

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 guest speakers.

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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Wampee tree *Clausena lansium* in Kathy's backyard ... with a couple of fruit still left. A citrus relative, it produces clusters of grape-like aromatic fruit with a refreshing sweet and tangy flavour, that can be eaten fresh off the tree.

It can grow to eight metres, but can be pruned to keep it lower if you wish, although the fruits are borne on the tips of the branches, so best to prune a few branches each year to ensure a harvest each year. It has a dense growth habit which makes it an ideal shade tree.

Wampees do well in our climate if you give them the same care and attention as your citrus trees receive.

Backyard Burlblings

I'm sure that in all of your gardens, the plants must have reacted with gratitude and relief as their leaves were washed clean and the roots received a wonderful soaking over the last two weeks.

In our case, the much-needed rain revived not only our gardens, but also our enthusiasm for growing vegetables. The 'Joy of Gardening' had waned considerably during the relentless heat. Just like the plants, our spirits were rejuvenated by the rain and the free nitrogen from the thunderstorms.

As a lot of this activity coincided with the waxing moon, the effects were magnified. Vegetable seeds planted germinated within a few days. New growth and flowers appeared on trees and shrubs and



papaws increased in size. It made us realise once again how closely allied we as humans are to the cycles of nature that go on regardless of our lack of attention.

Even if we don't notice at the time, we are still affected by the phases of the moon and find ourselves doing tasks in the garden such as weeding, pruning or sowing seeds close to the time when a Moon Calendar would indicate we should do those tasks.

In our past life on a Certified Organic farm all of that knowledge was an integral part of the seasonal work cycle for animals, gardens and orchards.

City living makes it a lot harder for us to practice those principles. One hardly notices the moon, let alone sees the stars. Food is available in abundance from supermarkets and our waste is all carted away in a bin.

Many people even take their weeds and grass clippings to the dump and then buy fertilisers and mulch to grow more! Somehow we are protected from the realities of food production and nature.



As ROGI members, you would know that the group is committed to spreading the message about better ways of looking after our food production and reducing our impact on the environment.

To let the wider Redlands community see how we do things at ROGI we are having our annual Expo at Indigiscapes on **24th March** at the **Redlands Living Green Expo**. This promises to be a great day with many stalls, talks and exhibits.

ROGI's contribution will be to show how we can **Close the Circle on Waste** from our own households and gardens by having interactive workshops and demonstrations of **Compost Making, Worm Farming, Bokashi** (kitchen waste fermentation process) and **No Dig Gardening**. We also want to showcase some of the **products/produce from our gardens**. There will also be **children's activities** and seed and plant sales.

To make all this possible we need ROGI members to volunteer to assist with various activities on the day. We only have six elected committee members and four appointed members for various tasks such as Membership, Library and Events.

As our membership is close to 200 it should be feasible to have at least 20 volunteers to share the load for this event.

To register your offer of help, please contact Bronwen on events@rogi.com.au

Please help to make this a fantastic event for all ROGI members and the Redlands!

Good gardening
Julia Geljon
ROGI president

Coming Events

Mar Tues 6	Herb Society meeting	
Wed 14	ROGI meeting	
Sun 18	Garden Visit	See p13
Sun 18	Connect with Koalas	See p15
Sat 24	Redlands Living Green Expo	See p 9
Apr Tues 3	Herb Society meeting	
Thurs 5	BOGI Meeting	
Wed 11	ROGI meeting	

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

March Meeting

Sourcing organics

We will have two speakers in March; both talking about how to find organic food (and why) without having to leave the Redlands.

Amanda has been supplying certified organic beef, lamb, pork and chicken meat for 10 years.

She works with graziers who use humane animal practices appropriate to the particular species, which are, of course, grass-fed—no grain.

The bacon, ham and corned beef are made the safe old-fashioned way with no nitrates.

From an environmental standpoint, Amanda and her graziers are committed to working the land so as to leave it in better shape than when they started.



Marion from Wray Organic lives and breathes certified organic; she knew it was the only way to ensure the best possible health for her family when her first child was due.

She is adamant that basic foods - the non-processed, non-modified, non-synthetic type of foods our grandparents grew and chewed pre-war is where we need to be.

Come along to ROGI to learn what certified organic means to you and your community and how this may inspire your own journey to wellness, through growing your own and finding ways and places to buy what you can't grow yourself.

