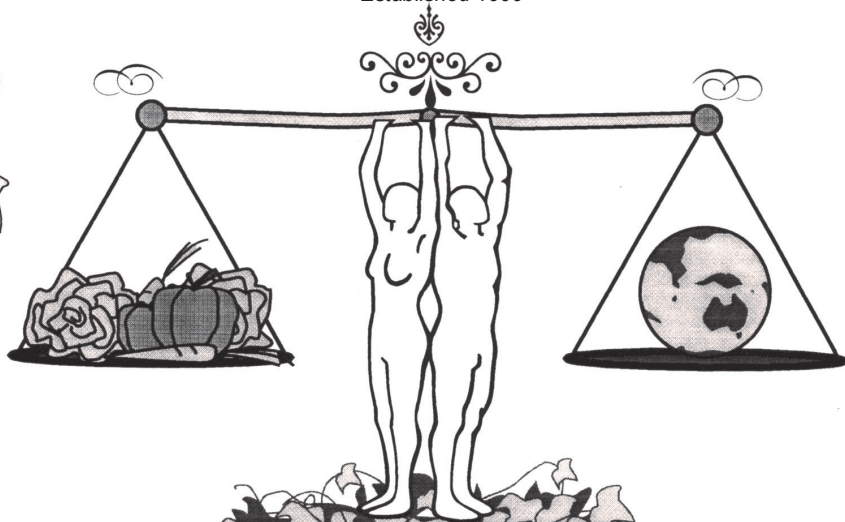


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 April 2013 Issue 4
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16 May

The Aims of G.C.O.G. Inc.

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

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

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

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

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

(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

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

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

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

\$2.00 each.

Members Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

This relies on the kind generosity of members to donate items on the night. Tickets - \$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: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year (11 issues)

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

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

2013 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Roger Peterson (07) 5534 8061 rpeterson.1@bigpond.com
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Karen Hart (07) 5657 0780
Membership Sec	Diane Kelly
Membership Asst	Jill Barber
Newsletter Editor	Angela Anderson w.a.anderson@bigpond.com (07) 5533 0169
Newsletter Asst	Diane Kelly
Website Editor	Dorothy Coe webprint@onthenet.com.au
Advertising	tba
Guest Speaker Liaison	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 jillbarber611@gmail.com
Librarians	Greg Wiltshire (07) 5578 8755 Judy Reiser (07) 5532 7198 Ann-Maree Andrew
Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609
The position of Trip Co-ordinator has been abolished and the Advertising position has yet to be decided.	

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.

Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Ross Davis, Cathie Hodge, Dorothy Coe and Lyn Mansfield

Notice Board

Membership Renewals

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

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

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

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

Overdue: Ross & Jenny Davis (199), Marion Symons (155), John & Jessica Steytler (313), Julie Abraham (315), Deborah Anker (336), Terri Groth (125), Judy McCracken (274), Tali Filip (277), Marino Canala (316), Yukiyo Copley (319), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Regina Lacgalvs (208), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Judy Reiser (338), Guy Lewington (339)

April: Barbara Talty (58), Margaret Reichelt (111), Jude Lai (220), Rebecca Bowen (297), Julien & Moyra De Jager (340), Alf & Marina Orpen (341)

May: Chris Larkin (141), Clive Canning (144), Karen Auchere (147), Mary Frawley (150), Bruce Kelly & Heather Ryan (234), Chantel Geldenhuys (268), Brian & Lyn Dick (298), Robert Turner (301), Robert Faulkner (303), Virginia Jacobsen (325)

Welcome to our new members:

John Clarke

Veggie Swap on Facebook

Setup by club member Debbie, for local people to swap their excess veggies. It's quite active already so have a look ...

<https://www.facebook.com/HomeGrownSwapGoldCoast>

Gold Coast City Council Active and Healthy Program

Community Gardening Workshops Composting and Worm Farming

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

Time: Saturday between 10am and 12pm
Apr 20th - Joan Park Community Garden
May 25th - Helensvale Community Centre

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

SEW Every 2nd Monday

S.E.W. is a women's group which has the motto "Sowing the seeds of friendship and knowledge through networking".

The group meets every second Monday, from 10.00 am to 12 noon at 270 Ferry Road, attendance is free, and children are welcome.

BYO plate of food to share with others.

Any enquiries contact Lyn on 0409 645 888 or secretary@goldcoastpermaculture.org.au

Open Garden - Jerry Coleby-Williams May 11th & 12th

Jerry Coleby-Williams's award-winning garden "Bellis".

