

ROGI News

Doors open at 6.15 so members can visit the library, stalls and seed bank or just have a chat before our meeting starts. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the speaker.

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Gold coin
Visitors: \$5

Please bring a plate of food (savoury/sweet or nibbles and preferably home-made) for supper after the meeting.

Tea/coffee provided.

You are very welcome to provide a **quality plant** to help share interesting plants with other members (**see p15**).

Remember to bring a bag/box/basket to take home your items.

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'Love in a Mist' *Nigella damascena* is well-named—it looks lovely and delicate.

This plant is a worthy addition to your garden, as the beautiful blue flowers attract bees and other beneficial insects. Also, the seeds are edible—they are often called for in chutney recipes.

The flower develops into a quite large seed pod that contains many green seeds that turn black when ripe. The pod splits open and the seeds fall to the ground.

Once you've let this happen, you'll have *Nigella* growing forever.



Backyard Burlblings

First I'd like to wish all ROGI members a happy new gardening year with flourishing gardens and abundant vegetables and fruit.

The extreme heat over the last month or so would have severely stressed many gardens, with some plants like tomatoes and capsicums literally cooking in the full sun. While the rain around Christmas was very welcome, the effects didn't last long with the soaring temperatures in January. Hopefully, last week's showers will provide a little relief to stressed gardens and gardeners alike.

Unfortunately, we and our gardens may have to adapt to more of these searing hot days during as the effects of rapid climate change kick in.

It seems the only way to grow any salad type vegetables at all is to use some sun protection like Microclima cloth or a light shade cloth until the cooler autumn days return once again.



It seems a long time ago now, but I'd like to reflect on the wonderful end of year feast. A

total of 87 members attended this great night of superb food and presentation. While every event needs a key organiser, in this case Sharr, it would not have been possible without the numerous cheerful helpers from within the ROGI membership.

The kitchen volunteers spent hours chopping, cooking and arranging the fantastic salads and other dishes; then washed and cleaned the dishes and benches leaving the Salvo's kitchen spotless. As if that wasn't enough, many brought delicious homemade desserts in the evening as well.

Overall the feast was a great success and the food must have been popular, as there was hardly any left at the end of the evening. We even ran out of desserts for the last table. Apologies to those who missed out. We'll just have to have more next time!

We also had a great number of helpers to set up the hall and decorate the tables. Most of those volunteers then helped to clear the hall in record time and set it up again for the Salvos to use.

As far as I'm concerned the best part of the Christmas Feast occurred very quietly and almost secretly. As people came in, they deposited gifts of food and other items for the Salvo's Christmas Hampers for those less fortunate than us. We'd put two large boxes in anticipation, but as it turned this was not enough. They were overflowing with gifts, and numerous smaller boxes were placed in front (see p 5). The generosity of everyone was overwhelming and very much appreciated by the Salvos.

On the night we asked members to write down some ideas and wishes for future meetings and events. The following are some of your comments:

- Gardening with a disability - eg raised beds for

chronic back pain

- Looking after tools – cleaning rust before sharpening
- Speakers to be paid in dollars to offset costs (includes ROGI members)
- Round robin workshops of 15 minutes each
- Shorter newsletter (to encourage people to digest the vital information), also indexing the newsletter and short resume of upcoming garden visits
- In-depth workshops at another venue on specific topics
- Saying grace before starting meal at next Christmas Feast
- Lost and found mentor's thread on the Facebook page
- Profiles of other members and their gardens
- Organic recipe book and request for recipes from organic feast
- Food dehydration and fermentation demonstrations and starter recipes
- Extended garden tour – eg garden safari with a presenter
- Speakers on various topics – eg organic meats, edible weeds, companion planting, rules and regulations for keeping chooks in suburbia, fruit fly tolerant fruit and vegetables, good bugs for the home garden, small trees for home gardens, verge/footpath planting and regulations for same, organic gardening versus non-organics & hydroponics, turmeric growing and benefits, bio-dynamic farming, organic health (eg naturopath), composting, fruit tree information from a fruit tree nursery

As you can see there is a huge range of interests for the ROGI committee to consider. We will do our best this year to fulfil some of your wishes.

I would like to close with the comment from one of our newer members: "Everything is fabulous and exceeded all my expectations."

Thank you all for making that happen.

