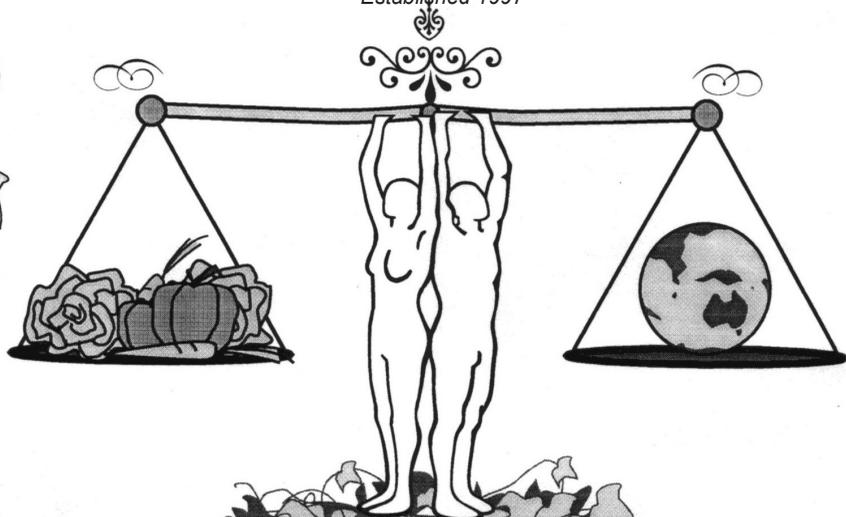


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 20 - MARCH 2016 Issue 3  
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21st April

### Notice Board

- To promote organic sustainable food raising for home gardens and farms.**
- To foster research into improved methods of organic farming and gardening.**
- 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

### 2016 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
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Assistant Sec	Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
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Website Editor	Dorothy Coe dorothy@dorothycoe.com
Advertising	Dorothy Coe dorothy@dorothycoe.com
Guest Speaker Liaison	Rachel Lebeter 0407 906 955 rachaellebeter@gmail.com
Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Pat McGrath Megan Keeler
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888 Maggie Golightly
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609 Heather Ryan

## 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:** Lise Racine (151), Val Sier (349), Josh Walker & Chris Viehbock (371), Sue Beckinsale (373), Roger Peterson (330), Warren & Beverly Carlson (87), Geraldine McDonald (354), Jun Yoneda (374), Jasen Pankhurst (376), Denise Goodwin (335), Ros Griffith (378), Denis Byrne & Sandra Ridolfi (380), Virginia Brown (381), Lynn Tilley (382), Evelyn Douglas (383), Marion Symons (155), Danielle Bohata (359), Doris James (360), Julie Townsend (385), Barry O'Rourke (185), Roger & Pauline Behrendorff (232), Barbara Morgan (246), Shem Pireh (361), Keith Rowell (362), Daniel Raper (387)

**March:** Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), John Clarke (345), Alex Dimos (364), Maggie Golightly (365), Fran Janes (366), Rachael Lebeter (367), Tricia Oh (368).

**April:** Jude Lai (220), Julie Abraham (315), Kerstein Trueman (346), Nancy Hageman (388), Elizabeth Hughes (389), Alison Bird (390).

**Newsletter Contributions:** Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. Deadline for contributions is the **second Monday** of the month. Send your content to Dorothy Coe at: [dorothy@dorothycoe.com](mailto:dorothy@dorothycoe.com)

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

### April

In April, we will be welcoming Kylie Nation, a local health and lifestyle writer. She has her own veggie patch and is an expert on the benefits of plant foods and healthy ways of preserving them. She will talk about the benefits of fermented foods and share some tips for fermenting our own beautiful veggies.

## Workshops

### Gold Coast Permaculture

**19th Mar** Getting your garden ready for winter — with Dan

**23rd April** Herbs - cleaning products, soap making, soils & herbs — with Haley

**28th June** Composting — with Dan

**25th July** Wonderful world of worms — with Greg

For more information contact Lyn Mansfield at Gold Coast Permaculture  
 M: 0409 645 888  
 E: [lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)

**Contd. over page...**

### Thanks to Contributors this month:

Diane Kelly, Dorothy Coe, Cathie Hodge, Neil Ross, Rachael Lebeter, Maria Roberson, & Gordon and Dorothy Singh.

Last newsletter can be downloaded from the site at [goldcoastorganicgrowers.org](http://goldcoastorganicgrowers.org)

## Workshops (Contd.)

### Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm

#### **Saturday 9th April Growing and Propagating Herbs**

Most herbs are hardy and will grow well throughout the garden, or in pots. Grow herbs amongst your vegetables, they make great companions, they can improve growth and flavour of vegetables and help repel pests. Learn how to grow herbs in the garden and in pots, different propagation techniques, how much sun, water and what type of soil herbs like, there are also hints on repelling insects and some simple recipes for sprays. This is a hands on class with plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

#### **When**

**Saturday 9th April 2016** The class runs for 4 hours from 9.30am to 1.30pm, with morning tea at 11-11.30am. Try to arrive 10minutes prior to have a cuppa and settle in.

#### **Cost**

**\$60** this includes a booklet of information on growing and propagating herbs, growing herbs in pots and in the garden and some recipes for herbal sprays, as well as a herby morning tea. You also get to take home the cuttings and seed trays that you do on the day.

