

# Easy Care Gardening Inc.

## Spring 2012 Newsletter

### Highlights in this edition

**Book Launch** - 'Stories from our Gardens'

**Around the Pathways** - Exhibition at Botanical Gardens Red Box Gallery

**Rare Earth** - Article from our Patron, Jennifer Stackhouse

**Profile of a Team Leader** - Lyndell van Noort

**Volunteers** - New Volunteers, New Saturday team, ECG awards and other awards

**Catnapper or Stowaway?** - client's cat discovered in ECG ute

**Garden Drum** - Gardening Blog

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### Stories from our Gardens



'Stories from our Gardens' was launched at Brush Farm House on 21 June. Funded by the City of Ryde, the book is a collection of interviews with some of the district's older residents who are also clients of Easy Care Gardening, and three of the wonderful volunteers who help them stay in their homes. The launch was attended by nearly all the clients

who so generously shared their stories for the book and by some of the volunteers who work in the gardens in Ryde. ECG President Brian Self spoke at the launch, as did the Mayor of Ryde Clr Artin Etmekdjian and Clr Jeff Salvestro-Martin. The book was officially launched by ECG Patron Jennifer Stackhouse. Special thanks were made to Wendy McCready and Kate Williams (Publicity Officers of ECG) who co-authored the book from interviews with the clients. The book is available to the public for \$10.00 plus \$2.90 postage per copy. If you would like a copy please send a cheque and address details to Easy Care Gardening Inc, PO Box 502, Turramurra, NSW 2074.

Owen Bennett 89, who features in the book, said *"The people who come in are just really wonderful people. They cut back the shrubs, and do all the weeding. At one stage there before they started, I had a chap come in to cut back all the trees and that cost me \$250. Now, I give them a donation, which is pretty limited, but I enjoy their company too. They are all so happy."*

Below, photographs from the book launch

### Events for your diary

**13 Sep Thur 10.00am - 2.00pm:** Plant and Volunteer Information stall. Venue: outside ECG garage, Gilroy Lane, Turramurra.

**16 Sep Sun 10.00am - 4.00pm:** The Bushland Shire Festival - Volunteer Information stall. Venue: Fagan Park, Galston. **Please call the office if able to assist.**

**21 Sep Fri 11am - 2.00pm:** AGM Open Forum followed by light lunch and tool maintenance demonstration. Venue: Meals on Wheels meeting room, Turramurra.

**20 Oct Sat 9.00am - 4.30pm:** Granny Smith Festival, Volunteer Information stall. Venue: Rowe Street, Eastwood. **Please call the office if able to assist.**

**5 Dec Wed** - International Volunteers Day

**5 Dec Wed** - ECG Volunteers Christmas function



Clr Jeff Salvestro-Martin



Mayor of Ryde - Clr Artin Etmekdjian



Jennifer Stackhouse



Wendy McCready (standing on left) at the book launch chatting with three of the Ryde residents who feature in the book.

### Around the Pathways - Botanic Garden Sydney's Red Box Gallery

One of the most iconic aspects of Australian life and culture - Australia's gardening - is explored in a new exhibition at the historic Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney at its Red Box Gallery. "Garden of Ideas" is part book, part pictorial exhibition that reveals the visual story of the Australian garden and charts the development and progress of garden design from the first imaginings of late-eighteenth century gardeners to today. The exhibition includes rare drawings and resources from across Australia. **When:** 13 July to 30 November 2012 9am to 4pm **Where:** The Red Box Gallery, Mrs Macquarie's Road, Royal Botanic Gardens.



### Easy Care Gardening Inc

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Patron: Jennifer Stackhouse BA (Hons), Dip. Hort.

## Rare earth - Jennifer Stackhouse, Patron

I've been reading about rare earths. In the financial pages they are metals found deep in the earth that are used in our modern technical world to help manufacture smart phones, hybrid cars and even wind turbines. To gardeners though rare earths are the stuff we dream of: that wonderful deep loam that almost purrs as you sink in the spade. It is the type of soil that allows water to soak in but not too fast and has a deep earthy colour and smell. Everything you plant leaps into growth. But that kind of soil is hard to find in the average garden. Most of us deal with common earth that's either too sandy or too clayey. Some garden soils are water repellent and others impossible to dig. Help is at hand. We had dreadful soil when we first moved to our garden. To plant a much-needed wind and privacy screen between us and the road, we had to resort to an auger to make the holes. Luckily we were only planting tube stock. To make the garden proper we set out raised beds, which we filled with a good quality organic garden mix. However that's an expensive option (even using recycled stone and sleepers for the beds). In other areas we simply cleared the weeds and put down sugar cane mulch. The earthworms did the rest turning our awful shale into reasonable soil. We still had to remove lots of stones, but we could at least dig a hole to plant.

