

Next meeting: Wednesday 13 September 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 demonstrations.

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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It looks like little green love hearts, it grows as a dense mat and it feels soft, spongy and fresh and cool to the touch. What is it? See page 10 for the answer and more on its relatives.

Backyard Burblings

The Oxford Dictionary tells us that to 'burble' is to 'talk ramblingly' ... in my opinion, a perfect metaphor for what often happens to gardeners when they get into their backyards.

You may go out into the garden intending to do a specific task, but then ramble around having a look at the vegetables or admiring the flowers, and notice several jobs that need urgent attention or that you'd rather do instead.

Or, in my case recently, to look out the window and suddenly realise that a miserable looking scale ridden native frangipani *Hymenosporum flavum* has transformed itself into a glossy leaved healthy tree while I wasn't looking.

In other words, a backyard, no matter how large or small, often takes on a life of its own and can be full of surprises.

This is one of the delights we as ROGI members are fortunate to be able to share with other like-minded members at our monthly meetings and garden visits.

Since joining ROGI just over two years ago, I have been impressed with the passionate commitment of all the members who attend these meetings and garden visits.

I have also been impressed with the interest members convey when they visit each garden. There is no sense of being judged or

competitive. Just a great sharing of ideas, and a willingness to learn from each other.

I would advise any newer members to volunteer their garden for a visit. We did last year after urging from Toni and really enjoyed the experience.

Our backyard is small and most of the vegetable growing takes place in raised beds with herbs and fruit trees around the perimeter or in between the beds.



Somehow there is room for flowers to add colour and delight the senses. We also manage to squeeze in two compost bins and a worm farm. So no room for a lawn!

Unfortunately, due to illness, the Garden Visit to Frankie Latter's property at Wellington Point had to be cancelled at quite late notice. We wish Frankie well with her recovery.

Due to other unforeseen events, the Garden Makeover Workshop scheduled by Linda Brennan for September 16th has had to be deferred until sometime next year. A new date is yet to be advised.

However, the Green Heart Fair at Carindale Recreation Reserve is definitely happening on Sunday September 10th. ROGI will be there with our own stall and our wonderful seeds and seedlings from 8am -2pm.

For this special day to be a success for us WE NEED VOLUNTEERS to help man the stall. Anyone who can spare a few hours on the day to help would be greatly appreciated.

To volunteer contact Bronwen on events@rogi.com.au

As your new president for this year I would like to thank Kathy Petrik for her great leadership over the last year and acknowledge the fantastic amount of work done cheerfully by the Committee.

Hopefully this year will be equally good. If any members feel there are ways we could improve your ROGI experience please feel free to contact me on juliageljon@gmail.com

Julia Geljon
ROGI President

Coming Events

Sept Wed 13	ROGI meeting	
Sat 16	Garden Makeover Workshop postponed	See p 2
Sun 17	Oaklands St Community Open Day	See p 8
FSS 22-24	Springtime on the Mountain	See p 8
Oct Sun 1	Field Trip Gary Donaldson, Macleay Island	See p 17
Tues 3	Qld Herb Society meeting	See back page
Thurs 5	BOGI meeting	See back page
Wed 11	ROGI meeting	
Sun 15	Garden Visit, George & Judy Allen	See p 17
Fr 15-S 24	Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers	

Membership Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

September Meeting

Propagation Techniques

We all know about sowing seeds and most of us can take cuttings to achieve new plants. At this meeting, we'll look at three vegetative propagation methods that are a bit more advanced—grafting, marcotting and budding.

Three ROGI members—Chris, Julia and Bob—will demonstrate these and you have the opportunity to watch and learn one of them.

Please read the information on page 7 so you can decide which method you want to see.

Bob considers late winter or early spring the perfect time to experiment with grafting as this is when saps start to rise and buds swell.

Bob got the grafting bug when he was just 12 years old while attending the Industrial Fair.

"I saw a tomato plant grafted onto a potato plant. It inspired me to try to replicate this – I still haven't succeeded.

"I progressed onto grafting other plants - mostly citrus, persimmons, mulberries and roses.

"People mistakenly believe that grafting is easy, but it takes many years of practice and trial and error.

"It is a fun journey and I hope that I can inspire people so they can experience the joy of their first successful graft."

Watch Bob demonstrate how to graft avocado and mulberry trees.



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

Ashley from Mt Cotton Organic Farm will be inside the hall with his selected produce for sale. Remember - bring your reusable bags.

Recycling Craig Duncan from Redland City Council

The four most common mistakes householders make when it comes to recycling:

From my perspective, these are:

1. Putting recyclables inside plastic bags or cardboard boxes, then placing it in their recycle bins. Our recycling facility is only designed for loose items, so anything inside a plastic bag will get sent to landfill.
2. Not recycling as much cardboard and paper as possible. People often don't recycle things like pizza boxes, envelopes, junk mail, office paper etc. As long as it's free from food, most paper and cardboard can be recycled—except tissues and paper towel.
3. Putting takeaway coffee cups into the recycle bin. These cups are definitely not recyclable in our kerbside recycle bins (the lids are ok). Better to have a Keep Cup.
4. Getting confused over which plastics are recyclable. My advice for plastics is:
 - Ignore the recycling symbol altogether and go by the rule: –
 - If it's soft and/or scrunchy it cannot be recycled in the kerbside recycle bin, if it's a firm container or bottle then it can be recycled.
 - Styrofoam is also not recyclable in our bins (e.g. foam meat trays, foam packaging).

Our residents now have the option to downsize their waste bins to a 140L bin (as opposed to the 240L bin that is the standard). Residents may also want to upsize their recycle bin to a 340L and even get an extra green waste bin. This option works out cheaper in the long-run compared to the standard set of 240L



bins. We like to give residents different options for their green waste, and, where home composting would seem like the easiest and best option, some residents just don't have the space/skills/time to do it, so a green waste bin is the next best option to keep it out of landfill.

