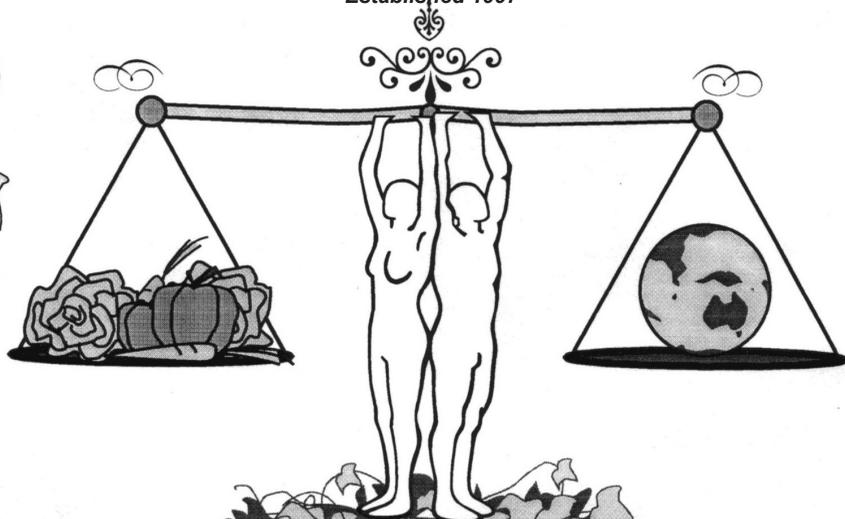


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 25, 2021 Issue 2
GARDENING IN WINTER

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OUR NEXT MEETING: MAY 27, 2021

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.

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:

1/4 page: \$15 an issue
1/2 page: \$25 an issue,
full page: \$40 an issue

W: www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcorganic

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Supper Co-ordinator	Deb Phillips Dianne Casey



A bee visiting Diane's orchid

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.

Overdue: Jane McLennan (446), Wendy Davies (463), Mark & Anita Fowler (464), Barry O'Rourke (185), Megan Huihui Lan (474), Shem Pireh (466), Stacey Hearne (467), Gertroud Webb (468), Kym O'Connell (470)

June: Karen Hart (198)

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 May 27 - Nimai Hedemark 'Plant selection in our changing climate'

Thursday June 24 - Deirdre Parkinson 'Garlic's uses for health'

Workshops

EdibleScapes Gardens welcomes visitors and volunteers. Gardening activities occur on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 9am to mid-morning. <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 contact Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888

View our Newsletters On-Line at:

www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/

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.

Thanks to this issue's contributors:

Jill Barber, Jorge Cantellano Leah Johnston, Diane Kelly and Maria Roberson.

The Joy of Sharing

Pictured left are Diane's new flower gardens, planted up with cosmos and marigolds from Penny; salvia from Margaret; coleus from Bill; and sambung from Deb. What great sharers our members are!

President's Notes

By Maria Roberson

Hello Everyone,

Planning what to plant for winter in the vegetable patch is always an enjoyable task when you live in the sub-tropics, as our climate is so different to the southern states. We are able to keep planting such a wide variety of herbs and vegetables by comparison, and there are only a few exceptions that require a good hot season to thrive. As has been discussed on previous meeting nights, corn, tomatoes and beans will do very well when planted through the cooler months in our local region, and so will cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. As a matter of fact, if you plant the last three of the above mentioned veggies any other time of the year, it is unlikely that you will have anything left to harvest after the caterpillars have munched their way through your crop. So many leafy greens thrive this time of year, and if you choose vegetables that have a red or purple leaf, the colour will intensify as the temperature drops, adding extra oomph to the salad bowl or stir fry.

Citrus is now colouring up and looking gorgeous hanging from green leafy trees. I could never get over that citrus trees cost the same amount or were cheaper than most ornamental trees at the plant nursery, so, of course, I bought citrus rather than flowering trees to plant, a move I have never regretted. We may have a few more oranges and mandarines than we need, but we do have a year's supply of marmalade each season, and can always find a lime for a Gin and Tonic.

I hope everyone is getting used to the

earlier start and finish time at our monthly meetings, which now start at 7pm, with doors opening at 6.30pm. We have had so many changes occur over the last year and a bit, I think that we are now taking everything in our stride and becoming, as they say, "very adaptable and resilient", two attributes that are common in gardeners, for sure.

Even though we are unable to have our regular supper table on meeting nights, which is sorely missed by members, we still have our swap table, for sale table and raffle table in full swing. I would like to thank everyone who contributes to these as they are an integral part of our monthly meetings. The raffle table is the source of much fun and anticipation, and, dare I say, a bit of good-hearted rivalry for prizes. Everyone loves to purchase the products on the for sale table as they are locally grown or produced. I love the swap table for so many reasons: it encourages generosity in not only the sharing of items, but also the sharing of knowledge. I often hear people explaining how to grow, cook, eat or use what they have brought in that night to a new gardener or an excited long timer that can't wait to get it home and get it in the ground, or to try out a new recipe with a surprising ingredient.

All in all, now is a wonderful time for planting and gardening, and you know those seeds won't grow if they are sitting in the cupboard, so get out there!

