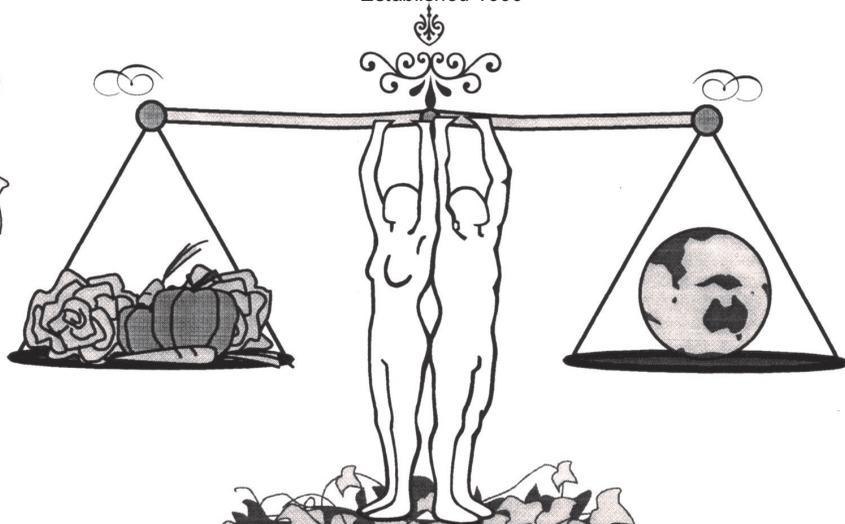


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 November 2013 Issue 11
GARDENING IN SUMMER

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16 January

The Aims of G.C.O.G. Inc.

1. **To promote organic sustainable food raising for home gardens and farms.**
2. **To foster research into improved methods of organic farming and gardening.**
3. **To provide information and support to all those interested in the various aspects of organic growing.**

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

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

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

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

(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

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

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

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers

Bank: Suncorp

BSB: 484-799

Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

\$2.00 each.

Members Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

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

Library:

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

Advertising:

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

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

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

2013 Committee

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Seed Bank	Roger Griffiths (07) 5530 5067
Seed Assistant	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609
The position of Trip Co-ordinator has been abolished.	

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: Henry Blonner (108), Frank Rebesco (342), Debbie Jones (254), Glenn & Joan Jones (266), Gai Morrow (309)

November: Ross & Jenny Davis (199), Paul & Maria Roberson (4), David Wyatt & Helen Wainwright (284)

January: Marion Symons (155), Peter & Patricia Edwards (163), Anissa Loades (228), Roger Griffiths (272), John Steytler (313), Winsome Gunning (314), Julie Abraham (315)

Welcome to our new members: Ashleigh Cornish, Amy Luken, John Palmer

Thanks to Newsletter Contributors

A special thanks to Diane Kelly for all her behind the scenes efforts with so many of the contributions throughout the year. This month Diane has encouraged some of our Gardening Community to let us into their gardens - Thanks Roger Peterson, Cathie Hodge, Gordon & Dorothy Singh, Ian & Margaret Lee, Pauline Behrendorff, Roger Griffiths. Dorothy Winton.

Thanks to Jill Barber, Maria Roberson & Karen Hart for your regular contributions that are so useful if we miss a meeting or need to refer back to past information.

Maria Roberson Home Vegetable Garden and Orchard Consultant

- Advice on achieving a healthy and productive fruit and vegetable garden.
- Let me show you how to garden using organic principals that really work and get the results that you have been aiming for.
- Phone 5598 6609 for a quote at affordable rates.

House Sitter Available ...

Mature, responsible garden and pet lover available to do house sitting.

Usually work during school hours a couple of days a week replacing teachers in local schools. Police check already conducted as part of teacher registration in Queensland.

Feel free to contact me to discuss your house and pet sitting requirements.

Contact Julie on 0414 607 130
(club member)

Tweed Foodie Fest

Tweed Foodie Fest is a five day celebration of local food and the vibrant culture that has grown around it.

Wed 27th Nov to Sun 1st Dec
www.tweedfoodiefest.com.au

- Meet our local farmers and learn about their relationship with the land.
- Be inspired by local chefs, whose creative interpretation of seasonal ingredients will excite your senses.
- Learn from the best and take home more than just a satisfied appetite, with classes and workshops to make you a home-made gourmet!
- Taste the very best local flavours at our signature event: Tweed's Biggest Dinner Party!

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Last month we introduced the BARTER AND SWAP TABLE to the monthly meetings, I think it may take a little getting used to, and so, we will need to be patient while all the so called bugs are ironed out of the system. The concept is to bring in things from home such as small amounts of produce or plants to swap with others. An example would be your jar of jam, for my half dozen eggs, or perhaps a bunch of silver beet for some tomatoes or an eggplant or two. The table is specifically for small amounts of produce that you would not bother to sell, yet you have too much to use up at home. If you are not going to stand at the table and barter your stuff, don't forget to put your name on it, you may want to put your wish list on it too.

We are looking for donations of mouse melon seeds, Ceylon spinach seeds and any flower seeds that you may have saved and have excess that you could pass on to the club. However we are always grateful for any seeds saved and donated by our organic members, as this helps us to keep the cost of the seed down to just \$2 per pack. Organic seed is becoming more expensive and it does take quite a lot of a financial outlay to stock the seed table each season.

With the coming of summer, there is no time to waste in getting vegetable gardens up and fully productive. There are still plenty of plants that will do well in the coming month or more. Mesclun mixes are a boon to salads over the holiday period and can be plucked early on in their growing life. Cucumbers and zucchini are two more must have vegetables this time of year. Make a quick salad from Cue, crushed garlic, salt and plain Greek yoghurt. Zucchini fried in garlic and olive oil is a fast and tasty side dish to just about anything. My kids thought that it was better than bacon with a fried egg for breakfast. If you are not sure what else you can plant this time of year consult our newsletter for a reliable seasonal planting guide.

Members are reminded to check if your membership fees are due, we try to give you plenty of warning as to when you are up for renewal. We have also made it easy for you to pay by transferring funds directly into our bank account, all payment details are on the first page of the newsletter.

If any members would like to sell items at the monthly meeting please check with me first so I can let you know where to set up and what the guide lines are for doing such.

The NOVEMBER MEETING IS THE LAST MEETING FOR THIS YEAR, meetings will resume in January 2014 as usual. In February we hold our Annual General Meeting where we elect the new committee for the coming year, we will no doubt have some positions to fill. If you feel you would like to contribute by nominating for a position on the committee, don't be shy, just go for it.

Happy growing, Maria



Slow Food® Gold Coast

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- ◆ Promotes Taste Education
- ◆ Supports Local Growers & Food Artisans

Check out www.slowfoodfoundation.org and check out the International Ark of Taste.

