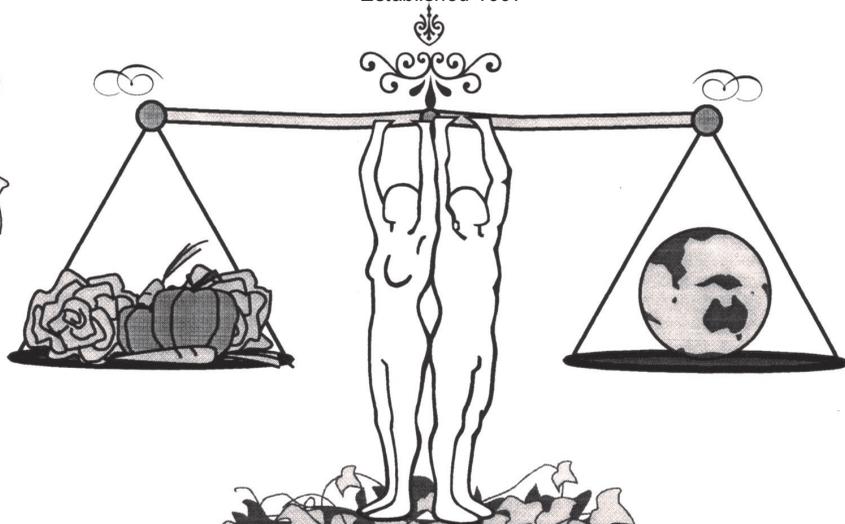


# GOLD COAST ORGANIC GROWERS Inc.

Established 1997



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 June 2014 Issue 5  
GARDENING IN WINTER

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**OUR NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17 July**

## Notice Board

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

### Meetings Held:

#### 3rd Thursday of the Month

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

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

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

*(No meeting in December)*

### Annual Membership Fees:

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

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

**Name: Gold Coast Organic Growers**

**Bank: Suncorp**

**BSB: 484-799**

**Account: 0014-21651**

### Seed Bank:

Packets are \$2.00 each.

### Members' Market Corner:

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

### Raffle Table:

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

### Library:

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

### Advertising: (Note 11 issues/year)

**1/4 page:** \$10 an issue, or \$100 per year

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

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

## 2014 Committee

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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](mailto:w.a.anderson@bigpond.com) or text a photo - 0439 488 166.

### Thanks to Contributors:

Diane Kelly, Jill Barber, Maria Roberson, Karen Hart.

### Website:

[www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/](http://www.goldcoastorganicgrowers.org.au/)

## Notice Board

### Membership Renewals

**NEW:** You can now pay your membership fee directly into the GCOG bank account.

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

### Remember to put your Name and Membership Number in the comment field.

Note the number in brackets after your name is your membership number - you will need to quote this number in the comment field, if you pay via online banking.

### Membership renewals

**Overdue:** Ross & Jenny Davis (199), David Wyatt & Helen Wainwright (284), Anissa Loades (228), Winsome Gunning (314), Terri Groth (125), Judy McCracken (274), Gaynor Allen (317), Anne-Maree Andrew (337), Greg Wiltshire (320), Louise Newell (321), Angela Anderson (323), Judy Reiser (338), Kerstein Trueman (346), Chris Larkin (141), Karen Auchere (147), Brian & Lyn Dick (298), Robert Faulkner (303)

### June:

Lise Racine (151), Jan Wright (191), Graham Boyle & Mea Lee Khoo (211), Dorothy Winton (253), Ron Campbell (255), Eileen Turner (328), Trevor & Barbara Hewins (348), Val Sier (349)

### July:

Ian & Margaret Lee (118), Peter & Jan Fleming (287), Patricia McGrath (305), Ann Brown (329), Roger Peterson (330), Scott McCormack (334), David Freeman (352), Anna Yeomans (353)

### Welcome to our new member:

Keith Gascoine

## Guest Speakers From Jill Barber

Hello, all GCOG members,

I'm looking for ideas of people to contact for guest speakers for our club, and your suggestions would be not only welcome, but essential if you want to have any more guest speakers - my well has run dry.

In anticipation of hearing from you, Jill

## What's On

### Qld Garden Expo

[www.qldgardenexpo.com.au](http://www.qldgardenexpo.com.au)  
Sunshine coast 11/12/13 July  
Entry fee \$18

### August

Tamborine Mountain Open Gardens



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## President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Even though we are in the thick of winter there is still plenty to do in the garden. Don't take any notice of advice that recommends leaving garden beds fallow at this time of the year. When you live in a sub-tropical region there is no reason for bare or idyll soil. If normal cropping activities aren't achievable then a green manure crop will be beneficial to soil life. If this is still out of the question then even a neglected bed of weeds is more desirable than bare soil.