Happy growing,
Maria

"No winter wind will chill my gardening heart."

- Blake Schreck

Meeting Recaps

By Leah Johnston

FEBRUARY

At our February meeting we held our AGM and voted in the committee members. Thank you to the members who held committee positions last year and to those who are continuing their roles or taking on new roles this year. Our club couldn't function without our wonderful volunteers.

After the AGM part of the meeting, we enjoyed an extended Q&A with Maria.

With prices of seeds rising, Maria explained that we can all help to keep the costs of our club seed packets at the current \$2 price for as long as possible by saving whatever seeds we can in our gardens and donating them back to the club.

Maria advised that:

- It's hard to save Asian greens and pumpkin seeds because of cross pollination, which results in "mongrel seeds".
- It's hard to save carrot seeds because they need two years in the ground to produce true seeds and we get too hot over summer.
- If you're storing seeds at home, don't use plastic as they can sweat if they aren't perfectly dry. Store them in paper envelopes or dark glass bottles, such as empty vitamin bottles.
- If you have surplus seeds you would like to donate to the club, please supply them in a paper envelope and label it with your name, the variety and the date they were collected.

For more information on how to correctly save seeds, Maria recommended *The Seed Savers Handbook*, by Michel and

Jude Fanton.

Q. Jill asked if she should compost the silverbeet leaves that have fungal black spot on them?

A. Maria said you can if you can get your compost hot enough to knock out the fungus (60-65 degrees celcius); however, most gardeners can't get their composts hot enough, so it's safest not to compost those leaves.

Q. Melanie's taro leaves are growing yellowish/brownish spots.

A. Google said it was a common blight that there's no way to get rid of, so remove it before it spreads to other plants. - Margaret suggested the plants need more air flow around them as it sounds too humid.

- Maria said it's unlikely to affect their roots and to be sure we are only following advice that's local to our area when we Google gardening information.

Q. Henry has been soaking kitchen scraps in a drum of water to make a fertiliser and was uncertain at what strength to apply it to the garden.

A. Maria and Jorge recommended diluting it until it looks like weak tea, this could be one part fertiliser to 100 parts water.

Q. Rolf told us about his experience adding mushroom compost to the top of his wicking beds. After one good season, everything died, so he added lime to try and help the situation.

A. Maria said mushroom compost has a high PH, and must be mixed with other soil, and to do a PH test before adding things like lime.

- Shelley said she lets her mushroom compost age for a while before using it, to help bring the PH down.

- John said he always travels with a shovel and some bags or containers to

collect river sand, clay and silt. He finds these treasures washed down into the gutters, and uses it to make wonderful soil. Members asked about the potential pollution from oil in the gutters. John replied: "It's a compromised world... go to where you look up to the sky and it's clear. Natural bacteria will help to eliminate the toxins".

MARCH

At our March meeting Mel told us about her vision for a community garden in Coolangatta, and Lyn told us about her group which visits community gardens throughout the Gold Coast. The list of community gardens is shared on page 17 and you can join the Facebook group Community Gardens Australia Gold Coast for more details.

Our speakers for the night were GCOG members John Palmer and Huihui Kairos Lan who told us about the regenerative farming project they are part of at Jandarra in Tallebudgera Valley. "Jandarra" is an Indigenous word meaning "a place of peace".

Huihui explained how good working with the land is for our mental health: connecting to the land, using all our senses, and connecting ourselves with the talents and interests of others.

"We are beginning to realise what our ancestors have done, ripping timber out and making money, and now there's nothing left. People are changing that, and that's why regenerative farming is gaining so much momentum," John said.

John doesn't want to spend thousands of dollars on machines to move rocks around - he wants to use his organic

moves. He discussed the eight primal movement patterns to us: to squat like a frog, go backwards and forwards like a dolphin, and align with the movement patterns of digging and pulling. Instead of doing yoga, he gets his exercise and movements in while gardening.

In his wonderfully entertaining fashion, John demonstrated how to use the tradi-





tional tools he collects and repairs, and, with Huihui, they sang us some prepared and some ad-libbed songs.

“We don’t often think of how efficient it is to our body - an hour of whippersnippjng might be efficient for cutting the grass but it’s not great for your body. When traditional gardening tools are sharpened up to a fine acute angle, and you get your body into the movement, it’s so satisfying. It’s better than golf, it’s better than any sport you can do,” John said.

Sam (who is growing a market garden and native plant nursery at Jandarra) talked about the 30 cows they run rotationally on the property, fertilising the soil as they move along.

Huihui explained how regenerative fundamentals can become part of our daily lives when we view life as a loop and understand that there’s no such thing as a rubbish bin, when we throw something



away we don’t think about it again but it all goes somewhere.

Community planting days are held at Jandarra, where people can come not as a tourists, but actually contribute to the land: pull some weeds, plant new trees, and connect. See the Jandarra Facebook page for further information.

Thanks Roger and Pauline

By Diane Kelly

During her presentation at our Club meeting on the 22nd of April, Pauline Behrendorff talked about “Life in the EcoVillage”, and at the conclusion she invited anyone interested to visit her husband Roger’s and her house and garden in the Village. The plan also included a visit to the Community Garden which just up the street from the Behrendorff’s house and which is growing fresh produce to contribute to Oz Harvest.

