

BLUE MOUNTAINS PERMACULTURE NETWORK

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NEWSLETTER WINTER 2006

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Hello

A lot has been happening - , Rowe with friends ran a most successful PDC in Blackheath with 12 very enthusiastic participants. (see pictures). The group came from Sydney, the mountains and one from Woodstock (near Cowra) and are now keen to applied what they learnt (see Working bee).

I am currently in Hobart to help my Mother move into a nursing home. I have been warmly welcomed to activities run by the newly formed Permaculture Association of Tasmania Inc. (PAT Inc)

This group seems to have developed after most members completed a PDC last year run by Naomi and Rick Colman. As the place where permaculture was born it is fitting that such a vibrant friendly group has picked up the baton and are really keen to practice and promote permaculture. See website www.permaculturetas.org

PAT Inc is a co organiser of a lecture series in September on **Peak Oil and Permaculture** with keynote speakers **Richard Heinberg** and **David Homgren**.

Again thank you to our generous contributors. John McNaull has provided an easy to follow description of his grey water system.

Note also the Eco events in Blackheath and Ranwick on Sunday 4 June - sited to be accessible to all from Bathurst to the sea.

All the best

Pat
BMPN

WHAT'S ON?

- Mid-Mountain Seedsavers 2783 Meeting 6**
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 4 June **A Mini Eco Expo & the Launch of 101 things to do in Blackheath**
Blackheath: cool & green & doing what it can to address global warming
Blackheath Community Hall, Great Western Highway Blackheath
Sunday 4th June from 10am to 3pm (launch of 101 Things to Do in Blackheath at 10.30am)
Information contact BANC on 4787 7770 or Lis on 4787 7533
- Sunday 25 June **Working Bee** at Celeste Salter's place
48 Derain Cres. Hazelbrook., 10:30 until 12:30 and lunch,
RSVP: cjsalter@austarnet.com.au by 24th June.
- Sunday 25 June **Leadership Forums** for Making Australia a World Leader in
Sunday 30 July Ecological Sustainability and Social Wellbeing. Katoomba.
Contact Andrew Gaines 4782 2004
<http://www.futuresfoundation.org.au/>.
- June 19th to 25th **Earth Festival,**
TERRALLIANCE, a French NGO, initiated the concept and now organise the Earth Worldwide Festival annually, a festival to engender global spirit of interconnectedness.
Local partner coordinating local activities is Paul Payten
www.earthfestival.geeni.net
- . Sunday 4 June **Randwick Ecoliving Fair** The ECOLIVING FAIR 2006 will highlight the community-based approach to sustainable suburbs. The fair commemorates international World Environment Day.
10:30am to 3:30pm, At the new Randwick Community Centre, 23 Munda Street, Randwick
- Friday Jun 9th - **National Greenbuild & Eco Show Exhibition & Conference,**
Sunday 11th June an environmentally focused trade and consumer event.
Rosehill Gardens Exhibition Centre

1st & 2nd September

The Permaculture Association of Tasmania has joined forces with the Richard Jones Memorial Committee and Sustainable Living Tasmania - to bring you, the "Richard Jones Memorial Lecture Series" - UTas. Stanley Burbury Theatre, The palpable topic[s] this year are **Peak Oil & Permaculture**. and of course >>>

Keynote Speakers

- Richard Heinberg (Peak Oil) www.museletter.com Author of *The Party's Over: Energy Resources and the Fate of Industrial Societies*.

Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World.

- David Holmgren (needs no intro)

MY MODEST GREY-WATER SYSTEM

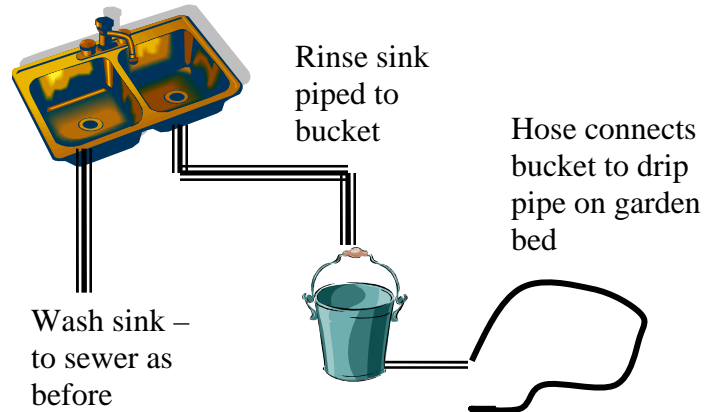
by John McNaull

OK, so its low technology, but it works and I'm proud of it! It re-uses up to 40litres of water a day, keeps a worm farm ticking over, grows mulch and waters a large vegetable bed. And it's self regulating, low maintenance, and dare I say, reasonably presentable.

