

Next meeting: Wednesday 8 February 2017

ROGI News

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

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Gold coin
Visitors: \$5

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

Tea/coffee provided.

You are very welcome to provide a quality plant to help share plants with other members (see p 22 for more on this)
Remember to bring a bag/box/basket to take home your purchases and/or winnings.

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Bees love basil. There were numerous bees on this basil plant. They are attracted to many herbs that are in flower in summertime.

Thoughts from the potting shed

Dear ROGI member

A very happy New Year to all ROGI members – I hope you and your gardens are surviving the hot weather. Personally, I find this time of year most punishing – and the weather statistics confirm this January chalked up about 10 extra days of heat wave conditions.

Despite the heat, your ROGI committee has been hard at work making sure 2017 will be another bumper year for members. We'll be offering interesting and thought-provoking speakers at monthly meetings, garden visits, field trips, public displays – and, of course, our wonderful seed bank and seedling shop.

Some of the topics our speakers will be talking about include: successfully managing backyard chickens, local organic farming techniques, growing sprouts and ensuring bountiful harvests. We'll also have our very popular Round Robin 'get your hands dirty' activity in May – with some refreshed activities.

Gary Donaldson from Macleay Island is our first speaker for 2017 and he'll give us some tips and tricks for raising backyard chooks. So if you're thinking about starting out, or indeed are seasoned chook-raisers, this meeting is not to be missed.

This year, we'll be hearing from and visiting several of our local remaining organic farms including our first field trip for the year to Ian Burow's Greendrop Organics farm in Mount Cotton on Sunday 19 February at 2.30 pm. Ian is well known in the local organic community and will be sharing his extensive knowledge during a farm tour. We'll be able to buy some farm products, organic potions and hopefully, his famous lychees. The Burows will be able to host about 20 members, so it's first in best dressed, for this one.

In March, Ashley from Muriel's organic farm, a 60-year organic farming tradition at Mount Cotton will be our speaker. I'm sure we all want to support our local farmers who steadfastly persist in delivering healthy, organic food and sustainable land management practices.

It's timely to be looking at the increasingly important role of organic food production when you consider the World Food and Agriculture Organisation has issued a

chilling warning that, based on current farming practices the world has only 60 years of food harvesting left. Fortunately there's a growing number of food growers who recognise the importance of sustainable management of soil as a vital natural resource our world depends on.

As we start another New Year, I hope like me, you'll be joining in ROGI's full range of events and experiences. There are so many opportunities to support our backyard organic growing experiences, whether it be through our library, events or just tapping into our gardening guru network.

If you haven't renewed your membership, please take a few minutes now to go on to ROGI's website and fill in your details on the online renewal form. If possible, please pay online too because it makes life a lot easier for membership administration. It saves the big registration lineups we face before meetings at this time of the year.

Looking forward to seeing you and catching up with everyone at the monthly ROGI meeting on Wednesday.

Happy Gardening

Kathy

Coming Events

Feb	Thurs 2	BOGI meeting	
	Tues 7	Herb Society meeting	
	Wed 8	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 19	Field Trip	See p 9
Mar	Thurs 2	BOGI meeting	
	Tues 7	Herb Society meeting	
	Wed 8	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 12	Garden Visit	See p 9
	Sat 25	Redlands Good Gardening Expo	See p 14

2017 Membership Fees are now due

- **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 Capalaba Central

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

If you pay 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 2017	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct16-Dec17
Single	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50
Family*	\$50	\$50	\$37.50	\$25	\$62.50
Pensioner Single**	\$20	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$25
Pensioner Couple**	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50

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

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

February Meeting

Keeping Chickens the Microponics Way

Gary Donaldson began micro-farming various animals forty years ago and has accumulated a wealth of experience with poultry - particularly quail and chooks.

His long-held ambition to grow his own freshwater fish was realised when he built his first backyard-scale aquaponics system.

Now his 1,000m² Macleay Island property is being developed to showcase his integrated backyard food-production strategies.

(See photos over page) Gary currently grows fruit and vegetables using wicking beds and aquaponics and keeps a variety of micro-livestock including chickens, quail, worms and black soldier fly larvae.

(see photo: he feeds them to the birds. Yum!).

Gary will explain the detail of his 'microponics' system with an emphasis on chickens. Find out how you can replicate all or some of what he is doing on your own property.



Shane Gishford will be selling fruit and vegetables as usual. Kemp Killerby will be selling Australian native food plants.

February Speaker Introducing Gary Donaldson

Gary began micro-farming in South Australia in 1976, raising rabbits, goats and several breeds of poultry and waterfowl. He reared broiler chickens and pigs, hand-milked two cows, grew olives and owned the obligatory 20hp grey "Fergie" tractor.

Among the pioneers of Australia's fledgling game bird industry, he designed and built much of the equipment used in the breeding and rearing of game birds and other small livestock. He operated one of the first purpose-built quail processing facilities in Australia, packing up to 1 500 quail per week. One of the more unusual outputs of the poultry and game venture was the production of balut (chicken embryos) for the local Vietnamese community.

A restaurant supply business *Quailco*

specialised in the supply of game bird and animal products to Adelaide restaurants and hotels.

During this time, Gary worked in a waste-water treatment facility gaining valuable experience with bio-digesters, bio-filters and the bio-chemistry of wastewater treatment.

