

BLUE MOUNTAINS PERMACULTURE NETWORK

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NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2005

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Hello

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter. I am feeling very hopeful re the future of the permaculture movement and the importance of permaculture for our future following my week at the Australian Permaculture Convergence in Melbourne.

I met many interesting committed people of all ages and from all part of Australia who are working in a wide variety of ways to care for the earth, to care for people and to distribute the surplus.

Pat
BMPN

WHAT'S ON?

- 1st Saturday of month
3rd Friday of month
Katoomba Community Garden 10 00- 2.00
9.00 - 2.00
Contact Derek Pracy 0405 249528
- Saturday 7 May
Open Garden at Blackheath Community Garden from 9.00 to 1.00
Info. Suzanne 4787 5229 or BANC 4787 7770, Bec 4787 8482
- Saturday 7 May
Cake stall fund raising for Mid Mountains Seedsavers
9.30 - 12.30 or when cakes run out. outside Hazelbrook Post Office.
Come and buy a cake
- Friday 20 May
Green Drinks Gardeners Inn Blackheath 5pm
Contact David Alder s-dalder@bigpond.com
- Saturday 21 May
Henry Doubleday Research Association of Australia Inc celebrates
35 years of organic gardening
10 - 4.00 Hawkesbury Earthcare Centre
www.hdra.asn.au
- Saturday 4 June
Hawkesbury Earthcare Centre: Open Days
12.00-5.00 Cnr Campus Dr & Science Rd
University of Western Sydney
Hawkesbury Campus
Richmond NSW 2753
PO Box 15, Richmond, 2753
www.earthcare.org.au
- 1st Saturday of every month
- Sunday 3 July
Mid-Mountain Seedsavers 2783 Meeting
Bullaburra Progress Association Hall, crn Noble St and Gr Western Highway, Bullaburra 10.00 - 12.00 Bring a plate to share
Contact 4759 2118 or mcrun@hermes.net.au to indicate numbers.
- Sunday Gathering
Winmalee Neighbourhood Garden from 4.00 - 6.
Contact Mark Lutherborrow 0418 694969 or 4754 1055

- June 20 - 26 Earth Festival A week to celebrate together; the Earth and the human solidarity between the nations
Contact Paul on 4787 5850 or earthfestival@geenii.net
- 17 - 19 June The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network
Second Annual Conference
Coolum Beach Sunshine Coast Queensland
Enquiries (07) 5474 5892 email northey@bigpond.net.au
- 31 July Planet Ark National Tree Day www.planetark.com

THE 8TH AUSTRALIAN PERMACULTURE CONVERGENCE (APC8)

I have just returned from an overwhelming, fun, inspiring and incredibly informative and exhausting week at APC8 in Melbourne. To save you from any more superlatives I'll focus briefly on the highlights for me and refer you to sites for more detailed information.

The Convergence opened with a public lecture by David Holgren *Global Energy Peak: Threat or Opportunity*. David spoke to 350 people in a 300 seat lecture theatre on a Friday night in the centre of Melbourne. David's thesis is that we are facing a global peak in the production of high quality fossil fuels which is "causing shock waves through the world economy and reshaping geopolitics". This event will set off a "cascade of environmental, economic, political and cultural changes for which society is not prepared."

His presentation demonstrated how permaculture could respond to the energy crisis.

Opportunities for permaculture include:

Rises in oil prices will flow through to all commodities (metals, timber, food, etc)

Higher commodity prices will;

make local products more competitive than imported ones

stimulate self-reliance, repair, retrofit and recycling

low input and organic farming will compete against intensive land uses

Demand for permaculture life skills education

Resurgence of community life, ethics and values.

(Global Energy Peak: Threat or Opportunity, Melbourne APC8: p.20)

The graphics which accompanied the presentation are available on www.holgren.com.au

It is a file of 318mb however.

Sunday at the Edmund Rice Centre Amberley "Permaculture people Tell Their Stories"

Twenty five people from a diverse range of backgrounds spoke of their journey into permaculture and/or their current projects. Topics were broad ranging such as:
a City Farm in Brisbane,

Tukkadjungul, a 40 acre central Victorian farm designed to provide the inhabitants with some self sufficiency as well as a demonstration farm promoting permaculture principles.

Environmental sustainability and an European Union Irrigation Project in North Bali

Permaculture principles in inner Melbourne from a young woman who writes a monthly column "Permaculture Slow Life" in a Japanese newspaper

Living together in permaculture at Carters Rd community, near Margret River WA

From Pesticides to permaculture - journey of an Agricultural Scientist

Creating a community garden with young offenders in Wollongong.

