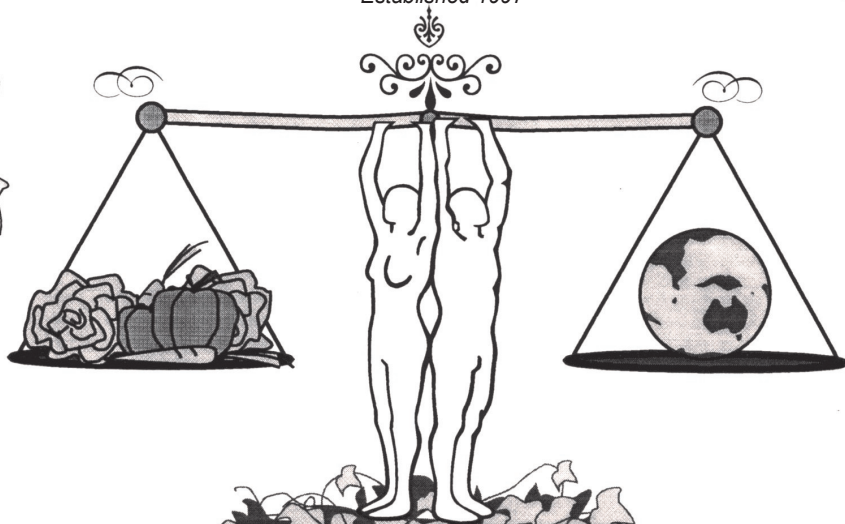


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 August 2014 Issue 7
GARDENING IN SPRING

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 18 September

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 \$1 members, \$3 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: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year

1/2 page: \$20 an issue or \$200 per year

full page: \$30 an issue or \$300 per year

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Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com or text a photo - 0439 488 166.

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart, Roger Griffiths, Pauline Behrendorff, Megan Keeler, Neil Ross,.

Website:

www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

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

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

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

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

Membership renewals

Overdue: Anissa Loades (228), Winsome Gunning (314), Terri Groth (125), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Robert Faulkner (303), Lise Racine (151), Ron Campbell (255), Trevor & Barbara Hewins (348), Val Sier (349), Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Scott McCormack (334), David Freeman (352), Anna Yeomans (353)

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What's On

September

Real Food Festival

13th - 14th September
\$20, kids under 16 free
Maleny Showgrounds
www.realfoodfestivals.com.au

Tamborine Mountain - Springtime on the Mountain "Open Gardens Trail"

26th-28th September, 9am - 4pm
Trail Passes \$20, dependent children free
www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au



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President's Message

Hello Everyone,
Spring is here so it's time to get planting. If you are new to gardening you couldn't have picked a better time to get started and for those more experienced gardeners you know all too well how rewarding this season can be.

The SEED TABLE is fully stocked with a good range of every day vegetable, herb, flower and fruit seeds, as well as a few unusual things to keep your gardening interests and appetites piqued. Two new varieties of seed available for sale are Alyssum and Beneficial Insect Mix; both flower packs make a valuable addition to not just the flower garden, but also the vegetable garden, because they provide nectar and pollen to a host of beneficial critters that are vital to a healthy pest management regime. If we wish to keep a good balance between the so called "good and bad" insects that make our gardens their home, it is necessary to provide a continual food source for predatory insects at all stages during their life cycle.

In other words, we need to keep the good guys interested in hanging around the whole year, rather than just hoping they show up when we need them.

It is becoming apparent that we could be in for an extremely dry period over the next few months, so now would be an excellent time to put into place some strategies for keeping your garden's water needs provided for. My tips are to water only the precious plants and to make use of household grey water whenever possible. Grey water from washing machines and bath tubs is an under-used resource that gardeners sometimes overlook, and to my mind is an appalling waste.

I have noticed the club library is not being used as much as it could be, and I am wondering why. If you have any thoughts on the matter, please talk to me on meeting nights as I would love to have your input.

Don't forget to make use of our BARTER AND SWAP table on meeting nights, and many thanks to those members who contribute to SUPPER and RAFFLE prizes at each meeting.

Happy growing,
Maria

How To Grow Asian Greens & Rosella By Maria Roeberson

Each month we will look at how to grow two different vegetables, fruits or herbs in the present season, which in this case is spring. Our aim is to provide all members, from beginners to the experienced, with some good local advice on how to grow different edible plants. I have chosen what could be perceived as an "easy to grow" and a "more difficult to grow", in the hope of giving something for everyone.

