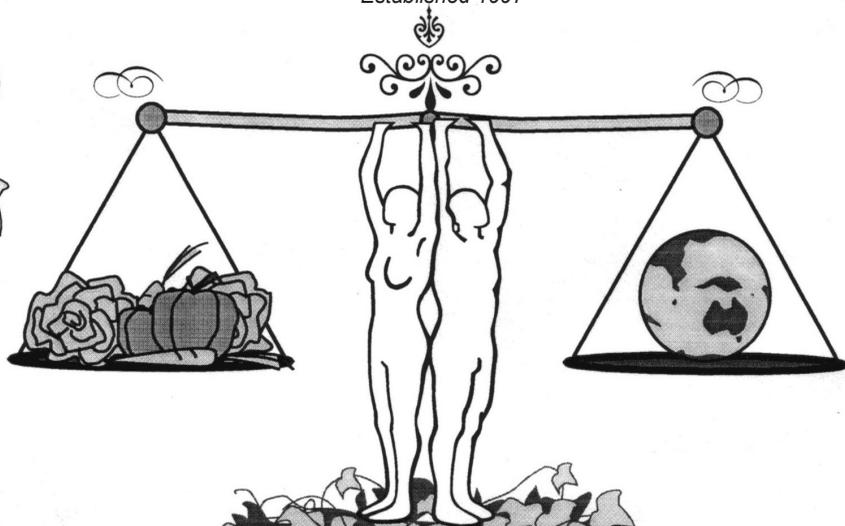


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 18 April 2015 Issue 4
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16 April

Notice Board

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

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

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

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

Entry is \$1 members, \$3 visitors.

(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

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

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

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

Members' Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

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

Library:

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

Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

1/4 page: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year

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

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

2015 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	David Freeman 07 5533 0119
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Karen Hart (07) 5551 1297 Penny Jameson
Membership Sec Membership Asst	Diane Kelly Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
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Website Editor	Dorothy Coe webprint@onthenet.com.au
Advertising	Dorothy Coe
Guest Speaker Liaison	Rachel Lebeter rachael@lancaster.edu.mx
Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Pat McGrath
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888 John Clarke Maggie Golightly
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609 Judy Reiser

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch.

Email Dorothy - webprint@onthenet.com.au

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart, Rachael Lebeter, & Dorothy Coe

Past newsletters can be downloaded from the site at www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

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

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

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

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

Membership renewals

Overdue: Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Scott McCormack (334), Anna Yeomans (353), Shelley Pryor (72), Geoffrey Williams (293), Ashleigh Hart (355), Darrell & Marion Williams (310), Karen Hart (198), Celia Forrest (351), Marion Symons (155), Peter & Patricia Edwards (163), Julie Abraham (315), Danielle Bohata (359), Doris James (360), Danny Li (384), Julie Townsend (385), Margaret Reichelt (111), Barbara Morgan (246), Ken & Pat Jenyns (273), Judy McCracken (274), Jerry & Justy Rogers (275), Suzanne Blatcher (276), Tali Filip (277), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Regina Lacgalvs (208), Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), Alex Dimos (364), Maggie Golightly (365), Fran Janes (366), Rachael Lebeter (367), Tricia Oh (368)

April: Jude Lai (220), Gai Morrow (309), Kerstein Trueman (346), Rodney & Cathy Boscoe (347)

May: Chris Larkin (141), Karen Auchere (147), Mary Frawley (150), Bruce Kelly & Heather Ryan (234), Brian & Lyn Dick (298), Robert Faulkner (303), Virginia Jacobsen (325), Keith Gascoine (369)

Upcoming Guest Speakers

May:

Neil Ross has organized for Geoff Wilson, the Director of Aquaponics Network Australia, to speak to us about urban aquaponics and the future of food production. Hopefully he will also have some practical advice about how we can utilise aquaponics on a backyard scale.

June:

We will not be having a guest speaker in June, instead making the time to socialize and to have an extended Q&A.

We have decided that the wealth of knowledge amongst members is an underutilized resource in the club, so as part of June's meeting we are seeking members who would like to give a 5 minute presentation about a speciality or current interest, for example a 5 minute segment on sprouting or tomato trellises or a new way to worm farm. If you have something you have been dying to share, send me an email or see me after April's meeting.

What's On

Gold Coast Permaculture

Upcoming Workshops....

18/04/2015	Soil Biology & Worms
09/05/2015	Worms & Healthy Soil
23/05/2015	Nutrition & Gluten Free Food
20/06/2015	Intro to Organic Gardening - No Dig Garden

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Most of you are probably aware that we have not been able to appoint one of our members to the Newsletter Editor position, so, until this situation is rectified we have found a Graphic Design student, whose name is Esther Njora who is willing to help us out temporarily, which we are very grateful for. Big thanks go to Angie for getting a fill-in newsletter done last month.