**Gardens benefit from organic matter:** Of course, once we'd been in the garden for a while we also had plenty of compost and the litter from the chook shed to add to the soil. With the addition of organic matter, the garden soil became more forgiving and plants started to grow. So here's the gardener's guide to creating that wonderful rare earth we call loam. It all comes down to adding organic matter along with fertiliser. While fertilisers fuel growth, mulches look after the soil to keep it cool, moist and weed free. Organic mulches also break down over time to release their stored nutrients into soils, which helps plants and soil organisms. Mulch can be used as garden fertiliser. The simplest way to add fertiliser to a garden is to buy it in a bag and sprinkle it over the soil. While this may provide plants with a constant stream of nutrients, adding fertiliser in itself is not enough. Soils also contain billions of organisms, most of which are too small to be seen. Soils are home to minute insects, animals, bacteria and fungi. These micro-organisms, as they are known, help plants to grow and soils to stay healthy. By caring for soil micro-organisms we also improve plant growth and grow better gardens.

### What to do in spring

- Feed the entire garden including lawns with a slow release or pelletised fertiliser.
- Re-pot tired potted plants into fresh potting mix that meets the Australian Standard.
- Increase watering as temperatures warm – particularly for plants in new growth or flowering.
- Attack weeds before they seed – mow, hoe or pull them up.

## Profile of a Team Leader - Lyndell van Noort

Lyndell van Noort contacted Easy Care Gardening when she responded to an article in the North Shore Times of 22 February 1989. This article described the launch of Easy Care Gardening at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens, and went on to say that the group "...**desperately needs volunteer workers**". Unfortunately the article didn't include a contact phone number but happily Lyndell was inspired enough to pursue the matter, and her original cutting of the article is covered with the notes she made in her attempt to make contact. Having finally reached one of the founders of Easy Care Gardening, Anne Shires, by phone, Lyndell met Anne for a chat and agreed to work as a volunteer gardener two days a week. There was no recruitment process or form filling, just "blind faith" (as Lyndell puts it).

In those first few years she would work all day until she was dropping with tiredness. She kept detailed records of each visit she made to clients until it reached 3,000 entries (about 13 years ago). Twenty three years on and Lyndell is still working one day a week. Lyndell is a volunteer team leader and her team members remain pretty much the same from one year to the next. Lyndell remembers that Easy Care Gardening's founder Anne Shires was able to instill in people the feeling that they were wanted and needed, and Lyndell has always tried, obviously successfully, to do the same with her team of volunteers. Lyndell's team has a lot of fun while they are gardening.

As well as gardening, team leading and working with the Plant Nursery Team (formerly the Propagating Team), Lyndell has worked on many stalls selling plants, and has on numerous occasions agreed to be "the face" of Easy Care Gardening, happy to talk to the press and take time to have her photo taken. This is very important as other potential volunteers see these articles and think of us when they have the time to volunteer. Lyndell has also won many awards. She is the winner of the Outstanding Service to the Ku-ring-gai Community Award for 2012 and has made it to the finals for the NSW Pride of Australia Medal in the Community Spirit Category. Bruce Taylor, ECG Volunteer Manager, nominated Lyndell for this prestigious award. "Lyndell is the heart of our service. She treats the clients as friends and builds a bond with both the clients and team members" Mr Taylor said. "She is a person who knows what duty of care is all about".



