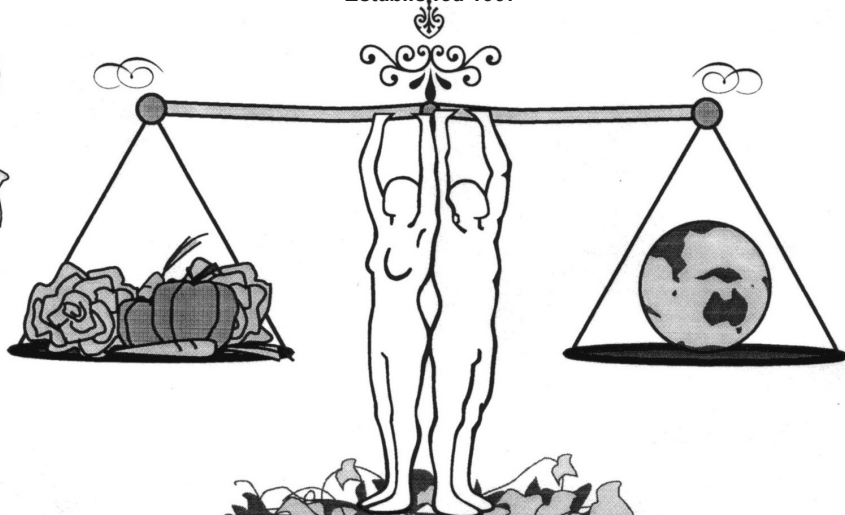


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 22 - NOVEMBER 2018 Issue 11
GARDENING IN SPRING

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|--|
| Pg2 | Club Information | 11 | Banana Circle |
| 3 | Notice Board, Guest Speakers,
Workshops | 12/13 | Organic Gardening in Ireland |
| 4 | Watersaver gardens | 13 | New Sensory Gardens |
| 5 | What do I like about the Gold Coast
Organic Growers? | 14 | "How the GCOG Club Has Benefit-
ed Me", "The value of the GCOG" |
| 6/7 | If You Only Do One Thing this
Month | 15 | A Huge Thank You, Insert from Nov
2014 |
| 7 | Recipes | 16/17 | Why not Try a Raised Garden Bed |
| 8/9 | How Does Your Garden Grow? | 17 | Insert from GCOG Nov 2011 |
| 10 | Hints for "All Things Gardening" | 18 | Fruit Trees |
| | | 19 | Vegetables and Herbs |

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17th JANUARY 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 - \$1 each 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 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 – November 2018:

Overdue: Mea Lee Khoo (211), Eileen Turner (328), Justin & Jerry Rogers (275), Pat McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Henry Blonner (108), Gillian Tubbs & Dolphe Cooke (403), Gary Miller (424), Jorge Cantellano & Julia Bustamane (425), Colleen Rohan (415)

November: Paul & Maria Roberson (4), Rodney & Cathy Boscoe (347), Megan Keeler (358)

January 2019: Marion Symons (155), Denise Goodwin (335), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Micheline Lazaroo (401), Winny Hu Shouhe (414), Ira Appel (417), Danielle Bowe (426)

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:

Rachael Lebeter, Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, 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

Free Garlic Harvest Workshop – Thursday 29th November

Like last year, Ron is having a garlic harvest workshop and field day. He has a lot of knowledge to share, and we all know there is a lot to learn. The workshop is free, but call a few days before to confirm the date and time as these might change. **Call 0447 487 808 or 02 6679 1800.**

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

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

What do I like about the Gold Coast Organic Growers?

by Rachael Lebeter

One of the suggestions for our November newsletter is that the members contribute a short piece about “the value of the Club to their gardening lives” , or in other words, “What do we like about the Gold Coast Organic Growers”.

What do I like about the Gold Coast Organic Growers?

When my Dad’s friend, Murray, brought me along to my first GCOG meeting 5 (??) years ago, I wasn’t sure, mostly because I am actually quite shy. I had recently returned from working in Mexico and despite not having had a garden since I was in school, I’d gotten the opposite of itchy-feet and ordered my first lot of seeds before I had even left Mexico City. I came home and quickly planted out the 5 little garden beds my Dad had built for me when I was 12. They weren’t enough, so by the time Murray brought me along I had dug up at least 10 m2 of my (very forgiving) parents’ lawn as well.

But, of course, starting out, most of my decisions in the garden were based on some sort of inherent logic, and extensive reading. And while I loved the books, techniques and ideas developed in temperate climates and European soils, while inspiring, tended to be more of a hinderance than a help in our climate and region. And the straight-line, weed-free garden I imagined never really took shape, even in those early days of time and enthusiasm without the counterweight of practicality that I have now. Mum had grown veggies when I was a kid, and so had my grandpa, but I don’t feel like I learned too much. I could plant a seed and knew how things grew, but I

didn’t have that knowledge that comes from actually practicing something with experts, and I am still sad I didn’t get to learn more from my grandpa.

