

Next meeting: Wednesday 11th October 2017

# 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: 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 p16**).

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

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A beautiful cleome flower in Gary Donaldson's garden on Macleay Island – strategically placed near the vegetable gardens.

Like many organic gardeners, Gary likes to mix his plants with different colours, shapes and scents to confuse the bad bugs and to attract beneficial insects. See more of Gary's garden on pages 6 to 8.

# Backyard Burlblings

Being an organic gardener can be hazardous at times as ROGI's multi-talented newsletter editor, Jill Nixon, found out a couple of weeks ago.

As well as editing a great newsletter every month, Jill and Ian maintain a garden filled with vegetables, berries, herbs and fruit trees. Any suitable surplus goes to their healthy flock of chickens kept in an enclosure with more trees and shrubs.

After distributing the daily largesse to the best-fed chooks in the Redlands, Jill had just repositioned a sprinkler beneath a couple of fruit trees when her left leg failed to follow her right leg through the gate and out of the chook yard.

As a result, she broke both bones in her left leg just above the ankle. Somehow she managed to keep the chooks in, crawl over gravel to the house, hop up five steps and across a porch and into the house to get her phone off the kitchen bench to ring 000.

She is now on her way to recovery after having some hardware installed in her leg, but is still in hospital for rehab.

True to form, our indomitable Jill has managed to produce this month's newsletter from her hospital room. I'm sure all of

you, along with myself and the committee, would like to say a great big thank you for this, and also wish her a speedy recovery.

However, it does highlight the fact that even a chookpen can be a dangerous workplace, no matter how palatial.

It also gives us a timely reminder that incapacitating accidents can happen to anyone at any time.

It has made the committee realise



Newsletter being produced in the Mater hospital.

Photo supplied by Linda Brennan

that for some important positions in ROGI, such as newsletter editor, treasurer and membership secretary in particular, we may need a back-up person for each.

Therefore, I would ask any member who feels they have the necessary skills already or would like to learn them, to contact me or any other member of the committee.

A knowledge of *Microsoft Publisher* for the newsletter and *Microsoft Excel* for membership and treasurer would be helpful.

For most ROGI members, this last month will have been a trying time in the garden due to the long dry spell and unseasonably high temperatures.

Keeping the soil moist enough for growing vegetables and herbs under those conditions requires quite a lot of water as a large percentage evaporates before it gets to the root zone.

One way of reducing this evaporation is to use loads of mulch around trees and shrubs and on garden beds.

This month we are lucky to have our guest speaker from Rocky Point Mulching to give us lots of good advice.

Please feel free to contact me via email [juliageljon@gmail.com](mailto:juliageljon@gmail.com) or mob. 0401466631

Happy Organic Growing  
Julia Geljon  
President ROGI

## Coming Events

Oct	Thurs 5	BOGI meeting	See back page
	Wed 11	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 15	Garden Visit, George & Judy Allen	See p 14
Nov	Thurs 2	BOGI meeting	See back page
	Tues 7	Herb Society meeting	See back page
	Wed 8	ROGI meeting	
	Sun 12	Garden Visit	See p 14

## 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	Oct17-Dec18
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

## October Meeting

### Mulch, growing media & more

Maybe, like me, you've wondered how, why and when the idea of using sugar cane trash as garden mulch began. I remember how it used to be quite a spectacle when it was burnt in early evening.

It all started at a cane farm just south of Redlands.

Dan from Rocky Point Mulching will tell us the full story and how that side of the farm business has since expanded into more mulches, a range of potting mixes, growing media, organic fertilisers and other gardening needs.

In line with the 'War on Waste', the company actively seeks wide-ranging opportunities for diversification, innovation and sustainability including resource recovery, compost-making and recycling. I have heard Dan speak before and his concern for the environment and his passion to make a difference is evident.

Feel free to ask Dan anything related to the above topics! I hope someone asks him about their massive new-ish compost 'toy'!



**Unfortunately, Shane will no longer be selling organic produce at our meetings. We will miss him, the produce and his advice. Ashley from Mt Cotton Organic Farm will be inside the hall with his selected produce for sale. Remember - bring your reusable bags.**

## September meeting report

The grafting, budding and marcotting (aerial layering) presentations held at our last meeting were enjoyed by all who participated. The demonstrations were given by Bob Cosgrove, Chris McIvor and Julia Geljon.

Everyone seemed eager to find out how to graft or bud a new variety onto an existing tree; or how they could change a seedling rootstock into a thriving fruit bearing tree.

Bob had brought quite a range of rootstocks to demonstrate various grafting techniques, and the large crowd of people at his table indicated they were very keen to hear about his long standing knowledge of grafting.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of time available, not everything was covered as well as Bob would have liked. But the participants were satisfied.

