

# THE MERIVALE COMMUNITY GARDEN STORY

(Courtesy of Deb and Facebook - if anything has been left out or not quite right, please let us know)

## Thursday January 12<sup>th</sup> 2012 - House Fire

It all started with the unfortunate house fire on the Corner of Fraser St & Alverstoke Rd, one man was seriously burnt and the Housing NZ house had to be removed.



John (GM Merivale Community Center) and Housing NZ wanted to avoid this land becoming dumping ground. Housing NZ agreed the land could be used for a community garden for up to 3-5years.

John asked Deb to coordinate the garden. At the time Deb was keen to learn how to feed her grandchildren with very little \$\$\$ and was learning about gardening through the kindy, their worm farm and compost system.

Deb made a deal with herself that she would make it as cool as she could so the community could keep the land as a garden. Deb has since, voluntarily, put her heart and soul (and her own \$\$\$) into the development of a fertile garden.



## **5<sup>th</sup> of May 2012 - Site preparation begins.**

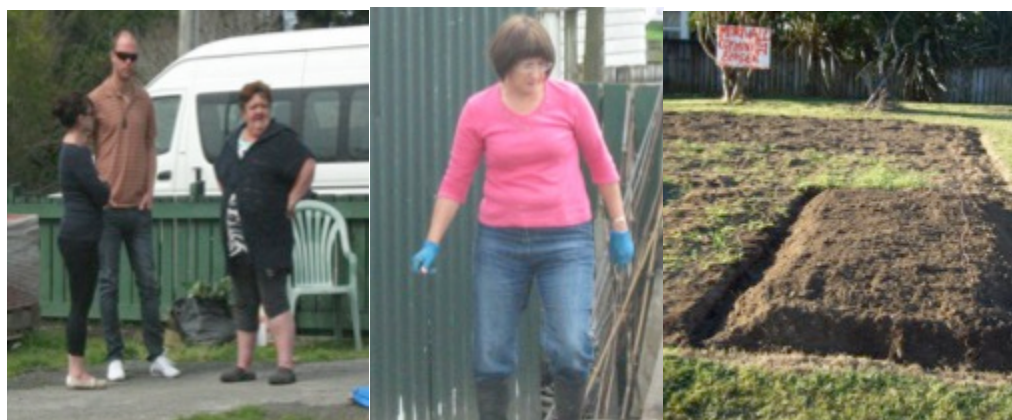


Debris left over from the house needed to be removed and the soil needed a lot of work to become suitable for gardening. Many people from the community came to help. E.g. soil had to be sifted to remove the remaining house rubble.



## **26<sup>th</sup> of May 2012 - The gardening begins!**

Wal and Vicky from the Matua Community Garden plotted out first 9 gardens according to gardening principles, and Steve helped with the landscaping.



The community continued the hard work preparing the plots.



## June 2012 - Corrections partners with the Garden

Deb approached Corrections to see if they could help with the on-going development of the garden. From here a beautiful relationship between Corrections and Community Garden began to bloom. And so did the garden with the PD boys and girls working hard alongside Deb on the garden every Saturday, 9am -4pm, for 9 months.



The garden has since become an agent for "Community Service", with Deb able to supervise community service workers while they do their hours with the garden. All have put their heart and soul into the garden, Deb feels she has been very lucky with the placements she has had.



*"I went to the garden to have a look - you're doing a great job [Deb McCarthy](#). Amazing how offenders on community work sentences are actually loving their punishment, gaining a love for gardening, then when finished their sentence they set up their own gardens at home and spend time in them instead of causing trouble! Keep it up, Deb and the team..." John Mc Carthy, 25.12.12.*



## December 2012 - The Grand Opening!

A lot of work went into preparing the garden for grand opening day.





And after 6 months of hard work the garden was officially blessed and opened.



## 2013 - Additions to the Garden

The shelter was built by the PD boys with the help of a builder who had been through community service. Funding for most of the materials came from Te Puni Kokori, and Avalon, topped up by Deb.