But GCOG is kind of like what I might had learned from grandpa – real advice, from real experts, who actually garden. Books are all well and good – actually, I got 4 great ones from the library last meeting after Evelyn spurred me into action, if anyone wants a recommendation – but gardening is the sort of knowledge that is meant to be handed down in the one place. No one has gardened on my land – it used to be a cow paddock – but at least at GCOG there are people who garden on their own cow paddocks in the area. And their ideas and advice, as much as I love books, are worth all the more because they experience the same climate, plant types, soils and weather as I do.

I got involved with organising guest speakers for GCOG less than a year after Murray introduced me to the club. Not only did I learn heaps through that, being involved in the committee definitely made me feel at home much more quickly than I would have otherwise. And for all that the information and advice has been fantastic, finding a group of people who like gardening and growing as much as I do has been by far the best thing about it. I love being able to talk plants and veggies, to visit gardens, to steal cuttings and trade plants, to be inspired by other people’s beautiful gardens, or flowers, or kombucha. It makes me a better gardener, it inspires, and it makes me feel like even though I am usually all alone in my big garden (except for worms, and the butcher bird that follows me around, and a million overwhelming weeds), I am also part of a community of gardens and gardeners. And that, for me, is important.

**If You Only Do One Thing this Month
– grow some lettuce:**
by: Diane Kelly

Lettuce – or *Lactuca sativa*; part of the Asteraceae family; and originating in Asia – is one of the main stays of our vegetable diet. And because they are easy to grow, we tend to just plant the seeds or seedlings, keep them watered, and then wait a month and a half or so to start eating them.

But a lot has been written about growing lettuces successfully, so here are some hints to help if you decide to make lettuces your “One Thing to Do This Month”.

Lettuces are basically divided into four main groups:

- **Hearting:** These are varieties that form tight heads of foliage that are harvested as entire plants, and are generally slower-maturing than other types. Examples include “Iceberg” and “Imperial”.
- **Non-hearting** or leaf types form loose, frilled or crinkled bunches of leaves. They are fast-growing, and can be either harvested whole or by progressively picking the outer leaves. These lettuces are generally tolerant of hot conditions, and include “Lollo Rosso” (with their striking green-to-red frilly leaves) and “Royal Oak Leaf” (with the latter tolerating growing in some shade).
- **Butterhead:** Red and Green Mignonette are probably the two best known of this type of lettuce, which form soft, loose heads of smooth leaves. “Buttercrunch” is another heat-resistant and fast-maturing variety.
- **and ... Cos:** Where would our Caesar salads be without these! This type of lettuce is distinguished by their narrow, upright foliage, with stiff midribs.



Mignonette

So, now that we know some of the varieties of lettuces, how do we grow them well? The experts all seem to agree on three things – lettuce like a fertile soil to grow in; lettuce need to be watered regularly; and lettuce only need to be planted a few at a time!

Prepare the soil by incorporating well-decomposed compost and manure. Lettuces require a lot of nitrogen, but don't use fresh compost or manure, otherwise young plants will be easily burnt. A good hint is to plant lettuces following a legume green manure crop, and remember that lettuces are shallow-rooted, which is why they require plenty of nutrients and water. If your soil is only moderately fertile, you can apply compost tea or other liquid fertilizers each week. Mulch around the plants to maintain good soil moisture levels, because if the plants become stressed, they will be bitter and will bolt to seed.

In our region, we can plant lettuces in the cooler, shaded areas of the garden, or erect some shade-cloth structures to protect the plants from the heat. (Lettuce with red-tinted foliage are usually more heat tolerant.) Water your plants early in the morning, as foliage that remains wet overnight is vulnerable to disease – and pests! Water directly into the root zone, where it is most needed. Slugs and mildew tend to be a problem in damp areas around lettuces, so ensure the soil is well drained, and increase air circulation around the plants.

Lettuce seeds germinate easily, usually emerging in 7-10 days (unless the temperature is extreme). Poor germination is usually the result of planting the seeds too deeply. Transplant seedlings in overcast weather, and space them 25-30 cm apart. Make small sowings of lettuces every 10-14 days – in this way you will be able to have plenty of salads to use the supply, and not risk the plants being in the ground too long and so starting to bolt.



Growing Cos

A few other lettuce hints:

- Incorporate some lettuce – especially the frilly, multi-coloured varieties – in your flower garden.
- Soaking lettuce leaves in iced water increases their crispness.
- Use lettuce leaves as a “plate” for other food. A tuna and rice mix, or some San Choy Bau served in lettuce leaves works well – or even just a slice of Granny Smith apple and a slice of cheese wrapped in a crisp lettuce leaf makes a refreshing lunchtime snack.
- When preparing lettuce leaves, handle them carefully.
- Separate the leaves; wash them in cold, running water, and then lightly pat them dry.
- As an alternative to salads, try some lettuce soup – it can be served either hot or cold, and its creamy flavour (with a bit of parsley blended in for extra colour) can be quite delicious.

