

Next meeting: Wednesday 11 July 2018

ROGI News

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

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Free
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 p 19**).

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

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To grow potatoes in a large pot like these are, you put the seed potato in near the bottom of the pot and cover it with soil and/or compost and mulch.

As the plant grows, extra soil/compost is added to ensure the potatoes growing below are kept covered.

When this potato plant was smaller and lower down in the pot, it had been showing signs of uneven growth. The gardener realised that the sun wasn't reaching the part of the plant hidden by the northern side of the pot. His solution was to place a mirror on the southern side of the pot to reflect the sunlight onto the sheltered plants. Clearly, it was successful.

Backyard Burlblings

Hello ROGI member,

Shortest Day or the Longest Night of the year! Take your pick, both are correct. This year, Thursday June 21st at precisely 8.07 pm the Winter Solstice marked a turning point for those of us who like to keep track of the seasons.

That would probably include most ROGI members as organic gardening implies an awareness of the forces of nature around us as we move through the yearly cycle of the seasons. This means we can now start to look forward to longer days and early spring.

As many of us live in a suburban environment this awareness is made a little more difficult when surrounded by houses and fences. As we often walk through the surrounding suburban streets, it has become more and more obvious that having a garden at all, let alone a productive food garden, seems to be of little concern to most people.

More and more houses enhanced by a few token designer plants in pebbles or pots appears to be the norm, while any shrub or tree daring to assert itself is pruned severely either by the owners or by council workers if a street tree.

We have been living in Birkdale just over three years, but in that short timespan many large trees housing wildlife have been removed from neighbouring properties to create more space for extensions, swimming

pools or a larger house. Consequently we have more wind, less shade in summer, fewer birds and a great view of roofs and fences.

All that has made us more determined to reverse some of that destruction and have a different kind of garden. What started out as a bare dog yard three years ago has now become a somewhat wild place where bees, butterflies, spiders and birds are welcome.

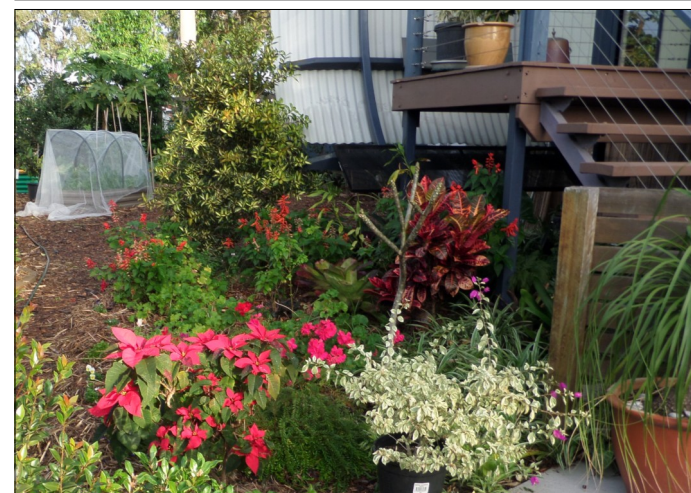
Unfortunately some possums have also made it their home and regularly chew off any new leaves on the two tropical apple trees. I think they regard it as their nightly snack bar. However, we can live with that, as running along the fences and nipping leaves off the apples and passion fruit vines seems to keep them away from the vegetable patches on the ground.

While the larger trees and shrubs flourished, we initially struggled with the vegetables and herbs as the soil was seriously out of balance, with a pH of 8-9 in some places.

We abandoned the soil and went for raised beds and kept on applying compost and digging in Bokashi-fermented scraps as well as using rock dust and worm castings. Our vegetables and salad greens were a lot happier and so were we as now we can always go and pick something to add to any meal.

There is now a real pleasure in walking around our small suburban garden and seeing the diversity of flowers, vegetables, herbs and fruit trees. Everything has grown so much that we now have to prune rather than plant. In other words it **is** possible to create one's own wilderness in a small space.

*Julia Geljon
ROGI president*



Coming Events

July	Wed 11	ROGI meeting	
	F/S/S, 13/14/15	Qld Garden Expo	See p12
	Tues 17	Seed savers' group	See p18
	Sun 22	Field Trip	Cancelled
	Sun 29	Garden Visit	See p16
Aug	Thu 2	BOGI meeting	
	Tues 7	Herb Society meeting	
	Wed 8	ROGI meeting	
	Sat 11	Proposed Field Trip	See p16
	Sun 12	Garden Visit	See p16
	Sat 25	Garden Makeover	See p11

Membership Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

July Meeting

Why do some gardeners have green thumbs and some brown?

- *My soil is really poor. What do I do about it?*
- *Why do my plants die just after I plant them?*
- *Why does my fertiliser stop working after using it a few times?*
- *How come my plants get discoloration & deformities?*
- *Why do the grubs get my tomatoes before I do?*



Many people know the importance of going organic and sustainably when it comes to gardening, but where do you start and what does it take to have a beautiful garden of healthy, disease-free plants?

This month sees a presentation by Des Warnock, co-founder of *Plant of Health* fertilisers. He loves soil nutrition and can't wait to tell you about the five key facets of healthy soil.

His fun and easy-to-understand presentation will get you on your way even if you have a "brown thumb".

Come along to learn a little about soils and soil nutrition and take home an easy-to-follow program for a great garden.

Ashley from Mt Cotton Organic Farm will have his selected organic produce for sale inside the building. Remember - bring your reusable bags, boxes, baskets etc.

Field trip - The Ecovillage at Currumbin

Reported by Mary Imer, Ann Roffey and Jill Nixon

On a glorious winter morning, Toni and Leigh drove us up Currumbin valley to the Ecovillage. We pulled up at the Pasture and Co café, which is under the original farm house that was raised to accommodate the café below and rooms for use by health professionals during the week on top.

The café was very popular as we discovered but those who waited in line were very happy with their drinks and food as they had a vast array of organic food choices and drinks. Every Saturday morning, there is a market of fresh, local and organic produce. Residents can sell or trade their abundant crops, eggs etc, in the old machinery shed nearby where the overflow from the café sat and enjoyed the winter sun on our backs.



Ben and ROGI members with Pasture and Co Café in the background.

Ben O'Callaghan met us and stood up on a pile of mulch while he talked about how statistics showed that the village was being successful in sustainability compared with other local housing developments.