#### **What to bring**

a hat and closed in shoes as we will be spending some time in the garden. Secateurs or scissors for cuttings (if you have them).

#### **Where**

Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm 491 Gold Coast Springbrook Road Mudgeeraba.

**Bookings:** 07 5530 3253 or [sandra@herbdcottage.com.au](mailto:sandra@herbdcottage.com.au)

### Nerang Aquaponics Study Centre

#### **Saturday 19th March Basic Introduction to Aquaponics**

Discover the benefits of Aquaponics, how it works, what you can achieve and how to setup an aquaponics system.

**Date: Saturday 19th March**

**Time:** 9.30am

**Where:** Nerang Community Garden

Located in Country Paradise Park-lands 231 Beaudesert-Nerang Rd, Nerang

**Cost:**

NCGA Members: \$2

**Visitors:** \$12 or \$15 per couple

***Morning Tea included***

**RSVP by 12th March**

Email: [nerangcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:nerangcommunitygarden@gmail.com)

### SpurTopia

**Sat, 19 March**

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Growing organic food for a family in your backyard - Inspirational presentation at the Bulimba, **FREE**

**Sat, 19 March**

1.30 pm - 3.30 pm

Raw Food & Fermentation, Beelarong Community Farm, Beverley St & York St, Morning-side, Fee \$40.00

**Sun, 20 March**

1 pm - 3 pm

HOW TO START BEEKEEPING - We will share our beekeeping experience and how we started from scratch. You will gain important basics and knowledge to begin this great hobby of keeping honey bees.

Bedford Park, Spring Hill, Fee \$40.00, more

**Sun, 20 March**

3.30 pm - 5.30 pm

HOW TO START GARDENING - We will share our gardening experience and how we started from scratch. You will learn about garden design, how to make organic soil and fertilizers, pest control ...

Bedford Park, Spring Hill, Fee \$40.00,

**More info about the events organised by SpurTopia .....**

<http://www.spurtopia.blogspot.com.au/p/events-workshops.html>

Or

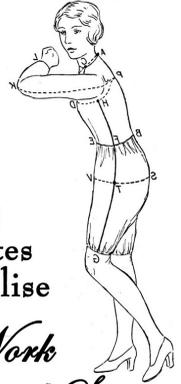
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Currumbin Valley

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- lovely ambience, yummy food and coffee,  
interesting things to see and buy.*

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GC Visitors Guide 2013

**Q & A - February 2016**  
By Cathie Hodge

**Q. Mandarin leaves with a silvery trail & misshapen?**

**A.** This indicates leaf miner attacking the leaves.

Maria suggested that this is difficult to control & there is probably no point in trying to control it. If white oil is used during the hot summer months it will 'fry' the leaves. Maria suggested keeping the plant well fed & watered. The healthier the plant, the less likely leaf miner will bother it. Don't cut off the leaves.

**Q. Big fat stripy grub on citrus leaves?**

**A.** Citrus butterfly. Not a problem on an established tree, but young or potted citrus plants are more vulnerable. If there are too many grubs on a citrus plant, relocate the grubs! (Don't kill them).

**Q. Copper-based fungicides for citrus?**

**A.** Maria suggested checking this out yourselves as organic gardeners don't tend to use these. See this article which mentions the negatives of copper fungicides <https://extension.umd.edu/learn/two-organic-pesticides-vegetable-gardeners>.

Or the following article by Jerry Colby-Williams where he mentions the use of a copper-based fungicide called cupric hydroxide which he claims is organic & safe to use. He uses it on pawpaws – <http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s3084873.htm>

**Q. What is sulphate of potash?**

**A.** Here is an answer from Daley's Nursery <http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/forum/what-is-potash-and-tell-me-why/>

Maria recommends using animal fertilisers instead, to provide these trace elements - e.g. cow manure (dry), aged chook manure or a seaweed-based fertiliser.

Aged cow manure can be used as a mulch. Fresh chook manure is likely to burn plants because of the urine component. Horse manure is likely to have seeds in it. Apply only a

sprinkling of manure when using as a fertiliser.

Pawpaw plants love plenty of manure (aged or composted), plenty of water & being well-mulched.

**Q. Does anyone have an opinion about "Searles 5-in-1 Plant Food"?**

**A.** Bruce believes it is fairly cheap because it is largely composed of vegetable matter & sawdust, as well as the manures. He believes that it is more of a mulch than a fertiliser.

**Q. Kaffir lime tree – the dark green leaves now have yellow veins. What is the problem?**

**A.** The plant probably needs some fertiliser, most likely nitrogen. (Don't use urea though as it is too concentrated). Try using 3 parts Seasoil: 1 part chelated iron.

Citrus & pawpaws are big feeders & need small doses of fertiliser 4 times a year, (or smaller doses 8 times a year).