So ... buy some packets of lettuce seeds from the Club seed table; plant some out at regular intervals ... and enjoy !!



Beef San Choy Bau

Recipes

Jill's Easy, On-the-go Breakfast Omelette

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- Olive oil, to coat pan
- 1 red onion, sliced into half moons
- 2 zucchinis, shredded
- 1 large carrot, shredded
- ¼ c mushrooms, diced
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- 12 eggs

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 175deg.
2. Cook onion on low heat until translucent
3. Add zucchini, carrot & mushrooms – cook until soft
4. Remove pan from heat & set aside
5. Crack eggs into large mixing bowl
6. Add vegs to eggs & mix
7. Season with salt & pepper
8. Coat muffin trays with oil & fill with mixture
9. Bake 20 – 25 minutes till golden on top



Please email your yummy recipes to Jill for inclusion soon: jillbarber611@gmail.com

How Does Your Garden Grow? With Jill Barber By Leah Johnston

Anyone who has grown one of the kale or Asian greens seedlings that Jill brings to our meetings can attest to what vibrant, healthy plants they grow into. I was excited to visit her garden in September and learn some of the secrets to her gardening success.



Jill first began gardening when she was raising her three young children with her husband Graeme in Canada, 40 years ago. "I was driven to grow organic food for my kids and growing things seemed like a very good thing to do for the planet. My next door neighbour had a garden so I thought I could ask him any questions I might have along the way; but once my kids got out there with me we quickly surpassed him in productivity. Homemade compost did it, I reckon."

One of her fondest gardening memories is of her small children carrying in huge beets from the garden.

"I've always gardened organically, it's always seemed healthier to me. My driving reason to garden is to feed myself and stay as alive as I can while I am alive," she tells me while we drink herbal tea and eat the lemon curd cheesecake I brought to share.

For the last 25 years Jill has been gardening in her terraced veggie patch at her home in Elanora. A meandering pathway leads from

the house to the garden beds, which are bursting with lush, thriving plants and nearby citrus trees are laden with healthy fruit.



Her favourite plants to grow are the leafy greens, "the darker they are the better they are for you." She doesn't grow iceberg because it's too light in colour and therefore lower in nutrients. The lemonade tree is another favourite, which we eat fresh from the tree (don't suggest using them in a recipe, he he). "I also love that my lime tree always produces more than enough limes so that I can always share them with people."

Jill eats from her garden daily; starting every morning with lime and orange juice; also making salads; steamed veg; her own kombucha and fermented vegetables (learnt back in Canada); and adds her own turmeric to juices and meals. The turmeric keeps an issue with her knee under control so that it stays flexible and she can keep on gardening.

The secrets to her gardening success include collecting seaweed from the beach which she soaks in a bucket of water to make her own seaweed solution. She also treats her garden with Biodynamic 500, an almost mystical concoction of cow poo which is stuffed into a cow's horn, buried for many months (on certain days of the year only), dug back up and warmed in a pot of rainwater, over a gas flame, stirring in one alternating directions for an hour... then sprinkled lightly over the garden.

Her advice to other gardeners is "Compost,

compost, compost!" Preferably make your own but get it from somewhere. Humus in the ground is magic: it keeps the soil aerated; feeds the microbes; lets the moisture get through; it's nutrient dense and yet you can grow directly in it without burning your plants.

Jill's own composting system (made with leaves from her garden, kitchen scraps and various animal manures people give her) is producing beautifully crumbly, rich, black gold.

During the 10 years that Jill has been a mem-



ber of GCOG she has volunteered her time fulfilling committee roles including guest speaker liaison and helping Diane manage the memberships. In her previous life she taught English and English as a Second Language and now uses those talents editing articles for the club's newsletter.

Thanks for welcoming me to your beautiful garden Jill! (And thanks for the limes).



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

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

Hints for “All Things Gardening”

by Diane Kelly

Let's start off this month with some herbs

1. **Tarragon:** This plant needs a well-drained soil to survive. If you have water-logged soil, you can improve drainage by forking in a shovelful of sand and one of potting mix into each planting hole. Alternatively, grow tarragon in pots with a good potting compost.
2. **Thyme:** Thyme is my most favourite herb, so I was interested to learn the following:
 - Thyme grows best in well-drained, poor soil in full sun, but if you are growing it in a heavy or poorly-drained soil, fill one-third of the planting hole with gravel or grit.
 - Cover this drainage layer with potting mix, then plant the thyme. Do not apply either manure or fertilizer.
 - Although thyme is an evergreen herb, its leaves have less flavour in winter. In summer, just before the flower buds open, cut some sprigs and hang them to dry in a warm, dark cupboard. Store the dried herb in paper bags or screw-tops jars until required to flavour your winter cooking.
 - p.s. I don't think the thyme leaves will last too long – each morning we enjoy it with our scrambled eggs to add that extra flavour – highly recommended!



