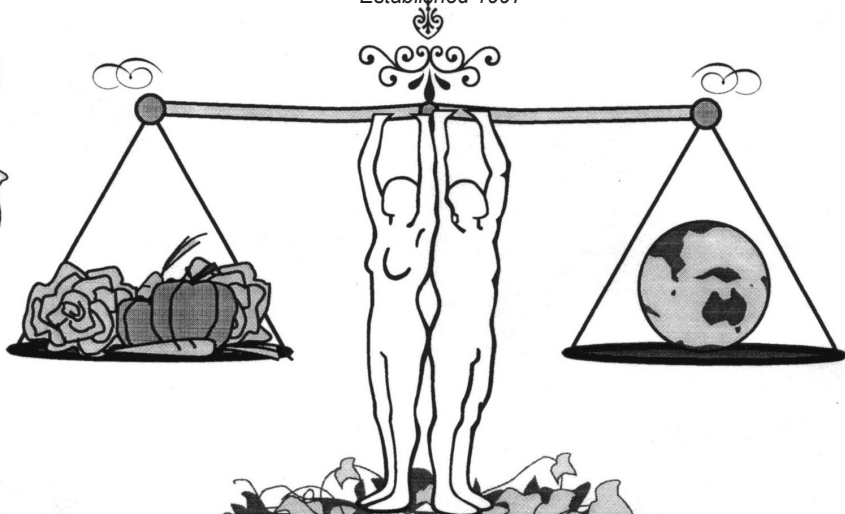


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 21 - AUGUST 2017 Issue 8  
GARDENING IN SPRING

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21st Sept 2017

## 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:

#### 3rd Thursday of the Month

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

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

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

*(No meeting in December)*

### Annual Membership Fees:

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

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

**Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers**

**Bank: Suncorp**

**BSB: 484-799**

**Account: 0014-21651**

### Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

### Members' Market Corner:

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

### Raffle Table:

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

### Library:

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

### Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

**1/4 page:** \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year

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

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

**W: [www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/gcorganic](http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic)**

## 2017 Committee

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Vice President	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
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Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Dayne Petersen
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888 Maggie Golightly Bill Smart
Supper Co-ordinator	Heather Ryan 0409 577 499 Deb Phillips

**Newsletter Contributions are welcome.**

Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch. Deadline for contributions is the **one week before the meeting**. Send your content to Dorothy Coe at: [dorothy@dorothycoe.com](mailto:dorothy@dorothycoe.com)

## Notice Board

### Membership Renewals

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

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

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

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

### Membership Renewals – August 2017:

**Overdue:** Denise Goodwin (335), Kym O'Connell (411), Barbara Talty (58), Khoo Mea Lee (211), Ron Campbell (255), Peter and Jan Fleming (287), Darrell & Marion Williams (310), Debbie Chesterfield (410), Justin & Jerry Rogers (275), Scott McCormack (334), Theunetia Scheepers (391), Judy Fourie (392)

**August:** Warren & Bev Carlson (87), Murray Olver (105), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Jill Barber (290), Jan Guest (307), Geraldine McDonald (354), Dayne Petersen (377), Caroline Li (395), Lieu Searston (412)

**September:** Henry Blonner (108), Beth Orme (343), Grant Fastier (379), Michael Cuthbertson (396), Anne Butler (398), Barbara Westmore (413)

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

### Thanks to Contributors this month:

Diane Kelly, Dorothy Coe, Rachael Lebeter, Kerry Lason & Jill Barber.

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

### September – Bernie Winters and Dr Doug English

We are going to learn about the experts why We Love Turmeric! Bernie runs a wonderful organic farm at Springbrook, while Doug is a local veterinarian who has published extensive research on the clinical benefits of turmeric and uses it in his practice. Come along for tips on growing and using turmeric!

