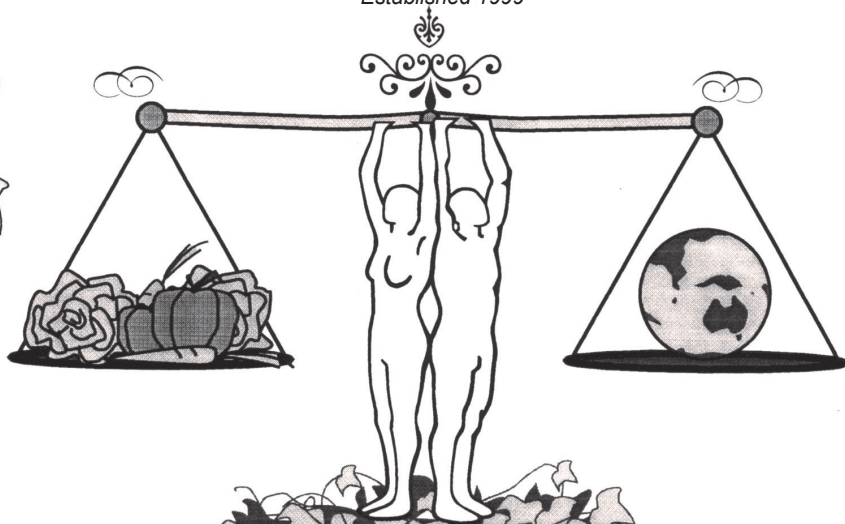


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 15

SEPTEMBER 2012

Issue 9

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OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 18 October

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 send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly - or just pay at the door.

Seed Bank: \$2.00 ea.

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 - \$1ea 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

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.
 Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com

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Newsletter Theme

Gardening in Spring

Thanks to Contributors: Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson Gordon Singh, Roger Griffiths.



Notice Board

Membership Renewels

Overdue: Stephen Dalton, David Tangye, Allan & Penny Jameson, Kay Schiefelbein, Robert Faulkner, Lise Racine, Ross & Helena Kelso, Ron Campbell, Gary & Jenny Spence, Ian & Margaret Lee, Renato Morandini, Liz Spittall, Ann Brown, Kathy Steenbeek, Justin Robinson, Jase Hillyer, Scott McCormack, Shelley Pryor, Gene Rosser, Gordon & Dorothy Singh, Wolfgang Dempsey, Peter & Leanne Dickfos, Leah Galvin, Geoffrey Williams, Jan Guest

September: Henry Blonner, Neil Ross, Denise Goodwin

October: Greg & Val Sbeghen, Robert & Donna Boston, Roslyn Griffith, Glenn & Joan Jones, Gai Morrow, Darrell & Marion Williams

Guest Speakers

Sept - Rod Bruin on Soil Improvement for Organic Veggies

Oct - Gina Winter on Using Herbs as Food and as Medicine

GCOG on the Web

From the Library

We now have a list of books and DVDs online.

The list can be viewed from:-

<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/library-books.pdf>

Newsletters

To look up past newsletters from 2010:-

<http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/newsletters.html>

Facebook

We are now on facebook:-

<http://www.facebook.com/gcorganic>

In Memory of Elizabeth Dolan

It is with deep sadness that I have to inform you that one of our beloved members Elizabeth Dolan has passed away. Libby was a long time and contributing member of our club. She was a beautiful friend and it was always a pleasure just to be in her company. Libby had a lovely calm and yet vibrant positive energy that always made you feel good when ever you spoke with her. Libby will be sorely missed by all at the Organic Growers. We send her family and loved ones our heartfelt regrets and nothing but the best of wishes.



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President's Message

Hello Everyone,

I imagine you are all very busy planting up your vegetable gardens and making full use of such a great growing season. Spring is a truly enjoyable season to be out of doors and messing about in the garden; it's not too hot yet and a bit of sun is welcome on cold winter bones. As we speak the powers that be have had a mind shift and are now recommending that we all get a few minutes of sunshine each day on some bare skin to boost vitamin B levels and what better way to do just that than planting some beautiful fruits and vegetables for you and your family to enjoy. As always, for optimal plant health and growth make sure you follow local seasonal planting guides, such as the one in our very own newsletter. I can't stress how important this is when trying to grow successful crops and yet it is one of the main reasons for failure in the garden. Another undervalued piece of information is to use fresh seed each year, this way you are assured of the highest germination rate. There is nothing worse than going to a lot of time and effort to "plant up" only to find half of the plants did not germinate, this will set your harvest schedule back by several weeks too, which can be most frustrating. After all, a pack of fresh new seed will only cost you \$2 and I think well worth it when stacked up against all that effort you put in.