3. **Mint:** This herb generally gets a negative report in gardening books because of its tendency to spread through a herb (or any other) garden in a matter of weeks. But who can resist the smell of fresh mint sauce when served up with peas and a good leg of roast lamb?

To solve the problem, plant a clump in a large pot, and sink it in a garden bed leaving the top 5cm above the surface. Each autumn, dig up the pot and trim off any roots that have grown through the drainage holes. Repot every three years.

Mint grows in sun, but prefers partial shade – and it is not fussy about its soil as long as it does not dry out.

If you want to establish a new mint bed, obtain a few new roots and plant them out. Do not harvest large amounts of leaves in the first year, as this may weaken the plant growth.

4. **Basil:** Also known as Saint-Joseph's-wort, basil is an annual which is easily grown from seed. Basil should grow all year round in our climate – to ensure long production, pinch back plants just above the point where two side branches leave the stem. Try not to allow flowers to develop, because they will sap energy from the plant's leaves.

Basil steeped in a good-quality olive oil is a delicious year-round addition to many sauces and soups. For more flavour, layer the leaves and oil in a container with some sun-dried tomatoes and top with a clove of garlic.

Another way to savour basil all year-round is to harvest the leaves before the flowers develop, then wash and chop in a food processor. Pack them into an ice-cube tray, add water, and put it in the freezer. When using a recipe that calls for fresh basil, pop a cube from the freezer and add.

Well, this month's contribution ended up being all about herbs ... I hope the suggestions have been helpful.

Banana Circle

by Jorge Cantellano



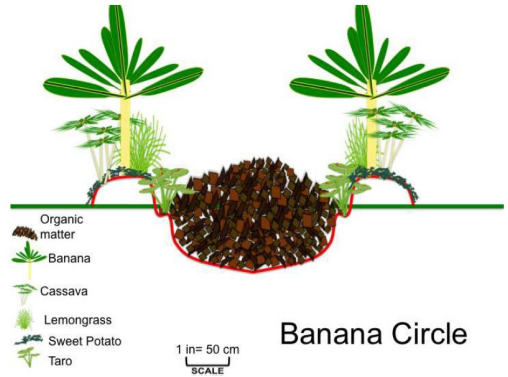
Pic 1: Edible Landscape Gardens' Banana Circle

EdibleScapes will finish 2018's activities with planting a second Banana Circle integrated into the Mandala Sun Garden.

A Banana Circle is one of the food growing techniques popularised by permaculture practitioners. It is a relatively simple idea, constructed in the shape of a bowl about 2m diameter and 1m deep. Excavated soil is piled into a mound around the pit. The pit will be filled with all sorts of garden waste that will biodegrade. We have half-filled it with composted mulch to start bacterial action. Bananas are very hungry plants and will thrive off the abundant cycling of organic material as well as the moisture naturally retained.

The Banana Circles at Edible Landscape Gardens are on a slope, the mound helping to retain water in a central pit.

A variety of plants will be located on the mound around the pit between the banana plants. Plants mutually support one another, shielding against wind, keeping cool, filtering sunlight and acting as trellises. What we have is a mini food forest with good diversity that is well watered and fertilized. Appropriate companion planting provides physical shelter, nutrients, assists in pest control and reduces root competition. Importantly it also produces food.



Pic 2: a tropical banana circle guild

Picture 2 shows a tropical selection, however in the subtropical region, using the typical three sisters -companion plants – beans, tomatoes and corn (maize) to climb on, (ancient Amerindian heritage agroecological knowledge) – the plants will grow better together than they would apart. As an added benefit their crops provide a healthy, balanced diet. (Tomatoes should not be planted too close to banana plants, as they aren't quite as water-loving as bananas.)

Initial groundcover like sweet potato or squash plants combined with nitrogen fixer plant like peanut grass will help to reduce root competition of grasses and weeds. Comfrey might be another great addition, adding a deep-rooting nutrient accumulator, an attractant for pollinators, and chop-and drop mulch.

In the inner rim wetland plants such as taro or cana lily, which are biomass plants absorbing lots of nutrients and having access to the moisture pocket.

The Circular Banana will be planted on 8 December 8:30 am. Everyone is welcome to come along to help and to join in the conversation and exchange knowledge.

Edible Landscape Gardens at Country Paradise Parklands, 74 Billabarra Crect, Nerang.

