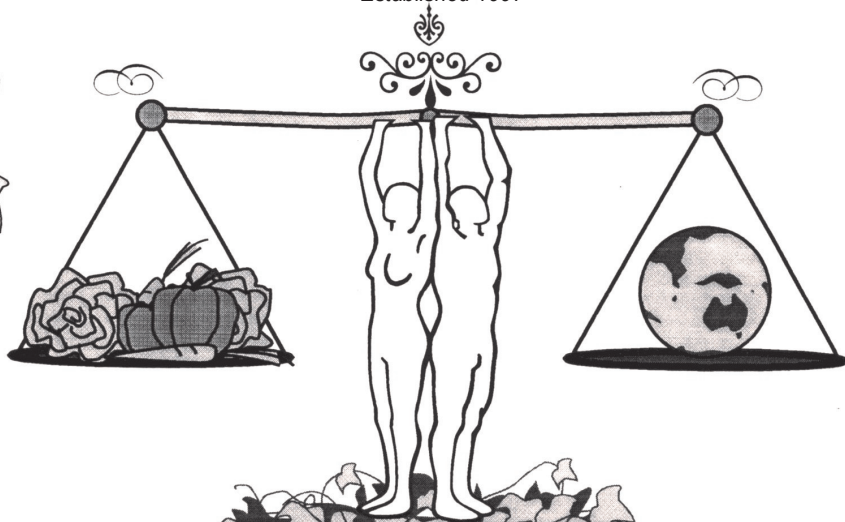


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 July 2014 Issue 6  
GARDENING IN SPRING

- |     |   |       |  |
|-----|---|-------|--|
| Pg2 | <i>Club Information</i>                                       | 10-11 | <i>Patch Updates - Cathie Hodge, The Village Garden; If You Do Nothing Else This Month - Soil</i>                                      |
| 3   | <i>Notice Board, Whar's On</i>                                |       |  |
| 4-5 | <i>President's Message, How to grow Beans &amp; Asparagus</i> | 12-13 | <i>Recipes - Lemon, Almond &amp; Starfruit Tart, Wild Rocket Dip, Beet Hummus, Nasi Kuning (Yellow Festive Rice); Mysterious Plant</i> |
| 6-7 | <i>David Freeman - Traditional Farm to Organic</i>            |       |  |
| 8-9 | <i>Getting to Know - Megan Keeler</i>                         | 14-15 | <i>Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Herbs</i>  |

**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21 August**

## 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

## 2014 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>
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Karen Hart (07) 5551 1297
Membership Sec	Diane Kelly
Membership Asst	Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
Newsletter Editor	Angela Anderson <a href="mailto:w.a.anderson@bigpond.com">w.a.anderson@bigpond.com</a> (07) 5533 0169
Newsletter Asst	Diane Kelly
Website Editor	Dorothy Coe <a href="mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au">webprint@onthenet.com.au</a>
Advertising	Dorothy Coe
Guest Speaker	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 <a href="mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com">jillbarber611@gmail.com</a>
Liaison	
Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Kerstein Trueman
Seed Bank	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Seed Assistant	Heather Ryan 5534 4047
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609

### 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, Cathie Hodge, Pauline Maxwell, Justy Rogers, Debbie Jones, Megan Keeler.

### 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:** David Wyatt & Helen Wainwright (284), Anissa Loades (228), Winsome Gunning (314), Terri Groth (125), Gaynor Allen (317), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Angela Anderson (323), Chris Larkin (141), Karen Auchere (147), Robert Faulkner (303), Lise Racine (151), Jan Wright (191), Graham Boyle & Mea Lee Khoo (211), Dorothy Winton (253), Ron Campbell (255), Eileen Turner (328), Trevor & Barbara Hewins (348), Val Sier (349)

**July:** Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Scott McCormack (334), David Freeman (352), Anna Yeomans (353)

**August:** Shelley Pryor (72), Warren & Beverly Carlson (87), Murray Olver (105), Gene Rosser (224), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Jill Barber (290), Geoffrey Williams (293), Lyn Mansfield (306), Jan Guest (307), Geraldine McDonald (354)

### Welcome to our new members:

Martin Skok, Joshua Walker & Chris Viehbok, and Lesley Freeman

### and a warm welcome back to:

Barbara Taslty

## What's On

### September

#### Real Food Festival

13th - 14th September  
\$20, kids under 16 free  
Maleny Showgrounds  
[www.realfoodfestivals.com.au](http://www.realfoodfestivals.com.au)

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

26th-28th September, 9am - 4pm  
Trail Passes \$20, dependent children free  
[www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au](http://www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au)



Slow Food® Gold Coast

An International non profit Organisation

- ◆ Defends Biodiversity
- ◆ Promotes Taste Education
- ◆ Supports Local Growers & Food Artisans

Check out [www.slowfoodfoundation.org](http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org) and International Ark of Taste.

