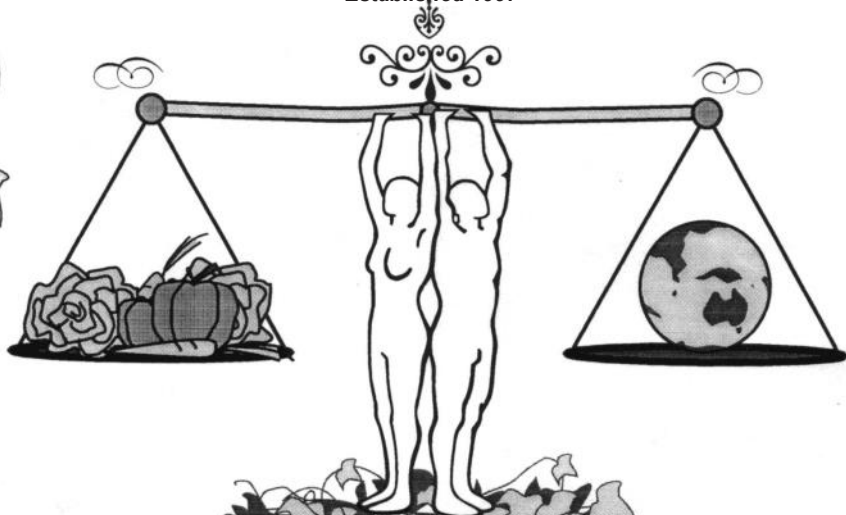


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 23 - JANUARY 2019 Issue 1
GARDENING IN SUMMER

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|---|
| Pg2 | Club Information | 9 | Designing for Communities - Plants and people |
| 3 | Notice Board, Guest Speakers, Workshops | 10/11 | Hints for "All Things Gardening" |
| 4 | Watersaver gardens | 12-15 | How Does Your Garden Grow? With Rebecca Bowen |
| 5 | A Hint about Nut Grass, A Timely reminder | 16/17 | Hardy Vegetables - For Brisbane |
| 6/7 | If You Only Do One Thing this Month | 17 | Training Water-wise Plants |
| 7 | Gold Coast Woman of the Year Nomination | 18 | Fruit Trees |
| 8 | ESS starting 2019 | 19 | Vegetables and Herbs |

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21st FEBRUARY 2019

Notice Board

1. **To promote organic sustainable food raising for home gardens and farms.**
2. **To foster research into improved methods of organic farming and gardening.**
3. **To provide information and support to all those interested in the various aspects of organic growing.**

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

The Meeting Place, Cnr Guineas Creek Rd and Coolgardie St, Elanora.

Doors open: 7:00 pm. **Begin at 7:30 pm**

Entry is \$2 members, \$5 visitors.

(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

Single: \$20. Family: \$30.

To renew or start memberships please transfer funds directly into our bank account, send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly, or just pay at the door.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

Members' Market Corner:

Please bring plants, books and produce you wish to sell or trade.

Raffle Table:

This relies on the kind generosity of members to donate items on the night. Tickets - \$1each or 3 for \$2.

Library:

Books 50c, Videos, DVDs \$2, Soil Test Kit \$2. Available to members for 1 month.

Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

1/4 page: \$15 an issue, or \$145 per year,

1/2 page: \$25 an issue, or \$250 per year,

full page: \$40 an issue, or \$400 per year,

W: www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcorganic

2018 –2019 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Cathie Hodge 0406 575 233 <i>cathie.hodge@gmail.com</i>
Assistant Sec	Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
Membership Sec Membership Asst	Diane Kelly Penny Jameson
Newsletter Editor Newsletter Asst.	Jorge Cantellano <i>jcantellanoc@gmail.com</i> Diane Kelly Dorothy Coe Jill Barber (p.r. for Jorge)
Website Editor Social Media E.	Jorge Cantellano Stacey Panozzo, Dorothy Coe
Advertising	Stacey Panozzo 0406 007 583 <i>staceypanozzo1@gmail.com</i>
Guest Speaker Liaison	Leah Johnston, <i>leahbryan9@gmail.com</i> Emma Litchfield, Stacey Panozzo
Librarians	Evelyn Douglas
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield Maggie Golightly Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson, Deb Phillips, Bev Geraghty
Veggie Swap Co-ordinator	Dorothy Coe

Newsletter Contributions are welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. **Deadline for contributions is the one week before the meeting.** Send your content to Jorge C. at: jcantellanoc@gmail.com

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

NEW: You can now pay your membership fee directly into the GCOG bank account.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers
Bank: Suncorp
BSB: 484-799
Account: 0014-21651

Remember to put your Name and Membership Number in the comment field.

