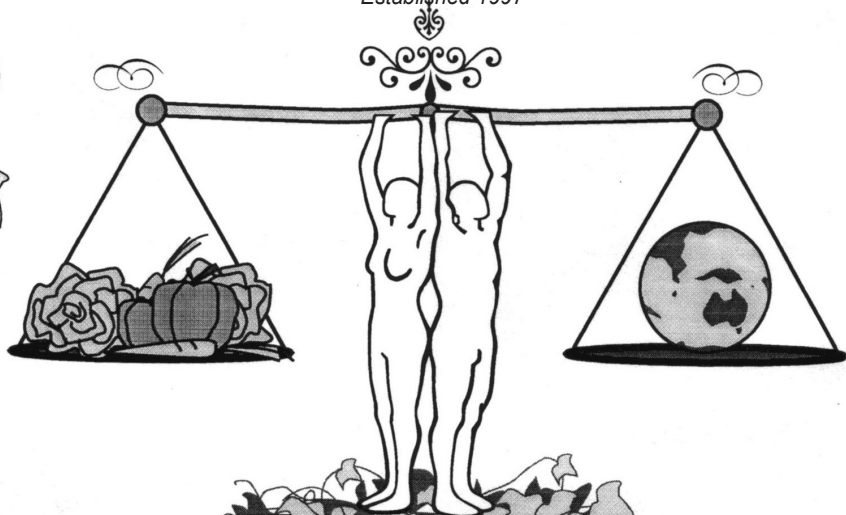


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 19    AUGUST 2015    Issue 8  
GARDENING IN SPRING

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**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17th 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

## 2015 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
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Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888 John Clarke Maggie Golightly
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609 Judy Reiser

## 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:** Chris Larkin (141), Robert Faulkner (303), Virginia Jacobsen (325), Barbara Talty (58), Lise Racine (151), Ron Campbell (255), Val Sier (349), David & Lesley Freeman (352), Josh Walker & Chris Viehbock (371), Sue Beckinsale (373), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Roger Peterson (330), Scott McCormack (334).

**August:** Warren & Bev Carlson (87), Murray Oliver (105), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Jill Barber (290), Jan Guest (307), Geraldine McDonald (354), Jun Yoneda (374), Graham & Flora Dunne (375), Jasen Pankhurst (376), Dayne Petersen (377).

**September:** Henry Blonner (108), Neil Ross (294), Denise Goodwin (335), Frank Rebesco (342), Beth Orme (343), Ros Griffith (378), Grant Fastier (379).

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

### Upcoming Speakers

**September** – Keeping with the theme of the creatures that visit our gardens, Peter and Lyn Reilly will be speaking about creating bird-friendly gardens and attracting native fauna through plant choices.

## Workshops

- 22 August** Small space gardening — balcony boxes
- 26 Sept** Animals in the Garden, Fermenting & Raw Foods
- 10 Oct** Open Day - stalls and farm tours — free workshops
- 24 Oct** Small space gardening / Self watering gardening

For more information contact Lyn Mansfield at Gold Coast Permaculture  
 M: 0409 645 888  
 E: [lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)

### Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch.  
 Email Dorothy - [webprint@onthenet.com.au](mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au)

### Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Rachael Lebeter, Dorothy Coe, & Karen Hart.

Past newsletters can be downloaded from the site at

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

## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Well spring is here and I swear it came around faster than it usually does. I hope you're ready to make the most from one of the best growing seasons the yearly calendar has to offer. If you haven't already cleared a garden bed or two ready for the new seasons delicious vegetables and herbs, I suggest you do so - Pronto!

The SEED TABLE is well stocked with all your seed needs and the seed table assistants can help with any enquiries you may have on the night. I like to make a list of the seeds I want so I don't forget what I need; after all, it's easy to get distracted on the night as there is the supper table to circle and raffle prizes to choose when your name is drawn out of the box.

We have some new varieties of vegetables, herbs and flowers in stock this year, and I thought you might like to know a little bit about a few of them.

The variety of Bush Bean, "Jade Bush", as the name suggests, doesn't require a trellis, and is described as: "Disease resistant and highly productive, with a long growing season". It produces dark green, tender, round pods, 15-17cms long with a rich flavour.