**November –** It's our birthday!! And our Christmas party! Event details TBA.

## Workshops

### Abilities Plus – Permaculture

For more information and bookings contact  
Lyn Mansfield M: 0409 645 888

E: [lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)

W: <http://abilitiespluspermaculture.com/>

26 Aug	2:30pm to 5.30pm	<b>LOTUS High Tea</b> Teavine House 268 Tallebudgera Creek Rd, Tallebudgera
27 Aug	9am to 3pm	<b>Brisbane Organic Growers - Organic Fair</b> Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Road Windsor
28 Aug	9.30am to 11.30am	<b>Gardening Class</b> <b>Lean about basic gardening and permaculture</b> Joan Park Community Garden, Joan Street, Southport
3 Sept	9am to 5pm	<b>Botanical Bazaar GC Garden Expo</b>  Nerang Country Paradise Parklands, 231 Beaudesert Nerang Road, Nerang
10 Sept	9am to 11am	<b>Logan Food Gardeners Garden tour</b> 11 Louden Street, Woodridge
11 Sept	9.30am to 11.30am	<b>Gardening Class</b> <b>Lean about basic gardening and permaculture</b> Joan Park Community Garden, Joan Street, Southport

## Can We Help?

In the section BELOW our members can ask about cuttings, seeds or plants that they would like to obtain, or where we could let others know about any bits and pieces that we might have spare and would like to share.

So if you would like to let the Club members know about any particular plant you are looking for, or if you can help out and provide a plant that someone has asked about. please email Dorothy with the details at [dorothy@dorothycoe.com](mailto:dorothy@dorothycoe.com)

## Offers / Wants / Swap / Share

### EDIBLE PLANTS, TREES, CUTTINGS DONATIONS OR SWAP REQUIRED

To support the start up of Ediblescapes (Edible Forest Landscape Project) at Nerang they are looking for donations of Edible Plants, Fruit Trees, Seedlings & Cuttings AND/OR Jorge can organise a swap deal whereby he will swap bags of compost for edible trees.

This will help them get the community edible landscape established.

If you can help now or in the future please contact Jorge at:  
[ediblescape.nerang@gmail.com](mailto:ediblescape.nerang@gmail.com)

### PLANT POTS, NATIVE PLANTS, EDIBLE TREES, SEEDLINGS, CUTTINGS REQUIRED

If anyone has any spare unwanted plant pots or **any** types of plants, trees, or cuttings (edible or non edible) please contact Cathy Beard as she is collecting them for an ongoing project down in Murwillumbah to help the people that had their gardens and homes flooded during the last storm.

This will be an ongoing project until further notice so if you don't have anything right now but might have something in the future please keep her in mind.

Also if anyone wants to be more actively involved helping Cathy with potting and planting or even offering storage over the coming months please let her know. Cathy can be reached on 0428 816 173

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[www.botanicalbazaar.com.au](http://www.botanicalbazaar.com.au)

## Ediblescapes' geoglyph garden design mockup

Thanks to Nerang Family Funanza and Country Paradise Parklands Nerang, Ediblescapes' Geoglyph artwork was viewed by over 7k people that celebrate community in this fantastic family fun day at Nerang.

Thanks to geoglyph "Moon" artwork, which is a mock-up of the Moon Circular garden – an adaptation of the Lunar Calendar - Ediblescapes received huge support and feedback of the edible forest landscape garden project and we also had some new members join the project.

With the help of volunteers, (you are invited to help) Ediblescapes aim to present at the Botanical Bazaar Gardening Expo a completed Geoglyph mock-up of the garden designs proposed for the Edible Forest landscape project.

Ediblescapes will work in the Geoglyph garden design mock-up the next 3 Saturdays— **19th Aug and 26th August and finish up on the 2nd of September. Working bees will be from 8:30am. Volunteers are welcome any time before 2pm.**

The geoglyph artwork will be produced at Country Paradise Parkland Nerang, just in the proposed position for the Edible Forest Landscape Gardens. For more information contact acting secretary at phone number 0412 382 989

For more information see event at <https://www.facebook.com/n.ediblescapes/>  
If you are interested in being part of NESS team as an active member, volunteer or a supporter please email to: [ediblescape.nerang@gmail.com](mailto:ediblescape.nerang@gmail.com) or contact: the acting secretary at Phone: 07 5533 9955