Julia Geljon
President



Coming Events

Feb	Sun 11	Garden Visit	See p 13
	Wed 14	ROGI—first meeting for 2018	
Mar	Thurs 1	BOGI meeting	
	Tues 6	Herb Society meeting	
	Wed 14	ROGI meeting	
	Sat 24	Redlands Living Green Expo	See p 9

Membership Information

- **Cash** payment at ROGI meeting
- **Cheques** made payable to *Redland Organic Growers Inc* - pay at meeting or to PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
- **Direct Deposit** BSB 633000. A/C 136137296 (Bendigo Bank, Middle St, Cleveland)

IMPORTANT! Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid.

When paying your fees online, please be sure to complete a membership renewal form online at <http://www.rogi.com.au/renew-membership.php>

Member Category	Members Renewing For 2018	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct18-Dec19
Single	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50
Family*	\$50	\$50	\$37.50	\$25	\$62.50
Pensioner Single**	\$20	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$25
Pensioner Couple**	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50

Family - two (2) adults residing at the same address and their children under eighteen (18) years

** Please provide evidence of **pensioner** status to claim discount

February Meeting

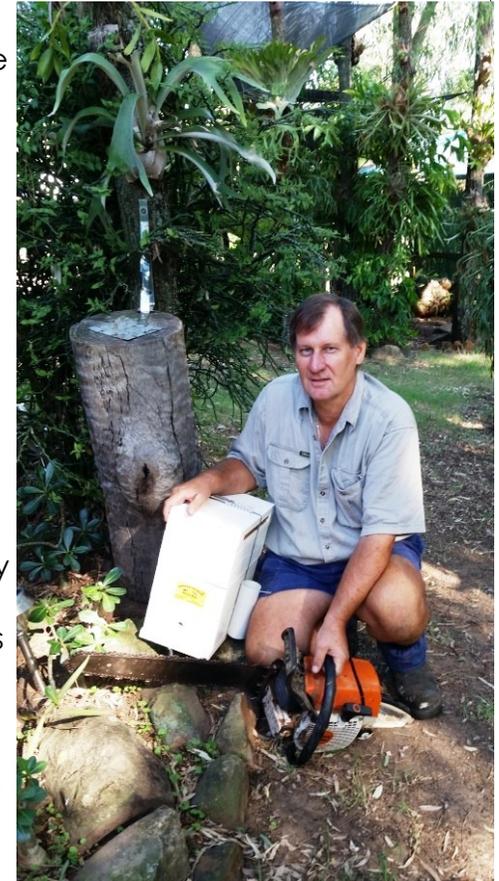
Stingless native bees

Russell Zabel began honey bee-keeping when he was eight. By 17, he was keeping 90 colonies. During this time he collected the occasional native bee colony; however his interest in native bees began in 1988 after an article in the local paper about research into splitting native bee colonies in a box.

After starting carpentry in 1974 he became a TAFE building teacher in 1984. He has a bachelor degree in Education and Building Surveying.

After leaving work in 2012, he and Janine have devoted their full time to their native bee business. They have lived and worked in remote locations helping the local aborigines understand native bees. The Zabels currently manage over 600 colonies—many of these are on the properties of ROGI members—as well as 160 of honey bees.

Russell's hobby is growing staghorn and elkhorn ferns.



Come along and hear about the benefits to your food garden when you attract native bees into your territory.

Ashley from Mt Cotton Organic Farm will be selling his selected produce for sale outside the hall entrance. Remember - bring your reusable bags etc.

Some photos from our 2017 Christmas dinner





Some of the many gifts from ROGI members for the Salvos to distribute

Myrtle rust on lilly pilly

Late last year we spotted three lilly pilly trees in someone's yard, heavily infested with myrtle rust disease.

As I know it is easily spread, and very hard to

eradicate, I googled "reporting myrtle rust", and then contacted Biosecurity Queensland. The department acted very quickly, and the trees have been removed.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/diseases-fungi-and-parasites/myrtle-rust>

Ann Roffey



Fungus on poinciana

I wanted to alert you to a very close call for my wife and brother on 25th January at 6pm. They were only metres from this huge poinciana tree when it fell without warning.

It was a fine clear evening, we'd had no rain for weeks, there was no wind whatsoever at the time. I was on the other side of the road and saw it just topple over across the road.

If my wife and brother were under it as it fell, I could have had two funerals to plan. We are thankfully fine but I am seriously concerned about something like this happening again and someone getting badly hurt or worse.

I noticed that there were white mushrooms growing at base of this tree which is a clear sign of wood rot.

Best Regards, Gennaro De Rosa



Above: The tree was in Hardy Rd near the railway overpass. Wellington Pt high school is on the other side of the train line and many students walk this way on their way home. It fell across the footpath and the road and was a big tree.