Speaking of seeds, don't forget to come and check out the new varieties that have been ordered in for spring and summer. I wonder if you have ever planted and grown rockmelon or watermelon before. The taste of a fully ripe home grown melon is something everyone should try at least once in their life, a goal that is so easy to achieve as well. Melons like hot weather and a compost enriched rotted manure added for good measure. Water the soil rather than the leaves to help keep powdery mildew at bay, seaweed based fertilizers and rock minerals are a boost too. We have seed of Planters Jumbo Rockmelon which is described as having large oval shaped fruit produced on vigorous vines in

summer. Also in stock is seed of the Sugarbaby watermelon, this melon is early maturing with round dark green skin, sweet red flesh and fits in the fridge nicely as it is only 30cms across.

Zucchini can be grown in much the same way as melons and have similar requirements, as with melons, plant 3 to 4 seeds into slightly raised mounds. When seeds have germinated remove the weakest plants leaving 1 or 2 strong seedlings per mound to continue. We have two varieties of zucchini for sale this year, the obligatory Black Zucchini that we all know and love as well as Golden Summer Crookneck Zucchini which is as its name suggests is yellow in colour. It has a slightly different texture and flavour to the black zucchini but is equally delicious. I recommend that you plant both and see which one becomes a favourite.

Now is an excellent time to plant some fruit trees and get a little orchard growing, just about everyone has room for at least one fruit bearing tree. My favourite easy to grow and prolific bearer would have to be the Tahitian Lime tree. It is truly trouble free and bears fruit several times a year so is nearly always in fruit. Don't forget DALEYS fruit tree nursery is offering members 10% discount when you order online, check out details in this newsletter.

Happy growing,
Maria.

SPECIAL OFFER ON FRUIT TREES FOR ALL MEMBERS

DALEYS fruit tree nursery is offering all club members a 10% discount on fruit trees when you order online.

Visit www.daleysfruit.com.au/ to check out the types of fruit trees available.

To receive the discount enter the following code at the checkout :
GOLDCOAST10OFF

Gold Coast City Council Active and Healthy Program

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.

Time: Saturday between 10am and 12pm

Sept 22nd - Broadbeach Library

Oct 20th - Joan Park Community Centre

Nov 17th - Banksia Park Community Centre

Dec 8th - Robina Library

To find out more information or to register for a FREE workshop near you, call (07) 5581 6855.

Visit one of the Community Gardens
Southern Beaches Community Garden
off Tugun Street on the vacant land behind the Tugun Community Hall.

Varsity Vegies Community Garden

Jim Harris Park, Mattocks Road, Varsity Lakes

Peachey Community Garden

Cnr Mcreadie and Tillyroen Rds, Ormeau

Joan Park Community Garden

Joan Street, Southport

Loders Creek

Owen Park - Ewan Street or south of Beale Street, Southport.

Labrador

Olsen Avenue, Labrador Park

Check out Council's Website Community Gardens

<http://www.gcparks.com.au/activities.aspx?page=37>

Healthy Cooking Workshops

<http://www.gcparks.com.au/activities.aspx?page=266>

What's On

BOGI Fair - Sunday Oct7th
www.bogi.org.au

Life Changing Events

Once a month we screen a new documentary film focused on health, food, social responsibility and our environmental impact on our planet.

After each film we are joined by an expert panel of speakers who are hand picked for their contribution to our community and field of knowledge ensuring that our movie guests go home with solutions that will change our world forever.

Check out the website for more details on the films showing on the following Monday nights @ The Arts Centre Gold Coast @ 6.30pm (Doors open 5:45pm):

- Oct 8th - The Greenhorns
- Nov 12th - Connected
- Dec 3rd - I am

www.lifechangingevents.net.au

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“HOMEGROWN” - the movie By Jill Barber

At our August meeting, Maria showed the movie, “Homegrown”, which some of us have seen already, maybe as part of the Lifechanging Docos series, and which was just as enjoyable to see again. It follows the life of the Dervaes family, who run a small organic farm in the heart of urban Pasadena, California, and promotes a simpler and more fulfilling lifestyle, in contrast with the corporate powers that control the food supply.