**Q. Banana plant knocked back by frost 2 years ago. Since then it hasn't produced any fruit. Why not?**

**A.** Not sure. Maybe it the plant hasn't recovered sufficiently yet?

This question led to a general discussion regarding banana growing:

- You can leave all the banana suckers to grow & bear bananas – the bunches will be smaller but this suits backyard growers as it can be a challenge to eat a commercial-sized bunch
- Once a bunch is harvested, cut down the plant, chop it up & put around the remaining plants. Also, chop off any banana 'trash' (i.e. dead leaves) & use as mulch around the plants.
- Don't share your banana plants with others as soil-borne diseases (e.g. Panama disease) can be passed onto others this way. Get banana plants only from accredited nurseries. See article by Queensland Government for more information & list of accredited nurseries <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/bananas/>
- Banana beetle cause banana plants to

fall over. Solution – put chooks among your banana plants & they will eat the beetle (& fertilise the plants)

- (It is also a good idea to put chooks among your citrus plants for bug-catching & fertilising)

**Q. Purple snake bean – started out healthy but is now covered with small insects & ants? What are these?**

**A. Aphids!**

Maria's simple solution to getting rid of aphids is to squash the aphids on the branches just using her fingers, after which she washes the aphids off the plant.

Maria also uses the following approach when she has other insects bothering her plants. She kills some of the bugs then leaves them on the plants. This attracts birds to eat the dead bugs & then they stay to eat remaining live bugs.

**Q. Thin skinned bananas – what type of banana are they? (Henry)**

**A. Maria knows them “sugar bananas” but she is not sure if that is their correct name.**

See the following article [http://](http://www.alittlebitummy.com/difference-between-sugar-bananas-common-banana-low-fodmap/)

[www.alittlebitummy.com/difference-between-sugar-bananas-common-banana-low-fodmap/](http://www.alittlebitummy.com/difference-between-sugar-bananas-common-banana-low-fodmap/)

**Let's Share our Tips of “All Things Gardening” by Diane Kelly**

One of the comments that has often been made about our Club is that the combined wealth of knowledge among us is quite amazing. So I would like to see if we can share some of that wisdom, and I'm inviting anyone who has a gardening hint, or any hints about preparing food, to send them in so that we can include them in our newsletters.

For example, there are two things that I've come across this month:

1. At the small community garden where I am now growing fresh vegetables (lettuces, silver beet, tomatoes, sweet corn and cucumbers) for the local Op Shop to include in their food hampers for those in need, I was putting in the tomato stakes and tying up the young plants. As I was doing so, I remembered what my dad had told me – “Always put the material ties around the stem of the tomato plant twice before tying it around the stake. In this way, it provides extra support for the tomato plant, and reduces the chance of the stem snapping in windy weather.”
2. Recently I bought two large avocados, and as I have just been making a salad for myself this week, I decided to slice a piece off the side of the avo to add in with the rest of the vegies. Now normally when I add avocado to salad, I end up with mush. But this time, I sliced down the side of the avocado just like you would a mango. And, as with a mango, I then cut the flesh into rows down and across, and then scooped out those pieces with a spoon into the vegie bowl. It worked a treat – neat, un-squashed pieces of avocado went into the salad, with absolutely no wastage.

So if you have a hint passed down through your family, or something you have come across by chance like I did with the avocados, please jot them down and send them into Dorothy for inclusion in our newsletter – [dorothy@dorothycoe.com](mailto:dorothy@dorothycoe.com)

## Backyard Chooks by Rachael Lebeter

### The Chicken or The Egg

In February, our multi-talented member Angie left the thermomix at home and instead gave a very informative presentation based on her experiences of caring for over 45 “backyard” chooks. While Angie’s backyard is clearly a lot bigger than many of ours, her knowledge of raising and keeping chickens is just as applicable for those of us with just 2 or 3 birds in suburbia as it is for those on acreage – although keep in mind that the Council forbids the keeping of roosters on blocks smaller than 4000m<sup>2</sup> (see the GCCC factsheet “Keeping of Poultry” for an outline of the regulations).

Angie’s presentation began with a basic overview of the common breeds of chicken in Australia. She recommended the reds, including Lohmann Browns and Isa Browns, as the most prolific layers of the lot, with some laying up to 300 eggs per year! If you are planning to raise your own chickens, the meatier Rhode Islands are also good layers and provide a good feed when you have to dispose of all of those chicks who grow up to be roosters. However, in terms of the cost-benefit analysis, Angie thinks it is probably cheaper to buy hens than raise your own. A flock of 20 chickens or less is recommended, as it prevents too much fighting. In larger groups, chickens tend to forget their place in the “pecking order” and are constantly checking.

Fortunately for those of us who don’t appreciate being woken at the crack of dawn, chickens will lay an egg about every 24-25 hours with or without a rooster. These eggs keep for up to 4 weeks, and as shells are porous, it is important they are kept clean and dry to avoid contamination by bacteria such as salmonella. Dirty eggs should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried. Angie revealed that all eggs should be stored with the pointy end

down, which is something I definitely didn’t know!

Interestingly, as well as laying, chickens will also become clucky – meaning that they wish to incubate a clutch of eggs to hatch chicks – without a rooster also! The benefit of a rooster is purely that the eggs will be fertilized. Chickens who become clucky will sit on their eggs for about 21 days, which is how long it takes eggs to hatch – this means if you wish to swap in fertilized eggs from another source, you will need to be quick. While nesting, a clucky chicken regulates the temperature and humidity of the eggs, rotating and moving them to distribute heat. She may leave the nest occasionally to eat and drink and will abandon any unhatched eggs about a day after the first chick has emerged. It is important to let eggs hatch naturally, as chicks also receive their final nutrients at this time. They need a high humidity environment to hatch or their feathers can stick in the egg and they will die. Until chickens develop their true feathers, they have difficulty regulating their body heat and need to help remain warm. After about 6 weeks, they will develop real feathers and after 22 weeks they will have reached Point of Lay, where they are fully mature.

