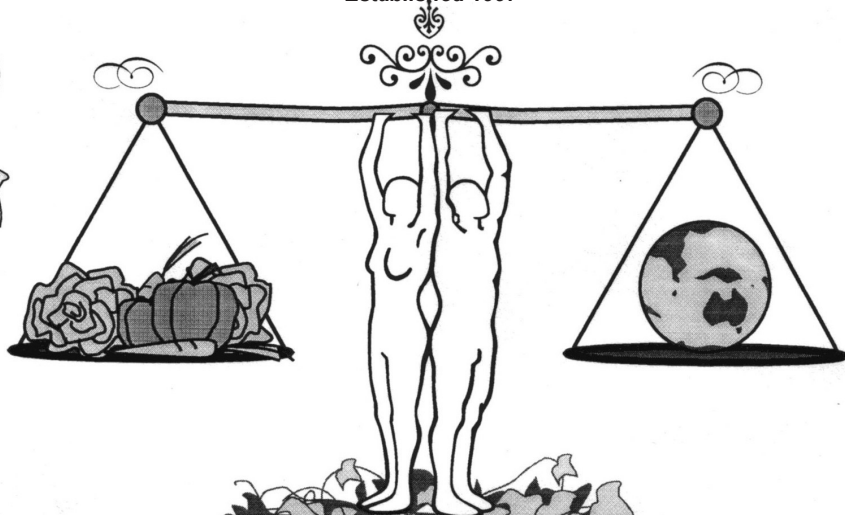


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 24, 2020 Issue 6
GARDENING IN SUMMER

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OUR NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 26, 2020

Notice Board

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

Meetings Held:

The fourth Thursday of the month at the Elanora Community Centre, 26 Galleon Way, Elanora - you must RSVP to Diane's email if you wish to attend.

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 PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Qld 4213, or just pay at the door.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

Members' Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

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

Library:

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

Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

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

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

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

W: www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcorganic

2020–2021 Committee

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Librarians	Evelyn Douglas Sally Beitz
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield Maggie Golightly Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson Deb Phillips Dianne Casey

Newsletter Contributions are welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch or write an article about something interesting you've learnt recently. **The deadline for our Autumn 2021 issue is the end of January.** Send articles and photos to Leah at leahbryan9@gmail.com

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

Pay online:

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Remember to put your Name and Membership Number (the number in brackets after your name) in the comment field.

Membership Renewals

Overdue (as of November 1): Justin Rogers (275), Maggie Golightly (365), Liliana Morgan (438), Jan Guest (307), Dayne Petersen (377), Neil Ross (294), Karen Collins (457), Glenn & Joan Jones (266), Amy Lukens (356), Evelyn Douglas (383), Doug & Sally Beitz (441), Debbie Casey (442), Rena Hofmann (443), Jane Menke (459), Jenifer Skues(460)

November:

Ann Brown (329), Rodney & Cathy Boscoe (347), Megan Keeler (358), Leah Johnston (416), Peter Turnermann (444), Anna Marie MacDonald (454)

January 2021:

Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Micheline Lazaroo (401), Ira Appel (417), Dianne Casey (461), Belinda Rennie (462)

Newsletter:

GCOG members are welcome to contribute photos and articles to our newsletter. Please send any contributions to Leah via the email leahbryan9@gmail.com

Contribution deadlines are:

Autumn issue: end of January

Winter issue: end of April

Spring issue: end of July

Summer issue: end of October

Upcoming Guest Speakers

Our meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Elanora Community Centre, 26 Galleon Way, Elanora.

Thursday November 26 - Colin Johnson from Earth Life (last meeting for the year).

Our meetings can only accommodate 50 members in the hall, so please keep an eye on your emails and RSVP if you wish to Attend a meeting.

Workshops

EdibleScapes Gardens welcome visitors and volunteers. Summer gardening activities occur on Monday, Wednesday and Friday 4-6pm; and Saturday from 6.30 to 9am.

<https://www.ediblescapes.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/n.ediblescapes>

Gardening Lunch – all welcome

We meet monthly for lunch and have a chat. 11 am to 2 pm – at a trendy café somewhere (any recommendation welcomed)

If you would like to know when the next lunch is on email Lyn Mansfield

Lynmansfield14@bigpond.com

Mobile – 0409 645 888

Want to share your event with our members?

Email it to leahbryan9@gmail.com

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.

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

www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/

Thanks to this issue's contributors:

Jill Barber, Rebecca Bowen, Jorge Cantella-no Cathie Hodge, Leah Johnston, Diane Kelly, Stacey Panozzo and Maria Roberson.

President's Notes

By Maria Roberson

Hello Everyone,

You may or may not know that GCOG has a new home: meetings are now held in the Elanora Community Hall on Galleon Way, Elanora. Another big change is that meetings are now on the 4th Thursday and not the 3rd Thursday of the month; however, the start time is still 7.30pm. This will be for the foreseeable future as our old meeting place is too small: we are unable to meet our COVID safe requirements there. It is the end of an era as I feel we were very comfortable in that venue, but I look forward to the possibilities that our new space will provide.

