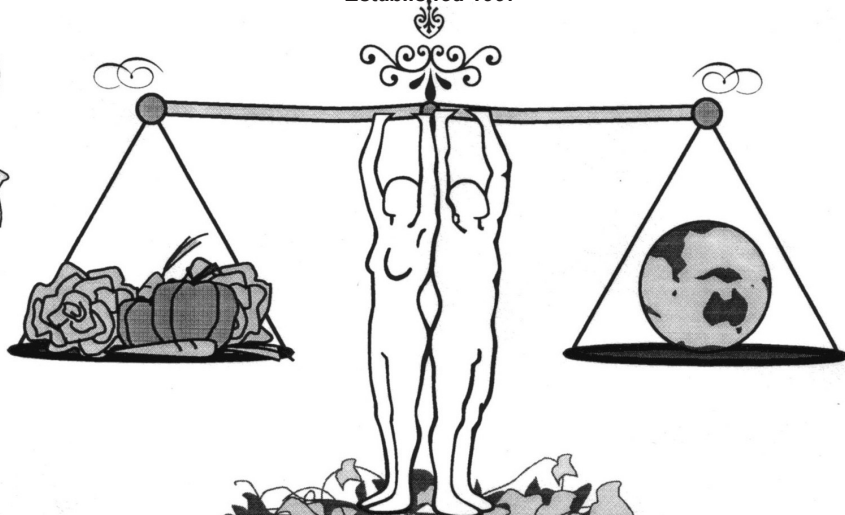


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 23 - AUGUST 2019 Issue 8  
GARDENING IN WINTER

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 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](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/gcorganic](http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic)**

## 2018 –2019 Committee

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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 one week before the meeting.** Send it to Leah [leahbryan9@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryan9@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.

**Overdue:** Danielle Bowe (426), Kerstein Trueman (346), Barbara Talty (58), Karen Hart (198), Dorothy Coe (253), Ron Campbell (255), Shem Pireh (361), John Trama (437), Ann Brown (329)

**August:** Warren & Bev Carlson (87), Murray & Judith Oliver (105), Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Jan Guest (307), Dayne Petersen (377), Robyn Penfold (439), Melanie Strang (440)

**September:** Henry Blonner (108), Neil Ross (294), Beth Orme (343)

GCOG MEMBERS  
**NEWSLETTER**  
CONTRIBUTIONS

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS  
ONE WEEK BEFORE THE MEETING.

Send your content to  
Leah at:  
leahbryang@gmail.com

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

September 19 - Mark Pritchard  
'Permaculture Fundamentals'

October 17 - Anna MacDonald 'Compost Teas'

November 21 - John Palmer 'Edible Wild Weeds' (bring specimens from your own garden for identification.)

We are seeking Guest Speakers for 2020. If you have a suggestion of a speaker that you think our members would enjoy (or would like to nominate yourself!) please contact Leah Johnston via leahbryan9@gmail.com or text 0428 028 042.

## Workshops

### Gardening Lunch – all welcome

We meet monthly for lunch and have a chat. 11 am to 2 pm – at a trendy café somewhere (any recommendation welcomed) If you would like to know when the next lunch is on email Lyn Mansfield [Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)  
Mobile – 0409 645 888

### EdibleScapes

Working bee/workshop 2nd Saturday of each month - 8:30am to 10:30am  
[Edible Landscape gardens Project.](http://ediblescapes.org/)  
<http://ediblescapes.org/>

If you have a free event you would like us to share in our newsletter please let us know about it by sending the details to Leah at: leahbryan9@gmail.com

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

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

### Thanks to this month's contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jorge Cantellano,  
Leah Johnston and Liliana Morgan.

## Botanical Bazaar garden festival notes and inspiration

by Leah Johnston

My favourite day of the year, Botanical Bazaar, was held on August 4 this year and I took some photos of our GCOG members enjoying the day and took as many notes as I could while listening to the speakers.

### STEPHEN RYAN

Stephen Ryan was the first speaker of the day sharing his knowledge on 'Plant propagation via seed raising and cuttings'.

"Propagating from cuttings is the only way to have a true to type offspring that is a clone of the mother. When you grow from seed you aren't totally sure what you will get due to genetic variations," he said.

Whether you're growing from seeds or from cuttings Stephen recommends taking notes in a log book. Note if you use a hormonal treatment was used and if so which one it was; how many grew; any other notes you have about it.

"Label everything! It sounds silly but how many times have we all planted something and not remembered what it was later on, so you don't know whether to plant it in the veggie patch or the flower garden.

"I use a good quality potting mix rather than a seed raising mix. Plant the seeds in separate pots. If you put too many into one you will disturb the other seedlings that aren't ready when you prick out the ones that are ready to plant out. I don't use shallow potting trays as the roots quickly grow out of the bottom of it and don't have a chance to grow a good strong root system.

