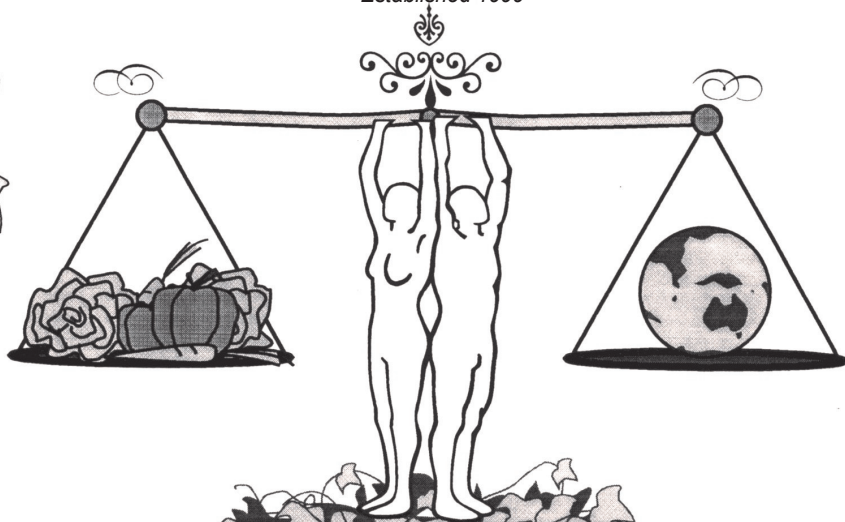


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 15

AUGUST 2012

Issue 8

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20 September

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 send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly - or just pay at the door.

Seed Bank: \$2.00 ea.

Members Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

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

Library:

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

Advertising:

1/4 page: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year (11 issues)

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

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

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.

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

2012 Committee

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Seed Assistant	Peter Seymour-Smith (07) 5596 5678
Supper Co-ordinator	Jenny Davis (07) 5599 7576

Newsletter Theme

Gardening in Winter

Thanks to Contributors: Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson.



Notice Board

Membership Renewels

Overdue: Stephen Dalton, David Tangye, Allan & Penny Jameson, Kay Schiefelbein, Clive Canning, Robert Turner, Robert Faulkner, Lise Racine, Ross & Helena Kelso, Peter Seymour-Smith, Elizabeth Dolan, Chris & Dorothy Winton, Ron Campbell, Cathy Hodge, Gary & Jenny Spence, Ian & Margaret Lee, Liz Spittal, Renato Morandini, Peter & Jan Fleming, Patricia McGrath, Ann Brown, Kathy Steenbeek, Justin Robinson, Jase Hillyer, Scott McCormack

August: Shelley Pryor, Warren & Beverly Carlson, Gene Rosser, Gordon & Dorothy Singh, Wolfgang Dempsey, Peter & Leanne Dickfos, Jill Barber, Leah Galvin, Geoffrey Williams, Lyn Mansfield, Jan Guest

September: Henry Blonner, Neil Ross, Denise Goodwin

Guest Speakers

Aug - "Homegrown" movie

Sept - Rod Bruin on Soil Improvement for Organic Veggies

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

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

Wanted to Rent

Cabin, Granny Flat, bungalow or shed on acreage property or very quiet place with Eco friendly people nearby. I am a responsible, mature person with an interest in growing unusual plants. I would need power and phone line possibility. I can give references from my current renting situation.

Contact Neil McLaughlin.
Phone 02 8090 9310, or
Email neilsilverhair@gmail.com

GCOG on the Web

From the Library

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

Newsletters

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

Links

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

Facebook

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



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President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Over the next three months the newsletter will be focussing on spring, with the aim of providing you with some of the help you need for this season. We would love to hear any tips or ideas you have for growing and harvesting at this time.

I have been very busy this past month pouring over seed catalogues and purchasing the very best seed available for you to purchase from our Seed Table. We have been able to source some new and exciting stuff such as Chook Mix and Green Manure Mix. Both are specifically suited to spring and summer planting. The Chook Mix is a mix of plants needed to provide your chickens with a healthy diet and cut down the costs of buying in feed. Most of us have heard the benefits of planting a Green Manure crop in our vegetable gardens, and let's face it there is always a period of time when our gardens are out of production for one reason or another. Why not take advantage of this lull and put in a green manure bed or two. Just broadcast the seed on top of the soil and rake it in to cover with a bit of soil, water well and continue to keep the water up if needed. When the plants are no higher than your knee, knock down and chop them up a bit with a spade, then just dig them in to the soil with a garden fork. Leave the garden bed to "compost" for a few weeks before planting with whichever crop you desire. Remember if you are digging the soil in your garden beds use a fork and not a spade, a fork does a better job and causes less casualties to the earth worm population.

