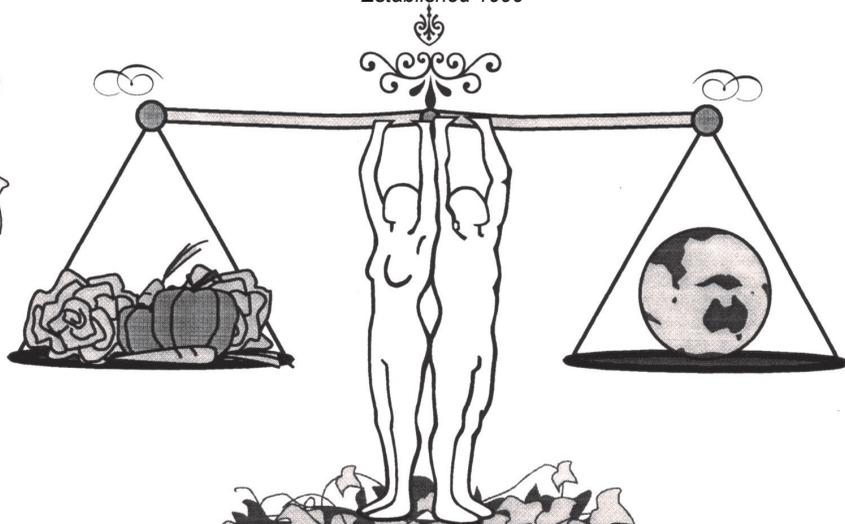


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 15

JUNE 2012

Issue 6

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**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19 July**

## 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: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month

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

Doors open 7.00 pm; Begin at **7.30 pm**

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

*(No meeting in December)*

### Annual Membership Fees:

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

To renew or start memberships please send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly - or just pay at the door.

**Seed Bank:** \$2.00 ea.

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

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

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

**Advertising:** **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.

### Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.

Email Angela at [w.a.anderson@bigpond.com](mailto:w.a.anderson@bigpond.com)  
Please put [GCOG] in email 'subject' box.

## 2012 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Cathie Hodge (07) 5533 8642
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
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Guest Speaker	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 <a href="mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com">jillbarber611@gmail.com</a>
Trip Co-ordinator	Ross Davis (07) 5599 7576
Librarians	Cathie Hodge (07) 5533 8642 Judy Reiser (07) 5532 7198
Library Assistant	Greg Wiltshire
Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Peter Seymour-Smith (07) 5596 5678
Supper Co-ordinator	Jenny Davis (07) 5599 7576

### Newsletter Theme

Gardening in Winter

**Thanks to Contributors:** Diane Kelly, Ross Davis, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson & Gordon Singh, Rebeca Bowen and Roger Griffiths.



## Notice Board

### Membership Renewels

**Overdue:** Katie Culpin, Jannette Janssen, Penny & Allan Jameson, Daniela Willis, Barbara Talty, Stephen Dalton, David Tangye, Rebecca Bowen, Kay Schiefelbein, Chris Larkin, Clive Canning, Karen Auchere, Robert Turner, Robert Faulkner, Virginia Jacobsen

**June:** Linda Thompson & Peter Birdsall, Lise Racine, Ross & Helena Kelso, Peter Seymour-Smith, Jan Wright, Elizabeth Dolan, Graham Boyle & Khoo Mei Lee, Chris & Dorothy Winton, Ron Campbell, Cathy Hodge, Neil McLaughlin, Gary & Jenny Spence, Eileen Turner

**July:** Ian & Margaret Lee, Liz Spittal, Renato Morandini, Peter & Jan Fleming, Patricia McGrath, Ann Brown, Roger Peterson, Kathy Steenbeek, Justin Robinson, Jase Hillyer, Scott McCormack

**Welcome to our new club members:**  
Moyra & Julien de Jager, Alf & Marina Orpen

### Guest Speakers

**June** - Sandra Nanka from Mudbrick Cottage on various Herbs

**July** - Richard Bull on Fruit Flies

**Aug** - Justin Sharman-Selvidge (TBC) on Permaculture Principles and Application

**Sept** - Rod Bruin on Soil Improvement for Organic Veggies

**Oct** - Gina Winter on Using Herbs as Food and as Medicine

If any members would like to share something that would be of benefit to our members please contact Jill Barber to discuss.

