



## SA Community Gardening Network Gathers...

Community Gardeners, people wanting to start or get involved with community gardens, and curious friends will come together again for the SA Community Gardening Network's Gathering on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The Gathering will be part of the Autumn Festival at the Flinders University Community Garden.

Over the past 5 years, students, former students, and staff members have transformed a windy, sloping section of the Flinders University campus into a productive and beautiful permaculture system. The garden has raised beds, abundant with vegetables and herbs, surrounded by plantings of native species and fruit trees on a swaled slope. The garden has become a source of food, a retreat, a hub for the campus environment group, and a convivial meeting place for students and local community members.

The garden has regular workshops, celebrations and working bees, and is about to commence its first Introduction to Permaculture course.

The SA Community Garden Network Gathering and the Autumn Festival will be an opportunity to meet the people who have started and developed the garden, hear about what they've learnt in the process, take part in a guided tour, and join in a bit of the everyday life of the garden.



The Network Gathering, at 3pm, will include news and updates from community gardens around SA (please let us know what's happening in your garden, even if you can't come along!) and updates from the recent national community gardening conference, which was held in Adelaide in March, and the Learning in the Garden Seminar, which brought together people interested in growing food together in schools. We'll be launching a major national survey of community gardens, which will give us a rich picture of where all the community gardens in Australia are, and what they're up to. And we'll plan future SA network gatherings, events, and whatever else people would like to do to make the network zing!

## **Mini-grants for SA Community Gardens**

People travelling from interstate to the national community gardening conference in Adelaide have contributed to a pool of funds to help offset the environmental costs of their travel.

Community gardens are invited to apply for small grants of between \$50 – \$150 for projects that will help sequester some of the carbon generated by the conference. Conference organisers, CERES SA have 3 – 5 mini-grants to award.

Projects could include planting trees and other perennials, improving the carbon absorbing capacity of soils through composting and encouraging microbial activity, or growing trees to be planted by farmers or local community members.

Preference will be given to projects that have the most significant carbon reduction effects – a garden wishing to plant 50 trees and shrubs will be more likely to succeed than one wishing to plant one fabulous rare quince tree.

To apply, send an email or letter to CERES SA including:

- the name of your community garden
- a contact person's name, postal address, phone number, and email address

- a sentence or two about a project you'd like to undertake which will help offset the carbon use of the conference
- how much it will cost in total and how much you're applying for.

Send your application to [ceres.sa@gmail.com](mailto:ceres.sa@gmail.com) or PO Box 108 Unley, Tandanya Bioregion, SA 5061

Applications close April 28<sup>th</sup> 2006. Successful applicants will receive their grant in early May 2006.

## **SA Community Gardens Pamphlet**

The ever-popular directory of community gardens in SA has just been through a complete overhaul, with new gardens added, contact details updated, and gardens who prefer to not to be promoted removed. The pamphlet now also includes more information and contacts for people thinking about starting a community garden, including how to access the SA Community Gardening Network's Register of Interest. Copies of the pamphlet will be available at the Gathering in April, and will also be downloadable from the Australian Community Gardening Website (see below). If you'd like an electronic (pdf) version of the pamphlet sent to you directly, please email [claire.fulton@spiral@senet.com.au](mailto:claire.fulton@spiral@senet.com.au).

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## **Australian Community Gardening Website**

The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network's website ([www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)) is a fantastic source of news, ideas and information about community gardens.

The website has received more visitors lately, judging by the statistics available. Visitation peaked in February 2006 and there is a noticeable peak following emails sent out to the national discussion list that refer to the website. People around the country are starting to contribute material and we are always interested in stories about your garden, your gardeners, what you grow, what you do in the garden as well as any research or academic papers you produce (researchers and students refer to those). Tertiary students are one group that we hear from through the year, usually with a long questionnaire in hand.

The website is also the first point of contact for journalists researching stories on community gardens and for most people who subsequently make contact with the SA and national community garden networks.

There is some SA content on the website, including our newsletters and SA Community Gardens Directory pamphlet, and there is room for more! If you'd like to share photos, stories, or news from your garden, or to use the website to promote upcoming events or ask for assistance, send your material to our web weaver, Russ Grayson at [info@pacific-edge.info](mailto:info@pacific-edge.info) or to claire at [spiral@senet.com.au](mailto:spiral@senet.com.au).

## **Community Gardens: An idea spreads**

by Russ Grayson, Australian City Farms and  
Community Gardens Network

Travelling interstate over the past year, I was amazed at how the idea of community food gardens has caught on. It was only a decade ago that they started a rapid rise in number in NSW, though the first in this state dates back to 1986 (Glovers Community Garden, Rozelle) and, in Victoria, to 1977 (Nunuwading Community Garden). It's good to see Glovers undergoing a revival, too – they have even installed a set of chooks. With their beehive, that's quite an increase in livestock. Look for the story of Glovers in the ABC Organic Gardener magazine.

Now, some community gardens, or 'city farms' as they sometimes call themselves (the difference seems to be a bit vague but is probably related to size) have become the main focus of community-based sustainability education and a number are used by local government sustainability educators as training venues. I have in mind places like Northey Street City farm in Brisbane, where you can do anything from short courses of a few hours to an accredited permaculture design course. There are others – Gravell Hill Community Garden in Bendigo, CERES in East Brunswick and so on.