Some members have showed interest in saving seed and passing some of it along to the Seed Table. This is greatly appreciated as it helps to keep the cost of seeds down for members, and it also provides us with locally grown seed which becomes very well adapted to our growing conditions. If you wish to donate seed to the club here are a

few guidelines that need to followed, seed should be from a non hybrid plant, seed needs to be packed in containers clearly marked with what the seed is and variety name, date collected as well as your full name.

An example would be- Bean, Climbing, Blue Lake, collected 8/12, Maria Roberson. This may sound a bit tedious however we need to be just as diligent when it comes to keeping seed records with our own seed collection for personal use. When growing food it's pretty important to have a reliable source of seed that is well labelled and properly stored, you never know when your life may depend on it.

Early spring is the perfect time to plant edible perennials such as asparagus, ginger, turmeric, arrowroot, yacon and Jerusalem artichokes. Many seed companies sell these plants in the form of crowns or sets and can be ordered via mail order or online. It is always very exciting to receive these parcels in the mail, I'm not sure if our Postie finds it quite as exhilarating as I do though.

Those of you, who wish to prune citrus trees, will need to do so now as there is not much time between harvesting this year's entire fruit crop and next year blossom set. Citrus does not require pruning to encourage fruiting as with peaches, apples and the like, so annual pruning isn't necessary, however, in small gardens trees are more manageable if they get a light pruning from time to time.

As for Peach and Nectarine trees, if you haven't pruned them by now I'm afraid you have missed the boat. Trees should be covered in beautiful blossoms with plenty of bee activity. You can sacrifice a few of the tall, hard to reach branches if needs be. Get ready to set fruit fly traps and baits this month, or cover trees in old mosquito nets or specially designed netting to keep out fruit fly.

Happy growing, Maria

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
August 18 - Nerang Library
September 22nd - Broadbeach Library

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

Visit one of the Community Gardens
Southern Beaches Community Garden
off Tugun Street on the vacant land behind the Tugun Community Hall.

Varsity Vegies Community Garden
Jim Harris Park, Mattocks Road, Varsity Lakes

Peachey Community Garden
Cnr Mcreadie and Tillyroen Rds, Ormeau

Joan Park Community Garden
Joan Street, Southport

Loders Creek
Owen Park - Ewan Street or south of Beale Street, Southport.

Labrador
Olsen Avenue, Labrador Park

Check out Council's Website
Farmers Markets
<http://www.gcparcs.com.au/activities.aspx?page=40>

Community Gardens
<http://www.gcparcs.com.au/activities.aspx?page=37>

Healthy Cooking Workshops
<http://www.gcparcs.com.au/activities.aspx?page=266>

Editor's Message

As we harvest the winter crops and the clear, warm days are returning, it is time to wind up Winter and focus on the Spring season.

Let us know you planting tips for September/October and storage tips for the winter crop harvest. Take a photo of your harvest or send in a recipe using what you picked this week.

With the chickens laying and the lemon tree hanging full, perhaps you have a lemon curd recipe to share with us.

The strawberries have started to flower and the bugs have already enjoyed the seasons first two strawberries in my garden, send in your hints/photos showing how we can enjoy more of these berries than the slugs and birds!

Fruit Fly monitoring - How many fruit fly have you trapped? Let us know.

Email me - w.a.anderson@bigpond.com
or phone 5533 0169. **Angie**

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
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DIGGERS.COM.AU

Sandra Nanka & the Many Uses of Herbs By Jill Barber

It was a full house for Sandra Nanka's presentation on herbs at the July meeting of the GCOG, and we were not disappointed! The co-owner of Mudbrick Herb Cottage at Mudgeeraba, Sandra, a qualified naturopath and herbalist and current president of the Qld Herb Society, did indeed tell us a lot about how to use a large variety of herbs that most of us have growing already, as well as how to prepare them. She is interested in both the medicinal and culinary uses of herbs. Her handout also gave us tips on how and where to best grow them, and she had a good few to show us which could be bought afterwards.

