

Next meeting: Wednesday 12 July 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 interesting plants with other members (**see p18**).

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

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### *French lavender* *Lavandula dentata*

*The natural habitat of lavender is dry, rocky or poor soil and low rainfall—which really doesn't describe the Redlands. Of all the lavenders this variety, being more heat tolerant, is the best choice for our climate. Grow it in very well-draining soil or keep it in a terracotta pot so you can move it out of the rain as needed. As well as its ornamental value, it is very attractive to bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects.*

## Thoughts from the potting shed

Dear ROGI member

Over the past few months, we have been delighted to see a big boost in both visitors and new members at ROGI monthly meetings. It's evidence that more and more locals want to take time to learn about a healthier lifestyle by producing their own backyard organic fruit and vegetables.

Sometimes though, it can still be daunting to join a large group like ROGI, particularly if you don't know anyone.

This is where our 'Buddy System' comes in. It's designed to help 'newbies' get to know other members and take full advantage of what's on offer with their membership.

It means that when you come to a ROGI function, whether monthly meetings, garden visits, field trips or workshops, you'll always see a friendly face and have someone to chat to.

And we are always looking for *Buddies* to help out new members - so if you need a nudge, here's what you need to know.

First, to be a *Buddy* you don't have to be a really experienced gardener, because the aim is not about giving out gardening advice (though that can be an added bonus).

It's more about making sure new members feel welcome and are encouraged to play an active role in the group. This makes community groups like ROGI sustainable and productive – and so much more positive for new members.

Second, it's not onerous to be a *Buddy*. It might be as simple as contacting your *Buddy* and reminding them about upcoming events - or getting new members to consider volunteering to help with ROGI activities in some capacity. We're always looking for extra helping hands, and those people who become involved in this way often end up learning more about organic gardening because they're 'living' it more often. Many *Buddies* visit one another's gardens and have an occasional chat on the phone or email now and then. Whatever works for you and your *Buddy*.

A *Buddy* relationship can last for just a few meetings/months until the new *Buddy* finds other connections within the group, or it can be the start of a long friendship, which isn't surprising since you

both have something very much in common—a desire to grow food organically.

So now you know what being a *Buddy* is all about. If you're interested in becoming one, please put your hand up at the next ROGI meeting when we welcome new members. Or let me or one of your other ROGI committee members know so we can add you to the list.

And there's really no limit to how many new *Buddies* you can connect with—it's really up to you.

... And Another Thing

Next month, it will be time to elect a new ROGI Committee and I'm urging members to consider putting their hands up to help run our group. It's a very worthwhile activity and generally doesn't take up a lot of time. It's really important that we keep the Committee refreshed with new ideas and skills.

So stay tuned for election details and please plan to take an active role.

Happy Gardening

*Kathy*

## Coming Events

July	7,8,9	Qld Garden Expo at Nambour	
	Wed 12	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 23	Garden Visit	See p15
August	Tues 4	Herb Society meeting	
	Thurs 6	BOGI meeting	
	Wed 12	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 20	Garden Visit	See p15
	Sun 27	BOGI Fair (More info in August ROGI News)	

## Membership Information

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

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

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

Member Category	Members Renewing For 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

## July Meeting

# Sustainability from Scratch

Many people love the idea of growing their own food but give up after a while as it becomes too much for one or two people. It's not just the growing, it's also dealing with a lot of produce ripening at once and needing to be harvested, processed and stored or sold.

Simon Cole has worked out a deliberate, accountable way for people to live and work together at growing their own food locally.

Simon runs his property *Equanimity Foundation* as a pilot co-housing project. Built from scratch, it includes sustainable features - rain water collection, efficient building design, solar energy and a fantastic permaculture garden to feed a household of four or more people.

Hear from Simon about how you might make your life easier and more enjoyable by making better use of your space for food and people. His talk is not directly focussed on growing things, it's more about living with and managing enough hands to match the productivity of your land.



Shane will be selling fruit & vegetables as usual. See p 16. Most of them are certified organic; some are guaranteed 'spray-free'.

# Keys to a bountiful backyard: successes & setbacks

Simone Johnston showed us how her garden evolved from something resembling a bare foot-ball field, purchased in 2009, into an area that is not only productive but also attractive. It contained one frangipani and a large thorny bush (a weed).