While “living off the grid”, they harvest over 6,000 pounds of produce on less than a quarter of an acre, make their own bio diesel, power their computers with the help of solar panels, and maintain a website that gets 4,000 hits a day. The film is an intimate human portrait of what it’s like to live like “Little House on the Prairie” in the 21st Century. It’s about what lead them to where they are today, what changed them and what keeps them together.

Since the mid-1980s, Jules Dervaes and his three now adult children, Anaïs, Justin, and Jordanne, have steadily worked to transform their ordinary city lot in Pasadena, California, into a thriving organic garden that supplies them and their “citified” backyard farm animals with food year round. These eco-pioneers also run a successful business selling fresh produce to local restaurants. The income helps fund their purchases of solar panels, energy-efficient appliances, and a biodiesel processor to further decrease the homestead’s reliance on Earth’s non-renewable resources.

Truly living by their ideals has costs, however: along with the positive benefits there are also sacrifices they’ve had to make, such as eating only what’s seasonally grown in their garden, or being focussed so much on this work that there’s not much room for social life. Furthermore, time is often taken out of the working week to host visits by schools and other groups wanting to see this remarkable,

inner-city, self-sufficient garden. Recognizing the hardships the Dervaes have faced makes their work all the more inspiring.

Learning of their journey to a sustainable life style has inspired many others to undertake at least some aspects of their way of life, and thank you to Maria for bringing the film to us that night. Some discussion followed the viewing, with a little time for questions and answers.

September Guest - Rod Bruin www.summitorganics.com

This recipe is borrowed from one of our favourite cookbooks, [Veg Everyday](#) by **Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall** of [River Cottage](#) fame.



It’s a really simple & scrumptious way to use kale. If you haven’t heard of kale before today, well it is a bit of a super-food. Its dietary credentials are considerable.

Health Benefits of Kale

- very high in anti-oxidants (cancer fighters)
- high in Vitamin K (bone strengthener)
- heaps of fibre (healthy bowel, lowers blood sugar)
- loads of Vitamin A (increases immunity)
- stacks of Vitamin C (helps eyesight, immunity, blood pressure)
- it also helps detox the body & reduce cholesterol

With all those credentials, you’d be made not to include this leafy green in your diet regularly.

Pasta with Kale, Garlic & Chilli

Serves 4

- 2 bunches kale
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 1/2 to 1 red chilli, deseeded & finely chopped, or 2 good pinches of chilli flakes
- 2 garlic cloves, finely slivered
- 300g pasta (penne or shapes)
- sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
- parmesan cheese (optional)

Method

Pop a large pot of well-salted water onto boil. Remove the thick stems from the kale leaves and shred the leaves.

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over a low heat. Add the onion and cook gently for 10 minutes, or until soft. Add the chilli and garlic and some salt and pepper, and continue to cook for about 3 minutes.

When the onion is almost cooked, add the pasta to the pan of boiling water and cook until al dente, adding the greens to the pot of water when the pasta has about 3 minutes left.

Drain the pasta and greens and toss into the frying pan with onions, chilli and garlic. Add more seasoning to taste, then serve with a good drizzle of olive oil and lots of parmesan cheese.

Voila!



Handy Hints From Diane Kelly

Scooper

In an old Gardening Australia magazine, I came across the following hint – and it has made getting the chook food out of the bag so much easier. It also makes a handy scope for watering pot-plants from a bucket, or filling pots with soil.

Cut a 2-litre milk container off at an angle. Leave the cap on. It is very light, slides easily, and holds quite a bit.



Cheap Glasses

Go down to the \$5 Shop & buy a cheap pair of glasses to use gardening. Wouldn't you like a dollar for every time you've pulled out a plant or a seedling thinking it was a weed – and all because you couldn't quite see the details! You will never see those green grasshoppers or chomping grubs if you don't have your glasses on. We don't only need glasses for reading!

Did You Know? If an established mandarin suddenly begins to produce bitter, unpalatable fruit, a deficiency of trace elements or extreme pH is often the culprit. But it is also worth double-checking that the limb producing the bitter fruit is not emerging from below the graft union.

