

March 2015

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

## BEELARONG COMMUNITY FARM

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



You will find flowers planted amongst the vegetables at Beelarong as we encourage bees and 'good' insects and this tree in the Australian native garden is a magnet for the birds.



## Weekly Events



### Wednesdays

**Volunteers** meet every Wednesday morning from 9am to noon and work together in the community garden. Food harvested is shared at the end of the morning. We break for morning tea at 10am. All are welcome.

### Sundays

**The shed** is also open on Sunday mornings from 9am - 11am so that allotment holders may have access to gardening tools.

### Monthly Committee meetings

**Beelarong Management Committee** meet at the farm on the first Sunday of every month (except January) starting at 9am.

All members are welcome to attend the meeting either as an observer or if you wish to come along as a guest to speak about a particular issue.

# A message from the President

Kevin Melican

Our attention has turned to the paths between the allotments and a number of actions have been tried with none of them providing anything but a short term solution. Weed mat, carpet or black plastic covered in wood chips looks good for a time but is no match for our nemesis the nut grass weed.

We are currently trying a thick layer of crusher dust with cement added and raked in. If this is found to be unsuccessful we will consider concreting and any other alternatives members can suggest.



I hope that many will get behind the scarecrow competition. The sight of 20 plus scarecrows scattered around the allotments would create a lot of interest and is a great way to get some publicity for the farm.



Our first scarecrow

By dusk on the 7th March we will have a cob/pizza oven built. I encourage anyone who has an interest in this to register for the workshop and join in the fun.



With all the moisture in the ground it's an ideal time to dig out those weeds in your allotments. Every allotment in part represents the interest, consideration and care allotment holders have for both Beelarong and their fellow members so for those lot holders who continually neglect their allotments please consider the interests of others and if you cannot commit to tending your allotment then it would be better for all if you do not re-let your allotment. There is always plenty of work in the community areas of the farm to keep members involved and making a difference.



We recently had a driller out in search of useable water for the farm which would have reduced our water bill. After 84 metres of drilling nothing suitable was found and the bore was capped. I would like to thank Marion on behalf of Beelarong for her efforts in getting us as far as we did with this project.

## Around the farm

Past President Marion Forrest reported that in the recent search for water on the farm, well drilling went down a huge 84 metres. The contractor said they went through 6 metres of clay then into the sandstone and shale where they often find fresh water but no go for us. He only found a few stratas in amongst the sandstone with some water flows but with only a rate of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the normal hose pressure = not enough to warrant putting down casing piping to bring water to the surface.

Marion pointed out an ironic twist to this search for water - Beelarong took a gamble with funds from the Gambling Benefit Fund.

The drilling crew in action.



Heather and her merry band of volunteers rolling one of the compost bins last week. They could hardly do it for laughing.

## Sincere thanks to aLUNZ and Robi - by Di Ferguson

To those of you who have been members of Beelarong Community Farm for some years, you will remember aLUNZ and Robi, who had an allotment for over seven years. They were instrumental in setting up our much needed website which really helped in promoting the farm, expanding our contacts to the wider community and providing information to anyone interested in organic gardening. Their work in establishing the site was greatly appreciated. They are keen gardeners and every weekend you would find them attending, as aLUNZ's would say, 'their little farmlet'. This is where their social connections were made with other members, as they worked during the week.

They now have their own veggie plot at a new home, turning a dilapidated spa into a wicking veggie patch with the help of a fellow from BOGI (Brisbane Organic Growers). Even with this hot summer, they have managed to grow heirloom lettuce, kale, carrots, capsicum, bok choy, spring onions, celery and beans. They have also produced a Torquay lime, Eureka lemon tree and a few natives to attract the birds and bees.



*The dilapidated spa wicking garden under construction and the finished garden newly planted.*



Below, are their thoughts of their time at Beelarong.