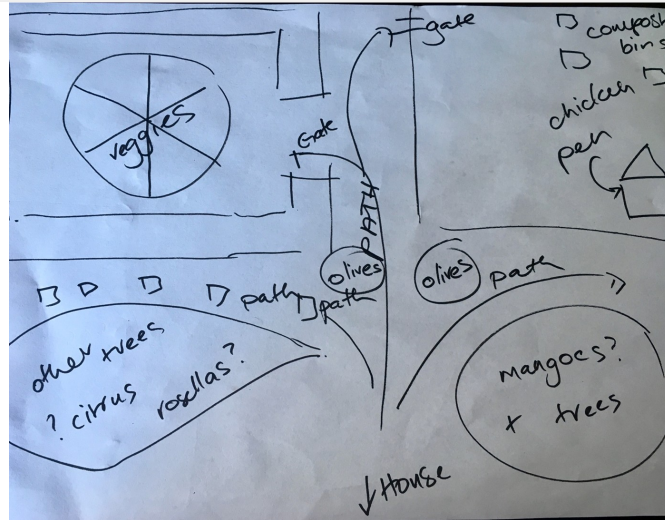


Before

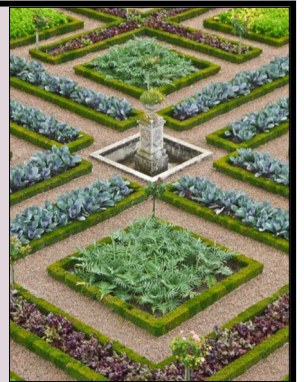
Simone drew up a rough plan (top right) and concentrated first on just one quarter of her yard, so as not to feel too overwhelmed.

One of the first and key features is her parterre-style vegetable garden (right), with the beds separated by pavers and a deco granite pathway.

As well as growing vegetables, herbs and fruit, Simone wanted her yard to be pretty with garden rooms and places (below) to enjoy her new garden. See last page for the 'After' photo.



A **parterre** is a formal garden constructed on a level substrate, consisting of plant beds, typically in symmetrical patterns, separated and connected by paths, designed to be ornamental. Parterre to right is at Chateau de Villandry in France, and below at Heronswood near Melbourne.



Above: One of the 'garden rooms' with some of the many fruit trees, stepping stones and a water source for birds and other creatures.

## A bountiful backyard



.Above: covering grass with newspaper layers before laying a pathway. Kairos (aka 'Special K') helps a lot, it seems.

The entire garden operation runs using **permaculture principles** using minimal energy and resources, recycling, and working with nature as much as possible.

Simone uses chickens (see photo far right of 'chicken tunnel tractor'), regular composting, and a Bokashi fermenting and trenching system to deal with and recycle food and garden waste. She also uses the Ensopet system to dispose of pet waste from her old cat, Grayson and Special K the dog.

More information: <http://www.bokashi.com.au/EnsoPet/EnsoPet+-+How+it+Works.html> Kitter brand cat litter, <http://www.kitter.com.au/> made from Australian sustainable plantation wood with no chemicals, also goes into the regular compost (without the faeces).



Simone enjoys using re-purposed and repaired items in her garden whether for ornamental or practical purposes.



Another principle relates to the plants. Simone:

- divides her own plants
- saves and swaps seeds
- strikes plants from other people's plants
- takes cuttings
- 'embraces' volunteers - self-seeding plants such as tomatoes, pumpkins and herbs such as Thai basil, coriander and parsley, and many flowers



Above: a volunteer pumpkin plant —not in an ideal position, but very productive, so there it stayed.



## A bountiful backyard



Above: The aftermath of Cyclone Debbie  
'There's nothing much you can't recover from so don't get too freaked out. There are other expensive hobbies you can waste time or money on and you don't get food from them!' says Simone.



Above: Productive espaliered citrus



Instead of the above to smother lawn grass, Simone now thinks she may be better off with paving or using woodchips like permaculture people do.

Other solutions:

Black plastic (does not kill worms)

Also a weed flamer

And now, recently, organic herbicide – *Slasher*.

[Note: *Slasher* Weedkiller, made from natural plant oils, breaks down in the soil within 3 days. Approved for use in organic farms and gardens, it can be used without harm to the soil or the environment. More info at <https://www.greenharvest.com.au/PestControlOrganic/WeedControlProducts.html#SlasherWeedkiller>]



Above: Home-grown eggs. Shallots, rocket, chives, Brazilian spinach, young pumpkin leaves and rosella leaves for brunch

## Simone's super duper hot tip for the backyard grower

**Learn from other people and have a go!**

- Local horticulturalists/permaculture quals - subtropical environment
  - Annette McFarlane
  - Linda/Ecobotanica
  - Green Dean
  - Jerry Coleby-Williams
- Attend permablitz days
- Organic gardener/ subtropical gardening magazines
- ROGI meetings and shop/library
- Blogs/YouTube – Morag Gamble on Sunny Coast
- Gardening Australia and App and website
- Visit local gardens/Southbank epicurean/ Jerry's garden in May/Roma St/ROGI outings/Northey St farm
- Free talks at libraries, garden shows, pay for workshops and things that interest you.
- Facebook groups/ garage sales/ swaps
- Internet – use your common sense

*'It's a fantastic time to be gardening. I've managed to do pretty well all of these things above in the last eight years. I now work full-time and I only recently was also teaching six gym classes in five days a week on top of my full time job!'*  
Simone

Plans are afoot to visit Simone's garden—probably next year, as we're fully booked this year. Stay tuned.

