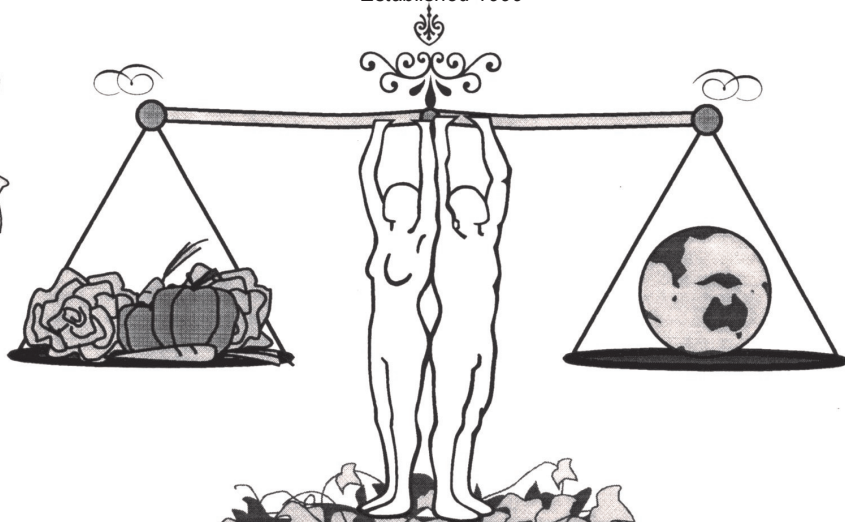


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 March 2014 Issue 2
GARDENING IN AUTUMN

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17 April

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

2013 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
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Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360
Seed Bank	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Seed Assistant	Heather Ryan 5534 4047
Supper	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Co-ordinator	
The position of Trip Co-ordinator has been abolished.	

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome. Send in a photo of what's going on in your patch.

Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com or text a photo - 0439 488 166.

Website:

www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/

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: Debbie Jones (254), Ross & Jenny Davis (199), David Wyatt & Helen Wainwright (284), Marion Symons (155), Peter & Patricia Edwards (163), Anissa Loades (228), John Steytler (313), Winsome Gunning (314), Julie Abraham (315), Terri Groth (125), Barbara Morgan (246), Ken & Pat Jenyns (273), Judy McCracken (274), Suzanne Blatcher (276), Tali Filip (277), Marino Canala (316), Gaynor Allen (317), Anne-Marie Andrew (337), Andrew, Helen & Claudia Blum (344)

March: Regina Lacgalvs (208), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), John Clarke (345)

April: Jude Lai (220), Gai Morrow (309), Kerstein Trueman (346), Rodney Boscoe & Cathy Smith (347)

Guest Speakers

April - Peter McKelvey, Aussie Chook Poo

May - Dan Willman, Rocky Point (organic) Mulching;

What's On

GCCC Community Gardening Workshops

Composting and Worm Farming

Come along to Council's free sustainable gardening workshops where you can learn all about composting and worm farming to recycle your waste and improve your garden.

Tea and coffee are provided and all you need to bring are closed shoes.

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April 12th

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President's Message

Hello Everyone,

It is officially autumn but to me, it just doesn't feel like it yet, I think the absence of summer rain has thrown me and my garden out of kilter. Still, I am busily preparing small manageable areas for planting out new seeds and my yearly garlic crop. I am only planting out a few beds at a time so I can keep the water up to them, then if we get some good useful rain I can plant up a few more beds. To keep soil moist use a thin layer of mulch no more than 1 to 2cm thick, just enough to protect the soil but still allow any shower of rain to penetrate. I have been using compost as mulch in the veggie garden with some great results; it is light enough to let the water through and feeds the soil at the same time. It is more expensive than using sugar cane mulch or something similar, but I am pleased with how it performs. If you give it a go I would love to know how it goes.

The SEED TABLE is brimming with the new season's vegetable, herb and flower seeds for you to purchase. As always we have the trusty reliable favourites, as well as a few new and exciting things to try out. Purple Sprouting Broccoli is one such, described as producing tasty purple side shoots after picking the main heads. Turning green when cooked and adding stunning colour when added raw to a salad. I have had great success growing a variety of carrot called Nantes, so I thought you might like to give them a go too. They are described as having a bright orange nearly core-less root to 17cm. They have a nice straight shape and are not too big and are also good for juicing.