Angie recommends that chicks are fed a starter mix which contains medicine against coccidiosis, a common chicken disease, and that this mix is kept away from laying hens so that the medication does not contaminate eggs for human consumption. Starter mix and other chicken feeds are available at a very reasonable price from Cambell’s Produce (Cambells Rd, Dungay NSW – just over Tomewin). Chickens also need access to shell grit and to greens, and Angie’s presentation outlined a range of uses for common garden plants, including as feed, disease control and insecticides in the chicken coop.

According to Angie, chickens normally moult in May (when there is less than 14 hours of sunlight per day) and will stop laying at this time. They generally lay for 12-14 months and rest for 2 months, and can continue to

Garlic	Preventative for worms	Put in water for a week
Nasturtium	De-wormer; Antiseptic, antibiotic and insect repellent	
Nettle	Too much work and a bit prickly for my liking!	
Sage Parsley Oregano Fennel Comfrey	General health – Salmonella, antioxidant General health and laying stimulant Ecoli, salmonella, coccidiosis, immune booster Foliage and seeds are good for general health Vitamins for general good health and laying Rich in protein, potassium, and calcium.	
Lemon Balm	Antiviral	
Catmint	Insect repellent for lice and ticks	Perennial border (blue flowers)
Feverfew	Excellent insect repellent if you dry its small daisy-like flowers	Perennial
Lavender	Insecticide Put dried lavender in your chicken coop to calm chickens!	Plant around your chicken coop
Wormwood (or mugwort)	Help control external parasites	Grow next to your chicken coop
Purslane (pigweed)	High in Omega-3	
Rosemary/ Lavendar	Fencing - they are dense so the chickens have trouble scratching, aromatic	

lay for up to 10 years but normally reach peak production at 1-2 years. Chickens who have finished laying may have a lighter-colored comb which is cool to touch.

Laying can also be affected by rain, heat, predators, not enough feed, and clucky hens. A clucky chook tends to disturb the laying cycle of others in the pen, and it is best to remove a clucky chook from the main pen if you can, even if you don't intend to let her sit. It was great to learn so much about chicken keeping, and it is clear that Angie really likes her "girls". She has kindly supplied her Power-Point from the night, so for images of the different chicken breeds and further information on dietary supplements and seed mixes, please check this out on the GCOG website.

## Veggie Swap by Dorothy Coe

Another great veggie swap afternoon last Thursday. A turn out of just 6 people but sooo much food!



Today we had cherry tomatoes, capsicums, eggplant, passion fruit, guavas, kang kong (water spinach), bitter melon, garlic chives, spring onions, silverbeet, heaps of different Asian greens, a variety of spinach, basil, edible hibiscus leaves which taste like Ceylon spinach only much bigger, okra, okra seedlings, passion fruit curd, home made raw chocolate bliss balls, kombucha, worm juice fertilizer AND heaps of different seedlings which were donated to the gardens again by a nursery in Brisbane.

I cannot remember all the seedling varieties now, but there were about 13 trays which included tomato seedlings, eggplant, mixed lettuce, cabbage and more. These seedlings are available to everyone in the swap group and in the community gardens and not part of the swap so that's a bonus!!



We will be holding the veggie swap every Thursday between 4-5pm at the Southern Beaches Community Gardens at Tugun

which is in Tugun Street, just behind the [Behind Tugun Community Center], 414 Coolangatta Rd ,Tugun.

In the near future I will be organising some weekend swaps too. Dates and times can change so it's a good idea to keep upto date by joining the Facebook page.

Feel free to check out and LIKE the facebook page I created [www.facebook.com/veggieswapgoldcoast](http://www.facebook.com/veggieswapgoldcoast). I have also created a **GROUP** page whereby if you click on the **JOIN** button I can send you a weekly reminders about the meetings and you will also be able to chat with other members and organise some swaps directly with others. The GROUP page link is at [www.facebook.com/groups/veggieswapgoldcoast/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/veggieswapgoldcoast/)

Any questions just let me know — 0412 382 989 or [dorothy@dorothycoe.com](mailto:dorothy@dorothycoe.com)

While at the gardens I took these photos of some lovely looking lettuce that someone was growing in the heat of Summer without shade and they look pretty good!



## JOKES

Since attending our last meeting we thought it would be appropriate to pass on this chook story. It will either ruffle the feathers or tickle the fancy. It's not a veggie joke but it's the best we could hatch up.

Regards — Gordon and Dorothy Singh

### Butch the Rooster

Sarah was in the fertilized egg business. She had several hundred young pullets and ten roosters to fertilize the eggs.

She kept records and any rooster not performing went into the soup pot and was replaced.

This took a lot of time, so she bought some tiny bells and attached them to her roosters. Each bell had a different tone, so she could tell from a distance which rooster was performing. Now, she could sit on the porch and fill out an efficiency report by just listening to the bells.

Sarah's favourite rooster, old Butch, was a very fine specimen but, this morning she noticed old Butch's bell hadn't rung at all! When she went to investigate, she saw the other roosters were busy chasing pullets, bells-a-ringing, but the pullets hearing the roosters coming, would run for cover.