### Website

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

## GCOG on the Web

### From the Library

We now have a list of books and DVDs online. The list can be viewed from:-  
<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/library-books.pdf>

### Newsletters

To look up past newsletters from 2010:-  
<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/newsletters.html>

### Links

Follow some of our favourite links:-  
<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/links.html>

### Facebook

We are now on facebook:-  
<http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic>



## HERB FARM

Michael & Sandra Nanka  
491 Springbrook Rd  
MUDGEERABA. 4213

### Opening times

Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday  
9 am – 4 pm

**Phone: (07) 5530 3253**  
**[www.herbcottage.com.au](http://www.herbcottage.com.au)**

- ◆ Culinary, Fragrant and Medicinal Herbs
- ◆ Vegetable and Herb Seeds
- ◆ Craft, Herb Vinegars, Jams & Preserves
- ◆ Essential & Fragrant Oils, & lots more

## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

This year sees the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*. Described as both brilliant and controversial, Carson brought her training as a biologist and skill as a writer together in *Silent Spring*. "This book is not merely about poisons; it is about ecology or the relation of plants and animals to their environment and to one another" said Lord Shackleton in his introduction. I wonder how much has really changed and to this day *Silent Spring* is still a relevant and thought provoking read. I highly recommend this book and our library does have a copy for you to borrow.

Winter is truly here and it was nice to get a bit of rain as the ground was very dry indeed. Now is the perfect time for planting some of the Asian style vegetables, however these do not transplant well and do better when grown from seed sown directly into the garden bed.

Sugar Snap peas are a favourite as well; 'Sugar Ann' is the variety we currently have in stock. It is described as a bush type, 60cm high with succulent edible pale-green pods 6-7 cm long. It is the sweetest of the sugar snaps and is very productive. I like it because you don't have to shell the peas you just eat the pod as well as the peas.

If you have been living on another planet lately you may not know that Broad Beans have become very fashionable in culinary circles. Well, never let it be said that GCOG members are unfashionable, because we have a lovely variety of Broad Bean seeds for sale on the seed table. Coles Dwarf is a short variety able to withstand more wind damage than other broad beans and produces a prolific crop. Young pods can be harvested and eaten whole or left until the pods are full size then shelled for the seeds. Use wire between the stakes to provide some support. Remember as with all beans, to water the seeds well only once after sowing and not again until

seedlings appear. Over watering large seeds like bean will cause it to rot before it can germinate.

All seeds are available on meeting nights at the Seed Table and are the bargain price of just \$2 per pack.

Our Librarians Greg, Cathy and Judy have been very busy thinking of ways members can get the best out of our fantastic library. At the moment not many people actually borrow a book, magazine or DVD which is a shame because we have a lot of vital information just sitting there. It is hoped that if we set up a viewing and booking process on our web site it will give members the time they need to choose a relevant title and free up the bottle neck around the library cupboard on meeting nights.

We will be adding another new page to the newsletter from this month on, it will contain some of the questions asked by you and the answers given at the last meeting. I thought this was an excellent idea because we all seem to experience similar gardening problems at one time or another. It has the added bonus of giving members who didn't attend the meeting the opportunity to learn along with us.

Thank you to all those who have brought a plate of food to share on meeting nights, this is a valuable contribution to the evening and much appreciated by all. So too are the donated prizes on the raffle table, it is lovely to see all the plants and home grown produce that make our raffle something truly special indeed.

Happy growing,  
Maria.

## Hints ... Weed Tea

Brew up a batch of weed tea to give the garden a free feed! Toss whatever weeds you have in a bucket of water and cover it. After a week, strain and dilute to the colour of weak tea and slosh it all over leafy greens, the soil and the compost for a quick nitrogen hit.

*Gardening Australia, June 2012*

### GCCC - Active & Healthy Program Community Gardening Workshops

If you have always wanted to grow your own vegetables, fruit and herbs but just don't know where to start, then this series of workshops is just for you. A variety of free gardening workshops are regularly held at community gardens across the city. The workshops will provide you with a hands-on introduction to growing your own food with all the tips and tricks to ensure that your garden thrives and survives.

**Time: Saturday 2pm to 3pm**  
**Intro to Organic Gardening**  
**July 14 - Oxenford**

For more information contact:  
Gold Coast Permaculture (07) 5539 3973  
or [permaculturegc@gmail.com](mailto:permaculturegc@gmail.com)

Gold Coast Permaculture also run low cost permaculture workshops. Contact them for a full program.

### Composting and Worm Farming

Come along to Council's free sustainable gardening workshops where you can learn all about composting and worm farming to recycle your waste and improve your garden. Tea and coffee are provided and all you need to bring are closed shoes.