Contact: goldcoast.queensland@slowfoodaustralia.com.au for details or Ph: 0412 266566

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

In Memory of Marie Rudd

As most of you will know, we lost a valued member and dear friend this past month, Marie Rudd. Marie was one of our first members; she also had a hand in the making of GCOG from the very beginning. She was a dedicated and active member for 16 years and it was only in the last few months that she missed a meeting night, come to think of it, I recon she had attended more meetings than I have.

Marie served on the committee in several positions over the years and she would muck in where ever necessary despite her busy life and commitments to other organisations. Marie was always on hand to show new members and visitors "the ropes" and hand out her S.A.F.E. information packs. Every year at the AGM she would chair the meeting and keep things rolling along so it was never an arduous affair as these things can become.

Marie loved to share her knowledge with fellow members and she was in fact our first guest speaker, I remember her talk was on "The Three M's" as she coined it - Moisture, Microbes and Minerals, a topic that was new at the time and has been proved to be as relevant to any good garden back then as it is now.

Every meeting without fail Marie brought a plate for the supper table, grapes were one of her favourite offerings or a special new healthy treat she had discovered and wanted to share with us.

At every monthly meeting Marie always saved me a seat beside her in the front row, so where ever she is now, I hope she is going to save me a seat there too.

Maria

Ooooby Three Is Coming from Asheleigh

Sunday 15th December will be our third Ooooby day, and a chance for all the seasoned Oooobiers to get together again, plus a whole bunch of new ones to find out just what it is all about. Ooooby can be lots of different things, but it stands for "**Out Of Our Own Back Yard**". The venue will be **Palm Beach Parklands, 945 Gold Coast Highway, Palm Beach** – look for us near the pirate ship playground from 10.00am until 2.00pm

Transition Community Southern Gold Coast would like to have a regular programme of Ooooby days during 2014. Organiser Jane Power said "It came from the Community Garden movement in New Zealand, where the different groups would get together regularly and swap their surplus produce. We decided to make it bigger than that, and involve our whole community"

So **Sunday 15th** is going to be about food. This is a big pot luck picnic day, so the food is what we are swapping. Make up whatever you feel like, (Christmas things would be fine) and put it in the middle with everyone's food together – we'll take some photos of the massed display and hungry Transitioners, and then eat it all! The lagoon is a great place to have a swim, and of course the playground is excellent for small children.

"We chose as our Ooooby theme '**Grow it, sew it, make it, or bake it – then swap it!**' said Rod Weir, Transition Community coordinator. " So if you want to bring some non-food items as well, that's great. Just bear in mind, we really want this one to about food, so please make sure you bring at least something you have made yourself".

If we make a point of sourcing our food from local suppliers or growers, or maybe even something you have grown yourself, fantastic! And we can spend some time talking about how to develop a useful and practical approach to localising our food as much as possible, and making this a cornerstone of our Transition Town.

See you there., Rod Weir

Q & A - October 17th
By Karen Hart

Opening:

Maria opened the meeting with a request for **seed donations** – in paper bags or glass jars please. Write your name on it and what it is and the date picked or seed collected. It can save the club a lot of money. Particularly wanted are nasturtium seeds, Ceylon spinach and mouse melon seeds.

A member spoke about **guinea pig manure** which is available from 'Angel's Guinea Pig Rescue'. This free resource is available in exchange for garbage bags. She would prefer a phone call first to arrange collection of around 50 large bags at a time so they could be shared. Phone Monique on 0435 251 510. It needs to be composted in a tumbler or a heap of around 1 sqm – consists of wood shavings, hay and guinea pig 'poo'.

Organic Farm Share, which has a farm 42 kms west of Kyogle, has now opened its very large refrigerated bus to non-members – you can just turn up or order online. The bus will be at The Ecovillage, 639 Currumbin Creek Road, Currumbin Valley, every Friday from 3-6pm.

Qs & As:

1. Jill brought in some **dill** which had turned a silvery grey – it is going to seed – and the question was asked if one can still eat it?

A. Yes, the silvery grey is like a bloom – wash it off first then the dill can be eaten.

2. Pauline brought in an example of **gall damage** from the gall wasp on some **grape-fruit stems**.

A. It should be solarised and then binned – do not compost! Pinprick holes indicate hatching of the larvae. Jill remarked that the better she fertilised her trees, the less these occurred: she has almost eradicated the problem by adding 'chook poo' three to four times per year (every season), in copious quantities. Maria reminded us that fruit trees given **too much nitrogen** will produce a lot of soft sappy growth in spring and encourage leaf miner and caterpillars.

3. A **brassica – possibly broccoli** – was presented with caterpillar holes, from big, fat, green caterpillars, which can hide in the centre of the plant in the heat of the day.

A. Squash by hand and hang on the plant so that birds can pick them and any others off.

Dipel is an organic alternative for a bad infestation.

4. **Eggplants** were brought in with brown marks on the skin, some two years old, others one year old.

A. The marking may be from rubbing, the wind, sunburn or fruit fly sting. Eggplants are really annuals so should be planted every year. The two-year-old plants were cut back and re-sprouted. Eggplants love fertile soil and need staking against the wind. When flowering, fertilise with 'chook poo', dynamic lifter or seaweed solution.

5. Pauline found huge **snails** in her garden this year.

A. The chooks love them; ducks even more so. Sprinkle water around at dusk, and collect them up and feed to the chooks or ducks.

6. **Tomato leaves** picked from the bottom of the bushes were brought in by Karen with black edges. She wondered if it was from watering in too hot sun.

A. It was suggested that the lower leaves be removed as tomatoes love good air flow, and need plenty of spacing. She also had a **tomato**, and thought it may have fruit fly sting, but determined that it was sunburn from this hot dry windy weather.

7. A deformed **bean** was brought in, but it was difficult to determine the variety, so it was hard to identify the cause.

A. It was suggested that a 'normal' bean be brought in with the deformed one. **Bean thrip** starts in the flower, and can then eat a bit out of the bean, and cause it to curl.

8. **Fig tree beetles** lay yellow eggs in a cluster, and then the grubs skeletonise the leaves.

A. They should be physically squashed or the tree can be netted with fruit fly mesh. One needs to keep on top of the problem

because it can be difficult to completely eradicate. Neil takes off the leaves as soon as he sees the eggs, but Maria thinks that it is better to keep the leaves otherwise you are taking away the plant's 'solar panels'.

9. **Leaf miner** has attacked **nasturtiums**.

A. With this very windy and dry weather for well over a month, we are up against it with pests, etc. However, now is a good time to get your vegies and salads in the ground, if that's not already done.

Final comments:

When planting **lettuces**, you can plant 'red salad bowl' and 'cos' together, and the 'red salad bowl' will be ready first, in good time for Christmas. If going for **Cucumbers**, Lebanese 'Muncher' is a good variety, and **Zucchini** should be planted now.

Small seeds should be watered twice daily to get established. Extreme heat and wind will kill them off, however, so dappled shade is needed during the midday heat. Any kind of prunings or palm leaves can give good shade.

