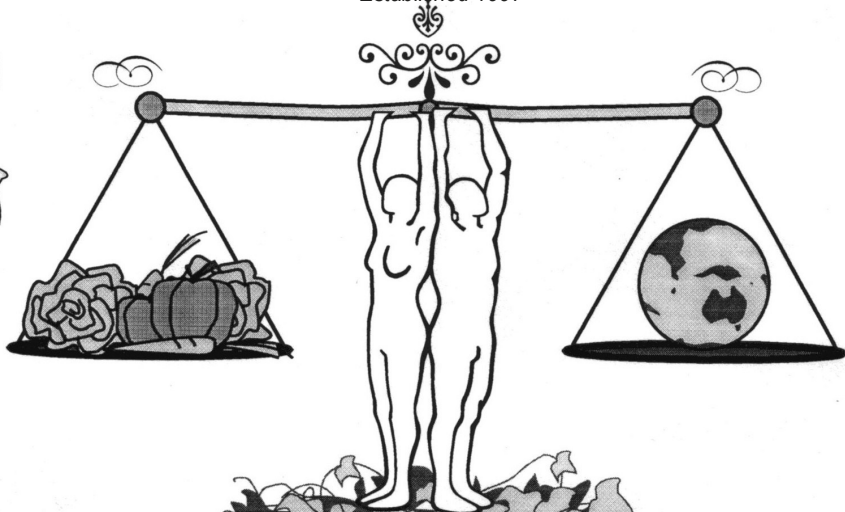


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 19 JULY 2015 Issue 7  
GARDENING IN WINTER

Pg2	<i>Club Information</i>	10-11	<i>Aquaponics Unit at Nerang</i>
3	<i>Notice Board, Guest Speakers, Workshops</i>	12-13	<i>Getting To Know Keith Gascoine</i>
4	<i>President's Message</i>	14	<i>If You Just Do One Thing Next Month - Grow an Eggplant</i>
5	<i>Club Outing</i>	15	<i>Our First Working Bee</i>
6-7	<i>The Future of Food, Veggie Swap</i>	16-17	<i>The Ginger Plant</i>
8-10	<i>A Wealth of Information—Mini Presentations by our Club Members</i>	18-19	<i>Fruit Trees, Vegetables, and Herbs</i>

**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20th August**

**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

**2015 Committee**

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	David Freeman 07 5533 0119
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Karen Hart (07) 5551 1297 Penny Jameson
Membership Sec Membership Asst	Diane Kelly Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
Newsletter Editor Newsletter Asst.	Dorothy Coe <a href="mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au">webprint@onthenet.com.au</a> Diane Kelly
Website Editor	Dorothy Coe <a href="mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au">webprint@onthenet.com.au</a>
Advertising	Dorothy Coe <a href="mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au">webprint@onthenet.com.au</a>
Guest Speaker Liaison	Rachel Lebeter 0407 906 955 rachaellebeter@gmail.com
Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Pat McGrath
Seed Bank Seed Assistants	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888 John Clarke Maggie Golightly
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609 Judy Reiser

**CLUB OUTING — Sunday 9th August**

**SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE DETAILS**

## 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

**Overdue:** Karen Hart (198), Celia Forrest (351), Peter & Patricia Edwards (163), Danielle Bohata (359), Barbara Morgan (246), Judy McCracken (274), Jerry & Justin Rogers (275), Tali Filip (277), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Regina Lacgalvs (208), Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), Alex Dimos (364), Kerstein Trueman (346), Rodney & Cathy Boscoe (347), Chris Larkin (141), Karen Auchere (147), Robert Faulkner (303), Virginia Jacobsen (325), Barbara Talty (58), Lise Racine (151), Ron Campbell (255), Val Sier (349), David & Lesley Freeman (352), Joshua Walker & Chris Viehbock (371), Sue Beckinsale (373)

**July:** Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Roger Peterson (330), Scott McCormack (334)

**August:** Warren & Bev Carlson (87), Murray Olver (105), Gordon & Dorothy Singh (241), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Jill Barber (290), Lyn Mansfield (306), Jan Guest (307), Geraldine McDonald (354), Jun Yoneda (374), Graham & Flora Dunne (375), Jasen Pankhurst (376), Dayne Peterson (377)

## Upcoming Guest Speakers

### Upcoming Speakers

**August** – We all know about the havoc being wreaked as a result of colony collapse disorder. The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society has arranged Kevin to tell us about bees and their importance for our gardens and the world. Hopefully he will encourage a few more of us to keep bees and do our part to protect Australia's bee population.

**September** – Keeping with the theme of the creatures that visit our gardens, Peter and Lyn Reilly will be speaking about creating bird-friendly gardens and attracting native fauna through plant choices.

## Workshops

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>18 July</b>   | Seed raising, propagation of herbs, and cooking with herbs |
| <b>22 August</b> | Small space gardening — balcony boxes                      |
| <b>26 Sept</b>   | Animals in the Garden, Fermenting & Raw Foods              |

For more information contact Lyn Mansfield at Gold Coast Permaculture  
 M: 0409 645 888  
 E: [lynmansfield14@bigpond.com](mailto:lynmansfield14@bigpond.com)

### Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch.  
 Email Dorothy - [webprint@onthenet.com.au](mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au)

### Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Rachael Lebetter, Jude Lai, Neil Ross, Cathie Hodge and Dorothy Coe.

