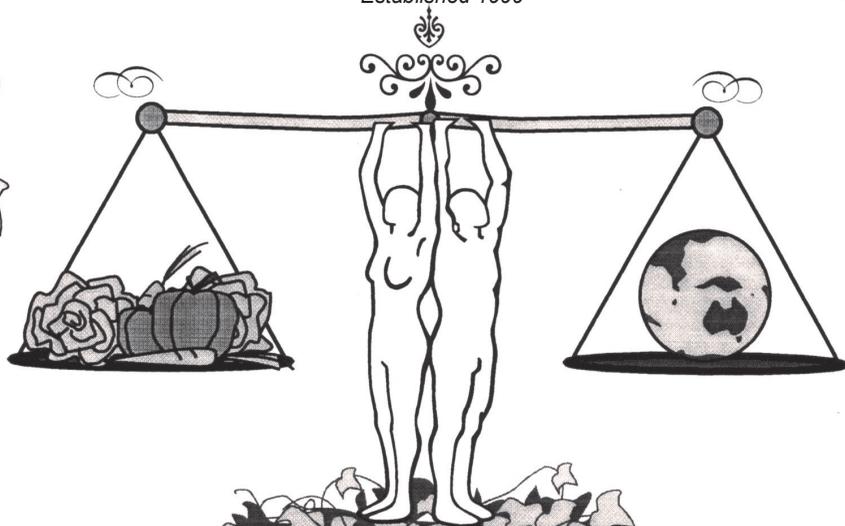


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 September 2013 Issue 9
GARDENING IN SPRING

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17 October

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 transfer funds directly into our bank account, send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly, or just pay at the door.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

\$2.00 each.

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 - \$1 each or 3 for \$2.

Library:

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

Advertising:

1/4 page: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year (11 issues)

1/2 page: \$20 an issue or \$200 per year

full page: \$30 an issue or \$300 per year

2013 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
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Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609
The position of Trip Co-ordinator has been abolished.	

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart, Debbie Jones

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

NEW: You can now pay your membership fee directly into the GCOG bank account.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers
Bank: Suncorp
BSB: 484-799
Account: 0014-21651

Remember to put your Name and Membership Number in the comment field.

Note the number in brackets after your name is your membership number - you will need to quote this number in the comment field, if you pay via online banking.

Overdue: Julie Abraham (315), Lise Racine (151), Chris & Dorothy Winton (253), Neil McLaughlin (326), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Kathy Steenbeek (331), Shelley Pryor (72), Warren & Beverly Carlson (87), Gene Rosser (224), Jill Barber (290), Geoffrey Williams (293), Lyn Mansfield (306), Jan Guest (307)

September: Henry Blonner (108), Neil Ross (294), Denise Goodwin (335), Frank Rebesco (342), Beth Orme (343)

October: Debbie Jones (254), Glenn & Joan Jones (266), Gai Morrow (309), Darrell & Marion Williams (310)

Welcome to our new member: Geraldine McDonald

GCOG - Guest Speaker

October: Lise Racine on "Therapeutic Tea and Decoction - Preparation & Use"

November: Christmas Meeting

What's On

Biodynamic Workshop

29 September

For more details contact Lise Racine

House Sitter Available ...

Mature, responsible garden and pet lover available to do house sitting.

Usually work during school hours a couple of days a week replacing teachers in local schools. Police check already conducted as part of teacher registration in Queensland.

Feel free to contact me to discuss your house and pet sitting requirements.

Contact Julie on 0414 607 130
(club member)



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

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for details or Ph: 0412 266566

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

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

No doubt, you, like me, are finding the last month quiet a challenge when it comes to gardening. Just when you begin to think it may never stop raining, we go through an extremely dry stint. It is very difficult to consistently keep the veggie patch running at an optimum level in such conditions. Compost and mulch will be your soils best friend now, helping to keep the soil cool and maintaining any precious moisture. Even a two centimetre thick layer will be enough and achievable for most gardeners.

On the Seed table this month you will find some Hopi Corn seed, this was donated by a fellow member and is grown for its little cobs of dark blue kernels. It is mainly used for a popping corn or in decorative displays. So if you have some space in the garden, why not give something new a try. If you need to build up organic matter in your garden beds, we have packs of green manure for sale, this is an excellent way to add organic matter to the soil when you can't make or get hold of any compost. Planting a green manure crop before you go on holiday is another great idea, as you are literally making compost without lifting a finger.

