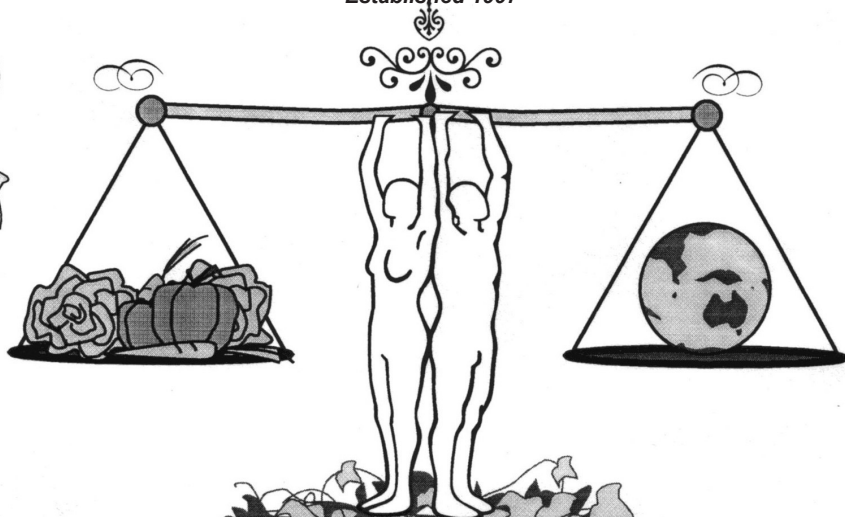


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 24 - MARCH 2020 Issue 3  
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16th APRIL 2020

## 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 \$2 members, \$5 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 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**

### 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:** \$15 an issue, or \$145 per year,

**1/2 page:** \$25 an issue, or \$250 per year,

**full page:** \$40 an issue, or \$400 per year,

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

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/gcorganic](http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic)

## 2020–2021 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Diane Kelly 0403 473 892
Treasurer	Diane Kelly 0403 473 892
Secretary	Deb Phillips 0422 680 784 <a href="mailto:debraps@gmail.com">debraps@gmail.com</a>
Assistant Sec	Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
Membership Sec Membership Asst	Diane Kelly Penny Jameson
Newsletter Editor Newsletter Assts.	Leah Johnston <a href="mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com">leahbryan9@gmail.com</a> Diane Kelly Jill Barber
Website Editor Social Media E.	Jorge Cantellano Pete Sypkens
Grants	Stacey Panozzo 0406 007 583 <a href="mailto:staceypanozzo1@gmail.com">staceypanozzo1@gmail.com</a> Lyn Mansfield
Guest Speaker Liaison	Leah Johnston <a href="mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com">leahbryan9@gmail.com</a> Stacey Panozzo
Librarians	Evelyn Douglas Sally Beitz
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield Maggie Golightly Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson Deb Phillips Dianne Casey
Veggie Swap Co-ordinator	Dorothy Coe

**Newsletter Contributions** are welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch or write an article about something interesting you've learnt recently. **Deadline for contributions is two weeks before the meeting.** Send articles and photos to Leah at [leahbryan9@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com)

## 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 (the number in brackets after your name) in the comment field.**

**Overdue (as of March 9):** John Palmer (357), Denise Goodwin (335), Barry O'Rourke (185), Penny Jameson (201), Danny Li (384), Bill Smart (386)

**March:** Angela Anderson (323), Lana Beloff (363), Maggie Golightly (365), Rachael Lebeter (367), Tricia Oh (368), Beverly Geraghty (404), Elizabeth Grippo (405), Stacey Panozzo (420), Rebecca Bowen (422), Christine Yeomans (433), Peter & Patricia Edwards (447), Ashley Corpaci (448), Michele Miller (449)

**April:** Kerstein Trueman (346), Sue Beckinsale (373), Nancy Hageman (388), Elizabeth Hughes (389)

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

April 16 - Colin Johnson from Earthlife (with soil conditioner products to buy)

May 21 - Cathie Hodge bushfire talk

June 18 - Renee Hillier from Love Thy Earth recycling talk

July 16 - Professor Rob Capon 'Cane Toads'

August 20 - TBC

To suggest a speaker you think our members may enjoy please contact Leah Johnston via email: [leahbryan9@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com)

## Workshops

### Gardening Lunch – all welcome

We meet monthly for lunch and have a chat. 11 am to 2 pm – at a trendy café somewhere (any recommendation welcomed)

If you would like to know when the next lunch is on email Lyn Mansfield

[Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)

Mobile – 0409 645 888

### EdibleScapes

Working bee 11 April 8:30am.