Past newsletters can be downloaded from the site at

[www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au)

## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

After some nice steady rain, my gardens are thriving and the water tanks are full, which is always a good thing. It is amazing to see the difference natural rain, as opposed to hand watering, makes to the growth of plants. Winters are not always so wet in this region, and the last couple of years have been extremely dry in spring. I suggest that you make the most of the rain, just in case we are in for another dry period ahead.

It is still time to plant Silverbeet, Kale, Peas, Cabbage, Asian Greens and lots of different herbs. Actually you can plant everything that is available on the SEED TABLE now and it will grow well. Next month the seed table will be stocked with all the seeds you will need for spring and summer plantings. I can't believe that it's that time of year already. Start planning where you are going to plant things, and remember to rotate garden beds to help with pest control. I have one bed empty and covered with mulch so that I can start planting the seeds as soon as they arrive.

Thank you to David Freeman and his family for hosting our club trip last month. I am sure everyone had an informative and lovely afternoon on the farm.

Our next Club trip is to another member's garden, too, Cathie Hodge. Cathie lives on acreage in the Tallebudgera Valley and has been gardening and caring for her land for many years. All members are invited to attend a guided walk, conducted by Cathie and fellow member, John Palmer, who is known for his vast knowledge of all things flora. We are to arrive at 10am on Sunday the 9th of AUGUST. After the walk, Cathie suggested that we bring a POT LUCK LUNCH to share on the lawn. It is expected that we will be there for about 3 hours, including lunch. Please check for further details in this newsletter.

Last month, as most of you know, we purposely omitted a guest speaker for the meeting. This is something we do from time to time so that we are able to extend our Question and Answer segment. However, this time we asked members to contribute to the meeting by volunteering to do a five-minute talk on a topic of their choice. Well, what a fabulous response we had! Several members were keen to share their knowledge or musings with us. The night was a resounding success and everyone asked if we could do it again, so we have arranged to do so in November, which is also the last meeting for the year.

As mentioned last month, I was invited to attend the Mudgeeraba Show to judge the fruit and vegetable section, which was both an honour and a delight. I had also mentioned to you, our members, that it could be fun to enter your home produce; however, I noticed that no one took this very seriously, and I wondered why. So after a chat with fellow member Margaret Lee, who does the flower judging, we thought we would do a presentation next year before the Show, on what and how to present your entries. We figured this would take out the fear and trepidation some of you might feel and show you how easy it really is. So, please consider joining in the fun next year, won't you, and let's show them what we can do!

Happy growing and maybe future showing,

Maria

### **HANDY TIP: Cats – detestable deterrents**

Cats hate wet soil, so water your flowerbeds last thing at night. They also dislike the smell of citrus peel, camphor and eucalyptus, so sprinkle some orange or lemon rinds or a few mothballs, or even some old tea bags sprinkled with eucalyptus oil, around the garden.

**Club Outing  
Sun 9th August**

**Club Outing to Cathie Hodge's property in  
Tallebudgera Valley**

**Date: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August**

**Details:**

- Arrive at **10am** for a guided tour with Johnny Palmer – starting at 10.30am
- Pot-luck lunch at approx 12noon – bring something yummy to share
- Parking available at front of property (not enough space at the top near house)
- Be prepared for a walk up the driveway (part of it steep) to the house & garden area
- If mobility is an issue – we can arrange to shuttle you to the top. (Let me know)

**Location:** 44 Dalton Rd, Tallebudgera Valley. (I can email directions if required. Unless you are with Telstra, phone reception is not always guaranteed)

**Cathie's contact details:** phone 0406 575 233/ email [cathie.hodge@gmail.com](mailto:cathie.hodge@gmail.com)

**OFFER:** I have a large **organic garden bed** that I would like to **offer** to someone interested in growing their own vegetables.

There is plenty of compost, horse manure, tank water and very easy access. I live about 5 minutes from Burleigh Heads at the start of Tallebudgera valley.

The garden is organic and has been active for about 15 years. The garden has just been green mulched and ready to go.

There is no contract or cost – this would be in exchange for us sharing some of the veggies. If interested call 0419226546



supported by  
**Tropical Fruit World.**

**Gardening Expo with a twist!**

**SUNDAY 30 AUGUST** **CURRUMBIN RSL**  
**9.30AM - 5.30PM** **\$10 ENTRY**  
Pre-purchase tickets online to receive a **FREE** Air Plant or Dragon Fruit cutting

**Educational Talks by**  
Phil Dudman, Claire Bickle, Apiarist,  
Vertical Gardening

**Plant Sales | Botanical Art,  
Beauty & Decor | Outdoor Living  
Garden Supplies + more!**

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

**KOMBUCHA TEA FOR SALE**  
**\$5 per bottle**

The beverage the ancient Chinese called the "Immortal Health Elixir?" It's been around for more than 2,000 years and has a rich anecdotal history of health benefits like preventing and fighting cancer and arthritis.