“For the record, we've had a wonderful time at Beelarong and made many good friends, with a common love of this earth and what she's capable of producing. We've learned so much and have enjoyed sharing our knowledge as we've increased it over the years. We're forever grateful for those who have given so much of their own time to this great little community. Thank you to the Committee for all their hard work and also members who sometimes assist the Committee or deal with other chores at the farm. Hopefully you'll let us pop over and compare veggies some time and keep us on the mailing list for the newsletter which is a great read and I'm sure takes lots of time to put together.”

\* aLUNZ and Robi wish to thank everyone for their support during aLUNZ's recent illness. It is much appreciated.

## BOOK REVIEW by Marion Forrest

### *Dark Emu Black Seeds* by Bruce Pascoe

This book tells of a tale with lots of early Australian explorers words depicting what exactly they found such as:

“King on the doomed Burke and Wills expedition, found a store of grain in an Aboriginal house, which he estimated at four tons.”

“Hewitt, on another search party for Burke and Wills, also found large stores of nardoo.” His comment on this find of ‘delicious grain’ was that it was ‘a pity we did not take more’.

Other quotes from the book:

“The efficiency of the fish traps were designed to allow the passage of breeding stock to pass through so that upstream fisheries could gain a share. The systems were managed and used by particular families - but those families had responsibilities for the secure provision of fish to the families and systems upstream and downstream from their location.”

“Aboriginal Australian law insisted that the land was held in common and that people were the more temporal custodians. Individuals were responsible for particular trees, rivers, lakes and stretches of land but only so these could be delivered forward to the next generation in accordance with law.”

I am now only starting to realise this Australian Aboriginal law produced a much more complex and sustainable Aboriginal history than I had previously imagined.

The book is in the library system. I found it well worth a read.

## A COUPLE OF REMINDERS from John O'Donnell

### **TICK ALLERGY**

There was a program on the ABC recently on *Catalyst* that dealt with ticks and the safe way to remove them. It dealt specifically with a meat allergy on the rise in Australia and the surprising cause - a tick bite. It's worth checking out the link below.

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4177191.htm>

### **HEAVY LIFTING**

There have been a couple of incidents of back strain at the farm by heavy lifting recently. It's hard to say 'no' when asked to help lift and chiropractors do not come cheap.

John has asked me to remind members that we have a tractor to lift anything heavy and it's no trouble.

# Whatever happened to summer?

by Alex Mathers

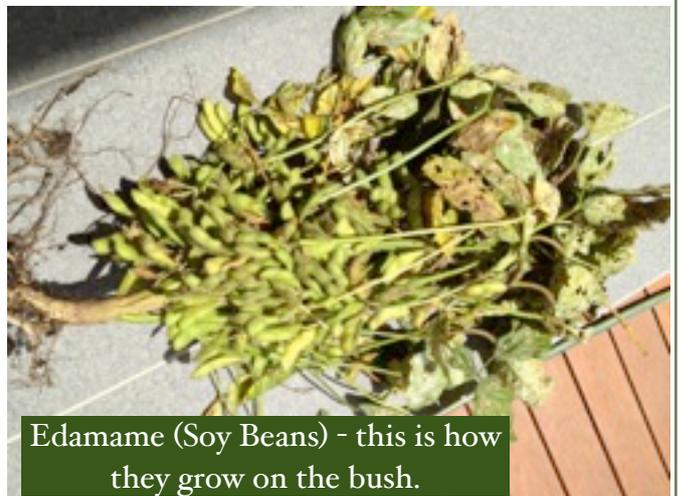
Here we are at the end of summer already. Let's look back a little at what we have done. You may remember planting some Snake Beans if you were quick enough to grab a small bag when I put them out a few months ago. If so, you should now be harvesting and cooking fresh Snake Beans. Jean and Kevin have been enjoying an excellent production. Mine is less so because I chopped them back severely before leaving to go on holiday. Remember; pick 'em before they start to swell. If you can see the shape of the bean inside the pod, it may be a bit late. If you just want the bean let the pods go brown and dry. Then you can dry the beans for soup and keep some for next season's planting.