Our green waste bins are collected fortnightly on the alternative week to recycling. I'm not sure how many green waste bins we have out there, maybe approaching 9,000.

Simple ways to avoid plastics now

Plastic items and packaging are often associated with so many aspects of our lives.

Is plastic a sustainable option, considering it never breaks down in the environment, is made from a non-renewable resource and has the potential to harm wildlife?

Here are some easy steps you can take to avoid plastic:

Get yourself a good quality reusable drink bottle. There are lots of glass, aluminium and steel water bottles to choose from, and they

look great too.

Use your own shopping bags. Choose a calico or hessian bag rather than the common re-useable 'green' bags as these are often made from a form of plastic. You can also get reusable mesh bags for your fruit and veg.

Find an alternative to cling wrap when saving and storing your leftovers. Use a container instead or get yourself some re-useable cotton beeswax or silicone wraps.

Go shopping with a zero waste mindset.

Avoid excessive plastic packaging and individually wrapped items.

Just say no - to straws, cutlery and other single-use items. Ask yourself...is it worth using it for 5 minutes when it's going to remain forever? Be prepared and take your own non-plastic options.

Shop locally and take your own bags and containers. Check out your local butcher, green grocer and baker to get fresh food, packaged the way you choose.

What should we do with soft plastics?

IndigiScapes began recycling soft plastics through the Coles REDcycle program early in 2016. Over 12 months, we recycled over 90kg of soft plastics—equivalent to over 22,000 plastic bags. Things like plastic shopping bags, cling wrap, wrappers and ziplock bags have been kept out of landfill and given another life.

To go one step further, RCC has purchased and installed the recycled plastic product in the shape of bollards and signage, found at various locations around Redlands. This closes the loop on this plastic material, and ensures the recycling process is sustainable.

Recycling ... continued

Here's a comprehensive list of soft plastics used by REDcycle:

- Biscuit packets (outer wrapper only)
- Bread bags (without the tie)
- Bubble wrap (cut into A3 size pieces)
- Cereal box liners
- Chip and cracker packets (silver lined)
- Chocolate and snack bar wrappers
- Cling Wrap - free of food residue
- Confectionery bags
- Dry pet food bags
- Fresh produce bags
- Frozen food bags
- 'Green' bags (Polypropylene Bags)
- Rice bags
- Pasta bags
- Ice cream wrappers
- Plastic sachets

Look out for a bin that looks like this one outside a Coles supermarket.



- Large sheets of plastic that furniture comes wrapped in (cut into A3 size pieces)
- Netting produce bags (metal clips removed)
- Newspaper and magazine wrap
- Plastic Australia Post satchels
- Plastic carrier bags from all stores
- Plastic film wrap from grocery items such as nappies and toilet paper
- **Potting mix and compost bags—not the woven type (cut into A3 size pieces and free of as much product as possible)**
- Snap lock bags / zip lock bags
- Squeeze pouches with lid on
- Wine bladders - clear plastic ones only

E-waste Repurposing

'It was excellent to be able to collect the nearly 1000 kilograms of electronic waste on the night and divert this from landfill,' said Tony Sharp from Substation 33. 'Hopefully we can do more ewaste drives with ROGI in the coming years.'

If possible, they refurbish and resell. They also custom build electronic devices from recycled e-waste components, such as the 3D printer

It is so good to know there's somewhere for these items to go and that they're being turned into such useful items.

For more, see <http://substation33.com.au>



Sustainable living

with Margaret Sear and Melissa Kelk

- It's about how we live our lives
- Our current patterns of living are unsustainable
- Our children will increasingly bear the consequences of decisions and actions currently being made or avoided

The challenge is to show respect for:

- others, including present and future generations
- difference and diversity
- the environment
- the resources of the planet we inhabit

How can we do this?

- refuse, re-use, repurpose, recycle,
- reduce food miles,
- reduce energy wastage,
- look after our wildlife and environments etc.
- think

Practical sustainability at home and in the garden

Margaret and Melissa set up displays of items and methods that can be done by anyone with a will to do it.

Some were:

- Alternatives to plastic bags—'Boomerang Bags', BYO fabric bags
- No straws
- No takeaway coffee cups or containers
- Bamboo toothbrush (can be composted)
- Cloth or bamboo wipes instead of microfibre



Above: personal care items
Below: household cleaning items



- Wood bamboo or stainless steel pegs
- Reused jars or stainless steel containers (from secondhand shops) for storage and cooking
- Pens that take new ink cartridges such as Parker rather than toss out whole pen
- Use pencils—put in compost when too short
- Think about what was used before plastics and harsh chemicals became the 'norm' and use them instead

They also had numerous garden recycled and repurposed bits and pieces and bee hotel ideas. Before you throw out anything, stand



Above: food storage options
Below: stationery items



back, look at it with an objective eye and think about how else it can be used, what else it can be used for.



Grafting, Marcotting and Budding

At our September meeting, you'll be given the opportunity to attend a demonstration on one of the more advanced methods of propagation. This information may help you decide which demonstration you'd prefer to attend.

Grafting

Grafting requires two types of plant material - a root stock and a scion. Rootstock is the 'bottom' of the plant, selected for its adaptability to soil type and disease resistance. The scion is the 'top' - what you graft onto the rootstock - and is selected for the quality of fruit it will produce.

The new plant benefits as it combines special attributes of both the rootstock and the scion—for example, making it more disease resistant while producing better quality fruit. Dwarf trees can be produced with multiple varieties and varying fruit times all on the same rootstock.

Marcotting

Marcotting, also known as air layering or Chinese layering, is essentially a propagation technique whereby a healthy young branch on a tree is girdled or cinctured, the bark removed, and the resultant wound is surrounded with moist material until it grows roots. The rooted shoot is then severed from the parent plant and grown as a new tree.

