

Spring 2006

green living



IN GOSFORD
NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Welcome to the Spring issue of Green Living News!

Spring is finally here and so is the time of clearing the clutter and spending time outside.

Inside this issue

- Spring cleaning chemical free!
- On the way to sustainability - A Community Eco-garden
- How waterwise is your garden?
- Petrol prices - fuel for action
- What to do with unwanted clutter.
- Weeding our way to a healthier environment

WHAT'S ON this Spring

Green Living Workshops

- **Natural Gardening - Part 1**
Sun 29 Oct 10am or Wed 8 Nov 1pm
- **Natural Gardening - Part 2**
Sun 12 Nov 10am or Wed 22 Nov 1pm
- **Cleaning with Less Chemicals**
Fri 10 Nov 1pm or Sat 25 Nov 9.30am
- **Energy, Water and Waste Wisdom**
Thurs 26 Oct 1pm or Sat 2 Dec 9.30am

All workshops are FREE and last for 3 hours. Refreshments and lunch provided and bookings are essential.

All participants will receive a free green living pack and a workshop guide.

For more information or to book email green.living@gosford.nsw.gov.au or call 4325 8175.

See page 4 for more great workshops and activities.

Spring Cleaning the chemical free way!

It's that time of year when many of us start the yearly spring cleaning frenzy. How about cleaning green this year by going chemical free?

Cleaning chemical free is simple, effective, less expensive and have been used for generations - your grandparents would have used similar recipes! It is less toxic for your family as it replaces harmful substances, such as bleach. The environmental benefits include reducing waste from packaging, pollution from manufacturing and chemicals released into our waterways.

If going chemical free, change one product at a time until you feel comfortable with it. Try the recipes below or come along to a Cleaning with Less Chemicals workshop to get started. If this is not for you, try non-chemical cleaning clothes!

Clean and dry disposable cleaning clothes or sponges to reduce waste. Hang them in the sun, to kill germs and bacteria.

Shopping List - most of these ingredients can be found in your local supermarket

The main ingredients are:

- vinegar
- bi-carbonate of (baking) soda
- borax
- pure soap
- lemon juice

Other common ingredients are:

- washing soda
- hydrogen peroxide (3%)
- salt
- eucalyptus oil
- olive oil

Some things to remember: Always test small amounts first. Keep in mind that borax is poisonous if swallowed, eucalyptus oil can be poisonous in large amounts, and only small amounts of essential oils (a few drops) should be used.

All Purpose Cleaners

- 4 tbsp baking soda
- 1 litre warm water
- 1 tbsp lemon juice or vinegar

OR

- 1/2 cup pure soap - grated
- 4 litre hot water
- 1/4 cup lemon juice or vinegar

For both recipes mix and place in spray bottle.

Toilet Bowl Cleaners

- 1 cup borax
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- Mix to a paste. Wet sides of the bowl, rub.

OR

- 1 cup borax
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- Sprinkle borax on bowl, drizzle with vinegar.

For both recipes leave for several hours and scrub.



On the way to sustainability!

A Community Eco-garden

The Kariong Eco-garden is a place where the community can join together to learn how to be sustainable in their homes and gardens.

Lisa Wriley one of the founders of the Eco-Garden describes the gardens as “A working, living place which gives people the chance to come and learn with others.”

Through community volunteer efforts and community workshops, the garden has progressed from an empty block of land to the beginnings of an ecologically sustainable haven.

Most of the resources used to develop the garden are re-used household or building materials. The garden is designed to have a closed loop for energy, water and waste. Rainwater tanks will collect roof runoff to water the gardens and solar panels will run night lighting and the frog pond pump. All organic waste produced onsite will be composted or fed to the worms, with future plans to take food scraps from other local organisations. The Eco-garden has no-dig gardens, a bush tucker garden, the beginnings of a frog pond, compost bays and worm-farms.

