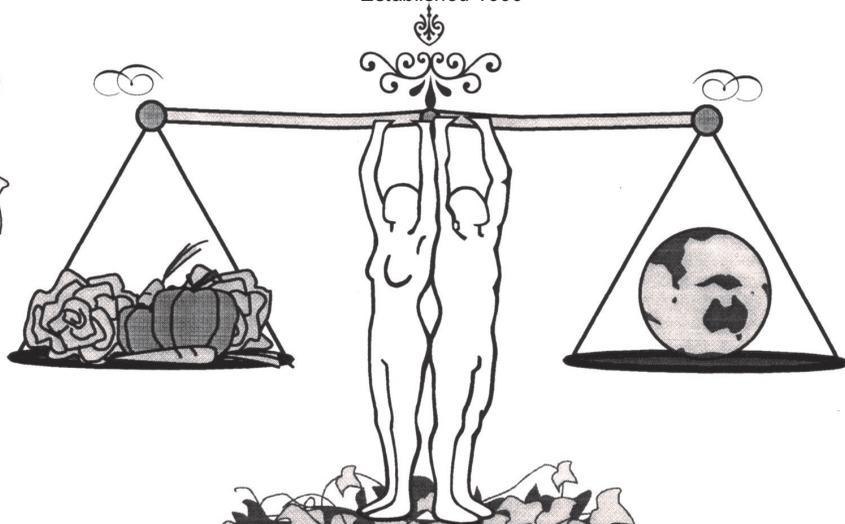


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 18 February 2015 Issue 2  
GARDENING IN SUMMER

Pg2	<i>Club Information</i>	8-9	<i>Getting To Know - Evelyn Douglas</i>
3	<i>Notice Board, What's On</i>	10-11	<i>Jill's Garden Update</i>
4-5	<i>President's Message, Pull Out a Plant!</i>	12-13	<i>Recipes - Kefir, Garlic, Bunya Nuts</i>
6-7	<i>Guest Speakers, Banana Bunch Top, Richmond Birdwing Butterfly</i>	14-15	<i>Gardening on the Gold Coast, Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers</i>

**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19 March**

## 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

## 2013 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Roger Peterson (07) 5534 8061 <a href="mailto:rpeterson.1@bigpond.com">rpeterson.1@bigpond.com</a>
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Librarians	Greg Wiltshire (07) 5578 8755 Judy Reiser (07) 5532 7198 Ann-Maree Andrew
Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609
The position of Trip Co-ordinator has been abolished.	

### 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](mailto:w.a.anderson@bigpond.com) or text a photo - 0439 488 166.

### Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Rachael Lebeter

### Website:

[www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/](http://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:** Ashleigh Hart (355), Glenn & Joan Jones (266), Darrell & Marion Williams (310), Karen Hart (198), Celia Forrest (351), Penny Jameson (201), Marion Symons (155), Peter & Patricia Edwards (163), Roger Griffiths (272), John Steytler (313), Julie Abraham (315), Daniel Bohata (359), Doris James (360)

**February:** Margaret Reichelt (111), Barry O'Rourke (185), Roger & Pauline Behrendorff (232), Barbara Morgan (246), Ken & Pat Jenyns (273), Judy McCracken (274), Jerry & Justy Rogers (275), Suzanne Blatcher (276), Tali Filip (277), Marino Canala (316), Anne-Marie Andrew (337), Shem Pireh (361), Keith Rowell (362)

**March:** Regina Lacgalvs (208), Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), John Clarke (345), Lana Beloff (363), Alex Dimos (364), Maggie Golightly (365), Fran Janes (366), Rachael Lebeter (367), Tricia Oh (368).

## What's On

### Gold Coast Permaculture Inc

28 Feb Wonderful World of Herbs  
14 Mar No dig Garden  
21 Mar Backyard Hens

Gold Coast Permaculture, Market St, Carrara behind the Back Page Sports Bar & Woolworths - Morning tea provided.

More information email Lyn on [lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:lynmansfield14@bigpond.com) or phone 0409 645 888.