Kale Colour Mix: This kale mix contains several varieties which can be cooked together or used separately for different purposes, such as juicing, steaming, roasted kale chips and anything else you can think of. The mix may contain: Blue Curled Scotch, Cavolo Nero, Red Russian, Vates, Dwarf Siberian.

Organic Salad Mix would have to be one of the most useful and nutritious crops you could grow in the spring/summer garden, in my opinion. This mix delivers versatility by the salad bowl full. This colourful mix may include; 8 leaf lettuces, chicory, endive,

rocket, beetroot greens, kale, mibuna, mizuna, mustard, silverbeet, spinach and cabbage Tokyo Bekana.

Now to the flowers: it seems that one of our favourite sunflower varieties, "Giant Russian", is in short supply, so we have chosen "Evening Sun" to replace them. Evening Sun is described as having- "Beautiful multi-branching sunflowers in autumn shades of orange, russet-bronze, mahogany-red and gold. Plants grow to 2m tall". Well, that should brighten the garden up a bit. When you grow these beauties be sure to save a good amount of seed, some for yourselves and some extra for the club please.

Speaking of seed saving, seeds are becoming very expensive and hard to get in the quantities that the club requires. We have only about 2 or 3 members donating seed on a regular basis and they only supply 6 or 7 varieties, which you can imagine is just a drop in the bucket [a very welcome drop], however. You get the picture. We stock between 80 to 100 different varieties of herbs, flowers, fruits and vegetables each year and we have a membership of around 140 people. Do you see where I am going with this? I do encourage our members to be more self-sufficient in their seed production. I can see no reason for us to have to purchase so much stock, when we could have beautiful, fresh, local, organic seed provided by our members. Seed prices have risen dramatically in the last two years, which will mean our prices will have to rise to reflect this. One way to keep the costs down is to have more seed varieties donated to the club. So if you have some extra, please pass it on to us. Please do come and talk to me if you have an interest in this subject.

Happy growing,  
Maria.

**Onion Art**  
By Jill Barber



**Did you Know? A Lettuce is a Daisy!**

The lettuce that we so enjoy in our summer salads is a member of the daisy family. The botanical name is *Lactuca sativa*, and the modern form is derived from a common wild plant found growing in woodland clearings and rocky slopes right across the northern hemisphere.

If you ever see a lettuce plant that has bolted to seed in the garden, the flowers will reveal its family origins and connections. Other edible daisy plants include the dandelion, cardoon, globe artichoke, tarragon and endive.



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**OFFER:**

I have a large **organic garden bed** that I would like to **offer** to someone interested in growing their own vegetables.

There is plenty of compost, horse manure, tank water and very easy access. I live about 5 minutes from Burleigh Heads at the start of Tallebudgera valley.

The garden is organic and has been active for about 15 years. The garden has just been green mulched and ready to go.

There is no contract or cost – this would be in exchange for us sharing some of the veggies.

If interested call 0419226546

**Q & A — From July 2015 Meeting  
By Karen Hart**

Q. Anne-Marie brought in a *broccoli* with a 'dead patch' in the middle.

A. Possibilities included whether strong fertiliser had been used – this was discounted; thrip or mite infestation; or maybe a scarification outside as the inside was perfect.

Q. *Mandarin leaves* were shown with *yellowing veins*.

A. Usually it is a nitrogen deficiency – some manure is needed.

Q. What is the cause of *tunnelling* through a *Blue Lake bean leaf*?

A. Bean leaf miner – remove and destroy damaged leaves. It is not a good time to grow beans as a really cold snap hurts beans. They are best planted in spring and early summer. Grow snake beans from December onwards as they are the only beans that are good for our hot summers. Broad beans are good for winter – sow in autumn as they need a long growing season and will be ready for spring picking.

Q. *Paw Paw leaves* are looking bad now.

A. They are suffering from this cold snap of weather. The fruit should not be affected.

Q. *Roma tomatoes* in community gardens are not doing well. The leaves have a *fungus disease* so are being snipped off.

A. Romas do not grow well here. 'Thai Pink Egg' and 'Tropic' are more suitable or just grow cherry tomatoes. If they come up on their own they will be more robust, so leave the best looking ones. If wishing to transplant the bush, be careful not to touch the stem or it will likely die.

Q. A *Citrus tree* looks like it is *lacking nitrogen*. There are lots of lemons on it, so maybe they are taking out the nutrients?

