

ROGI News

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the Covid-19 virus, all ROGI meetings and events have been cancelled until further notice. The ROGI Management Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all members good health.

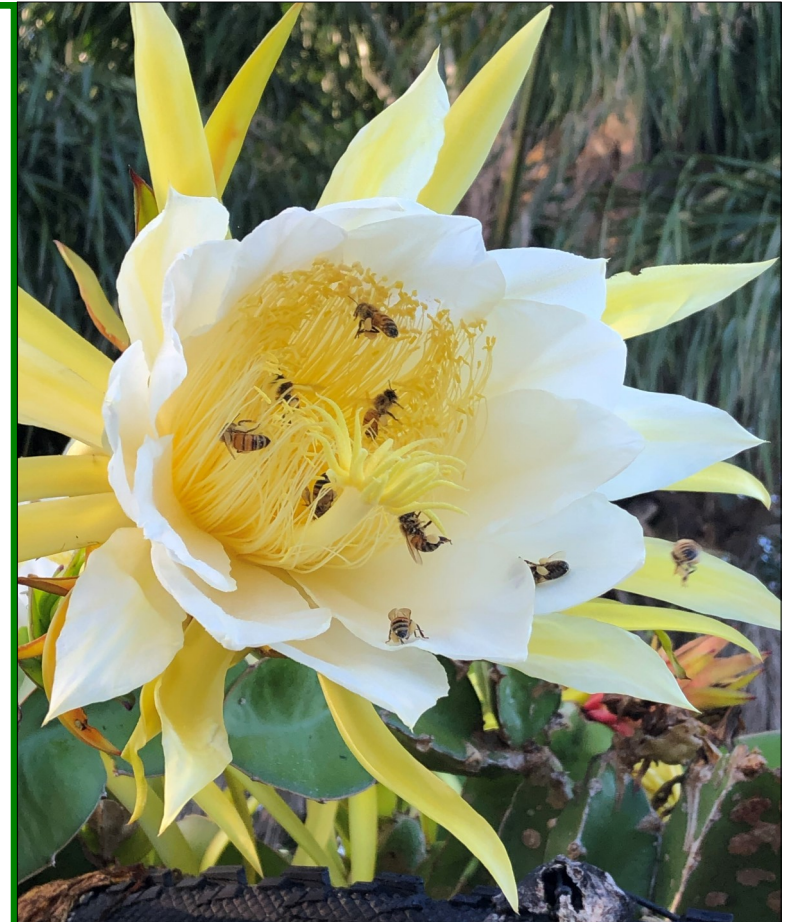
If you are in need of assistance, please do not hesitate to get into contact with one of us (all email addresses are on the back page of this newsletter).

The newsletter will still be emailed each month, please contribute if you can. The deadline for the next newsletter is the **27th May 2020** - email info@rogi.com.au

Stay safe and happy gardening!

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Discussion solved about who pollinates dragon fruit flowers since they bloom during the night. These bees were busy at work before 7.30am, and gone once the sun hit that part of Jill's garden.

Jill's Jottings

In ROGI we often talk about why we grow food, whether you have a few plants in pots on a balcony or you're on a large property with vegie plots, an orchard and space to spare. Invariably the answer will be something like:

I want to avoid chemicals in my food

I want my food to be fresh

I think it's healthy to get in the garden and embrace Nature

I want to grow my own herbs – they are so expensive to buy

It just feels right – it's part of being human

Why did you start growing your own food? Why did you join ROGI? In the past month, many people have joined ROGI for the first time – they now have time to spend in the garden.

It's interesting that when people feel threatened and uneasy as we are now (and as people were during WW2), we turn to gardening. Not just any gardening – food gardening. The next big shortage to hit after the toilet paper debacle was seeds and seedlings. Then it was chooks. It makes sense ... people want to aim towards self-sufficiency. They want to grow food.

We're told Australian farmers grow enough food for 75 million people. More than enough. However, behind that is the issue of getting that food to the consumer. Much of the packaging isn't made in Australia, so a shortage there means the food can't leave the farm.

Packaging is not a problem when you grow your own food. If your neighbours also grow food, you can swap and share – a backyard co-operative. The recent book (and associated website) *RetroSuburbia* is a great resource to help you find your way. Have a look at <https://online.retrosuburbia.com> where it is now available at whatever price you wish to pay.

What we need is national food security which incorporates local food production and a strong and cohesive neigh-

bourhood. Being a part of a community group like ROGI is a great start.

What does ROGI membership bring you today, apart from this newsletter? We are fortunate that one of our members, who is a film director, has offered to produce a virtual ROGI meeting, which you'll be able to 'attend' in front of your computer. It is still in production. Watch you inbox in the near future. There will be a virtual Field Trip to a local organic farm as well.

At ROGI meetings we have various 'stalls' - Joy and Tony have **organic honey**, Margaret makes and sells **sustainability products** to help reduce plastic use, Janet has **seeds and seedlings**, and so on. These are still available, plus extras.

- Call Margaret on 0418 100 173 for sustainability products.
- I still have the seeds and seedlings at my place. Check out Resources at www.rogi.com.au for an up-to-date list of these.
- I also have a supply of honey, as Tony is quite ill in hospital and Joy is the only visitor he is allowed.
- On **page 20-21** you will see an article about the benefits of using **biochar**. I have packs of this available. Text me for any of these on 0418 717 735.
- You can buy **fresh, local organic produce** direct from the farm in Birkdale. Franco, Bonnie and Luke are the farmers. They are open for ROGI members on Mondays after 1pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Give Luke a call during these times to arrange a time for pickup. His phone number is in the email where you found the newsletter link.

Please make use of ROGI's services, and get in touch if you have any ideas. Offer to be a part of the filming for the next virtual ROGI meeting or offer your garden for a virtual Garden Visit. Sow surplus seeds so you can give away the extra seedlings.

May your garden flourish and your harvest dreams come to fruition.

Jill Nixon, ROGI President



VALE ELAINE ELLIOTT

It is with sadness that we learned of the death on Easter Sunday of long-term ROGI member Elaine Elliott, after a year-long illness. Elaine used to come to our meetings with two friends and had been attending field trips. Our thoughts are with her husband David and daughter Davina during this difficult time.

