



Providing Volunteer Gardening Services since 1988

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A Word from Our Patron Judy Horton

Winter 2023

We all know that winter is an important pruning time: prune those roses, prune those berries, prune that fig and prune all the deciduous trees and shrubs (except for those that flower in spring, they're pruned after blooming), and more. But it's important not to forget about the evergreens that can and should be pruned in late winter as well.



Judy pruning an Abelia bush on a damp morning in Munich

Any of the summer/autumn bloomers can be cut back just before spring. Hibiscus are good examples, as are Plumbago, Abelia (pictured), Cannas and Abutilons. Gardenias, Murraya and Tibouchinas, if not cut back in autumn, can also be trimmed in late winter. Get out the secateurs too, for winter-flowering natives such as Banksias. And clumps of ornamental grasses can be slashed right to ground level.

To support all the new spring growth that will follow, don't forget to give all the pruned plants a treat with an appropriate fertiliser.

Judy Horton



Easy Care Gardening (ECG) volunteers and staff at the Domain



ECG volunteers admiring a sculpture

Volunteer Appreciation Day 15 May 2023

This year's theme was 'The Change Makers' and incredibly, ECG has been living this theme since 1988. The hard work from our volunteers to make a difference to the lives of our clients every day is testament to this.



L-R: ECG volunteer Ian Norman and ECG CEO, Leanne Babic

ECG kicked off National Volunteer week in style this year with a fun-filled day organised to thank our incredible volunteers and reward their efforts.

The day started with morning tea at the Domain by the Robert Burns Memorial, followed by a guided sculpture walk which is currently on display at Woolloomooloo. Next stop was lunch at the Bells Hotel, a classic pub in Woolloomooloo, and to finish the day, a leisurely tour of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Thank you to Coralie Jensen, ECG Volunteer Manager, for organising the day's events. Again, thank you to all our volunteers - our organisation wouldn't be here without you.

'Bring A Friend to the Garden' Day

To celebrate International Day of Friendship on July 30, we will be inviting volunteers to bring family and friends along to help out in the garden throughout the month of July. All are welcome to see what we do at ECG and to enjoy the winter sunshine and fresh air. Each person who gets involved will receive an Easy Care Gardening keep cup* in recognition of their efforts. These are made from natural rice husk fibre and BPA-free polypropylene, helping to reduce the amount of plastic used. As a bonus, a \$50 Coles voucher will be given to the person who brings the most volunteers for the month*.



*Ts & Cs will apply.

Our Valued Supporters

James N. Kirby Foundation

We are very fortunate to have a number of supporters and sponsors here at ECG, the first of which is the James N. Kirby Foundation. Without this generous funding from JNK, the database project by Alchemy Technology would not have been possible.

Garden services coordinator Shuna Papahatzis says, "The new database will allow Easy Care Gardening to better connect with our clients and volunteers in many ways. Having an easier and more efficient database allows us to keep our focus on our clients and efforts where they are most needed."

The new database is set to Go Live in late June.



JAMES N. KIRBY
FOUNDATION



L:R - David and Kate from Alchemy Technology and Lynne from ECG

Ku-ring-gai Council



James Quealy, ECG Garden Coordinator, trimming long grass under a tree line

Power tools are essential for our day-to-day operations in the garden. Thanks to Ku-ring-gai Council, we were able to purchase two new brushcutters, which are used to cut back hedges and clear paths to make gardens safer for clients. James Quealy, ECG Garden Coordinator, recently spoke of the value of these tools, "battery-powered equipment is much more efficient than petrol-powered equipment so these new brushcutters will make our work easier."

Bendigo Bank Community Pitch

Another valued partnership we have is with the Bendigo Bank *Community Pitch* (Community Bank Turrumurra and Lindfield branches). With their support we now have a number of battery-operated tools for the ECG teams. These tools help our teams continue to work more efficiently with the convenience and mobility of battery-powered equipment. Thank you again to this valued supporter.



L-R: ECG garden team members Ray, John, Steph, Mark, James, Phil and Gary the French Bulldog, who helps to weed and guard the tools on site!

HERO of the Season



Colleen Bracken Returns to the Garden



Colleen with her ECG Gardening team. (L-R) Back: Colleen, Helen and Michael. Front: Sue, Anna and Margie

"Most people in these circumstances would have given up the thought of gardening again, but not our Colleen".

Sue Cramp, fellow ECG volunteer

It had been raining on the morning of the third of December 2021. The ECG end-of-year party was set to take place at Cheltenham Bowling Club that day when witnesses heard a crash nearby at Cheltenham railway station. It was soon discovered that the accident was a car colliding into the railing next to the train line and the injured driver was Colleen Bracken, an ECG volunteer. Fellow volunteer Sue Cramp was entering the bowling club when she heard the crash. "It was Colleen's car and it was obvious she was very badly injured. At that point we did not realise how badly."

Colleen sustained a number of injuries and spent months in hospital requiring countless operations. This was also during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, which meant only her husband Patrick could visit. Colleen remained stoic and with a positive attitude while she endured numerous rehabilitation and physiotherapy sessions. With her gardening team rallying around her, they kept her informed and included, with news and stories from the garden.

ECG CEO Leanne Babic is overjoyed to hear of Colleen's return, "Colleen's story is remarkable and inspirational. Our thoughts were with Colleen throughout her incredibly difficult return, but we are so pleased to see her back."

Colleen's last operation was only a few months ago. Eighteen months later, Colleen is back in the garden with strict instruction to pace herself. Sue is overjoyed to have her back in the garden. She says "Most people in these circumstances would have given up the thought of gardening again, but not our Colleen".



If you have an idea, or simply want to share feedback, we would like to hear from you. Contact us at info@easycaregardening.org.au or Phone (02) 9983 1644