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

### Mudbrick Cottage

21 Mar Growing and Propogating Herbs  
18 Apr Eco Dyeing Workshop

[www.mudbrickcottage.com.au](http://www.mudbrickcottage.com.au)

### Ipswich Plant Expo

7 & 8 Mar

[www.plantexpo.com.au](http://www.plantexpo.com.au)

## MARIA ROBERSON

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Advice on achieving a healthy and productive fruit and vegetable garden.

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## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

February is always a month of change for the members of the Gold Coast Organic Growers in more ways than one. Firstly, we hold our Annual General Meeting, where the previous year's committee members resign their positions and a new committee is elected. More often than not, many positions are filled by the same dedicated members for a couple of years in a row. I often hear other clubs complain about this because it is perceived as a burden to a few "hard working" members for the benefit of the group. I, however, have observed the opposite within our club: whilst we encourage and need "new blood", I believe that everyone enjoys the rewarding contribution they make to our great club, and are often happy to nominate themselves for a return position. As I have always said, "We don't want anyone to do anything they don't want to do", so if you are considering lending a hand with the running of GCOG, give it a go; you won't be sorry.

February also marks the change of seasons, with the end of summer fast approaching. The seed table is fully stocked with all the seeds that you will need for autumn and winter. Having had some decent rainfall over the last months, it feels like one could do some gardening again, and actually get some really good results. Be sure to follow the seed planting guide on the back page of the newsletter for accurate seasonal planting times, to get the best results for your effort. Autumn is a fantastic time for growing vegetables, herbs and flowers as the weather is so much milder and plant friendly, but still warm enough to promote strong and healthy growth.

I am often asked what I have growing in my garden and the answer is simple, "Everything I can", and because I live on acreage, I have plenty of space to grow what I wish. This is not the case for everyone. So for those with limited space, I have a few tips that might help out. The first tip is to grow what you eat:

it is fun to try something new now and again, but not at the expense of everyday edibles. Second, grow some expensive-to-purchase veggies and herbs, for example, Kale grows easily, and leaves can be picked from the plant as needed; a \$2 pack of seeds will keep you in Kale all year. Grow lots of herbs, and be creative with positioning them: poke them into the corners of beds so they spill out over paths rather than taking up valuable garden space. My third tip is to make use of vertical space by using trellises. My final tip for the day would be that a garden is a garden. What I mean by that is that any soil is fair game for planting up, be it the garden around the swimming pool or out the front lining the entry pathway: soil is soil; if you have it, use it, no matter where it is.

For those who wish to plant garlic this year, now is the time to source planting stock. Garden beds should have been prepared already in anticipation of planting in March; however you still have time to make preparations if you choose to plant a little later. One year, as it happened, I couldn't plant my garlic until Mother's Day, yet I still managed to have a very successful crop. Please don't plant garlic that has been imported from overseas: it just won't grow as it has been treated with a chemical to stop it from sprouting. Garlic can be purchased from seed companies; there are plenty advertised on line or perhaps you might be able to source a local grower at a market.

Happy Growing,  
Maria

**If You Do Nothing Else This Month ...  
Pull out a Plant  
From Diane Kelly**

About four years ago, we purchased a mango tree. It was a meter high, and had a number of healthy looking leaves on it. About a month ago, when my husband was doing the mowing, he mentioned the tree. It was a meter high, and had a number of un-healthy looking leaves on it!

So, because Rob enjoys having large, open spaces to mow, we decided to “pull out a plant”. We then put the mango tree into a large pot (because we really didn’t think this transplant would work) which was filled with compost-rich soil. The tree is now a meter and more high, and it has lots of healthy looking, new leaves.

The above experience has made me think about “pulling out plants”, and so this has become the topic for February’s “If you only do one thing this month”. So why would we want to remove a plant/bush/tree from its current location:

**The plant is obviously not happy.** Maybe the soil does not suit it; maybe it is not able to retain adequate moisture (our mango tree was planted on quite a slope); maybe it gets too much wind, or too much sunshine – or not enough of either; maybe other trees or bushes are taking its nourishment.

**Other plants are not happy.** Sometimes plants just don’t do well together – have a look in your gardening books for “non-companion” plants! Sometimes a bush or tree can over-shadow or steal nourishment from other plants. For example, we built my vegie patch in the dappled shade of a small paper-bark tree about ten years ago. Now the paper bark is well-grown, and the roots were invading the vegie patch. In this case, we are re-locating the vegie garden, as we do not want to lose the paper-bark. The principle is the same – one plant was not happy because of another, so a move was made. Maybe in your garden a plant continues to grow at the expense of others that you would

enjoy seeing flourish.