A. Maria suggested that the library book,

*What Pest & Disease is that?* may have the answer. You need to look up and match the leaves. Also a pH test of the soil would be helpful.

Q. *Chilli peppers* are getting *eaten* even though they are 50cm from the ground.

A. Possible wildlife include possums, rats or crows.

Q. Pauline was wondering how to *deter swamp hens* from damaging young lo-mandras?

A. Maria suggested getting a cat or dog – tongue in cheek answer as she is aware that Pauline lives at the Ecovillage which has a 'no cats or dogs' policy. A 'hawk kite' works – flat piece of plastic hovering – use fishing line to attach. This works too amazingly well because the downside is that the second year means that with no birds coming near there is usually an insect infestation!

Q. Where can I get some *mushroom compost*?

A. Gold Coast Permaculture sells bags of mushroom compost for \$6. Maria got some from Springbrook Rd, Mudgeeraba, for \$80/ cubic metre. She uses it as mulch instead of sugar cane mulch, which has no nutrition. Greg from Wormtec obtains his supply from Jed at Mt Tamborine. Labrador Car Boot Sale has 3 x 20ltr bags for \$10. It was suggested that the pH of the soil be tested.

**Veggie Swap  
by Dorothy Coe**

If there are any members interested in doing some "veggie swapping", let me know during the meeting or email me at [webprint@onthenet.com.au](mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au) so that I can add you to the current list that we are putting together.

## Vegetable facts

### Sweet Potatoes:

Sweet potatoes are in fact nothing to do with potatoes at all. They're actually relatives of the bindweed or morning glory family – evident when you see their trailing foliage.

They produce underground tubers with sweet-tasting white or orange flesh. Sweet potatoes are originally tropical and sub-tropical plants, so although they can be grown in temperate climates, they will only produce a good crop during long warm summers, or in a greenhouse.

They can be raised from seed, but it's easier to buy – or grow your own – rooted cuttings, otherwise known as “slips”, and plant them directly in the ground. Because sweet potatoes need a deep, rich soil, they're often grown in earthed-up ridges.

### Recycle that BBQ !!

When your trusty old barbeque is finally beyond repair, take a closer look at the condition of the trolley.

If the hardwood is still in good condition, add in some more timber slats and use it as a potting bench or a garden display.



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GC Visitors Guide 2013



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## **The Bats, the Birds and the Bees** **By Rachael Lebeter**

Last month we hosted Trish Wimberley, director of the Australian Bat Clinic and Wildlife Trauma Center (ABC). Trish's presentation about bats and their importance to the Australian environment was both enlightening and just a little bit different to our normal guest speakers. I never realized that when we speak of 'the birds and the bees' it should really be 'the bats, the birds and the bees'!

Like many of us, Trish is a great believer in the importance of balance to ensure sustainability, both in our gardens and in the natural environment. Regardless of the damage sometimes associated with bats, particularly in the home orchard, they are a vital part of the ecosystem. There are over 1200 species of bats, including insectivorous microbats and the deceptively ubiquitous flying foxes, with around 25 species found here in Australia. Bats are identified in their role as pollinators as one of the five most vital species for global sustainability and these little critters maintain the balance in our native forests.

Trish dispelled a few myths surrounding bats and their well-known connection to diseases. Although bats do, quite definitely, carry both hendra and lyssavirus, there have only been 3 bat-related deaths ever and none in the last 6 years. Lyssavirus, which is a form of rabies, is often used as an excuse for neglecting injured bats and for destroying colonies in urban areas. While it can be transmitted by bat bite or scratch, there is a vaccine available. Used within 48 hours, this vaccine is very reliable, making the three recorded deaths from lyssavirus in Australia preventable tragedies.

Hendra virus, which is responsible for

many horse deaths, is carried by dogs as well as bats. The transmission of this virus from bats to horses is a scientific mystery, but there have been no recorded cases of the virus passing from a bat to a human, and any deaths were due to contact with infected horses. This, as well as the fact that the virus does not seem to mutate, suggest that bats are a lot less hazardous to our health than some local governments would have us believe. Incidentally, it is also worth noting that bats never attack humans and the reports of "swooping" are the result of their wing type, which, like a hang glider, require an up-draft to achieve flight.