To top it off Bob gave away over 30 rootstocks of avocado and citrus for people to practise at home.

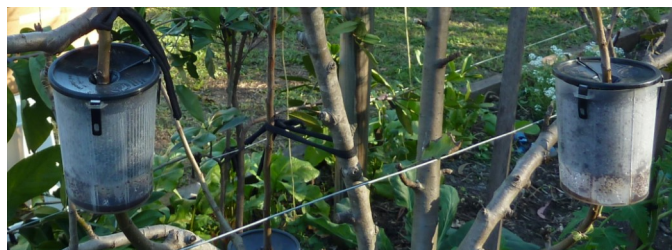


Some of Bob's prepared materials

Chris' marcotting, or aerial layering, demonstration had many people amazed that you could actually produce other trees or shrubs with roots from a living branch, whilst it was still on the tree.

She showed people how easy it could be to grow multiple young trees or shrubs at once without damaging the parent plant.

She also explained that each new plant would be a replica of the parent tree. The procedure can be successfully employed on fruit trees such as lychees, figs, mulberries and on roses.



Marcotting can be done with items you already have at home, or you can buy purpose-made items such as these in a member's garden.

Julia demonstrated budding on a citrus tree to show that it is possible to have more than one variety of the same species of fruit growing on the same rootstock.

Again, some people were surprised that such a tiny bit of plant material could grow into a healthy branch and produce fruit within a year.

While these three demonstrations were only able to give a brief overview, it does show that there is a keen interest in practical hands-on workshops amongst our ROGI members.

Julia Geljon

## Green Heart Fair, Carindale

ROGI had a stall at this year's celebration of all things sustainable and environmentally-friendly.

Saying it was successful would be an understatement. We all but sold out of seedlings and plants, sold out of some seed varieties and had a huge number of people express an interest in growing their own food organically in general and in ROGI and what we're all about in particular.

Next year we may need three gazebos to fit in everything and everyone. And we'll be after more volunteers—it's a lot of fun. Can you think of anything better than talking gardening all day? Oh, yes ... actually gardening.



# Sea Market Festival Karragarra Island

These markets coincided with our field trip on Macleay island so we decided to spend some time there on the way. There were about 100 colourful stalls along the foreshore.



ROGI members Linda Brennan and Margaret Sear had stalls at the festival to share their passion and knowledge with the community.

Linda (*right*) had a pretty collection of edible flowers, seeds and her new book on edible flowers.

Melissa and Margaret (*below*) were promoting sustainable practices to reduce waste.



Above: There were creative ideas like these stools made using milk crates with magazines on top to smooth and soften the surface and then covered with colourful t-shirts with the arms tied together. For extra comfort some had cushions.



*Right and below:* Lots of ideas to help with making compost and recycling.



## Then ... to Macleay Island and Gary Donaldson's garden



ROGI members with their purchases back on Macleay Island where the buses were parked.

Gary welcomed us at his property (*below*) and we chatted while we waited for the second bus to arrive with those people who missed the ferry back to Macleay Island.



# Gary Donaldson HaveMore Farm

**G**ary's *HaveMore Farm* is part of a broader waste transformation concept in which waste products of one organism become feedstock for others. Waste transformation is premised on the idea that organic waste can be divided into categories so it can be put to its highest use. While the farm is principally about growing one's own food, it's also about trialling alternative shelter, power and transport options.

Gary is an advocate for biopods which produce Black Soldier Fly Larvae (BSFL) which are very high in protein (35%) and oil. The larvae are fed to chickens, quail and fish which love them. The larvae eat kitchen scraps and fresh garden residues but they do best on livestock manures. Manure that is consumed by BSF larvae does not have an odour and is a perfect worm food (retaining something like 50% of its original protein content. There are usually not many ordinary fly larvae (white maggots) coexisting with BSFL and the BSF is not a pest as it isn't interested in people (unless they've been dead for some time - CSI determined length of death of a corpse by the stage of development of BSFL). The use of BSFL recycles waste from one animal to feed another. The flies are frequently present in compost bins as they are attracted to the scent of composting activity.

Gary set up his garden with numbers and provided us with a set of notes so we could do a self-guided tour. His notes form the basis for this report.

**The Front Yard** ... is the result of a three year struggle with the acid sulphate soil with which much of the coast of Australia is afflicted. After trying several approaches Gary decided the best thing to do with such soils is to leave them undisturbed and grow over the top. He has found wicking beds are the best solution.



**Kitchen wicking beds** at the front are just under 3sqm each: an ideal way to overcome the issues arising from the horrible soil...and to provide for efficient water use.

