



NEWSLETTER

Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc.

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Issue 1, 2009

Dear Members,

I write this newsletter with great sadness as the recent Victorian bushfires have decimated much of the state and destroyed many lives and homes.

Our thoughts go out to everyone that may have been affected.

At our next Committee meeting we will be discussing how we might be able to help victims of this tragedy in some way.

What a strange start to Summer. I thought the unseasonal cool and relatively moist December might be a sign of a mild summer. Then out of the blue we had that amazing run of "scorchers", and that terrible Saturday when Melbourne had its hottest day on record at 46.4°. I saw Avalon airport reached the staggering temperature of 47.9°.

Not only that, but we had our second driest January on record, and many areas of the state had no rain at all.

All of this, just a recipe for disaster.

The drought has made it difficult for gardeners, but we need to tough it out and keep going. It also made my choice of our next drought tolerant therapeutic plant even more difficult. So this issue we include a real toughie, the Rosemary.

As we mentioned in our last newsletter a major initiative for 2009 is the National Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week from 22 - 29 March, 2009. The aim is to raise community awareness of horticultural therapy as a recognized form of therapy.

We have already organized a couple of events, including a bus tour of some therapeutic gardens in the outer Eastern region on Saturday, 28 March.

If you have something organized and would like it included on our website, let us know.

Also included in this Newsletter are more activity sheets that have been supplied by Diane Relf. The sheets set out detailed directions for running specific activities with clients.

Best wishes
Paul de la Motte

Drought Tolerant Therapeutic Plants

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: Rosemary

Botanical Name: *Rosmarinus officinalis*

Family: Lamiaceae

Rosemary originally comes from the eastern side of the Mediterranean sea, around Greece and Turkey. It's name is derived from "Rose of the Sea" - (Ros - rose, marinus - the sea).

Rosemary is probably one of the most well known and widely used herbs. It is commonly referred to as the remembrance plant.

Generally this hardy perennial grows to 1 to 1.5 meters tall and about the same width. It can be used as a stand alone shrub or pruned into a hedge. It has fine waxy linear shaped leaves which are dark to bright green on top and pale underneath with fine hairs. The small flowers are a pale blue colour. Rosemary is also available in white, mauve and even pink. "Blue Lagoon" has deep blue flowers and *R. officinalis* "Rosea" is a beautiful pink variety.



Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary is a tough drought plant, mainly due to its waxy leaves, and will thrive in most styles of garden where most other plants will shrivel.

Rosemary has many craft uses including pot pourri bags. It is also a valuable culinary herb used in many types of dishes, in particular with lamb.

Rosemary is very easy to propagate from cuttings at anytime of year. In gardens it can be used as a stand alone shrub, in pots, as a hedge or even topiaried into shapes. Overall, a must have plant for any garden.

Therapeutic Gardening Course

**Holmesglen Institute of TAFE is running a weekend course on
Therapeutic Gardening**

Date: 14th & 15th March, 2009

Time: 9am – 5pm

Venue: 585 Waverley Road, Glen Waverley

Enquiries/enrolments-

Tel: 03 9564 1546 or visit www.shortcourses.holmesglen.vic.edu.au

Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week

Sunday 22 - 29 March, 2009

Take time out to 'smell the roses'

Being in a garden is therapeutically beneficial

Activities to do could include –

- ✦ Relaxing outdoors in a healthy environment
- ✦ Outdoor physical activity improves our health and well being
- ✦ Being in the natural environment can help combat stress
- ✦ Eating fresh food straight from the garden is healthy
- ✦ Plant herbs and vegetables for your own supply of fresh food
- ✦ Plant floral displays of colourful / perfumed plants to stimulate the senses
- ✦ Enjoy a morning tea in the garden with your neighbour
- ✦ Help an elderly neighbour with their garden chores
- ✦ Savour vegetables and fruits from different cultures
- ✦ Showcase your therapeutic garden
- ✦ Advertise your event on the websites below

Australian Horticultural Therapy Association www.ahta.org.au Tel: 03 9013 9556
Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria www.htav.org.au Tel: 03 9848 9710

Gardening for Health

at Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre

Tuesday 24 March, 1pm - 3pm

Paul de la Motte will present an informative and interactive workshop on the health benefits of gardening, followed by a tour of the Canterbury Community Garden.