**Time: Saturday between 10am and 12pm**  
**June 23 - Helensvale Community Centre**  
**July 21 - Elanora Library**  
**August 18 - Nerang Library**

To find out more information or to register for a FREE workshop near you, call (07) 5581 6855.

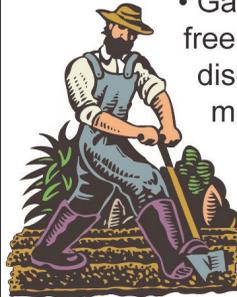
### Prostate Awareness Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:  
[www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com](http://www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com)  
or contact Ross Davis for more info:  
[rossco12@bigpond.com](mailto:rossco12@bigpond.com)

## The Diggers Club

Australia's largest garden club is helping gardeners grow healthier vegetables, tastier fruit and the most beautiful flowers.

- Heirloom vegetable & flower seeds, herbs, plants
- Gardening advice, free seeds and discounts for members



- We deliver direct to your door in QLD  
**03 5984 7900**

**DIGGERS.COM.AU**

### Hints ... Kitchen Waste

#### Recycle "Three in One":

Keep an old bucket under your kitchen sink to use as a compost bin (recycle #1). Half-fill it with shredded paper (recycle #2) which keeps the kitchen scraps dry (recycle #3), thus keeping smells and fruit fly away. Then, when you go out to your garden, empty the bucket into your compost pile. The bucket seldom needs washing or gets mouldy.

#### Floral Compost:

Sometimes, if we don't empty our kitchen compost bucket as often as we should, we end up with a rather distasteful example of anti-aromatherapy!

As usual, Mother Nature provides a rescue. Crushed lavender blossoms or a couple of drops of lavender essential oil in the bottom of the bucket means that good smells greet us when when we do open the bucket, even days later.

**Native Plants, Butterflies and other  
Insects with Graham McDonald  
By Jill Barber**

Graham McDonald very kindly came with his wife, Beth, to our last GCOG meeting to share with us his beautifully clear photos of native insects (primarily butterflies) and the native plants that they rely on for their survival in this area of the world. I managed to take three pages of copious notes, aided by the lamps Maria had brought, on all the butterflies' names, and some of the native plants, notably those whose common names Graham gave. Some were the Lewin's Honeyeater, which loves flowering banksias, melaleucas and grevilleas, the Blue Triangle Butterfly, which feeds on camphor laurels or native laurels. Then there was the Noisy Pitta, which is exclusively a rainforest bird, and feeds on the snails and other small invertebrates in leaf litter on the rainforest floor, and the Painted Lady Butterfly, which goes for native daisies.

I jotted down information on around forty creatures Graham showed us and spoke about, and there would be more that he knows about, he and Beth having converted their own land into a home rainforest where he has observed and photographed the local animal and plant interactions for several years. It is a closed system, in which there was input of nutrients and mulch for five to six years, and then no more work has been necessary as it naturally recycles nutrients: it is an ecological system.

Graham has researched over 500 moth and 50 butterfly species in the seventy five hectares of GCCC-owned Hinterland Regional Park, Mudgeeraba as well as the black cockatoo, Richmond Birdwing butterfly, kookaburras and five koalas, which are in the vulnerable category. Rather than me dutifully passing on verbally to you all the information we received that night, Graham has since met with me and left wonderful clearly illustrated and succinct colour brochures they produced for Fleays and Australian Plants Gold Coast.

These will be available for everyone at the next meeting, so anyone wanting to attract these creatures to your garden will know exactly what to plant.

Furthermore, he left a list of butterflies and their larval (caterpillar) host plants, both with common and botanical names, which will be available at the next meeting for anyone who would like it. I will also leave in the GCOG library the little booklet specifically on "Butterfly Gardening" that he wrote and illustrated with his own drawings.

**Hints ... Winter Gardening**

**Pest Watch:**

Brassicas are now in full swing, as is the cabbage white butterfly. The easiest way to control its ravenous larvae is to apply Dipel, a bacterial biological control that produces a stomach poison which is toxic to caterpillars. It breaks down when exposed to light, and won't harm other animals, including any beneficial insects. Spray onto plants; the pests are quickly brought under control. Several applications may be required in severe situations, as well as after rain. Remove fallen fruit and leaves under deciduous fruit trees, clean off rough bark that offers hiding spots to pests (such as codling moth larvae) and remove damaged limbs. Spray with a strong mix of lime sulphur now and again in late July.

