

At the Garden Gate with David

I have been considering the possibility of severe water restrictions in the coming summer as I am one of the sceptics who cannot see the promised average rainfall in the coming months making a very significant change in our reservoirs. This brings me to the point of view that we will have severely restricted watering times or even no watering at all. At first you might think, "Well what's the point of putting anything in?" But I am also optimistic enough to look at this problem from other angles. Perhaps I will be quite wrong and we will be able to water with restrictions and I know we have all been pleasantly surprised that this year we have all had bumper crops even though we could not water as frequently as usual. We have found we do not need to water as much as we used to. Another consideration is that farmers and many market gardeners rely totally on natural rainfall and still manage to produce marketable crops. In reading many of the early Australian history books, good vegetable gardens were grown by our pioneers relying totally on rainfall and grey water. And often in harsh seasonal conditions in arid parts of Australia. Perhaps we might be a little more selective in what we plant. Some crops will do well with out high levels of maintenance and large volumes of water. This will vary

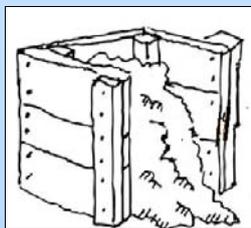
from household to household depending on your tastes and diets but now is a good time to begin to analyse your needs and start to plan for a summer which may be a test for us all. However, with careful planning, good soil preparation, keen water conservation and heavy mulching, I am facing the summer season with confidence and optimism and I am practising my tribal rain dance. My wife says she only has to hang washing on the line or for me to wash the car and it will rain within 24 hours. Perhaps if we all combine our collective forces the climate change will be more favourable.

Charles Schaefer and his co-workers continue to develop the community plots behind the shed and it is amazing the accomplishments achieved. I am constantly amazed at the input of Charles and Verna. Our grateful thanks to both of you and your helpers.

As our financial year draws to a close and our annual elections loom in August please give strong consideration to nominating for committee. Our meetings are brisk and short and we do not have many of them, so the obligation is not a hard one.. The present committee has again been excellent and I am hoping they will nominate again but it is always good to get new ideas and enthusiasm. You do not need to take an executive position but to take a role on committee would be great. Nominations will be called for in the near future.

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Annual General Meeting



Tuesday 21st August

**ANNUAL PLOT FEES
ARE DUE
JULY 31ST.**



Plant on the shortest day

Harvest on the longest



Up and ADAM with COMPOST

The best way to reduce food and garden waste is to compost it.

Compost returns nutrients to the soil and improves plant growth by:

- Bringing life back to the soil.
- Helping to break up heavy clay soils.
- Improving the soil's capacity to hold water.
- Adding essential minerals to the soil.

Good composting with ADAM

ADAM will help you remember the keys to making good compost.

Aliveness: Compost is a living system.

A compost heap needs living organisms to break down the waste and release the minerals and nutrients to make rich soil-like compost. Each living organism in the compost has a different but important role to play in creating the right conditions for good compost. Some of these living organisms, such as bacteria, are too small for you to see. But they are still very important.

Diversity: Lots of different ingredients are the key to good composting.

A compost heap needs different ingredients, just as you need different types of food to keep you healthy. Layering different ingredients makes sure that the compost you get from your heap has all the right minerals and nutrients.

Aeration: For fast-working, sweet-smelling compost, it is essential to get air (oxygen) into the heap

A compost heap needs air or it will start to smell. Remember, more air means less smell! Turning your compost heap lets in more air. But don't turn more than once a week as you will let too much air in the heap and it will get too cool. Compost heaps need to be hot to make the ingredients break down faster. Remember, you also want to let some air into the top of the heap, so don't cover it with plastic sheets, use hessian.

Moisture: For the living compost heap to work well, it needs to be a little wet.

All plants and animals need water and air to live and so does your compost heap. As a guide, compost should be about as wet as a lightly wrung-out sponge. It should be moist but not dripping with water.

What to compost?

Anything that was once part of a plant or animal can be used in home compost. Diversity is the key to great compost.

- **Weeds.** Most weeds can be composted, but they should be added before they have seeds.
- **Manures.** Small amounts of poultry or pigeon manure are great. Cow, sheep and goat manure aren't quite as good.
- **Garden waste.** Grass clippings can be added regularly in thin layers. Mix the grass with twigs and leaves to let air keep flowing through the heap.
- **Kitchen & household waste.** Almost all kitchen waste except meat and fish — even old cotton rags — can be composted.
- **Soil.** Add small amounts of rich soil or finished compost to your heap.
- **Wood ash, charcoal, dolomite & lime.** These help balance the acids in the compost. You can buy lime and dolomite from nurseries and hardware stores. Collect wood ash or charcoal from fireplaces and barbecues.
- **Tree prunings, sticks, twigs and leaves.** Include layers of this coarse stuff as it helps to keep air flowing through the heap.
- **Torn newspaper, unbleached paper and card board.**
- **Other useful ingredients**
 - hair
 - coffee grounds and tea leaves
 - seaweed
 - cut flowers and herbs
 - old potting mix
 - vacuum cleaner dust
 - torn up pizza boxes

