



The HIVE Newsletter | Autumn 2023



Hello everyone!

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter from SMRC's The Hive garden program. Autumn is here but that hasn't stopped the intrepid gardeners at the Hive. It's amazing how quickly you warm up when you're gardening and there's always plenty to do at the Hive. Come along and enjoy the fun, it's great to get outside for some fresh air and to socialize with other people who share a love of food and plants.

*Lou & Elly
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"I can smell autumn dancing in the breeze. The sweet chill of pumpkin, and crisp sunburnt leaves." – Ann Drake



HIGHS AND LOWS IN THE GARDEN



Summer is always a beautiful time in the garden but it seemed to take ages for the weather to warm up and it's hard to believe that autumn is already here. We've had some mixed results at the Hive this season, perhaps due to the cold start. Our sunflowers, however, have been a huge success reaching record heights and looking spectacular. I'm pretty sure that everyone who walks past the Hive can't help but smile at the sight of the sunflowers waving in the breeze.

Unfortunately we can't say the same for our tomato plants. Our delicious heirloom tomatoes have been favorites with the birds and rodents in Braeside Park. They've managed to break into our nets and steal our harvest, even eating the green ones before they ripen. After having such a bumper harvest last year, it reminds us that there's always challenges in the garden and success one year doesn't guarantee success the next. We won't give up though and next year we'll try a few other methods of deterring the greedy little critters.

We really can't complain too much though as we picked and ate kilos of fresh berries that we didn't even have to net. The summer fruiting raspberries just kept on coming, much to the delight of our clients, and to the bush kinder kids who came to visit us at the Hive. It was great to see the children picking the sun warmed fresh berries and eating them straight off the plant. One of the great joys of gardening organically.

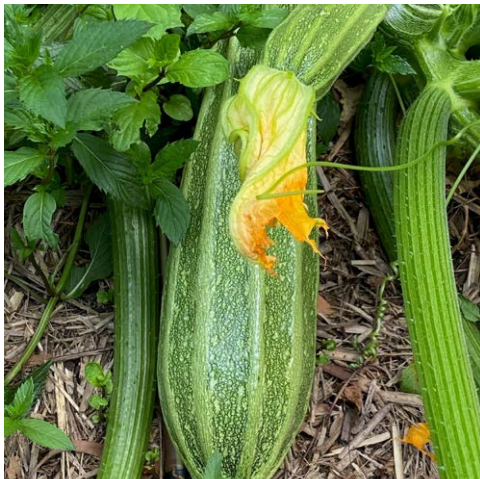


PRUNING IN SUMMER

The summer raspberries have been pruned now but are producing a second crop of fruit on next year's fruiting canes. This is only possible if they are correctly pruned and our clients have become experts. The autumn fruiting raspberries have started producing and the last of the tayberries are just hanging on. Lou is about to prune the tayberry plants which produce exquisite huge and juicy blackberries. They do tend to get a bit out of control though and the prickles mean that it's not a job for clients. Funny how the prickles don't stop everyone getting in there to get their fill of the fruit!!!



Pruning is such an important part of maintaining fruiting plants and we mostly do it in summer at the Hive. Summer pruning generally causes fruit trees to produce more fruit on smaller trees. Our apricot tree, which is a "Fireball" variety, has been fan trained against the fence line and has had it's best season of fruiting yet. It is especially important to prune apricot trees in summer as pruning them in winter makes them susceptible to a disease called gummosis, which can eventually kill the tree.





GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

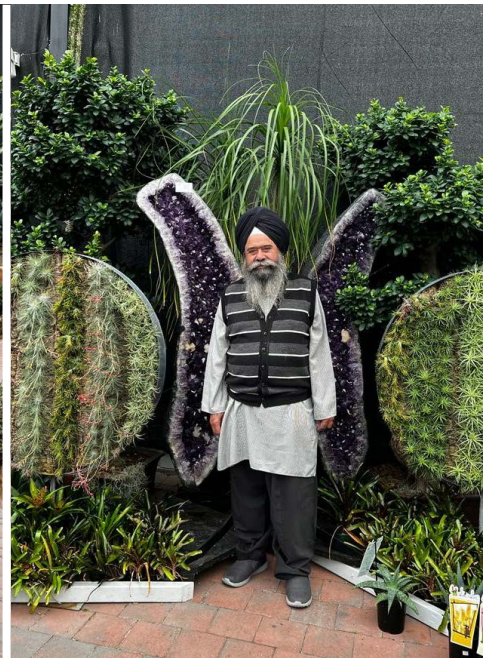


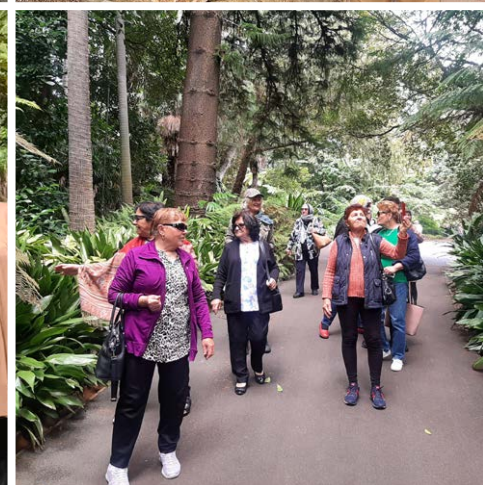
We've been branching out (haha) a bit this season, taking our clients on a few excursions to garden related destinations. We are regular visitors to Garden World which is always great, especially on rainy days. There's an impressive display of succulent plants, amazing air plants, and crystals which are beautifully displayed.

We had an excellent day out to Werribee Mansion and Gardens with our Sikh Men's group. We met up with the Werribee Sikh group who have a community garden onsite. This is the group that grows abundant rainbow chard, or silverbeet, to make meals for people in need. During co-vid lockdowns, they were instrumental in providing culturally appropriate food to people who were unable to leave their accommodation. We walked through the ornamental garden and even got a tour of the Mansion. Thanks to all at Werribee for your generous hospitality.

The Turkish Women's group had a big day out to Melbourne Botanical Gardens. We started the day at the Visitors Centre then walked along a pathway where the ladies spotted a majestic Turkish Oak tree. After stopping for a few photos, we headed to the perennial garden to admire the flowers before entering the fern gully section of the gardens. It was a big day of walking and everyone enjoyed stopping for fish and chips for lunch before heading back to SMRC.

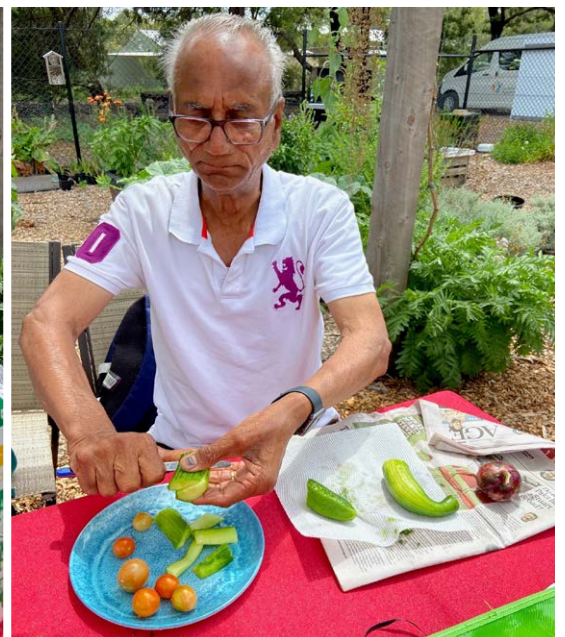
We are very grateful to our client Mr Bala who invited us down to enjoy a day at his Mornington farmlet. We enjoyed a tour of the beautiful grounds and dam, his emerging vegie garden, played with the goats and then enjoyed a delicious Indian feast, while some even took a dip in the pool. Thank you so much for having us.







CELEBRATIONS



The beautiful garden at The Hive is the perfect setting for many celebrations over the Spring/Summer season and we were thrilled to see our community enjoying it all. Our Sikh gentlemen honored the Lohri Festival with a yummy harvest bbq in our colorfully decorated garden. We snapped fortune cookies to see in the Chinese New Year and shared an assortment of different cultural meals.