Membership Information

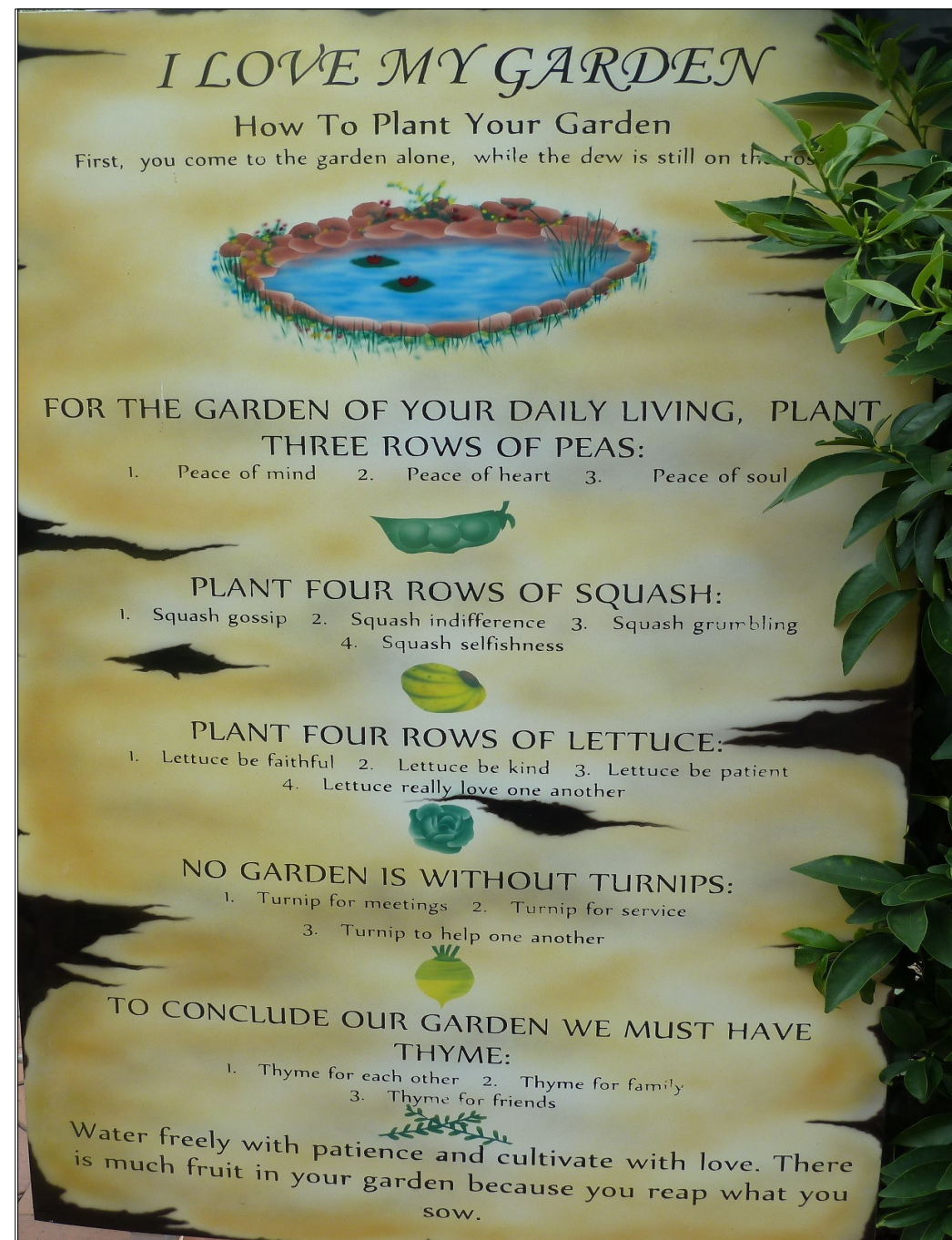
- **Cash** payment at ROGI meeting
- **Cheques** made payable to Redland Organic Growers Inc - pay at meeting or to PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
- **Direct Deposit** to BSB 633 000, Account Number 136137296 (Bendigo Bank, Middle St, Cleveland)
- **IMPORTANT! Reference** - Your initials and surname are 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/>

Member Category	Members Renewing For 2020	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
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 of age.

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

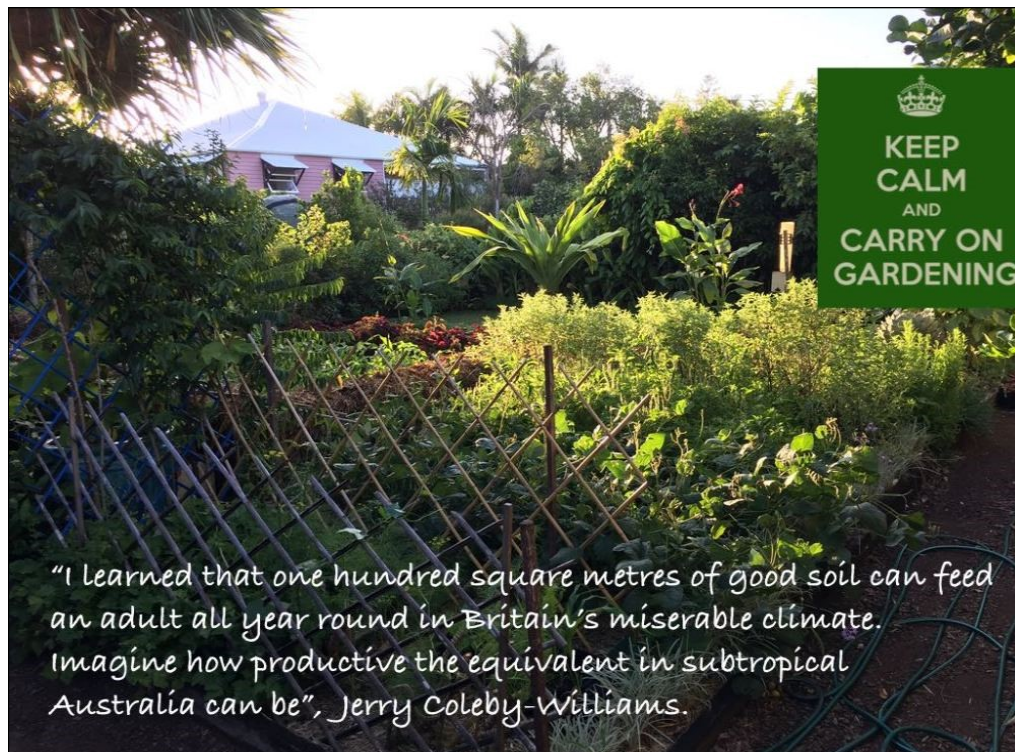


Food to plant and sow now in Australia

By Jerry Coleby-Williams

Grow your own food: Action is the antidote to anxiety.

The government is right to say Australia grows a surplus of food, but suddenly the cost of buying that fresh produce has leapt - a consequence of crippling drought followed by catastrophic bushfire and then, in places, flooding rain. As we garden in an increasingly surprising climate, the reality of organising a reliable flow of nourishing food to provide a household with regular, thrifty meals falls on those who have suddenly become unwaged. In some places, nurseries are being stripped of seedlings and packets of seed as a nation prepares to overwinter in self-isolation at home and in the garden. What climate zone is my garden in? What can I grow now? Why is crop rotation vital for success? Can I grow food in pots? So many questions to answer.



"I learned that one hundred square metres of good soil can feed an adult all year round in Britain's miserable climate. Imagine how productive the equivalent in subtropical Australia can be", Jerry Coleby-Williams.

Instant food

The quickest meal you will never need to grow is already in your garden. It's waiting to be recognised by you. If you are one of those people who didn't treat your garden to glyphosate, the world's favourite herbicide, you can have your first feed from chemical-free, self-sown edible plants – 'wild greens'.

For those who did use it, it's time to lift your game and for me to put on my hat as Patron of the [National Toxics Network Inc.](#) Glyphosate is a herbicide now known to be a [risk to human and environmental health](#). It may remain in plants and soil for up to a year after application.

Volunteer, or self-sown plants, can be a great addition to the garden, especially when things don't go according to plan, click on the link below:

[Volunteer Plants, Gardening Australia, Series 20 Episode 32](#)

Fast food

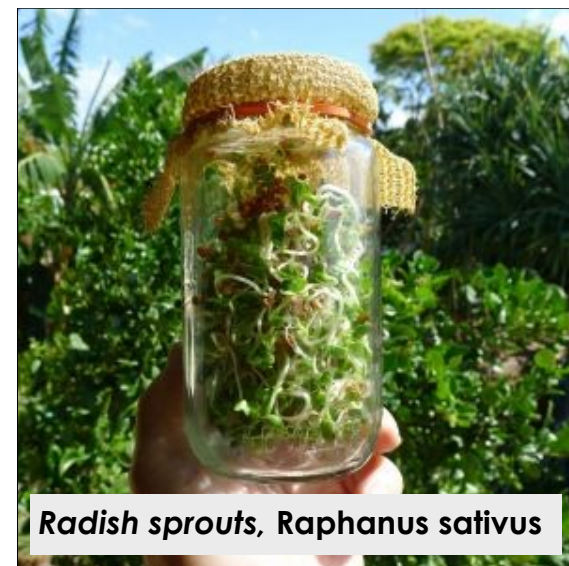
The next quickest meal you can grow is sprouted seeds. Up to the time a seedling produces its first pair of true leaves, it is more nutrient rich than at any other stage of its life.

