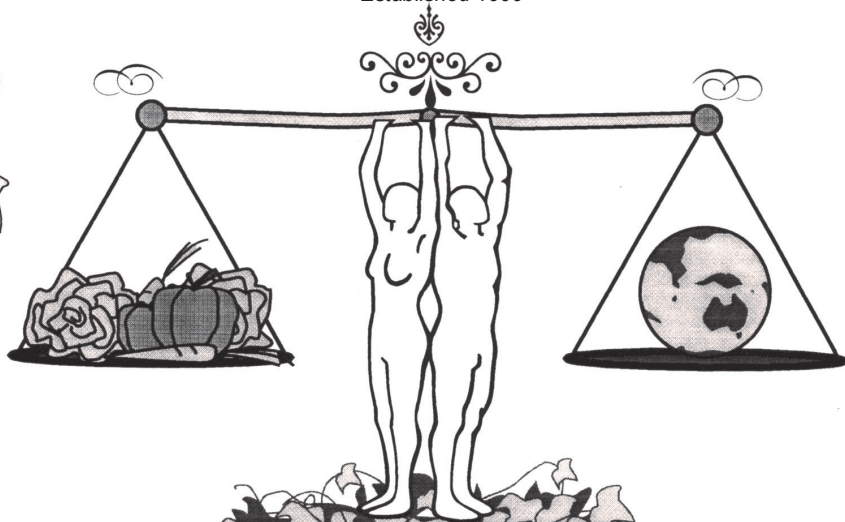


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 July 2013 Issue 7
GARDENING IN WINTER

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-------|--|
| Pg2 | <i>Club Information</i> | 8-9 | <i>A Visit Summit Organics" with Rod & Tania Bruin</i> |
| 3 | <i>Notice Board, What's On</i> | 10-11 | <i>Gardeners Q&A, Weeds, Vanessa's Cassava Cake Recipe</i> |
| 4-5 | <i>President's Message, Chokos, Propagation</i> | 12-13 | <i>Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts, Garden in August</i> |
| 6-7 | <i>Guest Speaker - Vanessa Fernandes - Cassava, Taro & Cocoyam</i> | 14-15 | <i>Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Herbs, Which Herbs won't grow together, Allelopathic</i> |

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 15 August

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 & Graeme Barber, Maria Roberson, Debbie, Virginia

We would really like to hear from you ...

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: Julie Abraham (315), Deborah Anker (336), Yukiyo Copley (319), Guy Lewington (339), Barbara Talty (58), Margaret Reichelt (111), Rebecca Bowen (297), Moyra & Julien de Jager (340), Alf & Marina Orpen (341), Karen Auchere (147), Chantel Geldenhuis (268), Robert Turner (301), Robert Faulkner (303), Virginia Jacobsen (325), Lise Racine (151), Ross & Helena Kelso (184), Peter Seymour-Smith (190), Jan Wright (191), Graham Boyle & Khoo Mea Lee (211), Chris & Dorothy Winton (253), Ron Campbell (255), Cathy Hodge (304), Neil McLaughlin (326), Eileen Turner (328)

July: Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Kathy Steenbeek (331), Scott McCormack (334)

August: Shelley Pryor (72), Warren & Beverly Carlson (87), Murray Olver (105), Gene Rosser (224), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Jill Barber (290), Geoffrey Williams (293), Lyn Mansfield (306), Jan Guest (307)

GCOG on the Web

Looking for more information about gardening for this time of year? Check out the past Winter newsletters from our website.

www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au

What's On

Gold Coast Permaculture

www.goldcoastpermaculture.org.au

27 July: Using Herbs for Medicinal and Culinary purposes. By Daniel Smith.

28 July: Wheat Grass and Green Smoothies. By John Sierakowski and Justin

10 August: Healthy eating and nutrition. Griffith University nutrition students

11 August: Healing methodologies and wellness strategies. Anne Marie Andrews

Mudbrick Cottage

www.herbcottage.com.au

20 July: Herbs for home use

Life Changing Events

www.lifechangingevents.net.au

20 July, 1-3pm (Burleigh School Hall) The Greenest School on Earth. With Dan Roman.

22 July: Film Night (GCOG Members receive a 20% discount - enter "LOHAS" as the code)

July start - Bio Farming Course with Dave Forrest (TAFE) - contact Angie for details.

