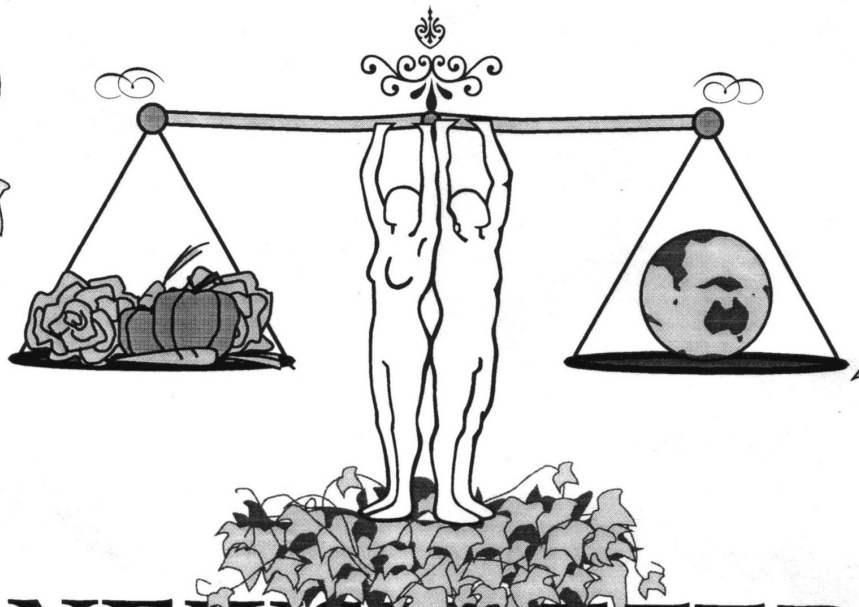
GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.



NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 October 2010 Issue 10

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 18 November

THE AIMS OF G.C.O.G. Inc.

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 send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly - or just pay at the door.

Seed Bank: $1.50 ea.

Members Market Corner: Please bring plants, books and produce you wish to sell.

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

Library: Books 50c, Videos, DVDs $2, Soil Test Kit $2. Available to members for 1 month.

Advertising: $10 an issue, or $100 for 11 issues (1 year).

Newsletter: contributions welcome by post or email (preferred). *Please send to Dorothy at* webprint@onthenet.com.au
Please put [GCOG] in email 'subject' box.

2010 Committee

President	**Maria Roberson** **(07) 5598 6609** **405 Piggabeen Rd,** **Currumbin Q 4223**
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Thanks to other contributors:

Diane Kelly, Ross Davis, Elizabeth Dolan, Lise Racine, Jill Barber, Lyn Mansfield, & Dorothy Coe.

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

Overdue: Dorryl & Rita Mahon, Gene Rosser, Tony Hall, Fraser & Kerstein Trueman, Jacqueline Zantiotis, Leah Galvin, Mel Kidd, Henry Blonner

October: Greg & Val Sbeghen, Roslyn Griffith, Peter Aubort, Glenn & Joan Jones

November: Marie Rudd, Karen Hart, Ross & Jenny Davis

Welcome to our new member:
Owen Brown

Guest Speakers

Oct: Indigenous Bush Foods & Medicines with Jan Sinclair
Nov: Christmas party

You can now also read and contribute content to the Gold Coast Organic Growers website — please visit: www.goldcoastorganic.com

SEASONS ON THE MOUNTAIN
Tamborine Mountain Open Gardens

Introducing: New Format—Three seasons

Autumn: Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th May
Winter: Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th August
Spring: Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd October

www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au

Miami Organic Farmers Market

Where: Miami State High School
2137-2205 Gold Coast Highway, Miami
When: Every Sunday, 6am to 11am
Contact: David Whyle
Telephone: (07) 3358 6309 or 1300 668 603
Email: info@gcorganicmarket.com

To cultivate one's garden is the politics of the humble man.
(Chinese Proverb)

Sustainable Gardening Workshops

Come along to Council's free sustainable gardening workshops where you can learn all about composting and worm farming to recycle your waste and improve your garden.

A series of workshops will be held at the following locations from 10am to 12noon. To register for a workshop near you, call (07) 3488 9660.

Composting and Worm farming Workshops

- Saturday 23rd October - Robina Library
- Saturday 13th Nov - Burleigh Waters Community Centre
- Saturday 11th Dec 2010 - Joan Park Community Centre, Southport

lifechangingdocos

Life Changing Documentaries, Workshops and Seminars

FILM SCREENING

SIMPLY RAW -
REVERSING DIABETES IN 30 DAYS

When: Wed 27th October
Times: Two sessions—see below
Where: The Gold Coast Arts Centre
Cost: $9.00

The film follows six participant's remarkable journey and captures the medical, physical, and emotional transformations brought on by this diet and lifestyle change.

We witness moments of struggle, support, and hope as what is revealed, with startling clarity, is that diet can reverse diabetes and change lives.

The doors open at 3.30pm for the 4.00pm session 6pm for the 6.30pm session. After the late session our panel of experts will discuss the issues raised by the film, and field questions from the audience.

Fabulous Organic food will be available on the night between 6pm-6.30pm.

The information in this film could save you or a loved one's life, and reverse most 21st century diseases such as Heart Disease, Cancer, Diabetes, Depression and alike.

More info and bookings at
www.lifechangingdocos.com or call
(07) 5576 3590.

Tropical Vegetable Workshop

Date: Saturday 23rd October
Time: 9.30am — 3.30pm
Where: BAVIA House, Broadbeach Hall

A one day workshop that explores how to grow and cook water– wise tropical vegetables in a Permaculture Food Forest garden.

This workshop is about growing and cooking with tropical vegetables in our sub-tropical climate. Tropical vegetables featured will be yam, cassava, green pawpaw, Madagascar beans, yakon, taro and more.