Made from sweetened tea that's been **fermented** by a symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast, **Kombucha** didn't gain prominence in the West until recently.

**Some health benefits of Kombucha Tea include:** Detoxification, Joint Care, Aids Digestion and Gut Health, Immune Boosting

To order just call Dorothy on **0412 382 989** - Delivery to some areas in Tallebudgera, Elanora, Palm Beach and Burleigh.

**(Flavours: ginger, mint, passion fruit, pineapple or other flavours available on request)**

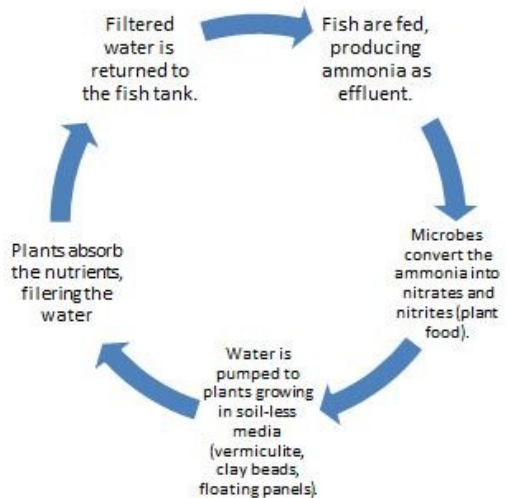
**The Future of Food**  
**(May Guest Speaker: Geoff Wilson,**  
**Nerang Aquaponics Teaching Unit)**  
**By Rachael Lebeter**

Last year, the UN announced that global agricultural production must increase by 60% in the next 40 years if we are to meet the demands of our growing population. Given the shortage of arable land and increasing urban sprawl, this is a question of how, as much as where, these crops will be produced. In May we were lucky enough to host Geoff Wilson, of the Nerang Aquaponics Teaching Unit, to speak about one possible food future.

30 meters below London's Tube, in defunct WW2 bomb shelters, now exists the world's first subterranean farm. In Canada, supermarkets are supplied with organic vegetables and fish produced year-round in massive warehouses by the first large-scale, commercial aquaponics farm. Innovative answers are needed to supply urban populations with sustainable food. Aquaponics is one option, providing nutritious vegetables and fish and using less than 10% of the water required by industrialised agriculture. But what is it?

The term "aquaponics" comes from Cold War-era America, where A-bomb fears led to the combination of aquaculture (growing fish) and hydroponics (soil-less plant production). However, Geoff explained that aquaponics is actually an age-old growing system: In Ancient Khmer (that of Cambodia's Angkor Wat) fish were introduced to rice paddies in order to control pests; In the chinampas of Aztec Mexico, Bolivia's Lake Titicaca and in the Nile Delta, crops are grown on floating beds of reeds, allowing waters rich in aquatic life to provide nutrients to submerged roots.

Modern aquaponics is a closed-system permaculture:



One of the beauties of aquaponics is its versatility: it is well-suited to urban, indoor and even vertical green walls, often having the dual function of a heating system or insulation; it is also suited to green technologies such as solar power, air moisture harvesting and solar LED lights; a range of plants and fish, including fin-fish, eels, mollusks and crustaceans, can be grown; the ratio of plants that can be produced per volume of fish is 10 to 1; and fish can be fed on anything from commercial feeds, omega-3-rich algae meal (particularly good for increasing the nutrient content of both fish and plants), or urban green waste, normally converted to protein through worm farming.

However, aquaponics systems are only deceptively simple. Geoff was adamant that accidentally killing all your fish is a mark of passage. Indeed, it is a system that requires much tighter control and more frequent monitoring than most gardens. Fish need to be kept at a certain temperature, require constant oxygen from an air-pump and can die from ammonia contamination. Imagine a black-out! Additionally, plants and fish prefer slightly different pH levels, requiring the addition of

acid or carbonate rocks to the water cycle. It is for these reasons that Geoff is in the process of developing a smart-phone app which would allow external monitoring and automated system control. I can only imagine the response from the industry should he be successful!

For those of us who are intrigued enough by the idea to stomach the risk, and I admit that I certainly am, Geoff made some recommendations for backyard aquaponics. In Queensland, eels, jade perch (barcoo grunter), barramundi, sleepy cod and murray cod are popular fish varieties to use, while tilapia boasts a \$220000 fine. Common crustaceans include red-claw and fresh-water mussels. Murray Hallum's tank system can be purchased for as little as \$1000 dollars but with a little ingenuity and some 45 gallon drums or IBCs, a system can be banged together for as little as \$100. And in a home system, with a commercial supplement if necessary, fish are quite happy to eat maggots, worms or duckweed, all of which are easy enough to grow.

For anyone interested in learning more, the Nerang Aquaponics Teaching Unit is up and running. I believe they are seeking Saturday morning volunteers and will be offering beginner's courses in the near future, so speak to Neil Ross or contact me for Geoff's details if you would like to be involved. We thank Geoff for a thought-provoking presentation on the possible future of food. I, for one, am much more interested in learning more about aquaponics than the uses of algal protein in food, but who knows what the future may hold.