GCOG - Guest Speaker

August: Louise Newell on "Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program"

September: tba

October: Lise Racine on "Therapeutic Tea and Decoction - Preparation & Use"

SPECIAL OFFER ON FRUIT TREES

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 availability fruit trees

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

GOLDCOAST10OFF

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Believe it or not, now is the time to get ready for spring in the garden. What do you want to plant this coming season?

Are you thinking of planting some asparagus crowns? If so you will need to gather some mail order catalogues or check out suppliers online for the best prices and cheapest delivery. Asparagus crowns are planted in early spring, which means garden beds, need to be prepared well in advance of their arrival so there is nothing to hold up the planting schedule. Crowns left lying around for extended periods of time before they are planted will suffer or possibly die. Growing Asparagus is considered a long term commitment in the vegetable world, with plants living up to 25 years, though this is unlikely here on the subtropical Gold Coast, you can expect 8 to 10 years if the plants are well maintained. This is a luxury vegetable that is all the more tasty when grown organically and harvested fresh from your garden, a culinary experience that is hard to beat.

At the upcoming August meeting the seed table will be newly stocked with all your seed needs for spring and summer. Still a bargain at just \$2 per packet, we are able to maintain this low price because members are choosing to purchase their seeds from the club, keep on supporting us and ask your friends and family if you can pick up a pack or two for them as well.

If you have citrus trees you will no doubt be in a state of orange, lemon and lime abundance. Trees look very attractive covered in fruit and it makes me wonder why anyone bothers with planting so called ornamental trees in their yards. Citrus trees are easy care and ever-green; they flower in spring and have a beautiful perfume, then, not long after, the fruit begin to set and another spectacle begins. It is no coincidence that the fruit ripen just when we need their Vitamins for winter coughs and colds. I reckon every yard in Australia could fit

at least one citrus tree, what do you think, have you got a spot to give it a go? Our meeting night raffle table has been looking fabulous this year, thanks to all the members who bring something to contribute on the night. Let's keep the momentum up folks as it is a major fund raiser for us.

New members are invited to participate in providing a plate of goodies for supper; it doesn't have to be fancy, so no pressure to perform. If you have some produce or a plant to put on the raffle table this is always greatly needed and we encourage you to do so. You will have noticed that our club is very inclusive and we all rely on each other to pitch in where needed.

Could all members put their chairs away and wash and dry their cups when finished supper, this would be a big help to those left to lock up and the end of the night. Perhaps you could just cast your eye around the room to see if anything needs tidying.

Happy growing, Maria.

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

CHOKOS

... Things You Learn at Organic Growers

I admit I am naive. I grew a choko vine on a small wire fence and was overwhelmed by its amazing growth – those tendrils were always seeking new places to grasp. My choko harvest was plentiful. Early childhood memories were limited to chokos being boiled and served with butter and salt.

So, being among a large group of well-informed, experienced, charming persons at the June meeting, I enquired as to how chokos could be used. What amazing revelations!

With my new knowledge, I put the recipes to the test.

I peeled and diced the chokos, and stewed them in a small quantity of water to which a desertspoon of sugar had been added. When soft and cooler, I mixed in some cinnamon. I placed this into a pyrex dish and added a cake batter to the top and cooked it in the oven. My dear husband did not bat an eyelid as he enjoyed his 'apple sponge' with custard. So I now confess this in the GCOG July magazine, and unless he reads it, he will never know!

I thought it was delicious.

Strips of choko added to the stir fry vegetables was an acceptable dish – and its lack of colour was not obvious amongst all the other crisp vegies. Anonymous.



Get ready for Spring .. HAPPINESS!

The Wilderness Garden - August

What to Propagate:

Snap off bits of lavender and wormwood and stick them in any bare patch round the garden, both for their beauty and to help repel pests and attract predators.

Dig up bit of comfrey root (you only need small bits) and plant them around garden beds to stop the grass encroaching, and under fruit trees as a deep-rooted "living mulch".

Pests:

- Clean up piles of rubbish. (Dowse with hen manure or blood & bone and hope they turn into compost!)
- Pick off all dried fruit "mummies" that may infect next season's crops.
- Put out snail traps and snail fences.
- Keep feeding your birds – they are the best pest prevention method I know.

"The Wilderness Garden" - Jackie French



HERB FARM

Michael & Sandra Nanka
491 Springbrook Rd
MUDGEERABA. 4213

Opening times: Mondays, Tuesdays and the 3rd weekend of the month.