At the Annual General Meeting last month a new committee was elected, so we have some members taking up new positions and quite a few positions being retained by the same people. I am pleased to welcome all aboard and look forward to another brilliant year of GCOG. I would like to thank retiring committee members for their hard work and

diligence over the past year and to let you know that your commitment was greatly appreciated.

I did however note that attendance was down at that particular meeting and I hope the fact that it was the AGM was not the reason for it. Whilst we encourage our members to be involved in the management of their club, we certainly never put pressure on anyone to take on more than they truly wish to do. The AGM should be looked upon as an opportunity to have an opinion or even make a contribution to the running of your club. If this is not up "your alley" that's fine too, I'm sure you will play your part in a way that suites you when the time comes. After all, we don't require every member to be on the committee; however, we always need someone to have a turn at bringing a plate for super or donating a prize for the raffle table. You can save seeds from your garden for our seed table or write something for the newsletter, these activities are just as vital to the success of our club and you may find them to be the type of commitment you are glad to do. So please, don't be put off next year when the AGM comes around, come and join in the fun.

Happy Gardening,
Maria.

Cont'd ... Foliar Feeding

Recipes:

Seaweed liquid manure, compost water, green manure fertiliser as well comfrey can all be used as foliar sprays. Dilute to the colour of weak tea, and use as described above. Make sure all liquid is well filtered through fine material or the spray may clog.

Chamomile tea, nettle tea, lucerne tea and other materials can also be used to correct particular deficiencies.

To make the sprays take a handful of the raw material, place with water in a saucepan, bring to the boil and leave until cool. Strain and then dilute to weak tea colour and use as directed above.

Organic Gardening in Australia
Jackie French

Foliar Feeding

Foliar feeding involves directly spraying nutrients onto the leaves of plants. Foliar feeds available on the market at the moment are mainly chemical, though there is at least one commercial organic seaweed spray, Seasol, manufactured in Tasmania. It is claimed that seaweed sprays strengthen a plant's natural defence mechanisms, stimulate cell division, prolong storage life, help root development and increase frost resistance.

There are also several varieties of fish emulsion that are suitable for foliar feeding. These have more of the major nutrients than the seaweed spray but do not claim the growth strengthening factors.

Home-made liquid manures, whether from weed brew, comfrey, soaked manures or seaweed are also suitable as a foliage sprays, though the quality and impact will vary according to the ingredients.

Why Use Foliar Spray?

Plants cannot be fed solely through their leaves. Foliar feeding is most useful in the case of deficiency. Foliar feeding will give results in a couple of days, as opposed to weeks through the soil. It's also useful when a plant is suffering from temporary water-logging or a root disease and it is worthwhile prolonging the plant's life to save the crop. It is also a good way to give a quick boost to a plant to increase fruit size.

Foliar sprays are best absorbed in the early morning, when humidity is high and the leaves are metabolically most active. Absorption is most rapid in the first hour after application. Try to cover all the leaves, including the undersides. It is best not to spray on very hot days, as the spray tends to evaporate leaving a thin crust on the leaves. Absorption is also less effective in cold weather when enzyme action decreases.

Cont'd pg 4

Di Kelly's Special Guest

This was before the recent rains that brought about a bit of green growth – he had jumped the broken fence over into an old veggie patch, and had systematically eaten my one surviving radicchio plant. Strangely, he was not interested in the lettuces or kale that were in the next patch.



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Lise Racine
Biodynamic Gardening
 By Jill Barber

Lise Racine has been a vital, contributing member of the GCOG club ever since she joined, and that's the energy and commitment she brings to her farming and to the creation of her lotions and potions. She enthralled us at the February meeting with the story she wove of her beginnings in biodynamic farming or gardening, her brief history of the whole movement firstly in Europe and later in Australia, the nearly mystical Preparations used, and the other vital parts of applying the whole biodynamic method created by Rudolph Steiner in Austria in 1924. This method, Lise assures us, is the Cadillac version of organic farming, so we were, of course, all ears.

Lise bought her property in the Tallebudgera Valley in 2003, planning to begin immediately to apply this method to her growing of edible and cosmetic plants, and by 2005 she'd gained the Demeter in-Conversion status. In 2008, following her training, she could be awarded full Biodynamic Certification. A couple of years ago I attended a fascinating introductory biodynamic workshop on her property, enabling me to take out membership in the Association, which is a requirement for being allowed to buy and use the precious preparations. She plans to hold two of these a year from now on.