SWEET 16 !!!
GCOG Birthday Celebrations



Great Birthday Cake Maria, and what a spread



Just some of our hard working Committee

WELCOME TO A
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interesting things to see and buy.*

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GC Visitors Guide 2013

Lise Racine
Therapeutic Teas & Decoctions
 By Jill Barber

John Palmer, the previous speaker at the September GCOG meeting, you may recall, said to me at suppertime last week after Lise's presentation, "You get top rate speakers here, don't you?!" We had a good laugh at him commending himself as well as Lise, but he was right: hers was a wonderful presentation. Not only did she tell us about the ways to prepare and enjoy herbal teas, the various types of herbs to use, the value of using them and the difference between the teas and decoctions; she also demonstrated, with her tabletop burner and teapot and her array of herbs, just how to make them correctly. It was a fascinating evening, and everyone paid total attention!

Having just completed a course as a traditional herbalist, Lise took time at first to explain a few basics, and that herbs have been used medicinally for thousands of years. In medieval times, a few basic herbs (20 or 30) were sufficient to treat most ailments, and these days herbs are returning to popularity. Just as with housecleaning and car servicing, the body needs regular care in the form of a health care maintenance program. The **blood**, in particular, needs to be gently cleaned on a regular basis, which prevents a later breakdown, as does the **liver**, being the filter of the body, and the processor of stress. The **gall bladder** likewise, needs a regular gentle cleanse, all of which aids the **nervous system** to function properly. To this end, two cups of *gentle* tea a day for a month gives us an easy cleansing, as opposed to a full-on detoxifying program.

Lise told us about the main herbs she uses and recommends, explaining that, **Yarrow**, for example, was healing for the peripheral blood vessels, reducing inflammation. "Every garden needs **Comfrey* to go in the compost and for the leaves to be used as a poultice on damaged ligaments**", Lise asserted*, and her favourite herbs are **Nettle**** leaves and **Dandelion***** for the leaves and the root. Then there is **Mallow****** a soothing plant while-

Plantain, which is very good for the skin, as well as **Lemon Balm******* who will look after the nervous system. She refrained from regaling us on the virtues of **Calendula******* flowers as we all know that this is the flower she grows on her Biodynamically certified property in Tallebudgera. This last herb forms the basis of her creams and lotions that she makes and sells at markets and online, as well as at our monthly meetings.

There are four main parts to a herb plant, Lise reminded us: roots, leaves, flowers and fruit, and each is used differently. David Hoffman, in his book "The holistic herbal" takes half a page per plant to explain which part works for what. For example, the **dandelion root** is more effective than its leaves as a tea, and it needs to be boiled for a while to bring out the value. If buying it, it's better to have the bits than the powder. It's also better to start slowly when drinking it, making a milder brew, not too strong, and having it regularly - one teaspoon of dry root to three cups of water. This will *gently* support the body to heal itself, as the dandelion root tea acts as a diuretic and flushes out the gall bladder.

We were then shown the best way to prepare the tea. I, for one, was surprised by the careful instructions about length of time to *gently* "simmer" the herbs (five minutes) and let them sit to infuse afterwards (also five minutes) before drinking. If left longer, it becomes a "decoction", which thus for me changed from a mystery to a known. Quite simply, decoctions are stronger, being cooked for longer, left to infuse for longer, and are not recommended to be ingested, but instead used externally, on the skin. This can be in a bath, a footbath, a handbath. Lise demonstrated how a herbal steam bath can be done as a skin cleanser by using a towel over her head while standing over the saucepan where the decoction was made. Furthermore, the pot of dandelion root tea that she'd cooked was put out at suppertime for us all to try some of, and I found it very mild and refreshing. The gentle approach was what Lise emphasised as being gentle on our whole system.

Other herbs Lise mentioned were **Burdock** root, which is strong when boiled for five to ten minutes and allowed to sit for another fifteen to twenty minutes. It can then be used in a bath to soak in if there is a skin problem. Tea from **Nettle leaves**, the second of her favourite herbs, increases mineral absorption, gently works on the hormonal system, and is great for people with anaemia. Drink one cup a day... forever. **Raspberry** tea is great for the last three months of pregnancy. It cleanses the lymphatic system, which is parallel to the vascular system. Once harvested, tie the leaves together loosely and hang them to dry. If using a drier, it should be no higher in temperature than 35 degrees celsius. **Lemon balm** tea is a very gentle nerve tonic, when used on a daily basis. It is easy to grow, preferring semi-shade, and is also easy to prepare. One teaspoon of dry leaves or a bit more if it's fresh, in a teapot, with almost boiling water added, and left to stand, lasts all day, giving three or four cups.

Lise then demonstrated the **inhaling** of steam from a herbal tea pot, draping a towel over her head to capture it. Breathed in for five minutes, this is good for the skin, and different herbs can be used: yarrow, comfrey, lemon balm leaves or calendula flowers. Directly following the inhalation, honey is smoothed over the face, and left for another five minutes as a mask, stimulating the blood circulation to the skin.

Lise pointed out to be sure to identify the herbs well. Dandelion for example has a hollow stem which doesn't branch, and a scalloped leaf. Parsley is used when an astringent is needed. As for mixing two or three herbs, Lise says you can, but simplicity is best, two or three being the maximum to mix, and use the roots and leaves separately. For example, just the root of the dandelion can be used to do the work, and lemon balm leaves can be added for flavour.

This was a very helpful evening, full of very usable pointers on the dos and don'ts of preparing and using herbal teas for medicinal purposes. I'm sure a lot of us will increase if

not actually begin using herbal teas, correctly prepared, of course, to our great benefit, following Lise's practical instructions. We can also look forward to hearing more from her early next year on Biodynamic Farming!

* I checked why, which seems to be primarily because **comfrey** stimulates the healing of wounds and broken bones. In folk medicine it is sometimes referred to as "knitbone" for its ability to speed wound healing. It is high in Calcium and Vitamin C, and is an anti-inflammatory.

** **Nettle** has been used for centuries to treat allergy symptoms, particularly hayfever which is the most common allergy problem. It contains biologically active compounds that reduce inflammation.

*** The leaves are often consumed as a nutritious salad green during spring and summer, aiding spring cleansing through the liver. **Dandelion** leaves contain the highest vitamin A content of all greens and very high levels of potassium. Dandelion leaves are used predominantly in treatments for liver and digestive disorders and fluid retention (oedema) since they encourage the flow of bile and digestive enzymes, and stimulate fluid loss through the kidneys.

**** Traditionally, oral preparations of **marshmallow** are used to ease sore throat, suppress cough and address gastrointestinal complaints and irritations of the urinary tract. The most common form of intake is marshmallow syrup, or "snail juice." Topically, marshmallow formulations are applied to insect bites, minor wounds and burns.