The award-winning "Bellis", the Brisbane sustainable home created by Jerry Coleby-Williams, is open to the public this autumn as part of the Open Gardens Australia program. The productive garden, sustainable lawn, water recycling system and much more will be on show.

Details: May 11th & 12th, 10.00am to 4.30pm,
 56 Daisy Street, Wynnum.
 Entry - \$8.00, no bookings required.

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

The wet start to autumn will be either a good thing for you, or not, depending on what stage of planting you are at or indeed what type of soil you have in your garden. Those who managed to get an early start with their planting will no doubt be happy with their extra spare time gained by not having to run outside to do "the watering". If on the other hand you left preparation and planting a little later, you, like me, may be waiting for a dry couple of days to get started. Our soil is a bit too heavy, being clay based, to mess around with when wet even though the garden beds are raised. Our soil seems to benefit from what I call "cracking with the fork" to loosen it up and stop it from setting like concrete. Basically what I do is push the garden fork into the soil and lever upwards with the handle to crack the soil. I do not turn the soil over, rather just leave it in situ, this aids with air circulation and enables any compost or additives such as gypsum to not just sit on the surface. I reckon the earth worms benefit too from not having to work so hard to push through compacted soil.

Here at home we have a new addition to the herd, Peaches the cow has given birth to a lovely little heifer calf. This is Peaches first girl after only ever having bull calves previously, so it is a happy occasion for all. Now the work begins, I am back to milking twice a day seven days a week, which hampers ones social life a bit. I really do sympathise with dairy farmers as I can't think of any other job that requires that much commitment, which is one of the reasons why I don't support the current price wars between supermarkets.

Something new on the SEED TABLE is Carrot Colour Mix; this is mix of white, yellow, orange and purple carrots all in the one packet. Carrots are not difficult to grow, just plant the seed as thinly as you can and tamp down the soil after sowing them. Keep the soil moist not wet but don't let them dry out. You will need to give the carrots time to mature so be patient, harvest at around 16 weeks and later; they

can be left in the ground to grown on for months to come .

I love the start of a new growing season and I'm so hungry for the all the things that can be grown now. Right now I'm dreaming about peas, all sorts of peas, there are snow peas, sugar snaps and peas in a pod as well. I'm going to have a row of each, maybe even two rows but I will have to leave some room for beetroot and carrots and kale and red lettuces and parsnip and potatoes and, well you get the picture. Is there ever enough time and space to have it all? I don't know but I'll let you know when I figure it out.

Perhaps you have vegetables that you can't wait to get planting too. I wonder will you plant the same things you always plant or will you try something new this season? I generally stick to old favourites and I'd be mad not to, however, I can't go past the challenge of something I haven't grown before. Each season there seems to be a new variety or even a new vegetable that I haven't come across before. When I first started growing our own fruit and veg everything was new and a challenge, but as I became more skilled I started looking for variety. A decade ago coloured lettuce was a novelty now there are coloured asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower and many others. The point I am trying to make is that gardening is never boring, there's always something new to learn or grow, and even the so called old things are new again. If you love gardening too, I know you'll agree with me that, it really is an amazing thing to be involved in.

Happy growing, Maria.

The Little Veggie Patch Co Fabian Capomolla and Mat Pember

"The privilege of living in Australia means you don't have to grow food for survival, so instead focus your efforts on the pleasure of food. Grow food that you love. Grow things that you will use in the kitchen but can't necessarily buy at the market. Grow food for whatever reasons motivate you."

From The Seed Table Visit Roger and Lyn

Available at the seed table this month:-

Basil Genovese
 Bean Climbing - Blue Lake, Purple King
 Beans Jill's Climbing
 Beetroot Bulls Blood
 Bokchoy
 Borage
 Broadbean Coles Dwarf
 Broccoli Green Sprouting Calabrese
 Bush Bean - Cherokee Wax, Provider
 Bush Beans Redland Pioneer
 Cabbage Early Jersey Wakefield
 Cabbage Savoy Vertus
 Carrot Chantenay Red Cored
 Carrot Colour Mix
 Carrot Topweight
 Carrot Western Red
 Cauliflower Snowball Improved
 Ceylon Spinach
 Chamomile
 Chives Onion
 Coriander
 Dill
 Eggplant Black Beauty
 Feverfew
 Jill's Snow peas
 Kale - Cavolo Nero, Dwarf Green
 Kohrabi Purple Vienna
 Leek Giant Carentan
 Lettuce - Buttercrunch, Freckles, Royal
 Oakleaf
 Madagascar Bean
 Marigold - Orange, Crackerjack
 Mesculin - Mild, Hot
 Nasturtium Jewel mix
 Nettle
 Onion long Tropea Red
 Parsley Giant of Italy
 Pea Sugar Snap Sugar Am
 Pigeon pea
 Rocket
 Silverbeet Fordhook Giant
 Snowpea Oregon Sugar
 Spinach Bordeaux
 Swede Champion Purple Top
 Tatsoi Green Coin
 Tomato - Cherry Camp Joy, Thai Pink Egg
 Warrigal Greens

