



Murramarang Community Garden

Growing Food Together

Minutes

Committee Meeting, 11 May 2013

10.35 am at garden site

Chair: Ewan Sussman

Present: Malcolm Salmon, Sandra Worth, John Nelson, Robynne Murphy, Sybille Davidson

Apologies: Judith Carroll, Luci Somers

Business arising from Minutes 2 March 2013:

In view of the on-going rodent problem there was further discussion on enclosed tumble compost bin systems, especially ideas for making use of recycled drums of any kind. There is some chance we can make use of an old oyster tumbling cage – possibly line it for compost use. Ewen will get some photos for discussion. Sandra will check out cost of new bins. Our budget is constrained by future projects including a composting toilet – so it would be good if we could come up with some low-cost options.

Reports:

Treasurers Report: Sandra Worth reported that the Assn has approx. \$8,000 in the bank. We have 69 financial members with an additional 2 members joining today. Sandra forwarded the Treasurer's Report subsequent to the meeting - attached.

Malcolm Salmon presented the Garden Manager's report – attached.

Malcolm has had on-going discussions with Steve de Berkhout in relation to the proposed garden extension (refer Mgers report).

Partly arising from this report the following issues were discussed and agreed:

- The new garlic plantings are looking good and will need regular watering if no rain; it was agreed that a low pressure sprinkler should be obtained to provide at least once a week deep watering – about 3 hours on Saturday mornings. Sandra will investigate and purchase.
- Discussion around the extent of the expanded garden; whether an additional 10 meter or 15 meter band would be desirable. Generally agreed that the additional margins be along the northern and western perimeters taking in an additional band 15 meters wide beyond the present fences. The present fences to stay, but a gate will be installed along each of the present boundary fences to access the new areas.
- An implication arising from the garden expansion will be water availability and infrastructure – a second water reticulation line will be cut and piping laid to bring water from the lower dam, this pipe dedicated to the new sections of garden. Evidently, with the current dam capacity there is little risk of a lack of water.
- The extension is intended to be for communal gardens – not individual plots. The additional 15 meters around 2 sides will provide extensive additional space for a lot of crops – all for communal benefit.
- There will be a significant amount of work involved in achieving this – beginning with the water reticulation laying, pre-spraying the whole area with Glyphosate, followed by rip-ploughing – before the fencing work. Malcolm is able to enlist the help of a couple of his TAFE trainees to help with some of the fencing. There was some discussion re whether we only start with spraying and ploughing small sections at a time - as gardener workers are able to manage. General agreement

however, that before the fences go up it is a good idea to get as much ground preparation done as possible while the ploughing phase is happening in preparation for more easier gardening later.

- Discussion around the crops desired in the new garden areas. Agreed that any crops should be low-maintenance – which tends to exclude stone fruit trees. The members present nominated a range of suggestions, including the following: Potatoes (various types), sweet potatoes, asparagus, rhubarb, horseradish, ginger, melons, pumpkins, blueberries, raspberries, passionfruit, a laurel bay tree, macadamias, almonds, hazelnuts, figs, more citrus, bananas, olives, avocados, sweet corn. Robynne proposed a number of Sth American fruits (Brazilian cherry, Japotokaba) that should grow at the same latitude here.
- Committee will recommend to membership agreed basic crops (potatos, sweet potatos, asparagus, rhubarb, melons, pumpkin, bananas and nuts) and that more choices should involve the general membership. Robynne volunteered to prepare an email to circulate among the members to gauge general preferences for prioritising of these – each member to put forward their 4 favourites among these options, outside of generally (committee agreed) crops. Draft to be circulated amongst committee within a week.
- Discussion re the span of 15 meter northward – would it go too far into the wetland area & might there be soil drainage issues? The northern area does slope downward toward the wetland and might have a generally wetter soil, but Malcolm pointed out that this area could be targeted for particular crops such as bananas.
- Malcolm put forward ideas for future presentation by a John Holschier on a “Square foot Gardening” concept. The meeting agreed this could be interesting and Malcolm is to invite John – he is likely in Nowra area.
- Also proposed that we exchange experiences with the Sage group in Bega. Their group has working bees on a Sunday. Some of them might possibly visit us on a Saturday, or we could visit them on a Sunday.
- Robynne raised the issue of improving communication within the committee and also improving organisation and use of the whiteboard, so that the general membership can keep informed. Sybille stressed the need for consideration of each other in our communications.
- It was agreed that we should have a General Meeting in about a month or so once further info is available.

Meeting closed at 11.45am

Minutes prepared by Sybille Davidson – in Judith’s absence