"There is a saying to sow the seeds to the depth of twice their diameter. But some seeds need sunlight to germinate. Generally, I just put enough river sand over them to cover them, using a very gently hand a lightly watering. Really fine seeds shouldn't be covered at all and need to be watered from below because watering from above can wash them into the potting mix.

"Never sow seeds if you're about to go overseas for six weeks, they need your attention. Patience is part of this whole game. Some things take a long time to come up. Some need a cool snap in the winter then a warm snap then another cool snap before they will come up. Some can take years. Cover your pots so that no animals can come and scratch your seeds out. With peas and sweet peas I would pre-soak in lukewarm water overnight.

"When it comes to propagating from cuttings you need to move quickly. You can't take cuttings and then plant them three days later, the fresher the cuttings are the better.

"When you're choosing what to use for cuttings don't take the weakest parts of the tree or the huge big water shoot coming up the middle of the tree; find the middle range shoots. Preferably take your cuttings when they aren't about to flower and if it is about to flower always take off the flowers. Nodes are where the leaves join: this is where the roots will grow from. Cambium tissues is directly below the bark and transfers water and nutrients along the tree: this can also produce roots.

"Always cut above a node. With cuttings I don't generally use secateurs for the final clean as they tend to bruise the bark. I use a Stanley knife and always make sure to have bandaids nearby. Start with something soft and work your way up to hardwood. Have a node near the bottom and at least one at the top. Generally speaking I make cuttings no longer than pencil length. If it has big leaves



you might want to cut the top off them as they will transpire water so you don't want them too big. Use a dibber or a stick to make a hole in your mix. I find perlite really good, it's very light and stays warmer than sand. Sand is heavy and can cause the roots to fall off when you're transplanting them out later on. Use fresh perlite every time: if there's any old bark or anything in your mix it could cause a fungal situation.

"I've always found if it's softwood cuttings I very rarely ever need a rooting hormone but for semi and hardwood I do. If you use honey make sure it's not processed honey as it doesn't work. There are different hormonal treatments in a powder or a gel or ones that you dilute in water and sit the cuttings in it," he said.

Stephen mentioned the photos you may have seen online where a potato is used to strike roses in. He said he doesn't care what anyone says, that would not work.

"You'll be surprised how many things you can strike in your own garden instead of paying a fortune at the nursery. I've been propagating plants since I was about ten years old. I still get a huge kick out of tipping out a pot of struck cuttings. But don't keep pulling them out to look at them if you do that you won't get roots on them. I want to see if roots are coming out the bottom of the pot then I know I can plant it out.

"Some plants can strike in a couple of weeks others take months. Dampen your perlite before you plant your cuttings out. They can take up moisture from below and you can water from above too. I have a sense that watering from above aggravates the bottom of the cutting and helps it to form callouses and form roots. I have no scientific evidence, it's just a theory.

"I find it interesting that we treat natives so differently because a plant is a plant is a plant. If it's a Western Australian plant I wouldn't try to grow it here because that could have easily been another country. You want to plant what's endemic here. If you plant a grevillea from Western Australia you could actually muck up the local gene pool



here.

"Join a local garden club so you can learn more and ask questions," he finished with. ANNETTE MCFARLANE

Annette McFarlane spoke about 'Conquering compost – how to make a perfect batch every time'.

"Chop things up to make it faster. You can blend kitchen scraps in the blender and you can mow over things on the lawn. Add manure from a herbivore, not from a cat or dog, they do have exclusive systems to compost that in but you wouldn't add it to your veggie patch.

"I've tried every type of herbivore manure and cow is my favourite. There's lots of ways to compost, some involve turning it which can be more work but if we are going to get exercise it may as well be in the garden!" she said.

On the topic of adding weeds to the compost heap or not Annette said if she didn't add her weeds she wouldn't know what to do with them, just make sure you're using a hot composting method if you're adding weed seeds.

"Most weed seeds will be killed when it gets to above 55 degrees Celsius. Creeping oxalis seeds are stronger so don't put that in and never add nut grass to it. Remember the rule that one year of seeds results in seven years weeding. So if you see your weeds going to seed don't wait to deal with them another day, go and break all their heads off them right away.

Speaking of the other types of composting methods you can use she said tumbler com-

posts and noted they need very fine materials and to have water added and checked to work properly. She also touched on bokashi bucket systems, trench composting, black soldier fly composting (like the Compost in-ground composting systems we have learned about at a previous GCOG meeting) and finding a local community composting system if you don't want to do your own at home.

“The lazy way to compost is trench composting: bury stuff into your garden and cover it up. It's quite a legitimate method and worms will cross neighbourhood boundaries to come to your garden.

“For successful composting use some of your broken-down compost as an inoculant to kick start your next batch. Add materials in thin layers and put a layer of dried leaves or grass over your layer of fresh materials. If you get cockroaches that indicates that the material is rotting and not breaking down. Chop up your materials and put a diversity of materials in. The moisture level should be like a damp sponge.