9 am – 4 pm

Phone: (07) 5530 3253

www.herbcottage.com.au

- ◆ Culinary, Fragrant and Medicinal Herbs
- ◆ Vegetable and Herb Seeds
- ◆ Craft, Herb Vinegars, Jams & Preserves
- ◆ Essential & Fragrant Oils, & lots more

Vanessa Fernandes
Cassava, Taro & Cocoyam
Jill Barber

It was fascinating to learn from Vanessa Fernandes at the last GCOG meeting about these staple foods from Brazil, especially cassava, "the bread of Brazil". Her talk, accompanied by her powerpoint presentation, clearly showed us not only the methods of cultivation and harvesting this amazing and hardy Brazilian plant, but also the food value, the method of processing and then how to use the product. She also passed around books and samples of processed cassava, which further illustrated why it is such an important plant in South America. Finally, she not only had plants and cuttings to give away, but a delicious dessert she had made from it to share with everyone at supper time. [See recipe following.]

Cassava is easy **to grow**, harvest and process, Vanessa told us. It copes well with water stress, and is resistant to diseases and pests. It likes loose soil, and is best planted in spring from stems, which are the common propagating material. They can be intercropped with corn, peanuts, sweet potato, pumpkin and beans, which can grow up them for support. In 8 to 12 months we can expect to be able to harvest them. The roots are a good source of carbohydrates and the leaves are a rich protein source.

To process them, once the roots are dug up, the outside layer can be peeled off, and must be used within 48 hours. If left longer, purplish strips appear due to oxidation, and it's wasted. If you're not ready to use it straight away, it can be covered with water and stored in the fridge for later use. Alternatively, it can be placed in sealer bags in the freezer. When ready to use, it can be boiled till soft, then the fibre from the middle removed.

Cooking Ideas. There are two types, bitter and sweet, which have different uses. **Bitter cassava** is grown to make into **flour**, which we had a taste of, too. Cassava flour is made by traditional communities in the Amazon. Flour is an important staple food for them.

They eat it with fish, acai berry and the national dish of black beans. The **sweet** variety is the only one cultivated in Australia as it has lower levels of cyanide.

Once peeled, it can be grated and made into frittatas with egg and flour, chips, soups, casseroles, fish and meat dishes, bread and pies. With rapadura sugar added, it can be made into cakes, biscuits, desserts, etc. If it's not being grated, it can then be boiled, sautéed, mashed or baked. Then the fibre is removed out of the middle, which is easier to do after boiling the cassava.

Extracting the cassava starch (tapioca).

Using a blender or a food processor, water is added to the cassava, turning it into a paste. You can grind it, too (watch out for your fingers!). The cassava is squeezed, using cheese cloth to extract the juice from it, which is full of starch! The liquid is left resting for 2 hours. You can bake a nice cake with this left over **cassava meal** or pulp .

The yellow liquid is the **tucupi**, which can be bottled up and fermented for a day. It can then be boiled for half an hour with herbs, salt, garlic and chillies, and used as stock for cooking, eg fish in.

After using a dry tea towel to remove the excessive moisture from the cassava starch, you can sieve the humid **starch, flour or tapioca** onto the top of a non-stick pan and enjoy a **pancake**. You can also leave the cassava starch in the sun to dry for later use as a thickener. It is available with this name from health food stores or Asian food shops here, too.

Cooking Cassava Leaves. Traditionally leaves are ground up or chopped up before cooking them. They are boiled for 15-20 minutes and the water then discarded as it contains cyanide. They can then be used in a dish called **Manicoba**, which is a traditional dish from the north of Brazil. The cassava leaves are cooked for 7 days. Then a range of types of salted meat is added to the pot. It is a really rich dish!

Cows thrive on eating these leaves, and give

more milk as a result, and they're good for chooks, too.

Fermenting Cassava. Elisabeth Fekonia's book, *Cultivating and Harvesting Tropical Vegetables*, includes information on this. The process is easy. First grate the cassava, then squeeze the juice out of it (the same process described above for starch extraction). The dry grated cassava is then packed tightly into a clean bucket with a well fitting lid. The cassava needs to be packed down tight to exclude the air as it is an anaerobic ferment, and it will spontaneously ferment in several days. You will have slightly soured, grated cassava on hand any time you need it. It won't spoil if it's kept in a cool spot in a cupboard.

Just use as in any grating cassava recipe. Because of the fermentation process, the taste will be a bit different, more sour. Fermented cassava can be used to cook cakes, the base of pies, biscuits, pancakes, etc.

Taro: Originates in the Indo-Malayan region, and there are two types: water loving or requiring regular irrigation. Taro likes soil with compost worked in. It is usually planted in furrows from September, and takes a full summer season to grow. It is harvested when it starts to get cool and it gets droopy. Replant baby suckers.