At the February meeting we held our AGM and elected a new committee for the year ahead. Some positions changed hands and some members continued on in the same positions. It is great to see such a high level of commitment by our wonderful members. I want to thank all those who were on last year's team for their hard work and valuable time spent making our club something really special. To those members who are new to the committee, I welcome you aboard and hope you find your experience a most enjoyable one.

A committee meeting was called so that we could discuss ideas, redefine goals and do some fine tuning. At the March meeting we managed to get through a rather large and ambitious agenda, which will enable us to provide you, as members, with even more of what you are looking for in a club like ours. I shall briefly outline some of the proposals here and they will be discussed in more detail over the coming months on meeting nights.

The first is to revamp and clean out the Library to make it more user friendly and up to date. It has been identified as a valuable resource which has become just too difficult for members to use with ease. All that has now changed, so check it out at the next meeting, and I am sure you will find looking for a book or DVD is now a pleasure and not a chore.

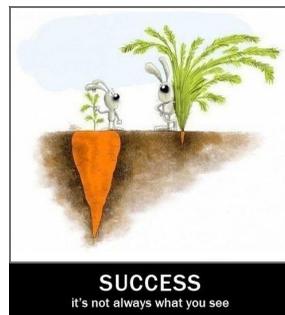
We intend to reinstate the very successful garden visits to members' properties, as these outings were always educational, social and heaps of fun. The aim here is not to be presented with a "show garden", but to experience someone's gardening journey, including the challenges they have faced along the way. It is hoped this will not only be a learning experience, but also a great opportunity for members to socialize and get to know each other better.

Another service to be implemented is a FRUIT AND VEG swap for members via Email; this will be run by Dorothy Coe. It has been a long standing problem for members who have a little bit of excess produce in the weeks that fall between meetings. Items up for swap or a small nominal fee will be posted by email to members who have registered their interest in participating; members will then contact the person directly to arrange the swap. Remember this is a not for profit service only. Members can register their Interest in participating in the swap by putting down their name and email address on meeting nights or by emailing Dorothy on her contact details that are in the Committee Member's column of the newsletter.

It has been acknowledged that our RAFFLE TABLE and SUPPER TABLE are valued highly by our members and I wish to thank everyone who has provided either a prize or a plate to said table. We really count on you to bring a little contribution towards these important monthly delights. A little Birdie tweeted that a few more savoury snacks on the Supper table would go down a treat, too.

Happy growing,

Maria



Q & A - March 2015

By Karen Hart

Q. Why does my passionfruit, which is 8 months old, have lots of flowers, but no fruit - 3 plants that are full of flowers?

A. Do not hard prune – tip prune only. Passionfruit have a wide root base – up to 3 metres around. They need lots of water and like full sun. Do not use shade cloth. They do not need a lot of nitrogen. The best variety for our climate is 'Red Panama'. 'Kelly Nelly' also does okay.

Q. A tropical pear has black patches on the fruit. Is it fruit fly sting? The nashi pear and tropical fruit both flowered with the result of 1 huge fruit from the fruiting spurs.

A. Pick the fruit green, not ripe. Maria suggests that you do not grow tropical fruit (unless you have lots of time to give it attention) as they like a Mediterranean climate which is the opposite to our weather ie dry summers and wet winters.

Q. A lychee tree was looking beautiful and prolific, but now ¾ of the tree has died off. Is cutting it down to allow it to reshoot a good idea?

A. It possibly has a borer. It's another plant not really suited to our climate – it's used to sandy, infertile soil, not our basalt soil.

Q. My male paw paws are growing well, but we were going to cut them down; however, they now have loads of fruit on long tendrils.

A. Yes, that is usual. They are sometimes okay, but male paw paws are not usually as tasty as the female or bisexual variety. However, the male paw paws flowering over winter are loved by bees.

Q. There are lots of wasps in the garden at present. Are they a problem?

A. Wasps are predators of the white cabbage butterfly caterpillars. A couple from Rocklea

had a little brick house surrounded by garden and left the wasp nests hanging from their gutters.

Q. Grasshoppers are also troublesome at the moment.?

A. They seem to especially like amaranth and leave the other plants alone. Chickens love grasshoppers.

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VEGETABLE
JOKES YET**



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Building Anaerobic Microbiology

By Rachael Lebeter

New buzzwords are always emerging and studying and building soil microbiology is to the new century what composting was to the '90s. But even though we are all au fait with the aerobic and anaerobic creatures that bless us with compost, I, at least, had not even considered the certain presence of anaerobic microbes in my soil. Thanks to David and Janet Gourlay, our February speakers from SoiLife Australia, a whole new horizon of soil improvement has appeared.

