

Leaflet

Simply Living Community Garden Newsletter

Contacts

Project Worker:

Janet Hoare
ph 9314 1010
email: hoareaj@bigpond.com

Minister:

Peter Greenwood
ph 0438 883 659
email:
peter.greenwood@
southportuniting.org.au

Web:

www.southportuniting.org.au
(follow the link to the "old"
website, then click on Port
Melbourne then Community
Garden)

Diary Dates

Garden Working Bees

3rd Sunday of month
11 am—12 noon

Sunday 18th January
Sunday 15th February



Bush basil in the tomato bed

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 at: hoareaj@bigpond.com

South Port
Uniting Church

Port Melbourne
congregation



Garden update

Anyone who has passed the garden recently will have seen how well it is growing.



The sunflowers have just started flowering and are brightening up the whole garden.

The building work has been finished and we can now enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of our labour.

We have had one glitch when someone decided to help themselves to some of the plants—a few tomatoes, both our eggplants and a couple of capsicums. It appears that they took them away to replant although it is unlikely the plants would have survived.

Fortunately we were able to get some extra tomato and eggplant seedlings—thanks to our neighbour Arthur for a magnificent Gross Lisse tomato and an eggplant. The other new tomatoes are Tigerellas (heritage tomatoes with red and yellow striped fruit) - so we now have quite a mixture of tomato varieties.

Arthur also provided the garden with a top dressing of pigeon poo which will provide some extra nitrogen to some of our plants which were looking a bit pale.

Compost bays

The compost bays now have lids and are ready for use. The "working" bay has a sign on top and is the one closest to the street. Please feel free to bring your kitchen scraps to help feed our garden with lovely compost and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by organic waste in landfill. Please do not put meat or dairy products in the compost as they will not only smell bad but will attract flies and vermin.

What's growing

Most of the planting has been done for now and plenty of vegetables are ready or nearly ready to harvest.

Please take care when picking that you don't damage the plant. Beans need to be

picked carefully, preferably with one hand holding the plant near the end of the bean and the other picking the bean, otherwise you might pull up the whole plant. Silver beet, zucchinis and cucumbers also need careful handling.

Tomato bed - tomatoes (cherry, roma, Grosse Lisse, Tigerella), capsicums (sweet yellow and bell peppers), eggplants and lots of chillies (two types—both hot). Chillies can be picked now, tomatoes are setting and will start to ripen this month.

Leafy greens & root crops - lettuce (oak leaf—non-hearting variety) and silver beet (plain and coloured), radishes, beetroot and spring onions. Lettuce and silver beet leaves can be picked without pulling up the whole plant. Pick the outer leaves first and leave at least five leaves on each plant so they can keep growing. Radishes are ready to harvest (look for the ones with the fat, red roots).

Vines & beans (low bed) The zucchinis are in full flower and can be picked as they get big enough. If you like zucchini flowers you can pick some of the male flowers (with the skinny stems) but please leave the females (fat stems) to grow into zucchinis. There is another zucchini at the end of the compost bays. One of the cucumbers is flowering so we should have some "mini muncher" Lebanese cucumbers soon. The cool weather has not helped the dwarf beans but they are starting to flower now and the odd bean is big enough to pick. The snap peas grown by the kinder kids are also flowering and setting but haven't liked the weather much and may not last long.

Beans & greens The climbing beans are making their way up the poles and will start flowering soon. These are a mixture of Blue Lake (green beans) and Purple King (purple beans—turn green when cooked). The mini cabbages are starting to heart—they grow to the size of a softball. A few caterpillars have had a feast so we wait and see what the cabbages will be like. We

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



have some celery seedlings growing slowly in punnets which will be planted out soon unless the weather is too hot.

The passionfruit vine has been planted on the trellis, along with a row of climbing beans. Two butternut pumpkins are also growing near the trellis and will flower soon.

Herbs include: rosemary along the street front, thyme next to the compost bay, mint at the end of the leafy greens and climbing beans, basil in the tomato bed, oregano near the rosemary and in the tomato bed and Vietnamese mint in the climbing bean bed.



Zucchini and sweet yellow peppers

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, 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.)

Working bees

The December working bee was a very short as it was so close to Christmas. Last week some shade cloth was put over the leafy greens bed in preparation for the very hot weather.

The next working bee will be Sunday 18th January at 11 am. There are a few small jobs to do and plenty of opportunity for chatting about the garden and starting to plan what to plant next. Everyone is welcome, even if you can't do much physical work. We'll have a mini market stall running again too—all proceeds to the garden.

Kindergarten families

Thanks to all the enthusiastic children and their Mums and Nannas who came along on Wednesdays last term. The children were fantastic—bringing their plants back to put in the garden, weeding out all the pea seedlings that came up from the mulch, watering and picking lettuces to share for lunch.

Water

The sub-surface watering system is working well and has been the subject of many garden-side conversations. The 20 litre drums attached to the weeper hose empty in about 20 minutes but the water is delivered to the root zone below the mulch where the plants can use all of it. At the moment the drums are being filled twice a week from the tank that collects water from the church hall

roof. Water saved by various friends of the garden is used to water the garden at least twice a week as well.

As the weather warms up we will need more water so if you can save a few litres from your home please bring it along and give any thirsty looking plant a drink (check the soil around the base of the plant to see if it is dry). Remember that some plants, such as silver beet and zucchinis, will wilt in the sun to conserve moisture and then stand up again when the sun has gone.

Another water tank?

At present we have a 2500 litre water tank which collects water from the church hall roof. This is keeping the garden going for now and we hope it will be enough for the rest of the summer with the extra water being brought in by garden friends.

In the long term we would like to put in a larger tank with a tap next to the garden so that we can collect water from the whole church roof, have a more secure water supply, not have to depend on people to save water to help out and make the water more accessible so the watering duties can be shared around.

The church is in a heritage area so there are restrictions on the type of tank we can install. After speaking to Council and several plumbers the best option appears to be an underground tank near the garden. Estimates of the cost to install a 22,000 l underground tank are \$25,000-\$30,000. If anyone has any experience with tanks of this size or ideas about how we can go about raising this amount of money it would be great to hear from you.

Donations

Thankyou to those people who have made donations during the past couple of months: Arthur, Demitra, Nancy and Janet have all donated home grown seedlings and plants to the garden and/or the working bee market stall.

We are still building up our tool inventory and any donations of tools no longer needed at home or workplace are welcome. Some of the items on our wish list include: grass shears, secateurs, garden spades (large or small), wooden stakes (any length), buckets, a hose reel and large pots (40 cm diameter or larger).

If you would like to donate plants or materials please see Janet Hoare any Sunday after church or contact her via phone or email (see front for details).

If you wish to make a cash donation to the garden please contact the South Port Uniting Church office, 319 Dorcas St, South Melbourne, ph 9690 1188. Office hours are 9am-4.30pm Mon-Thurs and 9.30am—4pm Friday (closed for lunch between 12 and 1pm daily). Cheques should be made payable to "South Port Uniting Church". Please clearly indicate that the money is for the garden.

Vale Di Greenwood

Some of our garden friends may not be aware that Di Greenwood died on December 30th after five years of living with cancer. Di was the wife of our minister, Peter, and friend to all of us at Port Melbourne Uniting Church, She is sadly missed by all who knew her.