*Right:* The wicking bed drain hole is as high as the depth of soil needs to be (less than 30cm) or the soil above that will have difficulty drawing the water upwards as gravity affects the wicking process. The soil structure also affects the water absorption of the soil in the wicking process. The plants in these front wicking beds were thriving compared with the plants in the ground which had been there longer.



**Top Lit Updraft Gasifiers...** designed by Dr Paul Olivier. These small units burn low value Level 4 organic wastes (including wood pellets, rice hulls, nut shells, twigs, etc) and provide high grade heat for cooking with biochar as a by-product of the combustion. They are an excellent example of the leveraging effect of the waste transformation process.



This beautifully constructed **wood-fired oven** is another strategy to future-proof the rising cost of electricity. Other similar initiatives he plans include solar hot water, photovoltaic panels and battery bank as well as rocket stoves.



Gary has planted **moringa trees** along the side fence line, the frontage and a back corner of the block. He has grown them from seed and cuttings and is still waiting to see if cuttings in numerous pots and the back wicking beds are going to take. Some of his moringa experiments have been more successful than others. Moringa trees are quick growing and everything on the tree can be used for something. The foliage is particularly nutritious and will be readily consumed by chickens.



**Native bee hive.** The bees look a bit like small houseflies. He doesn't eat honey (they produce small quantities) but these tiny creatures are useful pollinators on the micro-farm.

**Sand Test Rig...** this simple arrangement of buckets is used to determine the hydraulic conductivity (drainage) of sand used in one of the integrated aquaculture systems that Gary is building.

Gary currently has over 10,000 litres of rainwater storage which increases to about 16,000 litres when all of the aquaponics systems are full.



## HaveMore Farm

A **plucking machine** which is well suited to the processing of poultry for a small farm or village. Gary uses this for his quail, pigeons, chickens and ducks.



Inside plucking machine.



**The Soil Pit** is situated in the lowest point on the block in the corner, and fenced so chickens can go there during the day. It is a 600mm deep pit that contains about 12 cubic metres of tree mulch. This is where Gary deposits all coarse garden residues. Free-running storm water will drain into this pit. At approximately yearly intervals, a mini-excavator is used to turn the composting material. Over time (around two years), the organic matter becomes garden soil.

Small patterned eggs of **Japanese quail**. Gary believes they are the quintessential backyard micro-livestock. They are capable of producing meat and eggs to feed a family of four in a footprint of about two sqm. Their manure is fed to BSFL which convert it to worm food.



A couple of **worm farms** provide the castings that he uses to make compost tea in his aerobic digester. He wants to extend worm production to the point where they can become fish feed, too.



Worm 'juice' draining from a worm farm.



The **BioPod** is used for the production of BSFL. See more on previous page. The larvae are fed to chickens, quail and fish. One of the really great things about raising BSFL in a BioPod is that, when they are ready for the chickens to eat, they self-harvest by climbing up an internal ramp and dropping into the collection chamber, avoiding the need to get too 'hands on' with them.



Gary is setting up an **aquaculture/aquaponics system**. A collection of fish tanks, filtration modules and growing systems is his emerging integrated aquaculture system. When completed, it will provide freshwater fish for his own table, and will complement the wicking beds in the production of fruit and vegetables. He will also use the nutrient-rich water for trees and duckweed production. Duckweed (among the world's smallest flowering plants) is used as micro-livestock fodder and fish feed.

The **chicken tractor** houses four Isa Brown laying pullets who compost garden residues. He intends to build another smaller chicken quarters to house them overnight and during bad weather. During the day, they work/play in the soil pit...digging for insects and working the compost. Chickens yield about 160g of manure per day. Gary will capture about half of that volume and it will become the feedstock for the BSFL.



These 10 backyard wicking beds provide over 300 square feet of growing space. They are still evolving in terms of the growing mix. The original was degraded tree mulch and cow manure but was incompletely composted when Gary got it. He has been working on it but there's still scope for improvement.

The shipping container in the background is currently used for storage. Eventually it will be refitted for use as a dwelling or workshop. As an extension of his 'Have More For Less' concept, Gary is researching alternative shelter options. He is a tiny house advocate and lives in the 6m x 4.5m structure. He is also thinking of using a Caravan and DogHaus.

## HaveMore Farm



Gary has used a very robust liner Dura-Skrim in his wicking beds and has covered the edges with painted timber. An advantage of wicking beds is that they conserve water as very little is lost to evaporation. He only needs to water the beds as required. In really hot weather maybe every three or so days. There is the risk with torrential rain that the excess water may not drain fast enough and that the plants could float. Gary has not had that problem and if the outlet is blocked he clears it with a screw driver.