The energy use was 50% less in The Ecovillage mainly because the house designs require less lighting, heating and cooling and the shared ownership

of the community pool. All the houses have solar panels so they contribute to the grid during peak times during the day.

The Village is not connected to the water grid and is self-sufficient in water as houses have tanks and the waste water from stage 1 and 2 houses is treated and gravity fed back so that it can be used for irrigation. Nevertheless, the water usage by households in the village is less than in the average household in the city elsewhere – 428L compared to 450 L/ per day. The Village has won over 30 building design awards.

The stated vision of The Ecovillage is:
A world leading ecologically sustainable and conscious community where people and nature flourish in beauty, harmony and integrity.

The 3 Rs, reduce, reuse and recycle are taken very seriously within the village. There is a 3 R building hub, the centre of which is reconstructed from an old Telstra building. The centre largely manages the village waste with a central garbage collection point, composting and recycling collection station near the entrance. See page 20 for more on this.



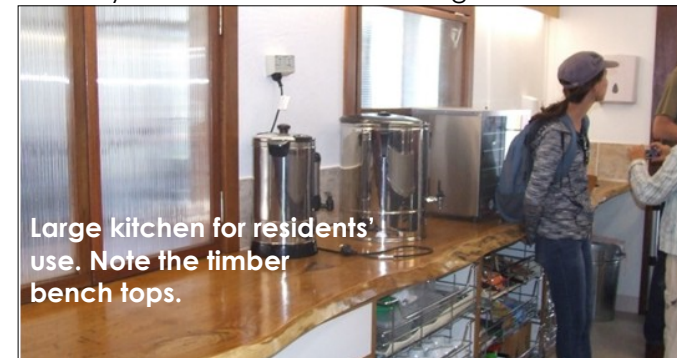
Where possible, recycled materials such as pre-used timber and a sawdust/

plastic blend (as in this sign, right) are used and will replace the old timber ones (above) as they wear out.



Ownership of houses is freehold. The village is managed by the body corporate. Fees are paid according to the building size - \$3000 - \$5100 for stages one and two houses, (connected to the waste water treatment plant) and \$4000 – 4500 for the acreage properties in The Highlands (stage 3) who manage their own waste water. No council mains connection means no water or sewerage rates. The rates charged for garbage removal is minimal as the village has just one pick up spot and largely manages its own waste and recycling. Council rates are about \$1,200 to \$1,600 pa - much lower than comparable houses in the area. The body corporate fee is used to maintain and provide community assets such as:

- Common property grounds maintenance (180 acres of common ground)
- Private roads and paths in the village
- Large hall (available free for use by residents) with two rooms that can be opened to one large room suitable for a party or meeting for up to 150 people or a smaller one for around 70. It has a large kitchen with excellent facilities for preparing and storing food and ample crockery etc. Some residents used the kitchen for a 'lemon tart day' the week before to use the abundant lemons in the village. Residents can use it for dinner parties so they don't need to own or store quantities of china, seating, tables. They book it in advance through the website.



Large kitchen for residents' use. Note the timber bench tops.

Field trip continued

- The Old Dairy Community Centre (constructed from the old dairy on the site) has an upstairs library of books donated by residents
- Swimming pool and a wading pool
- Gym
- Wood-fired pizza oven (complete with large frog atop) – pizza and craft beer nights are popular
- Children's playgrounds and equip-



ment with another nod to the old dairy farm

- At the RRR centre there is a men's shed and a communal craft room and sewing room—all very well-equipped



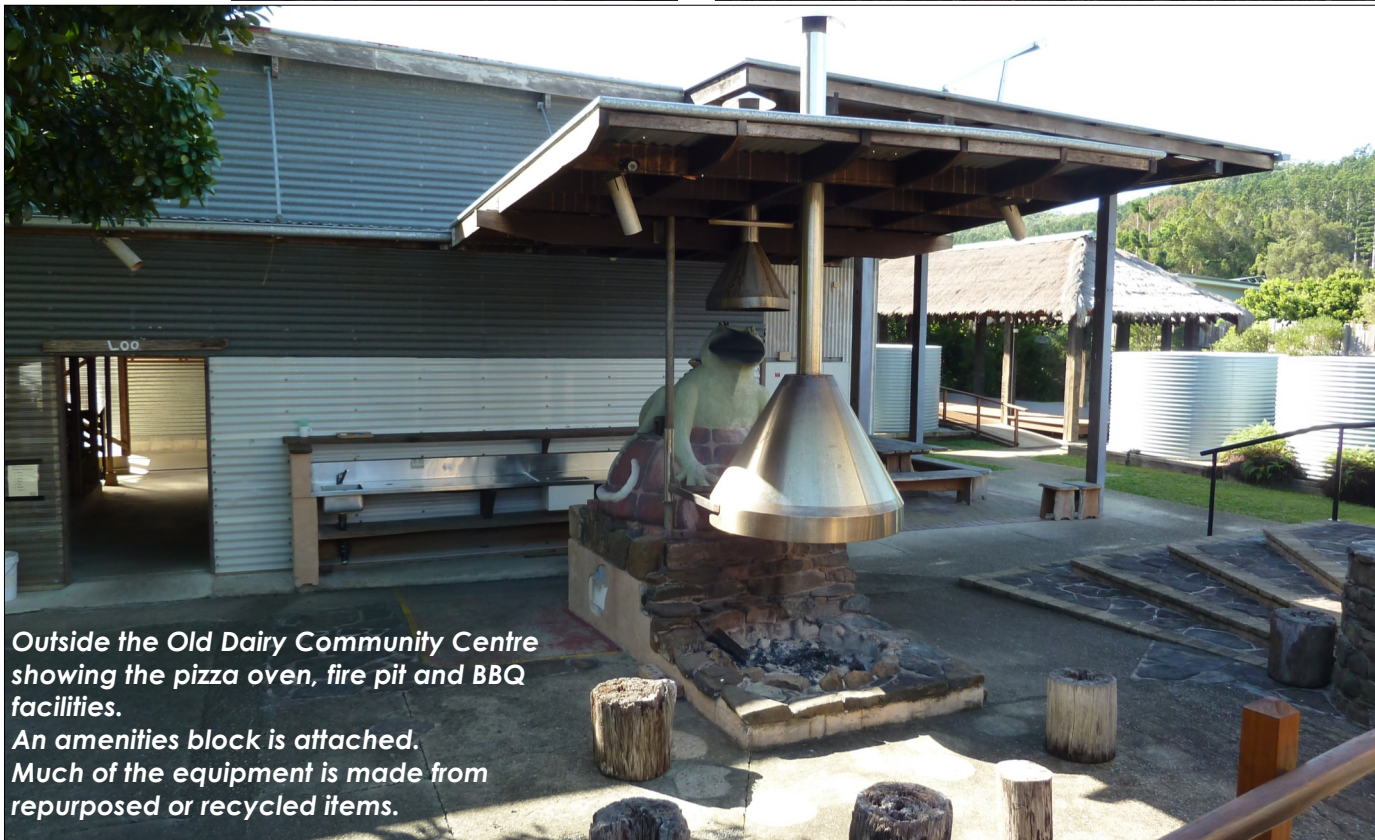
The 272 acres was previously a banana farm. A previous owner planted a 20 acres of native hoop pine which is now mature. Since 2004 there's been considerable revegetation and regeneration of native endemic plants and assisted swale drainage to help retain water, increase ground water to be available for plants. Waterways have become a feature. No curbing and channelling means the water flows naturally. There are 13 ponds as well as Currumbin Creek.