During the ensuing years, Gary and his former partner owned and operated a variety of small ventures including an award-winning fine craft gallery, a restaurant, a country hotel and a fast food outlet.

In 1997, Gary relocated to Queensland and started his own small business consultancy - and resumed backyard food production.

A long-held ambition to grow freshwater fish was realised in 2006 when he finally built his first backyard-scale aquaponics system.

He published *The Urban Aquaponics Manual* in 2007. In 2010, the 3rd Edition was released ... this time as the *Online Urban Aquaponics Manual*.

Gary believes that the key to successful backyard food production is the full integration

of fish, plants and micro-livestock. To achieve this, he uses a waste-transformation farming model (developed by Dr Paul Olivier) in which the waste products of biological organisms become the feedstock for other organisms and processes.

Websites:

www.microponics.net.au - main backyard food production website - currently undergoing an overhaul in readiness for an expanded self-reliance venture.

www.urbanaquaponics.com.au - this is where the *Urban Aquaponics Manual* is currently housed. 3rd Edition is currently available ... FREE!

www.iavs.info - the result of the ongoing collaboration between Gary Donaldson and Dr Mark R McMurtry - inventor of the Integrated Aqua-Vegeticulture System (iAVs) ... and all that subsequently became known as aquaponics.

Before and three years later: his Macleay Island property



ROGI Organic 2016 Christmas Feast



Above: Set up ready for the festivities to start

Below: Rhonda ready for members and visitors to arrive.



Above: Steve dressed for the occasion while working the AV desk.

Below: Margaret and Janet got into the spirit of the evening



Above: Mary, Treina and Janet preparing salads

Below: some of the food donated to the Salvos Christmas Appeal by ROGI members



ROGI Organic Christmas Feast



Above: Shane at his organic produce stall

Below: Kemp brought along a selection of native plants for us to learn about and buy



Above: Steve sharpening tools ROGI's Christmas present to you.

Below: Happy Jan with her sharpened tool.



Above: the table centrepieces comprised edible and decorative elements.



Below: 'ROGI Rewards' plants



ROGI Organic Christmas Feast



Above: Jackfruit curry tarts were very popular. See George about how to grow your own jackfruit tree and how to make these delicious morsels.

Below: tucking in to the salads.



This picture and right: a selection of the many desserts on offer. These all were made by ROGI members.



Left: Jan, Cheryl and ROGI members and friends enjoying their feast.

Below: Maisie, Sharr and Mary setting out some of the desserts



Below: Pickled nasturtium seeds (L) and (R) mouse melons (also known as cucamelon, Mexican gherkin and *Melothria scabra*). Mouse melons are a type of small cucumber.



Plant Clinic

Q: My rainbow chard (silver beet) has knobbles on the roots, like the nematode galls on tomatoes. The leaves are stunted. Would it be nematodes? I've put lots of compost in the raised garden bed and have drenched it with molasses and neem at different times. What do I do if it happens again?



Rhonda

A: Rhonda hadn't brought a sample, but Shane Gishford and George Allen agreed that it sounded like root-knot nematodes are the problem. Shane said that neem isn't the treatment for this, but that more molasses would help. George suggested Rhonda grow marigolds to improve the soil for a new crop of something else.

Plant Clinic

If you have an interesting-looking pest, wonder if your plant is a weed or has a deficiency or a disease, Plant Clinic may help.

Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts as you can (in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased or seedy) and fill in the form. Place the plant parts together with the form on Plant Clinic table well before the meeting starts. Someone will look and may be able to answer your questions.

Please be aware: we do our best but there may not be anyone who can identify your plant, especially if not related to organic gardening.

Marigolds and Nematodes

George's suggestion about growing marigolds as a preventative for root-knot nematodes led me to do some research.

Crikey!

This issue has been the subject of LOTS of research! See next page for links.

My conclusion is that every marigold (*Tagetes*, not the *calendula* marigolds) has an effect, but it depends on which particular nematode is the problem, and they're only effective when they're alive.

So ... perhaps growing cover crops of all *Tagetes* species (*T. patula*, *erecta*, *minuta* – there are dozens more!) closely together in the one bed and leaving them there for a few months before either digging them in (which, according to some of the research reports I read, will merely add organic matter to the soil but not affect parasites, although Jerry Coleby-Williams says the opposite in regard to *T. minuta*) or putting them in the compost or, perhaps, eating them or feeding them to animals.

Here is what Jerry has written - taken from <http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s4239785.htm>

{Plants for Pesticide

For example, the Southern Cone Marigold or Stinking Roger (*Tagetes minuta*) - when dug into the ground, it controls pest nematodes. These are real pests in a food garden. They feed on roots, causing plants to suffer and die.

Nematodes create lumpy swellings on plants' roots. They can be mistaken for beneficial nodules, but these lesions are tumours that impair the plant's ability to take up nutrients and water. Growing these marigolds and digging them in fumigates the soil, so the crops that would otherwise suffer from nematodes are

clean.

Spread the uprooted marigolds over the soil, chop them up if necessary, dig them into the topsoil, water the area and keep it damp for the next three weeks. This dampness allows the marigolds to release the gas that kills the nematodes. If the soil dries out, it won't work.

A few years ago, I had problems with nematodes on my tomatoes, so I cleared the vegetable garden, sowed some French Marigolds (*Tagetes patula*), dug them in and it worked. Since then, I've discovered that *Tagetes minuta* is even more effective, but that's not my only strategy.

