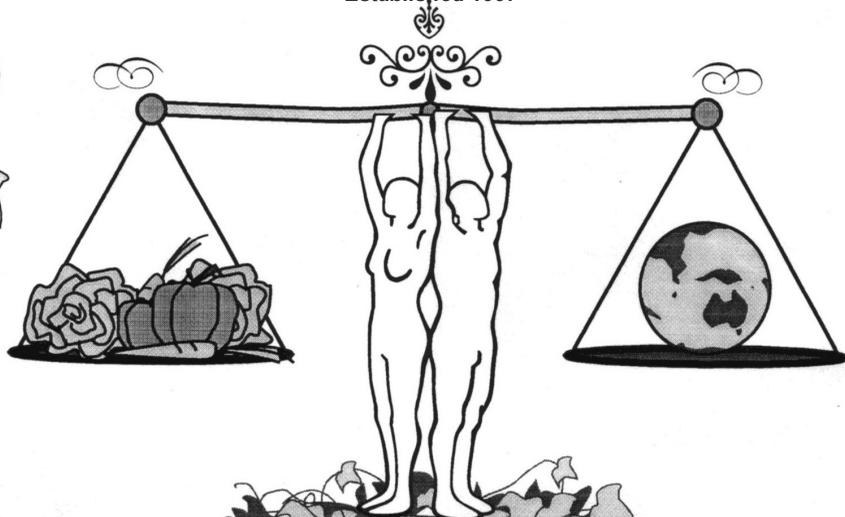


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 23 - MAY 2019 Issue 5
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

Pg2	<i>Club Information</i>	14/15	<i>A Safe Garden and a Compost Heap</i>
3	<i>Notice Board, Guest Speakers, Workshops</i>	16/17	<i>No Expense Spared</i>
4	<i>Our April Guest Speaker</i>	17	<i>Recipes</i>
5-7	<i>The World of Bees</i>	18	<i>Fruit Trees</i>
7/9	<i>Inoculation of compost</i>	19	<i>Vegetables and Herbs</i>
10-13	<i>How Does Your Garden Grow?</i>		

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20th JUNE 2019

Notice Board

1. **To promote organic sustainable food raising for home gardens and farms.**
2. **To foster research into improved methods of organic farming and gardening.**
3. **To provide information and support to all those interested in the various aspects of organic growing.**

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

The Meeting Place, Cnr Guineas Creek Rd and Coolgardie St, Elanora.

Doors open: 7:00 pm. **Begin at 7:30 pm**

Entry is \$2 members, \$5 visitors.

(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

Single: \$20. Family: \$30.

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

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

Members' Market Corner:

Please bring plants, books and produce you wish to sell or trade.

Raffle Table:

This relies on the kind generosity of members to donate items on the night. Tickets - \$1 each or 3 for \$2.

Library:

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

Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

1/4 page: \$15 an issue, or \$145 per year,

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

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

W: www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcorganic

2018 –2019 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
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Librarians	Evelyn Douglas
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield Maggie Golightly Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson, Deb Phillips, Bev Geraghty
Veggie Swap Co-ordinator	Dorothy Coe

Newsletter Contributions are welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. **Deadline for contributions is one week before the meeting.** Send your content to Jorge C. at: jcantellanoc@gmail.com

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

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

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

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

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

Membership Renewals –

Overdue: Marion Symons (155), Winny Hu Shouhe (414), Danielle Bowe (426), Angela Anderson (323), Julie Abraham (421), Christine Yeomans (433), Emma Litchfield (434), Daniel Tucker (435), Kerstein Trueman (346), Sue Beckinsale (373), Nancy Hageman (388), Elizabeth Hughes (389), Deborah Phillips (408), Celia Forrest (431)

May: Peter Meppem (436)

June: Barbara Talty (58), Shelley Pryor (72), Jan Wright (191), Karen Hart (198), Dorothy Coe (253), Ron Campbell (255), Cathie Hodge (304), Shem Pireh (361), John Trama (437)

Latest newsletter can be downloaded from the site at goldcoastorganicgrowers.org

Thanks to Contributors this month:

Diane Kelly, Leah Johnston, Jorge C. Kerry Lason.

Upcoming Guest Speakers

JUNE guest speaker: GCOG Secretary Cathie Hodge will teach us about lasagne no-dig gardening methods.

JULY and beyond TBC.

We are currently seeking Guest Speakers for throughout 2019. If you have an idea for a potential speaker, or a topic that you think would interest our members, please contact Leah Johnston at leahbryan9@gmail.com

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

We are encouraging our members to read our monthly newsletters either on our website - www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/ (and then select "newsletters"); on our Club Members' Facebook page; [Gold Coast Organic Growers Members](#) or by collecting their printed copies at our Club meetings. Enjoy the [coloured editions on-line](#).

Workshops

Gardening Lunch – all welcome

We meet monthly for lunch and have a chat. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. – at a trendy café somewhere (any recommendation welcomed) If you would like to know when the next lunch is on email Lyn Mansfield Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com
Mobile – 0409 645 888

EdibleScapes

working bee/workshop 2nd Saturday of each month - 8:30am to 10:30am
[Edible Landscape gardens Project](#).
<http://ediblescapes.org/>

Our April Guest Speaker

by: Diane Kelly

Peter Davenport & native bees:

Peter Davenport has been working with native bees for over 30 years, and has around 300 hives on his property. He joined us at our April meeting to show how a native bee hive is split; and then how either a new top or bottom was added to either part of the existing hive, thus multiplying the hives.