Note the number in brackets after your name is your membership number - you will need to quote this number in the comment field, if you pay via online banking.

Membership Renewals

Overdue: Eileen Turner (328), Henry Blonner (108), Gillian Tubbs & Dolphe Cooke (403), Gary Miller (424), Colleen Rohan (415), Rodney & Cathy Boscoe (347), Megan Keeler (358)

January: Marion Symons (155), Denise Goodwin (335), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Micheline Lazaroo (401), Winny Hu Shouhe (414), Ira Appel (417), Danielle Bowe (426)

February: Barry O'Rourke (185), Penny Jameson (201), Roger & Pauline Behrendorff (232), Danny Li (384), Bill Smart (386), Kerry Lason (402), Terry Lewins (427)

Upcoming Guest Speakers

We are currently seeking Guest Speakers for throughout 2019. If you have an idea for a potential speaker, or a topic that you think would interest our members, please contact Leah Johnston at leahbryan9@gmail.com

Latest newsletter can be downloaded from the site at goldcoastorganicgrowers.org

Thanks to Contributors this month:

Bill Smart, Diane Kelly, Leah Johnston, Jorge Cantellano, Stacey Panozzo.

View our Newsletters On-Line or Collect at our Meetings:

We are encouraging our members to read our monthly newsletters either on our website - www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/ (and then select "newsletters"); on our Club members' Facebook page; [Gold Coast Organic Growers Members](#)

or by collecting their printed copies at our Club meetings.

You will be able to pick up your current edition of the newsletter at the front desk each month, or if you've missed a meeting, then your copy will be saved for you in the Club library.

In this way, we will be able to save on postage costs, and the funds this frees up can be used for inviting special guests to speak at our meetings, or for other Club activities.

Please let the staff at the front desk know if you would prefer to cancel your printed copy, and enjoy the [coloured editions on-line](#).

Workshops

Gardening Girls Lunch – (Men welcome)

Rose Evans Garden Centre Coombabah
We meet monthly for lunch and a chat
Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888

EdibleScapes

working bee/workshop 2nd Saturday of each month - 8:30am

[Edible Landscape gardens Project.](#)
contact@ediblescapes.org

Designing for Communities - Plants and people

Saturday, 9 February 2019 from 10:00-12:00.74-78 Billabirra Cres, Nerang QLD 4211, Australia.

Located at the NEW Sensory Gardens for all abilities at Country Paradise Parklands in Nerang. <https://www.facebook.com/events/543158969518464/>

LIKE A GARDEN THAT LOOKS AFTER ITSELF?

Drought can be a gardener's worst nightmare. In 2006 Alan Singleton, a keen organic gardener, had no way of sustaining his crops through the severe water restrictions. Alan set about refining the wick garden system he had come across.

In 2011 he went full time building what are now known as Watersaver Gardens. Besides cutting water use by 80% other advantages include significant reduction in weeding and no regular watering even in hot conditions.

The science behind the Watersaver Gardens is the wicking system - capillary action sees water drawn up through the soil by plants only as required, meaning the plant is never over-watered or not watered enough. Great for those without a green thumb. The reservoir only needs checking every four weeks - great if you're going on holidays. With intermittent rain they can go six months without needing watering. All kinds of herbs and vegetables can be grown in the gardens. Not watering from the top reduces mould and rust that attacks the wet leaves.



A TOOWOOMBA GARDENER'S CLEVER CREATION SUPPORTS DROUGHT-PRONE PLOTS AND BUSY WOULD-BE GARDENERS.

FAST FACTS

- five sizes up to three metres
- all colorbond colours
- easily assembled flat pack
- ideal height for seniors
- suits busy people
- delivered to your door
- prices start at \$225

Like to know more?

watersavergardens.com.au

Phone Alan for a chat on 0424 996 540

Established Watersaver Gardens on display at 20 Jennings Street, South Toowoomba



WATERSAVER GARDENS

Made in Toowoomba

A Hint about Nut Grass:
by: Bill Smart

Here is some advice from one of the residents of the Eco Village in the Currumbin Valley – and thanks to Bill for forwarding it on to us:

I know several of us have an ongoing battle with nutgrass. I have tried all sorts of things to no avail but at last have stumbled on something that seems to have worked! Last autumn / winter I sowed a green manure seed mix over half of a garden bed, which I then cut down at the point of flowering and left on the ground under mulch. The other half I just covered with black plastic.