It is mostly used on fruit trees such as lychees which can be difficult to propagate from cuttings and are often not reliable from

seed. It ensures good characteristics such as heavy fruiting are maintained. Marcotting can also be successfully used to propagate fig trees.

A major advantage of marcotting is that the parent tree maintains the flow of nutrients and water to the new plant in the field, rather than relying on watering and misting in a greenhouse setting. It also allows for numerous branches to be done on the same tree at the same time.

Budding

Budding or bud grafting, is a term used for a form of grafting using a single bud or eye from a scion variety. It is often used to graft new varieties onto established plants in the field or garden.

A special cut is made to lift the scion bud from the parent plant, which is then inserted into a slit or T cut in the rootstock just below the rind. The new bud is then carefully tied into

place until a union takes place between the two cambium layers and new shoots grow from the bud.

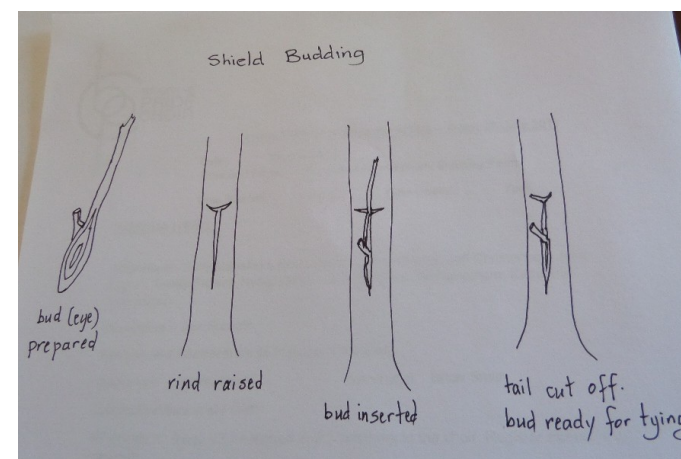
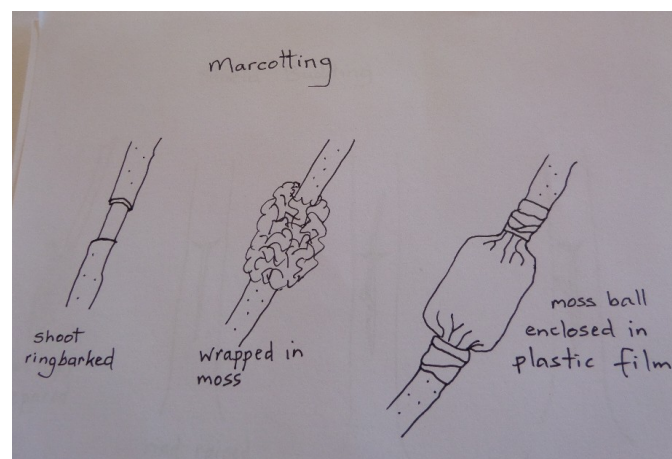
Shield budding, where a small section of rind is left attached as a convenient handle to aid the transfer of the bud from the scion to the rootstock, is the easiest method for the home gardener.

Budding is a great way to increase the varieties of fruit in your home orchard as it facilitates grafting two or three different varieties of the same species such as citrus or apples onto the one rootstock. Other fruit trees that can be successfully budded are custard apples, peaches, nectarines and mulberries.

In ornamental plants roses are often budded onto disease resistant rootstocks.

An advantage of budding over traditional grafting is that many buds can be utilised from the one section of scion wood, thus minimising waste. It also reduces the risk of failure as the small bud is easily kept moist and secure by its new host. If it does fail there is minimal damage to the new parent tree.

Julia Geljon



Open Day

Oaklands St Community Garden

Sunday 17th September 10am - 2pm

See the progress made during the last 12 months and catch up with the Garden Friends (some are ROGI Members).

Enjoy hot food, BBQ, Tea House with yummy cakes, slices and scones.

Plant sales, fruit and vegies grown on site and jams/pickles to name a few.

You can tour the different gardens, hear guest speakers and enjoy musical entertainment.

Find the gardens at the end of Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills (behind Aldi) Ph: 0419 987 870



Springtime on the Mountain Open Gardens Trail

This year, there will be seven diverse and delightful home gardens, as well as the Botanic Gardens, for public display over the three day weekend.

There will be a cafe with a sausage sizzle and Devonshire Teas.

The Botanic Gardens will host the Potty Potter plant sales and a sausage sizzle.


Enjoy a day strolling through the gardens or stay overnight to extend your visit.

TRAIL PASSES \$20 covers all gardens
Dependent children free
Single garden passes \$5
Pre-booked Groups of 10 or more \$15
Complimentary Trail guides are included.

Payment for passes by cash only can be made at the entrance to all gardens or at Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens.

More information at
<http://tmbotanicgardens.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Springtime-Brochure-2017-Web.pdf>

Or phone the convener on 0458 102 344



*7 Delightful Open Private Gardens,
Botanic Gardens with Plant Sales
and Sausage Sizzle*

Tamborine Mountain
Friday 22nd, Saturday 23rd
& Sunday 24th September
9am - 4pm

Letter to the editor



'I picked this up in Bunnings on the advice of their staff as it kills both male and female fruit flies and was natural.

Luckily I read the instructions and am taking it back. It says "do not spray if bees are feeding on flowering plants. Will kill bees."

I have three native bee hives and with the decline of bees world-wide I don't think organic farmers should be using this product whether the bees are feeding at the time of spraying or not.

