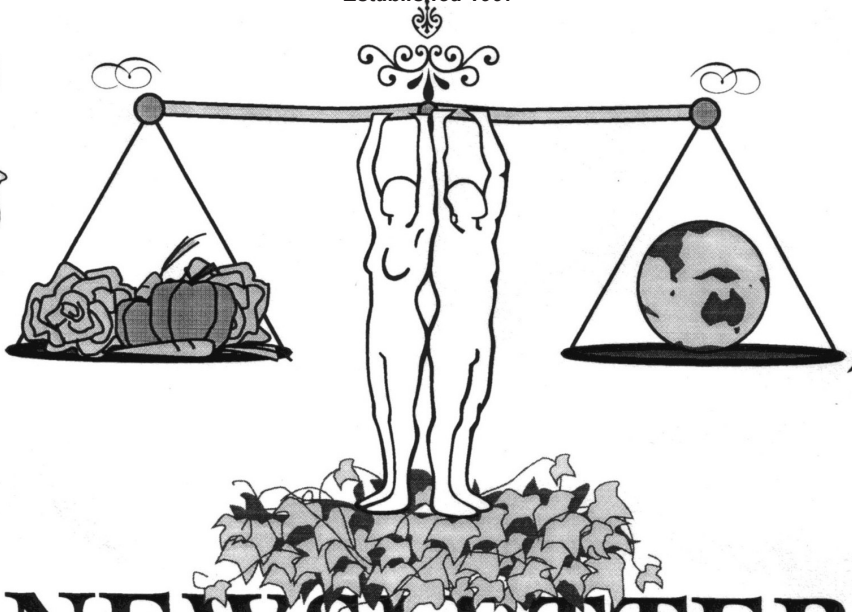
GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 27, 2023 Issue 1

GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 23, 2023

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: The fourth Thursday of the month at the Elanora Community Centre, 26 Galleon Way, Elanora.

Annual Membership Fees:
Single: $20. Family: $30.
To renew or start memberships please transfer funds dctly into our bank account, send cheques (payable to GCOG) to PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Qld 4213, or just pay at the door.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers
Bank: Suncorp BSB: 484-799
Account: 0014-21651
Membership Renewals: If paying online include your Name and Membership #

Overdue: Henry Blonner (108) Chui McDonald (476), Rachel Peate (477), Mary Courtney (482), Penny Schulze (483), Kym O'Connell (470), Robyn Penfold (439), John & Lee Drakes (485), Melanie Glenister (486), Bill Smart (386), Justine Rogers (487), Jenni Pocock (488), Cathy Sugerman (492), Di Gunther (493), Megan Keeler (358), Tanasia Park (490), Anne-Marie Andrew (337), Belinda Rennie (462).

February: Roger & Pauline Behrendorff (232), Penny Jameson (201), Kerry Lason (402), Gary & Sue Webb (445), Cheree Holland (475), Colleen Rohan (491), Gail Dunkley (494).

March: Barry O'Rourke (185), John Palmer (357), Tricia Oh (368), Danny Li (384), Astrid Connolly (465), Stacey Herne (467), Peter Sypkens (469), Heather Ryan (495), Catherine Goodacre (496)

Members' Market Corner: Please bring plants, books and produce to sell or trade.

2021-2022 Committee

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Guest Speaker Liaison	Leah Johnston *leahbryan9@gmail.com*
Librarians	Doug Beitz Sally Beitz
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Deb Phillips Dianne Casey

Seed Bank: Packets are $2.00 each.

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcorganic

View our Newsletters On-Line at:
www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/

Thanks to this issue's contributors:
Jorge Cantellano, Diane Kelly, Leah Johnston, Maria Roberson and Christina Yeomans.

President's Notes
By Maria Roberson

Hello Everyone,

I don't know about you, but I am not much of a Summer gardener. It's too hot in January and February for me so this is when I have a break and plan for the up-coming Autumn season. I ponder what I would like to achieve or change this year in the gardens and orchards. So far, my plans include planting more Bush Tucker plants and expanding on the variety that we already have. I am mad keen on having fresh bunches of flowers in the house and will be sourcing more beautiful flowering plants for me, the butterflies and other nectar lovers. We have been without banana trees for a few years now since one of the last cyclones took out our stand of plants, so we are establishing a new area for them. We have chosen some dwarf varieties and some varieties we have not grown before, so that may be exciting. I grew up on a banana farm and as you can imagine I got to eat more than enough bananas over my young life. In fact, after I left home I don't think I could look at a banana for about 15 years. Hence, it is difficult for me to get excited over a few banana palms, however, I endeavour to persevere. Of course, the vegetable patch will be a major undertaking too and one of my adult sons is taking a keen interest in growing food, so he is going to share the patch with me. Having an extra pair of hands and some muscle power sure does help to motivate me into full production. We, well he, is doing all the grunt work at the moment in preparation for the Autumn plantings.

As we all know, the up-coming season is one of the best growing times for the Gold Coast and its surrounds and not to be missed. Temps are more mild and the soil is still warm. The pest insect populations are on the decline and the humidity has dropped. The new season brings with it the opportunity to plant new herbs and vegetables that differ from the last. If you eat seasonally from your garden, chances are that you are not as keen on the cucumbers and zucchinis as you were in November and feel that it's time for a change. For the best growing results always follow a local planting guide and one can be found in the back of this newsletter.