**You are not happy.** If a bush blocks a natural pathway, or if a tree spoils your view, consider moving it. Even though we all love plants, if we can safely locate it to a better position, why not try it. It is better than having something annoy you each time you walk around your garden.

We can transplant many plants without killing them – we can move them to a more suitable location, and, like our mango tree, they may just be a lot happier. Have a read about transplanting bushes and fruit trees, take an honest look around your garden and see which plants are struggling, prepare the soil of the new area appropriately, and have a go!



**Newsletters Online**

Remember to visit us on the web.

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

This month there are many photos and they can be appreciated in colour and enlarged.

Also, you will find more information about gardening for this time of year if you check out the January, February and March newsletters from previous years.

All library books and DVDs are listed online.  
<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/library-books.pdf>

We are now on facebook:-  
<http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic>

## Guest Speakers By Rachael Lebeter

**March:** Janet and David Gourlay from SoILife will share information about how we can build the microbiology of our soil. I'm looking forward to seeing the before and after shots of Jill Barber's garden, which they treated in December in order to demonstrate the value of their ideas and products!

**April:** Greg Plevy from WormTec will give us more information about soil biology and the ways we can make our worm farms work for us. He will also have his great range of products to demonstrate for us.

## Bananas - Bunchy Top A call to help stop the spread of one of bananas' worst diseases From Neville Sloss

The support of South East Queensland's keen gardeners is being sought to stop the spread of Banana Bunchy Top, one of the worst viral diseases in the world to affect banana plants.

Banana Bunchy Top is in Australia but it is restricted to South East Queensland and northern New South Wales.

"Through the National Bunchy Top Project we are having success in controlling the disease in commercial plantations and working hard to ensure that they stay Bunchy Top free," says the Project Manager, David Peasley.

Aphids blown in the wind carry the virus after feeding on infected plants. Transplanting infected suckers also spreads the disease. The virus stunts the growth of leaves and an infected plant will not produce a bunch of bananas.

"This means that infected plants anywhere pose a risk and shows why we need the community's support in this battle."

"If the disease is allowed to go unchecked then no one will have healthy bananas. We

know that keen gardeners want to make sure that we keep the spread of any disease to a minimum so we are calling on members of gardening clubs and other organisations to help us in the task," says David.

The Bunchy Top Project, which is funded by the Australian banana industry with matched funds from the Federal government, has an inspection team working across the region. You may have already met inspectors in their travels.

Gardeners and hobby farmers can help in simple ways. The disease is difficult to spot particularly in its early stages, so a start is to watch a short video on You Tube that provides a good visual introduction – simply type in Bunchy Top Australia in a You Tube search.

Banana plant/s may have Bunchy Top if:

- plants are stunted in their growth
- leaves are 'bunching' rather than spreading out
- bunches are not forming or are not developing



**An infected plant**

If you think plants may be suspect, you can help us by taking photographs of:

- the whole plant or plants, showing leaves

emerging

- a close up of a younger leaf looking up towards the light to show the veins
- the stem of a leaf

They can be emailed to:-

[bunchytop@abgc.org.au](mailto:bunchytop@abgc.org.au) This will allow our inspectors to assess your plants before organising an inspection. **But please, do not spray to kill any aphids or cut plants down before an inspection.**



*The inspection of plants by two of the team, Samantha Stringer and Barry Sullivan*

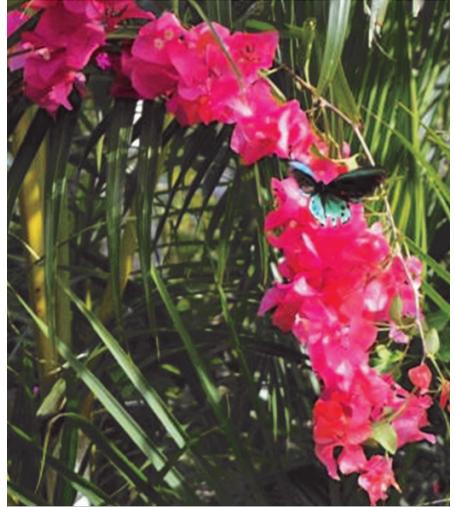
If you have a larger patch of banana plants or a small hobby plantation you can also help by making sure that they are free of weeds and any vegetation that could make inspection difficult.