This spring / summer I have worked over both beds and currently they only have a very light mulch as I wait for chamomile lawn to sprout. What I have noticed is that the half that was previously covered by green manure is completely nutgrass free, and the half that was just covered by plastic is full of nutgrass again.



A Timely reminder:
by: Diane Kelly



Have a look at the coloured photo in the newsletter on the website, and you will see a black snake curled up in my raised garden bed, snuggled up against the inside of the timber frame.



So a timely reminder to keep watching for snakes during the warm weather, and always wear gloves when gardening!

“Onion juice applied to stings and bites gives immediate relief” *Henry Doubleday Research Association*. (It is a bit like putting honey on a bee sting – the pain goes away quite quickly.)

<http://www.whatsnakeisthat.com.au/category/region/queensland/gold-coast/>

<http://www.goldcoastsnakecatchers.com.au/snake-id.php>

<http://www.wildlifeqld.com.au/snakes-catcher/snake-identification/snakes-of-south-east-qld.html>

If You Only Do One Thing this Month – Grow some Passionfruit :

by: Diane Kelly

One of my earliest childhood memories is of my mother telling the story about some friends who migrated from England to Australia by boat. During the journey, as they neared Australia, one of their meals included some passionfruit. Not being familiar with the fruit, and going by what is done with other fruit, they commenced to remove all the seeds and eat the remaining pulp!

Passionfruit (*Passiflora edulis*) is one of Australia's most popular homegrown vine crops, and I am sure we have all enjoyed a piece of passionfruit sponge (with cream), or one of the fruit's other uses.



So – this month, if you only do one thing – grow some passionfruit!

Growing a passionfruit vine requires a bit of planning – although you will probably only need to plant the one vine to keep your family in good supply of the fruit. For good fruit set, chose a sunny position, and remember that a north-south orientation is best. Add generous amounts of compost into the soil prior to planting and mulch the plant well (but remember to keep the mulch away from the stem). Water in thoroughly.



The vines are more productive and easier to manage if they are initially trained to a T-shape – prune the plants to a single leader, and when it has reached its desired height (ideally two metres), allow two horizontal laterals. Soft ties can be applied to guide the young plants up their support (a trellis, pergola, arbour or fence). Be careful not to allow the plant to grow back over itself because this prevents light and air reaching the plant, and limits pollination by bees and other insects.

Passionfruit have a high requirement for potassium, so apply potassium-enriched compost or sulphate of potash before flowering and during fruit development. Remember to water your passionfruit regularly, and keep the vine in check with light, regular pruning when it is in active growth. Your plant should be begin to bear in the first year – full-flavoured fruit can be obtained by harvesting ripe fruits as they fall.

Well-grown passionfruit vines are relatively disease free. You may notice some fruit drop – this can be caused by insufficient or excess water, over-fertilizing, dry & windy conditions, or extremes in temperature. The vine may also experience a woodiness virus which can cause a decrease in vigour, mottled leaves, and woodiness in the fruit – if this occurs, remove the vine. Thin-skinned types of passionfruit may suffer from fruit fly attacks – the larvae don't tend to develop, but they will cause the fruit to drop – try thick-skinned varieties instead.

Bees and other insects are important for good pollination, although a number of varieties are self-pollinating. Pollination problems tend to be caused by over-fertilizing with high-nitrogen fertilizers. Also hot, dry and windy conditions during flowering (or other extreme weather) can also result in poor fruit set.

Harvest black passionfruit when they are fully sized and coloured – they are at their best when slightly wrinkled. The Panama varieties, however, are ripe when still smooth. The pulp can be used straight away, or extracted and frozen.

So – grow some passionfruit. The vines are attractive, full of lovely green leaves, and the flowers are beautiful. The fruit can be used in fruit salads, smoothies, passionfruit butter, cakes and cordials – as well as a topping on your next pavlova!



Gold Coast Woman of the Year Nomination

By Leah Johnston

Gold Coast Organic Growers member, Stacey Panozzo, has been nominated in the Harvey Norman Gold Coast Woman of the Year awards!

Twenty Four finalists have been selected in eight different categories. Stacey has been nominated in the Wellness Warrior category which celebrates women who have inspired fellow Gold Coasters to live more sustainable and healthy lives.

Stacey was recognised for starting and running the Botanical Bazaar expo and Sprout Sunday events, which have encouraged thousands of people of all ages to learn how to grow their own food. As well as her work developing the new Sensory Gardens at Country Paradise, Nerang, which invites people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature.