**Veggie Swap**  
by Dorothy Coe

If there are any members interested in doing some "veggie swapping", let me know during the meeting or email me at [webprint@onthenet.com.au](mailto:webprint@onthenet.com.au) so that I can add you to the current list that we are putting together.

## Three Figs Café & Greenbird Gallery

- Locally made delicious food
- Big range of coffees and teas
- Old farmhouse setting
- Shady gardens and landscaping
- Handmade gifts & homewares

Open Wed-Fri 8am-2pm, Sat-Sun 8am-4pm  
The Ecovillage, 639 Currumbin Creek Rd  
Currumbin Valley

For bookings phone Mirella 0419 170 654

*"An enjoyable experience on so many levels  
– lovely ambience, yummy food and coffee,  
interesting things to see and buy.*

*Don't miss it!"*

GC Visitors Guide 2013



## 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](http://www.herbcottage.com.au)**

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

**A Wealth of Information  
Mini Presentations by Members  
during our June meeting  
By Rachael Lebeter**

Wow! I knew that your knowledge and understanding was under-utilized, but even I was blown away by the range and depth of short presentations at our June meeting. Thank you to all of our volunteers! I only hope I can do you all justice in this little speaker's write-up, as is traditional. I believe that our next "Members Only" will be in November, at our break-up, so start thinking of a 5-minute "lesson-bite" to share with us.

### Megan – The Beauty of Manure

Horse poo is Megan's favorite fertilizer. While we may like to blame this on the fact that horses are her favorite animal, Megan also believes that horse manure is better than chook poo and stronger than cattle manure; it adds humus to the soil and lightens it.

Her advice? Get it wet and compost it. Not only will this stop the poo from burning your plants, it will ensure that any vermicides are decomposed. Other options are mixing it in to the top layer of soil, far from your plants, and mulching on top to aid decomposition. Or making a nice manure tea. Now is the time to do this, as fermentation is too quick in summer. Ferment for a couple of weeks and water down to "cat's piss tea" before using on plants in need of a boost. It is also great mixed with chaff or sweepings.

Like me, you may have been wondering where to get this wonder-poo. It is free from the Bundal Racecourse (this needs a longer composting because it contains bedding and urine also) but Megan reckons that we should get to know our supplier. Some horse owners use fewer vermicides and chemicals, and may also feed their animals. If we know our supplier, we will know what weeds to expect in our poo (avoid nut-grass at all costs!) which is quite worth its weight in gold.

### Dave's Perlite and Vermiculite

Dave reminded us of the uses of his products. Since I always confuse perlite and vermiculite, just remember that perlite is for aeration and vermiculite is for nutrients and water retention. Another tip: mulch with peat moss around your strawberries, blueberries and other acid-loving plants.

### Keith – Activated Water: Fact or Fiction?

As our resident scientist, Keith gave us a scientific look at water. What does that mean? Well, science is about a thesis being both testable and replicable. For example the thesis that certain types of water are better for us than others.

Essentially, Keith explained, water ( $H_2O$ ) is made from two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. The bond between these atoms is unstable, meaning that water changes form easily and frequently. One of the more common changes is known as "self-ionisation", where two water molecules form a positively-charged hydronium ( $H_3O^+$ ) and a negatively charged hydroxide ( $OH^-$ ). Impurities, such as contact with carbon dioxide from the air, change the pH of water (its acidity), which in turn influences the proportions of hydronium and hydroxide in the mixture. In any glass of water, quantities of these molecules are created and destroyed each second, so positively-charged water or "ionized" water is pure fiction.

Another amazing tendency of water is that it associates in "clusters". These groups of molecules occur naturally in all water. They are what stop water boiling at  $-93^\circ C$ , as it would if it obeyed the rules of physics. So, clustered water... scam again?

Keith's advice, check your facts. Use observation and replicable studies, not one-offs. For more info, try: <http://www.chem1.com/CQ/> For the more science minded, *New Sci-*



*entist* publishes reviews of all sorts of current studies and trends.

### **Margaret – Useful Flowers**

Margaret Lee, our flower expert and resident provider of oft-coveted bouquets on the raffle table, has been playing with flowers since she was two and spent much of her working life as a florist. She brought a selection of winter-flowering, cottage garden beauties to help us beautify our gardens. But for Margaret, flowers aren't simply beautiful, they are also useful: as bee food, to attract beneficial insects and to repel pests. Below are a few of the tips Margaret shared, and a list of the flowers she brought to show us. The variety at this time of year is very impressive and she even gave away some of her flower-arranging secrets!