**Natives:**

Prepare holes for spring plantings of native trees and shrubs, if you have clay soils. Use a mattock to loosen the soil and incorporate organic matter plus gypsum (if needed) into the soil, as it takes a couple of months to take effect. Many Australian natives are at their best in winter. Tip-prune your natives to keep them bushy.

*Gardening Australia, June 2012*

## Q & A

**Citrus trees** seem to be a constant source of concern for many people and because of this we get a lot questions about the different afflictions they suffer. Sometimes what you observe and perceive to be problem with them is nothing to worry about at all, so it's good to know when to act and when to sit back and relax. Here are a few queries from the last meeting.

### **Q. What is the black coating on the leaves of my mandarin tree?**

A. This dark fungal growth forms on the honeydew produced by aphid, psyllids or scales. Its' common name is Sooty Mould, it will not kill the tree, however it will cut down the plants ability to photosynthesise and in turn the tree will suffer. To control Sooty Mould spray the leaves with a non toxic white oil or just plain soapy water, after a couple of days either blast the leaves with a jet of water from the hose or if it's really stubborn scrub off with a nailbrush. Check the tree trunk for ants as they will be protecting the aphids from predators so they can eat the honeydew they exude. Move the ants on by keeping the soil around the tree moist, maybe you could squish a few to put them off a bit.

### **Q. What are the silver trails in the leaves and why are the leaves sometimes misshapen too.**

A. Silver trails are left by the Leaf Miner as it burrows through new, young leaves of the citrus tree. As the leaf ages and grows, it becomes distorted and misshapen. This looks worse than it is and can be left alone. The best thing to do is to minimise the chances of it happening in the first place by not over fertilising the tree in spring causing a great deal of new leaf growth all at once. Citrus are greedy plants and do best when given a little fertiliser 4 times a year rather than one big feed, this system is preferable in our climate and region, this helps spread new leaf growth over the year making it less susceptible to Leaf Miner attack which is more prevalent in spring and summer.

### **Q. What is the swelling on the branches of my citrus tree?**

A. This is the Gall made by the citrus gall wasp and is a misshapen growth or swelling on the stem of a citrus tree. The wasp lays eggs in the soft young stem, as the larvae grow the swelling become larger till finally they burrow out in the warmer months. The main damage to the tree is when the branches become larger and burdened with fruit; they have become weakened at the gall site and are prone to snapping. Regularly check for galls and snip the affected stems off, burn or solarise by placing in a plastic bag, seal and leave in the hot sun for a few weeks to kill larvae. Do not compost as this will not kill the eggs or larvae. I have noted that Lemons and Grapefruit seem to suffer more than other citrus.

### **Pineapples, here are some tips on growing and harvesting them.**

Plant the tops of shop bought pineapples by stripping off the first 2 to 4 cm of leaves revealing the stub. Plant in pots or out in the garden, either will give good results. It will take approximately 18 to 24 months till harvest. Let the pineapple ripen to a yellow colour before picking it should smell fragrant and sweet when it is ready. If you need to protect the fruit from critters wrap in a strip of shade cloth. The top of this pineapple can also be planted after you have eaten your gorgeous home grown fruit. Fertilise plants with crushed rock minerals and a little manure based and sea weed fertiliser. YUM now get planting!

### **SPECIAL OFFER ON FRUIT TREES FOR ALL MEMBERS**

DALEYS fruit tree nursery is offering all club members a 10% discount on fruit trees when you order online.

Visit <http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/> to check out the types of fruit trees available.

To receive the discount enter the following code at the checkout :

**GOLDCOAST10OFF**



## Catching Up With Ian and Margaret Lee Interview by Diane Kelly

Just over eighteen months ago, I had the opportunity to interview Ian and Margaret Lee in their acreage garden located in the hills behind Mudgeeraba. You may remember that Ian is a horticulturist, and Margaret is both a highly-qualified florist and an Ikebana artist.

Ian and Margaret moved to their block in 1981, and over time have developed a large garden with many beautiful and unique plants. The area is divided in “rooms”, mostly based on colour, but also dependent upon soil requirements and sun/shade availability. Recently I had heard that Ian has been concentrating on the orchard area of the property, so I decided it was time for a return visit.

The area that Ian and Margaret had set aside for fruit and nut trees is triangular, being 102.4 metres x 71.5 metres x 77.0 metres, and following the line of the driveway. The first thing Ian did was to design a scale plan of the area, and note the soil type, gradient and aspect of each section. The orchard area faces north-east, and the slope is a challenge, with an estimated 35 degree angle. The soil is of volcanic origin; it ranges from red to brown; and it contains considerable amounts of small rocks and stones. There is no clay sub-soil. Ian worked out what type of trees to plant in each section, based on temperature requirements, size and the need to be near complimentary trees.