To Sarah's amazement, old Butch had his bell in his beak, so it couldn't ring. He'd sneak up on a pullet, do his job, and walk on to the next one.

Sarah was so proud of old Butch, she entered him in a Show and he became an overnight sensation among the judges.

The result was the judges not only awarded old Butch the "No Bell Peace Prize" they also awarded him the "Pulletsurprise" as well.

Clearly old Butch was a politician in the making. Who else but a politician could figure out how to win two of the most coveted awards on our planet by being the best at sneaking up on the unsuspecting populace and screwing them when they weren't paying attention?

Vote carefully in the next election. You can't always hear the bells.



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## Getting to Know Bill and Susan Smart By Diane Kelly

Seven or eight years ago, Bill and Susan Smart were living in a cul-de-sac in The Gap, a leafy and hilly suburb some eight kilometres west of the Brisbane CBD which borders on to the Mt Cootha National Park. They had been there for eighteen years, and had enjoyed their quiet area. The neighbours had been friendly, and over the years street get-togethers had been a means of getting to know each other. But gradually the demographics of the area had changed, and also Bill and Susan began to realize that they wanted something different.

Firstly – and realistically – they knew they wanted a level block. But they also wanted a productive garden; they wanted to have some chooks; and they wanted to grow their own food. And, possibly their top priority, they wanted to be part of a real community. So they started looking. Initially they headed north to the Sunshine Coast, and then they came south, looking at possible locations in northern NSW. But, in a series of coincidences, they ended up looking at land in the Eco-Village in the beautiful Currumbin Valley.

Bill and Susan now live in a comfortable home – more about that later – on a block that is just over 1,000 sq metres. But it is unusual – there is the house area, and an additional self-contained studio on one section of land, and then across a public thoroughfare, there is the large vegetable garden and chook run area. The road ends with the Smart's block, so there is no through-traffic, and behind the vegetable garden is parkland that stretches across to Currumbin Creek Road. It is a delightful spot.

Both Bill and Susan were born in England. Bill grew up in terrace house in Ilford, which is in Essex, but still part of Greater London, and not far from the River Thames. I asked Bill whether his parents were gardeners, and he spoke of his dad being a keen rose grow-

er. He also mentioned a part of his childhood that perhaps many of us also remember – the horses and carts that used to deliver bread, milk, coal and wood – and the bonus deliveries that the horses left for gardeners. Enough said! After travelling to many parts of the world with his work, and then living on Jersey, one of the Channel Islands between England and France, Bill came to Australia in 1973. He had been offered a job here, and “I fell in love with the country”. Bill and Susan both lived in Sydney, and then moved to Perth, and then came to Queensland – and in 2012 bought their block of land in the Currumbin Valley.

It turned out to be one of Australia's wettest summers, and this did cause a few worries because many of the walls of Bill & Susan's house were constructed of bales of barley straw, which were then rendered. The thick walls provide coolness in the summer. The Smart's lived in a camper van during the building of their home, and spent their time building fences and decking. (Bill has just finished the gate to the vegetable/chook area, and it is a true feat of engineering!)



***A fine gate !!***

Bill and Susan had begun learning about sustainable homes, and Bill had read a lot of gardening books – he has also been a member of the Brisbane Organic Growers Club for about ten years. So they had a plan for their block. Between the southern side of the house and the studio, they are making a tropi-

cal, rain-forest area – the house provides shade for the ferns and staghorns that they are growing. It is from the south that most of the breezes come. To the north they are planting fruit trees; the backyard is designated for avocado trees; and they have their herbs close to the kitchen. Heavy rainfall lies a bit on the clay soil, but then drains away to a swale at the front of the property. Bill adds gypsum to the soil to counteract the clay, and the garden beds are built up above ground level.



***Raised beds; Ceylon spinach & the chook run covered in passionfruit vine – and passionfruit !!***

Water has only been bought in once – Bill and Susan have water storage of 50,000 litres, including a 5,000 litre tank that is restricted for emergency use. I asked Bill about the hay bale walls of the house, and he explained that they have a low fire risk because the bales are so compacted. Barley straw is apparently the most suitable for this purpose, as it contains a high level of silica and so rots down very slowly – the walls won't ever need to be replaced. Being in one of the lower sections of the Eco Village, the property does get frosts.

The vegetable garden is doing well – neat beds, good mulch – and plenty of worms. Favourite vegies are snow peas, Asian greens, and lettuces, as Bill and Susan eat a lot of salads. They also like passionfruit, and the vine over the chook pen is healthy and

produces well. Bill grows Tommy Toe tomatoes, as he finds any of the bigger varieties get stung by fruit fly. Bill is also interested in espaliering fruit trees, and is growing a fig tree, ginger plants, a raspberry vine, and asparagus. Fertilizers used are Blood and Bone and palagonite – Organic Xtra is especially used for new crops (but not root ones). Bill has also grown eight sunflower plants, and has just harvested the seeds.



***Susan, the vegie patch, the passionfruit vine and the potting shed.***



***The pads of the sunflower harvest.***

Of interest on the potting shed – Bill is going to utilize the run-off from the roof to grow strawberries in the pipes that he has attached to the wall. The passionfruit makes a wonderful shade area, and keeps the six chooks cool in summer.