The Qld Herb Society produces a very useful book of tips and hints which Sandra recommended to us: *101 Herbs to Grow in South East Qld*, costing \$15. She began the evening telling us about useful "**weeds**", and top of the list was **plantain**, which is related to psyllium, and called *plantago major*. It's good for healing or drawing, for example, burns, swelling from bites, stubbed toes, spider bites (including redback and white tailed), and even diarrhoea, haemorrhoids and coughs and colds! What a wonder plant! You crush it up and hold it onto the area with a bandaid (though the mind boggles with diarrhoea or haemorrhoids...). Containing allantoin, plantain has a mild anti-inflammatory action, and promotes wound healing, speed up of cell regeneration and skin-softening effects.

There was also **radium**, which can burn off sunspots, after applying the white liquid from the stem, in about four days, being very corrosive, and **chickweed**, which can be used topically for itchy skin, eczema and burns, also containing allantoin. The latter is also good in salads, pesto and green drinks, and is very cleansing. Another "weed" is **dandelion**, though the one to go for has a single, hollow flower stem, not to be confused with cats ears. The leaves are a diuretic, and it has a lot of potassium. The root is good for the liver, detoxifying; just slice it finely or grate it, and then it can be roasted and made into a tea or

boiled into a decoction, for drawing out poisons. As a tea, Sandra adds a third of organic coffee and a third of chicory to the roasted dandelion.

Comfrey, a must for every garden I've heard, is also medicinal. You pack the crushed leaves onto or around the affected area in a poultice, and leave it on overnight or as long as possible, changing the dressing three times a day. This can be done for muscle tearing, shallow wounds or grazes and even broken bones, as well as for ulcers on people or pets, such as horses or dogs. A warning, though: it contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids, though less in older leaves, and can cause liver cancer if taken in large doses.

Erba Stella, *plantago coronopus*, grows all-year round, and is a pleasant addition to a salad. The flowers from the **Elder** (*Canadensis*) can be sprinkled in salads and desserts, and can be made into "champagne" or bubbly wine with the addition of lemons and sugar. Its berries can be made into jams or wine, with cloves added, or syrup [See recipe Opposite].

Rosemary, a widely used and popular herb, has traditionally been used with lamb and roast vegies, and also in desserts or with citrus, or as a tea. It's good for detoxing the liver, being high in antioxidants, sore muscles, improving your memory and warding off dementia. It can be infused in oil by filling a jar with it, covering with oil, and leaving the jar in a warm spot (not exposed to sun, air or light), wrapped in a towel. Alternatively, it can be placed in a double steamer, which is brought to the boil (392 degrees F/ 200 degrees C), and simmered for three hours. It can also just be placed fresh in the bath, say in a sock. As a cleaning agent, added to vinegar and lemon, and then left for about two weeks, it can be sprayed on counters for a refreshing fragrance. To cleanse for mould, add it to orange, cinnamon and cloves in vinegar.

St John's Wort grows best in temperate climates, and is good for depression, and for nerve pain and cramps, when rubbed on the area. The flowers are used both fresh and dried. **Valerian**, heavier than chamomile or

lemon balm, is used for calming and reducing stress. The roots are chopped (taking half the plant and leaving the rest) and made into a cold decoction by adding almost boiling water to it, covering and leaving overnight or all day.

Catnip, chamomile have a calming effect and help with sleeping, and **lemon balm** is good for upset stomach and stopping diarrhoea and vomiting. They are infused in a tea, covered so essential oils don't escape, and left for ten minutes. Babies with colic can get relief from their breastfeeding mum having chamomile tea. Catnip should be cut back after flowering; some cats love eating or lying in it. For cold sores, crush the lemon balm leaves and rub them on or have them in tea. Both their recurrence and duration should be reduced.

Sage and thyme are good for sore throats when made into tea, or ice cubes for tonsillitis.

She told us about her recipes for **Fire Cider** and **Elderberry Syrup**, and later sent them to me, so they are included here for us all (opposite), along with how to use the cider for pain relief or to relieve cold symptoms. Anyone wanting a copy of her fuller list of Herbs and Their Uses, just email me and I'll send it on to you (jillbarber611@gmail.com).

In conclusion, Sandra's knowledge and experience were evident in her clear presentation, and we all very much appreciated her generous sharing of her time with us that evening.