Love was in the air as we all painted pots for Valentines Day and potted up colorful Petunias as gifts for our Valentines, and we welcomed the Cambodian group to celebrate Australia day with a traditional Aussie BBQ where there was plenty of dancing and heaps of laughter.



LUNCHTIME FEASTS

Our regular weekly groups at the Hive have continued to enjoy the fruits of their labour and our communal lunches seem to be growing all the time. Zucchini is always a summer staple and great on the BBQ. Eggplant is also delicious barbecued and there's always a salad to whip up from freshly picked produce. Nishas delicious and nutritious tabouli has been a staple and Theresa has been bringing her home made olive treats to share. Fresh, crunchy noodle dishes or rice paper rolls are always a hit. The Turkish ladies excel with amazing salads, spinach and cheese delights, Nimet's zucchini fritters, and sweet and crunchy fresh chillies from their gardens. So many treats!!!



CHANGE OF SEASONS

As autumn sets in it's time to swing into planting for the colder months ahead. We've removed the tomato plants and are planting crops to help improve the soil health. Broadbeans are great to boost soil fertility and mustards are fantastic for improving soil structure and cleansing the soil of plant diseases. We utilise these Green Manure crops by chopping up the plants and turning them back into the soil. We've also sown many of our favourite winter veg seeds into punnets to get them ready to transplant into the garden, and to give to clients for their home gardens.

As the seasons change, our gardens, and our plates reflect the variety of food that we can grow here in our Melbourne climate. Eating seasonally means that you can get food that has been produced locally, hopefully in your backyard, and is cheaper because it's easier to grow and therefore abundant. It makes a lot of sense to all of us at the Hive.

Happy Gardening and Happy Eating.



RECIPES

5 Ingredient Zucchini Fritters



- 4 cups shredded zucchini
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/3 cup sliced spring onions (green & white parts)
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- Sour cream, for serving (optional)

1. Place the shredded zucchini in a colander set over a bowl and sprinkle the zucchini lightly with salt. Allow the zucchini to stand for 10 minutes. Using your hands, squeeze out as much liquid from the zucchini as possible. Transfer the zucchini to a large bowl.

2. Add the flour, eggs, sliced spring onions, ¼ teaspoon salt and teaspoon pepper to the bowl, stirring until the mixture is combined. Line a plate with paper towels.

3. Add the olive oil to large sauté pan set over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, scoop 3-tablespoon mounds of the zucchini mixture into the pan, pressing them lightly into rounds and spacing them at least 2 inches apart. Cook the zucchini fritters for 2 to 3 minutes, then flip them once and cook an additional 2 minutes until golden brown and cooked throughout. Transfer the zucchini fritters to the paper towel-lined plate and immediately sprinkle them with salt. Repeat the scooping and cooking process with the remaining zucchini mixture.

4. Serve the zucchini fritters topped with sour cream (optional) and sliced spring onions.



What do you call beans that have been in the sun too long?

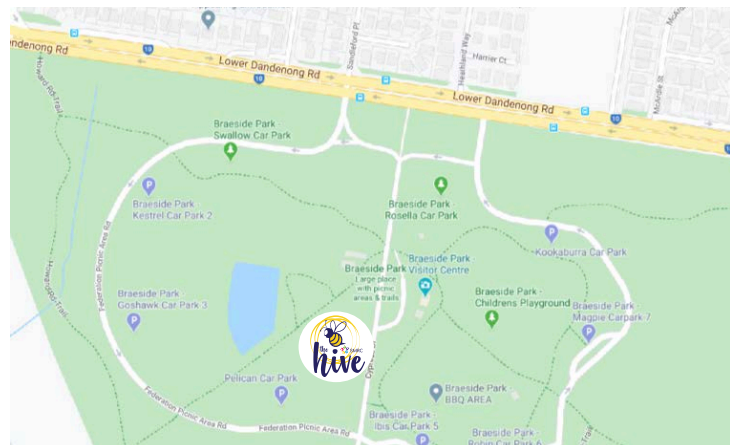
Baked beans.

What did the apple skin say to the apple?

I've got you covered.

What is King Kong's favorite food?

Ape-ricots.



Joining the Hive If you would like to join us at the Hive, we are located in Braeside Park, Monday to Friday 10 – 2 p.m. **For details call (03) 9767 1900 or 0407 050 878.**

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