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

February speaker

Russell Zabel

Australian Stingless Native Bees

- Russell and his wife Janine keep native and honey (European) bees. They have 165 colonies of honey bees and 650 of native bees. They live in Hattonvale halfway between Brisbane and Toowoomba. He has kept honey bees for 50 years and native bees for 30 years.
- He is one of the biggest beekeepers in Australia. They live on bees (it is their income).
- They buy, sell, make boxes, and teach beekeeping in indigenous communities.
- In Australia there are many species of bees. There are two classes– solitary and social. There are 1600 different species of native bees in Australia.
- The main food source of the Australian Stingless Native Bee is **Eucalyptus** (gum) trees. They will also visit other natives such as **grevilleas** and **banksias**, and exotics, as well as many fruit trees and vegetables.
- Honey bees produce 200kg of honey a year. Native bees produce ½ kg a year. This is mainly sold to restaurants (such as 'Orana' in Adelaide, for their bush tucker recipes). The native bee honey sells for \$100kg!
- Russell houses his native bees in boxes



that are made from Cypress Pine, which is durable and doesn't rot. His boxes are 45mm thick for insulation (thin timber doesn't suit our climate). He makes 1000 boxes a year. Many colonies were lost in the 45°C heat of February last year in Plainlands.

- Native bees are scarce in suburbia, as their homes have been bulldozed down. However, they are adapting. The most popular site for native bees is the water meter box.
- **Uses of native bees** are pollination, honey production, wax production, and to pollinate around avocado and macadamia orchards.
- Native bee honey will ferment – keep in the fridge.
- Russell recently went to Hawaii to do a presentation about our native bees – they are huge growers of the *Macadamia* tree and our native bees are the best pollinators
- Cane toads will eat native bees.
- The Asian honey bee is the next threat to our bees. It has arrived in Cairns (in a shipping container). It has so far spread as far south as Innisfail. The Varroa mite is one of the most serious problems threatening honey bees in the world today. Australia is now the only continent that does not have the Varroa mite.
- Colonies of bees should be kept five metres apart. Bees do fight. Aggressive swarms can attack colonies.
- Don't move colonies of bees. They will fly back "home". If they must be moved, move half a metre a day.
- Native bees don't work under 18°C or over 35°C. They need shade by 10am in summer. Face box north-east to the sun.
- Bees will fly 500 metres from the hive to collect nectar.
- The bees will collect the nectar, swallow

it, process the nectar, and then, back in the hive, regurgitate it and put it into cells. The nectar becomes honey.

- There are three types of bees: The Queen, who is three times larger than the workers; The Workers (female); and the Drones (male).
- Russell visits his agisted hives each year to harvest honey and split the hives from September to December. Ideally, if you owned a hive and wished to split it, you would split in September and harvest the honey in October. When splitting, do not put the new hive in the same yard, or the bees will go back to their original hive. You need to take the hive two km away for a month. Native bees will propagate themselves – they will move to another location if not split by humans.
- Social native bees live in tropical parts of the world – Africa, South America, parts of Asia, and Australia. Native bees occur along the top of Western Australia, the top of the Northern Territory (and a small patch further down), and along the eastern coast of Australia as far south as Bega, NSW.



- The most common three species of stingless bees are – *Austroplebeia australis*, *Tetragonula carbonaria* and *Tetragonula hockingsi*.
 - *Austroplebeia australis* are found in southern and western Queensland. They are very scarce and difficult to locate—they are very timid in character.
 - *Tetragonula hockingsi* are found in northern Queensland, although they are coming down to Brisbane as our climate is getting warmer. They are very difficult to keep in the cooler regions. Quite an aggressive bee.
 - *Tetragonula carbonaria* are the most widespread of the native stingless bees and are the most common in South East Queensland. They have been found in the Atherton Tablelands down to Bega on the southern coast of NSW, but the bulk of the hives lie between Sydney and Bundaberg. They can adapt to a wide variety of nest trees. These little bees are very active during all



Tetragonula carbonaria being split. It is a spiral brood.

seasons and are excellent for crop pollination. It is the species that ROGI members are agisting for Russell. Its common name is the Sugarbag bee.

- During January and February, you may notice seeds blocking up the entrance to the hives. The little bees will visit the eucalyptus tree named Cadaga or Cadaghi (*Corymbia torelliana*) during the flowering season and when the seedbeds open. The bees will be seen carrying the seeds back to the hives and depositing them inside the hive and outside the entrance. The seed has no value, but the resin attached to the seed is used as a nest-building material and sealing material. The bees bring so many seeds home that the entrance is often clogged right up. See below.