I would like to ask everyone who is growing nasturtium to bring in a small handful of ripe, dried seeds to add to the seed table stock. This way we will keep plant diversity and get some interesting colours in the mix. Just hand them into Roger or myself, in a postal envelope with your name and date collected printed on the outside.

All home grown and saved seed is gratefully received, especially the rare or unusual, however the ordinary is what is the most popular so we need that too. Just remember to put your name, collection date and importantly what the plant is and preferably what variety it is too. The best and simplest way to package seed is, as mentioned before, in a postal envelope as they can sweat and spoil in a plastic bag or container.

We will be providing a new opportunity for members on meeting nights in the form of a swap and barter table. The hope is that it will give members who have a tiny excess of fruit, vegetables, eggs, jam, pickles, herbs or anything else that you grow or produce yourself but don't have enough to sell, will be able to swap with another member. For instance I may bring in a pumpkin and a bunch of parsley which you may be happy to trade me for half a dozen eggs. I think this will be of great benefit to us all and am looking forward to its success.

October is the GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS 16th BIRTHDAY, and it would be fantastic if you haven't been to a meeting in a while to be there on the night. We will be celebrating with birthday cake and plenty of fun and frivolity.



Happy gardening, Maria.



Raffle Table

Q & A

By Karen Hart

Maria opened the session by enquiring if everyone knows what a **'no-dig'** garden is. To create one, there needs to be 'lasagne' layers – ie compost, Lucerne, mulch etc.

Maria then proceeded to tell us some of the packets of seeds that were available from the 'Seed Table' \$2 per packet:

Borlotti beans - for fresh pods or grow-on to dry

Chook mix - fodder for chickens

Green manure pack – grown to incorporate into the soil, allow to grow to shin high, then dig in. Maria sowed some and it was up within 5 days – scatter the seed then rake it lightly in. Good if intending to leave a bed fallow.

Queen Anne's Lace – great for attracting beneficial insects.

Chia seed 'white'

Rosella seeds – great for jam making

Henry brought in some **'white root'** – an invasive weed that is very difficult to be rid of – even a small piece will take root.



Judy asked Maria to review growing **tomatoes**.

Ross answered that the secret is to get the soil right – the Ph needs to be around 6.5 – 7.0 – too much nitrogen will cause too much leaf growth and not enough trusses.

They like lots of water but do not allow them to get waterlogged.

Now is a great time for planting – soil needs to be 10C or above overnight or flowers will not set.

Tomatoes need good airflow so allow plenty of room between plants.

Remove diseased leaves and dispose of, taking care not to transfer from one plant to another – hygiene is paramount.

'Beefsteak' is Ross's favourite variety. **'Tropic'**, **'Yellow Pear'** and **'Thai Pink Eggs'** are also great for the Gold Coast as they are heat tolerant.

Someone's **dragon fruit plant** had lots of flowers last year but did not get any fruit.

Maria said that it was a good year, so it was suggested that a soil test is done. If too sandy it may need good compost added.

Seedling punnets bought from Bunnings contained **polystyrene beads** in the soil – Thought not organic and could get into waterways. It is probably **perlite** so would not be a problem.

Aloe verabarbadosensis – Henry would like to obtain some. He understands that it takes 5 years for the healing benefit. Maria will bring some in. The yellow flowering variety is the true barbadosensis. The orange flowered variety is still effective for burns etc. but not as strong.

Graham asked how to do **grafting**.

Ross stated that it is nearly too late – needs to be done before end of August. You could try putting the grafting wood in the fridge, to trick it into thinking that it is still winter. Grafts are taken as soon as the buds begin to swell in the orchard.

Ross grew hedgerows using **quince 106 stock** for **granny smith apples**, **cox's orange pippin apples** – early and late varieties. Graham wished to grow **persimmon** and **avocadoes**.

Angie enquired about **moon planting**.

There are two calendars: **Thomas Zimmer** does the circle and there is also a **Biodynamic** one.

We used to sell Thomas's attractive "Astrological Calendar and Moon Planting Guide" – a poster – and it's usually available at health food stores, crystal shops, etc.