But it wasn't always that way... I offer "The Short History Of My Grey Water System" in the hope that it might be of use to someone, or even better, someone may be able to suggest an improvement!

My starting point was a dual-tub kitchen sink. Our kitchen habit is to use the larger sink for washing (hot soapy/greasy water) and the smaller tub for rinsing and washing vegetables (mostly clean, cold water). They had separate plug-holes but joined together underneath the sink to take the waste-water away to the sewer. For the first (and definitely not the last) time I thought "There must be a better way".. I might also add that I had the benefit of having my kitchen above the level of my garden (thus permitting gravity to do the work of shifting the water to where it was needed), and easy underfloor access to change pipe-work around. I set myself the task of using this ready supply of relatively clean and cold water for the garden.

Grey-water system Mark 1 - I separated the drain-pipe of the small rinse sink from the main sink and let it empty into a bucket. A length of garden hose then carried the water to the garden bed where it dripped from holes periodically drilled into the hose. My reasoning was that this would allow any solids from the sink to fall to the bottom, preventing them from clogging up the hose-pipe. Unfortunately the residue in the water encouraged mould to form quickly in the bucket which clogged the hose-pipe. Added to that, emptying the residue from the bottom of the bucket was a fairly unpleasant task (to say the least). I said again "There has to be a better way"

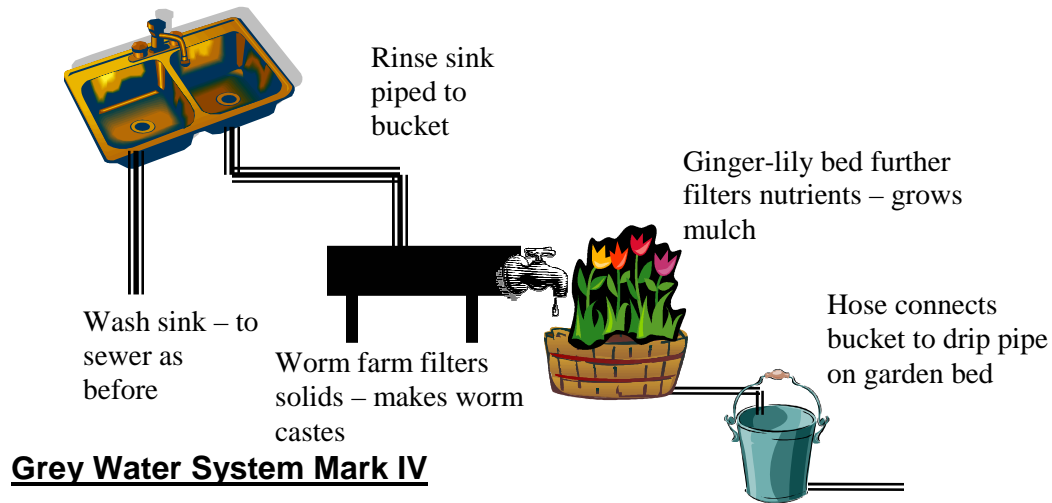


Grey Water System Mark 1

Grey-Water system Mark II. I modified Mark 1 by adding a garden sieve filled with gravel to sit on top of the bucket and catch any solids coming from the rinse-sink. This, I reasoned, would reduce the solids accumulating in the bucket and stop the mould growing. I also upgraded the drip pipe section of the system. Previously I had used old hose-pipe with holes drilled in it; this I now replaced with 19mm irrigation pipe, again with holes drilled (approx 5mm) into it. This I reasoned, would be less likely to clog. Unfortunately, Mark II lasted for a shorter time than Mark 1 - the gravel quickly became clogged with debris and turned out to be very difficult to clean. Added to this, the fact that the bucket was now enclosed meant that the anaerobic bacteria had an even better time with the nutrient laden water than before. The mould growing on the inside of the bucket now was something from the special effects department of a horror film! This was a grey-water system which could give grey-water systems a bad name!! I said again "There has to be a better way"