Nerang Ediblescapes  
Edible Forest Landscape Project

**WE NEED YOUR  
CONTENT HERE**

**SEND US SOME TIPS ABOUT  
GARDENING THAT YOU HAVE  
DISCOVERED OR PERHAPS SOME  
INFO ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING  
IN YOUR GARDEN.**

**NOTE: THE NEW DEADLINE FOR  
SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER  
IS ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE  
MEETING.**



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## Guest Speaker – Wollumbin Gourmet Mushrooms – July Meeting

Growing up in Northern NSW, it is wet more often than dry. It's the type of place where fungi grows with abandon on shoes, on clothes, on neglected books. After a good rain, or in the height of summer, trees and leaf mold are teeming with more colours than seems proper and you feel that if you sit still for long enough, you'll grow something too! Although I am well aware of the inherent danger in foraging for mushrooms, I always thought that there had to be more to the climate than moldy shoes. There had to be some way to turn all that fungi-growing potential into definitely-edible mushrooms!

Gary Miller, who stepped in at the last minute in July to save us from speaker-less-ness, has done just that. On a small property not far down the road from my parents, he is making a business out of the local fecundity with Wollumbin Gourmet Mushrooms.

After throwing an unproductive mushroom project outside only to have it immediately flush (produce mushrooms), Gary (a native of Tassie) realized what I learned as a child, that there is no controlling fungus in the Northern Rivers. So now, he just lets nature do the work and produces shiitake, shimeji, nameko, a range of oyster mushrooms and the aptly named Lion's mane in the naturally occurring rainforest of his backyard. And believe me, anything could turn into a mushroom in such a pretty place!

Gary told us that in Japan, the most valuable mushrooms are those that are cracked or misshapen. These beautiful flaws are an indication, according to tradition, of the improved flavor and health benefits that come from a mushroom that has had to fight to survive, a mushroom that has won out against the odds to grow and reproduce. And it is this natural instinct for survival (and the local inclination to fungus!) that Gary relies on to produce his beautiful and delicious mushrooms!

Like many of us, Gary focuses on having a minimal impact on the environment, creating

a sustainable business based on locally sourced inputs. The shiitake are grown on eucalyptus logs (forestry thinnings, actually) in the forest, echoing the traditional Japanese production method that is replicated on oak in the US – I loved the aside that shiitake logs can produce for up to 12 years overseas but can break down in as little as 18 months around here. While the other varieties are produced from grow bags containing straw, sawdust or chaff, and housed in simple shade-cloth covered frames. There are no sprays or conditioners, just water when humidity is low, like at this time of year. It turns out that most mushrooms rely on a humidity of around 70%. No wonder they like the Northern Rivers so much!

To produce mushrooms reliably, avoiding contamination is key. As such, there is a lot of sterilization of growing media involved (in pressure cookers, and even a 12 hour sauna (steam treatment) in a 40 gallon drum!), before it is inoculated with the desired variety of mushroom.

Much to my surprise, mushrooms are not typically produced from spore – in my imagination you just wave a suitable mushroom in the direction of where you want it to grow, because in the Northern Rivers anything is possible! Instead, they come from cuttings. However, producing a mushroom from a cutting is a much more complex process than simply placing the cutting into suitable media like we might do for a plant. Instead the cutting needs to be grown in a sterile environment like a petri dish before the resulting mycelium (fungus) can be removed, divided and used to inoculate a new media. Most mushroom varieties are divided and placed into various media like grains and sawdust several times before they are ready to be used to grow mushrooms, in a process that can take months.

If this sounds ridiculously complex, it is worth remembering that the mushroom we eat is the fruiting body or reproductive part of the fungus, which has the purpose of producing spores, while the mycelium is the vegetative part and absorbs the nutrients the fungi needs (any errors are mine or Google's, not Gary's!). Like plants, the mushroom mycelium

needs the correct nutrition and environment in order to attempt reproduction by flushing.

