



# Farm Fodder

The official newsletter for East Freo Farm

## Community gardening: from local to global

by Del Weston, Chairperson

We have seen recently the devastating effects of natural disasters from floods to cyclones to some very hot and dry weather. At the very least, we must ask ourselves if global warming might be contributing to these weather events. We cannot know with certainty but why take the risk.

Let's act anyway!

There are many steps individuals and families can take to live more sustainably, at the same time enhancing the quality of our lives. Per capita, Australia has the highest carbon footprint of any country so we Aussies have a long way to go if we are to leave the planet in a fit state for our children.

We can start by producing our own food, cutting down on transport miles, recycling our wastes as compost back into the soil, reducing water consumption and learning to live more simply and more as a community.

East Freo Farm Inc is excited to announce "we have land", thanks to 9 Seeds Cafe this is a great start. The process of securing land has been quite time consuming with the gamut of budgets, business plans and so on. The committee will continue pressing ahead with the East Fremantle Town Council to secure a larger public lot for our community garden. We will keep you updated as we forge ahead.

A community garden is about more than local organic food production. It allows us to come together as a community to swap and share, to meet and exchange experiences and to encourage and support each other in changing our lifestyles to tread more lightly on the planet.

## We have land

East Freo Farm has just been granted use of land behind 9 Seeds Cafe, 121 Marmion Street, East Fremantle, to establish its first community garden!

## What's On

**Planning Day** 9am Sunday 10 April

All members are invited to attend the first planning session for the community garden, at the rear of 9 Seeds Cafe. Bring your ideas and wish list!

**Busy Bee** From 9am Sunday 17 April

This is our first busy bee on site, we need lots of volunteers to help clear weeds, rubbish, erect a shed, start constructing raised beds and more. Anyone with trailers or tip passes please let us know.

## Donations

We are seeking donations of garden tools, baths (for worm farms), a wooden outdoor table, jarrah sleepers, corrugated iron sheeting, jarrah fence posts and pavers. We are also seeking a sponsor for a wooden boat and jetty for the children's play area.

We would love your help to build the garden and the community.

If you have other activities in mind that you would like East Freo Farm to be involved in organising, from film nights, picnics, gardening talk, making pickles, building frog ponds etc... just get in touch!

We hope to hear from you.



in this edition



We have land



Milk Madness



Italian Day



Permaculture

# Locals Hold their own Italian Day

East Freo Farm members Sophie Moller and Beck James, along with their kids and two other families had a very busy day recently.

Sophie had gone early to the Canningvale Markets and purchased 50 kilos of tomatoes for \$20! The result... delicious home-made tomato relish, jars of preserved tomatoes and bottles of traditional Italian passata.

Everyone joined in and helped out as there were many jobs in the production line. Tomatoes were first boiled to soften them in large pots. Some were skinned and chopped and then placed in jars for preserving. Others then went through the process of being ground through a tomato crusher to separate out the skins and seeds. The resulting juice was bottled with salt and a sprig of basil as passata. Jars and bottles were then sterilised and preserved by boiling in a traditional Fowlers Kit.

The kids loved joining in and being involved and it is easy to see the charm and community bonding associated with this traditional day in the families of large Italians. Not only was it a cheap, fun day for the families but their pantries are now stocked with a year's worth of the resulting products.

Sophie Moller & daughter Charlotte below, with some of the many tomatoes.



Will James above hard at work with the tomato crusher.

# Did you know?

Spinach was first cultivated in Persia thousands of years ago, spreading to European gardens around 1350. The green paint used to illustrate many of the manuscripts of the middle ages was derived from ordinary spinach.

# Irwin Street Party

Irwin Street had its first street party - a pizza dinner - in the front garden of Stephen and Sheelagh's place - on Australia Day. A small flyer letterbox drop resulted in about 40 neighbours attending - for many, meeting for the first time. Everyone came with their own pizzas ready to cook. Steve with sons Sebastian and Ziggy did the honours of cooking everyone's pizzas to perfection! Live music from the Foggy Memory Boys entertaining, making it a good night for all. Fundraising was for refugees in South Africa supported by Gavin and Del.

The pizza oven was lent by the Hubble Street crew, Tim and Shani, who make the pizza oven available free of charge for fund raising events.

## thank you

Our thanks to the following for kindly donating prizes for our AGM raffle: Spice Magazine, 12 months subscription; Mark's Organic Compost Manures, 6 bags organic manure; Department of Environment & Conservation, selection of books; South Metropolitan Public Health Unit, back packs; Nine Seeds Café, voucher; George St Bistro, voucher; Fremantle Ports, 1 safety garden pack; Town of East Fremantle, compost bin; private donation, 2 tickets to Oxfam Pakistan Appeal Concert. \$163.00 was raised.

# Permaculture: What it is and how it works (for the garden and for us)

by Nancy Tucker

The term permaculture is a contraction of two words: PERMANENT AGRICULTURE.

The concept was developed in the 1970s, based on the close observation of nature, natural processes and sustainable agricultural land practices of cultures world-wide to develop an alternative to the current, destructive industrial food system.

Any home gardener can do this in their gardens with very little effort and great results. Firstly you need a plan, consider how much sun is available seasonally, your soil type and read your water meter on a regular basis. Beyond that make compost. I have found black plastic bins to be the most effective, situated on concrete to avoid vermin getting in. Take your time by starting with small beds, getting some sort of tree canopy and have a watering plan so you do not overwater or underwater your plants.