#### **Flowers for bees and beneficial insects:**

- Bees like blue- and purple-toned flowers. They need flowers that provide pollen for protein, and nectar for sugar. Flowers that grow in clusters are good.
- Salvias, of which there are over 3000 varieties, are particularly good, attract rarer bees such as the blue-banded bee, and are beautiful buds for posies.
- Of the natives, wattles provide protein (the grey-foiled *Bailliana* is also great for stick-insects if that's your thing) and others, like *grevillia*, are good nectar plants that flower in winter.
- *Hamesia* and *Penitus* have clustered flowers which bees love
- Amaranth is a bee flower with edible leaves and seeds
- Other good options for bees include daisies, chrysanthemums, zinnias, lavenders, Indian Hawthorn, old-fashioned angelonia and blue-boy
- Umbelliferae (Queen Anne's Lace, fennel etc) are great for parasitic wasps and other beneficials

#### **Repellants:**

- Wormwood repels soil bugs and nematodes
- Tagetes lemonian, which is tarragon-ish, aka Mexican Marigold, keeps wallabies away and cured Margaret's tomatoes of wilt
- Chives are good for roses
- Nasturtiums protected the nectarines from insects
- Mother of herbs or 5-in-one herb is a possum repellent, but the variegated variety is recommended as it is less likely to take over the garden

#### **When arranging flowers:**

- Start at the top for vases with small openings, adding a bunch of leaf to the jug to keep stems straight
- Start at the bottom for big openings
- Imagine a flat surface at 180°. We don't want a flat arrangement, so add a 15° overhang or slant at the top, bottom and sides to give the flowers volume.

### **Anne-Marie – Knowing Your Truth**

Muscle-testing is based on kinesiology and is a good way to self-heal and listen to your body. Anne-Marie helped us discover our subconscious "true" or "yes" response. If you have forgotten how to practice: Take a breath, close your eyes and make a true statement. Your body will sway in a certain direction. Do a few more and notice that you invariably go the same way. Now make an un-true statement and note the difference. Everyone has a true and false response, which could also be yes and no responses. If you are indecisive like me, it's a valuable tool.

Continued over the page

**A Wealth of Information  
Mini Presentations by Members  
during our June meeting (Contd.)  
By Rachael Lebeter**

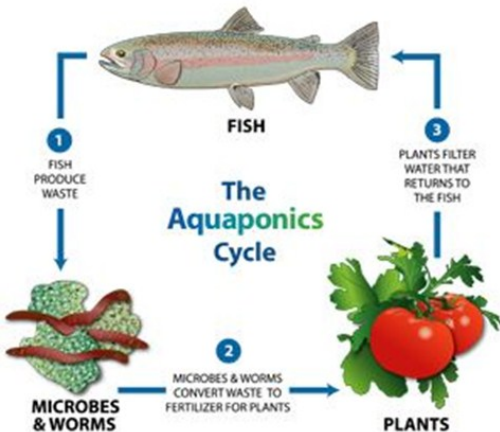
**Summary of ANA presentation  
& Aquaponics Unit, Nerang  
Community Garden  
By Neil Ross**

**Gordon – Earthing**

Gordon’s presentation was the perfect philosophical note to end on, and a timely reminder of why we are all here. In the modern world, we are seduced away from nature. We live and die in the artificial static of concrete. Gordon’s pertinent question: How often even we gardeners actually touch the soil? How often do we feel anywhere but our hands, if there? How often do we go barefoot? There is a growing movement called Earthing (google it), which is about reconnecting with the natural beginning with our feet. Gordon has experienced first-hand the benefit of going barefoot each day and, at the very least, has convinced me to try it!

**Neil – Aquaponics Update.**

Nerang Aquaponics Teaching Unit is now up and running, so go visit. Country Paradise Food Forest is also coming along, so get in touch with Neil if you would like to be involved.



**Our Mission**

Aquaponics is a method of food production which combines the best aspects of aquaculture and hydroponics to create a highly productive living ecosystem for sustainable agriculture.

By cultivating fish and plants in a recirculating system, fish waste can be converted to plant food using natural bacterial cycles. We seek to bring aquaponics to our local community through the use of variable strategies to grow nutritious vegetables using sustainable agriculture systems available.

Today’s agriculture is much different than that practiced by our grandfathers.

Problems related to water shortages, topsoil loss, reliance on fossil fuel inputs, and a changing climate, the reliability of our food systems and ecosystems are at stake. Alternatives are needed which are more efficient in their use of resources, being sustainable, resilient, and better integrates with our communities, to meet our current and future needs for locally raised, healthy and sustainable produce.

Our goal is to promote the growing of healthy food, optimize water and energy efficiency of aquaponics, and promote the sustainability of Aquaponics to complement existing food production systems.

We will strive to educate others as we develop techniques that are scalable from their backyards

We expect our operation to be a living laboratory and hope we can share what we learn in a way that lets aquaponics grow into something greater.

I/we can be contacted Via Email  
neilandhelen7@bigpond.com

Neil Ross



## THE DIGGERS CLUB

Helping Australians grow the  
best heirloom vegetables, fruits  
and berries.

Join the club for discounts, eight  
magazines a year and free offers.

Shop online for delivery  
around Australia.

Visit our website  
for video tutorials,  
fact sheets and  
gardening articles  
to help get you  
started.



TEL 03 5984 7900

**DIGGERS.COM.AU**

## Recipes Column

### Cathie's Pâté – a variation on Penny's

Energy to last the whole afternoon never  
tasted so good!