Contact: [goldcoast.queensland@slowfoodaustralia.com.au](http://goldcoast.queensland@slowfoodaustralia.com.au)  
for details or Ph: 0412 266566

WE BELIEVE EVERYONE SHOULD  
HAVE ACCESS TO GOOD CLEAN  
AND FAIR FOOD

## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

It was a full house for last month's meeting, with everyone from first timers to the longest standing members. It is great to see such a broad and wide ranging cross section of the community interested in growing their food organically and keeping their families as healthy as they can be.

For the next three months the newsletter will be focussing on the up-coming season of spring. For those of us who live in the Sub-tropics, August is the beginning of spring, so we get a head start to one of the most prolific growing periods of the year. Over the next few weeks make the most of your gardening time by preparing soils and planning your warm season crops. Now is a good time to check your soil pH level and make adjustments if necessary. Add compost to sandy soil and gypsum to heavy clay soil. Figure out where each crop will be planted, making sure you rotate vegies around the garden beds, so nothing is planted in the same spot as last time. If you have a photographic memory you probably won't need to commit this plan to paper; however, a simple sketch could save a lot of head scratching each season.

We have taken David Freeman up on his kind offer for members to visit his family farm, on Tomewin Mountain Road in the Currumbin Valley. This will be the first club outing in a very long time, and we encourage you to come along for a great afternoon of learning and socializing. The address is 618 Tomewin Mountain Road, Tomewin; just look for the old yellow truck and vegie stall on the side of the road. Tour begins at 1pm promptly, so please be there at 12.50 pm for assembly on SUNDAY, 3rd AUGUST. I look forward to seeing you there.

Happy Growing,  
Maria.

## How To Grow Beans & Asparagus By Maria Roeberson

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

**BEANS** are considered a beginners crop; however, there are a couple of problems that can arise and can catch out any of us. We are talking specifically about French beans which can be bush or climbing varieties and are the most common bean that we grow. I always plant beans from seed because I think bean seedlings are a waste of money. Soil preparation is always important, and no matter what the crop is, it should be done. Beans like a "sweet soil", so if your soil is acid, add lime, as instructed on the back of the packet. Always pH test soils before you add lime as you may not need it. Beans require a pH of around 6.5 to 7; you are unlikely to reach a 7 on most Gold Coast soils, and you may need to work your way up the pH scale slowly each year, which is far better than trying to raise pH dramatically in a short time.

Points to watch for: plant in the correct season (warm); plant seed 8cm apart and 2 to 3cm deep; plant seed into damp soil, and do not water again until plant has poked up through the soil. Over watering at germination stage will cause the seed to rot, which is a major cause of failure when growing beans. Expected germination time is 7 to 14 days. Don't plant beans where they were previously grown. Don't use high nitrogen fertilizers as they won't set pods. Once they are up and growing, keep root zone moist in dry weather. When your first crop starts to flower, plant another row for continuing harvests. Pick beans daily for longer producing plants; if you leave beans on the plants for too long they will stop producing new pods.

**Bean Troubles:** Bean Fly is the main pest in our region, and becomes more of a nuisance in the height of summer. Symptoms include a brown marking on the stems just above soil level; you may not notice this until the plant snaps or breaks when you are picking the beans. This is caused by tunnelling larvae weakening stems. If you have a Bean Fly infestation, it is best to pull out the plants, pop them into a sealed plastic bag, leave them in the hot sun to cook, then place them in the garbage. Do not compost affected plants. If you wish to grow beans in summer, try planting snake bean as they are not susceptible to Bean Fly, and cope with the hotter conditions better.

**ASPARAGUS** is delicious, and when you eat it fresh from the garden, there is no going back to the store bought stuff. Asparagus is not hard to grow, but there are certain growing practices that make it more complicated than the average vegetable. First, it is a perennial plant that stays where it is planted for many years; I find because of this, soil compaction can be a problem in clay soils. This is why soil preparation should be thorough, and good drainage is essential. Pick a sunny spot free from shade at all times of the year and sheltered from strong winds. Liming will be necessary if the soil is very acid. You can plant from seed, but be prepared to wait three years before regular cropping can begin. Asparagus is best planted using one-year-old crowns, which can be purchased from seed catalogues. The productive life of a plant is eight to twenty years, and the expected yield per mature plant is twenty to twenty five spears, probably a bit less for those of us in the sub-tropics. Approximate time between planting one-year-old crowns and regular cutting is two years.