Jennifer Stackhouse

Congratulations and many thanks to Wendy Addison who has been a volunteer with ECG for **20 years!**



Lyndell van Noort. Photo courtesy of Daily Telegraph

## New Volunteers

|                      |                          |                        |                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| William McKellar     | Scott Watts              | Alina Li               | Xiuping Chen                    |
| Daniel Griffiths     | Damon Sahota             | Dennis Chen            | Xinqi Wang                      |
| Mark Richards        | Michael McKeolin         | Edward Zhang           | Jie Song                        |
| Mansour Babaei       | Lockie Yiu               | Carolina Ding Lin      | Kathrine Anne Brailey           |
| Jennifer Wong        | Roger Gleeson            | Douglas Jamieson       | <a href="#">Corporate</a>       |
| Sakina Fatima        | Kerry Cranney            | Colin Hall             | Eremeran Hills Study Centre     |
| Dusan Nemec          | Su Xian (Linda) Ning     | Zike (Clark) Lin       | United Way - GE Capital         |
| Kuistan Al-Khaleefa  | Shzn-Hsien (Wilson) Yung | Simone Martin          | Marsh                           |
| Michael Jordan       | Bo Fan                   | Carolyn Pearson        | Kimberly-Clark                  |
| Martin Rollison      | Hazel Lim                | Ruz (Jerry) Zhou       | United Way - Vanguard Insurance |
| Anna Yongsiri        | Itaf Khalil              | Foo Chang              | Macquarie Group                 |
| Robert Pouthakoupian | Clare Isles              | Eileen Proctor         | Janssen Pharmaceutical          |
| May Tao              | Lauren Gardner           | Lynne Heir             | Westpac Banking Corp            |
| Mattie'Ella Baldwin  | James Martens            | Younmei Ou             | Lexis Nexis                     |
| Sara Mostafavi       | Louise Luo               | Navazollah Tashakor    | MLC Limited                     |
| Thomas Barratt       | Boris Zou                | Andrew Songsermmongkol | National Australia Bank         |
| Feng Hall            |                          |                        | Keysborough Secondary College   |

## New Saturday Team Starts August 2012

Good news! A new Saturday team will operate in the afternoons in the Hornsby and surrounding areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. The Team Leader is Kevin Waldron. If you are interested or know of anyone who may be interested in joining Kevin's team, please ask them to contact Jenny Nakhla on 9983 1644, or give Jenny their details, so that she can make contact.

## Catnapper or Stowaway!

One of our Coordinators was nearly sprung for catnapping. A visit to one of the clients one sunny morning and, unbeknownst to the owner, the ECG Coordinator and her team of volunteers, the owner's beautiful Burmese cat jumped into the ECG ute. On the way back to the office later that afternoon, the cat jumped from the back of the ute onto the front seat next to the Coordinator. You can imagine the surprise the Coordinator got - how was she going to explain to the client that she had not kidnapped her cat? In fact the cat, Chloe, was a stowaway! All ended well with Chloe being returned to her owner and our Coordinator's case was dismissed.

## Ryde Council Volunteer Recognition Awards 2012

In the Ryde Council's Volunteer Recognition Awards 2012, Easy Care Gardening Ryde Saturday Team was a nominee for the Volunteer Group of the Year Award. On the 17th May representatives of the Ryde Saturday Team attended a cocktail function for these Awards and although they didn't win on the night, our congratulations and thanks go to all the Saturday Volunteers who consistently give their time and support to Easy Care Gardening.

In the photo, left to right – Lauren Farinelli, Helen Tuckey (Team Leader), Peter Jones (Team Leader), Anne Pridham (Team Leader) Dylan Hvasanov, Trieu Nguyen.

## Easy Care Gardening Volunteer Garden Awards 2012

### Eden Gardens

301 Lane Cove Road,  
Ryde. Ph: 9491 9900



**April:** Sharon Cooper

**May:** Karin Yu

**June:** Kaye Clarke

### Hargraves Nurseryland

630 Old Northern Road,  
Dural. Ph: 9651 1833



**April:** Trevor Long

**May:** Wendy Scotland

**June:** Kathleen Staraj

### Parkers Nursery

45 Tennyson Avenue,  
Turramurra.



**April:** Fiona McPetrie

**May:** Trevor Brown

**June:** Not for publicity

Ph: 9487 3888



Beverley Honey, Tuesday Team Leader, was presented with a 2012 Community Service Award by the Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai for services to the disabled. Well done Beverley! (Beverley will feature in our Summer edition 'Profile of a Team Leader')



Next time try flying!



### Peter Whitehead Appreciation Award

Easy Care Gardening sends warmest wishes and congratulations to:

**Trish Canfield**

This Award is for outstanding service to volunteering.