It's wonderful to see sustainability and gardening being celebrated in the media.

You can vote for Stacey in the People's Choice category by visiting here <https://tinyurl.com/yal927qx>

Voting closes January 26 and the winners will be announced on March 8.

Good luck in the voting Stacey. You're already a winner to everyone at GCOG!



ESS starting 2019

By Jorge Cantellano



EdibleScapes had a great start to 2019 harvesting last year's fresh produce. 17 pumpkins and dozens of organic culinary and medicinal herb packs will be donated today (Thursday 17th January) to Nerang Neighbourhood Centre's Emergency Food Service.

This is a humble gesture; however, it is a symbolic and tangible statement about city food security and the rights of all citizens to enjoy nutrient-rich healthy food. The Edible Landscape Gardens site at Country Paradise Parklands is an experiential learning site, where a broad range of gardening, harvesting and expanded opportunities to learn are open to the public. .

We are eager to commence our 2019 program, motivated by the concrete support shown to EdibleScapes during 2018 from a range of community stakeholders. We are especially encouraged by the successful completion of the crowdfunding campaign, only in 3 days into December. This fundraising will support the Community Composting activities.

In addition, we were delighted to receive the City Council Division 5 Donation grant for learning aids / booklets / interpretation panels at the Edible Landscape Gardens site.

Another, "big Thank You to Cr, Peter Young" for a second and bigger Grant (on the way to

the bank) that will enable the development of the gardens, planting of the permanent fruits trees and running the gardening community education 2019 programs.



Edible Gardening and Community Composting Working Bee

2nd Saturday of the Month.

Edible landscape gardens regular monthly activity – meet us near the Edible Landscape Gardens site at Country Paradise Parkland - Nerang. 74 Billabirra Crescent, Nerang.

Everyone is welcome!

Join us as we transform this open space into a productive edible garden that will grow food for parkland visitors and the community in need! This is a hands-on event

This is a free event, but bookings are essential. Please feel free to bring any surplus produce, seeds, cuttings, plants, gardening magazines etc to swap and share!

EdibleScapes support healthy and sustainable local communities through edible gardening. Our volunteers work together to create a vibrant, sustainable network of community growers in the Gold Coast.

Check details out on the Facebook page: Edible Landscape gardens Project.

www.facebook.com/pg/n.ediblescapes/events

Designing for Communities - Plants and people By Stacey Panozzo

Saturday, 9 February 2019 from 10:00-12:00.

74-78 Billabirra Cres, Nerang QLD 4211, Australia.



Located at the NEW Sensory Gardens for all abilities at Country Paradise Parklands in Nerang.

We have completed the first stage of the Sensory Gardens, however seek assistance with the upkeep. Many hands make light work and we invite ALL ages and abilities to help with the light maintenance work.

Please come and help to do a little clean up of leaves, twigs, weeds plus spread mulch and replace plants that did not survive the summer after planting.

As a thank you, we will offer you the opportunity to learn more about 'Designing for Communities - People and Plants' by experienced therapeutic Horticulturalist Partrick Regnault.

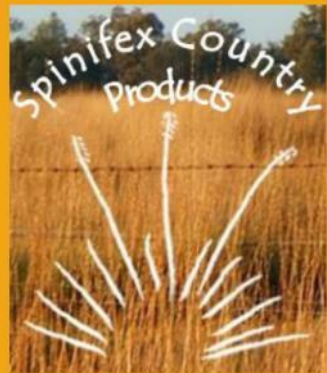
Patrick from Interactive Landscapes is donating his time to also help with the clean up and present the FREE educational workshop to the local community and members of the Australian Institute of Horticulture Inc..

We thank ETC - Enterprise & Training Company Ltd and Botanical Bazaar for sponsoring the build of the first stage of the Sensory Gardens.



Spinifex Country Products

High quality sustainably produced
Charcoal and Biochar for
your soils microbe & plant health.



www.spinifexcountry.com.au

Call us on 0448 955 101

Hints for “All Things Gardening”

by Diane Kelly

This month, seeing our guest speaker is talking about “Easy herbs to grow for your health this Winter”, I thought we’d continue the “herb” theme and chat about my four favourite types.

Thyme:

This herb is native to the dryer parts of Spain, France, Italy and the rocky slopes of Greece, and was worn by the Republicans during the French Revolution. So look to emulate the habitat of the plant’s places of origin by providing alkaline soil in a warm, well-drained spot.

To propagate and conserve particular characteristics, multiply thyme by root cuttings.