### 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 - The Pizza Oven Workshop!



Regan Prior ran a pizza oven-making workshop, which was a lot of fun. In 2015 there will be healthy cooking workshops with Stephen Wilson and a Sicilian Chef using the oven and garden produce.



## **2014 - On-going Development of the Garden**

### **August 2014 - Working Bee**



### **August 2014 - First Core Group Meeting**



First Core Group meeting to work towards continued growth and sustainability.

### **October - November 2014 - Theft and Vandalism**

For the first time Nick and Deb came to the garden to find tagging and vandalism, things stolen e.g. wheelbarrow, children's picnic table, herb plants and vegetables pulled out long before they are ready : (. Please can everyone keep an eye out on the garden, this is very disheartening, as a lot of voluntary work has gone into the garden. The garden is for everyone in the community, and to have a few spoil it is such as shame.

### **April 15, 2015 - Merivale Community Garden Incorporated**

A core group established the garden as an Incorporated Society this will allow the garden access to a broad range of funding. The garden is also able to distribute food on behalf of Food Rescue.

### **June 2015 - TCC Community Match Fund**

Our first successful application as an incorporated society was received towards the installation of an irrigation system and a series of garden workshops.

## The Garden Today



Deb travels 40min each way on her scooter to work in the garden Mondays, Wednesday and Saturdays, working alongside volunteers and community service workers. Nick works in the garden every Wednesday and Saturday, and occasionally on Mondays. He first became involved in the garden while on Community Service. Kevin and Calvin are also busy helping out in the garden regularly, while many others come and go providing support and assistance as they are able.



Produce (when it is ready) is freely available to the community and it is hoped that people help themselves as needed while respecting that the produce in the garden is for everyone, in return it is hoped that people will give back to the garden in whatever small way they can e.g. a little time or seedlings.

Next year the team are hoping to develop the garden and gardening skills further to help ensure everyone in the community has access to fresh fruit and veges : )



## How the garden grows...

Permaculture principles are used in the garden as they are cheap and they work.

Permaculture: "Consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs..." (Bill Mollison from Permaculture: A Designers Manual).

There is a busy worm farm and compost is made in the garden for the garden.



There are many bees working hard on pollination with two beehives in the garden.



Some gardens have been grown on fish guts. Deb grows seedlings at home, buys them when she can, and some are donated. In Deb's travels she talks to everyone she meets encouraging them to use the garden.

If you have got any ideas on how to develop the garden or would like to find out more about how you can be involved do have a chat with Deb.

# A Massive Thank You To Everyone Who has Helped Make the Garden What it is Today

**PD Boys and Girls**

**Community Service Workers**

**Department of Corrections** - \$2000 per year towards the garden.

**The Merivale Community**

**Regular Volunteers**

**Kingfisher Plumbing** provided the first hose

**Austral Bricks**

**BOP Cobbles**

**Carboline** provided 1000's of dollars worth of **paint**,

**Dave and Noel** have shared their knowledge and passion for all things greens.

**Te Puni Kokori**

**Arohanui Adult Education**

**Avalon** donated artwork    **Aquinas Collage** donated artwork and the scarecrow

Deb's sister **Chrissy** developed, designed and funded the website and stationary.

**Revital**

**Tauranga Girls Collage**

**Good Neighbour**

Generosity from **many people** over the years – e.g. one lady off the street gave Deb an envelope of \$100 worth of Mitre 10 vouchers.

**Fish'n'chip shop on Dive Cres** – donated fish guts – Deb leaves a couple of bins with lids on them, and leaves note and he will bring them around.

**Warehouse Fraser Cove** for Fruit Trees and seedlings.

**Mega 10 Mega** have given the garden an account which Deb pays, always give discount.

**Janice** at the end of Wairoa Rd, has provided cow manure.

**U Save Variety**

**Acorn Foundation**

**Daltons**

**Labour Party**

**Van – EnviroEd**



If anyone has not been included on this list do let us know it has not been deliberate.  
Please know your support and assistance has been greatly appreciated.