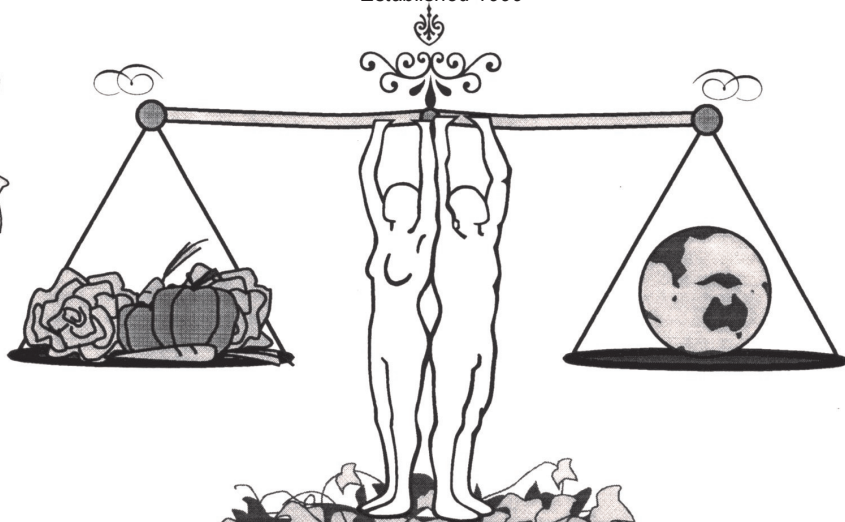


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 15

MAY 2012

Issue 5

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**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21 June**

## The Aims Of G.C.O.G. Inc.

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: 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 \$1 members, \$3 visitors.

*(No meeting in December)*

### Annual Membership Fees:

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

To renew or start memberships please send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly - or just pay at the door.

**Seed Bank:** \$2.00 ea.

**Members Market Corner:** Please bring plants, books and produce you wish to sell.

**Raffle Table:** This relies on the kind generosity of members to donate items on the night. Tickets - \$1ea or 3 for \$2

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

**Advertising:** **1/4 page:** \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year (11 issues),  
**1/2 page:** \$20 an issue or \$200 per year,  
**full page:** \$30 an issue or \$300 per year.

### Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.

Email Angela at [w.a.anderson@bigpond.com](mailto:w.a.anderson@bigpond.com)

Please put [GCOG] in email 'subject' box.

## 2012 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
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Guest Speaker	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 <a href="mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com">jillbarber611@gmail.com</a>
Trip Co-ordinator	Ross Davis (07) 5599 7576
Librarians	Cathie Hodge (07) 5533 8642 Judy Reiser (07) 5532 7198
Library Assistant	Greg Wiltshire
Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Peter Seymour-Smith (07) 5596 5678
Supper Co-ordinator	Jenny Davis (07) 5599 7576

### Newsletter Theme

Gardening in Winter

**Thanks to contributors:** Diane Kelly, Ross Davis, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson & Pauline Behrendorff.



## Notice Board

### Membership Renewels

**Overdue:** Katie Culpin, Mark Raynham, Judy McCracken, Sylvia Rolih, Daniela Guittart, Jannette Janssen, Penny & Allan Jameson, Greg Wiltshire, Louise Newell, Daniela Willis, Barbara Talty, Margaret Reichelt, Stephen Dalton, David Tangye, Rebecca Bowen, Kay Schiefelbein

**May:** Chris Larkin, Clive Canning, Karen Auchere, Mary Frawley, Bruce Kelly, Heather Ryan, Leanne Cane, Chantel Geldenhuys, Brian & Lyn Dick, Robert Turner, Robert Faulkner, Virginia Jacobsen

**June:** Linda Thompson & Peter Birdsall, Lise Racine, Ross & Helena Kelso, Peter Seymour-Smith, Jan Wright, Elizabeth Dolan, Graham Boyle & Khoo Mei Lee, Chris & Dorothy Winton, Ron Campbell, Cathy Hodge, Neil McLaughlin, Gary & Jenny Spence, Eileen Turner

**Welcome to our new club members:**  
Moyra & Julien de Jager, Alf & Marina Orpen

### Guest Speakers

**May** - Graham McDonald on Native Trees, Butterflies and other insects.

**June** - Sandra Nanka from Mudbrick Cottage on various Herbs

**July** - Richard Bull on Fruit Flies

**Aug** - Justin Sharman-Selvidge (TBC) on Permaculture Principles and Application

**Sept** - Rod Bruin on Soil Improvement for Organic Veggies

**Oct** - Gina Winter on Using Herbs as Food and as Medicine

If any members would like to share something that would be of benefit to our members please contact Jill Barber to discuss

