



The University of Sydney
Faculties of Health Sciences and Architecture
**The Home Modification:
Information Clearinghouse Project**

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 17 – May, 2007
ISSN 1832-2379

Our stated mission is “to develop a leading edge Home Modification information clearing project designed with the assistance of, and accessible to, the full range of industry and consumer target groups.”

Feature Article: Annual Report Highlights

Tanja von Behrens

Recently, the Clearinghouse contracted Nicolette Jackson to work on the HMinfo Clearinghouse's first annual report. This report, for the period 2005 – 2006, was the first annual report completed for the Clearinghouse and, as such, was a large undertaking. Nicolette's previous experience includes working for Medicines Sans Frontiers, putting together their Annual Report.

Collating information for the annual report was a challenging task, as Nicolette had no prior experience with the work of the Clearinghouse. The process involved a review of possible publication formats, and eventually the Clearinghouse settled on a format that we hope clearly outlines the necessary content required. As time progresses, and in future annual reports, it may be that the format needs to be reworked. The current report, however, contains clear and comprehensive information about the Clearinghouse projects to date.

A big thankyou to Nicolette for her time and effort in putting the report together, and for her smiling face in the office. We wish Nicolette all the best for the birth of her baby in April!

The annual report includes a summary of the aims and content of the Clearinghouse's research and web based facilities, in addition to summaries of information regarding the work background and work experience of all of the Clearinghouse staff and Clearinghouse Advisory Committee.

The Annual Report contains a directors' report regarding the work of the Clearinghouse over the 2005-2006 period, as well as information regarding the Strategic Plan that came out of the Clearinghouse Planning Day, held on the 12th of February 2007.

During the period 2005-2006, the Clearinghouse was involved in producing 9 different research publications, based on the Evidence Based Practice research framework. In addition, the Clearinghouse website underwent a major restructure, with an official re-launch in July 2006. Involved in 8 different events and presentations for this period, the Clearinghouse has been highly active within the community and has received positive feedback, with an increase in the number of website hits received on site, increased registration numbers and increased downloads of information from the site.

Among the major research projects undertaken by the Clearinghouse in the period 2005-2006 are included; a major report, funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, into the costs and benefits of using private housing as the 'home base' for care for older people. This report took the form of a systematic literature review.

In addition, the Clearinghouse was represented at the World Federation of Occupational Therapy Conference, and involved in the production of a set of DADHC funded guidelines for the building of Dementia Day Care Centres, a move to the HSNet internet server, the development of a users' guide to the HMinfo Drupal website, the production of 5 new summary bulletins and occasional papers and numerous overseas presentations - including at least one presentation in Sri Lanka for the Asia Pacific Consortium on Disability. The Annual report is currently being finalized, after which time it will be available on the www.homemods.info website.

Featured Web Site: Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria

www.horticulturaltherapy.com.au

By Lara Oram

The Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria is an organisation staffed by professionals and volunteers, which promotes horticulture as therapy and recreation. The website provides useful links to other gardening organisations and many helpful resources.

The Association has published four books, which can be purchased via the website. These include 'Horticultural Therapy', 'Raised Garden Beds', 'Sensory Gardens' and 'Starting a Horticultural Therapy Program'. The website also provides fact-sheets that provide the benefits of gardening, tips and considerations, where to get help, and safety. Some of the online resources provided by the website include:

- Gardening for Children
- Gardening for Seniors
- Gardening for People with Disabilities
- Gardens for the Senses
- Raised Garden Bed (RGB) Fact Sheet

The RGB factsheet, in particular, provides helpful dimensions for building a box style and a table top style raised garden bed. The dimensions consider both seated and standing gardeners.

The website also links to a smaller project titled Edible Gardens, which aims to encourage people to grow their own vegetables in order to "...enhance the health and well-being of people with a disability through improved nutrition, physical activity, increased social interaction and an increased sense of achievement for those involved" (Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria, 2006).

J.D Bone Memorial Trust grants are available to gardening related programs/projects via the Association website. In 2006, a grant of \$1500 was given to an organisation for a gardening activity.

A gallery of photographs that demonstrate different designs, including a sensory garden and the gardening project at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, are available on the website.

The photographs below are examples of a sensory and edible garden and an accessible garden.



Figure 1: Yarraleen CRU Sensory and Edible Garden, from the Horticultural Association of Victoria (2006).



Figure 2: Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, table planters.

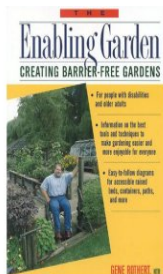
The Association can be contacted via their website for advice on gardening projects.

Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria. (2006). Edible Gardens. Retrieved 20 March 2007 from <http://ediblegardens.htav.org.au/>

Publication Review: The Enabling Garden: Creating Barrier-Free Gardens

By Gene Rothert

By Katrina Chaudhary



The Enabling Garden: A Guide to Lifelong Gardening

Gene Rothert HTR;
illustrated by Laurie Noffs.
Dallas, Texas: Taylor
publishing, 1994.
ISBN 0-87833-847-0

Gardening is an enjoyable and relaxing activity for a growing number of people. The therapeutic benefit of gardening has been well documented for some time. After a hard days work in the office it feels good to just hang out in the garden, admiring the fruits of your labour, picking vine-ripe tomatoes and pulling out some weeds. As our abilities to move around change due to age and disability, gardening becomes a challenging task.

Gene Rothert, a registered Horticultural Therapist, shows, through his own personal experiences of gardening with a disability, how gardening can easily be adapted with some planning and a few modifications. If you use a wheelchair, have difficulty balancing, lack strength, or find gardening physically too challenging, *The Enabling Garden* will help you reduce the obstacles by adapting the garden to your abilities. Rothert discusses gardening while seated, making raised beds and smooth paths, selecting appropriate plants and tools and performing maintenance chores.

The first chapter discusses the magical effect of gardening to the body and mind. The second chapter helps you relate your abilities and limitations to various activities in the garden. Chapter three provides a thorough overview of paths and surfaces to help you move around your garden. The fourth chapter covers specific suggestions for adapting the garden with containers, raised beds, or vertical structures. Chapter five begins to adapt you to be

able to perform your planned gardening activities by carefully selecting gardening tools and equipment. This chapter analyses various types of enabling tools with diagrams and gripping aids and techniques to overcome limitations to achieve continued success in the garden. Extensive descriptions of both tool adaptations and specialised tools are provided.

In Chapter six, the emphasis is placed on adapting plants by selecting those you enjoy growing and eating, and the amount of maintenance you can perform. Several types of plants, and how they relate to the enabling garden are reviewed in this chapter. Major emphasis is on plants with interesting colour, scent, texture and form; a particularly important principle in the enabling garden, where certain senses may be impaired. The last two chapters cover the essential steps of garden design, maintenance and care. Garden design includes site analysis plans, garden plans for wheelchair users and people with visual impairments.

In summary, this book offers a basic checklist that will help to assess your abilities, then offering sound advice for selecting the best tools, materials for pathways, and plants to make gardening easier. The author's step-by-step approach is most helpful, with easy to follow diagrams for wheelchair-accessible raised beds and paths, followed by concise information on the design process - from planning the site to compiling a wish list of garden features. Garden maintenance is covered in brief, but a reference list of books and articles provide additional sources for helpful information.

HMinfo Background

Our team brings together a range of experience. The Directors are Catherine Bridge from the Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney and Peter Phibbs from the Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney. Katrina is our librarian. Lisa, Stephanie, Tanja, Brian and Maree are the research assistants. Andrew and Gordon are our web programmers. Sadly, Lara Oram left us in March for a full-time clinical position with the Spastic Centre of NSW. Welcome to Maree, who has done some work with Sydney University in the past, and has come on board to help us out with finances and administration. The team will also soon welcome Lyndal Milikan as an Occupational Therapist.

How to contact us

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Latest Events & Training

- ▶ NSW HACC Conference 14th-15th May 2007
- ▶ ILC Professional Certificate in Accessible Buildings 18th-19th May 2007
- ▶ Building for Boomers and Beyond: 50+ Housing Symposium, 30th May – 3rd June 2007
- ▶ HMinfo Clearinghouse Advisory Committee Meeting 24th May 2007
- ▶ NSW HMMS State Council meeting 4th - 5th June 2007

Upcoming Publications:

- ▶ Modification or Relocation: Summary Bulletin
- ▶ Home Water Management: Summary Bulletin
- ▶ Gardening at Home: Summary Bulletin
- ▶ HMinfo Annual Report 2005-5006
- ▶ Research on the cost and benefits of providing care at home
- ▶ Understanding Aboriginal Australians for more effective provision of Home Modification Services

These publications are all in the final stages of review and will be posted on the Home Modification Information Clearinghouse Website as soon as possible.

- ▶ Research on environmental determinants and interventions in the home pertaining to aggressive and self-injurious behaviour of people with a cognitive impairment.
- ▶ Redevelopment of the DADHC Guidelines for Group Home Design

This research is currently underway.