Saving the seed: Thyme is self-pollinating but insects love it and push their way into the flowers, so therefore different varieties will cross with one another. Ripe seeds will come in bell-shaped capsules soon after the blue or white flowers turn brown. Tiny seeds will drop if left too long on the bush. Collect and hand in a paper bag until dry. Seeds will last five years, and there are 6,000 to the gram!



Usage: Pick thyme for cooking and for medicine when the plant is blooming. Twigs of dried thyme (not powdered) can be placed on top of steamed vegetables and underneath roasts.

Mint:

Mint should ideally be grown under a tap where it can get extra water – and it is one of those herbs that are essential near the kitchen door for sprigs in drinks, and to use as a garnish!

Mints are usually grown from cuttings, which is preferable to seed because crosses occur easily between different types.



Saving the seed: The seeds can be harvested after all the flowers open and when the bells are brown and dry. Once again, a paper bag is useful for harvesting and drying. Winnowing can be tricky as the seeds are extremely small, and can be blown away with the chaff. The little bits of stalk and petals wend their way to the top with gentle shaking in a bowl. Remove them either with the fingers, or a very fine sieve. The seeds will last one year, and there are 40,000 to the gram!

Usage: There are many different mints, and all are good in pot-pourris. They can be used as salad garnish, or made into a tea. And, of course, made into mint sauce to serve with roast lamb!

Chives:

Usage: Chives are a natural companion to tomatoes in a salad; their flowers can be used as a garnish; and they combine well with thyme and mushrooms to add flavour to scrambled eggs.

Chives are generally propagated by clump division – the root bulbs develop in clusters which should be dug up in spring every second or third year. Trim the roots and leaves of the divided clump for replanting. Replace the soil around the original clumps each year with some good compost. Chives make good border plants – just remember that the more fertility of the soil, and the more watering, the more leaf growth will occur.

Saving the seeds: Be aware that not all flowers will be fertile, and that chives will not cross with any type of onion. The beautiful purple flowers will yield black seeds. The seeds will store for a maximum of two years, but only if the climate is humid and hot.

**Basil:**

Usage: Picture adding fresh green pesto to your sandwiches or pasta – a heady mix of sweet annual basil, garlic, Parmesan cheese, olive oil and pine nuts. Basil can also be used as a tea – and in the olden days was used as a snuff to clear blocked noses!

There are both annual and perennial basil, and their shape and size range from between almost horizontal and bushes two metres high. Propagation is easiest by popping the bottom ends of the basil stalks in a glass of water until white roots start appearing, then replant. Annual basil, however, are usually propagated by seed.

Saving the seed: The flowers are coloured white through to purple; have abundant and pungent nectar; and rely on insect pollination, so one basil will cross with others. (Separate different varieties by 50 metres to avoid crossing.) The seeds mature from the bottom to the top of the flower, and capsules generally contain four seeds. Either cut the stalks or rub your hands up them when the top seed capsules turn brown and brittle. Dry on a sheet of paper or in a paper bag. Rub well when the seeds are crisp and dry, and place the mixture in a large bowl. Whirl the lot until the seeds gather on the bottom of the bowl, remove the bulky chaff with your fingers, and then sieve through the rest to retain the seed.

The seeds will last up to five years sealed away in a dark, dry, cool place – and being small and spherical, there are 600 to the gram!



The colours of basil



Tomato & basil salad

How Does Your Garden Grow? With Rebecca Bowen

By Leah Johnston

Long term GCOG member Rebecca Bowen has been gardening on her almost quarter acre block in Southport since the early 1980s. When she bought the property it was covered in gravel and used to park water trucks on. Now it's the most beautiful and productive garden in the street.

Growing up on a farm in New Zealand's north island with a totally self-sufficient lifestyle you could say Rebecca was born into gardening. Her profession was nursing but horticulture and cooking have always been her passions. Over her gardening life she has trialed many different styles including organic, permaculture, straight in the ground and straw bale gardening. After a double hip replacement she was keen to find a way to continue gardening so she carpeted the stone pathways around her garden, making it easier to walk on and push the wheel barrows on. It also suppresses weeds and retains water to help encourage active soil biology. She has also redesigned her kitchen bringing all the appliances to bench height so that she can continue cooking.



"As bending gets harder my garden is becoming a potted and container garden. I really like this style of gardening, it uses minimal soil and minimal water, and it's still really productive," she tells me.



"Even when something is dead it still has a purpose so I use this tree stump as a stand," Rebecca said.

