Welcome to the Winter 2015 edition of Streets Alive & Community Gardens news

Welcome to the Winter 2015 edition of Streets Alive News. This winter has seen some very chilly days in North Sydney with the second day of June reaching its coldest morning in five years. Despite the time of year, Streets Alive continues to build momentum with residents in Cremorne Point, Neutral Bay and Kirribilli taking the opportunity to establish and prepare new gardens in their streets in preparation for spring planting.

Our Streets Alive program was acknowledged recently at the 2015 Parks and Leisure Australia Awards of Excellence. Streets Alive won the award for Inclusive and Connected Communities against a competitive field. Contributing to the win was the successful manner in which the program engages a broad range of community members at a street level and addressing some of the many challenges of living in a highly urbanised area by creating opportunities to overcome social isolation. The Streets Alive volunteers and staff maintain four community gardens and countless sites. Well-done to all the volunteers.

We’re now automatically entered into the National Awards for consideration later in the year.

AROUND THE STREETS ALIVE PROJECTS

GREEN STREET, CREMORNE

Hedera helix, better known as Ivy, is a hardy and a robust under planting, but over time it can have a tendency to be invasive, requiring maintenance to keep it under control. Stuart from Cremorne decided to remove the existing Ivy and weeds from a parcel of land adjacent to Green Street – his vision is to replant the area with more appealing, bird attracting vegetation. After several working bees, the site has been terraced, planted and mulched. Stuart and his neighbours plan on continuing the work further down Green Street.
**Sinclair and Bruce Streets, Wollstonecraft**

Denise has been tidying and planting out small pockets of Council land for many years. She has recently taken on the road blisters on the corner of Sinclair and Bruce Streets, Wollstonecraft. Denise took it upon herself to remove all the existing struggling vegetation, then she contacted Council for some plants. The newly planted grevilleas are a compact form that will fill the space nicely on maturity. The winter flowering grevilleas will brighten up the intersection.

**Mil Mil Street, Blues Point**

If you’re thinking of softening a wall, *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, better known as Star Jasmine is an ideal choice. Naoko, from Mil Mil Street, was interested in creating some green space along a wall adjacent to Lady Mary Reserve. Streets Alive supplied her with some plants after Council’s stonemasons installed some sandstone edging to create a garden bed.
AROUND THE STREETS ALIVE PROJECTS

**Whatmore Lane, Waverton**

Local volunteer Vera has been the convenor of many Streets Alive sites for over 10 years, actively working Balls Head Road, Brennan Park, Bridge End, King Street and Wakelin Reserve. Over the last few years the tireless efforts of Vera and other dedicated local volunteers have created a wonderful public space on railway land at Whatmore Lane – a great reflection of the community spirit at Waverton.

Here is an account of the site by Vera:

On a Sunday in May 2012 a group of Waverton locals met with Ralph Forinash on the Whatmore Lane railway land. The fence had been moved towards the train line away from the path, giving us access to a good area of vacant land. The area was full of rubbish – railway waste, stones, gravel, metal, wood, broken glass, litter and weeds and we cleared much of it, although several bin loads of broken glass and metal continued to be removed over the following months.

In October North Sydney Council covered the lower part with grass lawn, leaving the lovely sandstone areas exposed. Park benches were installed, on the sandstone rock, in 2013. One can sit here in peace and quiet and look down on Waverton station and beyond.

Heather, JoU McMath and I collected bricks from local demolition sites to edge the plant beds.

We planted over 30 tubestock native plants. All exposed areas were mulched. Tree logs and trunk cuttings have been used for seating and edging. Sandstone blocks make paths and shape the garden beds. Everything used has been recycled from the Waverton area. Planting, watering, mulching and stone edging have been continued.

In August 2013 a group met to ring bells in memory of Hiroshima Day. The word PEACE was written in smooth stones on one of the rock platforms.

These stones are used by many locals now for messages of peace and goodwill, and it is interesting to see how many people stop to read the latest version.

The area with its seating is well used by many on their way to and from Waverton station, people working with laptops, having lunch or just resting. Children clamber over the logs and stones and go through a bushy track.

Vera Yee, Streets Alive volunteer

← Photos

**Brothers Memorial Reserve, Fifth Avenue, Cremorne**

A steep embankment plus willing locals equals a pleasing result. Brothers Memorial Reserve is one of the latest additions to the growing number of Streets Alive Sites. Here is an account by Ramin Khosravi, Bushland Project Officer who often lends his hand to Streets Alive projects:

Neighbours Robyn and Lester teamed up to adopt a section of steep and unused Council land. Robyn and Lester’s main aim was to soften the landscape, provide screening and habitat for birds and insects, suppress weeds, reduce the need for mowing on the steep bank and improve amenity value to the reserve by introducing flowering plants.

The project has proved to be very resourceful as the logs used for terracing and the mulch all came from a neighboring property at no cost. All the plants came from the “Community Nursery” at the Coal Loader where volunteers grow the plants for the community.

So if you happen to be in the area do take a look and see the change in making.

Main plant species used for this project include: *Grevillea linearifolia*, *Grevillea sericea*, *Indigophora australis*, *Polargonium austral*, *Acacia ulicifolia*, *Acacia seuaviolens*, *Acacia sophora*, *Banksia ericifolia*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Pultanea daphnoides*

Ramin Khosravi, Bushland Project Officer
Juniperus conferta is a hardy ground cover whose origins can be traced back to Japan, where it grows on sand dunes. It's a member of the Cupressaceae family, and is known for its dense green and slightly prickly aromatic foliage.