### Website

[www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/gcorganic](http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic)



## HERB FARM

Michael & Sandra Nanka  
491 Springbrook Rd  
MUDGEERABA. 4213

### Opening times

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday  
9 am – 4 pm

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## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Last months' meeting was very well attended which resulted in some members not having a chair to sit on. For this I apologise and am currently negotiating for more chairs so that it doesn't happen again. Still it is a good problem to have I guess, as it shows our group is continually growing and expanding. It goes to show that growing your own food has become a valuable thing to do for many more people over the past few years. To me it is the best insurance policy a body can have against the uncertainties of the economic and nutritional vagrancies that we face daily.

I'm sure I speak for all members in congratulating our new Newsletter Editor Angela on her first newsletter, we are very happy to have you on board. The newsletter theme has now moved on to winter in the garden. Please keep your contributions coming in and keep up the momentum on the "Three Things I Can't Live Without" articles. The "Three Things" article specifically relates to your garden and farm life including livestock, tools, growing aids anything that is a boon to your life in the patch, we want to know about it.

Over the coming months we will be exploring ideas for making our newsletter more cost efficient. One idea that has been floated is that members opt for the email version instead of everyone automatically receiving the printed copy. Post outs to absent members are also quite expensive and possibly need addressing. Please have your thoughts and ideas ready for discussion at upcoming meetings.

Members are reminded to return their borrowing from the library as promptly as it is important for all members to have access to the resources we make available. From now on we will be contacting tardy returners to arrange the return of books and DVDs.

I hope you managed to get your planting done in between the rain and those who were

planting garlic were able to make that happen. We are apparently in for a dry autumn however it is any bodies guess as to what the weather will actually do. My tip is plan for all outcomes and failing that just do what you want and go with the flow. The beauty of a home garden is that success or failure are both learning experiences and are part of the gardening process.

Onion planting time is approaching; the old saying is to plant on the coldest day and harvest on the hottest day. Which is not far off the mark, I usually aim for planting seeds out in late June to early July and look forward to harvesting in December/ January. We have a lovely red onion called 'Long Tropea Red' or 'Tropea Rossa Tonda' in Italian. It is an Italian heirloom traditionally grown in Italy and France and described as having sweet rosy flesh. The flowers are attractive to bees and other useful insects.

Another variation on what can be a boring theme is the 'Savoy Vertus' Cabbage, not boring I assure you. The 'Savoy Vertus' is an old French variety with 2-3 kg broad compact heads. Leaves are deep blue-green and crinkled. Flavour is excellent, mild and sweet. It likes fertile soil with a pH 6 - 6.5 and plenty of compost. Seeds for both of these vegetables are available at the Seed Table on meeting nights. All seed packets are still the bargain price of \$2 each.

Happy Growing, Maria.

**Previous newsletters from 2010 onwards can be downloaded from our website at:**

[www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au)

### Miami Organic Farmers Market

**Where:** Miami State High School  
2137-2205 Gold Coast Highway, Miami

**When:** Every Sunday, 6am to 11am

**Telephone:** 3358 6309 or 1300 668 603

### GCCC - Active & Healthy Program Community Gardening Workshops

If you have always wanted to grow your own vegetables, fruit and herbs but just don't know where to start, then this series of workshops is just for you. A variety of free gardening workshops are regularly held at community gardens across the city. The workshops will provide you with a hands-on introduction to growing your own food with all the tips and tricks to ensure that your garden thrives and survives.

**Time: Saturday 2pm to 3pm**

**Intro to Organic Gardening**

**June 9** - Coombabah

**July 14** - Oxenford

For more information contact:  
Gold Coast Permaculture (07) 5539 3973  
or [permaculturegc@gmail.com](mailto:permaculturegc@gmail.com)

Gold Coast Permaculture also run low cost permaculture workshops. Contact them for a full program.

### Composting and Worm Farming

Come along to Council's free sustainable gardening workshops where you can learn all about composting and worm farming to recycle your waste and improve your garden. Tea and coffee are provided and all you need to bring are closed shoes.

**Time: Saturday between 10am and 12pm**

**May 19** - Robina Library

**June 23** - Helensvale Community Centre

**July 21** - Elanora Library

To find out more information or to register for a FREE workshop near you, call (07) 5581 6855.

### Editor's Message

**Sorry Jill and Diane** ... Last month's "My Three Things" was actually Jill Barber's. I forgot to change the name. This month is correctly Diane's Favourites. I am sorry for the mixup.

