



Mentone Community Garden Club

WINTER 2020 Newsletter

A very warm hello to all our members old & new.

Hoping that you have been well & keeping connected, active & positive during this time of COVID on-off-& on again restrictions.

As group activities have been cancelled, gardening at home or in the community garden may have been the one thing you could continue to do to provide food & outdoor activity for yourself.

I have been keeping green online with some interesting food, environment & sustainability workshops which are FREE.

On Thursday 30 July Kingston is hosting one on Building Healthy Soil for garden health at 7pm via Zoom.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/building-healthy-soil-for-garden-health-tickets-113293624280>

Welcome to our new members

Janet & Roger Brydon 24 S.



Social Distancing has meant that we have not been able to hug or shake hands with those not living with us.

And like us plants also need touch for good health & well being. A report showed that rubbing the leaves of cress activates an immune defence mechanism against the Botrytis fungus disease.

I am aware of some gardeners who talk or sing to their plants so now give them a gentle rub especially if they are aromatic like our herbs or need a bit of TLC. And you can also hug a tree as science shows it is grounding & beneficial for our health.



Seedling Swap

Bayside food swap & Transition Kingston had a very successful swap & share in person just before the restrictions in March at a Mentone garden. Some of our garden members came along to enjoy a very informative seed raising workshop, swap & lots of sharing of gardening tips.

Remember that we have the share table if you have any excess seedlings or winter produce.



Frost and your garden

Well we are in that time of the year (mid to late winter) when there is often a night or several nights where frost is predicted. Although we don't get that many in Bayside because of its proximity to the bay, we do occasionally have nights when frost develops.



Mentone Community Garden Club

These are typically those nights when the skies are clear and there is little wind.

Frost occurs when cold air sinks to the ground. The water in the plant cells freezes and then expands when the temperature starts to rise again (usually once the sun rises). This expansion and then return to normal size (if it occurs rapidly or too slowly) causes the cell walls to collapse causing damage.

Which plants are affected?

Soft tender plant leaves tend to be more affected than more rigid leaves. Some plants have extra defences (waxy coatings, hairy surfaces) and some plants have been bred from those that originated in cold, icy countries of the world.

Some plants actually seem to benefit from the cold. Carrots, turnips, parsnips and some of the cabbage family ie brussels sprouts, tend to become sweeter with frost as the plants send their sugars to the parts we tend to eat.



What do we have to do to protect our plants?

Ideally the plants are in a microclimate that offers protection. Overhead trees/ structures can restrict the cold air from settling. Providing temporary shelter (an old sheet, shade cloth or garden fleece) can provide shelter during the night (typically when frosts settle) but can be removed during the day to allow the warmth and sunlight to the plant.

Also frost tends to affect young fresh shoots more than more established growth so refrain from

pruning or feeding with nitrogenous fertilisers in the months prior to winter.

What if my plants become frost damaged?

A frost damaged plant will look ugly and you are likely to be tempted to prune the offending material off your plant. But, like sun damage, this is not a great idea. This damaged foliage acts as a protective layer until the last frosts are over. Also, if you prune, you stimulate the plant to grow new tender shoots which will be very susceptible to the next frost. Be patient and wait until the frost season is over before removing frost damaged growth.

What to plant in Winter

July-Time to sow beetroot, pea, radish, sugar & snap peas or mustard green seeds. Lettuce & onion seeds can be sown or seedlings transplanted into the ground. And time to transplant strawberry runners.

August-Plant asparagus crowns, sow seed potatoes & rocket seed & undercover in seed trays sow seeds of capsicum, chilli peppers, eggplant, leeks & silverbeet

This information is from Gardenate & does differ from information on my packs of seeds. So I would be interested in feedback from members on when & how they plant according to temperature or the phase of the moon that we can share in our next newsletter.





Mentone Community Garden Club

Plot maintenance

Most of our members have been looking after their plots over recent months & gaining the benefit of fresh produce for the kitchen table.

While some of us wait for our vegies to grow for harvest.

And with COVID restrictions, isolation or concerns a few may not be able to attend so please let us know if you need any help with your plot.

Mowing Roster

Thanks to those who are doing this over recent months. However, the last time I looked there were no names down on our roster. So please share in this task to keep our pathways & nature strip looking neat & trim. If there are any problems with equipment please contact Malcolm on 0438635694 or Brian on 0402243711.



And you do not need to worry as we have an efficient petrol mower & whipper snipper !

Committee News

The committee last met in February.

We donated on behalf of the club \$1,000 towards the bushfires appeal for hay bales for stock food.

We also assigned some new roles with some positions also having a deputy officer D.

Rob Harris-President (37 E & 37W)

Brian Sawford – Secretary & Mowing D (7)

Kris Fitzpatrick – Treasurer & Shed D (9S)

Anne Conomy- Newsletter(8S & 25N)

Joanne Cody - Newsletter, Community liaison & Plot monitor(43N)

Malcolm Hall- Mower & roster(16N & 24N)

Julie Moore -Membership Secretary (40E)

Brian Grace -Shed Monitor (32)

Remember

To stay safe & well and NOW wear a mask & gloves when coming down to the garden.



This one is for post COVID mask ball.