

Turrumurra Lookout community garden

Everything grows better with TLC

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2014



SPRING

Spring

Loving...

Gazing upward and seeing the glorious day unfold

Loving ...

The blue, grey colour of our handsome artichokes

Loving ...

The exquisite crab apple tree proudly arching in the morning light

Loving

The delicious fragrance of the delicate white citrus flowers opening everywhere

Loving ...

Sweet Alice sprawling on the sandstone and the buzzing bees engulfed in her

and

Loving ...

Gently touching our warming earth with its promise of abundance



Tina

VEGIE GARDEN WORKSHOP

Things were certainly buzzing on Saturday 25th October, when the garden hosted a workshop on how to grow vegetables successfully.

The free public workshop was sponsored by Ku-ring-gai Council. It was held at the garden so it could be a “hands on” event and it certainly was. Participants were involved in a variety of practical sessions and moved from one learning station to another in small groups as they learn about:

- * How to Start a Vegetable Garden
- * Seed To Seed
- * Worms and Composting
- * Watering and Fertilising
- * How to make Biodegradable pots

At the half way mark, workshop participants and garden members mingled freely over an excellent morning tea while they enthusiastically discussed many gardening matters.

Doug, Tina, Julie, Winnie, Noel, Kerry, Sebastian, Frank, Mark





FRANK NEWNES



RHUBARB, SEA PINKS AND THE MYSTERY THAT IS GARDENING

My name is Frank. I am married to Marisa, and we have lived in North Turramurra since 1986 raising two, now grown up but still at home, children.

Let me say from the outset that gardening is a complete mystery to me. Anyone expecting gardening tips here should read no further. I have to admit that apart from a couple of golden memories and until very recently my life has been relatively “garden-free”. Although my earliest treasured memories are of times spent with my Grandfather in an English garden that was his pride and joy.

After years of “Digging for Victory” my grandparents treated themselves to the post war pleasure of growing things to look at rather than to eat. During the war I understand that their urban garden was entirely devoted to vegetables (with chooks and a “Ministry Approved” pig). By the time I came along, Grandad’s focus was on roses and a small but immaculate lawn that no-one, apart from his seriously spoilt grandson, was allowed to walk on. The lawn was surrounded by strange grass like plants called “Sea Pinks” – my first gardening mystery as not all of them were actually pink. The only reminders of the war were the garden shed (a converted air raid shelter) and a rhubarb patch which survived all of Hitler’s attempts to destroy it. Sweets (aka lollies) were still rationed back then so stewed rhubarb served with condensed milk was a particular treat. Rhubarb was my second gardening mystery: forbidden to touch it when in the ground (poisonous!!) yet served up to me by the bowlful when cooked.

My next golden gardening memory was of Mum and Dad’s allotment. By this time my interests

lay elsewhere. Gardening was for old people and couldn’t compete with the lure of the Beatles in the clubs of Liverpool followed by the late 60’s hippy lifestyle of my college days. The financial pressure of his first mortgage made Dad think he could save money by growing stuff. So on an allotment the size of a small field he astonished everyone by growing vegies on an industrial scale - enough to feed the neighbourhood. His potato crop alone would fill the boot of a small car. Nothing as exotic as tomatoes but vegies that you were expected to eat in the North of England: potatoes, cabbages, turnips etc. We all thought Dad was a great gardener but in truth he owed much to the rich black soil of West Lancashire. After a few years and as mortgage stress diminished Dad grew tired of feeding the neighbours and so, like his father before him, confined himself to a domestic garden full of roses, precision lawn mowing and those strange “Sea Pink” things, again.

Gardening in the UK is definitely an “all weather” pastime – memories of snow covered allotments each with a homemade shed in which people, huddled around primus stoves, brewed tea before venturing out to harvest frozen sprouts (that were readily available at the local shops). And that is my third great gardening mystery: why do people bother? In the face of such adversity: bad weather, pests and failed crops, why do people still love to garden?

And it is this final “mystery” that I hope to solve during my time at TLC. Surrounded by such knowledgeable, experienced and hardworking TLC gardeners, I hope to unlock the mystery of why my Grandfather and my Father loved gardening so much and why my best memories are of the times spent with them in their gardens.

In the meantime, can anyone can tell me where I can find “Sea Pinks” in Australia. I think it’s my turn now to grow those strange plants.

Frank



MULCH THREAT TO GARDENERS

Gardeners are being reminded to guard against a deadly Legionella infection as the rains cease and they head outdoors to begin spring planting.

In WA there is, on average, 70 cases a year of the potentially fatal strain Legionella longbeachae which can be found in potting mixes, compost heaps, mulches, soil conditioners and composted manures.

It generally affects the lungs, causing severe pneumonia, and the bacteria is most likely to attack the over-50s, smokers, gardeners and those with a weakened immune system.

Although it cannot be passed from person to person or from animal to person, it is spread by inhaling dust from contaminated matter. There is also the possibility it is passed from hand to mouth and ingested, making smokers vulnerable.