So a group of us visited the EcoVillage yesterday and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. Roger talked about the



**Above: Pauline’s herb patch—located just outside the kitchen door
Left: A colourful use of rubber boots**

construction of the house and the challenges and benefits that it has provided, and then Pauline took us on a tour of their garden. After that, we walked up to the Community Garden.

***Some pictorial highlights:
The added pergola area (perfect for
social events and wet weather);
a cool spot to relax in summer;
Bill and the group discussing soil.***



One of the beautiful poems Pauline shared at our April meeting:

UNDER THE UMBRELLA

From under my umbrella,
I survey the scene ahead;
The sky rolls out a carpet
of cloud as grey as lead.
Mist hangs a veil of moisture,
I cannot see the hills,
My feet are stuck in gumboots;
Rain dances by in rills.
The palette of the artist
paints green in tones of grey,
The trees bow sad and heavy,
It's another rainy day.
My pawpaw's leaves turn yellow,
Mould cripples every leaf,
Green fruits drop; one by one,
Drenched soil gives roots their grief.
The fragrance of decaying mulch
is warm and ripe with rot,
My clothes are damp inside and out,
My nose runs quite a lot.
Our swales brim with water
as it flows along its course,
The rain pelts down relentlessly;
Will someone stop its source?
The creek is in a hurry,
Logs hurtle past downstream,
The torrent of this moving mass
is thunder in my dream.
With trunks submerged in water,
Casuarinas hold the bank
like soldiers standing on alert,
Earthcarers I do thank.
The kangaroos are grazing,
In rain-drenched coats they munch,
They blend with their surroundings
and nibble on till lunch.
From under my umbrella,
the sodden earth is leached,
But frogs are singing their sweet song,
as joy on earth is preached.

©Pauline Maxwell

Getting to Know.. Gary & Sue Webb

By Diane Kelly

At the very top of Trees Road in Tallebudgera is a property of some 28 acres that has rich, volcanic soil; its own microclimate by virtue of being 400m above sea level; waterfalls and rainforests; no traffic or neighbour noise; a 60m bore that produces pure water; and which is home to Gary and Sue Webb.

The Webbs moved to the location in 2013. They now have some of their family living in the original house, and Gary and Sue have moved into a smaller building that Gary has nearly finished renovating to make a compact and efficient new home for them. Their vegetable gardens, flower beds, chook pen, orchard, water supply and solar-powered electricity are all well established and they are on their way to achieving their goal of self-sufficiency.

But their journey to Tallebudgera has been just as interesting as their current lifestyle. Gary and Sue both grew up in Christchurch which is on the coast of the South Island of New Zealand. As with many of our Club members, Sue's parents were gardeners – “my father always had a garden and grew veggies that included asparagus, parsnips and carrots.” Tomatoes were grown in a glass house; apples and pears were trained along the fence; in the backyard were plum trees, a “massive” apricot tree, Chinese gooseberries (we would know them better as kiwi fruit), and blackcurrant bushes. Walnuts were collected from where the branches of a tree hung over the back fence. Sue commented that the family was actually quite self-reliant – and then if neighbours or friends had an abundance of a particular crop, then they swapped it. Supermarkets only started to

be around when Sue was about 12, so it was certainly a different world.

And two of Sue's favourite memories were (a) “picking the peas, as I love them raw”, and (2) collecting the broad beans for the family's traditional Christmas dinner. Also, not only did the family have a large garden, Sue had her very own! This was actually part of the primary school curriculum – the children would grow vegetables at home, and the teacher would come to their place and give them a grade for their garden – as I said, it was certainly a different world!

Meanwhile Gary's first gardening experience was in high school. Horticulture was one of the subjects taught, and the students tended the school vegetable garden. At the age of 16, Gary started a five-year carpentry apprenticeship, and he soon found that he had a passion for landscaping. He says “back then there were not sub-trades like today; it was all part of your training”. A couple of years later, when Gary was 18 or 19, he bought his first house which was right across the road from a surf beach. There he learnt that he had a very usable resource – seaweed! Combining seaweed with the sand and with the addition of straw, he was able to grow rhubarb and grapes. Plus he had a couple of 80-year old neighbours who enjoyed giving him advice over the fence when he was out in



the backyard after work. Gary and Sue's first mutual garden was of the no-dig variety, which they said worked well.

In 1978 the Webbs moved from chilly Christchurch to chilly Canberra, where Sue got a job as a dental therapist – the climates of both cities are similar, with four very definite seasons. During the time that Gary and Sue lived in Canberra, gardening was not on the agenda.

And then Gary and Sue moved to Papua New Guinea, where they and their family lived for seven years. This conjured up visions of the Webbs growing cassava, taro, carambolas – or even pomelos, langsat or longans! But the reality was a bit simpler. They did grow a few fruit, but Gary's job meant that they moved around the country quite a lot (he was in charge of various public work projects, such as building and maintaining schools, hospitals and housing) and so establishing a garden was not feasible. Besides, Sue mentioned that “the locals are excellent at gardening and fishing and so we bought everything at the local produce markets. For example, in New Ireland Province, the New Zealand government funded an aid project and built a road which enabled the locals to transport their vegetables to market, so fresh lettuce, capsicums, cabbages, tomatoes and much more were available.”