### The Plan

The lower area of the orchard can be affected from frost, so fruit trees that require chill-factor were planned. Fruit trees such as peaches, apples, pears, plums, persimmons, cumquats and guavas were allocated to the lower section. Above the frost line, where the temperatures are more moderate, macadamias, bananas, cherry guavas, custard apples, citrus, pomegranates, sapote, tangelos and guamichamas have now been planted.

To prepare the area, Ian cleared the resident lantana, bracken, tobacco bush, setaria and other grasses. The next project was to cut swales (which are also used as paths and access points to the orchard) into the slope. Swales are defined as “a water harvesting dish on contour”. However they also stop erosion and allow water to be stored in the soil. The rainwater that collects in the swales gradually soaks through the soil banks to the trees as required, and has proven to be a more effective system than water storage in tanks. Approximately seven cubic meters of rocks were moved out of the orchard area by hand, and relocated to areas that need retainer walls. Ian used a spirit level to allow for the slope of the land, but no machinery, as this would disturb soil fertility.



### The Challenge

Ian and Margaret have either purchased the trees they wanted to plant from as far afield as Kyogle, Bangalow and Tyalgum; have propagated new trees themselves; or have been given trees as gifts from family and friends. The location of each tree was planned for micro-climates; their mature size; soil variation; ease of harvesting and maintenance; and for pest and disease management. The type of tree chosen has depended on their spread of harvest time (early or late in the season), diversity, usefulness for cleaning and medicinal purposes and sentiment. (I noticed the first, single fruit on a tangerine tree that is being kept especially for Ian and Margaret's grand-daughter to pick.)

Following advice from books by such authors as Annette McFarlane, and applying knowledge gained from many years of experience, the trees were planted using the following method:

- Water in a solution of kelp, humic acid and microbial inoculants.
- Mulch with well-rotten palm mulch
- Top with Dynamic lifter pellets

So 32 different trees have now been planted. I asked Ian and Margaret how they will look after the trees in the future. An easy answer – with additional water from a recently-installed 5,500 gallon tank, and a fence made from shade-cloth to keep the wallabies out! It is anticipated that pests will be minimal, with correct selection, location and planting procedures having been followed. Meanwhile various grasses have either been allowed to grow or have been sown – coriander, “blue billy goat” weed, cobblers pegs and others cover the slope – these are have been allowed to grow to stop erosion, and then whippa-snipped regularly as a green manure. Pigeon-pea trees have also been grown as nitrogen-suppliers and in time will be chopped as a mulch. (Unfortunately the wallabies love them!)

Watering will be minimal – so far most of the trees have only had three manual waterings – once at planting, and a couple of times since. This will ensure that the tree roots work hard at going down through the topsoil, which Ian estimates is at least two meters thick in this area.

What plans do Ian and Margaret have for the future? Olive, pine-nut and carob trees have been planted in the adjacent “Mediterranean” room. Blueberries have been planted in the “Acid” area, along with the camellias, magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas and other low-Ph lovers. Many dozens of pineapple heads have been planted along the driveway, and paw-paw trees are being allowed to grow where they have self-seeded. Still to be planted are many more companion and living-mulch plants and insect attractants. So I am sure that the end result will be a very special and productive garden.

### Weed Watch - Dodder Vine

Dodder vine (*Cuscuta* spp.) is a weed and must be controlled. Once this parasitic vine has attached to a plant, its roots die and it takes all the water and nutrients it requires from the host. Slowly, it weakens the host and may eventually kill it.

While short-lived, it seeds prolifically. Remove every piece of vine, clear the ground and mulch to 15cm deep. In badly affected beds, leave the ground fallow for one season to prevent spread.

***Gardening Australia, June 2012***



### Gardening with Ross

Well it a wet season and we will get wet seasons over the next 3 years or there about. I have seen 4 wet seasons like this now and after a big wet season each season slowly becomes dryer till we get into a drought.

So how do we grow vegetables in this kind of weather? With great difficulty. I have over the year made my garden higher by digging out the walkways and putting the soil onto the garden. The walkways become drains and are a bit messy but I have put old GRASS Carpet in the walkway and this works well.

There has been laughter at me for this but this year I have proved a point. My gardens are draining well; they sure needed to, as we have twice had six inches of rain over two days.

This proves the point that Garden Beds that are 600 mm (2 feet high) above the surrounding ground have a major advantage.

