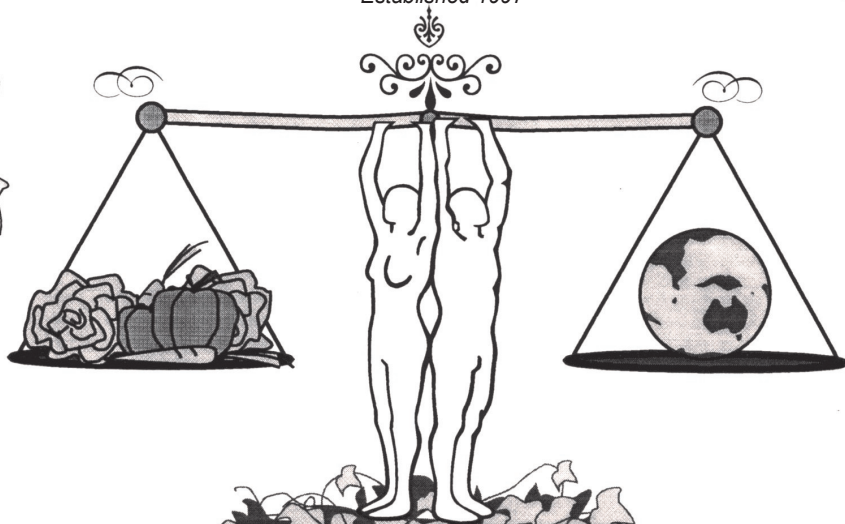


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 September 2014 Issue 8
GARDENING IN SPRING

Pg2	<i>Club Information</i>	10-11	<i>Q&A - August; Goodbye Brush Turkey, If You Only Do One Thing This Month - Weed Your Garden;</i>
3	<i>Notice Board, Whar's On</i>	12-13	<i>Recipes - Pumpkin Cake; Seed Bank</i>
4-5	<i>President's Message, How to grow Sweet Corn & Cucumbers</i>	14-15	<i>Gardening on the Gold Coast, Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Herbs, Black Sapote Cake</i>
6-7	<i>Spurtopia - Sustainable Living in a Rental Property</i>		
8-9	<i>Club Visit - Freemans' Farm; Potatoes</i>		

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16 October

Notice Board

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

Meetings Held:

3rd Thursday of the Month

The Meeting Place, Cnr Guineas Creek Rd and Coolgardie St, Elanora.
 Doors open: 7:00 pm. **Begin at 7:30 pm**
 Entry is \$1 members, \$3 visitors.
(No meeting in December)

Annual Membership Fees:

Single: \$20. Family: \$30.
 To renew or start memberships please transfer funds directly into our bank account, send cheques (payable to GCOG) to Diane Kelly, or just pay at the door.

Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers
Bank: Suncorp
BSB: 484-799
Account: 0014-21651

Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

Members' Market Corner:

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

Raffle Table:

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

Library:

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

Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

1/4 page: \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year
1/2 page: \$20 an issue or \$200 per year
full page: \$30 an issue or \$300 per year

2014 Committee

President	Maria Roberson (07) 5598 6609
Vice President	Roger Peterson (07) 5534 8061 rpeterson.1@bigpond.com
Treasurer	Diane Kelly (07) 5522 7444
Secretary	Karen Hart (07) 5551 1297
Membership Sec	Diane Kelly
Membership Asst	Penny Jameson 0411 639 558
Newsletter Editor	Angela Anderson w.a.anderson@bigpond.com (07) 5533 0169
Newsletter Asst	Diane Kelly
Website Editor	Dorothy Coe webprint@onthenet.com.au
Advertising	Dorothy Coe
Guest Speaker	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 jillbarber611@gmail.com
Liaison	
Librarians	Ann Brown 0403 936 360 Kerstein Trueman
Seed Bank	Lyn Mansfield 0409 645 888
Seed Assistant	Heather Ryan 5534 4047
Supper Co-ordinator	Paul Roberson (07) 5598 6609

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.

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart, Lyn & Heather

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.