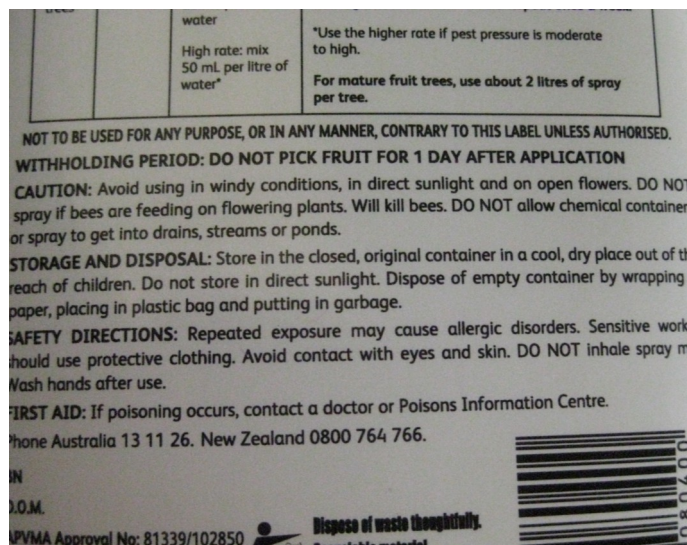
The ingredients are Garlic, Pyrethrins and Piperonyl Butoxide. Would it be worth putting it in the newsletter?'

Garry Bromham

About the product:

Richgro Naturally Based Fruit Fly Spray is formulated to control and repel fruit fly on all fruit trees. Because it is formulated using naturally based ingredients, Garlic and Pyrethrum, it is safe for use up to one day before harvest.

Richgro Naturally Based Fruit Fly Spray also includes natural plant oil which helps to extend the repelling properties of this product in adverse weather



conditions.

Extremely useful for protecting fruits and fruiting veggies, this insect spray is an affordable and effective choice for orchardists and home-growers. Sold as a concentrate, the normal chemical application rate is only 25 ml per litre, and the high rate is 50 ml.

Composed of natural ingredients, this organic fruit fly spray is ideal for growers looking to have total control over what compounds interact with their crop. Spray in confidence with help from Richgro's all natural formulations and rely on a century of experience working in Australia to ensure high-quality results each and every time.

FEATURES:

- Natural Garlic & Pyrethrum
- Natural fish oil
- Controls and repels
- Use up to 1 day before harvest
- Extensively trialled
- Economical - 500ml makes 20 Litres
- Kills Mediterranean and QLD Fruit Fly
- Can be sprayed on fruit & trees

ANALYSIS:

Active = 150g/L GARLIC, 4g/L PYRETHRINS, 16g/L PIPERONYL BUTOXIDE

Taken from:

<http://www.richgro.com.au/products/pest-disease-and-weed-control/naturally-based-fruit-fly-spray>

About the ingredients:

Piperonyl butoxide (PBO) is a synergist used in numerous pesticides. Synergists are chemical products that do not have a pesticide effect but improve the pesticide properties of other chemical products. PBO can be added to phytosanitary compositions containing pyrethrins or more generally compounds of the pyrethroid family. After ingestion by insects, PBO inhibits the secretion of certain enzymes and potentiates the insecticide properties of the phytosanitary product. PBO has harmful effects on human endocrine functions and on the environment.

According to the French Research Institute for Organic Farming, products containing PBO will be banned in organic farming according to the following timeline:

Removal of "AB" (organic farming) from the labels of affected products for sale and in distribution on 31 March 2017

Remaining stock to be used by 30 September 2017

Taken from: <http://en.phytocontrol.com/france-all-products-containing-piperonyl-butoxide-pbo-banned-in-organic-farming>

Pyrethrum is extracted from the flower of the Chrysanthemum plant. Esters known collectively as pyrethrins are found within the pyrethrum extract. The pyrethrins are the active ingredient in pyrethrum that kills insects.

Pyrethrum does not persist for a long time in the environment. The active chemicals in pyrethrum, pyrethrins, are degraded by high temperature and UV light.

Pyrethrum is a broad spectrum insecticide so it will affect a wide range of insects; including beneficials. They have been used in insect control for more than 160 years.

How safe is Pyrethrum?

Pyrethrum has been extensively studied for its effects on people and the environment. Like all insecticides, pyrethrum has a toxic effect on insects. Thus it is not correct to say that pyrethrum is 'safe'.

At the same time, we are confident that pyrethrum has a very good toxicity profile. For mammals, doses that elicit toxic reactions are significantly larger than the exposures people typically experience in using pyrethrum based products.

Taken from: <http://www.pyrethrum.com/FAQs.html>

You decide whether you'd want to use it or not.



Eau-de-Cologne mint



Pennyroyal



Peppermint



Spearment

Mint

There are many species of mint and most are easy to grow in our area. All they need is moisture and a reasonable soil.

Mint has a well-deserved reputation as a ground-cover. Invasive is another way to describe it! This means it's easy to strike from its underground stolons. It's safest to grow mint in a pot or a bed with good deep walls. A group of terracotta pots each with a different variety of mint looks lush and fresh.

All mints are perennial, and intensely and characteristically aromatic—one sniff and you know it's a mint! Their stems are square and their leaves are opposite.

Ask around at ROGI for cuttings—don't restrict your mint collection to just common mint.



Australian native mint



Moroccan mint



Common mint



Apple mint (variegated)

Front page answer: Corsican mint.

Plant Clinic

Q: What is wrong with my Lots a Lemon?



A: The Lots a Lemon is a dwarf Meyer lemon bred for growing in pots. Suggestions were magnesium and/or potassium deficiency. Gennaro thought maybe too much watering. I visited Garry's garden to take photos and have a look. Here is what Garry has done to help the lemon tree after advice from Linda Brennan:

'The lemon was planted in a 40 cm pot. When Jill saw it this morning to take photos for the newsletter she saw a root protrude from the bottom and thought it was root bound. Gennaro suspected that it would be water-logged.

