesn't cause any problems.

3 - one hive that we didn't split because half the hive was empty had blackened structure between the wooden hive and the foam box. I think it was attacked by SMB after its last split but that the SHB failed to penetrate the wooden hive. This attack weakened the hive to the extent that it did not expand to fill the empty half of the hive, however this is only a theory.

4 - Another hive split had a honey super and was one of Russell's with the 40+mm thickness walls. Interestingly enough the bees used the hive almost totally for the brood and had most of the honey and pollen stored in the super, whereas I've noticed that Russell's hives that do not have a honey super share the space with brood and honey. This reinforces my opinion that the 40+mm walls make the internal space too small.

After having split for a week I can report that the hives we find the easiest to split are the ones not on a star picket, these are also the ones that are easiest to "balance" if that is something you want to try.

Well that is the end of Week One - 32 hives split.

We're averaging about 8 hives per day aiming to work 4 days a week from 8.30am to around noon or a bit after. The hives are at residents properties which requires a degree of driving around which is time consuming. It would be a lot easier if all the hives were at one location. Unloading at the storage area and restocking supplies for the next day takes about an hour, which leaves a few hours at the end of the day to answer emails etc. To do 8 splits we need 16 empty halves, at least 8 painted foam boxes, (as potentially we might have to replace every existing foam box), although normally that is not required, lots of masking tape and a lot of enthusiasm because although the job is fun it can be hot and tiring work.

Source: <http://www.wildthings.org.au/>