Symposium Permaculture: Creating Pathways to Sustainability

Stuart Hill, Professor of Social Ecology, University of Western Sydney was the keynote speaker, Sustainable living through Permaculture: A Social Ecology Perspective. Stuart roamed through 40 years of experience with examples and stories from around the world to develop his thesis that sustainable living requires appropriate design and management of all human systems, in ways that are compatible with, and supportive of, all other natural systems. He explained that permaculture "comprises praxis (evolving, integrated theory and practice) that can effectively enable such sustainable living."

The keynote response was given by Morag Gamble from SEED International and Crystal Waters. Morag's talk, Permaculture: Cultivating a Sustainable Future, looked at practical and potential applications of permaculture design. Morag drew on a number of international projects on which she had worked.

The rest of the day was spent trying to decide which speakers in the two parallel strands I would miss. Again we were faced with deciding how to hear everyone. I opted for listening to Graham and Annemarie Brookman from The Food Forest in Gawler, South Australia. (Check their website: www.users.bigpond.com/brookman), Ross Mars from West Australia on Greywater Resuse options, and Geoff Lawton on his work in Iraq with the UN on setting up a sustainable village and missing land mines.

The talks from APC8 will be available on CD. I'm most happy to forward more information as it comes available.

The week went on with discussion on Accredited training, a Conference dinner and for me 2 days visiting 5 properties in Central Victoria. The talks were most stimulating, the people very friendly, I did not know any one when I arrived and the conversation with other participants was interesting, challenging and most enjoyable. It was great to meet and talk with those who write the books and articles, write to the permaculture list and generally seem famous in the world of Australian permaculture. The organisers are to be congratulated on a terrific job.

HOUSE WATER EXPERT

by Pat Rayner

At the Sydney ATA (Alternative Technology Association) seminar Cost Effective Water Conservation Jane Blackmore from CSIRO Urban Water gave a presentation on prototype software House Water Expert which allows you to assess your household water consumption, wastewater discharge, storm water run-off and investigate various water saving devices.

The software which is available as a CD ROM has been designed for individual urban households. It allows you to specify the design of your home and input details of how you use water, such as:

How long each member spends in the shower

How frequently you water the garden

The efficiency ratings of your various water appliances.

The software then estimates the volume of mains water you use, and the volumes of stormwater runoff and wastewater discharge. At the moment the software doesn't allow for storage of greywater. Research is continuing into this.

You can estimate the impact of various water saving options on your water consumption.

I have a copy of the CD ROM and found it quite entertaining to use. You can put in information for your existing house, see the water usage and then nominate improvements to see the difference. The software asks you to nominate the ratings of your devices but has an option for older devices which do not have ratings, leaking taps are taken into account. The rainfall of your region is an average value, so I had to click on Sydney. The savings nominated are not in dollar terms.

There are three games included.

While this is a prototype it could be useful to anyone refitting their house, wanting to change their water use behaviour and in learning situations.

The CSIRO are wanting feedback on the software. For a free copy of House Water Expert contact Andrew.Grant@CSIRO.au or Jane.Blackmore@CSIRO.au

COMMUNITY UPDATES

BLACKHEATH COMMUNITY GARDEN

by Suzanne Reaney

promoting an ecologically sustainable environment for the whole community

located in Whitley Park cnr Great Western Highway & Prince George Street Blackheath

Our parents and pre-schoolers group were excited winners of the new Scarecrow Section at the Flower & Craft Show in February and our entry, 'Jemima', has been on display in the Vegie Patch's window since March. The group meets most Monday mornings from 9.30.....ring Bec to check.

Most winter seeds and seedlings are now planted so we're turning our thoughts to a winter project. Why not come along and share your thoughts or just have a look and a chat at our next 'Open Garden' on Saturday, May 7, 05 from 9am - 1pm.

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of the garden, please either visit or give us a call. There's plenty to do so come and join us. Many hands make light work.....you know it's true!

For info: Pop in or call BANC on 4787 7770, Bec on 4787 8482 or Suzanne on 4787 5229

Blackheath Community Garden is a project of BANC

KATOOMBA COMMUNITY GARDEN

New members most welcome.

Activities 1st Saturday of the month 10 - 2.00
 3rd Friday of month 9 - 2.00

Contact Derek Pracy -0405 249528

WINMALEE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE GARDEN GROUP

by Mark Lutherborrow

Our next meeting will be on Sunday Feb 13th from 4 pm to 6pm we are planning a big day and all are welcome to participate in Scarecrow making, no dig garden bed construction, planting, weeding, harvesting, watering etc etc. Should be fun. Call Mark Lutherborrow 0418694969 or 47541055 for more info.