Plant crowns in trenches about 30cm apart and around 15 to 20cm deep by fanning out the roots; cover with half of the soil, then fill in the rest of the soil as the plants grow. Keep moist and weed free. Spears will appear soon after planting; on no account should these be cut: they must be left to develop into bushy fern-like stems. In the year after planting, little or no cutting should take place. Cutting can

begin in earnest in the second year after planting. As soon as the spears reach a height of 4-10 cm high, they should be severed at about 3 cm below the soil surface with a sharp knife. Cut every day if necessary; never let the spears grow too tall before cutting. Stop cutting in October, when all spears must be allowed to develop into fern in order to build up their reserves for next year's crop. Prune all dead foliage at the end of winter by cutting them down to ground level. Apply compost and fertilizer, and then water well for a bumper spring crop.

Top tips for growing asparagus are: keep weed free at all times; plants need to be well watered and well fed to maximise crops; mulch will be your best friend, and follow the rules if you want the best results. Above all, be patient, and don't over pick spears too early.

## The Diggers Club

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

- Heirloom vegetable & flower seeds, herbs, plants
- Gardening advice, free seeds and discounts for members



- We deliver direct to your door in QLD
- 03 5984 7900

**DIGGERS.COM.AU**

**David Freeman**  
**Traditional Farm to Organic**  
 By Jill Barber

David Freeman – Traditional Farm to Organic  
 Last month, David Freeman enthralled the GCOG meeting, with, firstly, a little of the history of his family's farm on the side of the fertile Tomewin Mountain, leading in to the techniques used now to practise sustainable farming on organic principles. It has been, and still is, a fascinating journey for them all, from the boss now, his father, Bill Freeman, to David himself, and his boys. If the latter decide to continue the farm, they will be the fifth generation on the farm.

Prior to this organic farming venture, David has already had an illustrious career and wide life experience, gaining knowledge first in Agricultural Economics and following that up with a short stint of growing vegetables and avocados on the farm. Then he changed tack to study law, being admitted finally as a Barrister of the High Court. A lengthy career came next, serving in the army as a Lieutenant Colonel (Legal Officer) for nearly thirty years, in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan, the latter in Special Forces. Having then studied International Human Rights Law at Oxford, he became a Knight of the Order of St. John.

Now he is studying towards a Diploma of Organic Farming, while working on the farm, which is in conversion, in three stages, from Conventional to Certified Organic farming. Currently the farm has fifteen acres of bananas, including Cavendish and Lady Fingers, a thousand fruit trees and two thousand square metres of organic veggies, which is expanding to five thousand, in four separate gardens. These include custard apples, paw paws and mangoes, and now coffee as well.

Theirs is the only horticultural farm left on Tomewin Mountain in the Currumbin Valley growing by organic principles, and their produce has won RNA Gold medals, and is famed for flavour, texture and nutrition. The farm has many natural assets, including a

unique micro climate between 600 and 1000 feet, warm northerly facing slopes, fertile basalt soil and 2200mm of rain annually. Summer temperatures go little higher than 27 degrees and in winter they stay around 21: perfect conditions! Besides the northerly slopes, there is some flat ground, namely, David's mother's former tennis court, which was transformed for vegetable growing. There is abundant water, including five permanent springs, which can irrigate twenty acres. As we can see, it's a prize of a farm, with an ideal aspect and soil, well worth keeping in the family for many generations to come.

David's motivation for converting to organic farming began long ago, when he first began to study agricultural practices and principles, though the actual move was started just five years ago, after he acquired more in depth knowledge and could apply it. Conventional farming methods involve a vicious cycle, he feels, where the nutrients are degraded and spraying is thereby needed many times for fruit and vegetables without the strength to repel diseases. The use of chemicals is systemic, and leads to an increase in the incidence of cancer and leukaemia, he asserted.

In contrast with that, they are taking a complete organic approach: no insecticides, pesticides or herbicides are used on the farm. Certified organic compost is added, as well as 20% basalt crusher dust, containing micronutrients, which unlocks phosphorous, potassium and so on, and 25kg of worm poo per acre. Currently, the soil has 12% organic matter, and they are building it to 20%, which is especially needed for the big feeding avocados. In addition, lime is added to achieve a 6.5 pH. They are aiming to get the soil minerally and biologically perfect. Companion planting includes garlic with parsley, and white eggshells in the brassicas to dissuade white cabbage moths. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is practised. Also, biological controls are employed, utilising the fact that "good insects eat bad insects". \* Within three years they are working towards full organic certification, which will by then include the rest of the farm as well.

*\*Bugs for Bugs by Dr. Richard Llewellyn*

## About the Farm & Tourist Drive

Arthur Freeman Lookout

## Freeman's Farm Fruit & Vegetables

Always Farm Fresh

### Gold Coast Scenic Drive

From the Gold Coast Highway or Pacific Motorway, follow the signs to Currumbin Creek Road and enjoy a scenic drive through the Valley until you come to the Tomewin Mountain Road turn-off on the left (sign-posted 'Murwillumbah').