"Grow what you love – the love will keep it growing"

**Louise Newell's Presentation
Gardening for Children +
Genetic Modification
and What to Do About it
By Jill Barber**

It was quite a surprise to me at least just how fascinating the evening listening to Louise at our meeting last month was. I was informed, educated and amazed by what she had to tell us about her involvement with the children at the Burleigh State School. This passionate environmentalist has both been a fulltime classroom teacher for the past 19 years, and for the last three of those has been the Garden Specialist in the **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program!** She firstly oversaw the creation of the extensive gardens in the school grounds, and now ongoingly tends them with the children, while gently helping them acquire new attitudes and awareness around food. She came to explain to us how the program runs and what kids are getting out of it.

It is one of 300 schools in Queensland which received a government grant to set up this "Pleasurable food experiences" program for primary school children. They have gardening lessons every week, which is a hands-on experience, planting, propagating, watering, pruning, mulching, digging, weeding, harvesting, etc. It also involves weed identification, tool safety, vermiculture, permaculture, eco-systems including lifecycles, making scare-crows, having wheel barrow races and, finally, cooking and eating sessions. There are five kitchens in operation, and 250 mouths to feed each week!

The garden occupies 4/10 of an acre in the grounds of this 95-year-old school, and its design was based on the Gowonda legend. The original edge was done by "Tidy Edge" team, and soil had to be brought in for the garden as the soil there is understandably very sandy. There were a hundred people who were involved in setting it up, and half a van of seedlings were gifted to them.

While the kitchens were being built, Louise ran a program called, "Coming to our senses",

in which she, for example, brought in herbs for the children to smell or soil to feel. She has lots of jobs to do when the children are not there, after school hours and on weekends as she has just two days a week for the garden, teaching grade 4 for the other three days. She is at school six days a week.

These 8 to 10-year-olds learn how to grow fresh, organic, chemical-free food. Their Real Food Manifesto says, "You are what you eat!" Some highlights are: the strawberries are much bigger and better this second year, Louise observed. Also, the students grew their own wheat, crushed it, winnowed it, ground it and made bread with their own flour. One time she brought her partner's chickens in for the children to experience. As a result of these experiences, some 8 to 10-year-olds have their own garden or are going to start one. A few of the parents are interested and come to the school to be part of it.

There are, of course, periodic difficulties:

- A bumper crop often comes in the middle of the holidays.
- The original grant is just finishing off now, and funds need to be generated to enable the program to continue running. Grants are being sought, and resourcefulness, such as selling things, etc., is needed to bring in funds.
- The twenty litres of rainwater in the tanks isn't accessible till tap keys can be obtained (some suggestions were made in the meeting).
- The kids help with the building of compost, but it isn't enough, and mostly needs to be ordered in.
- There have been excess herbs and lettuces, and Louise has started to work with the tuckshop, though they are slow to change.

They basically want a rolling harvest, not coming as feast or famine, and there are supposed to be parent helpers...

There has been a safety/risk assessment, including tool safety, hats and sunscreen, etc. There has also been a "Program Coordinator's end of year report", which is presented to the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation once a year.

Louise asked me to add a fantastic website called *Natural News*, which is amazing, latest health news.

In the second part of the evening, Louise took the opportunity to share with us some of the latest findings and law reform around **genetically modified seeds and food plants**, the health impacts for us all, and how this might affect us as organic growers. On May 25th she went on the March against Monsanto in Brisbane, to protest the use of genetically modified food in our society. Her rationale is quite straightforward: healthwise, introducing foreign genetic material into our bodies will do things that are unexpected! Simply put, consuming genetically altered organisms alters **your** genetic information.

There are no long term studies on the effects to humans, Louise informed us, so the bio-tech companies can say there are no ill effects to humans, but The FDA (Food & Drug Administration) is forbidden from viewing any report from anyone other than the GM engineers themselves, so we can draw our own conclusions. Just consider the possible effects when genomes (small parts of the genetic code) from one species are spliced into other species to produce some favourable attribute, mainly to tolerate large doses of toxic sprays, transportability and size of yield, at the expense of nutritional value and honouring the integrity of the species.