Although to those of us who have passed near a bat colony it seems as though there are plenty of them, flying foxes are actually a threatened species which will be extinct by 2070 if the current rate of habitat destruction and damage to colonies is maintained. Australia has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest clearing rate in the world and we have destroyed 75% of native vegetation in the past 200 years. This clearing, which is due to both agriculture and urbanization, has pushed bats out of the Eastern coastal corridor which was their traditional habitat. Although we have seen a small return of bats to this area as a result of the increased use of native plants in parks and gardens, the fact remains that bats are still being impacted by urbanisation.

One of the problems posed by fruit bats is that their colonies regularly become inconvenient for expanding suburbia and are "relocated" by local councils. However, it is rare that the chosen site meets the bats requirements, such as being situated over water, making the bats a "recurring problem" in the council's eyes. Another result of these moves is that bats cannot cope with temperatures that would be traditionally moderated by water, three-story rainforest canopies and coastal breezes. You will



remember the news stories of bats dropping from the trees and Trish estimates that some colonies in the South-east lost up to 1/3 of their members in last year's heat waves.

Bats have been a vital part of the Australian ecosystem for 70 million years and flying foxes in particular have evolved in a symbiotic relationship with eucalypt forests. The bats feed on the pollen, nectar and fruits of native plants, and are the most important pollinators of our eucalypts and hardwoods. Indeed, due to their role as pollinators, bats are considered one of the 5 most important species on the planet for global environmental sustainability. In Australia, many native plant species' pollen receptors are only active at night and peak pollen production for eucalypts is between 10pm and 2am – bat feeding hours.

Not only do bats suit the pollination requirements of our native trees, they also travel much further and more quickly than other pollinators such as birds and insects. A bat can travel up to 100km per night, dispersing pollen and seeds, and are vital for maintaining the genetic diversity between remnant patches of native forest. This is particularly the case for many rain-forest plants, whose seeds may not sprout within a certain distance of parent plants or which must pass through the gut in order to germinate. It is for this reason that Tim Lowe, ecological researcher, is pushing for east-west wildlife corridors as well as north-south corridors.

So, the important part: How do we deal with bats in our gardens?

Well, insectivorous microbats are a gift to the gardener. These little creatures eat thousands of mosquitos and insects per month and will also take care of your lawn grubs and grain weevils. Their droppings, known as guano, are one of the world's

best and rarest fertilisers. Microbats generally live in hollow trees, travelling up and down the tree in order to regulate temperature over the course of the day, and are a good reason to leave the dead trees which dot our properties. They will also live in hollow, hardwood bat boxes and you can contact Trish via the ABC webpage for designs suitable for different types of microbats.

The flying foxes, on the other hand, compete with possums and birds as the bane of the home fruit grower. They may only target ripe fruit, but can do a lot of damage in just one night. In many areas, exclusion netting, which protects crops from insects as well as mammals and birds, is subsidized through government grants. On a smaller scale, netting with a mesh of .5cm or less is suitable for bat exclusion (any larger and bats will eat through it, damaging their mouths in the process). However, the true trick to bat-netting which won't harm the creatures is the tautness of the net – if the net is taut the bats' wings will not catch on it. This can be achieved by pruning branches level and tying the net tightly at the base of the tree or by creating a frame of wood or polypipe for the netting. Another option is using plastic containers, banana bags, mesh or calico bags to protect individual fruits.

Another approach to dealing with flying foxes is based on experiments: If given a choice between fruit and native blossoms, the bats will choose the latter, their native food, every time. If provided with enough native plants, bats *will* leave orchards alone. We can be even cleverer by doing a little research and choosing native attractor plants or trap crops which will bloom at the same time as our fruit will ripen. We will be helping protect a vital species as well as our fruit!

Contd. Over page

## The Bats, the Birds and the Bees By Rachael Lebeter (Contd.)

Some native plants which attract bats include:

- Lemon-scented gum
- Pink bloodwood
- Swamp bloodwood
- Plunkett mallee
- Moreton Bay ash
- Swamp box
- Old man banksia
- Coastal banksia
- Pink-fruited lilly pilli
- Blue-fruited lilly pilli
- Weeping paperbark
- Broad-leaved paperbark
- Green-flowering paperbark
- Sandpaper fig
- Small-leaved fig
- White bottlebrush
- Red northern bottlebrush
- Orange grevillea
- Silky oak
- White cedar
- Beach almond

Trish is not the only advocate of balance in our gardens; this is the reason why so many of us are organic growers. When it comes down to it, we also need to establish a balance between our needs and wants, in this case primarily fresh fruit, and the needs and wants of the native creatures with which we share our gardens. In the case of bats, perhaps the best thing we can do to meet our needs is also the best for them. With a little planning, providing flowering natives will not only protect our fruit and beautify our gardens, but also do something for a threatened species that is vital for the sustainability of the Australian bush. Not at all bad for a few day's work, really.