The village has had cane toad catches; Ben told of an interesting development - a bait for cane toads that reportedly doesn't affect native frogs.

Twelve years of regeneration has shown an increase in the biodiversity of fauna. There have been 186 different bird species identified, and there are over 80 kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, echidnas and many native bees.

To preserve and encourage the native fauna, cats and dogs (except guide and assistance dogs) are prohibited. Any other animal is welcome.



Outside the Old Dairy Community Centre showing the pizza oven, fire pit and BBQ facilities.

An amenities block is attached. Much of the equipment is made from repurposed or recycled items.

Field trip continued

The 147 housing lots have over 350 adults and 100 children. There is a very diverse mix of people; the average age is 43 with many seniors, babies and different nationalities. Ben says he finds it easy to get baby sitters. There is a great community spirit but if you want to be a hermit that is also possible.

One third of residents run small home businesses - facilitated by high speed internet. Residents also benefit from the large TV aerial for the village.

House design impacts on energy efficiency, so there are building guidelines, such as:

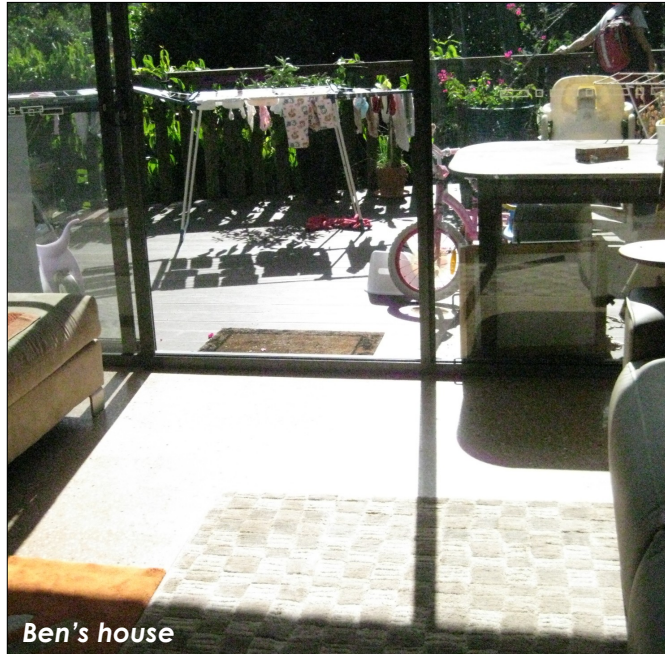
- Cross ventilation and fans rather than air-conditioning for summer
- LED light bulbs
- Low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) paint
- Follow land contour, minimal cut and fill to not affect the natural topography or water flow.
- Solar hot water system
- Solar panels – most are grid-connected. In The Highlands some have batteries and are independent of the grid. Ben averages about 2kw/hr - about 24kw a day
- Natural lighting - windows, some double glazed to reflect sun, and skylights.
- Light-coloured roofing materials
- Walls need to be insulated
- Use recycled materials. Bill and Ben both used recycled timber - doors and large beams
- Each house has a ramp for wheelchairs, prams



Bill's house

Note the windows placed high for cross-ventilation, the deck and the citrus orchard.

- Use decks so people can enjoy outside living
- Use deciduous trees on northern side to let winter sun in and for shade in summer



Ben's house

Orientation – house must face north to capture the low winter sun with concrete, stone or tile slab floor in the house on the north side to retain heat. The main living areas are on this side of the house.



Bill's house

Why waste a room in the house when a breeze-way can double as a laundry and drying area?

ecovillage
Important for all Ecovillage residents and tradespeople
A GUIDE FOR CLEANING PRODUCTS

Our Waste Water Treatment Plant uses a system that relies on living bacteria to break down all the laundry, bathroom waste to the plant. All homes on the creek and terraces send their kitchen, laundry, bathroom waste to the plant.

If we put chemicals into the system that might kill the good bacteria- the system will not work properly. So we need to consider what is going down our drains, we are all responsible.

DO

- Use Biodegradable detergents and cleaners that don't contain Phosphorous (consider the products table at the end)
- Display your recycled system stickers near toilets. Available from: janice@bigwheels.net.au
- Ask questions – mattbinney@hotmail.com

RECYCLED SYSTEM
Please only flush human waste & toilet paper

DON'T put these in machines, toilets, or drains connected to the WWTP

- Phosphorous containing cleaning products. Particularly some **dishwashing tablets** (check the ingredients) and **Napisan**
- "Flushable" wipes. They aren't actually flushable and cause blockages
- Feminine hygiene or male contraception products (yes this is a regular occurrence)
- **Methylated Spirits, Kerosene or Vinegar**
- If Napisan or harsh or strong cleaning products must be used on occasion, use a bucket and rinse the garments, cleaning sponges etc in the bucket, then empty the contents onto an appropriate area in the garden. Never pour buckets of cleaning product down the drains.