We are very fortunate to be living in a sub-tropical climate as we can grow vegetables all year round. Summer however is a time of the year when a lot of people give up on their garden due to the hot weather, but this is the time to grow and eat your tropical vegetables!

The workshop starts with identifying and how to grow tropical vegetables and then all the participants have a simple recipe to cook up for a very unusual but delicious lunch. Morning tea and a manual are included in the cost.

Planting material will be available
Recipes for the day include:

- Sweet potato and peanut patties
- Sweet little cassava balls
- Green paw paw salad
- Plus more

Come and discover and taste a whole new range of easy to grow water-wise vegetables that are grown in a food forest garden.

Cost: $75

book in via website the
www.permaculturepro duce.com.au
or call 0432 180523

Presented by Elisabeth Fekonia accredited Permaculture Teacher

Did You Know?

A Maritime Flower
Sweet Alice, or sweet alyssum, is a favourite cottage garden plant, with its honey-scented flowers that attracts bees and beneficial insects. Its Latin name *(Lobularia maritime)* gives another clue to its usefulness – alyssum grows happily in sea-side gardens. A native of the sea-shores and stony slopes of the Canary Islands and parts of the Mediterranean, it is a plant of maritime climates. You can sow it during most of the year in mild climates.

The Experiment

By Ross Davis

I have always practised the rule of growing your tomatoes in new ground each year and only going back after 4 to 5 years to the same soil.

Then I went to Byron Bay seminar of Doctor Elaine Ingham, a soil and Marine micro biologist.

In her talk she explained that Nematodes are not the enemies. That 80 per cent are good ones and only 20 percent are the bad ones. But if you do not have FULL biological balance, in your soil and you use chemical fertilizers you most likely will have KILLED OFF the good bacteria and just left behind the 20% bad ones.

It was hard to believe, after 60 years, to change the brain, into new ideas. Do they work? What will happen? Will I lose the crop? Questions like that race through your head. The year before the seminar, I grow a crop of Tomatoes, the seed of which had come up from Adelaide. An Italian guy that grew these super tomatoes and supplied these tomatoes to Maggie Beers's program, on the ABC, so I wrote down to him and received seed back, with instructions, telling me how to grow them. In his instructions I was to use copper oxide chloride dust, to keep the tomatoes free of diseases. I followed it to the letter; the tomatoes grew well till they were half way up the stakes. Then they started to look real crook, the growth slowed, the wilt started, tomatoes fell off the plants in all they looked like they were going to die real quick. I pull one plant out roots and all, and the plant had Nematodes all over the rooting system. I asked why?

It was explained to me that Copper will kill all the bacteria in the soil and once that happens the good nematode die and leave the 20% bad ones to attack my Tomatoes.
That had sure happened; the roots were full of nematodes.

Well I decided to go with the experiment, in the hot house. The crop you see in the picture is the 4th crop of tomatoes in this soil. Each year I have added more compost to the hot house, about 4 full barrow loads each time, and I mulch with compost as the crop grows.

The results speak for themselves, as so far, (touch wood) the crop could not really be any better. Red; full of juice and top taste, with lots of plump tomatoes per plant.

So; Good Compost, Blood and Bone, mineral mix, moisture, water only on the ground, and sulphate of potash. And mulch with more compost as they grow.

The experiment continues.

PS. Tomatoes are the hardest plant to grow and get a good result year after year.

Sticky Traps

Yellow sticky traps can catch white-flies, thrips and other small insects. They are often used to monitor infestations, and are available from garden centres or by mail order. Or make your own traps by coating yellow board or stiff paper with petroleum jelly. Place the traps on sticks in the ground a few centimetres from foliage. Replace as the traps become covered with insects.

Chia seeds in the GCOG seedbank

By Elizabeth Dolan

Chia seeds (Salvia Hispanica) come in white & black. The white seeds in the GCOG seedbank are from the chia sown Feb 2010 as a companion plant for citrus in our new garden at the EcoVillage at Currumbin.

Chia is an ancient grain from South America. It is rich in Omega 3, protein, anti-oxidants and dietary fibre. It is quite palatable direct from the plant and may also be added to muesli, cakes, soups, casseroles etc.

The plant itself is an attractive bright green salvia with upright flower spikes with small blue flowers. Native bees and butterflies did a great job pollinating to the extent that the flower spikes were full of small seeds.

I would like to use chia as a nutrition booster in meal preparation. I did add some to our muesli on a couple of occasions & it was delicious. However, I didn't manage to harvest the full crop with optimum timing, and to dry and sift the seeds from the husks with sufficient quantity for other purposes.

It is important to harvest the crop with optimum timing as unharvested seeds become nutritious food for rodents and can easily spread to other areas of the garden.

Chia seeds

Snippet from "Mini-Farming, self-sufficienty on 1/4 acre"

By Brett L. Markham

"...the quality of food produced at home is superior to that available in the supermarket for a number of reasons. The demands of business drive many factors that decrease the nutritional value of commercial foods. Because very little food is produced near its point of use, fruit and vegetable varieties are seleced on the basis of suitability for machine picking, long-distance shipping, and cold storage so that they still look good when they reach the supermarket. This results in homogeneous and visually appealing products that look better than they taste and have considerably less nutritional value than homegrown equivalents.

Spinach is a good example. With proper care and refrigeration, fresh spinach can be dept from spoiling for three weeks or more. But even when kept in the dark at 39 degrees, (Lise says…" *it loses about half of its B vitamin conent in only a week".)* So the appelaing bag of baby spinach under the brightly lit cooler in the supermarket actually has fewer nutrients than homegrown spinach that is blanched and frozen on the same day as harvest."