Grey-Water system Mark III. Going back to Permaculture basics I imagined Bill Mollison lecturing to me "the current problem manifesting as an excess of solid material in the waste water is actually caused by a shortage of worms". This quickly led to the addition of a worm farm to remove the solids. The output pipe from the rinse sink now empties into a worm farm which uses pine bark granules as the base medium. The layers of slowly decaying bark catch any of the solids as the water passes through. The solids then become food for the aerobic composting bacteria which in turn become food for the worms. Hey-presto - the water draining from the bottom of the worm farm is now solid free - and I have a thriving worm farm fed by a constant supply of nutrients from the sink. This simple formula has been working now for three months and I haven't yet had to clear out the worm farm. Excited by my success I said again, albeit in a slightly brighter tone, "There has to be a better way still"

Grey Water system Mark IV. Again I went back to permaculture basics, and the principle that every element in a design should have as many uses as possible. I reckoned I could clean the water even more, reduce the nutrient level even further, by passing the output of the worm farm



through an intensive mulch growing bed. I currently have an old sink full of ginger lily (a terrifically drought, flood, heat and cold tolerant weed) fed by a constant supply of nutrient rich water. The ginger lily grows rampantly (within the confines of the sink!!) and the lush green growth will periodically be harvested for the compost heap. The excess water, which is always clear and clean now, drains from the bottom of this bed and onto my lettuce and spinach as before.

I have now paused to admire my creation working prior to asking how I could improve it again. Any suggestions?

PROJECT TO MAKE WELLBEING A NATIONAL PRIORITY

by Andrew Gaines

Some years ago when I began to think through the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) I realised that if Australia is to become sustainable we need a whole system change. Industry, agriculture, education, economics and childrearing must change quite markedly if we are to create a viable society. As Donella Meadows pointed out, the key point of change is in people's thinking.

So I have started The Project to Make Wellbeing a National Priority. It is meant to be a national grass roots educational program enabling people at every level to think through what is actually needed to become ecologically sustainable and socially healthy. Hopefully this will lead to institutional change towards collaborative wellbeing and to more investment in personal development. As a society we must become a kind of people can create and enjoy sustainable society.

The Project is sponsored by the Futures Foundation. A Manual for an eight week discussion group can be downloaded for free from <http://www.futuresfoundation.org.au/>. It is a good read. I have put a lot of effort into developing diagrams that make it easier for people to see systems connections and positive points of change.

I have facilitated the first eight week discussion group. I condensed that down to a one-day Leadership Forum which gives people an integrated overview, and prepares people if they so choose to lead their own eight week discussion group. The next Leadership Forums will be held in Katoomba the last Sunday of the month in May, June and July. \$60 donation includes lunch. Andrew Gaines (02) 4782-2004 andrew.gaines@futuresfoundation.org.au

What's been happening?



Participants in PDC sheet mulching



Planning design at Andy's place

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Mid Mountains Seed Savers - 2783

Next meeting Sunday

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

Permaculture Working bee

by Celeste Salter

We held a very successful first meeting at Kathy's place today. Kathy, Murray, Pete and I performed surgery on the apple tree, a major prune that took around 2 hours (it was a big tree!).

Kathy's place has a great northerly aspect, and we were very warm while we worked. Photos were taken, brownies and other treats were eaten, and we all feel great that we had completed the task. The tree looks pretty good as well! Pete's quote for the day was "this branch (a large 2-3 m sprawling cutting) would look good inside someone's house!".

We discussed the timing for the next meeting, and agreed to hold it on June 25 at my place, 48 Derain Cres. Hazelbrook. Activities that will be on the agenda are removing the grass invading the Zone 5 region of the front yard and rock face, and some sheet mulching of the walkway around the house. If I get my act together maybe sheet mulching of the nature strip as well. As the timing for this meeting is in the middle of winter, the sun will be falling behind the hill from around 2:30pm, and so I suggest we meet at 10:30 until 12:30 or so and then have lunch, so we don't get too cold.

What to bring: gloves, weeding tools, yourself, a smile, energy, and something to eat and share after we have finished. Given it will be lunch time I will make soup, so please let me know if you want to stay for lunch as well

If it is raining on the day we can postpone to the week after.

RSVP: cjsalter@austarnet.com.au by 24th June.