***** It is thought that the volatile oils in **lemon balm** contain chemicals that relax muscles, particularly in the bladder, stomach, and uterus, thereby relieving cramps, gas, and nausea.

***** **Calendula** oil packs a punch in the skin care industry. This oil when properly and painstakingly distilled is a powerful anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial agent, and anti-septic.

Getting to Know - Judy Reiser From Diane Kelly

November 2013: I drive around the corner into the street where Judy Reiser lives, instantly recognize the block as belonging to a gardener, and think "Wow"!



The healthiest – and largest - agave plants I've ever seen!

Some thirty years ago: Judy moves into her new home in Southport. The block is clay soil, and is completely bare – there is not even any grass on it.

The story of what has changed during the intervening years is an impressive one, and a new story has been unfolding in Judy's life recently – the development of a community garden at the Ashmore State School.

Judy does not come from a gardening family, and when she moved up from Sydney to her Southport home, she had not had any gardening experience. But, as she commented, there was a bare block – and so she had to learn how to garden. Judy studied horticulture at TAFE for three years – and knows in Latin the names of plants I struggle to remember in English!

The house block is north-facing, and the slope runs from east to west, which has caused runoff problems in the past. But Judy has dug trenches, installed agi pipe, and has directed the water into mini collection points where it soaks through to the plants in the garden. There is a tank (a wonderful birthday present from Judy's daughter) that catches the rain-water from the house roof, and that supplies

town water usage. The garden feels damp and cool, even in this dry weather, and the plants do not seem to be depleted.

Judy's plan for her garden was to create a combination of shade and height. A lilli-pilli shelters the back-yard from morning sun, and there are a leopard tree, a poinciana, a paulownia tree, numerous palms, a gum and a pine that provide shade in summer, and allow sunlight through in winter. Apart from the trees, almost every area of garden is absolutely full of plants. Judy said that everything in her garden is either a gift from friends, or plants that she has propagated herself.

To feed the soil, Judy has used "anything that can be composted". Recently, she has been provided with plenty of horse manure to add to the mix – this includes an amount of sawdust, so we had a discussion about how to get it to break down effectively in the compost bins. Judy is experimenting with compost bins at the moment – she is working two "black" bins (and moves the material from one to the other to aerate it), but she realizes that the material does not reach high enough temperatures to kill weed seeds. So she has started a new compost area – aiming for 1 x cubic meter, but a bit more material is required as yet. Also she has a long-term compost area in which leaf litter is put – she knows that will be usable in a year or two.



The "experimental" compost area – the goal is a cubic metre of material

So what else features in Judy's garden? There is a herb area – she enjoys adding them to cooking for additional flavour. There is a propagating area – we sat in the shade at the back of the block, which is where the newly-planted pots and the buckets of "weed

tea" fertilizer live. There is a garden area that is growing yams and taro – Judy is experimenting with tropical plants – “anything that is used to jungle conditions”. And there is a family area, which provided Judy with her “Best Gardening Moment” – she planted the Poinciana tree many years ago, and over that time the children have climbed it and enjoyed its shade. In front of this area is an archway that is covered with a climbing rose – I wish it had been in flower.

One more thing before we move to the community garden – the Paulownia tree (also known as the “Princess” or “Empress” tree). This is Judy’s favourite “plant” in her garden. I would estimate it is now 40 feet tall; it provides shade; it creates leaf litter for the compost bin; and the birds and bees love it. The Paulownia tree has been grown in China for over 2,000 years. Apparently over 2.5 million hectares of Chinese land are planted with these trees, which are used as shelter crops, firewood and general timber. In Japan they use the timber for furniture, as it is extremely light, and actually quite hollow inside. Judy had a branch as a sample – it was some 3 metres long, and it was very easy to lift. The Paulownia tree is recorded as being one of the fastest growing trees in the world.



The Paulownia tree from the back balcony – the Hill’s hoist gives the perspective!

As I mentioned, Judy’s garden is full of plants, and as she explained, there isn’t enough space or sunlight for a veg patch.

So Judy is a volunteer gardener at the Ashmore State School, where several garden beds and fruit trees have been established.

In conjunction with Gold Coast Permaculture and a number of volunteers, there are now four long garden beds filled with sweet corn, melons of several varieties, silver beet, strawberries, lettuces and various flowers and herbs. The beds were formed with the no-dig system of cardboard, compost and hay, and the children are learning how to plant, water and weed a garden. There are also citrus trees planted around the perimeter of the garden area, and the zucchini plants that are planted under several of the citrus are producing well. I asked Judy what are the plans for the future – there is still quite a lot of land available around the gardens that can be planted out, so I think her Tuesday visits to the school will be busy for quite some time ahead.



The veg patch at Ashmore State School – very impressive!

So what about the future? Well, I would certainly enjoy a return visit to Judy’s garden. I would like to see how the compost bins are maturing, and I want to learn more about the “weed tea” and how Judy applies it to her garden. But I would also like to hear more about the things that Judy has done in her life – the architectural drawing class for which she enrolled; the dancing classes – tap & jazz – that she taught; the bonsai creations that she makes; the quilting she does; and the dolls for whom she makes and sews costumes. Because getting to know people – and when I asked Judy what her favourite thing was about the GCOG, her enthusiastic answer was “the people!” – can certainly teach us so much.

Gardening 2013 From Diane Kelly

With the year drawing to a close, I asked a group of our Club members to write a piece about some of the highlights of the last twelve months in their garden. The responses are full of ideas and gardening experiences, so I'm sure you will enjoy them.

Roger Peterson (Elanora)

1) Movable Seedling Trolley:

For my winter garden I like to get my seedlings in the ground as soon as possible. But with the hot weather through to April, we have to be ready to plant out as soon as the temperature starts to dip. This year I used a movable seed raising table on rollers which allowed me to plant seed in February and move into shade if too hot or shelter if the rain was too heavy - worked a treat.

2) Heading into Summer:

The summer garden is so different - why bother say some? Too hot, too wet, too many insects - but not for all our beautiful Asian vegetables including red amaranth, kang kong, okra, snake beans, bell peppers and Vietnamese mint and a sweet potato that you grow only for the leaves as well as taro and Queensland arrowroot. Coupled with some of the tropical spinaches and other hardy herbs, chillies and cherry tomatoes, there is always a fresh salad available every day. And it's perfect for all our sweet potato varieties and pumpkins. I am also experimenting with an Asian squash.

3) Fruit Trees:

For limited space, my favourite three would be: jaboticaba, finger lime and a Thai mango called Nam Doc Mai. Also have a look at the Drumstick or Horseradish tree and the Peanut or Monkey Nut tree. Daley's Nursery and the Forbidden Fruit Nursery are worth checking out.

Cathie Hodge (Tallebudgera)

Gardening, Bush 'Regen' & Holistic Management

How I enjoy the simple pleasure of getting my hands dirty in a veggie patch, or by doing bush 'regen'.