Overdue: Anissa Loades (228), Winsome Gunning (314), Terri Groth (125), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Lise Racine (151), Trevor & Barbara Hewins (348), Val Sier (349), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Patricia McGrath (305), Scott McCormack (334), David Freeman (352), Anna Yeomans (353), Shelley Pryor (72), Warren & Beverly Carlson (87), Murray Olver (105), Gene Rosser (224), Wolfgang Dempsey (258), Peter & Leanne Dickfos (260), Geoffrey Williams (293), Lyn Mansfield (306), Jan Guest (307)

September: Henry Blonner (108), Neill Ross (294), Denise Goodwin (335), Frank Rebesco (342), Beth Orme (343), Ashleigh Hart (355)

October: Glenn & Joan Jones (266), Darrell & Marion Williams (310), Amy Lukens (356), John Palmer (357)

Welcome to our new members: Jun Yoneda, Graham & Flora Dunne, Jason Pankhurst, Dayne Petersen

What's On

Tamborine Mountain - Springtime on the Mountain "Open Gardens Trail"

26th-28th September, 9am - 4pm

Trail Passes \$20, dependent children free

www.tmbotanicgardens.org.au

The **2014 BOGI Fair** will be held at the Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Road Windsor (near the Albion railway station), on **Sunday the 12th of October** from 9am to 3pm. This will be the 28th Brisbane Organic Growers Fair.

Club Visit Planned to Spurtopia

We are planning a Club outing to Roman and Jana's sustainable-living home and garden in Brisbane on the tentative date of Saturday 25th October.

NOTE: Date to be confirmed at this month's meeting .

The Diggers Club

Australia's largest garden club is helping gardeners grow healthier vegetables, tastier fruit and the most beautiful flowers.

- Heirloom vegetable & flower seeds, herbs, plants
- Gardening advice, free seeds and discounts for members



- We deliver direct to your door in QLD
03 5984 7900

DIGGERS.COM.AU

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Even though the weather was threatening to rain, the decision was made to go ahead with the Freemans Farm Tour, and what a great afternoon it was! David was very informative and generous with information regarding everything from soil amendments, to the different fruiting times of the many varieties of avocados grown on the family property. When the tour was over, we headed to a park to enjoy a cuppa and a jolly good chat about gardening, cooking, and bees, not to mention a Bag Pipe serenade by Johnny Palmer. All in all, an excellent arvo was had by everyone.

Last month's guest speaker, Ramon Spur, was a mine of backyard growing information and had us all truly inspired. We are in the process of arranging a visit to his home in Brisbane for a tour of his fabulous set up, so keep your ear to the ground for more information on the date and time.

Spring is truly here, and after some good rain it's time to get stuck into the vegie patch. The Seed Table is fully stocked with seed for your Spring and Summer needs. Don't forget planting from seed is the cheapest way to provide you and your family with the best, most nutritious food you can get. For example, corn cobs come in at around 4 cents each, lettuce 2 cents each and kale 10 cents a bunch. With value like that, why would you grow any other way?

Please check if your membership fees are due; there are several ways you can now pay, and the details are printed on the Notice Board page of the Newsletter. Don't miss out on the benefits of being a member of the oldest organic gardening club on the Gold Coast. I would like to thank all those who are contributing articles and bits and pieces for the Newsletter. I love that the content focuses on matters that directly affect our members, such as climate and growing conditions specific to

our region. To be really successful in the garden, it is important to have good local knowledge to draw upon, and we certainly have that in spades because of the vast amount of collective experience within our membership. So folks, keep up the good work, and keep those contributions for the Newsletter coming in.

Happy growing,
Maria.

How To Grow Sweet Corn & Cucumbers By Maria Roberson

SWEET CORN is a type of maize which has been bred for its high sugar and low starch content. Once the cob has been picked, the sugars in the kernels slowly convert into starch, which is why freshly picked, home-grown sweet corn always tastes better than shop bought. Most of the sweet corn we eat today is from the Supersweet varieties, which are F1 hybrids and have been developed for reliability and the sweet taste we have become accustomed to. However, you can still purchase old heritage varieties from various seed companies. Seed from hybrid corn cannot be saved and planted from year to year; if you wish to save seed, you will need to obtain a heritage variety.

Seeds can be sown in spring, summer and early autumn, and are planted in blocks rather than a single long row: block planting allows for effective wind pollination of the female flowers. There are two basic soil requirements - good drainage and enough humus to ensure that the ground will not dry out too quickly. A soil pH range of 5.5 to 7.0 is preferred. Select a warm sunny position that is protected from strong winds as plants can grow to two metres and are susceptible to blowing over. Sow seeds 5cm deep and 20cm apart, space rows at about 40cm wide, and aim for three or four rows per bed. Expected germination time is 7-10 days, and approximate time between sowing and harvesting is 14 weeks. If you want corn for the Christmas dinner table, you need to do some planning. Once plants are about

30cm high, I like to use some compost as mulch, to not only keep in the soil moisture, but to give plants an extra feed. A side dressing of organic fertilizer can be applied just before cobs form if needed. Water regularly: it is especially important to keep well watered at flowering time and as cobs develop, this is one crop that benefits from overhead watering. Corn can be harvested once the silks at the top of the cob have browned off. Sweet Corn has few pest and insect problems: however, earworm caterpillars can enter the cob and chew on the kernels, making a bit of a mess. Inspect plants regularly by carefully peeling back a little of the husk at the tip of the cob on the underside: if caterpillars are present, you can squeeze the end of the cob which should squash them or alternatively spray with Dipel.