He believes that human waste management should start at the local level and begin with separation of solid and liquid wastes. Each waste type is deposited into its own mesophilic composting bin. This process yields a safe, odour-free compost after about 12 months saving considerable quantities of potable water that can be used for more worthwhile purposes – like growing food.

Gary has set up an aerobic digester, is a simple device to produce mineralised solutions for use on the gardens. The feedstock can be fish wastes, animal manure, compost or, as is the case currently, worm castings. A small

submersible pump located in the bottom of the tank stirs and aerates the water.

Other projects Gary is working on are: convert a postie bike to provide his transport needs on the island to reduce his transport footprint, and to catch more rain where the gutters do not direct water to the storage tanks (he plans to set up more barrels equipped with float-operated sump pumps. When it rains, the pumps operate and move the water through overhead hoses to the tanks.)

### Making a wicking bed

Two pieces of PVC pipe connected by an elbow piece. The bottom piece had slits cut into the bottom to enable water to flow.



He placed the pipe with the slits in the bottom of a plastic container and covered it with gravel but made sure there was a depression and that the gravel was not flat. The gravel was covered with shade cloth or some geotextile and soil placed into the container.

There needs to be a drain hole (not shown in this photo) for excess water to drain out. Gary stressed that the better the soil, the better the results. Often potting mix is incomplete garden waste and hasn't fully broken down. This leads to nitrogen draw-down which deprives the plant of nitrogen while that process is taking place and also results in heat.

Gary likes to use a layer of lucerne mulch as it is high in nitrogen and then a layer of sugar cane mulch on top to prevent the soil drying out. Some members said they had experienced a lot of weed growth from lucerne mulch so care needs to be taken to ensure that you don't get the poorer quality lucerne mulch with weeds.



The completed wicking bed.

When a crop is finished the soil will be depleted and will need revitalising.

Gary believes that healthy soil is 95% the result of management of microbiology. You could grow a green manure and dig it in or put chickens in or use some methods Gary has employed to bring life back to the soil.



We were interested in the production of duck weed which Gary feeds to the chickens and the BSFL. It needs dappled shade as it will die off if it gets too hot but it also doesn't grow as well in cold weather. It has one of the smallest flowers and the BSFL will eat a bucketful a day. The chickens love it too.



Colourful flowers attracting the butterflies and bees.

We really appreciated Gary's hospitality and his eagerness to share his knowledge and expertise. To top off a very enjoyable day on the islands, it started to rain after we drove off the ferry. We all wanted rain so much for our gardens.

Mary Irmer

# Growing edible flowers

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the importance of getting your soil right and growing organically to produce healthy and life-giving edible flowers.

This month, the focus is on fertilising your edible flowers and the vegetable flowers that I find most delicious.

## Which food for flowers?

While good soil preparation is the key to success with any edibles, plants also benefit from regular light liquid soil and foliar fertilising. Many of our vegetables are annuals, so they have a short window of opportunity to grow, produce flower and then seed for the next generation. Additional nutrition during their rapid growth will result in healthy, bountiful crops.

Fertilisers applied as liquids to the soil or as sprays to the foliage (foliar feeds) are rapidly available to the plant. When applying these fertilisers, I aim for a 'balanced meal' approach.

Select an organic fertiliser such as *Fish and Kelp*; *OCP eco amino grow*; *Plant of Health Triple ten*. These are certified organic with a range of macro and micro nutrients. Some have worm liquid, vitamins essential for plant health and Humic and Fulvic acids to stimulate plant growth and resilience.

When looking for a good all-round fertiliser, check the label. It should say 'Certified Organic', it should have a panel with a long list of nutritional values and it should say 'fertiliser'.

Some liquids such as simple seaweed or

worm liquids cannot purport to be fertilisers by law, as they are not sufficiently high in nutrients to be labelled as such. These are valuable as a 'tonic', rather than plant food.

## Foliar fertilising edible flowers

Foliar feeding vegies and flowers about every two to three weeks gives me best results in colour, flavour and size.

Most liquid feeds do not have a withholding period from application to harvest. However, with application to flowers, you need to be aware that:

- i fertiliser can taint the taste of the flower, and
- ii some fertilisers, especially those containing humic or fulvic acids, can cause petal and leaf discolouration. So, fertilise after a harvest, when most of the flowers are still in bud if possible, and then allow a couple of days that include rain or irrigation, before the next harvest.

Liquid feeds to the soil beside the plants may be suitable if you wish to avoid fertilisers on petals. Do this at the same rate and timing.

## My favourite edible vegie flowers

A holiday in Italy coincided with the **pumpkin and zucchini flower** harvest. A delicious holiday!

Remove the pollen-bearing parts in the flower before eating and if you want more fruit, eat mainly male flowers; keep the females to form the fruit.