Serves one person

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds or cashews  
(soaked overnight)
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1/8 cup any other fresh or dried herbs  
(sage, savory, thyme, rosemary, tarra-  
gon...)
- 1/4 teaspoon grated ginger (optional)
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1 heaped teaspoon miso paste
- ½ an avocado
- 1 teaspoon "Screaming Seeds" Kashmiri  
Krush (available from Flannerys)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

Put all ingredients in food processor and mix  
until paté texture

*From Cathie Hodge*

=====

**Please email your yummy recipes  
to Jill for inclusion soon:**

**[jillbarber611@gmail.com](mailto:jillbarber611@gmail.com)**

**Recipe submission deadline is the  
second Monday of each month.**

## Getting to Know ..... Keith Gascoine By Diane Kelly

Surely the area south west of the Tallebudgera township is one of the most beautiful on the Gold Coast. The street in which Keith and Diana Gascoine live is lined with well-established trees and green lawns, and there are tranquil views across to the Simpsons Road ridge. But more about this area, and the farm on which they lived in the hills north east of Canberra, later.



***The view from Keith & Diana's home  
across to the south-east***

The first question on my list to ask Keith was the history of his surname – yes, I know it wasn't a gardening question, but I was curious! Apparently the name "Gascoine" was introduced to England after the Norman conquest of 1066. The surname was derived from the area in which the family lived prior to migrating to Yorkshire – the province of Gascony, which is in the south-west of France. Keith was five years old when his family moved to Australia. All his schooling was done in Brisbane, although the family lived in Toowoomba, Alderley and Wellers Hill when he was growing up. In January 1965, Keith graduated from high school, joined the Navy, and moved to the Jervis Bay Naval base. During the next twenty-two years, he achieved the rank of Commander, obtained his Master degree whilst living in Virginia USA, and lived in many locations, both within

Australia and internationally. After becoming involved in submarines prior to resigning from the Navy in 1987, Keith set up a "defence-orientated logistics company", and had fifty people working for him by the time he retired in 2003. During that time Keith consulted and lectured on "project, contract and risk management", as well as integrated logistics support to the defence forces of Australia, NZ, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and the United Kingdom. Keith also contributed his expertise as a judge for the Telstra Small Business awards.

So, after a life of such achievement, what else can provide an interest and a challenge during the following years? I think the answer could be summed up in "the soil".

After returning from a posting in the USA in 1984, Keith and Diana purchased 180 acres of land outside the tiny town of Bungendore, which is thirty-eight kilometres from Canberra. Keith described the property as having "poor quality, shallow soil and sporadic rainfall." But the land was able to carry beef cattle, and in good seasons hay was able to be baled for use on the farm. In the thirty years they lived on the farm, the family "loved it – the space, the lifestyle, and the four seasons".



***The homestead at Bungendore***

As with much of rural Australia, the farm endured years of drought, and this necessitated the sale of most of the breeding herd. But then it rained, and Keith and Diana started to rebuild their stock.



### ***Keith taking time out to enjoy the farm***

Although Keith did not come from a gardening background – “I certainly didn’t come from a family of gardeners!” – he did establish two small vegetable gardens on the farm, to which he applied mushroom compost. Crops of garlic and silverbeet were very successful, and for us Southerners, Keith notes that he did not plant tomatoes until after Melbourne Cup Day, when the frosts had passed. The growing season was only three months – late November through to early February. Later a larger vegetable garden was established, and strawberries were a particularly successful crop, enabling Keith to make his own jam.

The Gascoines also planted literally thousands of trees on their Bungendore property, including radiata pine and cypress leylandii for windbreaks; oaks, pears, cherries and many natives. The paddocks – and especially those around the homestead - that had been cleared back in the 1880’s were now protected from drying winds, and became moisture-retentive so that crops could be grown.

Then, last year, everything changed. Keith and Diana’s children discovered “The Perfect House” for them, and so they moved to the Gold Coast. So here are the things that Keith has learnt about living in a sub-tropical region:

- You need to learn to plant according to your area. Canberra was cold; the Gold Coast is hot, so instead of the “English”

trees and blossoms of a colder climate, Keith and Diana are learning to appreciate tropical palms and succulents.

- Although their block has been mulched heavily so that moisture is retained in the soil, there is a continual battle with weeds. Keith takes a trailer load of prunings and weeds to the tip each fortnight, but is working on a more efficient composting system for his garden excess.
- To get help – both with advice, and physical assistance if needed.
- Don’t work outside in the heat of the day in summer.
- As the one and a half acre block slopes strongly down to the front road, Keith has found it necessary to mulch the gardens and the areas around trees quite heavily. Open channels filled with smooth round rocks allow run-off to be directed safely away, and now that Keith has given the fruit trees plenty of fertiliser “and TLC”, their improvement has been noticeable.

Keith doesn’t envisage changing the garden layout of the block in the future – the garden has many interesting plants in it, and is well-established. But he is working on his vegetable patch! It is a comparatively small area, but is full of silverbeet, lettuce and tomato seedlings (plus some very healthy looking lima bean plants and eggplants) that he has grown from seed. The soil looks good – Keith has several compost bins on the go, and is working on a system of aerating them effectively without having to turn them. That technical knowledge he acquired over the years is being put to good use!

