

DECEMBER  
2011

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

# Beelarong Community Farm



*Time to grow*



Some of the produce from Wednesday open days at the market garden.

## Farm news by Sara Breckenridge

Welcome to the new Management Committee, Ronnie, Brian, Peter, Judith, Di and Helen. I look forward to working with you over the coming year and achieving great things. Thank you Rolf and your management committee for all you did last year, the farm looks wonderful.

At our inaugural November meeting we thought it would be good to include the farm mission statement on newsletters from now on to remind us all of what the founders of the farm had in mind;

*To encourage, educate, share and nurture interest in sustainable living by creating a vibrant community farm within an urban environment.*

You, the volunteer, play a crucial role at the farm in helping achieve this mission statement and we encourage you all to have a cuppa with your fellow allotment holders and volunteers; share a story in the shade; lend a hand and support each other to make this a vibrant and sustainable community farm.

This dry hot weather is testing my mulching and watering skills but is a timely reminder to mulch up in preparation for the long hot summer.

In the school gardens Jacq and I are busily preparing the beds for the summer holidays. With the likelihood of little watering (except from the heavens) we are planting the beds out with melons, snake beans, okra, corn, pumpkins and eggplants in the hope that there will be a fair harvest when we return in February.

I hope you have a good harvest for your Christmas table, happy gardening and I wish you safe and happy holidays.

Sara, President of Beelarong Community Farm.

## Events

### Gold Program

All sessions are \$4 and are held at the farm. To book call the Brisbane City Council on 3403 8470 and ask for the GOLD (Growing Old and Living Dangerously) booking office.

- Recycled gift wrapping - 3/12
- Wrapping paper - 6/12
- No dig Garden - 21/1
- Compost making - 23/1

### Active Parks

Please ring Beelarong Community Farm to make a booking 0401 168 657.

- Make your own dye - 10/12
- Raising seedlings - 17/12
- Compost making - 7/1

### Management Committee

The Beelarong Community Farm's Management Committee meetings are on the first Sunday of the month (except January) from 3pm to 4.30 pm. All members are welcome.

The next two meetings are on 4 December 2011 and 5 February 2012.

# Mysterious 'Chill Out' event

On the 13th of January we'll have Linda Brennan hosting a Chill Out program at the farm. These are designed for the 10 - 17 year old age group.

The workshop is called 'Exploring Mysterious Herbs' and runs from 10-11.30am.

It's Black Friday and there's no better day to be sneaking around the garden exploring mysterious herbs and sensational smells. Take the explorers challenge on a trail that has you discovering weird, wonderful and totally wild herbs. Find out what

repels wizards if you're a Potter fan, how to make cats go all soft and soppy, and lots more - all using herbs. You'll get the chance to start your own herb garden to take home and you'll make a mystery snack for yourself.

## Judith's garden tips by Judith Raue



### Gardening over Summer

In the ideal world you would have prepared your garden for Summer with lots of compost and mulch and your garden would just grow happily by itself with regular watering. However the recent hot dry weather means that a lot of plants are suffering in the heat, as it is not possible to replace a good drenching with rain with watering from a hose. The best thing to do if you are planting new seedlings, apart from watering, is to shade them from the sun. This can be done with either some shade cloth or by planting them next to taller crops such as corn or climbing beans, so they will get some shade during the day. Again, mulch them well as this will help retain the moisture in the soil, reducing the risk of water stress.

### Planting guide over Summer

Now is a good time to put in cucumbers, melons, okra, choko, tomatoes, eggplants, capsicums, beans, as well as corn, lettuce and radish.

### New plant at the community garden: Yacón

Check it out, you can find yacón in one of our greenhouses. The yacón is a perennial plant, originating from the northern and central Andes. Another name for the yacón is Peruvian ground apple, as it has crisp, sweet tasting roots. These edible roots contain inulin, an indigestible sugar, which means although they have a sweet taste, the actual calories are low.

Yacón can easily be grown and grows well in areas where the climate is mild, it can even withstand mild frosts. The plants can grow to over 2m in height, producing small, yellow flowers at the end of the growing season. The yacón produces thick, fleshy edible roots that look similar to a sweet potato. It

also forms smaller, rounded, pinkish tubers that are used to propagate the next crop.

It should be grown in well draining soil and even though it can tolerate drought, regular watering promotes a better crop. To harvest, the entire plant will be lifted from the ground and then the edible roots will be separated from the tubers.

The roots can be eaten raw or cooked. When cooked it will taste like water chestnuts, when eaten raw it can be put into fruit salads or eaten like fruit sticks or even blended into fruit or vegetable juices.

### P.S.

I thought I would keep everyone informed about the Amaranth. I made spinach and feta rolls with them and I could not tell the difference in taste to spinach. As usual the rolls tasted YUM.

# Meet the Beelarong gardener by Amity Sturwohld



Recently retired, Jean Burke lives in a unit in Teneriffe. Starting with pots of vegies on her balcony, it wasn't long before she had extended her green thumb and boundless enthusiasm to Beelarong.

## How did you come to be involved at the garden?

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I first heard about community gardens at a workshop I attended at New Farm library. The idea appealed to me and I did a bit of research and turned up at Beelarong one Wednesday morning and joined other volunteers working in the market garden.