In the beginning of the last century, Rudolph Steiner was approached by a group of farmers who had noticed that the quality of the soil and the products grown in it had declined over the past fifty years, from strong, nutritious, tasty, long-keeping plants to plants lacking in those vital qualities. This had been the result of the use of water soluble food devised by a scientist in 1845 to try to increase food production. Steiner's brilliant, inspired work barely got off the ground before his death, but it was carried on and developed through research, documentation and different comparative photos by Pfeiffer and later here in Australia by Alex Podolinsky, in the late 1950's. The result here was a widespread

growth in large scale biodynamic farming, till in 1990 there were over a million acres under the Biodynamic farming method, being the most in the world!

With this system, the soil structure is of paramount importance, and Lise says that according to her the three priorities for Biodynamic farming are: 1. Soil structure, 2. Soil structure and 3. (you guessed it) Soil structure, so that the life of the microorganisms is cared for. The aim is to have the "right expression of the plant", such that it stands upright, has the right colour, and it's not too big or too small. If it's too stimulated or too stressed, it won't be right. To this end, Steiner created the Preparations, as follows.

500 Preparation:

Made by placing cow manure in a cow horn, burying it over winter, facing in a certain direction, where all growth is stopped. The result is a 35gm ball, which in solution covers an acre, and costs \$3 to \$4. Only in certain parts of the country can these conditions be met, so not everyone can make it or the desired results will not be met. The ball is stirred in 13 litres of lukewarm water, in a copper or stainless steel drum with plenty of space, for an hour, in a special way, by hand, though farmers with very large properties have devised a machine to do it.

The 500 is applied *between 3pm and 2am*, on an overcast day, when the soil is open and wet; it can be after watering when there is no rain. It will help with the humus; help the roots to go deeper. The droplets applied either with a brush or the special sprayer are large, and land on the soil, not plants.

It is kept in a particular box, cushioned and insulated in mould-free, non-irradiated peat moss.

501:

Consists of silica crushed, and in solution; thus, activated. It's an aerial element which helps to concentrate the sun's rays or the sun element in the plants. It's applied *before sunrise*: it acts like micro mirrors, intensifying the sun's rays, so no water can be on the leaves once the sun rises. When everything is too

wet, 501 is used to help rein in the moisture, creating crispness in the plants, “bringing the plant in”. As you might imagine, Lise has rarely used this! It is applied as small droplets in the air.

502, 503, 504, 505 and 506:

Each is made with a different plant, including yarrow, nettle, dandelion, valerian, and some are made using a particular part of an animal. The preparation 502 is made with yarrow flowers, 503 with flowers of German chamomile, 504 from the leaves of stinging nettle, 505 from oak bark, 506 dandelion flowers, 507 valerian flowers.

Cultivation: Soil needs to be aerated, lifted up without breaking the structure which is already there, such as with a fork or chisel plough.

Green Manure: This is obtained from growing a mixture of plants, including 30% grains, such as sorghum, millet, wheat and buckwheat; and 70% legumes, like adzuki, lab lab, wooly pod vetch, navy beans, etc. Lise likes to grow two of these crops in a row, slashing each once they are forty to sixty centimetres high and digging them in immediately to enhance the nitrogen content. The greater the variety of seeds at any one time, the better.

Season: March to October are the best growing months for Lise; November to January Lise grows the green manure crops, and then the end of January or February, she digs them in and leaves them till they're well rotted in. Crop rotation is also an important factor.

Sowing Chart: There are four parts of a plant – the stem with leaves, the root, flowers and fruit/seed – and they're influenced by different constellations. So, the earth sign relates to the root; the air to flowers, water to the stem and leaves; fire to the seeds. Seeds not planted in the relevant times show obvious *visual* distinctions, and the viability of the seeds is improved from planting in the correct times. There are documented results from Maria Thun in Europe which clearly demonstrate this. Alex Podolinsky, in his published lectures says, “Above all when conditions are right, sow!”

Garlic: One of Lise's crops is garlic, which is a natural antibiotic. After a few years of practice, Lise managed to harvest five times what she planted. The yield can go up to 8 to 10 times what you plant. The time she begins is October, when she spreads a good covering of manure, and then plants the first of the two green manure crops. After they both have been chopped down, dug in and rotted, she will add mature compost, to activate the life enhancement ability of the soil, but not plant into it directly. The garlic, which has usually begun to shoot by this time, is best kept in the fridge for one to three weeks before planting out. If the garlic is shooting now, it's an ideal time to plant.