This is what we are up against when trying to protect ourselves from these effects: Monsanto had their own Protection Act bill passed so that it is illegal for any litigation towards them due to ill effects of consumption of GM foods and ingredients. The Plant Reproductive Material Law in some countries makes seed saving illegal !#*! Also, many countries still do not have to label GM foods and ingredients, which is largely the case in Australia.

The biggest names include: Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta, Dupont and Dow - biotech companies (seeds), agrochemicals (pesticides and herbicides) and the pharmaceutical industry (drugs & medicines). The truth about genetically modified organisms is

that they represent Patents on life. Just consider these alternatives to life that are presented to us: 'Round-up Ready', which is the second most toxic, non-radioactive compound on the planet; terminator seeds, that will not produce plants which can have seeds that will grow, and foods that are contaminated, degraded, devitalized and demineralized. Being the passionate environmentalist that she is, Louise has clearly researched this whole topic extensively, and gave us a list of preventable diseases of under-nutrition and genome disruption syndrome which include: infertility, sterilization, foetal malformations, lethal allergies, cancers, cardio-vascular disease, auto-immune disease, neurological dysfunction. In addition, a dire result of some pesticide use, as we know, has been that 90% of wild bees and 80% of domestic bees in the US have been wiped out already, which the European Union Times called, "The greatest human apocalypse in human history".

In order to be better informed and be able to protect ourselves better, Louise has come up with this list of companies producing foods known to have GM Ingredients: Nabisco, Betty Crocker, Kraft, Kellogs, Cadbury, Nestle, Campbells, Uncle Bens/Mars, Pringles, Coke & Pepsi & Sprite, Schweppes, Gatorade, Ocean Spray – cranberry.

Louise invites us to become interested in solutions and disseminate them. Our self-education could include these documentaries: "Seeds of Death" (Unveiling the Lies of GMO), "Food Futures", "The Future of Food", "Dirt" (a story with heart and soil), "One Man, One Cow, One Planet" and "Homegrown" (very inspirational). Furthermore, she claims help is at our fingertips, and gave us to explore: Non-GMO Project (App) Shopping Guide, Buycott (App) scan bar codes, March against Monsanto, Institute for Responsible Technologies (web info), responsibletechnologies.org (web site) and GM Watch (website).

Whenever people mobilize their outrage in an effective way, the globalists step back, Louise claims, and makes these final points:

- We still own our own body and nobody

To Be Continued pg 13

Getting to Know - Debbie Jones From Diane Kelly

By co-incidence, both the gardeners sharing their experiences in the "Getting to Know" series in September and October live in Palm Beach. What is interesting is that they have solved the problem of the area's sandy soils in two different ways. This month, we are featuring Debbie Jones and her very successful raised garden beds.

After spending two years working in London, and then another year back-packing around Europe, Debbie and her husband moved into their current home nine years ago. At that time, the backyard contained four large eucalyptus trees and an intrusive poinsettia tree (all of which had to be removed due to termite infestation and other damage), and very little else. Now there is a spacious back-lawn for the children, dachshund puppy and two guinea pigs to play on, and the block is edged with bushy palm trees for privacy, and bromeliads for display.

After a quick chat and a very yummy blueberry, mango (both hand-picked by Debbie and family) & banana milk smoothie, we headed out to have a look at the two large garden areas that have been built. The first bed has an internal area of approximately 1x3 metres, and stands nearly a metre high. (The blocks and installation were a birthday present for Debbie – what more could an enthusiastic gardener ask for!) The bed runs east/west, and so receives plenty of sunshine throughout the day – in summer, Debbie puts up shade-cloth to protect lettuces and other vegetables that may burn. The bed is parallel to the house wall and a colour-bond fence, both of which radiate winter heat to aid successful tomato growing.

Initially Debbie (contrary to the general advice – more about that later) put compost worms into her new garden, and installed internal pipes to use as food points for feeding the worms. But now that the garden has been composted and mulched for over six years, the soil quality is good and the additional feeding is not required.