Handy Hints

- Where you are adding a lot of manure or fertilizer to the soil at planting, take care to place soil between the enriched soil and the root system to avoid root burn or root death.
- If your soil is very sandy, try lining the planting hole with a layer of newspaper. This will slow the rate at which water drains from the hole, allowing it to be taken up by the plant's new root system. Eventually the newspaper rots, by which time the root system should have grown and the plant adapted to the new, well-drained situation.
- Cuttings strike when grown in a well-drained medium. You can buy ready-made propagating mixes by the bag from your local nursery – or you can make your own by combining equal amounts of sharp or propagating sand (a coarse, washed river sand) and coir peat. Perlite can be substituted for sand.
- Plant growth is slow or even dormant during winter, making it the ideal time to move an established plant. However it's best to avoid very cold or icy periods.

Checklist for buying a quality plant:

- Look for newly arrived stock
- Buy plants that look healthy and vigorous
- Select plants in proportion with their pots
- Don't take home pests, diseases or weeds
- Check for strong, healthy roots
- Don't buy damaged or spindly plants
- Choose buds over flowers

How to sharpen secateurs:

- Completely take apart the secateurs
- Sharpen the blade with a whetstone or steel. Hold it at the same angle as the bevelled edge and draw it along the edge, sharpening away from your body. Remove any built-up resin with a wire brush, steel wool or fine sand-paper.
- Oil the blades, spring, nut and bolt. Re-assemble the secateurs.

Excerpts from "Planting Techniques"
Jennifer Stackhouse & Debbie McDonald

Justin's Talk:
Permaculture Principles and Application
 By Jill Barber

Well, I don't know about the rest of you, but I really got more than I bargained for with Justin's talk this month! He sure is a mine of information and knowledge, and he's obviously passionate about Permaculture and the application of Permaculture design principals, especially in his work with the **GC Permaculture Group** in Ferry Road. He also volunteers at Carrara and Ferry road on Urban Agriculture projects, and is working on projects in Brazil related to broad acre design. So he's a busy man, and more able to have a more global view of both projects.

Following in the footsteps of the inventor of Permaculture, **Bill Mollison**, Justin modifies it and takes it further, taking into account eco system services, holistic management and food sensitive planning in urban design. Working with the GC Council is an interesting challenge, as he regularly reminds them that they are working with these same goals, and so it's easier to be of mutual benefit to each other. I wrote heaps, but there was too much information for me to put it all into an article for you, though I did glean a few points that I can convey coherently to you. There are several books, Permaculture Design 1, 2, etc, in which **David Holgren** expanded on Mollison's philosophy, but in short, the latter visited 120 different countries, setting up permaculture farms with the locals to carry on – an amazingly successful global project, reclaiming desert land, especially in third world countries, and thereby assisting these people to thrive and be somewhat self-sufficient. It was a people's movement, whereby they learned to capture the energy of nature through design science to survive. So it was not a political movement: it was goal oriented, and included such aspects as utilising so-called "waste" products by recycling them.

This is what has been happening in the **Ferry Road project** over the past 24 months: rather than waste, such as wood chips, being exported off site to the Elanora treatment plant, everything is utilised, initially in building up

garden beds, and to make paths between them, and once it's broken down, to use as mulch and soil-enriching humus. Microbes can only absorb nutrients if there is organic matter present, so water plants, like water hyacinths and even blue-green algae, rather than being "pests", now become valuable organic matter for the soil microbes. And azolla, a tiny water fern, acts in conjunction with the algae to enable it to fix atmospheric nitrogen, while itself being an ecological trail blazer which will clean the water. Hence, rather than the Council shipping tons of green waste away, GC Permaculture can take it, about 1500 tons of it, to be precise, and use it to great effect in enriching their soil.