Cooking. Taro should always be cooked before eating because of calcium oxalate crystals. It's peeled or cut above a bucket of water to wash as you go to protect the hands. It can be roasted or cooked whole. When cooled, it can be peeled and used for cooking in different ways, such as homus, cakes, pesto, porridge or in a frying pan with butter and garlic.

Cocoyam leaves look similar to Taro leaves, but the stem joins the leaf at the top of the rib rather than in the middle, as the Taro leaf does. The veins should be cut out, and the leaves chopped finely. They are very nutrient dense. The stalks can be peeled, chopped up and boiled, along with the leaves, with added herbs and spices, for 15 to 20 minutes. It's ready when it no longer makes the

throat tingly. Flour can also be made from cocoyam, and it's good with black beans.

Watching Vanessa's powerpoint presentation of traditional methods of all the above was not only very colourful and clear, but it gave us a good feel for the scope of the growth and production of these foods in Brazil. It also illustrated quite clearly how each stage was done, and we were left with the feeling that we could grow these plants and use them ourselves. To that end, several of us were appreciative of the cuttings and plants that Vanessa had brought to give away. I, for one, will now know what to do with the one I took, and look forward to making some of that delicious cake that she brought for us to try that night.



Slow Food® Gold Coast

- ◆ An International non profit Organisation
- ◆ Defends Biodiversity
- ◆ Promotes Taste Education
- ◆ Supports Local Growers & Food Artisans

www.slowfoodaustralia.com.au

WE BELIEVE EVERYONE
SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO
GOOD CLEAN AND FAIR FOOD

A Visit to “Summit Organics” with Rod & Tania Bruin From Diane Kelly

Forty varieties of herbs, sprouts and vegetables to grow; a high average rainfall of 61.2 inches; six workers to organize; and caterpillars, wild ducks, cut-worms and monolepta beetle to cope with – why would anyone choose to dedicate their lives to such challenges?

Rod and Tania Bruin returned to live on the family property at Tyalgum with the dream of farming organically, and last weekend several of our club members attended an Open Day to see what they have achieved, and how they've done it.

The location is dramatic – 338 acres set on a plateau surrounded by mist-shrouded mountains. Much of the property is bushland, but there are six acres that have been dedicated to growing vegetables and herbs. The soil is rich, the rows of plants weed-free and extremely healthy looking – but the story begins well before the harvesting up on the top of the hill.

The farm management is divided into two – Rod does the monitoring of soil, plants, compost and pest control, and Tania co-ordinates the planting, growing and the picking. The first buildings we entered were the poly-tunnels (where the sprouts are grown) and the seed shed. Five types of sprouts – sunflower, radish, buckwheat, peas and wheatgrass – were introduced into the farm's production four years ago, as extremely high rainfalls had been making it difficult to grow vegetables. Sprouts grow quickly, so Tania has to schedule the soaking (about 8 hours) of seeds, the planting into trays, and then the harvesting and washing of the end product.

The seed shed is an amazing place – there are trays and trays of tiny vegetable plants. Some are covered by wire frames to protect the seeds from rodents, and all have different growing times. As Debbie Jones, one of our club members, wrote “I found the mathematical calculations behind every crop amazing –

being able to have a constant flow of things growing in my garden is something I have often struggled with. But Rod and Tania are masters at it, calculating how many days apart to plant each and every seed”. And the quantities are large – the potting soil used for growing the sprouts is stored in a pile about 60cms high, and a mini-excavator is used for mixing it.

To add to the challenges of growing seedlings, detailed and accurate records are kept of every tray sown. The farm is ACO certified, and annual audits can track the cycle of a particular vegetable from seed purchase, to sowing, to planting out, and to harvesting. Although this adds to the work-load, it is also a valuable tool to aid quality control.

Tania mentioned to us that the most important thing about growing seedlings is observation – for diseases, caterpillars, rodents or any other problems.



The seed shed

Then it was time for us to walk up the hill to the compost delivery point, and the vegetable and herb growing area. Rod explained that only compost is used on the farm now – no lime or rock phosphate has been added for over 5 years. A “truck & dog” load (36 cubic feet) of compost is delivered every two weeks to the farm, and the spreading of this has achieved an organic content in the soil of 13%. A new layer of compost is spread prior to each crop being planted – Rod told us that if you provide food matter to the soil, “nature will send in someone to utilize it. So we just feed the soil with compost, and nature does the rest”. So each section of garden has 1.6

cubic metres of compost spread over it 3 or 4 times a year. One of the visitors asked if soil could be given too much compost, but Rod said that to date they have only seen improvement with the amounts they've used, so it's not too much so far! Ultimately Rod would like the farm to make its own compost by using the trees that are encroaching on the naturally cleared areas of the farm to make wood chips.

