

December 2014

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Special points of interest:

- AGM - Presidents report
- Increase in gardening fees
- ECG Coordinators
- Tulip Festival
- Fun and Tips section

AGM - President's Report (year ended 30 June 2014)

Extracts from the President's report

President:

I commenced my report last year reporting on the work of Brian Self as President of Easy Care Gardening (ECG) and later as a member of the Management Committee. As I expect most will by now be aware, sadly Brian died in July. Until not long before his death Brian had led an active life and he had continued to actively contribute to the work of ECG through his membership of the Management Committee. He was a marvelous man and will be greatly missed.

Performance

At 30 June 2014 ECG volunteers were servicing 1,229 clients (as against 1,237 last year). The number of volunteers registered was 572 (against 619 last year) who worked 38,591 hours (as against 40,121 last year). The number of garden services performed was 1,913 (against 1,871 last year). This slight increase is despite the fact that for part of the year we were two Coordinators down. There was also an increase in the number of lawns serviced through ECG, up from 805 to 891.

Funding

We still do not know what the basis of Government funding of ECG will be from July 2015.

We have made representations in regard to what we believe is the sensible basis of funding and we will continue to do so where we can. If the basis of funding does change significantly, the way in which ECG provides the service it does might well change. However, whatever happens, I am confident that all our volunteers will continue to provide a service to the community towards the goal of enabling the aged and persons with disabilities to remain in their own homes.

Patron

Jennifer Stackhouse has resigned as our Patron having moved to live in Tasmania. She was a good supporter of ECG and will be missed.

I look forward to another year as part of the overall team of ECG, the gardening volunteers supported by the administration volunteers, the gardening Coordinator staff and office staff, all working together to continue to provide gardening service to those in need in the community.

Frank Windeyer
President

Increase in ECG's gardening fees

Easy Care Gardening Inc. is a not for profit organisation providing gardening to aged pensioners and people with a disability to assist them to remain in their homes. Easy Care Gardening Inc. relies on government funding and clients' gardening fees to provide the service. The current fees have been in effect since 2011.

Unfortunately due to an increase in salaries, insurances, petrol, gardening tools and protective clothing Easy Care Gardening has had to review its gardening fees to keep continuity of the service. After much deliberation it was decided that a small fee increase commencing on 1st October, 2014 was necessary. However we try to keep our gardening fees to a minimum to help our clients.

The new rates are \$12 per volunteer with a maximum of \$84 per visit. If a large job is requested and a large team is organised the price will be advised before the visit. Mulch prices remain the same, \$30 for a small load and \$40 for a large load.

Please be assured that the same quality of work will continue to keep your garden safe, neat and tidy.

At any time you would like to discuss your gardening service or any issues pertaining to ECG please telephone me on 99831644.

Yours sincerely,
Yvonne Dewar
Manager

Pymble Ladies College



Redfield College Dural



Killara High School



St James Turramurra



Around the Pathways - ECG Coordinators

Easy Care Gardening has five Coordinators who are responsible for making appointments with our clients, training the volunteers who work in the gardens with gardening skills, liaising with clients and the volunteer teams. They manage five to eight teams each that consist of four to ten volunteers. Coordinators carry out a garden assessment prior to the first garden visit, so that they are able to allocate the correct size team and make the team aware of any hazards, for example steep driveways.

We are also fortunate to have group volunteers from schools and St James Turramurra. Throughout the year two of our Coordinators arrange for the young people from the Pymble Ladies College, Redfield College Dural, and St James Turramurra to garden for some of our clients. In addition, for two weeks in November all Coordinators take students from Killara High School to various clients' gardens. These schools and church groups support ECG to be in a position to take on larger gardens, and to go out as far as Dural. The young people enjoy meeting with our clients, learning new skills, and we hope a green thumb!

Coordinators work part time three days a week with one to two days in the office, where they make appointments, plan the volunteer teams needed for the month, make up the schedules to send to the teams and train new volunteers on the job. Coordinators check the tools are in good order and what

tools will be needed for the volunteer teams. When not in the office they work alongside the gardening teams, hands on working with the volunteers and the young people from the schools and church.

A close up of two of our Coordinators.

Jenny Nakhla has been a Coordinator with Easy Care Gardening for eight years. She lives on the Central Coast and travels to Sydney three days a week to work at ECG. Jenny has a great rapport with clients and volunteers, and loves meeting the clients and working alongside the volunteers. On a personal note, Jenny has five grandchildren sings in a choir, the Central Coast Chorale, and also participates in Greek folk dancing. So you see, our Coordinators are very versatile.

Robbie Cunningham recently joined ECG and comes from a background in horticulture and landscape architecture. Previously, Robbie was the City of Ryde Parks Community Liaison Officer, which saw her working with the community with regard to parks and playgrounds, as well as preparing Plans of Management to provide guidance for park use and development in the future. Consequently, she developed a good knowledge of the parks of Ryde and the area in general, which as a Coordinator for Ryde/Hunters Hill is invaluable. Robbie is enjoying meeting and working with the volunteers, team leaders, clients and the ECG team back at the office.

Volunteers take a break - in the highlands

Easy Care Gardening volunteers visited Bowral to see the tulips.

