

N2021 AGM 2012 Community Garden and Produce Exchange Report

The Community Garden has had another busy, successful year and continues to develop. More plots have been established both in-ground and as raised beds, espalier frames constructed and a drip watering system installed for berries and fruit trees along the fence lines. Although badly in need of rain the garden continues to produce and this year we have had delicious peaches and nectarines from the maturing trees.

There are currently 38 members (ploholders and diggers).

Projects/grants that have been completed since last AGM:

With combined funds from **MAS 2011 Community Grant, Regional Arts Fund** and **Newstead & District Swimming Pool**, a donation of tiles from Bunnings and assistance from the Men's Shed, we now have a central arbour, a pizza oven with two mosaic-topped benches and two picnic table sets. Diane Thompson led gardeners to do the mosaic and local artists worked with Neil Tait to design the arbour & benches.

A grant from the **Community Enterprise Foundation** (Maldon & District Community Grants) funded the purchase and installation of six raised garden beds. Gravel paths were also installed around the wheelchair accessible beds and pizza oven/picnic area.

Grant projects currently underway:

Newstead RTC – Supports for berries and grapes, bird netting and some basic hand tools.

Volunteers Grant (Dept of FHCS&IA) – larger tools, watering equipment, shelving, mower, shade structure.

MASC 2012 Community Grant – signage, noticeboards, tree maintenance/safety arborist work.

The garden also benefited from Newstead Primary School's participation in the **Kids Thrive (Philanthropy in Schools)** project. Students obtained funds to help convert old table frames into hothouse racks.

Workshops held:

Simon Rickard - fruit trees; **Penny Woodward** – pest repellent planting and alliums; **Biodynamic Compost** making - as part of MAS International Compost Week; **Seedy Sunday** – seed saving swap & propagating

Events:

Shared Table fundraising dinner; Castlemaine Children's Literature Festival – Bugs, Grubs & Garden Gremlins; Castlemaine & District Festival of Gardens – open garden; 2nd Birthday Lunch & plot renewal; Celebration with Anglican

Church – service in the garden; End of year & ‘new mayor’ celebration; Newstead Live Market Day & garlic stall.

Visits/Presentations:

The Community Garden is developing a reputation in the wider community and is often approached for advice, to give presentations &/or to host visits.

There have been visits from: Maryborough Garden Club; Castlemaine Permaculture Course x 3; Broadford Community; Castlemaine Garden Club; Regional Carers Week Conference; Heathcote Community Group; Daisy Hill Garden Group; Bright Garden Club; East Wimmera Community Gardens & Kitchens and His Excellency the Governor and Mrs. Chernov.

Relationships are being established with local organisations to enable co-operation towards shared aims – Loddon prison, Growing Abundance, MAS Healthy Communities, MASG Hub plot, Newstead Primary School.

Produce Exchange

The monthly produce exchange is now a firm fixture on Newstead’s calendar, attracting many from the local community as well as visitors to town. It is a hub for the exchange not only of produce but information, ideas and social support. It deserves much more recognition than these few lines. Special thanks to Liz Bell at the Red Store.

Blog: <http://newsteadgarden.wordpress.com/>

Janet Barker is to be congratulated for her work maintaining the garden blog that is such a great resource. Its quality is remarkable and appreciated by gardeners & communities near and far.

Coming Up:

Thursday 28th Feb - Chook Keeping workshop (byo picnic)

Sat 23rd March - fundraising Moroccan dinner

Sat 20th April - presentation to Sustainable Gardening Australia network of community gardens in bushfire affected communities.

Whew ...then there’s gardening!

Mary Park 25/02/2013