It was lovely to receive so many positive emails from members expressing their eagerness to have our monthly meetings resume once again. Meeting nights have always been about making social connections with other like-minded people. In fact I'm not sure which is more vital to our group - the gardening information or the friends we make along the way. I propose that it is both and in equal proportion.

The promised rain and storms have just arrived, and not a minute too soon. There is still time, if you are quick, to put in some leafy green crops that will be ready for Christmas salads. I am choosing to believe that we are in for a bit of rain, and therefore I am going to fill my garden beds to the brim with everything worth planting in summer. I figure nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Speaking of Christmas, our November meeting will go ahead, and will, as always, be our end of year/Christmas break up. We have a speaker booked, our plant swap table is back, and our seed table continues to provide for your seed needs. We are unable to provide food to share, but it was suggested that we all bring our own food and drink to have on the night so that the evening still has its celebratory feel. I reckon we should end this year on a high note, by getting together with some of

the best people we know, and I am really looking forward to seeing you all there.

Happy growing,

Maria.

Speaker Recap

By Leah Johnston

Our members were thrilled to be able to get together for a meeting in September, after many months without them, and we came back bringing out the big guns, with Jerry Coleby-Williams as our guest speaker.

First, we started our meeting with a welcome and Q&A from our President, Maria. Bill told us about a project he's started at the EcoVillage: a community garden that is growing produce exclusively for the charity Oz Harvest, which provides meals for homeless people. If anyone would like to contribute plants or time, please contact Bill on 0411 428 465.

A few members have had issues with black scale: this is a sign that there are too many ants in your garden, and they've been moving the scale around the garden. In drier weather there's not so much grain and insects for ants to eat so they start farming their own food, which is scale. The ants suck the sugar from the scale and take it home to their nests. There are two strategies you can use to fight this: put horticultural glue around the base of a tree to stop them moving up it; or put horticultural white oil thoroughly on the tree that has been affected. Do it three times with three weeks between each application.

Jerry uses his grandad's recipe, which he shared: mix two cups of sunflower oil with half a cup of dishwashing detergent. Dilute one tablespoon of this in a litre of water and spray it onto the plants. Jerry said that modern oils are better to use when the weather is over 30 degrees, but as he is using 20 litres of spray mix in one application, it's far more economical to use his grandad's recipe.

“Organic gardening is about being creative and crafty.”

- Jerry Coleby-Williams

“My great grandad said there’s no point putting poisons on things you’re going to eat. And it costs money, too: you’re paying to poison yourself,” he said.

If mites are an issue, you can use a wet-able sulphur. Apply this in autumn so you kill the adults and the eggs they are laying in spring. Jerry applies it in April, May and October.

Jerry spoke about how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected his life and what he’s learnt from the experience.

When his Mother’s Day weekend Open Day was cancelled, he sold plants to his local community garden, organised a drive-by sale via his local Facebook group, and GCOG member, Stacey, took a trailer to his house and brought back plants which our members had bought. Disruptions to supply chains also affected Jerry in unexpected ways: as deliveries from China were stopped, he wasn’t able to get his usual delivery of jars for his annual marmalade production, which he sells to support a different charity each year. However, he says there was some good to come out of this experience...

“I didn’t expect it to happen, I didn’t plan for it to happen, but my grandparents taught me from their experience during the Dig for Victory campaign that with 100 square meters of good soil you can grow enough food for one person. On my 300 square meters I always have a surplus of food. We should all be aiming for a surplus, and we can then share that with others,” he said.

Jerry recommended growing jackfruit as they have many uses, not just to be enjoyed as a ripe fruit, but when young and green they taste like artichoke hearts, and if boiled they can keep in the fridge for a week. Cocoyams

keep growing all year round for a dependable starch. If you want to grow some nutritious food quickly, you can sprout greens in 10-14 days, using not much water. There’s food to forage in the streets where he lives: figs, tamarinds, macadamias and baobabs, thanks to guerrilla planting.

“My house was set up to be an exercise in sustainable, affordable living. Not lush living, but getting by. The great thing is, having that resource of a back garden to eat from. When you know you have food to eat, it helps you sleep at night. My problem is having too much food and needing sauces to make bland things taste better. It’s a very healthy way to eat. It’s a fundamentally good thing to do. Gardening is exercise when you can’t go to the gym: after a day in the garden I’ve used everything, and pretty much everything aches at the end of the day.

Jerry has seen a great increase in the number of people wanting to grow their own food due to the pandemic situation.

