



Mentone Community Garden Club Inc

Autumn 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to a new season

And to our new members, Craig Paterson 12 N, Anthony and Ashleigh Strong 39 E, Francis Archer 44N and Robyn Caudry 35.

And to your new newsletter editors Anne & Joanne.

Autumn Working Bee

This will be on Sunday 9 April from 8.30am to 10.30am and you will be rewarded with our super delicious morning tea. As this is the first working bee of the year I encourage both our newer & older members to come along and help us achieve a great looking garden while you chat & meet other members. A swap table will be set up if you want to share produce, seeds or plants.



Mowing Roster

We are implementing a new system soon so that those that are able can all share in this important garden task. Malcom will be nominating members to a scheduled roster time. So if you have a preferred time please let him know **NOW** on **9583 7741**. Members will be emailed when they are to mow and trim.

Committee Members

Alan Carter - President (2)
Brian Sawford - Secretary (7)
Kris Fitzpatrick - Treasurer (9S)
Anne Conomy (8S & 25N)
Joanne Cody (43N)
Phil Reid (11)
Malcolm Hall (28S & 16N)

Garden members Forum

Phil has set up a great looking garden club website at <http://mentonegardenclub.org.au/>.

He has offered to set up for us a members only chat area.

Joanne has a passion using vegetables, herbs, weeds & indigenous plants as foods and medicines which she would love to share with others.

Do you have an interest in organic growing, soils, growing specific vegies or fruits ?

You can share this, ask questions and share your tips on our upcoming easy to use private forum on our website. Register your interest **NOW**.

Help in using will be offered if needed.

Membership

If any of our Members with large or multiple plots would be prepared to reduce their holding or are finding that they are no longer able to maintain their plot -please let us know.

A full listing of Members can be found on the notice board on the shed door and is updated from time to time.

We also have an email account specifically for the Club: mccginc@gmail.com. Please use this email in any correspondence.

A major success!!!!!!

Well done to the team who transplanted the quince tree last year. As it was not required on its original site, it was deemed an asset to be retained . So a dedicated team transplanted it to its new site on the Remo Street end of the garden. Sue Harris and other dedicated members have nurtured it with much love and care and it is now flowering.



Theft of produce

Unfortunately we continue to have an ongoing problem with theft of produce & other items from the garden. Therefore your committee has made the decision to trial the installation of cameras and signs to the gate.

And for security & personal safety please make sure that you always lock the gates after entering and leaving& never leave an open lock with the code visible to passers-by.

Green Bins

*Our green bins still fill very fast each fortnight. Much which goes into it could be composted and provide useful nutrient for your plots. Please only put out what can't be composted and ensure that any material put into the bin is devoid of soil as this makes the bins very heavy (even if not full) and a difficult job to get to the kerbside for collection. When the sign says full that means **FULL** no more please. Join the challenge in only using the bins for "nasty" weeds.*

Becoming sustainable

Sustainable: the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, to support long-term ecological balance:

This means minimising water use, the need for commercial fertilisers and external energy sources. It also means minimising what is put into waste.

Our garden, the Mentone Community Garden is the largest in Kingston and should be a fine example of sustainable gardening.

What you can do as a member

- **Compost** your kitchen and garden waste
- **Mulch** your soil to limit evaporation.
- *Don't use pesticides/herbicides*
- *Collect seed from plants that grow well*
- *Grow plants that encourage beneficial insects (daisies and plants from umbellifera family - carrots, parsley, dill, fennel etc) are excellent. Blue flowering plants attract bees for fertilising your fruiting crops.*
- *Add substances that help your soil maintain its moisture (compost and bentonite).*
- *To find out more, ask on the upcoming members' forum, speak to a garden member, email the garden club or attend one of the free garden workshops - like the excellent ones run by the City of Kingston. Members with more gardening experience are happy to share their "secret" success tips.*



To celebrate International Composting Awareness Week (ICAW) you can learn how to compost at a **FREE composting and worm farm workshop** on Monday 8 May at 10am to 11am at St Marks Primary school, which is located on Lower Dandenong Road, Dingley Village.

For more information or to book (**ESSENTIAL**) please contact the City of Kingston's Waste Education Provider - EnviroCom on 9703 5288.



Autumn jobs

- **Harvesting summer crops**

Lift root vegetables intended for storing eg potatoes, onions, beetroot, carrots and turnips. Use damaged ones immediately as they are unlikely to store well. Allow pumpkins and squash to mature then cut from the vine when the fruit stalk begins to turn brown. These can be stored in a cool, dark, dry place.

- **Organise a compost system for autumn debris.**

Growing vegetables intensively takes a lot of goodness out of the soil so it is essential to put something back. Yes, commercial fertilisers and manures are good but good quality compost provides not only nutrients but also supports good soil structure, encourages healthy soil life, strong plants and worms. Much of the material from your summer crops can be composted to keep their nutrients being recycled into your soil AND will not overfill our green bins!

Use a good mix of different materials, ideally a large proportion of dry organic matter and smaller proportion of green organic material. Materials that contribute to good compost are shredded paper/newspaper and cardboard, kitchen vegetable scraps, vacuum dust, crushed egg shells, coffee grounds, autumn leaves, in fact any organic materials (those that were once alive) can be used. Very woody materials can take a long time to decompose, diseased materials can spread disease so minimise these.

Although weeds can make good compost, bulbous weeds such as onion weed and oxalis, and running weeds such as couch grass can become problematic so are not recommended. Seeding weeds should have seed heads removed before composting.

- **Continue to monitor pests and diseases**

Although these should be starting to slow down as the weather cools it is important to make sure they are controlled so they don't become a problem next year.

Diseased material should be removed from the garden or burned. Yellowing leaves should be removed as they encourage mildew and botrytis. Pests can be squashed as they are spotted.

- **Plant a green manure crop on parts of your plot that are to remain vacant for any significant time.**

This could be a monoculture of specific crops such as peas, mustard, barley etc or a mix of leftover seeds. Once the plants are growing well (but before they flower and seed) the whole plant can be slashed into the soil to provide improvements to the soil structure and level of nutrients.

- **Plant garlic, onions and your winter vegetables**



Visit from the leader newspaper

At the end of last month we had a visit from the Leader newspaper who are doing an article on community gardens. They took photos of some members amidst the yellow flowered rocket-so look out for it hopefully in your local paper soon !

Plot Maintenance

Continue to keep your individual plots clear of weeds and dead & diseased plants, as neglect will mean much more work & effort in cleaning up, and will spread weeds to your neighbour's plot. If you are not able to do this due to illness or overseas travel please let the committee know.



Stable Manure & Straw

We have had access to FREE well-mulched stable manure and straw at:

- *Equest Park, 37 - 39 Tootal Rd, Dingley, opposite the tip. You must phone Angela on 0409 144 826 first.*
- *Silverdene Stud, 795 Thomson's Rd, Lyndhurst.*

Feedback from Members is that Silverdene has the best manure. I do not check regularly that these supplies are still available. Please let me know if you find that they are not.

Suggestions for Future Newsletters ?

If you have a short article or a topic that you want covered please let your editors know.

Also there has been a suggestion that we meet socially at the garden as a group at other times other than our 2 yearly working bees! An afternoon tea or picnic? Or a workshop specifically for members & their family?