



Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc

Newsletter - 2014 - Issue 1

AUTUMN Issue



It has been a long, hot and dry summer. However it has been a great year for roses. Now with Autumn comes the heavier jobs in the garden. It is a good time for fertilizing camellias, azaleas, hellebores and daphne to increase their flower formation. It is also a good time to rejuvenate lawns before it gets too cold. Re-sow or top dress lawns with 'Charlie Carp' or 'Dynamic Lifter for lawns.' Gather up Autumn leaves and add to compost with some blood and bone or manure.

During Horticultural Therapy Awareness week in March, two Therapeutic Gardens were opened for the public to visit to observe and/or participate in some Horticultural therapy activities. Stories and photos on page 3.

This issue also has a story on Therapeutic gardens and ornamental gardens in Singapore, which I recently visited.

Good reading

Paul de la Motte

Plants for Sensory and Therapeutic Gardens

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: Grapevine

Botanical Name: *Vitis vinifera*

Other names: Many cultivars and varieties including Sultana, Muscatel, Gordo, Shiraz and many more

Family: Vitaceae

According to John Newton's book, "The Roots of Civilisation", wine (from grapes) is one of the most important products of civilization – some might say the most civilized of all humankind's creations."

Grapevines are thought to have originated in Central Europe and spread all over the world.

Grapevines are a vigorous deciduous climbing perennial plant with large deeply lobed palmate leaves that change colour in Autumn. They produce clusters of fruit of many colours from pale green, pink, red, brown, purple and black.

They can grow many metres wide and can easily cover a pergola or shed.

Grapevines not only produce delicious and nutritious fruit but also provide a fantastic shade plant during summer.

When established, grapevines are moderately drought resistant and can be grown easily from cuttings. Apart from the fruit, the leaves can be used for making Dolmades, a Greek dish consisting of vine leaves stuffed with rice and herbs. Some of the ornamental varieties (pictured) produce striking Autumn colour and can be used for pressings and other craft related activities.



Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week – 17 to 22 March 2014

During Horticultural Therapy (HT) Awareness Week, two Melbourne garden programs volunteered to open their gardens to the public to show what they have been doing.

The first was the Peter James Rehabilitation Centre in Mahoneys Rd, Burwood which now has many herbs and vegetables growing in their raised beds. Residents joined the visitors to enjoy the garden and be involved in some plantings.

We also had a visit from new volunteers during their orientation to the centre.

The second garden was the Sambell Lodge Aged Care centre in Clifton Hill. Visitors assisted with potting activities with some of the residents. A short tour of the three garden areas was conducted.



Potting activity at Sambell Lodge



Residents at Peter James relaxing in garden

Bass Coast Special School

Another activity conducted during HT Awareness week was a visit to Bass Coast Special School in Wonthaggi, for an informal presentation on Horticultural Therapy benefits to the staff and volunteers at the school. Also attending were the Bass Coast Mayor as well as the local Landcare representatives. There was also a tour of the school and meeting with some of the students.



Paul with students, staff and visitors



Planter boxes made by Lions Club, and painted by students

Community Gardens in Singapore

On a recent trip to Singapore we were shown some inspirational Gardens that were transforming the lives of the participants of the Programs. While in Singapore we were escorted to various sites by Maxel Ng who works for Singapore Parks. Maxel was a presenter at our Conference in Melbourne a number of years ago and he was keen to show us around. A big thanks to Azza and Chey Hwee for driving us around.

The first site visited was a roof top garden and demonstration garden at a high rise complex in Jurong, an outer suburb of Singapore.

The demonstration garden was built at the base of the Residential block, to show others how they could establish a Community Garden and had examples of suitable plants and materials that could be used.



Community garden - used also as a demonstration garden Active group of garden caretakers

The roof top garden consisted of shallow plantings in large growing beds as well as purpose built raised garden beds that allowed wheelchair access. These contained a large variety of vegetables and herbs. The roof top gardens were specifically engineered and designed so that their weight would not affect the building structure.

The co-ordinators of the gardens and some of the growers showed us around and made us very welcome. These gardens were tended by an active group of residents some of whom were in their late 70's and 80+ years old.



Specially designed raised garden beds for wheelchair access



Beds for large scale plantings of flowers and vegetables

The other Community garden was set within the Jurong Lake Chinese gardens. This garden was very different and was built with sustainability in mind. The setting was beautiful and a whole host of quirky features were used including recycled bottle hanging gardens and a meeting area using toilet bowl seats among other things. It is called the 2CG garden as it is a **Community Garden** in a **Chinese Garden**. (CG in CG)



Jurong Lake, Chinese gardens



2CG Community Garden



Rice growing



Recycled bottles create a hanging garden



Recycled toilets used as seating



Meeting area under shade

Singapore Botanic Gardens

Paul de la Motte presented an overview of Horticultural Therapy benefits and research whilst visiting the Singapore Botanic gardens (pictures below), and discussed some Australian programs.



Vertical garden



Staff and visitors at Botanic Gardens

Gardens by the Bay

When in Singapore a visit to the Gardens by the Bay is a must. Set on a large area of reclaimed land (over 100ha) on the Singapore foreshore, there is a wide variety of themed gardens including a children's garden, a colonial garden, a cactus/succulent garden and a Chinese garden. As well as this there are two huge glasshouses. One contains many Mediterranean climate plants including an Australian section and the other is for more cool climate rainforest plants and includes a huge man-made waterfall on a man-made mountain.



“Supertrees”



Entry to Children's garden



Waterfall in the glass house



Theme gardens

The main visual feature is the “Supertrees”, which are huge concrete and steel structures that resemble bottle trees. One has a restaurant at the top and they all have solar panels to generate power for the glasshouses.

The whole complex is really too big to see in one day particularly with Singapore’s constant humidity and heat. We were lucky enough to be given a guided tour in a motorized buggy.

Alexandra Health Hospital gardens

We also visited ‘state of the art’ hospital gardens at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital just north of the City.

Features included a large lake with a walking path and viewing tower, extensive relaxation gardens and ponds all through the complex. There is also a medicinal garden, a butterfly garden and what can only be described as a small working farm on the roof.



Courtyard Garden and Pond



Rosalind, Maxel with students at rooftop “farm”

Our host and guide Rosalind Tan gave us a tour and explained that she often referred to the hospital as the “Resort”.



The Medicinal Garden



Lake at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital

Therapeutic Gardening Short Courses in 2014

Saturday 3rd May, 2014

9.00am - 4.30pm (One day course)

Saturday 14th June, 2014

9.00am – 4.30pm (One day course)

Holmesglen Institute, 595 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley

Registration: (03) 9564 1546

Website:

http://www.holmesglen.edu.au/programs/short_courses/house_and_garden/therapeutic_gardening

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