“Making your own compost is much better than anything you can buy - unless you're buying the biodynamic compost like they have here today (referring to the Red Soil Organics compost that Kane Dabbouss brought to GCOG for us recently).

“If you want to know more you can find my books at your local libraries: I'm a big supporter of local libraries I say use them or lose them,” she said.

Someone in the audience asked about using comfrey in the compost and Annette replied “It's really favoured by biodynamic growers. The leaves are drawing up a lot of nutrients from deep in the ground so they add that to the compost. You can add as much as you like as a layer. It's a really good idea to plant your comfrey around your compost area so you can cut it and chuck it in,” she said.

When using ash in the compost she recommends using it in small quantities because it's got about three times the alkalinity of



garden lime. So if you would use a handful of lime only use a tablespoon of ash, but it's great for the lawn and in the veggie patch before planting peas and beans.

#### GAVIN BULLOCK

Gavin Bullock (who we have seen speak at GCOG before) gave an interesting hands-on presentation demonstrating how to improve organic soil fertility.

“There are five components of soil: Air, so that your plants don't suffocate; water is life's blood, it has everything to do with how things can grow and defy gravity; microbes for worms to come and work in the soil; minerals from the rocks; organic matter is the food they can feed on and make the ground strong.

“Where you live governs what type of soil you're working with. Live near the beach you'll have sand, it's negatively charged and things leech out of it. If you're in clay that's too heavy and things will suffocate and you get root rot.

“It sounds corny but I'm a true believer that 'If you build it, they will come'. If you give organics a reason it will happen,” he said.

To keep your soil happy you need mulch on the ground, otherwise it will dry out and get hard and make it hard for things to grow.

“If you have too much nitrogen things cannot grow properly; they start going pale yellow. Let weed seeds cook under black plastic for

a few weeks. Get your compost up to 62-63 degrees Celsius three times in three weeks, then you'll kill the weed seeds.

"Add some sheep manure pellets it's not as high in nitrogen and will help the microbes to break it all down. It's great for fruit trees, it'll help your fruit hold on the tree. Mellow out your manure, don't use it fresh; chicken manure has too much phosphorus when it's fresh.

"Plants want to grow up high and defy gravity. Manure from chickens is great, they defy gravity because they fly, so their manure will help your plants grow high and defy gravity. Seaweed is the grass of the ocean, it holds all the mineral wealth in it, it has the trace elements and allows plants to hold potassium which makes the minerals available to the plant," he said.

Gavin recommends adding some gypsum to your compost heap. Throw it over and let it sit a few weeks to buffer your compost and make the goodness in it more available to your plants and it won't change the PH.

"What you see above the ground is a reflection of what's going on below the ground. When it comes to fertilising your plants I live by the saying 'A little a lot rather than a lot a little'. So don't treat your gardens with lime once a year, do a little but more often.

"Water deeply. If you water shallowly you create junkies, they eat up the water and food immediately and stand around waiting for more. This season we have hot days and very cold nights and the plants are spinning out. The daytime temperature is making them feel like it's spring but at night the soil temperature is low.

"Tip prune your plants gently so they get their roots deeper into the soil. Fish emulsion will inoculate the ground and make the microbes start working for you. Selectively remove larger citrus fruit as your plant will want to hold them all but can't manage to grow them all to full maturity. Check your trees every year: pull the mulch back and layer soil over any exposed roots and put your mulch back over the top.

"Do liquid feeds and fertilisers at half strength every few weeks then build up to the full strength. Anything growing in pots should be fertilised at half strength. I make my potting mix using two parts potting mix and one part compost. Water the ground and pots first then the plants at the end.

"Clay loves itself so much it can't stop hugging itself. Clay breakup makes it stop loving itself so much and changes the charge so it doesn't stick together so much. When improving your clay soil By adding river sand and compost form a ball and bounce it in your hand. You want it to break up after a few bounces then it's a good consistency," he said.

Gavin then did a hands-on demonstration of how to improve clay soil. At first the soil could be formed into a ball and bounced in his hand without breaking up. After adding enough riversand to it and some compost it formed a ball which broke up after bouncing in his hand twice. He then checked the PH of the soil her had made and it came out around the perfect 7-7.5 range.



### COSTA GEORGIADIS

As expected, the most popular speaker at this year's Botanical Bazaar was Costa Georgiadis. His topic was 'Using your garden to improve biodiversity', but in true Costa style his speech took us on a journey. Please note if my recount is a little disjointed this is not due to my notetaking ability; this is just how Costa presents. Costa began thanked the Botanical Bazaar team for organising the flash mob which helped to garner more votes for both

Costa as a presenter and Gardening Australia the television show in the recent Logie Awards. He was humbly excited about how the nominations alone helped to raise the profile of gardening and growing your own food into the mainstream a bit more. He was thrilled that Gardening Australia won a Logie for Best Lifestyle Program as it was its 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary this year.