At the Ferry Road location, there is a Community Garden, an Education Centre, a Research Facility, a Herb Garden, and it's generally home to multiple micro-enterprises. In its first year, there was a monumental cleanup effort, to remove the rubbish left there, 26 trailer loads of it, actually. It is now bio-intensive, all usable "waste" going straight into compost, and seedlings planted out intensively. It is urban farming at a micro-level. 20% of the gardens have flowers, to attract beneficial insects, and there is only ecologically conscious farming, using no fertilisers and no companion planting. Maybe a bit of fish emulsion is used on lettuces if they look "sad", but the goal is to build up the soil capital: rather than the more usual 100 tons of compost per acre of other farms, GC Permaculture uses 1000 tons per acre! Edge gardens, use perennials, for instance sweet potatoes, cassava, cocoa yams or zucchinis. Even nutgrass is seen as valuable, bringing up nutrients from deeper levels into their nuts, and being prevented from taking over by being planted out, vegies crowding them over and out of the bed!

The GC Permaculture values are: minimising waste production; maximising resource recovery; creating zero environmental harm; having educational programs to create behavioural change; reducing the amount of waste material generated in the community and discarded; and finding better ways to re-

use, re-cycle and recover energy from waste before disposal of it. Function stacking can be seen in the growing of pigeon peas or dhal beans for green manure and nitrogen fixing; and chicken tractors utilise the chicken droppings to fertilise the ground before being moved on to the next patch.

From David Holmgren's Holistic Design Principles came the diagrammatic representation of a flower to illustrate the many aspects of permaculture design, including "Health and Spiritual Well-being" and "Land tenure and Community". In short, the permaculture approach can be boiled down to three ethics: Care for the earth, Care for the people, and Return the surplus (which is otherwise either thrown out as waste or creamed off). We learned that permaculture means "permanent agriculture", in other words, sustainable farming.

Food-Sensitive Planning and Urban Design put out by the National Heart Foundation, gives a conceptual framework for achieving a sustainable and healthy food system, with a zero waste concept and societal connection. Big companies are also now moving in the direction of eco system services, Justin declared, because it's profitable. In this system, there are such practices as interplanting or guilding, as with the "three sisters", beans, corn and squash, as well as having a wide variety of flowers, attracting beneficial birds and insects.

Unfortunately, according to Justin, there is not one functioning broad acre Permaculture farm in Australia that makes the bulk of its income through food sales, as opposed to those farms thriving in the third world. There are some holistic integrated farms, and Taranaki is a good example, but they are not considered Permaculture farms. Some very interesting Permaculture farms that have successful integrated models are "Milkwood" and "Purple Pear" farm, both in NSW and easily found with a google search.

To have self-sufficiency, an integrated community is needed. Now, we have self-reliant farms instead: we do what we can, and bar-

ter for the rest. Some part of the permaculture vision can be attained though, so that the impact on the environment is lessened, by leading a low consumption lifestyle, for example. And the fastest way to sequester carbon is to not till the land, which only releases carbon. Toward the end of the evening, Cathy Hodge mentioned Permaculture Pioneers: Stories from the New Frontier, which tells us that "Permaculture is much more than organic gardening. Arguably it is one of Australia's greatest intellectual exports, having helped people worldwide to design ecologically sustainable strategies for their homes, gardens, farms and communities. This book charts a history of the first three decades of permaculture, through the personal stories of Australian permaculturists".

Through Justin's presentation, I must say that I gained a greater understanding of the broad scope of permaculture principles, realising that it's not a gardening or farming system, as biodynamics is, for instance, but it's a holistic approach to growing food and people's well-being, encompassing many different facets of food production, from health to finances and economics to community and personal interactions. In short, it's rather an ethical system, caring for the earth and the people and returning any surplus to the environment. Many thanks to Justin for taking the time and making the effort to come out and give his presentation to fill us in on this very valuable approach to the earth and our gardening practices. Already I personally can see several permaculture practices that I'd like to adopt, such as plant guilding and border planting, not to mention massive composting.

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

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

To receive the discount enter the following code at the checkout :
GOLDCOAST10OFF

AQUAPONICS TALK at BOND UNI
By Cathie Hodge

Two presentations were recently given at Bond University concerning Aquaponics.

These presentations mostly focused on the reasons why Aquaponics could be a sustainable, local & organic method, for growing fish and plants, including algae, in the one system. The presentations did not explain how to set up an Aquaponics system.