## Garden Visit Rhonda Binns

When Rhonda moved into her house in 2002 there were lots of gum trees next door so she started gardening in pots so she could move the plants around and they were not so affected by tree roots and the shady conditions. The gum trees have been cut down since, opening up her garden to beautiful winter sunshine that we all appreciated after a week of rain.

We could understand why her garden is a much-loved place for her where she happily spends a lot of time and produces an abundance of healthy food.



Above: Rhonda's butterfly and bee garden with lots of flowering and fragrant plants, including verbena, pink pentas, frangipani, perennial African blue basil and the annual sweet basil, pink tibouchina, purple buddleia, ten-year-old bay tree, dianthus, crepe myrtle, curry leaf tree, nutmeg bush, citronella, stephanotis, clivia, philodendrons and rondeletia. With this variety of flowering plants there is something to attract butterflies and bees all year round.

Right: Rhonda loves mulberries but doesn't have the room for big trees so grows two of them in pots.

Right: a small pitomba tree. It has apricot-coloured fruit that tastes like apricot also and doesn't seem to be affected by fruit fly. Note one of the clay pipes that Rhonda places pots in/on to display them around her garden.



Right: Rhonda grows a variety of herbs in this pot and around trees in the garden. Some of the herbs she grows are Moroccan mint, feverfew (a herb for headaches), brahmi (memory herb), herb Robert with a pretty pink flower and chicory.



Right: Warrigal greens trail along the ground and can climb if warranted. They can be eaten only when cooked, to neutralise the oxalic acid



Middle: Peas with purple pods simplify the harvesting process—they can't hide!



Below: A cumquat tree growing in a pot inside a bigger pot.



## Garden Visit Rhonda Binns



Above: jaboticaba fruit grows directly on the trunk. The fruit has an edible thin, but tough, skin—maybe this is why fruit fly aren't keen on it. The flavour is sweet and aromatic with the texture of a grape.

At the back of her garden are some very special sugar banana palms that originated in her grandfather's garden over 110 years ago. Gardens have many special memories.

Rhonda has set her garden up well with her worm farm and compost area hidden away at the side of the shed. She grows comfrey for composting along with household and garden scraps and prunings. She also has a bench and an outside sink for washing vegetables before taking them inside. The wash water goes back on the garden.

There is a series of raised gardens and pots in which she grows a wide variety of edible plants—native lemon grass that the birds love to hide in; turmeric; ginger; tomatoes; snow peas

and purple peas; several different kinds of spinach - Surinam, Okinawa, Brazilian, Malabar and warrigal greens; leeks, garlic and spring onions and garlic chives.

Right: a raised garden with hardy Red Russian kale



To extend harvesting time for citrus, there are two limes, a lemonade, cumquat and three different lemon trees.

Rhonda recommends using a biodynamic tree paste made with cow manure, diatomaceous earth and clay to treat the stems during winter to protect the tree trunks and rid the plant of ants.



Above: Eureka lemon tree. Rhonda has fly traps spread throughout her garden.

Right: Papaw tree with clean fruit and healthy leaves. One fruit had been nibbled by bats—it was ripe and red inside but still green outside.



Left: When you grow plants that possums love, a dog like Spotto helps keep the possums at bay but she welcomed us.

Right: It's a good idea to grow moisture-loving plants such as mint near a water tap and in pots.

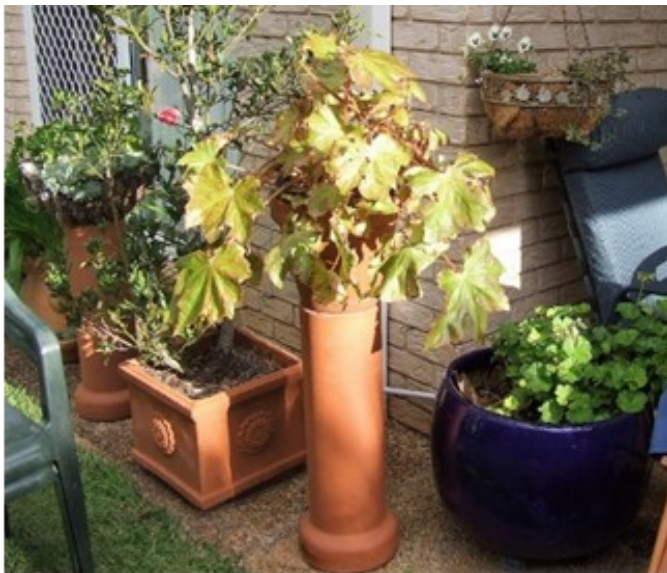
Below: common mint flourishing in its pot



## Garden Visit Rhonda Binns



Above: the asparagus patch is still looking good but the fronds should die back soon.  
Inset: seeds on a female asparagus plant.