Russell has heard of hives dying out due to this happening. Please clear the entrance when this occurs. The Cadaghi tree has now been declared a weed outside its normal habitat of the Atherton Tableland. Please do not plant this tree. See photo right.

- Most hives of *Tetragonula carbonaria* regularly appear to be swarming during the

summer months. This is not associated with the establishment of a new hive, which is undertaken by the honeybee. The bees hang around the outside of the hive in large numbers. We do not know why they do it. It is not something to be concerned about.

- Please don't use poisons near the hives.
- What Russell looks for in hosting (agisting) his bees: Acreage, Shady, Secure.

Reported by Ann Roffey

For more information go to www.zabel.com.au



Cadaghi tree

Garden visit Kathy Springate

Kathy has been working in Family Day Care for over 30 years so she is very experienced with young children and their social emotional, physical and cognitive development.

When she bought her house nine years ago she designed a beautiful garden to engage children in so many different ways and to encourage them to interact with it and each other in imaginative and creative play.

There is whimsy at every turn. Right: In the shade on the footpath, Kathy has placed a welcoming seat for people to rest and have a 'cup of tea' or a drink.

Below: Nearby In a hollow of a tree on the foot-path is a little bird's 'nest'.



Right: The sign says it all. A playground designer helped Kathy with ideas.



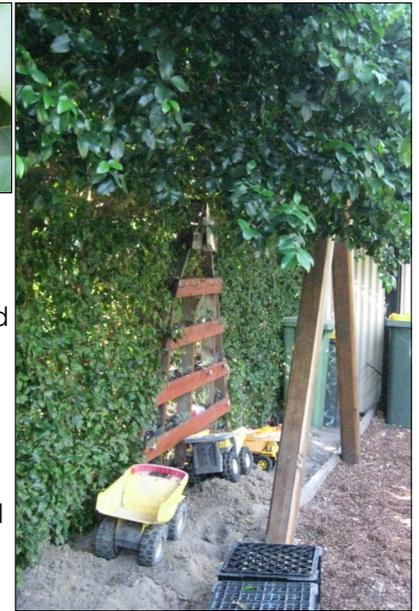
The garden abounds in all sorts of containers for children to sift, pour, measure and make anything they can imagine—all at child's height. Natural garden 'walls' are made, in this instance, with living bamboo.

Creepers are growing to provide other natural walls to delineate the various garden rooms.

In this area, nasturtium from last year's crop is coming back to life to provide shade over another work/play station. Pots of herbs sit on top.



The back fence is a Brazilian cherry hedge. The coarse sand is ideal for road works and entices children to use tip trucks to cart it around the garden. The old pallet is made into a vertical garden and has hooks and knobs to hang things on.



Right: Materials and plants used in the garden vary in shape and texture. There is wood-chip mulch beneath the tyres which children can jump into or climb over, and strappy-leaved plants to touch and feel. Bells and wind through leaves provide different sounds.



Children see and learn that fruits, such as this fig, grow on trees ...



... and that paper wasps are okay if you leave them alone.



Top is the view from the back fence nine years ago, and then how it is now, looking towards the house from the sandpit with its water drum is one of the little garden rooms inviting exploration.



Top is from the house looking towards the back fence. Note the different levels. Now the slope has been used to advantage providing some exciting slides and 'dangerous' bike speedways.

Recycled boots make interesting planters, as do many other found objects.



The scent of the three myrtle trees (cinnamon, lemon and aniseed) that line the sandpit is another sensory experience.



Running down one side of the garden is a 'dry creek bed' made with rocks of varying sizes to add a contrast to the sand, grass, mulch, pavers, tyres and other textures.



Left: Setting a good example: a place for everything and everything in its place.



Kathy and Linda discuss Australian natives such as lilly pillies.

Gennaro with Sophie, Rhonda and Garry. He explained how, by pruning a mulberry after its harvest, you can get a second and maybe a third crop.



"A child's work is play" ... one could imagine little children happily exploring and being busy in this beautiful and creative garden while developing so many skills and a love of life- giving learning. Thank you, Kathy, for showing us your garden.

