

Food Swap

- Grass roots at its best



When West Croydon resident, Julietta Cerin, couldn't stand the thought of throwing away the leftover figs in her backyard, she took action.

Rather than wasting the harvest of her fruit tree, and assuming her neighbours may be in the same situation, she invited people in the area to swap their excess homegrown produce every Saturday morning at Carnarvon Reserve, West Croydon.

"I decided to create the opportunity to meet with others and swap their produce for some of our figs, peaches and tomatoes. I had very little time, a one year old child, and a swag of other paid and unpaid commitments. In order for this to work, it had to take minimum time and effort. It had to be just one very small component of a very full life. In order to be sustainable for me, it had to be less than non burdensome - it practically had to run itself," says Julietta.

Fruit, vegetables and herbs, as well as homemade jams, chutneys and brandy sauce are often exchanged. If neighbours don't have food to contribute, they are welcome to bring plants, cuttings, seeds and bulbs, as well as their knowledge, conversation and spirit of sharing.

"There is no bartering, no trading and no money being exchanged," says Julietta.

"The swap is purely about sharing what you already have too much of, with your neighbours."

The environmental and social benefits of the swap are obvious, as a mix of professionals, students, retirees and new arrivals to Australia merge with the young and young at heart.

"Our swap is beautiful, small, simple and local. It works, and we love it. If we begin

attracting the attention of many people from surrounding areas, I will encourage them to start their own. My vision is of hundreds of these swaps mushrooming all over Australia."

As part of the Sustainable Lifestyles Program, Council hopes to encourage Julietta's concept and initiate swaps throughout the City, with each one being driven by local communities.

If you want to find out more visit www.myspace.com/vegswap or email vegswap@adam.com.au.



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