### Broad Beans

Delicious in salads, soups and spicy cuisine, broad beans are extremely nutritious and high in protein. They are even more tender when home-grown, so plant now and harvest your first fresh crop in spring.

**Sowing & planting:** Broad beans (*Vicia faba*) love the cold, and can withstand even the hardest frosts, although the flowers formed during frosty weather are unlikely to set pods. Higher temperatures in late spring also inhibit setting. The trick is to sow them so flowering is finished before days start being warmer than 20 degrees C. Autumn and winter are the best times to plant. Young pods are ready to pick in 60-100 days, while full maturity can take about 25 weeks.

Before sowing, fork plenty of compost or manure into the garden bed, then rake the surface to a fine, crumbly texture. Slightly alkaline soil is preferred so, if you have acid soil, add lime. Mark out 5cm deep drills, with 20-30cm between them, or sow as double rows 15cm apart. As the seeds are so large, simply place them individually along the length of each drill, placing them 17-20cm apart. Cover with soil, water sparingly and seedlings should appear from 10 days to a few weeks.

**Tending the crop:** Usually the biggest cause of failure during germination is over-watering, which causes seeds to rot. Wait until germination has occurred and the first two leaves appear on a plant before watering again. Once spring arrives, pinch out the broad bean's new tips to encourage pod set.

It's best to leave broad beans in the ground for as long as possible, even after harvesting the crop. Like other legumes, they have nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the nodules on their root systems. This helps to increase levels of nitrogen in the soil in a form that's available to plants.

**Harvesting the crop:** Harvest beans constantly to ensure a steady crop. If you want to eat beans in their pods, harvest them really

## Polyculture and Food Security through Community Ownership With Alf Orpen - By Jill Barber

First off, let me beg off having all the details of Alf's talk, on the grounds that I was trying to jot notes in the virtual dark, and some of his talk was rather technical and delivered fairly fast. Nevertheless, I did catch quite a bit that you will hopefully find interesting if not helpful.

By the way, Alf comes well qualified to talk about his favourite topic. He formerly served on the board of the Biological Farmers of Australia, a co-operative of over 800 organic farmers Australia-wide! He's studied mechanical engineering and applied sciences (biology). He's also a founding director of several enterprises, including Miessence, which is the world's first certified organic nutritional and personal care products, and Organic Farm Share, also a world first concept. So, he's a bit of an innovator.

To start now at the end, Alf's stated objective was to give "an overview of a natural hydro (water-harvesting), nutrients, nitrogen and carbon cycles in a closed-loop system (no need for outside inputs)". My rough translation of that is using the natural contours of the land to capture the water needed to grow food, and utilising the natural fertilisers/manure on a farm to enrich the soil so that no extra fertilising is needed. With that objective in mind, Alf launched into his explanation of "polyculture", using a powerpoint presentation based on an existing farm to illustrate his points.

**Polyculture**, Alf told us, is a closed-looped system, which can even be in a backyard (a rather big one, I would think), and is the growing of food in a way that mimics a natural ecological system. This method is now underway on the Unumgar property near Kyogle, called Organic Farm Share as it is member-owned, with currently over 240 members. The world renowned permaculture expert, Geoff Lawton, along with several others, identified the design for water harvesting, and a combination of permaculture and biodynamic methods will be employed. On it, **seed saving** is important,

as seeds will adapt to their environment, gaining in potency through the organic system, and free from the interference of seed-controlling companies. This is part of where **food security** fits in, the farm not being dependent on the economy of the country to survive, but being, in fact, self-sufficient.

Food security is affected by the fact that 1% of the world's topsoil is lost each year to urban development and, despite almost every government being concerned about that, very little is being done about it. Alf's point is that true food security can only come from **community ownership**, as exemplified by the 265-acre Unumgar property, which just this year is swinging into real productivity, as animals are being bought, and vegetables planted. **Peak phosphates** is becoming a key issue in the world as well, as they become more scarce and valuable, and are not able to be grown or synthesised. In the polyculture system, phosphates are returned to the soil naturally.

Another critical issue, of course, is **water**, 50% of which goes to sustaining cities. For a farm to have food security, access to water is critical, and the Unumgar property has seven dams, fed by neighbouring Mt Lindsay, so water is naturally captured on the property, with gravity being the means of distributing it. The dams will be stocked with **fish**, which in turn will be providing fish emulsion to be used to fertilise the fruits and vegetables – more evidence of the closed loop system.