The birds are important predators in the garden so they have to be looked after.



The permaculture principles of wasting nothing and using everything you have on hand really connect with Rebecca: "Never throw away your branches or trees these are the food for future generations of crops if you build a hugelkultur and grow your crops on top of it." She also makes the most of the materials available to her. After the rain she takes her three-wheel-wheelbarrow to the creek across the road to collect leaves for her compost.

Rebecca grows bananas, citrus, guavas, tamarillo, dragon fruit, winter melon, sweet potato, abika, climbing butter beans, Japanese black pumpkin, New Guinea bean and Amaranth, because it's pretty. Her favourite things to grow are the things she eats the most: Asian greens, Vietnamese mint, tarragon, basil, turmeric, ginger and chillis.

For years Rebecca had a well-known kerbside garden. "I had people coming up from down south on holidays here, and they would come and visit my garden to see what I was growing that was new and unusual," she tells me. This public garden and the free gardening classes she used to run from home (53 people attended her last class!) even garnered the attention of her local newspaper (see the photo below).



She has also passed her gardening knowledge and skills on to her daughter (who has adult children and lives in New Zealand). "She has wonderful skills ranging from a love of cooking and good food, gardening, creative interior reuse makeovers, fashion dress design, floristry, jewelry making using vintage glass and crystals. I have no idea where she gets it from," Rebecca laughs.

Like all gardeners I've met, Rebecca is incredibly generous: only too happy to share seeds, a plant or a jar of kimchi from her pantry. Years ago she noticed a neighbour in the townhouses next door looking down at her garden. She invited her over and gave her a section of the garden to treat as her own and grow whatever she likes. They now work alongside each other and share their produce. She also puts excess produce out on the street for people to take for free and she recently donated succulents to Sea World for a new under water themed garden they were developing. She has also shared a particular Dragon fruit from Jude Lai with permaculture interests at Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads, Byron, Laidley, Boonah, Canungra, Sunshine Coast and surrounds.

Rebecca's garden grows with free horse poo from the local pony club, soaking in buckets of water situated around the garden so that she can easily fertilize the plants as she works. She also practices permaculture principles of letting things self seed and evolve and grow over time. "I grow plants that self seed so I never have to replant... I let the fruits growing low to the ground go to seed, then if I forget to collect seed, they will fall to the ground and start growing again."



Parsley let to flower to feed the bees and encourage parasitic insects to keep



One of the best things about having gardening as a hobby is that there's always something new to learn. Even after gardening for all of her life, Rebecca is still learning.

"Jorge came over recently and taught me more about composting. Now I'm running it as a three bay system and keeping it nice and warm. When it rains I take the cover off to let the water in," she tells me as I admire the rich black gold almost ready to be spread onto the garden. Compost bins are located throughout the garden so that the nutrients and worm activity in the base can spread the goodness throughout the soil rather than in one central location.



To maximise space Rebecca has grown a lot of vine fruits vertically over the years. When growing pumpkins, water and rock melons etc in this manner she never had problems with mildew or rats, and found that the vines were strong enough to support the fruits.



Rebecca's gardening philosophy is to "allow nature to take care of nature". She has created an oasis for wildlife inviting parasitic

wasps, birds and even flying foxes into her garden where they take care of a lot of the pests for her. She is growing a variety of pawpaw that she doesn't like eating but continues growing it because the flying foxes love it. Growing up in New Zealand she has a love of Monarch butterflies and became interested in them again here after meeting local butterfly enthusiast Christina Yeomans. She now grows milkweeds to support these butterflies, which in turn help her by pollinating her other plants.

I love Rebecca's attitude of gardening in harmony alongside nature's creatures: "If I lose a few things along the way so be it."

Rebecca grows chokos and loves how versatile they are in recipes but advises to grow them with caution as the scrambling vines have killed five trees in her garden! Pumpkins are another favourite because you can put them in the garage and eat them in six months so you always have food.



Rebecca joined GCOG in the early 2000s and used to ride her motorbike down to the meetings! Those days are in the past but

wonderful people like Lyn and Kerry share their cars so she can still attend her favourite monthly event.

Rebecca has enjoyed meeting so many talented and skilful people through GCOG including Greg Plevy ('Wormtec' wee and rock dust); Lyn Mansfield and her never-ending list of contacts; GC Permaculture's amazing social workshops; Jen Stuart and Abilities-Plus workers; Lise Racine; Bernie and Gina Winter (of Self Help); and so many other gifted individuals.