Don't forget to check out our Swap Table on meeting nights. Maybe it should be called the "Giving Table" as it's more for bringing in what you have a lot of and would like to share with others. It's all about giving what you have and only taking what you need. Some months we have a lot to share and other months not so much. Just give when you are able.

Don't forget the Supper Table is back and we really appreciate our members bringing in a little something for us to enjoy with a cuppa. Please BYO cup on the night. Coffee and a variety of teas will be provided.

Our library is full of beautiful and informative books and resources for members to borrow and we would love you to take advantage of it. Members are welcome to borrow books, magazines and DVDs. Let's use it so we don't lose it.

Lastly, get that seed list ready so that you can grab what you need for planting over the next few months. The Seed Table will be stocked and ready to go on meeting nights. Beat down that shopping bill with fresh and healthy homegrown produce, and as my Dad says: "That's rich man's tucker".

Happy growing, Maria

Helping the Butterflies
By Leah Johnston

At our January meeting Leah and Christina told us about a passion they both share: butterflies!

The butterfly's lifecycle is: the butterfly lays eggs: caterpillars hatch from the eggs: caterpillars form a chrysalis (not a cocoon, a cocoon is spun from silk like silk moths do): then a butterfly hatches from the chrysalis.

It's tough being a butterfly. Of every 100 eggs laid approximately only one to two will survive to become an adult butterfly.

They have many predators including birds, dragonflies and lizards. Then there are parasitic wasps which will lay their eggs on the caterpillar, the caterpillar becomes their host and they continue growing and form a chrysalis but instead of a butterfly hatching, the pupae of the wasp hatch out.

Right: a Swallowtail caterpillar fending off predators. Below: a Swallowtail Butterfly

Another predator of caterpillars is gardeners who want to protect their citrus trees, but if you want butterflies in your garden (and in the world) you have to put up with some caterpillars on your plants! (If you are worried about a small citrus tree you can move the caterpillars to a larger tree). Butterflies can be eaten by birds, snakes, lizards, rats, toads etc. So with the odds against them, let's help them out.

Butterflies don't eat but they drink nectar from flowers. Some of their favourites include: bottlebrush, buddleia, daisies, grevillea, lavender, wattle, pentas, holy basil, and allowing some of your vegetable plants to flower and go to seed. Try to look around your garden at different times of the year and make sure there are always some flowers around to feed our butterflies and bees.

To attract butterflies to your garden grow more of these types of flowers. To keep butterflies in your garden grow their specific host plants that they lay their eggs on. Each caterpillar species can only eat specific host plants – they won't destroy your whole garden (white cabbage moths will eat your brassicas, but the other butterfly species won't eat your food).

To attract more local butterflies to your garden grow these specific host plants:

- Common Grass Blue is the easiest of all butterflies to support: just let your clover grow in your lawn! If you must mow the lawn try to leave a patch of clover growing.
- Monarch feeds on milkweed.
- Richmond Birdwing feeds on the richmond birdwing vine. To ensure you are growing the correct vine rub the leaves and smell them, if they smell like smoke it's the non-native Dutchman's pipe vine and should be removed as the caterpillars will feed on this and die.

- Grow a native tuckeroo tree (can be pruned to 2m) to support the Bright Cornelian, Common Pencilled-blue and Indigo Flash butterflies.
- Meadow Argus feeds on native ground cover fanflowers (scaevola).
- Australian Painted Lady feeds on paper daisy and yellow buttons.
- Varied Eggfly have cute blue eggs and feed on native ground cover joy-weed.
- Splendid Ochre feeds on lomandras.
- Plumbago Blue feed on native and introduced plumbagos.
- Common Crow feeds on money rope and weeping fig (these butterflies hatch from silver coloured chrysalis!)
- Yellow Migrant feeds on climbing sennas.
- Blue Triangle feeds on camphour laurels.
- Jezebel Nymph feeds on native mulberry.
- Blue Tigers feed on corky milk-vine.
- Leafwing feeds on love flower.
- Caper White feeds on scrub caper (years ago they had a large migration along our coast).
- Orchard Swallowtail, Dainty Swallowtail, Fuscous Swallowtail feed on both native and introduced citrus. If you see these on your tree touch around their heads and watch the red horns appear to ward off predators, emitting a scent that smells like citrus oil of whatever tree they are on.

These plants can be found at Bunnings, Michelle's Native Plants, Daleys, Friends of the Botanic Gardens and online.

Another fascinating butterly fact is that they can "overwinter" which means at any stage of their lifecycle they can hibernate (as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis or butterfly) then when the weather warms up they come back to life.

The Meadow Argus Butterfly

The Blue Tiger Butterfly

The endangered Richmond Birdwing Butterfly

Butterfly Gardening
By Christina Yeoman

My tips for growing a simple butterfly (and bee) nectar garden design you can do yourself in an afternoon:

Use bright, hot flower colours. Plant heaps of yellow and red and blue flowers in the butterfly garden. These insects love the hot bright colours so don't skimp on colour - the bigger and bolder the better.

Plant in big clumps. You want to attract butterflies so you have to give them a really big target. Plan on putting in large clumps of their favourite plants. In this case, bigger is better.