The trifoliate leaves of Troyer citrange rootstock are distinctive and easy to spot, where the foliage of the "Cleopatra" mandarin rootstock is almost impossible to distinguish from the cultivar that has been grafted onto it. Always remove all growth below the graft union.

**Getting to Know
The Nerang Community Garden
(and Neil Ross)
Interview by Diane Kelly**

Imagine a wide area of mown lawns with established trees, horses grazing, a creek linking into a wet-land for wild birds, and a number of buildings being returned to good condition for the community to use.

Imagine, too, a group of people working together to grow flowers, herbs and vegetables; who have a monthly newsletter called "The Buzz"; and who regularly give away part of their vegetable harvests to the local respite centre and other people in need.

Let me introduce you to the Nerang Community Garden, and my host for the morning of the 25th of August, GCOG club member Neil Ross.

The Community Garden is part of the 13 hectares of land that used to be called the Paradise Centre, which is on the western outskirts of Nerang, along the road to Canungra. In 2011 the property was purchased by the Gold Coast City Council, with the goal of "developing a community hub and sports centre". The Nerang Community Association, of which Neil is part, is working with the Council on the project, and there are plans for local-produce markets, craft groups, community-support groups and social clubs.

1,800 square meters of this property has been allocated for the use of the Nerang Community Garden. With financial support from the GCCC and a number of local businesses, fences have been built, 40 garden beds constructed and filled, and soil and compost bins have been built. As part of the initial set-up, organic soil for the garden beds was trucked in, but now all fertilizers, mulches, plants and equipment are provided by the gardeners (although there are some tools and wheelbarrows that can be borrowed.) The GCCC provides material from street prunings, and this is added to the cardboard spread on the bottom of each garden bed to control any

weeds, thus providing nutrients and height so the top-soil can be added. Horse manure is collected from a local property, aged, and then made available for the gardens.

There are a few rules – all gardening has to be organic; all plots must be kept clean and tidy; and plants must be kept at a considerate height so that over-shadowing does not affect the vegetables etc of neighbouring plots. (The plots have been constructed to run at a 45 degree angle on the block, to maximize sunlight.) Six plots are required to be retained for use by those with physical handicaps, and these have been constructed with wheel-chair access and height. Although these plots are not currently in use by such gardeners, they have been planted out by the group and it is this food that is supplied to the local respite facility. Each plot is 9 square metres (6m x 1.5m), but some smaller triangular plots are now being built, as some of the gardeners find the large plots too much to maintain.



The view from the hill – the new shed, the compost & soil bays, the arbour and the plots.

Up until July this year, the community garden area did not have access to a water supply, so water was brought in and stored 1,000 litre plastic containers. It is absolutely amazing to see what this group of gardeners has achieved without running water – they use watering cans and buckets, and carry the water to their plots. Now a 9m x 6m shed has been built, and two 25,000 litre water tanks attached, so life will become easier for the watering brigade – all they need now is some rain to fill the tanks!

So what else has this Community Garden achieved?

- In June 2012, a working bee was held, and an arbour was built – this will have flowering plants climbing over it. The building material (in line with the group's "reclaim, reuse and recycle" policy) is bamboo, cut from the stand on the property.
- A herb spiral has been built, and this will be planted out once the seedlings of sage, dill, chives and parsley get a bit bigger. The produce from this and several other areas are for use by all the community.
- Several large gardens along the perimeter of the property have been designed and created, and now have proteas, roses, bromeliads, standard tibouchinas and fruit trees planted. The whole group is responsible for the care of these plants, as well as the mowing and trimming of the lawn areas.
- The local Scouts have a plot in the Community Garden, and in June the first Junior Garden Club meeting was held. The children asked for their own plot, have done planting designs, and are propagating seeds. The corners and tops of the timbers of their plot have been capped to protect the children from hurting themselves.
- Plans are under-way for a tropical rain-forest area on the hill above the gardens, and a walking path around the whole property.
- The group has developed a strong relationship with the "River Keepers" group who also have a facility on the 13 hectare property. They are working on the regenerating of Crane Creek, which forms the southern border of the area – and hopefully may provide some water for the gardens at a stage in the future
- Someone in the group has grown strawberries with bright pink flowers!

The visit to the Nerang Community Garden was thoroughly enjoyable – I'm sure Neil got sick of me using such superlatives as "incredible!", "amazing!" and "impressive!" But there is another side to the hard work, diligence and gardening success – and possibly a more important aspect.