After returning to Christchurch for three and a half years (and finding it too cold) Gary and Sue moved to Australia, and Brisbane in particular. Then they purchased their property on the Gold Coast.

Here are a few more facts about the block:

- Its south-western boundary is the highest part of Tallebudgera mountain.



- Gary and Sue have about five acres of usable land – then there is a drop-off of some 20-30 metres into inaccessible and heavy rainforest.
- Syndicate Creek starts near their western boundary and runs into and down the length of the property – producing “stunning waterfalls”.
- The soil can produce earthworms that are over a metre long and as thick as one's thumb.
- Gary and Sue's home is totally solar-powered (fully off the grid) and self-sufficient for water – and they had a welcoming pot-belly stove burning the afternoon I visited. They have a number of large water tanks which have been placed to gravity feed water to the houses – this means that rain wa-

ter is collected from the roof and then pumped to the higher tanks (using the solar power) until they are full; the power is then switched off; and then gravity feed takes over until the tank is empty. The water pressure is surprisingly high.

- Any stormwater run-off goes into a huge dam lower down the property – the soil drainage on the property is very good.
- There are five species of frogs living on the property, and Sue is raising marsh frog tadpoles.

So, what about some gardening? Gary and Sue have come to a delightful compromise – Sue is the “willy-nilly” gardener, and Gary happily admits to being “Mr Regimental”. To solve this dilemma, they have agreed to look after separate garden areas. Gary has built a number of raised garden beds, some of which are wicking beds, and all are screened to protect the produce from the possums and the chooks. (They also have goannas, bandicoots, pythons, echidnas, tree snakes and the very venomous small-eyed black snake on the property.) At the moment, Gary is in a competition with a friend to “grow the perfect corn” – and, of course, the rows are delightfully straight.

Primarily Gary and Sue have focused on fruit trees (Gary has quite a large orchard with dozens of trees) and vegetables. They had the opportunity of taking a 3-month trip through North Africa, Greece, Italy, Croatia and Turkey, travelling by cruise ship and train, and the thing they learnt (from the Greeks and Italians in particular) was “Don’t plant what you can’t eat”. But there are some flowering plants around the garden, and in particular some healthy looking purple basil which was planted to attract the bees for their hives. The vegetable gardens have been made to be “chook-



proof”, as their 30 hens, bantams and ducks free-range.

The Webbs grows garlic, bok choy, spinach, corn, rocket, lettuce, parsley, basil, coriander, pawpaws, passionfruit and pineapples – “anything that is easy to grow”. Lavender is grown for the bees, and Sue grows calendulas for use in ointments. Producing medicinals and creams are another of Sue’s interests, and she hopes that she can develop her hobby of painting.

So what else is planned for the future? Gary and Sue have almost completed a small cabin higher up on the block which they are planning to offer as a B&B location – it is among the trees, but there is a gap that allows the magnificent views from the property to be seen. Also they are keen to develop their “Fire Fly Walk” – they have seen fire flies down by the waterfalls, and are now making a track and naming it “The Fairey Walk” so that any guests can enjoy this feature.

I asked Gary and Sue why they have become so focused on growing organic produce, and Sue said that, at their age, they are now educated enough to understand the benefits. Their most enjoyable gardening experiences have been eating their own organic produce, and they

value the fact that there are no pesticides involved. They both want to keep experimenting in their gardens and continue learning as much as possible.

And to finish the story with a compliment to all of us... I asked the Webbs what their advice for any new gardeners would be... their reply? "Go to meetings like the Organic Growers."

p.s. And what is a story without an update... I sent the draft article to Gary and Sue and asked them would they check the details and add or delete pieces as appropriate. So I've tidied up the article, and I couldn't help but refer to the list of fruit trees that Gary is growing in his orchard.

The Webb's have planted and have now harvested the more common fruit such as bananas, mandarins, pawpaw, grape fruit, kaffir lime, raspberries and curry leaf tree. But also planted and to be enjoyed at some stage in the future are wonderful things such as elderberry, black genoa, black sapote, custard apple, soursop, wampi, tree tomato (tamarillo), pomegranate, panama berry, Burdekin plum, coffee tree, nectarine, cherry, and syzygim jambos – just for something truly exotic. An incentive to us all !



The sign on Gary & Sue's B&B cabin door - and I think they've got lots of reasons to do so!

Enjoy Something Different This Winter!

By Diane Kelly

Visiting our local libraries is one of my favourite occupations and so I don't usually buy books. However I read about *Magic Little Meals* by Lolo Houbein and Tori Arbon, and I just had to reach for my credit card!

The book is all about "Making the Most of Homegrown Produce" and it takes you through a variety of foods that we can grow in our backyard. It gives a short summary of how to grow an alphabet of vegetables and fruit, and then how to prepare and eat them. The authors also talk about herbs and spices, dressings and chutneys, and breads and pulses. The recipes are often quite simple, but they provide a wonderful variety of tasty and quite often unusual flavours.