Above: Clay pipes help elevate pots around the garden so they stand out more in the garden adding height and catching the sun.

Right: some of the raised garden beds as well as various pots. The tomato grows inside a spiral climbing frame. Note the bricks to raise the pots above the ground.



Clockwise from above: Water for birds suspending from a tripod for protection from predators. Repurposing cassette storage frames to support climbers such as beans, peas and also tomatoes.



A practical feature in the garden. Kale and violas, both of them edible, on show.



This plant is fondly called Nanna's nodding violet as it came from Rhonda's mother. Pots of it have been given to her grandchildren.



Rhonda's namesake plant, the rare Rondeletia, is about to burst into blossom with its fragrant pink flowers.



Thanks, Rhonda, for sharing your garden with us. You certainly have a beautiful, thriving and productive garden with an incredible variety of plants and shown us how we can grow so much in a home garden.

Reported by Mary Irmer

# Living sustainably

We are all gardeners and as such take great care to grow our own food in as healthy and environmentally friendly and sustainable way possible. Whether we are growing our own food using organic and /or permaculture principles, we have made a conscious choice to do so and are aware of the many benefits for ourselves and the environment around us.

However, do we consider a sustainable lifestyle beyond the garden? I'm sure many of us do, but there are so many more little things that we can do daily to embed sustainable practices into our lives. "There is no Planet B" so, for everything we do, we must consider its effect on our world and the situation we leave for future generations.

Living a sustainable life is all about how we live our lives. Our current patterns of living are unsustainable.

Furthermore, our children will increasingly bear the consequences of decisions and actions currently being made or avoided.

Here are a few tips to consider and put into practice!

They involve the Rs! Not just 3 Rs but many more -

**refuse, reuse, recycle, reduce, rethink, relearn, repair, restore, relate, respond, revisit, relax.**

First and most important is **REFUSE**. Consider very carefully before you buy - 'Do I actually need it? Can I do without it or better still can I **REUSE** or **REPURPOSE** something I already have

instead? Can I repair my present item rather than throwing away? Can I buy something from a recycling shop or look for a replacement online from the free-to-give-away sites?' This is always the way to begin.

If the above can't be managed, try to buy a quality product that will last or can be repaired when necessary, rather than just being thrown out. Again if this isn't possible consider buying as ethically as possible and taking/or giving your old product to a recycling station where it can be disassembled and its parts recovered and reused.

Second, consider **REFUSING** single-use plastics. This is a very important step in greatly reducing our environmental impact. Check out ABC's recent War on Waste program <http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/war-on-waste> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WasteFreeStreet>

When purchasing food items and other products always refuse excessive packaging or, preferably, choose packaging-free goods. Where possible buy loose in bulk and use your own containers at purchase.

Meat, fruit and vegetables are prime examples of over-packaging, with many food outlets pre-packing their produce on polystyrene trays wrapped in plastic cling film—so



unnecessary when most fruit and vege comes with its own packaging skin! Choosing whether we want to buy one or six of something is just that - our choice, and we should speak up against having food already weighed and pre-packaged for us. If it's a slightly lesser grade, size, shape etc that requires it to be priced lower (even better budget wise), that's still okay as we can choose how much or how many we wish to buy.

Next July, Queensland will ban single-use shopping bags – but you can start now.

When purchasing your fruit and vege use paper bags or take your own reusable bags (cotton or synthetic) and place your food items straight into these. The checkout staff have no issues with weighing your food this way and you end up with NO SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAG to take home in the first place.



## Living sustainably cont'd

When buying meat from butchers ask them to wrap straight in paper, or take your own BPA free plastic container. They will pre-weigh this and place your meat straight inside. Once re-weighed, ask for the price sticker to be stuck to some paper – they do that willingly as well. When you get home, place all food straight into the fridge/freezer and there is no plastic to be disposed of!



Of course always take **reusable carry** bags to place produce and groceries in when shopping. Have one in your bag at all times for emergencies.

Take **soft plastics** that can't be avoided to the REDcycle bin at Coles or Woolies as they are recycled into garden furniture products.

