

Wednesday 15 January 2014

## **STOLEN CITRUS TREES LEAVES A BAD TASTE**

**'The Habitat' – one bad apple, or orange**

After a very successful year of operation, volunteers at 'The Habitat' community plant and food garden at Santa Rosa Park have been left with a sour taste thanks to the thoughtless theft of their prized citrus trees.

Over the past month, one selfish person has stolen all of the citrus trees that for the past nine months have been and happily growing and producing fruit for all to share.

'The Habitat' is a joint venture of City of Ryde and a group of dedicated volunteers. It is funded through grants, donations and plant sales and is all about sharing with the community. It has been a hit with locals who are encouraged to stop by and take a small amount of produce, including lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, chives and other herbs, to contribute to their family table.

The volunteers are saddened by the way the stolen citrus trees have been carelessly 'yanked out of the ground,' during the hottest time of the year, which also means these plants will more than likely die.

'The Habitat' now has 275 people on its volunteer list with people of all ages lending a hand for as little or as long as they can manage whenever they have some time to spare. The many positive benefits from gardening have helped some volunteers rehabilitate from illness, and others connect with their community. Workshops on habitat creation, worm farming, composting, seed cleaning, planting and growing techniques have attracted over 700 locals.

New 'Habitat' volunteers are always welcome. 'The Habitat' in Santa Rose Park, Quarry Road, Ryde, is open 10.00am to 4.00pm Wednesdays and Saturdays for volunteering. Just come along and the volunteers will make you welcome.

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Media contact: Lee Kirkland City of Ryde Media Officer 9952 8083