"We also ask people not to share any suckers with friends or family and remind people that you must obtain a permit from Queensland Department Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry to move banana plants or planting material," David said.

"It is also important that people don't destroy plants if they think they are diseased as they could unknowingly spread the disease further – we will inspect and destroy any infected plants free of charge."

If you would like more information go to [www.bunchytop.org.au](http://www.bunchytop.org.au) or to report suspect plants call the Hotline **1800 068 371**.

**The Richmond Birdwing Butterfly** - Arguably SE Qld's most beautiful butterfly is sadly on the vulnerable species list.

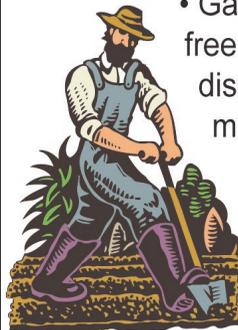


*A welcome guest to Maria's garden - note that the actual colour is an unusual green*

## The Diggers Club

Australia's largest garden club is helping gardeners grow healthier vegetables, tastier fruit and the most beautiful flowers.

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**Getting To Know  
Evelyn Douglas  
By Diane Kelly**

One of our newest Club members, Evelyn has had some wonderful experiences during her life. She has enjoyed sailing around the waters of New Zealand; she has played the piano since she was ten years old; she has travelled extensively overseas; she has had her own management consultancy business; and she has been a runner for many years. And now – probably most importantly for us – she is a gardener.

Evelyn grew up in Auckland in a time when many areas were rural that have now been built out. There were racehorse and poultry farms nearby, and the family lived on a fifth of an acre. But that block was highly productive – as Evelyn says “Mum did flowers: Dad did vegies”. Also grown were fruit trees – apples, figs and oranges. The soil was clay, so lots of compost was applied to improve its quality. There were also chickens in the backyard, raised for both eggs and meat. Evelyn remembers her mother saying “Everything in this meal is home grown”, and she regards that as an incredible legacy.

For a number of years, Evelyn was very involved with her career. This took her to England for two years, where she lived in Bristol, and where she nearly decided to stay permanently as she loved the country. But in 1987, she returned to New Zealand, and during the next year she was instrumental in the success of the New Zealand pavilion at Expo 88. This event reportedly put “Queensland on the international map”, and the NZ pavilion was so popular that people queued for up to six hours to be able to visit it.

So the childhood interest in gardening languished until about twelve years ago (apart from an unsuccessful attempt to grow some salad greens back in the 1970’s). In 2002 Evelyn moved to her current home in a quiet cul-de-sac near the golf course in Burleigh Heads. Her dream was to buy a north-facing

block where she could have her own veggie garden, and move toward being self-sufficient in much of her food. The property that Evelyn chose provided some challenges – the soil was “100% sand”, but there were no existing gardens, so Evelyn also had the opportunity to develop the block however she wanted.

Evelyn’s house is unusual in its design, with a delightful atrium in its centre that provides light and air circulation. There are gardens surrounding the house on three sides, and a recently added front deck, patio and swimming pool have provided another area that Evelyn will plant out. She will be growing gardenia bushes at each corner of the new front yard, using lots of mulch, and plenty of water, as “they seem to like wet feet”.



***The grape vines & the bird “curtain” – and CD deterrents!***

As we walked through the house and out to the back patio for our afternoon tea – no interview visit can happen without some apricot cake and a cuppa! – Evelyn mentioned that this was her favourite area to sit in the cool of the morning or evening. The deck chairs look out over one of the veggie gardens, which is protected from the hot sun by several large grape vines. They are growing on a sturdy pergola and nearly covering it. The bunches of grapes vary in quality, and Evelyn is noticing that the grape vine roots are starting to deplete the quality of the soil of the veggie garden. She plans to change the design of the garden to counteract that. Another challenge in this area are the blinds that Evelyn has installed on the pergola to stop the birds tak-

ing the grapes and robbing the tomato plants, and to protect the garden from the western sun. The blinds are effective against birds, but do create a build up of humidity, so Evelyn will be planting vegetables that can cope with that. As the block is reasonably small, Evelyn has noticed that the surrounding fences all create a build up of humidity in the back and front yards.

