TIM’S PESTO

This is the yummy pesto we enjoyed at the Jazz in the Garden event in November. Now you can try it at home!

Ingredients

1 large bunch of basil
approx: 3/4 cup of grated parmesan cheese
approx: 3/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil
approx: 100gms pine nuts (toasted)
1.5 cloves of garlic (crushed)
pepper to taste

Method

1. Pluck the leaves from the basil
2. Place leaves in a food processor
3. Toast the pine nuts until they become oily and aromatic (light brown)
4. Add nuts, cheese, oil and garlic to the processor
5. Blend until a smooth paste (sometimes you need to stop midway and stir the leaves through)
6. Taste test, and add pepper to your taste.

This should produce enough pesto for 500gms of pasta, sufficient enough for 4-6 people.

TIPS FOR USING PESTO

Tip 1: the closer you prepare to serving time the better, but it also stores well in a jar when covered with a film of oil and can be frozen.

Tip 2: At the end you nearly always need to add extra leaves, cheese, nuts, oil, garlic or pepper to get the texture and taste the way you like it.

Tip 3: Make a larger batch on the weekend, and you’ve got a perfect easy meal or two during your busy summers week. You can freeze the pesto too, and it will keep O.K for a few months.

Tip 4: Beautiful with any salad, but especially excellent with large vine ripened tomatoes: thinly sliced, topped with purple onion rings, pepper, a touch of salt, sugar, drizzled with extral olive oil, a splash of good vinegar, and topped with a few left over chopped basil leaves.

Visit us on the Ashbury Public School website under ‘Community Garden’, www.ashbury-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

This recipe is available on the Ashbury Community Garden page of the Ashbury Public School website, www.ashbury-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
December 2012

GARDEN NOTES

This has been an amazing year of consolidation in the garden with the completion of our beds, many of our beautiful fruit trees establishing themselves, completion of the paving, construction of our sculptural feature curvy fence and installation of a new shed. The garden classroom construction was completed in January 2012 and has taken central stage as an outdoor learning and community gathering area.

The children have been visiting the garden with the help and commitment of parents and teachers and many took part in another wonderful seed planting in March with our traditional green Mufti day. The committee welcomed Eleanor Bayndrian who replaced Narelle Gor as the teacher representative on our committee. Children and adults alike marvelled as our first crops of ginger and sweet potatoes were harvested. The garden continues to fill us with awe and wonder as we establish new and interesting crops we have never seen grown before.

2012 highlights: winning Garden of the Year in Canterbury Municipality in October, the Autumn Harvest Festival which was held in Ettrick St on 1 April was a huge success, drawing in the community and parents with wonderful food and music. In November our dream of Jazz in the Gardens was realised with the help of the wonderful Ashbury Jazz Band, Ashfield Little Big Band and a troop of dedicated volunteers serving up delicious food produced from the garden. This was another wonderful community event. In November we introduced native stingless bees.

The committee would like to convey our sincere appreciation to the NSW Government and our local member Linda Burney for the Community Builders Grant, which contributed toward the cost of our shelter. Thanks also to the Community Grants which funded the shed, new tools and the paving.

Brendan Moar worked with the committee to design the garden has continued to assist with completion of projects like the paving and the installation of the curvy fence. We would like to thank Elisha Blackledge a parent and architect who drew the plans for our classroom deck and Liam O’Sullivan and Frank Murphy who led a team of handy helpers to build the deck. The Canterbury Men's Shed made our new notice board. Thanks also to the dedicated volunteers who water the garden, participate in working bees, look after the chooks, assist with communications and help maintain the garden. Special thanks to Pia Argiratos for creating our wonderful website. What a year!!!
SHARING IS CARING

What a wonderful place the garden is! Passersby watch with interest and often stop to chat about what we have growing. The garden evokes so much for so many.

One busy morning we were harvesting spinach for the legendary pies which were baked for Jazz in the Garden. Carmen stopped to talk about the sunflowers and sweet peas. She moved from Spain 3 years ago and had not seen the big sunflowers or sweet peas here. We swapped some gardening stories, phone numbers and we will give her some seeds when they are mature.

Next thing Immacolata Colubriale popped by to ask if she could preserve some of our artichokes for us. Immacolata’s children came to Ashbury 40 years ago and she now has a grandchild at the school. She is really enthusiastic about the produce and keen to teach us how to preserve it.

She made a number of jars which she donated to the produce stall at Jazz in the Garden but they sold so fast we had to get a photo of her with the very last jar!!!

INTERESTING PLANT FACTS

Artichokes are edible flower buds originating in the Mediterranean region.

They have been used since ancient times for their medicinal and health benefits and because they are delicious!

Botanically artichokes belong to the thistle family.

Fresh artichoke is an excellent source of folic acid, vitamin C, K and B and a range of health promoting minerals.

They are also an attractive sculptural plant in the garden.

Above: Immacolata Colubriale her artichokes and ACG President Pam Swinfield
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, STUART

Meet Ashbury Community Garden Committee member, Stuart, who has a daughter Finlae in year 3 and a son Jesse who will be coming to Ashbury from Yeo Park next year.

In a previous newsletter, Stuart included some information about native bees which are completely stingless and are important pollinators of flowers and crops in the garden.

Did you know that without bees and other flying insects we wouldn’t get any fruit or vegetables? Native bee populations are declining through loss of habitat and over-use of pesticides so Stuart has arranged for two hives of native bees (Trigona Carbonaria) from Queensland for our organic, pesticide free garden.

Their honey is also a delicious bush food but they only produce a small amount each year. Stuart also keeps European honey bees in Ashbury and Mudgee and often sells his honey at our market stalls.

Next time you’re in the garden, have a look at the hives and the tiny black bees.

Stuart has also purchased a book on stingless bees that will be available to borrow from the school library in the coming weeks.

FACTS ABOUT OUR BEES

Visit our information pages on the Ashbury Public School website for our new fact sheet on our bees! Click on the ‘Community Garden’ tab to find us!

A few quick facts before you get there...

Do the bees swarm?

Not as you probably mean by the word swarm. New hives are formed by a queen accompanied by a few workers, unlike the honeybee which swarms in very large numbers. When native bees do swarm they are close to the hive and it involves mating or hive defence.

What does the hive look like inside?

In the middle of the hive is the egg mass covered by a thin membrane and densely surrounded by a spiral shape of storage pots and other structures.

What do the bees build their internal hive from?

A mixture of resins often gathered from trees, coupled with wax secreted by the worker bees.