# Next meeting: Thursday 9 December 2021

ROGI News

ROGI meetings are held on the second Thursday night of the month, with doors opening at 6.15pm. Members can visit the plant table, seed bank, library and stalls or have a chat before the meeting. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

#### Bayside Community Church Cnr McDonald Rd and Macarthur St ALEXANDRA HILLS

### Don't forget:

- Pay your membership dues (only fully paid members may attend)
  Tap in your QR code
  Observe social distancing
  Return washed seedling pots
  Bring a basket/box/bag for your Purchases
  Any questions for Plant Clinic
  A plant for ROGI Rewards
  Free swap/share/giveaway
  Your plate of sweet/savoury food
- Your tool for sharpening Your e-waste
- A gift for Salvo's Christmas Appeal

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7 Terry Sullavan's Malabar chestnut tree is producing
8 beautiful staminate flowers. They are followed by
6 fruit that resemble a choko in shape and colour, but
8 have delicious nutty seeds. Read more about Terry's
a amazing edible garden on pages 8-11.

Photo by Linda Brennan

# Coming Events

DECEMBER	Thursday 9	<b>ROGI Christmas Meeting</b>
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# 2022:

JANUARY NO MEETING

FEBRUARYThursday 10First ROGI Meeting for 2022

Tuesday 15 Seed Savers Group (see p. 13)

# Membership Information

- Direct Deposit to BSB 633 000, Account Number 136 137 296 Bendigo Community Bank Victoria Point Bendigo Community Bank Wynnum-Manly N.B. Reference: Please include deposit ID: YOUR NAME MEMB
- 2. **Cheques** made payable to: Redland Organic Growers Inc. Pay at meeting or by post to: Redland Organic Growers Incorporated PO Box 1257, Cleveland. Qld. 4163.

Member	Members	New member/s joining in			
Category	For 2022	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 21-Dec 22
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 of age.

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

# **December Meeting**

# Christmas Party

To celebrate the end of 2021 we're having a party. There will be a surprise guest speaker, fun and games interspersed with gardening trivia questions, and lots of time to meet new people.



Please bring:

- A small plate of savoury or sweet food to share (cut up into pieces). Please include a label listing ingredients to assist members with allergies.
- Your own plate, cup/glass (ROGI will provide the drinks), and cutlery in a bag to take them home to wash.
- Secateurs or any other hand tools for sharpening (see page 3 for more info).
- E-Waste for SubStation 33 to repurpose (see page 3).
- A donation for the Salvation Army Christmas Food Drive
- A basket/box/bag for your purchases.

From 6.15pm, members may visit the Seed Bank, library and stalls (home grown produce, local honey, jams, wax wraps, soaps etc) or just have a chat.

We plan to start the fun and games after 7pm.

We need to know if you're coming - please register on TEAM APP or email <u>events@rogi.com.au</u> by the 4th December, and let us know the savoury/sweet food you plan to bring.

### **ROGI MEMBERS ONLY.** To join, go to the MEMBERSHIP tab at www.rogi.com.au

# Salvo's Christmas Food Drive

Christmas time is hard to celebrate when you are doing it tough. ROGI members are asked to donate **non-perishable** food item/s and groceries for the Salvation Army food drive **at our December 9 meeting**. Please help struggling families in the Redlands. When giving, think of things people would not buy if they were on a tight budget—something special to celebrate Christmas Day.

# Suggestions:

- Christmas puddings or cakes
- Long life milk/cream/custard
- Tinned biscuits
- Chips
- Chocolates and Iollies
- Bonbons
- Bamboo plates and cutlery
- Tablecloths and paper napkins •
- Tinned vegetables
- Packet and tinned soups
- Tinned spaghetti and baked beans
- Tinned tuna and salmon
- Tinned ham
- Muesli bars
- Instant noodles
- Pasta and pasta sauces
- Rice and rice sauces
- Jelly packets or cups
- Tea, coffee, sugar
- Milo, Quick
- Cordial, soft drink
- Long life fruit juices
- Cake mixes
- Pancake mix
- Flours