But it is nice to know that if someone like Gary takes care of the sterilization and inoculation, growing mushrooms is simple. If you buy one of Gary's ready-to-go Mushroom Bags, all you need to do is cut some holes in it, keep the humidity up (bathrooms, spray bottles or anywhere in Northern NSW will do!), and you have mushrooms! Check out Diane's! One small mushroom bag will flush 4 to 5 times (roughly every 4 weeks) if looked after, producing up to 1 kg of mushrooms (which is more than you'd think) in total. Gary recommends picking around day 3 of a flush, and storing mushrooms in the fridge to stop them growing. Breaking the mushroom off and pulling a little filling from the bag in the process will help to prevent contamination of the growing media.

If you are as interested in growing your own mushrooms as I am, or live somewhere as humid as I, there are a lot of options:

- Visit Gary's website at <http://www.wollumbingourmetmushrooms.com.au> for tips
- Or pop in and see him at the Murwillumbah Farmers' Markets on Wednesday mornings at the show grounds. Not only does Gary have his gorgeous mushrooms for sale, he also has grow bags
- Gary also runs mushroom growing courses, that teach you everything from sterilizing your growing media, to creating mushroom bags and inoculation techniques. You will go home with the materials and skills to grow up a ton of mushrooms! The next course will probably be around the end of September (the 24<sup>th</sup>?) and you can get more information through the website.
- Additional resources include Paul Stamets' books, which set the standard for hobby mushroom growing.

## Q & A – June Meeting

- Q:** During discussions about our club funds, someone asked where does the money go raised by the club.
- A:** Examples include insurance, rent, seeds, books, soil test kit, gift baskets for guest speakers, computer, etc.
- Q:** Someone also asked if we could use some of our funds to pay some of the more high-profile public speakers.
- A:** If we have a public speaker in mind then we just need to appeal to the majority.
- Q:** We also discussed about organising more visits to our members gardens and also maybe some bus trip outings which can be both social and educational.
- A:** Maria was happy with this but we do need someone in the club to be the organiser so if there are any members that would be interested in volunteering for this role please contact Maria.
- Q:** Do peanuts grow here ?
- A:** Yes - Try loose peanuts from organic store. Try soaking on paper towel. Protect from bush rats and bandicoots. They need good drainage. Plant sandwiched between paper towel. They can cope with poor soil as not much nitrogen needed.

**If You Only do One thing this  
Month.... Plant Some Sweet Potatoes**  
By Diane Kelly

One of the first things to do before we decide what to plant in our vegetable gardens is to check a planting guide. Annette McFarlane lists over eighty different vegetables that can be grown in sub-tropical climates, but only fourteen of them can be grown year-round. Making sure of a plants growing season will increase the chances of a successful harvest. Fortunately, sweet potatoes are one of those vegies that you can grow any time of the year, so let's plant some this month.

Sweet potatoes originated in Central and South America, and have been cultivated over thousands of years – in fact Christopher Columbus brought some back from the West Indies to Spain. In South America, the juice of red sweet potatoes is mixed with lime juice for making a dye for cloth, and in Peru the vegetable is used in the production of the famous Moche ceramics. The plant is also used in the production of starch and industrial alcohol.

In our region, a non-culinary use of the sweet potato plant is to use it as a groundcover to protect and improve soil. The plants retain soil moisture, and they building up levels of organic matter by creating their own mulch.

For culinary purposes, we can boil, steam, bake, mash, chip or candy sweet potatoes with honey or maple syrup – and they can apparently be eaten raw or included in smoothies. The shoot tips can be cooked in the same way as spinach.

Sweet potatoes can be propagated vegetatively (i.e. when a part of a plant is removed and planted, with the new plant being genetically identical to the parent) by planting tubers, or by taking cuttings. When growing by tuber, it is recommended that you chose ones that have already begun to sprout – use organic tubers if you can, because sweet potatoes are often chemically treated to stop them sprouting. Another method of growing

sweet potatoes is to simply put one in a pot of friable compost or seed-raising mixture. Water regularly; apply liquid fertilizer when the shoots emerge – and then use the shoots as a source of cutting material when they are about 30cm long. Cut the shoots about 5cm above the ground – never pull the shoots out of the ground as this provides a point of infection.