Having a permaculture garden will give you produce and pleasure, as well as exercise. And there is something for everyone in the family. I have been permaculture gardening for over 20 years and I've never lost my enthusiasm. I learn something new every day. And passing on to others what I have learnt - as in this piece - that's fun!

# Milk Madness!

Coles has started a milk price war, with Woolworths and other independent grocers joining in, leading local dairy farmers to face ruin.

One local dairy farmer contacted by Farm Fodder has said “all my surrounding dairy farmers & myself are very worried about the cheap milk as we know it will be us who will bear the brunt of it when contracts come out at the end of June. I believe the supermarkets are trying to get rid of fresh milk, pushing consumers to UHT as they then don't have to run fridges & worry about use by dates. This is easily done by destroying the local dairy industry so there is no supply & people will have no choice”.

Think about it – for a little effort, we can support WA dairy farmers. Do we want lower priced milk from interstate with high environmental transport costs or locally produced milk?

Consider local milk like Bannister Downs, in great packaging that will break down quickly, now stocked at IGA, Fresh Provisions & Coles. Their milk is treated for 15mins at 70degrees instead of 15secs @ 90degrees for regular milk. This saves some great enzymes and vitamins.

Over the Moon Organic milk (and yummy cheese) is sold at Subiaco & Mt Claremont markets on Saturdays. Margaret River Organic Creameries milk is sold at 27 Carrington St Nedlands (get a group together and take turns buying this) or Manning and Subiaco farmers markets.

## Book Review

by *Stephen Loss*

*The Coming Famine by Julian Cribb, 2010. University of California Press and CSIRO Publishing.*

Julian Cribb in his recently published book *The Coming Famine*, argues that hunger breeds war, but that most future wars can be prevented by using science to meet the rising demand for food. He poses four important ways to provide food security for the whole planet:

1) **Reduce waste.** About half the food that is harvested around the world is wasted, either spoilt in transport or storage, or simply thrown out because it was surplus to local needs. Aim to use local production from urban gardens and recycle nutrients in manures and composts.

2) We need to **change our diet** by increasing the proportion of vegetables and fruit reducing the amount of energy we consume. Not everyone on the planet can eat like most Australians or Americans.

3) We need to **pay more for our food.** Cheap food is leading to waste and poor returns to farmers are discouraging them from undertaking costly land management practices.

4) Finally... we must **increase the funding** of agricultural research.

*\*Editors' note: book reviews for Farm Fodder are welcome.*

## Local snippets\*

Locals all around East Freo are producing bountiful results in their own gardens. Take Tony Messenger of Petra St. He is well known in the street for not only providing delicious fresh figs from his garden but for also frequently giving neighbours tubs of his Fig Jam. He calls it 'jam' but it's like a sticky decadent dessert.

His secret is simple. He quarters the figs, simmers them with an equal amount of sugar and some water and his trademark... an added dash of vanilla essence. The results are divine! Tony is on to harvesting olives next.

Photo: Tony surveying the figs on one of his trees.

\*We'd love to hear more of your stories.





# Bee worried

Bees are a part of the wonderful and integral web of nature and so important to our food security. Bees are responsible for far more than honey production, playing a vital role in the pollination of a large percentage of our fruit and vegetable crops. In Australia, over \$4 billion worth of food products each year depends on pollination by European honey bees.

Globally, however, this very remarkable insect is under threat. The main problem appears to be a mysterious disease called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). CCD is currently thought to have wiped out around 30 per cent of North American and European bees. It first hit the headlines in 2006, when US beekeepers opened their hives to discover large numbers of their bees had simply vanished.

While no one has yet determined the cause of CCD, theories include the use of particular pesticides and the loss of adequate foraging habitat resulting in poor nutrition. The pesticide neonicotinoid (an insecticide known as Clothianidin), is highly toxic to bees and is used in Australia where we work on a 'maximum allowed pesticide residue level' that is based only on human health and does not factor in animals, let alone those as sensitive as bees. This is an example of where the more holistic approach to the environment and food production found in systems such as organic farming and permaculture wins hands down.

## Bees and honey

by Brett Stevens, local apiarist

Different forms of the humble honey bee have been on earth for as long as there have been flowering plants. It is only in the last few years however that bee diseases and maladies have become more prevalent.

So what can we humans do to help to keep Australian bees healthy and productive?

Plant flowering native Australian trees and shrubs and that will keep us healthy at the same time! Virtually any native flowering plant will do the trick to help. These plants are then helped by the bees and this in turn will help keep Australia ecologically friendly. Stop to watch the busy bees work their different techniques on the various types of flowers during all the daylight hours, every fine day. Seeing them working away is so relaxing for us!

And then there's the honey...  
If you would like locally produced, unprocessed, home delivered honey, contact Brett 040 555 7612.



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Farm inc

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### Advertising in Farm Fodder

We welcome (paid) advertisements in Farm Fodder. If you are interested contact Del or Rebecca on the details above.

## Seed collecting & saving

...peppers, beans, tomatoes, peas and lettuce, herbs and many more!

Register your interest **now** to join our Seed Saving and Swapping Collective - contact us and depending on responses, we could be sowing the seeds of some stupendously successful enterprise!



[www.fremantleports.com.au](http://www.fremantleports.com.au)

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