## Recipes Column

### Broccoli Salad

Original recipe makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- [1/2 cup chopped raisins]
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup plain [low-fat] yogurt
- 1/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions

1. In a measuring cup, mix together yogurt, mayonnaise, sugar, and lemon juice.
2. In a salad bowl, stir together broccoli, red onion, sunflower seeds, raisins, and crumbled feta cheese. Toss with yogurt dressing, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

=====

### Raw Choc Macadamia Brownie

The original recipe is from the 'The Complete Idiots Guide to Eating Raw'.

#### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups cacao powder
- 1/2 cup carob powder
- 1 cup oat groats, ground

- 1/2 cup macadamias, ground
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut, ground
- 1/2 cup almond butter\*
- 1 cup agave nectar
- 1 cup + 2 TB coconut oil
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Plus 1 cup of macadamia nuts, diced to put on top of the brownie.

**Directions**

Put all the ingredients (except for the extra cup of macadamia nuts to put on top) into a food processor for about 30 to 40 seconds.

Put in a baking dish lined with baking paper, so the batter is about 1/4 inch high. Press the macadamia nuts into the top of the brownie. (You can also add shredded coconut at this stage.) Refrigerate for at least an hour.



The photo was taken when the brownie was just made, and hadn't been put in the fridge yet. Personally, I like to leave my brownie out of the fridge for a few minutes to soften up, and then it becomes all goo-ey and yummy!

\*(I made my own by grinding up a cup of almonds and adding a touch of salt and a bit of agave, and oil to bind it together)

=====

**Lime or Lemon Oil**

Place whole fruit in a wide-mouthed jar and cover with a good-quality olive oil. Leave to mature for at least two months before using. The fruit may be removed, sliced and placed as a baste over fish or chicken which is to be baked, wrapped in foil.

**Herb Vinegar**

Place freshly cut herbs in a bottle and cover with a good quality white wine vinegar. Store for two to three months. Strain to remove herbs. A token sprig of the herbs may be left in the bottle for identification and added visual appeal.

=====

Do please keep those recipes coming in - your favourite ones, that everyone just loves, maybe that you know were well received on the club supper table. Sharing them is a wonderful gift.

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

**Recipe submission deadline is the second Monday of each month.**

## Jill's Beans & Other Matters

I know that Maria is saying not to grow beans at this time of year, because it's too cold, but I have to say that they're the main things that are growing well in my vegie garden right now. I have the climbing Blue Lake going up a circular lattice, eight or ten plants around, and as you can see from the pic, they are doing very nicely. The Redland Pioneer bush beans, on the glass plate, are growing up to 20cm long, and now I just want to plant more!



A few wonderful brassicas (I've lost track of whether they're broccoli, cauliflower or cabbage) have actually made it into my garden (though not enough for my liking) and are thriving. Kale abounds, as does mizuna, dill and rocket – more than we can eat really. And limes continue to drop their bountiful, marvelously juicy load daily. It's great to have heaps of these things to share!

I've had such trouble with seeds not germinating for the longest time, and since our last meeting, with Maria's emphasis on how much full sun our plants need to grow well, I've realised that that has been the trouble – not enough sun! So, I lopped the top off the offending grapefruit tree casting the shade, and moved my seed raising box into a sunnier spot. Lo and behold, seedlings, the little darlings!



OMG! Today I went out to get a jicama jam, but couldn't budge one with a trowel, so got a shovel and dug and levered this one out! I've never seen one as big as this – bigger than a dinner plate. They've usually been about 11cm across, but this one is about 25cm!



**4.6kg, as big as a medium pumpkin, and heavier!**

#### OFFER:

I have **kefir grains** again to share with anyone who would like to get started on this wonderfully easy and beneficial health product, that I and many others love for its refreshing tanginess, like plain yoghurt.