No need to espouse the principles of **organic** growing to the members of GCOG, but Alf did refer to Rachel Carson's classic, *Silent Spring*, in which the effects of DDD being sprayed to kill gnats several decades ago, at merely 0.02 parts/million, were magnified astronomically up through the food chain, increasing at each level of birds, fish and ultimately humans, to reach a magnification of twenty five million times, with dire consequences for many of us, even though-sometimes it takes decades to have an effect, such that the original cause can be lost sight of.

**Distribution** of food is a critical factor to the cost of various food items. The average meal travels over 2000kms to reach our table, amounting to a massive 60% of our food cost. This usually puts organic food out of the reach of most families. Hence **Local production** is vital.

The **genetically modified** food that concerns us, and is so pervasive, and goes largely unchecked in our society, generally comes from monocultures, which creates a multitude of problems which are avoided in polycultures. The growth of carbon dioxide, which is increasing each year, could be halted, according to a 28-year Rodale Institute study/. The example given was that if 40% of the world's agricultural land was to be converted to organic agriculture it would be equivalent to removing 750 million cars off the road in relation to the amount of CO2 that is emitted and would otherwise be incorporated into the soils.

Alf then addressed the misconception that **cattle** are to blame for increasing the level of methane gas in the atmosphere: on the contrary, it is us humans who feed them unnaturally on corn and other grains, instead of having them graze on their natural food, grasses, who are to blame. Furthermore, the manure from one cow can provide 105kgs per year of **nitrogen**, whereas at present 50 to 70% of the nitrogen fertiliser we use is imported, just as the bulk of our fruit and vegetables is imported! So, the idea is to plant legumes, peas and beans, to return nitrogen to the soil naturally.

The **three sisters**, corn, peas or beans and squash, Alf assured us, work really well together. They contain both carbon in their fibrous parts, and nitrogen in the leaves and root nodules. By turning them back into the soil, compost is naturally created. **Compost** is the basis of a thriving garden or farm, solving the need for calcium, nitrogen and carbon replenishment, as well as negating disease. In fact, it creates the perfect soil.

One of the values of a polyculture, by the way, is the absence of **weeds**, and growing

seven to fifteen varieties of food together also results in fewer unwanted **bugs**. Alf made the point that virtually anything can be grown anywhere, given the right attention to these critical issues.

In conclusion, many of Alf's points were fascinating and eye-opening for most of us there, confirming many of our current practices, and going beyond them to this system to provide self-sufficiency within one farm. Invitations were available to attend Kitchen Table Talks to learn more about the farm he described, and for anyone who is interested but didn't get one, you can go to [www.organicfarmshare.com](http://www.organicfarmshare.com), and go to "What's Happening" to book in to that our Trip Co-ordinator might be considering a trip out to the farm later in the year for those interested.

A big Thank You to Alf for giving of his time and expertise to us that night.

### Continued ... Broad Beans

young (when they're 6cm long) before they have the chance to become tough or bitter. To eat them shelled, wait a little longer, until you can clearly see the pods bulging with beans. If left to reach full maturity, dry and add to soups or stews.

**Trouble-shooting:** Aphids can multiply into dense colonies on the young shoot tips. Prevent them by pinching out tips once first flowers appear.

Broad beans are prone to wind damage, but also need good air circulation to prevent fungal diseases. Use stakes or set up a string line tethered to stakes at either end of the row to support them.

**Storage and uses:** Pods can be eaten whole when young, or beans can be left to mature inside pods. These need to be shelled and the skins removed before cooking. Freshly shelled beans can be refrigerated for five days, or blanched in boiling water for three minutes, then plunged into cold water to stop cooking before being frozen.

*Source: Gardening Australia*



**Getting to Know  
Lyn Mansfield  
Interview by Diane Kelly**

Not long after we moved to Mudgeeraba twelve years ago, I was given a journal. It is a very nice journal – it has little pictures of flowers, birds, butterflies, and cups of tea on the covers, in pretty pastel shades. But two things about this book – (a) it is a gardening journal, and (b) the pages are empty.

Now I have had a reasonably productive vegetable garden for most of the time we have lived in this house, and yet I suspect I would have been a much more successful gardener if I had taken the same approach to gardening as our May interviewee, Lyn Mansfield.

There were four things in particular about Lyn's gardening experience that I found impressive:

Before Lyn started her current garden, she designed a "to-scale" plan of the area she wanted to plant out

She has recorded what she has planted, where each plant is located, and how she has looked after them since – in other words, she has kept a gardening journal.

Lyn has studied various aspects of gardening and soil care at TAFE and the "Smart Gardeners" program – her goal has been to research and understand each plant she grows.

She has a good reason to garden – "I just love growing things, and giving them to friends and family to share".