MID MOUNTAINS SEED SAVERS - 2783

Our last meeting on April 10 was great in our lovely new space - with lots of table space, a lovely old kitchen, mirrors, ballet rails and the picture of the Queen looking down approvingly on us. Reminded us that what we are doing is not new, but very, very old. Seeds grown by members this

season in mid mountains gardens and 'deposited' in the bank for 'loan' to other members to grow next year were:

peas - edible, purple flower	capsicum
tomato - tommy toe, tigerella, reisentraupe	black garlic
sunflowers - evening sunset, giant russian, lemon	
chicory	coriander

Coming at the next meeting:

chilies	potatoes
jerusalem artichoke	beans
lettuce	cucumber, apple & yellow

Currently available in the seedbank:

Lettuce (perpetual, curly leaf) parsnip (hollow crown - 70 yrs+ in lawson!!),
Aust yellow leaf lettuce, dill
plus lots more.....

More reports, news and seed banking at next meeting"

Please contact Loret or John on 4759 2118 or email mcrun@hermes.net.au

TABLELANDS ORGANIC FOOD GROUP

This group is in recess over winter and will regroup in Spring
Contact David Alder 02 6359 3175 email bslr@bigpond.com

SUSTAINABLE WORK AND HOUSING

Want Work and Housing in a Community Garden?

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Hello again from CHEC (Community, Housing, Employment and Cooperation)

We have a new address and phone number!

We are now at 3/15 Hope Street Blaxland NSW 2774 and our new phone number is (02) 4739 9965.

If we have not been in touch for a while, you may also need to change your records for our email address to chec@iprimus.com

Brief CHEC update below

Drawing on the expertise and experience of communities, cooperatives and business managers, CHEC has been developing programs and systems for community food gardens, community housing and productive neighbourhood programs.

We are now exchanging ideas with other community groups and have been operating as consultants for the last 6 months.

At our new Hope Street address (what a wonderful address for a project like ours!) three CHEC households are now secure in Department of Housing homes. Here we will have a chance to show how a well-organised project like CHEC can open up bright new cooperative opportunities! (see our new home page at home.iprimus.com.au/chec)

Stay in touch ... we should all be able to live in a Hope Street!

CHEC - Community, Housing, Employment and Cooperation

(02) 4739 9965

chec@iprimus.com.au

home.iprimus.com.au/chec

HAWKESBURY EARTHCARE CENTRE

by Tom Mellor

The Hawkesbury Earthcare Centre is an environmental educational centre situated in the grounds of the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury Campus.

The University is organising the Hawkesbury Community Expo, education for schools in sustainability and environmental management on 16 September.

The date of our Sustainability Fair is 17 September. Community and environmental groups are invited to have a stall at our fair. Charges are by donation and \$50 or \$100 for business or government groups to have a stall.

Coming events at EarthCare:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Saturday 21 May | Henry Doubleday Research Association 35 Years Celebration
www.hdra.asn.au
Stalls, Guest speakers, Cake cutting, Tree planting Face painting and Produce |
| Sunday 3 July | Planet Ark National Tree Day www.planetark.com |
| 11 September | Solar House Day - www.solarhouseday.com |

Saturday 17 September Earthcare Centre Sustainability Fair www.earthcare.org.au

For more information about the centre, any of the groups or our events contact:

Eric Brocken: ph 4567 8424 - mob 0438 731 712 - email eric@earthcare.org.au

Tom Mellor: ph 9332 4215 - mob 0419 416 551 - email info@earthcare.org.au

Also visit our web site: www.earthcare.org.au

TRUNCHEONS

An easy way to propagate deciduous or evergreen fruit trees

by Brian Coates

A traditional method of plant propagation is the taking of 0.5-1.0m cuttings (truncheons) in winter and burying them in a mound of soil (overwintering) until shoots appear in spring - summer. This is an 'out of sight, out of mind' method whereby the only requirements are to ensure that the soil is kept moist and free of weeds.

- Choose a sunny well protected area.
- Prepare a mounded bed mixed with fine bark and coarse sand.
- Cuttings are best taken from mid June to mid July, 0.5-1m in length, 0.5-1cm thick with several nodes. The cutting needs to be 2nd to 3rd year old wood - thus thick enough so as to enough carbohydrate reserve to sustain it over winter.
- Wound each cutting at the nodes
- Apply some rooting hormone
- Bury them 10-20cm deep in the mounded bed.

The cuttings should shoot by late spring/ summer and the following winter during dormancy the cuttings are dug up and separated by cutting them from the truncheon and potting them up.

This method has high success rate because:

The cuttings are deprived of light (etiolation) which stimulates adventitious root formation in difficult to root species.

The cuttings are 'overwintered' in mulched, moist soil which keeps them at an even temperature

This method is successful for fig, mulberry, grape, quince, pomegranate and the notoriously difficult to strike, olive.