Plan to grow sweet potatoes in a well-drained, raised bed in a sunny position. The mounds of soil can be built up on coarse prunings and garden waste – this technique provides perfect drainage and prevents tubers from rotting, and is particularly useful for elevating crops above water that may lie after tropical downpours. Plant either the tubers or cuttings 40-60cms apart. The cuttings (or “slips”) should be planted with the lower end 8cm under the soil – it helps to soak them in compost tea or diluted seaweed solution for ten minutes before planting. Containing plants by trimming encourages them to grow more tubers – use the cuttings to grow more plants.

Sweet potatoes should be ready to harvest within four months – although impatient gardeners can “bandicoot” or dig out young tubers for immediate use if they need to! The leaves will turn yellow as the crop is ready to harvest.

A potential problems of sweet potatoes can be the rotting of tubers late in the season, so keep them regular trimmed, deeply watered, well drained and fed well.

A final word of advice about another potential problem of growing extensive areas of sweet potatoes – bandicoots and rodents love to feast on the tubers – and snakes love to feast on rodents, and use the plants as habitat. So remember to wear sturdy footwear if you are growing lots of plants under trees as a ground cover!

Sweet potatoes: versatile to eat; easy to grow; good-looking in pots as a rambling indoor plant; useful for retaining soil moisture and feeding the soil – so let's plant some this month!





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### Recipes

#### Recipes and Supper Table

Thank you to those leaving their name with their Supper Table offering so we can ask you for the ingredients/recipe!

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

## Parks Alive, Roma St Parklands By Kerry Lason

Saturday 5th August, Rebecca Bowan and myself travelled on the train to Roma St Parklands, to experience 'Parks Alive'.

What a magnificent day weather wise and learning wise! My first treat was listening to Sophie Thomson from Gardening Australia, talk, whilst Rebecca learnt how to make food wraps using cotton cloth and beeswax.

Sophie's talk was on wellbeing in the garden, illustrating the benefits gardening provides us with - exercise, relaxation, health and nutrition. She then went on to describe each of these. A quote she borrowed was 'To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow' by Audrey Hepburn. Sophie talked of the two vitamins we absorb in the garden. Vitamin D and Vitamin N. Vitamin N stands for Vitamin Nature. She spoke about the author Richard Louv who wrote a book on Vitamin N and 'Last Child in the Woods'. If possible, read these books. The latter one explains the concern of lack of nature in many children's lives and how contact with nature improves our stability, empathy and love. She talked about the health benefits of soil and how we need to get our 'hands in it' for natural bacterium which releases serotonin to elevate mood and decrease anxiety. In New York they are selling soil mats to walk barefoot on! Also Google 'Beyond Blue to Green' and 'Nature Play' which the Gold Coast recently hosted. LESS SCREEN MORE GREEN is a new slogan to impress the importance of getting out in nature.

My next treat was Linda Brennan from [ecobotanica.com.au](http://ecobotanica.com.au) She has recently released her book 'A Delicious Bunch' - growing and cooking with edible flowers. I was fortunate to purchase a signed copy from her. Linda taught us how to make fertilisers, one being a Comfrey Tea Maker which is less smelly than making it in a bucket and also practical. Comfrey is high in calcium and magnesium hence excellent for the plants. You will need less than a metre (70cm) plumber's pipe, strong tape, 1.25 or 1.5 litre bottle (keep lid on),

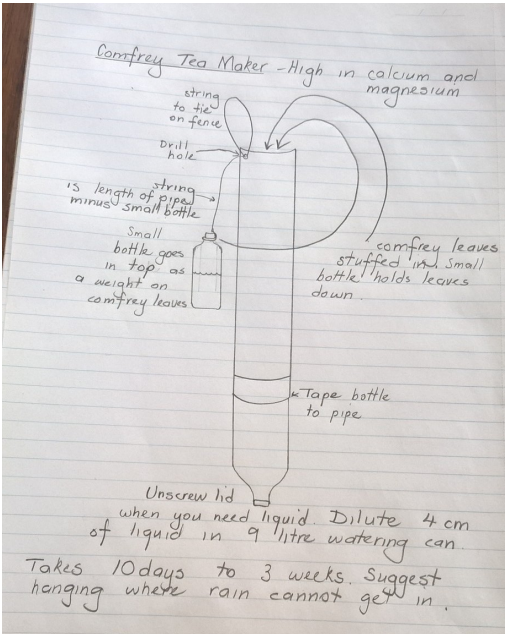
smaller bottle half filled with water (becomes the weight), string and drill. Cut the bottom off the big bottle and follow the diagram. It may take 10 to 21 days to break down. Use 4cm of tea in a 9 litre watering can, then fill with water.