Her best gardening advice for other gardeners is to work on your soil, it feeds your plants and you can't grow anything well without really good food in your soil. She used to have her own worm farms but it got too hot for them so now she gets her worm wee from GCOG member Dorothy Coe.

She makes lots of goodies from the food her garden produces – kimchi, jams, chutneys, canned fruit, dehydrated fruit, frozen fruit for smoothies and even cordials – be sure to come to our January meeting to try her chilli cordial!

Thank you for welcoming me to your beautiful suburban oasis Rebecca (and thanks for the yummy kimchi!)



Japanese black pumpkin.



Rebecca holding "The" sweet potato

THE DIGGERS CLUB

Helping Australians grow the best heirloom vegetables, fruits and berries.

Join the club for discounts, eight magazines a year and free offers.

Shop online for delivery around Australia.

Visit our website for video tutorials, fact sheets and gardening articles to help get you started.



TEL 03 5984 7900

DIGGERS.COM.AU

Hardy Vegetables - For Brisbane

Sub-Tropical Gardening—Issue 7

With parts of Australia gripped by drought and many cities not having sufficient water storage to sustain their increasing populations, growing water-demanding vegetables that wilt with the slightest hint of dry weather may seem a bit of a luxury.

However there are many hardy subtropical and tropical vegetables that thrive on the natural rainfall and many of these are presently widely grown or were in the past.

An advantage of living in a warmer climate is that many vegetables are perennial and don't need to be constantly grown from seed and replanted each season as they do in more temperate areas. While most of these plants tolerate periods of dry weather and poor nutrition, the plants may slow in growth and the quality of the produce will be poor. Occasional watering during dry weather and the application of mulch and organic fertilisers will encourage strong growth and high yields of mouth watering leaves, fruit and roots.

Choko: (*Sechium edule*)

This is the classic Queensland vegetable that covered every dunny in town. Its hardiness and productivity may have been its downfall, however another generation is now discovering this versatile vegetable. The plant needs a sunny position and a sturdy support on which to climb. As well as edible fruit (substitute for courgettes, squash, pears or apples), the new leaves and shoots are delicious in stir fries, and the tuberous root is a tasty vegetable. Plant a mature fruit to establish your vine.



Cherry Tomato: (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*)

Tomatoes can be grown year round in warmer areas, however cherry tomatoes are the hardiest variety and the best for growing over the warmer months as they are less susceptible to fruit fly attack. If birds damage fruit in your area, grow green or yellow ripening varieties. "Green Ripple Currant" tomato is a trouble free heritage variety.



Sweet Potato: (*Ipomoea batatas*)

Tough and almost indestructible, tubers may be white, orange or purple, sweet or savoury, rounded or long. The young leaves are also edible and are great in salads or stir fries. At the end of the season, you can dig up the plant, or you can "bandicoot" from an established plant by carefully removing tubers as needed. Plant a tuber or stem cutting from a favoured variety in a sunny, well drained location.



Cassava Plant: (*Manihot esculenta*)

The toughest root vegetable for Brisbane, this tall bush grows well in infertile, dry conditions. Harvest the roots as needed as they do not store well. The root requires peeling and cooking with a change of water. Some cultivars are used as a leaf vegetable, however others are poisonous, so ensure you have the right variety. Propagation is from cuttings during summer. A few ornamental varieties are grown such as the variegated and butterfly-leaved cultivars.

**Madagascar Bean/Lima Bean:** (*Phaseolus lunatus*)

Widely planted in the inner suburbs of Brisbane, this vine can be highly productive for many years. The immature green pods can be eaten raw or cooked. The shelled dry beans are delicious cooked in a variety of dishes. Plant seeds insitu in a sunny warm spot where they can grow up a fence or structure.

**Wild Rocket:** (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*)

Similar to salad rocket, but with a more succulent nutty flavour, this is a short-lived perennial which does best in full sun. Surprisingly tolerant of dry periods, abundant succulent leaves are produced in greatest abundance with moisture and adequate nutrition. It is readily grown from seed.

**Training Water-wise Plants**

Your Garden— Summer 2004

There are many ways to establish water-wise plants. If you haven't already, try some of these tips:

1. Don't forget that many nursery plants have been grown under controlled conditions and are used to regular watering. Consequently, they may need to be gradually introduced to the harsher conditions of the home garden.
2. Water your garden thoroughly at well-spaced intervals rather than applying light sprinklings so as to encourage strong, deep root growth.
3. Direct water to the drip line (a line around the plant's outer foliage).
4. Water in the evenings or the early mornings to give the water a chance to be absorbed by the plant rather than evaporating.
5. Even drought-tolerant plant varieties will probably require regular watering until they have become properly established.
6. Try to avoid staking as this can encourage plants to grow a smaller root system. If you need to stake (for instance to protect the plant in windy areas), use three stakes wrapped with a strip of soft fabric (like an old stocking) to form a triangle that supports rather than pins the plant. This can be removed when the plant has grown sturdy ...