In other words, put a minimum of three of any one kind in the clump to create big display of bloom. The type of flowers most preferred are open – like a daisy or cosmos, up the stem like a salvia and cluster as a verbena.

Full sun. Butterflies and bees prefer full sun so your butterfly garden design efforts should focus on creating that full sun garden for them. The sunnier the better and out of the wind is preferred as well.

Add water. Now this is something most gardeners forget in their butterfly garden. Adding water is a simple thing. Put rocks or big marbles in a shallow dish of water so they have something to perch on.

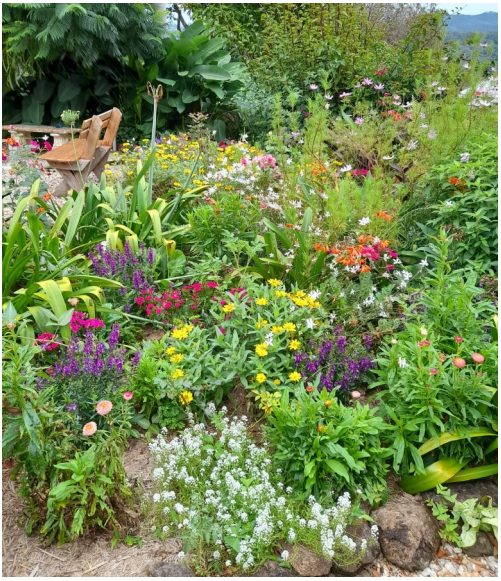
Mud. What you could do is excavate a very shallow depression (24-inches around by 6-inches deep) and either line it with plastic or sink a plastic garbage can lid in it. Do not puncture it for drainage. The objective is to create an area where it stays very muddy.

Butterflies will congregate on this very muddy ground regularly as they get their minerals from muddy water. You can surround the muddy area with plants or make it visible (my advice is to make it visible with very short plants in front so you can watch the butterflies sitting on the ground in one spot for more than a few seconds).

Large perching stones in the morning sun. Put the stones in the morning sun. Butterflies love the radiant heat and can often be found snoozing and overnighting on these rocks.

Rocks in the afternoon sun heat up too late in the day to get the butterflies moving and will be far less effective.

Remember to put a seat for you to sit on and enjoy your handiwork.



Maria's butterfly-friendly garden

Go Native… Here's How!
By Diane Kelly

The other day I was looking at the ABC news on the internet and a segment caught my attention – "English gardens making way for native plants to boost bio-diversity". The article went on to tell the story of the Understorey Network's native plant nursery in Glenorchy, Tasmania. Facing closure a year ago, the nursery and its team of 12 or so volunteers now produce up to 20,000 tube stock plants a year – these are used in home gardens and also re-vegetation programs.

A few hints about caring for native plants were included in the article:

- They do need some tender love and care.
- Don't over-fertilize – they don't need the same level of fertilizers as "normal" garden plants do.
- Native plants do like a bit of pruning and they do like to be kept weeded.
- They do need some watering to help them survive dry periods, especially when they are young.

The current advice is that there are over 24,000 species of native plants in Australia, and one third of those species found in Queensland are actually endemic to the state – i.e. they are found nowhere else in the world.

So if we would like to change the focus of our gardens over to natives, where does one start – and what would be special to grow?

As with any garden, the first thing to check is your location. A successful native garden is one where you look at your conditions – protected; windy; a rainforest environment; soil type – and find plants to suit, not the reverse. It is also wise to be aware that just because a plant is "Australian" it doesn't mean they cannot become weeds – get advice from the GCCC or a native nursery for a list of suitable types.

We know that there are two main ways to propagate plants - by seed or by cutting. If you are collecting seeds, do so from near where you are planting, or in areas where there are similar site conditions – and remember to only take seeds from healthy plants. If you are taking cuttings, read up on the topic first – my "habitat garden" book has pages and pages of what types of native plants can be grown from which type of cuttings, along with the best time to propagate them. And also take the time to plan out your native garden and prepare the soil where your new plants are to be placed. Consideration should also be given to ***why*** you would like to grow a particular native plant – for example, some are fire-hardy (wattles, lilly pilly and kurrajongs); some are nectar rich (think grevilleas, banksias and melaleucas) and some are salt-tolerant, such as she-oaks, hakea and tea trees.

We could start by considering the more common eucalyptus or acacias, but there are a few others that are worth noting because of their attractiveness, perfume or suitability as understorey shrubs.

Brachyscome Daisy: These are a type of paper daisy and are low-growing plants (up to 45cms) that thrive in both sandy or clay soils. You can grow these from seed or cutting and they don't mind being planted in part shade, where they will spread and form a colorful carpet. Brachyscome daisies have greenish-grey leaves, have a pleasant fragrance and flower in summer and spring. Grown

Brachyscome daisies

in pots or borders or just dotted throughout your garden, these plants are low maintenance, water tolerant and their blooms range in color from white to yellow to pink and to purple. And another good thing about brachyscome daisies? They are considered one of the most profuse and long-flowering annuals, with each plant producing well over 100

Prostanthera

blooms.