**Getting to Know Bill and Susan Smart  
(Contd.) By Diane Kelly**

So what other interests do Bill and Susan have? They've travelled to South Africa, Bali, England, and Norway. They went to Norway for the bird-watching, but feel the highlight of their trip was a train trip to Bergen where they were able to see the fjords – “they were amazing”. Bill, an engineer, also likes constructing things and enjoyed installing the kitchen in their new home. He also likes growing plants from seeds, and Susan says he definitely has the patience for this.

Both Bill and Susan got involved with growing things from seed because when they were living in Perth, they volunteered to work in the “Men of the Trees” program. Started in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to regenerate bush in South Africa, the mission of “Men of the Trees” is ***“To bring people together to plant and grow trees, and to achieve healthy, productive, sustainable landscapes”***. In Perth, a nursery was established where native tree seedlings were potted up by volunteers, and then in the planting season, they were distributed at low cost to farmers in the wheat belt that were battling high salt levels in the soil. During some seasons, up to 20,000 seedlings were planted. But one of the greatest benefits of being part of this program was that Bill and Susan developed strong friendships, both in town and with the farmers, some of which continue to this day.

Bill and Susan's goal is to become as self-sustainable as possible. The process is vegetables and chooks, then fruit trees, then flowers – and Bill dreams of adding bees hives to that list. They both see organic gardening becoming far more important in the future, and Susan said “we need to use whatever space we have, and fill it with sustainable food sources”. The way to do this is “all in the soil – soil preparation is vital; drainage is important; and then you need to choose the right place for the right plant”.



Just across the road from Bill and Susan's home is the parkland area, and it provides a good picture of the life in the Eco-Village that the Smart's are enjoying. It is green; the rainfall is generous; plants grow well; efforts are being made to regenerate the vegetation; and all is peaceful – you can see the kangaroos grazing behind the trees. It is very obvious why Bill and Susan have chosen to live there.



## HERB FARM

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**If you only do one thing this month ..... Plant some Peas**  
**By Diane Kelly**

***If You Only do One Thing this Month ..... Plant some Peas !!***

Recently a friend and I were discussing our favourite vegies, and I decided mine are snow peas .... with sugar snaps a close second. Anyway, I've checked my planting guide, and I was happy to see that in April I can start planting peas.

So how do we go about planting peas, snow peas and sugar snap peas – and how do we ensure healthy crops?

As with so many vegetables, peas grow best in rich, well-drained soil in a sunny position. But the soil does not need high levels of nitrogen – and in fact these would cause vegetative growth at the expense of flowers and pods. As legumes, peas have a special association with bacteria that enables them to supply their own nitrogen. Another thing to remember is to not grow peas in a bed that has previously grown the summer bean crop, as pest and disease problems may be transferred.

Peas are traditionally planted in rows, both to facilitate easier harvesting and to provide adequate air circulation. Before planting, erect any supporting structures. Then, using a hoe, make a drill about 5-7 cms deep. Sow the seeds at 10 cm intervals, in rows between 45-90 cm apart. Dwarf plants need the wide spacing for their wider plants, but the tall varieties form high, narrow crops. Water the seeds lightly once, and then not again until the seedlings emerge – over-watering can cause seed rot and therefore crop failure.

As the seedlings grow, earth up the soil to support the stems – this also ensures that the roots are deep within a cooler soil zone. As soon as the seedlings are tall enough, attach them to their supports – plants left to trail on

the soil will be vulnerable to attack by slugs. Ensure the pea plants are watered consistently, and mulched well. Avoid overhead watering, as this can cause powdery mildew from high humidity. Liquid seaweed fertilizers will assist in building up disease resistance.

Peas grow, flower and fruit within 10-14 weeks. Tip-pruning encourages branching and increases production, and the pods should be picked continuously once they begin to form. Garden peas can be harvested for 2-3 weeks, and you can enjoy snow peas for 5-6 weeks. When harvesting peas, remove the pod with one hand whilst holding the stem with the other – otherwise the stems will tear. Harvest the pea pods when they are well developed, but not yet fully mature.

So now is the time to start preparing your garden beds for growing some crisp, fresh peas. They are quite easy to grow, and as long as you can keep the cockatoos and black faced cuckoo shrikes away from the tasty pods, you can enjoy some wonderful additions to your winter and spring meals.

p.s. And if you get bored with garden, snow or sugar snap peas, try growing another member of the pea family – “winged peas”. These are so named because the pods have four wavy flanges, or wings – and as something different, the pods have an asparagus-like flavour!



## Working Bee at Maggie's Place By Diane Kelly

The names of our club members joining in our "Working Bee" program may have varied for each activity, but the things we've all had in common is that we have helped someone; we've learnt something – or learnt plenty – and we've all thoroughly enjoyed the experiences.

On Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, eight of us got together at Maggie Golightly's property in the highlands of the Eco-Village in the Curumbin Valley. It's a very special location – quiet, green, and obviously productive. After an accident in her workshop – and Maggie's interest in working with wood is another story – Maggie needed a bit of help to tidy the productive area of her garden, and get it ready for planting out.

So we weeded – all the weeds went into a very large bin for making "weed tea" - and we tidied, we spread compost and mulch, and we watered. Maggie has a large, fenced area which contains her vegetable and herb garden, and now the existing beds have been neatened, and the "finished" beds have been cleared and replenished with the compost and mulch that Maggie prepared. When some good rain comes, Maggie can plant out her autumn crops, and enjoy the fruits of our labours!