See **Jill Barber** at the meetings or contact her directly on 0404 449 753 or email [jillbarber611@gmail.com](mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com)

## Coriander

There are two main types of *Coriandum sativum* (known as coriander and as cilantro) – coriander varieties are grown mainly for seed and forms which mature more slowly, so giving better leaf production. The best form to grow for leaves to harvest for cooking or for garnishing food is the “Slow Bolt” variety. Most other varieties, including coriander brought as seed, will grow quickly to flowering and seed production.

Even when using “Slow Bolt” forms, coriander can grow or bolt into seed. Once this happens, the leaves are bitter and unpalatable. To slow down the flowering stage, grow coriander in the cooler part of the year (from autumn to spring), provide shade from the full afternoon sun, and do not allow it to come under stress through lack of water, too much heat, or a shortage of fertilizer. To continue to grow coriander through late spring and summer, make frequent plantings.

Harvest the seeds from coriander when they are plump, but before they ripen fully and begin to drop from the plant. Alternatively, lift the plants carefully before the seeds ripen and hang them upside-down over a newspaper in a cool, shady place. As the seeds ripen, they will fall onto the paper and can be gathered without difficulty. Store them in an airtight, dark-coloured glass jar.

Coriander seeds remain viable for up to six years if stored in a dry, shady place. One or two plants left to produce seed will provide next year's crop of leaves.

**Source: With extracts from “1001 Hints & Tips for the Garden”**

## Getting to Know ..... Our Working-Bee Team — By Diane Kelly

This month I didn't have time to do one of the regular "Getting to Know" interviews – I was too busy having fun at a working bee!

On the twenty-fifth of July, a dozen of our club members met at Barbara Talty's place in Mudgeeraba for our inaugural "Helping Each Other" working bee. The plan is that we spend a few hours working in someone's garden – weeding, trimming, re-potting or whatever – and then the next time, we go to another of the team's home and help them. Of course, cups of tea and cake, and lots of talk and laughter, are involved as well.

Barbara had damaged her shoulder a couple of months ago, and then broken her leg, so it was a wonderful opportunity to help her with some tidy up work in the garden, as well as get to know each other.



*All working hard, with some beautiful scenery.....*

### So who was there?

- Our two newest Club members, Judy & Theunetia. They've both moved to the Gold Coast from South Africa, so I'm looking forward to catching up with them

for an interview because they were both experienced gardeners there.

- Anne-Maree Andrew and Judy Reiser – Judy does a lot of work at the Ashmore State School with the children's community garden, and Anne-Maree has done lots of gardening at GC Permaculture.
- Ian & Margaret Lee – Ian moved a mountain of weeds, and Margaret helped us not pull out plants!
- Karen Auchere & Michel – Karen has been a member of our Club for many years, and Michel put in a lot of effort clearing out the dam.
- Ros Griffith – who has helped Barbara in the large garden over the years, and shared with us some of the jars of jam she'd made from the rosella's that grow there.
- Grant Fastier, who also helped clear the dam – and who took lots of photos for us to remember the day by.
- Penny Jameson – garden weeder extraordinaire.
- Barbara Talty – our hostess, and hopefully someone who can soon enjoy being back out in the garden.

It was a fun morning. We'd had a few days of soft, soaking rain prior to the 25<sup>th</sup>, and so the soil was very easy to pull weeds from. The weather was pleasant on the day, and it was a good chance to learn about weeds and some unusual plants. We all then got together for morning tea and a chat, so hopefully the photos below will be a reminder of a good day for those who were there, and incentive for others to join in the next event.

p.s. It was also Barbara's birthday, so we hope she enjoyed the gift of help that we gave her.

p.p.s. Have a look at the photos on the Club website – the colour makes a difference.



*Michel making a difference .....*



*Not sure what Barbara, Ian & I were all looking at during morning tea – but there used to be a resident carpet snake up in the veranda roof .....* !



*Barbara venturing out to see what Judy's achieving .....*



*The result of a good days work .....*

## THE DIGGERS CLUB

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**If You Just Do One Thing THIS Month  
... *plant some Sweet Corn!***

**By Diane Kelly**

In her book “The Wilderness Garden”, Jackie French tells us to “think of corn as a grass. It needs plenty of feeding and watering to bear well. I try to mulch corn as high as I can, and I give it a little liquid manure every week for the first four weeks. Then I ignore it until it crops. Sow first in spring, and then every week till autumn”.