Annette McFarlane talked on seed saving and protecting your plants from cross pollination from other varieties. She distributed seeds (say corn) to her surrounding neighbours to plant, to protect her plants in the centre of the radius. She also self pollinates her pumpkin flowers, then rubber bands the female flower to stop pollination from other varieties.

Rebecca and I spent the rest of the day enjoying the sites of the gardens and I enjoyed a bush tucker tour. I intend to go back to the Roma St Parklands and explore the many gardens it has, as I have been in this area one and a half years and loving all that is on offer! We are so spoilt for choice. The Parklands was full of people on the Saturday which demonstrates people are enjoying nature. When Sophie Thomson was checking out the venue Friday afternoon, she was thrilled to see people from the surrounding high rises enjoying the Parkland with their families and using the barbecues.

Bring back nature! Note: I am thrilled daughter number 2 was always outside and shinnying up trees whilst she was growing up!





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GC Visitors Guide 2013

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## Hints for “All Things Gardening” from Diane Kelly

It feels like we are going to have an early Spring – the “dawn chorus” has been loud and clear this past week or so, and the warbling of the magpies has been particularly melodic.

So how do we encourage wildlife – whether it be birds, lizards, butterflies or more unusual animals – into our gardens? Here are some hints for this month’s “All Things Gardening”.

I have a book on my shelf called “Habitat Garden – attracting wildlife to your garden”, and it commences with a definition of a habitat garden. The introduction explains that, for us, a habitat garden means “a garden that favours Australian native plants over plants from other countries”. More than that, a habitat garden favours **local** plants and life forms over those from anywhere else.

The book then asks “**Why** habitat gardens?” Firstly, it is rewarding to get to know our local fauna and flora. But more than that, we are losing much of the bush that we used to play in as kids – national parks and nature reserves only cover about 6% of our land area. Also, because we have traditionally used gardening styles learnt from the cooler, wetter climates of Europe, we have used enormous amounts of water and artificial nutrients.

So what can **we** do to win back some space in our backyards for the “disappearing Australians” – our native plants and animals?

1. Plan a habitat garden. If you aren’t sure what is indigenous to your local area, talk to the Gold Coast City Council – there’s a section on their website about encouraging wildlife. Also, talk to Landcare (or similar group), or ask around at our meetings to see who can give you some advice – have a chat to some of the Land for Wildlife members.

2. Mimic nature. The average suburban garden is made up of several layers – soil, soil covering (mulch, leaf litter etc), other ground features – rocks or fallen logs, places that hold water, ground-covering plants, shrubs and under-storey plants, and trees. Various birds, mammals, insects each use those layers – we need to see our gardens as home to each of them.
3. Learn about your visitors. The first steps about attracting nature to your garden is to find out about it – for example, what birds visit your garden; are they seasonal; what is their diet; and how do they nest? Then:
  - Provide food – ranging from grevilleas and their nectar (which also attract insects for bug-eating birds) to grasses, and then to trees.
  - Provide water – whether in a natural low point in your garden, or artificially via a bird bath or pond.
  - Provide refuge – dense and prickly plant foliage provides shelter from predators for little birds, and trellises, screens and hedges can also provide semi-invisibility for them.
  - Provide nesting – and this can range from leaving a dead tree standing in your garden for a parrot to nest in, to safe areas on the ground. Bird observer groups such as Birds Australia, or the Gould League, can help you there.
  - Limit threats. Wildlife is threatened by humans, pesticides, domestic “moggies” and even physical rubbish (various plastics) can be a problem.