ASIAN GREENS is a broad term used to describe a range of vegetables; in this case I will be talking about Bok Choi, Pak Choi, Tatsoi and the like. Belonging to the Brassica family, they are subject to the same pests as cabbages and broccoli; however, they do have a few specific growing requirements that set them apart a little. Soils need to be sweet, which means the aim is a pH of 6.5 to 6.8, so, if your soil is acidic, add lime, according to the directions on the pack. Compost dug into the top 8 to 10 centimetres of soil will be beneficial in getting good results, and the use of an organic fertilizer will aid in speedy growth.

Remember: do not add lime and fertilizers to the soil at the same time; rather, lime the beds first during soil preparation, then top dress with a little fertilizer near the root zone as plants grow.

Asian greens hate to be transplanted as seedlings, and will bolt to seed, so they should be planted from seed. If you have had poor results when growing them in the past, this is the most likely reason for failure. The seed, when fresh, will germinate well, so plant as thinly as possible. Spacing should be

about 10 to 15cm apart, depending on the size of the mature plant. If plants need thinning, remove unwanted seedling by cutting it off at the soil's surface so as not to disturb the remaining plants' roots. Use the unwanted excess plants in salads and cooking so they are not wasted.

Asian Greens grow fast, and can be ready to eat in as little as thirty days and up to seventy days for a fully mature plant. They do like to be kept moist, and can put up with a fair bit of rain over an extended time. Some varieties do better in the hotter months, and it is worth while seeking them out for a constant supply of greens. Pests can be a problem in the warmer months, with chewing caterpillars usually the worst. Use Dipel for large infestations or just pick off caterpillars, and feed them to the birds.

ROSELLA is a plant that has been largely underrated and almost forgotten over the years; however, in the recent Foodie culture, it is quietly making a comeback. This hardy, attractive, annual shrub is a member of the Hibiscus family; it grows to around two metres, and is a native to tropical West Africa, requiring a long growing period of six months in warm, frost free conditions. The red fleshy calyx is used to make jams or preserves, the dried calyx can be made into tea and cordials, and it is also high in vitamin C.

You will probably require at least six bushes if you wish to make jam. Choose a garden bed that is out of the way so that mature plants will not cast shade over the other beds in the garden. Seedlings or seeds can be used. Space plants one metre apart in a compost enriched soil. Do not go overboard with high nitrogen fertilizer: use a fertilizer suitable for fruiting crops and trees. These shrubs are pretty tough and can put up with dry conditions; however, the best results are always achieved when plants are well-watered and cared for. Pests are usually not a problem, but keep an eye on plants and flower buds in case of a pest infestation. If problems do arise, use soapy water spray for aphids and Dipel for caterpillars; pick off beetles and dis-

pose of them.

Once the calyx is dark red and fleshy, pick and use them in what manner you have chosen. Calyx's can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for a week while you stockpile enough to process. I recommend having a go at growing Rosellas every couple of years at the very least, as they are a truly valuable addition to the kitchen garden.



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Jasen Pankhurst
How Structured Water is Changing
Agriculture
 By Jill Barber

With a background for the last seventeen years in accounting and business, it was a big change for Jasen Pankhurst to undertake a project to learn and develop a business with the energy of water and life! Two and a half years ago it just came to him through an author he was working with: it "lit him up". Now, sharing what he has learned about water, agriculture and business with those interested in change excites him.

Jasen is the sole Director of the business, Awakening the Waters, he has been living with structured water in his house for over two years now, and he is thrilled to be able to share his experience with others. Structured water is softer, as he demonstrated to us, and his children noticed this in their bath water, commenting on how it felt different, and how putting their face in it felt like nothing was happening, as though it wasn't there. (* See below for additional information)

At last month's GCOG meeting, he explained it all to us, largely answering everyone's questions about how it works, and showing us two of the structured water units. It's a practical way to boost organic produce, he told us, and improve your water efficiency, as it reduces costs and increases output, with high nutrient levels. He showed us images of overseas farmers dramatically improving their crops with structured water. So it's very valuable both for agriculture and business, and for households.