It grows to a height of 30cm and can spread as wide as 2m, which makes it an ideal groundcover or border planting for those difficult to grow sites. It will provide a thick cover all year round (while suppressing weeds), and best of all it requires minimal maintenance once established.

Shore Juniper is often used in areas such as rockeries, roadside and seaside plantings, planters and other sites where most other plants fail. This versatile Juniper is also popular amongst bonsai enthusiasts, due to its fine foliage and hardy nature.

Propagation can be done through cuttings, along with the use of a rooting hormone which will assist new growth. Plenty of water is required during the early stages of establishment but only needs minimal watering once a solid root base is formed. Mulching during these early stages will also assist in retaining moisture content and suppressing any potential weeds.

There are many cultivars available, most of which have been developed for ornamental uses. Popular cultivars include All Gold, Blue Pacific and Silver Mist.

This Juniper is an excellent choice if you're looking for a low maintenance groundcover for difficult to grow sites or are interested in starting bonsai.

For those who are interested in learning more about bonsai you can find a club through the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs at http://www.aabcld.org/find-a-bonsai-club-nsw, and also the Bonsai Society of Sydney at http://bonsaisociety.org.au

Hugh Goodman, Streets Alive Project Officer
Mayor Jilly Gibson officially opened North Sydney Council’s fourth community garden at Forsyth Park in late February. Close to 60 volunteers and residents celebrated with us on the day, many of whom brought in home cooked food platters made from fresh ingredients from the community garden.

The Milson Park Community Garden has been growing some impressive crops this year. Volunteer JoU, reaps the rewards of his labour, as he proudly shows of the sweet potato crop he planted and attended to earlier in the year.
Communities making our streets living spaces

COAL LOADER COMMUNITY GARDEN

There has been plenty of activity down at the Coal Loader community garden this year with Costa Georgiades and the ABC’s Gardening Australia Team visiting. Gardening volunteer Ray said that, ‘the visit by Costa was an enjoyable, interesting experience which has brought the Coal Loader Platform into sharp focus and encourages everyone to check it out’.

Refer to the Gardening Australia episode at http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s4205988.htm

KURRABA POINT COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Kurraba Point community gardeners have been hard at it in the last few months. They are not only attending to the veggies and herbs but also concentrating on the ornamental plantings of the garden which is the underlying foundation of the garden’s unique charm.

Mandy has been doing a great job of coordinating the gardening group and Reg’s passion for gardening has seen the garden transformed with the installation of new garden beds, and ornamental plantings that display plenty of colour and texture.

Kurraba Point Community Garden welcomes new volunteers. Contact Streets Alive and Community Garden coordinator on 9936 8283.
North Sydney Council also provides support to the **Neutral Bay Uniting Community Garden** and for the past two years it has won first place in the North Sydney Council’s Sustainability Awards. Their philosophy is to, “Use what we have to the fullest without wasting anything whilst being environmentally friendly.”

The garden was established in 2012 with support from North Sydney Council. It is situated on the corner of Yeo and Barry Streets on what was a very narrow strip of lawn. The garden now has over 100 plant varieties, including fruits, vegetables, fragrant plants, succulents and herbs.

The garden is enjoyed by all ages – children from the Children’s Learning Centre water the garden every Tuesday and Thursday and learn the basics of gardening including planting and composting. Adults, seniors and families enjoy the therapeutic benefits of actively gardening and simply relaxing in the garden.

The essence of the garden is its sense of community, a place to meet and share. Recently, a “Share the Harvest” community garden exchange kiosk was installed, which invites neighbours to bring something from their home garden and take what they like from the garden’s harvest.


Now is the ideal time to start planning and preparing for your spring crop and that’s what’s happening in many of our community gardens right now.
It has been a transitional but productive and busy period for Streets Alive with Ralph Forinash retiring last year and the subsequent process of acquiring a new project officer. Please welcome our new Streets Alive Project Officer Hugh Goodman who has joined the Streets Alive team.

See you in the garden, Randal Shaw and Hugh Goodman.

NORTH SYDNEY
GARDEN
COMPETITION

Entries close 18 Sept
Judging 21 Sept - 2 Oct
Presentation 14 Oct

And gardeners and proud green thumbs are invited to show off their creative flair in the 2015 North Sydney Garden Competition. Entry is free and open to all residents in the North Sydney local government area. Entries close Friday 18 September, gardens judged weekdays, Monday 21 September to Friday 2 October. Presentation event for all entrants Wednesday 14 October.

Thank you for constant and long-lasting service to the community through Streets Alive.

It’s on again! The North Sydney Garden Competition is back, bigger and better than ever. Nominations close 18 September. There are more categories than ever before including Urban Forest and Edible Garden. For more information and to download an entry form, go to Council’s website www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/gardencomp

Want to receive a printed copy of this newsletter?

We are transitioning to electronic versions of the Streets Alive Newsletter. If we have your email address you will receive only an email, unless you have told us you want a hard copy.

If you wish to receive a printed copy (or both electronic and printed), let us know by sending an email stating your preference.

If you have received a printed newsletter and want to get it by email, send an email to randal.shaw@northsydney.nsw.gov.au

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