“I’ve been so busy: I normally do 10,000 questions through my website and Facebook each year. This year it’s doubled. The volume of gardeners that we now have is greater than any we have had, as long as I’ve been living in Australia. If we can help them across to our way of living, we can have a healthier society. Fast food just fills a feeling of hunger for a time, but it’s not nutritious. If we can help these new gardeners and give them a nudge in the right direction, then the world becomes a healthier and happier place,” he said.

Jerry told us about a controversial Facebook post he made about nasturtiums. He has found that they provide a habitat for cabbage

“We are really good at adapting; we need to hold that in our minds. We are organic gardeners. We solve problems.”

- Jerry Coleby-Williams

moths, aphids and leaf miners, so he now removes them from his garden. They can be dug into the ground and kept damp to kill the nematodes as they rot. A lot of people online got angry with him for no longer liking nasturtiums, but as he says, just because something is beautiful doesn't mean it's nice.

He finished by praising our meeting of likeminded gardeners, and said that getting together with other people is really important to build a community and a sense of belonging.

"Getting together like this is a core function of the human species," he said.

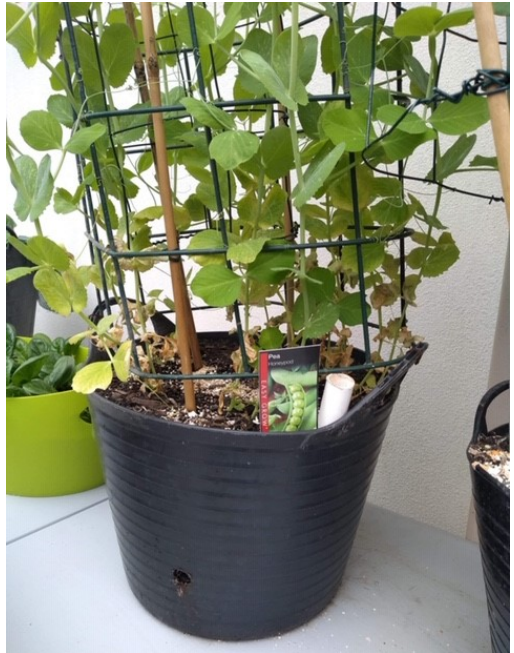
OCTOBER MEETING:

At our October meeting we enjoyed an extended Q&A with Maria and some members shared what has been going on in their gardens.

The topic of glyphosate was raised: our efforts to grow organically on our properties in suburbia can be thwarted by Council workers spraying roundup on our naturestrips. We learnt we can call the Council and register our properties on the non-herbicide register so they can't spray in front of our homes. If we all did this they wouldn't be able to spray anywhere. You can call the Gold Coast City Council on 1300 465 326.

Deb recently relocated a lemon tree and the very next day the leaves were all dead. Maria advised that the roots and the leaves have a direct correlation so if the roots are cut back then the leaves should be cut back to the same level, usually remove one third. Margaret and Ian said they cover the leaves with a lace table cloth for shade while it recovers from the relocation. Feed transplanted trees with weak Seasol, keep the water up to them and nurture them.

Margaret showed us a great new electronic pest deterrent she got from Diggers which makes a high-pitched sound that humans



A wicking bed style of garden can be made in any type of pot. These examples are from Gary and Sue's friend. They would be ideal for balcony gardeners or renters who may need to move their garden with them one day.



can't hear. It works on a space of up to 12 metres but if you have pet cats and dogs it could annoy them.

The topic of avocados not fruiting was asked and Maria taught us that some fruit trees need an A and B type or they can't cross pollinate and produce properly. As they take so long to fruit you don't want to wait for 10 years to find out if they will fruit so be sure to check you have an A and B type and plant them both at the same time. Margaret said native bees are especially good at pollinating avocados. Ian said to grow the two different types of avocado tree grow close together to help the bees cross pollinate. Margaret said some authorities say the lower branches have a more humid micro climate which aids pollination, so don't prune those off.

Gary and Sue have had great success with their wicking bed they built themselves and are now converts of this style of edible gardening. They made a traditional style one in a raised garden bed but their friend has had success making smaller ones in pots (see the pics on the previous page). Margaret said it's so successful as the plants get consistent moisture so they don't bolt to



seed.