Other single-use items to **REFUSE** are take-away coffee cups, bottled water and plastic straws! They are an environmental nightmare and coffee cups and straws are not recyclable! Take your own refillable water bottle and your reusable coffee cup (I keep one in the car) - you might even get a discount on your coffee! And who really needs a straw when you can drink straight from the cup or can?

Biodegradable plastic bags are not actually biodegradable as they break down

into minute particles that remain in the environment hundreds of years later.

If you're worried about your rubbish, remember that if you compost food waste, paper and cardboard, recycle accepted 'waste' products, REDcycle soft plastics, you will have almost nothing in your bin each week ... and that can usually be wrapped in newspaper or placed in a paper bag. Try it.

## How long does it take to decompose?

• Paper towel	2-4 weeks
• Banana peel	3-4 weeks
• Paper bag	1 month
• Newspaper	1.5 months
• Apple core	2 months
• Cardboard	2 months
• Cotton glove	3 months
• Orange peel	6 months
• Plywood	1-3 years
• Woollen sock	1-5 years
• Milk packet (tetra) covers & drink packets	5 years
• Cigarette butts	10-12 years
• Leather shoes	25-40 years
• Tinned steel can	50 years
• Foam plastic cups	50 years
• Rubber-boot sole	50-80 years
• Plastic containers	50-80 years
• Aluminium cans	200-500 years
• Plastic bottles	450 years
• Disposable nappies	550 years
• Monofilament fishing line	600 years
• Plastic bags	200-1000 years

## What goes where?

REDcycle accepts **soft plastics** such as:

Bread bags  
Biscuit packets  
Frozen food bags  
Rice and pasta bags  
Confectionery packets  
Cereal box liners  
Newspaper wrap  
Plastic shopping bags  
Old green bags  
Bubble wrap



*Note: Make sure the bin looks like this one above. It seems that some stores use an ordinary wheelie bins and then send the plastics to a tip.*

These go in <b>recycle</b> bin:	These go in <b>compost</b> bin:
Plastic bottles	Food waste
Plastic containers	Paper
Glass	Cardboard
Paper and cardboard	
Tin cans	

For more information, see:

<http://redcycle.net.au/redcycle/how-to-redcycle>  
<http://www.replas.com.au>

*Written by Margaret Sear*

*You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you.*

*What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.*

*Dr Jane Goodall*

## Plant Clinic

There were no queries from members at the last meeting, so we have nothing to report.

If you have a garden problem between meetings, you may like to join our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers](http://www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers) and post photos and information in the hope that someone may be able to help.

Go to <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au> if you have a weed problem.

For information on insect pests, try <https://www.annettemcfarlane.com/pestID.htm>

## 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 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.

## Win a mini garden makeover and workshop

**2.00pm Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September**

### Eligibility criteria

You must:

- be a ROGI member
- be the garden owner
- live in the Redlands
- be available Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September
- be prepared to host ROGI members at your garden for this workshop
- agree to your name and photos of the workshop being used in ROGI News and internet sites and local media.

If you win, Linda Brennan, our organic gardening horticulturist from Ecobotanica, will plan the makeover of a compact area of your garden with you when she visits prior to the workshop.

You then will have the items you need ready for the day so we can help you realise a bountiful patch.

Several ROGI members will gather at your place and we'll all learn together while helping to make your garden flourish.

For more about Linda go to [www.ecobotanica.com.au](http://www.ecobotanica.com.au)

### How to enter:

- In an email write, in **50 words or fewer**, why you'd like (or need) your productive garden to have a makeover.
- Attach **two photos** of the area that needs a makeover.
- Include your full name, street address and phone number

Entries close:

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017.**

Email entries to: [info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)



*ROGI members busy at the garden makeover workshop at Bryce's property last year.*

## Book Reviews

Last month, Simone Johnston told us about her experiences transforming her bare patch into a bountiful backyard.

If you're a beginner gardener and wish to emulate Simone's success, your ROGI library has many books that may help you.

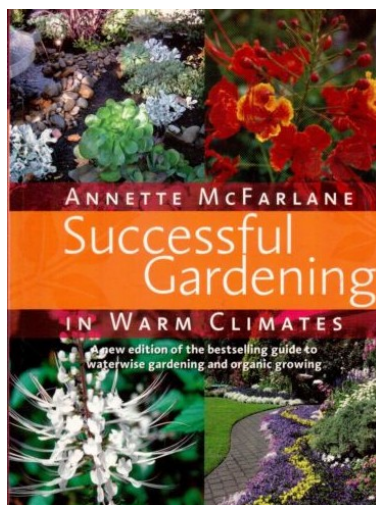
Annette McFarlane is an icon of food growing in SE Queensland. We can believe what she tells us because she has been growing in our area for decades.