Other complementary techniques for controlling nematodes include crop rotation as well as improving the soil by adding composts and manures. This encourages predator nematodes that eat the pest nematodes.

You can also grow break crops - like corn (*Zea mays*). The nematodes we're dealing with can't get their nutrition from this crop and they starve.

There are no pesticides that will control these nematodes, so you've got a choice - these organic remedies - or you've got nematodes.}

How to tell if you have root-knot nematodes

Root-knot nematodes are microscopic eel-like wormy critters that usually cause swellings called galls, on the roots of affected plants.

To recognise; dig up a few plants, remove soil from roots, and look for galls. Nematodes feed and develop within the galls, which can grow as large as two centimetres (they're usually much smaller). Root knot nematode galls can't be rubbed off the roots as can the beneficial, nitrogen-fixing nodes on the roots of legumes.

Marigolds and Nematodes continued

There are numerous places to find information on this topic and it's often contradictory. Here are some links for you to see what you make of it, if you wish.

<http://www.gardenmyths.com/nematodes-marigolds>

http://blog.nola.com/dangill/2008/05/the_truth_about_marigolds.html

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ng045> A very easy-to-read report

<http://www.aces.edu/dept/extcomm/specialty/marigolds.html>

<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7489.html>

(These three above are academic research papers)

<http://greenharvest.com.au/PestControlOrganic/Information/NematodeControl.html>

<https://jerry-coleby-williams.net/2012/07/03/marigold-magic>

<https://strictlymedicalseeds.com/product.asp?specific=573>

http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk/item_1222d_tagetes_minuta_seeds

Did you know ...?

Tagetes patula and *Tagetes erecta*, despite being known as French and African marigold respectively, are both native to Mexico. African marigold (*below left*) can grow to 100cm with pompom-type flowers, is erect and needs sowing annually, while French marigold (*below right*) reaches half this height, forms a clump and is self-sowing.

They both are used medicinally in many cultures and are edible, although some may dislike their taste. The essential oil is used in perfumery and the leaves can be used as a yellow/orange dye.



Above: *Tagetes minuta* (not in flower) grows much taller than the other two marigolds types growing beneath it.

Field Trip

Sunday 19th February 2.30pm

Ian and Linda Burow's Farm at Mt Cotton

Ian is a fifth generation farmer who produces avocados, mangoes, lychees, wheatgrass and sprouts. We will walk the farm and hear about some of the interesting methods that Ian uses.



There'll be an opportunity to purchase some of their famous lychees.

Garden Visit

Sunday 12th March 3.00pm

Ian and Jill Nixon at Birkdale

This visit is the 'after' of the 'before' garden visit in March 2016 shortly after they moved into the property.

See the changes that have been wrought in a mere twelve months and maybe offer suggestions for future improvements.

As always with these events, spaces are limited, so get in early.

Please book with Toni B. on events@rogi.com.au or 0402 323 704 or at the ROGI meeting.

Toni welcomes suggestions for workshops and field trips related to ROGI's organic growing interests. Also, discuss with Toni when you'd like to host a Garden Visit at your place.

Requested Recipes from December's ROGI Organic Christmas Feast

Perhaps we have started a new ROGI tradition, an annual organic Christmas feast provided and catered by talented and hard-working ROGI members.

We had numerous requests for recipes for this sauce and that salad that we simply had to put all the recipes we could in this newsletter. So here goes ...

Farinata & Dipping Sauces

As promised, I'll try my best to create 'recipes' but since I don't usually follow any specific written recipes, it is really hard to be precise.

Also, for dishes like farinata, although I measured everything this time for consistency, ultimately it comes down to the freshness and grade (as in how fine it is ground) of the besan flour plus the way it is cooked as well as likes and dislikes of the people eating it.

There are many really 'terrible' recipes on line, but it wouldn't hurt to try a few to find out what works best for you.

Farinata

- 1 litre of water
- 300g of besan flour *
- 50g of my own sweet potatoes to give it a nicer consistency
- 1 teasp of my home-grown turmeric powder
- Pinch of salt

- My own spring onions
- Caramelised onions (for "scrumptiousness")
- 1 tablespoon of extra virgin Australian olive oil (approx)

Unlike the traditional recipes that requires hand mixing and resting, I used a bullet blender to mix the dry and wet ingredients, then added the spring onions and caramelised onions, poured the olive oil in a hot pan and cooked it covered on medium heat for around 20 mins carefully turning it once. I cut it into slices, but wedges work too.

Since there are very few ingredients, you can really taste the oil and it makes a big difference if the one you use is rancid in any way: as with wine, if it doesn't smell nice and you wouldn't be prepared to drink it... don't cook with it!

** Besan flour is made from ground chick peas (also known as garbanzo beans) and is a gluten-free alternative to plain flour.*

Dipping Sauces

Porcini Mushrooms

- Porcini and button mushrooms
- My own flat leaf parsley
- Extra virgin Australian olive oil
- Australian garlic
- Cream - just enough to adjust consistency

I basically cut everything very small, sautéed the mushrooms and garlic for say 15 minutes and only added the fresh parsley once the sauce was cold.