Including an information section on Edible Garden Promoters.

More info at: [www.facebook.com/pg/n.ediblescapes/events](https://www.facebook.com/pg/n.ediblescapes/events)

If you have a free event you would like us to share in our newsletter please let us know about it by sending the details to: [leahbryan9@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryan9@gmail.com)

**View our Newsletters On-Line or Collect at our Meetings:-**

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

**Thanks to this month's contributors:**

Jill Barber, Jorge Cantellano, Leah Johnston, Diane Kelly.



GCOG MEMBERS  
**NEWSLETTER**  
CONTRIBUTIONS

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS  
DUE THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH**

Send your content to  
Leah at:  
[leahbryang@gmail.com](mailto:leahbryang@gmail.com)

## February Meeting Q&A

By Leah Johnston

We held our Annual General Meeting at our February meeting where the previous committee members were thanked for their service and a new committee was nominated. Many members have continued their roles and a few new members have joined the committee. Thank you to everyone, our club couldn't run without all of your efforts.

We then enjoyed a Q&A session and discussed the following...

Avocados don't like wet feet when they are young; some members have lost trees after the recent flooding rains. Stacey had asked Phil Dudman about it previously and he said he puts green shade cloth around the trees to protect them from too much sun during their first few years of growing. Also, don't let the grass clippings build up and touch the trunk.

For indoor plants that aren't doing well: Margaret cuts back about half of the bad leaves and puts them outside in the shade, waters them well and lets the bugs come and eat any pests on the leaves.

For pumpkins that aren't growing fruit: they always set the male flowers first for three weeks or more before any of the female fruit come. You'll notice them as they have the little mini pumpkin underneath the flower. If they are falling and dropping off they aren't being pollinated early enough in the morning by the bees. If it's raining in the morning the bees won't be there and you'll miss them getting pollinated. When the runners are a metre long pinch out the growing tip to

encourage more lateral growth and branching and continue tip pinching when every branch becomes a metre long. If you've missed the metre mark, just pinch it off at the growing tip; don't cut it back to a metre mark.

Pete Sypkens asked about cucumbers. Maria said you can pinch one and leave one and see what grows best for you.

Fruit flies: Pauline used organza on her pink Iona grapes to protect them from all the pests. She used to use old curtains from op shops but couldn't find any this year and used the organza and found it was better.

"The Biggest Little Farm" movie was recommended by members who have seen it.

What to do with an abundance of star fruit: Don't compost if they have fruit fly larvae in them as you will spread it throughout your garden. Margaret said solarise them in black plastic garbage bags in a thin layer in the sun and it will kill the fruit fly eggs and larvae. Then they can go in the compost or on the garden and cover them with mulch. If you think it's reached 70 degrees in there it's ready (you could check with a compost thermometer). It should only take one full sunny day. Or you can drown them in water. Margaret said to prune it so you get less fruit next year and with a smaller tree you'll be able to net the fruit. Prune it so that birds can fly between the branches and will be able to eat some of the pests. But don't prune now because the trunks will be burnt if you expose them.

Mulch: You can use fresh mulch straight away on top; just don't dig it into the soil unless it's composted. If you dig fresh bark chip into the soil it takes too much nitrogen out of the soil and the microbes

will eat it. That's the difference between a compost and a mulch. Compost gets dug into soil; mulch sits on top.

**February Meeting Speaker**  
By Leah Johnston

GCOG member Mark Pickard talked about catch and store wicking systems and olla pots.

If the soil layers were working properly and storing the water effectively from the recent downpours, we wouldn't have droughts, but they aren't, so we can use wicking beds to create our own drought-proof gardens.

When making a wicking bed, don't forget to have an overflow pipe or your plants will drown in the swamp.

"The beauty of the system is: we are watering up, not down. So we can top it with a thick layer of mulch as we aren't relying on rain water to water downwards. When your plants are very young they will need top watering. Plants are sentient beings: they will find where the water is very quickly," Mark said.

Mark finds 10mm size gravel is best. The finer the gravel the better the capillary action is. Washed coarse sand is also very good. Ensure your ground is level so you get an even spread of water. Line with two layers of weed mat and one of builders' plastic, but below the level of the soil as the heat and sunlight will break it up. Slotted aggie pipe is held in place with bricks and topped with sand. Plumbers white geo fabric protects the sand from the soil. Check that the water rises through the sand and stays there; otherwise, you'll have a leak and it's not going to work. The constant level of

moisture in the soil will be drawn on by the plant.