“It’s really important as gardeners to know what will work in our climate of where we live. If you go and buy a plant at a shop the label will say something like plant it in the ground and it will need some sun and some water. It doesn’t tell you if it actually grows where you live. Most plant labels aren’t specific to where we are.

“An event like today is so important because you can go to a stall over there and ask them what grows where you live. The community garden behind us is a great example of what edible plants will grow here so you can go look at that and learn from that,” he shared.

Costa then handed his Silver Logie to the audience and invited them to hand it around, take photos holding it and share on social media use the hashtag #logieroadie. Check out some of the photos of our GCOG members holding the logie.

Getting back to the topic of biodiversity in the garden Costa encouraged us to gift people an experience or some knowledge rather than more stuff. The world is overrun with stuff, and it’s a lot of stuff we don’t actually need.

“Giving the gift of a plant is one of the best ways you can encourage biodiversity and introduce someone into gardening. A gift of a course or book or workshop. Say a workshop in fermenting or kombucha making or compost. That might make them want to grow a cabbage, they might want to start growing their own plants.

“So suddenly from a biodiversity point of view we aren’t giving things we are giving experiences. We aren’t giving waste we are giving education. Don’t get overwhelmed by think-

ing you can’t do anything. Change your toilet paper to recycled toilet paper instead of wiping your bum with fresh forests, change your tissues and your hand towel. Use the recycled products we have

“You feel it’s convenient to grab for disposable things but who pays for this convenience? The cost is conveniently being placed on the next generation. Think about your behaviour,” he said.

***Ian holding Costa’s Silver Logie***



***Leah and Jill with Costa’s Silver Logie***





He spoke about the importance of community and meeting people and talking to people and how isolation contributes to a lot of mental health problems.

“Gardening is such a great way to do this. You can trade what you can grow with someone else who grows something that you don’t. If you don’t have room to grow a garden talk to a friend who has space and while you’re there tending their garden you’re also tending them because you’re having a chat and helping each other. Gardening can give us better health and better mental health and help us build community,” Costa said.

Apologies for any mistakes there may be in my note taking and thank you to Stacey Panozzo for another great Botanical Bazaar.



***Jorge had a great day sharing his liquid biofertiliser knowledge***



***Penny and her sister Miriam***



***Gary and Eddie - green thumbs up!***



***John and Jill listening to Costa***



## Liquid Biofertiliser

by Jorge Cantellano

### Raise organic food

Most conscious and informed people know that growing their own organic food is the healthiest and most nutritious way to feed their families. However small veggie patches don't always produce as much food as they imagine.

### Nutritional deficiencies and unhealthy soil

One of the reasons of failed crops is that the plants itself suffer nutritional deficiencies from an unhealthy soil environment. Many important macro-nutrients may not be available in high enough quantities for the optimal growth and development of plants. The food that you then eat from such a garden could also have some nutritional deficiencies caused by the low transfer of micro- and macro-nutrients.

### Developing Liquid Biofertiliser

Good soil conditions are imperative to increasing crop production, as well as growing more nutrient-dense food for us to eat. The application of biofertilisers can play a key role in developing an integrated nutrient management system which will improve and sustain the productivity of your edible garden while having a low environment impact.

### EdibleScapes Liquid Biofertiliser

EdibleScapes' Community Composting program is developing eco-friendly and safe to use liquid biofertiliser. The process of fermenting the organic matter it decomposes and extract minerals, reproduces microorganisms and created a life-filled liquid which improves the fertility of the soil, provides optimum nutrients to plants and helps keep pests and pathogens under control.

Our liquid biofertiliser is made from left overs from the farmers markets, separated in family groups of vegetables, herbs and fruits, fermented in our anaerobic biodigester system. EdibleScapes' fermentation process produces a liquid biofertiliser that can remineralise your garden with the correct balance of essential plant nutrients. These include nitrogen (N), potassium (K) and phosphorous (P), calcium (Ca) magnesium (Mg) and sulphur

(S) also carbon (C), hydrogen (H) and oxygen (O). The essential micronutrients elements include iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo), copper (Cu), boron (B), zinc (Zn), chlorine (Cl), sodium (S), cobalt (Co), and silicon (Si).

Biofertilisers contain microorganisms that can activate a biological process which stimulates the development of plants and ensures healthy growth. These microorganisms do not function only as a fertiliser. They transform the inaccessible forms of soil elements into forms that are accessible to your plants. We have studied many techniques to produce biofertiliser including the concept of Effective Microorganism from Japan, the Indigenous Microorganisms from Korea and the Mountain Microorganisms from Latin America (which aims to function as a soil inoculate to establish or re-establish soil ecosystems.) EdibleScapes adapts these methods to reproduce microorganisms to inoculate the two fermenting processes that we use to make our liquid biofertiliser. Over the first two to three weeks we use an urban bokashi fermentation system to separate the solid from the liquids. Next the material goes through a BIOL Super-Magro fermentation method from Brazil to anaerobically ferment again together the liquid and the solid for another four to six weeks.