The effect of structuring water is similar to that created by the vortexes in mountain streams tumbling over rocks, softening it. The water is alive; a unit makes a cellular difference to whatever touches it. There is more to water than is known, Jasen assured us, such as that it has the ability to transfer energy. In the unit, the glass has been infused with light and has a negative charge, so hydration happens quickly: there's no run-off when plants

are watered – it's absorbed straight away. When soil is damaged from abuse or neglect over long periods of time, soil microbes and structured water will balance or "structure" the soil. This is the point where growth and nutrient levels (measured by the BRIX index) is as nature intended. Crops have been increased by 60%, at the same time as the water consumption is halved, and the BRIX level measuring the nutrient content is increased. We saw a picture of a US cotton crop greatly improved by structured water: the crop grew twice the size twice as quickly.

Jasen brought along sample products. A "Portable" Rainmaker product costs \$480, and the ¾ inch commercial Garden (Stainless Steel) retail price is \$2,500. These products are the "Rolls Royce" of structured water units. Water pressure is not affected by installation. Photonic light from the glass spheres within the unit boosts the energy in water, so that when water passes through a unit, almost 3g's of force is created within the unit. There is nothing to replace in it, not like a water filter, with filters to clean. Nothing is taken out of the water**; homoeopathically, fluoride just becomes unavailable to the body.***

There are many health benefits of drinking structured water, which is oxygenated through structuring. Structured water detoxes your body simply by drinking it. The structured water molecule, being negatively charged, attracts positive charged cells within the body as it passes through it. When urinating, the positive cells leave the body.

Jasen says he has heaps of energy and no muscle pain after exercise. Another report is from a woman who has cured her arthritis. A huge benefit is that anaerobic bacteria can't survive in it, so it cleans up pollution in the water. This is a benefit which can be offered to undeveloped countries. And it improves wine! Run wine through a hand held unit and taste and smell the difference! Be surprised how good mediocre wine can taste!

In the house, it's best to keep structured water in a closed container, where it lasts 30

days; otherwise, it absorbs the surrounding effects from such appliances as computers, mobile phones, etc. It should be kept away from them.

Should you choose to purchase such a unit, be aware that there are only two manufacturers of them, Jasen's company being one, and a very attractive fact is that the units have a twenty-year guarantee. ****

This was a fascinating and educational evening, introducing most of us to the idea of structured water probably for the first time. Some people came ready to buy a unit, and the rest of us will be thinking about this for some time, weighing up the pros and cons and researching the topic some more. Thanks to Jasen for beginning this process for us. *****

Additional Material from Jasen:

* The single most powerful change I have noticed is how the body and mind respond when drinking structured water. The body is made up of "structured" water (negatively charged). Unstructured water (tap, filtered or bottled water) is "processed" by the body to what the body needs. By "structuring" water, we help the body with this process – which frees up energy. I and others have found the clarity of mind to be a huge benefit of this energy. Perhaps it's the negative charge!

** The water molecule is "structured" which activates water itself. The chemical compound of water has a mandate to "preserve life".

*** There have been claims that fluoride and calcium combine, creating calcium fluoride (which is good for bones!). These tests have not been supported by scientific testing at this point.

**** Since the talk, I have been exploring how to reduce the cost of the units to consumers. Structured water should be available for everyone. By lowering the price or even exploring how to make a unit (that works), more people can have the option to introduce struc-

tured water into their gardens or home. I have cut open the \$2,500 unit for research and development since the talk. (Liken it to a "Myth Buster" research experiment). If you want to have a unit in your house or farm or garden, feel free to call 0400 088 630 or email (jasen.leaf@gmail.com), and I can work with you to match your needs and budget.

***** The gift pack I received from the evening was very well received by me and my family, thank you all you very much.

Interesting point – the Custard apples I brought in to test measured a very respectable 6 on the BRIX meter. I suggest structured water will boost this to at least 8 or 9 (as proven with USA trials).

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Getting To Know - Penny Jameson By Diane Kelly

Back in around 1998 I was invited, along with a couple of friends, to have lunch at Penny Jameson's unit in Mudgeeraba. My first impression as I walked through into the lounge and looked out over the patio garden was "Wow" and nothing much has changed in the intervening sixteen years. When I visit Penny's current garden in Southport, I am still impressed and I still enjoy seeing a vibrant and whimsical garden.

Penny grew up as part of a gardening family - her maternal grandparents obtained a large property near Thangool (in Central Queensland) by drawing lots in a land offer. The property had no running water, no buildings, and no easy availability of food. So they grew their own. Penny's memories of visiting her grandparents include a variety of fruit trees - mulberries, guavas, Brazilian cherries, figs, peaches, loquats and more. Cooking was done on an open fire, and the washing-up water was used on the vegetable garden.