There are still so many vegetables and herbs that can be planted now and will continue to thrive over the next few months. I'm planting-Lettuce, Kale, Carrots, Beetroot, Snow Peas, Broccoli, Potatoes, Spring Onions, Coriander, Silverbeet and Asian Greens, there are plenty more choices listed in the back of this Newsletter.

If you have ever thought that growing carrots is difficult, now might be the time for a re-think. I reckon if you follow a few simple steps growing carrots will be a breeze and a skill well worth mastering. Bear in mind that they do take a while, usually around 16 weeks till mature; however you can leave them in the soil for many more weeks as you don't have to harvest them all at once. Most gardening books will recommend that carrots need sandy soil to grow well; this is not my experience at all. My soil is heavy and clay like; I do however apply gypsum to improve the soil structure which is necessary not only for carrots but just about any plant.

Carrots do not transplant well and need to be grown from seed; soil should be kept moist till germination at around 20 days. This may seem like a lot of effort, I keep a watering can full and ready to go, in dry weather water in the morning as well as the afternoon. Some gardeners recommend placing wet hessian or a flat board over the sown seeds to keep soil

moist, I have never done this so I cannot say how well it works; you will need to remove the item before seeds germinate fully.

One 3 metre row should yield around 3 to 4 kilos depending on the type of carrot grown. Carrots do not require nitrogen rich soil and are best planted after a heavy feeder crop. Do not use manure or dig compost in, however compost can be used as surface mulch about 1cm thick after seedlings are up.

To plant seeds make shallow trenches 1cm deep, 15 to 20cm apart and sow seed very thinly, cover seed with no more than 1cm of soil and gently firm soil down with your flat hand to remove any air pockets. Water in well but carefully so as not to dislodge seeds.

Wait until seedlings are big enough to handle and then thin out, too many plants in the one hole will cause carrots to twist and be small and spindly. Keep rows weed free, this is where light mulches really help. Keep soils moist in dry times as a downpour on dry soils may cause root splitting.

Some varieties that I have had excellent results with are- Chantenay Red Cored which is an "intermediate" or medium sized variety with thick, stump ended roots a deep orange flesh and sweet tasting. Early Nantes is a Short Rooted variety; it has a good sweet flavour and matures earlier. It is a smaller, thinner carrot than Chantenay and deserves a place in any ones garden. Another favourite of mine is Western Red; this is a giant, one carrot is enough to feed a family. This seed has become difficult to get over the last few years and I am always on the lookout for it, we do manage to stock it on the SEED TABLE from time to time.

So there you have it, there seems to be quite a bit to say about carrots and quite a lot written about them that is misleading. My advice is to give them a go, not just as a one off but as part of your regular planting regime.

Happy gardening,  
Maria.

**Q & A - May 2014**  
**By Karen Hart**

Q. Judy's friend has **corn** growing from the top of the plant rather than cobs normally growing from the side.

A. An anomaly – possibly due to the weather-too dry, then rain.

Q. Keith, who has recently moved to Tallebudgera from interstate, asked for identification of a plant.

A. It is an **ornamental – alternanthera dentata** – which can be used as a low hedge. It can be invasive but easily removed.

Q. Another plant was presented for identification.

A. It is a **coffee bush**. An attractive shrub, but can become a weed in the right conditions, so needs to be kept out of the bush, and all berries need to be picked to avoid it being spread by birds. Maria has grown some for 14 years, but one needs to be very dedicated to get coffee beans. Squeeze two beans out of the seed. They then need roasting, which can be done in a popcorn maker, but it is very time consuming for the amount of coffee produced.

Q. Jill grew **radishes** but they have long necks rather than the normal round shape.

A. The soil could be too rich – radishes will grow in concrete! Another suggestion was that they were not planted deeply enough. Thin and space plants. Splitting is caused by too much dry weather followed by rain or lots of watering.

Q. Karen brought in some 'fruit' for identification. It hangs in 'cherry like' bunches and of a similar size.

A. It could not be identified. Karen was advised to go to Martin Jackson at Ecovillage, who may have planted the same thing, and let the club know.

Q. A **citrus** has been dropping leaves, struggling for some time.

A. They need a couple of years for the roots to establish. Maria planted an orchard ten years ago and three dry seasons created

'bonsai' trees; they are only now catching up.

Q. Another **citrus** question: The person has just moved to a new block and is thinking of putting in lots of fruit trees.

A. Maria would not plant them unless there is a big dam or they have good drip lines as dry weather is forecast for the next year or two. It may be worth waiting.

Q. **Panama gold passionfruit**. Last year they had a brilliant crop so they planted another. It has produced lots of blossoms, but no fruit, and it was suggested that there are too many runners.