Wonderful vegetables, hand-watering, and some ideas for blanching celery!

The group regularly get together for a BBQ – the sausages or cold chicken are provided by the kitty, but the salads are supplied by the gardeners harvesting their plots. On the Saturday morning I visited the garden, everyone downed tools and met up at the shed. We all had a cup of tea and a biscuit, and we chatted about different gardening methods and plans for the future. A paragraph in the June newsletter says that the group wants the "Nerang Community Garden to not only be a vegetable garden to feed the body, but a place to feed the heart and soul – a place to meet friends, take time out, and relax". One of the ladies summed up how well this approach is working – the group is becoming "not just a community garden, but a **community** of gardeners".



The gardeners of the future.

Our Gardening Community

Potato Harvest Gordon and Dorothy Singh's Patch

We would like members to know that we have had a most disappointing harvest from our pontiac potato planting. Members may recall the great healthy plants that leapt out of the ground - well the sad thing is that from those beautiful plants our total harvest was just under 5 kgs, which gave us little more than the amount we planted. That compares with a similar amount of Dutch Creams planted two seasons ago that produced 30kgs. Last season our Sebagos and Dutch Creams gave us 20 kgs.

No doubt there will be suggestions of one kind or another for this poor result. We would welcome any further advice. My own theory is that with no rain since the middle of July our healthy looking plants received insufficient water. This was owing to the fact that our absence during person health problems we had relied heavily on the weather and made no arrangements for sustained watering.

We are eager to hear the results from other members.

Qld Fruit Fly Jill Barber's Patch

For the past six weeks I have been religiously counting Qld Fruit Flies, mostly dead ones, though I included the few that escaped from my trap when I tipped them out on the paper every week to count them. From 51 a week in early August, they've rapidly increased to 105 this week in my area, Elanora. After going over Richard Bull's written material again, I emailed him to ask about the timing for putting out the Amulet Cue-Lures (Male Annihilation Technique) as the notes say after the fruit has set, and my dwarf peach tree was still in the blossoming stage. He said to put them out now, however, as there are a lot of fruit flies in the area, and it pays to start clearing my space of them early rather than risk doing it too late.

Following Richard's recommendation of extending the area covered into adjacent properties if possible, by gaining neighbourly co-operation, last week I talked to the one of our seven neighbours, about his possible interest in participating in the extermination program. We have a wedge-shaped block, so we have lots of neighbours, but he has fruit trees and attempts some veggie growing. Leaving some literature for him to be more informed, especially when I venture onto his property weekly to do the Protein Bait Sprays, I gave him a week and yesterday returned to do the deed. He enlisted another neighbour, and together we spaced out my MAT devices to about the recommended 25 metres. Interestingly, he got a good look at the flies that I have become intimately acquainted with as I count them weekly – they kept trying to get into the packet with the lures!

I'll go to the next step once I've mixed the bait spray up with malathion. Then I'll be looking forward to our little peaches and lemons and tomatoes as they mature...without those destructive deposits from the female QFFs!

Otherwise, my garlic plants have keeled over, as they're supposed to, and the wonderful mixed greens I've enjoyed all winter are all madly bolting, the mizuna plants decorating our garden with lovely yellow flowers. Not to worry, other lettuces are forming up nicely to take their place. The new asparagus shoots are jumping up, and I *am* relishing the daily crops of green beans, both climbing and bush. Leeks from last season are sufficiently fat to use now, and my garden has even blessed me with providing some carrots, at last! Then there's the new broccoli heads, and later secondary heads, that are good enough to eat raw sometimes. I almost missed those seven little green caterpillars, nestled in snugly to the broccoli, looking for all the world like part of it – gee they're good at hiding! (Not savouring the squishing of them, they got the fold-into-leaves-then-squeeze annihilation technique).

We couldn't live out of our veggie garden, as it's not big enough or extensive enough, nor

do I have the time or energy to be a "Homegrown" person, but I have to say that I'm hugely grateful for what we do manage to grow. I love being able to step out the door and collect live, organic edibles from our own place. I also love having so many juicy big limes and now huge lemons that we can share them with family and friends. I'm just hankering after some rain now – the garden sure is dry, and I've resorted to watering regularly with a hand-held hose now, but it doesn't do the same job, does it? I need to get mulching more now!