**Peas, snow peas and most bean flowers** have a crisp, lettuce-flavoured flower.

Right: Bean flowers

In late winter and early spring, **broad beans** (right) flourish. If you can forgo some of the beans, treat yourself to the flowers.



**CAUTION: Avoid eating flowers of sweet peas, jack bean, jicama or sword bean. They have chemicals that, when ingested, cause Parkinson's-like symptoms**

**Florence fennel** is an umbrella-shaped head of bright yellow flowers. They give a terrific burst of aniseed flavour. I have a recipe for fennel and baby beetroot spoons with almond cheese in my book '*A Delicious Bunch, growing and cooking edible flowers*'. You'll love it.

**Asian greens** such as Kai Lan, Tatsoi and Pak choy have heads of flowers that add colour to any savoury dish or that can be eaten as a snack in the garden. Just remember to shoo the bees off before you take a mouthful!

Next month, we look at edible flowers for summer gardens.

Linda Brennan

Linda is an eco-educator and horticulturist, specialising in edibles and organics. Her latest book: '*A Delicious Bunch, growing and cooking with edible flowers*', can be found in bookstores or through [www.ecobotanica.com.au](http://www.ecobotanica.com.au) Linda is on facebook (adeliciousbunch) and Instagram (ecobotanica) with daily stories and tips.

# Eat your weeds

## Cobblers Pegs

I have successfully avoided the winter ailments by eating a diet rich in healthy weeds. Now the seasons have changed, the available weeds are changing and so is my preferred way of eating them.

In this hot weather we tend to go for salads. Dinner tonight was a salad comprising weeds, subtropical greens and herbs. It was delicious and massively nutritious but, even better, it was VERY easy to grow. That is where my love of weeds starts – I can do absolutely nothing and they still grow!

Throughout winter a combination of leaves of **cobbler's pegs**, **plantain** and **Sida**

**retusa** were my immune defence program.

Weeds have a place in a healthy diet at any time of year, and we are lucky to have an abundance of edible weeds available to us at different times of the year.

We can always have a yummy, immune-supporting diet featuring seasonal weeds.

**Chickweed** and **nettles** in winter, **pink baby's breath** and **pigweed (purslane)** in summer. And some like cobbler's pegs and **green amaranth** all year round.

Edible greens are abundant right now so we have plenty of healthy leaves to throw into salads, curries, pasta dishes, stews or any dish you would otherwise use spinach.

Cobbler's pegs leaves and **nasturtium leaves** are our main green at the moment. They need to be kept under control in the garden and the best way to do this is to eat them. Happily they make good eating. Once they have been thrown into a meal and lightly

cooked they have very little flavour and are very similar to eating cooked spinach.

When using them raw, I try to stick with the young leaves for better flavour – again, pretty much like using spinach.

Cobbler's pegs *Bidens pilosa* is extremely nutritious. I can see the look on your face as you read this! Yes I know you hate them so how can this be?! They have those dreadful black spiky seeds that stick all over you. And yet in warm climates the world over this is a valuable and highly appreciated food plant.

**"This weed is one of my favourites to discuss at talks and workshops. The look of shock and horror on people's faces as I suggest eating it is priceless!"**



*Sida retusa*



Plantain



*Bidens pilosa*—Cobbler's Pegs

## Eat your weeds continued

Research into the use of cobbler's pegs as an antimicrobial agent has been ongoing for nearly a century and has delivered scientific evidence of a great swag of medicinal properties for this humble weed, including being highly effective against the antibiotic-resistant staphylococcus.

Over 100 phytochemicals are found in *Bidens pilosa* and it is this complex interplay of active ingredients which not only gives it its wonderful medicinal properties but also may well be why it can remain effective against bacteria which have developed resistance to antibiotics. It is much easier for a staphylococcus to develop resistance to one active ingredient than to the 100 in *Bidens pilosa*.

Some references suggest that the high silica content of this plant means it should be eaten in moderation. Given that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation have promoted it as a safe and nutritious plant to ward off starvation and malnutrition in the world's poorest, I would think we can manage to eat a fair bit before we overdose! I personally have never felt healthier than when I started eating it regularly.

If you are interested in the medicinal

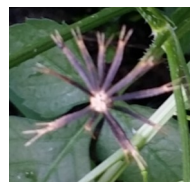
properties of *Bidens pilosa*, a quick internet search will give a huge number of references, some more scientific than others.

Despite a handful of cobbler's pegs leaves being chopped into almost every meal we eat, my husband is still horrified when he sees me wander through the weed patch across the road harvesting, and then come and brush all the prickly seeds off in our garden. I always brush the seeds into the one patch, and as they grow there I can harvest them as fresh microgreens for dinner. Win-win!