Bookings essential – 9830 4214



HORTICULTURAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

THERAPEUTIC GARDEN TOUR

Date: Saturday, 28th March, 2009

Time: 9.00am – 3.00pm

Tour: Start - 9am – Meet outside Nunawading Library,
Whitehorse Civic Centre, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading
for 9.15am departure.
Parking available behind Whitehorse Civic Centre.

Gardens include –
Hills Community Garden - Cockatoo
Melba Support Services - Mt Evelyn
Kevin Heinze People's Garden, Montrose
The Bridge Community Garden Centre, Kilsyth

3pm - Return to Whitehorse Civic Centre

Cost: Members \$30
Non-members \$35
(Includes morning tea; Please BYO lunch)

RSVP: Monday, 23rd March, 2009

Enquiries: Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria (HTAV)

Telephone: (03) 9848 9710

Email: contactus@htav.org.au

Website: www.htav.org.au

Celebrating National Horticultural Therapy Week - 22–29 March, 2009

Take time out to smell the roses

Activity: Transplanting Herbs to Outdoor Garden Area

Recommended staff/client ratio: 1 staff and 1 volunteer for every 6-12 participants

Estimated time to conduct activity with clients: 40 minutes, depending on size of garden

Estimated time to set up/clean up: 20 minutes/20 minutes

Month for activity: Early spring after the last frost

Materials

- 8-12 week old herb transplants; the number of plants depends on the planned space and planting distance
- Bed with prepared soil
- Hand trowels
- Bright colored labels for each herb that is to be planted
- Small light-weight watering cans or garden hose with adjustable nozzle
- Gloves, aprons, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen

Preparation and Set Up

1. Prepare soil for transplants
2. Decide where the herbs should be planted and make a planting plan.
3. Have bright colored labels for each herb that is to be planted.
4. Harden-off transplants and water plants the day before setting out.
5. Have all material and supplies ready in the planting area.

Procedure

1. Using your planting plan and working as a team, put labels where plants should go. Participants may be able to measure the distance with a ruler, or use a pre-measured spacing guide (such as a stick or mark on a trowel).
2. Demonstrate the process of planting one transplant for the participants.
3. Using hands or a trowel, prepare a hole in the soil where the herb is to be placed. The hole should be the same depth and a bit wider than the container that the transplant is in.
4. Remove herb transplant from its container by turning the container upside down with a hand holding the stem at the soil level, and gently tap the container against a table or other surface to loosen the plant from the pot. For cell packs, gently press on the base of each cell.
5. Place the transplant in the hole and cover the root ball with soil. Gently press down on the soil to ensure that the transplant is secure and supported. Make sure that the transplant is vertical and not leaning.
6. Give each participant one plant at a time to set out to avoid confusion.
7. Following the demonstration, each participant should take turns setting out their plants.
8. Continue to plant herb transplants (as in steps 1-5), spacing plants according to the plan.

9. When all transplants have been planted, water using a watering can or a garden hose with breaker attachment. Apply water until the soil is wet to a depth of approx 15 cms (check with a finger or trowel).

Special Considerations

- ❖ Be sure to use plenty of sun protection- hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, etc.
- ❖ Use gloves, and have access to wash up/baby wipes.
- ❖ Specialized tools are available for participants if needed.
- ❖ The height of the raised bed will determine if participants can sit in chairs while they work. If they will need to stand, have chairs on site so participants can rest if necessary (in shade!).
- ❖ Allow the participants to choose if they would like gloves and a hand trowel, or if they prefer to work with their hands.

Suggestions for Interactions

- ❖ This activity is also great for intergenerational interactions, where the adults and children can assist each other in planting, watering, telling stories, and planning the harvest.
- ❖ Consider using a group approach for planting: divide participants in to three groups, each with a specific task to complete in the process. For example, the first group would lay out the planting pattern and make holes in the soil, the second group would remove the plants from containers and place them in the holes, and the third group would cover the roots with soil. When the group is satisfied that the plants are correctly planted, they can water.
- ❖ Have participants identify the herbs they are planting. Ask if they have ever grown this herb before, and how they used it. Many participants enjoy sharing stories about their own gardens and gardening methods.