The resulting product is a ready-to-use liquid biofertiliser, which is convenient for small-scale landscapers, domestic edible gardens and community gardens.

### Biofertilisers

Biofertilisers can help improve the structure, texture and water-holding capacity of the soil. Biofertilisers, being living organisms, can decompose organic matter and help in the remineralisation of soil. The term 'biofertiliser' itself mean 'live fertiliser'. Biofertilisers, also known as microbial inoculants, are a complex product of live microbes which are able to fix atmospheric nitrogen, make soil phosphorus soluble, decompose organic material or oxidise sulphur in the soil. Biofertilisers are artificially multiplied cultures of beneficial microorganisms that can improve soil fertility stimulating plant growth through the synthesis of growth-promoting substances.

### **Eco-friendly and pose no danger to the environment**

The most important and contributing function of biofertilisers is considerable reduction in environmental pollution and improvement of agro-ecological soundness. Biofertilisers are eco-friendly organic agro inputs which cause no harm to ecosystems and bring a renewable source of plant nutrients to substitute chemical fertilisers. Biofertilisers have great potential as a supplementary, renewable and environmentally friendly source of plant nutrients to enhance plant health and contribute to soil ecology.

### **Liquid biofertilisers**

People are familiar with conventional solid biofertilisers, also known as compost but liquid biofertilisers have a higher microbe density.

Liquid biofertilisers are liquid substances containing the dormant form of microorganisms and their nutrients along with the substances that encourage formation of resting spores or nodules. When the dormant forms reach the soil they germinate to produce a fresh batch of active cells. These cells grow and multiply by utilising the carbon source in the soil or from root exudates. This improves the plant growth by advancing the root architecture.

Their activity increases root hairs, nodules and nitrate reductase. Biofertilisers produce plant hormones and improve photosynthesis performance to improve a plant's tolerance to stress and increase the resistance to pathogens, thereby resulting in healthy, stronger crops. When liquid fertilisers are applied plants can immediately absorb these substances thus offering faster outcomes.

### **For Liquid Biofertiliser product development we need \$12,000.**

Your support will help to develop the quality of liquid biofertiliser product by setting up the operation system which we can use as a research and demonstration site.

Our commitment is to transfer technological know-how on biofertiliser production for the community as opensource Creative Commons (CC) Non-commercial (NC) license, on the Public Domain (£).

### **Get your nutritive liquid biofertiliser perks**

To thank you for helping us to raise funds we have our liquid biofertiliser to share with you. We would love you to test it in your own edible garden and let us know what you think.

<https://chuffed.org/project/ediblescapesbio/>

For edible gardens

**LIQUID  
BIOFERTILISER**



## Let's Grow Something Different!

by Diane Kelly

Last month I brought home the seed boxes after our Club meeting, and I was asked to do a stock-take in preparation for the ordering of the new season's seeds. One of the things that I found interesting was that there were a number of packets left of two types of vegetable seeds – many of the other seeds were down to their last two or three packets. This made me wonder why – and then I realized that I didn't know how to grow (or cook) either of these two vegies. And maybe other members didn't either - so I decided this was a good chance to learn about growing something different.



*Celeriac – also known as  
“turnip-rooted celery”*

**Celeriac:** This plant has been described as “the ugly duckling of root vegetables”, but it is also known as “the versatile vegetable” because it can be eaten in so many ways. The most common way to enjoy celeriac is to peel and dice it and add it to soups and stews. But it can also be baked or mashed and finished as a gratin – or you can add it to your salads. Celeriac is also delicious when the blanched strips or cubes are fried and served as chips.

Celeriac is related to celery but differs from it in that you eat the round, fleshy root of the plant rather than the leaves (although these can be used to make stock). When you are preparing a garden area to plant out celeriac, make sure it is enriched with plenty of compost and decomposed animal manure – celeriac

likes a rich, moist and well-drained soil with a pH level between 5.5 and 6.5. Plant seedlings about 25cm apart and keep the plants free from weed competition – remember to water them regularly because they are prone to bolting to seed if stressed by lack of water and nutrients.

Celeriac grows best in cool and temperate climates as it develops its most intense flavour after exposure to frost. But it can be grown in the sub-tropics during the dry season. So you will need to wait till around Easter next year to try planting celeriac. But give it a go – there are plenty of recipes to enjoy; it is quite an easy plant to grow; it is a relatively pest-free vegetable; and the bulbs store well in cool, dark conditions.