The horizontal splitting of the hive & lifting of the top section with new tops & bottom ready to be assembled.



The base section of the hive



The two sections of the split hive – beautiful in their symmetry!

The World of Bees who they are; what they do; and how to welcome them to our gardens:

by: Diane Kelly

After enjoying watching Peter Davenport split the hive of native bees at our April meeting, and then spending some time just watching the bees (both honey and native) enjoy the blossoms of our golden penda shrub.

I thought a suitable topic this month for the second article of our new series would be:

BEES !!

And who better to have a chat with about bees than “The Honey Man”, aka Ian Lee.

So I arranged a time to meet up with Ian and Margaret at their property in the foothills of Mudgeeraba and then spent an enjoyable couple of hours seeing how Ian extracts the honey from his hives, and then learning about bees – both honey and native. I had previously emailed over a list of things I would like to learn about, so here are the Q&A's!

Q. Why would one choose to have a native bee hive, or a honey bee hive? I understand one produces more honey than the other, but is there a difference in the benefit to the ecology?

A. One of the main advantages of native bees is that they do not sting – but as Peter said at our last meeting – they can bite! The other advantages to native bees is that they are less work (and yet they still pollinate plants as honey bees do); they are less prone to disease and pests (and in fact are known to bite the head off the small hive beetles that are a problem with honey bee hives); and they are better pollinators of tree such as avocados and macadamias. If you have a native bee hive, they are lighter to move. But they do produce much less honey. Native bees are a bonus when teaching children about bees and honey, as they do not sting.

Agriculturists who truck in multiple hives of honey bees to pollinate orchards can also strip nearby native forests of nectar which leaves birds and animals such as sugar-gliders hungry.

Q. Peter indicated that native bee hives need insulation to protect them from extreme heat. Does the same apply to honey bee hives?

A. Honey bee hives can over-heat as well, but because the hives are larger and there are more bees, they can successfully cool the hive. To cool the hive, honey bees push the hot air out of the hive – and to warm the hive in cooler weather, they exercise their wings to create heat.

In extreme weather, it is good to move the hives into shaded areas, and cover them with leaves or damp towels. In nature, the bees will choose their own aspects – for example, native bees know that the interior of a log will be insulated from the heat. It is good to provide a shallow dish of water for bees to drink from – but remember to put a few rocks in the water so that they have something to land on as they drink.

Q. How is honey extracted from native bee hives?

A. Honey from stingless bees is called “sugarbag” and is harvested at about 1 kg a year for a hive. The honey is much more liquid than from a honey bee hive, being about 70% water, as opposed to 15% in the usual honey you would buy or harvest.

If you have a look at <https://www.milkwood.net/2013/10/18/urban-stingless-beehive-harvesting-and-splitting/> you can see Tim Heard (native bee expert extraordinaire) splitting a native bee hive, and then using a “bed of nails” tool to piece the sugarbags (which is the top part of the hive, which stores the honey and the pollen).



Q. How many varieties of native bees are there?

A. Ian's answer on this one – 1,200 and counting! Alternatively, there are only half a dozen species of honey bees in Australia. Bees are known by their (a) genus – *apis* (Latin for bee), (b) species – *mellifera* (Latin for honey bearing), and then (c) their family name – for example *apidae*, which is the most common European honey bee.



Native bees vary in size – as the picture shows, from the Great Carpenter downwards. (This rather wonderful poster can be purchased on line – just google “Gina Cranston – Native Bees of Qld”.

(Sorry about the glass glare!)

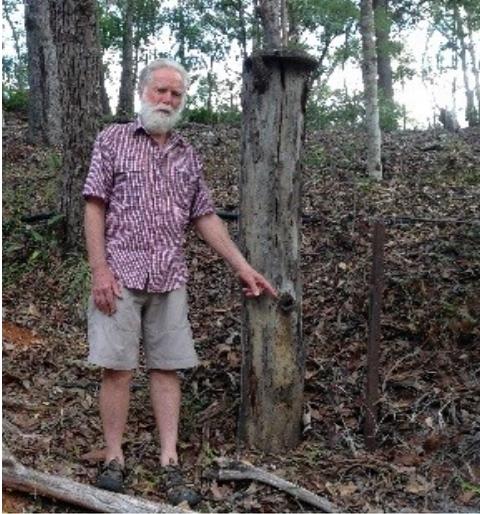
Q. How well do native and European honey bees co-exist – and native bees v's other native bees?

A. Bees tend to co-exist by foraging for pollen at different times of the day. They know when different plants have pollen and nectar flows – for example, cosmos flowers have nectar flows in the afternoons, so that is when the bees go to them. Blue banded bees do “buzz” pollination – some flowers hide their pollen in tiny capsules, but the blue banded bees shake them so that the pollen is released. Quite a few Australian native plants require this type of pollination.