Hints ... Staking for August Winds

If you have problems with your broad beans getting blown over, use welded mesh and upright steel droppers to hook the mesh onto. Place the mesh on the garden bed and sow a seed inside each square. As the plants grow, lift the mesh and hook it onto the droppers. The plants remain secure and harvesting is easy.

Source: Gardening Australia

Recipes

Fire cider

1 head of garlic slashed
 1 tablespoon granulated dried horseradish (or fresh sliced)
 2.5cm piece of fresh ginger root sliced.
 1 small onion roughly cut
 1-2 red chillies
 1 small lemon sliced
 2 cups apple cider vinegar (you may not need this much)
 Place garlic, horseradish, ginger, onion, lemon and chillies into a large jar.
 Pour over apple cider vinegar, you may use a little more or a little less than 2 cups, depending on the size of the jar.
 Steep in vinegar for four weeks.
 Using a piece of cotton muslin, strain herbs from the vinegar and discard.
 Stores well in the refrigerator for about one year.

How to Use Your Fire Cider

~ Rub into sore muscles and aching joints.
 ~ Soak a towel or cloth with Fire Cider to place on a congested chest.
 ~ Drink it straight or diluted in a bit of water or tomato juice.
 ~ Start out with a tsp or so to test your tolerance level. Take one tablespoon three times a day at the onset of cold symptoms.

Elderberry Syrup

400g of dried elderberries
 800ml of water
 500g sugar or honey

Put the berries and water in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for 20 minutes. Strain through a sieve.

Then add the sugar or honey. If using the sugar bring up to the boil, then turn heat off and let it cool.
 If using honey heat very gently to mix, or add while berry liquid is still hot.
 Let cool slightly.
 Pour into sterilized glass bottles.
 Store in a cool spot can be kept in the fridge.

Getting to Know Virginia Jacobsen Interview by Diane Kelly

When I arrived home this afternoon I unpacked: 1 potted tamarillo seedling, 1 borlotti bean pod to dry and save, 1 pumpkin, 5 purple passionfruit, 7 navel oranges and 1 jar of honey with a sticker saying “Bee Happy” on it. Also, as has happened each time I have done an interview with our club members, I brought home about a year’s worth of motivation.

Our “Getting to Know” interview this month is with Virginia Jacobsen, who owns an acre and a quarter of tranquil bushland and thriving vegetable garden out along Currumbin Creek Road.

When Virginia and her family moved from Palm Beach to their new home twenty-two years ago, the area still had dairy farms, and their block was covered with thick bush and lantana. The goal was to retain the native plants and trees, and at the same time be as self-sufficient with vegetables and fruit as possible.

The block rises steeply from the main road, and the front slope faces south-east. The prevailing winds can come from any direction, and the soil is a very light coloured clay. The back section of the block (which receives more sunlight) has been developed as a vegetable and fruit tree area, but the bush area at the front has been retained. It consists of gums, pines, wattles, paper-barks and tea trees (for the bees). It is home to visitors such as black cockatoos, brown pheasants, galahs, rosellas and kookaburras, and even a koala or two.

In the garden area behind the house, there is a variety of fruit trees – paw-paw, macadamia, mandarin, navel orange, lemonade, lemon, banana, tamarillo, guava, kumquat, loquat, olive, peach, tropical apple, pear and mango trees all produce well. It was the mandarin tree that first gave me the idea of doing an interview with Virginia – she commented at one of our meetings about how exciting it was that the tree just keeps on producing fruit.

And now it looks like the orange tree will do the same. The fruit trees are fertilized with a mixture of garden clippings put through the mulcher; forest floor collections; worm tea and comfrey.

Virginia has done well with her vegetable and herb patch. There are a number of compost bins around the area – some are placed on top of the garden beds and their contents directly feed the soil. This attracts large numbers of worms, as does “trench composting”. If you are developing a new garden or planting new trees, one of Virginia’s hints is to wrap up any excess prawn shells or chicken bones etc and pop them in the freezer. Then, when the area is prepared, defrost the leftovers and then add them (wrapped in newspaper) to the prepared area. In Virginia’s home, the goal is that nothing is wasted – have a look at the **picture of the macadamia nuts drying** – the metal bars from the back of a fridge make a drying tray to add to an old BBQ trolley to make the perfect mechanism.