So Keith and Diana are settling in well on the Coast. Keith likes coming to the GCOG meetings and appreciates the open sharing of information. In turn, I enjoyed seeing Keith and Diana’s interest in their garden, and particularly Keith’s enthusiasm about growing vegetables, and his willingness to learn from others – it was most refreshing. And I also enjoyed Keith’s summary of what garden means to him – “A lot of hard work, and a great deal of satisfaction”.

**Getting to Know ..... Keith Gascoine  
By Diane Kelly (Contd.)**



*The mandarin tree is doing well.*

p.s. I must explain Keith's comments about not coming from a gardening family. He commented that "our garden was for playing cricket and football – my dad was a first class sportsman, so sport was very important. We had a large block in Alderley which had our own cricket pitch in it." But to balance things out, "we did have a prolific bullock's heart mango tree at that house, and also what was then called a Queensland nut tree, now known as a macadamia."

p.p.s. It has been said that "Growing your own food is the pathway to freedom", but if you also want to learn about the freedom of the road, ask Keith about his and Diana's motor-bikes.....!!

**HANDY TIP: Removing pollen stains:**

Never dampen pollen when trying to remove it from clothing. Moisture spreads the stain into the fibres, making it quite impossible to improve. Shake the garment to get rid of loose pollen, then pull the rest off with sticky tape.

**If You Just Do One Thing NEXT  
Month ... Grow an Egg-plant!  
By Diane Kelly**

Egg-plants are part of the Solanaceae family, and have their origins in India. They are classed as "Easy to Grow" by Annette McFarlane, so why not have a go at planting some next month.

In the sub-tropics, egg-plant seeds can be planted in August. The seeds take about 15-20 days to germinate – if sowing seeds in containers, place them on a warm windowsill or close to some other heat source. When they are 5-10 cms in height, plant them out at 45cm intervals.

To do well, egg-plants need growing temperatures of 21-30 degrees C. They appreciate light, free-draining soils with high levels of organic material, but can produce good crops with less than ideal conditions of soil fertility. A pH of 6-7 is optimum.

Egg-plants require a growing season of about five months, and they produce attractive mauve flowers (which "droop" downwards, just as the fruit do, so don't panic and think they are dying!). Mulching for soil moisture retention is good, but make sure that the mulch does not come in contact with the base of the plants, otherwise stem root may develop.

The plants will begin to bear after twelve weeks, and will continue to fruit while the weather remains warm. They can remain productive for several seasons – last year I left one plant growing after the others had finished as it was still flowering, and its second crop was superior to the first.

Egg-plant fruit are ready to harvest when their skin is bright and glossy – large and mature fruits tend to be gritty and bitter in taste.

Egg-plants, tomatoes and capsicum tend to share many of the same pest and disease problems. Egg-plants may get stung on the

fruit surface, so paper bags can be used to protect your harvest. Wilt disease can be transferred by sucking insects, so remember to rotate the planting of new crops in a different section of your garden – the growing of solanaceous plants in the same location should be avoided for at least three seasons.

When considering seed-saving, remember that egg-plants are usually self-pollinating, but the seed plants are best protected from insects by bagging or netting the flowers. Scrape the flesh from mature fruits and pulp it in water. Separate the seeds from the flesh, drying them well before storing.

Egg-plants are both easy and attractive to grow; the flowers are quite beautiful; and the fruit make the most delicious meals. Grow some in August!!



© iStockphoto / Thinkstock

### **HANDY TIP: A Beautiful Aphid Fighter:**

*Phacelia tanacetifolia*, with its spectacular lavender-blue flowers filled with nectar is almost too pretty for its common use as a living mulch. It is a magnet for beneficial insects including native and honey bees, and predators of aphids. For this reason it is often planted around tomatoes, lettuces and roses.

### **Our First Working Bee !!**

We are planning a series of “Round-Robin” working bees for anyone who would like to give fellow Club members a few hours help with their garden – and in return, we’ll come and help you in your garden! Plus we will learn from each other’s gardening experience.

The first event will be at Barbara Talty’s place on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> July, at 9.00 am. The project will be to clear weeds from the gardens, and water weeds from the ponds, both of which will end up being material for a composting workshop that Barbara is planning to hold in the future.

So – 49 Horseshoe Drive, Mudgeeraba (off the Springbrook Road, near the Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm) and bring hats, gloves, tools for weeding – and especially rakes – and sturdy boots.

Please confirm your attendance with Diane Kelly on 0403 473 892 or email [dianekelly@bigpond.com](mailto:dianekelly@bigpond.com) so that we can plan morning tea !!



©2010 BLOGOGRAHY.COM

## The Ginger Plant By Jude Lai

There are about 50 Genera and a couple of thousand ginger species belonging to this Zingiberaceae family. There are no known poisonous gingers. We have planted in our property more than a dozen varieties, as below.

### THAI BEAUTY

This is more for the beautiful flowers and bracts than for medical purposes.



### GINGER OFFICINALIS

This Ginger is universally used for cooking for health benefits, with the old and young rhizomes. A combination with garlic fried in oil also brings out the flavour and aroma. A famous Chinese dish is young ginger with onions and stir fried with beef. The older rhizomes are used in many health healing combinations. One for mothers after the birth of a baby is brewing old ginger with pig legs/trotters in vinegar.

### JAPANESE GINGER

This is grown by the Japanese for eating the small flowers.

