

Easy Care Gardening

The latest news, clippings and snippets

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FROM OUR PATRON, Judy Horton OAM MAIH RH HMA

This summer, as La Niña seems set to give us yet more rain, weed control is likely to be the number one task. Here are some of my favourite weed tips:

- Follow the old bush regenerator's adage and work from the least infested area. Clearing a complete section, albeit small, will give you a sense of achievement.
- Do a little bit each day. I try to check for weeds each morning when I go out to pick up the newspaper from my front gate.

Remove weed flowers before they have a chance to spread their seeds. For example I have a major problem with arum lilies and there's no way I'll get rid of all of them in the near future. So I go through the lily clumps armed with a short-handled saw and use it like a machete to slash off the flowers (yes, I can hear the florists crying!).

- Follow up. Make a date with yourself (put it in your calendar) to go back and check weed-infested areas you've already cleared. The timing will depend on the season and the weed's growth habit. Perhaps once a week in the warmer months and every few weeks when it's cooler? Don't wait for months before returning or you're likely to find the weeds are back with a vengeance. This is particularly important for persistent, hard to control weeds such as wandering trad.

Happy weeding!

Use this QR code to subscribe to our electronic newsletter



AGM Notice

The Easy Care Gardening Annual General Meeting will be on 18 November 2022. Volunteers and clients are welcome to attend. Contact the office on info@easycaregardening.org.au or 9983 1644 for more details and to RSVP.



Leanne Babic, CEO and Coralie Jensen, Volunteer Manager, at the Granny Smith Festival

Granny Smith Festival Wrap-up

We were treated to beautiful weather for the Granny Smith Festival on October 15, with thousands of people flocking to Eastwood to see the parade and take part in the day's activities.

From the ECG stall we could glimpse Granny Smith go past on the float, feed apples to police horses, and were even greeted by the Granny Smith mascot (left). We handed out bookmarks and flyers and had a great reception - many hadn't heard of ECG so it was great to get the word out there! It was a terrific opportunity to meet potential volunteers and remind the community about the work ECG does in the City of Ryde. Particular thanks to the volunteers that helped out on the day or popped in and said hello - it was marvellous to see you there.



Left to right: Leanne Babic, CEO, Meredith Kirton, Marketing and Communications Manager, Coralie Jensen, Volunteer Manager, and Volunteer Frances Siu



Jutta Filla, pictured here with Costa Georgiadis and Fernando Ordonez, received the award from the Hon. Ray Williams, MP. Below is Meredith Kirton, ECG Marketing and Communications Manager, Jutta Filla and MP Ray Williams

Jutta Filla Received a Community Hero & Seniors Award



"Jutta is an eager, dedicated and generous volunteer who has regularly dedicated her time with ECG for over 9 years. She loves to feed the team and win them over with her wonderful homemade treats. Not to mention the jams she makes with the ingredients often coming from what's growing in our clients' gardens." The Hon. Member for Castle Hill Ray Williams, MP.

CEO Leanne Babic added *"For nine and half years, Jutta has certainly made a significant difference to the lives of so many clients and to the team at Easy Care Gardening. You have gone above and beyond your duty volunteering not only in the garden but always stepping in to support Easy Care Gardening to promote volunteering at Seniors Festivals or serving other volunteers at appreciation days. We cannot thank you enough for your 1913 hours or 620 days you have volunteered at Easy Care Gardening."*

WEEDING TIPS, TRICKS & IDENTIFICATION, by Daniele Di Paolo



Weeds, defined by the Sydney Weeds Network as "a plant that is growing where it is not wanted and is causing a negative impact", can be the bane of a gardener's life. While many of us will happily prune, cut and rake, weeding is not the gardener's favourite pastime. Yet it is a critical task that requires a practical plan to reduce and control the incidence of weeds.

While the best advice is to not let them go to seed, this is often not possible as they can be

airborne, carried on the soles of our shoes, via our furry and feathery friends, or just creep insidiously among the good guys (hello! turkey rhubarb and wandering trad, two of our most common invaders in ECG gardens). The A.B.C. of weed control in garden beds comprises the following steps:

- A. Hand-remove weeds as thoroughly as possible, first carefully removing seeds to prevent further spread. Aim to get both shoots and roots, as even small pieces left behind could start new growth.
- B. Spread out a layer of overlapping newspapers (5-10 pages thick)/cardboard, which will cut out sunlight and prevent the growth of weeds and their seeds. Do not use weed mats, they don't work and only make weeding more difficult.
- C. Slightly water the newspapers and cover them with a layer of mulch 5-10 cm deep. This will break down over time, reducing weed growth and slowly feeding the soil.

Because weeds are tough survivors, sometimes just "flying in", they are likely to find a way of raising their little heads through the mulched areas. However, with regular weeding and mulch top-ups, garden maintenance should be easier and more pleasurable for all.

The Sydney Weeds Network's booklet *Garden Escapes in Bushlands and Reserves - A responsible gardening guide for the Greater Sydney region*, is a great resource.



Want to connect? We would love you to connect with us.

We now send out a monthly e-newsletter that you can sign up to receive... and don't forget to like us on Facebook and Instagram and tag your friends!