Importantly, these gardens are also becoming centres of local culture, with celebration, food and festivals. Although the gardeners retain a regional, even an international outlook, the gardens are part of the 'new localism' that focuses on what we can do where we live, be that producing or purchasing locally-grown food, meeting our neighbours in our local community garden (whether they garden or not), highlighting local musicians, artists and writers rather than self-important and overpaid celebrities, getting to know the local ecologies and improving them, and understanding that it is we ordinary neighbourhood people who build local culture, not government, corporations or official arts bodies.

Also encouraging has been the way a few community gardeners have taken on a role of outreach to newer gardens to assist and advise them. Sydney's Eastern Suburbs Community Garden crew, for instance.

Most of us know about the enlightened move by Victoria's Department of Human Services in contracting the community-based organisation, Cultivating Community, to assist community gardens on the Department's housing estates. Thanks go to Basil Natoli, now part-time with the Department and a pioneer of gardening the housing estates of Melbourne, and to Ben Neil, who heads Cultivating Community and to his capable crew, Peta, Heidi, Tom, Ailsa, Andrew, Megan, Robin and others, who make things happen.

### **Into the schools**

The time for food gardens in schools and their linking to curricula seems to have come. It's been going on for some time and was accelerated by Carolyn Nuttall and Robina McCurdy and her acolytes like Salli Ramsden and Jacqui Hunter from hunter gatherer designs in SA, and others whose names I don't remember.

Linking gardens to curricula is a process requiring knowledge of teaching and how curricula work and it is somewhat time-consuming, however it is starting to happen. The Learning in the Garden Seminar in Adelaide was the latest event furthering the development of gardens in schools.

### **And to councils**

This has been long coming, too, but now local government is interested in community gardening. I know of the work of council staff in Sydney, mostly, because my partner, Fiona, works as a local government sustainability educator for an eastern suburbs beachside council and is devising education programs not only in community gardens and the council library in the municipality but with local schools as well to improve their resource use performance and to engage the students and staff in sustainability education. You can read about Wollongong City Council sustainability educator, Vanessa John, and her role in starting a local food alliance in the Illawarra in Community Harvest.

### **Help build our future**

So, there is reason for hope in this chaotic world of ours. It is the hope that we all build through our contribution to the greater good, however modest that contribution is, and whether we make it through participation in community gardens, community education or through our livelihoods. Let's keep it going.

## Seedy Sunday

SA Seed Savers and Salisbury LETS will present 'Seedy Sunday' on Sunday 9 April 2006.

The Autumn Seedy Sunday has a focus on picking and drying pistachios. It's also an opportunity to visit two productive properties and to swap and share seeds and cuttings of edible plant varieties.

**11.00 am:** Garden Visit, 23 Theodore Street, Evanston Park (cnr. Theodore & Russell). Find out how Julie converted a typical ornamental backyard into a productive permaculture garden.

**12.30 pm:** Shared Lunch and seed/plant sharing at Anne's Property, 2 Boundary Road, Lewiston (river end).

**1.30 pm:** What's happening with Seed Saving in SA? Join in on a discussion about the latest news and events.

**2.00 pm:** Pistachio drying workshop, pistachio picking, and property Tour. Anne has a pistachio orchard and lots of experience drying and preparing pistachios. Bring along some gloves and a bucket to collect pistachios – leave some for Anne and take a few handfuls home for yourself.

Seedy Sunday is open to everyone – no need to book. Come to all or part of the day! Bring seeds/cuttings/bulbs/plants of edible or companion varieties to share, a chair, and some lunch to share too! Cost: gold coin.

For more information, contact Allison on [jamiller@airnet.com.au](mailto:jamiller@airnet.com.au) or 8359 6781 or 0400 732 270

## Community Gardening on the Pod...

For those of you with access to online 'pod casts', here are a couple of stories you might like to download.

A November 2005 edition of 'Take Time' on PBA FM was entirely devoted to community gardens. Much of the program was recorded at the SA Community Gardening Network's last Gathering, at Duck Flat Community Garden last October. The program includes interviews with Tess Minett, co-ordinator of Duck Flat and visitors

from other SA community gardens. It also features Rosemary Neal, Executive Officer of the SA Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, speaking about the importance of the community gardening movement across South Australia. The health and wellbeing benefits of community gardening are a focus of the program.

The whole program is available online as an mp3 audio file. Go to [www.pbafm.org.au](http://www.pbafm.org.au) and follow the link to Take Time.

Also on the internet, a recent talk by Helena Norberg-Hodge at CERES in Melbourne about the importance of local food systems and economies.

Helena is a recipient of the Right Livelihood Award or Alternative Nobel Prize, the founder and director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture ([www.isec.org.uk](http://www.isec.org.uk)), co-founder of the Global Eco-village and author of numerous works, including the inspirational classic, *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, which together with an award-winning film of the same title has been translated into more than 30 languages.

Renowned for groundbreaking work in sustainable development, Helena Norberg-Hodge's ISEC network runs programs on four continents aimed at strengthening ecological diversity and community, with a particular emphasis on local food and farming. Helena's latest book is *Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness*.

You can listen to the talk at <http://members.dodo.com.au/~hlobato/localisation.mp3>

## How you can contribute to this newsletter

This SA Community Gardening Network Newsletter comes out about twice a year, in the lead up to network gatherings. If your garden has a story to tell, an event to promote, an idea to share, a question to ask, photos, designs... anything really... we'd love to include it in the newsletter. Send articles, items, pictures, photos etc to [spiral@senet.com.au](mailto:spiral@senet.com.au) or to Claire Fulton, SA Community Gardening Network, PO Box 108 Unley, Tandanya Bioregion, SA 5061.