Mint Bushes: These are not the pesky plants that spread through your herb garden, but rather it is the common name for *Prostanthera*, which is a genus of about 100 species within the mint family. All of these are endemic to Australia. Usually growing to shrub height, these are evergreen plants that generally prefer semi or even full shade – and they don't like to dry out (they will wilt in advance of totally drying out, so watch for the signs!) Comparatively short lived, they age at about seven years – but they are quick growing. The bees love *prostanthera* shrubs because 80% of them contain aromatic oils within their leaves and exude perfume when brushed against. *Prostantheras iasiantho* is known as Christmas bush, with the colors varying with the state in which it is grown. The blooms can be white, pink or red, and they provide nectar for birds. The South Australian and Tasmanian Christmas bushes (which do grow in Queensland) are home to a range of butterflies who eat the leaves and also lay their eggs on

Correa Pulchella

them as food for the larvae.

Correas: Pictured here is *correa pulchella* (*pulchella* is Latin for "beautiful"). Its cousin *correa alba* would be a welcome addition to your garden because it flowers right through winter and are tolerant of coastal conditions. They also tolerate shady conditions, but will flower more profusely in full sun – remember to clip them after they flower so that the plants become denser. *Correa alba* does not like clay soil (they like to be well-drained) but you can grow them as a hedge, or plant them in containers. Have a look at

some pictures of *correas* as they are quite beautiful as their colours range from lime green to white to pink to a red and yellow combination flower. Honeyeaters love the *correas* because their curved beaks are perfectly shaped to reach the nectar at the end of the flower. And, not to be forgotten, our friends the native bee also likes them – they are unable to climb the tube of the flower, but they make a hole in the top of it and remove the nectar from there!

Grevilleas: A plant we are all familiar with, grevilleas are sometimes known as spider flowers and are considered the number one choice for a bird-friendly native plant. Grevilleas can range from groundcovers to shrubs to large trees and their flower colour range is broad. The design of grevillea flowers is such that it is birds that remove the majority of their nectar – "The Australian Bird Garden" provides a fascinating description of how a grevillea flower ensures a bird takes both its nectar and its pollen. The introduced honeybee creates a problem for the grevillea plant – its design means the bee can only access the nectar, leaving the pollen behind to be ineffective. Native bees are restricted by "hairs" at the entrance of the flower's nectar cap, but the larger honeybees can push their way through.

One more thing to consider about grevilleas – because they are so nectar-rich they tend to favour the more aggressive birds in your garden. Wattle birds and honeyeaters tend to chase away smaller birds, so plant your grevillea where you already have shrubs that wattle birds like – and create an area of dense or prickly plants as a sanctuary for smaller birds.

So if you have thought about changing the emphasis of your garden to native plants, think about what you would like and why; consider your location; and then make a plan to add colour and form to your garden. As horticulturist Adam Muyt writes about Australian native plants, "they are so subtle, but they can also be very, very beautiful and you know you are going to be benefitting the local environment by using them".

Grevilleas

Getting to Know…
David and Sally Cheetham
By Diane Kelly

Sally Cheetham grew up in Risca, which is a picturesque town with a current population of 11,700 situated in south-east Wales in the UK. Risca is 14 miles from Cardiff (the capital of Wales) and 142 miles almost directly west of London. Historically it has been a coal mining area and is surrounded by hills (including the wonderfully named Mynydd Machen and Twmbarlwm). In that location it is hardly surprising that it snows in Risca.

Sally and her siblings used to go up to the hills and spend their days foraging for blackberries and winberries (a rather tart fruit similar to blueberries) for making pies, and hazelnuts – Sally remembers those days as being "freedom". Sally's mother was the gardener in the family and whilst she primarily grew flowers, green beans and tomatoes were also grown in their allotment. There are over 2,000 plots under cultivation in allotments in the borough in which Risca is, so quite a different world from the Gold Coast! And David comes from Yorkshire, another contrast.

But to the Gold Coast Sally came. With a love of boats and the hot weather she spent three years sailing around the tropics in a 12-metre sloop (with her two-year old daughter). The trip took her from the UK to Ireland to the Caribbean to New Zealand and then to Australia. Arriving in Brisbane it felt crowded, so the boat was sailed right down the waterways to the Gold Coast. The year was 1987.

Sally had been able to migrate to Australia as she was a trained scientist, specializing in chemistry and pharmacology. But at the time there were no suitable jobs available on the Gold Coast, and so Sally turned her hobby into a career. Initially settling in the Currumbin Valley on a property of some 12 acres ("anything I grew there just seemed to die" – you'll see that things have changed!) Sally moved to Burleigh Heads and she and David set up a successful clothing business. Sally is basically a self-taught seamstress – but both her grandmothers sewed and they used to show her what to do.

Moving forward to more recent times, David (who was an engineer prior to working in the clothing business) and Sally have now retired and they live in a most picturesque spot out in the Tallebudgera Valley. While living in Burleigh and always having been interested in environmental issues, Sally had begun to realize she wanted to know more about where her food came from and its quality. A successful garden was started – and Sally's love of making chutneys and jams continued.

David and Sally's property is just under two acres in size and it is quite a unique location. The block runs some 300 metres along the road and has a lot of trees to make the area cool and pleas-

Sally's walls of rock and mesh

ant. But it is the north-west facing area at the back of the block that makes it special – the house sits high above a small tributary of the Tallebudgera Creek and an island that extends over to the actual creek. Half the island belongs to the property and the view is peaceful and looks out over a rock pool area where you can swim. And to the north-east of the house is the fruit and vegetable garden area.