- Breakfast cereal, oats and muesli
- Nuts

•

- Pretzels
- Popcorn
- Sweet biscuits
- Savoury biscuits (Shapes, Jatz)
  - Environmental shopping bags
- Deodorants
- Toothpaste and brush
- Combs and hairbrushes
- Antiseptic wipes
- Shampoo and conditioners
- Bath towels

### NOTE: Please ensure foods are non-perishable and with expiry dates well into next year.

People will be receiving these packages as a gift. Help battling Aussies feel a little extra special at Christmas by purchasing a brand name (not 'no name' brands please).

# Membership renewal - due 31/12/21

# How to renew your membership . . . fast and easy

- 1. Go online to https://www.rogi.com.au/renew-membership.php
- 2. Fill out the application, press SUBMIT.
- Go to your online bank to make a transfer to ROGI -BSB 633000, Account Number 136 137 296 (Use your name as a reference please)
- 4. Find your 2022 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table at the February 2022 meeting.

# PLEASE NOTE—We now have a 'square reader' so that you can make your payment with your credit card (at the ROGI meeting).

# Merry Christmas and happy gardening from Rhonda and the Management Committee.

# **TOOL SHARPENING**

# **E-WASTE COLLECTION**

Shannon from Pout Sharpening will provide tool sharpening at the December meeting ... this is FREE for members.

- One tool per ROGI member. If there is time, a second can be done at your own expense. Prices at: <u>https://</u> www.poutsharpening.com.au/
- Please write your name clearly on the tool with indelible ink or name tag it
- Clean hand tools, not spades

E-waste can be placed in the bin provided in the car park at our December meeting. E-Waste is any electric or electronic product that has become nonworking, unwanted or obsolete, and has essentially reached the end of its useful life. Sources of E-Waste include:

- IT and telecommunication equipment
- Large household appliances
- Small household appliances
- Consumer and lighting equipment
- Electrical and electronic tools
- Toys, leisure and sports equipment
- Medical devices
- Monitoring and control instruments

# November Meeting - Linda Barrett

# Back to Basics of Growing Food

We were fortunate to have experienced ROGI gardener Linda Barrett speak at the November ROGI meeting on what she saw as the most important 'back to basics of growing food": amazing soil. The dictionary definition of basic surprised me, and it actually described exactly what Linda was talking about "forming an essential foundation or starting point; fundamental".

The fundamental aim of Linda's talk was to highlight the importance of the living "Soil Food Web" and it started with a text book reminder of soil layers and its components, what keeps it healthy and why we should understand pH.

The concept of the "Soil Food Web" (Dr Elaine Ingham) was introduced, and it's components described by form and function. Our understanding of the importance of keeping the "Soil Food Web" in balance grew as Linda explained the 'no dig' principle -(go to ROGI website, Resources, No Dig Gardens), which takes a very gentle approach to all things living.

To finish, Linda gave us an idea of what she is currently growing and tips. The garden means a lot to Linda and she finished with a quote from Steve Biddulph, 2021. "When rattled by what I see on the TV or in my Facebook feed, I wander out to my garden and weed the radishes. I can feel peacefulness flowing from the soil".

# Soil Food Web

The term "Soil Food Web" describes what is living within the soil: an interconnected web of relationships which together are greater than their parts (see Diagram top right).

Linda explained how the "Soil Food Web" is the key to fertile soil providing:

- Nutrient cycling for plant and living organisms
- Nutrient retention
- Increased structure in soil



Protection from pests and disease

• Protection from drought and flood.

The "Soil Food Web" was explained in layers; starting from the top:

- Plants create plant material, sugar/carbon through photosynthesis using the sun's energy, water and carbon dioxide.
- The organic matter, such as leaf litter and dead organisms are consumed by the Primary Consumers, mainly fungi and bacteria. This process assists with releasing nutrients to the plant.
- These in turn are consumed by protozoa, springtails, nematodes and mites, referred to as Secondary Consumers. This process releases both nutrients, made available for direct absorption by plants, and further organic matter.