Smokey Baba Ganoush

- My own eggplants
- Extra virgin Australian olive oil
- Lime juice
- Salt
- Australian garlic

Society garlic flowers

For this one I blistered the eggplants in our wood-fired oven while I was making biochar. Once they cooled down, I discarded the outer parts to leave only clean and unburned flesh which I blended with the juice, salt, garlic and oil (I have NO idea about quantities - I did it all by taste). Garnish with the flowers.

Tomato sauce

- Whole peeled tomatoes
- my own basil
- extra virgin Australian olive oil
- Australian garlic.

Simple traditional southern Italian pasta sauce. Basically, you sauté the garlic for a few seconds in oil, tip the whole peeled tomatoes in, reduce it by half on medium heat. When cool, add fresh basil and enjoy!

Gennaro De Rosa



Recipes continued

Legume & Vegetable Curry

To acknowledge the end of the International Year of the Pulse, I decided to make a dish that uses pulses. I had Madagascar beans and chick peas I had grown so I used those. I also had pigeon peas and lablab beans but thought two varieties of pulses was enough in one dish.

This curry is vegan, has no gluten or sugar. It has a rather sweet taste because of the pumpkin and sweet potato.

You can use whatever vegetables you have on hand and that you like. I dare you to be adventurous - for example, give okra a go if you haven't tried it. Okra melts into the sauce and thickens it slightly—you wouldn't even know it's there.

This is what I made for the Christmas feast. (It's never the same twice!) Quantities are approximate (adjust to suit your taste) and probably enough for about ten people for a hearty meal or 20 as a snack or entree.

Sauce

¼ very lge pumpkin (mine) cut in 5mm slices
4 tbsp coconut oil
1 large brown onion (Shane) roughly diced
100g Clive of India curry powder-whole box
1 tbsp turmeric (mine) finely grated
1 litre, more or less, coconut cream *
6 okra, mine, cut into thin rounds

.....
2 cucumbers, mine - peeled
5 large carrots (Macro organic)
3 large brown onions (Shane) - extra
2 white sweet potatoes (thanks, Gennaro)
6 potatoes (Shane)
2 large zucchini (mine)

2 cups dry Madagascar beans **
½ cup chick peas (or 400ml can) **
3cm bundle of snake beans (mine)
2 litres vegetable stock
Coriander leaves, torn
Thai basil leaves, torn
Kaffir leaves, finely chopped
Basmati rice (I used whole grain)

Sauce: Heat half the coconut oil in a large frying pan and place pumpkin slices flat. Cook on both sides until nicely browned to develop umami ***. Remove from pan and set aside.

Sauté onion until soft. Remove from pan.

Add rest of coconut oil to pan. Sprinkle curry powder and turmeric over base of pan and use a wooden spoon to keep it moving while it heats and the flavours develop.

Pour in one tin of coconut cream, stirring. Heat it until blended. Add pumpkin, cooked onion and okra rings and stir in. Add the rest of coconut cream and mix well.

Cook on a low heat, stirring occasionally, until it has become a smooth sauce.

.....
Meanwhile, prepare vegetables by peeling if necessary, and roughly dice carrots, onions, potatoes, zucchini and cucumbers, and cut beans into short pieces.

Pour curry sauce into a very large stock pot or saucepan (preferably with a heavy base to prevent sticking). Stir in half the stock and add the hard vegetables first—carrots, cucumber, potatoes. Bring to boil and simmer until vegetables are almost tender.

Put rice on to cook.

Add zucchini, snake beans and pulses, and rest of stock and cook until all vegetables are tender. Taste and adjust if necessary - some-

times it needs salt.

Reduce heat and cook, lid off, until curry has reduced to the consistency you want. Add water if too thick.

Serve curry on a bed of rice and sprinkle herbs over as a garnish.

* I usually use Ayam brand in 270ml cans—it is the thickest, with nothing added, and, I think, the best. You'd need four cans at least. (No, I don't have shares in the company!) For the feast, I used three 400ml cans of On Rich brand of organic coconut cream from Wray Organic, but it wasn't as thick and rich.

** It is important to soak dried pulses before use. This will help prevent flatulence problems. Soak for several hours or overnight, drain thoroughly and repeat process at least once more. Then cook them in plenty of fresh water until just tender and drain again. You can always use canned beans such as butter, lima, cannellini, borlotti, kidney and so on.

Other vegetables you could use: sweet corn, parsnip, peas, kumara, cassava, green beans, jicama, yacon, cabbage, cauliflower + others

*** The fifth taste we can detect - rounded, rich and savoury, e.g. those yummy pan scrapings.

Jill Nixon



Recipes continued

Watermelon and Feta Salad

700 g watermelon
1 small red onion
180g feta cheese
Handful fresh mint
Handful fresh rocket

Dressing:

½ cup virgin olive oil
3 tbsp local honey
2 tbsp white vinegar
1 tbsp crushed garlic
Pinch salt & freshly-ground pepper

Scoop out and chop watermelon flesh into chunks, discarding the peel.

Peel and finely slice the onion, crumble the feta, then pick the mint leaves, tearing larger ones, and add washed and dried rocket.

Place all into a bowl and combine.

Make dressing:

Put all ingredients in a jar with a screw-top lid
Shake until well combined; set aside ready for use.



Chickpea Couscous Salad

1½ cups vegetable or chicken stock (we used vegetable stock)

2 teaspoons ground cumin
1½ cups couscous, uncooked
425g can chickpeas, drained
3 medium tomatoes, finely diced
¼ cup parsley, chopped
2 sliced spring onions - include green tops
Rind of 1 lemon or orange, grated
Juice of 2 fresh oranges (150 ml)
1 tablespoon olive oil

Bring stock to the boil and add cumin.