No garden or balcony needed, you just need a well-lit windowsill and a few basic items. Sown in succession, you've got nutrient dense food in days.

I started sprouting mung beans when I was a child.

Youngsters can play an active role in household nutrition as they practise sprouting seed and learning how to prepare meals with them, click on the link below:

[Growing sprouts, Gardening Australia, Series 18 Episode 03](#)



Food to plant and sow now in Australia *(continued)*

Food in containers

I have a garden, but I still rely on containers for some plants. If you have a balcony or a small courtyard garden, once you've gathered those wild greens and seed are sprouting on the windowsill, it's time to turn your attention to growing things in containers.

A dwarf fruit tree can live its whole productive life in a container. A 60 – 80 litre container is sufficient for a dwarf mango, lemon or avocado. Do not waste money filling a pot like this with potting mix, instead make your own mix using equal parts of horticultural sand, garden soil and premium grade potting mix. Never forget to put crocks over the drainage holes – crocks must be curved so they hold back potting mix, preventing it from being rinsed out, but they allow water to drain out.

Strawberry has shallow roots and it thrives in a container. In winter, I move them into a spot with full, all day sunshine. In summer, I move them where they are shaded from scorching hot western sunshine in the afternoon. I do the same with boxes of multiplier spring onions, a cultivar which reproduces by offsets (cloning), not seed.

I grow giant society garlic and tree onions in terracotta pots because unlike plastic, terracotta breathes. While onions like regular watering during the growing season, their roots are killed by stagnant, waterlogged soil.

I dislike styrofoam and I hate these styrofoam vegetable packing boxes being used once and then becoming instant landfill. However, you can easily convert them into serviceable self-watering containers, click on the link below:

[Make your own self-watering pot, Gardening Australia, Series 24 Episode 34](#)

I'm never without fresh, container grown herbs either. Some of the finest, most versatile herbs need damp soil, but this is hard to achieve when there are watering restrictions. But I have a simple, water-efficient system that guarantees me an all year round supply of zesty, fresh produce.

Click on the link below:

[Save water, even if some herbs like it damp, Gardening Australia, Series 30 Episode 23](#)

During the floods of 2011, these container grown strawberries didn't lose a fruit.



Growing food in soil

For those of us fortunate enough to have soil for food production, I served my apprenticeship as a home gardener under the training of my four 'Dig for Victory' grandparents. For many years, I have given the talk 'My Family and other Vegetables' to explain how my mob got through years of air raids and rationing during two world wars. Colchester, our home town, was the first place to be bombed by zeppelin. I've still got the postcard.

I come from four generations of English farmers and gardeners. I was born in a house in London which my grandfather helped build (he was a quantity surveyor who also helped rebuild the Houses of Parliament after WW2) and I learned to garden in the 'Victory Garden' which my grandmother planted. My other two grandparents were lifelong allotment holders and they encouraged me to garden competitively.

My grandparents taught me that 100 square metres of good soil can feed an adult all year round. If this is possible in Britain's miserable cold temperate climate, where it rains every third day, you get about 100 days of clear sky a year and occasionally the soil freezes solid for days, then you can replicate this success with flair anywhere in Australia.

To get an idea of how to set up a garden for the long term, you can click on the link below:

[Having it all, Gardening Australia, Series 28 Episode 18](#)

Compost - the universal soil improver

Compost is the universal soil improver. By regularly digging in compost, the market garden at La Perouse, which happens to be Australia's oldest Chinese market garden (in Sydney) has converted dune sand into soil that cuts like chocolate cake. In under three years, digging in compost converted the heavy clay subsoil in my Brisbane garden into something suitable for vegetable growing. Organic rich topsoil develops into a healthy rhizosphere, the zone in which an intricately interconnected, mutually-beneficial, living matrix seething with microbes, fungi, animals and roots, creates an environment for growing nourishing food.

If you can't dig because the soil is full of fruit tree or palm roots, regularly mulching the surface with compost or any of a variety of leafy mulches, like shredded prunings, leaf litter, bamboo leaves or lawn clippings encourages earthworms to feed, dig, aerate, drain and cycle minerals through the topsoil for you. These little diggers facilitate the natural sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide gas; they help climate repair.

Rotate your crops each season

Crop rotation is vital as it frustrates pests and diseases, making life hard for them to flourish on their favourite hosts. Crop rotation has the reverse effect on food plants, it helps them thrive. In each rotation, grow new crops that are botanically unrelated to the ones you have just removed.

So, by replacing capsicum ([Solanaceae](#) family) with kale ([Brassicaceae](#) family) you limit opportunities for pests, like root knot nematodes, to do their worst. This is the fundamental way that crop rotation operates, so understanding a little backyard botany can simplify food production and improve your harvest.

This article was reprinted with permission from Jerry Coleby-Williams. For more information about organic gardening, go to his website: <https://jerry-coleby-williams.net/>

Crop rotation depends on changing crop families

- * The onion family ([Alliodeae](#)) includes garlic chives, onion and leek.
- * The carrot family ([Apiaceae](#)) includes carrot, celery, celeriac, Chinese celery, coriander, fennel, Florence fennel and parsley.
- * The daisy family ([Asteraceae](#)) includes chicory, endive, lettuce, Jerusalem artichoke and radicchio.
- * The cabbage family ([Brassicaceae](#)) includes kale, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, mustard and radish.
- * The saltbush or beetroot family ([Amaranthaceae](#)) includes beetroot, English spinach, Good King Henry, huauzontle, mangel-wurzel and silverbeet.
- * The tomato or potato family ([Solanaceae](#)) includes eggplant, chilli, capsicum and naranjilla.
- * The bean family ([Fabaceae](#)) includes broad bean, pigeon pea, snow pea, garden pea, sword bean.



How to Survive the Coming Crisis

The following article was written by the Barefoot Investor, Scott Pape on April 26, 2020:

The old man leaned in and whispered: "I've been preparing for a crisis like this for years." I was talking to none other than Peter Cundall, the 93-year-old former star of the ABC's *Gardening Australia*. "But then again, my life has always been punctuated by one crisis or another", he added cheerily.

Now *this* was the perspective I was looking for: a man who's lived through genuinely tough times. (Okay, and I also had an ulterior motive in talking to him ... but more on that in a moment.) So, as you and I struggle with couch-sores from all our Netflixing in lockdown, let me tell you Peter's story:

He grew up in the height of the Depression, in working-class Manchester (where almost no one had a job). Things were grim ... and I mean *really* grim: his parents lost two babies to cold and poor nutrition. In fact, Cundall says his family survived through the Depression largely by growing their own food:

"One of my first memories was when I was three years old. My mother gave me some leftover peas from the pea soup and told me to plant them in the backyard. And, lucky for me, in those days the streets were full of horse-drawn carts, so I ran along the road and scooped up fresh fertiliser that I used for my peas — *free!*" That was Cundall's first lesson in survival, and it would serve him well.

Over his next 90 years he would fight in three wars. He describes the Korean war, where he was an infantry soldier, as "non-stop slaughter". "We lived in holes for a year ... surrounded by the rotting corpses of our mates. Many were still holding *live* hand

grenades. The smell of death was with us for a year. It got into your nostrils. You couldn't escape it."

In the next breath he told me that, even though he was entitled to a military pension, he never took it. "Surely for all that pain and suffering you *deserved* it", I said. "Deserve it? No! I was one of the lucky ones, I came back! Life isn't fair!"

After an hour of chewing the broccoli, I decided it was time to lay my cards on the table. "Peter, my kids and I have a 'lockdown project' that we'd like to get your advice on." We've picked a paddock, and the kids are going to grow an orchard. It's a way of getting them away from their screens. To get their hands dirty. And to get them growing something."