After borrowing each of these books from the ROGI library often, I bought them.

No matter how much experience you have with gardening there is always a time where you'll need to look something up, and one of Annette's books is sure to have the answer.

### Successful Gardening in Warm Climates

Annette helps you to identify the climate in your region and then takes you through the steps required to establish and maintain your garden, from composting, pruning and mulching to



planting, fertilising and controlling pests and diseases.

Part two looks at Productive Gardens, describing the A-Z of vegetables, herbs, fruiting trees and vines suitable for growing in warm climates.

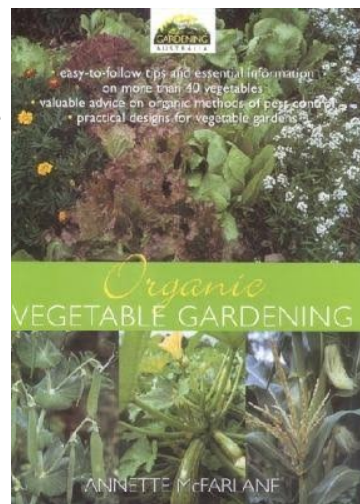
The final section of the book looks exclusively at ornamental gardening, with details on which ornamental species are most suitable for warm climates, including annuals and herbaceous perennials, Australian native plants, rainforest plants and spectacular warm-climate plants.

### Organic Vegetable Gardening

This book has two parts, the basics of gardening, and the A to Z guide.

To start, it covers principles of organics, setting up your beds, rotation plans, planting guides, saving seeds etc. There's good section on managing pests and diseases with organic treatments.

In the A to Z section, each plant listed has a summary at the top, followed by details on propagation, growing, pest and diseases, harvesting and seed saving information. A particularly useful section covers how many plants you should allow



per person for growing—very handy when you're starting out with a new crop.

### Organic Fruit Growing

Annette makes taking on the growing of your own fruit easy with advice on soil preparation, waterwise design, drainage, nutrition, propagation, purchasing and planting, pruning and training, pollination, pest and diseases and organic control.

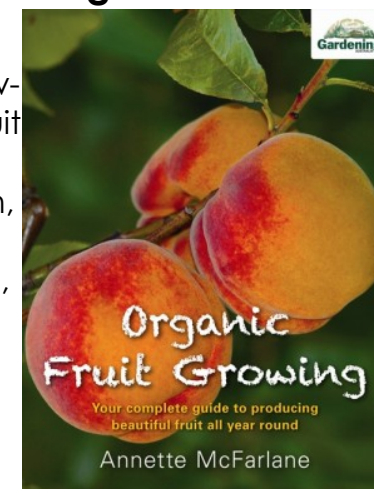
She provides a useful harvest chart so you can choose fruit trees bearing in mind their ripening times. This way you'll always have fresh fruit on at least one tree, and can also avoid huge gluts.

Jill Nixon

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

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

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



# Plant of the Month

## Beetroot *Beta vulgaris*

When I was little I thought beetroot came from a tin. What a wonderful surprise I had when I found out I could grow beetroot at home, so that is just what I did. At 10 years old one of my first crops was beetroot. I was so impressed with the flavour, I started pickling them so I had beetroot all year round.

Now is a great time of year to grow beetroot in the Redlands and Brisbane.

Soak the seeds overnight to improve the germination rate. (When they sink, they're ready to plant). Beetroot has aggregate seeds (seeds that comprise several seeds)

Beetroot prefer cool to warm conditions and full sun or at least four hours of sun a day. They like a little protection from the really hot sun and will grow well at the base of bigger plants, such as tomatoes and capsicum.

Loosen your soil with a garden fork and break up any large clods of earth. Remove any rocks in preparation for planting. Beetroot need a medium rich soil that's well drained and a pH of 5.5-6.5. Add heaps of well-rotted compost and manure to the bed, fork that into the soil along with a handful of blood and bone

Boron deficiency is common in

beetroot; it looks like rough cankered patches on roots and internal brown rot. Most Australian soil is deficient in boron so add ½ teaspoon in a nine-litre watering can and pour it over seedlings when planting. This mix will cover an area of one square metre and one dose is enough.

Beetroot requires a steady, even supply of rain or watering. Liquid feed your crop at least once a fortnight with diluted liquid seaweed or worm juice.

They will need thinning to around 20cm between plants. Larger thinned seedlings can be added to a salad so there is no waste!

Harvest young. Beetroot are at their sweetest when 30-50mm wide—baby beets. It takes around two to three months to get them to this size.

Harvest leaves and eat in salad or cooked as spinach from around six weeks. Start with outer leaves first and always leave five or six on the plant so it continues to grow.