A. Maria disagreed. The second tree was planted in the same spot, so that is more likely the reason. It could be a boron deficiency: the previous plant withdrew all trace elements. Horse manure and compost has already been added, but they could add some lime, just on top, not dug in – maybe a little boron and liquid seaweed.

*To be continued ... pg 11*

## Three Figs Café & Greenbird Gallery

- Locally made delicious food
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Open Wed-Fri 8am-2pm, Sat-Sun 8am-4pm

### The Ecovillage

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*"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

**Dan Wilmann**  
**Rocky Point Mulching**  
 By Jill Barber

Recently, I finally managed to nail Dan Wilmann, the Group Operations and Sales Manager for Rocky Point Mulching and Green Fingers Potting Mix, and have him come and talk to the GCOG meeting about their products! Busy man, he also has a young family (Dan enjoys growing veggies at home with his wife and two boys), so it's not surprising that, though willing, he was often hard to get hold of to arrange our evening with him. It was worth it, however, as Dan proved to be not only very knowledgeable but very approachable, so he was easy to listen to and chat to afterwards.

Having grown up in a farming family, particularly working on sugar cane farms, then studying science at Uni and subsequently becoming a secondary school teacher, Dan is well equipped for his job! He now uses all these experiences in his two companies. He is particularly interested in soil science, which shows in the contents of such products as Active 8 and the Premium Potting Mix, with its seventeen ingredients. Green Fingers Potting Mix comes well recommended, having won a National Award for....for the Growing Media Supplier of the Year, three years running!

Sugar cane mulch, Dan assured us, is a massive business, and his company has outlets in NSW, ACT, TAS, VIC and SA as well as various locations in Qld. They also have other mulches, namely lucerne and tea tree mulch, though they are more costly. Originally, the sugarcane mulch was just baled, but when their near neighbour, Kriedemann Farms, began covering theirs with plastic, Rocky Point Mulching was quick to follow suit. It's low-grade, biodegradable, so it breaks down quickly – a plus for the environment, and all unused plastic is recycled. Besides, the bales are able to be compressed, and then stockpiled, approximately 100,000 a year, without exposure by the elements. These are then hammer milled and made into bags.

The large bales (4ft x 4ft x 8ft) are more cost

effective, but the smaller ones are more in demand for gardeners. The large ones are sent to cattle farms for feed, hence the value of having them organic. On their property near Woongoolba, they harvest approximately 25,000-30,000 tonnes of sugar cane per year, and they don't spray where they don't need to. Any herbicide used has very quick breakdown times and is never sprayed directly on foliage. They periodically test the mulch for chemical residue, and always have had a nil reading on this. A large trommel screen takes the dust out of the mulch.

Dan clarified the difference between "certified for organic farm input", which is for soil input, and "certified organic" which is for what we eat.

In 2011, some of the family members who own Rocky Point Mulching purchased Green Fingers Potting Mix, in Nerang, and moved its operation to their own place. Daley's Native Nursery is an example of someone who uses Green Fingers Potting Mix. Rocky Point Mulching products are available from Mitre 10 in Currumbin, Creek Stockfeed in Currumbin and Boyds Bay, among others. A stockist locator can be found at: [www.rpmulching.com.au](http://www.rpmulching.com.au)

Recently, the company has been expanded as they've moved into making compost from retrieving green waste from various land clearing sites. It's laid out in windrows to compost, and on Fridays it's open to the public (8am-2:30pm) to bring in their trailers to buy a load that way. They're planning on having online business in 2015. Find current products: [www.greenfingerspottingmix.com](http://www.greenfingerspottingmix.com) At present they do deliver, a minimum of 3 cubic metres.

The Rocky Point Mulching Premium Potting Mix, which is not organic, has controlled release fertiliser, Osmocote, as part of its seventeen (!) ingredients. This product alone draws me to Rocky Point Mulching, so disenchanting have I been with other potting mixes. Other ingredients in the RPM Premium Potting Mix are: Organic compost 30%, Composted 12mm Pine Bark 25%, Coir Chip 15%, Coir Fibre 15%, Coal Ash 13%, Zeolite 2%, 3-

stage release fertiliser, Fish & Seaweed, chelated trace element, iron (hepta and mono), lime, dolomite, gypsum. This is the best premium potting mix on the market, it seems to me, and it's all manufactured and bagged on site. The packing date is very important, too, as fresh fertiliser is needed, and this is good up to about nine months. It should be stored under cover and in the cool.

The potting mix has a pH of around 6. If a lower pH is needed, iron sulphate can be added. Active 8 is not certified organic, but it has all organic ingredients, including blood and bone and fish extract. There is no soil in it, but you can plant directly into it.

To make sure that we did not go home that night empty handed, Dan brought in two whole shopping trolleys full of their different products, which he very kindly donated to our raffle table! As Maria commented, instead of the usual rather relaxed attention to the raffle drawing at supper time, it was like a feeding frenzy around it that night, waiting to see our name go up on the board so we could claim our prize. It sure created an exciting atmosphere.

I have to admit that I was so caught up in listening to all that Dan explained to us, that I did a very poor job taking notes this time, and had to call upon him again to fill in all the missing bits for this article! Thank you, Dan, for not only coming out that night to speak to us, but for taking this extra time to get the article right for us.

### **Continued from pg 9 Getting To Know - Karen Hart**

sufficient in food. Another is to continue to improve the quality of the soil – Karen has noticed that the soil in the raised vegetable gardens does tend to dry out easily, so she wants to continue add lots of compost to that soil.

But, most of all, I believe Karen's main goal is to have a well-balanced, responsible and peaceful life – and I think her home and garden in the Eco-village will help her achieve it.

### **If You Do Nothing Else This Month ... From Diane Kelly**

**This is a new segment that we would like to introduce to our newsletter. We'll be suggesting gardening tasks that suit the season, that are practical, and that are easy to follow – and if you have anything you think we should all do in July, please let us know! So, with a new season just starting .....**

**"If you do nothing else this month ..."**

Forrest Gump is quoted as saying "If you don't know where you are going, then you probably won't end up there". So our very first "If you do nothing else this month" is the most basic one:

### **Make a Plan, and Keep a Diary**

A plan can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make it. We can write down "only grow food we like to eat", or we can have a detailed list of what we are going to plant, when we are going to plant it, and how we are going to prepare the soil in which we are going to plant. But make a plan ... otherwise your gardening achievements will be limited.

When you have a plan, and when you start to achieve it, keep a record – in other words, start a gardening diary. A diary will tell you what you applied to your garden's soil and in what quantities. It will tell you what you planted, and when, and how the plants grew. A diary will tell you which types of plants suit your soil – do you need to grow Chantenay carrots that grow to 15cm and are good in heavy soils, or can you grow Cosmic Reds that grow to 30cm. If you record what you do, you won't make the same mistake twice – and you can repeat your successes.

In 2015, it will be hard to remember what we did in our gardens in the winter of 2014. But we want it to be successful season, so let's start to plan the direction we want our gardens to take, and keep a record of what we do along the way.

## Getting To Know - Karen Hart By Diane Kelly

Each of the properties I have visited at the Eco-Village in the Currumbin Valley has been quite different. Five of our Club members have now participated in an interview for our Club newsletter – Elizabeth Dolan (who introduced me to the principles of building and gardening in the Village), Val Sier (who overwhelmed me with her expertise in jam-making!), Roger and Pauline Behrendorff (who introduced me to their garden and their involvement in the community), Celia Forrest (who is lucky enough to raise Welsummer poultry), and now Karen Hart, whose garden and approach to nature is both motivational and challenging.

Karen's property is on the northern edge of the Eco-village, and the fan-shaped block over-looks the common area of wetlands and lawns. Families of kangaroos graze and sleep on the grassed areas, and a variety of wild birds live among the reeds of the wetlands. Karen told me about the family of buff-banded rails that has visited her garden. These birds are considered difficult to observe, as they usually live concealed among sedges, rushes and other vegetation. But a family of these strikingly-marked birds came right into Karen's garden, venturing quite close to her front deck, and then walked peacefully back to their normal habitat. I believe this visit is indicative of the haven that Karen has created on her block.



***The view from Karen's front deck – not everyone has visitors like these!***

After living in England for a number of years and missing the sunshine and blue skies of

Australia, Karen returned home. She lived on the Gold Coast for several years, and then decided that she wanted to have a home that was environmentally-responsible, and where she could enjoy a feeling of space and a healthy life-style. So, after building a house during 2008, Karen moved into the Eco-village a year later.

Karen grew up in Carlingford in Sydney, where her family did have a vegetable garden, fruit trees and chooks. But the main incentive for the home and garden that Karen has now created has been the goal of healthy living. Karen goes bush-walking and bird-watching – a visit to Binnaburra was planned for later this week. She is also involved with plans to develop the land across from her home into a more sustainable wetland, and she helps maintain the common areas that surround her section of the Eco-village.

Karen's block is fan-shaped, and faces north – the front deck and the windows and sliding doors of the house are wonderful sun-traps for winter. The garden has a variety of shades of green and grey shrubs and plants, and many brightly coloured flowers and herbs. The soil is very much clay-based, but no additional soil has been brought into the garden. Instead Karen has worked with compost, mulch, worm castings and "chop & drop" cuttings to improve the various areas of the garden. So the degree of healthy and pest-free plants in the garden is quite impressive. The garden was planned by a landscape designer, but Karen requested that the paths be widened for easy access to the garden beds. Karen had help with the heavy block and rock installations, but other than that did all the digging and planting herself. The goal for the garden was a sub-tropical environment.

The first section of the side yard that we looked at was the rose garden, where beautiful white and deep red roses were in bloom. Karen contributes the occasional banana skin to these plants, as potassium deficiency can easily occur in roses. Under the rose bushes are whole areas of strawberry plants – they produce fruit, and also make excellent ground cover. Beside the rose garden is one of the water tanks for the house, and this is covered

in a native jasmine vine – it must be beautiful in spring. Then comes the lemonade tree – one which is always in fruit, even when it is flowering, and then the daisies, candy-tuft and self-sown mustard plants that surround the compost bins. Karen operates three compost bins, utilizing everything that is weeded or pruned from the plants in the garden – she feels that compost bins are more useful than the worm farm that she also has. However, one of the compost bins has a problem – at the top of each side of the bin is an air-vent roughly 3cm x 20 cm. Normally this helps the contents to mulch down – but it also provides easy access to the local python to “hop” into a warm and snug place to sleep through the winter days. Another snake story that Karen tells is about the day she cut down the suckers from the banana trees. She carried them in a bundle across the backyard to place them into the compost bins. It was only then that she realized that one of those nice, green banana suckers was actually wriggling away to freedom! Still, green tree snakes don’t bite!



### ***The snake’s holiday home for winter***

Karen has several raised galvanized-iron garden beds, with pipe tubing installed ready for supporting protective netting when required. Currently she has rocket, cos lettuce, mustard and several herbs growing, and three healthy tomato plants. These are from Beef Steak seedlings that Ross had grown, but Karen has done something different – she has planted out the laterals from the original plants, and these are now a metre or so high and bearing some very healthy fruit. Around the vegetable gardens, Karen has grown sweet potato plants as ground cover (the orange variety), and next to them is the potato patch. Karen is experimenting with the “no-

soil” method of growing pontiacs this year, so it will be interesting to find out what sort of yield she achieves. The seed potatoes are covered with sugar cane mulch.

A feature of the back section of the block is a dry creek bed. This is a peaceful area that is constructed of timber, rocks and pebbles, and is planted out with cigarette bushes, ferns and wetland grasses. Then, in the middle of the area, there are native violets. This bed takes care of the run-off during heavy rainfall – the water is directed under the house (which has raised concrete flooring), through the front yard, and out into the storm water system. Karen mentioned that because of the heavy rainfalls in the Valley, she keeps her water tanks under 100% full – in this way, any sudden downpour can be coped with, and not cause damage by heavy overflows.



### ***The native violets feature in the dry creek bed – so peaceful!***

A feature of Karen’s front yard is the steps up to the large deck (a favourite place for a cup of tea and a read in the sunshine). The steps are large sand-coloured stones, and they are surrounded by white candy-tuft and yellow tarragon flowers. There are also brilliant red chilli fruit to add colour to the patch. Then there is a row of asparagus plants (a favourite for Karen to cut and eat uncooked), bee-attracting basil, grevilleas, pig face, pineapple plants (the red ones), and rosemary, pumpkins and frangipani bushes. An unusual mixture, but one that works well and provides a variety of shapes and colours.

So what are Karen’s plans for the future of her garden? One thought is to increase the vegetable section, and become more self-

***To be continued ... pg 7***

## Patch Updates

### Ian & Margaret Lee - June 2014

Gardening at the Lee's has been hectic as we are having two Garden Club visits in July.

#### **(Unwelcome) Visitors:**

In desperation, I bought a Ryset "Animal Away Plus" (an ultra-sonic animal deterrent) to stop Mrs Wallaby eating rose buds for brekky.

Regular sprinkling of Blood & Bone has deterred Mr Bandicoot from uprooting new plantings, though not totally stopped him!

That leaves possums, crows, antikinus (a small carnivorous marsupial) & scrub turkeys still foraging ...

I use the "Four-in-One" herb mentioned on Gardening Australia as a deterrent planting, and lots of wormwood & tall single marigolds.

#### **Flowers & Food:**

The white camellias are glistening, and the cape gooseberries are fruiting well now that the caterpillars are slowing down.

Bees are on early wattle for pollen, and are visiting salvias, roses, lavender, grevilleas, male pawpaw, aloes, amaranth, pink silk tree etc for nectar.

There is lots of colour from our Euphorbia family, who are excelling in the dry conditions.

We are eating mixed salads of various lettuce, alternanthera, hibiscus and sweet potato tips,

Cumquats are loaded like baubles on Christmas trees.

**Aloha from Ian & Margaret, Mudgeeraba**

### Jill Barber - June 2014

Aren't we all blessed to have gardens! They keep us alive and young(er), in body, mind and spirit, don't they, what with the physical exercise, challenges of the changing weather and multitude of factors to take into account when planting and tending the young plants, and last but not least, the joy of being in nature! Whether it's the health-giving benefits of fresh air, the peace of being away from technology or the magical birdsong, our outlook on life invariably turns rosy, I find, and other cares recede into virtual non-existence. It's brilliant for crabby members of one's household, too, as sending them out into the garden to perform some cooked up task or other has a marvellously transformative effect every time!

This season helps to reinforce that feeling of being blessed, as it's not only kinder to work in the gentler rays of the sun and the gentle breeze, but the plants are mostly thriving, in my garden, and hopefully yours, too. This year (is it really winter?!), the beans are the best ever for me! They've climbed up the trellis I put for them...and latched onto the string dangling the bird-dissuading old CDs, only to climb up them and over the pergola frame for the summertime shade cloth, beans hanging prolifically from everywhere. I might even have to freeze some if we can't eat them all – how fantastic!

On the flip side, my radishes, the cherry belles, are all lanky and not forming properly; I've had a terrible time trying to have carrots germinate, and now leeks and beetroot as well. Oh, well, there's a lovely variety of lettuces, parsley (at last), mustard greens, rocket (finishing now), basil, lemon sorrel, silverbeet and kale. It's a joy to duck out with a little basket and pick our own organic salad greens. As well, I've loved digging up ginger and turmeric as I need it. I've started to do that with sweet potato, which I've fairly recently started to grow, but we eat quite a lot of that, and there's not enough; I think I need a bigger space for it.

The daikon radishes are mostly forming

above the ground, kind of lying down - is that right?! I thought they grew straight down; they're good and crisp and strong though. The garlic, though planted a bit late, is all standing up happily and promising to produce well. I wish I'd had my brassicas in earlier, but at least my seedlings are mostly in now – broccoli, cauliflower, and Russian Red kale, though the cabbages have been a bit slower. I hope I have more success with my celery this year, remembering from our Summit Organics farm visit last year that they need to be planted close together and need lots of water.

I have to admit that it's taken me *years* to learn to work with all the factors to finally manage to grow anything passably edible. It's thanks to this GCOG's club meetings and troubleshooting discussions and sheer committed determination that I've ironed out enough glitches to encourage me to continue. Those include, the birds, the drought, the heat, the bandicoots or dogs, soil conditions, insects, mulch ...you name it.

If I had to say one thing that's helping to turn things around in my garden, to have it be productive, growing healthy, nutritious food, it's compost – compost, compost and more compost. If I could only add one thing, it would be compost every time: Rod and Tania Bruin, at Summit Organics, once again, really confirmed this for me.

### Continued from pg 5 Q & A - May 2014

A member regularly produces abnormally large passionfruit – one weighed 800grams. Celia planted a passionfruit near her front door which has produced over 500 fruit. Another one around the corner gets beautiful flowers, but no fruit. The first one is on flat ground, the other on a slope. Passionfruit love lots of water.

**Q. Raspberry plants** are looking very healthy, but have no fruit. It was bought from Bunnings. Potash has been added, but still no fruit.

**A.** They normally fruit in summer. Neil suggests that you need to be patient – it may fruit

*To be continued ... pg 12*

### INTERESTING LINKS The Gloucester Project [www.thegloucesterproject.org.au](http://www.thegloucesterproject.org.au) From Neil Ross

The Gloucester Project is a regional development solution aimed at creating self-sustaining regional communities.

The Tucker Patch is a demonstration market garden in Gloucester, New South Wales and is the public face of The Gloucester Project. Its response to the strategic national issue of food security is to demonstrate the extensive and long-lived benefits of converting under-utilised land into valuable agricultural land.

The Tucker Patch model aims to help form:

- healthier local communities, with locally grown food freshly available to all;
- better connected and better educated communities;
- communities that have less demand on government assistance;
- happier community members, both rural and urban



Slow Food® Gold Coast

An International non profit Organisation

- ◆ Defends Biodiversity
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Check out [www.slowfoodfoundation.org](http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org) and International Ark of Taste.

Contact: [goldcoast.queensland@slowfoodaustralia.com.au](mailto:goldcoast.queensland@slowfoodaustralia.com.au)  
for details or Ph: 0412 266566

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

**Q & A - April 2014**  
**By Karen Hart**

Q. Ross had brought in some potatoes to sell and was asked how to plant them.

A. First dig a trench 20-25cm deep, and scatter rock dust and blood and bone in the base. Place potatoes with eyes pointing up, and cover with 3-5cm of soil. As the potatoes grow, keep covering with soil from the sides of the trench. Ross says it is important to check the nitrogen content of the blood and bone – too much creates too much leafy green growth. Buy with least amount of nitrogen and preferably more potash. Wood fire ash can also be used. Bone dust has good potash.

Q. Can potatoes be grown in straw or above ground?

A. Ross has not had success – prefers the above method, but knows that it can be done, good success in Tamborine. It does involve the least work.

Q. If one wishes to grow a mandarin tree in a pot, what soil is best?

A. Ross replied that first you need a good sized pot which needs regular watering and fortnightly nourishment. Suggested that charcoal be placed in bottom of pot. It needs a slow release fertiliser. Uncomposted 'chook' poo should not be put on a plant as it will burn it. To avoid overheating of roots, fill a bucket with water at breakfast time and check the temperature at midday. Roots need to be kept cool in summer so use hessian, polystyrene, etc around the pot. Place rocks in the saucer so that the pot sits above. Manures, worm tea and seaweed solution are all good fertiliser.

Q. A member has citrus growing in a pot, the fruit of which never ripens – stays green.

A. Suggestions that the soil is too dry and it should be repotted.

Q. Pauline brought in a large plant for identification. It has been growing for around 18 months and not produced any flowers or fruit. She is hoping that it is a rare rainforest species!

A. It could not be identified so it was suggested that she sends some leaves to Mt

Cootha Botanical Gardens for a positive identification.

Q. A weed was produced and queried if it was 'good' or 'bad'?

A. Thought to be a type of clover, but it gets burrs so was considered a pest weed – best to remove it.

Q. Karen brought in a 'strappy' (flat, not normal round shape) asparagus and wondered why it has grown that way.

A. It could be a virus or a 'fasciation' – a spastic variation.

Q. Did anyone watch last Sunday's 'Gardening Australia'? Apparently clumping bamboo is edible – boil for 1 hour, drain, replace water and boil for a further hour.

**Continued from pg 11**  
**Q & A - May 2014**

in the second season. When planting temperate or Mediterranean plants, remember that the weather is the opposite to here: the Mediterranean gets rain in winter and dry summers.

Maria grows 'native' raspberries and gets different flavours in different areas of the garden. They are super prickly – not fabulous to eat raw, but make good jam.

Q. Which variety of **olive tree** would grow well here on the Gold Coast?

A. Research is needed for the variety you want, and you should go to a good supplier, like Daleys, or seek online.

Good winter rain is needed for a good crop. It can take up to seven years for a first crop. A member has grown 2 olive trees in 'willow' buckets (drums from Bunnings).

Q. Jill asked how long can **dried herbs** last? She has just had them hanging to dry.

A. If kept in a glass jar in the dark they should last a while. It was suggested that a fresh batch be made every year. A dehydrator used on its lowest heat setting keeps the herbs' green colour. Fresh herbs can be kept in the freezer.

Q. When is **turmeric** ready to harvest?

A. Very soon – in winter, once the tops brown off.

## Bunchy Top Spread from Backyard Banana Plants

Backyard banana growers have been warned their home-grown trees could potentially wipe out Australia's commercial banana industry.

National Banana Bunchy Top Project manager David Peasley believes the bunchy top disease has been allowed to spread through backyard plantations, particularly in regions like northern NSW and the southern Gold Coast.

Mr Peasley said if not treated properly, the disease has the potential to spread quickly within a 10km radius of the infected plants. "In the Tweed there are probably 30 or 40 plantations that have bunchy top disease", he said.

"The problem we're seeing is that a lot of the commercial plantations are being infected by backyard bananas. If not inspected regularly and if people don't know what to look for, the banana aphid, which is a small flying insect, can spread the disease from those backyards into commercial patches – one little black aphid can fly up to 10-15 km from one tree to another."

The disease has been around for more than 100 years, and nearly wiped out Australia's entire banana industry during the early 1930's.

Mr Peasley said while the disease had been relatively contained to the Tweed region, plant sharing between neighbours and friends has seen more bunch top cases pop up in South East Queensland. "What is really concerning are people who give their neighbours suckers or baby plants from their backyard. Even though the plant might look healthy, if you give the sucker away to someone else over the back fence, that's how it can spread. It's not the sort of thing that you can get rid of in a short time because you don't know you've got it sometimes until it's too late", he said.

Mr Peasley said the only way to get rid of an infected tree was to kill the aphids from the inside using Roundup and the worst thing an

owner could do was cut the infected tree down.

People looking to plant banana trees in their backyard should acquire the appropriate planting permits and purchase their plants from a nursery.

Infected plants do not produce fruit, and are characterised by the bunched appearance of new leaves, as well as dot-dash flecking of leaves and stem sheaths.