Remove from heat and mix in couscous.

Cover and allow to stand for 5 minutes until stock is absorbed.

Mix in remaining ingredients with the couscous cumin mix

Serve warm or cold.

Potato salad

1kg washed desiree potatoes, cut into wedges
4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled, sliced
4 green onions, thinly sliced

5 gherkins, sliced
½ cup whole-egg mayonnaise
¼ cup chopped fresh dill

Cook potatoes in large saucepan of boiling salted water for 15 to 20 minutes until just tender. Drain. Cool completely.

Place potato, egg, onion, gherkin and dill in a large bowl. Combine with mayonnaise.

Season with salt and pepper.

Toss to combine.

Mayonnaise

2 eggs
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 teasp mustard or garlic
Pinch sea salt
1½ cup rice bran oil

Blend or process egg, juice, mustard/garlic and salt until well combined.

With the motor still running, add the oil in a slow, thin stream until the mixture is creamy and all the oil has been incorporated.

Store in a jar in fridge for up to one week.



Recipes continued

Pesto Pasta Salad

- 375g dried pasta
- 1 cup fresh basil and rocket leaves
- 2 tablespoons raw cashews
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 whole small preserved lemon or 6 preserved cumquats
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Cook pasta in a saucepan of boiling salted water, following packet directions until tender. Drain. Return to pan.

Process basil and rocket, cashews, garlic and preserved lemon, scraping down sides occasionally, until almost smooth.

With motor running, add oil in a slow, steady stream. Process to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

Add pesto to warm pasta. Toss to combine.



Pumpkin, Pepita and Cranberry Salad

- 1.3kg pumpkin approx
 - 1 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt & freshly-ground pepper
 - 141g mix of sambung, okinawan spinach leaves
 - ½ cup dried cranberries
 - ½ cup coarsely-chopped pepitas roasted
- Honey vinaigrette
- ⅓ cup olive oil
 - 3 tbsp local honey
 - 2 tbsp white vinegar
 - 1 tbsp mustard
 - Pinch salt & freshly-ground pepper

To make the honey vinaigrette, shake all ingredients together in a jar with a screw top lid until well combined; set aside.

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.



Peel pumpkin and cut into 2.5cm slices and toss together with olive oil, salt and pepper until well-coated.

Arrange pumpkin in a single layer on sheet.

Roast for 30 minutes or until pumpkin is well-browned and caramelised. Allow to cool.

Arrange spinach leaves, pumpkin, * pepitas and cranberries in a large bowl. Drizzle with dressing.

* *Pepita* is a Spanish word for the edible (and highly nutritious) seed of pumpkin and squash.



Chocolate Almond Cake

- Dark chocolate
- Almond meal
- Butter
- Sugar
- Eggs
- Cocoa

made by Cheryl McWilliams—ask her for the full gluten-free recipe

Native Passionfruit

Many of you will have sampled these little fruit that Gennaro provided as a part of the table centrepiece at our Christmas feast. Maybe you took seeds home and they have successfully germinated.

Provided with a decent trellis, they are easy to grow, as well as being a great producer of fruit. The flavour may be an acquired taste for some, but they are rich in vitamin C.

It is called 'native passion fruit' but it is actually an import - *Passiflora foetida* - a native of South and Central America.

Give it a go if you've got a tall narrow spot for it in full sun or part shade.



Photos from previous Good Gardening Expos



Good Gardening Expo Saturday 25 March

ROGI will once again team up with IndigiScapes to produce the Redlands' best community gardening event.

The event will feature a number of exhibitors in the IndigiScapes grounds and gives ROGI a great opportunity to meet locals and share the benefits of organic gardening. We use it to sign up new members as well as raising funds through plant sales and raffles.

Once again, we will have our own display area with a series of ROGI speakers on our Organic Stage, an area for hands-on activities and seed/seedling/plant sales.

We'll be raffling off some of the popular box gardens again this year, and will provide prepared kits at the February meeting to those who put their hand up to grow them - there will be no financial outlay for you.

If you have a few hours to spare on 25 March, we're looking for volunteers to help with activities. Here's what assistance we need:

- Speakers
- Setting up and taking down display
- Members to help with activities, information, and raffle sales

Also, growers to prepare box gardens for raffle prizes (to be done in advance)

If you'd like to help, or want to find out more, please contact Kathy Petrik at the February meeting or at president@rogi.com.au.

Plant of the Month

Snake beans

Vigna unguiculata ssp. sesquipedalis

Summer in the Redlands is long, hot and humid – a bit like Southeast Asia. So a wonderful plant to grow in summer would be Asia's snake beans.

Snake beans, also known as yard long beans, asparagus beans, bora and long-podded cowpeas, can grow to 1 metre or more but can become tough and inedible. In our garden we leave a few to get really long just for fun, to see how long can they really get, and so we can save the seeds (once the pod dries out). However it can't be all fun. We need to eat too, so we pick most of them when they are 30cm long or less* as this is the optimal size for cooking or eating most green snake beans.

These beans grow fast and you will find you will need to pick them every day, or every second day at least, to ensure that they are harvested at their best; also this helps to keep the vines forming new beans.