The Kariong Eco-Garden has a great atmosphere with picnic tables and benches and can be visited by the community at any time. The Garden holds tours for community groups, workshops and working bees for those who are keen to be involved.



Where:

Dandaloo Street, Kariong - corner of Woy Woy Road. Behind the Kariong Progress Hall, adjacent to the rear tennis court.

How to get involved:

Working bees are held most Mondays from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Contact CEN on 4349 4756 for more information.

How waterwise is your garden?

Trying to keep the garden growing can be a real challenge in these times of drought and water restrictions. So where does your garden stand and what else can you do to reduce your water use?

Use this waterwise checklist on your garden:

- Do you follow water restrictions? Make sure you keep up to date with current restriction levels.
- Is your whole garden mulched? Mulch is best applied at the beginning of spring, while the soil is still cool.
- Have you planted many Australian native plants or drought tolerant plants?
- Are outdoor taps and pipes checked regularly for leaks? Leaks can waste about 700 litres of water each week.
- Do you sweep or rake paths, patios and driveways instead of cleaning them with water?
- Have you applied wetting agents to your soil? This will slowly release water into the plant's root system.
- Has organic matter such as compost been added to the soil to improve water retention?
- Do you remove weeds? These compete with other plants for water.
- Is your lawn at least two centimetres long? This will shade the roots and help retain moisture.
- Are your pots plastic, glazed or painted? These are less porous and save water.

If you do most of these you are well on your way to being a waterwise gardener. Below are some advanced steps to a waterwise garden, does your garden incorporate any of these?

- Have you installed a water tank? Great for the garden but even better if you can connect it inside (*keep water restrictions and Council requirements in mind*).
- Are plants with similar watering needs (or similar species) grouped together?
- Are your plants located according to the amount of sun and heat exposure?
- Is your garden designed to take into account soil types (sandy, clay and loam)?
- Is your lawn a slow growing, water saving variety, with deep roots for drought tolerance?

To find out more about come to a Natural Gardening or Energy, Water and Waste Wisdom workshop or contact your local nursery.

Eco Myth Buster

Myth: Recycling needs to be washed before being put in the bin.

Fact: Recyclables don't need to be washed but must be empty. So tip out any liquid and scrape out food remains like dog food.

If you do like to wash or rinse your recyclables do several items at once with the plug in.

Petrol prices - fuel for action

With current petrol prices, the financial cost of an average family's transport each year is estimated at \$7,700. The environmental cost of transport is also high; with the average family generating about six tonnes of greenhouse gas, mostly due to petrol use of cars. Help reduce your petrol expenses and greenhouse gas emissions by trying these easy tips.

- 1. Servicing and maintenance** - Have your vehicle regularly serviced and update records to help you keep track. Make sure your tyres are at the correct pressure. These help to keep your car running more efficiently, which means there is less fuel consumption and less air pollution.
- 2. Plan ahead** - Do as many tasks as possible in the same trip, such as shop on the way home from work or school. Substitute one car trip each week with walking or public transport if this is an option. The less we travel by car the less cost for us and the environment.
- 3. The way you drive** - A car driven smoothly will use around 30% less fuel than a car driven with fast accelerating, sudden braking or in stop-start traffic. The way you drive your car is an important factor in determining fuel economy.
- 4. Fuel efficiency** - Consider fuel consumption and your transport needs when buying a car. All new cars have a label that indicates approximately how many litres of fuel the car will use to travel 100 kilometres in city driving conditions. Go to www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au to compare the fuel efficiency of vehicles.
- 5. Wind resistance and weight** - Remove roof racks and external sunvisors from your vehicle when they're not needed and save up to 5% on fuel costs. Also, remove unnecessary weight, such as tools and luggage, from the car for a further 5% off fuel costs. The less wind resistance and weight makes moving easier and uses less petrol.



One person's trash can be another's treasure!

What to do with unwanted clutter when spring cleaning this year.