Q. Peter spoke about “intruding swarms” of bees being territorial – how can this be avoided?

A. This does happen – and the way to avoid it is to create extra homes for bees. For example, if you are clearing trees, leave some logs so that native bees can safely nest in them. Don't keep your garden areas immacu-

late – leave some homes for bees – and birds, lizards and insects. Native bees will look for a new home in a log or tree where there is morning sun (rather than the hot western sun in the afternoons). They nest in timber because it insulates their hives.



Ian showing me a native bee hive

Q. Do native bees produce queens in the same way as honey bees?

A. Native bees tend to have multiple “princesses in waiting” to develop as queens, in difference to honey bees who tend to kill any extra queens. The queens in both cases are easily identifiable due to their size.

Q. Do other countries have different types of bees?

A. Indonesia & PNG have similar bees to Australia. Africa has some very aggressive native bees. Britain and Europe have bumble-bees, which are banned in every state in Australia except Tasmania. (Bumble-bees arrived in Tasmania in 1992, and have caused problems by reducing nectar available to birds and native bees.)

Q. How would you obtain a native bee hive from the bush?

A. Native bees tend to make hives high in trees (for safety). It is possible to chain-saw off a section of a fallen log where the hive is, cutting either

side, and then under the hive. The brood area must be protected when removing a hive. The sugar-bag (the food area) is not quite as important, as long as there is enough food for the bees until they are re-established. In this example, Ian moved & “re-planted” the length of tree.

Native bee hives have propolis (an immunity material that sterilizes and protects the hive) at their entrance, and there are guard bees at the front and back of the entry tunnel to the hive. These provide protection from their natural enemies such as cane toads and birds.

Q. Why do bees swarm, and is there a realistic hope of re-capturing them?

A. Bees tend to swarm in spring when there are plenty of flowers in bloom, nectar is flowing, and their hives are full – or too full - of honey. If they swarm and land close by in a tree, they can be captured in a box and rehived.

Q. What is your advice if we get stung by a bee?

A. Firstly, remove the actual sting as quickly as you can – otherwise it will keep pumping poison in to you. Then apply honey; an ice-pack; and use an anti-histamine.

Q. What can we do to welcome bees in to our gardens?

A. One major thing we can do is to provide flowers in our gardens during winter – there is plenty of natural food for bees in summer and spring, but in winter we can grow salvias, sages, abelias, and other winter-flowering plants for nectar and pollen. Mangroves flower in winter and produce an unusual white honey. Allow some of your brassicas and Italian parsley to go to seed for your bees – and some cobblers pegs flowers are welcome as well.

Some plants are poisonous to bees – these include azaleas and rhododendrons, and you may notice that your bees don’t go near them. Also South African tulip trees (considered a Class 3 pest by the DPI) are toxic for native bees.

Q. Of current interest is the “flow hive” mechanism to be added to bee hives.

What are the pros & cons for these?

A. They do make extraction easier – you don’t have to kit up in the traditional way! But it is important that you still maintain your hives. You can learn a lot from opening the hive and inspecting each frame – you then know how much honey to remove. You need to look after the brood area to ensure that you don’t take too much honey and so not leave enough for the bees; and generally you need to maintain your hives. It is good to learn about bees first, before using the flow hive option. Then it becomes a matter of preference.

Q. Are there a few other interesting things we should know about bees?

A.

- a. Almonds, canola, stone fruits – these are all pollinated by honey bees. Native bees would not be able to pollinate on this level.
- b. Mono-culture is detrimental to bees. If multiple hives are shipped in to pollinate an orchard, they then need to be taken to (say) a roadside area full of weeds so they are provided with a varied diet. Otherwise they become weakened.
- c. There are hybrid bees which are bred for increased production; temperament; and being less likely to swarm. (Asian bees tend to swarm easily, and also attack native bees – hence the efforts to keep them from Australia.)
- d. Have a look at some of Erica Siegel’s beautiful photos of native bees on-line.
- e. Native bees forage up to 500 metres; honey bees range up to 10 kms.
- f. Bee hives don’t like a windy position, and don’t like lights (e.g. security lamps) coming on at night.
- g. Recommended reading: Two books are worth reading – “The Bee Book – Bee-keeping in Australia” by Peter Warhurst and Roger Goebel; and “The Australian Native Bee Book” by Tim Heard.
- h. Watch for blue-banded bees – they are delightful! They dart here and there and so hard to photograph. But be aware – they buzz loudly, and are often mistaken for blow flies. So don’t spray them! Same applies to small bees that you may think are flies. Make your environment poison-free.

Q. And a couple of personal items

A. Ian has been keeping bees for at least 25 years. The first hive and honey began as an alternative to sugar in his and Margaret’s diet, and then Ian realized he enjoyed the process. Jack Cormack (his obituary reads “practical beekeeper, gentleman and innovator, always on hand to share wisdom and advice”) was Ian’s mentor and friend, and one of his wise sayings about bee-keeping was that “there is so much that we don’t know”.

Ian’s advice is that if you want to keep bees, then it is imperative to join a bee-club so that you can learn about what you are doing. (For those on the Coast, it would be the Gold Coast Amateur Bee-keeping Society – just google their site – and subscribe to “The Buzz” to learn as much as you can.)