The vegie garden under the grape vines was established with lots of lawn clippings, horse manure, and compost. Along the northern side of the house is a 10 metre long, 1 metre wide, and 1 metre high raised garden bed (yes, I was envious!), currently home to some prolific egg-plants bushes and pumpkin vines. Evelyn filled this bed with a base of sugar cane (for volume); then lucerne, cow manure mixed with straw; soil; and then fish fertilizer. The resulting soil was so rich and contained so much nitrogen that the sweet potatoes that Evelyn planted grew vast amounts of leaves, but very few tubers. Evelyn also adds crushed egg shells and Epsom salts to her gardens at various times.



***The magnificent raised garden – egg-plants & pumpkins galore!***

At the moment Evelyn is operating three compost bins – two square black ones, and a tumbler. The stationery bins are reasonably successful, but Evelyn is aware of how much goodness leaches into the soil as the compost matures. She makes her own potting mix by combining lucerne hay with cow, chook manure and horse manure, and has

quite a number of large pots around the backyard with flowers, tropical tubers, fruit trees, agapanthus and herbs in them. Also growing in the backyard are three banana trees, a pawpaw, two red dragon fruit plants, and tomato vines. The run-off from the house roof goes into a 5,000 litre set of tanks, and the water is piped through to the vegie gardens. Evelyn can see the different effect that nitrogen-filled rainwater has on plants in difference to town water.

The fourth side of the house does not have an established garden as yet, but Evelyn is planning to put in amaranth, blueberries and hibiscus. But she admits that her time goes into the vegie garden – “flowers always come second best to vegetables”. Another plan is to continue to grow lots of herbs. Having done so much travelling in previous years, and having stayed in so many hotels, Evelyn now appreciates home cooking, and enjoys walking out and picking fresh herbs to add to her meals. Also on the “to do” list is to plant fig and persimmon trees.

Evelyn’s other interests at the moment are reading (particularly gardening books), hosting international students coming to the Coast for school, and attending gardening workshops. She still plays the piano, and regularly visits her mother who lives locally, and who has recently turned 100 years old. She plans to keep her gardens neat – she doesn’t like messy gardens – but not too formal, and she would like more shaded areas for summer cool. Evelyn would also like to join in some gardening working bees with other members of the Club – we agreed it would be a way to get to know each other, and learn about different types of plants and gardens. After the hard work gets done, we could all enjoy a BYO lunch – hopefully made up of our own home-grown food!

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Evelyn’s gardens – they are peaceful, cool and productive. It was time to leave, but I had to detour for just one more photo – so let me introduce you to the magnificent “Upright Elephant’s Ear” plant that welcomes any visitor to Evelyn’s home.

### Jill's Garden Update

Well, it was a nice idea initially, having all that rain, but sorry to be picky: it hasn't been all that kind to our garden. Sure, the trees and larger shrubs are very happy – thriving! Green and lush and needing pruning, again! No, I won't complain about them, but I have to say that the vegies are looking decidedly the worse for it all - pitiful really. I'm writing this so that new gardeners will take heart in that their sorry gardens are probably somewhat typical of gardens after deluges (and, of course, so that those of you with lovely thriving vegies can gloat and truly appreciate them even more).

Okay, to be fair, it's probably just because it's summer, and that's what they all do – go manky, to use a favourite expression, which I'd never heard till Maria said it. Despite the shade cloth and careful hand watering prior to the deluges, the compost made with love and the lucerne mulch bought at great expense...the vegies are dreadful, I have to admit.