Above: A close-up of the fallen tree clearly showing the white pieces of mushroom/fungus scattered around. Please check any poinciana trees in your area for the tell-tale mushrooms and keep yourself, your family and your cars well away.



Above: This poinciana is in Birkdale Rd, Wellington Pt about 50 metres from the BP. Notice the many white 'mushrooms' growing from its base. There is a possibility that this one could topple similarly.

Malabar spinach

Basella rubra
Basella alba

Malabar spinach, also known as Ceylon spinach, is extremely easy to grow in our warm climate. These little plants have grown between the cracks in our back steps. The seeds fell from a plant twining up the handrails.

There's a lot to love about it: easy to grow, no pests that I've noticed (not even grasshoppers), can be eaten raw or cooked, and is rather attractive. This one is *Basella rubra*. *Basella alba* has green stems and much larger leaves.



Plant of the month

Angled Luffa *Luffa acutangula*

Angled luffa (or loofah) is a fast-growing, long-season, sub-tropical vine that can climb up to 3 metres high. It is a member of the cucumber family.

It needs a strong support system to prevent the fruits from touching the ground. I have used two big old metal screen doors; I staked them into the ground, added some string running from one to the other. This gives the height and space for the luffa to grow over the doors. I placed the doors in the most suitable warm and bright site with adequate room and made some great well-drained soil.

Angled luffa seeds are notoriously slow to germinate and sprout. I find soaking the seed in water for a full 24 hours before planting them helps them burst out and start life. I use our own ROGI seed raising mix after I have soaked them to sow the seed in. I keep them damp and give them half a day of sunlight after the second set of leaves come up and then transplant them to their new home. The soil should be fertile, freely draining, moist and full of sunshine - similar to the ideal conditions for zucchini, to which it is related.

When it's time to plant it out, I create a mound of soil that has been enriched with aged manure (horse), plenty of compost, and bio-char. This mix is free draining and full of life. I plant in the centre of each mound. Mounds should be about 100 to 150mm high and plants should be between 75cm to 1m apart.

Angled luffa has a wonderful flat yellow flower which the insects go crazy for. The flowers open up late in the afternoon and this is a great time to see what is flying around your garden because all the little critters will want to play in this flower.

The fruit of the angled luffa is quite special; it is edible, but only when immature (you treat it like a zucchini at this point). The mature fruit forms

sponge-like fibres inside. After the fruit has matured, you dry it, skin it, shake the seeds out and give it an overall clean. The fibres can be used as scrubbers, cleaning pads or bath sponges; this is how it got the name Dish Cloth Luffa. Other common names are Chinese Okra or Ribbed Sponge Gourd.

You can buy Angled Luffa seeds from the seed bank, \$1 members, \$2 non-members. They are easily saved for future crops so buy one packet and you'll never need to buy Angled Luffa seeds again.

Sharr Ellson



Since March 2013 ROGI, together with IndigiScapes and the Redland city Council, have hosted the annual Redlands Good Gardening Expo.

From now on, though, things will be a little different. For a start, it is now called:

Redlands Living Green Expo

This year's theme is
Closing the Circle on Waste

Saturday 24th March 9am to 2pm

We are looking for volunteers to help spread the word on how organic gardening is an important part of this theme.

There are several different jobs, and one will fit your skills and talents, so you can volunteer for as little or as much time as you can spare.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Making garden boxes
- Setting up and/or taking down the displays
- Helping give information at the ROGI display
- Assisting with the seed bank & seedling sales & enquiries
- Assisting at one of the stations:-
 - Composting
 - Worm farms
 - Bokashi
 - Raised/no-dig garden beds
 - Seed collecting/saving
- Being a general floating helper to go wherever as needed.

Information and training will be supplied for all the activities.

Please let me know your preference on time/s and activity/activities you can help with and we will schedule accordingly.

Please call me, Bronwen, on 0402 057 752, email to events@rogi.com.au or see me at the ROGI meeting on 14 February.



Above: The idyllic setting of the ROGI section of the expo every year. We'll be in the same spot this year.

Below: Getting everything set up the day before. The seed bank and seedlings tent is a popular spot.



Plant Clinic

Q: What is wrong with my **spearmint?**
(from the November meeting)



A: It doesn't look well and you'd be reluctant to use these leaves in a salad! ROGI members and our visitor from BOGI believe it to be mites.

Treatment options suggested were to remove all infected areas and treat with wettable sulphur and if this was unsuccessful water the plant with a neem oil solution. As it's a mint, it will regrow well.