Supplied by: Lise Racine

Extract from "Dirt"

by David R. Montgomery

"A 1992 U.S. agricultural census report found that small farms grow two to ten times as much per acre as do large farms. When compared to farms greater than six thousand acres in size, farms smaller than twenty-seven acres were more than ten times as productive; some tiny farms – less than four acres – were more than a hundred times as productive." P. 159

So considering that the small land holding has more potential for higher productivity.

Biodynamic Workshop

By Jill Barber

Held at Lise Racine's, on a beautiful sunny September day, this workshop was run by Dick Marriott and attended by a number of GCOG members as well as a few others. It was a very engaging, informative and interactive day, made additionally pleasant by our hostess, Lise, who provided teas, extra food for those who hadn't brought lunch, and the relaxed environment of her yard for us to learn and work in.
I compulsively took notes, which is why it was suggested I write this article, but there is more information in my notebook than can be included here, so I'll be happy to share this with anyone wanting further details.

I learnt a lot! It was wonderful to hear that Biodynamic farming is "massive" in Australia, introduced by Alec Podolinsky, who invented machinery to do large scale production and application of the preparations originally created by Rudolph Steiner in Austria. The method is used not just by us exclusive, mystical, few, little backyard farmers, but by farmers with large, commercial properties. It is used throughout Asia and Europe, as well as the U.S. and now Australia.

We were shown the Demeter Method of making the various preparations, which are designated by the numbers 500 to 507. The 500 is the basic manure made from cow manure buried in cow horns deep in the earth all winter. The latter are made using quartz crystals, yarrow, chamomile flowers, stinging nettles, oak bark, dandelion flowers and valerian tea, respectively, and they each serve a different purpose, balancing out the sulphur, the iron, the calcium in the soil, for example. They are applied to the making of compost, which in turn creates the humus so essential for the regeneration of the soil.

In the making of the 500, the manure in the horns buried in the earth receives the life forces in the earth, and it thereby becomes transsubstantiated or changed in substance, in its energy, not just transformed.

Queensland doesn't get cold enough, by the way, for it to be made here. That day, we were given the experience of stirring the small ball of aged manure in a container of pure, warmed water in a particular way, for an hour. The resulting liquid, we learned, must be sprayed immediately on the ground in even droplets, spreading over a large area, at a particular time of day, in particular climatic conditions. The cost of this application of life energy to a field is a mere $3 an acre! And the structure of the soil is thereby changed, its microbial bacteria so enhanced as to produce crops greatly improved in strength and appearance, flavor and nutritional content. How wonderful!

Before the 500 is stirred into the water, while waiting for conditions to be right, it must be carefully stored to maintain its full value, in a ceramic pot, in a specially made wooden box lined with peat moss, in a very cool place, and its water content must be evenly maintained. You can see why a full day's workshop is needed to learn all these procedures!

Before lunch, we built a biodynamic compost heap together, carefully supervised, step by step, by Dick. Under his scrutiny we all pitched in, taking turns to saturate the (organically certified) straw in a big (bath) tub, before mixing it up with horse and cow manure, in equal proportions, then layering it on to the heap, leaving an air vent down the middle. Small amounts of green manure were regularly added to help heat up the pile and achieve the right temperature, and water was sprinkled on constantly. Various other organic matter could be added, so as to achieve the right balance of carbon and nitrogen forming materials, and as many sources of the latter as possible. The resulting temperature must be 45 to 50 degrees. Some old compost was added, and the different BD preparations added in a particular way, finally ending with a thick layer of dry mulch.

This is to stand undisturbed for 4 to 5 weeks, maintaining its present moisture content

through dry and rainy times.

The finished humus product is to be randomly distributed, sparingly, throughout the soil, so that the plants can access it as they need it, without the force feeding of chemical fertilizers. The latter create plants that are low in nutrition, are not long-keeping, and they degrade the soil! What a contrast!

With the BD method, there are particular ways of digging the soil; there is the influence of the moon; a variety of green manures is very important; some mulches are better than others; planting must be done when the soil has the correct moisture content, and the 501 is sprayed on differently from the 500. I hope one day to be able to master all the aspects of this amazing method of working with the soil, to produce healthful vegetables and fruit. It seems a vital way of working with nature in a sustaining and energy enhancing way. Thanks so much to Lise and her partner, Chris, for providing their place for us to do the workshop, and to Dick for his dedication in teaching it to us in such an easily understandable way, with a nice balance of listening and hands-on activity.

I hope that those of us who did this workshop, along with past and future people, can come together in mutual support to encourage each other to pursue this “Cadillac” version of farming.

Prostate Awareness
Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:
www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com or
contact Ross Davis for more info:
rossco12@bigpond.com

Lime or Lemon Oil

Place whole fruit in a wide-mouthed jar and cover with a good-quality olive oil.

Leave to mature for at least two months before using. The fruit may be removed, sliced and placed as a baste over fish or chicken which is to be baked, wrapped in foil.

Did You Know?

Tree or Egyptian Onions

This strange onion variety produces clusters of small bulblets that appear in mid-air, sprouting from the top of tall stems in place of flowers. The plants can grow up to 1.2m (4ft) tall, and as the stems slowly bow down under their own weight, bulbs that make contact with the soil may take root and produce new plants for the following year. The onions are deliciously sweet and excellent for pickling or in cooked dishes.

Source: Grow Vegetables
Alan Buckingham

Mineral Deficiency in your soil

By Ross Davis

"You can trace every sickness, every ailment, and every disease to a mineral deficiency" Dr. Linus Pauling, two times Nobel Prize winner.

Minerals are essential for bacteria and our garden to product Organic food full of all the nutrients required for good health.

Some time back I went to a seminar to try to understand more about Minerals and how essential they are to our plants health and our own health.

The soil, Food and our health, HUMANS and animals, are all LINKED by Bacteria **and Minerals**.

Dr Joel Wallach www.wallachonline.com talks about minerals and how they affect your health.