I received such a warm welcome, and enjoyed the social side of the morning tea that I was hooked. After a few months I applied for my own allotment.

## What is your involvement in the garden?

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I have served this year as a member on the committee. I tend my allotment two or three times a week, and volunteer in the market garden on Wednesday mornings.

## What are you growing and what are your plans for Summer?

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I have tried to plant vegies that can cope with Queensland's summer heat and I am already harvesting zucchini, baby squash, silver beet and lebanese cucumber.

## What is your favourite thing to do with your produce?

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I don't think you can beat a plate of steamed vegies you have grown yourself, but I also enjoy pickling my harvest.

I have been quite successful with the old-fashioned "bread and butter pickles" made from a glut of lebanese cucumbers. I'm stocked up with pickled beetroot which goes just fine with a piece of cheese.

## What plants have you seen success with ?

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I suppose the most success I've had is with silverbeet. It has been prolific, and I always come back home from the allotment with a bunch. Fortunately I could eat it every day, and mostly I do. I should have muscles like Popeye by now!

I seem to do well with baby squash which kept me going all last summer. Seems it will be the same again as the three plants I have at the moment are going berzerk.

## What plants are you still trying to conquer ?

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I would love to be successful with

heritage tomatoes, and capture the wonderful taste of a home grown tomato that I remember as a child. I have tried. I have planted and tended with great care, and the dreaded fruit fly beats me every time.

## Any tips to share?

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My only tip would be to get involved with Beelarong. If you have a free Wednesday morning, come along and join other volunteers in the market garden, enjoy a lively morning tea together, and share in the harvest at the end of your labours. And, why not put your name down for a plot and let your imagination run riot? You don't have to stick to lettuce and spuds (not that there's anything wrong with that), but why not try something a bit more exotic such as kohlrabi, asparagus, all the asian greens, the list goes on.

## What is your favourite thing about going to the garden?

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My favourite thing about going to the garden is the peace, the friendship I have found there, and naturally, the joy of growing and harvesting your own produce - nothing like it.

# Volunteer news by Di Ferguson

## Day trip a delight

In late October eleven of our members enjoyed the warm hospitality of Bulimba State School, children, staff and volunteers of the 'Stephanie Alexander Garden/Kitchen Project.

Here, children are encouraged to grow, harvest and cook using produce they have taken from the garden. We were divided up into member groups of two people with five students and a volunteer or teacher and taken on an amazing tour of the extensive terraced gardens. After the tour we were treated to a lovely morning-tea of short-bread biscuits with some ingredients taken from the school produce.

The children were only too happy to answer our questions. Our sincere thanks to all concerned at Bulimba State School.

## Welcome to our new members

A lot of your queries can be answered on our website which is listed at the end of this Newsletter. If you have any other queries please contact a Committee Member either on an open day or by email and we will endeavor to answer your enquiry.



## Changes at the farm

Peter, who does all our mulching, has recently upgraded safety equipment and will soon be locating to a different area at the farm.



The two bays behind the community garden area is now a storage area for our grass contractor, Joe, to deposit grass clippings. This will make the grass more accessible to the compost tumblers.

## New free workshop

We have made arrangements for a Brisbane City Council, Educational Officer to head a very informative FREE workshop at the Farm on a Sunday 29th April, 2012, 9am - 12 noon. "Rethink your Rubbish - A Compost and Worm Farm Workshop".

Keep the date free and mark it in your calendar for next year. A reminder will go in a future newsletter.

## Help needed

PLEASE, PLEASE, if you have any time to assist, even a 15 minute block, with the workload at the Farm, please turn up on an open day and we'll find something for you to do.

## RECIPE- Perfect Italian Pesto

Try this delicious fresh summer recipe using your best basil. Whiz 2 cups firmly packed basil leaves, 1/2cup/8 ozs pine nuts and 2 garlic cloves finely chopped in a food blender. With the motor running add 1/2 cup/125ml of olive oil in a thin, steady stream until combined. Add 1/3cup/25g finely grated parmesan cheese and give the mixture another good whiz.

It's wonderful served on meat or fish or served in a pasta or tossed through boiled potatoes.

## Tip for puffy eyes

Use a round of a cucumber on both eyes and lie down for a few minutes and feel refreshed. Feeling tired in the afternoon? Cucumbers are a good source of B vitamins and carbohydrates providing a quick pick-me-up that can last for hours.

# Help please!



The jobs will be listed on the whiteboard at the farm and also in this fortnightly newsletter.

Choose your preferred job, perform with flair and vive and then cross it off the whiteboard and sign so we know whom to thank. If you have questions, just ask.



## Next edition

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The next edition of the Beelarong newsletter will be in February.

If you have any photos, tips or stories to share about your garden, please email [info@beelarong.org.au](mailto:info@beelarong.org.au) by January 18.

## Bite size tasks for the common garden

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Many hands make light work of the jobs at the farm. Please would you help us with the ongoing gardening maintenance; we want to keep Beelarong productive, good looking and vibrant.

To make this happen tasks will be broken into 15 minute bites and we ask that when you come in to work on your allotment, put aside 15 minutes to work in the common garden area as well.

We can do it with your help.

Thank you!

The Beelarong Farm Committee

## Jobs for December and January

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- 1 Check the white board
- 2 Mowing, just 15 minutes worth
- 3 Weeding in the market garden, just 15 minutes worth