The following query came by email, so I thought it could be included here as others may be wondering the same thing:

Q: I harvested some of my "True Gold" **corn** a few days ago, and last night we had it for dinner. In the past when I have grown corn, I have been very disappointed, because it always turns out **not sweet** – just a very bland taste.

This time was no exception! Very disappointed!! I picked the corn when the tassels

were starting to brown, and they are a decent size. Is it just the variety, or do I need to fertilise with something special??? Do you know what I am doing wrong?

A: It sounds as if it was ready for harvest—the tassels should be turning brown and the ear should be plump and the husk still green. You may want to check that the kernel has milky liquid when you puncture one to test. If it's still watery, it's not ready. If there's no liquid, it's past its prime.

Some say you should have the water boiling before you pick the corn. Maybe. It does lose its flavour very quickly as the sugars begin to convert to starch as soon as it's picked. You say you picked it a few days before eating it, so that is probably to reason for your disappointment.

Try eating the corn fresh off the stalk, raw, while standing in the corn patch. That's when it's the sweetest and juiciest.

Plant Clinic

If you have an odd looking pest, think your plant may be a weed or have a deficiency or a disease, Plant Clinic may help you.

Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts - fruit, leaf, root etc - as you can, and in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased or very seedy) and fill in the form.

Place the plant parts together with the form on Plant Clinic table before the meeting starts. Someone will have a look and may be able to answer your questions.

Please be aware that, although we do our best, there may not be anyone present who can identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

Another corn question.

Q: The weirdest thing has happened to my corn. It is developing kernels up with the tassels. Some of the ears are okay, but many have this happening. What is going on?

A: Don't know. Can anyone help?



Ordering discounted certified organic chook feed

Last year we organised a bulk purchase of certified organic chook feed from **Country Heritage Feeds** so we all could take advantage of the savings.

It's time to make another order — hopefully so the bags will be ready for you to take home from the meeting on 14th February. We are required to order a minimum of 50

Please contact Sharr at **0423503983** or president@rogi.com.au asap.

bags and are about halfway there.

In future we plan to place an order every second month—so early February, April, June, August, October and December—to be picked up at the ROGI meeting in that month; as long as we have the minimum order. We ask you to place your order well in advance, or set up a regular order that will last two months.

Delivery of \$2.50 per bag and GST apply. The most popular feeds are:

Coarse Layer \$23.35+2.50+2.35 (\$28.20)
Backyard Layer Pellet \$23.80 (\$28.68)

We are keen to buy these feeds, but you may order other items from their range. Look at the wholesale price list below and look up the products the website to check them out - <http://www.organicstockfeed.com/poultry/layer-birds>

How much cheaper is it? Quite a bit. The retail price of **Coarse Layer** is in the range of \$36.95 from a local produce store and up to \$39.95 + freight of \$9.95 ordered online.

For this to work efficiently, we ask that you **order today** if you want some, and make your **payment** online if at all possible - BSB 633000. A/C 136137296. If this isn't possible, you must pay when you collect the bags from the meeting on Wednesday night.

Coarse Layer



DESCRIPTION
CHF Organic Coarse Layer is a wholegrain ration similar to the old fashioned "Scratch Mix". Typical ingredients may include wheat, sorghum, barley, triticale, pearl millet, sunflower seed, mung beans and corn. These are mixed without any milling, giving it the "wholegrain" consistency. The diverse mix of colours gives the feed an appearance similar to muesli, making it very appealing to the chicken and owner alike.

APPLICATION
The CHF Organic Coarse Layer is designed solely for laying birds in the backyard environment, and offers the daily requirement of cereals needed for healthy laying hens. Incorporated into the wholegrain blend is a "protein pellet" which contains essential vitamins and minerals, protein meals and trace minerals. This ensures the integrity of the feed is maintained and avoids the separation issues that can occur if adding these ingredients individually.

FEED DIRECTIONS
CHF Organic Coarse Layer is formulated for laying birds. (Approx. 18 – 20 weeks). For young pullets, it is advisable to begin blending the CHF Organic Coarse Layer with the CHF Organic Chick Starter Grower Mash from around 16 weeks to allow a smooth transition onto the layer feed, and to ensure extra calcium is provided to the birds as they mature and begin egg production. Typical feed consumption is between 130g – 150g per head per day and is best made accessible through a specially designed self-feeder. To obtain minimal wastage, ensure your feeder is elevated so the birds can comfortably access the feed, but high enough so they cannot scratch it out onto the ground with their feet. Always ensure that birds have access to plenty of clean potable drinking water.