At the **seed bank** this month we have **chioggia** (red with white rings) and **Detroit** (dark red) and beetroot microgreens seeds.

\$1 for members

\$2 for non-members.

We will have beetroot seeds in our new "plant your own" area (see p 17).



## Back to Nature

We emerged from an exceptionally hot dry summer that was followed by a very wet and windy autumn. Before the glow of relief of the cool moist weather fades, we should make a note of what worked, what failed, what we felt about the failure and what strategies we should have put in place to reduce the adverse impacts. This is a largely human characteristic of challenge, response and learning. I will consider these challenges firstly in terms of mental health and secondly in terms of environmental management.

I am not a mental health expert, but rather a keen observer and, to some extent, a participant in the mental health awareness debate. Our DNA gives our brains an ability to picture our physical and social environment and anticipate how events should develop.

My view of mental illness is that either our brains are not functioning normally and/or there is a gross conflict between how our brain anticipates events and reality.

I come back to organic gardening and the observance of natural systems. Despite the best intentions and worst behaviours of humans, the forces of nature persist and environments evolve.

As keen gardeners and observers of nature, we are well equipped and practised at seeing our great expectations dashed and then adapting our expectations to deal with the real world outcomes.

As observers of the real world, we should be aware of the mental health risks to our family, friends and communities who are captives of city living and the contrived world

of electronic information and interaction. The perception of reality of this group lacks the resilience of the perceptions of gardeners who observe the complexities of the natural environment and are tested by it.

This characteristic of challenge, response and learning has given the human species a high level of control over the environment, but with a high level of control there is a corresponding high level of responsibility.

As organic gardeners, we are probably more sensitive than most others to the use of harmful chemical products, poor food and other lifestyle choices and the push of commerce to put profit ahead of the welfare of people.

Long term value is not determined by some brilliant marketing strategy but rather by returns on the assets and resources.

As the general public become more aware of the limitations and adverse impacts of our current economic environment, there will be more take-up of our greener, people- and environment-friendly philosophies.

The more organic gardeners that there are, the easier it is to entice others to follow that path.

We should go out into our gardens, breathe the fresh air, smell the flowers, taste the bounty of our harvest, sense the forces of nature and encourage others to share in our happiness and contentment.

*Happy and healthy gardening,*

*Bruce Ham*

President, Brisbane Organic Growers Inc  
Newsletter, May 2017

*I read this article recently and found it very interesting, so I wanted to share it with you. Bruce has given permission for it to be reproduced here.*

*Editor*

## Garden Visits

### Sunday afternoon 23 July

Greg and Louise Lindner's garden in Wynnum

### Sunday afternoon 20 August

Francesca Latter's Wellington Pt garden

## Field Trips

**September:** Kemp Killerby's property. He runs *Bushfood 4 Biodiversity* and *Flora 4 Fauna*. See how he incorporates his principles into his own yard.

**October:** Gary Donaldson's property. In February Gary spoke to us—mainly about chooks. See what else he does at his permaculture site on Macleay Island.

*Green Harvest & Bugs for Bugs.* We're still working on this, so a date is yet to be confirmed. More information later.

As always, spaces are limited, so get in early.

**Please book with Toni B.** on 0402323704 or [events@rogi.com.au](mailto:events@rogi.com.au) 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.

## Shane's produce for sale the next ROGI meeting

Bok Choy  
Beetroot bunched  
Broccoli  
Carrot – Orange – Organic  
Cauliflower  
Cabbage - Drum Head, Red Sugar Loaf  
Celery  
Celeriac  
Choko  
Daikon – Asian white radish  
Garlic - Aussie Purple (New Season)  
Kale– Green Curley  
Lettuce - Cos, Oak Leaf, Red & Green  
Onions – White  
Potato Sebago – Pesticide Free  
Pumpkins - Jap, Butternut, Potkins  
Shallots  
Silver Beet  
Sweet Potato – White, Purple  
Swedes  
Turnips  
Zucchini Green

Apples Granny Smith, Red Delicious  
Bananas – Cavendish, Lady Fingers  
Oranges - Sweet Navels  
Custard apples  
Mandarins  
Lemons

Apple cider Vinegar  
Eggs - 700 Gms Free Range  
Honey  
Pure Apple and Ginger Juice  
Pure Apple Juice – Filtered and Unfiltered

## What exactly is organic growing?

Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of **soils, ecosystems and people**. It **relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions**, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects.

Organic Agriculture combines **tradition, innovation and science** to benefit the shared environment and promote **fair relationships** and a good **quality of life** for all involved.