Organic Gardening in Ireland

by Rachael Lebeter

This year, I was lucky enough to spend 3 months on an organic farm in Ireland – at Ballymaloe Cookery School and Farm – spoiled, I know. It was just coming into spring, and getting to see the transition of seasons (they have real seasons!!) was incredible. When I arrived, the grass was short, the flowers and perennials weren't yet up and the deciduous trees were only just beginning to bud. By the time I left it was the height of (an admittedly Irish) summer – sea kale and asparagus had come and gone, the summer border was in full bloom (Clive Blazey eat your heart out!) and the peaches were almost ripe!

The Ballymaloe farm was originally a horticulture enterprise, growing lettuces and other vegetables primarily in the 1-acre glasshouse. The soil is heavy, but really fertile even after all that farming. It holds water so well, and the climate is so wet, that they usually don't water more than once after seedlings are planted out! After the cookery school took the place of the horticulture operation, the farm converted to organic and focuses on supplying the school and recycling waste. The number of birds on the farm has increase by 200 % or something ridiculous since they converted to organic, and everything seems to be flourishing.

The composting system is quite well-developed and considering the school often has 60 students for 12 weeks at a time, it is quite a feat to cope with all that waste, supply all the eggs and herbs, plus a good portion of vegies, milk and meat. All organic waste from the gardens and school (except meat) is tipped into skip bins in the chicken pens for the chooks to have first go. These bins are layered with straw from cleaning the pens, and sprinkled with a bit of lime if needed. When they are full they are transported to the composting area which is probably the size of a basketball court, divided into lots of bays. The skips and any other waste from the farm, cows, chickens etc is put into bays and the turning process takes place every few weeks

when the bays are rotated. I asked about C:N ratios, but they don't bother with "the science of it".

Whatever they are doing is working though, because the compost in the end bay looks and smells right to me. And it is the only thing they use on the gardens, and manages to maintain the soil fertility wonderfully even after 100 years of farming. While I was there, we saw a perfect example of the power of compost – they had planted out Asian greens which were being made a meal of by slugs – their only real pest apparently – in one particular row. Interestingly, there was another row of Asian greens, planted out at the same time, right next to this one that hadn't been touched. The only difference? That row had been top-dressed with compost. And believe me, the vegies they grow make mine seem puny and unhappy in comparison (which they might be!).

The farm is mostly run on a no-dig basis, with a top dressing of compost the only real treatment. They grow some cover crops, lots of wildflowers for bees, and sometimes rest beds. They may let a bed fallow for a season and then cover it with black plastic to kill the weeds before adding compost and planting again. They are almost self-sufficient in potatoes, which is a good effort in Ireland, but grow these traditionally. When I was there, they were considering trying no-dig potatoes, so I told them all about Peter Cundall. It'll be interesting to see how the trial turned out.

It was fascinating seeing the European gardening tradition in all its glory. In addition to the farm – cows, chickens, fields, the whole lot – and 1-acre glasshouse (a beautiful, positively sultry wonderland of all the vegetables that we grow outdoors), the cooking school also has more traditionally-styled gardens including:

- A one-hundred metre summer border
- A traditional box-hedged herb garden
- A Victorian pleasure garden (think lawns, parasols and beautiful trees) with a water garden to match
- An acre of Celtic-knot maze
- Orchards of apples, old and new

- A stone fruit garden
- Rows and rows of berries of all types (the only ones they net are the blueberries!)
- A woodland full of forage plants like wild leeks, wood sorrel and other goodies
- Traditional cottage flower gardens surrounded by 200-year-old beech hedges
- A folly of some sort around every second corner!

Plus there were teaching gardens for the school, a traditional kitchen garden and a mock-up of an urban garden that showed how easy it was to grow a good amount of your food in a small space. Plus traditional hedge rows, wildflower meadows and wildlife areas. Of course, there are about 10 permanent gardeners plus almost as many interns and helpers, but it is still a massive undertaking and incredible feat.

So conclusions? We have it a little tough here in Australia. Although choosing suitable plants, and working with the seasons certainly helps. And as John Palmer and Cathy pointed out, when you consider the weather, and our year-round growing season, and the tropical fruit, and how expensive one of those beautiful glasshouses would be to build, we're not doing too badly!

Haulie in glasshouse



An acre of Celtic-knot maze



New Sensory Gardens

by Stacey Panozzo

Thanks to funding from ETC - Enterprise and Training Company and Botanical Bazaar Garden Festival, spectacular new sensory gardens for all ages and abilities are being built at Country Paradise Parklands, Nerang.

The gardens are a collaborative effort between Stacey Panozzo from Gold Coast Green Living Inc and therapeutic landscape designer Patrick Regnault from Interactive Landscapes.

Stacey said "the gardens are an interactive play and discovery area where no matter what your age or ability, you can enjoy them. We hope to see school, social, family and retirement groups visit the gardens."