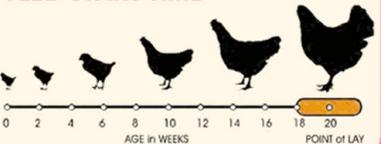
KEY POINTS

- PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
- CERTIFIED ORGANIC
- NUTRITIONALLY BALANCED FOR EGG PRODUCTION
- WHOLEGRAIN RATION
- 20KG PACKAGING
- FEED FROM POINT OF LAYER (18-20 WEEKS)
- AVAILABLE QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC, SA, NT ONLY

ANALYSIS

Min. Crude Protein	12.0%
Max. Crude Fibre	6.0%
Max. Salt (NaCl)	0.3%
Copper	9 mg/kg
Selenium	0.23 mg/kg
Min. Calcium (Ca)	3.0%
Max. Calcium (Ca)	4.5%
Min. Phosphorus (P)	0.4%
Max. Phosphorus (P)	1.0%

FEED START TIME



COUNTRY HERITAGE FEEDS
PRODUCT CODE OPC01-XX

Backyard Layer Pellet



DESCRIPTION
CHF Organic Backyard Layer Pellets are a blend of certified organic grains which are finely milled and then pressed into a pellet, offering a consistent, nutritionally balanced diet ideal for backyard laying chickens. Typical ingredients may include certified organic cereals such as wheat, sorghum, barley, pearl millet and corn. The feed also contains certified organic vegetable protein meals such as soybean meal, safflower meal, sunflower meal, fishmeal, meat meal; and other essential vitamins and minerals.

APPLICATION
Formulated to the same high specifications as the CHF Organic Backyard Layer Mash, this pellet ration provides the birds with all the essential vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain good health and to promote consistent, strong shelled, vibrant yoked eggs.

FEED DIRECTIONS
CHF Organic Backyard Layer Pellet can be fed to birds at point of lay (18-20 weeks) but can be blended with CHF Chick Starter/Grower from 16 weeks.

Typical feed consumption for backyard laying hens is between 120g – 140g per head per day. Feed is best provided ad lib as the birds naturally regulate their consumption according to their energy requirements. A specially designed self-feeder is the most suitable method of doing this. To obtain minimal wastage, ensure that the feeder is elevated so the birds can comfortably access the feed, but high enough so they cannot scratch it out onto the ground with their feet. Always ensure that birds have access to clean potable drinking water.

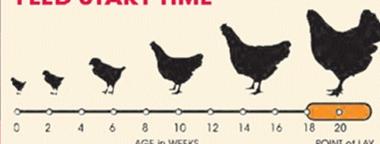
KEY POINTS

- PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
- CERTIFIED ORGANIC
- NUTRITIONALLY BALANCED FOR EGG PRODUCTION
- 20KG PACKAGING
- FEED FROM POINT OF LAY (18-20 WEEKS)
- AVAILABLE AUSTRALIA WIDE

ANALYSIS

Min. Crude Protein	16.0%
Max. Crude Fibre	7.0%
Max. Salt (NaCl)	0.3%
Copper	9 mg/kg
Selenium	0.23 mg/kg
Min. Calcium (Ca)	3.0%
Max. Calcium (Ca)	4.5%
Min. Phosphorus (P)	0.4%
Max. Phosphorus (P)	1.0%

FEED START TIME



COUNTRY HERITAGE FEEDS
PRODUCT CODE OPC01-XX

CHICKEN FEEDS	20KG BAG	PRICE*
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER MASH		\$22.45
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER PELLETS		\$23.80
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER VEGETARIAN MASH		\$22.75
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER VEGETARIAN PELLET		\$24.10
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER SOY FREE MASH		\$22.75
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER SOY FREE PELLET		\$24.10
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER SOY FREE VEGETARIAN MASH		\$22.75
ORGANIC BACKYARD LAYER GLUTEN FREE SOY FREE MASH		\$22.75
ORGANIC CHICKEN STARTER GROWER MASH		\$23.85
ORGANIC CHICKEN STARTER GROWER CRUMBLE		\$25.45
ORGANIC COARSE LAYER		\$23.35
ORGANIC COARSE LAYER SOY FREE		\$23.65
ORGANIC COARSE LAYER VEGETARIAN		\$23.65
ORGANIC FREE RANGE LAYER MASH		\$23.40
ORGANIC FREE RANGE LAYER PELLET		\$24.80

We are doing this as a service to you, our ROGI members. Please let us know what else you think we may be able to organise to help you.