Freeman's Farm is on the right near the top of the range, where you'll see the bright yellow fruit and vegetable truck.

Continue on past Arthur Freeman Lookout and into Murwillumbah to visit the Tweed River Art Gallery and other local attractions, returning along beautiful Tomewin Mountain Road to view the Cougal Cascades in the Mount Cougal section of Springbrook National Park.

### What We Sell

A beautiful drive through Currumbin Valley brings you to Kianga Plantation, the Freeman's fresh fruit and vegetable farm. Look for the yellow farm truck. There is a range of seasonal fruit and vegetables fresh from the farm.

#### Fruit and vegetables include:

Bananas (New Guinea Cavendish and Lady Fingers all year), Custard Apples, Avocados (all year) Tomatoes, Various Root Vegetables, Cabbage, Pineapple, Mandarins and other seasonal fruits and vegetables.



**Tourist Information**  
On Tomewin Mtn Road, just before Arthur Freeman Lookout, you will see the Freeman's yellow fruit and vegetable truck. Views from the truck are stunning.

Where to find us  
618 Tomewin Mtn Road  
Currumbin Valley, Qld  
Phone: 07 5533 0119  
Mob: 0438 777 763  
E: davidgowerfreeman@bigpond.com

Other points of interest are the four-bed rotation, using green manure, such as combinations of oats and vetch, rye grass and Haifa White Clover. These green manures are then cut with a mulcher mower, and rotary hoed back into the soil to give it valuable organic matter. Ground cover under the fruit trees includes pinto peanuts, legumes, rye grass, clover and lab lab beans, which is a summer growing legume. These all become green manure in time. The organic seedlings are purchased as large wholesale orders from Seedlings Organic (Luke Sansom at Tintenbar) and from "Farmer's Choice Organic Seedlings" in Murwillumbah (0449 106 306).

The farm already sells to a large local com-

munity stretching from Murwillumbah to Coomera, and many tourists who take the scenic drive through Tomewin Mountain. The farm also supplies organic produce to Cabarita Ocean Retreat, and a number of organic cafes on the Gold Coast. As for marketing, by 2015, they aim to have a coffee house also at their market/roadside stall, which is already well known by their famous yellow truck. It certainly sounds like a farm that is worth visiting (see details following)!

We were all very inspired by David's presentation of the farm's history and the whole conversion to organic farming venture. David's thorough and systematic approach to organics is to be applauded, and his sharing it all with us was very much appreciated.

## Getting To Know - Megan Keeler By Diane Kelly

There are some people that you just *know* have had interesting lives – and our “Getting to Know” gardener for this month is certainly one of them.

Megan Keeler was born in California, and because of her father’s job, lived and travelled in exotic places such as Brazil and Ecuador. Megan’s early memories are of surfing, snow skiing, hiking and camping – and enjoying the local foods. There was also horse-riding – and in California this often meant exploring through orchards of almonds and stone fruit – bird-watching, and berry picking. Each summer there were blueberries and blackberries to collect, as well as wild strawberries. Then, at the age of sixteen, Megan had the opportunity to be an exchange student. She spent a year in Australia (and fell in love with the country – especially the beaches), and then returned to the US to study for a pre-law degree. Then Megan came back to Australia, and in 1988 she became an Aussie citizen.

Megan’s first home in Australia was in Wonthaggi, which is a coastal town 130 kilometres from Melbourne. Although she describes the area as “cold and rainy”, Megan would go surfing there – and it was also here that she created her first garden. Although without any family background of gardening, Megan had always been interested in nature – and in the over-grown area of the backyard, she discovered an apricot rose bush by accidentally mowing over it. It grew back vigorously and produced lovely, strongly-scented flowers, and this was the beginning of an interest in plants. The example of an Italian family next door provided the motivation to create her own vegetable patch, and after clearing away all the long grass, Megan discovered that the soil was good. Corn was her most successful crop at that time, and food production has continued to be Megan’s main reason for gardening since then.

Then Megan watched a Bill Mollison video, and as someone who gets fully absorbed in her interests and learning about them, she

began to read about permaculture and growing food organically. After moving to Port Macquarie in the mid 90’s, the combination of roses and vegetables continued. Megan was given a rose bush called “Double Delight”, and wanted to create a perfumed garden. She ended up with a rose garden encircled by her vegetable patch, and had enough bushes to make her own rose oil. The soil of this house was also good, with a clayish base, good drainage and a northerly aspect. Megan’s goal was to create her own micro-climate.