Snake beans take up very little space in the garden as they are grown on a sturdy trellis in soil that has plenty of humus and compost added. This should keep the soil pH at an ideal level (6.5–7).

Early summer is the best time to sow the seeds, but you'll get a crop if you sow some now. Sow in damp soil 1cm

deep and more than 30cm apart, and water in well. I like to sow them in a mound with a sugar cane blanket on top. As we get most of our rain in summer this improves drainage, lowers water loss (and retains it too) and also helps with soil loss.

To ensure the bean seeds don't rot in the ground, we do not water the soil again until the true leaves (cotyledons) appear, then water regularly to ensure healthy growth. The seeds germinate quickly and vines can produce beans in about 50 days in our hot summer months.

Sharr Ellison

(*There is one type that will grow to about 80cm and still be very good to eat. We call these 'long beans' in the seed bank.)

We are giving away green snake bean seeds this month only, so the next meeting is a good time to give these beautiful vines a go in your garden.

We also have seeds for the beautiful red noodle snake bean for sale to this month (\$1 for members, \$2 non members a packet).

They look so wonderful in the garden with the deep green leaves and long red beans hanging around waiting to be picked and used. They stay red after they've been cooked.

Right: Red noodle snake beans (with a bit cut off) on a bench, and long beans growing.



Hints and Tips

from December 2016 meeting



Place a compost bin near your banana plants so, as your compost does its thing, you feed your bananas as well.

(I got the bin at Lifeline in Merritt St Capalaba - 'op shops' often have them, it seems)

Linda Barrett

1. When building raised gardens, make the pathway between them twice as wide as you think you'll need. We thought a wheelbarrow-width distance would be enough.

The plants have grown over the edges so the wheelbarrow won't fit between.

2. Don't put all the climbers in the one garden as the more vigorous take over and you can't find many of the plants. This purple yam (*right*) went crazy and needed to be on its own, as did all the other climbers—Madagascar bean, jicama and loofah.

3. Marry someone who will build arches for you so you can grow climbers.

Mary Irmer

Below: the wheelbarrow can't get past the plants



Hints and Tips continued

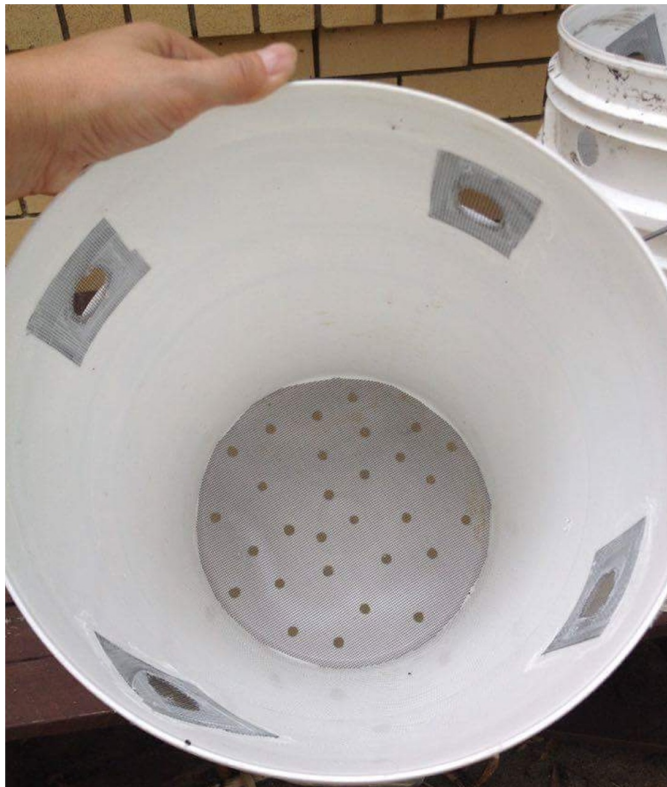
Home-made Worm Wee Farm

I used two 20 litre buckets ... one inside the other. I added a tap at the base of the bottom bucket to collect the worm wee.

I drilled small holes in the bottom of the top bucket and covered them in mesh to allow liquid through, but not solids. I also drilled ventilation holes at the top and stuck mesh over them to keep pests could out.

I put strips of newspaper and a suitable medium for the worms to be in into the top bucket and then I just throw food on top of that for them and put the lid on.

Catherine Allinson



1. Keep fruit trees pruned low enough to pick the fruit comfortably.
2. Use the framework designed to support safety net on an (old) trampoline to spread netting over to protect fruit from creatures that want to eat it before you can get to it.

Bronwen Thomas



Mat, springs and safety net removed from trampoline. The tall poles will hold netting when tree has mangoes on board.

Interesting True Story

I accepted six Madagascar beans from Gennaro and planted all six. After a couple of weeks all six had germinated.

This is very much like the Jack and the Beanstalk story. They grew and they grew. They dried out on the vine, and some were still green and had taken over my veggie garden trellis along with a million cherry tomatoes. So the lot had to come down for spring planting. We had buckets of beans!

Ken, my sister Julie and her husband and I planned a trip to visit Green Harvest and to have lunch in Maleny.

While we were looking at the seeds at Green Harvest, Julie pointed out a box of Madagascar beans.

'Oh no,' I said. 'I've got them coming out of my ears at home.' Well, the sales assistant joined in and said they are not grown commercially, and if we had any we didn't want they'd be happy to buy them.