The silverbeet are decimated with oodles of holes and black spots all over the small area of leaf left – in short, inedible! (I think I'll be too embarrassed to bring them in for analysis in a meeting to see what it is...or maybe I will – I'm desperate) Whatever else there is, such as handsome Royal Oak leaf lettuce or basil or rocket, is bolting. Oh, there is a bit of mizuna (*pictured here*), the parsley is great, and a few carrots have been overlooked by the bandicoot/rabbit that took the beets (neatly laying down the tops for me). The sweet potato is



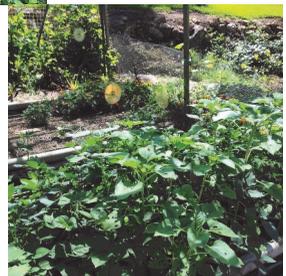
partly riddled with some sneaky little worms – help, anyone! The large, spreading patch of sorrel that was lush before the rain, became buried by surrounding plants falling down on it with the weight of water...and has stayed lying down and quietly died.

I have high hopes for the turmeric and ginger, though, all standing up strongly, and my five little asparagus plants (that were six) have continued to reward us with a nice little meal every couple of days. Thank you, you sweet things!

Meantime, some green manure is in and thriving, I'm so happy to say, earlier than last year, so maybe this year I'll get my autumn planting of brassicas in earlier, too, soon enough to mature before the onslaught of the following summer and its accompanying army of brassica annihilating bugs. I'd like to get more in yet. Isn't it a relief to feel the cooler weather beginning!



**Thriving Green Manure and you can spot the asparagus too.**



P.P.S. Okay, my next big job is now done! I wanted more garden beds ready to plant in autumn, and was determined to come to grips with all those soil additives I've been amassing, from speakers who've been coming to our meetings over the years and bringing their wonderful products for us, before planting green manure in two more garden beds. There was allroc, worm extract, purasil, palagonite, Rocky Point Mulching compost, Active 8 and mulch, vermiculite, perlite, Aussie Chook Poo, Dolph's biochar... oy, oy, oy!! Where to start?? And quantities?? Well, you get the short story (my husband got the long one). Having reluctantly removed the last of my (still producing) few incumbent vegies, and raked off the last vestiges of precious lucerne mulch, I first dug out my own compost from the box and applied it liberally (for nitrogen and carbon), with the last of my Active 8 for good measure. Then I sprinkled over the last of my palagonite and allroc (for minerals), adding a little purasil for silica (my nails need it). Since I hadn't inoculated my biochar for 12-24 hours with compost juice, I've decided it can go in when I dig in the green manure, in six weeks or so. After lightly forking this all in, I finally deposited the seeds into their magnificent beds – a few pigeon peas and cow peas and BQ mulch – covered them lightly with the re-applied lucerne mulch supplemented with a little of the organic sugar cane mulch...Of course, the end to the story was the watering in. Now, God, it's all yours.



*Jicama Yam*



*Upright Elephant's Ear" plant that welcomes any visitor to Evelyn's home.*



## HERB FARM

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## Recipes Column By Jill Barber

Here begineth the first of a new column – for those recipes we'd just love to share with others because they're so good/simple/healthy/from our garden/someone asked for it...etc. There have been so many wonderful delicacies put out on the Supper Table at our meetings over the years, and many of us would just love to be able to make those ourselves. So, please think about making that little contribution to this GCOG newsletter column: it would be lovely to have it become a standard feature.

## Kefir By Jill

I began making kefir milk a couple of weeks ago, and it is so simple to make, and so beneficial and delicious, I think, that I would love to share some of its attributes with you, as well as how to make it and some kefir grains, for those of you who would like to contact me and arrange to pick some up.

### Benefits:

The naturally occurring bacteria and yeast in kefir make it a complex symbiosis of beneficial bacterias and yeasts that combine to give superior health benefits when consumed regularly.

The live, beneficial bacteria colonize the intestinal tract, and beneficial yeasts dominate, control and eliminate destructive yeasts in the body. The small curd size of kefir makes it easy to digest and it also contains lactase, the enzyme needed to digest lactose as well as many vitamins and minerals including calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, Vitamin B2 and B12, vitamin K, vitamin A and vitamin D. It also contains Tryptophan, and essential amino acid known for it's relaxing effect on the nervous system.

1 Tablespoon of fresh milk kefir grains is enough to ferment up to 1 cup of milk every 12 to 24 hours. Kefir grains will successfully

ferment any fresh, raw or pasteurized, cow's or goat's milk into a healthy kefir drink packed with over 30 strains of beneficial bacterias and yeasts. In a short period of time, well cared for kefir grains will multiply so you will have more than enough for your own use as well as extra to share with family and friends. If you care for them correctly they will last forever.