### FALSE CARDAMOM

This is not the true cardamom, with the seed pod that grows out from below the ground. However, the young tender leaf gives out a similar aroma, and we use it for our cooking.

As seen in the photo, it has a beautiful spray of pinkish flowers that sprout out from the plant terminal. The plant can grow up into a 5 ft high, thick clump, and we plant it in hollows and waterways to stop erosion. The young tender leaves can be used to give a beautiful cardamom aroma.



### ORANGE TURMERIC CURUMA

This ginger is known for its anti cancer properties, and in its ground powder form it is universally used in Curry powder. We have two cultivars: one has an orange coloured rhizome and the other one is yellow. The yellow cultivar has white flower-bracts with yellow flowers and yellow rhizomes as seen in the last photo (#13). The orange coloured turmeric has also yellow flowers with the tips of the bracts purple pink and with orange rhizomes.

The plants are about 2ft tall and have broad leaves.





### DWARF GINGER

The Indonesian word for it is Kenchur, whereas the Chinese call it Sar Keong, which literally means "sand ginger". As shown in the photo, we have these two cultivars. The small leaved variety with the rhizome is exposed to Indica, and the big leaved variety beside it is still in the ground. This ginger is also known for healing Cancer and Alzheimers diseases. Both are used for cooking certain dishes, just for their distinct flavour, and the rhizomes and leaves are utilised.

### SHELL GINGER, the ALPNIA ZERUMBAT

This plant grows wild all over the tropical world, from Asia to South America. It is perhaps the tallest of all ginger plants, with a height up to 12 ft or more. The clump spreads very wide. We have two clumps growing between our two dwellings, and every couple of years, we have to chop them down to manageable sizes. Though not commonly used for cooking, this rhizome has a mild neutral taste, and has great healing properties for numerous ailments like cold and flu, cough, stomach upset or pain, lower blood pressure, and it kills fungi, candida, etc. It is also a diuretic. The sprays of flowers from the plant terminals are pinkish, and are great for cut flowers.



**SHELL GINGER**

mematic.net

### CHINESE KEY GINGER

Botanically called *Boesenbergia pandurata*, the Thai call it Krachai, and they mainly use it in their cooking for its flavour, besides its medicinal value. The Chinese use it chiefly for its healing properties, and combine it with that herb *Piper sarmentosum* (Kalau) to give it more healing potency. As seen in the photo, I have exposed a clump showing the finger-like, cylindrical roots that sprouted out of the rhizomes. I personally chew these keys as an antiseptic for my mouth cold sores and other mouth ulcers. This ginger has a very strong biting taste.



**CHINESE KEY GINGER**

mematic.net

### GALANGAL

They can grow up to about 6 ft tall, with slender stems and narrow leaves. The Chinese call this 'Nam Keong'. A small, old piece of rhizome is ground into a paste just to add flavour to certain dishes. We use very little of this ginger as it has a very strong biting taste, numbing the tongue when taken raw.

### THE TORCH GINGER

Botanically known as the Etlinger Elatior and the *Phaeomeria Speciosa*, this ginger plant can grow up to around 10 ft high. The flower that sprouts up from the ground is used in cooking a dish called LAKSA. The flavour of this flower is distinctly aromatic. There are 3 coloured flowers of red, pink and white. We have the red and the pink .

## FRUIT TREES

### JUNE

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

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

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

**Mango:** Don't let the trees dry out.

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

**Pawpaw:** Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Pick fruit at mature stage with ½ colour to have full flavour.

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

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

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

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

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

### 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.

## VEGETABLES

### JULY:

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

### 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.

## 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

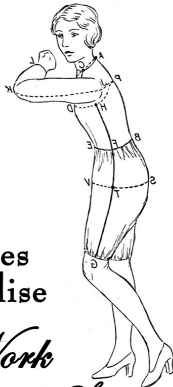
**Annual:** Borage, Calendula, Chervil, Chamomile, Coriander, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Mustard Lettuce, Nasturtium, Rocket.

**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.

## Clothing Alterations & Mending

*Clothes altered to fit you!*

Repairs  
Alterations  
Hems - zippers  
Soft furnishings  
Textile recycling  
Extended mending  
Copy your favourites  
Remodel - Revitalise



*Quality Work*  
*Good Old-fashioned Service*

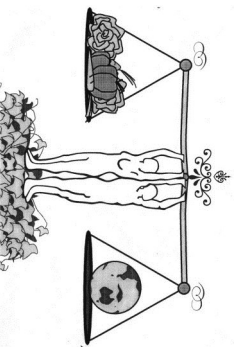
Maggie Golightly 0413633055  
golightly@iprimus.com.au

### HANDY TIP: Use a Balloon on a String

If you want to see where the shadow of a tree you intend to plant will fall, and do not have stick long enough to represent the tree's eventual height, use a short stick, a length of string and a helium balloon. Measure a piece of string equal to the height of the mature tree, minus the length of the stick. Thread paper onto the string to increase visibility. Tie the balloon to one end and secure the other end to the stick, then note where the shadows of the paper fall. To prevent distorted shadows, do this on a day with no wind.

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 August 2015