



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



Hello gardeners,

As we await an outcome from our application for grant funding under the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program we have kept busy in the last month doing more housekeeping. Of particular interest is a connection we've made with Garden Clubs of Australia Incorporated (GCA). GCA is the not-for-profit peak body that provides support to over 750 garden clubs and societies across Australia. For a reasonable fee (\$40 affiliation fee plus \$80 annual fee) we have an opportunity to become an affiliate of GCA and take advantage of the services and benefits it provides. These include: a free quarterly magazine that features gardening stories from across Australia, access to post FVCG diary dates on the GCA website, website resource information, a GCA Bulletin emailed to affiliates, a bi-annual Convention and a photography competition. However possibly the greatest benefit is having access to GCA's Insurance scheme. Presently, FVCG has Public Liability insurance through Elders with a premium of around \$500pa. We do not currently have Volunteer Workers Insurance coverage, that's normally \$1,500+ annually.

GCA's superior insurance scheme provides both Public Liability and Volunteer Workers coverage for around \$100 - \$200pa depending on the number of members in the affiliated club. Given the value that affiliation would provide, the FVCG committee at its meeting on 28 November, voted in favour of becoming an affiliate of GCA.

At our November meeting the committee was very pleased to also welcome our newest committee member; Courtney Nash. Courtney shares our passion for growing, sharing and teaching food security and permaculture skills and is a great addition to our team. One of the first tasks Courtney will assist with (in her role as Membership Coordinator) is to develop a formal membership application process.

As the above mentioned GCA insurance policy is based on actual number of club members, we have reached the point where we need to formalise club membership. GCA insurance coverage will likely commence on 1 April 2022, so that is the date we are working towards for having a FVCG membership register. More details on membership will come early in the new year.

Other matters the Committee has been discussing are **two potential future FVCG Programs**. The first is a program that, if implemented, would seek out community members that require assistance in their home garden. The idea here is that those in the community who for various legitimate reasons are unable to maintain their garden, would be provided with basic assistance by FVCG member volunteers. This program would be called something like 'Garden Care' or 'Garden Angels'.





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The other program we are exploring is along the lines of **'Farming it Forward'**, a scheme operating in the Blue Mountains. This would identify and link community members who have land space available, with individuals or groups of people that are willing to help establish and maintain an edible garden. The food produced and harvested from the garden would subsequently be shared between the landowner and participants.

We are genuinely excited about introducing programs such as these, however, as always there are many things to consider in the development and implementation of new programs. So, for now we cannot just jump in and make it happen, but we are earnestly researching these two exciting programs and will keep you posted.

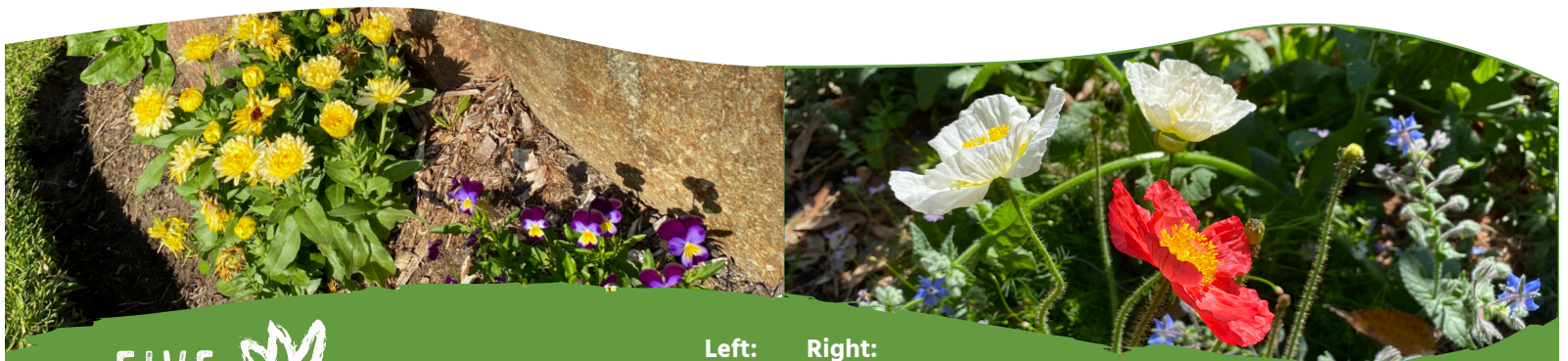
In other news, Jimmy has been working away in the background developing a draft **'Urban foodscaping and kerbside gardening policy'** that FVCG will offer Shoalhaven City Council as a potential policy addition. This would follow the lead of progressive and environmentally-focused councils such as Inner West Council and Randwick Council. We are also working on a formal system for memberships for FVCG so people in the community can be official members and vote at our meetings.

As always if you have any feedback of any of the above topics or if you have ideas on things you would like to see FVCG get involved with, please get in touch through a comment or direct message.

**Until next month happy gardening!**

Dennis Buttigieg

President



**Left:**  
So many gorgeous flowers!  
And Chives for days, get down  
to the RFS shed and pick some  
before the Roo's do!

**Right:**  
Beautiful Papaver Poppy  
flowers in the RFS shed  
garden this month.