Not knowing much about them, as we don't eat a lot of beans, I said 'Ok!'. She ducked out the back to the seed-buying lady who asked if I could send her some to check the germination before they buy any.

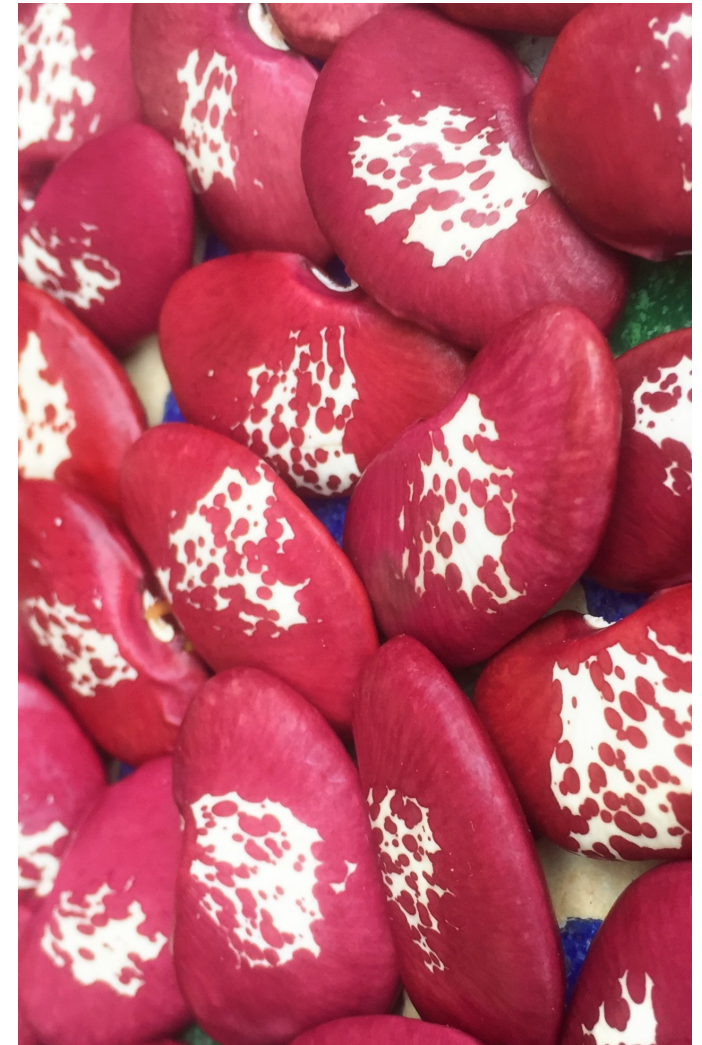
So I did, and a couple weeks later they emailed me and said they had 100% germination. I did tell her that I am organic in my garden, but not certified.

We grabbed the chance for another trip to Maleny and lunch, and took her 2.7kg of beans for which we were paid \$108 - \$40 per kg - which, I might add, I spent in the Green Harvest shop on more seeds and supplies. I told Gennaro at the last meeting. He was a



bit shocked that we did not eat them, and gave me his congratulations.

Francke Latter



Above: the beautiful red and white beans

Left: a Madagascar bean plant starting to really take off. It requires a very sturdy and wide trellis. One plant is sufficient for a family. It can continue to bear for up to seven years.

Library News

The following books and DVDs/CDs are still missing in action!

Please have a good look to see if they're on your bookshelves. These resources are very valuable and they need to be available to others. Please contact anyone listed on the back page to return item/s.

Books:

"Cymbidiums, How to Care for Them" Qld Orchid Society
"Dendrobiums", Their Description & Culture" Qld Orchid Society
"Grow Your Own Bushfoods" by Keith & Irene Smith
"House Plants, How to Choose & Display" Sunset Books
"Jackie French's Guide to Companion Planting" (Book 2)
"Organic Gardener Essential Guide, Getting Started" Gardening Australia.
"Organic Gardener Essential Guide, Permaculture Made Easy" Gard Aust
"People with Dirty Hands" by Robin Chotzinoff.
"Planet Chicken" by Hattie Ellis
"Silent Spring" copy 1 by Rachel Carson.
"The Cook's Garden" The Australian Woman's Weekly.
"The Fascinating History Of Your Lunch" by Jackie French
The Omnivore's Dilemma, (The Natural History of Four Meals)" M Pollan
"The Sacred Balance, Rediscovering Our Place in Nature" David Suzuki
"Tomatoes Love Carrots"
"Backyard Aquaponics" (Blue Folder).

DVDs:

"Composting Kids"
"Gardening Australia – The Complete Gardening Box of 3 DVDs – Permaculture & Organic Gardening, Roses, Cottage Gardens" ABC
"Harvesting Water The Permaculture Way" by Geoff Lawton
"Permaculture Soils", by Geoff Lawton.
"Practical Guide to Home Landscaping" – Readers' Digest.
"Think Global Eat Local", A Diet For A Sustainable Society" Seed Int

CD:

"Unlocking The Ancient Secrets of Aloe Vera, Miracle Benefits That Amaze Modern Science".

Equipment:

Refractometer (an expensive implement for testing the quality of produce)

Origins Our Roots. Our Planet. Our Future.

DVD Produced by wellness Org.

This DVD has some very good messages, and it is delivered with some lovely imagery, but at times the subject matter is disjointed and jumps from one area to another.