He went on to say you feed supplement to your animals and get increased production (very true I have seen the difference, but that's another story)

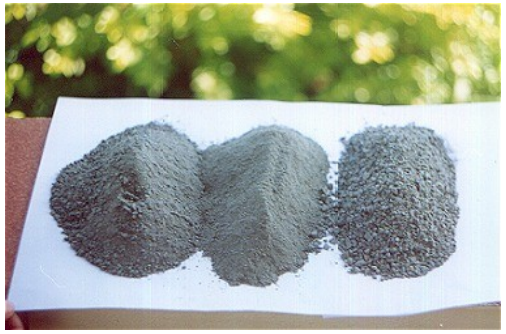
Farmers have been feeding Minerals to animals for years via Mineral blocks in the paddock.

Now we have started to feed the soil to enrich the grasses and other plants to feed the animals.

How can we get mineral into our soils? Therefore into our vegetables and our selves. The secret of ORGANIC FOOD.

There are several ways. Through making thermal compost with the rock minerals mixed in.

By adding rock powder to the garden, the summer when the soil is warmest is best.



Below are 4 sites that will tell you about the minerals in their mix.
Go to www.minplus.com.au and look at the result of Tomatoes, this is the Rock DUST that I have used over the last 3 years in my hot house and garden in general.

www.stonebread.co.nz
www.boral.com.au
www.minplus.com.au
http://www.mineralfertiliser.com.au
alroc@safe.au.com

For those interested, we should club together and buy a pallet load to share amongst those that are interested.

Happy gardening
Ross. Rossco12@bigpond.com

Herb Vinegar

Place freshly cut herbs in a bottle and cover with a good quality white wine vinegar. Store for two to three months.

Strain to remove herbs. A token sprig of the herbs may be left in the bottle for identification and added visual appeal.

Organic Growing of Healthy Food in your garden

By Ross Davis

Most people joining the Gold Coast Organic Growers, join to learn how to grow healthy food.

To grow healthy food you need to have your soil full of all the Biological bacteria that your soil can hold.

Your soil needs to have a FULL spectrum of Minerals. Some of these are Selenium, zinc, boron and the list goes on, to help your soil take up a full supply of minerals you can apply all rock minerals, XYZ minerals (in a powder form) and therefore able to be absorbed by the bacteria, this comes from Nth Qld.

Most soils have no, to very little minerals available to the plants. This is because the bacterial activity is too low.

How do we get the bacterial activity going in our soils?

Bacteria need Moisture, Food, Warmth and Oxygen to grow.

- **Moisture:** Mulch can make sure the Bacteria stay Moist.
- **Food:** can be Blood and Bone, Black strap molasses (a sugar) or lots of well decayed moist grasses.
- **Oxygen:** by making holes in the soil with a garden fork in to the soil you will let in the oxygen.
- **Warmth:** Bacteria need over 20 degrees to grow

Another way to get Bacteria into your soil; is COMPOST TEA.

We can make Compost tea ourselves and right now is the perfect time of the year to start.

Warmth; Bacteria need over 20 degrees to grow quickly and best. Most nights from now on to March 2011 will be around 20 degrees min.

How do we know that we have good Bactria all mix in our Compost tea?

To start with you need good compost, (Bacterial source) and a 10 litre bag made of Shade cloth.

A 20 litre plastic bucket. A Fish tank air pump. (Oxygen) and Black strap molasses, (food)

Most important 15 litres of water. Water **cannot** be from town supply unless you oxygenated it over night to get rid of the Chlorine .

Are you a person that has experience with a Microscope?

Some time back now the Gold coast Organic growers received a grant to by equipment. One item we purchased was a Microscope with a camera built in. We are able to present ON the screen via our Laptop / Projector, whatever is in your sample of COMPOST TEA.

Making compost tea is like making homemade beers. You need to follow the instructions or your beer dies.

Talk to me or other committee members on your thoughts of the above subject.

Happy gardening
Ross rossco12@bigpond.com

A Time for Thyme

Time is just not on thyme's side. Even with the best care, this herb lives for only a few years. To keep the foliage lush, harvest the leaves, cutting back the stems just as they start to bloom. Replace one or two plants yearly, so that the patch doesn't die out all at once.

Fresh food prices could soar

By Toni Crisp

The price of food has doubled since 2000. (ABC Local: Jo Joyce)

A food security summit in Brisbane is hearing prices are expected to increase by up to 50 per cent over the next 10 years, making fresh food unattainable for some people.

Forum chairman Professor Geoffrey Lawrence says the price of food has doubled since 2000.

He predicts prices will continue to increase, especially staples such as rice, corn and wheat. He says many global factors are responsible.

"There's very little additional arable land to bring into production," he said.

"Productivity rates in farming have plateaued, irrigated water is not going to be all that much available.

"The final major one is that climate change is going to raise sea levels and those increased sea levels are going to inundate productive areas."

Professor Lawrence says climate change will eradicate food production areas in India, China, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

"In the Murray-Darling Basin [in Australia] there's likely to be with worst case scenario a 40 per cent decline in available irrigation water which is going to limit the amount of crops," he said.

He says there needs to be more spending on agricultural research to improve crop yields and less wastage of imperfect fresh food in western countries.

"The supermarkets in particular where 70 per cent of our food is sold in Australia are very careful about getting what they see as the best products.

"That means there's a lot of food wastage and that food would normally be available but it's not picked up by the supermarkets.

Supplied by: Diane Kelly

Brisbane Organic Growers Annual Fair

By Diane Kelly

Where could you buy an organically-grown asparagus plant, an “Ox-heart” (heirloom) tomato plant, and a butternut pumpkin plant all for $5.00? How about a established choko plant for $2.00? And would you like to have two vegie fritters or a kebab, and a fresh, organically grown salad (nastursium flowers included for free) for lunch for $3.00?