When I tipped it out it was very wet at the bottom

but there was not much of a root system. The root Jill saw was just two roots that went to the bottom.

As you (Linda Brennan) suggested, I washed all the roots off and soaked it in seaweed solution while I prepared the soil. Due to the small root system I decided to put it back in a 40cm pot filled with the following:

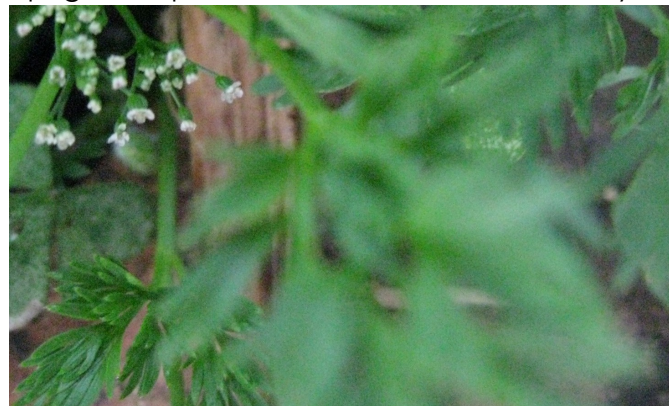
Coco-pro mix to which was added Instant Humus, rock dust, microbial rock dust, ½ teasp iron chelates. Then I replanted the tree and saturated the soil with seaweed solution. I put the tree in an area that gets light but is protected from the direct sun. Will get just a little morning sun.

It has lots of blossom and one small lemon starting. I am interested to see if we get any fruit this year.

If this does not fix it all I can say is that it is a "lemon" and must have been propagated on a Monday or a Friday!
Garry Bromham

We'll let you know how this tree has progressed in a month or so.

Q: What is this weed? (below & right) It looks like a carrot plant but it's a ground cover not upright, no particular smell, tasted mustardy.



A: A Spanish ROGI member told us that it is edible and gave us the Spanish name. Subsequent online research suggests it may be *Cyclospermum leptophyllum*—a plant in the celery family. Common names: marsh parsley, slender celery and fir-leaved celery. It's a weed in pastures, gardens and disturbed



areas. Varying opinions on edibility. It's not very palatable, and there are plenty of nicer alternatives to eat.

Q: A cabbage leaf that looked sun-burned.

A: No-one could come up with a conclusive answer on the night. However, considering it's winter and although Neem oil was sprayed, I think it was probably a fungal disease made worse by the dew that settles on those outside leaves each and every night.
Gennaro

Plant Clinic

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

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

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

Eating Pretty Petals

Eating a rainbow

The 'Eat a rainbow every day' promotion by Nutrition Australia encouraged us to eat colourful foods for their phytochemicals that included anthocyanins (blue/purple veg); carotenoids (orange/yellow) and lycopene (red veges). These phytochemicals each play an important role in keeping us healthy, from supporting heart function, to eye and mucous membrane health and more.

Munching bunches

You can grow and eat colourful veges, but you can also take to eating your organic flower garden, to enhance your intake of these important nutrients.

Before we start munching into a bunch of flowers, there are a few alerts:

- Avoid eating flowers that are sprayed with chemicals such as fungicides, and pesticides. Flowers accumulate these in petals and pollen.
- Don't eat flowers from polluted areas
- Avoid eating flowers you can't positively identify as edible.

In a series of articles over the next few ROGI newsletters, I'd like to introduce you to edible flowers and how to grow them in your garden. My book *A Delicious Bunch* has just been released, and has a wealth of knowledge, inspiration and ideas for gardeners and cooks. I'll have copies for sale at ROGI meetings. (See review of this book on page **XX**)

Before the rainbows, let's start with the soil

Any of us who garden with a passion understand the importance of a healthy and lively soil for plant health. To encourage soil life, which in turn feeds the plants, ensure a good soil structure. Particle size, soil pore spaces and penetrability contribute to healthy soil, allowing moisture and root penetration and microbial growth.

Soil moisture is key for healthy plants and microbes, and is essential for worm activity. Adding plenty of rich compost, humates (which improve soil water holding capacity), and adding a 5cm layer of mulch to your soil, will protect it from moisture loss. Ensure your watering regime penetrates the mulch and wets the soil to the root level of your plants.

The pH is the measure of hydrogen in the soil. A high pH indicates an alkaline soil, whereas the lower end of the scale is more acidic. In general, I aim for a slightly acidic pH of about 6.5 in my flower growing and vegetable areas. This maximises the range and availability of nutrients and suitable conditions for beneficial microbes and fungi to grow.

Your pH test kit records how to change soil pH, but remember to always add worm liquid or compost when changing soil pH.

Edible flowers for humans and healthy ecosystems

I'd like to focus on a few favourite edibles that do well as companions to fruit and vegies and that are good to include in our diets.

Nasturtium

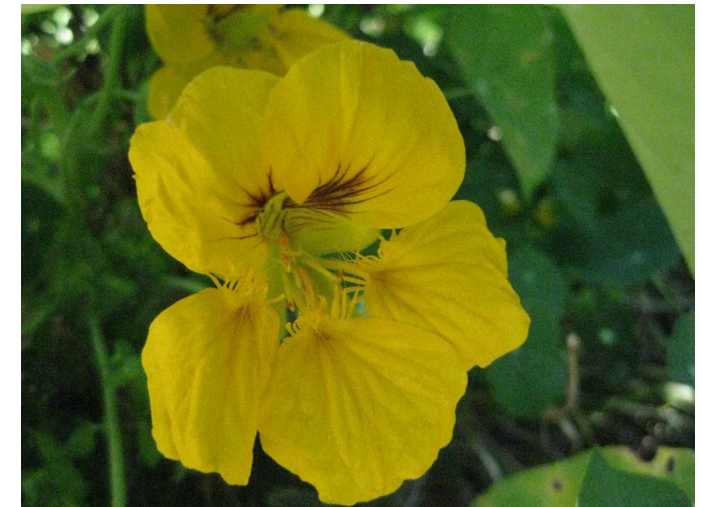
Who can resist nasturtiums in a garden? They are colourful, tolerate neglect and provide continual show for months on end. They self seed easily.