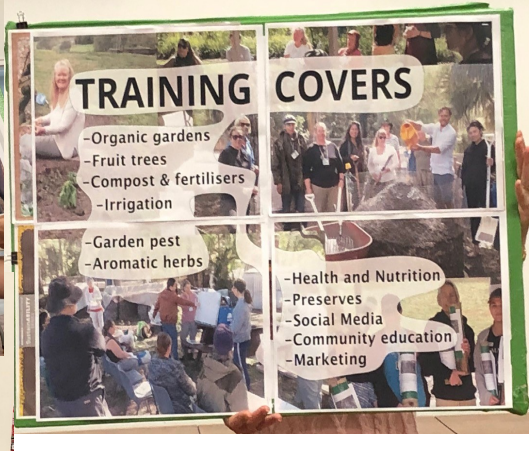
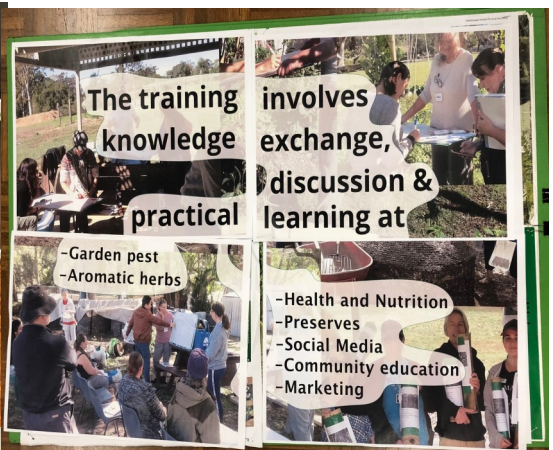
Pete asked about how to deter possums from eating his fruit trees: they are even eating his monstera. Margaret said they are creatures of habit so try to change their route: feed them your veggie scraps in the far corner of the yard away from your fruit trees and veggies.

Stacey asked about mango flowers: should she protect them from getting wet to aid pollination? Maria said you realistically can't; a mango farmer with 1,000 acres of trees can't possibly keep all the flowers dry. But if you only have on or two trees at home and you have the time and ability to cover the flowers during a storm it won't hurt.

Jorge spoke about the latest happenings at EdibleScapes with his garden promoter program and gave members interactive puzzles to solve which describe the program (see the photos for more information).

Ian told us about the new raised garden beds he made for Margaret out of cut down water tanks and filled in a lasagne gardening style using debris from the firebreak he made at their place. We were all in awe of his strong work ethic and would all like an Ian to at our homes!





Gardening in Summer

By Diane Kelly

Hopefully Spring has been an abundant and enjoyable season in your garden. If your petunias, zinnias and roses have bloomed well, and your lettuces, capsicums and eggplants have been productive – congratulations!

Now we come to the months of summer, and they are a time of challenge, but also of pleasure. As Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Russell Baker wrote “Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.”

We know the mild months of Spring come early to the Coast, and by logic the hot, humid days of summer soon follow. So let’s have a think about what has been happening in our gardens; how the weather is warming up quite quickly – and how we have had very little rainfall. How do we garden in the next three months?

MONTH ONE:

Summer this year may well start bringing hot weather before December, but the principle that Jackie French mentions in her book *The Wilderness Garden* still applies – we will now be reaping what we sowed in spring, and as the holidays approach, it’s a time for doing as little as possible – except for harvesting your produce. You should now be enjoying home-grown potatoes, tomatoes, garden and snow peas, lettuce, celery, chokos and zucchinis that you have planted earlier in the mild weather. But if you want to continue working in your garden in the cooler, early mornings, what can you plant?

Vegetables – and a fruit to feature:

Continuing on from spring you can still grow capsicums, casava, Egyptian, amaranth and Ceylon spinach, okra, chilli, cucumbers, eggplants, sweet corn, taro, radishes, and of course the ongoing lettuce, tomatoes, and sweet potatoes. None of the main vegetables commence being planted in the traditional summer months of December, January or February

To bring some sweetness to your table: rockmelon and watermelon can be planted now – and a wonderfully refreshing dessert can be made by dicing up some of each of the fruit and topping the bowl full of flavour with a dollop of cream and ice cream.

Rockmelon seedlings should be planted into a mound that has been well-prepared with a mixture of animal manure, seaweed and lucerne mulch – or you can add sulphate of potash to the soil. Plant the seedlings in a warm, sunny position – the mounding will provide the perfect drainage that these plants require. Rockmelon plants have shallow and wide-spreading root systems, so be careful not to cultivate around them once they are growing. Keep the plants well-watered, especially when they initially start growing and when their fruit starts to form. Pinch out the growing tips as this will encourage the grow of laterals, which is where the fruit is borne.

Leave the fruit on the vine until they fully ripen and come away freely from the vine – early harvesting of fruit will not encourage more fruit to form. You can wrap the fruit in newspaper to protect them from sunburn, fruit-fly and other pests. Also, remember to choose disease-resistant varieties, as rockmelon plants are susceptible to mildew. “Hale’s Best” and “Planter’s Jumbo” are two hardy and disease-resistant types. Foliar applications of seaweed products will build up disease resistance.

And, if you are short of space in your garden, remember that the vines can be trained to grow vertically – just ensure that the fruit are supported by recycled onion bags or cloth slings.



Flowers:

The first month of the warmest season is referred to as the “month of the marigold”. If you’ve early-sowed them, they will be flowering now, but there is still time to plant seedlings out. Marigolds will stop a host of diseases and pests in potatoes, tomatoes and roses – and as a border plant they are reported to be an effective deterrent to the lifted leg of a canine!