I explained that there are only three rules: First, they get to eat as much healthy fruit and vegetables as they can stomach(!). Second, they can sell it at our roadside farm gate. Third, anything left over is donated to Foodbank charities. And wouldn't you know it, the kids are as excited as Peppa Pig in mud!

When I'd finished speaking, Peter sounded choked up with emotion: "Scott, I'm an old man", he said. "And when you get old like me, you might understand why I feel like this, but ... if I saw your little two-year-old gardening, well, I think I'd burst into tears." "What you're doing is important, Scott. You're teaching your kids how to survive." "Take it from me, that will stick with them long after you're gone ... and *that* is a real legacy."

That evening I went out to the garden with my daughter ... and planted some peas.

Tread your own Path!

<https://barefootinvestor.com/how-to-survive-the-coming-crisis/>

Permission given to reprint by Scott Pape's office, 29/04/20.

What's Happening in my Garden this month

I am trying to make the most of my stay-at-home time by exercising a bit more than usual. Walking and gardening have become a much larger part of my day, which I don't mind at all. In autumn there is always a lot to do around my garden, and this year I might plant a few more "high maintenance" crops than usual. Right now I am growing from seed several types of beans, tomatoes and brassicas that will last well into spring.

I am also getting ready to harvest our rosella bushes, and topping up mulch - especially around citrus, bananas, and papayas - to retain as much moisture and heat as possible near their root zones so that they cope well with the next few cool months.

This month is also the time I start to reduce and then stop all watering of my ginger, turmeric and water chestnuts. Leaves on all of these will start wilting and going brown as soon as our nights get cooler, and if the soil is too wet some will rot.

One other job I have been doing is to cut the jicama flowers after the bees have had a feed, but before pods form. That way each tuber will be larger and sweeter. I've also left three plants to go to seed to top up and refresh my own seed collection.

Finally, I am also starting to plan what I can grow for the next six months in all those areas of my garden that will receive more sunlight, especially once I do the yearly heavy pruning of my fig and mulberry trees.

Happy Gardening!
Gennaro deRosa

Would you like to share with readers "what is happening in YOUR garden"??? Please email info@rogi.com.au to volunteer.



Jicama flowers



Jicama—sending out 'feelers'. The reason it needs a haircut.



GIVE AWAY:

Frank Dobson has 10 x banana tree 'pups' from his very productive lady finger bananas to give away. He is willing to deliver them (to ROGI members only). Give him a ring on the mobile number advertised in the email accompanying this newsletter if you are interested.



Plant of the Month—Lemongrass

Lemongrass has been one of my success stories as a novice gardener. It ticks all the boxes for successfully growing in my garden where it's sometimes survival of the fittest.

- ✓ It is tough
- ✓ Grows readily in our hot and humid climate
- ✓ It can handle a wide range of soils
- ✓ Drought tolerant
- ✓ Indestructible once established - even our chickens haven't destroyed them
- ✓ Useful culinary herb all year round in food and drink recipes
- ✓ Rarely has problems with pests or diseases



Lemongrass plants that came up in my garden from fallen seed over summer



Seed from the seed heads of lemongrass

It grows into an attractive grass clump in the garden or in a pot. Because it grows so well, it can tend to take over if not controlled in a garden position. It prefers at least half a day of full sun.

Existing clumps can be divided by either digging up the entire clump and splitting into smaller sections, or just slicing a section off the side. Lemongrass is tough, but with either method be sure to keep a decent amount of roots with each section. Remove

any dead leaves/stalks and cut remaining stalks to about half their height. Water in well with a good seaweed brew. The leaves have sharp edges and should be handled with care.

Lemongrass grows easily from seed, established plants or the division of an existing clump. Seed should preferably be sown in spring into punnets, and watered in with a seaweed fertilizer. Seeds will germinate in 14-25 days. Transfer strong seedlings into individual pots and grow them on until about 15-20cm high. At this stage they can be planted into the garden or a larger pot.

There are two common types of lemongrass which are native to the Indian and southern Asian regions:

- West Indian Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) is the more commonly used type for cooking (chopped/crushed stalks), in teas (leaves) and in perfumes. It grows easily in warm climates and gets up to 90cm.
- East Indian Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon flexuosus*) grows taller (up to 1.5m), has purple tinges to the stems and prominent pinkish/purplish seed heads.

My lemongrass is a bit messy and overgrown at the moment. I intend to cut it back hard in late winter for new growth to appear in spring. It doesn't require much, if any, water over winter. So, if you haven't already, why not try growing some lemongrass? It is a versatile herb used to add a zesty, citrus flavour to cooking and as a refreshing herbal brew.

The tea we enjoy at the ROGI meetings contains lemongrass, as well as lemon myrtle and fresh ginger. It is also refreshing in summer as a cool drink and apparently contains a lot of health benefits. An interesting read on the health benefits can be found at '20 Surprising Benefits of Lemongrass' by Meenakshi Nagdeve. <https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/herbs-and-spices/health-benefits-of-lemongrass.html>

Sources:

<https://ecoorganicgarden.com.au/gardening-tips/how-to-grow-lemongrass/>

<https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/herbs-and-spices/health-benefits-of-lemongrass.html>

By Gabrielle Bell

Bill's Mystery Cake & Other Recipes

At our meeting in March, Bill brought along for supper his delicious black sapote fruit cake, and also a 'mystery cake'. Below is the recipe—thank you very much Bill!

2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 cups SR flour OR SR wholemeal flour
2 teaspoons bicarb of soda
Pinch salt (optional)
Dash of vanilla
Dash of brandy/rum/orange, lime or lemon juice/water
500g sultanas or mixed fruit (*wash and strain, sit for 5 mins*)
500g mix of dragon fruit, bananas and mango
(*normally Bill uses 500g black sapote—this is where the mystery is. Use whatever fruits you have that are in season*)

- Mix all fruits, egg, vanilla and liquid together. Sit for a couple of hours.
- Sift flour, bicarb of soda and salt into a separate bowl, and then add to the fruit mixture. Mix altogether. If mixture is too wet add more flour, if too dry add more liquid (*until the right consistency is reached*).
- Line a loaf tin with baking paper. Put mixture into the tin.
- Place a loose sheet of baking paper on top of the tin when it is in the oven so that the top doesn't burn.
- Cook at 180°C (160°C fan forced) for about 1 hour.
- Cool in tin for 5-10 minutes. Remove and cool on cake rack.

Notes: Bill makes 2 batches of this cake at the same time, so that he is not wasting oven space and time. Each cake may not be the same—use the ingredients you have on hand. Cake freezes well. When cool, Bill slices and wraps in clingwrap, and freezes to take to different functions. Other options to add flavour include cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves. As there is only natural sugars and no added sugar, this cake is perfect for diabetics.



Other recipes for black sapote include:

EASY ICE-CREAM

Low fat vanilla ice-cream—let stand until soft.
Fold 2 cups of mashed sapote per litre of ice-cream and refreeze.

BLACK SAPOTE SUNDAE

Black sapote pulp (chocolate fruit)
Cream
Bananas
Crushed nuts

Cut black sapote in half lengthwise, remove seeds, scoop out the pulp and mash. Slice banana on top, top with cream and sprinkle with crushed nuts.

BLACK SAPOTE MOUSSE

1 medium ripe sapote
2 tablespoons whipped cream
1 tablespoon brandy
Sugar to taste (*suggest 1 teaspoon*)

Mash the pulp of the sapote, fold in the cream, brandy and sugar.
Chill and serve as a mousse.