# November Meeting - Linda Barrett (continued)

- Another layer of Higher Level Consumers nematodes, earthworms, ground beetles, millipedes, ants, centipedes and spiders - feed on the secondary consumers. This process similarly releases both nutrients for plant growth, and also add faecal pellets to the soil, as well as feeding birds and other wildlife.
   Features of some important Soil Food Web components are: Bacteria and Fungi:
- Decompose organic matter
- Extract nutrients
- Build soil structure
- Retain nutrient in the soil
- Food for protozoa and nematodes Nematodes:
- Eat fungi, bacteria and other nematodes
- Predatory nematodes eat the root feeding ones
- Release nutrients in a form available to plants Protozoa:
- Consume bacteria
- Release nutrients in a form available to plants
- Food for arthropods



It is important to keep this "Soil Food Web" in balance by NOT:

- turning over or ploughing the soil which destroys protozoa and fungi,
- reducing organic matter, which would decrease the nutrients available for organisms,
- using chemicals such as fungicides, pesticides and herbicides.

# Soil Layers and Components

We were given a visual reminder of what the soil layers look like to put into context what we were concentrating on: the topsoil layer.

The foundation of good garden soil includes the following components:

- 20-30% clay
- 30-50% silt
- 30-50% sand
- 5-10% organic matter
- Chemical/mineral elements (rocks, shells, organic materials)

### Soil Texture

The main difference between sand, silt, and clay is their particle size: sand particles are larger in size while clay particles are extremely fine, and silt particles are somewhere in between sand and clay particles. The triangle *(pictured left)* indicates how the proportional differences in these three mineral particles affect soil's texture. Also essential to healthy soil is air space, water and organic matter to support soil organisms.

### **Organic Matter**

Organic matter is any living or decaying material, whether of plant or animal origin. Carbon is the basis of organic matter, without which soil is dead. Dead soil creates dead food. Carbon is sourced from:

- organic matter in compost, such as dry leaves, grass, sawdust, woodchips or cardboard,
- carbon rich materials such as mulch, so that nutrients are more easily accessible to the soil.

# November Meeting - Linda Barrett (continued)

Its characteristics include:

- ability to bond with other elements to create new compounds,
- storage of energy, for later release, by bonding to itself then breaking that bond.

#### **Chemical/ Mineral Elements**

Chemical elements in soil can be beneficial or problematic. Problematic elements: heavy metals such as lead, arsenic and cadmium.

Beneficial elements:

Nitrogen (N)

- Helps to build protein,
- A major ingredient in chlorophyll,
- Great for leafy growth (leafy greens and silver beet), but remember for fruiting plants (e.g. tomatoes) it creates all leaf and less fruit, and for root/tubers (e.g. carrots) it creates ferny growth but poor carrots,
- Sources: chicken manure, rain, urine, blood and bone. Phosphorus (P)
- Stimulates root formation,
- Assists with flower, seed and fruit development,
- Increases plant resistance to disease by building healthy cell walls,
- Too little will result in stunted growth,
- Sources: compost, rock minerals, banana peel, egg shell and most organic fertilizers.

Potassium (K)

- Often called Potash,
- Helps formation of carbohydrate (CHO),
- Essential for photosynthesis,
- Sources: wood ash, compost, rock minerals, organic fertilisers, and "chemical amendment.

### Trace Elements/Minerals

Trace elements are chemicals which are present in soil in small quantities and by extension are in the food that, once eaten, end up in us.

- Examples are calcium, magnesium, boron, iron, zinc, copper, manganese.
- Some functions of these chemicals are known, with many yet to be discovered.
- Examples are magnesium for citrus and potash for rosellas
- The combination of continually adding organic matter and minerals to the soil ecosystem over a couple of years will build enriched soil.
- Sources: seaweed, fish emulsion, rock minerals [only get silica and basalt rich rock minerals], sea and freshwater minerals (built from remnants of living creatures such as algae, diatoms and crustaceans), isolated chemical amendments.