Megan tells the story of “The Rose Garden and the Chooks”. She had some white Leghorn hens (she wanted white eggs for painting Easter eggs for her children) and some Australorps and Isa Browns, and their pen was up the slope from the rose garden. With the run-off from the chook-yard, Megan noticed that over a period of time the size of the rose blooms tripled in size.

Whilst living in Port Macquarie, Megan began to grown sub-tropical plants - turmeric, Yukon, mangoes, acerolas, taro and sweet potatoes (which were given to her by her Solomon Island neighbours). She ended up having over 40 fruit trees producing tropical and native bush foods, and the entire property crammed with edibles – Megan regards her time in Port Macquarie as her “practice run” in self-sufficiency. During that time, Megan was also reading widely – anything herbal, multi-cultural or medicinal caught her attention – and travelling to some remote corners of South East Asia, including visiting Thailand, Malaysia and Sumatra (to go surfing). Megan ate exclusively local food, fascinated by the ingredients. The impact of this travelling is very evident in Megan’s current garden.

In October 2012, Megan moved to the Gold Coast – again her love of the beach was a motivation – and this has given her the chance to agist her horse at the local horse-riding club. Megan’s current home has a long, glassed verandah which provided a delightful sun-trap area for us to have our “cuppa & cake”, and chat about all things gardening. The yard had an established garden when Megan moved in, and while some of the



steeper areas remain as they were, others are gradually being turned over to Megan's interest in becoming as self-sufficient as she can with food, and also producing medicinal plants, and herbs and spices. Megan's landlords are supportive of what she is achieving, and have helped with creating garden beds as well as providing trellising for the passionfruit and a couple of compost tumblers.



### ***Compost in the making!***

In part of the original garden, Megan has planted sweet potatoes for both their weed-prevention and food values. There are a few other food plants in that area – in particular a tub of potatoes plants that are looking good. The planting material for those has come from the pony club, where an area of manure had rotted down into soil. Megan includes the horse manure with the other materials in her two compost tumblers – these are low, black bins that seem easier to turn than the traditional model. Prior to the arrival of the tumblers, Megan used informal trench composting, which she found to be easy, quick and always providing lovely surprises in the form of vigorous plants springing from the newly improved soil.

Megan's main gardening focus now is the front yard – the vegetable-growing half of it is enclosed with pool fencing, which keeps out the local bush turkeys! The original soil here was sandy and very compacted – basically un-diggable. So Megan has created a mandala-shaped raised garden area, and here she grows several types of turmeric, three types

of gal gal, ginger and torch ginger, chillies, and herbs (basil, lemon basil, garlic chives, lemon grass, thyme and coriander). There are also other more traditional vegetables doing well in this area – the soil is now moist and rich-looking, and there is the largest passionfruit vine I've ever seen. This vine, plus a number of large trees, does create more shade for the garden than Megan would like, but she is planning on gradually reducing the taller items, and turning the whole front yard over to food-producing plants. There are already lemon, guava, lime, Davidson plum, star fruit, papaya, black mulberry and mango trees growing, as well as a tapioca plant, a Thai egg-plant, pineapples and a pandan plant (used in South East Asia as a sweet flavouring). Megan also has kaffir limes in pots, as she uses the fruit a lot in the Indonesian foods she makes, and there is a large patch of Ceylon spinach (the original plant came from our gardening club) which Megan loves – including having as a raw snack.



### ***Baked potatoes in the making!***

So what about the future? Apart from one day pulling out the hedge of mock orange bushes along the front of the house and making a perfect north-facing garden for espaliered fruit trees, Megan is planning to move to her own property. This will need to be acreage, both for space to keep her horse, and to give Megan the chance to grow the food and medicinal plants in which she is so interested, and which she uses so successfully in her cooking. Megan has kindly shared with us her recipe for Nasi Kuning. Enjoy!!

## Patch Updates

**Cathie Hodge - June 2014**

Well, apparently 6 months have gone by since I described my gardening & bush regen efforts in the November 2013 GCOG newsletter. So, what's been happening since then?

Sadly, on the gardening & bush regen front, not a lot actually. But fortunately, my GC-Permaculture-style lasagne beds have happily kept producing, without too much interference from me. I have continued to harvest plenty of perennial subtropical greens, edible weeds ('wild edibles' if you want to be posh), self-seeding tomatoes, herbs & self-seeding annual greens, pumpkins & chokos (plus the tips of both plants). I've also lately been enjoying pawpaws, passionfruit, citrus, guavas & a few other fruits.



### *Part of my neglected garden*

And why have I been so negligent? (It wasn't intentional). I embarked on a course in Holistic Management (HM) in August 2013, and haven't quite managed to complete it yet. Despite the very worthwhile & very practical assignments that have demanded a huge amount of time & attention, it has been the most stimulating & paradigm-shifting course I have ever undertaken. I have loved every minute of it.