The GC Permaculture 'lasagne-bed' method has proved an effective way of growing nutrient-dense veggies (& flowers). However, the challenges of the recent unseasonably hot, dry conditions led to an experiment - i.e. building garden beds in a shade-house. (But then, as I write, there is the welcome sound of heavy rain on a tin roof. Oh well...)

Throughout the dry heat, my favourite summer lettuce proved its resilience again. Is it called 'Tree lettuce'? Is it called 'Chinese lettuce'? Or, is it called 'Chinese Tree lettuce'?? I'm not sure, but it handles hot, dry conditions beautifully; produces a continuous supply of new leaves from spring until autumn, as it gradually reaches up to 2 metres; & finally, it flowers to produce copious quantities of seeds for the next year.



Having signed up with *Land for Wildlife* in 2013, bush regeneration has also become a part of my repertoire (aided by restoration workshops, newsletters & free advice from the Conservation Partnership Team of the Gold Coast City Council). Working-bee swaps with a friend have made bush 'regen' a pleasure. We happily chat away as we

chop back the lantana, giving space & light to any emerging, but hidden, native plants. It is a delight to see these plants then begin to flourish.

Finally, my 2013 highlight has been – tackling a *Holistic Management* course, provided through Lismore TAFE, but held at Clunes, NSW. Learning exciting & deeply relevant knowledge about the 4 foundational ecosystem processes; drafting a personal holistic goal; learning to make all decisions by considering social, environmental & financial factors; testing or monitoring such decisions to ensure they are moving me towards my holistic goal; holistic financial planning; and much more...All these have been part of this fascinating & enjoyable course. And there is more to come.

And now, back to the dirt & the lantana...

Honey - Ian & Margaret Lee, (Mudgeeraba)

Being a “flower person” from way-back, I am delighted that Jerry & others from Gardening Australia now talk of how very useful flowers are to the edible garden. Attracting & feeding beneficial insects - fine, but they cheer us up as well!

Before this lovely rain, we mainly had lilies & salvias, pentas & buddleia & stringy bark ; but now the philadelphus & vireyas, orchids, citrus & guava , male pawpaw ,blueberry, brunfelsias, gardenias, gaillardia, cleome, Queen Anne's lace, zinnias, paper daisies, baileyana wattle (mantis) are there for the birds 'n bees etc.

We saw a young koala eating new tips (& flowers?) on 2 Brush box trees. Is this common?

Been trying some of the edible weeds that were recommended by our previous guest speaker. (The speakers have been very worthwhile this year, entertaining & good tips.)

Problem number one lately is the **** bandicoot digging & leaving roots to dry out & die. In a large garden there is a lot to check on. Suggestions please...

Jill Barber, (Elanora)

Just as I've decided to give up eating deadly nightshades – tomatoes, capsicums, egg-plants, potatoes, blueberries, to name a few – to combat some fibromyalgia and a touch of arthritis, this season has been my best ever for growing tomatoes, and capsicums! And I love them both: they are so colourful, nutritious and versatile cooked or raw. My fibromyalgia and the arthritis, however, have disappeared, so it's worth it!

Nevertheless, there are the capsicums growing so nicely, and I spend my life figuring out how to protect the prolific crop of tomatoes - tropic, Roma and cherry – from firstly the fruit flies and now the birds...since the nematodes saw the green manure crop of BBQ Mulch and did a quick exit many months ago. I've been hanging used CDs around them, and that is an effective dissuader...except when the wind blows them all into the plants and they get tangled up. It's sad to see green tomatoes on the ground, with one little hole pecked into them, or go out to harvest the one(s) just turning pink, only to find nothing there! I did bag them in bunches one year; guess I could do that again. The mosquito net that fitted over our peach tree is much too big.

Speaking of peach trees, after fertilising our miniature peach tree (singular) this year, along with mulching and watering, it's absolutely laden! My brother reminded me to thin them out, saying that farmers had their neighbours do theirs and vice versa because they had a hard time throwing any away off their own. He offered to do it for us, but we declined his offer, and did it ourselves. And now, guess what? The biggest of the four branches has cracked and fallen down!! Should have let him do it! Green peaches anyone?

Gordon & Dorothy Singh, (Benowa)

We have attached some pictures which illustrate how some plans come to fruition for the wrong party. We were looking forward to having a feast from the first crop of our small nectarine tree. We were confident that it was well protected with our bird netting but delayed picking them a day too late. The lesson to be learned is not to have the net too close to the fruit. As shown by these pictures, the fruit bat landed on the netting and was able to grab hold of the tree and ruin the complete crop as well as breaking a few branches. In the process of gorging itself, it was so entangled that it strangled itself to death. As you can see from one of the pictures the only way it could be unravelled was from the outside. Most of the fruit finished up on the ground ruined as seen in the bucket. We were sad to lose the fruit but not as sad as having to bury the bat.



Pauline Behrendorff, (Eco-Village, Currumbin Valley)

One of the pleasures which Roger and I share together is the monthly Gold Coast Organic Growers meeting.

We have learnt new things every month. And I love all the GC Organic Growers who share secrets, solutions, and new information in a fun way. I love the variety of people who attend and the excitement of the raffle table draw. I love Maria, our long-serving President who is wise, experienced and entertaining. I enjoy chatting over a cuppa while choosing seeds or produce from our members. And thank you to those who take on club responsibilities which assist in the smooth-running of our evenings.

One of the joys in gardening is finding surprises when I least expect them – different lettuces, coriander, tomatoes, pumpkin, watermelon, calendula, cosmos and a variety of other seedlings pop up wherever the compost has been added to enrich our clay soil.

My favourite tool is my Cyclone Floral and Fruit Snips which I use every day, mainly for cutting up vegetation for mulch. They are also good for cutting some weeds and plants off just below the soil surface, leaving the roots in the earth. I can snip wayward weeds from cracks in rocks, lightly prune plants and cut flowers for the house.

They have green handles, so have my grass shears and one of my weeders. After losing green-handled implements in the garden a few times, I now attach a bright piece of rope or thick string, about a metre long, to the hole in the handle. If I put them down, I find the bright rope amongst the greenery.

Maybe this is a solution for other gardeners.

Roger Griffiths (Mudgeeraba) Brazilian Cherry and Jaboticaba

We have a grey water outlet that is close to a Brazilian Cherry bush, and also a Brazilian Cherry bush away from the grey water. Well,

over the last two months the fruits of the watered bush have been at their usual cherry size, but the "dry bush" candidate only supplied a few, and very shrivelled fruits.

Lesson: Lack of water reduces fruit numbers and fruit size.

Action: Gave some heavy soakings of the Jaboticaba bush to avoid the same issue. This seems to be working with a 1 kilo crop of fruit, and now a much greater crop of green berries coming on behind. This adds to my jam making dreams and all because of water!