DISCOVERING THE BIGGER PICTURE

by Sue Girard

For anyone who does not know -over the last couple of years I have been doing a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management. Looking back I am astounded what I have learnt- this subject (as taught in the Blue Mountains anyway) is Permaculture on a very big scale. I no longer just worry about the water, weeds, nutrient load etc running off my property my concern now encompasses the local sub catchments and the wider catchment.

Sure I can hear you all say that's how it should be! And yes I did know it all before, but naively not quite how finely tuned it all is.

Now I dream about gross pollutant traps and areas where huge weeds plumes are assisting in holding sediment; I listen to tapes of bird calls and frog calls so I can do fauna surveys; I can bush regenerate with the best of them and I can recognise, let alone spell the scientific names of hundreds of native plants, that I knew virtually nothing about prior to this course. A large component of the course has been setting up and doing Biological Surveys as future Ecological Consultants.

I firstly became interested in Planet Ark Park in Wentworth Falls (formerly Interlife) when Rowe took me there as part of one of the Permaculture Design Certificates. The 'Park' is an old sand

quarry that was bought and reclaimed under Permaculture principles back in 1994 and Planet Ark have continued the environmental practices that the site was designed to incorporate. But the large amount of human impact and the 2002 fires that burnt much of the property has made revegetation slow. So when a group of us were asked to survey different flora and fauna, to look at the ecological health within the site, the entomologist in me decided to look at insects as bio indicators in four different habitats on the property.

With butterfly net and camera in hand (and assisted by my partner's help and expertise) I entered the most amazing world. Some of the specimens I collected look like specks of dust to my bespectacled eyes but under a microscope WOW!

I am happy to report the areas that look most like a moonscape were incredibly diverse; whilst in better looking habitats I caught fewer varieties of insects. However observing spider webs by day and feeding bat species by night suggests that may just have been a method failure on my part!

In the July school holiday I'm off to Katherine to survey the Giant Termite *Mastotermes darwiniensis*. And who knows I just might find time to do a bit of sightseeing...

COURSES/WORKSHOPS

The Blackheath C.A.K.E. Club, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre- BANC & Blackheath Chamber of Commerce invite you to join the Community of Blackheath in celebrating

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

with

A MINI ECO EXPO

THE LAUNCH OF 101 THINGS TO DO IN BLACKHEATH

BLACKHEATH: COOL & GREEN & DOING WHAT IT CAN TO ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING

WHERE: Blackheath Community Hall, Great Western Highway Blackheath

WHEN: Sunday 4th June from 10am to 3pm (launch of 101 Things to Do at 10.30am)

WHAT: a fascinating and highly informative variety of interactive displays by Blue Mountains City Council and other local providers; entertainment by the talented Ruby Bloomers, food by the

Blackheath Public School healthy (and gourmet!) eating canteen, a Toyota Prius hybrid car up close, up to date information about Green Power, discounted water tank vouchers, eco design architect, Slow Food Blue Mountains, Free Trade goods, Friends of the Earth Blue Mountains, GEENI (Global Ecology & Education Networking Interface) and Easy Being Green to name a few. Those who get there early will also be able to walk away with free compact fluorescent lightbulbs! As the world grapples with issues of climate change, rising petrol prices and dwindling energy resources, the Blackheath Community is leading the way with creative solutions. According to a 2005 British study, if all food, for example, was consumed within 20km of where it was produced, costs associated with congestion and transport would be cut by 90%. Responding to a growing body of information with similar conclusions the Blackheath C.A.K.E. Club, Blackheath Chamber of Commerce and Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre - BANC have joined forces to present a Mini Eco Expo to celebrate World Environment Day.

A feature of this day will be the launch of the Chamber of Commerce's booklet *'101 Things to Do in Blackheath'* which celebrates the slogan "Think Global, Act Local". This comprehensive guide showcases local food producers as well as community groups, natural attractions, businesses, alternate & mainstream health providers and entertainment. According to Lis Bastian from Stop Laughing This Is Serious, *"When we scratched the surface we realised that Blackheath offers just about everything a community needs to be relatively self sufficient and even people who've lived here for a long time were surprised at how rich our village and surrounds actually are."*

The Mini Eco Expo, to be held in the Blackheath Community Hall from 10am to 3pm on Sunday 4th June, also aims to showcase other creative ideas and easily accessible ways to live more sustainably in the challenging times ahead. BANC on 4787 7770.