Many people think that HM is all about grazing management, but it is far bigger than that. It teaches participants (not necessarily farmers) to make *all* decisions from a holistic perspective, because all of our decisions have an impact on this precious earth, other people & our finances.

Obviously I can't summarise a course like this in a short article. However, below are a few links that will give an insight into the power & pleasure of managing holistically. (Hopefully, I'll return to more active gardening soon!)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zavLvBU9iwl>  
 – a 6-minute film about Holistic Management at work, including interviews with people who now manage holistically.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpThi7O66pl>  
 – a TED talk by Allan Savoury who, over many years, developed the framework for managing holistically.

<http://www.insideoutsidemgt.com.au/holistic-management> – website for *Inside-Outside Management*, the business of Brian Wehlburg & Helen Lewis who are certified Holistic Management trainers.

<http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/how-wolves-change-rivers/> – this is not specifically about managing holistically, but I always like to throw it in. It so beautifully illustrates one of the tools advocated by HM – predator-prey relationship & animal impact. Very inspiring!

## The Village Garden - June 2014

The children that participated in the “No-Dig Garden” demonstration that I wrote about in the May newsletter planted out about thirty-five lettuces – a mixture of cos, mignonettes, butter-nuts and “frilly ones”. They also planted two rows of sugar snap pea seeds.

Well, the lettuces were a good size within a month, and have now been shared among the local families, and those of the Playgroup that meets in the Uniting Church hall where the Village Garden is located. The sugar snap peas are growing well up their trellises – I saw

a notice at Nerang the other day that recommended pinching out any early flowers until the plants reach the size you want, so that future yield is increased. So I'm doing that with half of the plants, and we'll see what happens.

The other exciting garden patch belongs to the Pontiac potatoes. These are now about 75cms tall, and I've had to mulch them several times to cover the growth – these are the ones that are being grown without soil.



The broccoli is finished, but the Tommy Toe tomatoes are coming through well. In the beds that had the lettuces I have now planted out silver beet and cabbages – with some coriander, interspersed because I also read recently that coriander keeps away the white cabbage moth. I've also planted out some kale and some more lettuces. The egg-plants are still producing, and the carrots now need thinning, and we've started to harvest the beetroot – and the sweet peas are finally flowering.

When I was planting out the seedlings and mulching the gardens on the weekend, a lady from the local craft group came along with her Bokashi composting bucket, as she wanted to contribute the contents to our compost heap. Instead we decided to add it to the garden bed that had the broccoli, and which I am now resting, adding compost and lucerne mulch. So we pruned, fertilized and mulched so that garden bed now looks good. As author Clare Ansberry wrote "gardens & flowers have a way of drawing people together".

### If You Do Nothing Else This Month ... From Diane Kelly

Last month we looked at planning and diaries – this month we need to:

**Focus on the Soil**, and there are three parts to this month's hint:

**Add some compost to your soil:** The ingredients of your compost heap should be as varied as possible, and attention should be given to the carbon/nitrogen ratio; the amount of moisture in the heap; and the provision of air to the compost.

A carbon/nitrogen (C/N) ratio of 30/1 is generally considered most effective; the moisture content of your compost should be like that of a squeezed-out sponge; and your compost heap should be aerated by turning it once the temperature of the heap reaches 65-70 degC.

**Do a Ph test on your soil:** Adding compost is a simple way of providing the nutrients your plant needs. **However ....** whether your plants can access these nutrients largely depends on the acidity or alkalinity of the soil, or its pH.

Soil pH is measured on a scale of 1-14. The lower the number, the more acidic or sour the soil; the higher the number, the sweeter or more alkaline the soil. Soil that measures 7 on the pH scale is said to be neutral, and most vegetables prefer soils with a pH of between 6 or 7, since this is the level at which the majority of nutrients they require are readily available to them.

So borrow a pH test kit from the Club library, read up on how to treat the condition of your soil, and give your soil a boost.

**If all else fails, sow some green manure:** If you are too busy, too tired, or just too confused at this stage to make compost, or add fertilizers, or plant out seeds, at least sow some green manure. Green manure is a mixture of seeds that will produce a crop specifically grown to be incorporated back into the soil for its nutrients and organic material.

*Continued pg 15 ...*

### From Justy Rogers

This recipe is based on one of Sheridan's, from her book "Food Year" (pg 12), but I just adapted it for the fruit on our farm currently in season namely starfruit and passionfruit (and limes):

#### Lemon, Almond & Starfruit Tart

- 1 x 23cm prepared shell, baked blind
- 90g unsalted butter
- 180g castor sugar
- 3 eggs, whisked or beaten
- juice and zest of 1.5 lemons
- 70g blanched almonds
- carambolas (starfruit) and the juice and seeds of one passionfruit (optional) to decorate

Preheat oven to 180C.