Reported by Mary Imer

Plant of the month

Strawberries

Strawberries are in the *Rosaceae* family (with apples, cherries, raspberries). The botanical name is *Fragaria* meaning 'fragrance'. Modern supermarkets should have their own Latin name for the strawberries they stock; I believe it should be *saeclum insapiens transporter baca* meaning – 'tasteless transporter berry' because that is what they are. We are lucky in that we can gain knowledge and grow our own organic sweet, fragrant, fresh *Fragaria*.

March is the best time to plant strawberries. The best way to grow them is to plant runners. When buying runners ensure they are clean and virus-free. This is really important as strawberries are prone to diseases. Put the runners into a bucket of water with some seaweed solution and let them stand while you prepare the bed. (This puts less stress on the runners.)

Strawberries need full sun and well-drained soil. If the drainage in your soil isn't that terrific, create a mound of soil and plant the runners into the top of the mound.

They are greedy plants, so get them off to a good start by digging in plenty of compost, well-rotted manure, a handful of *Earthlife Garden Mate* (as that's what I have on hand from the November meeting) and some biochar to make all that wonderful humus available to the strawberries. Then every two weeks they will love a drink of weak Seasol or worm juice to keep going strong.

The strawberry farm at Wellington Point (the last in Redlands, and sadly not organic) has

black plastic placed beneath the plant leaves to keep the fruit clean. This doesn't work well in backyards, as it can heat the soil excessively. We work on a smaller scale so can be more hands-on; our best bet is to use an alternative. The traditional and best method is to lay straw (or sugar cane mulch) under the leaves; you can even use pine needles as strawberries like a slightly acidic soil of pH 5.0 – 6.0. The mulch needs to be replenished from time to time.

The plants need plenty of water, either by drip irrigation or overhead watering. Only water your berries in the morning so the leaves have time to dry to prevent fungal problems.

If you are interested in moon phases but have never given it a go, the best dates this March to plant your runners are from

the 9th to the 22nd, so get out there and give it a go and see what comes of it.

Ashley will have organic and virus-free runners for sale alongside his organic produce at his stall outside.

Snails and slugs love strawberries too. Try sprinkling diatomaceous earth (DE) over the mulch.

Below: Runners planted on mounds in a raised bed in full sun. Sugar cane mulch and irrigation ready to go.



Closing the Circle on Waste

Saturday 24th March 9am to 2pm

“Discover inspiring ideas to help you create new habits at home and in the garden. You will love our totally green program of reduce, reuse and recycle.

There is something for the whole family at this free event including workshops, talks, craft and activities.

Enjoy the market stalls, food and music. ”

We need extra volunteers to help on the day.

Here are some ways you can help to:

- Set up and/or take down the displays
- Help give information at the ROGI display
- Assist with the seed bank & seedling sales & enquiries
- Assist at one of the stations:-
 - Composting
 - Worm farms
 - Bokashi
 - Raised/no-dig garden beds
 - Seed collecting/saving
- Be a general floating helper to go wherever needed.

Information and training will be supplied for all the activities.

To find out more and to register your interest, contact Bronwen on events@rogi.com.au or 0402 057 752

‘It was after I helped at the Expo a few years ago that I felt I was really part of something that was making a difference... and I made many wonderful new friends.’



Above: The seeds and seedlings stall last year.



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

Plant Clinic

Q: What is this plant? Is it a weed?

A: Discussion ensued. **Native violet** was ruled out. Other options are **gotu kola** *Centella asiatica* and **kidney weed** *Dichondra repens*. The differences between them are that *D. repens* has



leaves with smooth edges, and its flowers have five whitish to pale yellow-green petals with five sepals; whereas *C. asiatica* has toothed or serrated margins and its flowers have five petals either pink, white or purplish and no sepals. Since there are no flowers, we have to go on the leaves, which have toothed edges. Both are edible.

So it is **gotu kola**, a valuable native herb. Not a weed (unless it's growing where you don't want it).

Q: My gardenia has **black soot** on it. What to do?

A: The sooty mould is feeding off honeydew exuded by sap-sucking insects such as scale, mealybugs, aphids, and so on. You may notice ants—they like the honeydew as well.



Treat it by spraying with eco oil as a short-term solution. Introducing beneficial insects that predate on the pests is a long-term method.

Q: We have this little evodia tree (*Melicope rubra*) and these are the fruit. **Are they edible?**

A: Yes, they are edible. However, there seems to be no evidence that they are safe for humans to eat, because it seems no-one who may have eaten it has put that fact on the internet. Birds, particularly lorikeets and honeyeaters, enjoy it.



Q: My **fig tree** has no fruit on it and the leaves are curled and being eaten by something.

A: The consensus was to not worry about it. It is deciduous and the leaves will all fall off soon.



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 solve your problem or identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

Q: I have a fig tree with a pawpaw tree which has recently grown up through the fig. The fig tree is now dying, it seems. What should I do?



A: No-one could help with this at the Feb meeting. An update from the owner ... 'On reflection I think it is just the end of the fig tree season. It is looking similar to other figs. I think it's just a coincidence that the pawpaw has grown there.'

Q: What is this? Is it a weed? Is it edible or useful?

A: Suggestions were that it was some kind of brassica or fleabane. Both were subsequently dismissed. An update: Kate Wall identified it as



vervain. The blue/purple flowers are good for attracting bees, butterflies etc and the leaves can be cooked - I think they are bitter raw. You can use the flowers and seeds as well. So it is edible and useful.

For you ... chook owners

We really do want to make a bulk purchase of certified organic feed from **Country Heritage Feeds** so we all can take advantage of the savings. The minimum order is 50 bags. We plan to place an order at the beginning of every third month for you to pick-up at the ROGI meeting that month. Please order in advance, or set up a regular order that will last three months. (If people order more, we could change it to every second month).

Why feed organic to chooks?

The wisdom is that 'we are what we eat', and also 'we are what we eat, eats'. If our chooks eat food that's laced with various agricultural chemicals, their eggs will be too. We eat the eggs, we get the chemicals. Surely that's what we, as organic growers, are trying to avoid.

How much should I order?

A chook needs to eat 120gm of food a day. If she has 20gm food scraps and bugs from free-ranging, she'll need 100gm of feed. Six chooks eat 600gm a day or about 18kg a month - one bag a month: three bags every three months.

How much is it?

Coarse Layer $\$23.35 + 2.50^* + 2.35^* = \28.20
 Backyard Layer Pellet $\$23.80 + ** = \28.68
 *Delivery of \$2.50 per bag and GST apply.

See the wholesale price list below and look up the products the website to check them out - <http://www.organicstockfeed.com/poultry/layer-birds>

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 keen to buy the highlighted feeds, but you may order other items.

How much cheaper is it?

Quite a bit. The retail price of **Coarse Layer** is \$36.95 at a local produce store and up to \$39.95 + freight of \$9.95 if ordered online. So it's at least \$8 cheaper per bag - about 21% off.

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.

For this to work efficiently, we ask you to **order at the March ROGI meeting or by phone or email** (see below), and make your **payment** online if possible - BSB 633000. A/C 136137296. If this isn't possible, you must pay when you collect the bags from the April ROGI meeting.

Please contact Sharr on 0423503983 or president@rogi.com.au well before the deadline for ordering of **Monday 2 April**.

Examples of the feeds available:

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.



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
- WHOLEGRAIN RATION
- 20KG PACKAGING
- FEED FROM POINT OF LAYER (18-20 WEEKS)

Book Reviews

Three very different books are featured this month. They have been in the library for some time, so I thought we could revisit them. Maybe there's one for you.

Wild Foods

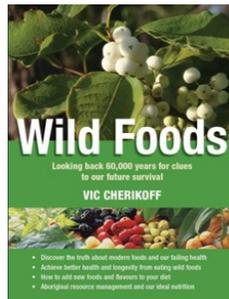
Vic Cherikoff has been credited as 'a pioneer of the commercialisation of wild foods'; as such he is passionate about including wild foods in our diet to improve our health.

He begins with what I can only describe as a rant against the big corporations and agribusinesses that grow and control our food chain. He claims they have denatured our fruit and vegetables by breeding ever bigger, sweeter and starchier varieties that do little to feed our bodies but have better sale appeal and keeping qualities. He postulates that eating these leads to diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

According to Vic our health would be better served if we took note of how our Indigenous people survived 60,000 years by wild harvesting grains, seeds, roots, berries and other fruits. He states that the early white settlers ignored the evidence before their eyes, as they did not recognise the grain cultivation and storage methods of Aboriginal tribes.

He tabulates the many diseases caused by poor nutrition and explains in great detail how our cells are affected by our modern diet. He suggests we add native wild foods to our diet to counteract these effects, but then launches into the possible toxic effects of some of the foods and is scathing of chefs who promote Indigenous ingredients without knowing the full story.