NOTE: "Soils should be in good condition, both physically and chemically, to provide for optimum growth of plants. Many soils are unsuited for this purpose and need amending to improve these properties. Soil amendments are the materials added to the soil for the purpose of making soils better suited for plant growth." WadeW. McCall <u>https://</u> www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/GHGS-17.pdf

### Soil PH

This was detailed at a previous ROGI presentation, but Linda briefly outlined the basics:

- pH tells the concentration of hydrogen ions (a cation) in solution, ranging from 1-14.
- 1 (highly acidic, e.g. battery acid), 5.5 (rain water), 7 (neutral e.g. pure water) and 14 (highly alkaline such as caustic soda).
- The pH reading will indicate what can live in the soil, importantly the bacteria and fungi required for plants to thrive, and the capacity of the soil to exchange nutrients with the plants growing in it.
- Soil pH constantly changes at the root zone and these pH and ion exchanges influence the organisms in the soil.

# November Meeting - Linda Barrett (continued)

- Neutral (7) most vegetables.
- Acidic (4.5-5.5) blueberries, azaleas, camellias, strawberries, pine trees, bracken fern.
- Be observant!!! Look around your local area to see what grows naturally.
- Adjusting acidic soils with a pH less than 7: add green crops into your garden rotation with more frequency, add organic pH neutral compost, add a small amount of agricultural lime (100g/m2) and retest in 6 months.
- Adjusting alkaline soils with a pH more than 7: add organic matter such as decomposed tree leaves and coffee grounds, use green manure crops, add pH neutral compost, use small quantities, infrequently, of anti-microbial sulphur (one handful/ m2).

# Linda's Garden and Tips

### What's growing in November?

• Cucumber, pumpkin, rosella, okra, yacon, spring onions, capsicum, corn, beets, carrots and leafy greens.

### What's being picked in November?

• Mizuna, silverbeet, kale, kailaan, lettuce, rocket, kang kong, Asian cabbages, eggplant, leeks, corn, beans, Malabar spinach, asparagus, zucchini, beetroot, Brazilian cherries, carrots, blueberries, mint, parsley, rosemary and coriander.

#### Tips

- Make beautiful soil using what is available to you—make a no dig garden; compost with help from neighbour's wastes (e.g. grass clippings); trench composting when establishing a new bed; purchase micro-organisms or get microbes from someone else's garden compost.
- Plant for successive harvests.
- Use a drill attachment for stirring your compost (Linda uses a Renegade 75 X 600mm spiral drill attachment from Trade Tools and Ozito battery power hammer drill from Bunnings).

- Prepare for sub-tropical summer (heat, humidity, rain and insects).
- $\Rightarrow$  Mulch to regulate soil and reduce damage and evaporation.
- $\Rightarrow$  Protect from the hot summer sun by using shade cloth where needed.
- ⇒ Attract predators and repel pests by companion planting and inter-planting or using exclusion netting and fruit bags.
- $\Rightarrow$  Feed the soil microbiome e.g. predator nematodes.

I thought of Linda when I heard a comment by a person interviewed on Gardening Australia. She said she was not a gardener by profession, but found that having worked in a caring role professionally, it translated into her becoming a good caring gardener. We learnt today that caring for the soil and the food web it holds will bring benefits to us, our families and the environment.



### By Mena Stoke

### References

No-Dig Gardening & Leaves of Life by Esther Deans (in ROGI library)

Teaming with Microbes, The Organic Gardener's Guide to the Soil Food Web by Jeff Lowenfels & Wayne Lewis (ROGI Library) Dr. Elaine Ingham, discovered the discovering the Soil Food Web Approach (<u>https://www.soilfoodweb.com/how-it-works</u>)

# Garden Visit - Terry Sullavan

Terry and Maritza's home in Alexandra Hills backs on to bushland, which gives a lot of shade from the tall native trees. But every part of both the front and back gardens were planted out with plants that had a purpose.