There are three stages to the Sensory Gardens, with the first stage officially opening to the public on 27th November. The first stage incorporates smell and sight into the gardens with the inclusion of deformed infinity mirrors and mirror walls, scented Geraniums, *Astromyrtus Dulcis* (edible Midgen Berry) and *Atractocarpus Fitzalanii* (Yellow Mangosteen) which oozes a delicious smell with scented flowers and lush growth. There is also *Graptophyllum Excelsum* which produce bright red flowers which feeding birds find irresistible and a few other eye catching plants such as *Lagerstroemia Natchez* (Crepe Myrtle), *Nandina Nana*, a small evergreen shrub with lovely foliage turning lime green to crimson red in different seasons and coloured grasses that rustle in the wind.

The other two stages of the build have plans for soundscapes, a functional light changing tunnel, touchy feely paths and panels, jumping pads, hopscotch, sensory poles, resting areas and more. Further fundraising activities will occur to support maintaining the gardens and the building of the second and third stages.

The public is welcome to visit the gardens based at 74 Billabirra Crescent, Nerang and are free of charge to enter. Volunteers are welcomed with open arms to help maintain the gardens.

For further information contact Stacey Panozzo - goldcoastgreenlivinginc@gmail.com

“How the GCOG Club Has Benefited Me”

Jill Barber

There are so many benefits which I experience that it's hard to know where to start really. I guess firstly, having a community of like-minded people, who care about the natural state of the environment and about each other, is a real blessing. It's so heart-warming to share gardening stories, problems, recipes, food, produce, ideas, joys and simple help! I'm continually surprised that it's all so satisfying and rewarding.

I really look forward to the monthly meetings, and work hard to prepare for them, as do many others, I know, gathering up the plants, seeds and produce, etc that I'm taking. There are seedlings to sell, excess to share, raffle table for give-aways and seeds to prepare. I love the buzz that greets me as I enter the room, with everyone purring around setting up for the event, greeting each other happily, looking for what's new. Even though I've just had dinner, seeing the supper table makes me hungry already!

Then there's the garden itself – so much learning, so many issues and rewards! Having the GCOG meetings helps to reassure me that I'm not alone with never-ending problems, and I've often found answers listening to Maria field questions from us all. Actually being in the garden working is health-giving on all levels, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Also, there's something deeply, quietly satisfying knowing that I'm part of what's going on across the planet, working with the soil, with nature, organically, doing my bit to contribute to the health of all concerned.

A lot of what I help to grow in our garden isn't great, a rat has got to it first and half eaten it...but the half he left me trims up to be pretty good actually! At least the carrots actually look and taste like carrots now, not tasteless, misshapen aberrations. The silverbeet is going brown through the stems and seeping up into the leaves again....., but at least we've had several months of abundant, rich leaves which taste amazing! And the soil no longer feels like heavy clods: it's pretty loamy and a nice dark colour. Our compost has gradually transformed it over time; it truly is the wonder

element.

In short, I don't think I could be happy without a garden, and the GCOG club is the “icing on the cake” of the gardening for me.

Diane Kelly

Whilst I have learnt something “technical” from most of the Club meetings that I've attended – whether it be from our guest speakers, or from the presentations our Club members have done, or from our Q&A sessions (most helpful because they are local) – I think the greatest benefit to me has been to see the generosity of our Club members.

This trait is evident every third Thursday evening of the month – people welcome each other; they are friendly; they contribute items to the raffle table; they swap goodies on the Swap table; they bring supper on a regular and generous basis; and they give talks. Many of the members give each other cuttings or seedlings, spend time helping each other with gardening, willingly give hints on how to solve gardening problems, and generally offer friendship.

My theory about this is that because we work with the natural world – soil, rain, sunshine and the growing of plants, all of which are freely and abundantly obtained – then this generosity becomes part of our everyday lives. Thank you, GCOG!

Cathie Hodge

I re-joined the GCOG in 2010 after an absence of many, many years. (Rearing & home-schooling 5 children had become too distracting during those intervening years. However, by 2010 they had all run away from home).

I have thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from being back in 'The Club' for the following reasons:

- ☆ the many friendships formed
- ☆ the gardening information gained from guest speakers, from other members, and especially from Maria's deep pool of knowledge
- ☆ and the raffle table. Aah, the raffle table! I've acquired many a gem from that raffle table. The GCOG is a unique little club that has contributed much to my life. Thanks everyone, but especially to Maria & Paul.

A Huge Thank You

We would like to thank the following businesses for their support of our bumper November Raffle this year:

Daleys Fruit Tree Nursery

36 Daleys Ln, Geneva via Kyogle
A wide range of trees in store, plus an extensive mail order service online
<https://www.daleysfruit.com.au>

Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm

Open Monday, Tuesday and the 3rd weekend of the month.
Stocks a range of hard to find herbs, medicinal herbs, permaculture plants and ornamentals.
491 Springbrook Rd, Mudgeeraba
www.herbcottage.com.au

Ground Grocer

Local organic produce, juices and sourdough
Open Friday and Saturday mornings at The EcoVillage
639 Currumbin Creek Road, Currumbin

ABC Organic Gardener Magazine

subscribe online anytime
mymagazines.com.au
magazines, books and more!