Stingless bees are the first to visit nasturtiums each day, buzzing happily into each flower.

They have the reputation of keeping aphids away from your susceptible plants, so plant them around late season cabbages and kale, roses and custard apples.

The yellow flowers provide vitamins C and D and lutein.

All above ground parts of the plant can be eaten. One of my favourite ways to enjoy them is cooked in a vegan tempura batter.



Eating Pretty Petals cont'd

Calendula

Golden yellow to orange in petal colour, these 30 cm tall annuals are colourful and giving little plants.

Grow them in pots, under fruit trees or amongst the veges.

The edible petals are rich in Vitamin A and the carotenoid lutein.

Include them into cheese balls, dukka and salads. They are slightly smoky in flavour.

I also use them when infused in sweet almond oil, as a dry skin treatment.

They attract parasitic wasps and other beneficial insects to your garden and provide food for stingless bees.

German chamomile

This is a fine foliaged chamomile, with a generous helping of white flowers surrounding central golden discs.

Avoid growing Roman or other forms of chamomile as these can create problems with asthmatics and allergy sufferers especially if consumed.

Chamomile self-seeds in a warm, sunny spot, and can be seen hosting myriad insects through the day. You'll have fewer aphids where you grow chamomile too.

Chamomile will happily grow through late winter to late summer with little extra water. I plant it under citrus and apples.

Apart from using it in sleepy time or relaxing tea, you can make cordials and chamomile-flavoured cakes and slices.



Borage

This annual produces blue starry flowers, although you will sometimes get random pink flowers and a white borage seed is available to plant too.

Borage is a favourite with bees, so plant borage under avocados where the moist, cool conditions will suit both plants, and where the bees will pollinate the avocados.

I eat borage flowers in salads, smoothies and in Buddha bowls where its cucumber flavour is very welcome.

Anthocyanins in blue flowers help guard against heart disease and some cancers.



Next month we look at fertilising edible flowers and the best vegetable flowers to eat.

Linda Brennan

Linda, a ROGI member, 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 book-stores or www.ecobotanica.com.au Linda is on facebook (adeliciousbunch) and Instagram (ecobotanica) with daily stories and tips.

Harvesting ginger

My ginger plants had been begging to be harvested for a while. As you can see (right), the above ground parts appear to be dying.

This one was so big it made the pot bulge out of shape.

I grow them in pots to make harvesting easy.



Clear away the potting media and use a soft brush to remove as much of it as possible. Then wash it well. The potting mix can be used again, although I put mine in the compost.



The ginger was longer than the width of the pot—no wonder it was pushing the pot out of shape!

The edible part of ginger is the rhizome. These are the roots.



Turmeric can be grown the same way.



To grow a new plant, select a piece with a bud and let it cure for a few days. Plant it with bud side up about 1 cm below the surface. Most pieces will have more than one bud.

Ginger needs a warm climate, a friable rich soil or potting mix/compost in a pot and enough depth to grow the rhizomes. Keep it moist, but well-drained.

This is half the harvest from this batch. (I took it out of the freezer for the photo —scissors are for scale)

To use it, I shred a frozen piece with a microplane straight into the dish, pot or pan.

Jill Nixon



Up-end the pot onto a tarp or similar (concrete, in this case), so it's easy to clean up later.



It's worth growing yourself. Organic ginger is valuable.

Book Reviews

Now is the time when our gardens are full of the sights and scents of abundance—flowers and food. A couple of useful books are as follows:

Did you know that hyssop is a lure for the cabbage white butterfly, and bees love it too?

Did you know that kale doesn't like beans or strawberries?

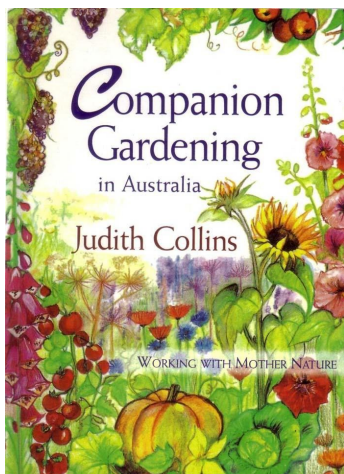
Carrots and leeks benefit each other when interplanted.

Nasturtiums (yellow in particular) lure aphids away from other

crops—becoming a sacrificial companion plant.

Collins explains the ways plants can act to help other plants thrive—they use camouflage, nurturing, stimulation and sacrifice; they exude root secretions, aroma, and the nutrition from themselves after they die.

But this book is more than just theory. It abounds in examples and is wonderfully set out so you can easily find what to grow with what for the best results for both plants.



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!

This is one of those books that you will borrow to read and then want to own. I refer to my copy frequently.

Reviewed by Jill Nixon

First published in 1975, this may have been the first book to encourage the use of companion planting to help with pest management and gardening success without using toxic chemicals. It covers the plants that most people would grow in their vegetable gardens.

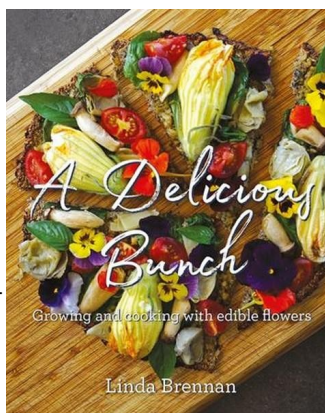
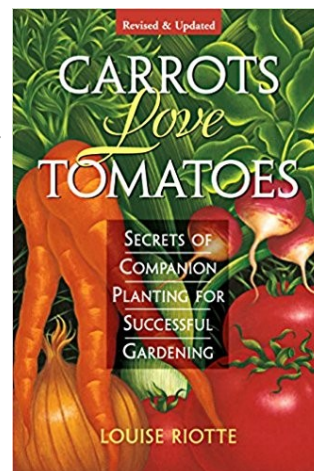
Read it to glean snippets of information that you can put into practice.