I do not eat weeds because I am a health nut – far from it. I am a time-poor gardener and a lazy cook, and I hate shopping (for anything other than plants!). The weeds are just there. All I need to do is pick them as I want them. Not only are they the easiest food I have ever grown, they are easily the most nutritious.

By adding just a handful of weeds to our daily diet we not only provide ourselves with fresh and free food, but we also use our food as medicine and massively support our health.

We can plant a huge array of herbs which have wonderful medicinal uses in supporting our immune systems. Because we



call them “herbs” as opposed to “weeds” we value them in our garden.

I have recently planted **clover** into my lawn, and **plantain, dandelion, cats ears, chickweed, emilia, sow thistle, wild brassicas** and, yes, cobbler's pegs into my new herb garden. To me these plants are of value for their medicinal, culinary and aesthetic values.

Yes ... aesthetics. Value is in the eye of the beholder and if we enjoy the look of a flourishing garden, filled with flowers and bees and knowing that it is also filled with wonderful food for us, then all of these “weeds” will fit perfectly into my new herb and flower garden.

Whatever plants we like to grow, or which like growing in our gardens, it is immensely rewarding to know that our gardens are capable of supporting our diets and our health and wellbeing, and hopefully save us a trip or two to the doctor.

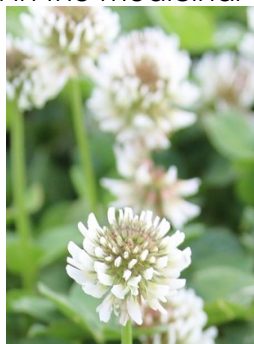
Kate Wall

This is an edited extract from an article “Beating Winter Colds with Weeds” featured on Garden Drum. You can read the full article here: <https://gardendrum.com/2017/09/04/ beating-coughs-and-cold-with-weeds/>

To learn more about weeds, Kate's next workshop “Weeds: from Foe to Friend” will be on Oct 14. You can purchase her booklet on weeds, and Sharr's wonderful weed recipes from Sharr at ROGI meetings.



Pigweed/purslane.



Clover



Emilia



Sow thistle



True dandelion



Cats ear

# Seeds of the month

## Salad greens

One thing I've had great success with in all of my gardens over the years is leafy greens. I have grown them in styrofoam boxes, milk bottles, raised garden beds, hanging baskets, in the cracks of concrete paths and even right into the earth. I find this just fantastic because relying on the shops to sell fresh quality and many different varieties is not happening. Also, I see that a lot of leafy greens (lettuces and spinaches) sold in the shops have been grown hydroponically, and I can't yet make my mind up if this is a good or bad thing.

Leafy greens begin to lose vitamin C and other nutrients from the second they are harvested, so it makes much more sense to grow your own.

In this warm weather salads are often prepared for meals. However summer is also one of the hardest times of the year to grow salad greens. Growing in a few different parts of the garden can help—spots with part shade (especially afternoon shade) will minimise the need for watering and may allow you to produce salad greens at the hotter times of the year.

I like to choose a sunny spot but offer some relief from the hot sun with some shade overcasting at the hottest time of the day, and I make sure my soil is higher in nitrogen and has good drainage.

Digging the soil over thoroughly to incorporate compost, worm castings and well-rotted manure (I use horse manure that I get from Jean, a member of ROGI, who has enough horse poo to

supply the whole of ROGI, if you're looking for some) and a sprinkle of *Earthlife Garden Mate* gives me a beautiful mix.

Once a week or so I sow a sprinkle of ROGI Salad Mix seed. This way I always have fresh greens for my family and friends. I cover the seeds with very little soil, water well but gently, and keep it damp until the seeds sprout. After germination, I thin the seedlings to a final minimum spacing of 20 to 30 cm.

The thinnings (the tiny plants I've pulled out) are micro greens and are jammed packed with flavour and nutrition—they make a very special salad that any fine dining restaurant would be jealous of. Never feel bad about thinning seedlings.

As I said I have had great results growing salad mix in recycled styrofoam boxes.

Here's how I do it: I almost fill the box with a combination of organic potting mix, vermiculite, my worm castings and some aged horse manure. sprinkle the seeds evenly on top of the mix, gently pat them down; then cover with 0.5 cm of soil mix. (There are exceptions to this with ROGI Salad Mix seed - chicory, endive, rocket and mizuna which only need to be pressed firmly into the soil and left uncovered, but they're all in together so you can't separate them out. Why not try leaving them all uncovered and see what happens for yourself?)

Water often using a gentle spray (the green 'bottle-top waterers' are perfect for this—see *far right*). After the true leaves come up (these are the second set of leaves—the first pair being the 'seed' leaves), every other day I add some diluted seaweed, worm tea, or compost tea to the sprayer, as I've heard this improves the nutrient levels in the salad mix. And, just like growing in the earth, thin

the plants out so those left have space to grow—but remember to eat these thinnings.