According to Llew Withers, manager of Applied Environmental Health at the WA Department of Health, all people who garden should wear gloves and a face mask to avoid inhaling the dangerous aerosols. They should also keep the mix damp while in use and wash their hands thoroughly after handling it.

“Cases of longbeachae are quite prevalent in WA but the problem is a lot of people are very complacent when they come to handling potting mix and blended soils,” Mr Withers said.

“The primary component of potting mix and blended soils is human waste — it’s called sewerage sludge — and very few people know that. When people are diving their hands into compost and smelling it and sucking it all in and saying ‘doesn’t that smell earthy’... it’s incredibly unhealthy to do that because it’s human sewerage sludge. People handling

those mixtures containing animal or human manures really need to be aware they can catch these sorts of diseases.”

Early symptoms of Legionella longbeachae infection are often like a severe flu infection, and may include fever, chills, a dry cough, a severe headache, tiredness, loss of appetite and shortness of breath. In acute cases, the bodily system may be affected, leading to diarrhoea, vomiting, mental confusion and even kidney failure.

While there was no vaccine to prevent Legionnaires’ disease, patients who sought medical attention early would be given antibiotics and begin to improve within three to five days, with treatment lasting about 10 to 14 days, Mr Withers said.

Scientists are not sure why there are so many more cases of longbeachae in WA compared with other parts of the world but gardening soils now feature warning labels about the bacteria as a result.

Mr Withers said a Collie woman died this year after contracting a strain of Legionnaires’ disease linked to potting mix. Her husband said at the time that he believed she became infected when she was re-potting plants ahead of their Christmas party and although she wore gloves when gardening, she never wore a mask.

“When you open a bag (of potting mix), treat it like a good bottle of red wine and let it breathe a while,” Mr Withers said.

“The top of the bag has possibly been sitting in the sun and if there is Legionella in there it will have grown, multiplied, and as soon as you open the bag it will spill out into the general air. So wear a mask and cut the bag open and leave it to breathe for a while and continue to wear your mask while you are planting.”

The West Australian

IT IS A DIFFERENT WAY

Our Community Garden has 26 plots, individually fenced and some fully netted, except 4.

When you look at the 4 plots to the right of the pond you will see that they are managed in a different way to the rest of the individual plots. When these plots were first allocated we decided to work them as one area and though there are only two of the original members remaining, we have continued to do so.

As the original 4 plots were on a grassy slope, we used the no dig method and added a step half way into the plots to give a more level growing area. Several layers of newspaper were layered on the top of the lawn, watered and then growing media was moved in on Doug's trailer and shovelled on to the top of the newspaper. Yes, hard work but easier than removing the lawn and digging over the heavy clay. This means that root crops are grown at the deeper end, though over time this has become less of a problem.



Learning from other plot holders we fenced our 4 plots before we started planting, using a star picket, top and bottom, to mark the boundary of each plot. When we realised that the existing fence didn't keep out the bandicoots another, smaller gauged, fence was erected. We have tried to have no high structures within the parameters of the plot and are careful

to consider shade on neighbours when planting taller crops such as sweetcorn. Because of the larger area it has been possible to install a drip watering system. As there are 4 of us we can manage the watering system by one person turning it on and turned off by another sometime later.



There can be the occasional problem where a plant will fall into your neighbour's area or someone won't keep the weeds to a level that you are happy with but by talking to each other these problems have been resolved.

The plus is that by working together we learn from and help each other. Because of the watering system the plants get a deep watering without someone having to be there and you only have to look at what the plots produce to know that this is working.

Even though we have a no fence policy we all garden in a different way and our individual approaches give an interesting look to the area that is tidy, very productive and a joy to spend time in.

The great plus about being a gardener is the joy of growing something you want and enjoying the area that this takes place in. I love our approach but recognise that it's not for everyone.

Kerry



EVENTS

November 1st

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Seedling Sale

November 8th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

November 15th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

4pm 5th Annual Meeting / 6pm Dinner
(Chair John Dailey)

November 22th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

November 29th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon
Working Bee

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT!**

MORE EVENTS

November 20th, Thursday

10:30 The Westleigh Probus Gardening Group, John Dailey and Julie Antill will be along.

April 2015 is a busy month with an early Easter, school holidays etc so the Autumn Seedling Sale will now be an Open Day on the 7th March 2015 and just another note for your diary, the Spring Seedling Sale will be the 5th September. Don't you just hate it when you have events for next year and its still only October!



ANOTHER GARDEN VISIT

It was a delightfully sunny day when the community garden group from **The Grange Lifestyle Village, Waitara**, came to visit.