The first impression I had of the area was that it included such a variety of plants - I had seen Sally's photos that she posted on the Club facebook page, and I now realized that they were not of her first garden but of her first experimenting with companion planting. Sally has read a lot of gardening books (Craig Castree's *Edible Gardens* is a favourite, and Bill Mollinson's *Introduction to Permaculture* was foundational) and spent a lot of time working out a large list of plants to locate together (or not). She has applied the principle quite a bit (see the photo of her strawberries and leeks both looking happy together!) but is now realizing that with finite space you can't always garden by that method.

The strawberries and leeks

The next impression was that there were a lot of garden beds – some were inherited with the property, and some David and Sally have built. (As with a number of us the ladies are the gardeners and our "other half" does the heavy work – and David has moved a lot of rocks!) Sally's lavenders are growing very well behind the walls built with mesh and small rocks. The garden area was originally clay and rock, but Sally is gradually improving the plots with layers of straw, cardboard and manure etc. Soil was brought in to fill the raised garden beds and Sally mentioned a good point – if you are using purchased soil, don't leave it sitting too long before you utilize it or else it will dry out.

I asked Sally if she had developed the garden area with a particular plan in mind – I was curious, because I could see quite an area centred on a wrought-iron gazebo and extending out in different directions. Each part is filled with different types of plants, but Sally's first "methodology" came from a friend who said "start at the house door and work out". Good advice, as I am sure starting at the edge and then trying to fill the space could be quite daunting. Another factor that David and Sally have had to keep in mind is the river. After very heavy rains, the water comes down from Springbrook, and during all the wet weather last year the creek rose with massive force and lots of debris and it came very close to entering the house. The attached photo doesn't do the verandah's height above the water full justice, but I'm sure David could tell you how much the rise must have been. Because of the water factor, the Cheetham's have built swailes in the back, lower end of the garden so that area doesn't flood.

As with any interview there are com-

ments made or anedotes given that don't fit into the flow of the story, so here are a few other things I heard about:

- Green grasshoppers, white cabbage moths, slugs and snails are all visitors to contend with.
- Sally has used a chili/dishwashing liquid combination to deter pests.
- No bush turkeys or crows come to damage the garden or steal the fruit, but Sally and David do have black cockatoos and red-breasted kingfishers visit the property.
- They live in hope of seeing platypuses (or platypli if you are English) along the creek walls – but they also told me that these have not been seen in the Tallebudgera Valley for some 50-60 years.
- Sally's favourite flowers include borage and nigella and she has noticed how the bees are attracted to them as well.
- Seaweed is collected, soaked in water and added to the compost heap to add nutrients.
- David and Sally have had some unwelcome guests to their home – when they removed some gyprock in the lounge area when renovating, the snake man had to come and remove 5-6 snakes – of the red-bellied black and tiger varieties.

David and Sally's garden

David and Sally have a double-bayed compost system that Sally hopes will produce enough material to fill up future garden beds.

So, apart from gardening, how else do the Cheetham's fill their days? They have two large dogs that enjoy a long, daily walk (or two, if they can convince David); Sally sews; appreciates art; and enjoys cooking. David said that he "tinkers around the property", but he also said about gardening that "concrete is your friend", so I think his days are actually more productive than that!

Sally has enjoyed becoming a member of the GC Organic Growers – joining a club was one of the things she felt she needed to do as she came to have more time on her hands. And now that David is a member it is a good chance for us all to get to know two gardeners who are enjoying and learning about growing their own food.

P.S. If you've not yet met Sally, she is the lady who brought along the recorded bird calls for us to identify at our 25th birthday party in October.

The veranda overlooking Tallebudgera Creek

Autumn is Coming
By Diane Kelly

Autumn is coming! For most of us, depending on whether the glass is half-full or half-empty, it is a matter of “at least the heat of summer is finished” or “now it’s almost winter”. But whatever your approach, we need to have our gardens ready for the next three months.

We’ve talked a lot at our meetings about the changes in the weather and the seasons, and how they make it hard to plan what to plant in your vegetable garden and how to prepare it. So whilst the books say “March, April and May” it all depends on the rain, the heat and what your garden actually does. So I think it will be a matter of watching the weather and working out a plan as the weeks pass.

March... or Month One:
When I look at my planting guide March doesn’t give the impression of being a particularly busy month (but this rapidly changes in April and May). But we can still grow cucumbers, egg plants, capsicums, lettuces, radishes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and silver beet. So let’s choose one vegetable for each month and look at how to grow them in detail.

Capsicums: I visited Sally Cheetham’s garden in January and we were both bemoaning the fact that we don’t seem to be able to grow capsicums – my experience has been that mine weren’t worth the space the plants took up! But there are a few tips that we can follow to grow capsicums successfully.

To prepare your garden beds for planting capsicums, you should add in well-rotted organic matter and some complete fertilizer (125g per square meter) several weeks prior to planting.

The soil should be very well drained and deep – capsicums are intolerant of waterlogging.

Capsicum seeds require warm conditions to germinate, and “all the books” recommend they are planted into pots or punnets. Placing these on a window sill will help achieve early germination (which usually takes 3-4 weeks).

Daily temperatures of 20-25 degrees are ideal for optimum growth and fruiting.