David Gourlay is motivated by his own family history to aim for the admirable goal of improving the quality of soil, and therefore of life, on both his "own little bit of Australia" as well as that of others. He is adamant that our health, and the health of the planet, depends on our soil, and has spent the last five years building a business based on this idea.

SoiLife Australia's main products are soil builders made from natural products. Like all soil builders or inoculants, these products address problems found in depleted soils. They improve soils by increasing soil life and diversity, as well as providing a range of available nutrients and trace minerals for plants. I am sure that the majority of us use composts, teas, worm products and mulches to this effect, but have you ever considered the "bottom dwellers", as I have come to think of the anaerobic microbes?

Unlike many soil inoculators, David has focused on building anaerobic microbes, which are microbes that survive without oxygen or light, and are found deep in the soil. When applied through a soil builder, anaerobic microbes dig down through the topsoil (A horizon) to deeper levels, significantly improving the soil in the process. Their journey breaks up the soil and relieves pressure, allowing roots and aerobic soil life to penetrate more deeply. Additionally,

anaerobic microbes produce polysaccharide, which is partially responsible for good soil crumb (texture) and the accompanying improvements in water retention.

Various trials are currently being conducted with David's products. The trials have been promising, and it was fascinating to see organic principles being applied on a commercial scale on recognizable local farms (google 'ABC Landline – Organic Converts' if you missed it). I was also pleased to hear what I am sure we all suspected: that microbial diversity encourages greater competition and therefore decreases the ill-effects of soil pathogens and fungal diseases in plants. It all comes back to diversity, in plants as well as microbes, so if you do nothing else, continue to compost!

One of the most promising elements of the addition of anaerobic microbes is their apparent ability to penetrate the soil, breaking up the hard pan that limits plant growth on up to 95% of Australian properties, according to David. This did leave me wondering, 'Why is Australian topsoil so shallow?' My geography is a bit rusty, but I do know that my soil is shallow so that might be answer enough.

An improvement from 4 to 12 inches root penetration for macadamia trees is pretty amazing, anyway.

As well as being extremely knowledgeable about microbiology, David also talked a little about the uses of neem as an organic pesticide. I got caught up in the potential of including neem leaves in feed for livestock to eliminate the need for drenching. However, it was also very interesting to learn that some plants are hemi-parasitic, meaning that their roots will connect with those of other plants and steal some of their nutrients etc, and that with these plants neem can be used as a companion plant which will lend its pest-repelling qualities. Amazing!

I am sure that we all appreciated David's wealth of knowledge about soil microbiology. It was inspiring to hear of such an environmentally-conscionable local business and to learn about another way to improve our own little bits of Australia.

Veggie Swap by Dorothy Coe

At our committee meeting on 26th March, we decided that we would try to get the "veggie swap" off the ground again. This has been attempted before using the swap table at the meetings which didn't really take off.

If there are any members interested in doing some "veggie swapping", let me know at the next meeting or email me at webprint@onthenet.com.au so that I can add you to the list. Then feel free to email me whenever you have anything to swap and I can email the other members and let them know what you have to swap and what you would like.

I grow a quite a few of my own veggies but I do not have any established fruit trees and I would love to find someone who has Avos and Bananas that I can swap with from time to time. I always have spare bottles of Kombucaha, free range chook eggs and veggies.

Perhaps we can also look at swapping other items too such as jams, chutneys or other home made food or items.



Sample of my
Mortgage Lifter
Tomatoes

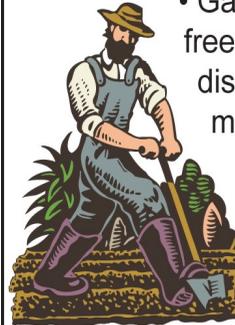
Summer 2014

Dorothy Coe

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GC Visitors Guide 2013

**If You Just Do One Thing This Month
Try a Raised Garden Bed
By Diane Kelly**

For the past fifteen years, I have enjoyed gardening in three x 3 sq metre, ground-level garden beds, restricted only by a surrounding fence that kept out the chooks, the wallabies and the bandicoots. But with the arrival of “The Bush Turkey” into our neighbourhood, we’ve had to compromise and build a number of mesh-protected raised beds. I’ve always disliked the idea of raised beds – they didn’t seem like “real gardening” to me. But I have now learnt from practical experience that a garden bed surrounded by timber and raised from ground level can be highly productive.

So what are the advantages of raised garden beds?

1. Raised beds are flexible in design. Depending on your backyard, you can have a raised bed a metre or so wide, but 10 metres long like Evelyn has (ref: our February newsletter), or a series of 6 x 1 metre square gardens like I now have.
2. Raised beds are easy to weed – and one of their main advantages is that you don’t have to bend over so far to do so!
3. In wet weather, raised beds drain well – as I’ve found recently with 842.50 ml of rain in Mudgeeraba during January to March, and then 149 ml already this month.
4. You can create a raised garden bed pretty well anywhere – you can build one on top of concrete, or on top of areas of very poor or very solid soil.
5. Raised garden beds don’t need digging – you just add new layers of soil and/or compost for planting out your next crop.