Penny's parents raised their family in Moura (some 50 miles from Thangool). On a town-size block, Penny's mother grew bananas, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, mangoes, Brazilian cherries, peaches, lemons and mulberries (Penny remembers mulberry fights, and also painting their baby goat purple with the fruit - and calling it "Alvin" - for those who were around in the 1970's!) Mulberries were a favourite fruit, and Penny's mother used to make pies, jelly, and stewed and bottled fruit with them. Also raised on that town block were goats, ducks, pigeons, geese, turkey, dogs, an occasional cat - and six children!

The family moved to Mount Morgan when Penny was in Grade 6, and the property had a more established garden. It was here that Penny remembers the World Encyclopaedia that introduced her to the concept of seasonal gardening. Penny's mother continued to garden in the river-bed land - soil was never purchased, but rather improved by lawn clippings, kitchen scraps, and incinerator ash -

all dug over by the chooks first. This interest in gardening has been passed on, and now Erin (Penny's niece) is a gardener. Her mum is still growing vegetables, herbs and fruit trees.

Since that time, Penny has lived in a number of homes, and each one has been stamped with her own eclectic and welcoming style. In the rental properties in which she has lived, Penny has always built a no-dig garden, whether it be filled with flowers or vegetables. Lawn clippings were always used to improve the soil, and there was always something growing - Penny shared cuttings with other gardeners, or swapped pot-plants, or was grateful for seed-sharing - anything to create something that looked good, and that mixed food with colour. When she was living in the unit in Mudgeeraba, Penny used to plant Canterbury bells and nasturtiums in the common areas of the property, just to brighten up people's day.

Penny visited the Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm many years ago, and attributes much of her gardening style to their example. There have been very few straight lines in any of Penny's gardens, and at one home she developed a full mandala garden, with one of the pieces of sculpture she has made as the centrepiece.

Sculpture has been an interest of Penny's for a long time, as well as painting, cooking, buying old gardening tools, reading - and garage sales! She also enjoys travelling, and six or seven years ago went to live in Ireland for a year, meeting up with many of her father's family who live there. Penny wasn't able to garden there, but had herbs growing on window sills, and she would also help her cousin with their courtyard garden. Penny also travelled to Poland and to Denmark, where she stayed for several months - her relatives there have large compost bins and glass houses so they can have home-grown vegetables all year round.

Returning to Australia, Penny moved to her current home in Southport, which she has

enjoyed renovating. The backyard required a total transformation, as there was no garden but many square metres of Singapore daisy. The block slopes softly down to the back fence, as do the adjoining properties, and any rain run-off keeps that area moist. The soil is rich (with an estimated 18 inches of topsoil), and Penny operates a compost tumbler to continually add to its quality – any garden or kitchen scraps go in it, except for any Singapore daisy remnants, wondering dew and nut-grass. The tumbler gets emptied every couple of months, and Penny doesn't require that the compost be fully broken down before adding it to the garden. She also leaves a third of each load as a starter for the next batch. Occasionally Penny may add a bit of fish emulsion or Seasol to the garden, but basically leaves all the rest of the work to the worms.

So onto our regular topics:

- Penny's **advice to any gardener** is to have plenty of patience, and don't panic about bugs or beetles – there will be plenty of food for everyone. Her other suggestion is to share with others the things people have shared with us – produce, cuttings, ideas and time.
- Penny's **gardening successes** are all the meals that she has made from home-grown food, and especially "green smoothies", to which you can add a variety of leaves, including introducing some health-giving bitters.
- Penny's **gardening failures** (she admits) have come from inadequate watering, and from sometimes putting plants in the wrong location. Her advice in regard to plants that are looking "sad" – give them a generous amount of time to get growing.
- Penny's **favourite flowers** are cosmos (pink/purple); **vegetables** are "anything that self sows" – she likes to leave a plant or two from each crop, and takes the heads off lettuce and coriander to achieve that; and **herb** is thyme.
- Penny likes to add **sheep manure** to her flower beds and pots. She told me about how in times past manure of all descrip-

tions was paid for in gold (reading books about the soil and farming life in other countries is another of Penny's favourite pastimes).