These principles are the roots from which Organic Agriculture grows and develops. They express the contribution that Organic Agriculture can make to the world. Composed as inter-connected ethical principles to inspire the organic movement -- in its full diversity, they guide our development of positions, programs and standards.

### Principle of Health

Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.

### Principle of Ecology

Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.

### Principle of Fairness

Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

### Principle of Care

Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

The mission of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) is leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity.

Our goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of organic agriculture.

<https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-landmarks/principles-organic-agriculture>

It is a great mistake to think that food is primarily nourishment of the body. All good food, carefully selected, prepared and presented, nourishes the soul too.  
Thomas Moore | Author of *Care of the Soul*

## New Seed Bank News!

From the next meeting the Seed Bank will have a station where you can sow seeds for free.

We hear from some members that they are not good at growing from seed and we believe this is not a good enough reason to stop sowing seeds. So we would like to encourage you to be self-sufficient with a "nothing to lose" way of growing from seed.

### We want to help/encourage you ...

We will supply a reusable growing container to sow the seed in, some of our own ROGI seed-raising mix and the seeds.

Your job is to check the moisture level of the seed-raising mix – don't let it dry out.

Keep the pots in a protected spot - a well-lit, shaded position is best.

As the seedlings emerge, harden them off by gradually increasing their exposure to sun and heat.

Then, when the second set of leaves appears (the first 'true' leaves), this is a sign that your plant is getting mature and ready for serious growth. A nice weak drink of Seasol or worm liquid is in order. Then you can plant on in a larger pot in or straight into the garden.

There you have it; you grew from a seed, now to plant on and do it again.

This month we have **beetroot**, **lettuce** and **bean** seeds.

*Sharr Ellson and Janet Crighton*

Our **seed-raising mix** (a blend of coir peat, vermiculite, perlite and biochar) works quite well. Now you can get some for your own use. We put it in used yogurt or ice cream containers.

#### **Fifty cents per litre.**

We are able to offer wonderful prices as we source well and we're a not-for-profit group.

Our passion is to get you gardening and growing more food.

#### **Special Offer**

*For every five packs of seeds you buy from the seed bank, you'll receive one litre of seed-raising mix to sow them in.*

Please **return seedling pots** the month after you have bought the seedlings so they can be reused. Especially the 4-cell ones. **Other clean used pots**—small sizes only up to 12cm diameter. The almost-square ones are good too.

## Seed Sowing Guide

### July

Artichoke; Jerusalem a'choke  
Asparagus  
Beans, French  
Beetroot  
Cabbage  
Capsicum/Chilli  
Carrot  
Celery  
Chicory  
Endive  
Kohlrabi  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Radish  
Silver beet  
Swede  
Sweet potato  
Tomato  
Turnip

### August

Artichoke; Jerusalem a'choke  
Asparagus  
Beans, French  
Beetroot  
Capsicum/Chilli  
Carrot  
Celery  
Chicory  
Eggplant  
Kohlrabi  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Potatoes  
Pumpkin  
Radish  
Silver beet  
Squash  
Sweet potato  
Tomato

This guide is for sowing seeds, not seedlings.

There may be several days or even weeks between the optimal time to sow a seed and to transplant a seedling.

Keep in mind that these are only guides. Be aware that micro-climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before or after the recommended times. ROGI Seed Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits.

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

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

## Exchange plants, cuttings, seedlings and home-grown produce

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

### ROGI Rewards

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

### Members' Sales

Items you 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 **Cleveland IGA** store. This is how it works:



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

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



## We'd like to hear from you.

For example, send us:

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

**Please send your items to the editor and help keep ROGI News topical, interesting, local and relevant.** [info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)

### Did you know?

You can go online and read every edition of ROGI News since September 2014. Go to [www.rogi.com.au](http://www.rogi.com.au) and browse.

**August Newsletter Deadline Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 26 July.**

*Left: It could be mistaken for a type of dandelion, and its a cousin—the heirloom red-veined chicory *Chicorium intybus*. Highly nutritious, it can be eaten raw (its bitter leaves aid digestion) or cooked (steamed or stirfried} which removes most bitterness. It's perennial, hardy and easy to grow. This one is growing in Rhonda's garden.*

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

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

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

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

**Oaklands Street Community Garden**—Wednesday & Friday 9am - noon, Sunday 2 - 5pm. Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills.



Above: This is Simone's garden now—no longer the bare 'footie field'!

Right: Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) growing in Rhonda's garden. This dainty plant is very easy to grow in our climate—it prefers dappled shade in the hotter months. Once you have it in your garden, it will pop up everywhere. The 'crane's bill' seed pods burst when they're ripe sending a spray of seeds into the air. You can add leaves and flowers to salads, or have it as a tea. It has numerous medicinal properties.