However, for practical information for the home-enthusiast, two websites were recommended.

“**Backyard Aquaponics**” based in Perth – <http://www.backyardaquaponics.com/>. This website provides very useful information, including how to set up a low-cost system in a small or large space.

“**Murray Hallam’s Practical Aquaponics**” based in Queensland – <http://www.aquaponics.net.au/> (Please note that this website details a 1-day, *Discover Aquaponics Seminar* in Brisbane on 19th May).

The Aquaponics Network Australia – <http://aquaponicsaustralia.wordpress.com/> defines Aquaponics as “the symbiotic cultivation of plants and aquatic animals in a re-circulating environment ...It combines **aquaculture** with **hydroponics**.”

Daryl McPhee, an Associate Professor at the Institute of Sustainable Development & Architecture at Bond University, provided many compelling reasons for the acquisition of home-based Aquaponics systems, as well as commercial systems in Australia.

These reasons mainly relate to ensuring food security and include:

- The anticipated future demand for seafood in Australia. Apparently domestic wild catch fisheries will not be able to meet this projected demand
- The increasing “gentrification” of Australian coastal areas is limiting available productive aquaculture areas
- High labour costs in Australia make it relatively expensive to develop aquaculture businesses in this country
- The high cost of transporting aquaculture products in Australia will cause the price of such products to become too prohibitive for consumers
- Environmental contaminants are an issue with farmed fisheries & consumers are increasingly aware of and/or concerned about such issues.

McPhee sees specific opportunities for the Aquaponics industry in this country, including:

- Algae production to provide it as a dietary supplement for humans and animals
- Urban food production with minimal transport costs and less food miles
- Linkage with food provenance as a contribution to tourism
- Increasing ethnic diversity which contributes to a broader appreciation of fish varieties & of fish generally as a staple food
- A greater awareness of the health benefits of fish consumption (specifically, quality protein and Omega -3)

However, McPhee also saw specific challenges for the Aquaponics industry including:

- Animal welfare and animal rights issues
- Price competition against cheap aqua-

culture imports

- Time-poor consumers being more inclined to purchase & consume pre-cooked convenience meals
- A lack of consumer interest in native Australian freshwater fish

Geoff Wilson, the Director and Editor of Aquaponics Network Australia, gave the second presentation. He talked about how Aquaponics around the world has two major streams:

The home-based production of organic food – both fish and edible plants – which can be grown either in units next to kitchens, or via community units. (See websites listed above)

Large-scale commercial industry that is rapidly developing in Australia and in North America and leading to better urban production of organic, fresh foods. Facilities now being constructed vary from 15,000 to 40,000 square metres a unit. Energy comes from either wood-waste biomass, from solar power, or from innovative water movement power.

Commercial enterprises in Australia include Urban Ecological Systems Ltd and Blue Smart Farms -- <http://www.bluesmartfarms.com/freshfood/> (a very interesting website); in Canada, see the ecoTECH Energy Group & their “Beyond Organic” business plan, with targeted clients such as Walmart Canada, Canadian supermarkets supplying organic products, organic restaurants, and grocers in China.

Fish farming generates much fish-waste, which means disposal problems. Hydroponics also results in waste disposal issues. Also, the rapidly rising cost of plant nutrients makes this process expensive. Aquaponics solves these problems by using a process that

‘mimics Mother Nature’. Fish and plants can be grown using totally organic methods & they can be grown in close proximity to where they will be consumed. The use of chemical fertilisers & pesticides can be reduced significantly, or completely abolished, through Aquaculture food production.

According to Wilson, recent dietary guidelines recommend that people over 65 years of age (increasingly those of the “Baby Boomer” generation) should consume less food as they age, as well as eat more protein and fewer carbohydrates. Aquaponics can meet this increasing need for fresh, local, organic, healthy protein, which also contains valuable Omega 3.

Wilson outlined how commercial Aquaponics is rapidly moving to mesh with **algae farming** for the production of biofuels; and for a lower cost output of valuable Omega-3 oils, algal proteins for pharmaceutical additives, and for fish or livestock feeds derived from local materials.

Algae farming in cities can become a source of high quality protein food for humans & for animals, a source of biofuel & can also help sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

Aquaponics units can be integrated with green roofs & green walls to help ameliorate urban climates. (Apparently where “green roofs” are combined with solar panels, the generation of solar power is increased). For more information on green roofs, look at <https://greenroofsaustralasia.com.au/>

So, as you can see, the Aquaponics presentations gave us plenty of food for thought! (Excuse the pun).