So that got me thinking - because I am sure we all have found ourselves cooking the "same old, same old" at times. I decided to read up on some less usual vegies, find out a bit more about them, and then find out how to grow and cook them. So I've chosen 5 vegies that I don't usually grow or eat, and I am looking forward to experimenting with them. And more than that, the coming couple of months is the right time to grow them!

Number 1 – Florence Fennel:

Let's start with an easy-to-grow plant. Florence fennel has green, plume-like foliage (it is actually part of the *Apiaceae* or carrot family) and leaf bases that form a bulbous stem. Sow the seeds directly into the prepared soil, as transplanting will affect growth. Germination should only take 7-10 days and the plants can be grown quite close together as long as adequate moisture and nutrients are

supplied. Once the fennel bulbs reach golf-ball size they can be blanched by putting newspaper or cardboard collars around them and then hilling them with mulch or soil. Leave the green foliage exposed so that it can continue to feed the plant. Harvest about a month after blanching, or when the bulb is the size of a tennis ball. Fennel bulbs can be eaten cooked or raw – thinly sliced raw fennel adds flavour to salads and pairs especially well with orange slices and salty olives. You can roast fennel by simply tossing wedges in oil, adding a sprinkle of vinegar, and then cooking them for about 40 minutes until they caramelize. And my new book provides a simple recipe for “Fennel Soup with Celeriac & a Touch of Orange”. You can Google the recipe.



Number 2 – Celeriac:

And seeing we've been talking about celeriac... this is another member of the *Apiaceae* family, and one that can be grown in the subtropics in the dry part of the year. Celeriac is a rather ugly plant which also has a bulbous stem – and which one book says has a rather off-putting smell. But this rough-skinned round root also has a marvellous taste all its own. Celeriac can be used in soups and stews and can also be eaten raw. You can mix it with mayonnaise to make a salad dressing or a dip, or you can slice the bulb thinly and add the strips into a salad. Or you can turn them

into “the best vegetable chips you have ever eaten”. Cubed and added to olive oil, garlic, onion, ginger, chilli and curry leaves in a pan, celeriac bulbs can be turned into a simple curry. Or you can add celeriac to lentils and bake them before serving them with chapatis and a “raita” and sliced seasonal fruit. (A “raita” by the way is a side dish to counteract any heat – it's made from yoghurt, cucumber, cilantro, green onions, coriander and cumin.) And don't waste the foliage and stems (which resemble celery) – they make a wonderful stock.



Number 3 - Peruvian parsnips:

After getting side-tracked by a recipe for “regular” parsnips in my new book (roast parsnip wedges served with warm boiled eggs and sauteed tatsoi – with sprigs of coriander for that little bit extra piece of flavour) I have now learnt that Peruvian parsnips produce multiple cream or yellow parsnip-like roots. These occur in clusters that can grow up to 300g at harvest and are joined to an underground crown. Above the ground and the crown, stems and lacy leaves emerge, and these produce white flowers. Seed germination for Peruvian parsnips is generally poor, so propagation is done by taking cuttings from the stems that emerge from the crown. Leave the stem cuttings to dry in the shade before planting them and space the plants at 60 cm

intervals. And, just like with carrots, remember to not overfeed the garden area with manure – otherwise it may result in root branching.

So how do you enjoy Peruvian parsnips? They add a deliciously creamy flavour to soups, purees and stews, and can also be used to make gnocchi (something I've always wanted to learn how to do! These might have more flavour than the potato variety.) Peruvian parsnips can be baked or turned into chips, or they can be used to make flour or dehydrated flakes. The tops of the plants can be used as a green vegetable or as a garnish.

So... something different, and something tasty and new to try! (And by the way, Peruvian parsnips can be obtained as rootstock from Green Harvest.)

Number 4 – Surinam spinach:

Well - learning about this plant was a shock because it looks like what I already have growing in my herb patch! And I absolutely agree with its categorization of “very easy to cultivate” – all I do is pop some cuttings into water; wait for them to grow roots; and then plant them out. We have them virtually every day in our salads and they have a mild, soft flavour and texture.

An advantage of this shrub (it only grows to about half a metre) is that it is happy to grow in dappled shade (although it copes well with full sun – I've tried both, and the latter wins!). You can also grow the plants from seed - but make sure you don't bury them too deeply – just firm them into the surface of whatever seed-raising mixture you are using. Soft-tip cuttings can also be planted into a friable propagation mix, or directly into some good compost.

All parts of the plant are edible, and reg-

ular harvesting promotes branching and encourages new growth. But remember to avoid heavy harvesting in the winter months as this is when the growth will slow, and don't overfeed with nitrogen fertilizers. The leaves of this plant are described as “sweet and succulent, and very palatable as a salad vegetable as it does not possess any inherent bitterness. And so it provides a fresh, easily grown, trouble-free (except for maybe a few grasshoppers or caterpillars) addition to your salads or stir fries.

And number 5 – Globe artichoke:

Many years ago we had the opportunity to travel to Los Angeles and a friend offered to take us out for a meal. I can't remember where we went (except that it was at a restaurant by the beach) but I do remember the first time I ate globe artichokes.