Key Questions: 1. *Have you ever planted this herb before?* 2. *How big do you think this plant will be in 6 months time?* 3. *What part of this plant will we be harvesting?*

Horizontal Programming

- ❖ Transplant a collection of herbs into large pots to take home or give to a local school, etc.

Vertical Programming

Downward Extension

- ❖ If a participant is unable to complete all the steps, encourage them to do the steps they can and help them (or have other participants help) with the harder ones. For example, a participant who cannot grasp a hand trowel may be able to lightly press on the soil after the transplant is placed in the hole.
- ❖ If a participant doesn't want to get dirty, they may be willing to simply water the plants once they have been planted.

Upward Extension

- ❖ Higher functioning participants can assist with set up and clean up
- Higher functioning participants can assist participants who cannot complete each task.

Activity: Weeding the Herb Garden

Recommended staff/client ratio: 1 staff and 1 volunteer for every 6-12 participants

Estimated time to conduct activity with clients: 30 minutes

Estimated time to set up/clean up: 20 minutes/20 minutes

Month for activity: Spring through autumn

Materials

- Hand trowel or rakes
- Gloves
- Containers to collect weeds
- Optional: Brightly colored stakes/tags for herbs so they will not be pulled out.

Background

It is important to remove weeds from the garden before they mature and produce seeds. Weeds compete with the herbs for water, nutrients and sun light. Weeds are easier to pull from soil that is moist but not wet. It is important to remove the weeds frequently, especially when they are small and their roots system will not disturb the herb plant as it is pulled.

Preparation and Set Up

1. Identify the presence of weeds in the garden. This may need to be done by the activity facilitators. Participants may need close supervision if they are not able to discern weeds from herbs.
2. Participants may need to wear gloves while weeding. Mark herbs with brightly coloured stakes or tags so that they will not be removed.
3. Make sure that conditions are good for weeding. If the soil is hard and dry it will help to water it a day before weeding.

Procedure

1. Have facilitators assist participants in identifying the plants that are weeds.
2. Some weeds can be pulled by hand by firmly grabbing the weed close to the soil line and pulling (Figure 1).
3. If weeds cannot easily be pulled by hand, scrape the soil surface around herbs with the edge of trowel or hand hoe to loosen approx 1cm of soil (Figure 2). This method works best if weeding is done frequently so that weeds do not get too large.



Figure 2.

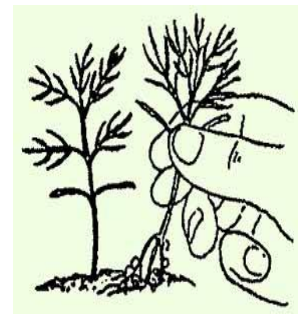


Figure 1

4. Collect weeds in containers and dispose of weeds in a compost bin.

Special Considerations

- ❖ Try to weed in early morning or late afternoon to avoid mid-day heat and sun.
- ❖ Always wear sun protection, including sunscreen and a hat, when working outdoors.

Suggestions for Interactions

Have participants assist each other in identifying weeds. Participants may be able to work in teams where one person pulls weeds while another collects them for the compost bin.

Key Questions

1. Why do we consider this plant to be a weed?
2. Are there any “good” weeds?
3. Have you ever eaten a weed? What kind? How did you prepare it?
4. What is your favorite job to do in the garden? What is your least favorite?

Horizontal Programming

- ❖ Participants who enjoy weeding may also like other maintenance tasks such as mulching or harvesting.
- ❖ Remove dead herbs at the end of the growing season to put in compost bin.

Vertical Programming

Downward Extension

- ❖ Give lots of hands-on help for participants who are having trouble. It may be necessary to point out weeds while the participants pull them.
- ❖ Participants who are not able to pull weeds may collect them for the compost bin.

Upward Extension

- ❖ Have participants determine when weeding is necessary.
- ❖ Have participants assist in determining good conditions for weeding (feeling soil to see if it is moist but not too wet). If soil is too dry, then participants can water it in so that it may be weeded the following day.
- ❖ Have participants who are able to discern weeds from herbs put the brightly colored stakes around herbs.