*Walnut and celeriac tacos  
– they look yummy!*

**Watercress:** The second vegetable that we are going to have a look at is watercress. Now this is considered an “easy to grow” plant; it can be grown here between March and October; and it can be eaten in salads or in soups. Annette McFarlane's favourite way to eat watercress is to team it with cream cheese and fresh tomato in a sandwich. And I think the orange, avocado and watercress salad recipe below sounds tasty.



### Orange, avocado and watercress salad

#### Ingredients: (serves 2)

- ¼ teaspoon orange zest
- 2 teaspoons orange juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 grind of pepper
- ½ avocado
- 2 cups trimmed watercress
- 2 very thin slices red onion
- 4 rounds of a navel orange
- 1 tablespoon coarsely chopped roasted almonds

#### Directions:

In a bowl, mix 1/4 tsp orange zest, 2 tsp orange juice, 1 tsp olive oil, 1/8 tsp ground cumin, 1/8 tsp kosher salt and a grind of pepper. Dip thin slices of 1/2 avocado in dressing; set aside. Add 2 cups trimmed watercress and a few very thin slices red onion to dressing; toss. Divide among two plates. Top with 4 rounds of a navel orange (peel and pith removed) and reserved avocado. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp coarsely chopped roasted almonds.

Watercress's main requirements are water and shade. The natural environment of watercress is a running stream, but this peppery salad leaf can easily be grown in the garden. The plants also grow well when planted in self-watering pots, or in pots plunged into water gardens.

If you are planting watercress in your garden, dig a trench some 25cm wide and 60cm long. Mix a bucket of well-rotted manure or compost

into the soil in the base of the trench, leaving it about 10cm below the surrounding soil level. Keep the trench moist at all times. Watercress appreciates an alkaline soil, so make sure its pH reading is 7 or above – adding shell grit as a mulch can help provide the calcium and alkalinity that these plants require. Any disease problems encountered by watercress are likely to be caused by incorrect pH levels.

As long as your watercress plants have plenty of nutrients and water they will become established very quickly, and can be harvested regularly - you will be able to re-cut previously harvested sections of the plant in as little as a week. Try and plant new crops twice a year so that the plants remain vigorous – you can multiply watercress by cuttings or self-layering stems.

So – two lesser known vegetables – but perhaps two new items to add to your garden and your meals. Try some watercress now, and remember to grow some celeriac next autumn – experimenting is always fun!



*The delicate leaves of watercress*

*Money can't buy happiness, except maybe at the garden centre.*

## How Does Your Garden Grow?

**With Maggie Golightly  
and Liliana Morgan**

by Leah Johnston

This month my article is a two-for-one as I visited soon-to-be neighbours Maggie Golightly and Liliana Morgan in the Ecovillage in Currumbin.

Maggie bought her property seven years ago and built her beautiful home and moved in a year after that. It's important to note that when I say 'built her beautiful home' I mean she actually got hands-on involved in building her home. Maggie has excellent carpentry and cabinet-making skills and takes a lot of care to do things properly, there's no 'near enough is good enough' to be seen in her home or her garden. Everything is built deliberately with time, care, respect and intention using a blend of new items and reclaimed lovingly restored pieces.

I've been to Maggie's house before, around two years ago on a gardening working-bee organised by Lyn Mansfield. It's great to see how her land and garden has evolved since then, as she continues to work with the land and see what works best, where.

Around a year ago Maggie met Liliana who was inspecting the vacant block next door and they became fast friends. Maggie has built a flat-let underneath her house where Liliana is currently living while her own house next door gets built. The pair work together daily in the garden sharing their knowledge and skills as well as the food they harvest and cook.

"I really feel like gardening is drawing me to a sense of community, it can be a challenge because I've been out of it for so long, but now I feel drawn to working with others. Maggie and I work really well together. We both have our strengths in different ways," Liliana said.

"We work to each other's strengths, and sort it out as we go along," Maggie said.

"It's very idealistic but it's working," Liliana said.

"I'm a self-sufficient sort of person and sharing my garden has definitely added value to my life, sharing what we've created and eating and cooking what we have grown is a joyful experience," Maggie said.

"Working in the garden and being in the garden is not a chore, it's a joy," Liliana said.

"We get so excited watching things grow. I wake up in the morning and I get so excited about what I can go and do that day," Maggie



said.

Many people focus on building their house first and then get in and start the garden. Liliانا and Maggie are wisely planting the fruit trees (which they will both care for and share the bounty of) before the building of Liliانا's house has even started.

Maggie and Liliانا grow pawpaw, dragon-fruit, banana, kaffir lime, native raspberry, strawberry and just purchased at the Botanical Bazaar lemon, lime, blood orange, grape-fruit, cara cara orange and two avocado trees. They grow lots of salad and Asian greens, pumpkin, burdock (which they've been using in soup) and plenty of herbs including lots of basil to keep the wild bees and butterflies fed.

