



KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

Hi Everyone,

We hope Christmas was a happy time for you all and that 2016 has started out on a positive note.

Raised Beds

We have finally grown something!! The cherry tomatoes look good and taste great. The carrots don't look too good but they taste fine. We have grown radishes, oca, capsicum, large tomatoes and watermelon. These are all test cases to see what grows. It's a bit of a battle to find some good base soil to mix with rice husks, burnt rice husks and cow poo as our soil is so bad. Finally found some.



Mau, our gardener, a lovely man



Nursery

Spry had only 4 puppies but they were quite big when they were born. She dug a deep hole under the plough so we really never saw them much until they started to run around outside. Unfortunately they all died at about 5 weeks old of a virus that was killing many puppies in the village. Meanwhile the cat had 3 kittens. We found them in the storeroom and have moved them to our bathroom/toilet area where they will be safe from the dogs. In this picture they cannot

stand up on their legs yet. She usually has more but these are a fair size and healthy.



The goose eggs didn't hatch any goslings again but they are having another try. Four eggs have been laid already. Mau has made them a comfy nest. Third time lucky. I think we are just waiting for the geese to grow old enough to reproduce although George's terror tactics are becoming a bit too much to put up with no reward of seeing goslings.



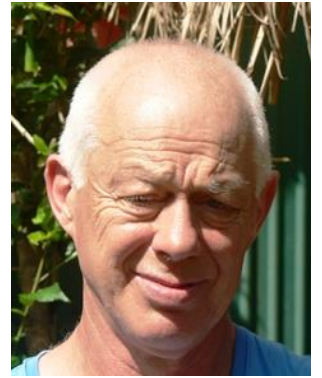
Movie Nights

Thanks to St Augustine's College who gave us a projector when they came to work on the workshop we can have movie nights which we have been thinking about for ages. Thank you very much to Stefan from Ecrum in Kampot who downloads the cartoons and movies for us. We had about 100 people at our first night but I need to sort out a bigger screen and louder speakers.

Volunteers



Marina



Erwin



Susan



Wim



Mart



Sharon



Kathy



Andrew

Another fantastic group of volunteers since the last newsletter. We are grateful that we have the

opportunity to meet so many lovely people from all over the world.

Not only have they all contributed so much to Kep Gardens but thanks to Erwin all my computer problems were solved through his daughter in Belgium. Lovely to see Susan again on a return visit. Wim has been teaching Class 4 about job applications, CVs etc and has conducted a job interview with each student individually. Great experience for them. Erwin gave a couple of science lessons, making old fashioned cameras out of boxes. Marina taught Choun how to cook tomato soup using our homegrown produce as well as hand feeding the puppies water and food to try and keep them alive. Kathy is a gardener and gave us great hints to help with the veggie growing and Andrew, an agriculture student, helped Mau in the garden for 5 weeks. Thanks also to Kookai, Mathieu and Irene, short term volunteers. Great to see Rebecca again who popped over from Vietnam for a few days. Everyone contributed in different but equally important ways which made for a congenial atmosphere at meal times and interesting conversation. A huge thank you to you all.

New Tuktuk

Thank you very much to the people who responded to Craig's plea on Facebook for donations towards a new tuktuk for Kep Gardens. Below is the result of your kindness. It has a stronger motor bike so we can take people up hills rather than offloading and walking. It also seats 9 comfortably which is great for sports days as the car at times cannot fit in all the players and I need to do 2 trips. Now we can go in convoy, car and tuktuk and arrive together. Same for the hospital and dental clinic checkups for all the students. We can transport them ourselves. The biggest advantage is that it will not be in the repair shop every week or so. Thank you so much, we appreciate your support.



Playgroup

The numbers for playgroup have increased this year and we needed more small chairs. Thank you to Rus, Solar Joe and Lance who sponsored 6 chairs each.

We also built a shaded enclosure as the sun creeps through the coconut trees in the morning. Helps to keep the whole area cooler during the day too so it's turned out to have a twofold benefit.





Debate

What a wonderful experience for Class 4 when we participated in an inter-school debate with the Buddhist Library. The Buddhist Library won 2, but not by much, and the third was a draw. They learnt a lot and were asking the next day "when can we do it again". Great confidence booster. They went from sheer terror to wanting a return bout. Congratulations to the Buddhist Library but watch out, we are coming after you!!



Recycling

A special thank you to Jason, JK and all the guys at KKC Recycling in Ballarat. When the staff take something from work they throw a donation into a case box. Jason keeps tabs on this and sends the donations to Kep Gardens. Thanks very much Jason. Some friends in Alice Springs also send their recycling money to Kep Gardens. Recycling not only helps the environment but can also help others not so well off and it doesn't hurt your pocket.

Workshop/Storage Area

Since December when St Augustine's College in Sydney helped build the Trades Training Complex, we have rendered and painted the outside and installed the steel security door. Depending on funds we hope to have the verandah added in the coming months. Then we will have an all-weather building suitable for a variety of uses that all sections of Kep Gardens will be able to use.



Sports Uniforms

Thank you to Juanita Cesar and Sinat Say from the United States for donating 30 sports uniforms to Kep Gardens. Certainly can't miss us with the bright colour. Good on Sarak for using his initiative and finding a sponsor.



Volleyball uniform



Soccer uniform

Staff Family Weddings

The daughter of Choun our tuktuk driver and a former student was married in February as was the son of Choun our housekeeper also a former student. Add on a couple of extra weddings of former students or neighbours and February was a busy time for partying. A couple more weddings to go plus an engagement and an 8 year old birthday party. Partying slows down during the rainy season giving us all a chance to rest and recuperate before October when it all starts again!!



Sreyna, a former student

Heading towards the very hot weather. Already the days are very hot but the nights are still a bit cooler. Going to be a long hot season as forecasters say there won't be any rain until July. Yuck!!

Leadership Through English

At the end of March we have a break for 2 weeks while the country celebrates Khmer New Year. Then we begin the long third term of 18 weeks. We have decided to have our own school concert this year so the Leadership Through English group of Year 10 and 11's are busy organizing a stage, lighting and speakers as well as class reps from this group organizing individual and group performances from each class. Should be a fun night as we are expecting the parents and relatives of the children to attend.

Hope life is treating you all with kid gloves.
Cheers, Janine and Andrew

