



# Weed-It

## March Street Community Allotment Gardens Newsletter

### **Volume 3 Issue 9 September 2022**

#### **September Birthday Celebrations**

Marg B	24 Sep
Robert D	14 Sep

Wishing a very happy birthday to Marg and Robert.

#### **Newsletter has been updated**

The newsletter has been updated to reflect the new Club name, March Street Community Allotment Gardens.

#### **Newcastle City Council community garden links**

It has taken three letters, numerous phone conversations and two years of trying to have the Club's contact detail changed on the Council website. Now all links are working and phone numbers have been removed and we have only an email address as the contact.

#### **What to grow in September**

September is the start of Spring and it's time to ponder what plants you would like to grow in your garden bed. Here are some ideas!

Asparagus, Basil, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrots, Celery, Chilli, Chives, Climbing beans, Bush beans, Dwarf beans, Coriander, Cucumber, Daikon (Japanese radish), Dill, Eggplant, Endive, Fennel, Globe artichokes, Horseradish, Kohrabi, Leeks,

Lettuce, Mint, Mustard greens, Oregano, Turnips, Parsley, Parsnips, Peas, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Rocket, Sage, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow peas, Spring onions, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet corn, Zucchini.

#### **Pavers wanted**



The Club is wanting to pave the walkways between the garden beds. If you come across any free pavers 230mm X 110mm x 50mm on social media and various market places or maybe know someone that is renovating their property, please let the Secretary know and we can organise transport for them.

## Spring lunch at the Blackbutt



*The spring statue at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney. "Note the bag of fresh flowers and produce".*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September the Club celebrated and welcomed Spring with a lunch at the Blackbutt Hotel. Hopefully the weather will be kind to us all and the garden beds will produce an abundance. The lunch was well attended with lots of laughter and enjoyment of good food with friends.

## Reviving Dead Soil

Some of the garden beds in our garden have very gray sandy looking soil. In some of these beds we have scraped off the top and returned it to the compost heap for rejuvenation. I am often asked how to know if the soil in a bed is good.

Firstly, you dig a hole about 200mm square and about 200mm deep and the soil that comes out of the bottom of the hole in the middle is collected and a small handful in a ungloved hand is taken and squeezed into a ball. If the soil doesn't form a ball the soil is too dry. If the soil forms a ball and when the hand is open the soil sticks to your hand, this means the soil is too wet and possibly not enough drainage is happening.

If the soil forms a ball once the hand is opened and the soil doesn't stick to the skin, this is telling us that the soil has the right water content to sustain a plant. This is also fairly consistent with there being the right amount of compost in the soil. Remember soil is a living medium the supplies food and water for your plants to grow. If the soil is too dry compost and well-decomposed manure needs to be added. It is also a good idea to add a worm café to your garden bed.



The worm farm or café above is made from a plastic drainage pipe which could be between 130 to 150mm in diameter and about 400mm in length with a number of 20mm holes drilled into the sides of the tube at random. There is no bottom on the tube and only a cap lid on the top of the tube to keep the rain out. Once the hole is dug in the garden there should be about 100mm of the pipe protruding above the ground. Place about 50 to 75mm of good compost and worms from the garden then place some worm friendly food such as potato, carrot, peel, and apple skins and cores. Don't feed onions to the worms as they don't like them. These worm farms are a great way to introduce a worm population to your garden. It is also a good idea to check the soil Ph and the essential mineral content (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium). If these minerals are in balance the worms, once established, will keep the soil in balance to some extent. You will still need to keep adding compost to your bed to keep the soil alive. Resurrecting dormant soil doesn't happen overnight - it can be a labour of love which can take months to achieve the desired outcome. The important take-away point here is keep feeding the bed with good compost manure and keep feeding the worm café.



## Vegetable of the Month

### Corn

*Zea Mays*



Sweet corn is an annual cereal grass from the Poaceae family. Sweet corn is also known as, corn, Indian corn or maize. Corn was first domesticated in Mexico around 10,000 years ago. The corn we eat today has been developed from the Balsas teosinte, a wild grass. By the time of European settlement in the Americas, corn crops were grown by the American first nation people. The first nation Iroquois people gave corn known as Papoon to the European settlers in 1779. Corn became a popular food source by the early settlers known as Indian corn. Currently corn global production is 1,060,247,727 tonnes per year with the United States and China leading world production. All parts of this tall plant can be utilized - the stalks for livestock fodder, as well as paper and insulation particle board; the cobs and kernels for food and as a great source for alcohol and biofuels. The cob silk can be used in medicinal tea. Corn serves as the foundation for such products as bourbon, corn flour, corn oil, cornmeal, cornstarch, corn syrup, and laundry starch.

Corn is best grown in full sun in a well-drained and well composted soil (with plenty of manure). Corn takes about 120 days from seed to harvest and if grown from seedling around 90 days to harvest.

Growth periods are all governed by soil quality and the amount of water the plant gets. Longer periods of time will be needed if soil is not maintained properly. Fertilise regularly and do not harvest corn cobs for one week after fertilising.

Corn is relatively disease-free – the only problem a gardener may face is ants eating the cobs.

## Recipes of the Month

Sweet corn is great just boiled for five minutes and served with a little bit of salt and butter, but we have added a couple of recipes that are great for Spring.



### Corn & Haloumi Fritters

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup self-raising flour, sifted
- 2 free range eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup chilled soda water
- 100g haloumi, coarsely grated
- 3 spring onions, thinly sliced, plus extra to serve
- 1/4 cup chopped continental parsley leaves
- 2 cups sweet corn kernels
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- Tomato or chilli relish, to serve

#### Directions

Whisk flour, egg, and soda water in a large bowl until smooth and combined. Stand for 10 minutes. Fold in haloumi, onion, parsley, and corn.

Heat oil in a large, deep-frying pan over medium-high heat. Place 4 x 1/4 cups mixture in pan. Cook for 4 minutes on each side or until golden and cooked through. Transfer to a wire rack set over a baking tray. Repeat with remaining batter, adding more oil, if necessary.

Serve fritters with extra spring onion and relish.



## Barbecued Corn and Mint Salad

Source: Hayden Quinn – Australian TV Chef

### Ingredients

2 corn cobs, husks and silks removed  
Olive oil spray  
1 small red onion, thinly sliced  
1 small red capsicum, seeds and white membrane removed, thinly sliced  
1/2 bunch mint, leaves picked

### DRESSING

1/4 cup (60ml) olive oil  
2 tbs red wine vinegar  
1 tbs caster sugar  
2 tsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

### Directions

Preheat a barbecue or chargrill to high. Spray corn cobs with olive oil. Cook corn, turning frequently using long tongs, for 6-8 minutes until lightly charred. Transfer to a plate and set aside to cool.

For the dressing, whisk all the ingredients in a small bowl, then season.

Remove corn kernels from each cob by standing it upright on a board and cutting downwards along the cob with a sharp knife. Transfer corn to a large bowl with the onion, capsicum, and mint leaves. Add the dressing and toss to combine.

Nice with barbecued chicken or fish.