In this comparatively small area of garden, Debbie grows over 20 different vegetables and herbs. All the vegetables are allowed to go to seed, as one of Debbie's main gardening interests is seed-saving, both for on-going quality and for food security. Debbie tries to plant something every day, as she works on developing a succession-planting system. In addition to seed planting, many self-sown seedlings are allowed to flourish in the garden. One of Debbie's skills seems to be early recognition of plants, and she explained to me that the first two leaves that a seedling grows are not "true" leaves. The third leaf will look quite different, and when it appears then you can start fertilizing, transplanting or thinning as required.

Egg shells, onion skins and coffee grinds are applied to this garden to deter slugs and snails (the coffee also adds acidity to the soil, if required), and Debbie uses sugar cane as a mulch. The flowers from the rocket, coriander and calendula plants are used in salads, and Debbie is planning for the calendula seeds to be used for skin care products in the future.

The strawberries are worthy of note. The initial plants were given to Debbie by a neighbour who has been growing strawberries successfully for 35 years – we figured the variety should have adjusted to its Palm Beach environment by now! Debbie's two daughters have the responsibility of checking this garden for bugs, and the definite instruction not to pick the strawberries "until mummy says" – even I would find that one hard to take notice of!



The strawberry patch.

The second garden in Debbie's back-yard is much larger, and took 7 cubic metres of soil to fill. This was created for growing larger plants, so there are pumpkins (butternut, Qld Blue and jap), egg plants, potatoes, zucchinis, tomatoes, snow peas, cauliflowers etc. Debbie has also planted sweet potatoes in this bed, but feels the return did not warrant the space used (although she did use the leaves in green smoothies). There are also a variety of herbs planted in this garden, including a magnificent Thai basil plant which was covered in bees.

In this bed are also a couple of experiments:

- Debbie is growing potatoes in a chicken-wire frame – the seed potatoes have been placed on the ground and then covered in sugar cane mulch – this has continued up the height of the frame. (Advantage? The potatoes come out totally without dirt to clean off!)
- A white strawberry plant
- And when the soil temperature is adequate, Thai eggplants

Apart from her ability to recognize, for example, cos lettuces that are only two, tiny little leaves, Debbie is very aware of the wild-life in her garden. She and the children check for larvae and other tiny indicators of pests, and keep the plants safe from grasshoppers, white cabbage moths etc. But as you can see from this photo, not all the visitors are unwanted.



A welcome friend

Now to return to the question of “general advice” mentioned in paragraph four. An idea that has cropped up in several conversations recently, including when I was chatting with

Debbie, is the realization that every gardener should garden as suits them. Obviously there are many basic principles within gardening that need to be adhered to, but in matters of style, interests, experimentation and goals, we can all choose what suits us, our environment and our own requirements. Debbie's two gardens are examples of this – the sandy soil had to be allowed for; the gardens provide self-sufficiency in many foods; the children are learning how to care for what nature provides; and, as one of Debbie's main interests, gardening provides her with many hours of challenges and enjoyment.

p.s. Apart from gardening, Debbie's interests are cooking (especially her husband's favourite food – curry!), sowing, and making household products. She makes liquid soaps (and gave me a bottle to try at home – it contains lemon balm and lemon grass essential oil, and smells and feels very pleasant); dish-washing powder (which can be used in the washing machine as well) and a citrus cleaner, which puts peelings to good use.

The easy-to-make recipe is on page 10.



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Recipe - Citrus Cleaner By Debbie Jones

Citrus Cleaners - so easy and good!

Here is my citrus cleaner that I use in the kitchen ... it is excellent for wiping down the stove and bench-tops, in the bathroom, and even cleaning the toilet - just add a little bi-carb soda to the bowl and spray with "Citrus Clean".

Citrus cleaners and oils can be expensive, so if you eat citrus, why waste the precious oils in the skins that you would normally toss in the bin or compost. You just need to keep adding to the jar as you eat an orange or use a lemon. All you need is vinegar and the citrus peel.

Half fill a wide brimmed glass jar with white vinegar, and then start adding your lemon and orange peels (I have even done one with rosemary). Continue to add the peels as you use them - I think there is the rind of at least 1 dozen oranges in this bottle.



Leave (out of the sunlight) for 4 to 5 weeks to mature. Then just strain the liquid into your container of choice and you're ready to do some cleaning. (You can dilute with water if you wish - I dilute it up to 50%.) If you're going to use it in a spray bottle, you need to strain it really well.

You can see how the orange oils are already starting to be extracted, by the orange tint to the vinegar.