CUCUMBER is a subtropical, annual vine which can be grown on the ground or trained up a trellis. Plants are frost tender, and require a warm, sunny spot with good air circulation to aid in the control of powdery mildew. It is recommended that seeds be sown in a mound of soil for good drainage; however, I don't think this is necessary when planted into a raised garden bed. Plant three seeds at a time, 10cm apart and 2cm deep, and space plants 40cm apart. Germination time is 6 to 9 days, and approximate time between sowing and harvest is 12 to 14 weeks. When the first true leaves have appeared, thin out the plants, leaving the strongest seedling. When the seedlings have 6 or 7 leaves, pinch out the growing tips to encourage branching and increased fruit yield. Picking fruit regularly will also promote continued production.

The soil must be well drained and rich in humus, with a pH range of 6.0-7.0 preferred. If soil pH is low (acidic), apply lime to correct it, and follow the rates of application on the back of the packet. Mushroom compost usually has a high pH and can be used on acidic soils, but not on soils with a pH of 7 or over. Place mulch on the soil surface to prevent moisture loss and weed growth; mulch also keeps fruit from coming into contact with the soil, which can cause fruit rot. Growing cucumber on a

trellis will also keep fruit from soil contact.

During humid weather, plants are susceptible to the fungal disease "powdery mildew"; this can be seen as a white powdery covering on the leaves. A safe and acceptable treatment to use is a spray made from a mix of 1 part milk to 10 parts water. When irrigating, water the plant roots, rather than the leaves to help stop the transference of fungal spores.



HERB FARM

Michael & Sandra Nanka
491 Springbrook Rd
MUDGEERABA. 4213

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

9 am – 4 pm

Phone: (07) 5530 3253
www.herbcottage.com.au

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

Spurtopia – Sustainable Living in a Rental Property

By Jill Barber

I thought I gave a pretty lively introduction to our guest speaker, Roman Spur, at the last meeting of the GCOG, but when he jumped up to speak I saw what creating your own sustainable living along organic lines can really do for someone! He was just a ball of excited energy from beginning to end! A self-styled Sustainable Design Engineer, Roman truly lives what he preaches, having transformed an inner city rented property into a productive, organic food source over five years. Now it's an **urban farm** of about 150 square metres, providing 50 to 70% of his family's fruit and vegetable needs, along with other subsistence needs, such as Solar hot water. He is only too happy to share all his knowledge with whoever wants it, and it's amazing how much he was able to share with us in such a short time in our meeting.

"**Spurtopia**" is his and wife, Jana's, Small Kingdom of Happiness, which they share with their toddler, who is quite proficient at foraging for herself in the garden. Having come from the Czech Republic five years ago, Roman is no stranger to sustainable living, and he is passionate about sharing his knowledge, experience, ideas and inventions with whoever wants them. It obviously provides him with a great deal of satisfaction, and it certainly benefits whoever hears him.

I was particularly enthralled with Roman's innovative ideas in using **recycled materials**, such as Styrofoam boxes, plastic bottles, 20 litre paint buckets, PVC piping and reflective foil. From them, he's made and showed to us self-watering planter boxes, a chicken feeder and waterer, a solar hot water system for less than \$50, a pizza oven and bee hive, as examples of his many creations. These he's happy to explain in detail how to make: see his website www.spurtopia.blogspot.com.au. His creations have reduced his power bill to \$100/quarter, for which he pays a little extra, about \$10/quarter, to have it be 100% "green power"

Roman was appalled when he first came to Australia with the **massive waste** that is made here, amounting to \$5 billion worth or \$250/person/year on food, which is more than is spent on the army, or on electronics (computers, mobile phones, etc). Australians tend to take so much for granted, he thinks, and he is passionate about doing what he can to change that attitude, by following the natural urge to share what he knows; hence, his commitment to recycling, creativity and self-sufficiency. On his website you can read: "Refuse – Reduce — Reuse Recycle – Repair", as a lesson he has learned.

So, he also uses **citrus peel** to make fabric softener and household cleaner, and **aloe vera** to make smoothies, toothpaste and shampoo. On his website are recipes for wonderful food they've made from their garden produce, such as black sapotes and rosellas, and I've taken the liberty of including a couple of those in this newsletter.

Roman believes that "we are what we eat", so he was determined to have what they grow be the best, most nutritious food for his family. He started from scratch, with a small garden bed in the middle of the lawn; and now in their garden they have over 100 different vegetables, 25 fruits and 25 herbs, so we don't need an acreage, he declared! He likes to grow **kale** rather than broccoli because of its incredibly high nutrient content, such as vitamin K: 100gm of kale provides 700% of what we need daily! This will go to a breastfeeding baby via the mother's milk, so it wouldn't need the vitamin K injection at birth.

The **planter boxes** that Roman makes were Tasmanian salmon or broccoli boxes, and they store ten litres of water in the bottom, which is gradually used up by the plants in the next level above as moisture gets up to the soil by capillary effect (wick). They are mosquito proof as the only way into the water table is the very small overflow holes and a watering in pipe with a float. Styrofoam acts as insulation, so they are warm in winter and cool in summer. A **challenge** is that they might leak after a while, but they can be lined with black builders' foil. Also, plastic can leach

into plants, so the boxes can be painted inside with beeswax to prevent this.

In **single level** boxes they grow capsicums and lots of green plants; whereas for deeper vegetables, such as carrots, **two levels** can be used. These have a 40 litre water storage capacity, which is especially useful for plants needing a lot, like cucumbers. Then there are the **triple deckers**, for even longer rooted vegetables, such as daikon radish or even smaller fruit trees. These can be placed in full sun, with no shade at all as they do have sufficient water through the heat of the day.

Roman has expanded into a **block wall**, with holes for strawberries in pots, for example. In the bottom of the pots is 4-5cm of charcoal, which is porous and so stores water. Plus, there is heat from the block wall for the strawberries. He will also use **beer traps** to protect the strawberries from slugs.

Other gadgets he's devised include the **wicking pot** made from a plastic milk bottle cut in half and the top half fitted into the bottom half... upside down, with a piece of cloth stuck in the lid opening going down to the water. Then there's the large **drink bottle slit lengthwise** and spread out to envelop paw paws, mangos and passionfruit left on the tree to ripen, which keeps out not only possums but also flying foxes and rats.

Roman's resourcefulness is shown in another one of his strategies for dealing with the **possums** that come to eat his paw paws that they love is to feed them! Give them some paw paws or other fruit, he says...and they'll then leave the rest of the garden alone. He's also discovered that they're territorial, so when he found a dead possum once, he put it in his mango tree...and the resident possum moved out! When he found his passionfruit decimated by them, he decided to plant it along the back wall of his house, making it too difficult for them to get it. Other possum deterrents are good for the plants: human urine, blood and bone or fish emulsion. He's even found that they can be useful: when they climb a tree with a passionfruit vine growing

up it, they knock down as many fruit as they eat, making it much easier for Roman to pick the fruit for his family.

More gadgets from recycled materials include a **chicken feeder** which prevents the chooks from spreading the grain around, and thus it does not attract rats and mice, and a **water feeder**, so the chooks' water is always clear and fresh. To make sure that the chooks have fresh protein, Roman has created a **maggot grower** in a large, four litre tin, full of holes, in which he leaves some meat for flies to lay their eggs in. Soon, maggots come wriggling out the holes, and the chooks have fresh maggot meat! Chooks like a lot of greens, and their chooks have fresh greens as they have free access to a 15cm raised garden bed of **green manure**...which grows through a wire mesh, so they can eat it, but not scratch in it! Organic eggs are ten times higher in nutrition than those from caged hens, Roman claims, and his hens are not only free range, with sunlight and air, they have that green stuff to make them as healthy as possible.

Definitely worth trying are his **fruit fly traps**, made from plastic milk bottles painted yellow, with a couple of two-centimetre holes in the top half, and, below the holes, his mixture of water, sugar, vanilla and cloudy ammonia (recipe on his website, <http://spurtopia.blogspot.com.au/search/label/inventions>). These he hangs around the property, about 6m apart, and the flies drown in it.

Of course, Roman's garden wouldn't be complete without **bees**, so he read up on them in a book and visited beekeepers to learn the basics, after which they set up their own hives, which in their first year produced 160 kilos of honey! The first batch of honey was dark and thick, like molasses, and delicious, and they can share it with their neighbours. In the suburbs, he declared, there is a constant supply of nectar in the flowers in urban gardens, which feeds the queen amply (queens can lay 2000 eggs a day!), and their garden vegies are thereby pollinated. He added that

Continued on page 12

**Our Club Visit to Freemans' Farm
Sunday, 24th August
By Diane Kelly**

The Southern Gold Coast received some very heavy rainfalls during the two days prior to our visit to Freemans' Farm, but Sunday the 24th of August was fine and pleasantly warm.

About twenty-five Club members and friends met at the entrance to the Farm on Sunday afternoon, and we started the visit with a walk around the new visitors' area, the timber-sided vegetable gardens, and the lookout that showed magnificent views of Mt Cougal, Springbrook, Mt Tallebudgera, and along the Currumbin Valley to the ocean. This area at the top of the farm is now 1,000 m² of productivity and interest – and the "Old Yellow Truck".

David Freeman provided us with an introduction to the property, and with many of us wearing gum boots – and the rest of us wishing we had some, because it is definitely red-soil country – we headed down the driveway to the main part of the farm. David explained about the watering system for the farm, and showed us the dams and tanks. Then we walked down to the packing shed, and past the plantation of banana trees that were apparently the first introduced to Australia. There were also avocado trees laden with fruit. David explained how the soil quality is maintained, making full use of leaf litter that is thick on the ground.



The main vegetable-growing area – fully protected from wild-life

Passing the farm house (with a prolific Dorothy Perkins rose bush in full bloom, and some beautiful hibiscus) we continued to the vegetable growing area.

The Freemans have utilized the original tennis court, the fence of which provides protection against any wild-life that would enjoy a meal of kale or lettuce etc. The dimensions of the vegetable-growing area are quite stunning, and to have it all protected must be a real bonus.

There is a second vegetable garden area, and David showed us the green manure that he has planted among the rows of kale and other vegetables.



The green manure – quite a variety of different plants.

We then walked to the other side of the farmed area, along a track with views to (I think) the south-west. There were small patches of rain-forest, and many interesting trees to look at. Cutting through the bush, we returned to the farm house and another look at the magnificent views before returning up the driveway to the farm entrance. We could then buy avocados, kale, custard apples, pineapples, tomatoes, herbs and bananas.

It was a farm visit that was well worth the trip, and we appreciated David's time in introducing us to the farm's operations. It has been a busy time for him, as preparations for adding coffee and cakes to the menu of food to be purchased at the Old Yellow Truck are well under-way – and it is quite inspiring to see someone's dreams becoming reality.

Potatoes – in fact, 13 kilos of them: By Diane Kelly

A couple of years ago, I planted a crop of potatoes in my home garden utilizing the Peter Cundall recommended system of using layers of straw and manures, rather than soil. I enjoyed harvesting the clean tubers, and so this year I thought I would try an experiment.

Back in late April, I planted out a raised bed of Pontiacs, using nine seed potatoes, and the “no-soil” method. Just under three weeks later, the first leaves started to appear. So at the end of May, I planted out the same number of Dutch Creams, but this time using a larger variety of materials, including soil.

Both crops did quite well until about mid-August, when the Pontiac plants began to wilt and look like they were dying off. I had been waiting for them to flower – and in fact neither crop flowered this year, and other people have commented the same about their plantings. So I decided to bandicoot down and see what was going on – and several medium size Pontiacs surfaced! I then left both beds of potatoes to see what developed – the Dutch Creams also started to wilt, but not as badly.



The rewards of “bandicooting”

But this weekend, I could wait no longer. We are planning another “no dig” gardening demonstration at the small community garden that we have been working on in Mudgeeraba when we have our bi-annual Craft Fair, so I needed to start composting, fertilizing and mulching the garden beds in preparation for

planting out in a couple of weeks.

So the fun began – there is nothing like the excitement of burrowing down into rich soil and coming up with smooth, healthy potatoes. I must admit the Dutch Creams seem to have been a better crop – maybe it was the different planting materials, or the later planting, or just the different “breed”, but they outnumbered the Pontiacs by about 3 to 2. Next time I will do a more systematic test.



Pontiacs v’s Dutch Creams

We’ve ended up with about 13 kilos of spuds, and it was fun to bag them up and share them with friends. And plus we are looking forward to enjoying a couple of meals of them for ourselves.

p.s. If anyone else has had a “different to normal” experience with their potatoes this year, please let us know – sharing knowledge helps us all



Ready to share with others

Q & A - August 2014

By Karen Hart

Q. Karen mentioned that her **broccoli was not forming heads**, even though cauliflower and cabbage planted nearby and at the same time have done extremely well.

A. It was suggested that they may require **sulphate of potash** - 85g per square metre.

Q. Ashmore Primary School has a strawberry patch, but the **strawberries are being eaten** - holes in the bottom of the fruit?

A. **Slugs** are the likely culprits - beer traps work best!

Q. A **strange melon** was brought in.

A. Apparently it is a **'Spanish' melon**.

Q. A member has a **pawpaw with black spots** on the bottom. They still taste lovely and look okay inside when cut.

A. It was suggested that the **fruit be picked and disposed of** - they could be under stress from recent cold weather. Hopefully this will fix the problem by itself. They like lots of fertiliser and need to be well watered.

Good Bye to the Brush Turkey

By Diane Kelly

Gardening is one of my favourite pastimes, and recently this activity was threatened by a visit from "The Brush Turkey".

The first picture shows the initial steps we took to protect the vegetables that had been growing so well. Proof positive of who we were dealing with!

We put bird netting around everything, and it worked for a few days. But then it rained, and then we had a few sunny days, and then the brush turkey obviously decided this made perfect incubating conditions (soft soil & heat), so he decided to build a nesting mound right between two of my garden beds.

Over the next couple of weeks, he dug soil, he dug weeds, he scratched up all the materials from flower gardens across the backyard, and he even started to tear pieces off the paper-bark tree. We used all sorts of con-

tainers, buckets, logs, mesh and palings to stop him, but he was undeterred. The final straw (and he had scratched up plenty of that as well!) was when he decided to start digging in under the garden sleepers and collecting out the soil from the actual vegetable gardens, thus under-mining them.



Spot the culprit !!

The mound ended up several feet deep, and spanned a circumference of about two metres. The only good thing about his whole project was that the soil that he collected was beautifully aerated, and I've now mixed it with other soil and used it for potting out spring colour.

The brush turkey has now gone (they are a protected bird so the man in the white van came and took him away – hopefully more than 23 kilometres, which is the estimated distance that they can find their way "home" again.) We admired his diligence, but it is so much better to have a vegetable garden growing safely and undamaged.



Life as we know it has now returned to normal from this.

**If You Only Do One Thing This Month
Weed Your Garden - Or Not!**
From Diane Kelly

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that “Weeds are plants whose virtues have never been discovered”; A A Milne wrote “Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them”; and Doug Larson wrote “A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except learning how to grow in rows”. The gardening world appears to be divided on weeds – so let’s look at them this month.

1. Why weed your garden:

- (a) Weeds can overwhelm other plants, smothering them with vigorous growth
- (b) Weeds compete for soil moisture and nutrients
- (c) Weeds make harvesting more difficult
- (d) Weeds reduce yields of fruit and vegetables
- (e) Weeds can spoil the appearance of beds and borders

2. Why weed your garden - not:

- (a) Weeds can be food for beneficial insects – daisy-flowered plants, forget-me-nots, Patterson’s curse
- (b) Weeds can be attractive to butterflies and bees – dandelion, poppies, lantana & passionfruit
- (c) Some weeds are edible – blackberry, passionfruit, fat hen, nettles & chicory
- (d) Weeds can be a useful addition to the compost heap – comfrey, vetch, nettles & dock
- (e) Weeds can provide food and shelter for birds – boxthorn, blackberries, dandelion, ivy, thistles and grasses
- (f) If you aren’t able to plant out your garden at the moment, leave some weeds in to help avoid soil erosion, stop moisture evaporation, and to attract wild-life – but remember to remove them before they go to seed

3. What else can we learn about weeds?

- (a) Weeds can spread by seed, runners and stolons, roots & rhizomes and bulbs and bulbils
- (b) Some vegetables cope well with weeds (potatoes and squash for example) but others (such as onions) do not. Crop rotation helps keep weeds under control
- (c) Digging your garden can encourage the germination of thousands of weed seeds by exposing them to light – so cutting down on turning your soil can reduce a weed problem
- (d) Transplanting seedlings, rather than sowing direct, can give plants a head start over any weeds – plus it makes identification of weeds easier
- (e) Close planting of vegetables, herbs and flowers cuts down on the space where weeds can grow

4. So what can we do?

- (a) Know your weeds. Knowing how a weed survives and reproduces helps you choose effective methods of dealing with it
- (b) Think about your gardening style – are there weeds that you would like to encourage in your garden?
- (c) When clearing ground, be realistic – don’t clear more than you are able to keep weed-free
- (d) Mulches prevent and eradicate weeds, for little effort – read up about the different types that may suit your garden
- (e) Never leave soil bare – plant it, cover it, or sow a green manure

Continued from page 7

pollen has five times more concentrated protein than beef, as well as vitamins, minerals and trace elements, and the propolis is a great healer, for example, for toothache.

Roman recommended watching the doco, "Queen of the Sun" (www.queenofthesun.com), which shows how bees sometimes travel 20,000 miles around the world, and this is one of the reasons for colony collapse. Greater awareness is needed about their care, and it's really important to keep bees. If you're stung, he advised scraping out the sting with your thumbnail straight away, before the poison spreads, then applying honey, onion or aloe vera. We should always buy honey direct from beekeepers or a farm to make sure that it's cold processed because when it's heated over 40 degrees, all the good enzymes are killed. Hence, we should put our honey in our drink just before drinking, rather than pouring very hot liquid on it.

Aloe vera is a wonderfully useful plant: it can go into smoothies, the whole thing, be used for toothpaste with bicarbonate of soda and mint for freshness, or as a shampoo. If you want to remove the bitter part, avoid the yellow sap under the skin, down the middle. The yellow sap is also used for disinfection.

We have sun in abundance in Australia, and Roman's family makes the most of it in their solar inventions. Their **solar oven** bakes bread, cakes, rice and stews. The sides and top are made from corrugated, lined with reflective foil, such as that inside a potato chip bag, and it's sufficient to magnify the temperature from the sun to 180 degrees in a black pot within an oven bag. Their **solar hot water heater** he made for less than \$50 (see website for instructions).

Roman is very aware of the value of **community**, as giving a sense of belonging, and they encourage people in their street to visit and

socialise. One way they can do this is sharing the bounty from their BBQ/**pizza oven**, which he made in minutes from recycled bricks and a barbecue cast iron plate with lid. Later, the resultant **wood ash** is used in the garden, and the **charcoal** is smashed up and soaked in chicken manure before going into the garden as it helps to regulate the moisture in the garden bed as well as supplying a steady stream of nutrition. As a **fertiliser**, tomatoes love the wood ash, as well as human urine, as they are good sources of potash and other nutrient. Weeds soaked in water for two to three weeks are another good source. For insect **pests**, a simple remedy is to catch them, put them in the food processor, then spray them right back on them!

Living this way gives them the lifestyle they want, as Roman only needs to work for a couple of days a week for their minimal costs, and spend the rest of the time with his family and playing in the garden. It's simpler, cheaper and easier than a more conventional way of living. "Do what excites you the most", were the final words he left with us, and I think he couldn't have given us better advice. What an inspiration we received that night: it will be a hard act for other speakers to follow!

Pumpkin Cake From Roman

3 cups wholemeal flour
 2 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 3 teaspoons cinnamon
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 cup sugar
 0.5 cup chopped walnuts (or macadamia)
 0.5 cup sultanas
 1.5 cups olive oil
 3 eggs
 2 cups pumpkin puree (steam half of a medium size pumpkin then blend)
 pumpkin seeds to sprinkle on the top

Mix all ingredients together, place it on baking tray lined with baking paper, bake it for 35 mins at 180 C.

SEED BANK
By Lyn & Heather

What have you been growing in your garden this month???

We have the following seed packets available if you want to plant things prior to summer.

Seeds \$2.00 per packet

Alyssum Royal Carpet
Basil
Bean Provider
Beetroot Bulls Blood
Beneficial Insect Mix
Bush Bean Borlotti Red Rooster
Bush Beans Redland Pioneer
Bush Beans Redland Pioneer
Capsicum California Wonder
Capsicum Sweet Chocolate
Carrot Chantenay Red Cored
Carrot Colour Mix
Carrot Scarlet Namtes
Carrot Western Red
Ceylon Spinach
Ceylon Spinach
Chai White
Cherry Tomato
Chives Onion
Climbing Bean Blue Lake
Coriander
Cucumber Green Gem
Cucumber Muncher Lebanese
Dill
Eggplant Black Beauty
Flat Parsley Giant of Italy
Fruit Rosella
Green Manure
Kale Black Toscana
Leaf Amaranth
Lettuce - Little Gem
Lettuce - Paris Island Cos
Lettuce - Red Salad Bowl
Madagascar
Madagascar Bean
Mustard Green Osaka Purple
Nasturtium
Okra Clemsons Spineless
Pigeon Pea
Pop Corn Hopi Blue
Coriander

Cucumber Green Gem
Cucumber Muncher Lebanese
Dill
Eggplant Black Beauty
Flat Parsley Giant of Italy
Fruit Rosella
Green Manure
Kale Black Toscana
Leaf Amaranth
Lettuce - Little Gem
Lettuce - Paris Island Cos
Lettuce - Red Salad Bowl
Madagascar
Madagascar Bean
Mustard Green Osaka Purple
Nasturtium
Okra Clemsons Spineless
Pigeon Pea
Pop Corn Hopi Blue

If you have any excess seeds that you would like to bring in and share this would be appreciated. Just put a description on the packet so we can help the new gardeners know how to grow it.

If you have any queries about seeds please let us know so we can find out the information for you.



Roman's delicious Pumpkin Cake

Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts

This is the month to fully ponder the adage: as you sow, so shall you reap. There is a wide choice of flowers to plant this month and the vegetable possibilities are as vast as our seed racks.