On Sunday the 3rd Oct, we headed to the suburb of Windsor in Brisbane to enjoy a few hours at the Brisbane Organic Growers’ annual fair. The lawned areas were full of stalls with seedlings, books, tools, honey, fruit trees, herbs, soaps, chutneys & spices, and a whole range more.

There were displays of raised gardens to inspect, and Mark Tully (of “Blue Hills Rare Breeds Stud” and ABC documentary fame) had chickens, hens, goats, dogs and a very large pig for the children to pat (with a sign that said “Please wash your hands **before** patting the pig”, which amused us.) There were lectures to listen to, and we saw Colin Campbell chatting to people, so it was an excellent chance to ask some questions.

Inside the hall was the food area, with hot meals, salads, sandwichs and a range of cakes and biscuits available – all homemade. There were also large competition displays of fruit, eggs, vegies, jams, chutneys and flowers – these were going to be judged and then sold, later in the afternoon.

So next year, if you would like to go to an enjoyable activity, visit the 2011 BOGI Fair – because the 2010 event was really good!

Growing Community Gardens
By Lyn Mansfield

Community gardens have been operating on the Gold Coast for the last ten years, but only recently have they gained real popularity. These gardens prove beneficial to both families and individuals who get satisfaction from growing their own nutritional foods, while being active and involved in the wider community.

There are now gardens sprouting in every corner of the region as part of a citywide program; Joan Park at Southport, Peachey at Ormeau, Varsity, Labrador, Loders Creek, Southern Beaches at Tugun, Mt Tambourine, Springbrook, Ashmore, Broadbeach, Merrimac & Nerang.

HOW TO GET INVOVLED!!!!!!!

This is the fun part when you get 40 people who are interested in gardening to sign their name in your start up kit. A steering group of about 10 people is formed from those 40 people and it is up to them to find a suitable location to have the community garden. Next you make a wish list of what you would like in the garden and then it is time to approach your Divisional Councillor for their support for funding. You should do some research on other community gardens to see what works and does not.

Once you have completed your start up kit it is time to submit it to the council. This book asks questions about your land for the garden i.e. aspect, slope of land, size of usable land, sun exposure, prevailing winds etc. The Council will take your book and see if it complies with the Policies and Management Plans.

The next step while waiting for the Council is to have a plan for what your group would like to do in the garden other than growing vegies. It is advisable to have a 5 year plan and review it every year. You need to consider education, raising funds and social events. Find people that have studied Horticulture or Permaculture so you can hold workshops to educate those gardeners with little or no knowledge. If you want your garden Incorporated (so you can apply for Grants) you will need By-laws, membership forms and a garden manual. Most of this information you can get off the internet from other community gardens. You need to define roles and responsibilities so everyone has a purpose and feels that they are a part of the garden.

Next is the construction of the garden and working bees to build the community involvement. To keep the community's interest you should hold regular fund raising events i.e. social dinners, sausage sizzles, raffles, grants, donations and this will keep the community involvement alive.

Flowers grow in flowers gardens,
Vegetables grow in vegetable gardens,
& People grow in Community Gardens
Auckland City Gardens Policy, 2002

Thank God for the Weeds!

Peter Andrews, author of two bestseller books *Back from the Brink* and *Beyond the Brink,* is the type of Aussie bloke that my Dad would often proclaim, “He calls a spade a shovel!” and thank God he does. Right up front I’ll admit he is one of my heroes and I had the pleasure of spending a day with him and his mate Gerry Harvey on his upper Hunter Valley horse stud where Peter had put his long held theories into practise.

Gerry invited his two sons to join us as we walked along a rejuvenated creek that “never ran dry since Peter got the bulldozer to work and pushed around some logs and old tree stumps that slowed the water down and then he planted weeds”. I remember Gerry’s profound words to his sons, “Keep your mouth closed and your ears open and you might learn something.” We all listened attentively as Peter explained the role weeds or as he prefers to call them **restoring plants** play.

Emphatically Peter states, “It is not merely that we should tolerate them – we cannot do without them. Weeds are the only hope we have of making Australia fertile again. And I’m certain of that.”

So what’s with the weeds, sorry – restoring plants? Well quite simply they are fertility accumulators, as distinct from grass which is a fertility consumer. By this I mean that weeds **add carbon** to the soil and they also bring up various kinds of minerals from the deeper soil to the surface where they can be used by other plants. They truly are God’s restoring plants and in a wonderfully designed plan, once soil fertility is restored, the weeds gracefully retire having completed their role and shallow rooted grasses simply replace them. Neat eh?

Most gardeners and farmers have heard about the importance of mulch. Well one of the best sources of mulch is to allow a good crop of weeds to grow over two seasons, slashing them each time. Thistles are by far the best weeds in this respect. Peter Andrews has proven that by the third year, the mulch created by weeds will prevent most other weeds from growing, thus enhancing the crop the farmer has planted.

My sister has three horses on her property and despite my protestations she regularly sprays the weeds in the paddocks. Her rationalisation is that if the horses eat certain weeds they’ll be poisoned. (And I think what about the toxic poison that’s accumulating in the soil.) Peter Andrews says that there are just two reasons why a weed is inedible. One, it has thorns; two, it contains tannins. Now if you allow the weeds to grow to their full maturity and then slash them, then the tannin in the dead weed will oxidise and the thorns will go soft, so the weed becomes edible. Even weeds that contain prussic acid will oxidise away when slashed. The only exception Peter notes are plants that contain arsenic, but even these are only harmful if eaten in fairly large quantities. So in practical terms don’t add to Monsanto’s bottom line – save your money, if it is in the realm of your authority, let the weeds grow, slash them and let the horses enjoy the protein!