FRUIT TREES

JANUARY

Custard Apples: Peak water needs. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees.

Figs: Net trees to protect figs from birds. Fertilise with 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash.

Low shill stone fruit: Moderate water needs.

Lychee: Peak water needs. This is a good time to “skirt” trees (skirt-trim all growth to 500mm above ground). Prune so 20% light can be seen through trees.

Mango: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up water. Prune trees after harvest. **Pruning:** If it is a very large tree that needs to be pruned to a manageable size, the correct way is to cut back 1/3 of branches each year for three years. In the first year remove one of the largest branches, the following year remove another branch, and so on until the tree is of an acceptable shape and size. In this way you will have some fruit each year while at the same time reducing the size of the tree.

Passion-fruit: Keep up the water.

Pawpaw: Spray copper based spray or leaf microbes to prevent black spot.

Persimmon: Make sure trees are fully netted. Harvest time for early varieties.

Strawberries: Keep well-watered to form new runners for next year.

Bananas: Keep up water; bag fruit; and cut off bells.

Citrus: Fertilise tree with organic fertiliser containing sulphate of potash, 1 kg for large trees and ½ kg for smaller trees. Keep up sprays of pest oil for leaf miner.

*Queensland Planting Guide
- Brisbane Organic Growers*

FEBRUARY

Custard Apples: Peak water needs. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees.

Figs: Net trees to protect figs from birds. Pick fruit every two days. Fertilise with 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash.

Low shill stone fruit: Moderate water needs.

Lychee: Peak water needs. Mulch trees. This is a good time to “skirt” trees (skirt-trim all growth to 500mm above ground). Prune so 20% light can be seen through trees. If Eri-nose mite is a problem, spray with wettable sulphur every 10 to 14 days from pin head size new growth to fully open, and harden off.

Mango: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up water. Prune trees after harvest. **Pruning:** If it is a very large tree that needs to be pruned to a manageable size, the correct way is to cut back 1/3 of branches each year for three years. In the first year remove one of the largest branches, the following year remove another branch, and so on until the tree is of an acceptable shape and size. In this way you will have some fruit each year while at the same time reducing the size of the tree. Spray with copper based spray or leaf microbes for anthracnose every fortnight.

Passion-fruit: Keep up the water.

Pawpaw: Plant pawpaws in threes (thin out to strongest). Plant out seedlings as the soil is still warm and by Autumn they will be stabilised, and then be ready to get an early start for Spring. De-bud your first year trees (keep one flower to try the fruit – if you must!) Keep one male to eight female trees. Paw-paws are heavy feeders. Spray copper based spray or leaf microbes to prevent black spot.

Persimmon: Make sure trees are fully netted. Harvest time for early varieties.

Strawberries: Prepares sites for runners to be planted out at the end of the month. Keep well-watered to form new runners.

Bananas: Fertilise with organic fertiliser ...

VEGETABLES

JANUARY:

Asian Greens, Capsicum, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuces, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Snake Beans, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Corn, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

FEBRUARY:

Asian Greens, Beans (French, Snake), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Chilli, Choko, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Marrow, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsnip, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Silverbeet, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato.

HERBS

JANUARY

Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Nasturtium, Italian Parsley, Rocket, Salad Mallow.

Perennials & Bi-Annuals – Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

FEBRUARY

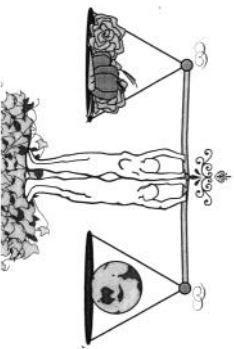
Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Dill, Herb Robert, Misome, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Italian parsley Rocket, Giant Red Mustard, Salad Mallow.

Perennials & Bi-Annuals: Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information the association (including Editor, Executive Officers and Committee) accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed in this newsletter.

If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:
GCOG, PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Q 4213

*GOLD COAST ORGANIC
GROWERS Inc.*



NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

Meeting place:
Cnr Guineas Creek Road
& Coolgardie Street
Elanora, Gold Coast

Next meeting:
Thursday 21st Feb 2019