Other flower you can plant out now include chrysanthemums, lobelia, nasturtiums and petunias. If you are growing fuchsias – which have such elegant and colourful flowers – remember to never let them dry out and provide them with some potash at flowering time to make the blooms even brighter. Also remember to snip off the spent heads of your roses, annuals and perennial plants as they finish.

A few other hints for this month:

- Check your poinciana trees for borer
- Secure vulnerable plants against strong winds
- Feed your hibiscus plants and take tip cuttings
- If we do get heavy rain, mulch the soil to protect it from erosion
- Check your roses for black spot and powdery mildew if there is high humidity
- Plant gingers and spathiphyllum (more commonly known as peace lilies) in shady places
- Take cuttings from your bougainvillea and plant them up in pots.

Fruit:

Keep all fruit well-watered during any dry spells to ensure a quality crop throughout the summer. Mulch to retain moisture (and to reduce the need to apply water) and to keep down the weeds. Remember that many weeds act as hosts to pests and diseases.

If you are buying new fruit trees be careful to check that they are suited to the microclimate of your garden – and remember to confirm that there is adequate space for trees that

grow large. And why not try something different – lychee, feijoa, dwarf mangoes, rambutan or mangosteens.



Mangosteens – why not try one?

MONTH TWO:**Vegetables:**

Here’s the chance to continue planting your favorite vegetables from Month One’s list – the only one to stop now is okra. Month Two is the last opportunity to plant Ceylon spinach (wonderful in stir fries and salads), rockmelons and watermelons.

Taro, with its origins in Africa and the Middle East, can be enjoyed in savory recipes – fritters, chips or pancakes – or sweet – cheesecake, mooncakes, cakes and ice cream. Taro tubers range in color from white to yellow and from pink to purple - which makes for interesting cake and ice cream desserts.

With their striking heart-shaped leaves, taro can make an effective decorative display in your flower garden. The plants can be grown in a water garden or a semi-shaded growing position and can tolerate full sun as long as they are grown in fertile, nutrient-rich soil (with a pH of between 5.5 and 6.5) that is constantly moist to wet. Taro plants do not flower and therefore are propagated via corms and offshoots – this method of propagating ensures that they stay true to type.

To grow your taro plants, obtain a suitable tuber from a farmers’ market, supermarket or greengrocer. Annette McFarlane has a word of warning – “Never be tempted to harvest taro from the wild. Taro-like plants growing along creeks and waterways are usually toxic ornamental varieties rather than the

edible food varieties.” Select a corm with the neck intact and look for the presence of immature buds close to the stem end. Plant the whole corm into the soil or a container by burying it upright until it is just a few centimetres below the soil surface. The new growth will shoot from the buds at the top of the corm. Keep your new plant damp but not wet until it begins to shoot and its growth is at least 10cm high – don’t overwater, otherwise the corm will rot in its early stages of growth. You can also grow your taro plants by slicing off the top few centimetres of the corm to plant out, while saving the rest of the tuber for eating. Space your plants at 60cm intervals.

Once the taro foliage dies back you will know the corms are ready to harvest (often around 5 months in our region), so dig carefully around the base of the plant to remove them. (If we have a dry winter, you can leave the corms in the ground and harvest as required.)

As with potatoes, taro should always be thoroughly cooked before eating as this destroys any calcium oxalate crystals present – their presence means you need to peel a thick layer of skin off the corm before preparing to use it. In addition to the other uses mentioned above, roasted taro is delicious, but you can also mash the corm to use as pumpkin or potato. The leaves can be used to wrap food in prior to cooking, and the peeled stems can also be chopped, boiled or steamed and eaten as a vegetable.



Flowers:

A good hint about growing flowering plants during the hotter months: “Grey is cool for summer”. If you are looking for a way to fill a sun-drenched area, consider silver or grey-

leaved plants because they should thrive. In fact, if they are not grown in full sun, they will become straggly and lose their colour.

So look around for plants such as “cineraria silver dust”, “eremophila nivea” (or “emu bush” that has a dainty mauve flower), santolina or “senecio vira vira” – the bees love the soft lemon flowers. More common grey plants are “lamb’s ears”, carnations and lavender – but the other ones are worth googling to see the variety available.

Nearly all plants will keep flowering and fruiting without pruning, as long as they are growing strongly. If you are going to prune, this is a good month to prune native shrubs, fuchsias and roses – but lightly, just the tips.

MONTH THREE:

Vegetables:

Once again, not a lot changes from what we can grow in Months One and Two and Month Three. Ceylon spinach stops, and this month is the last for planting chokos, sweet corn, water spinach and zucchinis.

If you’ve been lucky enough to have a glut of tomatoes this year you can dry them and enjoy during the weeks ahead. Much of our year is too humid for sun-drying them, so instead cut the fruit in half (cherry and egg tomatoes are particularly suited); sprinkle with rock salt and basil and/or oregano and bake in a slow oven for half an hour or so. Place in warm sterilised jars and fill with good olive oil. Simple!