Gardening With Ross

Well here it is 10 weeks off the shortest day of the year.

Why did I say that?

As gardeners we need to be looking ahead to work out what weather, the seeds/plants are going to be growing in.

Potatoes: need to grow in Cold soil, Planted too early when the soil is still warm is OK, But the soil must be **cold** when the potato's start to develop into their full growing stage. As we live in such a diverse climate there are some who must make a judgment about the likely hood of frost damage.

I have **Dutch Cream** potatoes about to be planted. This potato is a waxy potato and the most popular by far according to all the feedback I have had this last season.

Pontiac, (the real one) is still the best red skinned Potato in this climate. I reckon the best "Bake in the oven with the skin on" potato. The skin cooks up nice and when baked like that just needs the top cut off / sliced and filled with all the things we all know are not good for us! But what the heck! We need to indulge some time don't we. Pontiac is a fast growing, dry floury potato when cooked & it loves this climate.

Pumpkins: not setting!

Well it's been such a wet season & the bees have not been out working so much and as a result I have very few Pumpkins set so far. I have recorded over the years that my pumpkin's seem to set more at the end of the season better (April/May) as the weather dries and the bees seem to be about more. Is this what's happening to you?

As most of you know Jenny & I went to New Zealand for 5 weeks. It rained for half a day in the whole 5 weeks we were there. NZ is in one of its worst droughts ever. The longest time we have ever had for a holiday ever.

We had a granddaughter 21st Birthday to attend. Plus a Wedding of a nephew. And A Primary School Reunion at Papakura.

Cow peas: a bean really!

So I planted the entire garden up with Cow peas, Pumpkins and Sweet Potatoes all designed to grow as ground cover to hold off the weeds.

The garden was a jungle. Pumpkins up the fence, Cow peas a thick mass totally covering the ground/soil. The Sweet Potatoes just a total ground cover with very few potatoes showing. **BUT NO WEEDS:** so it was a good result and I now have plenty of green tops to dig in or put into the compost.



Happy Gardening, Regards Ross

The Diggers Club

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

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



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

DIGGERS.COM.AU

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

This is a relatively calm month if the weather has been kind and your plantings have been diligent. It is not too late for plantings which should have been made during the previous two months, but for some of the varieties, the results will not be the same.

There is a little fertilising, pruning, potting and planting out to be done this month and it is also an ideal time for the leisurely planting of native species such as acacia, banksia, grevillia and melaluka. You will be blessed with native birds in years to come.

Vegetables: The fact the broad bean is really a cold climate plant does not deter those addicted to the unusual, faintly nutty taste. There are no half-measures with broad beans – you either love them or hate them!

With some knowledge and co-operative weather, broad beans can be grown. They must not have too much rain and they must flower in the cooler months, so sow now and next month. Make sure the soil is fertile from the addition of well-rotted organic matter – a little richer than for other varieties of beans. However, don't overdo, as leaf growth will outstrip the flowers.

Broad beans also like an overdose of lime, so apart from digging some into the soil, rake a little extra into the stop surface and then sprinkle some more between the rows. This also deters snails and slugs from attacking the young shoots.

Flowers: In the early part of the month, many of last month's selection can be planted, but be quick. (Refer to GCOG March newsletter.)

Plantings include: Bulbs, calendula, corn-flower, lobelia, lupin, marigold, pansy, poppy, primula, snap-dragon, sweet pea & viola.

Roses: Roses will grow in cooler, drier climates with less effort and greater result than in our area, but that does not mean we

should be discouraged. There are at least 50 different varieties which will thrive here, given the right treatment.

Roses can be purchased in containers and planted out all year, but are generally more expensive than the bare-rooted buys, which are only available in late autumn and winter. Even container roses prefer a move in the right months, which begin now.

Roses like a deep, rich and well-drained soil. If your soil is acid, add lime well before planting. If the soil is clay, dig deep and wide, and add plenty of organic matter. They love blood and bone and well-rotted manure. Incorporate liquid fertilising, top-dressing and mulching of the roses into your maintenance calendar.

In this area, rose pruning can now begin and continue until the end of July. Remove dead wood, old wood, weak wood and branches crowding each other, and shorten the remainder by one third. Make clean, slanting cuts. New plants shouldn't need pruning. Leave the older bushes until July. Nematodes are the roses' greatest worry here, so be sure to plant nasturtiums under the bushes.