Lise has a simple recipe for garlic in syrup, to be taken as a cold remedy. See the Recipe on page

Now to conclude with Lise's workshop: Lise emphasised the point that before you can buy any preparations, you need to attend a workshop, and the one to be held at Lise's is in May, and costs \$60. Then you will learn how to stir, how to store and how to apply the preparations. Other costs for beginning this venture are the \$45/year membership in the Biodynamic Gardeners' Association Incorporated (BDGAI), about \$200 for a knapsack sprayer (optional for the first few years) , a 500 storage box for maybe \$250-\$300 (from a Gold Coast fellow), a stirring bucket and a calendar. The storage box dimensions are given in the workshop, where the use of all of these is explained and demonstrated.

We gave Lise a beautifully healthy and colourful anthurium as thanks for her sharing of all her wonderful Biodynamic knowledge and experience. Her presentation was very much appreciated, which the attention of her audience showed during her talk as did their later excited buzz over supper (and it wasn't just because of Marion's wonderful cheese ball, though that was indeed delicious; we're receiving her recipe for the newsletter, I believe). Many thanks to Lise, and best wishes for the success of her workshop in May.

**Getting To Know
Jerry & Justy Rogers
By Diane Kelly**

This month's interview with Jerry and Justy Rogers had its beginnings within an email that Justy wrote to me just over twelve months ago. She commented that "every day on the farm there is a little surprise for me - today it was a baby peacock feather - absolutely perfectly formed lying just next to my driver's side car."

I was intrigued by this idea – who would have peacocks in their backyard; what sort of a farm did Justy live on; and what was the connection to growing things organically.

After a visit to the peaceful property, a very exotic morning tea, and the chance to read a book called "Bend of the River", I thought it was an interesting story to share. But first let me introduce Jerry and Justy. Jerry Rogers and her husband Bob have four daughters:

- Sheridan - a food and travel writer who "looks to her garden for solace, peace and renewal"
- Brett – who is currently living in England
- Justy – previously a lawyer but who now lives and works on the farm & has her own remedial massage practice
- Skye – who designs greeting cards and stationery in Sydney, and who has drawn a number of the illustrations in Sheridan's book "The Cook's Garden"

Jerry is also the author of several books. In 1991, when travelling around Australia, Jerry was impressed by the quality of the hand and machine knitting done by the women of the outback. In a tribute to them, Jerry chose twenty-five Australian paintings and commissioned them to be knitted into garments. The stories behind the designs and the technical instructions were then published in "The Art of Knitting" and "A Sense of Place: Contemporary Needlework".

Then, in 1998 and in conjunction with Skye, Jerry wrote "Bend of the River", which is the story of her family and her dream to create

"an orchard, a sea of shining leaves with groves of differently shaped and colored fruits."



Morning tea at the Rogers – yellow mangosteen cheesecake, jack fruit icecream, star fruit and persimmons, served with frangipani blossom

Jerry was born in northern Queensland, and remembers following her mother around the garden while she planted cuttings. "Invariably they grew", Jerry writes in "Bend of the River". Living in Sydney after she and Bob were married, Jerry was a keen embroiderer, a mature-age student who gained an honors degree in politics and history, and a successful organic gardener. In the mid 1960's, Jerry read Rachel Carson's book "The Silent Spring" and her ecological awareness began. Permaculture 1 & 2 followed (Bill Mollison and David Holmgren) along with various international authors who wrote about ecological ethics and the practicalities of good plant growing. Jerry had visited Esther Dean's no-dig, organic vegetable garden in Sydney, and had based her own garden on those principles. Then it was time to fulfill the dream of the orchard.