He also explains the chemical components of



various traditional and other foods and how they affect our taste buds and hunger. This leads to ways of recognising and preparing wild foods ... with excellent photographic detail.

This book needs careful reading to get hold of all the facts as it is a huge concept. In his passion for his subject at times he tends to preach rather than educate. However, there is a lot of food for thought about future food production in this book.

Reviewed by Julia Geljon

Believing Cassandra

How to be an Optimist in a Pessimist's World

I grabbed this randomly at the last ROGI meeting—to earn a spot in the library, it must have had something going for it. Weird title, though.

I hadn't heard the Greek myth of Cassandra, daughter of the king and queen of Troy. Given the power of accurate prophecy by Apollo, as well as the curse that no-one would believe her, she knew what would happen with that horse, but her warnings fell on deaf ears. Catastrophe ensued.

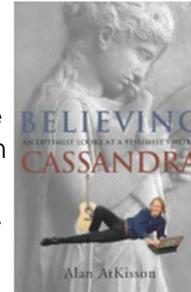
Hence the title and how it fits the issues that continue to face the world now, 19 years after Alan AtKisson wrote this book.

I found it disturbing to start with because it all seems so hopeless, with the developed world's constant push for growth and the devastating environmental results of that, but he's an optimist, and his writing style and the well-researched science and facts kept me going.

Today's Cassandras are happy to be proved wrong; they want their warnings heeded so the foretold doom does *not* come to pass. He encourages the reader to believe that a sustainable future is possible and to take action to achieve it.

By growing our food organically, by composting,

A while ago our 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.



by making do instead of buying new, by recycling, reusing (and all the other 'r' words) instead of adding to the waste stream, by lobbying politicians, by doing all the other small and large actions, we are aiming to be a part of the solution.

Reviewed by Jill Nixon

Creating a Useful Garden

If you are new to food gardening this book may be just what you're looking for.

Cheryl Maddocks has kept it entirely practical and it covers pretty much everything you need to know to get started, such as ... how to:

- assess and improve your soil,
- use natural pest and weed control,
- design the various sections of the garden,
- choose what to grow when,
- grow fruit, nuts and herbs as well as vegetables,
- make the most of companion planting.

There are numerous lists and tables which are helpful for when you're deciding what to plant.

Actually, this is the sort of book that everyone needs to own, as you'd find yourself referring to it often while you're getting started. That fact that it is small and lightweight, while being a sturdy hard-back, makes it easy to have in your trug while you're gardening.

Once you're well on your way, then you will turn to books that cover the issues mentioned above in more detail, and that are meant specifically for our sub-tropical climate, such as those by Annette Macfarlane, all of which are in the library, (but also that you really need to own).

Reviewed by Jill Nixon

We aim to put a review of new books in ROGI News before they are added to the library. If you'd like the privilege of being the first to read a new book, and then write about it, please let me know on info@rogi.com.au

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.

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!

Growing garlic

Why not try growing garlic this year?

For the past three years, I have successfully grown garlic in my raised vege garden. I love adding garlic to casseroles and soups; even if it's not specified, I add it anyway!

I decided to grow my own after reading an excellent article by Sunshine Coast-based Anne Gibson (The Microgardener) – and this is now my 'go-to' guide for how to grow garlic successfully:

<https://themicrogardener.com/5-step-guide-to-growing-gorgeous-garlic/>

A lot of people mistakenly believe that garlic can only be grown in a cool climate. You can grow garlic in South-East Queensland, you just need to plant the right variety.

I purchase my organic garlic bulbs from Green Harvest – just make sure you choose the ones that are suitable for a warm climate.

So far, I have grown Glen Large and Italian Pink. Of these varieties, I prefer the Italian Pink – the cloves are much larger, and I don't have to spend as much time peeling them.

The best time to plant your garlic in SE Qld is in autumn, **March to May**. Garlic does take about six months to grow, but it's well worth the wait!

Ann Roffey

Right: Some of my Italian Pink garlic harvest from last year. I'll plant more this year.

Far right: Last year's crop 'curing' (for a month) in my garage.



Above: Garlic is relatively pest-free. Water it regularly and give liquid fertilisers frequently. Keep well mulched and weed-free.