PEST REPORT

MY DOG HAS FLEAS

by Sue Girard

Sounds like a good title for a children's book !

But sadly for our dog, she does have fleas and although in Australia fleas are not considered a hygiene pest management problem, 1000's of people die world wide each year from flea related illnesses. Only the mosquito is more lethal. Both the dog and I are more distressed by the biting feeding habit of the pests rather than acknowledging diseases such as bubonic plague (Black Death), typhus, tapeworms, tularaemia and allergic reactions.

To understand fleas you need to consider how they develop. They undergo what is called complete metamorphosis starting life as an egg and growing into a larval grub, and later pupating before turning into an adult. A female can lay around 600 eggs each month, depending on the availability of food and shelter. Fleas like a temperature range of 15-30° C and because eggs don't hatch below 5° C, in the Mountains (before global warming) the cycle was more often than not broken throughout winter.

The larvae live in cracks and crevices and sandy areas for between 9-200 days from hatching eating organic debris such as old skin and dried blood. We are not often aware of this stage nor the next when they pupate in their cocoons. The real secret to a flea's survival is that they can stay dormant at this stage for anything from 7-400 days, waiting for the right temperature, concentrations of carbon dioxide and vibrations which indicate the availability of a blood meal.

You don't need to have a domestic animal in your house or garden to suddenly find that you have fleas. They could have been brought in by a passing possum or a stray cat or rodent visiting your roof or subfloor. In all things prevention is better than cure. In days gone by in Scotland, the people would send a few sheep through a vacant house a few days before they entered themselves. Not so practical here in the Mountains. So what to do to be organic?

Firstly close in your subfloor areas to prevent animals from access to under the house. Check any cracks and crevices around doors and windows that may allow entry into the house or garden shed. Be aware of any loose roof tiles or faulty guttering that may allow entry into your roof void. Keep your grass mown short.

If you find you have a problem, hose down the yard especially sandy areas and sprinkle with natural pyrethrum. Or you can try a 'wormwood' herbal spray. For this you need 4 cups of chopped leaves (you will need a good armful to get this much). Cover in boiling water and leave for 4 hours to infuse. Strain and dilute to 1 part wormwood tea to 4 parts water. Spray immediately. It is important to cover any fish pond or bird cages even when using organic products. Natural pyrethrum will kill fish and frogs even though it is considered non toxic to mammals. And it will also kill bees, so it's best to spray at dusk.

If you do have a pet, fresh pine needles are considered a useful repellent in bedding. If you have a dog you might try washing their bedding in pennyroyal oil; but be aware this is toxic to cats and therefore not suitable for your feline.

My brother-in-law swore by brewers yeast in pet food about 1 to 2 teaspoons per day. Garlic is also said to help, but should not be given on a daily basis as it may cause anaemia.

Inside the house you should vacuum regularly especially behind doors and under chairs. Don't wait until the bag is full. Destroy the dust as soon as possible. Now days carpet manufacturers recommend that you have your carpet steam cleaned 6 monthly. If you do get a flea problem inside borax can be sprinkled onto carpet and left for 24 hours before vacuuming.

Cushions and rugs can be placed in a black plastic bag and left in the sun for a day.

Hard floor surfaces such as lino should be mopped with 1 cup of white vinegar to a bucket of hot water.

Wooden floors can be oiled with a mixture of pennyroyal oil steeped in sunflower oil which has been left for 6 weeks, shaken regularly.

The list can go on and on, diligence is the key.

* A word of warning. If you do become desperate many flea collars contain nerve poisons and may cause noticeable irritability in your pet. If you apply a dusting preparation whilst your pet is wearing a flea collar you may be causing an overdose

FEEDBACK

WEBSITES

ODDS & SODS

- **New books**

Lawns into Lunch by Jill Finnane tells stories, with beautiful pictures of city gardeners who have taken permaculture ideas and applied them in their own way and in their own situations.

Re release of Smart Permaculture Design by Jenny Allen, published by New Holland. This is the coffee table book on permaculture, with beautiful pictures, lyrical writing but at the same time very practical.

'Meliodora' A case study in cool climate permaculture 1985 - 2005 now on CD ROM as an eBook. By David Holgren.

Membership Due

Permaculture International Limited PIL membership is now due.

You are invited to join/rejoin PIL to participate in building a stronger network of people who care for the earth and care for each other.

PIL

PO Box 219 NIMBIN NSW 2480

WINTER NEWSLETTER

Contributions for the Winter Newsletter by Friday 8 July PLEASE.

To **unsubscribe** please reply with subject 'Unsubscribe'.

Disclaimer: The Editor cannot be held accountable for any content but has endeavoured to check all she can.