I asked Virginia about her gardening background. Growing up in Sydney, she had always been interested in gardening and cooking – her mother had flower and vegetable gardens, and cooked professionally. Now her main goals are to feed her family and herself with the best chemical-free produce possible. (Virginia told me stories of the competition between one of her sons who lives just over the border in Crystal Creek and herself to produce best vegetables. But with that friendly rivalry comes the pleasure of watching the grand-children learn about gardening, and be interested in “bugs and beetles” and the native bush.)

A few more things I learnt during the interview with Virginia:

- Every day she spends some time in the garden – even a few minutes helps make a busy life calm.
- Virginia loves reading, and appreciates receiving any advice she can about gardening.
- She loves bees! There are four operational hives on the property, and Virginia belongs to the Gold Coast bee-keepers association (and the local bromeliad club).
- As the warmer weather approaches, she will be adding to the size of the hives – and I'm looking forward to sampling the jar of honey I was given.
- Virginia used to work at the Currumbin Valley Bird Gardens, and still retains her interest in birds. There are several aviaries set among the garden area, one of which houses the most beautiful parrots.

I asked Virginia what were her gardening goals for the future. She would like to become even more self-sufficient in the food she grows for the family, and she would like to grow enough produce so that she could share more with others – just like her 80-year old neighbour has done for her, sharing the vegetables and fruit that Virginia is not yet growing.

Virginia's best gardening experience has been the joy of educating her family about gardening – some are gardeners, and some are not – and yet they all understand the value of home-grown, chemical-free food, and Virginia believes they will all take up that life-style when the time is right.



A successful pumpkin harvest

I was intrigued when Virginia couldn't think of a "worst gardening experience" – I suspect that all aspects of gardening are valuable to her. However she did have rather a good story: "One time a man walked up our very steep driveway to our house and asked if we would like to buy a trailer load of bush-rocks. This sounded like a good idea, so I placed an order. However, a day or two later, the rocks arrived all at the start of the driveway, at the bottom of the hill !! They were very nice rocks, but carting them up our driveway was definitely not what I had in mind"

There were two more questions for Virginia: What advice would you give a new gardener? Be careful of the size of any trees you are planting. In our climate in particular, trees can grow very quickly and become very large, so be aware what you are putting into your garden. Start small with your vegetable patch – new soil, limited amounts of compost and lack of experience can result in disappointment. What one word would describe your gardening experience? "Fulfilling – gardening makes you feel good".

The interview with Virginia continued on yes, we did have a cup of tea and a slice of cake ... and we had a few ideas that might be of use to the Club. We talked about a "Tips for Gardeners" section in the newsletter; we discussed how working bees can be so much fun and so valuable to those who may need a helping hand; and finally we decided that gardening is one of the best things that we do.



A "Welcome" sign attached to the garden shed that one of Virginia's sons built for his study course.

“The Herbal Gardner” on Gardening Australia

Costa Georgiadis, the ebullient host of the Gardening Australia program, recently visited Lise Racine at her home in Tallebudgera, along with a film crew.

The result of this visit is a five minute segment that will air on August 18th at 6:30 pm.

Lise Racine has been a member of the Gold Coast Organic Growers club since 2002 and resident of Tallebudgera since 2003. On her property Lise grows certified herbs (bio-dynamic Demeter) which are transformed into infused oil. This oil enters into the composition of a range of natural skin care. The products are hand-made on a small scale on Lise's property, without the use of petroleum ingredients, synthetic preservatives or fragrances.

On the segment of Gardening Australia you'll see:

- Costa and Lise taking a stroll in the gardens while talking about the methods used in looking after the soil,
- The herb drier used to dry calendula flowers
- How to make an infused oil
- A demonstration of how to make an ointment

All that information put into a five minutes segment is a miracle!

If you miss the show on the night, you can see it on the website of Gardening Australia.



Lise and Costa

Hints ... Nitrogen

Low nitrogen, please: When fed with nitrogen, many plants respond by producing plenty of leafy material, while the flowers and fruit suffer. High-nitrogen fertilisers are also too strong for most Australian natives and can even kill them. Fertilisers for plants with low nitrogen needs include compost and manure of sheep, cow and goat. Fully decomposed horse manure is also relatively low in nitrogen.