6. Raised garden beds have the advantage of remaining friable – you won’t ever need to walk on them to weed, which can cause compaction.
7. Raised beds are neat, structured and efficient.
8. Raised garden beds develop an excellent soil structure, and have been described as the “ultimate in no-dig gardening”.

But are there any disadvantages?

1. If your raised garden bed is particularly high (15-30 cm is probably as high as most gardeners would need to go), then you may need to add some form of drainage as the bottom layer of your garden. Rocks, old pottery, gravel, charcoal, old potting mix will all help to ensure adequate drainage.
2. Filling up a very deep raised bed can be expensive – but I’ve calculated that a metre square, average depth bed filled with “no-dig” ingredients will get you a healthy & effective garden bed for around \$15.00.

So if your backyard has poor soil, or little spare space, or if you would just like to experiment with a new style of gardening, then try raised garden beds – I must admit, they are rather fun!



My Garden, Nov 2014.....*Dorothy Coe*

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words By Diane Kelly

At our recent committee meeting, we talked about how we like to include photos of members' gardens and related topics in our monthly newsletter. In this way we get to know each other better and the things we are doing, and hopefully this will encourage us all to widen our gardening horizons.



Rob's first extraction of honey – 10 jars from three frames – with many thanks for his advice to our "honey mentor" Roger G. ...



"No-Dig Gardening" comes to the Elanora Gardening Club – a group of 70 people have now been introduced to an easier way to garden ..



...and our favourite wallabies came for a visit & a feed on our back verandah. They are one male and two females, both of which are carrying joeys.

So for our May newsletter, we would like to see YOUR photos – the successes, the failures, and just the things in your garden that you love. You don't need to write a story to go with them – just a caption will be fine.

Look forward to seeing you next month!

MARIA ROBERSON

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FRUIT TREES

APRIL

Custard Apples: Peak harvest period. Harvest every 3 to 7 days. Watering can be tapered off. If you have not done your spraying for mealy bug, do it now. Spray individual fruit with pest oil or wipe on metho and water (30% metho & 70% water).

Figs: Taper off the water.

Lychee: Don't let trees dry out. Check for Erinose mite. Spray with wettable sulphur.

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Fertilise trees with a high organic potassium fertilizer, 50 gms per sq meter to the drip line of trees. Prune trees now – 1/3 to 1/4 of the tips can be taken off. Any inward or downward wood can be pruned.

Mango: Apply gypsum if soil pH is 6 or more. If below 6 pH, apply lime. 50 gms per sq meter of either. Continue with copper based spray for anthracnose or with 25 mls leaf microbes and 5 gms wettable sulphur per 1 litre of water.

Passion-fruit: Water can be tapered off. Harvest fallen fruit every 3-4 days.

Pawpaw: If you have not applied boron, apply now. 1 teaspoon per mature tree. 40% of annual fertiliser can be applied now to mature trees (20 grams per sq meter of a high organic potassium fertiliser).

Persimmon: Main harvest time. Declining water needs. Apply a little super-fine lime and gypsum, 20 gm of each per sq m.

Strawberries: Plants should be coming away well. A little organic potassium fertiliser can be applied now. Use fish emulsion or kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health. Add 20 mls molasses per litre of water + 10 mls leaf microbes.

Bananas: De-sucker plants, cutting at ground level. Cut out centre with a sharp downward motion around the circumference to the centre, forming a well. If they do not die, use 20mls of kero to the bottom of this well.

Citrus: If any scale and fungal problems still exist a further spray with pest oil and leaf microbes will be needed. Add the pest oil + 15 ml per litre of the leaf microbes. Early varieties can be picked this month.

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.

*Queensland Planting Guide
- Brisbane Organic Growers*

VEGETABLES

APRIL:

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

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.

HERBS

APRIL

Annual: Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Nasturtium, Rocket.

Perennials & Bi-Annuals – Catnip, Chives, Perennial Coriander, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Winter Savoury.

MAY

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

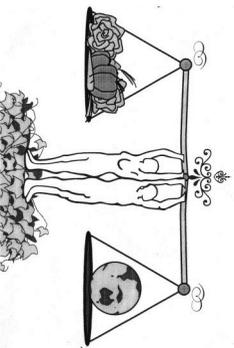
Perennials & Bi-Annuals Catnip, Chicory, Chives, Perennial Coriander, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.



Giant Eggplant from a seedling that was given to me by Debbie Jones - *Summer 2014....Dorothy Coe*

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 16 April 2015