Ensure you plant your seedlings in a warm, sheltered position as the plants tend to be brittle and subject to damage in windy conditions.

Check your soil pH (5.5 – 6.5 is best) and make sure that adequate levels of calcium are maintained so that blossom end rot is avoided.

Don’t plant capsicums in garden beds that have previously grown related plants such as potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants or chillies as this can bring about a build-up of root knot nematodes.

Fertilize the plants once they begin to bud, and then repeat monthly until picked. Always water in the fertilizer, and mulch around the plants to aid water retention – they need regular watering to grow steadily.

Capsicums protect themselves from overloading the plant – when a full quota of fruit is reached (if only!) then new blossoms will tend to drop. Once some fruit is picked, the plant will again start setting fruit.

Problems with capsicums? Deficiencies of calcium and/or fluctuations in soil

moisture levels will result in the fruit developing soft, sunken spots at the base of the fruit where the blossom ends. Adding calcium and watering the plants regularly should help solve this problem – capsicums can tolerate a dry atmosphere, but not dry soil. Capsicums are subject to fruit fly attack. Bagging the individual fruit is the easiest way to solve the problem.

April... or Month Two:
Carrots: Well, here's another vegetable that I have been unsuccessful in growing – so I guess it is time I learnt a bit more about them. Carrots were not known prior to 1547, and the Greek word *carota* actually means "to burn". Carrots were originally grown for their medicinal value in aiding stomach problems – in more recent times we have learnt that carotene is a source of vitamin A.

The first principle of growing carrots is that they dislike being transplanted, so always grow them directly from seeds rather than seedlings. Carrots need an open, sunny position and to be grown in soil that has been prepared to a fine texture. Avoid using fresh manure or overly rich compost as these will result in forking. Rather, plant carrots in a bed that has just finished a crop of greedy leaf crop (such as lettuce, cabbage or broccoli) that received a liberal dressing of compost or manure. Soil that has been fertilized by chicken manure for its previous crop should have adequate amounts of phosphorus (highly required) and nitrogen and potassium (moderately required). Sow seeds in rows 30cm apart and remember that they need light to germinate, so avoid planting them too deeply. Germination should occur in 10-14 days. Carrots dislike dry weather, so supply plenty of water. But be aware that if the soil has been left to become very dry and then it gets flooded, the carrots will split. Mixing the carrot seeds with either washed river sand or radish seeds makes the job of thinning out the seedlings less work. (The radish crop will mature, so thinning the carrots will be automatic as you harvest the radishes. Remember to keep the carrot crop weed-free once it has germinated. Baby carrots should be ready in less than 10 weeks – harvesting them selectively will allow the remaining carrots to mature. When you harvest your carrots, remove the top straight away – this stops them withering.

Problems with carrots? Soil nematodes and fungal diseases can be avoided by rotating carrot crops with other vegetables and nitrogen-fixing legumes. Avoid growing carrots following crops of celery, parsnips or parsley. Carrots can be attacked by the small, shiny, black-bodied carrot fly that has a yellowish head and legs – they are attracted by the smell of the carrot foliage. The white, maggot-like larvae of the fly eat the root tips and leave brown tunnels in developing carrots. Carrots and onions make good companions because the smell of the onions helps discourage the carrot fly. An alternative that I've read about (but haven't tried) is to add a cup of unused coffee grounds into the packet of carrot seeds and then sow – this fools the fly but doesn't flavour the carrots.

May... or Month Three:
Broad beans: I have grown broad beans and they did not actually go into the "too hard" basket, but I remember other people mentioning that they had no luck with them, so they are worth a look at. Please note that my plants did not fruit as prolifically as those pictured! Depending on the variety, broad beans can be either dwarf or tall-growing in habit, but their varieties tend to be classified by the size and shape of the pods, and the colour of the seeds. Long pod varieties grow them

to 20cm and contain 4-10 seeds; shorter pods may only contain 2-4 beans. The colours of broad beans can range from white to green to red. So how do we grow them?

Broad beans like moderately fertile and well-drained soil with a pH level of 6.5 to 7.5. If the soil is too rich or too sandy the plants tend to run to too much leaf, so avoid using fresh manure. Too much leaf can lead to fungal leaf diseases, and also few flowers and therefore fewer beans. Scatter 1/3 of a cup of complete fertilizer and 2 teaspoons of potash along each meter of your planting rows and rake in prior to sowing seeds.

To speed up germination soak the seeds overnight in a diluted solution of liquid seaweed. Sow them directly into the soil in double rows spaced 20-40cm apart, spacing individual seeds at 12-20cm intervals. Plant dwarf varieties further apart as they tend to have bushier plants. Plant the seeds 8-10cm deep. Water the area well after sowing and then leave the seeds unwatered – they are large seeds and so have the tendency to rot – until after they have germinated (about 10-14 days). When the plants get to about 15cm high, apply a very weak liquid manure (or complete fertilizer) to them every three weeks.

Broad bean plants tend to collapse under the weight of their harvest, so ensure that they are supported. I put four stakes in at each corner of the crop and tied several rows of baling twine from one stake to the next to create side supports. Once the plants begin to flower pinch the tops off as this makes the pods set better, and don't worry – it is not unusual for the first flowers to fail to set any fruit.