Maggie values the importance of pollinators when it comes to the success of her garden. She allows wild milkweed plants to grow for the monarch butterflies and has bordered her raised beds with flowers and herbs including comfrey, borage, calendula and nasturtiums taking over from time to time.

"Mum was always a mad-keen gardener. She lived in England and had such a small garden she described it as the size of a postage

stamp and could cut her lawn with a pair of scissors. When she moved to New Zealand (where I was brought up) she was excited to have a bigger garden. As kids we were roped in and had to pull out the blackberries and weeds. We hated it.

"I wouldn't say that as a child I had a love of gardening because it seemed like hard work. But somewhere along the line I got that it was more than just gardening; more than just digging and planting; I got that it was giving back, creating soil, creating biodiversity, creating environments for others not just us. It's like I used to think that yoga was just an exercise and then one day it dropped down to another level and it just became more of a soul journey. And that's what gardening is!" Maggie shared.

"It's about that connectedness. That oneness. Everything is connected and gardening is practising that connection. It's a symbiosis with the land," Liliانا added.

In contrast to Maggie's childhood, Liliانا was brought up in an Italian family where her mother was the keeper of the home and her father was in charge of the garden.

"We weren't allowed to do anything in the garden except water it. I took up gardening





**Maggie's photo of when the dragonfruits were in flower, wow!**

later on when I stopped working. Years later my dad came and visited me and couldn't believe the size of the eggplants I could grow," she shares.

Now, both mothers and grandmothers themselves, they love to involve their grandchildren in the garden. Maggie's grandson chose her herb book to read one day and the pair enjoyed identifying the plants from the book in the garden and drawing their own pictures of them. Listening to the 'pop' whilst picking strawberries with her grandson was their special time of day. He now lives in Western Australia but is continuing to garden – his parents recently sent a video to Maggie showing him pruning a peach tree with a saw. Liliانا's grandchildren will soon live with her (and their mother) when her house is completed next year so they will also be great little helpers in the garden. They are also forming a fairy garden underneath a beautiful big Moreton Bay Fig which I'm sure the grandchildren will love.

Maggie and Liliانا have harvested and cured bamboo to use as posts to support a wire mesh that will grow a living shade crop in summer, maybe passionfruit. Then the fruit can hang underneath and be protected from the birds and in the winter it will die back and allow the sun back into the beds.

Maggie's philosophy to life and gardening is

in line with the Japanese practice of 'wabi-sabi'. This is a fascinating approach which I want to learn more about, but for now here's a short introduction: "Wabi-sabi reminds us that we are all transient beings on this planet - that our bodies, as well as the material world around us, are in the process of returning to dust. Nature's cycles of growth, decay, and erosion are embodied in frayed edges, rust and liver spots. Through wabi-sabi, we learn to embrace both the glory and the melancholy found in these marks of passing time... It depends on the ability to slow down, to shift the balance from doing to being, to appreciating rather than perfecting. Wabi-sabi is a state of mind, a way of being. It's the subtle art of being at peace with yourself and your surroundings," – from the article *Wabi-Sabi: The Art of Imperfection* by Robyn Griggs Lawrence.

Maggie and Liliانا's garden grows with lots of homemade compost – they use both hot and cold composting methods combining grasses, nasturtiums and any other green waste, kitchen scraps and chicken and horse manure. They recently chopped down a red sugarcane that was growing and have made a beautiful compost. I was fascinated (and encouraged!) to hear that hot composting can be achieved without the need to turn it! Maggie said it takes around eight weeks to complete a hot compost that isn't turned. She recommends ensuring there is enough moisture in the compost system to allow it to break down faster, not watered from the top but with moisture added to each layer as it is built up. If it's a little dry she forms a dip in the top layer to help collect some rain and let it add moisture to the heap. If it's moist enough she makes a pyramid shape on top to allow the rain water to run off. She makes the base with twigs or cuttings so that the bottom of the heap has air to circulate.

With such a vibrant and productive garden it may be hard to choose some favourite plants but Maggie named the red dragonfruit among her favourites for their wonderful flavour, high antioxidant qualities and how productively they grow there – more than 300 fruit last year! Maggie enjoys eating them fresh, in smoothies, and also topped with passionfruit.



"You can't beat fresh salad greens picked straight out of the garden," Liliana added.

Maggie and Liliana love to share their excess produce with nearby neighbours. They call them up and invite them to come and pick their own straight from the garden. They are also helping their closest neighbours to transform a bare bank into a food source for the local bees by giving them salvia cuttings.

Maggie has been a member of GCOG for about five years and started bringing Liliana last year. Many of the flowers in the garden have come from GCOG members: lots of vibrant calendula made its way here via some seeds from Lise Racine and many salvias and amaranth started from cuttings and seeds from the beautiful bouquets which Margaret contributes to the raffle table.

Their best advice for other gardeners is to start small, start around the house, have a vision and build on what you've got, talk to others and feel the joy of gardening.