Mulch

Mulch is good, but over mulched is a short term error!

Sugar cane mulch does protect the ground from drying out, but if too thick it also does not allow the water from the sky or the hose to penetrate. Lesson: Reduce the depth of mulch enough to let water through to the soil!

Ginger and Turmeric

Ginger seems to push through in October, while Turmeric must need warmer soil to activate, because so far in the GC hinterland only two tubers are showing green shoots.

Flowers and Vegetables

I'm moving away from the idea of a rectangular vegetable plot, with straight lines of produce. This is happening progressively as flowers are being randomly inserted. However, the garden is being transformed from being a utilitarian area of productivity and into a field of art, whilst maintaining production. Coreopsis is becoming a favourite with its cheerful yellow, season lasting flowers, and also supply cut flowers to boot! (Anybody want some, and/or visit and have a cup of tea at the same time? Contact Roger G)

Dorothy Winton (Tallebudgera)

My gardener (my husband, Chris Winton) has been so busy the last couple of years with his voluntary work with the SES that our garden got very neglected, so in August I decided I would have a go at gardening myself.

In the past I had really only just potted

around in the garden sometimes and I didn't really get involved. I had been to most of the club meetings over the last few years and was also the newsletter editor for 2 years so you think I would have learned something in that time but my mind was blank and I felt like I had no idea what to do and the task of planting veggies was quite daunting. I even took notes during most of the meetings but it was like I had forgotten everything.

We have two veggie garden areas and both were very overgrown with weeds so our first job was to weed and Chris and I did that over a week – very meditative! One interesting thing I noticed after weeding was that once we removed all the weeds the wildlife (Bandicoots) started to eat the few veggies we did have growing, they even ate the leaves off the strawberry plants and the tomatoes plant leaves and anything else green.

Previously they must have been eating the weeds so I have learnt a good lesson here. Weeds can be useful!

Once the weeding was done I called in the experts for advice (Maria and Shelley). They were great with all their knowledge and gave me lots of advice on the position of the garden, what to plant where, what to do with the soil, etc and I took lots of notes while they talked. This was a great starting point.



After weeding, preparing soil

I have worked on computers for 24 yrs now it only seemed natural to create an Excel spread sheet (isn't that what all gardeners do ? mmm .. maybe just me? Ha ha!) I then started researching all the veggies that could be planted in that month of August and typed up my notes in Excel e.g. where to position the veggies, what type of soil they like, what food they need, how much water they need, etc. It was good to do this research because I started to realise how easy it was going to be because most veggies all need the same care although some might need a bit more sun or water and others might like a bit of fertilizer or pot ash occasionally but overall most plants need the same care.

With my research for that month done we started to focus on the soil and did a ph test and the soil seemed to be around 6.5 – 7.00. We purchased some well rotted mushroom compost and inoculated it with worm juice from our existing worm farm and then I left it for about a week and started planting.

I first purchased some organic seedlings from the Palm Beach markets just to get myself started. I also planted lots of seeds in seedling trays so that I could have more veggies to plant the following month. I kept all my young seedlings in a sunny spot but under a white shade cloth to filter the sun a bit. I decided to do this so that when I transplanted them into the full sun in the ground they would be heat and sun tolerant and it seemed to work well.



Seedlings Planted

I also created a garden diary so that I could record everything I did and where I purchased seeds and plants from, dates I planted on, when they were due for harvest and another section of the diary has a TO DO list which I am continually adding to.

I'm sure all "professional home gardeners" probably don't need to do this but for me, recording everything made it easy and I have been able to refer to my Excel spread sheet and notes although I am finding now that the information is starting to sink in and I am having to look at my notes less.



3 months later

It's almost 3 months on and my garden looks amazing. I have had an endless supply of various types of lettuce, spinach, pak choi, dandelion, rocket, mizuna and endive which took no time at all to grow. Things like tomatoes, zucchinis, cucumbers, water melons, rockmelons, pumpkins are all in flower and should start fruiting soon. I do have a few small zucchinis just starting to take shape too.

Next on my TO DO list is to create a hot compost (but I need to talk to the expert on that one – Lise Racine!) Chris is also just in the process of creating an enclosure for the second garden to keep the wild life out so that should be up in about a week or two.



First Zucchini Growing

I can't believe how much joy I have had from creating the gardens and I find myself spending more and more time out in the garden and I just love it!



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Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm From Diane Kelly

The other day I changed the contents of my coin jar into notes and headed off for a visit to the Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm.

The Herb Farm is located just out of Mudgeeraba, a few miles along the Springbrook Road, and Sandy and Mick Nanka have been growing and selling herbs for cooking and medicinal uses for nearly twenty years. Originally the herb gardens were the main interest, but now the nursery produces plants that are ordered on-line, and shipped anywhere in Australia.



The actual gardens are feeling the effects of the prolonged dry weather at the moment, but the area that has been set up to display the herbs and plants is well worth a visit. Sandy, who is a qualified naturopath and herbalist, has set out descriptions of each plant, and their medicinal value. (Her gardening and herbal hints, along with some yummy looking recipes, are well worth reading on the Mudbrick Cottage's website.)

So if you are looking for some dried herbs for cooking, or some plants to add to your garden, take a drive out in the country and go to the herb farm. When I've finished typing this, I will be going out to plant my new "Cats Whiskers" (which has medicinal value, but is also liked by bees and butterflies) and a "Californian Poppy" (which can be made into a relaxing infusion to drink).

With over 300 varieties of herbs to choose from, a visit to Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm is well worthwhile.

The Veggie Patch Calendar From Diane Kelly

December is one of the busiest months of the year. The days will be lengthening and the temperatures rising, and everything will be growing energetically – not least the weeds! Most likely you'll feel that the whole plot is insistently demanding your attention. December can be a surprisingly dry month, too, so there may be a lot of watering to do in order to keep your newly planted seedlings growing healthily.

Weed: Like most plants, weeds put on a growth spurt in December. Dig out any perennial weeds, such as dandelions and dock, that you've overlooked in the preceding months. Then hoe regularly, especially on dry days, to prevent annual weeds competing for moisture with new, young plants.

Water: Seeds and seedlings need regular watering if they are to germinate and develop successfully. Young plants are better able to take up moisture if you water little and often than if you drown them just once a week.

Mulch: Continue to spread mulches such as garden compost, mushroom compost, well-rotted manure, and bark chips. They will help to suppress weeds and, if the underlying earth is damp before you apply them, they will also delay evaporation.

Check nets: Ensure tomato, berries and soft fruit are all securely netted against birds.

Feed tomatoes: As soon as tomatoes form their first tiny fruits, they will benefit from a weekly feed of high-potash fertilizer. Pinch out small side shoots that grow in the "V" between the leaf stems and the main stem.

Earth up potatoes: Even if you've already done this, it's worth doing again. It will help ensure the tubers remain out of the light.