Young vegetable seedlings often have a hard time in the late summer sun, but there is an easy solution. Push some light sticks along the sides and ends of the garden bed (and some in the middle if it is a large plot). Tie some wire netting across the top and add scraps of shade cloth. Alternatively you can substitute the shade cloth with pea or bean trash or banana leaves. As the covering vegetable matter breaks down, more light is gradually admitted, often at just the right rate for most seedlings.

As the warm weather continues, watch out for

mildew on the plants in your vegetable garden. Remove the infected leaves and compost or burn them. Make sure the soil is well-mulched to stop contact between the plants and the soil. If the infestation is light, you can use a chamomile tea spray or milk, and remember to spray under the leaves as well and on top of the mulch where spores may linger.

In our region we can grow capsicums all year round. Remember that they are heavy feeders, so enrich your garden soil before planting out. Adequate levels of calcium must be maintained to avoid blossom end rot, and take care not to plant capsicums in beds that have previously grown related plants such as potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants or chillis – otherwise you may struggle with a build-up of root knot nematodes. Another problem that capsicum face can be fruitfly. The easiest control method for them is individual bagging. And if you notice that your plants are failing to set fruit in the hot weather, just wait for more optimum temperatures and fruit formation will resume.



Flowers:

Roses can be given a light prune and shape this month, and they will also appreciate a dose of fertilizer and some fresh mulch.

Flowers to plant and enjoy: ageratum, lobelia, pansies, primulas, salvia, verbena and alyssum. And if you are looking for a plant that thrives in any hot, dry spot and also does well in coastal areas, why not try *Tomneya coulteri*, more easily known as Californian tree poppy. This is a heraceous

perennial that has large, single, pure white blooms with rich yellow centres – and as you can see the bees enjoy them! The flowers can grow up to 15cm in diameter. To perform well, these plants need a bit of room to spread their roots – about 3 metres is ideal. Plus they need full sunshine, otherwise they will grow straggly and sparse. But they will grow to 1-1.5 metres high, and will flower right through summer and autumn.



Fruit:

Strawberries can be planted in Month Three, and on for the next three months. These wonderful fruit can be harvested within 6-10 weeks of planting and are moderately easy to grow.

Strawberries are usually planted from young, bare-rooted plantlets called runners, and can be grown in your garden; in pots; or in hanging baskets. You can plant new runners produced each year by parents plants, or you can continue to maintain the parent plants for up to three years. One reason strawberry runners may die is because they have been planted too deeply – just plant the roots of the runner in the soil, ensuring that the point where the leaf stalks start to emerge from the crown sits on ground level. (If you bury the base of the stems, you will also bury the crown and the growing point of the strawberry plant, thereby predisposing it to crown rot.)

Plant your individual strawberry runners at least 30cm apart, with a similar distance between rows. This gives them plenty of

room to grow, and also ensures adequate air circulation. Strawberries will enjoy nutrient rich soil to be planted into, and being fed during their growing season with compost, decomposed animal manure or liquid fertilizers – this can be done every six weeks or so. Don't let the plants suffer from moisture stress; keep the fruit from having contact with the soil; and remember not to water them from overhead.



Summary:

These three months may be a challenge, but hopefully they will be rewarding as well. Plan for some relaxing time to think about your gardening goals for the cooler months ahead, but make the most of the warm weather. As Henry James wrote:

“Summer afternoon – summer / afternoon. To me those have always been the most beautiful words in the English language.”



Look What We Grew!

By Leah Johnston

Check out the photo of Jill's thriving garden (bottom left).

The Lagos spinach she bought from Jerry Coleby-Williams at our last meeting (below) adds some colour to her salads.

And the lemon sorrel from a friend is delightful (bottom pic).

She also said she hasn't grown fennel before, and is delighted with it.





Stacey hosted a workshop with Kane from Red Soil Organics at her place in Tallebudgera. Together the participants learnt about and created swales and water catchments on the hillside. Keep us updated on how it's growing Stacey!



Jill and her savoy cabbage she grew!



Rebecca planted her potatoes late in the season and was disappointed with the small crop, but they do look delicious!

Growth in Wet and Hot Summers

By Jorge Cantellano

The Ediblescapes's volunteer training program, "Edible Garden Promoters", started new participant intakes in the first week of November, just at the beginning of our early wet summer, which is an unusual season for gardening on the Gold Coast.

Ediblescapes is taking the challenge with the support of a Council grant. In spite of the weather conditions, Ediblescapes aims to fulfil its promise to supplement with healthy fresh food the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre's foodbank in response to the food insecurity impact in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, and recurrent climate change natural disasters.