It is written by an American for an American audience, but we Aussies are used to altering things around to suit our part of the planet.

There's one new book in the library this month.

Much loved ROGI member Linda Brennan has recently released her first book, and a truly beautiful book it is.

Linda's passion is edible flowers and brings together gardening, cooking and stunning photography into one joyful book.



I had the immense pleasure of attending one of Linda's book launch functions. A tiny bookshop was filled with flowers, laughter and scrumptious food. I have added flowers to as many meals as possible ever since.

Linda's book is more than just beautiful, it has a very important message for us all, and I applaud her for it as it is a message close to my own heart.

We need to appreciate flowers in our gardens more. Linda goes a step further. She not only appreciates them she champions and celebrates them.

Flowers do play a big part in an edible garden. Don't believe me? Get hold of Linda's book and even if you are not concerned with the bees, you will want to eat them! (the flowers that is, not the bees).

For anyone who likes cooking, this book is a must, but even more, for anyone who is new to gardening, this book offers the gardening 'how to' to help get started in the garden and be a flower whiz in the kitchen.

Not only does Linda include some of the old favourites such as lavender and roses, she also includes some subtropical delights such as torch ginger, blue butterfly pea and even bougainvillea.

I highly recommend this beautiful book, and the fact that Linda is one of our own makes it even more special.

Reviewed by Kate Wall

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.

Plant of the Month

Queen Anne's Lace

Ammi visnaga

*Queen Anne's lace dressed to fit in a royal palace,
Yet found in common
Along the roadsides dwelling
How fortuitous we shall meet.*

Leona J. Atkinson.

With that poem you can imagine it fitting right in where it originated - the Nile River Valley.

Queen Anne's lace has tall stems with feathery foliage and large white lace-like clusters of flowers.

The variety we have in the seed bank has the typical white blooms but it can come in a few other colours too.

Being an annual plant, it grows, sets seed and dies over the course of a single year. Normally reaches to 90 cm. The plant tends to bloom in the warming months of summer—they are flowering now, the weather has been so warm!

I love growing Queen Anne's lace for the flowers as it attracts so many beneficial insects and even birds to the garden.

These beneficial insects need nectar and pollen in their diet and they really appreciate the flower structure of Queen Anne's Lace and other flowers in the *Apiaceae* family as they can easily access their food from these plants.

I have been amazed watching a flower-head buzzing with many different parasitic wasps, minute pirate bugs, hoverflies, lady-



bugs, lacewings, big-eyed bugs, tachinid flies – dancing all at once on it.

Attracting these insects to your garden will help keep pests such as caterpillars and aphids under control. Queen Anne's lace is great for inexperienced gardeners and those who like low maintenance gardens as it is easy to grow and will teach you so much about bugs in your garden while the low maintenance gardener will appreciate the

work that Queen Anne's Lace will do ... and that it will not die suddenly on you.

Queen Anne's Lace can be sown in autumn or spring. Sowing seeds in the spring is the preferred method for the best plants and the most blooms. This month could be your last chance for the year, so get the seeds in now.

In later spring thin the seedlings to 30cm apart to help with air flow and growing stronger plants. Plants may fall over if exposed to strong winds so staking plants will help if this is a concern. Leave flowers on to produce seeds. If you desire them to self sow, you may have to share the seeds with small birds as they love them too. Plenty will pop up next season. Or save the seeds so you can sow next year.

Plant in a location that enjoys full sun and remember to water moderately.

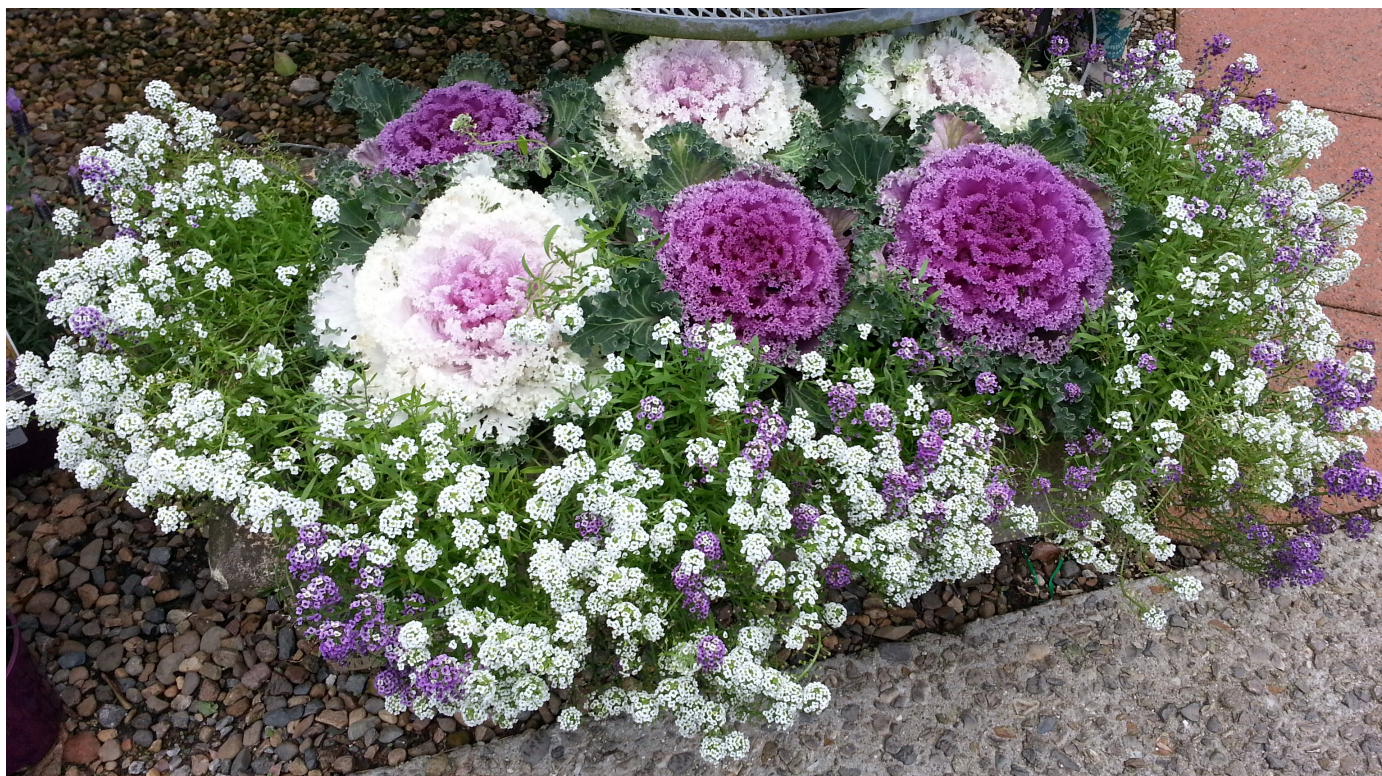
The seed bank will have these seeds and plants for sale this month.