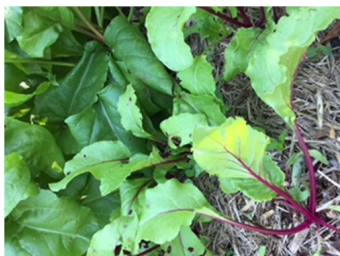
Harvest by cutting leaves as they reach five to ten cm long; use scissors to snip them off just above the growing crowns if you would like to be able to pick several times. This is called the 'cut-and-come-again' method because the crop will grow back if you water and fertilise often. Or you can choose to harvest whole plants.

The green, leafy vegetables like beetroot, kale, mustard, sliver beet and spinach that are part of the salad mix can also be grown individually to a mature size if you wish.

Sharr Ellison.

In the seed bank we have many varieties of seeds for sale, including ROGI Salad Mix. \$1 to members; \$2 to non-members

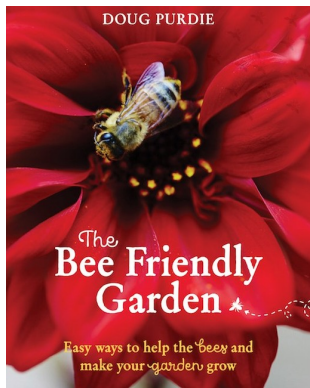
ROGI Salad Mix contains chicory, kale, endive, rocket, beetroot, mizuna, mustard, sliver beet and spinach.



## Book Reviews

### *The Bee Friendly*

*Garden* by Doug Purdie is one of the latest acquisitions for the ROGI library and explains some easy ways to help bees survive in urban areas - and make your garden flourish.



It's an easy to read, inviting book - full of exquisite colour photographs. It simplifies the complex issue of waning global bee populations and their importance to our environment generally. Most importantly, it explains how to attract bees back into our gardens and keep them happy.

Bees 'rule' - as the most effective pollinators - but sadly they are in decline everywhere. They love to live in urban environments, where it's a short flight path from one type of plant to the next. But conventional gardens that favour lawns and pesticides over flowers and edible plants are scaring the good bugs away.

Native blue-banded bees, for example, are disappearing from urban areas as their natural nesting sites - dirt and clay soils - are destroyed due to the pressures of growing cities.

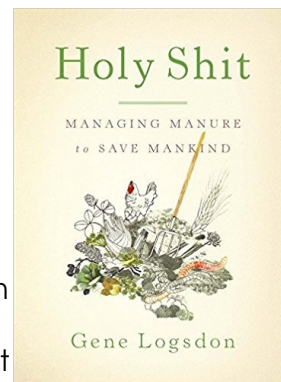
*The Bee Friendly Garden* is a guide for all gardeners, great and small, to encouraging bees and other good bugs to our green spaces. It includes: how bees forage and why your garden needs them; a comprehensive plant guide to bee friendly plants; simple changes anybody can make; ideas for gardens of all sizes; natural pest control and companion planting advice.

Author Doug Purdie is the co-founder of *The Urban Beehive*, which manages over 100 bee-hives around Sydney (many on city rooftops) and teaches beekeeping courses. His previous book *Backyard Bees* was aimed at helping people to get into beekeeping.

Reviewed by Kathy Petrik

What does one expect when launching into a book called *Holy Shit*? The subtitle goes some way to explain ... '*Managing Manure to Save Mankind*'.

Gene Logsdon is a farmer and a farmer's son from way back. Back when common sense was abided by and there'd just been a depression so people still remembered how to make do, and to use everything until it wore out.



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!

Some time ago the ROGI refractometer went missing from the library. We would love it back. If you know where it is, please arrange for it to appear at a ROGI meeting or garden visit. No questions asked.



I've been reading this in my hospital bed, so it's been left lying around for all to see. Interesting comments from some of the staff, but when I explain what it's actually about they become thoughtful and agree that, yes, there is a problem with the disposal and use of ... well ... shit. Animal and human.

Logsdon's country-style humour rather quickly removes the yuck factor for the more sensitive, and soon you will find yourself learning about how to use a manure pack in your chook house ... and almost smelling the stench emanating from the modern 'efficient' method of concentrated animal farming where the manure flows into huge cesspools and is treated as rubbish to be disposed of.

Only a short way in, you'll be convinced that treating manure (animal and human) as a waste product is one of the silliest things modern western thinking has come up with.

Our councils spend untold amounts of money transporting 'humanure' and treating it and then disposing of it ... and then many (most?) farmers and gardeners spend more money purchasing synthetic fertilisers to use on their farms and gardens.