In 1974, Jerry had been shown a property for sale on the Gold Coast that definitely met her criteria of "remote, and on the river". This was originally an un-treed block of sixty-three acres of dairy land, accessed only by a dirt track, and with a house on it that was built in 1910. The area was divided with other members of the family, and so Jerry now had fifteen acres of tranquility. The orchard was started on 1 ½ hectares on a north-easterly slope, above the frost level and where the

drainage was good – and where the sun shone for most of the day. Jerry had started obtaining seeds from the Rare Fruit Council (who have the intriguing motto of “Eat Your Landscaping”) and had planted wind-breaks to shelter the young fruit trees that were beginning to grow. She writes in her book “in the following months, to enrich the soil, newspapers, hay, straw, grass cuttings, bagasse, blood & bone, gypsum, dolomite and animal manures all made their way into the orchard”. No chemical fertilizers had previously been used on the property, so pre-conditions for organic growing were ideal. A foot of topsoil sat on a clay base, so Jerry watched as the trees adjusted to the water-retaining effect of the clay.

Over the years, the house on “Bend of the River” had been turned into a family home, with school holidays filled with cooking, fishing, tennis, swimming and canoeing. Justy’s hobby was horses (of which she had eleven at one time) and Jerry claims that it was only after this interest waned that she was allowed more space for trees. Always looking for plants that she did not have and that can be considered survival food, Jerry travelled to countries such as New Guinea (where she found vanilla plants), Africa, and Cuba (which she considers the best botanical country, and where the monkey-pot tree is found). One of these trees now grows in the orchard – it is related to the Brazil nut, and has large, woody fruits. Monkeys take the seeds by reaching into the pot once the lid has dropped off, and any seeds that drop to the ground greatly enrich the soil with nitrogen.

Jerry and I had a walk around the orchard, and the variety of fruit trees was quite overwhelming. A few I recognized – star fruit, neem (the oil from the leaves helps repel bugs), jack fruit, quince, guavas, finger lime, mangoes, black sapote (one of Jerry’s favourite), Davidson’s plum, cadamon, bananas, pomilla, custard apple and silky oaks. But there are so many others that I was glad most of them had name tags, trees such as lakoocha, hog plum (from Tropical America), kepel fruit (considered one of the most beauti-

ful of all tropical fruit trees, and quite rare), sapodilla tree (a Central American tree that takes five to eight years to fruit) and bergamot citrus trees (the flavor of which is the basis for Earl Grey tea). With such a variety, Jerry said that they have home-grown fruit to eat all through the year.

I asked Jerry about maintaining the orchard. Originally composted lucerne and mulch were used to improve the soil, but now each September, December and February the trees are fertilized with blood & bone and dynamic lifter. Horse manure is utilized, and chicken manure is used on the vege garden. Jerry is kindly ruthless to the trees – she allows them plenty of time to grow, but if they eventually show that they are not suited to their location, then they are removed. As we walked down to the river, Jerry showed how the silt from floods has improved the soil in the lower part of the orchard. Fruit fly and fruit-sucking wasps are a problem.

As with any interview, there are some other bits and pieces of interest that don’t really fit into the story line, but here they are:

Birds that visit “Bend of the River”: kingfishers, whistling ducks, magpie geese, wood ducks, honey eaters, geese (permanent residents) parrots and bush turkeys. And of course those peacocks! The story behind them is that Jerry wanted a couple of peacocks to live in the garden, so a couple of peacocks were obtained. But then, suddenly, five others appeared from “nowhere” and stayed! Ultimately they had to be relocated due to the danger of traffic on the main road, but there are still two beautiful birds among the fruit trees. There is a timber frieze along the verandah wall of the house that lists the birds. (Koalas visit too, as well snakes, foxes and kangaroos.)

Jerry’s garden in Sydney: This also has a tropical theme, with kiwi fruit and Brazilian cherries, and fruit trees escaping out onto the nature strip. Jerry still maintains her vegetable garden.

How to extend the use of your Garlic From Lise Racine

Garlic is harvested in September in Queensland. The garlic you are buying now will last only until April or May. After this time it will start to decompose because it is time to plant it. This means we will all be left without good garlic until next September – missing out on garlic use during the winter months.

For this reason I looked for a good way to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of garlic for those extra months of the year. I found a great recipe published by James Green in his book “The Herbal Medicine-Maker’s Handbook – a home manual”.

I have been using this recipe for myself, my family and friends since 2004. Garlic is a natural antibiotic, a tonic and immune builder. A teaspoon of this syrup for a few days helps with your health.

A great French healer, Maurice Messegue said “*Where I found health I found garlic and where I found garlic I found health.*”

Here is the recipe...