My Motto - Grow It, Use It Roger Griffiths' Patch

In our little piece of earth many things grow and it is probably the same at your place, or community garden.

Yet, when we have it there appears to be a seasonal glut, like now at our place **lemonades**, soon there will be **mulberries**, then **garlic**, and months later there will be **ginger**, **turmeric** and now we've even got **Yakon**, whatever one does with it! These sub-tropical gluts are just so "not British", although the local **leeks** are great because they can just be left in the ground until needed.

Anyway, I'm trying to think in terms of what to do with the produce, and particularly the excess produce. Now lately there has been quite a production of marmalade from the variety of **citrus** from our block and two of our neighbours. Here's a local irony with **citrus** that fruit is left to rot on the tree! (Some saved **citrus** fruits will be available as marmalade for sale at September's meeting).

Some months ago I borrowed a drying machine to produce **dried fruits** and **chillies**, and we still have some produce in storage.

Now **turmeric** has got me thinking to learn all about making curries, and I've found that there is even a curry making course right here in Mudgeeraba. I feel that if we can grow it then we also ought to use it and store or somehow preserve the excess for out of season needs.

DVD Book Review

"Magic Harvest" & "One Magic Square"

By Diane Kelly

During winter, I spent three days at home with the flu. Apart from being able to catch up on a bit of extra sleep, I had the chance to watch a DVD and start to read the book that was the basis for the story behind the film. The book's introduction explains the background:

Lolo Houbein's great-great-grandfather was a market gardener in North-West Frisia who passed on a food gardening gene down each generation. In Lolo's youth she saw her hometown in western Holland implode under the impact of war, until all animals, birds and rodents were eaten, all fish angled, all trees used for firewood and a long winter of famine ensued during which 24,000 people died of starvation in an area approximately a sixteenth the size of Tasmania. Food security has been Lolo's life-long preoccupation and this book is an offering for survival to those who have never even grown a radish.

Lolo Houbein was educated at the universities of Adelaide and Papua New Guinea in the literatures of Australia, Britain, Papua New Guinea, the Pacific and Africa; classical studies; world religions and anthropology. She is well known as an author of fiction and non-fiction. Her novel *Walk a Barefoot Road* won the Bicentennial/ABC Fiction Award.

In a nut-shell, Lola's book says "to go outside; dig over one square metre with a garden fork and remove all the weeds. Add some fertilizer. Then buy seeds or seedlings of the

(Continued on page 13)

Editor's Message

Jill, Gordon & Dorothy, Roger and Diane - Thank you for letting us all know what you are upto in your patch. Good news, not so good news - and a conversation begins...

In my patch ... Preserved lemons, lemon curd, lemonade ice blocks for school and the peels are soon to be marmalade, oh and how can I forget the parsley and lemon juice by the litre! All lemoned out ... until next year!

The Garden in September

Now we are well and truly into spring, in a very pleasant month of the year, with the garden green and vibrant. Many plants are in flower, and the mild warm days gladden the heart of every gardener.

Vegetables to be sown: The vegetable garden is a hectic place to be in now – you can sow seed of all kinds of salad leaves, radishes, spring onions, capsicum, eggplant, melon and many more. The point to bear in mind is to sow little and often so you don't get a glut of produce reaching maturity all at once. Short rows of each type of vegetable sown at, say, seven to ten day intervals will give you a manageable succession of crops that will keep your kitchen well supplied.

Sweet corn is nutritious and easy to grow if you remember it likes heat. Plant it when the soil has warmed up and sow successionally every three weeks until the end of January or even later. Plant seeds about 2.5cm deep in fertile, well-drained soil in full sun. Two seeds can be sown together to ensure good cover, and sow in a block to assist pollination. Water generously.

When plants are about 30cm tall, mulch with well-rotted manure, and give a side dressing of nitrogen fertiliser. Harvest cobs at the "milk" stage, when cobs are plump and the juice is sweet and milky. Pick when the silks have just turned brown and the cob tip is filled out.

Sow dwarf and climbing beans. Take out a wide drill 2.5cm deep, and space the seeds 15cm apart in staggered rows. Water if the soil is dry – the seedlings should be up in a few days.

Looking after crops:

Thin out rows of seedlings sown earlier. If seedlings are not thinned out, the plants will become straggly and not crop well at all. The distances to thin each type of vegetable will vary, and it is best to check the details for each individual plant.

