



## Five Villages Community Garden Association President's message August 2021



Hello gardeners,

Wow! It's August and even though it's only early in the month spring is nearly here. It seems the notorious August winds came early this year so hopefully they'll also end early. For me wind is the harshest and my least favourite natural element; I've got more to say on wind later.

As you know we still had a bit of work to complete on the RFS garden in Cunjurong. Although we would like to have completed this work as a FVCG working bee, current Covid restrictions prevented this. Instead, a limited group of enthusiastic gardeners completed the work in shifts on Saturday 24 July. Work completed included planting four plum trees, completion of garden edging, construction of the second arbor, completion of the timber benches, and placement of additional mulch. The garden is looking fantastic and pleasingly as we packed up our tools on the day a pair of inquisitive eastern spinebills dropped in for an inspection and productive forage.

It was intended that a community celebration day be organised at the RFS garden to acknowledge and thank sponsors, however once again due to the extension of Covid restrictions we will not proceed with an event at this time. We will instead formally thank contributors by sending letters of appreciation and providing acknowledgment through social media.

Last month we finalised a bunch of essential formalities for the club. We now have an ABN, tax file number, a Bendigo Bank account, an email address ([fivevillagesgarden@gmail.com](mailto:fivevillagesgarden@gmail.com)), and a website: <https://fivevillagesgarden.weebly.com>

The website is in early development and we'll be adding content such as a resource centre, FAQ's and tips and tricks. We would welcome suggestions and ideas for the type of content you would like to see.

Earlier this week we met the Yulunga Reserve Committee and staff from Shoalhaven Council to discuss and progress plans for the Yulunga Reserve playground beautification project. Whilst Council is very supportive of our current concept, Council policies will constrain the final design in terms of plant selection and hardscaping. We will continue to work with Council to come up with a practical and compliant design. Pleasingly, during the meeting Council was very keen to identify other opportunities within the Yulunga Reserve for the establishment of an allotment style community garden.

Now back to that dastardly wind! Wind can be quite damaging and destructive to your garden, it beats plants up, shreds leaves and tears tissue creating small holes in young tender leaves. Dealing with wind



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damage promptly can significantly improve your plant's chance of survival and in most cases the plant will recover and prosper. The best thing you can do is to prune back stems and branches to below any damage and pinch prune damaged leaves. This will remove entry points for pests and diseases and allows the plant to put energy into new healthy regrowth rather than fending off pests and diseases. As strong wind is likely to persist for a few more weeks it's still not too late to take some preventative action for this year. If there's one thing the weather bureau is getting good at its wind forecasting. If you become aware of predicted severe windstorms get in early and protect small seedlings in your vegetable garden with a makeshift cloche (e.g. upturned old pots or buckets), or cut PET bottles (good excuse for drinking G & T's!), or temporary plastic igloos. Supporting taller vegetables with stakes is also a good idea.

For plants showing signs of damage, e.g., brown frayed edges or torn leaves, you can try and create wind barriers using things like garbage bins or temporary screens, or use cages, trellises, ropes and A-frames with shade cloth/hessian etc. For pot plants simply move them to a more protected area or inside. Longer term you can look to designing and building permanent barriers, or planting screening hedges of hardier plants to protect delicate plants, being mindful not to create too much shade.

As mentioned last month the FVCG Executive committee has several vacancies, if you would like to be part of the committee, please get in touch with Jimmy or myself.

That's it for this month other than a final word on all things lockdown and these crazy Covid times. If you are feeling a bit down, get out and enjoy your garden and watch how it changes for the better over the next few weeks as spring approaches. If you are in a bit of a rut with your garden, or things in general, feel free to reach out to your FVCG Committee as we'd love to help out wherever we can.

**Dennis Buttigieg**, FVCG President