We started the tour in the front yard. On the right hand side Terry is growing figs (loaded with fruit), citrus trees, tangelo, gingko biloba, guava and camellias. The fig and gingko can grow quite large, yet were planted close to the house. Terry prunes them to keep them small, but being deciduous, they shade the bedroom from the morning sun in summer, and allow the winter sun in winter.

On the other side of the driveway is Malabar chestnut, wormwood, and three citrus trees that produce for eight months - Imperial mandarin, tangelo and Valencia orange. Also growing are jaboticaba, mock orange, jackfruit, stinging nettle (for making tea), two types of avocado, soursop (produces about 20 kilos of fruit per year), lychee, Arabic tea, Queensland arrowroot and peanut pinto. Under the trees are growing liquorice, strawberries and asparagus.

Around the back happy chickens are kept in a fully enclosed chook house. They lay four eggs a day plus a mountain of manure! Terry has four varieties of bamboo (all to the south of the property to avoid shading other plants), a mulberry tree, henna plant, galangal ginger, sweet potato, lemongrass, asparagus, rosemary and cassava. He also has just planted four rows of corn interspersed with climbing beans, an ancient Native American technique.

On the narrow, sunny northern side of his house he has made an organic hydroponic system, in which he is growing lovely large tomatoes in. More information and photos about this innovative technique are at the end of this garden visit report.

It was great to see some innovative ideas from one of ROGI's long-standing members. Their edible garden is a credit to Terry and Maritza.

Report & photos: Carolyn Lassen, Linda Brennan & Terry Sullavan



# Garden Visit - Terry Sullavan (continued)



Orange Naranjilla fruits - A member of the solanum family, Naranjilla or Lulo is a favourite fruit for Maritza, who has enjoyed the flavourful fruit since childhood. She shared with us how she makes a wonderful drink from it. However, the thorns mean that very careful harvesting is needed to avoid injury.



Left: Maritza holds a ginkgo leaf. The Ginkgo biloba tree is considered a living fossil, with fossilised remains from the Permian Period 259 million years ago. The tree threatens to be a large specimen but is kept manageable in the garden with pruning. Terry uses the leaves as a tea. It's said to have anti inflammatory actions in the body, improving heart health and circulation. Left: The Naranjilla plant has an armour of vicious spikes on leaves, stems and branches.

Right: The larvae of the fig leaf beetle have started skeletonising the leaves of the brown Turkey fig. They pupate in the ground below the tree so its important to let the chooks free says Terry, to reduce the problem. Otherwise, he controls them by hand removal and allowing other parasitic insects to deal with them.



Two dwarf avocado trees, a Fuerte and a Wurtz, were among the first fruiting trees Maritza and Terry planted when they bought their house. The trees are setting fruit now, and will be enjoyed in a few months time.



Below: The brown Turkey fig tree is producing plenty of figs this year. It grows in a protected spot near the house.



# Garden Visit - Terry Sullavan (continued)



Water is collected from the kitchen sink into a covered bucket, and then pumped daily onto the Oldhamii bamboo clump in the back corner of the garden. This has resulted in healthy bamboo and efficient use of waste water on site. Right: The Biopod system is used to produce Black Soldier Fly larvae (Hermetica illucins) in great numbers. Terry and Maritza feed the larvae in the main pod area with organic waste and chicken manure, then collect the larvae from the collection section on the far left of the pod. Inside the pod, the larvae climb up a curved channel and fall into the collection section, which makes collecting them easy. The larvae are favourite chook food, being rich in protein, vitamins and healthy fats.



Below: The four happy chickens produce eggs for eating and manure for Terry's organic hydroponic system (see page 11 for more details).



Above: A jackfruit tree in the front garden produces healthy fruit over warm weather. At our visit, tiny fruit were developing, with the promise of many meals to come. Jackfruit can be eaten green (where it tastes 'meaty'), or fully ripe (when it's sweet and juicy). The fruit can weigh up to 20kg on large trees! The white sap/latex is very sticky, so wear gloves and smear both gloves and knives with oil before cutting the fruit to help release the stickiness. If you're thinking of growing a jackfruit tree, you can expect fruit in about 3-4 years.