- Penny's **plans for the future** include learning more about pruning bushes and trees; growing poppies; growing more plants from seeds, and thus staggering production; and spending more time in the garden.
- One of Penny's **favourite gardening stories** is about the mulberry tree in her current back yard. She wanted a shade tree in a certain location, and came home with a metre-high "stick". Penny's husband Allan remarked "That's not a mulberry tree that's a sun-dial!" But Penny was not worried, and assured him that they would be eating fruit off it within the year. So Allan said "If so, I'll eat my hat". Anyway, the tree did indeed bear fruit within the year – and I've not seen Allan wearing a hat since, so it makes me wonder!
- And finally, **Penny's favourite gardening quote** comes from John Keats when writing about a garden – "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"



Penny, pickles (home grown choko) and pawpaw !! And kale seedlings, pikelets and a cuppa for me !!

Q & A - July 2014

By Karen Hart

Q. Eileen brought in a plant for identification. A. It is a **macaranga**, a pioneer native which can grow to 8+ metres, with a very wide canopy spread. Not a plant for a small garden. The roots can be invasive.

Q. Diane presented a **Pontiac potato** plant with damaged leaves.

A. Maria thought it could be sap sucking insects and it is a problem in the soil. She wondered if it was caused by the cold weather, although Diane said it started before the cold spell. Maria suggested that she sacrifice one – dig it up, and do a ‘post mortem’: check stem and roots in case of curl grubs.

Q. Diane said that her **heirloom tomatoes** are spongy and soft with quite a few dropping. This was a plant given to her.

A. Maria suggested that the plant be removed, solarised and binned. Maria then went on to explain **how to save tomato seed** – squeeze the seeds out of the tomato – they are covered in a gelatinous membrane. Place them in a jar with a little water and leave for around three days – it will not smell too good! Add more water, shake well, slough off the membrane, and you should be left with hairy seeds. Dry off on newspaper or kitchen towels.

Q. Pauline asked how best to cope with **plants burnt by frost?**

A. Some may be saved, depending upon the extent of the frost. If forewarned, cover the plants with an old sheet or a pillowcase. Water first thing in the morning before the sun hits the plants.

Q. A **hibiscus** plant has lots of lumpy contusions – what are they?

A. It is blister mite, a little mite which causes the leaf to blister. Eco-oil or white oil will fix the problem. It is not a problem with food crops. [From Maria later:



the question about the hibiscus leaf damage was indeed **Hibiscus Erinose Mite** and not blister mite as suggested in the meeting.]

Q. Judy asked if **erichnose mite** is still around? It was a problem a few years ago and plants affected needed quarantining.

A. Maria said she didn't know: ornamental plants are not her expertise. She only grows what can be eaten and can look after itself!

Q. Do you prune **passionfruit** plants?

A. Definitely no hard pruning – it will kill the plant. Only tip prune. Never replant in the same place. The same goes for tomatoes and potatoes!

Perplexing Pumpkin Patch

By Roger Griffiths

Spreading the compost seemed like a good idea but then those pumpkin seeds began to shoot. Although everything else became shaded out, we thought that at least we will get some pumpkins!

Those pumpkins grew and spread beyond the garden edges, some even going through the pig wire fence and joining the sheep and he did not eat the leaves. So expecting a pumpkin crop we enjoyed the bright greenery for a while, that from a distance made the garden look healthy and productive.

Then came the trouble as the pumpkins forming under that greenery were being eaten out from the inside by night visiting bush rats. Of this year's first harvest of six pumpkins, it was a very ratty game, rats 5, us 1.

Tried to make progress planting seeds and along comes a bandicoot and digs them up!

Finally, our first well nurtured Big Russian Tomato, even fed with comfrey juice, ripening up on the bush and just turning red, then whammo, this morning it has gone, vanished, disappeared.

Rats, bandicoots, possums, we'll all be ruined says Hanrahan!

Integrated Aquaponics Training Unit Nerang Community Garden From Neil Ross

An “Integrated Aquaponics Training Unit” is well under way at Nerang Community Garden. It is expected to be ready for courses in “Integrated Aquaponics” in early 2015, subject to approval by the Gold Coast City Council.



Neil Ross steadies the basic aquaponics unit ready for a flap to guard against bird and other predators. Fish, crustaceans or molluscs will be in the 550-litre bottom tank. A 20 cm layer of ceramic pebbles will be in the top tank, so that a population of micro-organisms can be built up. Fish tank water passing through is converted into plant food, and the plant roots are supported by the ceramic beads.