Or simply phone to talk to us on 9983 1644 or info@easycaregardening.org.au



Another Happy Customer

Thursday's team with a relative new (and hugely grateful) client who was impressed with all the work achieved in just under 3 hours.

Gardening coordinator Renate Mason remarked that "The results were amazing - virtually a transformation from a beautiful but unruly garden to a more compliant one. The mountain of work achieved was fuelled in part by the fantastic morning tea enjoyed by all...including a couple of dogs!!"

Steve Lockard, one of the volunteers on the job, explained, "This gardening day was a good example of what I, as a volunteer, get out of participating with ECG. There was fun, good friendship and a great result for all involved."



Ken Fox, Mr Jarvis, Steve Lockard (back), Frances Heath (front), Kaz Abramowicz, David Ashton, Heather Knight (front), Mick Marr



YOU + ME = WE

Volunteers Steve Lockard and Mick Marr after a big few hours

Be a Friend

Support us by becoming a friend of Easy Care Gardening.

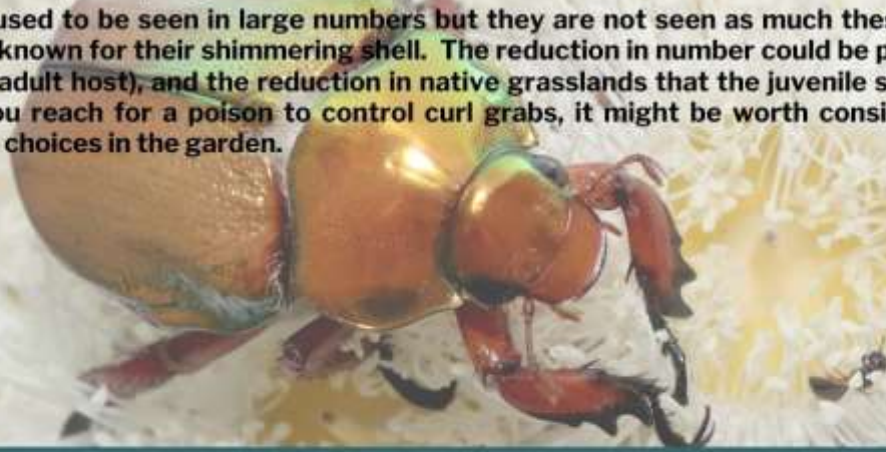
Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Contact info@easycaregardening.org.au. For more details go to our website www.easycaregardening.org.au P.O. Box 5337 South Turramurra | Charity No. 10507 | ABN. 96 338 250 354

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP



Christmas Beetles (*Anoplognathus spp.*)

Christmas beetles used to be seen in large numbers but they are not seen as much these days. They are a type of scarab, and known for their shimmering shell. The reduction in number could be put down to the loss of gum trees, their adult host, and the reduction in native grasslands that the juvenile stage feeds on for a year. Next time you reach for a poison to control curl grubs, it might be worth considering the broader implications of your choices in the garden.



by Meredith Kirton

Summer Gardening Tips

- Remove old flowers from *Agapanthus* before they go to seed.
- Prune shrubs back after flowering in spring to promote bushy growth and prevent seeds and fruits forming.
- Watch for the spread of seeds from flowering trees like Jacaranda and Cockspur Coral Tree after they have finished blossoming.
- Lower the mower height slightly.
- Ensure any summer fruits are protected from fruit fly by bags and use baits to indicate when they are active.
- Pinch prune new growth of your herbs to encourage extra foliage growth. Remove flowers from basil the same way.
- Summer holidays can mean plants are neglected when their 'plant parents' go on holidays. Keep indoor plants moist by placing them in the bath on a moist towel, and cluster outdoor potted plants in the shade together and water them well.

Tool Review

By Daniele Di Paolo

We all know the common phrase "a tradesman is only as good as his tools", a saying that certainly extends to our

gardeners and the tools they use to weed, prune, clip and dig. While there is a wide array of tools available, a few of these are essential to a more enjoyable and successful gardening task. Depending on the job at hand, they would include the following:

- For weeding: hand-held trowels (perfect for digging out deep-rooted weeds – watch out, onion weeds!) and hoes;
- For pruning: secateurs (or pruning shears, to cut thick stems and small branches), hedge shears (long handles and flat blades), saws and loppers (like a secateur but with long handles and able to cut thicker branches. If you need to prune trees or shrubs, a simple pair of secateurs just won't cut it...);
- For digging: pickaxes, mattocks, garden spades and shovels.

In order to keep all these tools in good working order, it is important to clean and sharpen them regularly. To clean blades, a 50/50 mix of white spirits and citronella applied with a scouring pad or stone will do a great job. Dry blades and use a diamond file (if available) to sharpen bevelled edges.

Don't forget your gloves, and take care while gardening!



Gifts and Gratitude

We have been very fortunate to receive funds from Hunters Hill Council to buy some new \$1336.28 worth of tools to use in Area 1 with Lynda and her teams. The City of Ryde also has contributed with a grant of \$2632 for Area 1 and 2 teams to have at their disposal.



Left to right: Mary-Ellen Housego, Wendy Ralph, Christine Wyness, David Ralph, Kaya Clarke, Ronnie MacKenzie