Now to some background. Lyn grew up in suburban Melbourne, and some of her earliest memories are of visiting her grandfather and walking around his backyard vege patch. Lyn had her own small garden from about the age of eight, with strawberries being a firm favourite to grow.

Strawberries also featured in Lyn's garden when she and her husband moved to Southport in 1991. Two 6m x 3m garden beds rekindled Lyn's interest in being outside and growing vegetables, and this is when she began to see that good soil adds to the quality and flavour of the food that it produces. In 1993 Lyn did a permaculture course, and began to experiment with mixing different types of plants together in the one area.

Three years later, Lyn and her family moved to a 600 square meter block in Parkwood. The backyard is reasonably utilitarian, with a pool, a shed, a water tank and a small amount of lawn and low maintenance garden. However, it is the front yard that is both productive and a pleasure to look at – when I drove down Lyn's street, I knew which house was hers as soon as I saw the mass of floral colour in the front garden.

The front yard faces north/east, and gets plenty of sunshine. There were a number of trees in the front garden when Lyn moved in, but they were not suited to the location, so they were removed. Now Lyn's feature tree is a large mango – but when it bears fruit, her husband tells her the tree is his!

Lyn takes up the story of how the front garden developed:



Lyn's front yard – a mass of cosmos colour!



“My garden space is 10m x 5m, and when planted the permaculture way, it seemed messy to the family, and hard for me to manage. So I decided to build “Lyn’s Community Garden”. I got black garden edging and began to dig. Finally I ended up with seven garden beds, which are much easier to manage. The beds just evolved around the existing plants, and I just love walking through the garden each morning”. Paths covered with wood chip divide up the area, which make easy access for weeding and watering. Lyn didn’t bring in soil when starting the garden area, but instead has used mushroom compost, worm castings, chicken manure, comfrey, cow manure and mulched leaves/old plants to improve the existing soil. Sugar cane is also used as a mulch. Another idea Lyn has experimented with is wrapping scraps in newspapers and letting them compost down. Lyn has two active worm farms, and a large compost bin.

Although the front yard seems comparatively small, Lyn is currently growing 36 different vegetables, fruit, herbs, trees and flowers. These range from the common – sweet potatoes, pumpkins, rocket, lettuce, pineapple and, of course, strawberries! – to the more exotic – amaranth, loufas, nettles, borage, turmeric, okra, kale, sage, snake beans, gourds and casaba. And there are some sunflower plants for the cockatoos, cosmos flowers for the bees, and lemons for anyone who wants them!

When I asked Lyn about her favourite vegetable or flower, she explained that she is a vege person – “I don’t plant anything that I cannot eat, except to attract insects to help pollinate the vegetables. I love vegetables that I can give away – e.g. chillies, beans, pumpkin and lemon grass.” So Lyn’s best gardening moments are “when she can share with others the food that she has grown, or that she has learnt about from someone else.”

Lyn continued: “I don’t think I have a worst gardening moment, because my garden is one big experiment, and if something does

not work I try again, and ask friends for advice about what to do in the garden.” Lyn has been involved with a lot of community garden groups, starting when she was part of the P&C at her son’s school which had a farm area, and was involved with his soccer club when a community garden group wanted to rent their hall. Since then she has contributed much time, effort and administrative expertise to the Musgrave, Labrador and Ashmore Community Gardens, and is now the secretary & treasurer of GC Permaculture. Lyn is enjoying being part of a program that is “educating people about growing vegetables and teaching new gardeners how to work on the quality of their soil first”. She also commented that with community gardening, the gardening is somewhat incidental – it is people getting together that is so beneficial.

Lyn also attends the meetings of the Slow Food Association, and has learnt about such topics as growing coffee, and making pasta and cheese.

So what about the future? Lyn has the goal of moving to the country so she can have an acre of land which she would design and cultivate on permaculture principles. As for her current garden, she wants to broaden the variety of foods she grows, and learn more about each plant.

The final question that I had for Lyn was “if someone asked you to summarize gardening in one word, what would it be?” Her reply was an enthusiastic one ..... ENJOYABLE!



The lemon tree – home to gourds, snake beans and loufers – and plenty of lemons!

## Three Things I Can't Live Without From Diane Kelly

### 1. My Red Dragon Fruit plant:

On New Year's Day this year I woke early – it was a cool and quite perfect morning, and in the dawn light I went out to my vegetable patch, and walked along behind the back fence.

Attached to this timber fence is a large Red Dragon Fruit plant, which had been dormant for many months. But on this day, there was the first flower for the season, and it was beautiful.

The flowers of the Red Dragon Fruit plant are "magnificent, highly scented, trumpet shaped flowers" that only bloom for one night. The flowers are a creamy white colour which glows by moonlight, making it easy for pollinators to find; they can grow up to 30cm long, and really are quite dramatic.