Cleaning Product Type	Good commercial option	Eco alternative
Laundry Detergent	Kin Kin, Eco Store, Earth Choice	
Laundry Softener	Earth Choice	
Stain Soaker	Kin Kin, Ecostore	Lemon Juice
Manual Dishwashing	Kin Kin, Eco Store, Earth Choice	
Automatic Dishwashing*	Kin Kin, Eco Store, Morning Fresh	Bi-Carb
Tile Cleaner	Ecostore, Kin Kin	
Power/Bath Cleaner	Ecostore, Kin Kin	Citris, bicarb, borax powder

*The WWTP is not endorsing these products in particular and ask residents to make their own decisions using the advice in this flyer. Talk to the WWTP Manager if your dishwasher does not work with phosphorous free detergents

Operators are; Peter Tardrew, Mike Dobson, Greg Bews and Tyler Wood

Clear guidelines regarding the waste water treatment plant. Below: Some books with good ideas



Field trip continued Bill's house and garden



Bill's productive garden is protected from marauding wildlife.

R: Bill's impressive collection of long-handled tools.



Below: Bill's raised vegetable beds have shade cloth that can be rolled down to protect from harsh summer sun. The structures are made from repurposed items.



Eliminate snails and slugs.

A trick Bill has used is to place old carpet, turned upside down, on the pathways of his vegetable garden, which he has then covered with fine gravel. Slugs and snails don't like it and keep away.



Left: Elaine watching Bill turn compost with a spiral purpose-made compost turner. They are readily available at the big green store.

Right: Bill rigged up this solar collector to run an aerator for his weed 'tea'. This keeps it moving and prevents nasty smells.



The sponges glued to these tongs are soaked in mineral turps and then used to saturate the nut-grass. This is an experiment to see if it will work. The photo below shows that the leaves have died off (plants on the left haven't been treated). Bill has said since that the roots/bulb on each plant died, but it didn't carry through to the adjoining plant. So each plant needs to be treated ... but it works! The advantage of this system is that the soil, and thus the micro-organisms, is not affected.





The lush timber deck is another living area. Their house has only two bedrooms; they also have a self-contained studio (to the left of the deck - painted cream) which is used for guests or is rented out on Airbnb. The deck acts as a buffer between the house and the studio. Many houses in the village are small and have studios. Those without spare rooms or studios often rent these for their guests to stay in.



A method of striking cuttings

Bill saw this on Gardening Australia a while ago.

Use a plastic pot and a smaller terracotta pot. Put potting media about halfway up the large pot. Plug up its drainage hole of the terracotta pot. Nestle it inside the plastic pot and fill it with water. Add more potting media to the big pot. Position three or more 60cm bamboo sticks into the mix and place the cuttings between them. Cover the bamboo sticks with a large plastic bag to hold in the moisture.

Terracotta is porous and allows gentle seepage of water into the potting media, without letting it become sodden. It seldom needs refilling.



ROGI Committee Positions

The ROGI Annual General Meeting will be on 8 August.

All committee positions will be declared vacant at the beginning of the AGM.

PRESIDENT

- Leads and inspires ROGI
- Delivers monthly meetings to members
- Seeks guest speakers, field trips and other opportunities
- Promotes ROGI and organic gardening to the community

VICE PRESIDENT

- Assists the president in planning and delivery of meetings, initiatives and events as above**
- Stands in if president is absent**

SECRETARY

- Keeps records of the business of ROGI, including the rules**
- Records office-holders and trustees of the association**
- Sets agendas and records minutes of committee meetings**
- Completes and sends documents to Office of Fair Trading after AGM**
- Manages correspondence**

TREASURER

- Handles all monies paid or received and issues receipts
- Deposits monies into ROGI bank account
- Makes payments from ROGI funds with appropriate authority
- Complies with Associations Incorporation Act
- Submits report, balance sheet or financial statement to committee
- Has custody of all accounting records of ROGI
- Reviews transactions online prior to all meetings

Four other committee members

- These may be Office Bearers of the club, or they may be members who want to be a part of the decision-making process.

The eight committee members are expected to attend ROGI committee meetings. Currently these are usually held the fourth Wednesday of the month.

ROGI Office Bearers

Internal Events Secretary

- Sources and coordinates member workshops, garden visits and field trips

Membership Secretary

- Updates membership list monthly; sends to committee
- Compiles list of visitors each month
- Sends an individual welcome letter to each new member
- Sends reminders to unpaid members in February each year

PR & Communications Co-ordinator

- Handles advertising and press releases
- Arranges maintenance of website and social media
- Assists with newsletter compilation and editing

Public Events Co-ordinator

- Organises public ROGI events eg Green Heart Fair. Indigi Day Out**

Website Manager Manages and maintains website

Newsletter Editor

- Liaises with president, committee, office bearers to publish their articles, upcoming events, and other relevant articles/news
- Develops ideas and arranges for members or self to write articles
- Arranges for write-ups from events and speakers
- Edits for accuracy of spelling, grammar, sources and facts
- Sends finished document to president for review and distribution

Seed Bank Co-ordinator

- Purchases, saves or procures fresh quality seed for seed bank
- Maintains records of seed stock and rotates to maintain viability
- Sells seeds at ROGI meetings, garden visits and events
- Arranges for envelopes, labels and seed-packing days
- Ensures seed bank has seasonal stock

Library co-ordinator

- Maintains records of books etc in stock and all loans; Acquires new books

Supper co-ordinator

- Supplies milk, teas, coffee, sugar, ROGI herbal tea etc and keeps receipts
- Lays out supper provided by members on table/s
- Ensures kitchen is clean after meetings with help of volunteers
- Launders tea towels, etc

AV Desk Operator/s (two or more people could share the job)

- Operates desk on meeting nights

Positions Vacant Our president and treasurer are happy to continue, but we need a new **vice-president** and **secretary**. You may nominate for any committee position (vacant or not) if you wish to a part of the decision-making process. We also need a **public events co-ordinator**. Please consider volunteering to contribute to your club.

Plant of the month

Cats Whiskers

Orthosiphon aristatus Also known as Java tea, Kidney Tea Plant and kumis kutjing .

Cats Whiskers is a branched herbaceous plant that belongs to the Lamiaceae, or mint, family.

The plant is a medicinal herb found throughout southern China, South East Asia and tropical Queensland but most people here don't grow it for the health benefits.