And to finish off the article, two other “bee” photos.



Firstly, Ian and the extractor – it works with four frames at a time.



The second is a native bee hive as developed by Prince Charles at Highgrove.

Inoculation of compost

By Jorge Cantellano

Maturity of Compost

Composting is an effective way of reducing organic wastes and transforming them into humus as bio-fertilizer. The application of mature compost not only increases soil nutrient and beneficial microbial population, but also promotes plant growth and suppresses diseases. The application of microbiological additive inoculated compost is likely to exhibit persuasive results compared to the direct use of organic wastes. The microorganisms in mature compost could persist in soil for longer periods of time and colonize more aggressively in the rhizosphere.

The end product of composting organics is considered beneficial **if it meets safety standards** for human health and the environment, and it can also enhance soil health. Compost maturity is defined as a property that, when applied to plants, does not cause adverse effects including phytotoxic effects. In general, mature compost can be defined as a material which is ready for cultivation use.

It is very important that the final product of composting be mature. Immature compost causes several detrimental effects including reducing the available soil nitrogen, which in turn causes nitrogen deficiency in crops. In addition, due to the speedy disintegration of immature compost, an anaerobic environment is often created around the plant roots, depleting the supply of oxygen. Furthermore, acidic compost also increases the solubility of heavy metals and inhibits the germination of plant seeds by producing phytotoxic substances like ethylene oxide, organic acids and ammonia.

Effective Microorganisms (EM)

It is a group of mutually compatible species of microorganisms used to accelerate the decomposition process. They include lactobacilli, yeasts, photosynthetic bacteria and actinomycetes. **Inoculation of compost** enhances the composting process and quality of the final product.

EM produces antioxidants such as inositol, saponin, ubiquinone, low-molecular polysaccharides, chelating agents and polyphenols. These substances inhibit the harmful microbial population, enhance the multiplication of beneficial microorganisms and decontaminate harmful substances simultaneously. However, a single microorganism cannot produce all the necessary enzymes for complete degradation but use of microbial groups such as EM which act synergistically for rapid biodegradation of organic residues can help produce all the necessary enzymes.

(The concept of efficient microorganisms (EM) or effective microorganisms was developed in the 1980s by Dr. Tegu Higa, professor of horticulture at the University of Ryuky, in Okinawa, Japan.)

Mountain Microorganisms (MM)

Mountain Microorganisms is a collection of various beneficial microorganisms that are found in virgin soils or forest decomposing organic matter. They are used in the preparation of organic fertilizers in order to speed up the process of breaking down organic matter. The inoculation of beneficial microbes in the compost would further enhance the soil fertility and crop productivity.

Organic Fertilizers and Bio-Ferments

It is based on the technology of using Mountain Microorganisms to restore soil life, increase crop productivity and quality in order to improve organic growers' livelihoods.

The production of organic compost using effective Mountain Microorganisms is one of a demonstrated alternative that will allow or permit organic growers to regenerate the fertility of their soil. This technology was implemented from microorganisms from their natural habitat (nearby natural forest) which are reproduced using inputs and techniques that are easy to understand.

These microorganisms are then incorporated in the preparation of organic solid fertilizers (Bokashi) and Bioles (fermented liquid fertilizers), in order to regenerate soil health and fertility of soil. This puts in action the restoration of ecological equilibrium of the land that were once enjoyed by our ancestors. Organic

fertilizers are products obtained from the decomposition of organic matter; in this process effective microorganisms are important because they break down the organic matter thus releasing nutrients for plant growth.

Importance of organic fertilizers

They improve the soil, physical structure (soft and loose soil), chemical (increase nutrients), and biological (high population of beneficial microorganisms) composition.

- Improve yields and the quality of produce
- Source of food for soil organisms

If there were no beneficial microorganisms, the process of decomposition would be slow and we would not obtain high quality organic fertilizer.



Decomposing forest matter is a natural source of Mountain Microorganisms.

Importance of Effective Mountain Microorganisms (MM)

- Improves the soil health, crop productivity and quality of produce.
- Stimulates seed germination and root growth
- Protects the crops from being attacked by disease causing organisms.

Are used in the preparation of Bokashi, Bio-ferments and Bio-crop repellents.

Reproduction of MM

Is a process of reproducing beneficial microorganisms, obtained from a natural forest, by giving them the right conditions for their growth which will later be used in the preparation of solid and liquid organic fertilizers. They

can also be applied directly on the plant leaves to control certain pests and diseases or as a growth booster.

The MM technology regenerates poorly managed soils reducing incidences of crop pest and diseases and improves productivity and quality of your crops. It can be implemented by all producers whether large, medium, small, organic, conventional or sustainable.

Mountain Microorganisms Recipe

Phase 1: MM Solid

Ingredients

- 3 sacks microorganisms (duff layer of primary forest)
- 2 sacks semolina, or chopped sugar cane
- 1 gallon molasses, cane juice, or fruit juice
- 1 gallon water

Instructions

Spread a layer of duff on a top and cover with a layer of semolina. Mix well with hands. Dilute the molasses with the water and sprinkle on top as you continue to mix. If you grab a fistful of the mixture it should be slightly damp and fall apart easily after you squeeze it.