So why can't I do without my Red Dragon Fruit plant? Because it has taught me several things – one is that a gardener needs to be patient. My plant bears about a dozen fruit a year within a short fruiting season, but their flavour and colour make the months of watering and fertilizing well worthwhile. Secondly it reminds me that things of beauty and value can be found in the most unlikely places – the plant of the Red Dragon Fruit is actually quite ugly, and very prickly. And thirdly, I am reminded to share my garden – the original cutting was given to me, and in turn, I've been able to give other people plants, and *sometimes* I even share what I regard as my favourite fruit!

### 2. My Nifty Little Wheel-barrow:

I am just over five foot tall, and I am sure that anyone else who is as "vertically challenged" will understand the frustration of trying to lift the arms of a standard wheel-barrow, full of whatever, high enough that the barrow can actually be wheeled, and not have the legs drag on the ground.

My other problem is that my vegetable area consists of three gardens of about three and a half meters square, with paths between and around each bed. Around the area is a mesh fence to keep out wallabies, bandicoots, chooks and Chloe the cat.

Until I purchased my "little" wheel-barrow, I often clipped corners, ran into the fence, or over-balanced and actually spilt out what I was barrowing. The standard wheel-barrow is a problem for short people trying to manoeuvre them, but now the problem is solved. And my new toy is even light enough to pick up and carry it over tricky patches!

### 3. Friends:

As much as I enjoy my Red Dragon Fruit, and as much as I appreciate my little wheel-barrow, my third "Thing that I can't do without in my Garden" is the most valuable, and is actually a person.

Some ten or twelve years ago, my friend moved to an acreage property on the other side of Mudgeeraba. The block was rather shaley, and had lots of gum trees that restricted sunlight, so there were plenty of gardening challenges. At the same time, I was establishing my own vegetable garden, and trying to grow enough greens, tomatoes and potatoes for our own use, and to share.

As with all new gardeners, poor soil, weeds, lack of knowledge, and time & energy limitations were daunting for both of us. So we came up with the idea that, for a couple of hours in the late afternoon once a fortnight, we would alternate visiting each other's



places. We soon found that sharing the work-load more than halved it, and we learnt that weeding **isn't** too bad if someone else is helping, and you can chat about gardening, food, and life in general.

So why can't I do without my friend?

A) A friend gets you going. If you haven't been able to get out in the veg patch recently, nothing is as encouraging as a phone call saying "I've got a few spare hours – is there anything I can come over and help you with in the garden?"

B) A friend gives you ideas. I used to grow vegetables in my veg patch in a very structured and organized way. But I've learnt to include some areas of colour – some flowers for the bees, some for my mum, and some just to make me smile when I go out to pick the lettuce or snow peas for tea.

C) My friend has now moved to Southport, and her backyard is full of rich, moist soil. Her new garden is growing well, and there are plants and trees in it that she has not grown before. Meanwhile, I'm growing broad beans for the first time; my freesia's have come up again after their first flowering last year; and I'm putting cow manure into the compost and garden, again something new. Things are changing, but we still get together to weed, plant and chat – to paraphrase one of my favourite calendar sayings "The best part of a garden is sharing it."



1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – a bee enjoying my Red Dragon Fruit flower

## What to Plant - June

June is hibernating season. It is also a "bare" time – a good time to look around the garden and plant. Winter is the time to move shrubs that are in the wrong place – but most native plants don't transplant well - it's best just to plant new ones.

Water! Cold days – and especially cold, windy days – dry plants and soil more than you would think. A lot of "cold damage" is often just lack of water.

**Plant to eat:** Passionfruit vines and seeds, mixed salad leaves, apple cucumbers, butter beans, huge New Guinea beans, coloured capsicum, Chinese cabbage, chillies, chockoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, eggplant, melons, okra, shallots, sweet corn and tomatoes.

**Plant for beauty:** Alyssum, calendula, cleome, coleus, gerbera, petunias, phlox, salvia, torenia and zinnia.

**What to Prune:** Lock up your secateurs until summer. The more you prune, the more you'll have to feed your trees and shrubs to make up for the lost foliage – and they'll be set back in spring when they should be producing flowers. Summer pruning is far better: wounds heal quickly. Heavy pruning attracts sap suckers like woolly aphids, so practise light pruning after flowering instead.

**Pests:** In most areas there are few pest outbreaks at this time of year. But you may have over-wintering populations, especially of fruit-fly and codling moth, and any remaining fruit or wind-falls should be rigorously checked to prevent an early pest build-up when the weather warms. This is also a good time to think about planting to reduce pest problems next year.