The rows of vegetables and herbs stretch out over the sloping beds. Some are covered to increase the temperature (which aids growth); most seem to have drip irrigation piping installed; and a number of them have electric netting zigged-zagged over them to keep out the wild ducks. Wallabies used to be the main wild-life problem, but now the wild ducks come on the nights of the full moon (so they can see any predators) and they can destroy up to \$6,000.00 worth of plants at a time. The monolepta beetle has caused up to 75% destruction of some crops, and cut-worms can chomp through many thousands of seedlings as well. Plus there were stories about the black, tiger and carpet snakes – but they were counter-acted by hearing about the rosella, king parrots and lyre-birds!



The rows of vegetables and their mountain back-drop

Back to Tania's job of harvesting the vegetables and herbs – this involves a 6.00 am start in summer, and a 7.00 am start in winter. The picking needs to be completed by 10.00 am, to maintain freshness, and to have supplies ready for the two markets at which the

produce is sold. Harvesting looks incredibly hard and tiring work – Tania uses a pair of rose clippers for cutting green leafy vegetables. They are cut, bunched and tied, and the off-cuts are left in situ to feed back into the soil. Some vegetables, such as kale, can re-grow for three harvests. Only healthy and strong leaves go into the bunches to be sold, so adding compost to improve the quality of the soil becomes economical. Water for the gardens comes from two dams, and spring water is used for any vegetables that need a final washing.

A couple of quotes from Rod are worth including:

“The longer we farm, the more we realize we don't know”

“When anyone buys organic food, they are supporting many things – good soil, TAFE classes, gardening clubs, students, as well as the farmers, their workers and their families”.

Jill and Graeme Barber, who were among those who visited the farm, wrote:

“We were impressed by the incredibly hard work and dedication of the people there to making things work: the way they handle all the problems, such as the ducks and beetle plagues, and how much compost is used - huge piles! I liked the wonderful friendliness and helpfulness of Tania & Rod, and the quality of what they produce: it's beautiful and fresh and healthy. I learned just how many hoops they have to jump through for certification, as well as countless little tips for growing our own vegies and sprouts, such as planting celery very close to keep the stalks in tight, and how it needs *lots* of water to prevent bitterness”.

Debbie commented that “There were many things that impressed me about the visit:

Rod & Tania's hard work ethics and pure passion stood out by far, and the effort they continually invest into the soil.

Their ability to withstand hard times, adapt and continue to stand strong in their belief

... Continued on pg 11

Gardeners Q&A

What Vegetables can I grow in Partial Shade?

As a general rule of thumb, any plants that do not flower will do well in a shady area. Leaf lettuces, carrots, radishes and cabbage should produce well for you. A shady spot actually makes growing some vegetables, such as spinach, easier as they are less likely to run to seed if grown in these conditions.

Why should you plant Sweet Corn in blocks?

Planting corn in a block of short rows rather than one long row is preferable because it helps to facilitate pollination. This is all-important with any edible crop as it will give you much higher yields. You can use the spaces between your rows of corn to grow shade-loving crops, such as spinach.

Why do my Zucchini Flowers fall off before they have a chance to grow?

Zucchini vines develop both male and female flowers; the male blossoms dry up and fall off after a few days, whereas the female flowers will develop fruit if they have been pollinated. You can help things along by attracting bee-friendly plants like borage – having lots of different kinds of flowers blooming all the time will help to ensure there are lots of pollinating insects nearby.

What is the best way to Freeze Herbs for use in the kitchen in winter?

Herbs can be frozen, but the process depends upon the herb, and what you'll be doing with it after it's frozen.

Tough-stemmed herbs like basil, tarragon and sage should have their leaves removed prior to freezing. Just pack the clean leaves into plastic bags. Basil should be blanched before freezing, or it will turn black. Simply put basil leaves into a strainer and pour boiling water over them. Drain and freeze in the size portions you think you'll need. Other herbs, such as dill or parsley, will freeze well if they're separated into sprigs and frozen individually, then packed into one large container.

You can also freeze chopped herbs in ice cube trays. Place a teaspoon of herb in each section, then fill with water. Once they're frozen, the herb cubes can be removed and stored in plastic freezer bags in the freezer. They're great for popping into winter soups and sauces. They also add a depth of flavour to pasta dishes, casseroles and omelettes.