In summer, Mark refills the wicking beds' water every three weeks. He can reach his hand into the pipes to feel if more water is needed.

After harvesting, he broad-forks the beds with a blunt fork so it won't break through the fabric layer. Then he tops them up with more layers of mushroom compost, horse manure and topsoil.

After experimenting with different sized wicking beds, his preference is to use 3m sleepers that are 50mm wide and 200mm deep.

Any container can be turned into a wicking system. Any wicking bed will work well, provided you maintain the water level. You need to be checking it every ten days or so. You don't want to wait until the plants tell you they are dry as it will take a long time to recover the beds if they get dry.

Depending on what crops you want to grow, you might want to add washed river sand to the soil to improve drainage for plants that don't want to be too wet.

Mark showed us the ancient technology of olla pots: terracotta pots that are buried beside trees and plants and filled with water which slowly leaches into the soil and is drawn up by the plants' roots. Mark has made his own system, using terracotta pots from Bunnings. He just seals the hole in the bottom with a terracotta saucer, using 'no more nails'. You can connect the system of pots to a water reservoir with irrigation pipe and fittings, then you have an automatic system and won't need to manually refill each pot: just check your tank always has some water in it.



**Kathleen Golder -  
Centenarian and Gardener**  
By Diane Kelly

Last week I noticed an item on the ABC internet news about Kathleen Golder that caught my attention... "Wine, **GARDENING** and gratitude are this 100-year-old's secret to a long, happy life." I've now found that a segment of last week's Gardening Australia program brought us the story of when Tino went to visit Kathleen in her South Hobart garden.

Kathleen Golder celebrated her century of life on February 25 and has now got her telegram from the Queen. Kathleen comes from a long line of vegetable gardeners – both of her grandfathers were gardeners and so she "grew up on the best fruit and vegetables". One of her grandfathers was head gardener for Lord Tollemache at Peckforton Castle near Tarporley in Cheshire, UK and he looked after 22 gardens, including the large vegetable gardens, orchards and extensive glasshouses. Kathleen was actually born in the gardener's cottage in the middle of the gardens.

Kathleen is the mother of ten children and has "so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren that she has lost count". She survived the Depression in England and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (serving as a policewoman during the five years when her husband was a prisoner in Poland). Then she and her husband Peter moved to Australia in 1953. Living in various places in out-back Queensland, Kathleen always developed gardens to help feed her family. She commented "Feeding a family from home-grown produce was no small feat. We had meal after meal, dinner after dinner from the garden."

Kathleen has been a vegetarian since before the War and brought her children up similarly – "they went to school with not cornflakes in their stomachs but a cabbage salad and a baked potato."



**Kathleen as a police-woman during WWII**

In the 1980's, Kathleen and Peter moved to northern Tasmania to help their son start a vineyard. Then in her early 70's, Kathleen propagated thousands of vine cuttings... and yet again started a large veggie garden. Then, after ten years at the

vineyard, the couple moved to South Hobart and then set to work digging up the lawn of their new quarter acre block. Another veggie garden was planted – and this one Kathleen has been tending ever since.

With her daughter Jane's help ("always under strict guidance from mum") Kathleen still grows an impressive amount of food. Kathleen says "I have lots of herbs, broccoli, leeks, lettuce and the odd bit of asparagus that pops up. The apple and



**Kathleen and Peter in South Hobart**

plum trees are also doing really well. There are also two pears, one nectarine, a fig and an apricot tree." In a wonderful understatement, Kathleen commented "I have a bit of fruit coming on at the moment."

Kathleen enjoys her herbs. She says "The parsley I always let go to seed. It grows everywhere so I am never without parsley. I also just planted some lemongrass in a pot that I hope survives. I've been very successful with odd things too. I planted wasabi (also known as Japanese horseradish) a few years ago under some small bushes at the front of the house. I thought – if it lives, it lives – and if it dies, it dies. (What a wonderful gardener's philosophy!) When we harvested it a couple of weeks ago we got 15cm of stalk! Previously I tried to nurture the plant, but it didn't like it. I think it liked being neglected. Even at my age I keep on learning."

Kathleen has a special recipe for the fertilizer she uses when planting seedlings, and which she shared with Tino on the Gardening Australia segment:

- 10 parts blood and bone
- 1 part magnesium sulphate
- 1 part dolomite
- 1 part sulphate of potash

Mix with a bit of soil, and when planting, add half a handful into the soil with each seedling. Cover with a light layer of soil and then water in.