"We can never sleep when we come home from the gardening club meetings," Liliana said.

"We get hyped up!" Maggie added.

Thank you for the beautiful morning spent in your patch of paradise Maggie and Liliana and thank you for the lemon myrtle tea and wild blueberry muffins (check out Liliana's recipe - right). I look forward to visiting your garden in another few years and seeing how much it has grown and changed in that time.

If any of our members reading this would like to invite me to check out your places please contact me via [leahbryan9@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com) or 0428 028 042.

If you would like to learn more about composting, Maggie will be hosting a fun and insightful hands-on compost making workshop at the Ecovillage on Saturday 21 September, 9am-1pm Cost \$75 including afternoon tea and handouts, book: 0413 633 055.

## Recipes

### Wild Blueberry Mini Muffins

by Liliana Morgan

#### Ingredients:

¼ cup white chia seeds  
1 cup mashed banana  
½ cup gluten-free oat flour  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
¼ teaspoon sea salt  
¼ cup maple syrup  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
½ cup frozen wild blueberries

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 190°C.

Place the white chia seeds in the blender alone and blend them on high until finely ground. Add the mashed banana, oat flour, baking powder, sea salt, maple syrup, and lemon juice into the blender and blend until smoothly combined into batter.

Pour the batter into a bowl and stir in the frozen wild blueberries. Line a mini muffin pan with 16 mini parchment baking cups and fill each with 1 heaping tablespoon of batter.

Place the mini muffin pan into the oven and bake for 20 minutes until the tops of the muffins are turning golden brown and an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Remove the muffins from the oven and allow them to cool before eating. They will continue to firm up inside as they cool.

*Makes 16 muffins*

From the book *The Medical Medium Liver Rescue* by Anthony William.

Thank you to those leaving their name with their Supper Table offering so we can ask you for the ingredients/recipe!

**Please email your yummy recipes to Jill at [jillbarber611@gmail.com](mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com)**

## FRUIT TREES

### AUGUST

**Custard Apple:** Leaf loss should occur this month. Low irrigation. Mulch trees. This month is the best time to prune custard apples. 1/3 of old wood needs to be taken off.

**Figs:** Pruning can be carried out. Be very vigorous. 1/3 can be cut off. Figs are only produced on new wood of the new season's growth. Give trees a good feed of organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Mulch well.

**Lychee:** Increase irrigation. Flowering should start this month. Fertilise trees with an organic fertiliser with potassium sulphate. Give mature trees 1 kg and small trees ½ kg.

**Low chill stone fruit:** Carry out final thinning. Stone hardening will occur this month. Continue with high irrigation. Prune out water shoots and dense foliage for better sized fruits. Use fruit fly control programs, for example netting or an attractant method.

**Mango:** Don't let trees dry out. Once flowering occurs spray with copper based spray or leaf microbes for anthracnose, if visible.

**Passionfruit:** Vines will start to grow this month. Apply a little organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash and mulch vines at least 2 to 3 metres out from the base. 1kg for large vines and ½ kg for smaller vines.

**Pawpaw:** Spray with wettable sulphur in the evenings for spider mite.

**Persimmon:** Flowering will start in early varieties. Mulch trees. Low irrigation.

**Strawberries:** Apply small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash. Keep up irrigation. Pick fruit when fully ripe.

**Bananas:** Don't let stools dry out. Keep fruit covered and cut off bells.

**Citrus:** Flowering will occur this month. Increase irrigation. Fertilise tree with organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1kg for large trees and ½ kg for smaller trees.

### SEPTEMBER

**Custard Apple:** Leaf loss should occur this month. Low irrigation. Mulch trees. This month is the best time to prune custard apples. 1/3 of old wood needs to be taken off.

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*Source: Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook*

## VEGETABLES

## AUGUST

Artichoke, Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans, Beetroots, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Endive, Gourd, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Shallot, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Corn, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

## SEPTEMBER

Artichoke, Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans (French), Beetroots, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rosella, Shallots, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet corn, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO  
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CONTACT US



Enquiries directly to  
[staceypanozzo@gmail.com](mailto:staceypanozzo@gmail.com)

## HERBS

## AUGUST

**Annual:** Borage, Calendula, Chervil, Chamomile, Coriander, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, 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, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

## SEPTEMBER

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

**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.

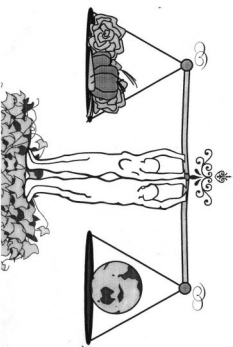
*Queensland Planting Guide  
Brisbane Organic Growers*

*“We might think we  
are nurturing our  
garden, but of course  
it’s our garden that is  
really nurturing us.”  
- Jenny Uglow*

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 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER