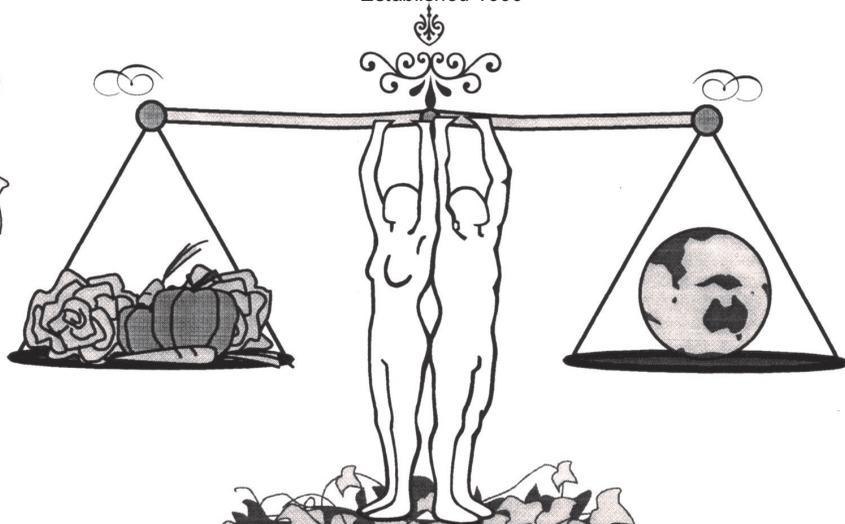


GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1999



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 August 2013 Issue 8
GARDENING IN SPRING

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|---|
| Pg2 | <i>Club Information</i> | 10-11 | <i>Q&A (June mtg), Gordon & Dorothy Singh's Patch, Val Sier's Jams</i> |
| 3 | <i>Notice Board, What's On</i> | 12-13 | <i>Problems with Acidic Soil, Paw paws and Pineapples, Aquaponics</i> |
| 4-5 | <i>President's Message, Q&A</i> | 14-15 | <i>Gardening on the Gold Coast & Thereabouts, Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Herbs,</i> |
| 6-7 | <i>Guest Speaker - Gavin Bullock's Soil Biology</i> | | |
| 8-9 | <i>Getting To Know - Cows & Chooks and Sheep & Bees</i> | | |

OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19 September

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

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) 3151 2025
Membership Sec	Diane Kelly
Membership Asst	Jill Barber
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	tba
Guest Speaker Liaison	Jill Barber (07) 5534 4753 jillbarber611@gmail.com
Librarians	Greg Wiltshire (07) 5578 8755 Judy Reiser (07) 5532 7198 Ann-Maree Andrew
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 and the Advertising position has yet to be decided.	

Newsletter:

Contributions and ideas welcome.

Email Angela at w.a.anderson@bigpond.com

Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart, Gordon & Dorothy Singh, Ross Davis, Val Sier, Neil Ross

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: (315) Julie Abraham, (336) Deborah Anker, (319) Yukiyo Copley, (339) Guy Lewington, (58) Barbara Talty, (111) Margaret Reichelt, (297) Rebeca Bowen, (340) Moyra & Julien De Jager, (341) Alf & Marina Orpen, (147) Karen Auchere, (301) Robert Turner, (303) Robert Faulkner, (151) Lise Racine, (184) Ross & Helena Kelso, (190) Peter Seymour-Smith, (191) Jan Wright, (253) Chris & Dorothy Winton, (326) Neil McLaughlin, (387) Peter & Jan Fleming, (331) Kathy Steenbeek

August: (72) Shelley Pryor, (87) Warren & Beverly Carlson, (224) Gene Rosser, (241) Gordon & Dorothy Singh, (258) Wolfgang Dempsey, (260) Peter & Leanne Dickfos, (290) Jill Barber, (293) Geoffrey Williams, (306) Lyn Mansfield, (307) Jan Guest

September: (108) Henry Blonner, (294) Neil Ross, (335) Denise Goodwin, (342) Frank Rebesco, (343) Beth Orme

Welcome To Our New Members: Celia Forrest, David Freeman, and Anna Yeomans

GCOG - Guest Speaker

September: tba

October: Lise Racine on "Therapeutic Tea and Decoction - Preparation & Use"

What's On

Gold Coast Permaculture

www.goldcoastpermaculture.org.au

There is a whole, free **Fair Food Week** in August on **Saturday, August 24th**, at GC Permaculture, 270 Ferry Road, Southport.

Life Changing Events

www.lifechangingevents.net.au

LOHAS Precinct Market 1st Birthday

14-16 September

with COSTA - Gardening Australia's Host

14th Burleigh Markets with Costa

15th Build a COB PIZZA OVEN with Costa

16th Healthy Film Night with Costa

Ingleside School Garden Workshop:

A workshop showing how to create a "No-Dig Garden" will be held at the Ingleside State School on **Saturday 17th of August**. Club member Cathy Hodge will be running the session, and Greg Plevy from Wormtec will be doing a presentation on microbes & soil etc. All are welcome to attend.

As part of the workshop, attendees will actually be creating four garden beds for the school's use, and this will hopefully become part of an educational & community-building program in the Tallebudgera Valley.

"Real Food Festival" – September 7th & 8th

www.realfoodfestival.com.au

A program of inspiring talks has been lined up for this year's Real Food Festival at Maleny. Peak oil and GM food will be among the topics at the Festival's Food for Thought venue.

Other highlights at this celebration of Sunshine Coast food will include more than 120 stalls, cooking demonstrations, kids' activities and workshops. Adults \$15.00; kids <16 free.

Bio Farming Course with Dave Forrest

contact Angie (Newsletter Ed) for details.

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Here on the Gold Coast and its surrounds, August is considered the beginning of the Spring season. You will, like me, have noticed in the last couple of weeks the grass turning a richer green colour and fruit trees blossoming and putting on new leaf. The days are getting longer and warmer and there is a real change to be felt in the air. We will no doubt get a "spat of cold days" within the next month or so but nothing to stop the change of season gardening frenzy that sees in Spring.

Citrus trees are beginning to flower even though you may not have harvested all of their fruit yet. Prune away dead branches and any shoots coming from below the graft. Check that branches are not crossing each other and rubbing away the bark where they meet, if so; prune one branch out to prevent the bark being rubbed away as this will cause the branches to die. In the coming months check for citrus gall, any lumps should be pruned and destroyed by putting in a plastic bag and placing in the garbage bin. Trees will benefit from a light application of fertilizer now, then again at the start of summer.

Asparagus plants need some attention, cut back all the dead foliage and pull up any weeds that have come up over winter. Add some compost or fertilizer and some rock minerals to the beds and keep the water up to them. Pick the spears that are thicker than a pencil and leave the thinner ones to grow on and feed the plant for an ever better crop next year.

The Seed Table is now stocked with lovely things to plant in the coming warmer season. Every year we try a few new varieties of vegetables, herbs or flowers just to keep it interesting.

Soy Bean Edamame is something we haven't stocked before; however, I think it will be very popular. Edamame is described as a large-seeded type of soybean that is eaten as a green vegetable. It is delicious and nutritious

and prepared by boiling or steaming the pod for 5-10 minutes, then cooling under running water. Squeeze the seeds from the fibrous pods and enjoy plain or with a soy or tamari sauce.

Whilst we are on the bean theme, Borlotti bean is another new addition this month, Red Rooster is the variety, a name I happen to like very much. It is described as a bush bean, so no trellis required, and has 13 cm long mottled red pods with dark maroon and white seeds when fresh turning maroon and tan when dried. Beans are mainly grown for use as a dried bean, but the fresh podded beans are delicious.

In the flower category we have Queen Anne's Lace, this plant is very handy indeed and earns its' keep in any garden. It is a hardy, vigorous tall annual with clusters of greenish-white lacy flowers which make a lovely display, either in the garden or as a cut flower. The leaves are edible and taste similar to mild cress. At the business end, it is grown for its ability to attract beneficial insects into the garden or orchard; insects include lacewings, assassin bugs and predatory wasps.

Thank you to all the members who responded to the "help needed" call out for packing the batch of new seeds. I pack seeds nearly every month but the Spring and Autumn collection does require a lot of time. So once again, tar very much.

Happy gardening, Maria.

Worth the wait ... I think so!



Pineapples from Ross Davis

Q & A
By Jill Barber

Maria was in fine form as usual to field our questions at this meeting, before the guest speaker's presentation.

Marie had literature and free tapes on SAFE (Sustainable Agricultural Food Enterprises), and spoke at some length about their products, services and laboratories in West Burleigh.

Q. A plant was identified as a Mallabar Chestnut.

A. According to Ian, it is not a true chestnut, and has a "seriously succulent root system" – it's unkillable. It has peanut-like fruit, and a dwarf variety can be grown in a *strong* pot.

Q. Heather asked about a weed

It was a false chickweed – we can't afford to leave these in a tropical garden, and they can be composted or eaten before they flower.

Q. Suzanne asked about another weed.

A. It's a caustic creeper, which should be twisted and pulled out by its taproot.

A. Another was like a wild carrot.

Angie talked about a hook hoe for weeding, as it cuts off the weed just below the surface.

Q. Pauline showed a sample of pigeon pea being ring barked.

A. It's a nitrogen fixer, and the insect's job is to activate the release of the nitrogen by eating around it.

Q. A large caterpillar on a citrus twig was passed around.

A. From citrus butterfly – considered a pest, but can ignore it if not doing too much damage.

Q. Eileen asked about a tough plant.

A. It's called Devil's Apples, which gets orange-red, very toxic fruit and is spiky, prickly and furry. It's from the same family as the tomato, and its taproot busts the ground, allowing aeration, but you don't want to keep it as it's invasive and an unpleasant weed.

Q. Jill asked about an attractive orangey, beehive-like flower.

A. As suspected, it's a lovely ornamental ginger.

Q. Ron has a 3-year-old Tahitian lime tree which has split.

This is either from too much or irregular water, such as the weather it's been exposed to over the last several months on the Gold Coast. Heavy fruit will accentuate the split. It could also be from overdosing of minerals, such as boron toxicity from grey washing water. To heal it, the two green parts must meet, with no air gaps between. The best time for healing would be spring or early autumn, when the sap is flowing.

Q. Paul and Maria have three giant camphor laurels that have been cut down, and want to know of any woodworkers who might like to come and take them away.

A. Several suggestions were made.



Slow Food® Gold Coast

An International non profit Organisation

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

Australia now has 13 of 1203 worldwide threatened traditional products listed, the latest being the Finger Lime.

Check out how you can nominate a product.

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

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

**Gavin Bullock's
Soil Biology Presentation
Jill Barber**

“Oh no, not pH again”, was what someone told me at supper that they thought, when they heard the topic of this night's guest speaker. How surprised they were to discover that Gavin actually made this somewhat dry topic exciting!

His enthusiasm for and commitment to passing on knowledge of soil structure and types was quite catching. Prior to his presentation, drawing on the wealth of his experience, Gavin was able to participate in the Question and Answer segment of the evening, providing answers to several of members' queries. He has his own horticultural consultancy business and regularly holds gardening workshops and presentations. The wealth of knowledge he gave us that night took concentration to keep up with! Nevertheless, if we missed a bit, his handouts clearly gave us the key information about soil components, forms of soil water, soil colours, mulches, pH and vital soil elements.

Gavin's career began during his 7-year hitchhiking trip around the country, during which he was inspired to find out how to make the Nul-labor into a rainforest. Thus began his 22-year horticultural career, beginning with permaculture. Along the way, plant wisdom he's gleaned includes:

- To always be **ready**, and to be flexible
- To **observe** – biology shows you, for example, why plants are unhealthy – are they overcrowded? There used to be drought a lot, but now there's humidity to contend with, creating root rot and bacterial problems, when the soil is wet and warm.
- Agricultural practices have to be **sustainable**, giving the plants strength.
- There's always more to **learn**.
- **Organic matter** is essential in the soil, which gives motivation for microbes, such as worms and other beneficial organisms, and allows airflow and the beneficial effects of sunshine through photosynthesis.

Five Components of Soil:

- Air – otherwise, plants rot.
- Water – how it's stored and held in the soil is what matters: if you squeeze a handful of soil into a ball, bounce it in your hand, and it doesn't break, plants won't grow well in it. It is too wet and anaerobic.
- Organic matter-this is what makes soil.
- Minerals – these are based on strength, and help photosynthesis. They need to defy gravity in reaching throughout the plant.
- Microbes – soil biology, such as worms and flagellates which help break down organic matter.

Different forms of Soil Water: gravitational water, hygroscopic water (humidity), and capillary water, which is that taken up by the plant. In order to water effectively, a three-phase watering system is required, whereby a small amount each time is allowed to soak through, resulting in less compaction and less erosion. Eg, 15 minutes water = 3 x 5 minutes. This allows the water to soak in.

Soil Colour is very useful in determining the soil composition, mostly comes from its colloids (very fine particles suspended in solution), and is darkened by humus.

Reds, oranges, yellows and browns – iron oxides/hydroxides

Rust-coloured mottling – shows waterlogging for part of the year only

Uniform brown and reddish-brown extending into the subsoil - excellent aeration

Yellow soils and subsoils – generally formed under wetter conditions than red soils

Green-blue, dark grey, olive green and black – iron hydroxycarbonates, formed under waterlogged conditions - poor aeration.

Grey and whitish – lack of organic matter and long periods of leaching

Pale clay minerals – caused by small amounts of atoms: green – magnesium & iron; purples, reds and pinks – manganese; blue – chromium.

Pale potting mixes – an absence of humus due to rawness of bark or sawdust, not enough iron or pH well below 5.

When sufficient humus is present, through

composting, the result is a sweet-smelling, organic soil. You shouldn't be able to squeeze lots of water from the compost or it will be waterlogged and putrid.

Not all soils are useful for the immediate growth of crops, etc. To check the composition of a soil, dig a plug one shovel deep, and the levels of organic matter will be evident. The greatest problem with the soil will be suffocation or fermentation. To remedy this, use two or three raised sleepers for good drainage.

If planting into pots or beds where organic matter is not composted down, the soil grabs the nitrogen for the breakdown process, and the soil becomes pale. This is known as nitrogen drawdown. The whole plant becomes pale in colour also.

The plant's job is the take light and turn it into sugars to feed itself.

pH: The amount of positively charged hydrogen ions in soil, with 0-7 being acidic, 7-14 being alkaline and optimum being 5.8 - 6.8. Dolomite raises it and sulphur powder lowers it. Tomatoes hate too much manure, which causes nitrogen toxicity. Gypsum doesn't change the pH, it just breaks up clay and gives it a breather. Prepare it by putting it in a 20 litre drum with water, spinning it around then applying it. For best application, apply to the soil and rinse off plant leaves.

Mulches are like a doona, holding in the warmth over winter, and giving food and motivation for microbes to stay in the garden.

If **manure** is heaped on, there is too much heat, and hair roots stay way. **Nitrogen** gives heat and instantly changes nitrates to nitrites, giving a chocolate colour. Too much of it, however, causes over-rapid leaf growth, and chewing insects eat holes in the leaves. If the pH is dropped a little, plants like roses are happier. pH 6.4 is touted as an optimum level for a very broad majority of plant species.

Fertilise around the end of August/early September to allow average 4 – 6 weeks for reflection and growth of spring crops. This allows plants to harden off new growth,

flower and fruit better into late October and through summer. This will incur less insect damage and deficiency symptoms, leading to healthier plants and potential increased yields.

All **trace elements** are important, for example, Nitrogen is needed for leaf growth, Phosphorous for the roots and stems, Potassium for the fruit and flowers, and with a balanced pH of 7, all of them will be available: a balance is needed for a good take up of minerals and a good penetration of the roots. In Australia, the average pH is 4: the soil is overall very acidic, but in this area, we are very fortunate, with good rainfall, and so on.

So ended a most educational evening, which had renewed our belief in the value of what we are all striving for – growing healthy, vital, organic vegetables – and gave us both more insight into the reasons for what we do and more confidence in our ability to do so. Armed with all of these pointers on how to achieve the desired results, we felt most grateful to Gavin for giving us his time and inspiring us to apply his information to our gardens.

Three Figs Café & Greenbird Gallery

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

Open Wed-Fri 8am-2pm, Sat-Sun 8am-4pm

The Ecovillage

639 Currumbin Creek Rd Currumbin Valley

For bookings phone Mirella 0419 170 654

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

Don't miss it!"

GC Visitors Guide 2013

Cows & Chooks and Sheep & Bees From Diane Kelly

For many of us, our “Organic Growing” experience involves a vegetable patch, some flower beds, a couple of fruit trees, and maybe a few chooks to keep us supplied with fresh eggs. But Angie Anderson has taken the idea a bit further, and on seven and a half acres in the Currumbin Valley, she is learning about cows, poultry, sheep, bees and much more.

Angie and her husband Wayne, along with their two children, moved to their current home four years ago. A Murwillumbah girl, Angie always intended to settle in this area, but the family has also lived in Vancouver in Canada, and they spent six months living in Beijing. Angie speaks of both places with enthusiasm – Vancouver for its beauty and snow fields, and Beijing for its fascinating culture, people and city living. The family enjoyed the food of China – in fact this was where Angie had her first experience of yellow zucchinis – something she’d not come across before. As well as Canada and China, Wayne’s work in the mining industry has taken him to such diverse places as New Guinea, Mongolia, Namibia, Kenya and Columbia.

Angie’s vegetable garden is a series of terraced beds that catch the northern sun, although the large pine trees to the west do reduce the daylight hours for the vegetables. But this does not stop the production of snow peas, chillis, pineapples, broccoli, kale, carrots, celery, galangal, rhubarb, strawberries, tumeric, rocket and beetroot. There are also trees – a paw paw; a banana; a bay leaf tree; lychees, lemons and limes. Angie is experimenting with using lengths of recycled astroturf as a deterrent for weeds on garden paths; bamboo stakes hold up the snow peas; and the wire garden fence is used for the passion-fruit vine. There is a long bed of potato plants that are a healthy green, and the asparagus is growing well.

Much of the property is sloping but drainage does not appear to be a major problem.

When they first moved to the block, several swales were cut into the back paddock with the goal in mind of planting fruit trees. At the moment, however, the cattle are in that paddock – as with all our properties, Angie’s is a “work in progress”.

The land drops away from the house area to the cow paddock, which is where Lizzie and Ellie-May live. These girls are “Brangus”, which is a cross between an Angus and a Brahman – to be eligible for registration, an animal has to be 5/8 Angus and 3/8 Brahman. Angus cattle provide good quality meat and milk production, and the Brahmans are known for being disease resistant, hardy, and good mothers. These two girls have shiny black coats, as does Opal, who is Lizzie’s daughter and who has recently been “moved” into a paddock of her own on the other side of the farm. (Opal escaped the electric fence so it was the perfect time to wean her.)

Next to the cow paddock was a large, sunny area of lawn which we agreed would make a perfect location for a new vegie garden – but which has been commandeered as a footy field. Soaring above that area we noticed an eagle – apparently a pair of eagles came to the Valley about twenty years ago, and an eaglet was hatched about three years after that.



Opal.

The next stop was the poultry yard, where there was the usual blend of black, white and brown girls. There was also a fine looking Rhode Island Red rooster and several very delicately-coloured hens – silver grey, with darker feathers around their necks. These are Platinum Sussex, and I am sure they

were introduced to the flock for their good looks! The yard is well fenced against predators, although apparently carpet snakes have not been a problem. A second fenced area has been built for more grassed areas for the girls to scratch about in, and this includes some fruit trees for good day-time shade.



The Platinum Sussex hens and Rhode Island Red rooster.

We walked down the driveway to the entrance to Angie and Wayne's property, which was also the start of another block of land that they have recently bought, and also where the sheep live. It was when Angie mentioned that they had recently had some lambs born on their farm that I first thought about asking if I could visit. Since then a few more lambs have arrived, and so there is now a little flock in the area next door. The sheep are "dorpers", a South African breed who are known for being good meat and for lambing twins. But they are probably better known for being "self-shearing". The sheep have a light coat of wool that sheds automatically in summer and spring, which obviously reduces maintenance of the animal. They also do not need crutching, and do not suffer from fly-strike. Their skins are apparently unusually thick, which provides protection from a wide range of climatic conditions.

This group of dorpers were very pretty, with most of them having black heads. The lambs currently have dog tick collars on them to protect them from ticks, as Angie has already lost one lamb from tick bite, and another little male became very ill but survived.



The dorper flock

And finally onto Angie's current favourites – the bees. A new addition to the farm, the hive is located behind the chook pen and shed, and was a flurry of bee activity. The hive was installed just prior to winter, and Angie was able to get one harvest of honey before the colder weather made the bees need to be dormant. Result: 3 litres of home-grown honey!



It was an enjoyable few hours spent wandering around Angie's farm – and it was good to see her enthusiasm for what she is achieving, and her determination to learn as much as she can about the projects she is undertaking. Planting of an orchard, and thinking about vegetable production on a larger scale are the next ideas on the agenda, as well as the renovation of an old house. Quite impressive !!

Q & A - June 20

By Karen Hart

Maria opened the meeting, and suggested some **seeds** that would be suitable for planting now:

- Oregon sugar' **snow peas** do not need a trellis, although a short twig or some other support would assist. There are also other varieties in our stocks which do climb.
- Onions** take 5/6 months but are easy to grow. A good variety we have is 'red long tropea'.

Just a reminder when **storing** seed not to keep it in sheds/garages/outhouses, etc, as temperature fluctuation affects viability. It's best to store it in the house, but beware of cupboards made of MDF because of off-gassing of formaldehyde.

Maria mentioned a new ad in this month's newsletter regarding a '**Slow Food**' outing to a sheep farm towards Beaudesert to view artisan cheese-making (also for purchase there will be nine different cheeses). An email went out from Diane during the week regarding this.

Justin mentioned that the Gold Coast Permaculture, at 270 Ferry Rd, Southport, has over 60 tons of excellent **compost for sale**, at \$8 a big bag.

Judy stated that now is a good time to rid the lawn of **bindi's** before they develop prickles – never let a weed set seed. They are bright green flat rosettes with carrot-like leaves. Virginia brought in a plant to be identified which just appeared in her garden – it was determined that it is a weed, although Justin said that leafhoppers love it so if left it could prevent them attacking other plants in the garden.

Jill brought in some **aloe vera barbadensis** which is an excellent plant to have for your 'medicine chest'. It is great for burns, sunburn, etc. – very healing. You need to remove the outer layer, then wash off any yellow sap as it is an irritant, leaving only the gel flesh which

can be rubbed onto the skin for almost instant relief. It can also be stored in the fridge, simply place the gel in water in the fridge and use as needed. A little of the liquid can be drunk daily – a great emulsifier. Grows very happily in pots or soil, and readily propagates, producing 'pups' – side shoots – miniature new plants.

Pauline brought in some **pigeon peas** that have been attacked by a small brown caterpillar. It is inclined to get a borer which if citrus is nearby can affect them, so it's wise to remove the plants. They are a valuable plant for fixing nitrogen, but do not keep long term. Good for enriching vacant ground before planting out.

Someone had a leaf of the **cava plant** as hedging, but it can take up to ten years for hedging.

Gordon said that his **potatoes** are springing out of the ground – **Dutch Cream and Pontiacs** (from Ross). Maria says that we can still plant now and for the next couple of months.

He also has a **choko vine** and now towards the end of the season is finding that they are growing bigger than ever – one weighing 1lb, 12 oz, many on the vine. 'Apple' crumble can be made from white chokos (peel and pre-cook fruit). Also, if picked when small and young and steamed, whole are nice and sweet. Maria said that her father used to let them get very big then just cook the seed only and discard the outside! Heather went to Tropical Fruit World to source a **multi-grafted fruit tree**, but was advised to just purchase 3 separate trees and plant in the one hole.

The session finished with Maria reminding us that to grow vegetables successfully in winter, requires a minimum of six hours sunlight to grow well. It may mean that you site veggie beds in different areas of the garden, depending on the season; that is, a winter area may get too much hot sun in summer.

Gordon & Dorothy's Patch



Have a look at the Choko's Gordon mentioned at the June meeting ... that's a lot of apple pie! The biggest choko was 11lb 12oz.



The carpet snake up in the banana stool may be a reminder to the unwary or the complacent.

...carrots, silverbeet, spring onions and potatoes in the background.



Success at the Mudgeeraba Show



Val Sier uses only organic ingredients in her prize winning jams. The judges could taste the difference and Val's jams stole the show. Val was first in the Rosella Category and 1, 2 & 3 in the Open Category.

1st - Finger Lime

2nd - Kemembilla (Ceylon Gooseberry)

3rd - Mangosteen, Passionfruit & Ginger

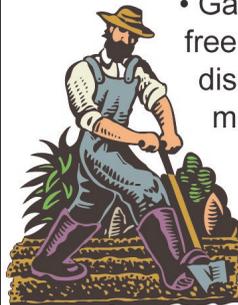
Try some at the "Members Market Corner"

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

Problems Created by Acidic Soil From Diane Kelly

With spring & summer rains on their way, I thought this advice might come in handy. (Don't forget to pH test your soil before adding lime.)

Acidic soil is often found where annual rainfall and humidity are high. Many coastal areas have acidic soil, and areas that once held bogs are often highly acidic. Rainfall leaches away minerals (such as calcium) that help neutralise soil pH. In some humid regions, pH of soil can be as low as 5.0, inhibiting the plant's ability to absorb and metabolise some nutrients, leading to some of the following:

- abnormally dark, blue-green leaves; reddish leaves and stems; slower than normal growth; few flowers and fruit – all signal a **phosphorous deficiency**. (Most Aust soils contain only small amounts of phosphorus.)
- pale green leaves over the entire plant; new leaves smaller than normal with slow growth – both signal a **nitrogen deficiency**.
- browning leaves; fruit that begin to rot at the end opposite the stem (blossom end rot) – both common signs of **calcium deficiency**. (Often occurs in sandy, acidic soils.)
- older leaves of plants covered with yellow blotches; poor tasting vegetables and fruit – **magnesium deficiency** cause—acidic soil.
- older leaves turn yellow; scorched leaf tips; thinner-than-normal stems – **potassium deficiency** again caused by acidic soil.

Neutralising overly acidic soil is a simple way to fix soil nutrient deficiencies. All you need is limestone (garden lime). Simply sprinkle it on over the surface of the soil in the amounts recommended on the packet. Rake the powder lightly into the soil. Wood ash (from a fireplace) is also fast-acting. However, sprinkle over the ground sparingly, avoiding contact with plant as ashes are caustic and can damage plant tissue. Crushed eggshells and pulverised oyster shells are good, slow-release and neutralising for acidic soils.

Adding the universal curative organic material to your soil each season will also gradually neutralise the pH and will add easily absorbed nutrients to help correct the imbalance.

Gardening With Ross Pineapples & Paw Paws

Here are two plants we can grow in the local climate. Both tend to be frost tender so they are better if you grow them close to the house or a sheltered warm corner. If you have a wall that faces north that is the ideal place to plant Pineapple's and or Paw- Paw.

Paw-Paw: We have several varieties to grow here. There is the standard yellow one; it grows well if you have a local acclimatised genes seed plant. This plant is acclimatised to our weather and will generally grow good Paw-Paw.

The Red Bisexual Paw-Paw: This plant you need to buy from a nursery. Being Bisexual it does not need male plant to makes sure the flowers are fertilized. This plant is a very good producer of Paw-paw with a red flesh and very sweet when fully ripe.

Pineapple's: Find a protected corner that's warm and out of the frost line. You need free draining soil for both Pineapples and paw-paw.

- Take the top off the pineapple you have just brought. Peel four or five of the outside leaves from the TOP. Let the cut stork that has come off the top of the plant dry, takes about 12 hours.
- Plant the bottom inch of the top of the green leaf section, into the selected planting area.
- Water in and fertilize with a nitrogenous fertilizer when the plant is established.

Both plants will take about 18 months to produce fruit. **Happy Gardening, Ross.**



Aquaponics From Neil Ross

Aquaponics is coming to the Gold Coast ... Country Paradise Parklands, at the Nerang community gardens.

An Aquaponics learning unit is to be developed over the coming months. **Those wishing more information should make themselves known to Neil Ross.**

I have included some of the great info that Neil forwarded from a powerpoint presentation by **Geoff Wilson, Director and editor of Aquaponics Network Australia.**

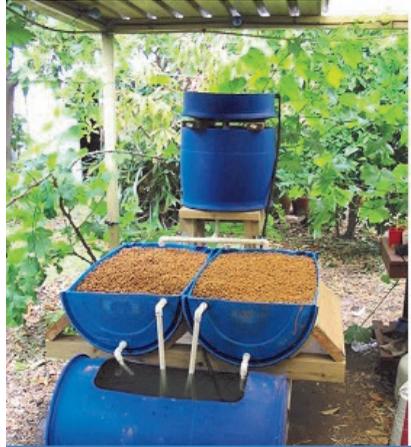
Aquaponics is the "perfect synergy". Fish for consumption produce ammonia and other waste, which food plants use to clean the water. It is as organic as the sole input – fish feed. Between fish and plants is a micro-organism filter to break down the fish wastes into plant feed.



Murray Hallum's simple aquaponics units using fibreglass tanks made in Brisbane.

Murray has been a remarkable pioneer of home-based and small commercial units that are well-meeting a need for sub-tropical equipment. A beginner can buy in at around \$1,000 and obtain good food value from fish and vegetables.

Aquaponics can be very simple and primitive, using old materials. The simplest and cheapest home aquaponics or teaching unit aquaponics is achieved using cut-down barrels used for food ingredient transport (eg phosphates for Coca Cola drinks).



High schools and universities in North America better teach science and maths by using organic aquaponics units. Such teaching units can be well-enhanced by providing "integrations" with non-carbon power, recycling of clean, urban organic matter via fish feeds, plus use of LED-lit technology to extend daylight hours.



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

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 - BOGI From Diane Kelly

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.

Source: Brisbane Organic Growers Handbook

It's Time To Get Growing



VEGETABLES

AUGUST: Amaranth, Artichoke, Asian greens, Bush beans, Ceylon spinach, Climbing beans, Capsicum, Carrot, Celeriac, Celery, Sweet corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Gourd, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Luffa, Marrow, Okra, Parsnip, Peanut, Potato, Pumpkin, Radish, Rhubarb, Rockmelon, Shallot, Spring onion, Silverbeet, Squash, Strawberry, Sunflower, Sweet potato, Tomato, Watermelon, Zucchini.

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.

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

HERBS

AUGUST

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

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

SEPTEMBER

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

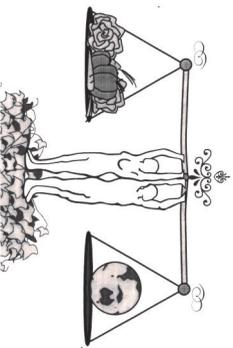
Perennials & Bi-Annuals: Catnip, Ceylon Spinach, Chicory, Chilli, Chives, Comfrey, Perennial Coriander, Echinacea, Fennel, Hyssop, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Licorice, Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mushroom Plant, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Stevia, French Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress,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

Prostate Awareness Twin Towns & Tweed Coast

Just a click away:
www.prostateawarenessaustralia.com
or contact Ross Davis for more info:
rossco12@bigpond.com

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 19 September 2013