Just recently I was espousing Peter’s work to a group of close friends and provocatively asked, “What weed do you hate most?” There were two main contenders for the title; bindi-eyes and blackberries – the terrible B’s! Now I haven’t talked to Peter about bindies in the lawn but I’m sure his response would be that grass is a fertility consumer and therefore the bindies are highlighting that the fertility of top soil is depleted and they are playing their role in sending down deeper roots to pull up minerals and sugars that the shallow rooted grass will feed on. Cheekily I quipped, “You could also wear thongs.” I’ll let Peter answer for blackberries, “They tend to grow in sensitive areas that would certainly be destroyed by animals if they were able to get into them. The edges of creeks are a good example. Cattle and sheep would eat out the grass there and leave the sides of the creek vulnerable to erosion if they were not prevented from doing so by the blackberries.

I would like to add, "How would we make blackberry pie if we poisoned all the blackberries?"

Source: Life's Natural Catalyst and One Garden Divine Flower Essences
www.lifesnaturalcatalyst.com

Beneficial Wildlife

There are numerous ways to encourage an influx of creatures into your garden to help keep pests and predators at bay:

- Plant a mix of vegetables, fruit and flowers. Diversity encourages a wide range of visitors
- Keep one or two semi-wild areas at the edges of your plot. Being scrupulously tidy doesn't leave anywhere for creatures to colonize
- Plant a hedge. It will provide a lot more camouflage and cover for insect-eating birds than a neat wire fence
- Spray with pesticides and weedkillers as a last resort
- Create a nesting site for beetles and wasps – make a small lot pile and let it rot naturally
- Spread organic mulches over the soil. Apart from retaining moisture, they shelter beetles, centipedes, spiders and so on
- Put nesting boxes for birds and bats, and hibernation boxes for insects such as ladybirds and lacewings
- Dig a pond. However small, it will attract frogs and toads, which will feast on slugs

Did You Know?

You can remove a mulberry stain by rubbing it with half a lemon, then washing it in soapy water.

Did You Know?

Catch Cropping
Catch crops are ones that grow very quickly and can be interplanted with, or grown alongside, slower-growing crops. The catch crops will be ready first, so can be harvested in plenty of time for the slower-growing crops to grow on and fill the space they occupied.

Lettuces, radishes, rocket and Oriental salads are all good examples of catch crops. This is a well-established technique in many commercial market gardens, but it's equally appropriate in small urban gardens when space is at a premium, and, as long as the soil or compost is sufficiently fertile, there's no reason why it shouldn't also apply to vegetables grown in pots and containers.

Getting to Know ….
Graham Boyle & Khoo Mea Lee

Interview by Diane Kelly

As I drove along the street where Graham and Mea Lee live in Broadbeach Waters, I knew immediately which was their house.

Two large grevilleas trees, a very healthy looking hedge, and colourful flowers fill their front yard, along with herbs (they grow in the gravel strip along the verandah, and never require watering) strawberry plants, a red papaya tree, a rhubarb plant with huge leaves, and a large jade plant in a pot. Graham explained that they have created an area that is totally private, but without the need of a fence – and that the grevilleas (Mea Lee's favourite plants) attract the birds.

As the morning progressed, I began to see that Graham and Mea Lee's gardening life is based on principles of caring for the property, the soil, the birds and insects that visit, and the community of the neighbourhood. The front yard has retained an open feeling, with an area of lawn, but at the back of the house, the yard is full of life and interest.

Graham and Mea Lee moved to their home six years ago. The back-yard was very sandy and required a lot of work, but now they feel that the soil is good. I asked Graham how he improved the soil, and there were three answers …. horse and cow manure; worm castings; and anything that is left from the vegetables and herbs that they grow. Any leaves or stems that are only suitable for composting are "dropped and dug" into the garden for the worms to feed on, along with any kitchen scraps.

The horse manure is kept under the cover of straw until it is aged, and then applied. The worm castings – Graham & Mea Lee have two "Can-o-Worms" farms that are working well, and a bath tub version – are used whenever a new plant goes in. I was interested in the worm farms – Graham uses cardboard as the top layer, and he says that is the worms' favourite food.

It was raining the day I visited Graham and Mea Lee, but we still had magpie, lorikeet and currawong visitors. One of the pleasures of the backyard for Graham is to watch the inter-action of plants, insects and birds. When I asked Graham and Mea Lee what were their favourite plants, Graham's answer was that there wasn't one particular plant he favoured, but he found the way that nature works as a whole to be the most wonderful thing.

So what do Graham and Mea Lee have in their "kitchen garden"? Close to the back door are the herbs (Graham has studied permaculture, has taught classes on it, and applies its principles), and then we progress through the slightly raised beds – tomatoes, oak-leaf lettuces (which can be used in stir-fries as well as salads), broad-beans, asparagus, carrots, garlic, cucumbers, bok choi

and other Asian greens. Spaced among the beds are a paw-paw tree, comfrey, a lemon tree, a peach tree (well shrouded with netting to protect the small fruit), dragon fruit plants, a pineapple plant and a lemon myrtle bush. The potato crop has finished for the season, as have the pumpkins – this year they only got about 30 pumpkins – last year it was around 70 off the one plant. The garden is only watered by tank water, and solar panels supply more than enough electricity for Graham & Mea Lee's needs.

One of the things I was reminded of during my visit to Graham and Mea Lee's home was how much experience, wisdom and knowledge our club members have. Mea Lee is a qualified teacher, has done a lot of travelling, and enjoys hiking. (It was actually while they were both hiking in New Zealand that they met – I've looked up in my atlas where they were on Stewart Island, and it is the most southerly part of the islands you could imagine – south of Invercargill, and I imagine very cold!) Graham is qualified in the hotel industry, and is a chef (he made the pumpkin cake that we had for afternoon tea, along with lemon myrtle tea, with leaves straight off the bush); but he has also studied permaculture, and has taught agricultural and solar cooking classes in schools in Malaysia. He has also travelled a lot, and I heard stories of travelling in South America and Malaysia, and coming across a jaguar and a tiger whilst out hiking. He has worked at organic farms along the coast while travelling from Cairns to Albury, and enjoys hiking through the bush of the Gold Coast hinterland.