All these disruptions to the food system threaten widespread future food insecurity to our modern cities, which depend on imported food. Ediblescapes is exploring community initiatives aiming for full capacity for an urban food security cushion, promoting edible gardens as families respond in the neighbourhoods. Yet despite the heat and humidity of the Gold Coast's wet summers, in time of need, we should be able to grow the needed food.

Our long summers, which have the tropical characteristics of warm to very hot nights and days, with high humidity, promoting heavy rainfall, already started in the last week of October this year, and will be prolonged possibly to late March.

This confirms the observation of our Gold Coast Organic Grower's knowledgeable president, Maria Roberson, who said that the seasonal weather pattern has occurred about a month earlier than in previous years. To illustrate this, the picture on the right shows that the warm wet weather came three weeks earlier this year (2020) than the tropical summer characteristic of the South East Queensland three season pattern.



Source: (FEBRUARY 3, 2017 BY RONNI MARTIN ON [HTTPS://WWW.NSCF.ORG.AU/SEASONAL-VEGETABLE-GROWING-IN-THE-HUMID-SUBTROPICS/](https://www.nscf.org.au/seasonal-vegetable-growing-in-the-humid-subtropics/))

This year the 'Wet' arrived in late October, whereas in an average year, it starts in December and continues through January. Thanks to the influence of the La Niña phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, this year, heavy rainstorms are anticipated, to approximately the level of those in 2011, which provoked a flood catastrophe in South East Queensland.

Gardening in high humidity, cloudy skies and diffused light, presents a set of issues for growing plants. The gardener should prepare their raised garden beds with sufficient organic matter to enable good drainage; plant foliage distance should allow air movement; and a supplement of adequate nutrient will be required. In these conditions, as temperatures rise, we want to grow tropical vegetables, plants from Africa, Central and South America, South East Asia, India and the South Pacific.

Arno King, a Brisbane-based horticulturalist and garden writer, said, "This summer rainfall combined with the high summer temperatures, means that there is a need to be judicious when selecting cultivars of lettuce, tomatoes, beans as some of these thrive, and others cannot grow in the summer as they rot in the ground or bolt during periods of heavy

summer rainfall.”

Arno suggested, “Climbing varieties are also a much better option for high production in small spaces (vertical growth) and less subject to disease during wet weather. Whenever you have a choice, (for example green beans, zucchini) plant the climbing rather than dwarf cultivars. Climbing vegetables include beans (lablab, winged, snake and ‘Purple King’ beans), squashes and gourds (zucchini, choko, cucumber, luffa, snake gourd, New Guinea gourd), and Malabar spinach.

“Other reliable vegetables include amaranth (Chinese spinach), Ethiopian cabbage, corn, ‘Australian Gold’, ‘Oakleaf’ and Asian lettuce, cherry tomato, kailan, rosella and pumpkin. Many of these plants will need to be planted by mid spring.”

See Tim Sansom in conversation with Arno King at <https://www.diggers.com.au/garden-advice/articles-and-more/articles/how-to-garden/mlx16-subtropical-growing-zone/>

As shown in the picture below, EdibleScapes is preparing the garden beds for the wet weather by planting vertically growing plants, and reducing mulch around the roots to allow evaporation. We are also deepening the water trenches, filling them up with fresh mulch to allow water infiltration yet sufficient drainage with as little soil erosion as possible. For this wet and hot long summer, we are planting sun loving,



Three sisters companion plants at EdibleScapes Garden: corn, beans and pumpkins.

slow to fruit plants on the north and west sides of the garden bed, and the shade loving, short and rapid growth vegetables on the south and east side of the garden bed, where they will receive good ventilation and be protected from the harsh mid-day and afternoon sun.

We are confident that our biointensive, double depth soil of about 60cm, will receive, infiltrate and release excess water out through the sides of the mulch-filled trenches, allowing for the successful growth of these crops to be harvested and donated for the community in food insecurity situations. Ediblescapes’ volunteers are satisfied that by opening our demonstration and experiential learning garden to the Gold Coast community, it will motivate and show what it is possible to grow with a zero budget and without purchasing long distance or imported materials.

Fermenting Fun By Cathie Hodge

The COVID lockdown-on-life back in March and April this year meant more time for my favourite activities – gardening and bush regen.

My nutgrass gardens were ever-so patiently restored to food-producing gardens. Phew!

Nutgrass was replaced with cabbages, cauliflowers, beetroot and turnips galore.

So, what do you do with this abundance? Convert it into sauerkraut and other ferments of course. Yum! (Much tastier than nutgrass).



**Butterfly Profile:
Splendid Ochre**
By Leah Johnston



The different hues of the Splendid Ochre butterflies, and (left) their host plant: the lomandra longifolia.

Photos from www.brisbaneinsects.com

The Splendid Ochre Butterfly, also known as Symmomus Skipper and Symmomus Rush-skipper, is a small butterfly in tones of orange and brown.