Now, how easy is that!!!

New Garden Beds for Ingleside State School

The 17th of August was a special day for the Ingleside State School (which is located in the beautiful Tallebudgera Valley, has around 60 children in attendance, and is over 120 years old).

As well as a welcoming presentation by Lindy Davidson and then an introduction to making fruit & vegetable smoothies by one of the parents who runs a seedling nursery, we heard a talk about soil biology by Greg Plevy from Wormtec, and then we headed off to learn about "no-dig" gardening.

The school staff and parents have been working with GCOG member Cathie Hodge to establish several raised garden beds for the students. When we arrived the wood chips had been spread and the beds installed. Now all we had to do was fill them!

Cathie had organized for large supplies of wood chips, water weed, horse manure and mushroom compost to be delivered to the site. Activated compost had been supplied by GC Permaculture, and Greg was going to apply his Wormtec product to the finished beds. Barrows, shovels, spades - and plenty of cold water, as it was quite hot work - were supplied, and after an explanation of the procedure by Cathie, the attendees started to spread the various ingredients into their layers.

A wonderful vegetarian lunch was supplied at the half way mark, and an enjoyable and educational day was had by all.

Nematode Alert From Diane

Beetroot can suffer from nematode attacks in frost-free climates. Crop rotation and bio-fumigation using dug-in cover crops of mustard or tagasaste is an important preventative method.

Organic Gardener Sept/Oct 2013

Zucchini

Varieties:

Dark green: Ambassador, Black Beauty, Blackjack, Greenskin

Yellow: Gold Rush, Golden, Golden Arch Crookneck

Other: Greyzini (grey-green), Cocozelle (pale green, striped), Costata (pale green, ribbed)

Planting & Care:

Zucchini needs good drainage and warm conditions. They can be sown in all but winter in the sub-tropics.

Space bush varieties 40-90 cm apart. Trailing types need at least twice this space.

Dig a large hole, mix the soil with manure, then backfill. Plant 2-3 seeds on a mound, then mulch. After germination (in 7-10 days), thin to the strongest seedling.

Water well when flowers and fruit are forming. Liquid-fertilise fortnightly.

Pinch out the tips of trailers when stems reach 60 cm long.

In cooler weather, hand pollination with a small paintbrush may be necessary.

Harvesting & Storing:

Expect a harvest in 6-9 weeks. Pick regularly when fruit is about 10 cm long to encourage cropping.

Check every day or two as they can quickly become very large. Store in the fridge for up to a week.

Excerpt from "Gardening Australia" – Oct 2013

Watering:

As zucchini is very susceptible to moulds and mildews, try to keep water off the leaves and foliage when watering. Don't worry about the leaves wilting in very hot weather. They will recover in the cool of the evening if kept well watered.

Warm Earth magazine - September 2013

Cont'd from pg 7 - Louise Newell

should be able to change it without our consent.

- Even if we can't change the protection law, we can still rally for labelling.
- Social media is our friend.
- Don't be surprised if people find it hard to accept the truth – it *is* outrageous. No one can deny the scale of the challenge or its urgency.
- Do your research. It's out there.
- Make any and all small changes you can. It's not about going without. We have choices- informed ones are best.

In closing, let's remember that part of the food security answer for us small gardeners at least lies in bio-diversity and saving our own seed at this time. It's all about self-empowerment, and we are so grateful to Louise for all her work and energy presenting us with this one-two punch evening of inspiration and wake-up call!

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GC Visitors Guide 2013

Jill's Garden Update

Today's the day – I'm finally putting up my fruit fly traps again, having just split a pack once more with Roger G. Thanks to Richard Bull's fine products, our last crop of lemonades, in particular, survived virtually unscathed by the little monsters. The miniature peach tree might actually produce edible fruit this year, with this fruit fly protection in place, as well as fertiliser to hopefully prevent it from being bitter, as it was one year.

Hopefully, our tomatoes will produce better this year, and be in need of this protection as well. They are certainly looking healthy so far, with very promising flowers appearing.... before the bottom leaves all turn yellow, as they've done in previous years. I just hope that they aren't too close together to allow enough airflow between them. I realised after the last GCOG meeting, when the How-to-Plant-Tomatoes question arose, that I'd planted them too close, but it was too late to move them, so time will tell. I did add compost and plant a green manure crop, of BQ Mulch, in that bed, so hopefully they are nematode-protected as well as sufficiently fed.