“Gardeners’ Q&A - 500 Gardening Questions”

A Few Stubborn Weeds

Bindii eyes: Pour on undiluted urine in winter when they stand out bright green against the grass. Don't water for a day.

Couch grass: Keep it out with a grass barrier, either metal or comfrey. Kill it with clear plastic or undiluted urine. Scatter thickly with sulphate of ammonia, then cover with clear plastic. Leave a week.

Convolvulus, wandering jew and other spreaders: Cover with weed-mat, cut tiny holes for seedlings, and plant a garden on top. Scatter thickly with sulphate of ammonia, then cover with clear plastic. Leave for a week.

Kikuyu: Fence it out with a metal or comfrey barrier. Ploughing or digging must be repeated at weekly intervals, as kikuyu grows very fast.

Nutgrass: Dig it out in late winter/early spring when the roots and tiny tubers are nearly exhausted. Take as much soil as you can and keep it under water for three weeks to kill the bulblets. Mulch must be at least 20 cm deep and maintained for a year to be effective, as the bulblets provide a good food supply for the plant. Repeat cultivation will get rid of nut-grass, but the best solution is to plant lots of thick shrubs like French lavender over it.

Paspalum: Cut it with a sharp knife just below the surface. The leftover roots won't regrow. One blow with a mattock should do this.

“The Wilderness Garden” - Jackie French

... “Summit Organics” Cont’d

that if you look after the land, the land will look after you!!

The fact that Rod and Tania not only produce amazing fresh food from healthy land that they have helped create, but they are willing to share their knowledge and form strong connections with their customers.

Debbie continues: “The main thing I learnt was if you want sustainable, long term & healthy crops, bursting with nutrients, you need to continually feed the soil!! As Tania said, healthy soil produces healthy and strong food bursting with life.”

Virginia Jacobsen was another Club member who attended the Open Day and obviously enjoyed it. She wrote:

“What a great day was had by all at the lovely Summit Property. Rod and Tania are so passionate about providing everyone they can with their organic produce. They took us through the step-by-step process of growing healthy organic vegetables that they sell at various markets for us the public. Such kind, caring people - they even provided the most delicious lunch of so many kinds of fresh green vegies, organic dressings, bread and toasted walnuts with a little butter and honey - just delicious! I highly recommend a visit to this fabulous property. And, as Rod will tell, IT ALL STARTS WITH THE SOIL.”

So why do Rod and Tania work hard on their farm, and then come to the markets to allow us to share in what their efforts have produced? In her welcome to the group, Tania explained one of their reasons – “To connect people to farms – to show the who, how and why of food being grown” and with her trademark grin “to show how hard farmers work!” I am sure that everyone in the group was very glad they do.

... Vanessa’s Cassava Cake Recipe

I must say I don't have a recipe because I always mix everything by the eye straight into the baking tray, but I will try to give you some idea about the ingredient amounts.

- 4 to 5 cups of grated cassava (I do it inside the baking tray; this way I can see how much cassava I will really need to use for that baking dish). No need to grease the tray.
- 1 cup of sugar (Put more if you want it sweeter; it really depends on your taste. I used rapadura that I brought from Brazil, but you can buy it from bulk food shops, though I think it's a bit expensive over here). Rapadura is unrefined sugar with more nutrients. Any other type of sweetener will do the job. At other times I've used honey or raw or white sugar.
- 1 cup of shredded coconut
- 1 tin of coconut milk or coconut cream for a richer cake
- 2 beaten eggs
- Optional - add cubes of guava paste (It can be anything if you wish to give it a special taste). Again, I brought it from Brazil, but you can buy it from a bulk food shop that sells Brazilian products. Just be creative: any type of jams or fruit compotes will do the job or even a simple touch of cinnamon on top, for example.
- Mix everything inside the baking tray. Pack gently to make the cake even. Bake at 150 degrees. After more or less 4 minutes it will start to get colour on the top. Check with a fork to see if the cake is cooked inside: it should not be wet when coming out.

Enjoy with a warm cup of tea or coffee.

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

The hints of spring are here and for gardeners, this is the real beginning of the year. So begin at the beginning and do a stock-take! De-rust and oil the tools, replenish fertilisers and check the recommended expiry date on seed packets. It's important.

Seed storage is equally important. For them to remain viable – no matter what the expiry date – they must be kept correctly. Store in a sealed bottle containing silica gel inside the refrigerator.