The thinnings of most vegetables, except root vegetables such as carrots, beetroot and turnips, can be transplanted. The advantage of this is that these thinnings, having been disturbed, will mature that little bit later than the seedlings left in the row, therefore extending the succession of cropping. Water seedlings before and after thinning in dry weather. Seedlings being transplanted should also be watered gently, but well, after planting.

Support peas sown earlier. Peas have rather a straggly growth, and if they are not supported some of the crop will be lost, because it will become spoiled lying on the soil. There are several ways to support peas – one method that is useful is to use the prunings from other shrubs in the garden, provided they are strong enough and are reasonably straight. An ideal shrub for this is buddleja (the butterfly bush). It produces large purple or white flowers on long shoots made through the summer, and these are ideal for peas. Keep them to one side after you have pruned them from the shrub. The tips with the old flower heads may have to be removed to make them look more presentable.

Herbs:

Divide chives, if not done last month. With larger clumps, you may have to use two forks back to back to prise the clump apart, but otherwise they can be pulled apart by hand. Water well after replanting in soil that has been revitalised with garden compost.

Propagate thyme by layering. This method of propagation is very similar to that used on strawberry runners. Fill small pots with a mixture of equal parts of potting mixture and sharp sand, and sink the pots into the garden soil beneath the vigorous outer stems to be layered. Peg the stems into the pots and, in a few weeks, roots will form.

Flowers:

Remove fading flowers from rhododendrons, camellias and lilacs. By removing the fading blooms the plant's energy is diverted

from producing seeds into building up buds for next year's flowers. Be careful when removing the spent flowers from rhododendrons and camellias, as the new shoots develop immediately below the old flower head. With lilacs, cut back the flowered stems to just above a pair of leaves or buds, or even small shoots, lower down the stem, in a similar way to deadheading roses.

Cut back lavender once the plants approach the size you want them to grow to. If lavender plants are left unpruned the centre of the shrub grows sparse and the plants look unattractive, and they don't like being pruned into older wood. So it is a good idea to prune after flowering to keep them bushy and compact.

Other silver-leaved shrubs to shear in the early spring are curry plant and cotton lavender. Go over the whole plant, trimming off 2.5 to 5 cm of growth. Use shears for speed if you have a lot of lavender, for example, a low hedge. By doing this, plants stay compact and the centre does not open up. Propagate to replace old plants.

Finish dividing and replanting summer-flowering perennials. This is the latest month for lifting and dividing if you want these to flower in the summer and autumn. Whenever possible, always revitalise the soil with well-rotted farmyard manure or garden compost before replanting perennials. Water in well after planting if the weather is dry.

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

Handy Hints

Grey Water: Good quality water grows the best fruit, but it is also possible to recycle grey water from the house onto your garden.

Remember that grey water contaminated with phosphorus from some laundry products will accumulate in the soil and make iron unavailable to plant roots.

Grey water makes also makes soil more alkaline. When it is available, fresh rainwater is always the best choice. *Annette McFarlane*

Cont'd ...

DVD Book Review

"Magic Harvest" & "One Magic Square"

vegetables you want to grow. Plant them, and water them. You are now a food gardener." Obviously the book goes on to describe many aspects of gardening, but it is the simplicity that caught the imagination of South Australian olive-grower and wine-maker Toni Moreton.

Toni invited the residents from Adelaide's southern suburbs to create their own "magic square" of garden. Each participating home (and 65 families joined in the project) was given a starter kit to get them going, a bag of compost, some organic seedlings, and support via workshops and advice.

A DVD was then filmed that shows how the gardens started and grew, and what it meant to those who could now see a different way to enjoy food – they learnt how to grow healthy, chemical-free vegetables in their own backyards. And then they came together as a community group to swap food, and also to share a wonderful meal together, cooked from what they had grown.

"Magic Harvest is an insightful film following participants in the scheme from start to finish, as they get their hands dirty, digging, composting and looking after their new gardens. It is a celebration of getting back to basics – growing, cooking and eating simple seasonal organic foods."

One Magic Square tells us how to "take control of your own fresh food supply. Food gardening is the most intelligent adult endeavour on earth – and Lolo Houbein shows you how to do it, and why you should".