Black Sapote (*Diospyros digyna*)

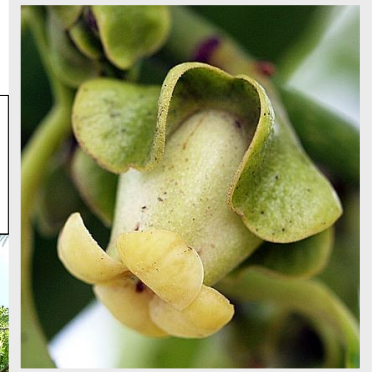
If you like chocolate you'll love black sapote, commonly known as the chocolate pudding fruit. Black sapote is native to Mexico, and is closely related to the persimmon. The tree can grow up to 8 metres high, and may produce as much as half a ton of fruit per year!

The black sapote tree is evergreen, and can cope with extended dry periods. They grow best in warm-temperate, subtropical and tropical climates, so are perfect for the Redlands. They tolerate full sun or part-shade positions. Slightly protected positions are preferred, as the heavy fruit hanging on the branch ends are prone to damage in windy areas. Trees flower at a young age, and the rather unusual looking flowers have a wonderful perfume. Well grown trees fruit as soon as three years after planting.

The fruit of the black sapote is very thin-skinned, and rarely fully ripens on the tree. It should be picked when it is still hard and then stored at room temperature. The green skin will turn dark brown to black, and the fruit will soften considerably when it is ripe. This amazing fruit is low in fat and an excellent source of vitamin C, containing about four times as much as an orange! It also has good amounts of calcium and phosphorus.

Black sapote is delicious eaten fresh or used as a chocolate substitute in recipes. In Mexico, the pulp is mashed with orange juice or brandy and served with cream. It is also delicious with wine, cinnamon and sugar. A delicious beverage is made by mixing the pulp with pineapple juice in a blender. In Central America, the fermented fruits are made into a liqueur somewhat like brandy. Fruits can also be cut in half and eaten covered with passionfruit, or simply mix the pulp with yoghurt and lemon juice for a refreshing treat. Really, you are only limited by your imagination, for the black sapote truly is a chocoholic's dream come true!

Black sapote flower (right) and fully grown tree (below) in Ian Wintle's yard in Birkdale (The Giving Garden).



Want to grow your own chocolate pudding fruit tree? They are remarkably free of pest and disease problems, and the fresh seeds germinate readily. However, to avoid the disappointment of growing a non-bearing male tree, it is best to purchase a grafted tree from a reliable fruit tree stockist.

By Ann Roffey (from notes kindly supplied by Bill Mellor, and Annette McFarlane's book Organic Fruit Growing)

Compost: Black Gold for your Soil

International Compost Awareness Week is being celebrated this week in Australia (3-9 May 2020), so I thought it was timely to share with you my love of compost. I've only been composting for five years, and I wish I had started sooner. Before that I used the soil from my chook pen, reasoning that they pooped in there, leaves fell and rotted, and scraps thrown in and composted. And the soil was good, but when I started adding compost to my beds, WOW—it really is black gold for your soil!

So what exactly is compost? It is decomposed organic material. You use materials that would otherwise end up in landfill, and it turns into a wonderful additive for your garden soil. It's a win-win!!

Where to start: buy or make a compost bin. There's plenty of them available, a simple black plastic one will set you back about \$50-00. Next, position it in a level, well-drained area. There are differing opinions about whether to position your bin in the sun or shade. If you are placing your bin in the sun, the compost process will be hastened. However, your pile will dry out faster, and you will need to add more water. Our summers are very hot, so I find it best to have the bin where it will get morning sun and afternoon shade.

Position your bin in direct contact with the soil (*unless instructed otherwise—systems such as Aerobin are placed on bricks or tiles*). To prevent pests, either sit the bin on aviary mesh or bury the bin 10cm into the soil. At the bottom of the bin, add a layer of sticks or coarse dry material to encourage air circulation.

Now to the ingredients. These are classed as either carbon (browns) or nitrogen (greens). It's important to add more carbon than nitrogen, otherwise you'll end up with a smelly, rotting mess. The finished product should have a pleasant, earthy smell. If it's too wet, add more browns, or too dry add more water.

So, these are the four ingredients of composting:

- **Air** (use a compost aerator or garden fork)
- **Water**
- **Carbon** (browns) - paper, cardboard, dried leaves, dried grass, sugarcane mulch, spent potting mix
- **Nitrogen** (greens) - fruit and vegie scraps, freshly mowed grass, fresh prunings, manure, coffee grounds (not too many as they're very acidic)

Adding your ingredients to the bin—you can layer everything (the lasagne method), or mix it altogether first in a wheelbarrow (the tossed salad method). I prefer the latter, as you are already aerating your ingredients before they go in.

Ingredients you don't want to add (because they attract vermin) include meat and fish scraps, wheat and dairy. Also dog and cat poo, onion, garlic and citrus peelings, weeds or diseased plants, glossy paper, sawdust and rice.

There are many different ways to make and store your compost, and no one method is the 'correct' one. Using materials that would otherwise end up in landfill, you can make a wonderful additive for your soil. Compost helps retain water, lightens the soil, and acts as a consistent source of nutrition for plants. But don't just take my word for it, on the next three pages are some of the ways other gardeners and ROGI members make their compost.

Further reading:

<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/the-science-of-composting/>

<https://www.thespruce.com/compost-black-gold-for-your-garden-soil-1403130>

<https://learn.eartheasy.com/articles/7-signs-your-compost-is-struggling-and-what-you-can-do-about-it/>

<https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/composting/>

By Ann Roffey

Compost: Black Gold for your Soil *(continued)*



Frank Dobson uses four wooden pallets to make a 'bin'. He ties them together with a rope and positions it in his chook run. He makes sure that everything that is put into the pile has first gone through his mulcher (materials must be dry to do this), so that it is in small pieces and will break down quicker. He uses:

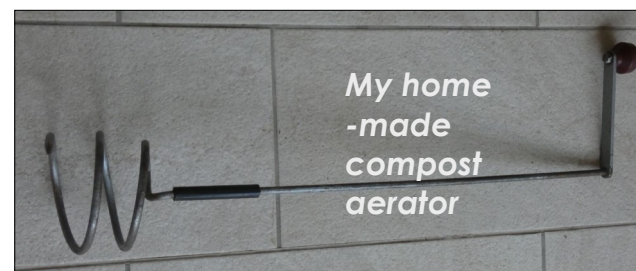
- Lawn clippings
- Tree mulch from a lopper (which he gets every 2 years)
- Newspaper
- Garden waste and prunings
- Eggshells, teabags
- Fruit and vegie scraps are NOT added (they are given to his chooks and worms)

All the above materials are mixed together and then put into the pallets. Grubs and bacteria soon start breaking it down, and after 4-5 months he takes the pallets off, and lets his chooks do the hard work of consuming all the insects and further compost it by aerating the pile with their scratching. Frank then puts the compost into buckets. When he wants to add it to a garden, he adds a variety of ingredients to improve his soil. Frank has not visited a tip in five years, as every bit of garden waste gets mulched! He has now converted his very clay soil to a beautiful, rich productive garden soil.

I (Ann Roffey) have two compost bins—one is a 400L Aerobin (bought before a certain hardware store decided to stock them and raise the price significantly). The other is a black plastic 'Gedye' bin. Of the two, I have to say the Aerobin is a lot faster at making compost. The manufacturers claim "there is no need to turn the biomass" - well, I do not agree. The ingredients break down much quicker when I manually aerate them with my giant home-made corkscrew (see photo below). I keep my fruit and vegie scraps (which have been cut up into small pieces) in an airtight container in the fridge. Then when the lawn is mowed, I get together all my other ingredients and mix them in the barrow. As a final layer I throw in some comfrey leaves, as they're known to be a great compost activator. Once a month I also add a couple of handfuls of garden lime, to combat acidity.