### Garden Visit - Terry Sullavan (continued)

#### Terry's hydroponic system

With his engineer's know-how, Terry has set up an organic hydroponics system on the narrow, sunny northern side of the house. The nutrients feeding into the system are produced onsite using a wellcomposted chicken manure fertilising regime.

Many organic gardeners avoid hydroponics due to the chemical nature of the technique, or because of the absence of microbes - which organic growers feel contribute to the taste and nutritional quality of the harvest.

Terry's inspiration comes from aquaponics - whereby fish are kept in balance with grow beds full of clay beads (like scoria). Growing crops consume the waste of the fish, thereby cleaning the water. Wanting to utilise the waste from his chooks rather than buy and keep fish, Terry created his "chook-a-ponics" system!

The chicken manure is decomposed in two stages before being added to the grow beds. First, it is mixed with water and left in a bucket for at least a month to ferment anaerobically. About 100mL of this is diluted with 10 litres of water daily into a biofilter, which is a second bucket full of expanded clay beads. A small pump is on a timer, which drenches the clay beads every half an hour. This is an aerobic decomposition method, which completes the nutrient mix ready for uptake by the crops in the grow beds. It has a mild unoffensive smell, much like an aquarium.

Ten litres of the nutrient mix is added to the grow bed daily. It grows great tomatoes and cucumbers, but he does find that different plants have different needs - brassicas seem to need more nutrients. He has had success with leeks, Bok choi, celery, sorrel and basil.

It takes about 10 minutes a day to check and feed the system, and he's still getting big tomatoes with no signs of disease and very few pests. Terry feels these systems have a lot to offer organic growers, particularly anyone who is low on space, interested in learning about decomposition, and growing big tomatoes into the warmer months - and who wouldn't want that?!







Left: Terry's organic hydroponics system. Above: Biofilter Below: Healthy vegetables!



# Plant Clinic Managed & Reported by Rohanne Young



### PLANT IDENTIFICATION:

A member was seeking identification of an unknown plant.

Linda Brennan identified the plant as an Illawarra flame tree.

# FOR SALE:

Repurposed swing set chicken coop for sale for \$300. It features a nesting box with a lid accessible from the back, an insulated panel at the back to keep the pen cool, a small front door, and the wire and star pickets for the run on the side. The coop is disassembled and will need re-assembly. The back of the chicken coop is the largest piece, which will need a trailer to be moved. Pick up from Runcorn. Contact Andrew on 0413 257 389.



Stephen M wanted to know what would cause his ladyfinger banana to rot from the centre before it produced fruit.

Rohanne consulted with some fruit experts who were concerned about the possibility of Panama disease.

Stephen was advised to contact Biosecurity Security Australia/DDP.







# Seed Savers News

Our meeting in November was hosted by ROGI's seed-growing extraordinaire Janet—who shared with us some of the secrets of her success. Here is her recipe for starting seeds:

#### Fine Coir Peat—8 parts Medium Perlite—2 parts 3/4 cup Organic Xtra Lawn Fertiliser OR Organic Xtra pellets (add water to the day before, to break down) A handful of Garden Mate (or fine rock dust) Vermiculite—on top

Please note: Janet says her recipe is not set in stone. Success can depend on the time of year, temperature and even what seed is being sown.

Water the planted seeds with a bottle top sprinkler (attach to soft drink bottle or similar, *(pictured above right)*, and keep moist until seedlings emerge. Seedlings can be transplanted when they are big enough to handle. Always hold the seedling by the leaves when transplanting.





### **FREE SEEDS!**

ROGI Seed Savers group has been busy saving seed from various plants. These are donated to the Seed Bank for use by members—for FREE! See the Seed Bank to check out what seeds are available.

