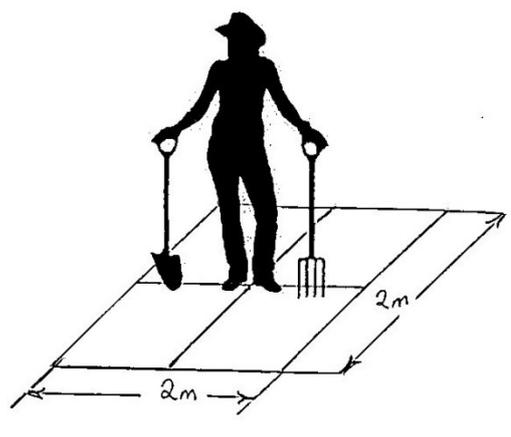




Volume 1 Issue, August 2020

The COVID – 19 Virus and social distancing



If we keep in the centre of a 4 metre square this should give about a 1.5 metre distance between gardeners.

Do the three

- 1. Wash your hands.**
- 2. Maintain a 1.5 metre distance.**
- 3. If sick stay home.**

Compost information session

Last Saturday afternoon we held our first gardening information session which was attended by 9 of our members. We discussed the reasoning behind the new composting bins configuration and our projected aspiration on compost for the year. It is hoped once all our community bed compost obligations are filled

we will be in the position to share the compost with members.



The Friday before the session a soil sample was taken from the ready-to-go compost bin to analyse the mineral content. The finding was as follows.

Nitrogen: Medium

Phosphorus: High

Potassium: High

PH 7

The above findings were very encouraging to know that our compost bins are producing a good quality product of base elements to add to the garden beds. This test in the past was done on commercial compost which gave readings of very high Nitrogen and low on all the other elements.

Bill gave a demonstration on the process of turning the beds, which takes about 25 minutes.



Watering the Community beds

When at the garden, can we please all endeavour to water these plants as they have been planted for our mutual benefit.

Weeding of pathways

Over the last two weeks we have received 230 mm of rain in Kotara which has been wonderful for the garden and the weeds. Can we please work together to reduce the weed problem growing around our garden beds.

The grassed area at the garden.

Plans with Council are afoot to beautify the grassed area on entry to the gardens. This project will take a while to complete. The Committee will keep you posted.

Mint bed

The weeds in the mint bed have hopefully been removed. The soil was completely sieved through by hand with 5 buckets of weed being removed. We now have Vietnamese mint, Spearmint and Common mint. As this bed is a community bed can we all make an effort to water it.

Community beds

The broad bean seeds in the community beds have all germinated with the rest of the produce doing well. The weeding of the middle camellia bed has taken place in preparation for the planting of 20 gardenia radicans ground cover plants. These plants will be appealing to the eye and give a delicate fragrance and will help reduce the weed problem.



Container clean out

The community bed fertilizers have been sorted out and placed in their new labeled sealed containers. During the clean up we found a big 75mm rust hole in the side of the container wall. We had always wondered how the rats were gaining entry. The hole will be fixed this week along with the rest of the roof leaks.

How to collect seeds.

Collecting seed and saving them for sowing in the next season may seem laborious and time-consuming but it can actually save you money. Not only will you have the advantage of the cost saving, but you will also have a seed that has been produced and adapted to the climate and soil conditions of your garden. Saving vegetable seeds can preserve a particular plant variety (for example the heirloom varieties).

Saving seeds is a three-step process with some vegetable seeds being easier to collect than others.

“The following seeds are easy to collect”

- Tomatoes
- Capsicum
- Beans
- Peas
- Onions
- Pumpkins
- Cucumbers
- Lettuce

Some of the plants above have self-pollinating flowers and produce seeds with little attention before storage. Plants that have male and female flowers such as sweet corn and pumpkins run the risk of cross-pollination which can affect the taste and shape of the produce.

Seed from biennial crops can take up to two years to produce seeds and the seeds are harder to save.

Step 1

Make sure you only save seeds from open-pollinated varieties, not hybrids. Open-pollinating veggies varieties are mostly heirloom varieties that have naturally evolved over many years and have been passed down from gardener to gardener. Hybrid seeds or

seedlings have been commercially produced from two varieties of plants to prevent diseases and to give higher crop yields. Collecting seeds from these hybrid plants can grow a plant that may not produce any harvest or a plant that is susceptible to disease, because the genetics in the seeds follows the dominant plant variety which the seed was developed from.