For more information on bunch top, visit [www.bunchytop.org.au](http://www.bunchytop.org.au)

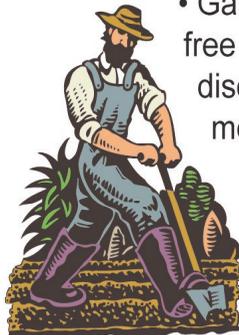
**NOTE: The Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry recommends: Do not cut or disturb plants or move plant material off your property – this can spread the disease. Plants should be treated only by a trained inspector.**

*GC Bulletin Article - May 2014*

## The Diggers Club

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

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## Recipe - Sweet Chilli Jam

### By Debbie Jones

I have recently made sweet chilli jam as we have had an excess of chillies. The jam was a real hit and I added a twist to a Nigella Lawson recipe. I reduced the sugar content of the recipe by adding apple and cranberries as a substitute. I have attached a photo of a bowl of my chillies.

I used scotch bonnets - Christmas bell chillies, as these are mild.

#### Ingredients:

- 200g fresh red chilli peppers (deseeded and cut in half)
- 200g green apples (cored, deseeded and cut in half)
- 2 1/2 cups of jam sugar (I did not have any so used raw sugar)
- 1 large apple cut (cored, cut into rough chunks, skin on)
- 1/2 cup of dried cranberries
- 600ml vinegar

#### Method:

1. Sterilize your jars and leave to cool.
2. Put the cut-up chillies, apple and cranberries into a food processor and pulse until they are finely chopped.
3. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar in a wide, medium-sized pan over a low heat without stirring.
4. Scrape the chilli-pepper mixture out of the bowl and add to the pan. Bring the pan to the boil, then leave it at a rollicking boil for 10 minutes then simmer till you are happy with the thickness.
5. Take the pan off the heat and allow it cool. The liquid will become more syrupy. (If you are wanting jam to be thicker you can add thickener (pectin).
6. After about 40 minutes, or once it is cool, then ladle into your jars. Then seal tightly.

## FRUIT TREES

**Custard apples:** Harvest every 3 to 4 days as fruit matures. Don't let trees dry out.

**Figs:** Dormant period. Don't let trees dry out.

**Lychee:** Do not let trees dry out. Minimal watering is needed. Check emerging flowers for flower caterpillars. If more than 1/2 are infested, spray with pyrethrum or garlic spray.

**Mango:** Don't let the trees dry out.

**Passion-fruit:** Don't let the vines dry out. Keep up the fish emulsion or kelp sprays every month. Small amount of organic fertiliser with added sulphate of potash can be applied to vines, 20 gms per sq m – for example, large vines = 100 gms; small vines = 50 gms.

**Pawpaw:** Spray with wettable sulphur if powdery mildew is a problem. Minimal water. Pick fruit at mature stage with 1/2 colour to have full flavour.

**Persimmon:** Dormant period. Minimal water required at this time.

**Strawberries:** Feed with organic fertiliser with added sulphate of potash. Also use fish emulsion and kelp spray regularly over plants to keep in good health. This will prevent fruit rot. Pick fruit when fully ripe. Keep plants fully watered – try not to wet the berries. This will prevent fruit rot. Mulch plants so the berries do not lie on the soil. Pine needs are good.

**Bananas:** Keep up the water and bag fruit. When fruit are formed, bag fruit with banana bag, tie bag to top of stem and drape down to bell. Leave open at bottom for air. Cut off bell to get larger fruit.

**Citrus:** Harvesting should be well under way. Keep up watering.

**Avocado:** Early flowers should appear this month. Keep up water needs. If you have not applied garden lime and gypsum, apply now as per June instructions.

*To be continued ... pg 15*

## VEGETABLES

### JUNE:

Asian Greens, Asparagus Crowns, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broad Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Spinach, Snow pea, Tomatoes, Turnips.

### JULY:

Asian Greens, Asparagus Crowns, Beans (French), Beetroot, Broad Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Onion, Parsnip, Pea, Potato, Radish, Shallots, Silverbeet, Tomatoes.

Continued from pg14  
Recipe - Sweet Chilli Jam



*Debbie's Scotch Bonnet Chillies*

## HERBS

### JUNE

**Annual:** Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Giant Red Lettuce, Herb Robert, Italian parsley, Misome, Mizuna, 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, Winter Tarragon, Thyme, Upland Cress, Watercress, Winter Savoury.

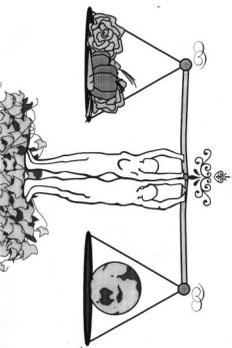
### JULY

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

If not claimed in 14 days, please return to:  
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*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 17 July 2014