In difference to Jerusalem artichokes (which may not be tolerated by everyone's digestive system) globe artichokes are an entrée to “wake up the tastebuds and stimulate the gastric juices”. When growing these wonderful plants, remember that they will need a semi-permanent spot in your garden as they will grow to 1.5m in both height and spread – and also remember they like full sun and good drainage. After that you can divide the plants every 3 or 4 years. Plants should produce 4-6 flower heads in the first year, and then 10-12 in the second and third years.

My new book says that when an artichoke would fit nicely into the palm of your hand, then they are ready to be enjoyed. The whole fruit can actually be enjoyed cold or warm. They can be boiled until tender enough for the outer leaves to be pulled off easily – and in the meantime, stir up a dipping sauce. This can be an all-purpose dressing

(consisting of olive oil; lemon juice; salt; sugar; wholegrain mustard and finely chopped garlic – and then with additional ingredients to your taste) or a butter and smashed garlic sauce stirred and heated for a few minutes; or a mashed boiled egg and mustard sauce with a squirt of olive oil – or you may even just prefer dipping the leaves into some tahini. Whatever your preference, remember that globe artichokes are a slow food – picking and dipping the leaves is guaranteed to lower your blood pressure! And when you finally get to the heart of the artichoke, it will just melt in your mouth.

So... five new vegetables for me to learn about; to cook; and to enjoy - and I hope you have picked up a few hints and ideas along the way as well.

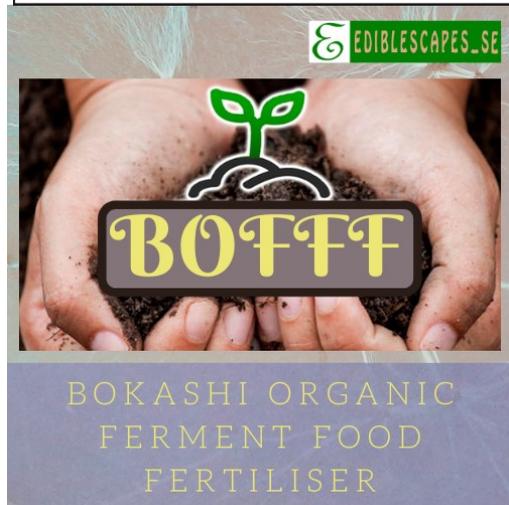
Check out where you can obtain these vegetables and add some variety to your “same old, same old” as well.



 EDIBLESCAPES_SE



BIOL-SOL: plant fertiliser used as a vegan substitute for animal manure in urban edible gardens. BIOL-SOL fertiliser is a concentration best used as a dilution of 5% in water.



BOFFF: Bokashi Organic Fermented Food Fertiliser - soil fertiliser used to create microbe-rich soil ready for planting or to accelerate plant growth through root absorption.

Urban Agriculture Month - EdibleScapes Lighthouse

By Jorge Cantellano

Ediblescapes responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by way of a temporary departure from our original goal to cultivate the Edible Landscapes Gardens in the design of food forest contained within a public landscape garden. Instead, we have scaled up our biointensive growing bed to produce more vegetables and fruit to service the increased number of food-insecure people using Nerang's Neighbourhood Food Bank service. Our agroecological growing practices allowed us to provide fresh, nutritious food.

Ediblescapes selected and implemented an organic biointensive growing method capable of growing more food in less space. We coupled this with application of the fermented natural fertiliser that we develop on-site. We also adapted some aspect of India's Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). In our view, a practical, demonstrative garden modelled on ZBNF gives low-income families the opportunity to grow a proportion of their own food with minimal capital.

Biointensive growing, biological growing and ZBNF - like biodynamics, regenerative agriculture and indigenous food systems – all enable community food to be grown. The challenge for Ediblescapes is to adapt our capacities to an urban food system in a way that reduces the external ecological footprint on gardens.

Ediblescapes advocates for growing social food in communal spaces, as evidenced by our gardens in Nerang's Country Paradise Parklands. Social

food directly benefits local people who are experiencing food crisis or insecurity. It provides both volunteer opportunities through our hands-on education program, and a harmonious experiential public space for parkland visitors.

EdibleScapes operates solely with volunteers, however we encourage governments to examine the national food system and redistribute financial support away from industrial agriculture and towards sustainable, urban community initiatives, including communal edible gardens and city farms with paid public service workers. Such initiatives can augment urban food security, provide dignified employment and reduce health-care costs associated with illnesses related to malnutrition from inadequate nutritional density of fresh food and exposure to chemically-laden crops. Urban growing can ameliorate suburban communities and enhance wellbeing and people's sense of purpose. Through the nature of urban farms being focused on local production, distribution and waste reduction, they most certainly mitigate climate change impacts associated with industrial-scale farming.

Ediblescapes supports Sustain: The Australian Food Network that called for the creation of a \$500 million National Edible Gardening Fund, which it claims will create 3,000 new jobs and boost urban agriculture across Australia. See: https://sustain.org.au/media/documents/SUSTAIN_Pandemic-Gardening-Action-Agenda.pdf

Future operations facilitated through our social enterprise

Ediblescapes has been running its programs with minimal funding, while the permanent Edible Landscapes Gardens have been largely supported by local Councillor Peter Young. We want to

ensure future financial viability of the project and are serious about generating our own income – we are now embarking on a social enterprise operation to fund our future programs.