Here's what I usually put in the bin:

- 3 buckets dried leaves
- 1 bucket freshly mown lawn clippings
- 1 bucket aged cow manure
- 1 bucket sugarcane mulch and chook droppings from the hen house
- 1 bucket shredded paper
- 1 bucket spent potting mix (if I have any)
- 1/3 bucket coffee grounds
- Fruit and vegie scraps; tealeaves; eggshells (baked in the oven, dried and then chopped up in the food processor)
- Comfrey leaves



Compost: Black Gold for your Soil *(continued)*

From *The Giving Garden* (an open garden) at Birkdale:

Composting plays a very important part in our gardening methodology. I have a Greenfield 6hp petrol driven shredder, and almost all the waste from the garden is put through this machine and placed in one of the composting areas.

All fallen leaves, vegetable matter, weeds and cuttings are shredded. I especially like to shred the old bromeliad plants as these break down very quickly. I do not put hard wood through, as this ruins the shredder's expensive blades too quickly. To help accelerate and make the compost richer, I place layers of spent mushroom compost in the heap.

I do not use any chemicals, nor do I completely turn the heap over. I place several 90mm plastic storm water pipes with many drilled holes in the heap vertically—this helps to aerate the heap, and I also have a 'compost mate' which is like a large corkscrew which helps turn over the mix.

My mix takes about six months before I can use it. The largest heap usually has about five cubic metres of useable dark rich compost. I try and have two heaps going at once, and one starting.

Permission to reprint given by owner Ian Wintle, 14/04/20.



Francke Latter has a 4-bay compost bin that was designed and cleverly constructed by her husband Ken. It is adjacent to the chook run. Each bay has a lid that enables the hens to climb in when open. They can scratch through it and eat any beetles, grubs etc. and at the same time add fertiliser. They do all the hard work of turning over the compost and aerating it. Note the bay on the far left is not open at the top so the hens can't get in. This is the bay where the current compost is ready to use on the garden.

To make her compost, Francke uses sugarcane mulch mixed with droppings from her chooks and ducks, grass clippings and horse manure. She doesn't add scraps, as these are given to the worms, chooks and ducks. In another black plastic bin near the house, Francke puts garden prunings, spent potting mix, orange and onion peelings, and horse manure.

President Jill Nixon starts a new compost bin when a chook dies. The dead chook goes close to the bottom, on top of shredded newspaper and some soil out of the chook yard. She is then covered with leaves and other greenery, more shredded newspaper, coffee grounds and old potting mix—whatever Jill has on hand. By the time the compost in that bin is ready, the only evidence found of the chook is a few tiny bones interspersed throughout the compost.

Compost: Black Gold for your Soil *(continued)*

For many years, Madeleine Mionnet used a compost bin, adding kitchen scraps, garden waste and lawn clippings, with very poor results. The process seemed to take forever and the result was a gluggy mess.



After joining ROGI, she enlisted the help of “Farmer John” Borg to get better results and improve her garden. Firstly a garden bed was sacrificed and he dug down below the first sleeper level. With a combination of purchased fencing and recycled materials, he built a bed for the compost. The bed is divided into two

sections. The front section is the “working/adding materials section”; the second at the back is the resting/composting area.

Method: The compost materials are added in layers – just like making a lasagne – not too wet – not too dry. Start on bare earth so the worms and other organisms can feed on the pile. Alternate moist and dry ingredients.



Madeleine's recipe (layers):

1. Sugar cane waste – purchase a large bale (roadside or Facebook Marketplace).
2. Leaves, garden waste, vegetable scraps from the kitchen (chop into small pieces).
3. Half a bag of horse manure (roadside). Total of 3 bags per pile.
4. Lawn clippings.
5. Sprinkle on – a handful of chook poo pellets, a handful of gypsum and some compost conditioners (available from garden centres or produce stores).



Cover with plastic and turn over with a fork to aerate every week or so (her young assistant, Daniel, does the hard yakka). When it has broken down and is starting to look like soil, move the pile to the back of the bin area, top with cane waste, cover with plastic (an old tablecloth is used) and begin a new compost pile at the front.

Check the oldest pile periodically, making sure it is warm, moist and breaking down. “Farmer John” loves to stick his hands in – Madeleine’s a bit more squeamish and puts on plastic gloves first to take its temperature!



Plant Clinic *Managed and reported by Rohanne Young*

As Jill mentioned in her Jottings last month, the Plant Clinic is still open for business during our meeting "time out". Plant Clinic is great as it answers a member's question about something happening in their garden, but also allows us to share this information with other members who may be having a similar problem. They just may not be aware of the problem, or not want to admit to a less than successful outcome!



This month we have had two queries. The first query from Rhonda Binns relates to the dreaded root knot nematode. Rhonda had planted snake beans and had a dismal crop. When she pulled the snake beans out, she discovered nodules on the roots, which she thought were root knot nematodes. However, being a legume it was important for her to rule out nitrogen fixing nodules.

Rhonda had previously had nematodes in the same raised bed, so she was immediately suspi-

cious! The nematodes had been in the same bed within the last two years. Rhonda had treated them with a cover crop of mustard which she had grown as a green manure and dug in. She had then added plenty of compost to the garden.

From the photos that Rhonda supplied it was obvious that she did have root knot nematodes in her snake beans. With legumes it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between root knot nematode damage and the nitrogen fixing nodules that you find on legume crops. However, nitrogen fixing nodules are relatively loose and easy to detach from the root. Inside they should be pink or green, whereas the nematode is inside the root structure and is more brown and fibrous as they are grown from irritated tissue.

Once plants get infected with nematodes a lot of other pests and diseases are attracted to the ailing plant, and this didn't help Rhonda's snake beans at all!

Rhonda had taken most of the recommended preventive action by fumigating the soil with mustard, and then adding compost. Plenty of good organic matter and compost in the soil introduces and supports many of the beneficial bacteria which will actually attack the nematode worm.

Mustard is great as it fumigates the soil and Rhonda had dug this through as a green compost. The mustard contains isocyanates, which is the compound that breaks down to isocyanide and fumigates the soil. Personally I prefer the Red Asian mustard as it is hotter and contains more isocyanates.

The only other option that Rhonda hadn't tried was to make a drench to treat the soil. There are two drenches you can use. The first drench is made up using 8 litres of warm water, ½ cup of black strap molasses and 1 litre of full cream milk. Mix together and apply generously to the soil each week, until plants recover. This is obviously for crops that are affected by nematodes in situ. I don't know how long you need to apply it to make the soil nematode free.

Plant Clinic *(continued)*

The second drench is made up of 50 percent Neem oil and 50 percent water. Mix well and apply this to the soil. You probably need to repeat this after a week or two in case any eggs hatch. While I am happy to use Neem oil, Rhonda was concerned about whether this would harm other beneficial organisms in the soil. However I did find this cure in a book about soils from a soil biologist.

Finally, if you are game, you can make a hot compost on top of this particular bed. Temperatures of 60 degrees for three days will kill all the nematodes and their eggs. If you do this it will put the bed out of commission for about six weeks, but it will certainly make that bed pop when you did replant it!

If you did want to plant up the bed now, it seems that lettuce, spinach, Asian greens and amaranth are all relatively immune to nematode damage. I would also interplant with marigolds or mustard.

The second query, also from Rhonda Binns, relates to her Villa Franca lemon. The fruit had started to fall off, and when cut open they had a yellow/brownish colour inside. Rhonda had thought that her lemon might have a trace mineral deficiency, so she gave it some trace elements but without effect. Her next strategy is taking all the fruit off the tree, giving it another feed and a light prune and leaving it—but she wanted to see if this was a step in the right direction.

With respect to the lemon I'm fairly sure that it has been affected by the moth discussed at ROGI a few months ago. Apparently it's been a bad year this year in SEQ. As Rhonda thought, she will need to strip all the fruit off and bin it. As she had already fed the tree, I wouldn't give it more food, as it will be slowing down for winter soon and this would give it a new flush of growth which



could attract the citrus leaf miner. I would recommend that Rhonda prune the tree. The trace elements will be helpful too. When it starts to set fruit again, I would probably give it a spray or two of Neem oil. I'm not sure if it will help with the moths but it definitely helps with the citrus leaf miner and other problems.