You can eat broad bean pods and all at about 10cm - after that they will be too dry and tasteless to eat unless cooked. When the crop is finished, cut the plants off at ground level and leave the roots in the soil as a source of nitrogen and organic matter. Another recommendation to try is to put the plant tops criss-crossed on your compost heap. Plant tomato or cabbage plants among the cut off tops – they'll feed off the nitrogen and do really well.

Problems with broad beans? Fungus-chocolate spot seems to be the major one (indicating a potassium deficiency). This can be overcome by adding wood ash to the soil or growing broad beans in a trench of comfrey leaves. Alternatively, a compost of decayed bracken ferns can help – if taken in the summer (when the potash level is highest in the fronds). This comes about because bracken tends to deplete the sandy soil it grows in of its potassium.

If your broad bean plants have fungus-chocolate spot (and it is very readily visible), let the soil rest of at least 3 months after the crop is removed. If any self-sown plants come up, remove them as the disease is carried over on the leaves.

So... three different vegetables to experiment with over the next three months. No matter if you are a "glass half-full" or a "glass half-empty person, let's make this Autumn a gardening pleasure.

EdibleScapes' Calendar of Events 2023
By Jorge Cantellano

We want to invite everyone to EdibleScapes' monthly events. Finally we have good news and can host gardening events! Fortunately, it seems that average weather conditions will return during 2023. Still better, the antisocial pandemic restrictions are now a survivor's story.

International Women's Day
Saturday 11 March, from 9:00am
Celebrate International Women's Day at our Cultural Diversity Women's Garden. You can taste some fruits from trees planted on International Women's Day back in 2019. To make this reunion memorable, you are invited to bring perennial plants, herbs or flowers to plant around these trees.

Youth Week, Saturday 15 April, from 9:00am
Unseen Life of the Soil: Ecology of the Garden. At this mixed reality art exhibition visitors will use their mobile phones to see 3D images movies and sound floating over the backdrop of the gardens.

Young People Workshopping the Possibilities

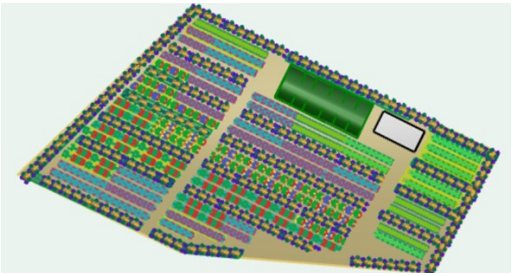
Proudly supported by

Councillor Peter Young
Division 5

CITY OF GOLDCOAST.

Saturday 15 April, 9:00am to 3:00pm
Project launch
Creative – multidiscipline - collaboration

Compost Week, Saturday 13 May
Compost in situ – Agroforestry ally cropping. All In One Urban Circular Economic – Food Security an Agroecological solution. Ediblescapes Agroforestry zone for the Horticultural Hub - Country Paradise Parkland Project presentation.



World Environment Day, Saturday 10 June

Re-build human-scale ecological Local Food. No Future without Food Sovereignty! Greenprints Bioregion report mapping.

NAIDOC Week – For Our Elders Saturday 8 July, Kombumerri Country

The food of Ngarang-Wal people at Nerang River. Acknowledge first people's food knowledge. Pluricultural conversation at the Moon Garden.

Agroforestry Zone Analysis, Saturday 5 August, at Botanical Bazaar

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance will assess the agroecological status of the Agroforestry zone landscapes at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands.

Ediblescapes proposes to develop a 2000m2 demonstrative Agroforestry Zone. Agroforestry is a land use management system in which trees or shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. In this case we propose an adaptation of Inga Alley Cropping to urban setting.

Inga Alley Cropping is based on the power of legumes to fix nitrogen from the air, thus fertilising the soil by making nitrogen available to plants. Inga edulis is a legume tree. Inga trees are planted in rows, like hedges with 50cm between each tree, or more open distance if you are planning to combine with productive tree or plant like pineapples. The rows are planted with space of 4m between them. The inga are then pruned, the bigger branches are useful for biochar. The rest is left to rot down to a fertile mulch in the alleys. The crops are planted into this. The crops grow well, are harvested, and the trees regrow. The cycle is repeated year on year.

The system is suitable for our weather conditions as inga edulis need over 1200mm rainwater annually, which is the average of our annual precipitation. Inga will grow on degraded, acid soils, making it ideal for regenerating damaged lands. This inga can also be planted directly planting into immature compost, so we will experiment with a generous mulch layer.

The aim of developing an Agroforestry Zone is to provide an agroecology site where urban, peri-urban, and hinterland food growers from the local community can observe and analyse the applied agroecology practices and principles demonstrated at the site. The project will develop knowledge through horizontal conversations and access to educational programs as well as encourage the transition to agroecological food production.

The project will address food security through direct provision of food grown on-site to the local community; it will support the circular economy through the collection and use of organic waste to grow compost and then donate nitrogen-fixing trees grown on-site to locals.

VEGETABLES

MARCH:
Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chili, Endive, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsnip, Peas, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Sweet Potato, Sweet Corn, Tomato.

APRIL:
Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Endive, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Peas, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Spinach, Sweet Potato, Sweet Corn, Tomato, Turnip.

MAY:
Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Endive,Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Spinach, Tomato, Turnip.

HERBS

MARCH
Annual: Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Rocket.