So that is an introduction to having wildlife come to our gardens – and our gardens won’t do well without them. Read up on what you can do in your backyard; talk to knowledgeable people or groups; and take the time to look around you so that you can create your own “Habitat Garden”.

## Interesting Articles From Jill Barber

### Nutritional content of fruit and vegetables declines

Several studies have shown substantial declines in the nutritional content of fruits and vegetables over decades. The 2004 University of Texas study comparing nutrient levels in 1950 and 1999 of 43 fruits and vegetables, found substantial declines in protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, vitamin B2 and vitamin C.

The authors postulated that levels of magnesium, zinc and vitamins B6 and E would have declined but these were not measured in 1950.

A British study of data on 20 vegetables from 1930 and 1980 found that average calcium declined by 19%, iron by 22% and potassium by 14%. A Kushi Institute study of 12 vegetables found declines between 1975 and 1997 of calcium 27%, iron 37%, vitamin A 21% and vitamin C 30%.

Another study found that vitamin A levels were only eighth of the level in our grandparents time. Two key factors have been suggested for these declines: soil depletion and the restricted ability of plants to take up certain minerals due to artificial fertilisation, and the breeding of plants for size and rapid growth has outstripped the ability to take up or manufacture nutrients.

More reason to grow our own!!\

### Soluble nitrogen reduces soil CO2

For decades, soil scientists have maintained that water soluble nitrogen fertilisers, by making plants grow faster and larger, helped to build up common levels in the soil.

Recently, University of Illinois scientists have contested this belief, in a paper *synthetic nitrogen fertilisers depletes nitrogen: a global*

*dilemma for sustainable cereal production*, published in the Journal of Environmental Quality. They argue that, to the contrary, artificial nitrogen causes soil organic matter to be used up more quickly, releasing CO2 into the atmosphere. As soil organic matter levels decline, organic nitrogen stored in the organic matter is also released, as nitrogen oxide, a greenhouse gas with 300 times the heat trapping effect of CO2. As the soil's ability to stroll organic nitrogen declines, more soluble nitrogen must be applied to get the same growth effect in plants, creating a vicious cycle.

### Herbicide Linked to Fatty Liver

Scientists have discovered that the ingestion of very low doses (4 nanograms per kilogram, 75000 times less than levels permitted in the EU)! Of the herbicide glyphosate is linked with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Rats fed this amount developed fatty livers whereas rats given water without glyphosate didn't.

### Soil makes you happy

Many people feel more balanced, "earthed", relaxed and happy when they get their hands in the soil.

In fact there is some scientific basis for this phenomenon. Soil contains a microbe, *Mycobacterium Vaccae*, that actually may stimulate serotonin production, making you happier and more relaxed. Lack of serotonin has been linked to anxiety, depression and other psychological problems. Gardeners actually inhale the bacteria from the soil and can take it into their bloodstream through a cut. Experiments with rats indicate that after a good bout of gardening the beneficial effects may last up to 3-4 weeks!

## FRUIT TREES

### AUGUST

**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.

### SEPTEMBER

**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.

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**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.

*Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook*

## VEGETABLES

### AUGUST:

Artichoke, Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans, Beetroots, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Celery, Chilli, Cucumber, Eggplant, Endive, Gourd, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Shallot, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Corn, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

### SEPTEMBER:

Artichoke, Asian greens, Asparagus, Beans (French), Beetroots, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rosella, Shallots, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet corn, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Zucchini.

## HERBS

### AUGUST

**Annual:** Borage, Calendula, Chervil, Chamomile, Coriander, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, 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, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

### SEPTEMBER

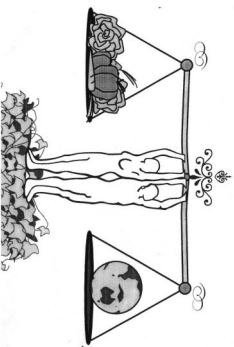
**Annual:** Basil, Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Coriander, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Mustard Lettuce, Nasturtium, Rocket.

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

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

If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:  
**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 21st Sept 2017