PLANT CLINIC

(This is still running even though we're not having a meeting)

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. Email the description and photo/s to info@rogi.com.au.

Someone will have a look and may be able to answer your questions. Any solutions will be published in the next newsletter. Please be aware that, although we do our best, there may not be anyone who can solve your problem or identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

Chronicles of a Rat Killer

I recently endured another rat plague at my place. This is the third such plague that I have suffered through and let me tell you, they are not fun!

If you go onto Facebook, you will find endless posts about not using poisons due to the impact on our native animals if they eat a poisoned rat. Being a big fan of the blue tongue lizards and kookaburras who visit my garden, I am in sympathy with this view. However, I was amazed at the number of organic gardeners who admitted to using poisons! And now I can genuinely understand why!

I tried to go the "No-poison" approach. The first solution I tried was the old-fashioned rat trap. Well the little varmints (I had to search for this word as I usually use a much stronger, less polite word!) managed to eat all the peanut butter, pumpkin seeds, cheese and other baits without once setting off any traps! I tried tying the baits on, as well as super-gluing them on, both without success.

Meanwhile the rats continued to decimate the garden. Having eaten their way through all my parsley and sage, they then ate all the oregano, a lavender bush, two Midgen berry shrubs and a 12-month-old Abu tree that was just getting established. So, it was now officially war!

The next thing I tried was the rolling drum technique. This is where you place a bottle or can on a wire over a drum of water



Old fashioned rat trap



Rolling drum technique

and bait it with peanut butter. It is not as simple as it seems! My first problem was that my fur critters decided they liked the peanut butter and licked the trap clean! After removing the dogs and applying more peanut butter and a ramp up the bucket, I set the trap. Next morning there were rat droppings in the water, but no rat, and most of the peanut butter was gone.

I set the rolling drum up again the next night, with more water in the bottom of the bucket as I was not sure if he had managed to climb out or not fall in. This time the peanut butter remained untouched, so obviously the rat had learnt this was a trap and was not going to be tempted again!

I have since read various iterations of this trap. One seemed to suggest that I needed a deeper bucket and another suggested oiling the drum. So far, I haven't revisited this as a solution!

I went onto Google and found several sites claiming a new style rat trap, made of plastic with big teeth instead of the metal bar and supposedly foolproof, so I ordered one. Sadly, for the first time in over 10 years of buying online, I was ripped off. Instead of receiving the new style rat trap, I was sent four of the old wooden rat traps which are readily available from the Big Green Shed, and that I had already tried without success.

By this stage, the rats were burrowing down to get under the worm tubes, which was where all vegetable scraps were going, so I could eliminate any and all food sources! I had to go and get some solid wire mesh to surround the worm tubes to prevent the rats accessing this food source! They had already attacked the worm farm and made it inoperable by chewing through and eating all the food scraps.

While at the Big Green Shed, I discovered that there are electronic rat traps that kill the rat with an electric charge when they try and eat the peanut butter paste. Beauty, I thought. Someone is getting clever with rat solutions. So, I bought one.

First night, no dead rats and no bait taken. Then I read you have to leave the trap in the same place, so the rats get used to it. Really?? Next night, bait half eaten, no dead rat. Third night, bait all eaten, no dead rat! So, I called the manufacturer. It turns

Chronicles of a Rat Killer *(continued)*

out this trap only works for rats indoors! Really, if you are having this level of rat problem indoors, I think I would be moving house!

On returning the electronic rat trap for a refund, I succumbed and purchased some rat poison! I placed the baits carefully to not attract possums or other wildlife and waited. Two days later I was rewarded with three dead rats! I say rats, but they were the size of a small cat! I replaced the baits and collected another two dead rats and a dead mouse.

I then chanced upon a Facebook post where several people offered non-hazardous poisoning solutions. I had previously asked on Facebook, but obviously not on the right page!

There were three solutions that I decided to try. The first, and easiest was instant dried potato. Apparently, the rats eat it, it swells in their stomach and they cannot eat anything else, so they die. Three bait stations were set up. Only one bait station was touched on the first night. Second night, still no takers. Apparently, my rats aren't big fans of dried instant potato. I can't say I blame them! Third and fourth nights all the instant potato was eaten. However, I still haven't found any dead rats after two packets of instant potato and six nights.

The next solution was cheap toothpaste. Apparently, the rats go nuts over this and can't eat enough, but it poisons them. You have to wonder what it's doing to us? Anyway, it was worth a try. I sliced open the tubes and placed them along the rat superhighway. My rats are definitely not a fan of toothpaste, as this hasn't been touched in over a fortnight.

The final solution was bicarb soda. According to the site, rats can't burp so the bicarb swells in their stomach and prevents them eating anything else. You mix the bicarb with plain flour and tomato sauce. Roll into balls and leave where the rats will eat them. Again, worth a try! So, I mixed up the bait balls



and placed them along the rat superhighway. Again, no takers.

I know that I still have rats, although it is a lot quieter on the rat superhighway. Last night they decided to alter course and dislodged three wine glasses off the outdoor glass bakers stand. They have also eaten all my jicama that I was about to harvest.

So, I returned to the internet and purchased the new style rat traps. The first night they weren't touched. The second night both traps were sprung but no rats were caught. They are certainly easier to set than the old style traps but don't appear to be any more effective.



I have recently talked to my neighbours and found out that they have been using Ratsack, so it would not have mattered even if the "no-poison" solutions were effective! The downside of living in suburbia. Finally, after 10 days I found another three dead rats. Not sure if they died due to ingesting instant potato or rat poison.

I am reasonably sure that the rats are nesting next door and not in my yard. I'm just providing a smorgasbord of food, as next door don't grow anything except succulents, palms and weeds. It seems that this year is a particularly bad year for rats. There are numerous posts on Facebook asking for ways to eliminate them. Sadly, everything except rat poison seems to be ineffective. At least I pick up all the dead rats and dispose of them in the rubbish, so hopefully I am not impacting the local wildlife. I know that I still have rats, as I find new droppings and hear them scurry around at night. They are also still tripping the rat traps, so I am not able to plant up my vegetable garden or replace the herbs or fruit plants that have been destroyed! It really is disheartening, not to mention expensive!

If anyone else has a foolproof, non-poisonous way of eliminating rats, then please let me know. Until then I will continue using bait and picking up the corpses! Tally at time of printing: 11 dead rats and 1 dead mouse.

By Rohanne Young

Biochar vs Charcoal

Tammy Small of Spinifex Country Products explains the difference between biochar and charcoal:

For our operation these are the same product, though graded through screens. Biochar is graded 0-5mm, and we grade 5-12mm, 12-25mm, 25+mm charcoals. Due to Biochar having more surface area, it has a higher percentage of porosity – which is great for microbes, moisture and nutrient retention.

Our Charcoals and Biochar

Due to our process and the natural timbers properties, we are able to produce high quality stable charcoal and biochar. We use hardwood timber from our farm; we cook it at over 900°; it is ~93% carbon (which is very high carbon charcoal)- the higher the carbon the lower the volatile organic compounds that remain; it has low ash; it has high porosity; being from timber feedstock, it is reported to last hundreds to thousands of years in the soil.

Many other horticultural and BBQ charcoals on the shelves are imported. Some are made from mangroves, and most have high volatiles in them still which are toxic to soils. Many are still made using high-polluting methods.

Terra-preta (black soils) were discovered in the Amazonian low-fertility landscape of rainforests. It was discovered that civilisations were being sustained in these areas of anthropogenic-created soils for thousands of years.