### How to Make it:

- Place about 1 Tbs kefir grains in clean dry glass jar.
- Add ½ c fresh milk – cover with cloth & secure with rubber band.
- Let sit 24 hours to ferment; stir gently 3 or 4 times.
- Strain contents – place kefir grains + 1-2 Tbs of strained liquid + ½ c fresh milk in clean dry jar – ferment again 24 hours.

The remaining liquid can be stored in the fridge till wanted, and added to as more is made. After a week, increase the amount of fresh milk added to the grains by ¼ c, then in another week, increase it to 1 c, as the grains gradually multiply. To slow down the process if desired in summer, refrigerate as needed. The grains can be stored in the fridge in a jar in 1 1/2 -2 c milk for a week.

Use only glass and plastic utensils, not metal, and make sure to rinse off detergent well when washing utensils.

It is best to start drinking kefir gradually, to give your body time to adjust to it: start with 1-2 Tbs/day, and gradually increase by 1 Tbs/day over 2-4 weeks, until you are drinking 1 c/day.

### Bunya Nuts From Angela

My husband found some Bunya nuts last week and asked me about them - of course I had no idea, so I went to see Paul & Maria!

The large spiky cone is made of many 'pods'. Some have nuts in them, some don't and of course they vary in size. I think this has been a good year.

Paul ducked outside and came back with a cone and showed me how to pop them out of the pods - it's very easy. Opening the outer shell is a little harder.



I tried one and decided if I were to be lost in the bush they would be delicious however they wouldn't be on my dinner plate tonight.



I filled Wayne in and he collected a bucket full - he hadn't tasted them yet! He made a fire and roasted a few. They were easier to peel and they actually tasted quite good. We were visiting his parents for the weekend and took them a

large bag full. His Dad had heard a mate speak of boiling them. So in the pot they went. It was a pretty resounding 'No' from all 6 of us. We came home with a large bag (minus 6).

### Garlic From Angela

Don't forget to collect some locally grown garlic asap as it needs to go in the ground sooner rather than later.

We've talked about Garlic a lot over the years so have a look in past years around Feb/March/April for more information.

There are many guides that vary slightly in their details. I have had success with the following:-

- Separate the cloves and put them in the fridge for say 2 weeks. (This breaks the dormancy)
- Put the clove into the soil with the "base plate" about an inch or so below the surface so that the pointy end will be just below the surface
- Put each clove about 15cm apart.
- Gardening Australia says not to water until the plant has germinated. Keep the soil moist.
- Now wait at least 5 months.

If you don't get organised in time, I have planted the Giant Garlic (Elephant or Russian) as late as May with success. It is comparatively mild in flavour but I find it particularly useful when I (or my daughter in particular) am eating garlic raw eg in pesto on a sandwich.

## Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts From Diane Kelly

This is one of the months in which you make it or break for Spring. It is an important time of the gardening calendar, so plan and plant now.

No garden, no matter how large or small, should be without strawberries. Even if you don't eat them, your visitors will! Grow them in pots, tubs, baskets or beds, and this is the month to begin. They love well-rotted animal manure, compost, lime, ashes, heaps of mulch and liquid fertiliser.

Cut the runners from last year's strawberry plants and re-plant, give away, or compost. Divide old clumps, if necessary. Top-dress the bed with manure, compost, lime and mulch. Strawberries love a coat of pine needles, if available.

Among the vegetables to be planted for winter and spring is the unpretentious **onion**. Early crop seed can be sown now, but plantings can continue through to the end of June. Onions will grow under a great variety of conditions, but particularly like our moist, warm climate.

Grow from seed in boxes or sow direct and thin later. Onions do not like root disturbance and after transplanting, thinning or weeding, give a moderate-strength feed of liquid fertilizer to compensate for the shock. Mulch between the rows, for weeding onions is not the most entertaining garden chore.

Pea planting can begin now and as most gardeners know, there are few more delicious tastes than the first fresh-picked peas. Climbing peas, dwarf peas and snow peas – all can and should be cultivated. Bear in mind that they actively dislike proximity to your onions, garlic and shallots.