One of my standard questions during these interviews is "what advice would you give to new gardeners?" Mea Lee's answer was very generous – "no advice – just give cuttings". Sharing was how Mea Lee became involved in our gardening club – firstly enjoying choosing raffle prizes, and then buying things from the produce table, and now she and Graham bring their excess produce to give to others. Both she and Graham recommended just swapping things with others, and "having a go". Don't get discouraged … if something doesn't grow, try something else.

So what did *I* learn from my visit to Graham and Mea Lee's home? I did see some interesting plants; I could see how rich their garden soil has become; and I enjoyed the peacefulness of their property. But more than anything, I gained the sense of community and sharing – when Graham and Mea Lee are away overseas or travelling, their neighbours look after their house and garden, and are encouraged to help themselves to whatever vegies, herbs or fruit are ready to eat. They swap food and eggs; they give the baker that supplies their bread fresh herbs; they care that their compost is odour and rodent free for the sake of their neighbours – in other words, they practice the principles of giving, and caring for our world and each other.

Bogi Fair, October 3rd 2010

By Lise Racine

I managed to go the Brisbane Organic Growers Inc. fair they hold every year. The last time I went was quite a few years ago.

And once again, I am so pleased I went. The whole place was busy with many stall holders and participants. The stall holders were offering among other things: seedlings, soil improvement products, books, seeds, tools, fresh products, info on seminars (Elizabeth Fekonio), environmental products, rare breed with Mark Tully and his many volunteers, food, fresh sugar cane juice, organic food delivery service and more.

The atmosphere was great, very alive and busy. People were curious, interested, asking questions, discussing, buying while eating the very tasty and most affordable food prepared by the club members.

Inside the main building was a display of some of the members products. What a display that was! The presentation was so creative and colourful while the range and the number of products was really impressive. There were baskets of vegetables, fruits, flowers, single vegetable which were either "perfect" and/or very big. The whole display was I believe 20 metres long and spreading on two shelves.

Chatting with a lady of the club she told me that their members list is around the 500 people. Wow, that's a lot of members!

Their next speaker for the Thursday following (7th of October) was talking about permaculture and bio-dynamic. Don't worry I am trying to book him for our club.

All in all, I had a great time there and would definitely go back another year.

Is it possible to organise such a fair with our club? Would anyone be interested?

Harvesting & Storing

By Diane Kelly

Some vegetables are best eaten as soon as possible after harvesting. Peas and sweet corn, for example, start to convert their sugars to starch the moment they're picked, so from that point on the clock is ticking on how long they will stay super-sweet. Lettuces, Oriental salad leaves and spinach quickly wilt, too. They are best picked in the early morning or evening, not in the heat of the day. However, many other vegetables will keep for a long time if stored carefully.

Storing vegetables:

Onions, shallots, garlic, pumpkins, winter squash, potatoes and other root vegetables should last into winter if stored. Eat or discard damaged produce, as it won't store. Store dry potatoes in paper sacks or bags – not plastic, which will make them sweat. Hang onions, shallots and garlic somewhere cool, dry and well-ventilated. Root vegetables such as carrots and parsnips will hold in the garden through winter if the soil is well-drained and rainfall is not excessive.

Freezing:

French beans, runner beans, broad beans, peas, corn, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are all suitable for freezing. Wash, trim and blanch them in boiling water for a few minutes, then bag them up and freeze them straight away. Tomatoes can be frozen, but they may go mushy when defrosted.

Pickling and preserving:

Oils and vinegars can be flavoured with garlic, chillies and herbs. And vegetable chutneys and pickles – which combine vinegar, sugar and salt as preservatives – traditionally contain onions, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, beans, cauliflower or eggplants.

Source: Grow Vegetables", # 1
Alan Buckingham

Free Food
By Diane Kelly

The idea of propagating your own vegetables is very tempting. It means free food, after all. But it's worth sounding a note of caution. Although most vegetables are grown from seed, not all are worth attempting to propagate from seed you save yourself. Beans, peas, onions, tomatoes squashes and certain herbs are the most likely to be successful, while others are difficult or unreliable. However, a few vegetables can be propagated using methods such as dividing established rootstocks and certain herbs by taking cuttings.

Which seeds to save:

Don't attempt to save seeds from what are called F1 hybrid plants. They are the offspring of two inbred parents, crossed to produce a cultivar with very specific characteristics. Their seeds will not breed "true", which means they are unlikely to inherit the same uniform qualities. Even ordinary seeds, those allowed to form naturally, without hybridization, may get accidently cross-pollinated in your garden or on your vegetable plot, and may product offspring with non-standard variations. For this reason, grow plants from which you intend to save seed well away from other cultivars.

How to collect seeds:

Allow tomatoes and squashes to ripen fully before collecting seeds, and leave pea and bean pods on the plants until they have withered and dried. To collect seeds from onions, shallots and leeks, leave a few healthy plants in the ground and let them product flowerheads the following spring. When they turn to seedheads cut them down and dry them.

Propagation by division:

Perennial vegetables such as asparagus, globe artichokes and rhubarb are best propagated by digging up existing plants, dividing them, and replanting on a fresh site. You get three or four new, vigorous plants from one single parent.

Propagating bulbs and tubers:

Potatoes or onions left in the ground often sprout the next year – they can be propagated this way. However, this is not advisable, as they tend to become diseased. It's safer to buy new, virus-free seed potatoes and onion sets.