Build supports for climbing beans: Use wire mesh and secure vertically. Or use 2.5m (8 ft) long canes and strong twine to construct

rows or tee-pees ready for beans to climb up. Make sure they're sturdy enough to support the heavy weight of beans when they are fully grown. Protect newly sown or transplanted seedlings from birds and snails.

Cut down peas: As soon as harvesting is over, cut plants down to just above the surface of the soil and compost them. But leave the roots in the ground, as they are rich in nitrogen.

Feed asparagus: Apply a general-purpose fertilizer now you're no longer picking spears – but leave the plants to grow and don't cut them down until they go brown in autumn.

Summer-prune herbs: Chop back herbs such as mint, chives, sage, thyme and oregano in order to remove tired old leaves and to stimulate the growth of fresh new ones. Thyme and oregano can be dried then stripped from stems and stored in a jar.

Pot up strawberry runners: If your strawberry plants have finished producing fruit, you can either cut off runners, or use them to make new plants.

Pick early peaches, nectarines and apricots: Check ripening fruit daily to be sure to harvest when fruit is sweetest. Fruit is juiciest when the weather is fine and warm. In rainy or humid conditions stone fruit is prone to Brown rot.

Pick summer figs: Mature fig trees produce two crops of figs. The first summer crop, or *breba crop, is small but the fruit size is huge. The main crop ripens in late summer or early autumn. (*Breba crop - see below)

Grape vines: Prune side shoots, and head back long leaders that are growing beyond their allotted space.

December Pests & Diseases: Vegetables & Fruit:

Check tomatoes are free from virus such as tomato blight and Purple top wilt and Spotted wilt viruses. These are the most common

causes of curling tip foliage and yellowing of leaves. If plants are left to fruit, the fruit will be mottled and the plant will die. Remove diseased plants to prevent insects spreading the disease to other tomato plants.

Protect young seedlings from slugs and snails. Place bait around newly sown seed.

Net berries and tomatoes to protect them from pesky birds

Check cabbages for cabbage white butterfly eggs and caterpillars. Squash or pick off.

Check peas for signs of pea moth. Covering the crop with fleece is a reliable safeguard.

Prevent onion rot by harvesting onions when leaves are drying off. Cease watering onions a few weeks before harvest or the bulbs may soften and rot in storage.

Prevent potato rot by keeping plants dryish. If the soil is wet after tubers have formed, they may rot in the ground.

Check strawberries for grey mould, especially in wet weather, and remove and destroy all affected fruit. Net strawberries to keep off birds and protect fruit from slugs.

Inspect citrus & olive trees for scale insects and spray if scale is present. Check citrus to see mulch is not touching the trunk, or it may cause collar rot.

Breba crop (figs):

Many fig trees varieties crop twice each. The first, (or breba) crop, form on last year's wood. You can often see the tiny fruits dormant on the tree over winter. A heavier crop is then produced later in summer when the new growth develops.

December At A Glance From Diane Kelly

- Keep weeding and deadheading to maintain beds, borders and container displays
- Water new and young plants as necessary
- Look out for pests and suckers on roses
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs
- Propagate climbers by layering
- Cut back and tidy up spring-flowering perennials
- Sow seeds of perennials
- Cut down the faded foliage of bulbs, and lift and divide overgrown clumps
- Plant out summer annuals in beds and containers, including hanging baskets
- Sow plants for late summer colour, such as Californian poppies, cosmos and marigolds
- Give tired lawns a boost with a liquid feed
- Plant winter brassicas (seeds) and protect them from pests

!!! Last chance:

- Plant new plants before summer heat
- Sow more annuals outside to flower
- Plant out vegetables such as tomatoes and capsicum to get good crops this season

* Get ahead:

- Peg down strawberry runners to make new plants
- Sow chicory to force in autumn or winter
- Sow seed for pot plants to flower in winter

*Gardening Through the Year in Australia
Ian Spence*

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts From Diane Kelly

December:

Vegetables: There is still a variety of seeds and seedlings which can be planted. If they are to your taste, don't neglect regular radish plantings. A sprinkle of seed each month for fresh sandwich, salad and stir-fry material.

Flowers: This is the month of the marigold. Early-sown plants will be flowering now, but there is still time to sow. Apart from the wide range of colours, the cutting qualities and easy care aspects of marigolds, they are truly the plant's plant. Companion planters agree – marigolds with everything! They are a version of that great herbal panacea – calendula.

Marigolds will stop a host of diseases and pests of potatoes, tomatoes and roses. In pots or as border flowers, they are an effective deterrent to the cocked leg of the canine!

January:

No time more than now does your garden appreciate mulch. It will save you water, headache, back-break and loss of yield in the mid-summer heat. Think of the soil as a series of tiny tubes. Water travels down, and is eventually dragged back up again through solar-powered, plant or soil evaporation. A blanket of mulch slows the whole process.

Seed-free compost is ideal for mulching. It will boost soil fertility, condition sandy or clay soils, and provide a plethora of earthworms. It is wise to have two compost heaps: a long-term compost for organic matter containing seed (some garden weeds, manures, lawn clippings) and a short-term variety that does not require the time for seed destruction (soft weeds, kitchen waste, garden waste, some manures).

Vegetables: The first half of the month is good for late plantings of the garden's mainstays and, in the latter part of January, to begin regular sowings of vegetables which will carry us through winter and early spring.

Broccoli is one of the most versatile, long-

yielding and favoured vegetables in our area and there are many varieties available. Sowings can continue until June. Prepare the beds well because they, like Brussels sprouts, respond well to feedings of organic matter. Cabbages and cauliflower seed, which can also go in at the end of the month, like the same treatment. Germinate seed in boxes, protecting from the direct rays of the sun by placing either shade cloth or damp hessian across the top. Gradually sun-harden.

Plantings include: Beans, beetroot, broccoli (**seed**), cabbage (**seed**), capsicum, carrot, cauliflower (**seed**) corn, cucumber, lettuce, marrow, squash & tomato.

Flowers: If rain and sun have been gentle, the rich colours of dahlias should be at their best in January. A native of Mexico, the dahlia is one of the world's most popular flowers, and the range of colours and types is enormous.

Don't over-feed dahlias, but they do like some organic matter dug into the soil before planting. They are quite simple to grow. When the flower buds first appear, apply medium-strength liquid fertilizer, repeating every three weeks or so. The taller varieties will need staking.

Pick regularly, leaving long stems on the flowers. Don't leave old blooms on the bush, for removal will help new growth and health. Plant the tubers in August and September.

Around the Garden

Apply and renew mulches - the most important point to bear in mind when putting down a mulch is to make sure the soil is moist beforehand. If the soil is dry the mulch is just as good at keeping water out as it is in retaining it in the soil.