We will also have seedlings of related plants with similar appearance - large white flower heads and effect (attractive to beneficial insects):

Daucus carota, or wild carrot, grows a little shorter than *Ammi visnaga* and is a biennial.

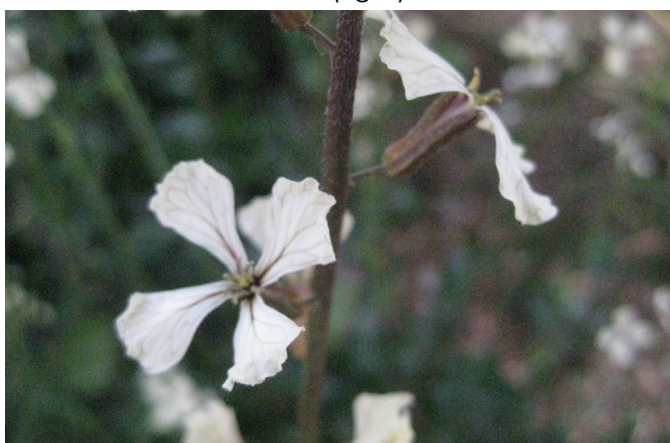
Ammi majus, also known as False Queen Anne's Lace or Bishop's Flower, grows well in full or part shade and attain a height of 1.2 metres.

Also, ***Daucus carota*** 'Dara' which has very showy flower heads that are pink/purple with the occasional white one.



Above: A beautiful display of ornamental kale and alyssum. Although it's called 'ornamental', this kale is perfectly edible—unless it's been sprayed with something that renders it inedible. I've been told that no caterpillars have been found on the kale (they love brassica leaves). Would this be because the sweetly-scented alyssum attract beneficial insects that deal with the pests before they can do any damage?

Below: Edible brassica flowers. Left is a broccoli and the distinctive white flower (right) is from rocket.



Garden Visits

Sunday 15 October

George Allen's Capalaba property

Sunday 12 November

Treina Densley's Cleveland property

Workshops etc

Saturday 16 September

Garden Makeover Workshop postponed. See p 2.

Field Trips

Sunday 1 October:

Gary Donaldson's property.

In February Gary spoke at our meeting — mainly about chooks. See what else he does and grows at his permaculture site on Macleay Island.

As always, spaces are limited, so book early.

Please book with Toni on 0402 323 704 or 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.

Seed Bank News!

ROGL 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're a not-for-profit group. Our passion is to get you gardening and growing more food.

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

Seed Sowing Guide

September

Asparagus
Beetroot
Beans, French
Beetroot
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Chicory
Choko
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jerusalem artichoke
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Okra
Melons—Water and Rock
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radish
Rosella
Silverbeet
Squash
Sweet corn
Sweet potato
Tomato
Zucchini

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

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 and browse.



Delicate blue flowers of *Ageratum houstonianum*. I threw lots of different out-of-date seeds near the chook run and many are now flourishing—including these. Another name for them is Billygoat weed—which explains why Franco the farmer curses them as a weed at his farm. Butterflies like them, so I'll leave them, but I'll be dead-heading them to prevent self-seeding.



If you've been noticing these eggs suspended on silk stalks around your yard, then thank your lucky stars! They are green lacewing eggs. Their larvae can eat 60 aphids an hour! They like mealybugs too. The female deposits her eggs on the stalks to keep them out of reach of predators such as ants and each other—yes, they'd even devour their unhatched siblings! These eggs were on a car side mirror; they lay them in the oddest places—clothes peg, letterbox.

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

October Newsletter Deadline Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by **27 September**

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

Plectranthus barbatus (*Coleus forskohlii*) enjoys warmth and is happy in full sun or shade, with rather ordinary soil. It grows quickly, to 2m, and tolerates drought and root-competition—can get straggly. Very easy-care, it is also easy to strike from a cutting. The root can be used as a pickle. It has a 3 000 year Ayurvedic medicine history and is now being researched for cancer treatment. I like it because it's blue and beautiful.



Its plump buds open to beautiful, long, bright blue spires of flowers from March to September



It has thick, furry leaves with the classic *Plectranthus* pungent scent