Most Australian plants grow strongly in hungry soils, often without added fertilisers, yet will respond if mulched annually with well-rotted animal manures, but go very easy with the chook droppings. If fresh, stable manure can also be deadly around most plants – natives are especially sensitive. Pile this stuff in a heap so it can rot down before being used.

Nitrogen-greedy plants: Use of fertilizers that contain a high content of nitrogen often leads to masses of leaves, so most plants that produce plenty of large leaves love a good feed of these. Plants that need nitrogen include citrus, dahlias, lettuce, brassicas, silver beet, hydrangeas, stone fruit trees and leafy house plants. High-nitrogen fertilisers include fish emulsion and the various forms of bird manures.

Source: Gardening Australia

What to Plant - September

Spring usually comes with a bump – one day you're shivering and then next the lawn needs watering and you're racing to get your spring vegies in. Don't panic – a few days or even week won't make much difference to the time they crop.

September is the main planting time – put in enough carrots, silver beet and beetroots to see you through the year. Anything you want to put in, put it in now – melons, tomatoes and masses of sweet corn.

Fruit: Evergreen fruit trees can be planted now before it gets too hot. So can deciduous trees as long as they are in pots or transplanted with plenty of soil, then kept moist and well-staked so their new roots aren't broken as they rock in the wind. Graft fruit trees just before bud burst but before the sap is flowing.

Vegetables: All-rounders like celery, silver beet, carrots, peas and broad beans, asparagus and early artichokes can be harvested. Small potatoes can also be harvested from plants that have over-wintered. Winter vegetables may start to go to seed – pick out seed heads regularly to delay them. Mulch heavily to keep the soil cool – this will also delay plants going to seed.

Pests: Pests attack early plantings – most start breeding at 3 degrees C – most predators at 12 degrees C. As another anti-pest precaution, try not to water spring crops and don't fertilize them until the spring flush is over – and never give high-nitrogen fertilizer. Let some vegetables go to seed and flower around your garden. This is perhaps the most important bit of spring advice there is – flowering vegetables are one of the best ways to attract pest-eating predators. Most adult predators eat nectar from flowers, and most prefer the nectar from the plants which their offspring will forage over for pests – in other words, your vegies!

*Source: The Wilderness Garden,
Jackie French*

The LOHAS PRECINCT At Burleigh Markets

We are about to establish the first "Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability "LOHAS Precinct".

The LOHAS PRECINCT will:

- bridge the gap between our food, farmers, small green businesses and consumers.
- provide exposure for our local small eco/ recycled/renewable green businesses.
- offer interaction with green businesses such as, schools, gardening groups, alternative energy and water saving solutions.
- teach food growing and provide insight to the challenges of life on the land.
- introduce energy saving ideas to reduce living costs; encourage less dependency on electricity, oil and gas by promoting alternatives to energy-dependent household appliances and fuel-dependent transport.
- provide a safe, friendly, fun shopping experience whilst promoting a locally supported economy and raising the environmental consciousness within our community.
- showcase organic cosmetics, body care, household consumables.
- offer family health and wellbeing services

As part of an on-going commitment to education the LOHAS precinct will seek to provide educational information, workshops and demonstrations.

Kym O'Connell
LOHAS Organic Precinct - Director

The LOHAS Precinct within Burleigh Markets

GRAND OPENING
15th September 2012
meet Costa Georgiadis

Where: Burleigh Heads State School
Lower Gold Coast Highway, Burleigh Heads

When: Every Saturday, 7am to 12noon

Telephone: 3358 6309 or 1300 668 603

The Garden in September

The first month of spring and the garden comes alive with all the spring flowers. But this is a changeable month weather-wise, with warm sunny days followed by cold periods or rain.

Take it easy at first: If you've been taking it easy during the cool months, and now have the sudden urge to get out and put the garden to rights, then do take it easy at first. Before starting any strenuous jobs such as digging, do some warm-up stretching exercises to ease yourself into the work. Jobs such as digging should be done in short spells – a whole day doing one job with repetitive movements may harm your back. So do about half an hour's digging at first, then switch to another job that does not involve bending.

So on to gardening...

Sowing seeds of vegetables and annual flowers can begin in earnest this month, but if you have a heavy clay soil, then you may have to delay sowing until it warms up more.

Pests and diseases begin to make their presence felt in earnest from this month onwards. Hand-pick and destroy pests such as caterpillars; knock bronze orange bugs on citrus trees into a bucket of soapy hot water. Protect fruit with exclusion bags tied over the fruit, and set beer traps for slugs and snails, or use barrier strips of copper around plants.