Book Reviews

Three very different books are featured this month. Maybe there's one that interests you.

Biopiracy The plunder of nature and knowledge

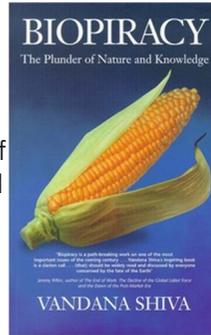
'This book shows how Western powers, following in the footsteps of Columbus, are using patenting and genetic engineering to re-colonise the Third World.

Denying the value of indigenous knowledge developed over many generations, the West is attempting to colonise life itself. Shiva argues that we must struggle to protect biological and cultural diversity, and that this will best be brought about by our developing and supporting self-organised communities based on decentralisation, local democratic control of resources, social justice and peace.

Vandana Shiva, a physicist, ecologist and activist, is one of the world's most dynamic and provocative thinkers on the environment, women's rights and international affairs.' - from the book cover.

"With her characteristic blend of analysis and passion, Vandana Shiva traces the continuity from the European colonisation of 'native' peoples ... to the present appropriation of natural resources they need for their physical and cultural survival.

... an important book that should be read by anyone wanting to understand the global threat posed by the technological transformations of organisms, cells, and molecules and by their exploitation for profit." Ruth Hubbard, Professor Emeritus of Biology, Harvard University.



This book is an indictment of the exploitation of nature and indigenous societies by powerful states and multinational companies.

Shiva states that there have been three waves of globalisation – initially through European colonisation, then through the foisting of Western ideas of 'development and prosperity' during the post-colonial era and still today, and the third recently through 'free trade' and the treatment of life as a commodity. Biopiracy. The piracy of life itself.

Reading this will give you an understanding of how patents are being used to privatise the world's living resources. She tells the story of neem as an example. See over page for this.

It took me some time to get into the book – I put it down several times before persisting. Reading it may well unsettle you, as it did me, and it's clear that the situation has only become worse in the last two decades.

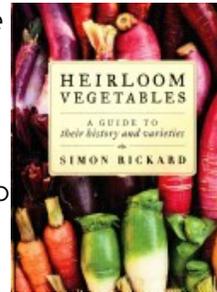
Reviewed by Jill Nixon

Heirloom Vegetables A guide to their history and varieties

This book is about growing your own vegetables in your backyard. Just what you want to read when you're starting out or want to be inspired.

First he writes about what heirloom vegetables are, and are not, and who owns seeds, and how vegetables such as we eat today only exist because of centuries of human intervention. Interesting stuff.

Most vegetable gardening books go from A for artichoke to Z for zucchini ... but not this one. Rickard discusses plant families, their history and relationships and how well they get along with one another.



I like that he says, 'Don't believe the television gurus. Growing your own vegetables is *not* easy. It is actually quite difficult. But so is driving a car, playing a musical instrument or knitting a jumper. Most of you can do one of those things, so there's no reason why you can't learn to grow your own veggies, too.' The more you practise, the easier it becomes.

He then proceeds to give lots of good advice about how to do it, along with many handy hints and a very thorough section on germinating seeds.

A great reference—he's Australian but not local, so bear that in mind.

Reviewed by Jill Nixon

Gaia's Garden

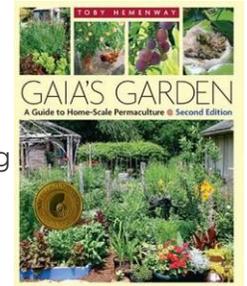
Permaculture is the message of this book—how working *with*, not *against*, Nature can result in beautiful, abundant and forgiving gardens, whether urban or large.

Hemenway shows how to create a backyard ecosystem with communities of plants that can work cooperatively and perform a variety of functions, and in doing so he provides food for thought and inspiration for action.

If you read *Biopiracy*, then perhaps this book will give you an outlet for your disquiet. You can read it and learn how to do your own bit to do the right thing. It is packed full of information, tables and charts—everything you could need, really. Not many pictures, though, if that's what you want.

Really, the only downside is that it's from the USA, so you'll need to make allowances for climate and seasons.

Reviewed by Jill Nixon



Please, someone else, read some books and write some reviews! We'd like to hear what you think.

If you read a book that would be valuable for our library please tell a committee member know about it—see back page. We welcome reviews from readers of ROGI library books you've read. Please!