Over the last two years, we have researched, experimented, and developed an effective fermented biological fertiliser (biofertiliser). It is comprised of food waste (non-harvestable or consumable produce) collected from the Edible Landscape Gardens, green waste and brown waste collected from the parklands. Our weekly delivery of freshly harvested produce to Nerang Food Bank is a testimony of the efficacy of these fertilisers.

BIOL-SOL and **BOFFF** are the two biofertilisers that we intend to trade under our social enterprise branch: Ediblescapes_SE. This will allow us to fundraise for Ediblescapes volunteer and public outreach programs, as well as design a marketing strategy for our 'social good' framework that will allow us to replicate our community education program across the city, and encourage the propagation of edible gardens, returning to the core objective of Ediblescapes Inc.

We would like to develop mutually beneficial relationships with local gardeners and growers – we hope to do this by exchanging our biofertiliser for your individual support in the Ediblescapes program. We do not intend to sell compost or cultivated soil, the other products of our volunteer work.

What are BIOL-SOL and BOFFF?

BIOL-SOL and BOFFF derive from microorganic reproduction through a process of fermentation of organic matter. It is an effective way of com-

posting organic matter and accelerating humus production to create microorganic-rich soil boosters.

BIOL-SOL: plant fertiliser used as a vegan substitute for animal manure in urban edible gardens. BIOL-SOL fertiliser is a concentration best used as a dilution of 5% in water, or 1: 20 ratio, for foliar application and/or soil watering.

BOFFF: Bokashi Organic Fermented Food Fertiliser - soil fertiliser used to create microbe-rich soil ready for planting or to accelerate plant growth through root absorption. Combine with sifted soil for seedling development in trays. When transplanting seedlings, add it directly to the base of the hole where the seedling is to be planted. Use it as a maintenance soil fertiliser during the growing months.

We use raw bokashi to ferment organic waste in a process that firstly separates the liquid from the solid, followed by anaerobic fermentation to produce biological solid fertiliser and biological liquid fertiliser. In the final step, both the liquid and solid fertilisers are remixed for further aerobic fermentation and compostation, thus creating BIOL-SOL.

We have observed that hot composting produces considerable nutrient loss through liquid leaching. In contrast, fermentation of organic matter does not lead to leaching, and instead results in a high concentration of nutrients, biotics and mineral elements contained within the end product.

Contact

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Plants to Keep Your House (and You) Healthy

By Diane Kelly

As the weather cools and we tend to spend more time indoors, we can bring our love for gardening inside and grow plants that are both soothing to look at and that are good for us and our environments.

When the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) began to research ways to improve the poor quality air in spaceships, the solution they came up with was house plants! Plants can absorb toxic gases (such as benzene and formaldehyde that are emitted from common products in our houses) through the pores in their leaves, and this cleans the air we breathe.

NASA's scientists concluded that nine tropical and sub-tropical plants were particularly efficient in cleansing the air. This is largely due to the plants' leaf composition, which enables them to photosynthesize well in household light. So here are some of the "super plants" and the type of chemicals they can help clear from the air:

Spider plants: These are one of the easiest plants to grow indoors and they enjoy bright, indirect sunlight. They will help remove formaldehyde (which can cause respiratory and skin problems) and xylene (which can affect our nervous systems) from the air.

Snake plant: (We may know it as "mother-in-law's tongue"). These enjoy dry conditions and some direct sun – they are a very hardy plant. Snake plants help remove benzene (which can cause blood disorders), formaldehyde, trichloroethylene (another nervous system affecter) and xylene.



Garden Mum: (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*) A common plant, but one that removes ammonia, benzene, formaldehyde and xylene from the air very effectively.

Peace lily: These plants with the rich green leaves love the shade and can flower all summer long. They are good to remove ammonia (high levels of which can affect our respiratory systems), benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.



Dracaena: These plants come in more than 40 varieties and all have long, wide leaves that have feature lines of white, cream or red. Note that while dracaena help remove benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene and xylene from the air, they are toxic to cats and dogs.

Boston Fern: A favourite indoor plant, these like to stay moist, in a cool area, with high humidity and indirect light. Effective against formaldehyde and xylene.



The other three plants that NASA recommended growing indoors are Aloe Vera, Bamboo Palm (for tall spaces only!) and Weeping Fig.

In the same way as we plan our outside gardens, remember to place your indoor plants according to their preferences for shade and space. The indoor air temperature and humidity are also important. Remember that indoor plants require very little water in winter (and more in the warmer seasons) – many plants that we grow in our homes suffer more through excess water rather than too little. Leaves going brown can indicate over-watering, and in extreme cases, the plants will become pest-prone and simply rot.

Indoor plants also tend to get dusty, and this reduces their ability to photosynthesize and purify the air. To clean them, an easy thing to do is to pop them outside on a mildly rainy evening, or gently clean the leaves with a water spray bottle and sponge.

The most common pests that affect indoor plants are scale and mealy bugs. Watch out for the small brown lumps of scale, or the soft, fuzzy white bodies of mealy bugs. Both these pests will suck the plants' sap and weaken them. If the infestation is small, just pick them off. If a larger problem, spray with a white oil mixture that will suffocate the insects.