Mulch bare soil – having weeded and tidied it first, add well-rotted manure, garden compost, lucerne, chipped bark or mushroom compost. (Don't use the last around acid-loving plants like rhododendrons, because it contains lime.) Never put a mulch on top of dry soil – if the soil is dry, water it first, as a layer of compost is just as good at keeping water out as sealing it in.

Plant new plants: Most perennials will grow away quickly if planted now. Feed and mulch after planting, and keep well watered until they establish.

Lift and divide over-grown clumps of summer-flowering herbaceous perennials. Most can be lifted and divided in spring just as growth gets under way, and if the divisions are reasonably sized, they should flower later in the year. Plants which need dividing are usually easy to see. As perennials age, the clumps push outwards, with fresh young growth to the edge of the clump, and the centre dies out. This is the stage at which they should be divided. Lift each clump with a fork, and insert two forks back to back to prise them apart; smaller pieces can be pulled apart by hand. Add organic matter and fertiliser to revitalise the soil, and plant the young divisions in groups of three, five or more, depending on what space you have. Water them in well if the soil is dry.

Start mowing regularly. In most parts of the country, grass will be growing steadily now, and needs to be cut regularly to keep it in good condition. A lawn will be much healthier and stay greener the less grass you remove every time it is cut. Now, for the first few cuts, set the blades at the highest setting. Even if you tend to leave clippings on the lawn in summer, keep the box on the mower in spring so that air, rain and fertiliser can penetrate the turf.

Prune and shape summer-flowering shrubs such as hibiscus, poinsettia, allamanda and oleander if not done. Hibiscus are pruned in late August to September. You can prune plants back by up to one-third all over, but in that case leave some stems to supply early flowers. New growth generally produces the best flowers. Give a light feed of blood and bone, and mulch with chicken or cow manure, or mushroom compost, after pruning.

Spring-flowering shrubs and trees, including native plants, can be pruned after flowering if needed. Remove dead and twiggy wood – native shrubs respond well to regular up pruning, which can be done throughout most of the year, or only after flowering where shrubs carry terminal flowers. Nip out the growing tips of the plant with your finger and thumb.

Vegetables and Herbs: Continue sowing summer crops – globe artichoke, asparagus, beans, beetroot, carrots, celery, chicory, endive, cress and other herbs, lettuce, spring onions, khol rabi, radish, rhubarb, salsify, silver beet and shallots. Also plant chokos, melon, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, watermelon, rosella and Cape gooseberry. In general, sow short rows at a time – at weekly or ten day intervals. In this way a succession of vegetables will become ready throughout the summer and autumn.

Asparagus crowns are best planted in winter but spring is a good time to sow asparagus seed, although it is a very slow proposition. There is a three-to-five year wait for an edible crop, but freshly harvested asparagus has an unusually delicate flavour.

The plants are all-male or all-female, with the male plants usually producing larger, more numerous spears. These male plants are the ones that are available in winter as crowns. Plant the seeds 2.5 cm deep and the same distance apart. Keep well watered and transfer to a permanent site after one or two years. Prepare this by digging the soil deeply and incorporating plenty of organic matter.

If your soil is a heavy clay, add coarse sand to improve the drainage. The beds should be 1.2m wide and as long as you like. Make the bed slightly higher than the surrounding soil to improve drainage. This should automatically happen if you are adding plenty of organic matter.

Looking after Crops: Feed lettuces and leafy crops, such as silver beet, which have been planted in the winter and which now will benefit from an application of a general organic fertilizer to keep them growing well. Sprinkle it between plants according to the manufacturer's instructions. Water it in well if the soil is dry. Cut every other lettuce when required and leave the others to grow on and heart up.

Keep the hoe going to keep the weeds down. Now that spring is here, weeds seem to grow more vigorously than anything else in the garden. This is why it is important to keep the hoe going between rows of vegetables. Not only do weeds take valuable moisture from the soil, they also act as host plants to pests and diseases. Hoeing is best done on a dry day when the weeds can be left on the soil surface to dry out in the sun.

Perennial weeds will have to be dug out, because if any piece of root is left in the soil it will grow again.

Herbs: Sow herbs direct and buy young plants. Many herbs can be sown direct now – these include chervil, chives, dill, fennel, marjoram, coriander and parsley.