Lolo is interviewed in the DVD, and one of the things she mentions is that there are 5 to 6 million backyards in Australia. Her dream is that each one of them is used for home food production and isn't that what organic growing is all about?

Both the book and the DVD are available from the Gold Coast City Library.

FRUIT TREES

Custard apples: Start increasing irrigation. Mulch trees. Apply 2 grams of boron per sq m.

Lychee: Mulch trees. Peak water needs. Apply 20 gm gypsum per sq m.

Low chill stone fruit: Spring prune new growth. Continue with high irrigation. Prune out water shoots and dense foliage for better sized fruits. Use fruit fly control programs, for example netting or an attractant method.

Mango: Peak water needs. Apply organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash – 1 kg for larger trees and ½ kg for smaller trees. Spray with copper based spray or leaf microbes for anthracnose per fortnight.

Passion-fruit: Plant out new vines. Pruning carried out this month. All dead parts to go. Mulch vines at least 2 to 3 metres out from the base.

Paw-paw: Release predatory mites.

Strawberries: Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp spray weekly. Pick fruit when ripe.

Bananas: De-sucker plants by cutting down to centre with a sharp knife taking the centre out and add 1 teaspoon of kerosene in the well. Have one plant with fruit on, one half grown, and one sucker. Discard all others. Keep up water needs.

Citrus: Keep up water. Time to put on lime or gypsum. Mature trees ½ kg, ¼ g for small trees.

Tips on Growing Fruit Trees:

Avocados, when young, may benefit from a shade cloth cover for a short time, plus lots of water in the hot dry months.

Pawpaws and most fruit trees need only a very light mulch around them during the colder months, so pull back the heavy mulch used in summer. This action will let the soil warm up and it protects the plant's roots from frost.

Citrus do well in all warm to mild climate zones. Trees will tolerate cool conditions. Select a sunny position, protected from strong winds. Successful on sandy soils. Dislike clay soils or those with heavy subsoil. Heavy soils can become over-wet and drain poorly, leading to root rot problems (grow in a raised bed).

Lots of sunshine and good drainage are essential. Most trees will die from having wet feet – if you are in doubt, mound up the soil at least 20cm. The citrus and avocado will thank you for your efforts.

The best time to plant fruit, nut and berry trees is from late autumn to early spring. However plant banana suckers (Lady Fingers only) coming into the hotter months. It is important to keep all fruit trees weed free. Collar rot can be caused by mulch too close to the trunk. Put lots of well-rotted compost and mulch around each tree, out to the drip line and at least 1.5 cm thick. This will keep the moisture in and the weeds out.

Young trees may need some special TLC in their first years, namely protection from wind and scorching afternoon sun. Pigeon pea and cassava make good wind breaks for the suburban garden. They will also provide a good quality material for the compost heap. When planting out trees, tease out their roots before putting into the prepared hole. Keep the bud union at the same level as the soil in the container. Do not over water a new plant – a good watering once a week is sufficient in dry weather. Plant in early autumn or early spring. This will avoid both cold of winter or heat of summer. Wait at least 4-5 weeks before applying a fertiliser to young trees. Citrus trees should need little pruning – if they are over-crowded, thin out after fruiting.

Start baiting for fruit fly in mid-August. Bag or net young fruit at the marble-size stage.

Harvesting will depend on locality, but with some clever planning you can have many months with a continual crop. Select early, mid or late varieties of citrus, avocado or mango trees etc to suit your requirements, and to maintain continual harvesting.

Finally, buy your tree from a good nursery. Don't buy a tree that is too big for your garden.

A good rule is "feed your tree after it feeds you"!



It's Time To Get Growing

VEGETABLES

SEPTEMBER:

Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, New Zealand spinach, Okra, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

OCTOBER:

Amaranth, Artichoke, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Snake bean, Sweet corn, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, New Zealand spinach, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

Prostate Awareness Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:

www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com
or contact Ross Davis for more info:
rossco12@bigpond.com

HERBS

SEPTEMBER

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

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

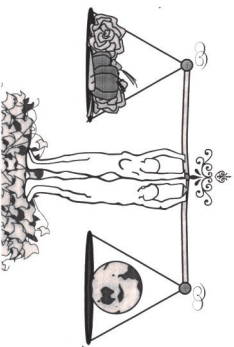
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If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:
GCOG, PO Box 210, Mudgeeraba Q 4213

*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 18 October 2012