If you have apple trees, let parsnips or other umbellifera go to seed now, to spring up wild around the orchard to reduce codling moth infestations. Tansy planted under apples is also supposed to reduce codling moth.

Source: Jackie French - "The Wilderness Garden"

## Gardening with Ross

Gardening this time of the year is like a second spring for people lucky enough to live in our beautiful climate.

### Hot House:

Hot House or Tunnel as some people call them is a good way to grow and control the climate especially with the rain we have been having lately.

Here is the difference in growth of **lettuces**. Three punnets of lettuces each with 6 plants in them. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2012:-

3 plants planted outside ...



And 3 plants in the hot house ...



The plants in the house are now twice the size of the outdoor ones in 24 days.

**Tomatoes** setting in 40 days in hot house (12 May)



### Carrots and parsnips:

These vegetables need to be sown now as it's the best time to get a good crop. I have FRESH parsnip seed for \$2-00 a packet. This year I also saved my Western Red carrot seed and they are growing very successfully.



### Seeds:

There are plenty of seeds available at the seed counter that the club sells and as it's like we have two springs you should be loading up your garden now with the veg that you like to eat.

### Peas:

Now is a good time to plant Peas, Why I can hear you say, well peas planted too early will easily succumb to Mildew especially when it still warm. Peas are a cold weather crop.

### Garlic:

Garlic should be up and growing by now. This year My garlic is suffering from too much rain, we had had over 6 inch of rain in one two day period and the garlic plants are not liking it as they are showing a distinct yellowing in the leaves which means there roots are too wet, however I have weeded all through the beds and loosened the soil to help the soil to dry and sweeten up again in this much needed sunny weather we are experiencing now.

Happy gardening  
Ross.

## Harvest

Oscar and Caleb rustled through the overgrown garden. I heard Caleb's 'ouch'. He appeared holding his shaven head, large brown eyes like two chocolate marbles on his pale face. 'That grapefruit banged me on the head,' he announced, giving his temple a rub. 'The fruit is almost as big as your head,' I laughed, as he made his way down the path to his house.

Huge ruby red and yellow grapefruit hang from the different citrus trees. Orbs of gold and orange decorate the forest green branches, the perfect source of juice for early morning.

Further along the path, the Lemonade fruit weighs down the branches. Day by day the fruit turns from green tones to yellow. The joy of sucking a Lemonade surpasses the artificial concoction that is marketed as a fizzy drink. Sweet, tangy, fluid tingles the tongue. This year is a bumper crop.

Around the home plots, orange trees are loaded with produce. Johnno, who lives here, told me of a morning when his children were playing some hectic ball games on a grassy block.

'The kids started to ask for something to eat, and as I had nothing with me, and they didn't want to go home, I picked some oranges from the tree by the road and peeled them. The boys thought they were ace. My girls said they were sweet. Kept them going until lunch time.'

Winter is also the season for lemons. Up in the highlands, bush lemons grow in abundance among the wild native areas, from fertile seeds spat there by pioneers. Many varieties are grown in the creek flats greenways. With so much fruit we have to become creative in our efforts to use them wisely.

An adventurous group of females have begun a regular activity. They gather in the

community's commercial kitchen and work through recipes to produce delicious food and drinks. They have called the group 'The Lemon Tarts', and have established a reputation for marmalades, tempting sweets and slices, and Lemonade Crush. To watch them at play, among the oil fragrance of lemon peel and the vapour of citrus fruit bubbling on the stove; producing jars of preserves which line up on the shelves like miniature stained glass windows, reminds me of my grandmother's kitchen.

These same ladies become the 'Lillypilly Filies', when our Syzygiums come into season. Sweet pink lillypilly fruit is picked from the trees by the village children as treats. But in the kitchen, many fingers remove tiny pips and produce amazing lillypilly cordial for cool summer drinks. The fruit is also boiled and strained into jelly which shines crimson from the jars. Lillypilly sauce pudding appears on the dinner menus.

And when the guavas ripen, out come the cookery books again and on go the aprons. The pots are rattled, scales found, and laughter and stories blend with rhythmic chopping as the smells of new and tested recipes lure the hungry observers in to test the samples.

We are establishing our gardens around our house, concentrating on improving the soil with compost and mulch. We have enough vegetables to supplement our supplies, and herbs for flavour. And we share the plentiful fruit on common land. As long as our strawberry crop produces a daily handful from June to December, I come up trumps with my man. 'As sweet as your kiss,' he drools over his morning bowl of fresh ripe berries.