Sweet corn is one of the most enjoyable vegetables to eat, and its “Ease of Culture” – in other words, how simple it is to grow – is considered moderate. But there is nothing like breaking of the cobs, with their browning tassles and their ripe kernels, to make you feel that gardening is well worth while!

**So, how do we grow sweet corn?**

Corn is a rapid-growing, heavy-feeding plant, so the soil must be well enriched for good crops to be achieved. Select a warm, sunny position that is protected from strong winds, and prepare soil that has a pH of 5.5 to 7. Plant out seeds as soon as the soil becomes warm – for sub-tropical climates, Annette McFarlane recommends October to February seed planting.

Obtain fresh seeds, as viability falls sharply when seeds have been stored for more than a year. Sow the seeds directly into your garden, 5-7 cm deep, and in blocks (to aid pollination). Allow 25 cm between plants and at least 60 cm between rows. Place 2-3 seeds in each hole, and thin out the seedlings – or sow a few extra seeds in each row to provide replacements where seeds fail to germinate. Seeds germinate in 10-14 days. Crops planted at 4-6 week intervals provide successive harvests.

As the plants develop, hilling soil around the base prevents them from being blown over, and also encourages the development of prop roots. (These substantially increase the uptake of water and nutrients.) Use a nutrient-rich mixture to hill plants, and apply this material to the whole bed, rather than just individual plants, as that can make watering difficult.

As plants reach their mature height, flowers containing male pollen form at the top of the plant. This is shed downwards to the female flowers, or silks. Increase watering at flowering and when the cobs begin to swell.

The browning of the silks at the top of the cobs indicates that the corn is ready to harvest – generally about four weeks after flowering. Pierce a single kernel with your finger nail – the cob will be ready to eat if a creamy milk emerges. A watery discharge would indicate immaturity, and a doughy consistency would indicate that the corn is old and starchy. Twist young cobs downward to remove them from the plant – and enjoy !!





**Seeds Available  
from the GCOG Seedbank**

The following seeds are available for purchase from our seed bank for just \$2 per packet.

If you have any questions about our seeds just chat to Lyn Mansfield at the next meeting and she will be happy to help you.

<b>Vegies</b>		<b>Flowers &amp; Herbs</b>
Bean Bush Redland Pioneer	Leaf Amaranth	Basil
Bean Climbing Blue Lake	Leek Giant Caventan	Beneficial Inspect Mix
Beetroot Bulls Blood	Lettuce Little Gem	Calendula
Broccoli Calabrese	Lettuce Paris Island Cos	Chives Onion
Broccoli Hong Kong	Lettuce Red Salad Bowl	Coriander
Broccoli Purple Sprouting	Mesclum Mild	Cosmos Giant
Cabbage Sugar Loaf	Mustard Greens Osaka Purple	Dill
Cabbage Wong Bok	Pea Bush Sugar Snap	Flat Parsley Giant of Italy
Carrot Chantenany Red	Radish Diakon	Garvinia
Carrot Nantes	Radish French Breakfast	Lupin
Cauliflower Snowball	Silverbeet Fordhook	Madagascar Bean
Celery Tall Utah	Silverbeet Lucullus	Marigold Orange
Ceylon Spinach	Snowpea Mammoth Melting	Nasturtiums
Jicama Yam	Tatsoi	Queen Anne's Lace
Kale black Toscana	Tomato Cherry	Rocket
Kale Red Russian	Tomato Thai Pink Egg	
Kohlrabi Purple Vienna	Tomato Tropic	

**Source: Lyn Mansfield**

## 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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## 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.

### IT MAKES YOU THINK .....

#### Five pennies save 147 million !!

Scotland introduced a 5p charge per plastic bag (at shops). That's about ten cents. It was introduced in the latter half of last year, but still cut plastic bag use by 147 million bags in 2014. That's a lot of plastic saved from going straight to landfill, or to our oceans.



## 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.

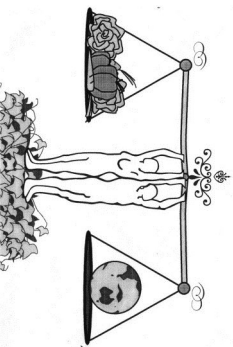
### SEPTEMBER

**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 17 September 2015