Water plants thoroughly during hot spells. If there's a lot to do, it is no good going out every night and splashing a little water everywhere. In drought periods, divide the garden into areas, and every evening give a different one a good soaking, which should last for up to a week. This is beneficial for plants, be-

cause the roots will go deeper into the soil in search of water. Smaller amounts of water encourage the roots to come to the surface of the soil, making plants even more vulnerable in drier conditions.

Hoe or hand-pull annual weeds while still small, to save work during the rest of the summer. Choose a dry day, and leave the weeds on the surface of the soil to wither in the sun. Perennial weeds will have to be dug out completely, leaving no trace of the roots in the soil. If any piece of root is left it will start to grow again.

Deadheading is a regular task in all parts of the garden. With many plants – perennials, repeat-flowering, roses and annuals – the flowering period can be extended considerably if old flowers are removed as soon as they fade. This will prevent the plant's energy going into the production of seeds, and channel it instead into new growth and flowers later in the summer and autumn. Most deadheading can be done with secateurs, cutting back to just above strong buds lower down the stem of the plant. Some plants, like the true geraniums, can be quickly trimmed back hard with a pair garden shears when the flowers fade. It may seem rather drastic action, but new foliage soon appears.

If picking peas now, cut down top growth of the plants but leave the roots of the peas in the soil, as these will provide valuable nitrogen to it. Nodules on the roots of peas and beans are able to fix and store atmospheric nitrogen in the soil. Follow peas with a leafy crop, such as cabbages, which require a higher nitrogen content in the soil. This is one way, by practicing good crop rotation, of reducing the amount of fertilizer we need to add to the soil.

The tops of onions ready to harvest should have begun to fall over and the skin to harden. Lift them to break the roots in the soil and let them dry out in the sun.

Harvest early potatoes – dig the crops before the summer heat. Make sure you get all the potatoes, as any left in the ground will grow next year.

Plant out runner beans. Put up wigwams or parallel avenues of canes with 60 cm between the rows. Slugs love young runner bean plants, so protect them by surrounding them with collars made from plastic drink bottles. To ensure runner bean flowers set and produce pods, spray flowers with water regularly and make sure they don't dry out at the roots.

Climbing French beans can be treated in the same way as runner beans, and do better in warmer conditions. Dwarf beans can be grown on slightly raised beds in a sunny position in neutral soil with added nitrogen.

Climbing French beans usually give heavier yields, and crop over a longer period than dwarf varieties.

Keep sowing salad vegetables in small quantities in regular intervals of 2 or 3 weeks, to give a continuous supply of fresh salad ingredients. Note that lettuce seeds will not germinate in high temperatures, so if the weather is hot and dry, sow the seeds in a shady part of the garden, or sow them in seed trays and put these in a shady part of the garden. Transplant the seedlings when they are large enough to handle. Choose a variety suited to summer growing.

Sow or plant out cucumbers in soil that has been enriched with plenty of organic matter to retain as much moisture as possible. Pinch out the growing tips of the plants when they have made six pairs of leaves, to encourage side-shoots to form and produce the cucumbers. Feed and water regularly with a high-potash fertilizer throughout the summer.

Feed asparagus after flowering. You won't be cutting spears from young crowns, but once they are established and giving you a crop, stop cutting in early December to allow the crowns to build up strength for next year's crop. Apply a general fertilizer to all plants, young and old, and let the foliage grow until it turns brown late in the summer, when it can be cut to the ground. Ideally, feed the asparagus bed late this month with a heavy dressing of animal manure mixed with the general fertilizer and dig it well into the soil.

Remember ... "Six Hours of Sunlight From Diane Kelly

Some weeks ago I planted six silver-beet seedlings, all at the same time, and they have all had the same amount of watering and feeding.

However, I didn't realize how much the tall celery plants to the north of the garden bed would over-shadow the two silver-beet plants on the left. So I took a picture (well worth a thousand words) to remind me that *all* my vegetables need plenty of sunlight!



Have a look at the coloured photo on the website, and the difference will become very obvious!

Recipe Crisp Pickled Cucumbers

If your cucumbers have done well this season, here's a recipe for Crisp Pickled Cucumbers to try:

Slice 2 kg unpeeled cucumber (include any small finger-size cucumbers whole) Rough-chop 3 medium onions; peel 6 cloves garlic. Cut one stick celery into little finger-size lengths.

Mix above ingredients in large bowl with 6 whole, small red or green chillies (optional) and 6 bay or curry leaves. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup of coarse salt. Place in refrigerator 4 hours; freezer 3 hours.

Drain well and mix together 1 ½ cups raw

FRUIT TREES From Diane Kelly

Custard apples: Hand-pollination of Pink Mammoth and Hillary White.

Figs: Keep water up and mulch well.

Low chill stone fruit: Prune trees. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees.

Lychee: Peak water needs. Cover trees with net for protection from fruit piercing moth, birds and bats. Fertilise with an organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for a mature tree and ½ kg for young trees. Harvest only when fruit on the pendant stalk are sweet and full colour.

Mango: Net trees or bag fruit to protect from birds and beasts.

Passion-fruit: Apply 1 kg organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Keep up the water.

Paw-paw: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for mature trees and ½ kg for young trees. Apply a copper based spray or leaf microbes for black spot control.

Persimmon: Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 ½ kg for mature trees.

Strawberries: Keep well watered to form new runners for next year. December is the time to mark old strawberry plants. Watch for their new runners to develop. This makes it easier to define plants when you are ready for new planting.

Bananas: Keep them well watered.

Citrus: Water tree well. Keep up pest oil spray for citrus leaf miner.

Queensland Planting Guide - BOGI

Recipe Continued...

sugar, 1 ½ cups cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon turmeric, 1 ½ tablespoons mustard seed & ½ teaspoon whole peppercorns

Place cucumber mixture in large saucepan over medium heat and pour the pickling mix over, stirring gently but constantly, until it boils.

Pour into warm, sterilized jars, evenly distributing the ingredients. Seal immediately and store in a cool, dark place.

It's Time To Get Growing



VEGETABLES

NOVEMBER:

Artichoke, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

DECEMBER:

Artichoke, Capsicum, Choko, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Luffa, Marrow, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

JANUARY:

Artichoke, Capsicum, Sweet Corn, Cucumber, Lettuce (under shade cloth), Marrow, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rockmelon, Rosella, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon.

FLOWERS

DECEMBER:

Chrysanthemum, lobelia, marigold, nasturtium, petunia & phlox

JANUARY:

Marigold, petunia & phlox

HERBS

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Annual: Amaranth, Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Nasturtium, Rocket, Salad Mallow.

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

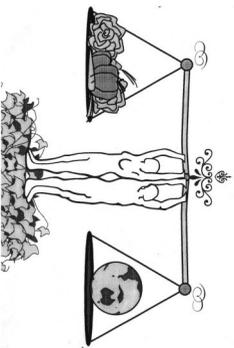
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If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:
GCOG, PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Q 4213

*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 16 January 2013