#### **A few more comments:**

- Kathleen believes that a lifetime of gardening is the key to her long, healthy life because it keeps her physically and mentally active. "To keep the mind going is essential. It helps me enormously to go into the patio, plan the next season's crops, and see the plants being planted out."
- "I read a lot of gardening books.

At my age I keep my mind working and open to new ideas. I'm still thinking about the future. I'm aging in my bones but not in my mind."

- "I think everyone should have a hand in gardening because that's where our food comes from. We depend on the garden; we depend on the land."
- "Go through life with a smile and a hope for the future. I know we've got the climate problem and we are going to have to do something about it... but in the meantime, still plant!"

To watch Tino's interview with Kathleen, tune into the Gardening Australia broadcast of the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. (I had to smile to see Tino planting out some red runner beans for Kathleen and to hear her comment "Oh, you must have done a bit of gardening before you came here." And then she warns him not to break the plants. They had a lot of fun!)

To turn 100 is an achievement; to be a successful and satisfied gardener and to provide healthy food for yourself and your family is another. Full credit to Kathleen after at least 67 years of gardening!

*Credits: ABC internet news & Gardening Australia 28.2.20*



**A younger Kathleen**

## Jackie French's Easy Fertilizer Regime

By Diane Kelly

This is rather an encouraging and sensible approach to fertilizing your garden from Jackie:

Give regular dressings of compost, blood and bone, old hen manure and other nitrogenous fertilizers plus lime every couple of months and an initial sprinkle of ground rock phosphate, until you think your soil deficiencies and acidity are under control – i.e. **Everything is growing well.**

Once a reasonably fertile soil is achieved it is easy to keep it there:

- Recycle everything. Dump all wastes between the plants as mulch – unless they are likely to regrow, have seed heads that may germinate, are diseased or, in the case of food scraps, may attract dogs, cats, flies or rodents. In this case, compost them!

- Try to grow a green manure crop each four years, and a nitrogen-fixing crop in each area of your vegetable patch at least every two years, preferably each year.

- Keep up the mulch and add a little high nitrogen material every time you renew it, and as a booster when each plant is young and when fruiting.

Apart from the above, just look for signs of acidity but don't bother about adding lime or similar substances unless you have evidence that acidity is becoming a problem. The same with phosphorus – if you are bringing in hen manure or blood & bone or quantities of other material, such as kitchen scraps, it will probably

be some time before you need to add more ground rock phosphate. Your initial dose should be effective for about five years.

Just remember that what comes out must go back in. Large scale nutrient loss should really only a problem for the commercial grower, not the backyard growers, where so much of what is consumed can be recycled, and other human or animal food is likely to be brought in, and some of its nutrients eventually find their way to the vegetable garden.

Source: *Organic Gardening in Australia* by Jackie French

## How Can We Help? Change Your Habits

By Leah Johnston

A habit is a practice we regularly do. They can be good habits like bringing your own refillable water bottle everywhere you go, or bad habits like buying bottled water everywhere you go.

Swapping some of our not-so-great, environmentally speaking, habits for better choices can make a big difference to the world if enough of us do it. One person saying “no thank you” to one straw one time doesn't make a big impact but when thousands of people decline a straw restaurants and bars stop supplying them and there's far less straws ending up in the oceans where they can harm sea life.

Some suggestions of easy habits to change:

- Swap Glad Wrap for reusable containers or beeswax wraps.
- Ask for no straw with your drink, or bring your own reusable bamboo or



stainless steel straw with you.

- Swap your plastic toothbrush (which would take 400 years to break down) for a bamboo one you can bury in your garden or add to your compost when you're done with it.

- Keep a reusable coffee cup in your car or actually sit down at the coffee shop and drink your coffee in a real cup.

Take your own fork if you're eating out at food truck festivals.

- Don't bin your food waste: compost it, worm farm it, feed it to chickens, dig it into the garden. Many of us would already be doing this, if you have room for more food waste you could take in your neighbor's or local café's waste.

- Remember your reusable shopping bags when you go shopping.

- Replace tea bags with loose leaf tea that you pop in a tea strainer (it may also be healthier for you as some tea bags can leach chemicals and microplastics into your tea).

- Buy naked soap bars instead of liquid soap in bottles.

- Bring your own containers to a health food shop or co-op to refill instead of buying packaged items.

- Bring your own container to the deli counter.

- Buy recycled toilet paper and paper towel.

- Go old school and use handkerchiefs instead of tissues.

- Use silicone mats instead of baking paper

- Switch your chemical cleaning products for greener choices or good old fashioned vinegar and baking soda.

- Buy clothes from op shops and fix your old clothes if you can rather than buying new pieces all the time.