Initial funding plus donation of time, money and gear for the Nerang unit has come from four ANA volunteers, **Neil Ross, Sid Dyer, Alan Gales** and **Geoff Wilson**. Significant other help has come from Gold Coast City Councillor **Tracy Gilmore** and from **Tim Wilson**, Manager of Bunnings Nerang. Other sponsors and physical helpers are being sought.

Aquaponics Network Australia is a not-for-profit group using volunteer help. ANA's newsletter is available for A\$24/yr, (12 issues). It is a cost-recovery exercise only. This subscription allows you to use the newsletter stories for your own publication, without extra charge (only attribution of the sources).

If You Do Just One Thing This Month Be Waterwise! From Diane Kelly

With much of SE Queensland and Northern NSW receiving only 41% of their usual rainfall over the past twelve months, we all need to become more water-wise. Here are three ways to do so:

Learn about the way plants use water. Healthy plants can consist of up to 95% water, and all processes essential to plant life have to occur in a water solution, so read up on topics such as photosynthesis and plant metabolisms. A helpful book is “The Water-wise Garden” by Jeffrey Hodges (available from GCCC Library).

Improve the water-holding content of your soil with compost and mulch. Humus in the soil can absorb and retain almost twice its weight in water, enabling plants to extract moisture as required. Humus also makes soil more friable, allowing more air circulation and reducing soil temperatures, and thus reducing the need for watering. So get those compost heaps turning!

Create “water-use zones” to improve water efficiency. Most importantly, choose plants suitable for our climate. Then group your plants in low, medium and high water-usage zones, so that watering can be directed at the plants that need it most. Make use of micro-climates within your yard, and put thirsty plants in the more sheltered and partly shaded areas, and reserve full sun areas for low water-usage plants.

And remember ... a dripping tap can waste up to 100 litres of water a day!

Bathtub Garden Idea From Roger Griffiths

We have used an old bathtub to make an above ground vegetable patch and it seems to be working. The bathtub started out as a container for lawn clippings from last summer which rotted down. By tipping the contents, re-positioning the bathtub into sunshine, refilling the tub with a mix of composted items and planting seedlings, we have now got a bath tub swimming with vegetables.



Roger's wife, Diane, mentioned ... the idea of making compost in the tub, and then planting into that.

... Di Kelly added ...

We have an old bath-tub here that I would like to fill with Spring colour, so maybe this would be a good idea for getting the soil going.

... Angie adds ...

One of the parents at school works for a bathroom renovation company who remove about 1 metal bathtub each week or two. Rather than the bathtubs going to the tip, we took a few for water for our animals. I have also seen them put to great use as worm farms the plug hole perfect for catching the liquid gold.

Green Manure Seeds From GC Organic Growers From Pauline Behrendorff

This year I bought a packet of Green Manure from our seed table. I cleaned a circular garden of old strawberry plants, added some compost, sprinkled my packet of seeds, and covered it with mulch.

I understand that the green manure is chopped up and becomes another layer of great mulch.

We went to London for the month of March and when we returned, i had a garden plot full of the most interesting plants. Some had popped up out of the compost and most from the green manure seeds.

So I let it all grow, and added some new strawberry plants and some excess spring onions (from the market stall). I have had the surprise gifts of amaranth, (researched it in Stephanie Alexander's "Kitchen Garden Companion") beans, pigeon peas (chopped up for mulch), parsley, pawpaw plants (chopped up for mulch), wonderful greens (like a tiny leafed bok choy), calendulas, capsicums, lettuces, strawberries (when the swamp hens leave them alone) and I have just picked my first broccolini. There are more surprises too.

I love this small area of amazing productivity, and I really didn't do too much to achieve it.

Recipes to Share

Spicy Spinach From Megan Keeler

Last month we had the chance to enjoy Megan Keeler's recipe for **Nasi Kuning** (Yellow Festive Rice). The second recipe Megan shared is for Spicy Spinach, or **Kang Kung Belacan**. Note that Megan's measurements are approximate ... to quote "that's how I cook" – which makes it easier for us all!