You should have all of your potatoes in the ground by now. All the cauliflowers, cabbages, Broccoli and beetroot should be on the planting program over the next month. Also Carrots and parsnips\*? MUST be planted NOW as they are cold ground crops.

Note: \* it is really too late to sow parsnips but you could try.

Happy Gardening,  
Ross.

### Fruit trees need to be pruned correctly every year.

Ross is available for fruit tree pruning over the next 6 weeks.

My fee is \$25 per hour plus mileage.  
Quotes given.

Ph: 5599 7575

Email: [rossco12@bigpond.com](mailto:rossco12@bigpond.com)

### Seed Saving, Not! From Roger Griffiths

It seemed logical to save my left over seeds and keep them for Ron, later 'on, next season, next year!

However, this year I did something different. Mixing up all of last year's left over seeds, I followed our president's idea plus scattered them around in a measured block to see what would sprout. Sure enough, for whatever reasons many have not seen the light of day. It looks like there are some beetroot shooting, but not much else.

So it would seem to endorse the idea that saved seed that has been exposed to air, and/or lacks appropriate storage is an exercise aiming for future disappointment. Must listen to our president's ideas more often!

### From Rebeca's Garden

This delightful young man is called Jarod, he's the son of a GCOG member & is holding the New Guinea Beans I grow at my place in Southport.

This was the smallest one (that could be carried), others had to stay behind (too heavy). I grow only the white ones and I hope to be bringing the few seeds I have available from this bean to the next meeting to sell.



### Chilli Cordial From Rebeca

This is a superb cordial recipe. Some people may call it Chilli Wine but my preference is to call it Cordial because it's diluted primarily with water...

Bottles of it get taken with me wherever I go & none comes back home!

#### Ingredients

1/2 kg white sugar  
1.75 l water  
15 sm. chillies, bruised (birds eye type)  
-do not cut open or remove seeds  
- do not place hands near eyes!  
2 tsp. Citric acid  
2 fresh lemons-juiced with little rind (or if preferred lemon essence)

#### Instructions

1. Add sugar and chillies to saucepan
2. Fill with water, bring to boil for 10 minutes
3. Remove from heat and add citric acid
4. When cool add lemon juice or essence
5. Strain through muslin and bottle up
6. Dilute to taste with chilled water

Lovely in along glass with ice blocks made from cordial

Extra special touch, add finely sliced cucumber & mint leaves for decoration

Lovely with Soda Water, Ginger Ale & some suggest Vodka

**Flavour intensifies by each day** and as water level reduces. Top up with water till flavour is depleted

Chillies should be the small Bird's Eye type.

### Miami Organic Farmers Market

**Where:** Miami State High School  
2137-2205 Gold Coast Highway, Miami  
**When:** Every Sunday, 6am to 11am  
**Telephone:** 3358 6309 or 1300 668 603

### In Gordon Singh's Garden

#### **Pontiac Potatoes**

"These show the Pontiacs from Ross which, in a little more than two weeks kept me busy continually covering them, and to see them now, makes me think I should have gone wider and deeper with this variety."



### In Jill Barber's Garden

Sometimes I don't know whether to laugh or cry at my gardening ability. I guess I do a bit of both. Of course, the crying parts I can just pass off as probably typical of most gardens with the repeated rain we've had on and off, but then along comes Ross with his massive, gorgeous tomatoes or Maria with her healthy, prolific carrots. Then I have to face the fact that I still haven't figured out the answers for my garden of how to grow these things.

Mind you, at this time I do have beautiful, healthy mixed greens for my salads, which is the main thing, and I love them! There are crinkly lettuces, ones with lacy leaves, feathery leaves, mignonettes, cos, kale, rocket, purple mustard greens, sorrel, parsley, basil, climbing spinach, coriander and even a bit of BQ Mulch – I do have lovely salads. They're especially good with the sweet crunchiness of jicama yams or a few sugarsnap peas and white Miyashige radishes.

I actually wonder at myself, however, for yet again planting rows of seeds, hoping that something will have changed, and maybe those carrots will actually come up this time...all along the row, instead of just a couple, like a booby prize. Then there's the purple king beans. I admit they're not my favourites, but I *have* grown them before, even collected seeds from them to plant again, and my granny flat person just loves them, so I try again. They even came up once this season, but the next week they'd all died. This time they didn't even *try* to germinate; nor did the bulk of the row of bush beans, which previously I've managed to grow prolifically. And how about those zucchinis! I thought zucchinis were supposed to be green. Well the ones that have actually grown are yellow and knobby – is that how they're supposed to be? I even managed to pick a few....only to discover that they'd all rotted inside, or been eaten from the underside into the middle. The rest are just openly rotting now, before they even put on a show of maturing. Oh, well, gardening does teach you to be philosophical and surrender to the whims of nature.