Think about the items you are planning to throw away or don't use anymore, are they still in good condition? If the answer is yes think about these options:

- **Donate them to a local charity** - some organisations even collect large items.
- **Give to friends or family** - especially kids toys and clothes as they grow out of them before they wear out.
- **Have a garage sale** - and make some pocket money.
- **Reuse items** - be creative, a bath tub makes a great worm farm or frog pond and tyres make great no-dig gardens.

Don't put broken items in the charity bin as most charity organisations don't have the resources or facilities to fix them. Remember always wash clothes first.

Weeding our way to a healthier environment

Many plants growing in our gardens are environmental weeds. They can spread into bushland, posing a threat to our natural environment. Here are two environmental weeds you can remove from your garden before they reach native bushland.



Mother of millions - has red bell-shaped flowers and succulent leaves.

Remove by pulling up plants by hand. Store in a black plastic bag or dark space until completely decayed. Make sure no leaves fall off to prevent leaf fragments becoming new plants.



Asparagus Fern - has short spikey leaves on long stems and small red berries.

Remove any berries then hold the stems together so the woody base is visible. Insert a knife or small shovel at an angle and sever the roots from the base of the plant. The watery tubers attached to the roots can be left.

Tips on controlling environmental weeds

1. Learn about the plants in your garden - are any of them environmental weeds in disguise? If yes, get rid of them.
2. Garden waste that is illegally dumped near the bush can spread weeds. Report dumping to Council on 4325 8222.
3. You should not remove or interfere with vegetation outside your property. If you are interested in preserving native vegetation in your area join a local Bushcare group. Contact Geoff on 4325 8169 or Robyn on 4325 8195 for details.

What's on in Spring

All workshops are FREE and bookings are essential!

Plastic bags - kick the habit!

Thurs 2 Nov: Kick-off - Kibble Park Gosford, 1pm.

Activities throughout November.

Details - www.gosford.nsw.gov.au or call 4325 8175.

Recycler of the Year - Nominations open for School, Business, Community Group & Household.

Details - call 4325 8266 or

email james.lawson@gosford.nsw.gov.au

Thurs 21 Sept: **Bush Foods Workshop**, 10am to 4pm.

Contact Geoff on 4325 8169 or Robyn on 4325 8195

Neighbourhood Centres - Eco Living Workshops

Thurs 21 Sept: Recycling Tour, 10am – 12pm.

Wed 4 Oct: Composting & Worm Farming, 10 to 11.30am.

Sat 28 Oct: Composting & Worm Farming.

Wed 15 Nov: Recycling & Composting , 9am - 3pm.

Thurs 16 Nov: Chemical Free, 10am to 12pm.

Kariong Neighbourhood Centre - Ph: 43401 724

Green Point Community Centre - Ph: 4367 7591

Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre - Ph: 4363 1044

GREEN LIVING NEWS

Would you like to be included on the mailing list? Need to update your address? Do you have a great tip or story you would like to share, or a comment on what should be included in the next newsletter?

Call Council's Environmental Education Officer on 4325 8175 or email: green.living@gosford.nsw.gov.au

Kariong Eco Garden

Sun 24 Sept: Backyard Biodiversity, 2 - 4pm.

Mon 9 Oct: Waste Reduction, 10 am - 1pm.

Mon 16 Oct: Waterwise Gardening, 10am - 12noon.

Sat 11 Nov: Waste Reduction, 10am - 1pm.

Sat 25 Nov: Community Waste Forum, 10am - 1pm.

Bookings - Kariong Neighbourhood Centre 4340 1724.

Woy Woy Environment Centre - from 10.30am

Sat 23 Sept: EcoVillages.

Sat 7 Oct: Water Saving.

Sat 14 Oct: LETS Trading Day.

Sat 21 Oct: Waterwatch: Spring bug survey.

Sat 18 Nov: Bushtucker Field Trip - Ourimbah

Contact Zainem on 4342 6589 for more information.