Some time ago ROGI's refractometer went missing from the library. We want it back. If you know where it is, please arrange for it to appear at a ROGI meeting or garden visit. No questions asked.



These books are among the many items available for loan from your ROGI library.

We also have pH test kits and needles for sewing shade cloth for you to borrow.

Neem

A native of India, neem has been used for centuries as a biopesticide and medicine.

'People start their day using the neem toothbrush to protect their teeth with its medicinal and anti-bacterial properties.

Communities have invested centuries of care, respect and knowledge in propagating, protecting and using neem in fields, field bunds, homesteads and common lands.'

Today this heritage is being stolen under the guise of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

For centuries, the Western world ignored neem; the practices of Indian peasants and doctors were not deemed worthy of attention by the majority of the colonists.

However, when the Western world became concerned about pesticides and other chemicals, there was a sudden enthusiasm for the properties of neem.

This book is 20 years old, and by then many patents already had been taken out for various neem-based products; these claimed that the extraction processes were unique or novel.

This, despite the fact that Indians had been extracting the active ingredients for over 2 000 years!

Polyculture

Navdanya (nine seeds) or *barnaja* (twelve crops) are examples of highly productive systems of mixed farming or polyculture based on diversity, yielding more than any monoculture can.

Unfortunately, they are disappearing – not because of low productivity, but because they need no inputs, being based on symbiosis with legumes providing nitrogen to cereals.

In addition, their outputs are diverse – providing all the nutrition a family needs.

But diversity acts against commercial interests, which need to maximise the production of a single output to maximise profits. Polycultures by their very nature are ecologically prudent.

Thus recovering diversity in production provides a countervailing force to the globalised, centralised and homogeneous systems of production that are destroying livelihoods, cultures and ecosystems everywhere.



As I was hanging out the washing one morning in early December, I heard the pitter-patter of little feet . . . no, not the human kind. My lizard friend came around to check if there were any strawberries, and didn't seem in the least bit daunted that I was watching him! I raced inside to get my camera, and caught him red-handed eating a strawberry I must have missed bagging. As you can see, he's quite a photogenic chap . . . so nice to see wildlife in the garden!

Ann Roffey

Garden Visits

11 February - Sunday

Kathy Springate's garden at Wynnum West. This garden has grown through her passion to create a great environment in which children can play and grow; designed and created with the assistance of a playground specialist. There are fruit trees, herbs and flowers in several garden rooms and areas.

Incorporated into all of this are many recycled products. An interesting and inspirational garden. Well worth a visit.

Note: this is before the next meeting so book with Toni asap

18 March - Sunday

Robyn Dwyer's garden at Victoria Point

Field Trips

Nothing is confirmed as yet, but we are investigating visiting various places at:

Currumbin Valley,

the **Sunshine Coast Hinterland**, and the **Byron Bay area** during the year.

As always, space is limited, so book early. Please book with Toni on 0402 323 704 or events@rogi.com.au or at ROGI meeting.

Our Garden Visit calendar is full for 2018 (except for December). If you'd like to put your garden on a waiting list, in case of cancellation - as happened in 2017 - please get in touch with Toni.

Toni also welcomes suggestions for field trips and workshops related to ROGI's organic growing interests.

Seed Bank News!

Seed packing

This will be done at Kathy's Garden visit on Sunday 11 February. See p 13.

Maximum of 6 people to come early and help pack seeds for the bank. Please talk with Toni.

Plant your own seed

The seeds this month will be sunflowers.

We'll supply a reusable container to sow the seed in, some ROGI seed-raising mix and the seeds. Your job at home is to check the moisture level of the seed-raising mix – don't let it dry out. Keep the pots in a protected spot - a well-lit, shaded position is best. As seedlings emerge, harden them off by gradually increasing their exposure to sun and heat. Then, when the second set of leaves appears (the first 'true' leaves), this is a sign that your plant is getting mature and ready for serious growth. A weak drink of Seasol or worm liquid is in order. Then you can plant on in a larger pot or straight into the garden.

Changes

... you will notice at the seed bank table.

- new variety of seeds
- enough great quality plants - 50c to \$3
- more cuttings of those plants that we have better success at growing from cuttings

ROGI Seed Savers

Please come to the seed bank at the end of the meeting if you have any interest in joining our ROGI Seed Savers sub-group.

- gain knowledge, skills and confidence in organic gardening
- get free seeds
- weekday meeting
- help ROGI build our own local seed bank

Please **return seedling pots** so they can be re-used. Especially the 4-cell ones. **Other clean used pots**—small sizes only up to 12cm diameter. The square ones are good too.