Melt butter over a low heat.

Add sugar, beaten eggs, lemon juice and zest. Cook, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens to a custard consistency.

Pour into the partially baked pastry shell. Finely slice starfruit and arrange on top. Sprinkle with passionfruit juice and seeds. Bake for about 35 mins or until top is slightly glazed. Cool slightly before serving or serve at room temperature.

Remove from heat, add the ground almonds. Enjoy!

### From Debbie Jones

Currently have lots of beet and rocket in the garden so have made these to recipes this month!!

#### Wild Rocket Dip

- 1 large block of danish fetta
- 2 gloves of garlic
- 50 to 100grams of fresh rocket
- 3 table spoons of olive oil



Mix in blender to soft and creamy

#### Beet Hummus

- 2 large beets
- 1 can Chickpeas (15 oz)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 large garlic cloves (minced)
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt

Cut beetroots into 1/2 inch cube and place in a double broiler and steam until tender (with lid on).

In a food processor, add remaining ingredients. When the beets are cool enough to handle, add them to the food processor and Purée all ingredients.



### From Megan Keeler

#### Nasi Kuning (Yellow Festive Rice)

- 2 cups rice – jasmine or basmati; medium grain; white
- 1½ cups watery stock (vegetable or chicken)
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 large "finger" (2-3 Tbls) fresh turmeric - Blend until turmeric is pulverised
- 1 stalk lemongrass - bruised & tied in a knot
- 2 kaffir lime leaves
- (Optional: 1 pandan leaf tied in a knot, and 1-2 "duan salam" leaves (*eugenia/syzygium polyanthum*))

Combine liquid & herbs. Quickly fry rice in 1 tablespoon coconut oil, add liquid mix. Bring to an active simmer, then cover and put heat on low for absorption. Cook until rice is tender, add extra liquid if needed. Fluff with fork.

Serve with: lemon basil, fried crispy shallots (Asian) and any form of chilli – fresh sliced, sambal or chilli jam.

**PS Next Month: Spicy Spinach (kangkung belacan) !**

## Mysterious Plant From Pauline Maxwell

*Now here's something I've never come across before.*

After years of tending plants where I live in the riparian area of Currumbin Valley in sub-tropical south-east Queensland, I love the surprises I find in my garden. Wherever I spread my home-grown compost, or hand-cut mulch over the soil surface, not only do the purchased seedlings flourish, but self-seeding lettuces, marigolds, nasturtiums and tomatoes also pop up.

*But this new plant has me beaten.*  
I've learnt to identify most plants and weeds. A variety of beautiful ferns and a native grass have emerged from the seed bank under our verandas and our large deck. From time to time a Sandpaper Fig will appear, and as it is a major tree, I transplant the odd specimen down to the creek bank.

No longer does the Giant Devil's Fig, Tobacco Plant, Fireweed or Cobblers' Pegs linger in my planted beds where they can distribute seed. They know better than to hide in my garden. I know the removal of noxious varieties of weeds, when seedlings, is a lot easier than when they attain height and deep tap roots.

*I study the leaf pattern of the dark, glossy green leaves and decide to let it grow.*  
And grow it did - on the west side of our western tank, alongside the greenway, where many people have asked what it was. Some plant experts have looked and scratched their heads. One thought it was a weed, as it wasn't a plant he recognised. A few suggestions were made, but Google pictures proved them wrong.

Two months ago I took a branch from the then two-metre high tree to the local Organic Growers group. In front of sixty people I displayed my sample and gave a description of its height and location. The blank looks on the many faces returned a negative response.

'I'm hoping this is a rare or endangered rain forest species which has not been sighted in centuries,' I suggested. With a twinkle in my eye, I admitted, 'I hope I become famous and appear on the front page of the local paper as someone who has discovered a plant the experts thought was extinct.'

'Why don't you send a sample to the Herbarium at the Queensland Botanical Gardens?' a friend suggested. 'They have a service which identifies plants.'

I Googled the Queensland Herbarium site, read the instructions and downloaded the application form. I had to supply lots of details as well as leaf, flower or fruit samples. The leaves were to be dried between sheets of newspaper for at least a week.

I followed the process, changing the newspaper, pressed under two telephone books, each day. My specimen had no flowers or fruit as it was an immature plant. The bark was interesting. I held a sheet of white paper against the rippled texture of the trunk and rubbed a lead pencil over to show the unusual surface. My man took some photos of the then two- and-a-half metre high 'tree'. All the

information went into a large cardboard envelope which I had to sign, to declare "no dangerous goods" were included. It was with a sense of excitement and intrigue I posted it in the mailbox.