Consider the early part of August as preparation time. New plots or those which have grown root vegetables should have lime or dolomite dug in. One handful per square metre is a good rule for most concentrated soil additives. Lime and dolomite prevent a number of diseases and aid the decomposition of the organic matter you should also be adding. If this is in short supply, lay grass clippings over the freshly-turned soil and sprinkle another dose of lime or dolomite on top. Dig this and any other compost, manure or fertilisers in after two weeks.

(Note: remember to check your soil's pH level before applying lime etc.)

Vegetables: In the latter part of the month, the soil is warming. Sweet corn can go in now, although germination can be slow and variable if it has not been a mild winter. It needs good soil, drainage and sun. Sow in a square bed (to aid fertilization) and keep them moving with food and water. Corn is particularly partial to a drink of seaweed or fish emulsion.

Mildew is the curse of the cucurbit family but, with planning, it is possible to avoid the worst. Plant squash, zucchini, pumpkins and melons early. Here's how: soak the seed for 12 hours. Place it between several layers of newspaper, place in a plastic bag on top of the hot water storage unit and check daily. When the first rootlet emerges, plant out. Pick a sunny, well-drained position in good, rich soil. To further reduce mildew attack, water

around the roots rather than overhead.

Start sowing beans now and at three-weekly intervals until February. Though they are a favourite and easy to grow, beans are subject to wilt and bacterial disease. Make the seed-row topsoil sandy for easy emergence and add lime to minimise disease and pests. Snake beans are hardy and a wonderful curry and casserole ingredient. Be careful though – they are prolific!

Fruit: Broaden your horizons – exotic fruit from around the world is available. Feijoas and figs, limes and lychees, pecans and pomegranates, tamarillos and tangelos – the list is as long as your imagination. Train some kiwi-fruit along the fence, and use passionfruit to cover a blank wall or run up a sturdy native tree.

Late winter and autumn are the ideal times to be planting these investments, remembering that drainage, shelter and light are three clues to good fruit. Hole preparation is another. Dig generous holes, working in plenty of well-rotted manure, compost or organic fertiliser, mixing well with the local soil. Tree transplants need water, more water, and mulch. However, don't drown them – and add some organic emulsion (fish, seaweed or blood and bone) to the watering can before and after the shift from pot to ground. If the area is low-lying, build the tree site into a mound.

August is a good citrus-planting month and if there are space problems, consider a veranda tub with a laden kumquat. Grapefruit, lemons, oranges, mandarins, limes, lemonade tree, tangerines, tangelo, pomelo and kumquat all excel in our climate. And, like the majority of fruit trees, citrus like a sunny, sheltered spot and a hole with dolomite or lime dug through it, ideally several months before the transplant.

The graft must, be well above ground level and the top-dressing of organic matter should not touch the trunk (it encourages disease and pests). Citrus are particularly fond of poultry manure and a top-dressing in autumn and spring will do wonders.

Pruning of citrus is generally kept to a minimum but, particularly in the first two years, a little may be necessary to shape the bush – thinning or removing the lower branches. This month, examine mature citrus, cutting off and burning any citrus gall which shows as swelling on branches.

It's also time to plant kiwi-fruit and remember, unless it specifically claims to be a bi-sexual graft, you'll need at least one friend for it to pollinate and fruit. They will run riot over a pergola or fence and should be placed about five meters apart. The roots are sensitive and shallow, but they like a good feed.

Don't neglect that wonderful winter source of vitamin C – the tamarillo. Plant in very good shelter because of their susceptibility to wind damage. When the top shoot is about one metre high, tip to encourage branching. Tamarillos fruit in winter months, which makes them great value. Pick with stems attached for good keeping. Fertilise mature plants now.

Feed all established trees, bushes and vines and mulch again for the coming hot weather.

Flowers: Spring flowering annuals should be helped along at this stage of their growth with a liquid fertiliser and early plantings can now begin for the summer display.

Plantings include: ageratum, snapdragon, carnation, cosmos, dahlias, dianthus, gysophils, marigold, petunia and statice.

Orchids: Most varieties of orchids thrive in our conditions and now is the time to re-pot many species, including the hundreds of varieties of cymbidiums. These like semi-shade in summer and full sunlight in winter. Wait until November before re-potting the cattleya species as they prefer a move during the growing period.

Beware of over-feeding orchids - more have been killed through over-feeding than under-feeding. Use either commercial orchid foods or a weak fish, seaweed or blood & bone liquid fertiliser.