Our next meeting will be held on **Tuesday**, **15th February 2022 at 7-8.30pm at Linda Brennan's house in Capalaba**. The topic for the evening is The Needs of Seeds. We'll look at the particular needs that certain seeds have for saving, storage and germination. Whether it's cool, heat, miniature, sunlight or other. They are a bit like people– Special things suit every seed.

We will also be sharing, saving and separating seeds to go into our seed bank for gifting/sharing. Please bring along heads of seeds so we can separate them.

RSVP: Numbers are limited, so please book online at TeamApp or ring Linda on 0416 157 470.



# Fruit Trees with No QFF Problems

After learning about the existence of the parasitoid wasps that are the nemesis of the Queensland fruit fly, I got to thinking about the fruit trees that we have grown that haven't been susceptible to QFF.

These trees/shrubs are also fast-fruiting, and can be kept to a manageable height. They bear fruit so quickly that, should you not enjoy the fruit, it's not so difficult to remove them and try something else.

#### Acerola cherry - Malphigia glabra

We'd been wanting to get one of these for a few years, and finally figured out where we could fit one in. It sounded attractive because it is reputed to be THE highest natural source of vitamin C. I have noticed that it's an ingredient in my vitamin C tablets.



Positives:

- Doesn't get stung by QFF, and doesn't appear to be attractive to any other pests (possums, bats, rats, etc).
- Fruited within one year of being planted (some other South American trees can take about seven years - e.g. jaboticaba, chocolate puddina fruit).
- Has flushes of delightful little pretty pink flowers, followed rather promptly by cherry-coloured fruit, several times a year.
- The flavour is pleasantly mild and refreshing, although not as strong and sweet as a 'real cherry'.
- It's easy to keep the tree to a manageable size, which doesn't affect the fruiting and makes harvesting easier- we keep ours to about 2.5 metres high and about 1.5 metres in diameter. Negatives:
- The fruit can fall from the tree quite easily, so they need frequent harvesting (we usually stand at the tree and eat them on the spot).

- The amount of fruit can become a bit overwhelming, requiring us to do something with it.
- Some people notice that they get a bit itchy if they brush against the branches (I wear long sleeves). Uses:

• Eat fresh from the tree.

- Make it into a sauce (which requires a lot of sugar, as the fruit isn't highly sweet even when raw).
- Freeze the pulp. This is my favourite:

I put the whole fruit with a tiny bit of water into my food processor with the non-sharp plastic blade which won't cut up the seeds, and process until the flesh has been flung off the seeds. Press it through a strainer using the back of a spoon. Pour the resultant liquid into ice cube trays and freeze. Use the blocks in drinks - just like a frozen vitamin C tablet. This method retains the vitamin C content, which would be damaged by heat.

Brazilian Cherry - Pitanga, Surinam Cherry - Eugenia uniflora Ours is a black-fruiting variety 'Black Beauty' which we planted early this year. We have had our first batch of fruit from it (these trees fruit in spring), so it's a fairly quick producer. It's easy to tell when they're ready to eat, because they are black.

My main experience with Brazilian cherry is through foraging footpath trees - these are the regular type with red fruit, and they have no owners looking after them. I have never noticed any pest problems with them.

Most people are aware that you need to wait until the cherries are really dark maroon before you eat them. Otherwise you will pull an ugly face!

These trees can become weedy as birds tend to take the high fruit and carry the seeds away inside them, to deposit them in bush land.

If you choose to grow one, keep it to a manageable height, and harvest all the fruit.



### Fruit Trees with No QFF Problems (continued)

**Guisaro** - Psidium guineense

This is a relative of guava, which are usually fruit fly magnets, but it is the exception. The fruit have a rather tough skin which may be the deterrent (although fruit fly can attack walnut fruit!).

We decided to grow guisaro for this reason and because we were told it was a fast producer. Both were true.

However, we didn't really like the fruit very much (it didn't have that wonderful guava scent - which may be the real reason the fruit fly weren't attracted), the chooks weren't keen, and it produced SO MUCH that it became a bit of a nuisance. There always seemed to be fruit lying on the ground (still unaffected by fruit fly). So we dug it up.