We love it for its flowers which we can have for most of the warmer months in the Redlands. Bees, birds and butterflies are attracted to the flowers.

It is a fast growing, perennial that grows to a height of 1-2 meters. It does well in full sun and prefers well-drained soil high in organic content that can hold moisture, neutral to slightly alkaline pH.

Propagation can be by the very small seeds, by cutting (my favourite way) or root division.

Medicinal uses:

Now I am not a doctor nor am I a wise woman but, over many many years, herbs have been healing, and this is some information I have found out via Isabell Shipard.

Cats Whiskers can make a great tea for the treatment of kidney stones to move them and discharge them. The herb is also used for gallstones and for rheumatic pains and coughs. The leaves can be used fresh, or dried, as an infusion or decoction.

The crushed, dried leaves may be encapsulated; the active ingredient can retain

its properties for several years when stored in cool, dry conditions; otherwise just drink as a tea one or two times a day for kidney stone movement.

This is a recipe Isabell offers for gallstones:

Use 15-20 fresh leaves, a 'finger knob' of fresh turmeric, 7 cloves of garlic, and 1 litre of water, simmer 10-15 minutes and strain. Half the decoction is drunk in the morning and half in the afternoon.

We will have white and purple cats whiskers plants for sale at the seed bank at the July meeting.

Sharr Ellison



Using a soil pH test kit

Testing the pH of my soil has been on my to-do list for quite some time ... but it always seemed a little too fiddly and tricky!

This month I finally got around to it – thanks to borrowing ROGI's pH testing kit in the library – and I am pleased to report it was a breeze to do.

Plants tend to prefer soil pH around 6.5-7 (with a few exceptions) and if your soils are out of balance (too acidic or alkaline) the plants are not able to access nutrients – no matter how much T.L.C. you are ladling onto them from topsoil. For a comprehensive list of plants preferred pH range see www.almanac.com/content/soil-ph-levels.

The process of testing is quick and easy, it took me around 15 minutes to do 5-6 garden beds.

Grab a soil pH testing kit and a small shovel. Open the soil crust and obtain ½-1 teaspoon of soil from about 10-15cm deep, placing it on the provided white mixer card. Brush off any stones/twigs/debris.

Mix 1-2 drops of indicator dye with the soil, then sprinkle on a small amount of the supplied white powder.

After 30-60 seconds, match the changed colour of the powder with the colour chart provided to determine the pH.

Ideally test a couple of spots from each garden bed, or at least 6 sites from around your garden generally to get a good idea of your soil profile.

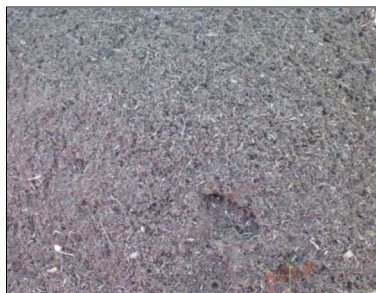
In general, Australian soils tend to be acidic – ie pH less than 7. Improve these soils, if needed, with green manure crops, organic compost or agricultural lime.

Lara Brits

Fire ant alert

Fire ant nests have been found in Cleveland. As a precaution, keep plant pots above the ground, especially if planning to share with others. Talk with Janet at the Seed bank or Jan Acton for more information.

Species	<i>Solenopsis invicta</i>
Description	<p>Nests: No obvious entry or exit holes. Come in various shapes and sizes. Can be mounds or just some loose soil. Can be found under and around logs, rocks and garden material</p> <p>Behaviour: Aggressive, particularly near the nest. Can inflict a painful sting</p> <p>Ants: Small 2-6 mm. Variety of sizes within each nest. Head and body are coppery-brown, abdomen darker.</p>
Location of nests	Fire ant mounds are not always easily identifiable. They can be up to 40cm high, but may also be flat and look like a small patch of disturbed soil. They are usually found in open areas such as lawns, pastures, along roadsides and unused cropland. Nests are also found next to or under other objects on the ground, such as timber, logs, rocks, pavers or bricks.
Distribution in Australia	Fire ants have been found in SEQ, around Brisbane, Logan, Ipswich, Redland and Scenic Rim. View a map of current fire ant biosecurity zones .
First aid advice	<p>Stings are painful, and the burning or itching sensation can last up to an hour. Victims of multiple stings may feel as if their body is on fire. After several hours small pustules may form at sting sites. These may become itchy and can take up to 10 days to heal. There is a risk of secondary infection if pustules break.</p> <p>If stung by fire ants: Apply a cold compress to relieve the swelling and pain. Gently wash the affected area with soap and water and leave the blister intact. Seek medical attention if you are allergic to insect stings or experience symptoms of allergy. In extremely rare cases fire ant stings can cause a severe and sometimes fatal allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).</p> <p>Seek medical attention if showing signs of adverse reaction to stings.</p>
What to do if you think you see a fire ant	In Queensland, call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or complete the online report form . Under Queensland legislation, fire ants are a category 1 restricted pest and must be reported to Biosecurity Queensland.



Left: One of the fire ant nests in Cleveland - in parkland not far from the local school; they prefer open sunny places. As you can see, this one looks just like disturbed soil, but they can build mounds, which don't have an obvious opening in the centre.

If you find a suspicious-looking nest, don't touch or poke it; the ants are very ferocious and aggressive and will run up a stick and give you stings that burn like fire.

Mini Garden Makeover & Workshop

Linda Brennan, our organic gardening horticulturist from Ecobotanica, will plan the makeover of a compact area of the winner's garden in consultation when she visits prior to the workshop. You, the lucky person, then will ensure the necessary items are ready for the day. 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

How to enter:

- Write up to **50 words** why you'd like 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
- **Closing date 11 July**

Email entries to: info@rogi.com.au **Post** entries to: PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163

To be eligible to enter, you must:

- be a ROGI member
- be the garden owner
- live in the Redlands
- be willing to host ROGI at your garden for this workshop
- agree to your name and photos of the workshop being used in ROGI News, internet sites and local media.

Please read carefully and think about whether your garden, or part thereof, would be a suitable candidate for a ROGI mini garden makeover.

**The workshop
date is Saturday
25th August**

Previous winning gardens have been:

- Jenny's backyard vegetable patch where we did soil pH testing and trench composting
- a section of Sharr's garden where we planted fruit trees and companion plants
- an enclosed garden at Mena's acreage to keep out marauding wildlife
- Bryce's acreage property where we learned about and then planted out a four-bed rotation vegetable garden along with companion plants (and cuddled the baby lamb).



Queensland Garden Expo is a must see for green thumbs and novice gardeners alike.

Held in Nambour, this 3 day expo is Queensland's premier gardening event attracting 40,000 + visitors from Australia and New Zealand. Some of our leading gardening experts take part in three days of lectures and workshops.

See lots of plants, with over 55 nurseries and over 360 exhibitors. There are free lectures and demonstrations on eight live stages every day covering a vast array of gardening topics.

Go to the Gourmet Garden stage for some great tips on growing your

own produce and turning it into delicious gourmet meals. The 'Giant Kitchen Garden' features a totally organic food court with a fully-planted sustainable garden constructed onsite. Get help with gardening problems and plant identification from the onsite Plant Clinic.

Adult Entry: \$20

Aged Concession: \$18

Children 15yrs and under:

Free

Groups of 10 or more: \$18

More info at <http://www.qldgardenexpo.com.au>

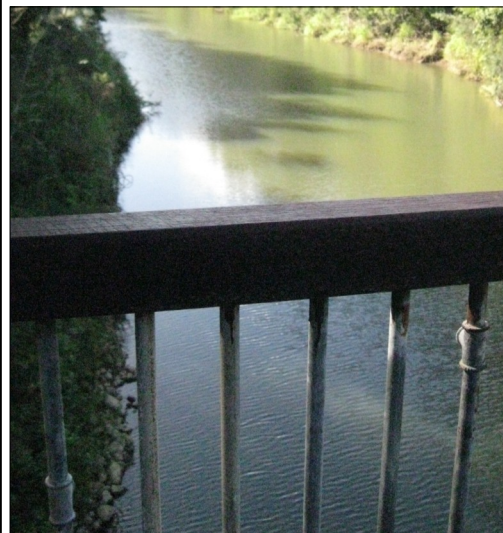
Ideas from The Ecovillage



A lightshade with a difference ... repurposing a metal bucket from the old dairy. Some indoor lights were shaded by old metal milkshake containers.



Above: Just a bit further around this corner is a rather spectacular outdoor shower for the use of swimmers, near the pools. Very lush and green.



Left: One of the bridges over Currumbin Creek. Note that the uprights are made from old water pipes, repurposed. Can you spot the giveaways?



Right: There is a bus shelter near The Village Green. We noticed the sheets of glass that make up its walls. Closer inspection revealed that they are old car and/or bus windows — repurposing, again.

Plant Clinic

We received a good variety of specimens and, with input from George, Gennaro, Linda, Janet, Chris and others, most of them have been resolved.

Two potted trees were brought in by Bill for identification:

1. *Garcinia achacha* a highly-prized tropical fruit native to Bolivia. It has very obvious, unusual leaf branching.



2. *Clausena lansium wampi* gives off a strong citrusy smell when the leaves are crushed. A member of the citrus family, it has small oval yellow fruit which taste sweet and sour.



A small soft-leaved plant with a purple flower remains unidentified but it was suspected to be a weed. If anyone recognises it from the picture Shirley Holmes would like to know.

Three types of aloe with their emerging flowers...

We were unable to specifically identify them despite help from www.aloe-aloe.com.au. However the narrow-leaved specimen matches our *Aloe vera* plants which have just come into flower.



The burning question really is: Can you eat/drink all types of Aloe? My research suggests not but probably because some have no medicinal properties whatsoever. *Aloe vera* seems to be the best choice.

Some young mango leaves with spots and tip burn symptoms were diagnosed with anthracnose.

Reasons being; we were told that young leaves are affected, no fruit has matured— all dropped at a small stage, it is typical at this time of year (cool/humid), and mangoes in Brisbane are fairly marginal from a climate point of view. Treatment options are to prune very hard allowing a lot of light into the tree; spray with copper hydroxide or potassium bicarbonate; try a tea made from casuarina leaves.



A small piece of young cabbage with wriggly lines all over it ... this is typical of cabbage leafminer. Use row covers to prevent the fly stage from laying eggs or import a parasitic wasp *Diglyphus isaea* which is capable of killing the larva in the 'mine'.



You can buy beneficial insects and predators such as *Diglyphus isaea* and *Montdorensis* to release in your garden. They usually come in egg form or as larvae, with instructions for use.

<http://www.bioresources.com.au>
<https://bugsforbugs.com.au>

Plant Clinic

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

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

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

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

Plant Clinic continued

Now for all the tomato questions ...

This tomato fruit and sample of leaves provided clear evidence of russet mite.



Symptoms include bronzing of stem, leathery skin on fruit and withering of lower leaves. Control can be achieved by using wettable sulphur or, as Janet researched, a predatory mite named *Montdorensis*. Commercial use of this mite is still in early stages but it has the amazing property of changing gut colour depending on what it targets. e.g. yellowish tinge when eating thrips larvae or pinkish when eating tomato russet mite! (For more detail, check out 'The Good Bug Book').

Some holey (note the "e") tomatoes were very well infested with tomato budworm whose moth lays eggs early in the season on the leaves. 'Worms' hatch and move to the flowers and fruit.



Spraying with Dipel (also sold as 'Success') works but has to be done at bud formation and as soon as the first eggs start to hatch. Since this happens throughout the season you have to repeat the process. Inspecting the flowers and destroying any damaged ones helps to lessen the number of caterpillars surviving to pupate in your soil for next year.



Another sample of a tomato plant - a black cherry tomato showed wilting on one side of the stem and dull streaks on the stem which were starting to crack open.

This looks like bacterial canker which affects tomatoes and weeds in the same family*. Plants may become diseased because they have been grown from infected seed or because the soil contains infected plant debris.

To prevent, practise crop rotation (four years between tomato crops is desirable). Remove and burn or solarise infected plants, wash hands and tools in warm soapy water and avoid overhead watering which splashes the bacteria around the plants. Obtain disease free seed.

Reported by Chris McIvor

If you are unable to get identification of a plant from your local nursery, go to <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/herbarium/identify-specimens>. Fill out the Botanical specimens cover sheet, and send with your plant cutting (between two sheets of newspaper) to:

Botanical Information & Advisory Service, Queensland Herbarium, DSITI, Brisbane Botanic Gardens
Mt Coot-tha Road, TOOWONG QLD 4066

They will identify your plant for free and send you a reply by your choice of post/email/fax/phone.