Next, have someone stand in a 55 gallon plastic drum (never metal), while you shovel the material inside. As you shovel, the person stamps the mixture down with their feet to compress it and remove any air pockets. Seal the barrel and leave at least one month, stored in the shade. When ready, it should have a strong smell of lactic acid.

Edible Landscape Gardens
regular monthly activity
2nd Saturday of the Month

at Country Paradise Parkland - Nerang.
74 Billabirra Crescent, Nerang
8:30 am -10:30 am
Everyone is welcome!

(Check details out on the Facebook page: [Edible Landscape gardens Project](#))

How Does Your Garden Grow? With Cathie Hodge

By Leah Johnston

One of my favourite things about coming to GCOG meetings is all the wonderful, strong, inspiring women I get to meet. Long-term GCOG member (and Secretary since 2017) Cathie Hodge might just be one of the bravest. She manages a small acreage property in Tallebudgera Valley, isn't scared of snakes and is even a real life, volunteer rural fire-fighter.

Prior to Tallebudgera Valley she and her late husband lived on a one-acre property in Heather Street, Tallebudgera for 20 years, there, Cathie home-schooled their five children and first started coming to GCOG. However, with the many hats she wore as wife, mother, teacher and home gardener, she didn't feel she was able to contribute to GCOG (and she loves to contribute) so she let it go for quite a few years.

For many years her late husband, David, wanted to move to a larger property somewhere out west. However their youngest child, a teenager, was attending a school that she loved and was a serious ballet dancer. Consequently Cathie was reluctant to leave the area.

Finding the 6.5 acre oasis in Tallebudgera Valley 10 years ago was the perfect property for all of them. Sadly David died ten months later, but not before setting up the property well for Cathie to manage. Chris Piper supervised and helped build a large enclosed pond and also swales on the sloping land. The pond was to provide a ready supply of water for the gardens, fruit trees and animals. The swales were built to manage water runoff and to increase rainwater penetration into the soil. Later Chris Piper also helped Cathie to prepare three large garden beds, while John Palmer helped her plant many fruit trees. At this time, her friend Lise Racine encouraged her to attend a meeting at the GCOG again. Since then Cathie has enjoyed being a regular part of the Club, including as Secretary for a couple of years, and she has hosted meetings on the odd occasion that President Ma-

ria Roberson has been away.

Cathie first became interested in whole foods and a healthy lifestyle in her early 20s. "That was back in the early 1970s, when the importance of growing food organically was becoming recognised. I lived on a commune for about a year where I met serious organic gardeners and began to learn about growing food this way. Later I was guided by JI Rodale's 'Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening'."

After starting her family in 1980, Cathie felt highly motivated to look after the health of her children (as well as the health of the planet). "Organically-grown food wasn't readily available then, so that was the real beginning of my own foray into organic gardening – motivated by a desire to feed my kids and husband better quality food.

"I eventually became interested in Permaculture (via Bill Mollison's tome), but initially found it daunting. Then in about 1999, Linda Woodrow's book 'The Permaculture Home Garden' changed everything for me. I was very excited about her concepts and it all sounded so do-able. Later I started attending workshops offered by Gold Coast Permaculture and that was also very exciting in terms of learning about using waste streams such as woodchips, mulch, aquatic weeds, manure, coffee grounds, etc, to build 'lasagne' or no-dig garden beds," Cathie said.

Cathie has given talks on the topic of building lasagne gardens at a couple of Gold Coast City Council libraries and will be sharing her knowledge with us at our June meeting (save the date, Thursday June 20).

Her kids are all grown up now and are living in either Brisbane, Melbourne or London. Surprisingly none of them ever took to gardening, though she says they're all pretty healthy.

Cathie had once been interested in joining the SES: "In a crisis I'd much rather be helpful than helpless." But her life didn't have room for it at that time. However, once they moved to Tally Valley, the Rural Fire Brigade was very close by and Cathie suggested to

David that they sign up. They were accepted into the Brigade around the time they found out that David had cancer. A few months after he had died, although Cathie felt shy about joining the Brigade alone, she thought it would be a great way to meet local community-minded people, so she started her training.

"I never ever imagined that I would become a fire-fighter – it wasn't on my bucket list! I can't say it's my natural calling, but I've been an active rural fire-fighter since 2010 now and the Brigade Secretary since 2011. Recently I was very surprised to be promoted to the position of Crew Leader," Cathie tells me proudly.

Her grandkids think it's very cool that she's a firefighter, and I do too.

As well as fighting bushfires, Brigade crews also assist the urban 'firies' (in the red trucks) at house fires in the Valley, by supplying water and making sure the house fire doesn't spread into the surrounding bush. The Brigade has also been involved with flood and cyclone recovery over the years. The Brigade's work is not limited to Tallebudgera Valley either, but supports brigades in other areas of Queensland and even interstate occasionally. On extreme fire danger days a 'strike team' – i.e. crews with their fire trucks from a number of Gold Coast rural brigades – will head out to an area where a fire could be catastrophic and will be on standby, ready to support the local rural fire brigade.