The Garden in August

Winter wet: (Note: Normally this would not apply to South East Qld, but after the wet weather we've had, it is of interest.)

Try to keep off the soil when it is excessively wet as you will do more harm than good. Tramping over very wet soil compacts it, pushing out all the air and damaging the structure. Once this has happened, raking the soil down into a fine, crumbly tilth that will give seeds a good start becomes much more difficult. If you really must tread on soil in these conditions, work from a plank that will spread your weight evenly over the soil and reduce compaction.

Recycle prunings:

This is the month for pruning woody plants. Hardy shrubs that flower on new wood later in the summer, such as the butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), can be cut right back, generating lots of twiggy prunings. You can recycle the sturdiest of these to make plant supports, and use the rest of the debris to add to the compost heap or use as a mulch.

Shredded prunings make a good home-grown mulch, but lay it when the soil has warmed up and is weeded and well watered from the rain, then you will lock some of that moist warmth in under the mulch blanket. What you can do now is give the soil a dressing of an organic fertiliser, so that the nutrients that it contains will be available to plants just when they need it – as they start into growth.

Prunings:

Finish weeding & digging over borders and new planting areas, incorporating organic matter if you can. Cut down any old dead growth from plants such as sedums and acanthus which was left on for effect over winter. The sooner this is done the better, as new shoots will already be emerging from some plants towards the end of the month and they are easily damaged.

... The Garden in August Cont'd

Towards the end of the month herbaceous perennials will be starting into growth; it's a good time to feed them with an organic fertiliser.

Continue taking root cuttings from perennials. Check stakes and supports removed in autumn and stock up if you will not have enough for your plants later in the spring. One cheap way of doing this is to keep the best of the prunings from shrubs pruned this and next month.

Vegetables & Herbs:

Feed spring cabbages: Cabbages that have been standing in winter will benefit from a feed now - use a general organic fertiliser to boost growth. As you harvest, cut every alternate plant in the row, leaving the others to grow on. You can get a second crop from cabbages that have already been cut. Leave the stem and root in the soil and make a cross-cut on the top of the stump. Feed the plant and in a few weeks "mini cabbages" will grow from the cuts.

Mint is an excellent herb with the first of the early potatoes dug fresh from the garden. Potting up roots is quite a good way to grow mint outside, as it can be very invasive, easily taking over the garden. Grow it in a large pot and stand this on the terrace, or plunge the pot into the ground, leaving the top 5-10 cms of the pot just above the soil surface. This will usually prevent the mint from creeping over the rim into the soil, but keep an eye on it anyway.

Top-dress shrubby herbs in pots, such as bay and rosemary.

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

FRUIT TREES - BOGI From Diane Kelly

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

Figs: Keep well mulched.

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

Low chill stone fruit: Peak water needs. Water trees 2 weeks before flowering and 3 weeks later. In late July start blossom thinning. Winter prune late varieties. 50g of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash added per sq m to drip line of trees. Mature trees - 1 kg.

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

Passion-fruit: Don't let the vines dry out. Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp sprays every month. Small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash can be applied for vines. Large vines - 1 kg; small vines - 1/2 kg.

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Use copper based sprays or leaf microbes if black spot is about. Pick fruit at mature stage with 1/2 colour to have full flavour.

Persimmon: Minimal water required at this time.

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

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

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



VEGETABLES

JULY:

Asian greens, Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Carrot, Celery, Celeriac, Cucumber, Endive, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Marrow, Onion, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Snow pea, Strawberry, Tomato.

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.

HERBS

JULY

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

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.

Which Herbs won't Grow Together?

In general, plants that have the same growing requirements can be planted together. An exception in herbs is fennel – it is **allelopathic (see note)** and should be grown alone.

There are basically two kinds of herbs – those that need a lot of moisture and those that don't, so group each kind and they will grow happily together. Herbs that enjoy moisture-rich soil include basil, coriander, tarragon and parsley, while herbs that don't need as much water, or "Mediterranean herbs", include oregano, sage, rosemary, thyme, bay, marjoram and lavender.

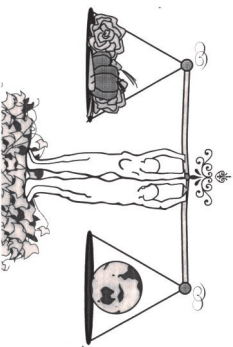
Allelopathic

"The inhibition of growth in one species of plants by chemicals produced by another species."

Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information the association (including Editor, Executive Officers and the 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 15 August 2013