Ron from The Fruit Tree Man Nursery

Make a day trip of it – go to the nursery and visit Murwillumbah!
A wide range of fruit trees for the area and extensive knowledge
Visit at 981 Numinbah Road,
Crystal Creek NSW
Open 7 days, 9-5
<https://www.the-fruit-tree-man.com/>

Compot – Direct Compost Solutions

Visit online for a range of composting and gardening supplies.
Vicki will soon be supplying seeds as well!
<https://www.directcompostsolutions.com>

Crystal Castle

Open 7 days (excluding some holidays), 10 am – 5 pm
81 Monet Dr, Mullumbimby
<https://www.crystalcastle.com.au>

Zarraffa's Coffee Palm Beach

19th Ave, Elanora
<https://zarraffas.com/location/palm-beach/>

Gina and Bernie Winter

From **Selfhelp Retreat** at Springbrook
Follow them on Facebook for wonderful pictures of their gardens and inspiration using herbs

<https://selfhelpretreat.com.au>

David Gaven from

Dave's Pet & Garden Supplies

0428 296 646 –

dave@davespetandgarden.com.au

<https://www.davespetandgarden.com.au/>

Also, a mention of appreciation for

Greg Pleyvey from **Wormtec**

<https://wormtec.com.au/>

Insert from GCOG newsletter Nov 2014
'President's Message'.

"The defining difference at GCOG is that the people who seek out groups like ours are willing to not just discuss the changes that are needed; they are determined to do something practical to insure a positive outcome for all. It is heartening to meet so many people, of all ages, who are mindful of and questioning in what it truly means to have a "good life"."

...

"As a member of GCOG, I have been truly inspired by the many people I have met over the last 17 years, but I would have to say that Roman Spur is a particular standout. His enthusiasm and energy for a sustainable life style are infectious and re-affirming, not only to newcomers, but also to those who have long trodden a sometimes lonely path. The Spur family have reminded me that the sharing of knowledge is the most valuable tool and the most powerful weapon that we have at our disposal for creating the kind of world we wish to inhabit. They, by today's standards, are pretty unique in their generosity and willingness to pass on practical information to the rest of us, for no monetary gain. I hope that by taking a leaf out of their book, we, too, will enable others to strive for a better, healthier and richer life. Happy growing, Maria"

Why not Try a Raised Garden Bed:
by Diane Kelly

(A book review)

In one way, borrowing Mel Bartholomew's book "Square Metre Gardening" from the GCCC library was a bit redundant, as all my vegie gardening is now done in 1200 cm square timber frames. But I've learnt some very helpful things to make my gardening more effective, and so here is a summary of what Mel writes.

After retiring in 1975, Mel decided to take up gardening as a hobby – and as an ex-engineer, soon started to question the efficiency of the conventional gardening methods. Why fertilize a whole garden area, when plants are only placed in long grows with paths on either side? Why walk on areas of your garden that you've cultivated, thus compacting it? Why water whole areas of your garden when plants are in a limited area? And why plant long rows of the same vegetable?



After some experimentation, Mel concluded that the best size to a garden is for it to be as wide as you can reach in to maintain the area. He also realized that long rows of the one crop is OK for commercial farming (where you want to harvest the plants all at once) but that for the backyard vegie patch

a variety of plants is much smarter. So he planted a range of seedlings, based on the area they required for growing, and had a steady supply of produce throughout the year.

So what are the advantages?

1. Your garden can be closer to your house because it is smaller– this makes watering, maintaining and harvesting easier – and you can easily see what is happening in your plot!
2. You won't need to dig your garden again – just add the soil mixture on top of the existing area. So – less tools and less energy output.
3. You can make your garden in "boxes with bottoms", so that they can be installed on tables or verandas for easy access.
4. You can have multiple garden sites – metre square boxes can be snuck into a variety of places, and you can vary that according to the shade requirements your plants.
5. Building up instead of digging down means that you aren't wasting fertilizers on existing poor soil, but you can create your new garden beds with a healthy mix.
6. No fertilizer is required ...

... and that leads to one of the Mel's other recommendations. "Mel's Mix" is a combination of 1/3 peat moss; 1/3 vermiculite, and 1/3 garden compost (or bags of blended compost).

The advantage of this mix is that it is lightweight, so it is easy to work with, and it is easy for plants to grow in. It is also nutrient rich. And it holds moisture, and yet drains well.

Back to "No fertilizer is required". Mel's experience – after 30 years of SMG (Square Metre Gardening) was that you don't need to add any fertilizers to your vegie patch. If you

start off with the mixture he has found to be successful, then all you need to do is add some more compost – that will supply the nutrients and minerals required by your plants.