Young plants of herbs that are more difficult to raise from seed can be bought now – mint, tarragon and shrubby herbs such as thymes and rosemary. Choose French tarragon rather than Russian, which has a coarser taste and is a very invasive plant. So is mint in nearly all its forms – plant it in a pot and partially sink the pot in the ground.

Divide **chives** now that they are starting to grow. Lift each clump with a fork and divide them up, being quite ruthless with them. Small clumps can be replanted in soil that has been revitalised with organic matter.

Plant passionfruit: The soil should be well manured two or three months before planting. If soils are shallow or badly drained, plant the vine on a mound. Train the leading shoot vertically, pinching out sideshoots, until it reaches a horizontal support, then pinch out the leading shoot and train two sideshoots, one to the left and right.

Also plant mangoes, banana suckers and other tropical fruits in warm areas.

*Source: Ian Spence
Gardening Through the Year in Australia*

September at a Glance

- Mulch bare soil in beds and borders
- Move evergreen shrubs
- Plant container-grown trees and shrubs so they will establish before summer heat
- Feed and water gardenias regularly to ensure a good summer display
- Prune evergreen shrubs lightly after flowering
- Prune shrubs with colourful winter stems
- Propagate shrubs by layering or cuttings
- Increase stocks of perennials by taking basal stem cuttings from the new shoots
- Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- Split polyanthus after flowering
- Take cuttings from dahlia tubers
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs
- Sow summer annuals where they are to flower
- Re-seed bare patches in the lawn
- Sow vegetables outside, and harden off young plants to go outside
- Plant early potatoes and asparagus seed
- Water indoor plants regularly now the weather is warming up. Re-pot if needed.

! Last Chance:

Finish planting deciduous trees and shrubs and new fruit trees and bushes

* Get Ahead:

Put stakes and other plant supports in to support new growth before it really needs it.

*Source: Ian Spence
Gardening Through the Year in Australia*

Hints ...

- Water and mulch newly planted fruit trees well. But do remember to keep the mulch a reasonable distance away from the trunk in order to minimise the risk of collar rot.
- Spray drinking-strength coffee on soil to control slugs.

FRUIT TREES

Custard Apple: Leaf loss should occur this month. Low irrigation. Mulch trees. This month is the best time to prune custard apples. 1/3 of old wood needs to be taken off.

Figs: Pruning can be carried out. Be very vigorous. 1/3 can be cut off. Figs are only produced on new wood of the new season's growth. Give trees a good feed of organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Mulch well.

Lychee: Increase irrigation. Flowering should start this month. Fertilise trees with an organic fertiliser with potassium sulphate. Give mature trees 1 kg and small trees ½ kg.

Low chill stone fruit: Carry out final thinning. Stone hardening will occur this month. Continue with high irrigation. Prune out water shoots and dense foliage for better sized fruits. Use fruit fly control programs, for example netting or an attractant method.

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

Passionfruit: Vines will start to grow this month. Apply a little organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash and mulch vines at least 2 to 3 metres out from the base. 1kg for large vines and ½ kg for smaller vines.

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur in the evenings for spider mite.

Persimmon: Flowering will start in early varieties. Mulch trees. Low irrigation.

Strawberries: Apply small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash. Keep up irrigation. Pick fruit when fully ripe.

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

Citrus: Flowering will occur this month. Increase irrigation. Fertilise tree with organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1kg for large trees and ½ kg for smaller trees.

Source: Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook

It's Time To Get Growing



VEGETABLES

AUGUST: Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Celery, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Okra, Parsnip, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Shallot, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Strawberry, Sunflower, Sweet potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

SEPTEMBER: Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, New Zealand spinach, Okra, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

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HERBS

AUGUST

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

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

SEPTEMBER

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

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

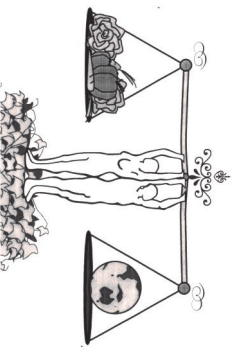
Prostate Awareness Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:

www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com
or contact Ross Davis for more info:
rossco12@bigpond.com

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

*GOLD COAST ORGANIC
GROWERS Inc.*



NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

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

Next meeting:
Thursday 20 September 2012