- Slice and bruise $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup (90 gr) of fresh, peeled garlic
- Put 250 ml of organic apple cider vinegar in a glass jar and add the above garlic in it.
- Let this mixture stand for four days. *Shake every day.*
- Strain the apple cider vinegar in a saucepan
- Add 500 gr of raw honey and gently warm up the liquid until the honey is dissolved (do not cook it – just warm up slowly at the lowest temperature).
- Bottle the resulting syrup in small bottles of 250 ml or 100 ml. You will get two 250 ml bottles. Label them with the date you made the syrup.
- Keep in the fridge. I use a batch within 6 to 8 months.

Enjoy a teaspoon of your syrup when you feel a cold or flu coming or when you feel a bit low with your energy. If you wish to hide the smell of garlic on your breath, chew on some fresh parsley.

Cont’d ... Jerry & Justy Rogers

What do Jerry and Justy do for relaxation? Apart from both being avid cooks, Justy weaves rustic baskets from materials all gathered from the farm and does mosaics, and Jerry is still an avid reader. And with the picture to prove it they both like to play Scrabble with Lise in French!!



Scrabble in French (Justy lived in France for a year & Jerry reads it well, so competition was fierce!)

A quote from Sheridan’s “The Cook’s Garden” that I liked:

- “It is important to create the sort of garden you are happy in, and not feel bound to set it out according to designs in books or the latest fashion”.

With Jerry’s many years of gardening success, I asked her what has been her best gardening moment:

- “When a long-term fruit tree bears fruit for the first time”.

The final question for the day was “In a couple of words, what does gardening mean to you”, and I think Jerry’s answer was as good as it gets:

“Gardening is life”.

What Lies Beneath
Organic Gardener - Mar/Apr 2011

Testing your soil for chemicals is a wise move before starting a veggie patch or raising chickens.

Growing your own fruit and veggies and having some backyard chooks is a dream for many, but chemicals lurking in the soil can be an unseen trap.

Organochlorine compounds in particular, which were widely used in the horticulture and agriculture industries as herbicides, insecticides and fungicides in Australia from the 1950's, can still be detected today. Given that much farming and horticultural land has now been swamped by suburbs, many backyards are contaminated with organochlorine residues.

Organochlorines were also used to control termites in fences and houses. Among the most widely used were dieldrin, DDT, heptachlor and chlordane. By 1987, all of these were deregistered for use due to their toxicity and extreme persistence in the environment – remaining in the soil long after they were originally used. They also remain in the bloodstream of humans.

Organochlorines are stable compounds. They are not water soluble, so they are not washed through the soil profile; they remain where they are sprayed, stuck to soil particles. Anything that eats those soil particles will eat the organochlorines as well. So sheep and cattle that graze on contaminated pasture may ingest the chemicals. Poultry – especially chooks – ingest a lot of soil as they peck and scratch around.

Organochlorines are fat soluble, which means they lodge in the fatty deposits of animals. In sheep and cattle, this is the milk and fat. In poultry, it is the fat and eggs. These chemicals are persistent, so anyone who eats the milk, meat or eggs from contaminated animals also eat the organochlorines.

For some landholders it may not matter if

residues are present; it depends on what you want to do with your land. If you want to revegetate the land, grow fruit trees or run horses, then contamination may not be a major issue. But if you want to grow root crop vegetables, where the edible portion is immersed in the soil, raise poultry, or run animals for meat or milk production, it matters a lot. Commercial growers certainly cannot get organic certification if the soil has chemical residues.

Of course, you can build raised bed gardens using imported, clean soil, but if you want to use the soil you have, then a soil test by an appropriate analytical laboratory is a wise move.

Contacts: www.measurement.gov.au or email enviro@measurement.gov.au

DEFINITION: An organochloride, or-organochlorine, chlorocarbon, chlorinated hydrocarbon, chloroalkane, or chlorinated solvent is an organic compound containing at least one covalently bonded atom of chlorine.



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Did You Know?

The modern name “**garlic**” is derived from the old English word “garleac”, meaning “spear-leek”, the spear reference alluding to the shape of the plant’s leaf.

Cauliflower:

Dedicated seed savers are needed to save cauliflower varieties, because many have already been lost to cultivation through cross-pollination with other brassicas. Flowering annuals, including stocks and alyssum, belong to the Brassica family.

Rocket:

Like all brassica blooms, rocket flowers are very attractive to native bees, parasitic wasps and other species of insects, so they are useful for attracting these beneficial insects to your garden. Rocket seeds are used in the production of oil.