After the garden work, we put away our tools and sat down for a rest, a chat, and a cuppa and cake. It was our chance to get to know each other, and to talk about a morning well spent. A special "thank you" to those who joined in helping Maggie – as you know, she really appreciated our efforts!

p.s. If you would like a hand with **your** garden – and there are a group of us who are willing to help – please let Diane know – because we know that it will be fun!!



*We all chipped in ....*



*Weeds ready for turning into tea ....*



*Phillip spreading mulch ....*



*And then a well-earned rest, a cuppa, and a chat .....thanks for the opportunity, Maggie!*

### Why I LOVE working bees! By Cathie Hodge

On a hot morning in late November 2015, an enthusiastic group of GC Organic Growers, armed with their tools of trade, arrived for a working bee at my place. How wonderful! Together we weeded & mulched a (somewhat out-of-control) area of my food forest. The results for me were delightful. Since then I have been able to maintain control of that area.



But a working bee is not only a practical event. It is also a highly enjoyable social event. Chatting & laughing & working together are part of the satisfaction (as well as the shared morning tea afterwards).

Finally, even my plants showed their appreciation. Previously the fruit on my rollinia tree hadn't ever ripened successfully. But within a week of the working bee, the remaining fruit on the tree did just that. I LOVE working bees. Thanks again everyone!



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## Recipes Column

### Vegan - Chocolate Hot Cross Buns

With Easter approaching I thought this would be a good recipe. It was given to me by Katie Culpin some time ago and I just made them last week. However I pushed for time so I made them without the cross!



The secret to these is grating some of the real chocolate into the mixture as well as the chunky choc chips that are distributed through the mix as well.

**Makes: 6 small buns or a medium cake**

#### Ingredients:

#### **Buns:**

- 1 cup almond meal
- ½ cup raw cashew ground into meal
- 1 cup coconut sugar
- 3-4 tbs grated dairy free chocolate
- 1 ½ tsp raw cacao powder
  
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla powder
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ cup dairy free chocolate chips or chopped chocolate

- 2 tbs ground flax soaked in 4 tbs warm water – leave for 5 minutes
- 1/3 cup coconut milk or similar
- 2 tbs coconut oil
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice

#### **Cross: (optional)**

- 1/3 cup raw cashews
- 2-3 tbs water
- 1 tsp maple or rice syrup

#### Preparation:

#### **Buns:**

- Pre heat oven to 180°C and line a square baking dish with baking paper
- Add the water to the ground flax and let sit while you get the dry ingredients ready
- Add all of the dry ingredients to a large mixing bowl and stir to combine
- Add all of the wet ingredients to a blender and blend until well incorporated and the flax is nice and loose. This will ensure that it distributes through the mix evenly.
- Add the wet to the dry and stir through until you get thick dough
- With damp hands shape the mix into 8 even balls then drop into the baking dish

#### **Cross (optional)**

- Blend the cashews until they become fine then add the water and sweetener stir through ensuring there are no lumps
- Spoon the mix into a small clip lock bag then snip a small tip of one of the bottom corners to create a nozzle
- Carefully pipe the mix over the buns to create the traditional Easter bun cross
- Place buns into the center of the oven and bake for up to 45-50 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean, or they spring back when gently pressed.

- While they are still hot carefully pour a small amount of the syrup onto the buns then spread with a basting brush.

**By Dorothy Coe**

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## Delicious Squash Daal

### Ingredients

- 8 cloves of garlic
- 2 fresh red chillies
- olive oil
- 3 teaspoons black mustard seeds
- 1 heaped teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 handful of curry leaves
- 2 onions
- 1 x 5cm piece of ginger
- 1 bunch of fresh coriander , (30g)
- ½ a butternut squash , (600g)
- 500 g split red lentils
- 3 tablespoons natural yoghurt
- 1 lime
- 2 large free-range eggs
- 4 uncooked poppadoms
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach

### Method

Start by making a temper. Peel the garlic, then finely slice with the chillies, ideally 1mm thick on a mandolin (use the guard!). Pour 2 tablespoons of oil into a large wide pan on a medium heat and add the mustard seeds, cumin seeds and curry leaves for 1 minute, then the garlic and chillies. Stir so everything's flat, moving regularly until crisp and lightly golden. With a slotted spoon, remove half the temper to a plate, taking the pan off the heat.

Peel the onions and ginger and finely chop

with the coriander stalks, then chop the squash into 2cm cubes, leaving the skin on but discarding any seeds. Stir it all into the pan and return to a medium heat for 15 minutes to soften. Stir in the lentils, then 1.5 litres of boiling water. Bring to the boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer and cover for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mash the squash into the daal, taste and season to perfection. Remove 6 portions, bag them up and, once completely cool, freeze for a rainy day when you'll be really grateful it's there, leaving the rest on a low heat to keep warm.

To serve, blitz the coriander leaves, yoghurt, a pinch of sea salt and half the lime juice in a blender until smooth, then decant into a small bowl. Reheat the reserved temper in a non-stick frying pan on a medium-low heat with 1 teaspoon of oil, then divide into two piles and crack an egg over each. Cover and leave to slowly fry on the bottom for 2 or 3 minutes, while they coddle on top. One-by-one, puff up your dry poppadoms in the microwave for around 30 seconds each. Top each portion of daal with a fried egg, and pop some spinach, dressing, poppadoms and a lime wedge on the side.