A week later, the answer came back with an official Queensland Government letterhead from the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. "The botanical specimen received by the Queensland Herbarium on June 13, 2014 has been identified as:  
*\*Phytolacca dioica*  
\* Naturalised non-native species.

Thank you for participating in the weed detection project."

I was disappointed. My dream to be famous was shattered.

*Continued pg 14 ...*

### Continued from pg13 - Mysterious Plant

I investigated the botanical name. To my surprise, this plant is a native to the Pampas of South America, commonly known as Ombú. It is considered a bush, the size of a tree - and what a size! It has an umbrella-like canopy that spreads to a girth of up to fifteen metres, and the tree can grow up to twenty metres. The rippled effect of the trunk is "an anomalous secondary thickening rather than wood" meaning the trunk is soft and spongy and is easy to cut. The rooting system resembles that of a giant fig. I learnt the creamy-yellow flowers grow in clusters which droop with the weight of berry-like fruits which turn from green to black resembling a mulberry. The tree is recognised as a herb and the berries are used to control high blood pressure.

With all this information, I imagined this tree growing to a size where it would tip over the water tank, which was only a metre from the trunk. So with mixed feelings, my man and I pruned off the healthy branches and bow-sawed the trunk into a "V" near the roots and applied a chemical to stop its progress.

I ponder the mystery of how the seed came to be in the soil. Maybe the migrating birds from South America fly here for the winter. Maybe it was carried in the pocket of a South American gaucho who travelled to Australia as a tourist, visiting this part of the Queensland hinterland. Maybe a refugee from Uruguay or Argentina brought some seeds of the tree, which is a symbol of these countries, hoping to have one grow in his new homeland.

And I wonder if I will ever find one of those seedlings again.

*Some information retrieved from Wikipedia / *Phytolacca dioica*.*

©Pauline Maxwell 19062014

### FRUIT TREES

**Custard apple:** Harvest every 3 or 4 days as fruit matures. Don't let trees dry out. Apply garden lime to soil – 20 grams per sq m to drip line – for example, a mature tree, 1kg.

**Figs:** Keep well mulched.

**Lychee:** Do not let trees dry out. Minimal watering is needed. Check emerging flowers for flower caterpillars. If more than ½ are infested, spray with pyrethrum or garlic spray.

**Low chill stone fruit:** Peak water needs. Water trees 2 weeks before flowering and 3 weeks later. In late July start blossom thinning. Winter prune late varieties. 50g of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash added per sq m to drip line of trees. Mature trees – 1 kg.

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

**Passion-fruit:** Don't let the vines dry out. Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp sprays every month. Small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash can be applied for vines. Large vines – 1 kg; small vines – ½ kg.

**Pawpaw:** Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Use copper based sprays or leaf microbes if black spot is about. Pick fruit at mature stage with ½ colour to have full flavour.

**Persimmon:** Minimal water required at this time.

**Strawberries:** Feed with organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash. Spray fish emulsion and kelp regularly over plants to keep in good health. This will prevent fruit rot. Pick fruit when fully ripe. Keep plants fully watered, but try not to wet the berries. This will also prevent fruit rot. Mulch plants so the berries do not lie on the soil. Pine needles are best for this.

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

**Citrus:** Pick mature fruit when fully ripe. Keep up irrigation.

## VEGETABLES

### JULY:

Asian greens, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Carrot, Celery, Celeriac, Cucumber, Endive, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Marrow, Onion, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow pea, Strawberry, Tomato.

### AUGUST:

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



## HERB FARM

Michael & Sandra Nanka  
491 Springbrook Rd  
MUDGEERABA. 4213

**Opening times:** Mondays, Tuesdays and the 3rd weekend of the month.  
9 am – 4 pm

**Phone:** (07) 5530 3253  
**www.herbcottage.com.au**

- ◆ Culinary, Fragrant and Medicinal Herbs
- ◆ Vegetable and Herb Seeds
- ◆ Craft, Herb Vinegars, Jams & Preserves
- ◆ Essential & Fragrant Oils, & lots more

## HERBS

### JULY

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

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

### AUGUST

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

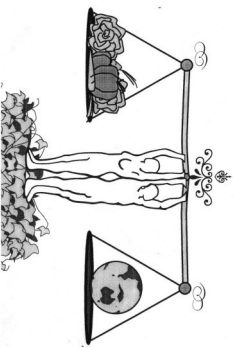
**Perennials & Bi-Annuals:** Catnip, Chicory, Chives, Perennial Coriander, Fennel, Hysop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

**Continued from pg11**  
**What to do if you do nothing else ...**

Grow; slash just prior to flowering; and then dig the greens back into the soil (or, if you have a no-dig garden, leave on top as a layer). So rather than leave bare soil in your garden, let some barley, millet, alfalfa, clover and buckwheat look after your garden for you.

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 21 August 2014