Kerry and I met the group and told them the history of our garden and then showed them our garden from start to finish, including the artichokes which were in full fruit. Most of the visitors had been aware of our garden and several had had a peep at some time or other. Their community garden is on the grounds at The Grange and it was interesting to hear about their garden and also how successful their tamarillo plants have been. They said they never make jam etc from the fruit as they are eaten immediately when picked ... sounds just great to me! They are going to plant some seeds for us in exchange for some comfrey. It is so great to have community garden cousins just up the road. Needless to say they have invited us to visit any day and they will put the kettle on for morning tea!

Thanks to Kerry for her wonderful assistance.

Tina

www.tlcgarden.org.au

www.facebook.com/pages/TLC-Garden/318635698227162



NASTURTIUM (TROPAEOLUM MAJUS)

Nasturtium belongs to the Brassicaceae family; it is a sprawling succulent perennial in warmer areas, and an annual, in frosty places. It originates in South America and is known for its fiery colourful flowers with bright green peltate (shield like) leaves and its 3 celled capsular fruit.

They do well on a light sandy soil and are a companion plant for fruit trees. Nasturtiums with sufficient water grow and flower prolifically; however with too much water they put on masses of leaves. Their bright yellow flowers are attractive to many insects.

White butterfly love this family, so why not use nasturtiums to act as a decoy and then sprinkle wormwood over the cabbages etc.!

USES

Nasturtium leaves have a peppery taste and all parts of the plant are edible, the seeds can be used as a caper substitute. Sometimes called 'Indian cress'; its spicy leaves make a great addition to salads and sandwiches or it can be chopped with parsley, or chives and added to cottage cheese. The flowers have a delicate perfume and make lovely cut flowers in a vase, or as edible colour decorations on salads.

MEDICINAL VALUES

Nasturtiums are rich in sulphur, iodine, potassium, Vitamin C and phosphate.

A plant with powerful anti-microbial properties, make it useful against bacterial infections especially respiratory, such as bronchitis. Being high in sulphur nasturtiums are useful in cases of 'flu, common cold and even infections of the female genital tract. Nasturtiums together with nettles are useful for stimulating hair growth and scalp health. Use as a strong tea and pour over after final rinse.

In Germany, one company has made a herbal antibiotic and heart remedy of nasturtium. The seed contains a type of mustard oil which can be used to treat staphylococcus, streptococcus and salmonella infections. It can be taken as powdered seeds or fresh juice. Leaf tea can assist excess catarrh.

Just eating the leaves and flowers on a regular basis strengthens the whole system: the old saying "bitter in the mouth, builds a healthy heart."

Notes prepared by Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame with acknowledgement of Pat Collins, Useful Weeds at Your Doorstep, Total Health and Education Centre, Muswellbrook, NSW. ISBN 0-646-36468-5



RECIPE

NASTURTIUM RISOTTO

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 leek, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced, white and light-green parts only
- 1 teaspoon garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup white wine
- Coarse salt
- 3 cups Nasturtium Bouillon, heated
- 3/4 cup Nasturtium Butter
- 3/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- Nasturtium Pesto, for garnish
- Fresh chervil sprigs, for garnish
- Nasturtium flowers, petals, or buds, for garnish



Directions

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat olive oil and butter over medium-high heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring, until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add rice and cook, stirring constantly, until grains are opaque, start to sizzle, and stick together, about 2 minutes. Add wine and cook, stirring, until liquid is completely absorbed, about 30 seconds. Season with salt.

Reduce heat to low and add enough bouillon to cover rice. Cook, stirring constantly, until almost all the liquid has been absorbed. Add another 1/2 cup bouillon and continue cooking and stirring, until liquid has been absorbed. Continue cooking and adding bouillon, 1/2 cup at a time, until rice is al dente, about 20 minutes.

Stir in butter and remove from heat. Fold in cheese and season with salt. Serve garnished with nasturtium pesto, chervil, and flowers.

<http://www.yummly.com/recipe/external/Nasturtium-Risotto-Martha-Stewart>

VISITS TO TLCG

The contrasts of youth in our garden this last month.

Firstly a clutch of eager three year old play groupers from Hillview loom into sight. Faces smiling, watching worms, pond water and seed planting in our greenhouse. Parents trailing behind them showing their little ones the joys of flying insects and tiny flowers on the apple trees.

Then came the bold fourteen year olds down the path - confident and enthusiastic to learn about the intricacies of nature - wishing to duplicate many of our fine garden features in their school domain... artichokes, pomegranate, kiwi fruit and figs.

Within two visits John, Gillian and I had enjoyed helping two completely different age groups in our awesome garden patch.

Tina

GPS HUNT GAME

We had someone install a small bird house which houses a cache for an electronic orienteering game. (John gave permission).

So from time to time you may see participants of the game at TLC garden if they are playing their GPS Hunt Game.

They then win a million dollars - oops sorry - NO! they just get a smile on their face because they have successfully found the hidden cache.

Want to find out more about them?

<https://www.geocaching.com/>



PHOTO ALBUM



So what exactly did you feed this plant???



Jill and her cauli.



One of JD's 'loving' carrots.