* Tomato belongs to the *Solanaceae* family as does potato, eggplant, capsicum, chilli, cape gooseberry, nightshade, tobacco, many flowers and weeds. When you practise crop rotation, these plants need to be considered the same.

Health benefits of gardening

Have you ever wondered why getting into your garden or sitting out on the balcony can leave you feeling refreshed and energised in times of stress? New research shows that getting your hands dirty can be good for your soul, not just your garden.

A recent survey from Yates shows that 71% of Australians feel that social media and technology play a role in making them feel anxious. So, in a world full of deadlines, packed schedules and Facebook scrolling, it's important to get away from our screens every once in a while.

Stemming from ancient Buddhist traditions, the practice of mindfulness has emerged in Western countries as a tool to help focus the mind and provide a much-needed antidote to the many hours of screen time we get each day.

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing your attention on the present moment - a simple concept that can be remarkably hard to achieve. But just as Buddhist Zen gardens have been used for hundreds of years as places of meditation, so too can your backyard or balcony become a place for you to practice quiet reflection and master the art of focusing your thoughts.

"Being in the garden is my happy place. It helps me to unwind from a busy week as I'm focused on planting, pruning or picking the fruits of my labour, and I'm not alone," says Yates horticulturist, Angie Thomas. "We know that being outdoors in fresh air, focusing on a task in the present, getting our hands dirty and watching something we planted grow is great for our physical and mental health."

Here's why spending time in the garden after a long and stressful week can be beneficial to your mental and physical health:

Soil releases serotonin

Getting your hands dirty in the garden has been scientifically proven to increase serotonin levels through contact with soil and specific soil bacteria. Serotonin is a chemical that helps fight depression and boosts your immune system - something we could all use an extra dose of.

An all-natural high

Growing your own food in the garden or on your windowsill releases a chemical called dopamine, which activates a state of mild euphoria. Dopamine is the same chemical that is released when you notice your Instagram or Facebook post getting lots of 'likes' - but it's also triggered when you harvest, smell and watch fruit and veggies grow.

Once your hard work in the garden is over, pour yourself a cup of tea and take at least a few minutes to step back and admire your handiwork.

Notice the colour of the ripening tomatoes, the bees thriving on the blooming flowers and the smell of the fragrant basil you carefully planted all those weeks ago.



Decreased cortisol levels

Setting your mind to a gardening task, such as planting herbs in pots, allows you to focus your mind on the moment, engage in the natural world and reduce your stress levels.

Research* conducted on allotment gardeners also found that - following a period of short-term stress - gardening helped significantly decrease their cortisol levels and boost positivity.

* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20522508>

Incidental exercise

Weeding, planting, mowing, pruning and digging can really work up a sweat and burn calories, making gardening an effective form of exercise. Physical activity has many stress-relieving benefits; pumping up your endorphins, helping you to sleep better and focusing your mind.

Unites the family

An easy way to get into the garden and involve your family is to start a communal veggie patch. When you share the sowing, growing and harvesting process with others, there's a sense of shared pride when it comes time to incorporate your harvest into a family meal.

"I can't recommend getting outside and starting a veggie patch highly enough," says Angie. "It's easy to get started with a trough or pot and a few herbs on a sunny patio or deck. Check seed packets to see what time of year is best to plant and use a seed raising mix to give them an extra boost."

You don't need a backyard to reap the rewards of gardening. The same benefits will be enjoyed on an acre or small patio.

Taken from:

<https://www.lifestyle.com.au/gardening/gardening-gives-you-an-allnatural-high.aspx>

We want your strawberry and tomato punnets



We need **250gm cube-shaped strawberry/cherry tomato punnets**..

One of ROGI's activities is making a seed-sowing pot out of newspaper. After making this pot visitors sow a seed or seedling plug into it and take it home safely in a punnet.

At the Green Heart at Carindale each year we use hundreds of them, and we've noticed that our supplies are low, so please bring them long to the July and August meeting and we'll store them until they're needed.

The Fair will be on September 9 this year.

Recycling e-waste

Last year in August **Substation 33** brought a trailer along to take away lots of e-waste from ROGI members. We're doing it again in August, so talk to your family, friends, neighbours and start collecting.

Substation 33 will take anything that has, or once had, a power cord, plug or a battery, including the actual cords and batteries.

This is a wonderful opportunity to clean out those drawers and boxes and give them to a training organisation that will actually make good use of them by converting them into something practical, useful and ingenious.

Some examples are: electric bikes, 3D printers, early warning flooded road signs, as well as repairing some items for resale.

For more: <https://substation33.com.au/what-we-do>



Substation 33 trainees in the workshop dismantling e-waste to make something new from the components.

Garden Visits

Sunday 29 July—Francke and Ken Latter's garden at Wellington Point has a definite focus on edible plants as well as chooks and ducks. Seeing the infrastructure is worth the visit.

Sunday 12 August—Karina Lay at Redland Bay

Field Trips

We are planning a visit to the Hare Krishna farm near Murwillumbah, possibly on Saturday 11 August. More information at the July meeting.

As always, space is limited, so book early.

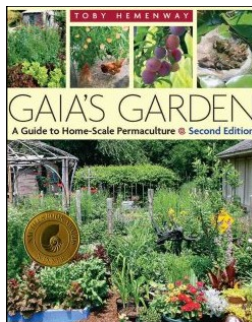
Please indicate your interest at the July meeting to Toni

Our Garden Visit calendar is full for 2018, but we're planning for 2019. If you'd like to put your garden on a waiting list in case of cancellation—as happened in 2017—please get in touch with Toni at tonibowler@hotmail.com; or 0402 323 704

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

Book Reviews

Gaia's Garden: *A guide to home-scale permaculture* by Toby Hemenway



If you are committed to organic gardening, intrigued by or interested in permaculture, but not up for slogging through a textbook, then this book may be just what you are after.

Permaculture, broadly, covers the development of agricultural ecosystems to be self-sustaining and self-sufficient – working with nature, not against her.

This book is conversational in style, but nonetheless gives comprehensive detail around many key permaculture principles. These include building and maintaining soil fertility, catching and conserving water, providing habitat for insects, birds and animals, and growing edible 'food forests'.

