

No. 19
December 2010

Leaflet

Simply Living Community Garden Newsletter

**The garden is located at
cnr Nott & Bridge Sts,
Port Melbourne**

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Diary Dates

Garden Working Bees

Tue 14th Dec, 6-7pm
Tue 18th Jan, 6-7pm

Kitchen Mates

Resumes Feb 2011

Jamming in the Kitchen

Tuesdays 9.30-12 noon
22nd February 2011

Christmas Services

Carols Service, 9.30am
Sun 19th Dec

Blue Christmas, 7pm

Wed 22nd Dec

Christmas Day, 9.30am

Leaflet by email

If you would like to be
added to the "Leaflet" email
list (get it first, in colour and
save paper) please send a
message to:

janet.hoare@southportuniting.
org.au

Garden update

The garden is moving from Spring to Summer. Many of the spring vegetables have finished and the summer ones are being planted.

Brassica & chilli bed.

The broccoli is nearing an end. Some of the plants have finished and been removed but there are still a few producing lovely tender broccoli branchlets. If the stems are tender enough to break off with your fingers they are tender enough to eat.

The chillies have shot up again and have begun flowering. Some new capsicum plants have been planted in this bed.

Winter Greens—now tomatoes.

All but the celery has been cleared from this bed and it has been planted out with five varieties of tomatoes ranging from cherry size through salad and slicing types to the big fleshy preserving types.

Seeds for tall bronze sunflowers have been planted in the middle of this bed.



Mulching the new tomato plants

Leafy greens

Some of the silverbeet has gone to seed but there are still plants producing edible leaves. Radishes and lettuces are ready to pick. The capsicums have regrown and are now flowering and setting fruit. The last beetroot were harvested and some new seedlings are growing now.

Two varieties of zucchini (Lebanese and Rondo—a round zucchini) have been planted in this bed.

Beans bed

The broad beans produced masses of beans this year. They stopped flowering

when the weather warmed up and then developed a rust fungus in the humid weather. Most have been pulled out but a few which had sent up new flowering shoots have been left to see what they do.

This bed will be planted out with dwarf and climbing beans over the summer.

Herbs, fruit trees etc.

The herbs, lemon tree and snowpeas are all growing well in the herb bed.

The passionfruit that was struggling the most has been pulled out and two new plants put in. Maybe this year we might get them to establish well.

Tomatoes have also been planted (or self sown) along the trellis. These are already flowering and starting to set fruit.

Onions & garlic

The spring onions and garlic in the polystyrene boxes are ready to harvest and will be brought outside at the next working bee.

The red and brown onions in the table beds in the courtyard and are growing nicely.

Potatoes in pots

Our potatoes in pots are still growing although the pots are probably too small. We are still hopeful of getting some tubers when the plants die down in the new year.

Working Bees

Eighteen people came to the Tomato Planting Day on November 21st. The tomato bed was cleared, topped up with compost, blood and bone and dolomite lime and the new seedlings planted, staked, watered and mulched.

The compost was turned over into the next bays and the old garden material chopped and put in the first bay. Other new plants put in were: capsicums, passionfruit, zucchini seeds. The working bee finished with a delicious shared lunch in the hall.

**South Port
Uniting Church**

**Port Melbourne
congregation**



The Simply Living Community Garden has been built with support from the City of Port Phillip Community Grants Program



The next few community working bees will be held on weeknights when the weather is cooler and to give those who can't make it on a Sunday a chance to join in. These will usually be the third Tuesday, 6-7pm, but the next one will be on Tuesday 14th December. Come along to plant some beans, fix up the summer watering system and find some worms as the compost is turned.

Kitchen Mates

The community kitchen program finishes for the year on Friday 10th December with a Christmas special. The program will resume in February.

Kitchen Mates is particularly for those who usually cook for themselves and would like to cook with others in a friendly supportive atmosphere. It is also a great way to increase your confidence in the kitchen if you find you are cooking for yourself for the first time. If you would like to join in in 2011 please contact the Church Office.

Jamming in the Kitchen

The last jamming session was held in November where batches of strawberry jam and lemon butter were produced (and taste tested on some freshly baked scones). The results were sold on the market stall, which has raised \$380 so far this year

There will be more jam and preserve making next year, about twice a term. If you have excess fruit or vegetables that you would like to donate to be turned into preserves, please contact Janet.

Kindergarten families

Best wishes to all our young gardeners who are leaving kinder and starting school next year. Thanks for all the watering, planting and critter catching you have done.

SkillsFest

Thanks to everyone who came along to SkillsFest on November 6th. More than 200 community members came along and joined in some of the 28 activities on offer sharing a variety of skills from worm farming and composting to knitting, singing, and getting involved in the community. The weather was also kind—the only fine Saturday for weeks.

We are currently writing an evaluation of SkillsFest. If you would like to give any feedback or suggestions about how it could be improved we'd love to hear from you.



Some of the SkillsFest action

Donations

Thank you to the people who have helped our garden to grow through their donations. These include: passion-fruit plants from Gwen, tomato plants from Nick and Sally, lemons and jars from Chris and jars from Doris and Therese.

Thankyou also to the anonymous people who donated tomato plants, a worm farm, pots and some micro-irrigation pipes.

Plant of the Month—Legumes

Legumes are the plants of the pea and bean (Fabaceae) family. In our garden they include green peas, snow peas, dwarf beans, climbing beans and broad beans.

These plants are grown for their highly nutritious edible seeds, and sometimes seed pods, which are good sources of protein.

Legumes are also an important part of the crop rotation as they bring nitrogen back into the soil through their association with nitrogen-fixing bacteria (*rhizobia*) on their roots. The *rhizobia* take nitrogen from the atmosphere and convert it (or “fix” it) into ammonia which can then be taken up by the plant roots. When the plant dies some of this nitrogen is retained in the soil, increasing soil fertility.



Rhizobia nodules on the roots of one of our broad bean plants

Christmas at Port Melbourne Uniting

You are invited to join in the Christmas celebrations at Port Melbourne Uniting Church.

Family Carols Service, 9.30am, Sunday 19th Dec.

Blue Christmas, a service of acknowledgement and support for those who hurt at Christmas or find it a lonely or difficult time, 7.00pm, Wednesday 22nd Dec.

Christmas Day Family Service, 9.30am, Sat 25th Dec.

Sunday after Christmas, 9.30am, Sunday 26th Dec.

Picking from the garden

Everyone is welcome to pick from the garden for their personal use. The only things we ask are that you:

- take care with the plants so that they can continue to grow and produce more for everyone (many of the plants in our garden can be picked leaf by leaf or stem by stem rather than taking the whole plant) and
- contribute to the garden in some way, such as: bringing kitchen scraps for composting, watering the garden, helping out at working bees, or making a donation (which could be cash, plants, manure, garden stakes, wire mesh, tools, etc.)