Garden Visits

18 March - Sunday

Robyn Dwyer's garden at Victoria Point. She bought this large property recently and has done some good things, but would appreciate suggestions from ROGI members. So come along to teach and/or learn .

Field Trips

Nothing is confirmed as yet, but we are investigating visiting various places at: **Currumbin Valley, Sunshine Coast Hinterland, and 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 the ROGI meeting.

Our Garden Visit calendar is full for 2018 (except for April and 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

Plant your own seed

We'll supply a container to sow the seed in, ROGI seed-raising mix and the seeds.

At home, you need to:

- keep the mixture moist
- keep pots in a protected well-lit, shaded spot
- harden off new seedlings by gradually increasing their exposure to sun and heat
- water with weak Seasol solution or worm liquid when the second set of leaves appears (the first 'true' leaves)
- transplant into a larger pot or the garden

The seeds this month will be cauliflower.

Seed Saving

Janet has proposed that ROGI set up a **Seed Saving Group**

This would be a small group of 6-10 people to meet regularly apart from ROGI meetings at a time convenient to all participants.

The idea is that the group learns correct seed saving procedures in a short course with a knowledgeable tutor e.g. Linda Brennan.

Some reasons why we need to save seeds:

- A greater range of seeds in the seed bank
- Use seeds adapted to our environment
- Sustainable use of resources and save money
- Learn new skills
- Possibility to breed new varieties of plants

If you are interested in being a part of this group please contact Janet on Jcrighton144@gmail.com or 0407 787 936 for more information.

Special Offer

For every 5 seed packs you buy, you'll receive one litre of ROGI seed-raising mix to sow them in.

Please **return seedling pots** to be reused. Especially the 4-cell ones.
Other clean used pots—small sizes only up to 12cm diameter. Square pots are good too.

Our **seed-raising mix** (a blend of vermiculite, coir peat, 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 a litre. We can offer good prices as we source well and we are not-for-profit.

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.

Seed Sowing Guide

March

Basil
Bean: Lablab, Madagascar
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

April

Artichoke; Jerusalem artichoke
Asparagus
Bean: Lablab, Madagascar
Bean—French
Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Capsicum/Chilli
Cauliflower
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Endive
Florence fennel
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Onions/garlic
Potatoes
Radish
Silver beet
Spinach: Brazilian/Egyptian/Warrigal/
Kangkong
Sweet potato
Tomato
Yacon

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 a 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.

Connect with Cleveland Koalas

Sunday 18 March 2018, 1.30pm to 5.30pm

Where: Redlands Memorial Hall, 46 Smith Street, Cleveland (next to Redlands Museum).

What:

- 1.30pm: Talks from a koala researcher and a council officer on Redlands koalas.
- 2.45pm & 4.15pm: Guided walks to search for koalas in the wild.
- 2.30pm to 5.00pm: Lend a hand to plant koala habitat anytime throughout the afternoon.

Bring: Enclosed shoes, water, and sun protection.

Provided: Planting equipment and gloves.

Free plants for all tree planters!

Bookings preferred but not essential.

Please phone 3824 8611 or email indigis-capes@redland.qld.gov.au to book.



Believe it or not

If this was the first of April, you'd have trouble believing it ...

A Japanese company has created a banana that you don't need to peel before you eat it!

Read more about it here:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2018-02-20/edible-skin-bananas-from-japan-developed-from-old-variety/9445178>

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

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

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 also help to raise funds for ROGI.



An update on the war on waste issue: watch this short film taken by a diver in the ocean near Bali.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-06/diver-films-wave-of-plastic-pollution-off-bali-coast/9508662>

The volume of waste (mostly plastics of every type) is overwhelming. Something has to be done ... soon!



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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

Soon we will be purchasing this book for the ROGI library.

We would like to offer you the opportunity to be the first to read it, and then to tell us about it ... a review to go in April's ROGI News.

The first person to get in touch with us at info@rogi.com.au will be the winner.

Here is a bit about it:

“This 592 page manual shows how Australians can downshift and retrofit their homes, gardens, communities and, above all, themselves to be more self-organised, sustainable and resilient into an uncertain future.

It promises a challenging but exciting mix of satisfying work, a more meaningful way of living and hope for the next generation.

RetroSuburbia is divided into three main sections: the Built, the Biological and the Behavioural along with the introductory section 'Setting the scene'.”

It sounds like the perfect primer for keen organic growers. Ed.

