

No. 12
December 2009

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

3rd Tuesday, 6-7pm

15th December 2009

19th January 2010

Market Fresh

Resumes Feb 2010

Christmas Day Service

Port Melbourne Uniting

25th Dec, 9.30 am

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 now looks quite different to how it was when the last "Leaflet" came out. Most of the winter vegetables have finished and been replaced with summer plants. The rain in November was wonderful, giving the garden a good soaking just after the new plants went in.

It is interesting to note how effective mulch is. One bed was half-mulched. Only four days after heavy rain the mulched side was still quite damp at the surface while the top 5-6 cm of the unmulched side had dried out.



Preparing the leafy green bed for summer planting

Bean & chilli bed.

The broad beans finished in mid-November and have been pulled out to make way for climbing beans which will grow up the bamboo teepees. Dwarf (or bush) beans have been planted around the edges and some dwarf sunflowers at the driveway end.

The chillis and capsicums have begun to produce fruit. These plants had a flying start after being cut back at the end of Autumn and sending out new shoots in early Spring.

The perennial (Greek) basil is bringing in the bees to help pollinate the crops.

Vines and Greens.

The silverbeet planted last year has gone to seed but the plants that were put in last autumn are still producing edible leaves. The spinach has also gone to seed and finished.

The garlic was a complete failure—only two tiny bulbs were found (less than what we planted in the first place). If anyone has

some tips on growing garlic we'd love to hear from you.

The zucchini seedlings are all growing well. The first cucumbers were eaten off but the next lot of seedlings are now growing.

Leafy greens and summer veg.

All the old plants in this bed have been removed, the bed dug over and compost and blood and bone fertiliser added. The sub-surface weeper hose has also been replaced and the whole bed mulched.

Capsicum and eggplant seedlings were planted in November but were eaten off (we suspect earwigs or snails). Replacement plants are still growing in pots and will be planted out when they are a bit bigger and more likely to survive. Silverbeet, beetroot and radish seeds have been planted at the sides and sunflowers in the middle.

Tomatoes

The low bed has been replanted with a variety of heirloom tomatoes, including Amish Paste, Tigerella, Tommy Toe and Reisen-traube. A few left-over seedlings were also planted into pots next to the hall. Basil seedlings have also been planted.

Herbs, etc.

The herb bed now has thyme, parsley, sage, oregano and lemon grass as well as the lemon tree.

Onion boxes

You may have noticed the three polystyrene boxes of onion plants next to the hall. This is a bit of an experiment to see how they do. They are in the boxes rather than the main beds as onions don't like to be mulched and also there was not a lot of space in the garden beds when it was time to plant the seedlings out. So far they are growing well.

Working Bees

The last working bee was the Tomato Planting and Picnic Day. Fourteen people came along and put in a great effort. The

**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



low bed was cleared of everything except one colourful nasturtium, then planted out with tomatoes. These were staked, tied and watered in. The brassica (now leafy greens) bed was also cleared and prepared for summer planting (see notes about leafy greens). All the plant material was chopped and put into the compost. Each plant was given a big drink (this was the week after the burst of hot weather and before the November rain). Shade cloth was installed at the end of every bed so it can be rolled out in hot weather. Our market stall, which included tomato seedlings, herbs and a variety of home made jams, raised \$50 for the garden. The morning finished with a delicious picnic lunch.

Over summer we will have the monthly community working bee on the third Tuesday of the month from 6-7 pm. This is a better time for the plants and hopefully will suit people who are busy on weekends. Everyone is welcome to come along for an hour (or less) to do a few garden jobs and have a chat with other gardeners. Gloves and tools provided.

Compost bays

The hot and wet weather has helped the compost move along. Even on warm days you can feel heat rising when you lift the lid. The compost in the middle bay has rotted down so much that it is only half full after being filled with material from the first bay six weeks ago.

Civic Project of the Year Awards

The garden was one of 13 community projects nominated for the 2009 City of Port Phillip Civic Project of the Year. Although not the eventual winner, the garden was recognised at the Civic Awards ceremony on December 3rd. Pictures of the garden and people of all ages working in it were displayed on the big screen during the ceremony. Again, thank you to the more than 100 people who have contributed to the garden during the past year.

Kindergarten Families

The end of term is nearly here and the gardening program will finish for the year on December 16th. More than 30 children, plus their parents, grandparents and carers, have been involved in the garden through the year. Their enthusiasm has been wonderful and it has been lovely to see how their garden knowledge has grown along with the plants. An example of this was while planting climbing bean seeds to grow up bamboo teepees, one of the boys suggested that we grow some lettuces underneath so that they would be in the shade—a great idea.

Thanks and best wishes to all the children going on to school and we look forward to welcoming back the younger ones, along with some new families, next year.

Community Kitchen

The Market Fresh shopping and cooking group finishes for the year on December 11th. This will be a Chinese special with the help of some Chinese friends. The program will resume in February 2010. Bookings for Market Fresh can be made at the church office, ph 9690 1188; cost \$2; free transport within the Port-South-Parks area can be arranged if needed.

We are also planning a new community kitchen program for 2010 for those who have lost a partner and want to learn how to cook for themselves. If you are interested in being involved please contact Janet Hoare or Peter Batten via the church office.

Also look out for news about some occasional food preserving days next year—come along and make some jam, sauce, pickles, etc, depending on the season and what's available. If you have, or know of, fruit trees that have excess fruit that could be used for preserves please let Janet know.

Donations

Thanks to Kelly and family for donating some packets of seed and to Sue, Sophie, Jack and Marjory for some pots.

Plant of the month—chilli

Chillies are a type of capsicum. Different species are grown in many parts of the world.



Chillies are an excellent source of Vitamins A and C but are mainly used to add flavour (and heat) to a variety of dishes. Chilli heat comes from capsaicin, a chemical found in the flesh and seeds, and is measured on the Scoville scale.

The Scoville scale ranges from 0 (sweet bell peppers) through to 2500-5000 (Jalapeno peppers), 100,000-225,000 (birds eye chilli) and 16 million for pure capsaicin. The ones in our garden are definitely at the milder end of the scale, but still hot enough for most people.

Farewell Wendy

Our best wishes to Wendy van Dort, who is leaving the Port Phillip EcoCentre and moving north. Wendy gave us a huge amount of help and support in designing and building the garden, including supervising the six working bees to construct the garden beds and compost bays. She has also been the coordinator of the Port Phillip Urban Fresh Food Network which has helped to bring a whole range of people together to grow more fresh food in the City of Port Phillip. Thanks Wendy!

Christmas services at Port Melbourne Uniting

Everyone is welcome on Christmas Day, 9.30am.

Blue Christmas service, for those who find Christmas a difficult time, Monday 21st December, 7.30pm.

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.)*