**By Dorothy Coe**

**Source: Jamie Oliver**

**Please email your yummy recipes to Jill for inclusion soon:**  
[jillbarber611@gmail.com](mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com)

**Recipe submission deadline is the second Monday of each month.**

### **Genetically Modified Organisms**

GCOG is on the mailing list of Gene Technology Regulator so we receive notice of all applications made by various companies to the regulator in regards to genetic modification licences within Australia. This is notice of a change in how these companies are to apply for licences in the future. We have included it in the newsletter for your information in case you have an interest in such matters.

#### **Letter from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator**

I am writing to remind you of the upcoming changes to the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the GT Act). These result from:

- the *Gene Technology Amendment Act 2015* (the GT Amendment Act) which comes into effect from 11 March 2016 (<https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2015A00121>);
- the *Statute Law Revision Act (No. 1) 2016* which will also come into effect from 11 March 2016 (<https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2015A00010>); and
- the *Acts and Instruments (Framework Reform) Act 2015* which will come into effect from 6 March 2016 (<https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2016A00004>).

The latter two contain administrative changes which don't affect GMO assessment and approval processes (details below).

#### **Changes from the GT Amendment Act**

The GT Amendment Act implements minor and technical recommendations of the 2011 independent Review of the Act as agreed by all Governments in 2013 by:

- removing a restriction on licence variations to broaden the circumstances in which the Regulator can vary licences rather than require new licence applications;

- updating the matters the Regulator must consider before a GMO dealing can be declared a notifiable low risk dealing in the Regulations ;
- discontinuing quarterly reporting to the Minister on activities under the Act;
- clarifying activities allowed under an inadvertent dealings licence, to ensure reasonable activities are explicitly authorised;
- changing newspaper advertising requirements for notifying the public of consultations on licence application assessments; and
- removing the requirement for the Regulator to include genetically modified products authorised by other agencies on the public record of GMO approvals (the GMO Record).

#### **Changes from other legislation**

The *Statute Law Revision Act (No. 1) 2016* changes all the offence provisions in the GT Act to align with other commonwealth legislation. The words "is guilty of an offence" are changed to "commits an offence".

The *Acts and Instruments (Framework Reform) Act 2015* removes references to documents in the GT Act as "disallowable instruments under Section 46A of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*" instead these documents will be referred to as "Legislative Instruments".

A revised compilation of the GT Act incorporating all these changes will be available at <https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00587>.

Could you please ensure that, where relevant, people in your organisation are made aware of these changes.

Yours sincerely

Dr Vidya Jagadish, A/g Assistant Secretary  
Regulatory Practice and Compliance Branch,  
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

## FRUIT TREES

### MARCH

**Custard Apples:** Fertilize trees – 20 gms of organic fertiliser per sq m to drip line. Harvest every 3 to 7 days. If mealy bug is a problem spray individual fruit with pest oil or wipe on metho and water (30% metho + 70% water).

**Figs:** Close to end of season.

**Lychee:** Less watering is required, but don't let the trees dry out. If Erinose mite appears, spray every 10 to 14 days with wettable sulphur from pinhead size new growth to fully open and hardened off.

**Low Chill Stone Fruit:** Water needs to taper off now as trees begin to defoliate.

**Mango:** If any anthracnose fungus is visible, spray with a copper based spray every 2 weeks, or with 25 mls leaf microbes and 5 grams wettable sulphur per 1 litre of water.

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

**Pawpaw:** Plant out new trees. Apply boron now. 1 teaspoon per mature tree. Spray leaf microbes (25 ml leaf microbes per 1 litre of water) if black spot is seen.

**Persimmon:** Main harvest time. Decline water needs. Apply a little super fine lime and gypsum – 50 gms per sq metre of each.

**Strawberries:** Plant out new runners. If you want to leave last year's plants, prune only.

**Bananas:** Give stools a high organic potassium fertilizer – 200 grams per stool (any organic fertilizer that has added sulphate of potash).

**Citrus:** If any fungal problems arise, spray with pest oil and leaf microbes. Add the pest

oil + 15 ml per litre of the leaf microbes. This will also control the citrus leaf miner and scale.

**Pruning Citrus:** Citrus trees need little pruning. If over-crowded, thin out after fruiting. Don't thin oranges or grapefruit severely but mandarins can be shortened back to the second or third shoot down the branch. Lemon trees are taller and less compact so keep them to a size easier to handle. Old trees can be cut severely but will take a year or two to recover and bear.

### 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.

*Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook*

## VEGETABLES

### MARCH:

Asian Greens, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chilli, Endive, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onions, Parsnip, Peas, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow Peas, Sweet Potato, Tomato.

### 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.

## HERBS

### MARCH

**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.

### APRIL

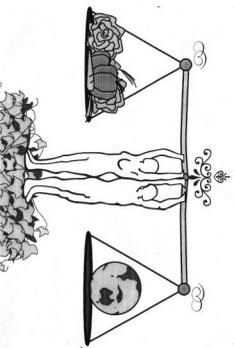
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Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information the association (including Editor, Executive Officers and Committee) accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed in this newsletter.

If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:  
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*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 21st April 2016