I personally was excited to learn about 'guilds' – groupings of plants which together support each other and provide self-sustaining yields of mulch, nitrogen fixation, beneficial insect habitat, ground cover, mineral accumulation and of course food for me!

The text doesn't assume you have acres of space to play with - the author takes care to include smaller backyard restrictions in his designs, and has a chapter specifically dedicated to urban and balcony gardening.

There are lots of case studies with photographs, which are engaging and inspiring and make it surprisingly easy to get through the 300 or so pages.

Reviewed by Lara Brits

One Magic Square

by Lolo Houbein

While browsing in an antiquarian bookshop in Eumundi recently I came across this book first published in 2008 and reprinted three times in 2009 and 2010. The author is a passionate advocate for growing at least some of our food in our backyards.

The book's subtitle *Grow your own food on one square metre* is really what the book is about, but it is not just another version of Square Foot Gardening.

On the first page of the book we get an introduction on How to Use this Book. It begins:

'To start growing your own food without delay, put down this book, go out in the garden and select a spot in the sun. Dig over one square metre with a garden fork and remove all the weeds by hand. If digging up lawn, cut out the sods with a spade, roots and all, and stack them upside down under a tree as mulch. Come inside again and thoroughly wash your hands and clean your nails as you must always do after working with soil ... '

From this practical beginning, the author takes us through a step by step journey on how to create a productive



food garden wherever we live on whatever kind of soil. Sensibly she suggests starting small with just one square metre plot, expanding, as one gains confidence and expertise, to more plots. But always keeping in mind what we can and want to grow and eat.

To give an idea of the incredible range of this book:

Part 1 - full descriptions of 37 different square metre plots.

Part 2 - nine chapters Towards Food Self-Sufficiency.

Part 3 - 19 sections on Tips and Tricks from watering to pest control and saving seeds.

Part 4 - Descriptions of food plants with lists of common vegetables and herbs and easy care fruit trees.

The final pages have references, notes, addresses of organic suppliers and a comprehensive index.

While consisting of 350 pages, it is a very easy to read and follow book for both beginning gardeners and those of us who think we know it all. Open it to any page and there is useful practical information with references to other sections.

This book was written after many years of growing productive gardens and teaching vegetable growing in various parts of Australia and it shows.

Reviewed by Julia Geljon

We plan to have a library copy of this book available for the July meeting.

If you read a book that would be valuable for our library please tell a committee member know about it—see back page.

We welcome reviews from readers of ROGI library books you've read. Please!

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

We also have pH test kits (See p10) and needles for sewing shade cloth on loan.

Seed bank news

Plant your own seed

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

At home, you need to:

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

The seeds this month will be

Lettuce (seeds saved by Seed savers' group)
Rocket, Good Bug Mix

Seed savers' group

Next session is 17 July. More info at the Seed bank and plants table at the ROGI meeting.

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

Fifty cents a litre.

We can offer good prices as we source well and we are not-for-profit.

Special Offer

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

Please **return seedling pots and punnets** to the seed bank be reused – especially the 4-cell ones like this.



Other clean used pots—small sizes only up to 12cm diameter. These square pots are good too.



Bigger pots, such as those you get through ROGI Rewards, can be put on the swap/share/giveaway table in the foyer. See page 19.

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

Seed Sowing Guide

July

Artichoke
Jerusalem artichoke
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 artichoke
Asparagus
Beans, French
Beetroot
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Eggplant
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Okra
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radish
Silver beet
Squash
Sweet potato
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 all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits.

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

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

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

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

ROGI Rewards

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

Members' Sales

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

FREE swap/share/give-away

(This is for members only)

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

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

Request

We would like some peach and/or nectarine grafting wood. If you have some and are willing to share, please contact Chris McIvor on 0448 481 954

A silver beet plant at one of the gardens at The Ecovillage. Particularly note the length of the stem below the leaves ... this plant has produced a prodigious number of leaves for the family and their chooks to feast upon.

How long does the average silver beet plant keep giving?



Beautiful blossoms on an espaliered nectarine tree



We'd like to hear from you.

For example, send us:

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

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

August Newsletter Deadline

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 25 July

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

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



Did you know?

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

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Julia Geljon	president@rogi.com.au
V. PRESIDENT	Sharr Ellson	president@rogi.com.au
SECRETARY	Margaret Sear	secretary@rogi.com.au
TREASURER	Shanthie Goonetilleke	group@rogi.com.au
COMMITTEE MEMBERS Rhonda Binns, Toni Bowler, Jill Nixon, Kathy Petrik		

OFFICE BEARERS

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Rhonda Binns	membership@rogi.com.au
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Jill Nixon	info@rogi.com.au
PR & COMMUNICATIONS	Gail Bruce	info@rogi.com.au
CLUB EVENTS	Toni Bowler	events@rogi.com.au
PUBLIC EVENTS	Bronwen Thomas	events@rogi.com.au
LIBRARY	Sophie Bromham	library@rogi.com.au
SEED BANK	Sharr Ellson	seeds@rogi.com.au
SUPPER	Cheryl McWilliams	group@rogi.com.au
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	pal@pcpals.com.au

info@rogi.com.au www.rogi.com.au PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers

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 (ex Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor, 6.30 for 7.30pm. 33573171 <http://bogi.org.au>

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

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



Part of The Ecovillage RRR Centre (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). At this secure facility near the street entrance, there is a letter box for every house, and a large locked box for parcels, to save the postie having to drive several kilometres around the site.

While residents are collecting their mail, they can leave re-usable items in the appropriate boxes for others to use ... such as: egg cartons, coat hangers and corks; clean glass jars; shoe boxes and other small re-usable boxes; computer stuff; shopping bags; haberdashery - wool, threads, zips etc; stationery - office, home and school; gift bags, wrapping paper and wine bags; non-perishable food items for homeless organisations; clean packaging such as bubble wrap, postage bags and tubes, paper, tissue paper; toiletries from hotels and motels ...and more.

There is a large table where people can sit and chat and flick through newspapers, magazines and books that may be left there for residents to borrow.

There are so many easy, good and sensible initiatives being done. It is an inspiration, and I hope many of us take on some of these ideas.

An old wheelie bin has been repurposed to accept batteries