The weather over the last couple of months has certainly been great for our garden! Everything's looking the best ever! However, from our visit to Rod and Tania Bruin's farm a couple of months ago, it's become crystal clear to me that, although we make our own compost, as much as possible from our own garden waste, etc, it's not enough. We do need to buy in extra if we want to produce vibrantly healthy and nutritious vegetables and fruit.

It's the citrus that have thrived best in our garden – the lime, grapefruit, lemon and lemonade – and it's because we've put huge amounts of chook poo on several times a year. We've also pruned them quite drastically, in contrast to what's been recommended in our club, I have to say, reducing the height so that the fruit is more reachable, cutting out the branches crossing over in the middle, and generally thinning out clumps of new growth. This year, perhaps as a result of their very good health, there were very few waspy

growths to remove, and the crops have been abundant. It's always tricky timing knowing when to prune as there's still ripening fruit while the massive lot of new blossoms emerge. So we have to sacrifice some blossoms – there are way too many, anyway, for the trees to hold up, and they smell lovely as cut flowers in the house – and leave some fruit on till it's mature... and we're ready for it.



Before



And After

Lots of ferals have blessed us this year – cos and mignonette lettuces everywhere, lots of dill, coriander at every turn, nasturtiums colouring up every spare space – and I've actually planted flowers amongst the vegies for the first time. Marigolds – both useful in dissuading pests, we're told, and uplifting of the spirits every time I go there, with their bright and cheery orange faces in amongst the

green. Beautiful! In the past I've had feral rocket and basil; let's hope this crop does that next time, too.

I'm finally digging up the rest of my turmeric and jicama yams now, too...if they haven't all rotted away already. Lots of things are going to seed now: mizuna and mignonette lettuces, mustard greens, dill, lupins. Now those lupins were a disappointment: I got them from a friend, expecting lovely, strong, tall plants and towers of flowers, like the ones we saw all along the roads in New Zealand, but they are small, weak and have very missable flowers. Oh, well, they must prefer a cold climate. Carrots are another disappointment for me: the only ones that came up, out of three or four varieties I tried, were the mixed coloureds. At least there *are* some. The parsnips and leeks make up for them – so healthy they look.

Oh, and that 7-year climbing bean plant I asked about a few months ago, that was presumably a Madagascan Lima Bean, and took over a big part of one garden bed, just had to go – the pods were too small and tough for me to want to be bothered with. I cut it down, chopped it up, and honoured its life by turning it into green manure in that bed.



Finally, I have new lattices up for the climbing peas and beans, and so far those look lovely and healthy. Now the asparagus needs new supports to contain it and keep it from tripping me up as I pass it by on the path, and I need to relocate the lemongrass as it's

perched too precariously on the edge of a sloping bed and looking poorly.

What a blessing it is to have a garden, with never-ending jobs to do! It provides not only continual challenges with problems to solve, physical labour to keep us active and fit, in a way, and wonderfully nutritious and tasty food to harvest, but it keeps us out in nature, with fresh air, birdsong, fascinating insects to observe and nature spirits to keep our spirits lifted. When our children were little, and naughty, I sweetened them up by giving them a job in the garden, and soon they were singing as they happily completed their task! Works every time with me, too!

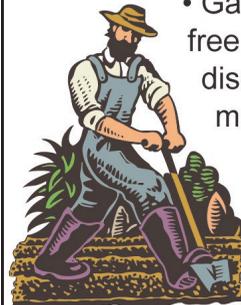
Handy Hints - Cover Crops

Try planting a cover crop under your trees. Nastursium, Coriander, Lemongrass, Radish will provide an extra crop as well as stop unwanted weed growth. They will also encourage good soil biology which will help your tree!

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Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

This is the month of inspiration as the night temperatures rise and a general air of growth is about. The delightful Jacaranda displays will help dispel the last vestiges of winter; fruit will be forming on the trees; and a rash of Spring vegetables can be yours.

Vegetables:

Consistency is one of a good garden's most important ingredients. This particularly applies to the planting program, so keep up the monthly sowings of carrots, beans, corn and lettuce so that your supply of fresh food is never exhausted.