## FRUIT TREES

**Custard Apples:** Peak water needs. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees.

**Figs:** Net trees to protect figs from birds. Pick fruit every two days. Fertilise with 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash.

**Low shill stone fruit:** Moderate water needs.

**Lychee:** Peak water needs. Mulch trees. This is a good time to "skirt" trees (skirt-trim all growth to 500mm above ground). Prune so 20% light can be seen through trees. If Erinose mite is a problem, spray with wettable sulphur every 10 to 14 days from pin head size new growth to fully open, and harden off.

**Mango:** Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up water. Prune trees after harvest. **Pruning:** If it is a very large tree that needs to be pruned to a manageable size, the correct way is to cut back 1/3 of branches each year for three years. In the first year remove one of the largest branches, the following year remove another branch, and so on until the tree is of an acceptable shape and size. In this way you will have some fruit each year while at the same time reducing the size of the tree. Spray with copper based spray or leaf microbes for anthracnose every fortnight.

**Passion-fruit:** Keep up the water.

**Pawpaw:** Plant pawpaws in threes (thin out to strongest). Plant out seedlings as the soil is still warm and by Autumn they will be stabilised, and then be ready to get an early start for Spring. De-bud your first year trees (keep one flower to try the fruit – if you must!) Keep one male to eight female trees. Pawpaws are heavy feeders. Spray copper based spray or leaf microbes to prevent black spot.

**Persimmon:** Make sure trees are fully netted. Harvest time for early varieties.

**Strawberries:** Prepares sites for runners to

## VEGETABLES Seed Planting Guide

### FEBRUARY

Asian Greens, Beans (French, Snake), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Chilli, Choko, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Marrow, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsnip, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Silverbeet, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato.

### MARCH

Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Chilli, Endive, Garlic, Kohlrabi, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Marrow, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsnip, Peas, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Sweet Potato, Tomato.

## FLOWERS

Sweet peas – lime and organic matter, raked into the top of sandy soil and dug into heavy soil, will suit these flowers. Give them a sunny, sheltered position. Climbing sweet peas need a trellis, as they reach a height of over two metres. But there are semi-dwarf and dwarf varieties which don't require support.

Plantings of calendula begin March and continue until early winter. Grow from seed or seedlings. Bedding, borders or clumps – they are hardy, easy to maintain and will self-seed. Sprinkle the petals in soup for good health, and they can also be used as an ointment or tincture to treat wounds.

### FEBRUARY

Bedding begonias, bulbs (many prefer April though), calendula, carnations, cornflower, foxglove, Iceland poppy, larkspur, Livingstone daisy, lobelia, lupin, marigold (French), pansy, poppy, primula, snapdragon, stock, sweet pea and viola.

## HERBS Seed Planting Guide

### FEBRUARY

**Annual:** Amaranth, Basil, Dill, Herb Robert, Misome, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Italian parsley Rocket, Giant Red Mustard, Salad Mallow.

**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, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

### 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.

## Cont'd ... Fruit Trees

be planted out at the end of the month. Keep well-watered to form new runners.

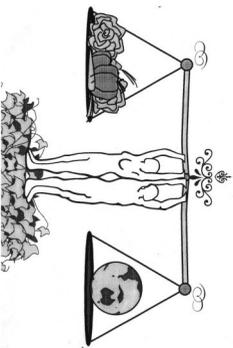
**Bananas:** Fertilise with organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg per stool. Keep up water; bag fruit; and cut off bells.

**Citrus:** Fruit thinning should be done this month. Leave one fruit every 150mm. Fertilise tree with organic fertiliser containing sulphate of potash, 1 kg for large trees and ½ kg for smaller trees. Keep up sprays of pest oil for leaf miner. Keep up the water.

*Queensland Planting Guide - B O G I*

If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:  
**GCOG, PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Q 4213**

*GOLD COAST ORGANIC  
GROWERS Inc.*



**NEWSLETTER**

**Meetings held:**  
3rd Thursday of the Month

**Meeting place:**  
Cnr Guineas Creek Road  
& Coolgardie Street  
Elanora, Gold Coast

**Next meeting:**  
Thursday 19 March 2014