The Compost Recipe –

2 Carbon : 1 Nitrogen, = 2 parts Brown : 1 part Green

- ♣ Common Carbon (brown) ingredients are – dry materials like woody plant matter, hay, dry leaves, dried grass clippings or shredded newspaper
- ♣ Common Nitrogen (green) ingredients are – fresh materials such as recently living plant matter, green lawn clippings, comfrey, food scraps, legumes and chook, cow or horse manure
- ♣ Start with a 20cm layer of broken up sticks, twigs, and prunings which will help with drainage and aeration
- ♣ Add a layer of compost or rich soil from a previous heap
- ♣ Add alternative layers of Carbon (brown and dry) and Nitrogen (green and juicy)

Spare a Thought for Artichokes



Jerusalem Artichokes

(*Helianthus tuberosus*)

Produce edible tubers not unlike ginger in appearance. However, they are neither artichokes nor do they come from Jerusalem. They originated in North America, probably getting their name from an apparent similarity in taste to a globe artichoke. Jerusalem artichokes belong to the sunflower family having a yellow flower not unlike a small sunflower.

Jerusalem artichokes can be treated like potatoes and may be steamed, roasted or fried, used in soups or even eaten raw (when fresh).

From the Italian "*girasola*" (sunflower).

Globe Artichokes

(*Cynara scolymus*)

Produce edible flower heads, which are considered a delicacy. *Cynara* is a member of the thistle family most likely coming from the eastern Mediterranean region. Flower buds are best harvested in late spring and summer before purple blossoms appear.

Boil artichokes for about 10 minutes in water containing lemon juice - to prevent discolouration - and lie a plate on top whilst cooking to keep them from floating. Artichokes are cooked when they pierce easily with a skewer. After cooking, add some vinaigrette to ensure colour is maintained.

Parkinson tells us that "the manner of preparing them for the Table is well known to the youngest Housewife I think, to be boyled in fair water, and a little salt, until they bee tender, and afterwards a little vinegar and pepper, put to the butter, poured upon them for the sauce, and so to be served to the Table."

Ode To The Artichoke
 by Pablo Neruda
 The artichoke
 With a tender heart
 Dressed up like a warrior,
 Standing at attention, it built
 A small helmet
 Under its scales
 It remained
 Unshakeable,
 By its side
 The crazy vegetables
 Uncurled
 Their tendrils and leaf-crowns,
 Throbbing bulbs,
 In the sub-soil
 The carrot
 With its red moustaches
 Was sleeping,
 The grapevine
 Hung out to dry its branches
 Through which the wine will
 rise,
 The cabbage
 Dedicated itself
 To trying on skirts,
 The oregano
 To perfuming the world,
 And the sweet
 Artichoke
 There in the garden,
 Dressed like a warrior,
 Burnished
 Like a proud
 Pomegranate.
 And one day
 Side by side
 In big wicker baskets
 Walking through the market
 To realize their dream
 The artichoke army
 In formation.
 Never was it so military
 Like on parade.
 The men
 In their white shirts
 Among the vegetables
 Were
 The Marshals
 Of the artichokes
 Lines in close order
 Command voices,
 And the bang
 Of a falling box.
 But
 Then
 Maria
 Comes
 With her basket
 She chooses
 An artichoke,
 She's not afraid of it.
 She examines it, she observes
 it
 Up against the light like it was
 an egg,
 She buys it,
 She mixes it up
 In her handbag
 With a pair of shoes
 With a cabbage head and a
 Bottle
 Of vinegar
 Until
 She enters the kitchen
 And submerges it in a pot.
 Thus ends
 In peace
 This career
 Of the armed vegetable
 Which is called an artichoke,
 Then
 Scale by scale,
 We strip off
 The delicacy
 And eat
 The peaceful mush
 Of its green heart.

Whilst John Parkinson in *Paradisi in Sol* (1629) describes Jerusalem Artichokes as 'a dainty for a queen,' John Goodyer, one of England's pioneer planters of the early 17th century wrote, "In my judgement, which way soever they be drest and eaten... they are a meat more fit for swine, than men."



Ancient Greeks and Romans considered artichokes a delicacy and an aphrodisiac and Culpeper (1653) claimed that artichokes were under the "Dominion of Venus, and 'it is no Marvel if they provoke Lust'."



Fay's Stuffed Peppers

4 x Large Capsicums
1 kg Mince
1 x Large Onion
2 x Cloves Garlic
1-1½ Cups of Cooked Rice

1 x Grated Carrot
1 x Grated Zucchini
2 x Bacon Rashers
Tomato Paste
Salt and Pepper

Method:

Cut top off capsicums and remove seeds and veins.

Cook onions, garlic, mince and bacon in fry pan, until browned.

Add rice and vegetables, season to taste.

Spoon mixture into capsicums and place in deep casserole dish.

Drizzle tomato paste (or puree) over capsicums ensuring there is sufficient to cover at least 1/4 or each capsicum.

Cook in moderate oven for approx. 30-45 minutes, with lid on.

Notes:

You may prefer to use less mince and more rice and vegetables like celery, mushrooms, peas.

Use homemade tomato puree/paste, or a bottle of Bertolli **Provista Sugo** Classica sauce

The quantity of filling required depends on the size of the capsicum.

A beaten egg may be used to bind the mixture.

Walk past any community garden and you'll see people interacting--exchanging seeds and growing tips, sharing tools and a laugh, offering a sympathetic ear. Like the corner pub, the community garden becomes a meeting ground, a place where the lone soul can join the whole, be acknowledged and accepted.

Vegetarian Times, March, 2000 by Mark Harris

