

No. 14
April 2010

Leaflet

Simply Living Community Garden Newsletter

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

Contacts:

Project Worker:

Janet Hoare
ph 9690 1188 or 9314 1010
email:
janet.hoare@southportuniting.
org.au

Minister:

David White
ph 0421 198 922
Tues & Wed

Web:

www.southportuniting.org.au
follow Port Melbourne link

Diary Dates

Garden Working Bees

3rd Sunday of month
11am-12 noon
18th April

Fresh on Friday

Fri 7th May

Kitchen Mates

Pilot program during
March April 2010; next
group starts May-June

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 summer growing season is drawing to a close with the shorter days and cooler nights. The summer crops are still producing well but there won't be enough warm weather left for the new flowers on the eggplants and pumpkins to develop into mature fruit.

One or more vandals on a Saturday night in February smashed three of the four water containers at the ends of the beds and pulled out some of the plants. Unfortunately these included the biggest of the eggplants that had fruit all over it. Most of the garden was undamaged and the water containers were easily replaced.

The garden looks very green with pumpkin vines sprawling wherever they can reach. They look fabulous but have only produced one butternut pumpkin between them (which has already been picked).



A big bunch of cherry tomatoes

Bean & chilli bed.

The climbing and dwarf beans have been consistently flowering and growing beans for the past couple of months, although the climbing beans are quite small.

The chillies and capsicums continue to thrive. The sunflowers were lovely while they flowered.

Vines and Greens.

The two zucchini plants have been producing a couple of zucchinis a week each. The cucumbers did poorly, producing one small cucumber between them. Most of the bed has been taken over by a self-sown pumpkin but none of the fruit has grown past tennis ball size.

Leafy greens and summer veg.

The capsicums and eggplants left by the vandal/s have produced well.



Some of our lovely sunflowers (and bees)

The ruby silverbeet is growing well, although one plant had all its leaves stripped off and has taken a while to recover. Seedlings of beetroot, silverbeet, lettuce, mizuna and rocket are now growing and more will be sown during autumn.

The dwarf sunflower had lots of flowers during February-March and attracted dozens of bees. Hopefully the sunflower seeds will develop on the heads that are left.

Tomatoes

The cherry tomatoes are still producing fruit, although this is slowing down and we may not get much more fruit setting. There are still lots of green tomatoes that will ripen during the next few weeks. Some of the basil is beginning to flower and is close to finishing. The rocket is growing well.

Herbs, etc.

The herb bed and lemon tree are flourishing with new growth all round, although the pumpkin vine is trying to take over the bed.

The passionfruit have been receiving lots of TLC and are looking very healthy.

Working Bees

There have been two twilight working bees since the last "Leaflet". On 16th February, Shrove Tuesday, the workers enjoyed pancakes with homemade jam at the end of the working bee.

Jobs done included turning the compost and adding some more manure, weeding

**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



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the ground-level beds, removing the voracious mint from the pathways, replacing the broken water containers and watering. We also picked up some extra compost kindly donated by Jean.

The mid-week twilight working bees have finished for now. The April to November sessions will be on the third Sunday of the month from 11am to 12 noon. The next one will be on April 18th. Everyone is welcome.

Compost bays

Kitchen fruit and vegetable scraps are always welcome in the compost bay closest to the street. Please chop any garden material into small pieces before adding it to the bay.

As the autumn leaves start falling please note that a few dry leaves are all right but please do not put large amounts of dry leaves into the compost, especially tough leaves from plane trees.

Kindergarten Families

Gardening activities for kindergarten families have continued through Term 1 with lots of watering and planting. Activities will resume on the second Wednesday of Term 2 (21st April).

Donations

Thanks to Jean for the compost and Una for a small watering can that reaches into the centre of the beds. In addition our market stall has raised nearly \$90 already this year—thanks especially to the kindergarten parents.

Harvest Celebration service

On Palm Sunday, March 28th, there was a Harvest Celebration service in the garden. Having done this two years in a row we can now call it an annual event. The weather was warm but cloudy and not too windy. Fortunately the F1 cars ended their practice rounds at Albert Park before the service began. There was a mix of people from church and wider community. Everyone participated in the service in some way and enjoyed the home made morning tea in the hall afterwards.

New Tank

After many months of planning our new 20,000 litre underground tank will be installed during the week after Easter. Water from the church roof will be stored in the tank for use on the garden. Thanks again to Gwen Waters for her generous donation and the City of Port Phillip Community Grants scheme for providing funding towards the cost of the tank.

Community Kitchen

Our community kitchen program is growing along with the garden. If you would like any more information about any of the community kitchen programs, please contact Janet (see front page for details). There are limited places and all bookings should be made by calling the church office, ph 9690 1188.

Fresh on Friday

Our shopping and cooking group on the first Friday of the month resumes on 7th May, 10am-1.30pm (May menu fried rice and seasonal fruit). After shopping at the Footscray Market everyone joins in to prepare a healthy

and delicious lunch. Cost \$2. Travel to the market is on the church bus and transport within the Port—South area can be provided if needed.

Kitchen Mates

The six week Kitchen Mates pilot program began on March 12th. This group is going well and has used herbs and vegies from the garden to cook a variety of meals including risotto, meatloaf with vegies and vegetarian pizza. All were delicious and easy to prepare.

Another pilot program for a new group is planned for the coming month. Please contact Janet if you or someone you know would like to get together with others to cook healthy meals in a friendly and supportive environment. Participants decide what to cook and pay for the food themselves. Costs are usually \$2-3 per serve.

Preserving Days

The last jam making day in February went well, producing another couple of batches of plum and raspberry jam. There will be more opportunities to get yourself into (a) jam during the year, so please look out for dates and times.

Plant of the Month—Eggplant

Eggplants (*Solanum melongena*) are from the same family as tomatoes and, like tomatoes, produce a fruit (which we call a vegetable) during the warmer months. In warm, frost free areas eggplants can be treated as perennials and can produce fruit over a few seasons.

We have two eggplants in our garden, one is the white “Casper” variety (pictured, grown from seed donated by the Dig In Seed Savers) and the other the striped “Listada di Gandia”.



Eggplants are also called aubergines. They are a good source of dietary fibre and have small quantities of vitamins. They are well known as the main ingredient of moussaka. Grilled or roasted eggplant is a staple of many vegetarian dishes and it can also be made into a delicious dip.

Exhibition

Our garden was included in the “Harbingers of Change: Citizens and Sustainability” photographic exhibition at The Incinerator Arts Complex in Moonee Ponds during March. The exhibition will be travelling to a number of regional galleries during the next 12 months.

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.)*