Enjoy these fabulous photos taken on the day.





Welcome to all our new volunteers



Happy birthday to Wally (Dennis Wallace on left) celebrating with his gardening team

Herbs from your Garden – Belinda Thackeray, Education Manager at Eden Gardens

Enjoy the amazing flavour of your own home-grown herbs this summer.

Herbs are easy to grow in pots, planters and in the garden. Select a position with at least four hours direct sunlight a day and pick a variety of herbs that you will use in cooking. There's a great range of perennial herbs suitable for planting now like chives, parsley, oregano, thyme, mint and rosemary, and also summer annual herbs like basil and dill. Position low growing groundcover herbs like oregano and thyme at the front of pots or garden beds, medium sized clumping herbs like chives and parsley in the middle and tall

growing herbs like rosemary at the back. It is always best to plant mint separately as it can be a very vigorous grower.

Prior to planting, enrich your soil with compost, manure or Soil Conditioner, and in pots use a good quality potting mix like Eden Premium. Keep soil moist and feed herbs regularly with a nitrogen rich liquid fertiliser like Powerfeed. Harvesting small sprigs from all over the herbs often is a great form of tip pruning which encourages bushy new growth.

Adding fresh herbs to your cooking can transform ordinary meals into amazing meals. Try mixing basil and oregano into pasta sauces; adding rosemary sprigs to roasting meat; cooking fish with dill and lemon thyme; stirring garlic chives into omelettes or mashed potato; making your own pesto using rocket or basil; infusing oil with rosemary or thyme; incorporating parsley, chives and basil into butter; and adding interest to salads with mint, parsley, coriander and rocket.



Congratulations to Mr. Harlow who recently turned 101 years. Seen here with Coordinator Trish Muller



Easy Care Gardening Volunteer Garden Awards

Eden Gardens

301 Lane Cove Road, Nth Ryde.
Ph: 9491 9900



July: John Dixon
August: Kaye Clarke
September: Vivienne Barry

Hargraves Nurseryland

630 Old Northern Road,
Dural. Ph: 9651 1833



July: David Cockerell
August: Daniele Di Paolo
September: Geoffrey Davis

Parkers Nursery

45 Tennyson Avenue,
Turramurra.
Ph: 9487 3888



July: Marie Clarke
August: Trevor Brown
September: Dennis Wallace

Peter Whitehead Appreciation Award

Easy Care Gardening Inc sends warmest wishes and congratulations to:

Pam Rosser

This award is for outstanding service to volunteering.

Fun and Tips Section

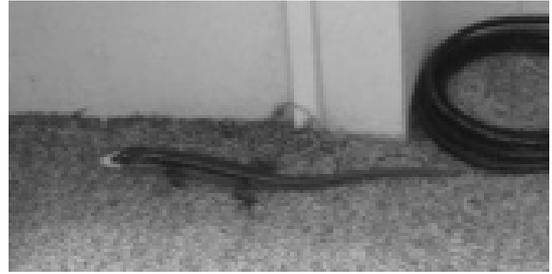
I had a glance and saw my reflection trying to decide what to make of it. Had the years finally caught up with me? I was astounded and thought to myself , what have I done, what have I become?

If your image does speak the truth to you why is it that the years prove wrong and unjust? What was my youth has now become my enemy.

I can't change but it is dammed hard to accept. The years have taken their toll. I'm not vain, I just used to be better looking!

Poem by Dave Duval (volunteer)

Our latest volunteer, 8 inch or 20cm 'skink' lizard came into the office to assist the ECG staff with their computer work recently. Fortunately, he quickly left the building through the front door after sending the (English) Editor (me) into a tizzy.



Now we are in Spring and soon Summer, the Australian flies will be about. Here is a tip that may help if you have flies coming into your home.



Flies will stay away from the scent of cayenne pepper. Mix a little in a spray bottle with water. Spray the cayenne mixture in doorways, window sills and other cracks and corners where flies might try to come in. The smell of the cayenne will deter them.

If opportunity doesn't knock

- Milton Berle

Mulching - article Jo McGahey

Last Summer I had only one word for all gardeners and that word was MULCH. May I direct you to that 2013 article, as I do not want to keep on repeating myself. Now this Summer it would be a good idea to take stock of all the plants in your garden and swear a splendid vow to no longer buy too many plants that are water guzzlers. I do not mean avoiding everything delicate, darling little plants you love and filling your garden with cacti

(unless you love cacti). But it makes a lot of sense to consult with your nursery and read the labels before you buy. So... if a water-loving something carks it in the next heatwave, do give serious thought to the replacement plant and maybe choose one that can and will tolerate dry periods.

And keep on MULCHING.

Jo McGahey



Gnome news corner - Spring is here

Spring is a wonderful time of year, it makes you feel good as you look around at the changes in our landscape. New blooms, leaves back on the trees and blossoms everywhere. Also, those dreaded weeds, although sometimes these are appreciated, I just love to see a daisy or two on a green lawn.

Let's soak up the warmer weather and enjoy the photographs in this newsletter - Bowral tulips and the 'Botanical Gardens Spring Walk' that I was fortunate to explore with some very good friends whom I have met through ECG.