- Try to buy items second hand from Gumtree, Facebook Marketplace or garage sales before opting for the new and shiny version (you'll save money too!)

With time and repetition our new practices will become habits.

### Butterfly Profile: Common Crow By Leah Johnston

To boost butterfly populations we need to provide both the nectar the adult butterflies eat and the host plants the caterpillars feed on. The Common Crow is a black and white butterfly whose underwhelming name and monochrome appearance give no clue to the remarkable chrysalis this species hatches out of. Without exaggerating, the chrysalis looks like a metal pendant you could wear on a necklace. If you have seen these butterflies around your garden you could have their host plants nearby, and it's worth searching for the caterpillars and stunning chrysalis. The host plants include Monkey Rope and Weeping Fig. Monkey Rope grows up the trunks of trees.



Photos from the Museum of Tropical Qld

## Growing Vegetables From Seeds

By Diane Kelly

Our March **“Club Member Expertise”** section starts with a disclaimer – Jill Barber wrote that “I am no expert. It’s all trial and error, and I’m always open to learning more and sharing it with others.” As organic gardeners, we probably all feel that way, but for those among us who appreciate the effort Jill goes to when planting out veggie seedlings to share at our meetings, I think we would all agree she is doing well.

Looking back through my collection of Club newsletters, it appears that Jill first started to plant seeds in small containers to bring to meetings back in 2013 or 2014. At that time Ross Davis used to bring small tomato seedlings in little packages, and Jill thought that was a neat idea. Jill also attends the Robina Garden Club in Carrara and she noticed that they would serve their supper tea and coffee in styrofoam cups (they are now encouraging their members to BYO if they would like a cuppa!). Thinking this was a good chance for recycling, Jill started to collect the cups, clean them, and then use them for the pots that we see on the members’ table each month.

Jill prepares seedlings for our Club and her own veggie garden in the same way. There is a homemade shade-stand at the back of Jill’s garden. It is a timber table with a shade-cloth covered frame that reaches out and over the styrofoam vegetable boxes that Jill fills with her potting mix and then into which she plants the seeds. There are neat rows, all labelled, and once the seedlings at least have their “second leaf”, Jill removes the seedling from the soil in the boxes and puts them into the styrofoam cups. Then, when the seed-

lings grow large enough and have had the chance to be sun-hardened, Jill plants them out directly into her prepared garden beds. The excess – after all, there are only so many lettuce, Ceylon spinach or endive seedlings that you actually need at any one time – are brought along to the Club meetings for the benefit of us all. This is only ever done once the seedlings have been growing in the cups for at least a week or two. This enables the seedlings’ roots to grow large enough to hold the soil together so that it doesn’t disintegrate when the plants are removed to put into our garden beds. Jill also only transplants the seedlings from the box to the cups in the cool of the evenings.



The potting table - with blue rope to stop the birds

Jill explained that the reason she doesn’t plant seeds directly into the cups is that germination tends to be too uncertain. Instead she plants the rows of seeds into the large boxes, and then moves them across to the cups once she can see which seedlings are doing well.

For her own garden, Jill then transplants the seedlings from the cups into the prepared garden beds once they appear strong and healthy – at probably 10 to 15cm in height.

I asked Jill for the recipe to her seed-raising mix and so she listed (and showed me) the ingredients:

- Rocky Point cow manure (there are a number of stockists on the Coast) – Jill uses “a good proportion” of this in the mix – probably 1/3 to 1/2 of the total.

- Vermiculite – this is used because it aerates and loosens the soil mixture. This takes up another 1/4 to 1/3 of the mixture.

- A smaller amount of compost. Jill makes her own compost – horse manure, green garden clippings, anything leafy from the garden and kitchen waste are collected and left to develop in a timber and shade-cloth structure. The mixture is left to disintegrate without turning, and when it is ready, Jill sieves it and adds it to the potting mix. The only “treatment” that the compost gets as it is disintegrating is to have a length of aggie pipe inserted into the material so that the volume can become aerated.

- Some sand (only river sand – not sea sand, as the salt content is high).

Sometimes Jill adds palagonite when it is available (Jill finds this adds minerals to the mix more readily than some other like-products).



**The compost heap - half developing;  
half ready to use**

These ingredients are then mixed together and added to the potting cups. Jill waters the soil, and then leaves it a

week or so before planting the seeds into it. She commented that this combination of ingredients seems to suit any type of seedlings.