Natives: It is our responsibility to grow our area's native vegetation where possible. A wide variety of vines and shrubs inhabited these parts and their beauty – sometimes subtle, sometimes bold – is unique.

Most Australian natives will not handle much fertiliser or cultivation and our coastal varieties prefer a light soil and good mulch. Water well when transplanting with a weak liquid, organic fertiliser. Plantings of container-grown natives can be done all year, but the next three months are considered ideal.

Plantings include: Banksia, boronia, brachychiton (Illawarra flame tree), callistemon (bottle-brush), eugenia (lilly pilly), grevillia, hakea, hoya, leptospermum (tea tree), melaleuca (paper bark), schefflera (umbrella tree), stenocarpus (Queensland fire wheel), westringia (coastal rosemary) and wisteria (native: *milletia megasperma*).

Herbs From Diane Kelly

Around October or November last year, my husband decided it was time for his first foray into the world of gardening. Being realistic, he decided to start with a one-metre square raised bed, which he filled with some rich soil that was the result of a pile of wood-chips that had been allowed to rot down. (Of course the chooks had discovered the pile, and had aerated it and de-bugged it nicely during its decomposition.)

Silver beet and lettuce seedlings were planted (green smoothies were a favourite breakfast at the time), and sweet corn was planted from seed. The garden was a success.

Then, due to various circumstances, the bed was left with a light covering of mulch (and some netting to keep “the girls” out). So about six weeks ago, I decided it was time to use the little garden to grow a concentration of herbs, as in my main vegie garden area I only had garlic chives and rosemary growing.

The seedlings have grown very well, so I now have oregano, sage, thyme, basil, parsley, chives and spring onions on tap. This has inspired me to start looking in the local library to learn more about herbs.

Invasive herbs:

Some herbs are invasive and taken over the herb garden if left unchecked, so these are good candidates for planting in pots:

Bergamot (a perennial herb - both the aromatic leaves and the flowers have culinary uses, and a citrus fragrance. Bergamot tea with a squeeze of lemon makes a refreshing iced drink)

Lemon balm (the flowers are much loved by bees)

Mustard (their peppery leaves can be used as well as their seeds. Black mustard is the most pungent, brown is the bitterest)

Mint (including spearmint and peppermint)

Purslane (use the leaves, stems and flower buds of this annual to add a mangatout-like flavour and texture to salads)

Lovage (this is a perennial herb which has a sharp, celery-like flavour throughout its seeds, stalks and leaves, so only cook with small quantities)

Growing herbs from seed:

If you are growing herbs from seed, bear in mind that they all have different germination requirements. Some may benefit from an overnight soak in water before planting in pots or in the garden (such as parsley) and a very few may need scarifying. This is a technique whereby you nick seeds with a knife or a piece of rough sandpaper to allow air and moisture in. Plants that need scarifying are those such as bay and coriander that have hard hulls.

Reaping the herb harvest:

Harvesting various parts of herbs involves different techniques and timings to ensure you pick them when they are full of flavour. You can cut herbs for using fresh throughout the growing season and even through the winter if they are evergreen. However, if you want to harvest leafy herbs for drying or to store, pick them in early summer when they have the most flavour – just before the flower buds open.

Herbs produce their flavoursome volatile oils at night because the hot midday sun evaporates them each day, so the best time to harvest them is in the early morning. Flowers appear from spring through summer and can be picked for use as they appear, but if you want the seeds for cooking or for sowing the next year, leave the flower heads untrimmed. They will then set seed, ready to be cut down, dried and stored in autumn.

Do's:

- Snip off stems and leaves early in the day before the sun is at its strongest
- Always use a sharp, clean knife or pair of secateurs or scissors
- Harvest from all over the plant to keep it neat
- Feed herbs with liquid fertilizer after making a substantial harvest

Don'ts:

- Avoid cutting into old, woody growth as it may not re-grow
- Do not use leaves and flowers that are damaged or discoloured – remove and discard them
- Avoid dead-heading flowers in late summer if you want to collect seeds in autumn
- Do not scrub leaves vigorously – rinse and pat dry

Freezing herbs:

Most herbs keep their flavour extremely well during freezing, but their appearance tends to suffer. Frozen herbs work well in salad dressings, sauces, stuffings, toppings, soups and in slowly cooked dishes, such as roasts and pot roasts. You can freeze herbs in oil or water.

p.s. If you were wondering about the flavour of purslane, “mangetout” are a “flat-podded variety of pea, eaten whole while the peas within are still very small – hence the French name, which means “eat everything”. Also known as the snow or sugar pea.”