Source: Grow Vegetables", # 1
Alan Buckingham

Chillies …… how hot is hot?
By Diane Kelly

All chillies are hot, but they range from the mildly warm to the frankly volcanic. The heat comes from the chemical "capsaicin", most concentrated in the seeds and the white pith. It stimulates nerve endings in the mucas membranes in your mouth and throat, and in your skin too. It's this that produces the burning sensation and causes eyes to water, noses to run, and saliva to flow.

Wilbur Scoville, an American chemist, invented a method of measuring chilli heat, now known as the Scoville rating. A sweet pepper has a score of zero, as it has no heat at all. A relatively mild chilli such as a jalapeno ranks at 2,500-8,000 Scoville units. The chilli claimed to be the world's hottest – the Dorset Naga – was recently measured at a mind-numbing 923,000 Scoville units. It can only be handled wearing gloves.

	Mild	Medium	Hot
Habanero			***
Jalapeno		***	
Thai Hot Dragon			***
Serrano		***	
Hungarian Yellow Wax Hot		***	

Source: Grow Vegetables
Alan Buckingham

COMPANION PLANTING FOR OCTOBER

Plant	Companions	Function	Foes
Basil	Tomatoes	helps repel flies and mosquitoes	Rue
Beans	Potatoes Carrots, Cucumber, cauliflower, summer savoury, most other vegetables and herbs.		Onions Garlic Gladiolus
Borage	Tomatoes, squash and strawberries	Deters tomato worm, improves growth and flavour and in the strawberry patch will increase the yield.	
Carrots	Lettuce, Peas, Leeks, Chives, Onions, Cucumbers, Beans, tomatoes, wormwood, sage, rosemary		Dill in flower and being stored with apples
Cucumbers	Beans, corn, peas, radish, sunflowers		Potatoes, aromatic herbs
Dill	Brassica's	Dill attracts predator wasp for cabbage moth.	
Nasturtium	Radishes, cabbages, zucchini cucurbits, fruit trees	secrete a mustard oil, which many insects find attractive and will seek out, particularly the cabbage white moth. The flowers repel aphids and the cucumber beetle. The climbing variety grown up apple trees will repel codling moth.	
Parsley	Tomato, asparagus, roses	Deters rose beetle, improves tomato and asparagus.	
Potato	Beans, cabbage, marigold, horseradish (plant at corners of patch) eggplant, sweet alyssum.	Alyssum attracts beneficial wasps and acts as a living ground cover	Pumpkin, squash, cucumber, sunflower, tomato, raspberry
Pumpkin	Corn		Potato
Radish	Peas, nasturtium, lettuce, cucumbers, spinach	Radish attracts leaf minor away from spinach	
Spinach	Strawberries		
Squash	Nasturtium Corn		
Sunflower	Cucumbers		Potato
Sweet Corn	Potatoes, Peas, Beans, cucumbers, pumpkin, squash	Corn acts as a trellis for beans and beans attract predators of corn pests.	
Tomatoes	Asparagus, Parsley, Chives, onion, Broccoli, Sweet Basil, marigold, carrots, parsley.		Kohlrabi, potato, fennel, cabbage

VEGETABLES

OCT: Amaranth, Artichoke, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Snake bean, Sweet corn, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, New Zealand spinach, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

NOV: Artichoke, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

HERBS

OCTOBER
Annual: Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Mustard Lettuce, Nasturtium, Rocket.

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

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

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

Planting in October

Amaranth	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Basil	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Borage	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Burdock	Plant in garden.	Harvest from March
Capsicum	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Carrot	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Chilli	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Cucumber	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Dwarf beans , French beans, Bush	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Eggplant	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Globe artichokes	Plant in garden.	Harvest from September
Jerusalem Artichokes	Plant in garden.	Harvest from March
Lemon Balm	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Lettuce	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Luffa	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Marrow	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Mint	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Mustard greens	Plant in garden.	Harvest from December
NZ Spinach	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Okra	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Oregano	Plant in garden.	Harvest from December
Pumpkin	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Rocket	Plant in garden.	Harvest from December
Rockmelon, Canteloupe	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Rosella	Plant in garden.	Harvest from April
Rosemary	Plant in garden.	Harvest from 12 months
Sage	Plant in garden.	Harvest from 18 months
Silverbeet	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Squash	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Sunflower	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Sweet corn	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Sweet Potato/Kumara	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Thyme	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from September
Tomato, Tomatillo	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Watermelon	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Yam	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Zucchini, Marrow	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from December

Preparing for November

Amaranth	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Basil	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Borage	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Capsicum	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Carrot	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Chilli	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Chives	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Choko	Plant in garden.	Harvest from May
Cucumber	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Eggplant	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
French tarragon	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Globe artichokes	Plant in garden.	Harvest from September
Lemon Balm	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Lettuce	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Luffa	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Marrow	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Mint	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
NZ Spinach	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Okra	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from February
Oregano	Plant in garden.	Harvest from December
Pumpkin	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Radish	Plant in garden.	Harvest from December
Rockmelon, canteloupe	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Rosella	Plant in garden.	Harvest from April
Sage	Plant in garden.	Harvest from 18 months
Silverbeet	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
Squash	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Sunflower	Plant in garden.	Harvest from January
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Tomato, Tomatillo	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Watermelon	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from January
Yam	Plant in garden.	Harvest from February
Zucchini, Marrow	Plant out (transplant) seedlings.	Harvest from December

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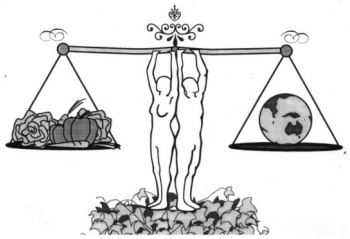

NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

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

Next meeting:
Thursday 18 November 2010