Seed-saving is something that Jill practises, and I was intrigued to see her brown-paper shopping bags hanging from the garage ceiling. However she did mention that she hasn't been saving her broccoli seeds, because the florets have been so good to eat that they don't get to the going-to-seed stage! Various lettuce, beans, basil and parsley seeds have been saved and dried in the bags – and Jill reminds me that they are all labelled because it is so easy not to recognize seeds two months down the track.



**Seed saving in brown paper bags**

The seeds Jill saves must have been of good quality because they have done well when used over several generations, especially the frilly pink lettuce. Often in the veggie patch though, she doesn't need to plant out the seeds of these because they self-seed and pop up everywhere among the garden.

Now, back to growing the seedlings. One thing Jill does stress is that seedlings grown in this way need to have the water kept up to them otherwise they will dry out, and she finds morning watering



tends to work best. Another couple of hints are: (a) plant seeds at the right depth – they need to be covered with the soil mix, but not too much, and (b) don't over-plant. There is no need to plant lots of seeds because you probably won't be able to use all the seedlings and they will go to waste. Also, whatever you find the germination time of your seeds to be, always have your garden soil ready to plant into.



**Ready garden beds - green manured;  
composted and mulched**

Moving on to perhaps the philosophy of growing plants by seed, I asked Jill what she particularly enjoys about gardening in this way:

“That first germination. The fact that life comes out of nowhere”.

“It always seems like a small miracle”

“It creates a connection with other people all around the world who grow plants in this way.”

And I like this comment the best of all – “You go out there and you feel better. Gardening makes you feel happy and alive”.

After my visit to Jill's place and seeing her mixing table, potting table, her compost heap and her garden, I was encouraged. Growing our vegetables (and flowers and herbs) from seed can perhaps seem a bit daunting at times, but Jill has

now provided us with the necessary information to also go out and make a success of it – and maybe also become experts!

### **Green Manure and Perennial Greens**

By Jill Barber

For the climate on the Gold Coast, and the weather being so obnoxiously hot and humid from December through March, I figure that the only way to go for veggie gardening is green manure. From December, if not before, I find that almost all veggies slow down to virtually stop: they cease germinating, and if they have germinated, they just stop growing any bigger. And if they're lettuces and the like, they just bolt...up and into seed. I thought carrots would keep going, but no, no bigger either.

I have found one type of edible veggie that keeps growing, healthy and vibrant, and that is perennial greens, such as Okinawa Spinach, Brazilian Spinach, Malabar Climbing Spinach, Mushroom Plant, Qld Greens, Sambung Nyawa and Surunam Spinach, all of which go very nicely in a salad.

Those aside, by the end of December, I've quit trying for anything else, and figure that it's time for green manure planting. This makes all the beds useful,



Surunam Spinach



Brazilian Spinach

and lets me off the hook of being out in that heat for maybe six to eight weeks. By the end of February I'm braving it early in the mornings for a couple of hours to go out and chop it down and fork it under, enriching the soil with lots of nutrients, in particular, nitrogen, and the much needed humus that the microbes need to do their wonderful job of feeding my greens.

I've usually bought my perennial green plants as well as the green manure seeds from Green Harvest, being relatively local, on the Sunshine Coast. Besides, I've been to their business there, and like what I see and what they've sent me.

As you can hopefully see from the pictures, I planted Buckwheat, Japanese Millet, BQ Mulch and Cow Pea, in different beds, adding left over seeds from my own veggies. When I chopped it down, I also added some comfrey leaves, for their marvellous nutrients brought up by their deep root system, and other greens in the garden from plants needing trimming. This was for added bulk as I felt there could be more than I'd planted.



**QLD Greens**



**Buckwheat, Japanese Millet & BQ Mulch**

**Chopping down the green manure**



**Sambung Nyawa**

**Okinawa Spinach**

**Mushroom Plant**

**Malabar Spinach**



## Edible Garden Promoters

By Jorge Cantellano



**EdibleScapes Gardens on March 4**

We have completed the initial stages of the Edible Landscape Gardens by cultivating the test gardens and developing organic fertilisers. Now Ediblescapes Inc is ready to establish EdibleScapes Promoters.

EdibleScapes like to share big picture thinking. In 2030 we would like to see the Gold Coast burgeoning with 'edible gardens' in most residential homes and as well as in public spaces, from institutional sites to common sites controlled by local and state Governments. This solution guarantees healthy, nutritive food security for all Gold Coast residents.

It is not enough to rely on not-for-profit organisations like OzHarvest and Food-bank to deliver rescued food to those in need. Their work is in providing food to over 60 charities, churches, community centres and schools across the Gold Coast to ensure that those who experience food insecurity are supported. But if we are to experience crises like the one we are beginning to experience with the hysteria around COVID-19, leading to supermarket shelves emptied of basic necessities like toilet paper, sanitary products and respiratory masks, this indicates greater scarcity of basic human consumables and potentially food.