We first trialled making charcoal and biochar in 2011, so by 2013 after up-grading and then down-grading our systems, we reached the position that allowed us to produce charcoals that were good for the farm, non-polluting to the environment and at a price that is affordable to customers. We hand-make the product and we know what is happening every step of the process.

My Haphazard Biochar Gardening

I started adding our biochar to our soils. I knew we had to hold water in our sandy shallow A horizon soils with low organic matter, with hard setting and almost impenetrable B horizon not far below, typical of the soils around the farm-house.

Expecting great results, not a lot of good news was received. Soil testing revealed a pH of 8-9. Then we found out “you need to add fertilizer to the Biochar (called ‘charging’) before adding it to the soil”. Due to the high porosity of Biochar, it will draw from the surrounding areas if those pores are empty - i.e. fill them full of fertilizer and microbes then your plants, microbes, and biochar work together. The microbes have a high-rise to live in, and the fine root hairs feed from the nutrients are held within too.

After a couple of years we started to get results – large silverbeet leaves, rockmelons, watermelons, beans, all leafy salad greens, potatoes, the list goes on. Our garden was successful.

We are in our third location of veggie gardening since commencing Biochar additions. I'd read that it takes up to two years for the microbes to build up in the soil, and agree that it can take that long. In my current veggie garden, it's been 18 months, and the garden is starting to show better results with veggies now.

Our Top Tips

- Add nutrients and water (soaked for a few hours minimum) to your biochar before adding to soil.
- Work biochar through your composting system to enable the microbes to start habituating in the biochar.
- Work biochar into the top 5-10cm of soil for veggies. I add a mixture to every new fruit tree hole to ~40-50cm, incorporating with the soil. Mixture ingredients can be provided.
- The solanum family of plants seem to be disadvantaged in fresh Biochar soils – add them to mature (~1-2yrs) biochar soils if possible.

Biochar vs Charcoal *(continued)*

Do some of your own trial plots, as your soil will be different. Read the research on biochar. Below is an excellent paper link; there are many more.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Janice_Thies/publication/284041311_Characteristics_of_biochar_biological_properties/links/56dcc8ea08aee73df6d3fd94/Characteristics-of-biochar-biological-properties.pdf

FURTHER READING:

Nature Journal:

https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-01123-0?fbclid=IwAR3Jg5ZAcUZxQs_zJrJdh7ASklrwA6H1cfyMgF8t7_QKQx3moMDejdjKk

Department of Agriculture:

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/climatechange/australias-farming-future/biochar?fbclid=IwAR1RNF-H-hHrvkwVoi4rxffDZ95x_OjIW91xtCM63KLLawP24L9lJv8UUcs

US Biochar:

https://biochar-us.org/soil-water-benefits-biochar?fbclid=IwAR1S78m_BixtNDxT8NxWLhF4uWB8SNCc8IEMbFeiRUEG-uQFrmuEX6KgV5g

TAMMY'S BIOCHAR 'RECIPE'

Into a large tub put 50 litre bag of **Biochar**. Add 1 litre of **worm juice** concentrate (from your worm farm), 500mls of **Seasol** and enough **water** to make it sloppy. Stir well and mix in a sort-of-equal amount of very broken-down **compost**.

Tammy uses this mix to back fill every hole she digs. She reports that the plants seem to love it and she doesn't need to water as often.

Biochar isn't easy to find in retail outlets, but we have some from Tammy for sale.

8 litre bags (45 x 30cm) \$12 and 20 litre bags (65 x 37cm) \$24.

To get some contact Jill at president@rogi.com.au or phone/text 0418 717 735.

Do you have WORMS???

No, not the intestinal kind—
A WORM FARM

**We would like your tips and knowledge
on how to keep a worm farm
for the next ROGI newsletter**

Please send to info@rogi.com.au



Gardening Tips

At a Seed Saver's meeting last year we learnt how to propagate plant cuttings. After these had successfully grown new leaves in their 'hot house' (a plastic box turned upside down), I potted them on . . . with varying results. Four out of five of my fruit salad salvias died! Here's where I went wrong—they should have been potted on into smaller pots (*note the sole survivor is in a smaller pot!!*) Janet sometimes "pots on" her plants 2-3 times.

Ann Roffey



Line a pot with newspaper before potting on a seedling. This makes it easy to lift and plant the whole lot in the ground when it's time.

John Borg



Long pots falling over on your plant stand??? Problem solved! They fit perfectly into this piece of fencing with square holes that I had previously used on another plant stand. I'll be placing it on my new plant stand with a couple of bricks to hold it up.

Ann Roffey

HELP! SOMETHING IS EATING MY NEWLY PLANTED OUT SEEDLINGS / FRUIT ON THE TREE / VEGETABLES . . .



Plastic PVC pipe cut into 10cm lengths can be placed around baby plants to protect them from pests. Push into the soil and remove when the plant is bigger. Available from plumbing section in hardware stores or find offcuts in skips.



Create a wire cage around vegies that could be eaten by rats or possums by joining the two ends of wire together with pegs.



These wire bins are available at some 'cheap' shops for a small price. Cover growing vegetables. Can be secured with tent pegs for a sturdier exclusion.



Use a 2 litre plastic milk bottle to protect fruit such as mangoes and avocados. Cut a slit up the longer side, continuing the cut across the bottom of the bottle to the centre. Cut a small hole to accommodate the stem of the mango. Fit to the fruit. Make sure the cap is removed to allow any rain or water to drain out.

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 information
- 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 the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant.
info@rogi.com.au

The June Newsletter deadline is 27 MAY, 2020

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



This is how it works:

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

Every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, you also help to raise funds for ROGI which we use to benefit our members.

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

Seed Sowing Guide

May

Artichoke; Jerusalem Artichoke
 Asparagus
 Bean: Broad, French
 Beetroot
 Broccoli
 Brussel Sprouts
 Cabbage
 Capsicum/Chilli
 Cauliflower
 Carrot
 Celery
 Chicory
 Endive
 Florence Fennel
 Kohlrabi
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Onions/Garlic
 Parsnip
 Peas
 Potatoes
 Radish
 Silverbeet
 Spinach & Other Spinach: Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal, Kangkong
 Swede
 Sweet Potato
 Tomato
 Turnip

June

Artichoke; Jerusalem Artichoke
 Asparagus
 Bean: Broad, French
 Beetroot
 Broccoli
 Cabbage
 Capsicum/Chilli
 Cauliflower
 Carrot
 Celery
 Chicory
 Endive
 Florence Fennel
 Kohlrabi
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Onions/Garlic
 Parsnip
 Peas
 Potatoes
 Radish
 Silverbeet
 Spinach & Other Spinach: Brazilian, Warrigal
 Swede
 Sweet Potato
 Tomato
 Turnip

For a list of the seed bank stock, please go to the ROGI website www.rogi.com.au and click on the RESOURCES tab.

Please Note: 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.

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

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—

1st Thursday every month (except Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor, 6.30 for 7.30pm. 3357 3171 <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—Wednesday &

Friday 9 - noon, Sunday 2- 5pm. Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

Like ROGI, we believe these groups have temporarily stopped their face-to-face operations to comply with Covid-19 regulations. Please check with them for further details.

HIVE PARKING FOR NATIVE BEES

We are always interested in keeping our native stingless bees in other people's backyards. We need new spots for the coming season.

Here are some requirements:

- * Suburban acreage
- * South, east and south-west side of Brisbane and also south of Brisbane along the coast to say Ballina.
- * The site needs to be safe, secure, tamper-proof, shady and accessible

We would like to keep at least 12 colonies at each site. Please get in touch if you think this is possible for your place, or you know someone who would be able to help.

Some ROGI members are already happy hosts to our bees (talk with Margaret Sear or Ann Roffey).

We do not pay an agistment fee - the benefit to you is that you enjoy the pollination services provided by our bees.

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