Our **seed-raising mix** (a blend of coir peat, vermiculite, perlite and biochar) works quite well. Now you can get some for your own use. We put it in used yogurt or ice cream containers. **Fifty cents per litre.** We are able to offer wonderful prices as we source well and we are not-for-profit.

Special Offer
For every five seed packs you buy, you'll receive one litre of seed-raising mix to sow them in.

Seed Sowing Guide

February

Amaranth
Asparagus
Basil
Beans; climbing, snake, soy
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum/Chilli
Choko
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jicama
Lettuce
Marigold
Pigeon Pea
Purslane
Radish
Silver beet
Spinach-Brazilian/Egyptian/Warrigal
Spring onion
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomato
Zucchini

March

Basil
Beans; climbing, snake, French
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Cauliflower
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Leek
Lettuce
Marigold
Pigeon pea
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Purslane
Radish
Silver beet
Spring onion
Spinach-Brazilian,/Egyptian/Warrigal
Spring onion
Squash
Sweet potato
Sweet corn
Tomato

This guide is for sowing seeds, not seedlings. There may be several days or even weeks between the optimal time to sow a seed and to transplant a seedling.

Keep in mind that these are only guides. Be aware that micro-climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before or after the recommended times. **ROGI Seed Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits. \$1 per pack for members. \$2 non-members.**

For an up-to-date list of the seed bank stock, please go to:
<http://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/seed%20bank%20list%20March%202017.pdf>

Swap plants, cuttings, home-grown produce, seedlings.

Please consider contributing to any or all of these at various times.

ROGI Rewards

Good quality plants and other garden-related items brought along by members. Everyone who attends is eligible for a ROGI Reward. **Please label plant with its name and variety before placing it on the table.**

Members' Sales

Items you've produced that are surplus to your requirements that **you wish to sell** to other members - eggs, honey, seedlings, lemons, jam, sustainable craft items – things that have cost you money, time and effort to produce. Please ensure items are labelled, named and priced. It is preferable that you staff the stall yourself or time-share with a friend.

FREE swap/share/give-away

(This is for members only)

For those items you don't want payment for eg shredded paper, unwanted volunteer plants (named, please), cuttings, surplus produce, empty pots, strawberry runners and so on. You may want to work out an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

Remember to bring bags/boxes/baskets to take everything home, including purchases of organic produce from Ashley.

Did you know?

You can go online and read every edition of ROGI News since September 2014. Go to www.rogi.com.au/resources.php and browse.

Give away and Lost and Found



I have these two multi-level bird feeders to give away to any member that wishes to have them. Also I have the poly pipe cut to size for a number of poly styrene boxes for anyone wishing to garden using poly boxes as self-watering garden beds. Please contact Garry on 0417824095 if you are interested



This glasses case was left at the Christmas dinner in December. Please get in touch with Toni if yours is missing. Phone 0402 323 704.

We'd like to hear from you.

For example, send us:

- A story about your garden
- A photo of an interesting plant
- An article about an unusual plant
- A request for items or information
- Specific garden or nutrition info
- A recipe for home-grown produce
- A notice that you have something to give away or sell
- A handy technique or tip
- A gardening problem solved
- Anything to do with organic growing
- A review of a ROGI library book

Please send your items to the editor and help keep ROGI News topical, interesting, local and relevant. info@rogi.com.au

March Newsletter Deadline Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 28 February

ROGI is a beneficiary of the My IGA Card Program for **Cleveland IGA** store.

This is how it works:

- Pick up a My IGA Card at the Cleveland store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support

Then, every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, but you are also helping to raise funds for ROGI.



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Here is the salad mix I bought from ROGI. As you can see, it is doing extremely well in spite of the hot dry weather. It's on the western side of the house, but gets shade from about midday. *Ann Roffey*

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www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers

The views expressed in ROGI News are those of the editors and submitters, not necessarily those of Redland Organic Growers Inc

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—1st Thursday every month (ex Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor, 6.30 for 7.30pm. 33573171 <http://bogi.org.au>

Qld Herb Society—1st Tuesday every month, Albion Peace Hall. 7.30pm. 54268299 <http://www.qldherbsociety.org.au/qhs>

Oaklands Street Community Garden—Wed & Friday 9 - noon, Sunday 2- 5pm. Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills. 0419987870



Snake beans thrive in summer in our climate whereas regular beans struggle. This is one day's harvest from three plants of different types—more than plenty for a family. Notice that some of them are 700mm long!