Read this book and you'll learn everything you ever wanted to know about manure - and way, way more.

We as a society have lost the plot. We need to find it again, spread manure thickly on it, and start growing.

Reviewed by Jill Nixon

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

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



Gall wasp damage

Gennaro spotted this citrus tree in Richmond, Victoria—surely the worst case of citrus galls ever. The adult female wasp implants her eggs in the same tree that she herself emerged from just days before. She can lay up to 100 eggs, mostly under the bark of new shoots. The larvae hatch 2 to 4 weeks later. They grow forming galls or calluses within the soft stem tissue for 9 to 12 months until they pupate and emerge as adult wasps the next year. It can happen that larvae are already present in newly purchased citrus trees in spring.

It's far too late to help this poor tree, but here's what you can do to prevent it happening to yours:

- Avoid high nitrogen fertiliser in spring as it promotes soft sappy growth - perfect for new eggs. Feed autumn and winter.
- Remove new galls (those that have no exit holes) before the end of winter—or earlier since winter is almost non-existent now. (Only prune 1/3 of the tree though, to avoid stress.) Leave old galls in place - they're no longer a problem.
- One way to do it is to use a super-sharp stanley knife to very carefully slice along the gall exposing larval chambers. The tree will seal the tissue and the gall chamber will dry out.

## Garden Visits

### Sunday 15 October

George and Judy Allen's property specialising in sub-tropical fruit trees in Capalaba

### Sunday 12 November

Treina Densley's property in Cleveland

As always, spaces are limited, so book early.

Please book with Toni on 0402 323 704 or [events@rogi.com.au](mailto:events@rogi.com.au) or at 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. There are still vacancies for 2018.

- Yellow sticky traps with chemical attractants are available—the wasp comes to investigate and gets stuck. Unfortunately this can also attract beneficials, so don't leave on after November when the wasps are no longer about.
- Be sure to destroy all infected stems by burning or securely bagging.
- Encourage your neighbours to do the same every single year

Gennaro De Rosa & Jill Nixon

## Seed Bank News!

**R**OGL Seed Bank now has a station where you can sow seeds for free.

We hear some members say that they're 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 supply a reusable growing container to sow the seed in, some of our own ROGL seed-raising mix and the seeds.

Your job at home 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 or straight into the garden.

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

There will be a selection of seasonal seeds for you to choose from at the next ROGL meeting.

*Sharr Ellson and Janet Crighton*

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.

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 are not-for-profit.

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.**

## Seed Sowing Guide

### October

Asparagus  
Beans, French  
Beetroot  
Capsicum/Chilli  
Carrot  
Cucumber  
Eggplant  
Ginger  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Pumpkin  
Radish  
Rocket  
Rockmelon  
Rosella  
Silverbeet  
Squash  
Sweet corn  
Sweet potato  
Tomato  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

### November

Asparagus  
Beans - snake, Lab Lab, pigeon  
Pea, Madagascar.  
Beetroot  
Capsicum/Chilli  
Carrot  
Choko  
Cucumber  
Eggplant  
Jerusalem artichoke  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Pumpkin  
Radish  
Rockmelon  
Rosella  
Silver beet  
Squash  
Sweet corn  
Sweet potato  
Tomato  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

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. ROGL Seed Bank is available at all ROGL 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>

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

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

### ROGI Rewards

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

### Members' Sales

Items you've produced that are surplus to your requirements and that **you wish to sell** to other members eg eggs, honey, seedlings, jam, lemons, 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 and Shane.**

### 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.

### Plant Clinic spot



Q: What is this plant?

A: Cape gooseberry. It is a member of the Solanaceae (related to tomato, capsicum, chilli, potato, tobacco etc), and is very prone to attack from the three-stripe potato beetle. Many people think that the sweet/sour delicious fruit encased in the papery 'cape' is worth the effort of dealing with the pest. The seeds are very easy to germinate (ask someone with a plant for a single ripe fruit and you'll have enough seeds for the whole neighbourhood) and the plants are pretty easy to grow in a large pot, so give it a go and see what you think.

## 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](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)

**October Newsletter Deadline** Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by **25 October**

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.

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

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

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

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

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

## Plant Clinic spot

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

A: It is oxalis, a very common and persistent weed that is almost impossible to completely eradicate.

Like many weeds, it is edible, although it's probably not wise to overdo it because of the presence of oxalic acid—cooking

Removes it. The flowers are pretty added to salads. However, you'd need to eat a lot to keep up with it. The key to removal is to ensure you have not left even a tiny fragment in the soil—the white nodes break off very easily. Dig with a fork wide and deep around the root area and gently lift the whole lot out and give it to the chooks.