You may also remember that I had planted some Edamame (Soy Beans) and we have harvested two bushes with good results. Another bush had unfortunately been left too long and has been relegated for composting. This is a lesson for us. The window of opportunity for Edamame is short. The pods on a bush will mature all at the same time and need to be picked when green. If they turn yellow/brown, it is too late. You could leave them for seeds but we didn't this time. There are some tricks to growing Edamame that I would be happy to share with anyone interested in taking on the challenge next season.



Edamame (Soy Beans)

The immature soy beans are steamed in their pods. You can either sprinkle with salt or soak in soy sauce. Squeeze the pod and pop the beans in your mouth. Discard the pods as they are inedible.



Edamame (Soy Beans) - this is how they grow on the bush.

Our Peanuts have come along nicely and so far, it looks as if everything is doing well. We will know in a few weeks when they come out.

Once the Edamame and Peanuts are finished and harvested, we can turn our attention to autumn and winter vegies. All the usual things will come into consideration, although there are a few favourites of course. March is the time for planting Silver Beet, Beetroot, French Beans, Bush Beans, Broad Beans, Asian vegies such as Pak Choi, Cabbage (but too early for Savoys, my favourite) Capsicum, Chilli, Cauliflower, Celery, Carrots, Lettuce, Leeks, Radishes, Shallots, and Tomatoes. How good is that? A magnificent list of fresh produce to look forward to.

Feed your soil. All this recent heavy rain may have washed some of the goodness from your patch. Add plenty of organic material such as compost and manures. Some dressing with Blood and Bone will also help replenish the soil.

Happy Gardening      Alex

# WORKSHOPS at Beelarong

Wear sun protection and comfortable clothing and footwear as appropriate for the activity you are participating in. Bring drinking water.

## Monoprinting **CANCELLED**

~~Tue, 10 March, and~~

~~Tue, 17 March~~

## Cob Oven Building workshop

Sat, 7 March, 10am - 3pm

Learn to build your own cob oven

The cost is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. The fee includes a full 'hands-on' experience in building a cob oven, morning tea and lunch.

**Booking essential. Payment to be made to secure your reservation, numbers limited**

For bookings and payment details phone Jean on 0412 699 082.

## No dig garden.

Sat, 14 March, 9:30 - 11:30am

Establish a veggie patch with a no dig garden and plant up with seasonal veggies.

Cost: Free

Bookings: Required - Contact Beelarong

Community Farm 0401 168 657

Age: 50+

## Gardening - seed saving and plant propagation

Thu, 23 April, 9:30 - 11:30am

Learn various propagating methods and how to save seeds for another cropping season.

Cost: Free

Bookings: Required - Contact Beelarong

Community Farm 0401 168 657

Age: 50+

## Gardening - compost and worm farm workshop

Sat, 16 May, 9:30 - 11:30am

Find out how to turn kitchen waste into rich nutrients for your garden! Brisbane City Council will host this workshop to provide practical information about different methods of composting. You will learn the principles of successfully managing organic waste to enrich your garden.

Cost: Free

Bookings: Required - Contact Brisbane City

Council on (07) 3403 8888

Age: 50+

## A VISIT TO VASILIS GARDEN

You may have enjoyed *Vasili's Garden*, an Australian television gardening program on SBS hosted by Vasili Kanidiadis.

Bill and Narda met Vasili and Big Bird Jason at his Nursery in Melbourne recently. They had a lovely time chatting and got two of his books signed.

Here's a happy snap with Narda and the man himself, Vasili.



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## A NEW RAIN WATER TANK

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The new tank was delivered this week. It's the huge cream and black object standing behind the guys who helped unload it, Bob, John and Kevin.

Our thanks to the Enactus Group students from Griffith University for generously donating and installing a new rain water tank behind the shed on Sunday 8th March.

Beelarong volunteer Bob McConachie will be supervising.

This will be the second rain water tank donated by the Enactus Group.

The students will also be assisting with laying new footpaths and other jobs around the farm.

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**YOU CAN NOW CHECK OUT BEELARONG COMMUNITY FARM ON FACEBOOK**