NOTE: For more information about gathering & drying herbs, and also how to build a herb spiral, have a look at page 19 in the “Queensland Planting Guide”, published by the Brisbane Organic Growers.

“The Cook’s Herb Garden”

Handy Hints

- Where you are adding a lot of manure or fertilizer to the soil at planting, take care to place soil between the enriched soil and the root system to avoid root burn or root death.
- If your soil is very sandy, try lining the planting hole with a layer of newspaper. This will slow the rate at which water drains from the hole, allowing it to be taken up by the plant’s new root system. Eventually the newspaper rots, by which time the root system should have grown and the plant adapted to the new, well-drained situation.

- Cuttings strike when grown in a well-drained medium. You can buy ready-made propagating mixes by the bag from your local nursery – or you can make your own by combining equal amounts of sharp or propagating sand (a coarse, washed river sand) and coir peat. Perlite can be substituted for sand.
- Plant growth is slow or even dormant during winter, making it the ideal time to move an established plant. However it’s best to avoid very cold or icy periods.

Re-potting plants check-list:

- Soak the root ball thoroughly so it is wet before re-potting.
- Check for pests and diseases.
- Remove weeds, including their roots or bulbs.
- Prune damaged roots.
- Don’t plant the plant deeper in the pot than it was in its old pot.

*Excerpts from “Planting Techniques”
Jennifer Stackhouse & Debbie McDonald*

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May At A Glance

From Diane Kelly

- Tidy the garden for winter
- Clear out bird boxes, and put food out for birds
- Don't have a bonfire without checking the heaps for hibernating creatures
- Clean or chuck old pots and trays
- Buy and plant trees and shrubs, particularly those where you can check any autumn colouring
- Protect tender and newly planted shrubs from frost and wind
- Get the lawn-mower serviced
- Feed camellias and newly planted annuals
- Start off hippeastrum bulbs to flower in winter and spring
- Plant out winter and spring-flowering annuals
- Plant garlic and other bulbs
- Feed recently planted vegetable seedlings and leafy vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbages, silver beet, spinach and lettuce, with liquid manure.
- Clear drains around beds in case of wet weather
- Protect the curds of cauliflowers to keep them white and delay the time when the flowers will open up. The inner leaves can be tied or snapped and bent over the curds.
- Press on with autumn digging as the weather allows. The soil should not be so wet that it sticks to your boots when you walk on it. Dig in plenty of well-rotted compost.

Check all stored crops for signs of disease. It is better to do this regularly so any rotting doesn't get a chance to spread.

Flowers:

Plant calendulas, candy-tuft, cineraria, corn-flower, cyclamen, everlasting daisies, forget-me-knots, French marigolds, gypsophila, lobelia, pansies, poppies, polyanthus, primulas, sweet peas, viola and wall-flowers.

Also, especially in sub-tropical areas, alysum, aster, carnations, coreopsis, English daisy, gerbera, snap-dragons and statice.

FRUIT TREES

From Diane Kelly

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

Figs: Taper off the water.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



VEGETABLES

APRIL:

Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Leek, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Silverbeet, Spinach, Squash, Strawberry, Tomato, Turnip, Zucchini.

MAY:

Asian greens, Asparagus crowns, Beans, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Leek, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Rhubarb, Shallots, Silverbeet, Spinach, Strawberry, Tomato, Turnip.

**Gardening Australia -
iPad / iPhone App
From Dorothy**

Have a look at a new App from Gardening Australia. It has what to plant now info, how to info, an easy to use diary to capture your observations and photos.

[http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/
resources/vegie_app.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/resources/vegie_app.htm)

HERBS

APRIL

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

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

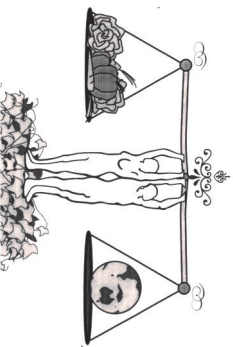
MAY:

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

Perennials & Bi-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.

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NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

Meeting place:
Cnr Guineas Creek Road
& Coolgardie Street
Elanora, Gold Coast

Next meeting:
Thursday 16 May 2013