One bunch of spinach: English, Ceylon, Kang Kung (or "Water Spinach")

- rinse, chop (very coarsely – retain large pieces)

Spice Paste:

- grind in processor or mortar & pestle
½ bulb garlic, peeled
1 red onion, or French shallots (1/2 cup)
Generous pinch of salt
- Fry in a few tablespoons of coconut oil
Coconut (palm sugar) 1 tsp
Chillies – 4-8 chopped, mild to hot
Toasted shrimp paste – 1-2 tspns crumbled into foil, enveloped & then heated in toaster
Plus/or minus if you prefer – 3 tblspns of dried small shrimp, soaked in a little hot water
- Add leaves, toss & stir to wilt
- Add final flavours to balance to taste
Sweet soy – a few tablespoons
Shredded kaffir lime leaf
Asian fried shallots
Lemon basil

Yum with rice !!

Elderberry Cough Syrup From Neil Ross

With the increase in mortality and morbidity of H1N1 in the last few weeks, I thought I would repost some information on elderberry tincture and elderberry cough syrup. Both elderberry tincture and elderberry syrup work by decreasing the viral load of the influenza virus. It is thought that elderberry and star anise inhibit the replication of the virus.

Elderberry Cough Syrup

The standard treatment for influenza is Tamiflu. The active ingredient in Tamiflu is star anise. The elderberry cough syrup has star anise as an ingredient. (And the advantage of the herbal remedy is that you don't need to go to the doctors and get a prescription. And the herbal remedy is a lot cheaper. Note: Tamiflu is only effective if taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms.)

Ingredients:

- ½ cup elderberries (sambucus nigra)
- 12 star anise
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 8 cloves
- 2 cup water
- 1 cup honey

Add water, elderberries, star anise, cinnamon sticks and cloves to pot. Bring to a boil. Then simmer for 45 minutes. Strain out the plant material. Wait until liquid cools. Then add honey. Stir well. Place in glass jar and refrigerate.

Dosage: For adults, use one tablespoon every hour until cough subsides. For children, use one half to one teaspoon every 2-3 hours as needed for cough.

Note: Some people like to include licorice root and/or ginger. Licorice root helps boost the immune system. Ginger helps with cough and nausea. I have never tried these myself. But next time I make cough syrup I will add the licorice root.

January 6, 2014 By **M.D. Creekmore**
By Bam Bam

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

This is the month to fully ponder the adage: as you sow, so shall you reap. There is a wide choice of flowers to plant this month and the vegetable possibilities are as vast as our seed racks.

The practice of serious gardeners is to raise, where possible, their own seedlings. Create a nursery bed in the garden by running a **40 sand: 40 soil: 20 organic mix**: though a garden sieve. Or recycle polystyrene boxes (making sure they have holes in the bottom) and use a base layer of gravel or rocks, some mature compost, then the above mentioned sand/soil/organic mix.

Vegetables: This is the month to get serious about crisp, summer lettuce. Raise seed in beds or boxes, keeping sheltered and moist. Transplant into a well-drained soil with a healthy proportion (20 per cent) of organic matter dug through. Rake some more into the top layer with a sprinkle of dolomite or lime and all is ready. Mulch lettuce with grass clippings or compost and feed with liquid fertiliser every fortnight. Apart from the root and legume varieties, this practice can be applied to most inhabitants of the vegetable garden with good results.

Vegetables & Flowers: If the meteorological forces are with you, plant after a late-afternoon shower. And remember, rain or not, late afternoon (unless it is particularly cold) is best. If there have been a few days of rain, plant when it appears to be abating – rain-water (in moderate amounts) – is the transplant's friend.

Fruit: Pop in some passionfruit this month, but be aware of their riotous behaviour. Again, use plenty of organic matter, keep up the top-dressings and liquid feedings.

Shrubs & Climbers: Sun, shelter and drainage are needed for most trees, shrubs and climbers. If the soil is clay, make life easier for the plant by digging its hole half a metre wider than its root ball. Mix compost and sand with the soil you have removed.

FRUIT TREES

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.

VEGETABLES

AUGUST:

Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans, Beetroots, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Endive, Gourd, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Peas, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Shallot, Spring Onions, Silverbeet, Squash, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

SEPTEMBER: *Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Beans, Beetroots, Ceylon spinach, Capsicum, Carrot, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melon, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rockmelon, Rosella, Shallots, Silverbeet, Squash, Sweet corn, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.*

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.

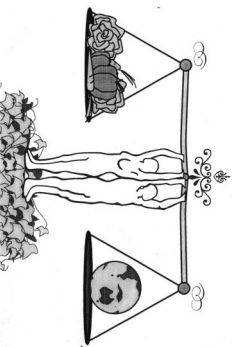
SEPTEMBER

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.

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 18 September 2014