Ceylon Spinach:

Flesh from the purple fruit of Ceylon spinach can be used as a food colouring. If your Ceylon spinach runs rampant, do not be too concerned – add it to the compost or steep it in water and use it as a liquid fertilizer.

Arrowroot:

Many gardeners grow arrowroot as a source of green foliage for mulching and composting or as a green feed for chickens, ducks and grazing animals.

Munching metals – worms!

Worms can remove heavy metals from soil, according to studies published in the *International Journal of Global Environmental Issues*. Over a two-week period, tiger worms removed 42-72% of arsenic and 7-30% of mercury from a test worm farm.

In a separate experiment, worm compost when applied to contaminated wastewater removed lead, nickel, chromium and vanadium. These are typical contaminants from dumped computers and electronic devices.

Hints

Liquid manure – key to rapid growth in cool conditions: Even a small 10-litre container can be used to make good liquid manure. However, the larger the better.

- A hessian or similar porous sack containing sheep, horse or cow manure and dangled for a week or so in a drum almost filled with water will produce some of the cheapest yet most valuable of all plant foods. But never use it full strength because the action is quite sudden. The best mix is about one part of liquid manure to three or four of water. This brew helps to induce fertile soil over a short period.
- If you want to use chicken manure, remember that this is very strong, so be prepared to dilute the finished product even more. In addition, chicken manure is also inclined to encourage the proliferation of lots of unpleasant maggots in the liquid, so be sure to keep the brew well covered at all times.

Cultivation of herbs:

Most herbs need a sunny position, with as much northern sun as possible. Their leaves will develop their fragrance and volatile oils in full sun, whereas in shady areas, they will only grow weakly, with little aroma in the leaves.

They are not particular about soil types, and will grow well in most, as long as they are well drained. If herb roots become water-logged, the plant will not succeed.

Generally, in their original site (very often the Mediterranean region), herbs grow in rocky exposed soils, with little water hanging around the roots.

It is not necessary to mix compost, animal manure or fertilizer into soils, as herbs do not need a soil that is too rich. In soils that are over-rich, the leaves can grow to be too lush with little oil.

Lapsang Souchong tea is often used as a possum repellent. Simply make up a strong pot of tea and allow it to cool, then spray the tea over plants eaten by possums. The

strong, smoky flavour of the tea is said to stop them from nibbling new growth and flowers. Repeat applications after rain or overhead watering.

Crop rotation suggestion:

Sweet corn and sorghum, members of the grass family, can be followed by two members of the tomato family, potato and tomato.

Just like following cucumbers with carrots, if these two hungry plants have been successfully cropped, the soil will still contain sufficient organic matter and nutrients for potatoes and tomatoes.

Avoid wetting the foliage of potatoes and tomatoes to reduce the risk of diseases. As soon as either crop begins to flower, be prepared to spray with copper hydroxide to control foliar fungal diseases.

Valuable comfrey:

Comfrey is important in an organic garden to help build up high-quality soil. It has long roots that push deep into the soil, accumulating nutrients that are then made available in its leaves. Plant comfrey near your compost so the nutrients that leach out of the compost are caught by the comfrey. Regularly pick comfrey leaves and use them as mulch or add them to compost to speed up decomposition. Another bonus is that bees love comfrey flowers.

Fabulous figs:

Figs are ready to harvest when they reach their full colour (purple, brown, green or yellow, depending on the type), the fruit stem starts to soften and the whole fruit droops.

They are sublime when eaten straight from the tree and can be stewed, poached, made into jam, frozen or dried. If ants are climbing the tree to feed on the syrupy fruit, then make a collar out of thick paper; tie it around the trunk near the base and apply a horticultural glue in a complete ring to the paper, including the bottom edge. Fold a little of this edge underneath to stop any ants crawling under the collar as well as over the top. Remove once the fruit is harvested.

Various books



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GC Visitors Guide 2013

GARDENING IN APRIL

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

This is the other month (along with March) in which you make or break your Spring garden. The earth remains warm enough to germinate seed and for seedlings to establish a healthy root system. This, however, is not all joy, for many of the weeds are seeding and must be removed before they have dropped their little bundles of havoc.

The end of Summer also means that the old vegetables and flowers should be either dug in or composted. Any diseased plants should be buried – anywhere but in the garden. They can also be burned and the ashes returned to the garden.