GREENHOME WORKSHOPS

A series of FREE GreenHome workshops will be held at the

Castle Grand Community Centre, 7-9 Castle Street, Castle Hill

from 6:30 to 9:00pm, refreshments provided:

Thursday 8 June	Transport and Healthy Lifestyles
Thursday 6 July	Household Chemicals & Green Shopping

RSVP to Australian Conservation Foundation 1800 223 669 or membership@acfonline.org.au

RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL ECOLIVING FAIR 2006

The RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL ECOLIVING FAIR 2006 will highlight the community-based approach to sustainable suburbs. The fair commemorates international World Environment Day.

The Fair organisers are following Helena Norberg-Hodge's (Institute for Society, Ecology and Culture, author of "Ancient Futures") proposal for a "New Localism" - that we have enough local heroes and do not need to import celebrities and other well-knowns to promote sustainability. Hence, most of those appearing at the Fair are from the Sydney bioregion.

MOBILISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

PERMACULTURE designers, educators and activists appearing include:

ROSEMARY MORROW (PDC), Blue Mountains community Permaculture educator and activist - Rosemary appears as an ideas person in the Conversations for the New Century strand

EMMA DANIELL, community trainer, horticulturist, landscape designer and coordinator of Randwick Community Organic Garden

TERRY BAIL (PDC), architect, specialising in energy, water and resource efficient buildings and renovations

KEELAH LAM, social entrepreneur and waste elimination educator who started Manly Food Coop

JILL FINNANE (PDC), Permaculture teacher, gardening author, social justice advocate and international development worker

MARY O'CONNELL, UNSW Permaculture Garden Arts in the Garden coordinator

UNSW ECOLIVING CENTRE display

JULIAN LEE (PDC), local government coordinator of an urban-fringe market garden program who is developing his own rural property and who started Sydney Organic Buyers

VANESSA JOHN, Illawarra Food Forum member, local government sustainability education officer, who will discuss "slow food fair food" for the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance

FIONA CAMPBELL, (PDC) Permaculture designer and teacher and international development worker, facilitator and local government sustainability education officer.

In celebration of World Environment Day, Randwick's Ecoliving Fair will highlight community based approaches to sustainable suburbs with practical workshops and demonstrations, a conversation series and stall holders with a focus on sustainable, healthy products and information on a range of community groups.

WHEN: 10:30am to 3:30pm, Sunday 4 June 2006

WHERE: At the new Randwick Community Centre, 23 Munda Street, Randwick (off Hendy Avenue, Randwick)

Community Water Grants

Information supplied by Vanessa Steele

Successful Round 1 Community Projects in the Blue Mountains - under the Federal Government's Community Water Grants (13 March 2006). Over \$160,000 worth of grants! . For more info see <http://www.communitywatergrants.gov.au/round1/index.html>

Community Water Wise Garden and Bush Food Project Blue Mountains City Council -

This project will save water by installing rainwater tanks to collect water from the roof of the Katoomba Showground and Community Gardens. Collected water will be used to flush toilets at the showground and an additional tank at the Community Gardens will supply water to the toilets and drip irrigation system. In addition to this volunteers will plant a "no-water" bush food garden. This project will save 202,500 litres of water each year. \$29,416.36

Recycling water for use on school grounds Leura Public School - This project will involve the installation of rainwater tanks to store rainwater that is collected from the roof of the Leura Public School. The collected water will be used to irrigate the school grounds via a water efficient irrigation system. This project will save 1,000,000 litres of water each year. \$39,990.91

Recycling Treated Wastewater for Irrigation and Toilet Flushing Blue Mountains Blue Mountains Grammar School Ltd - This project will treat and recycle greywater and treated effluent to irrigate playing fields initially and for connection later to new buildings for toilet flushing at the Blue Mountains Grammar School. This project will save 3,000,000 litres of water each year. \$45,454.55

Recycling Treated Wastewater for Toilet Flushing Katoomba High School - This project will re-use treated effluent to flush the toilets at Katoomba High School. A water recycling system will provide a constant source of treated water, compared with reliance on a rainfall collection system. This project will save 1,000,000 litres of water each year. \$45,272.73

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Contributions for the Spring Newsletter by Friday 18 August PLEASE.

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