It is time to urgently initiate now urban food solutions in the form of edible gardens and for people to transition us to this new reality.

We need local food sovereignty solutions to respond to food price increases and food scarcity that are likely to result from a) the impacts of environmental events leading up to and beyond 2020 - long droughts, bush fires, torrential rain floods, what next?- and b) world pandemics such as the onset of COVID-19 that deepen the global socio-economic crisis.

### Our vision

Ediblescapes Inc proposes a collaborative learning program facilitated by edible gardens "Promoters". Each Promoter is empowered to establish an edible garden in their home garden space and help their neighbours to grow edible gardens too.

The objective of edible gardens is to provide residents self-sufficiency in the form of fresh, nutritious food, as well as many other integral benefits of cultivating soil to grow food, such as sequestering carbon into the ground, cooling the environment, reducing food transport and associated pollution, creating family bonding experiences, and emancipation from screens and digital devices.

Initially, we invite those over 55 to volunteer to become a neighbourhood Edible Gardens Promoter. After six months undertaking a learning program within EdibleScapes Gardens, the participant will be able to grow food at EdibleScapes Gardens as well as at their own home, and apply diverse organic agroecology methods to do so. Food produce in this program will be donated to local social food programs to support those that don't have the financial means to acquire all their food needs from the supermarket.



### EdibleScapes produce delivered to Emergency Food Service

Additionally, excess produce can be designed into a co-operative sales model that allows participants to sell their homegrown produce at a local farmers market.

By 2030, in ten years' time, we foresee EdibleScapes leading the direction of local collaborative food economic models, developing human centred eco-logical solutions and developing viable social economic alternatives using urban agroecology practice.

This is 'Big Picture' thinking. Can we make it a reality on the Gold Coast?

### Why agroecology ?

Edible gardens were popular in Australia during the Second World War - they were known as Victory Gardens and were neighbourhood gardens that



World War II Victory Gardens

helped with food shortages. The concept of agroecology demonstration sites is common in countries around the world, particularly in Latin American. Volunteer promoters for edible gardens have existed in Argentina for 20 years, with 20,000 volunteer promoters and 750 paid technicians. The Argentina national program 'Pro Huerta' (Pro Garden) supports 600,000 family gardens, 7,500 school gardens and 4,000 community gardens.

Argentina created the Pro Huerta program in response to their deep economic crisis 20 years ago. However, the Gold Coast is not immune to poverty, with 35,000 people living below Australia's poverty line and 20,000 unemployed.

From the time of Victory Gardens to now, the world has changed immensely. City cement covers yesterday's farms, the agro-industry has poisoned and destroyed natural environments, and people have migrated from regional areas to urban centres and lost their agricultural knowledge.

The EdibleScapes vision offers a realistic and practical response to the question of how to give our communities access to healthy, nutritious food in both present uncertain times and in a future full of instability. Now we need people power - a network of stakeholders, local and state governments, institutions and community groups to help to make this possible.



EdibleScapes Gardens March 4

## Bring Back the Dragonflies

By Leah Johnston

Mosquitoes have been in abundance on the Gold Coast after the flooding rains we got in January, so bad that the council did some spraying for mosquitoes at the northern end of the Coast.

As organic gardeners, we don't want to use such methods in our gardens (if we have a choice about it), so it's worth looking at more natural methods of mosquito control. After all, nature has a solution for every "problem".

There are a number of plants that are supposed to deter mosquitoes from hanging around your garden, including: citronella, lemongrass, catmint, catnip, rosemary, basil, pyrethrum, lavender, geranium, peppermint, garlic, lemon balm, marigolds and horsemint. (If you have success growing these near your doorways and keeping the mozzies away from your home, please let us know!)

If this deterring of mosquitoes isn't working, try planting a garden that will attract dragonflies instead. Just one dragonfly can eat hundreds of mosquitoes every day, and dragonfly larvae will eat mosquito larvae.



Dragonflies need a water source, such as a pond, in which they can mate and lay their eggs. Juvenile dragonflies will spend at least two months in the water as larvae and are in danger from predators such as ducks, toads, frogs, fish and larger dragonfly larvae, so they need some hiding places such as underneath rocks and water lilies and between aquatic plants. You could add these plants to your pond set up: arrowhead, wild celery, water horsetail and cattail. The adult dragonflies can use the plants to land on.