"I enjoy the real camaraderie that develops from being part of an emergency response team. As fire-fighters we are taught that on the fire-ground, first we look after ourselves, then our buddies, then the public. (There's also time for plenty of banter and laughter among us!) We have an excellent brigade here," Cathie says.

As both a gardener and a firefighter Cathie has witnessed the effect of climate change locally. "Our fire season is normally September, October and November, then the summer rains come and it's over. Last year we started mid-June and didn't finish until March this year. In the garden I'm seeing some

plants putting on a second fruit crop in autumn, which they wouldn't normally do."

Establishing fruit trees and veggie gardens was Cathie's initial focus for the property, but she then became passionate about bush regeneration. Since joining Land for Wildlife in 2012, and with the help of GCCC funding and Regen Australia (a local bush regen business) she's turned grazing paddocks into the beginnings of Lowland Subtropical Rainforest.

"Land for Wildlife and Regen Australia selected the plants. They chose a variety of fast-growing, native, pioneer tubestock plants. These plants quite quickly created a canopy which minimises the re-growth of environmental weeds and promotes the shade-loving native grasses and herbs. I've been amazed to watch the native grasses and herbs coming back into the paddocks – the seeds must have been lying dormant in the soil, suppressed by the pasture grasses, but now they have their chance to grow again. It's been such a treat to watch the transformation," Cathie explains.

Cathie considers this bush regeneration project as her tiny contribution to the environment. "Even though it's a spit in hell, it's something that I can do. No need for mowing the regeneration areas either, so that's less petrol used." In the David Warth film 'Rainforest: the secret of life' - rainforests are described as the air-conditioners of the world. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBwI27mOjE8>

Cathie's property adjoins the GC City Council conservation corridor that extends from Burleigh to Springbrook, so she enjoys seeing koalas, pythons (which don't worry her, and are welcome to hang out and eat any local mice and rats), various other snakes, possums, swamp wallabies, goannas (near the chook house!), scrub turkeys, flying foxes, micro bats (that live under the house) and an abundance of bird life.

Scrub turkeys can be a bit of a problem. Lately one was seen up in the banana plants, ripping open the banana bags to munch on

the ripening fruit. Without her trusty dog Jack, the turkeys would be more of a problem, but fortunately he enjoys chasing them away.

Cathie says that the bush regeneration work takes up much of her time, so she doesn't grow so many food plants any more. However, while walking around we see chokos, dragon fruit, bananas, galangal, lots of comfrey, Jap pumpkins, sweet potatoes, aloe vera, chilli, lemongrass, yacon, Brazilian spinach, pineapples, turmeric, cassava, passionfruit, pigeon pea, blueberries, arrowroot, tomatoes, peas, beans and lots of salad greens. And don't forget the fruit trees – there are lemons, mandarins, pawpaws, sandpaper figs, pecans, macadamia, rollinia, jaboticaba, grumichama, persimmon, loquat, mulberry, pomegranate, Davidson's plum, fingerlimes, mangoes, tropical apple and wampi, which she says is lovely and juicy when working out in the garden on a hot day.

Cathie's produce grows with the help of composted manure from her chickens; lots of 'chop and drop' crops for mulch (such as pigeon pea, popcorn cassia, arrowroot and lemongrass); a recently-planted green manure crop in the main veggie patch (to grow during autumn; to be dug-in later and the garden to be planted in spring); a Compost inground composting system for scraps from a local café; and a native bee box to help with the pollination of everything (and because it's lovely to watch the little bees going about their work!)

Cathie's best advice for fellow gardeners is to "Enjoy the process as much as the product!" Especially true when waiting months and months for things to grow.

"The great thing about being a gardener is that the learning never stops and the GCOG is a continuing source of ideas and information," Cathie says.

Cathie can't understand how people can be bored, as she always has plenty to do. The garden and bush regen are certainly her biggest 'anti-boredom' contributors.

Thanks for welcoming me to your beautiful cottage in the bush Cathie (and thanks for

the yummy bananas to eat and chokos to plant!) If any GCOG members reading this would be happy for me to write an article on their garden please email or text me on leahbryan9@gmail.com or 0428 028 042.



Cathie's cottage has a unique kitchen which previous tenants renovated



Delicious grumichama fruits which I now want to grow myself



Cathie has grown her best capsicums yet, nearby the inground Compot compost system



A Safe Garden and a Compost Heap: by Diane Kelly

A month or two ago I happened to show Maria a photo of one of the latest additions to our backyard, and she asked me "Have you told the Club members about that?" As the answer was "no", I thought I had better let you know about our "garden house" – and mention about my new compost-maker as well.....

Now we do have the advantage of living on acreage – neither of these two items may be suitable for a small backyard. But with acreage comes possums, bush turkeys, bandicoots, crows, hares and wallabies – and they all seem to enjoy helping themselves to the various vegies and herbs in my back garden. We have tried a number of ideas to keep the intruders out, and then one day we came across an ad for what is actually a "Large Chicken Coop". (I think the coop is large, not the size chooks you need to put in it!) that was on special. It is a 6 x 3 x 2m galvanized steel frame which is enclosed with powder-coated mesh. It has a gate entry, and comes with a plastic sheet that ties over the roof to provide complete shade for a 3 x 3m area if required.