So, I carry on. Today, my husband, Graeme (the one who carries my tall chair in for each GCOG meeting), and I got three barrow loads of dark, moist compost out of the bin and distributed them over the garden beds that aren't already planted, lightly forking them in to the soil which is getting ever loamier, and lightly covering them with sugar-cane mulch. It felt really good on this gorgeous day to be out working with the soil, helping healthy vegies to grow (those that want to, anyway). I admired the garlic all upstanding, and wondered at the asparagus still looking all green – isn't it supposed to have died off and be all brown? I must cut back my lemongrass tomorrow, chopping up the dried leaves to add to the mulch, and salvaging whatever of it is still green to make into tea. Then I'll pot up some of that tenacious chocolate mint that keeps sneakily trying to invade the garden, though I thought I'd eradicated all of it from this area; it really needs to be kept contained.

Yesterday we finally bought a power pruner, after years of strenuously doing our massive Mock Oranges, etc, by hand. It'll be exciting to get into that next weekend. My other garden club says pruning should all be over by June, but that's when Graeme gets holidays and we start doing the citrus. We're always torn between pruning our lime, lemon, lemonade and grapefruit trees (one of each) now, which means picking the fruit before it's properly ripe, and leaving it so long that the trees are flowering again.

Today was a good day – we got so much done, pretty harmoniously, in this heavenly weather which is perfect for gardening – bright and sunny yet cool enough to stay comfortable. I dug up my first turmeric, which was exciting, and brought in my first head of broccoli, picking out eleven healthy green caterpillars before they'd done any damage. Perfect timing! And I managed to spread the compost through the asparagus, peering through the semi dark to cover it with mulch before I was forced inside. Life doesn't really get any better than this.

## What to do in July

### **Around the Garden:**

Spring-flowering bulbs, polyanthus, primulas, cinerarias and azaleas all provide excellent colour under deciduous trees or in the general garden in winter to spring. If you haven't planted these, take note for next year.

Warm northern gardens going through the drier season need regular watering, particularly if you are growing vegetables. This is pruning season in Queensland for roses, acalphas and frangipani.

A permanent source of water, such as a pond or a bird bath, will attract birds to the garden, and native flowering plants will provide nectar, seeds and insects for their food. This is better than providing a bird tray.

Weed seedlings will germinate even in the middle of winter. On any walks around the garden, take a hoe with you so these weed seedlings can be knocked out before they get too big. Collect up annual weeds and put them on the compost heap. Any perennial weeds should be dug up with as much of the root as possible, putting these in the bin. Pieces of root left in the soil or just on the compost heap often start to grow again, actually increasing the weed problem.

There are few pests and diseases around at this time of year, but remember to practice good garden hygiene. After pruning roses, spray the leafless plants and the ground around them with lime sulphur to clean up scale and disease spores. Moist or wet weather, and often mulches, encourages snails, so set traps such as a shallow container of beer with the rim at soil level. Encourage big lizards, such as blue-tongues, which enjoy snails.

Any decaying leaves should be collected and put on the compost or leaf mould heap. Pay particular attention to clearing the crowns of herbaceous perennials and low rock plants, which are vulnerable, especially the latter, to rot in prolonged damp conditions under fallen leaves.

### **Trees and Shrubs:**

Check that protective mulches over frost-tender plants have not been disturbed by winter weather. You can reduce the chance of frost damage to plants by gently hosing down the foliage first thing in the morning. In general, water in the morning if the weather has been dry rather than in the evening, which may contribute to frost damage if there is a cold night in frost areas, or fungal diseases in warm areas.

Young trees and bushes which are being blown about by strong winds may not last long, so check ties and stakes regularly. When trees and bushes are planted loosely, a sunken area will develop around the base of the main stem, caused by the continual rocking back and forth. This is where water can collect, and the plant can begin to rot and die off.

Plant deciduous trees and shrubs now, when they are dormant. Plant bare-root trees and shrubs, but only if soil conditions allow. If the soil is very wet, heel in the plants temporarily in a corner until conditions are suitable. Take out a trench big enough to hold the root system, and cover the roots with soil, firming gently.