This little beauty is an easy one to support by growing its host plants in the garden: the drought-tolerant lomandra longifolia. I've chosen this species of native butterfly to feature in our Summer edition as the plants are easy to grow even though it's hot out there. These plants can be in pots, garden beds, around the pool, around the house. You can buy these host plants at Bunnings or from Michelle's Native Plants (see her at the markets at Stockland or message her via her Facebook page).

FRUIT TREES

NOVEMBER

Custard Apple: Increase irrigation. Mulch trees. Apply fertiliser with Sulphate of Potash – 1kg-mature trees, 1/2kg-small trees.

Figs: Pruning should be done. Figs only produce on new wood or new season's growth. Keep well mulched and watered.

Lychee: Peak water needs.

Low chill stone fruit: Use fruit fly control programs. When fruiting is finished and harvested, prune trees.

Mango: Peak water needs.

Passion-fruit: Prune. All dead parts to go. Keep up the water.

Paw-paw: Increase irrigation. Apply 20 gms per sq m of organic fertiliser.

Strawberries: Keep well watered to encourage runners for next year.

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

Citrus: Keep up the water. Spray with pest oil for leaf miner. Paint trunks with a white waterbased paint.

DECEMBER/JANUARY

Custard apples: Hand-pollination of Pink Mammoth and Hillary White.

Figs: Keep water up and mulch well.

Low chill stone fruit: Prune trees. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees.

Lychee: Peak water needs. Cover trees with

net for protection from fruit piercing moth, birds and bats. Fertilise with an organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees. Harvest only when fruit on the pendant stalk are sweet and full colour.

Mango: Net trees or bag fruit to protect from birds and beasts.

Passion-fruit: Apply 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up the water.

Paw-paw: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees. Apply a copper based spray or leaf microbes for black spot control.

Persimmon: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 ½ kg for mature trees.

Strawberries: Keep well watered to form new runners for next year. December is the time to mark old strawberry plants. Watch for their new runners to develop. This makes it easier to define plants when you are ready for new planting.

Bananas: Keep them well watered.

Citrus: Water tree well. Keep up pest oil spray for citrus leaf miner.

VEGETABLES

NOVEMBER

Artichoke, Asian Greens, Beans (French & Snake), Capsicum, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kale, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrows, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rosella, Shallots, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet corn, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

DECEMBER

Asian Greens, Beans (French), Capsicum, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuces, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish,

Rhubarb, Rosella, Shallots, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Corn, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

JANUARY

Asian Greens, Capsicum, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuces, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Snake Beans, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Corn, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

NOVEMBER

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

Perennials & Bi-Annals: Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury, Winter Tarragon.

HERBS

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

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

Perennials & Bi-Annals: Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury, Winter Tarragon.

JANUARY

Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Borage, Calendula,

Dill, Herb Robert, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Nasturtium, Italian Parsley, Rocket, Salad Mallow.

Perennials & Bi-Annals – Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

The Essential SUMMER GARDEN CHECKLIST

Grow
what you love

Laugh
at aphids

Eat
the best berries

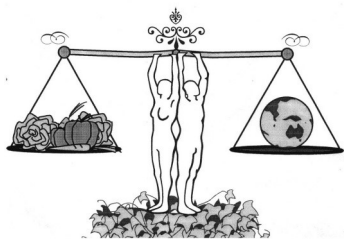
Listen
to the birds

Play
in the dirt

Nap
in the shade

Watch
the night stars

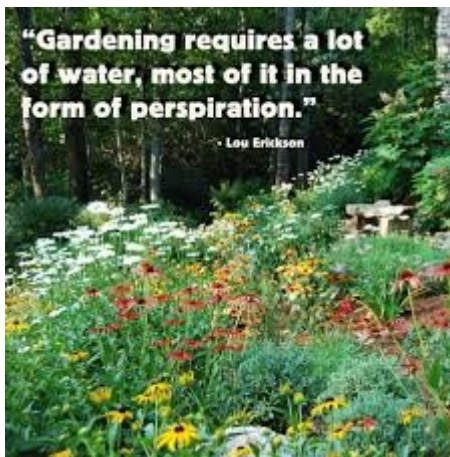
*GOLD COAST ORGANIC
GROWERS Inc.*



NEWSLETTER

"Gardening requires a lot of water, most of it in the form of perspiration."

- Lou Erickson



There is nothing I like better at the end of a hot summer's day than taking a short walk around the garden. You can smell the heat coming up from the earth to meet the cooler night air.

Peter Mayle **QUOTESTATS.COM**

Meetings held:

4th Thursday of the Month
Doors open at 7pm, meetings start at 7.30pm and run until approximately 9.30pm

Elanora Community Centre:

26 Galleon Way,
Elanora, Gold Coast

Next meeting:

Thursday November 26, 2020

"I could never in a hundred summers get tired of this."

-SUSAN BRANCH

