

Garden Managers` Report for MCG 2016 [Harley Delves ,Jocelyn Sussman]

1 Produce grown together and shared -see list.

The communal area was extended and diversified to include a greater variety of vegetables herbs, and perennials and fruit.

2 Markets;

Excess produce was on several occasions taken to Ulladulla and given to the Community Centre for the needy, as well as being sold at the Murramarang Market.

The MCG participated in all 7 of these markets .

The total raised by members at these markets was \$ 4313

This included a sausage sizzle at ANU where we were kindly invited to take the profit if we cooked for a book launch.

3 Construction of a new herb garden.

Thanks to designer, and chief organiser Sybille Davidson, a new pyramidal structure has been erected to enhance our entrance.

In Spring 2015 Bunnings` s community liason person Vicky Sanson offered to help the MCG with a donation of timber, plants and a wheelbarrow as well as labour to complete this project. It is now thriving, and we are considering paving around it to facilitate access by disabled people.

4 Loading Ramp;

Harley and Doug Howarth worked on and completed a new loading ramp for Doug to load and unload his own ride-on mower with which he kindly mows our extensive lawns.

Many thanks to Doug and Peter White who have mowed all year to keep the MCG looking great.

5 Solar Power;

Solar panels and wiring were installed and the final cheque written in February 2016.

The installer Lumen Solar is credited on our website, together with the Veolia Trust whose initial grant enabled the establishment of the MCG.

6 Built-up garden beds;

Our wonderful regular workers [mostly Harley] built up and filled with soil and plants ,two new strawberry beds and an extra bed for rhubarb, and extended the asparagus bed.

An important decision has been made to upgrade all single beds to 2-boarder beds to improve drainage and depth of soil. This is on-going.

7 Garlic .

Last season we were disappointed that our big fat garlic bulbs were inundated with torrential rain just before harvest. Subsequently many bulbs rotted and the crop was severely diminished. We were therefore not able to charge premium prices for the crop which we had been hoping would keep us in the black for years to come. We had many local restuarants and buyers looking forward to buying our crop.

In order to be better informed, Harley and Ewen and Maggie Davidson and Jocelyn attended the Braidwood Growers` meeting and were invited to inspect the crop of Gilles Bonin. We learnt the importance of spreading the crop between early and late varieties, and many other things which we hope will enhance our skills.

We have now planted 7 different varieties of garlic in 7 beds, most of them built up to improve drainage. We wish to spread the harvest and keeping time of our crop, and the risk; as well as try for a longer shelf life, and just see which varieties suit our conditions better.

8 Beehive.

We have been lucky enough to be given a beehive and its residents by Col Keating. It was installed by Col ,and Harley, and Roger Jenkins.

Col told us the bees would be quiet all Winter and wake with the warmth of Spring. Maggie Davidson may dispute this; but we know that bees get mad when chain-saws and perhaps whipper-snippers are used close to them.

9 Windbreaks.

These are mostly thriving despite some having been planted into water. The casualties have been noted and more co-operative varieties favoured. Bush tucker plants have been incorporated when suitable places have appeared.

Sadly, the original northern windbreak trees include some which are rapidly turning into giants, so we will have to call in Jack who made his name felling not the giant, but the giant bean. Some of our members and others are pretty handy with chain-saws.

10 Lessons learned;

Drainage, drainage, drainage.

That northern windbreaks shade the northern beds, and the root-run of large trees is in danger of starving the citrus orchard.

11 Plans;

More raised beds; installing a pipeline for better watering; irrigation.

12 Life without Barriers

Recently a group from this organisation requested, and has been given time at the MCG with some of our volunteers. So far, three visits have eventuated in happy participants.

13 Many thanks to our wonderful members, some of whom are new, who co-operate so consistently and work so hard to keep the MCG a friendly and successful organisation. Some have already been mentioned, but one in particular we would like to select for special mention; Maggie Davidson whose boundless energy and enthusiasm kept us focussed on the rhythm of succession, planting and harvest.

There are others we would like to thank especially for their regular hard-yakka at working bees and other times, for their work at markets; contributions at cake stalls; with preserves and cakes and with selling produce. Thank you all.