Step 2

Collect seed from the most vigorous plants with the best fruit, avoid seeds from stunted or weak plants. This way you will be naturally selecting the traits you want to encourage in your crops.

Tomato, Cucumber and Eggplant seeds: Allow the fruit to fully ripen on the plant. Cut the tomato in half and scoop out the seed pulp. Place the pulp in a jar and fill it with water. Stir the water and contents for two days until you see the seeds separating from the pulp. Usually the pulp will fall to the bottom of the jar. Carefully pour out the water and remove the seeds from the jar and place on a paper towel and pat dry. Leave to dry on a clean paper towel and when fully dry place the seeds in an envelope or a white plastic screw top jar and keep in a dry dark place away from pests.

Capsicum seeds: Allow the fruit to fully ripen on the plant and harvest the seeds from the centre. Place the seeds on a paper towel to allow to dry. Place in an envelope or a white plastic screw top jar and keep in a dry dark place away from pests.

Beans and peas: Again allow the pods to ripen on the vine and wait until they start to turn brown. Remove the pods and place them on a tray indoors and leave to dry for two weeks. Shell the pods and then place in an envelope or a white plastic screw top jar and keep in a dry dark place away from pests.

Step 3

Store the seed in an envelope or an airtight white plastic jar and keep them above ground level to prevent mice or insect invasion. The most important part of storing seeds is to label the packet with what they are and write the date of when they were harvested and packed.

Herb of the month

Basil

Ocimum basilicum spp.



This must-have annual or sometimes perennial herb is an essential in any garden bed or it can be grown in a window box near to the kitchen. The wonderful aroma of cinnamon-anise-mint has flavoured and contributed to many cuisines throughout the world. Basil is a jam-packed herb we use as a garnish or in pesto. It contains Vitamin, A, C, E, K, B1, B2, B6, Niacin B3, Calcium, Copper, iron, Magnesium, Manganese, Phosphorus, Potassium Selenium, sodium, and Zinc.

Types of basil:

- Sweet Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*
- Greek Basil, *Ocimum minimum*
- Lemon Basil, *Ocimum x citriodorum*
- Thai Basil, *Ocimum basilicum 'Horapha'*
- Purple Ruffles Basil, *Ocimum basilicum var*
- Purple Basil, *Ocimum Basilicum var, purpurascens*
- Holy Basil, *Ocimum Sanctum*
- Cinnamon Basil *Ocimum Basilicum 'Cinnamon'*

Recipe of the Month

Basil Pesto



Prep Time: 15 min **Cook Time:** 5 min

Ingredients

45g (1/4 cup) pine nuts
1 1/2 cups fresh basil leaves
2 small garlic cloves, halved
60g (3/4 cup) shredded parmesan
5 tablespoons olive oil

Directions

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Spread the pine nuts over a baking tray.

Bake in oven for 5 minutes or until toasted.

Remove from oven and set aside for 10 minutes to cool.

Place the pine nuts, basil, garlic and parmesan in the bowl of a food processor and process until finely chopped. With the motor running, gradually add the oil in a thin steady stream until well combined.

It is best used the same day, but if you are not using the pesto immediately, store in a clean jar in the fridge. It will last for a few days in the fridge.

Add a tablespoon of roasted pine nuts at the end, and sprinkle with feta cheese.

Bacon and Pumpkin Pesto Pasta



Prep Time: 15 min **Cook Time:** 25 min

Ingredients

1kg kent pumpkin, deseeded, peeled, cut into 2.5cm pieces
Olive oil spray
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
400g penne rigate
300g short-cut bacon, thinly sliced
125g (1/2 cup) basil pesto (see notes)
Shaved parmesan, to serve
2 tbs roasted pinenuts, to serve
Salt, to season

Directions

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Place the pumpkin, in a single layer, on the prepared tray. Spray with olive oil spray and season with salt and pepper. Bake in oven for 25 minutes or until tender.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water following packet directions or until al dente. Drain and return to the pan.

Cook the bacon in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat, stirring, for 5 minutes or until crisp and golden.

Add the pesto to the pasta and toss until coated. Add the pumpkin and bacon and toss until well combined. Divide among serving bowls and sprinkle with parmesan. Serve immediately.

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Don't forget to look at this month's issue from the Seed Collection.

www.theseedcollection.com.au