## Words of thanks from our Clients

**NB - Nth Epping:** Many thanks for the miraculous service, I truly appreciate it. **JC - Wahroonga:** I just want to tell you all how very much I appreciate your help. **ME - Epping:** Thank you for a wonderful job they did with my garden. **MH - Thornleigh:** Thank you for the excellent work on my garden. **BW - Beecroft:** This is to thank and praise the courageous helpers who attended my garden. These volunteers are a special breed of people and are admired and appreciated. **TB - Nth Ryde:** Many thanks to the volunteers who did a wonderful job in my garden. **BM - Berowra:** We are so grateful for the volunteer workers that came to do our garden, what a wonderful bunch! **PW - St Ives:** Appreciated and will be remembered with gratitude. **PM - Denistone:** Wonderful representatives for Australia. **EF- Hunters Hill:** Big thank you for the lovely people for sorting out my neglected plants. **JB - Thornleigh:** Thank you all so much for your help. **JS - Turramurra:** Many thanks for the great job you did on our garden. **CC- Ryde:** Thank you for doing my garden for me. **PP - Asquith:** A big thank you to the volunteers for making my garden picture perfect. **MK - Hunters Hill:** Many thanks, wonderful team of workers. **BH - Ryde:** A wonderful team did an amazing clean up, thank you all.

## Garden Drum, Gardening blog - Jennifer Stackhouse

We are used to getting gardening information from the television, radio, newspapers or magazines but there's a new and exciting way to read about gardening and that's on line. Here you'll discover gardening blogs. Many are the work of passionate and knowledgeable gardeners, and most are free. I have recently begun contributing to a blog site called Garden Drum. This is an Australian site but it has contributors from around the world as well as Australia wide. Angus Stewart and Tim Enwistle (previously head of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and now at Kew Gardens in London) are two regular bloggers. The site has been created by garden writer and landscaper Catherine Stewart. There's also information about new products, interesting gardening snippets and great ideas. As well as reading the blogs on the screen, you can also listen to them as a podcast! Have a look at the site - you'll really enjoy exploring what's on offer. You can find it at [www.gardendrum.com](http://www.gardendrum.com)

## Spring fever - Jo McGahey

With the mad weather we have been having, I'm not sure if the poor old plants know what season it is. I have had Spring-flowering plants blooming since last Autumn. Nevertheless, when everything is in full bloom it is a good time to mark with a small stake or two and a marker pen, just where all those bulbs are so you don't accidentally dig them up or mow over them ever again. These and bedding bulbs should be fed (with proper bulb food) as the foliage dies down. Do not use nitrogen-rich plant foods as next year you will just get a whole lot of very healthy leaves and few if any flowers. Do not knot or remove leaves. Yes, I know they look untidy but they absorb lots of good stuff through those untidy leaves. When everything has died down, lift bulbs carefully, wash with water and a few drops of fungicide. Dry and store in old panty hose or onion bags and hang in a cool spot.

I know this advice is early but, if I leave it until the Summer edition, when it is time to lift the bulbs, they will have vanished into the lawn, been mown down, or had their leaves cut back to tidy up.

## Butcherbird

The Butcherbird is back, recently sighted in Macquarie Park and Willoughby. Butcherbirds are aggressive predators and from their appearance, the butcherbird may not look very special, but wait until you hear it sing! It has one of the most fantastic melodic whistles of all Australian birds. The song is typically started by the male and then continued by the female, repeating until completed or until the female quits. Australia has few finer songbirds than the pied butcherbird. Its loud, pure whistling notes ring through the still morning air and can be heard far from the perch where he sings. When in a dawn chorus with his cousin, the grey butcherbird, a family of magpies, a flock of currawongs, and the occasional "crack" of a whipbird, the effect is pure magic. If you listen carefully, you will discover that, like the whipbird, the song is usually a duet with the partner providing a cadenza.

## Gnome news corner - Watch the Gloves!

Council workers do their bit for us by disposing of our rubbish and for the environment by pulling the bags apart so that the green stuff can compost. Imagine the fright they get when a glove or two turns up in the green stuff - their imagination can go wild!

Apparently there were three gloves in one bag the other week. One wonders where the fourth one went? So spare a thought for our lovely council people and for the environment.

**Volunteers - please watch what goes in the plastic bags!**



### Gardening Quotes:

*Gardening requires a lot of water - most of it in the form of perspiration.*



Pied Butcherbird