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

APRIL
Annual: Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Rocket.

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

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

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

FRUIT TREES

MARCH

Custard Apples: Fertilize trees – 20 gms of organic fertiliser per sq m to drip line. Harvest every 3 to 7 days. If mealy bug is a problem spray individual fruit with pest oil or wipe on metho and water (30% metho + 70% water).

Figs: Close to end of season.

Lychee: Less watering is required, but don't let the trees dry out. If Erinose mite appears, spray every 10 to 14 days with wettable sulphur from pinhead size new growth to fully open and hardened off.

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Water needs to taper off now as trees begin to defoliate.
Mango: If any anthracnose fungus is visible, spray with a copper based spray every 2 weeks, or with 25 mls leaf microbes and 5 grams wettable sulphur per 1 litre of water.

Passionfruit: The water can be tapered off. Harvest fallen fruit under vines every 3-4 days.

Pawpaw: Plant out new trees. Apply boron now. 1 teaspoon per mature tree. Spray leaf

microbes (25 ml leaf microbes per 1 litre of water) if black spot is seen.

Persimmon: Main harvest time. Decline water needs. Apply a little super fine lime and gypsum – 50 gms per sq metre of each.

Strawberries: Plant out new runners. If you want to leave last year's plants, prune only.

Bananas: Give stools a high organic potassium fertilizer – 200 grams per stool (any organic fertilizer that has added sulphate of potash).

Citrus: If any fungal problems arise, spray with pest oil and leaf microbes. Add the pest oil + 15 ml per litre of the leaf microbes. This will also control the citrus leaf miner and scale.

Pruning Citrus: Citrus trees need little pruning. If over-crowded, thin out after fruiting. Don't thin oranges or grapefruit severely but mandarins can be shortened back to the second or third shoot down the branch. Lemon trees are taller and less compact so keep them to a size easier to handle. Old trees can be cut severely but will take a year or two to recover and bear.

APRIL

Custard Apples: Peak harvest period. Harvest every 3 to 7 days. Watering can be tapered off. If you have not done your spraying for mealy bug, do it now. Spray individual fruit with pest oil or wipe on metho and water (30% metho & 70% water).

Figs: Taper off the water.

Lychee: Don't let trees dry out. Check for Erinose mite. Spray with wettable sulphur.

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Fertilise trees with a high organic potassium fertilizer, 50 gms per sq meter to the drip line of trees. Prune trees now – 1/3 to ¼ of the tips can be taken off. Any inward or downward wood can be pruned.

Mango: Apply gypsum if soil pH is 6 or more. If below 6 pH, apply lime. 50 gms per sq meter of either. Continue with copper based spray for anthracnose or with 25 mls leaf microbes and 5 gms wettable sulphur per 1 litre of water.

Passion-fruit: Water can be tapered off. Harvest fallen fruit every 3-4 days.

Pawpaw: If you have not applied boron, apply now. 1 teaspoon per mature tree. 40% of annual fertiliser can be applied now to mature trees (20 grams per sq meter of a high organic potassium fertiliser).
Persimmon: Main harvest time. Declining water needs. Apply a little super-fine lime and gypsum, 20 gm of each per sq m.

Strawberries: Plants should be coming away well. A little organic potassium fertiliser can be applied now. Use fish emulsion or kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health. Add 20 mls molasses per litre of water + 10 mls leaf microbes.

Bananas: De-sucker plants, cutting at ground level. Cut out centre with a sharp downward motion around the circumference to the centre, forming a well. If they do not die, use 20mls of kero to the bottom of this well.

Citrus: If any scale and fungal problems still exist a further spray with pest oil and leaf microbes will be needed. Add the pest oil + 15 ml per litre of the leaf microbes. Early varieties can be picked this month.

MAY

Custard Apples: Peak harvest period, harvest every 3-7 days. Don't let trees dry out.

Figs: Dormant period. Don't let trees dry out.

Lychee: Don't let trees dry out. Fertilise trees this month. Mature trees (5 years and older) 1.5 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees. (For trees under 5 years, use only 50

grams.)

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Fertilise trees with 50 gms of organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees. Prune off 2/3 of new growth.

Mango: Apply gypsum if soil pH is 6 or more. If below 6 pH, apply lime, 50 gms per sq m of either. Mature trees (5 years and older) 1.5 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees; water in well.

Passion-fruit: The water can be tapered off. Harvest fruit every 3-4 days under vines.

Pawpaw: If you have not applied boron, apply now. 1 teaspoon per tree. 40% of annual organic fertiliser can be applied e.g. 20 gms per sq m.

Persimmon: Decline water needs. Apply a little garden lime and gypsum, 20 gms per sq m.

Strawberries: Plants should be coming away well. A little organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash can be applied now. Use fish emulsion or kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health.

Bananas: Keep up the water. When fruit are formed, bag fruit with banana bag, tie bag to top of stem and drape down to bell. Leave open at bottom for air. Cut off bell to get larger fruit.

Citrus: Harvest should start this month, and continue until August. Keep up watering.

Avocado: Add garden lime, 20 grams per sq m to drip line and gypsum 20 grams per sq m again to drip line. Early varieties can be picked. Don't let trees dry out.

Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go.
- Anon

Autumn is springtime in reverse.
- Anon

For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together. For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad.
- Edwin Way Teale