A safe garden at last!

The installation was not difficult – and all the poles and bolts were there! The mesh took some time to tie flush to the metal frame, but it is quite solid.



A better view of the structure

Since we assembled the garden house in early February, I have had crops of sweet corn, tomatoes, celery, cucumbers, lettuce and various herbs – all safe from the animal world! However, I must admit to a basic error with the positioning of the garden. As you can see from the first photo, we positioned the garden too close to the large lilly-pilly tree – we didn't want to have to dig out our orange tree which was just starting to fruit profusely. So the vegie garden did not get enough sunshine – probably only 5 hours a day max. So we have now moved the garden house to a 90 degree angle from where it was, and as far north as we could make it, allowing for the slope of the block. It now gets full sunshine from 7am till 4pm – result!!

And now on to our new compost maker. Our friend who helped us – actually, he did most of the work – assemble the garden house also offered to make me a new compost bin. Years ago one of my book-keeping clients was renovating a factory and he was removing many metres of metal security mesh, so he offered some to me. So our friend took home several large sheets of the mesh, and brought back a very effective compost maker. Basically it is two sides joined by an opening door at either end, and it has two lengths of mesh on the top to make the "roof". (These I have covered in plastic to stop the compost heap becoming too wet when it rains. Being open mesh allows plenty of air access.



Thanks, Brian !!

So when it is time to turn the compost, I simply lift the frame to the new position, open one end door, and then fork and turn the compost in through the end. Then, the next weekend, I repeat the process back to the original location. The size of the compost-maker is such that I can finally get the theoretical 1 cubic metre of material in it, and with regular turning the ingredients are turning into wonderful compost for my vegie patch.

These two items won't suit everybody, but they may give you some ideas for your backyard.

Trivia for our Bee-keepers:



According to the April 2013 edition of Country Life, there is a 7th century Irish law text on bee-keeping called the *Bechbretha*. One of its rulings is that a bee taking nectar from a neighbour's flowers is guilty of grazing trespass. After three years, the neighbour had to be given a swarm as payment, thus ensuring that bees became a common asset.

The law also declares: *"If a man follows a swarm which is not his and finds the place where they settle: a third [goes] to the holding where they settle, a third to the man who tracks them, a third to [the owner of] the hive from which they escape and which is their original home."*

p.s. One of the reasons why bees were so important is that bees-wax (for making candles) was a highly-prized commodity.



DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS ONE WEEK BEFORE THE MEETING.

Send your content to
Jorge C. at:
jcantellanoc@gmail.com

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
ADVERTISE IN OUR
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Enquiries directly to
staceypanozzol@gmail.com

No Expense Spared

by Diane Kelly

I read a gardening article recently with the intriguing heading of “No Expense Spared”, and so I decided to do a bit of research about how much some plants can actually cost. and we thought what we have to pay for seedlings or potted plants is expensive! **Here are seven of the most expensive flowers in the world:**

- Kadupul flower: Priceless. ...
- Juliet Rose: £3 million. ...
- Shenzhen Nongke Orchid: £160,000. ...
- Orchids, lilies, moonflowers and a 100-year-old ficus: £80,000. ...
- Gold of Kinabalu Orchid: £3,800. ...
- Tulips: £3,600. ...
- Saffron crocus: £760-950 per pound.

So what is a Kadupul flower, and why is it priceless?

The Kadupul flower, Sri Lanka's native blossom, is said to be the world's most expensive flower. This floral species is so expensive it bears no price tag in contrast to other beautiful flowers. The reason for this is because the moment it is picked, it quite often dies.



The Kadupul flower

How beautiful is the Juliet Rose!

The Juliet Rose is a completely unique flower that took 15 years to create and more than £3 million to produce, making this the most expensive rose ever developed. It is often referred to as the “£3 million Rose” as a

result of this, but bouquets of the Juliet Rose actually sell for around £90. Despite the lightest fragrance of all garden roses, Juliet is a favourite choice for weddings & special occasions.



And what about rare plants?

1. **Corpse Flower.** (The corpse flower is one of the most endangered in the world. Stunningly beautiful but morbid!)
2. **Kadupul Flower.** ... (pictured above)
3. **Jade Vine.** ... (an emerald, leguminous perennial whose stems can reach up to 18m in length). As jade vine requires bats for pollination, it is one of the world's rarest flowers.
4. **Chocolate Cosmos.** ... (a beautifully rich burgundy colour, but extinct in the wild)
5. **Franklin Tree Flower.** ... (part of the tea plant family *Theaceae* – considered critically endangered)
6. **Fire Lily.** ... (Described as a “fire ball in a flower”!)
7. **Yellow And Purple Lady Slipper.** ...
Some background: A stubborn plant, the lady slipper can take many years to grow and develop from seed to mature plants. They rely on a process called symbiosis to survive, which is typical of most orchid species. Symbiosis is when an organism, in this case a fungus found in the soil, is needed for a plant to grow and thrive. The

fungus breaks open the lady slipper seed and attaches to it, passing on the food and nutrients needed for it to flourish. Once the lady slipper plant is mature and producing its own nutrients, the fungus will extract nutrients from the orchid roots.