Mosquitoes and dragonflies have very different lifespans. Mosquitoes can develop from an egg to a larvae to an adult mosquito in as little as 12 days, then the adult mosquito will live for only a month. This is why their populations can bloom so quickly after heavy rain. Dragonflies, on the other hand, will live in the larval stage for months before becoming an adult dragonfly; they can then live for around a year. These different life spans explain why we have more mosquitoes around than dragonflies at the moment, as flash flooding can create shallow water sources that are around long enough for the mosquitoes to breed but can dry up before the dragonfly larvae have time to mature. By keeping a still water source, like a pond, at your home you can give the dragonfly populations a better chance. Initially it could become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, but once your dragonfly population increases they will soon eat up most of that mosquito larvae (and the adults too).

Adult dragonflies need spaces to hide from predators (including reptiles, tiny mammals, frogs, bees and other insects), so plant trees and shrubs for them. Besides mosquitoes, dragonflies will eat beetles, wasps, moths, aphids, ant,

termites, flies and butterflies (yep not so keen on this character trait!)

Flowering nectar-rich plants will attract many of the prey the dragonflies want to eat, which will in turn attract the dragonflies. Try planting black-eyed Susan, swamp milkweed, joe-pye weed, meadow sage, white yarrow and buddleja.

Dragonflies have lived on Earth for the past 325 million years, but their numbers and diversity of species has been declining in recent decades along with many other types of insects. This is thought to be due in part to human activities including loss of habitat, insecticides and herbicides. A reduction in insect populations has far reaching ramifications for species higher up the food chain, not just the birds, reptiles and other animals that eat the insects, but also the species that are reliant on the foods the insects pollinate (spoiler alert, this includes our species).

So let's do our bit for the dragonflies, for the insects, for the birds, for the reptiles and for ourselves, by planting some more flowering nectar-rich plants and perhaps a little pond, if you have the room.

Source: <https://www.healthyfoodhouse.com/one-dragonfly-can-eat-hundreds-of-mosquitos-a-day-keep-these-plants-in-your-yard-to-attract-dragonflies/>

**Recipes**  
by Jill Barber

### Coconut Keto Snowballs

Author DrJockers.com  
Makes 7–10 snowballs

#### Dr Jockers Comments:

These coconut keto snowballs are a tasty, easy to make, fat burning keto snack or dessert that you will love! These snowballs taste wonderful, fill you up with

just 2-3 and you can make a whole bunch and store them in the refrigerator for the whole week. These healthy fats are also great for your brain and will improve mental clarity and drive. Especially if you add in a touch of peppermint essential oil which provides a great flavor and rosmarinic acid which improves circulation and stimulates neurotransmitters involved with memory!

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/4 cup full-fat coconut milk, plus more as needed
- 2 tablespoons powdered stevia or monkfruit sweetener, more if desired
- Pinch of pink salt
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 20 drops of Peppermint essential oil (optional)
- Ground cinnamon, for sprinkling (optional)

#### Instructions:

In a food processor or high-powered blender, blend the coconut on high until it takes on a powdery texture. Add the coconut milk, sweetener, peppermint oil (if using), vanilla extract, and salt and blend on high until a thick batter forms. Add a little more coconut milk if the batter is too crumbly.

Line a plate with parchment paper. Slightly wet your hands and form the batter into small balls, about 2 inches in diameter. Place the balls on the prepared plate.

Sprinkle with extra sweetener or cinnamon, if desired, and refrigerate for 60 minutes, or until they firm up.

Serve or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week.



## 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 1/4 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.

**Passionfruit:** 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.

*Queensland Planting Guide, BOGI*

## VEGETABLES

### MARCH

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

## HERBS

### MARCH

#### Annual

Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Italian parsley, Miso-me, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Rocket.

#### Perennials and Bi-Annually

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

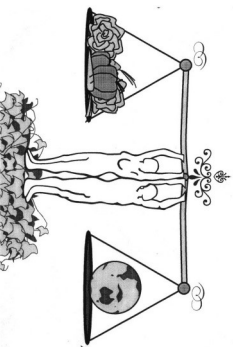
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Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information the association (including Editor, Executive Officers and Committee) accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed in this newsletter.

*GOLD COAST ORGANIC  
GROWERS Inc.*



**NEWSLETTER**

**Meetings held:**

3rd Thursday of the Month  
Doors open at 7pm, meetings  
start at 7.30pm and run  
until approximately 9.30pm

**Meeting place:**

Cnr Guineas Creek Road  
& Coolgardie Street  
Elanora, Gold Coast

**Next meeting:**

Thursday 16th April 2020