

Gardening secrets revealed in Busselton

Spring was in the air on the middle weekend in September as John Colwil, John McWilliams and Garry Heady from the Great Gardens team explained secrets and exploded myths about sustainable gardening to over 120 residents of the Provence estate and Busselton areas.

“One of the biggest myths is the need for copious amounts of fertiliser” John Colwil explained, “you need to improve the soil with organic matter and your garden will naturally flourish” he said. Slow release fertilisers are the only kind supported by the team of experts. In our sandy soils, quick and soluble fertilisers just end up polluting our waterways.

Mulching tips and secrets were explained by John McWilliams; “Every year you need to put 4 inches of hard mulch on your gardens. This will stop the moisture from evaporating and save you plenty on your water bill”. This mulch will also break down and provide a source of natural food for your garden.

With our precious scheme water disappearing fast as our climate warms, we need to be smarter in the garden. Plant with water wise natives and keep exotic plants to a minimum. A good soil wetter such as bentonite granules will improve sandy soils and make your plants and lawn thrive.

“With such valuable natural assets in the area, including Geographe Bay and the Vasse Wonnerup Wetlands, it is vitally important that local residents do all they can to preserve the natural environment”, said GeoCatch Project Officer Gene Hardy.

Local resident Jacqui Graves took home some important messages from the workshop. “I am going to become more efficient at improving my top soils quality through thicker mulching. Plus, the mulch is going to reduce my garden’s water consumptions and reduce the need for fertilizers.”

“Local natives are definitely going to feature more extensively in my new garden”, says Settlers Beach Estate resident Sophie Cowden.

“I’m going to plant more native plants and less exotics,” says John Murphy, pictured at the Provence Estate workshop with some local native plants from the Geographe Community Landcare Nursery. “Plus I am going to leave the mower catcher off so the lawn clippings naturally feed my lawn.”

“By following some of these simple gardening solutions, as well as keeping pet waste onsite rather than washing it down the drain and using earth friendly detergents, we can all have a positive effect,” says Mr Hardy.

More free Great Gardens workshops are planned for early next year focusing on great food gardens. People can register their interest by emailing GeoCatch NRM Project Officer Gene Hardy at gene.hardy@water.wa.gov.au or ringing GeoCatch on 9781 0108. The workshops were coordinated by GeoCatch and funded by the Federal Government’s Caring for Our Country initiative and the Satterley Property Group / Provence Estate.



(L-R) Glen and John Murphy
Holding native plants grown
by Geographe Community
Landcare Nursery