Carrots can be tricky, so take extra care sowing the seed. The tiny embryos must be planted direct, so water the day before and when sowing sprinkle seed generously, remembering this local version of the old rhyme:

*One for the ant, one for the rot
One to grow, and one to not*

Some gardeners use commercial seed-raising mixture to cover the carrot seed, but a mixture of soil, sand and organic matter can be sieved over a bed. Water lightly and spread a sheet of light hessian or shade cloth scrap to help retain soil moisture until the seedlings emerge.

Lettuce sown now will mature in the hot months, so choose a cooler spot, reserving a north-facing location for later plantings.

Fruit:

Again, it is still possible to plant out fruit trees in October, but the speciality of the month is the banana. Select the strongest suckers available. A warm, sheltered position with a northerly aspect and deep, rich, well-drained soil are important loves of the banana. If the soil is heavy and water-logged, build a mound, adding some sand and organic matter. Bananas are heavy feeders, so be generous with the manure and/or compost. Mulch well and be careful with watering, as young suckers can rot. Top-dressing and liquid fertilising every four to six weeks will create big fruit. *Continued on next column*

FRUIT TREES From Diane Kelly

Custard apples: Start increasing irrigation. Mulch trees. Apply 2 grams of boron / sq m.

Lychee: Mulch trees. Peak water needs. Apply 20 gm gypsum per sq m.

Low chill stone fruit: Spring prune new growth. Continue with high irrigation. Prune out water shoots and dense foliage for better sized fruits. Use fruit fly control programs, for example netting or an attractant method.

Mango: Peak water needs. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for larger trees and ½ kg for smaller trees. Spray with copper based spray or leaf microbials for anthracnose per fortnight.

Passion-fruit: Plant out new vines. Pruning carried out this month. All dead parts to go. Mulch vines at least 2 to 3 metres out from the base.

Paw-paw: Release predatory mites.

Strawberries: Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp spray weekly. Pick fruit when ripe.

Bananas: De-sucker plants by cutting down to centre with a sharp knife taking the centre out and add 1 teaspoon of kerosene in the well. Have one plant with fruit on, one half grown, and one sucker. Discard all others. Keep up water needs.

Citrus: Keep up water. Time to put on lime or gypsum. Mature trees ½ kg, ¼ g for small trees. *Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook*

Gardening on the Gold Coast Continued

Flowers:

Don't neglect the humble zinnia as a long-blooming bedding plant, a potting proposition, or in its dwarf form, an effective edging flower. They love full sunlight, heat and in these climates, are quite hardy. However, when watering, don't spray the plant – they are subject to mildew, so water around them.

Nasturtium are always good value, as they can run riot in the garden, dispelling nematodes in their wake. The leaves are good in salads, and the pickled seed can be used as a very fine form of caper. Don't overfeed nasturtium or there will be lots of leaf and few flowers.

It's Time To Get Growing



VEGETABLES

SEPTEMBER:

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

OCTOBER:

Amaranth, Artichoke, Beans - Bush, Climbing & Snake, Ceylon spinach, 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.

Handy Hints - Herbs

Divide chives: With larger clumps, you may have to use two forks back to back to prise the clump apart, but otherwise they can be pulled apart by hand. Water well after replanting in soil that has been revitalised with garden compost.

Propagate thyme by layering. This method of propagation is very similar to that used on strawberry runners. Fill small pots with a mixture of equal parts of potting mixture and sharp sand, and sink the pots into the soil beneath the vigorous outer stems to be layered. Peg the stems into the pots and, in a few weeks, roots will form.

Gardening Through the Year in Australia

HERBS

SEPTEMBER

Annual: Basil, Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Coriander, 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.

OCTOBER

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

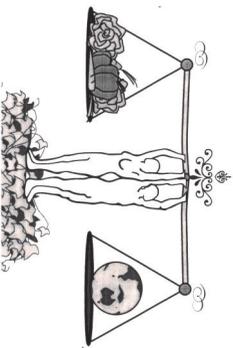
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FLOWERS

Crysanthemum, Lobelia, Marigold, Nasturtium, Petunia, Phlox & Zinnia

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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 17 October 2013