

GREEN THUMB

Celebrate the season for change

BY DEB DELAHUNTY

of Wodonga TAFE

AUTUMN is such a beautiful time of the year, a time when our deciduous trees take on a multitude of colours and gardens becomes vivid and awe-inspiring.

Enjoy the views but make time now to work on your ornamental and vegetable gardens.

There's no excuse for not growing some of your own produce, even if you only have a small garden.

Ensure you have a compost bin or a worm farm, every home needs at least one of these for disposal of kitchen and garden waste.

If you've already planted broad beans then they're due for a side dressing of potash, 15 to 20 grams per metre of row should be enough.

Perhaps put in another couple of rows of seeds to lengthen your cropping time. If you want to grow onions, prepare your beds now.

Dig over and remove weeds from your beds so that by June-July they are weed-free. Use lime on acidic soils, a light dusting over the bed should be sufficient.

It's important to know if you have acidic or alkaline soils. Relatively cheap but reliable testing kits are available from your local nurseries and they are easy to use.

Gardens can look a bit tired at this time of the year. Take your wheelbarrow and secateurs and remove spent flowers and any dead material from your herbaceous and woody plants.

The word herbaceous refers to any plants that don't produce any wood.

In the flower garden why not plant some annuals and perennials.

You can buy and plant bulbs of tulips and hyacinths and consider planting ranunculus, anemones and freesias for a spring-summer display.

Our local nurseries will have selections of seedlings for flowering displays, planted now you'll have colour in your garden in no time.

Plant carnations, nemesia, violas, wallflowers and stock to name a few and take the time while you're in the nursery to look at all the varieties available.

Canna lilies can be planted now. These plants went out of favour for a while and I can't comprehend why as they give a magnificent display with flowers of yellow, orange and red and there are varieties available with decorative foliage as well.

Canna lilies thrive in any garden and they love the sun. They make a spectacular backing plant, and all they need from you is a bit of water over the summer and a cut back when they start to die down each year.

If you have a plant in the wrong place, or in a position where they're not growing well now is a good time to transplant. Roses and deciduous trees should be left until winter.

Some plants will move well but some won't and there will be casualties.

Our gardens are always a work in progress.

It's important to get out in the garden at every opportunity to keep the chores in check.

More importantly, enjoy every minute you spend with your plants.

The saying "everything stress is — gardening isn't" is true.



Wodonga TAFE Horticultural students Kristopher Rolten and Kobey Diamond catch up with chores in the vegetable and herb garden.

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Water Land & Food
HORTICULTURE



Canna lilies give a vivid display in the garden, as well as spectacular flowers ... this variety also has decorative foliage.

AROUND THE GARDEN

IT'S pumpkin harvest time again.

■ Don't let your pumpkins rot in the garden, harvest and store them to keep you supplied for months to come.

■ Pumpkins can be picked from now and into winter. Ensure you leave a few inches of stem on the pumpkin. Store it in a cool, ventilated position.

■ Don't forget your stored pumpkins, ensure you use them or give them away.



DEB'S DIARY

FRIENDS of the Albury Botanic Gardens held their plant sale last Sunday. It raised more than \$1100 for projects in the gardens. Thank you to all who attended.

THE florilegium (a term used to describe a collection of botanically accurate paintings of plants) of prominent Albury Botanic Gardens specimens is progressing wonderfully. Beechworth Institute of Botanical Art members have completed 50 paintings. Depicting the influence that J.E.R. Fellowes had on the gardens, the collection will be on show at the Library Museum from November.

To have your event listed here, email Deb Delahanty at ddelahanty@wodongatafe.edu.au

LIVING LIGHTLY

Glue that holds community together

ONE of the exiting aspects of living lightly is the opportunity it provides for community-building and connecting with other people.

Strong social networks will become increasingly important as we grapple with environmental problems, energy insecurity and financial turmoil at the end of the age of growth.

As a specialist in international relations, I look to Chinese culture for ideas on building social cohesion during tough times.

Between the First Opium War in 1836 to the beginning of economic reforms in the late 1970s, Chinese society endured a long period of social chaos, continual revolution and war. For ordinary people, life was often nasty, brutish and short, where mutual trust between people was the only barrier between order and anarchy.

Imagine the practical difficulties of everyday life without law and order and strong government.

The Chinese people managed by drawing on a cultural practice called guanxi (pronounced "gwan-

shee"), which is about maintaining networks of ongoing personal relationships based on mutual benefit through reciprocal ties and obligations.

Guanxi was the basis for greater social stability at the local level in China than would have otherwise existed during this turbulent period. While 19th and 20th-century China is not a close historic parallel to 21st-century Australia, there are some lessons we can take from the Chinese experience.

We can maximise our own well-being by consciously being less self-

ish and placing a greater emphasis on the good of the community.

As the trust horizon shrinks from the national to the local level in a society under stress, strong networks can provide the glue that holds a community together.

In tough times, people benefit not only from strong social support networks but also reliable suppliers of everyday goods and services, particularly when there are cost pressures and scarcities.

For us this might mean joining a community garden where one can grow and share produce, or

establishing an ongoing purchasing relationship with a farmer.

Any reciprocal action for mutual benefit can form the glue of strong social bonds.

I do not suggest we abandon our own cultural practices.

However, other cultures have good ideas that we can borrow from. As a multicultural country, Australia is well-placed to take advantage of the experiences of other societies.

— Dr BEN HABIB
WATCH (Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health)