The practice of serious gardeners is to raise, where possible, their own seedlings. Create a nursery bed in the garden by running a **40 sand: 40 soil: 20 organic mix**: though a garden sieve. Or recycle polystyrene boxes (making sure they have holes in the bottom) and use a base layer of gravel or rocks, some mature compost, then the above mentioned sand/soil/organic mix.

Vegetables: This is the month to get serious about crisp, summer lettuce. Raise seed in beds or boxes, keeping sheltered and moist. Transplant into a well-drained soil with a healthy proportion (20 per cent) of organic matter dug through. Rake some more into the top layer with a sprinkle of dolomite or lime and all is ready. Mulch lettuce with grass clippings or compost and feed with liquid fertiliser every fortnight. Apart from the root and legume varieties, this practice can be applied to most inhabitants of the vegetable garden with good results.

Vegetables & Flowers: If the meteorological forces are with you, plant after a late-afternoon shower. And remember, rain or not, late afternoon (unless it is particularly cold) is best. If there have been a few days of rain, plant when it appears to be abating – rain-water (in moderate amounts) – is the transplant's friend.

Fruit: Pop in some passionfruit this month, but be aware of their riotous behaviour. Again, use plenty of organic matter, keep up the top-dressings and liquid feedings.

Shrubs & Climbers: Sun, shelter and drainage are needed for most trees, shrubs and climbers. If the soil is clay, make life easier for the plant by digging its hole half a metre wider than its root ball. Mix compost and sand with the soil you have removed.

FRUIT TREES

Custard Apple: Leaf loss should occur this month. Low irrigation. Mulch trees. This month is the best time to prune custard apples. 1/3 of old wood needs to be taken off.

Figs: Pruning can be carried out. Be very vigorous. 1/3 can be cut off. Figs are only produced on new wood of the new season's growth. Give trees a good feed of organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash. Mulch well.

Lychee: Increase irrigation. Flowering should start this month. Fertilise trees with an organic fertiliser with potassium sulphate. Give mature trees 1 kg and small trees ½ kg.

Low chill stone fruit: Carry out final thinning. Stone hardening will occur this month. Continue with high irrigation. Prune out water shoots and dense foliage for better sized fruits. Use fruit fly control programs, for example netting or an attractant method.

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

Passionfruit: Vines will start to grow this month. Apply a little organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash and mulch vines at least 2 to 3 metres out from the base. 1kg for large vines and ½ kg for smaller vines.

Pawpaw: Spray with wettable sulphur in the evenings for spider mite.

Persimmon: Flowering will start in early varieties. Mulch trees. Low irrigation.

Strawberries: Apply small amount of organic fertilizer with sulphate of potash. Keep up irrigation. Pick fruit when fully ripe.

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

Citrus: Flowering will occur this month. Increase irrigation. Fertilise tree with organic fertiliser with sulphate of potash, 1kg for large trees and ½ kg for smaller trees.

VEGETABLES

SEPTEMBER: *Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Beans, Beetroots, Ceylon spinach, Capsicum, Carrot, Chilli, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Leeks, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melon, Mustard Greens, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rockmelon, Rosella, Shallots, Silverbeet, Squash, Sweet corn, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.*

OCTOBER:

Asian Veg, *Amaranth, Artichoke, Asparagus, Beans - Bush, Climbing & Snake, Ceylon spinach, Sweet corn, Capsicum, Carrot, Choko, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Melons, Mustard Greens, New Zealand spinach, Okra, Peanut, Pumpkin, Radish, Rockmelon, Rosella, Spring Onion, Squash, Sunflower, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.*

Black Sapote (Black Pudding) Cake From Roman

1.5 cups plain flour (I mixed 1 cup wholemeal flour and 0.5 cup soy flour)
 1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
 1 cup sugar
 4 tablespoons cocoa powder
 1 cup water
 1/3 cup olive oil
 2 tablespoons white vinegar
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 3 black sapote (mash with fork)
 1/2 cup macadamia nuts

Mix all ingredients together, place it on baking tray lined with baking paper, bake it for 35 mins on 180 C.

HERBS

SEPTEMBER

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

Perennials & Bi-Annuals: 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.

OCTOBER

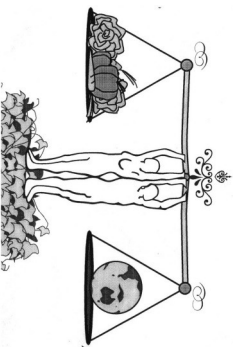
Annual: Basil, Borage, Calendula, Dill, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, Giant Red Mustard, Mustard Lettuce, Nasturtium, Rocket.

Perennials & Bi-Annuals: 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.



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 October 2014