*©Pauline Maxwell 13072011*

### Prostate Awareness Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:

[www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com](http://www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com)

or contact Ross Davis for more info:

[rossco12@bigpond.com](mailto:rossco12@bigpond.com)

## Tips for Winter Gardening From Diane Kelly

### Citrus Tips:

If scale insects are present, or have been present during the previous summer, spray with white oil on an overcast day – otherwise the sun can cause leaf burn. White oil leaves a smear of transparent oil on the leaf surfaces and prevents a ready re-infestation from the citrus scale.

If planting young citrus trees, take utmost care that the roots are not disturbed, as any such disturbance may cause the plant to shed its leaves and lose its vigour for several seasons. Young citrus trees have very sensitive green-wood stems, and that's why plastic collars are put around orchard trees. The collars also protect the trees from leaf predators and sun scald. To reduce incidence of collar rot, you can paint the stem with a lime-based slurry with some copper oxychloride in it, so that a fungicide is in place as well. Young citrus trees seldom need pruning, but the removal of dead wood and a spray of copper oxychloride to prevent further fungal spread will benefit the vigour of your older trees.

Nitrogen fertiliser should be applied with the first hint of winter days warming up. Organic fertilisers to consider are: blood meal; blood & bone; poultry manure; pigeon droppings and sheep droppings. Animal wastes need to be diluted if added though, because poultry manure in particular can easily burn the young leaves with its concentrated nitrogen. Best to start with one part of manure to 20 parts of water and then increase the dose as the weather warms up and the citrus start growing and absorbing nutrients more rapidly.

White citrus butterfly (*Papilo ananctus*) caterpillars should be removed with a rubber glove. Slugs and snails can leave shotholes over new leaves, and are easily removed by hand at night. The Khaki Campbell duck has an insatiable appetite for snails and slugs – a good idea if you have room for a couple to roam your garden! If you have a dry winter, water citrus trees during the afternoon and by

dusk you will be able to pick up the little critters off your leaves by hand. They can, incidentally, remain dormant for up to three years under leaf-litter or rocks.

### After-pruning tips:

Spray deciduous fruit trees with a fungicide to reduce the incidence of bacterial and fungal moulds and diseases like flecks and shot-hole. Remember to apply a fungicide to all bare cuts made when pruning, or apply a water-based paint with the fungicide dissolved in it to the wounds.

### Compost winter tips:

The breakdown of leaf-litter into rich compost almost stops in winter due to the low ground temperatures. To accelerate the action, cover your compost with a sheet of black plastic, which helps the compost warm up during the day. It also cools fairly quickly at night, but if you can get enough green matter into the heap the heat generated by its decay takes over.

### Seed Collection:

In the depths of winter, when you're convinced there is no point in gardening at all, try collecting the seed from native plants, either in your own garden, local neighbourhood, or on roadsides in the country. Eucalypts, hakeas, melaleucas, callistemons and many others retain their seeds for many years. The woody capsules are picked and put out on sheeting in the sun to dry for a few days or weeks, depending on the temperature. They then open up (dehisce) and the tiny seeds fall out. Save these for sowing in spring. It is most important to save some leaves and fruits of the tree that you collected your seed from so that they can be positively identified.

### Tool Care:

After paying up to \$50.00 for a good spade or fork, the maintenance of the wooden handle in its best possible shape is often overlooked. First remove the varnish and the maker's brand which the manufacturer applied by lightly rubbing with fine glasspaper.



## VEGETABLES

### MAY:

Asian greens, Asparagus crowns, Beans, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Silverbeet, Spinach, Strawberry, Tomato, Turnip.

### JUNE:

Asian greens, Asparagus crowns, Broad beans, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow pea, Strawberry.

## Continued ... Tool Care

Apply some burnt linseed oil onto a rag and rub it in lightly. If you do this maybe twice a year, the wooden handle may outlast the metal flange where the spade or fork joins the handle. It may be necessary to sand the flange so that all the metal splinters are removed.

*Source: Malcolm Campbell  
The Gardening Australia Book*

## HERBS

### MAY

**Annual:** Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Giant Red Lettuce, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Mustard Lettuce, Nasturtium, Rocket.

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

### JUNE

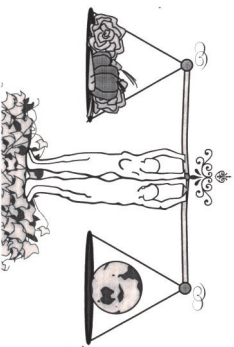
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**Can still plant, but it is getting towards the end of the season** – Basil, Ceylon Spinach.

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 21 June 2012