If you don't intend using a bed until Spring, do it a favour by applying a coat of lime or dolomite and an overcoat of mulch. It will restrict the weeds, encourage earthworms and condition the soil.

Vegetables: Continue plantings from the previous month (refer February newsletter) and if you have a high fence with a northern, or even north-eastern aspect, consider the old favourite, the telephone pea. All children love the long pods and giant seeds. Don't forget to add lime to the soil when preparing the bed. They, like other pea varieties, prefer a fertile, but not over-rich soil.

Weeds are the peas' greatest enemy. The pea plants pull out with the weeds. Mulch is a good ally. Most dwarf peas also like some support and a length of wire netting between rows will reduce wind and rain damage.

In this climate, some gardeners hardly bother with a Summer garden, preferring to concentrate on the more manageable colder months. Potatoes are the best example of this. Instead of a Spring sowing as in southern climates, our best times are considered to be April, May and June.

Continued on pg 15

FRUIT TREES

Custard Apples: Fertilize trees – 20 gms of organic fertiliser per sq m to drip line. Harvest every 3 to 7 days. If mealy bug is a problem spray individual fruit with pest oil or wipe on metho and water (30% metho + 70% water).

Figs: Close to end of season.

Lychee: Less watering is required, but don't let the trees dry out. If Erinose mite appears, spray every 10 to 14 days with wettable sulphur from pinhead size new growth to fully open and hardened off.

Low Chill Stone Fruit: Water needs to taper off now as trees begin to defoliate.

Mango: If any anthracnose fungus is visible, spray with a copper based spray every 2 weeks, or with 25 mls leaf microbes and 5 grams wettable sulphur per 1 litre of water.

Passionfruit: The water can be tapered off. Harvest fallen fruit under vines every 3-4 days.

Pawpaw: Plant out new trees. Apply boron now. 1 teaspoon per mature tree. Spray leaf microbes (25 ml leaf microbes per 1 litre of water) if black spot is seen.

Persimmon: Main harvest time. Decline water needs. Apply a little super fine lime and gypsum – 50 gms per sq metre of each.

Strawberries: Plant out new runners. If you want to leave last year's plants, prune only.

Bananas: Give stools a high organic potassium fertilizer – 200 grams per stool (any organic fertilizer that has added sulphate of potash).

Citrus: If any fungal problems arise, spray with pest oil and leaf microbes. Add the pest oil + 15 ml per litre of the leaf microbes. This

Continued on pg 15

VEGETABLES

MARCH:

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

APRIL:

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

Cont'd ... Gardening In April

Add good compost and either ashes, lime, dolomite or rock phosphate and you will be enjoying the wonderful taste of a freshly-dug spud in the early spring. Keep hilled and mulched.

Flowers: Bulbs are extremely adaptable, quite hardy and beautiful in wide or narrow beds, pots, window boxes, tubs, under bushes and around the base of trees. They will grow in a great variety of soils and climates and at this time of the year, most nurseries have a good range.

Generally, bulbs like a well-drained, not-too-rich soil. Add some well-rotted organic matter and, if the soil is particularly heavy, dig in coarse sand. Indoor bulbs can be planted in a more socially-acceptable preparation, using a commercially-available bulb fibre that does not smell or attract insects.

In early Spring, when flower buds appear, give bulbs a moderate feed of liquid fertilizer, and again when flowering is finished.

HERBS

MARCH

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

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

APRIL

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

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Cont'd ... Fruit Trees

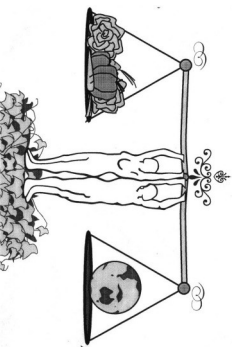
will also control the citrus leaf miner and scale.

Pruning Citrus: Citrus trees need little pruning. If over-crowded, thin out after fruiting. Don't thin oranges or grapefruit severely but mandarins can be shortened back to the second or third shoot down the branch. Lemon trees are taller and less compact so keep them to a size easier to handle. Old trees can be cut severely but will take a year or two to recover and bear.

Queensland Planting Guide, BOGI

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NEWSLETTER

Meetings held:
3rd Thursday of the Month

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

Next meeting:
Thursday 17 April 2014