The dramatic Fire Ball lily

Funfetti blondie



Recipes

Funfetti blondie

Makes 16 pieces Prep 15 mins (+ cooling time) Cooking 1 hour 5 mins

- 200g Nestlé Bakers' Choice White Choc Melts
- 100g butter, chopped
- 1 cup (220g) caster sugar
- 3 Coles Australian Free Range Eggs, lightly whisked
- 1 cup (150g) plain flour
- ½ cup (75g) self-raising flour
- 200g Nestlé Bakers' Choice Milk Chocolate Choc Bits
- ¼ cup rainbow confetti
- ¼ cup rainbow sprinkles
- 2 tbs rainbow confetti, extra

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease the base and sides of a 20cm (base measurement) square cake pan. Line with baking paper, allowing sides to overhang.
2. Place the choc melts and butter in a saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 5 mins or until mixture is smooth. Set aside for 15 mins to cool. Add the sugar and stir to combine. Stir in the egg. Add the combined flour and stir to combine. Gently fold in the choc bits, confetti and sprinkles. Pour into the prepared pan. Sprinkle with the extra confetti.
3. Bake for 1 hour or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean, loosely covering with foil for the last 20 mins of cooking. Set aside to cool completely. Cut into pieces to serve.

Courtesy of Kerry Lason, recipes for those yummy squares she had on the supper table in April meeting.

Please email your yummy recipes to Jill jillbarber611@gmail.com

FRUIT TREES

MAY

Custard Apples: Peak harvest period, harvest every 3-7 days. Don't let trees dry out.

Figs: Dormant period. Don't let trees dry out.

Lychee: Don't let trees dry out. Fertilise trees this month. Mature trees (5 years and older) 1.5 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees. (For trees under 5 years, use only 50 grams.)

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Fertilise trees with 50 gms of organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees. Prune off 2/3 of new growth.

Mango: Apply gypsum if soil pH is 6 or more. If below 6 pH, apply lime, 50 gms per sq m of either. Mature trees (5 years and older) 1.5 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash added per sq m to the drip line of trees; water in well.

Passion-fruit: The water can be tapered off. Harvest fruit every 3-4 days under vines.

Pawpaw: If you have not applied boron, apply now. 1 teaspoon per tree. 40% of annual organic fertiliser can be applied e.g. 20 gms per sq m.

Persimmon: Decline water needs. Apply a little garden lime and gypsum, 20 gms per sq m.

Strawberries: Plants should be coming away well. A little organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash can be applied now. Use fish emulsion or kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health.

Bananas: Keep up the water. When fruit are formed, bag fruit with banana bag, tie bag to top of stem and drape down to bell. Leave open at bottom for air. Cut off bell to get larger fruit.

Citrus: Harvest should start this month, and continue until August. Keep up watering.

Avocado: Add garden lime, 20 grams per sq m to drip line and gypsum 20 grams per sq m again to drip line. Early varieties can be picked. Don't let trees dry out.

JUNE

Custard apples: Harvest every 3 to 4 days as fruit matures. Don't let trees dry out.

Figs: Dormant period. Don't let trees dry out.

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

Mango: Don't let the trees dry out.

Passion-fruit: Don't let the vines dry out. Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp sprays every month. Small amount of organic fertiliser with added sulphate of potash can be applied to vines, 20 gms per sq m – for example, large vines = 100 gms; small vines = 50 gms.

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Pick fruit at mature stage with ½ colour to have full flavour.

Persimmon: Dormant period. Minimal water required at this time.

Strawberries: Feed with organic fertiliser with added sulphate of potash. Also use fish emulsion and kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health. This will prevent fruit rot. Pick fruit when fully ripe. Keep plants fully watered – try not to wet the berries. This will prevent fruit rot. Mulch plants so the berries do not lie on the soil. Pine needs are good.

Bananas: Keep up the water and bag fruit. When fruit are formed, bag fruit with banana bag, tie bag to top of stem and drape down to bell. Leave open at bottom for air. Cut off bell to get larger fruit.

Citrus: Harvesting should be well under way. Keep up watering.

Avocado: Early flowers should appear this month. Keep up water needs. If you have not applied garden lime and gypsum, apply now as per June instructions.

VEGETABLES

MAY:

Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Endive, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Spinach, Tomato, Turnip.

JUNE:

Asian Greens, Asparagus Crowns, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broad Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Peas, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Spinach, Tomatoes, Turnips.

HERBS

MAY

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

Perennials & Bi-Annuals:

Catnip, Chicory, Chives, Perennial Coriander, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

JUNE

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

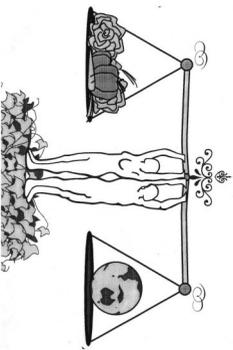
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Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information the association (including Editor, Executive Officers and Committee) accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed in this newsletter.

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

*GOLD COAST ORGANIC
GROWERS Inc.*



NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

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

Next meeting:
Thursday 20th JUNE 2019