(Reference: *Grounded – a companion for Slow Living* by Anna Carlile.)

Take Care of the Honey Bees

By Diane Kelly

Did you know ... that for each kilogram of mangoes you may eat, 21 honey bees were required for their pollination?

Did you know ... that around 104,000 metric tons of almonds are produced across Australia each year?

And did you know ... that to produce that amount of just almonds alone, farmers need 180,356 hives containing some 7.6 billion bees?

Insects generally are responsible for about three quarters of all pollination of our main crop species, and honey bees are the most important and most efficient of these pollinating insects.

Without the work of bees, our food sources would reduce to a limited



Anise Hyssop

number of grains, fruit and meat – many of the grazing animals rely on clover and other bee pollinated pastures. As we all know, bees are impacted by pesticides (especially those used in agriculture). The chemicals remain in the soil for long periods, and even if they don't kill bees, they can affect their development and ability to find nectar.

So to garden organically is an obvious start in the challenge of taking care of our bees. But what else can we do? The larger variety of plants we have in our gardens, the more bees will come to visit – and that will improve the yield of our fruit and vegetables because so many of them require bees for pollination and fruit set.

When thinking about what to add to your garden for the sake of our bees, remember that plants with simple flowers are the easiest for bees to collect nectar and pollen from. So avoid modern hybrids with many petalled, dense flowers in favour of old-fashioned open ones.

And try to have something flowering in your garden all year round – it's good for the bees, and good for our spirits!

What "Bee-Favourites" can we plant?

Herbs: Anise hyssop, basil, borage, catmint, chives, comfrey, coriander, fennel, hyssop, lavender, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, mustard, oregano, parsley, rocket, rosemary, sage, savory and thyme.

Fruit: Apple, blackberry, black and red currants, blueberry, lemons, limes, mandarin, passionfruit, persimmon, plum and strawberries.

Veggies: Capsicum, chilli, cucumbers, leeks and onions (if left to go to seed), pumpkins and squash.

Flowers: Alyssum, cornflower, cosmos, echinacea, echium, forget-me-knot, geranium, marigold, roses, sunflowers and zinnia.

Others: Banksia, callistemon, eucalypts, grevilleas, leptospermum (part of the myrtle family) and melaleuca.

(Ref: Penny Woodward, Gardening Australia; Agrifutures Australia.)



leptospermum

FRUIT TREES**MAY:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strawberries: Plants should be coming

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

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

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

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

JUNE:

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

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

Lychee: Do not let trees dry out. Minimal watering is needed. Check emerging flowers for flower caterpillars. If more than 1/2 are infested, spray with pyrethrum or garlic spray.

Mango: Don't let the trees dry out.

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

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal

water. Pick fruit at mature stage with ½ colour to have full flavour.

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

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

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

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

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

JULY:

Custard apple: Harvest every 3 or 4 days as fruit matures. Don't let trees dry out. Apply garden lime to soil – 20 grams per sq m to drip line – for example, a mature tree, 1kg.

Figs: Keep well mulched.

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

Low chill stone fruit: Peak water needs.

Water trees 2 weeks before flowering and 3 weeks later. In late July start blossom thinning. Winter prune late varieties. 50g of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash added per sq m to drip line of trees. Mature trees – 1 kg.

Mango: Don't let trees dry out. Continue with copper based spray or leaf microbes for anthracnose if visible.

Passion-fruit: Don't let the vines dry out. Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp sprays every month. Small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash can be applied for vines. Large vines – 1 kg; small vines – ½ kg.

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Use copper based sprays or leaf microbes if black spot is about. Pick fruit at mature stage with ½ colour to have full flavour.

Persimmon: Minimal water required at this time.

Strawberries: Feed with organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash. Spray fish emulsion and kelp regularly over plants to keep in good health. This will prevent fruit rot. Pick fruit when fully ripe. Keep plants fully watered, but try not to wet the berries. This will also prevent fruit rot. Mulch plants so the berries do not lie on the soil. Pine needles are best for this.

Bananas: Don't let the stools dry out. Keep fruit covered and cut off bells.

Citrus: Pick mature fruit when fully ripe. Keep up irrigation.

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant.”

- **Anne Bradstreet**

VEGETABLES

MAY:

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

JUNE:

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

JULY:

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

Source: *Queensland Planting Guide*

HERBS

MAY:

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

Perennials & Bi-Annals:

Catnip, Chicory, Chives, Perennial Coriander, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender,

Lemon Balm, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

JUNE:

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

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“A garden is half-made when it is well planned. The best gardener is the one who does the most gardening by the winter fire.”

- *Liberty Bailey*

What I'm Eating in My Garden... How About Yours? By Jill Barber



Jicama Yam and Windsor Longpod Bushbeans



Mrs O'Brien's Climbing Bean Trellis



Surunam Spinach



Pineapple Sage and Purple Basil



Frilly Pink Lettuce and Tatsoi



Brazilian Spinach



Windsor Longpod Bushbeans



Flowering Lagos Spinach



Qld Greens and Sambung Nyawa