The books goes on to talk about topics such as “Planning your garden”, “how to Plant Out your Square Metre Garden”, and “Growing and Harvesting”. Bear in mind that Mel lived in America, so the seasons will be upside down!



Mel’s first book “Square Foot Gardening” (SFG) became America’s largest selling gardening book ever, with over a million copies sold. Mel also created the “Square Foot Gardening” Foundation, which is a Non-Profit organization for spreading the message of SFG through humanitarian projects around the world. The foundation’s mission is in 3 steps:

1. Get everyone in the world to eat one meal per day of fresh vegetables.
2. To grow those vegetables in their own garden.
3. To use the SFG method for that garden.

So ...an interesting concept, and an interesting book ... as soon as I return it to the library, you will be able to enjoy a Christmas break read!

Insert from GCOG Nov 2011

Article from Rebecca Bowen

1. **Tamarillos - Tree Tomatoes - my babies propagated from 2009**

Some thieving bugger last year totally stripped the few that had grown.....this year I'll be covering the trees in mesh bed canopy covers - branches are bending under the weight of fruit - have lost several branches to high winds - these are the Red fruit, my Yellow one didn't make it for some reason.

2. **MY BIG FAT PEPINO! 13"** at roundest gut point, 5/5" from top of stem to base. Largest I've ever seen! Several weeks ago I enclosed it in an onion bag to take it to GCOG next meeting - I don't think they believed me when I was saying how large it was. Unfortunately, me moving it must have detached & I never noticed till yesterday. A bit of rot had set in but still a beautiful fruit to eat. (Plant on Steroids)!

3. My Pepino shrub less than 30' high - totally weighed down with fruit of varying sizes.....several extremely large fruit 12" plus & others averaging around 8.5 - 9" at roundest point. Trying to support weight & keep fruit from ground. The discarded palm branches that hold the red berries comes in handy for the job. Grown as understory to Tamarillo's - very shaded. Others grown in full sun have smaller but much sweeter fruit. Any advice or suggestions to support branches & no compromise fruit would be appreciated.



FRUIT TREES

NOVEMBER

Custard Apple: Increase irrigation. Mulch trees. Apply fertiliser with Sulphate of Potash - 1kg-mature trees, 1/2kg-small trees.

Figs: Pruning should be done. Figs only produce on new wood or new season's growth. Keep well mulched and watered.

Lychee: Peak water needs.

Low chill stone fruit: Use fruit fly control programs. When fruiting is finished and harvested, prune trees.

Mango: Peak water needs.

Passion-fruit: Prune. All dead parts to go. Keep up the water.

Paw-paw: Increase irrigation. Apply 20 gms per sq m of organic fertiliser.

Strawberries: Keep well watered to encourage runners for next year.

Bananas: Have one plant with fruit on, one half grown and one sucker. Discard all others. De-sucker plants by cutting down to centre with a sharp knife taking the centre out and add 1teaspoon of kerosene in the well. Apply fertiliser, 1kg/stool.

Citrus: Keep up the water. Spray with pest oil for leaf miner. Paint trunks with a white waterbased paint.

Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook

DECEMBER/JANUARY

Custard apples: Hand-pollination of Pink Mammoth and Hillary White.

Figs: Keep water up and mulch well.

Low chill stone fruit: Prune trees. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees.

Lychee: Peak water needs. Cover trees with net for protection from fruit piercing moth, birds and bats. Fertilise with an organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees. Harvest only when fruit on the pendant stalk are sweet and full colour.

Mango: Net trees or bag fruit to protect from birds and beasts.

Passion-fruit: Apply 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up the water.

Paw-paw: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees. Apply a copper based spray or leaf microbes for black spot control.

Persimmon: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 ½ kg for mature trees.

Strawberries: Keep well watered to form new runners for next year. December is the time to mark old strawberry plants. Watch for their new runners to develop. This makes it easier to define plants when you are ready for new planting.

Bananas: Keep them well watered.

Citrus: Water tree well. Keep up pest oil spray for citrus leaf miner.

Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook

VEGETABLES

NOVEMBER:

Artichoke, Asian Greens, Beans (French & Snake), Capsicum, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kale, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrows, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rosella, Shallots, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet corn, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

DECEMBER:

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

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.

HERBS

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Nasturtium, 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, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury, Winter Tarragon.

JANUARY

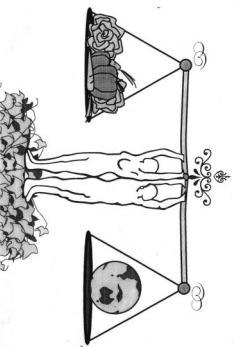
Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Nasturtium, Italian Parsley, Rocket, Salad Mallow.

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.

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 17th Jan 2019