The producers use a lot of authors and experienced people in their fields to present on subjects. The stated intent is to educate and to inspire a healthier lifestyle.

It starts with a discussion of how quickly the human civilisation advanced – with the discovery of fire being a source that lead to wider food choices and the eating of more fats and protein. This lead over time to us living in an industrialised world.

However the producers wish us to learn that we all have ancient ancestry – many of us from Africa - and we need to relearn the chain of wisdom and respect for plants animals and the earth that indigenous tribes worldwide have used to sustain their environment and food sources.

They suggest that humans have become more like parasites to the world and challenge us to consider our relationship with the world and realise that we cannot live separately from the natural world.

This is where the content jumped from subject to subject – discussing climate change, use of chemicals in our day to day lives, oils and plastics, then moved onto reviewing gut health, use of antibiotics, fermented foods, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fertility issues, depression, lack of energy.

Some overarching statements here just too broad for me to feel comfortable with. For example: A presenter stated that wild animals seldom get sick because they are eating their natural foods; another presenter stated 1 in 4 couples in the western world now have fertility issues; another presenter stated that endocrine disrupters are in many products such as fluoride and antibacterial soaps.

Furthermore, while the experts spoke about their topics, interesting imagery was used with natural 'good' products being bright and colourful; people who were sick were at times in darkened areas; and when the oil fields, a bomb cloud and war pictures were shown backgrounds were dark red/gray/black. Light vs dark.

An interesting DVD with these take-home messages:

- Learn what NOT to eat rather than what to eat.
- The most powerful tool we have to change our health and the health of the environment, the economy and the whole world is our fork. Vote with your fork.
- Move more



Linda Barrett

ROGI library has the following items available for borrowing by members:

- sail needles (for sowing shade cloth)
- pH kits

Seed Bank Request

- Please **return seedling pots** the month after you have bought the seedlings so they can be re-used.
- Please bring along **other clean used pots**—small sizes only, up to 120mm diameter. The almost-square ones are good.

Seed-raising Mix

The ROGI seed bank **seed-raising mix** (a blend of coir peat, vermiculite, perlite and biochar) has proven to be quite successful at getting the little blighters to come up!

We put it in recycled yogurt or ice cream containers.

One litre = \$0.50

Two litres = \$1.00

Four litres = \$2.00

We are able to offer wonderful prices as we source well and we are a not-for-profit group. Our passion is to get you gardening and growing more food.

Sharr Ellson

Special Offer

When you buy five packets of seeds from the seed bank, you will receive one litre of the special seed-raising mix to sow them in – free!

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 that you may have bought from a nursery.

Seed Sowing Guide

February

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

March

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

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 ROGI meetings and Garden Visits.

\$1 per packet for members. \$2 for non-members.

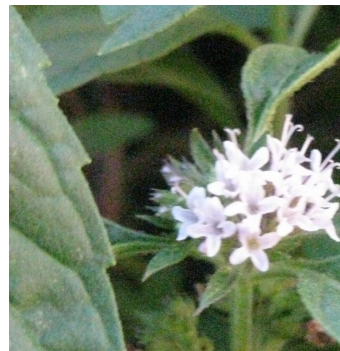
Purslane



Purslane is in flower and producing seed right now. Because it is such a valuable and nutritious plant, and an easy 'weed' to remove if you find it growing where you don't want it, now is the time to sprinkle the seeds where you want it to grow in the future.



Mints in flower



Flowers attract beneficial insects
Top: Applemint
Above: Moroccan mint and Spearmint

Right: Coriander growing well, despite this hot weather, beneath the cover of an old white lace curtain doubled over



A spectacular pitcher plant snapped by Gennaro at Cairns Botanic Gardens.

These carnivorous plants live in poor soil conditions so have developed a modified leaf in the shape of a vase in which to lure, trap and digest curious insects.

Some species are used as 'toilets' by some mammals providing plant with manure daily.

Exchange plants, cuttings, seedlings and home-grown produce

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

ROGI Rewards

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

Members' Sales

Items you have produced that are surplus to your requirements and that **you wish to sell** to other members eg eggs, honey, seedlings, jam, lemons – things that have cost you money (and time and effort) to produce. Please ensure items are labelled, named and priced. It is preferable that you staff the stall yourself.

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) or cuttings, surplus chillies, empty pots or strawberry runners and so on. This is where you may want to work out an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

Remember to bring a bag/box/basket to take everything home

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

This is how it works:



- Pick up a My IGA Card next time you are in 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, you are also helping to raise funds for ROGI.

ROGI uses its funds to help provide more services to members such as new library books, discounted gardening products, paid expert speakers, and free or low-cost field trips and workshops.

Did you know?

You can go online and read every edition of ROGI News since September 2014.

Go to www.rogi.com.au and have a browse.

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 current affair to do with organic growing
- Anything else to do with organic growing

Please send your items to the editor and help keep ROGI News topical, interesting, local and relevant

info@rogi.com.au

March Newsletter Deadline

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 22 February for the March edition.

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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

Jan Acton has many dragon fruit plants and has had a bumper crop recently. There were dozens of blooms, many flowering on the same night. Although Jan helped along the pollination using a paintbrush, not every flower resulted in a fruit, but there were still ample fruit nevertheless. She grows them up a single solid pole and the branches hang over and down.



Right: The fruit before they are mature. Note the spent flowers still on some.