Prune repeat-flowering roses now, when they are dormant – prune in winter or early spring before growth starts. Roses that flower only once a year, such as ramblers or many of the old roses, are pruned after flowering. The main reason for pruning roses is to build a healthy framework of shoots that will produce a good display of flowers. Thinning overcrowded growth allows in light and air, so there will be less chance of problems with pests and diseases.

### **Sow Spring & Summer Flowers:**

Sow amaranthus, aster, browallia, Californian poppy, celosia, cleome, cosmos, chrysanthemum, coleus, coreopsis, dahlia, gaillardia, gerbera, impatiens, kangaroo paws, nasturtium, petunia, phlox, saliva, snapdragons, Sturt's desert pea, viscaria and zinnia.

## Continued ... What to do in July

### Vegetables & Herbs:

Complete winter digging of empty beds and new vegetable plots. Manure the beds and add lime where it is needed for particular vegetables. Allow the winter weather to play its part in breaking down large clods of earth, improving the soil structure.

Plan your crop rotation – vegetables within the same group should never be grown in the same place again until at least two years have gone by.

Many vegetables and herbs can be sown now – beans, beetroot, capsicum, carrot, cabbage, lettuce, melon, peas, silver beet, squash, sweet corn, sweet potato, tomatoes and zucchini. Plant asparagus. Now, and during the next month, plant rhubarb crowns. If you haven't planted any winter greens, remember that turnip tops can be cooked and eaten as a green vegetable.

### Fruit:

Towards the end of the month is a good time to apply an organic fertilizer to all fruit in the garden. Although you may not notice it, in late July things will be beginning to stir – sap is beginning to rise and trees are awakening after their winter rest. An organic fertilizer such as blood, fish & bone or seaweed meal is ideal, because organic fertilizers release their nutrients slowly over a long period; the plants don't get a sudden boost to growth as they would get with inorganic fertilizers. Too much soft growth early in the season is more susceptible to damage from frosts, and pests and diseases. Pull away any mulch around the bases of trees and bushes if necessary before feeding; water the ground; and renew the mulch.

Examine apple trees for signs of canker. The symptoms to look for are damaged areas of bark which show signs of splitting, causing the bark to flake off. The branch may also become swollen around the affected area, and fungal fruiting bodies may be seen on the

Bark. Fungal diseases can overwinter in cankers and mummified fruit, and the spores are spread by wind and rain, attacking trees through open wounds or pruning cuts.

To control any canker, you may have to cut out whole branches or fruiting spurs. Make sure you remove all the damaged bark and wood back to healthy tissue. Cut to a healthy-looking bud, a branch junction, or the main trunk. Look at the pruning cut: if the wood is white, you have pruned back to healthy wood and the cut should heal well. If it still shows brown staining, you should prune further back.

Custard apples, figs, mulberries, persimmons, citrus, granadilla, passionfruit and pawpaw can be planted now.

Force rhubarb for tender young stems in the spring. Clear away all the dead foliage from the crown. Cover the plant with an old dustbin, a large pot or a type of terracotta rhubarb forcer, which is an upturned clay pot with a lid. Place one of these over the crown of the plant, and if you can get it, cover the forcer with a pile of fresh horse manure. The heat generated by the manure as it rots will force the rhubarb on even quicker.

### July At A Glance

- Keep on top of winter-germinating weeds
- Clear the crowns of plants of damp leaves
- Order seed and summer-flowering bulbs
- Check supports of trees and shrubs
- Choose and plant camellias
- Prune frangipani and take cuttings. Leave them to dry for a week before planting.
- Protect plants vulnerable to wind and cold
- Prune trees and shrubs to shape
- Prune vigorous climbers
- Take hardwood cuttings of trees and shrubs and root cuttings from perennials
- Aerate lawns to improve drainage
- Continue planting and winter-pruning of fruit



## VEGETABLES

### JUNE

Asian greens, Asparagus crowns, Broad beans, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow pea, Strawberry.

### JULY

Asian greens, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Carrot, Celery, Celeriac, Cucumber, Endive, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Marrow, Onion, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow pea, Strawberry, Tomato.



Some greens in Gordon Singh's garden.

## HERBS

### JUNE

**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.

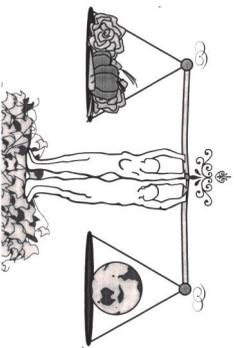
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If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:  
**GCOG, PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Q 4213**

*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 19 July 2012