#### Mulberry – Morus nigra

You know about mulberries. Luscious, delicious, nutritious, juicy, messy. What's not to love? And they're fast!

I have never seen mulberry fruit for sale, even in markets. They are too fragile, so you need to grow your own, or have a friend with one.

We haven't had any issues with fruit fly, possums or flying foxes, although I suspect the odd high-up fruit may be taken by birds. Stick a cutting in a pot, and in the right season it will get fruit on it when it's about 30 cm high! So you don't have to wait for long. Encouraged by Anne Gibson (The MicroGardener) who was a guest speaker a few years ago, we now cut our mulberry back about five times (every spring/summer/autumn). It fruits on new wood, so we get five flushes of little blobs of deliciousness several times a year - enough to freeze fruit to last the rest of the year. So if you want a couple of mulberry cuttings to grow your own,

just ask someone who has a tree.

Ours is a dwarf tree, and we got it from a ROGI member nearly six years ago. 'Dwarf' means it starts branching very low, so that it's easier to reach the fruit without having to resort to a ladder.



Left: A mulberry cutting fruiting at 4 weeks!

Right: Mulberry finished fruiting, ready to be cut back



By Jill Nixon

**The February** 

**Newsletter** 

deadline is the

**27 JANUARY 2022** 

### 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 information
- 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 the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant. Email <u>info@rogi.com.au</u>

# Book Review



### **The Small Food Garden** by Diana Anthony

What a fabulous handbook for all gardeners, not just those who have downsized and may have limited outdoor space.

The Small Food Garden covers all the usual suspects of site assessment, soil condition and water, and also provides information on various climatic zones. There is an easy

reference guide to seasonal plantings, harvesting and storage, covering all types of edibles, including herbs and fruit trees. For fruit tree enthusiasts, there are instructions on how to espalier fruit trees, which maximises the vertical space in a small garden. The book also describes various pests' favourite foods, as well as great gourmet tips for humans.

For those with smaller gardens, the section on growing food in pots covers the essentials including container types, grow bags and making your own potting mix.

My favourite chapter provides great information on companion planting. Companion planting enables a regime of prevention, and a useful overview of do it yourself organic treatments using sprays like garlic and Neem.

Although The Small Food Garden does not go into specific details about, for example, chemical deficiencies, it is a great easy reference guide and ideal for novice gardeners, as well as quick reminders for those more experienced at digging in the dirt.

Reviewed by Tracey Mann

# What Larvae are in your Stung Fruit?

Not long after our October meeting and listening to Col Harris talking about the parasitoids of Queensland fruit fly, I put some of my stung tomatoes into a container with a lid and dropped it in at Col's workplace in Cleveland.

It takes about three weeks before identity of the larvae can be determined.

Here are the results from Col:

"You have fruit flies Bactrocera tryoni, Bactrocera neo humeralis, Zeugodacus cucumis and the parasitoid wasp Di achasmimorpa kraussii."

So, the good news is that I have the native parasitoid wasp (D. Kraussii) which will help reduce the numbers of at least one of the two Queensland fruit fly species that I have - B. tryoni. The bad news is that I have the cucumber fly (Z. cucumis) - this is not a surprise, as my zucchini and tromboncino, and some cucumbers and pumpkins have been stung off and on for years.

I asked Col about a parasitoid wasp that deals with the cucumber fly, and



he doesn't know of any research into this area, unfortunately. It is a bit difficult to bag these fruit, so the entire plant would need to be enclosed, which would create pollination issues.

If you'd like to know which particular fruit flies and parasitoid wasps are in your neighbourhood, you're welcome to get in touch with Col's colleague Chloe on <u>c.vanderburg@qut.edu.au</u> to make arrangements.

By Jill Nixon

# Biodynamic Planting Guide: the best time to sow, propagate & prune December & January

# Seed Sowing Guide

			December	lanuary	February	
Looking after your soil. Includes composting, adding nutrients, applying cow horn manure	17th to 27th December	13th-23rd January	DecemberJanuaryAsparagusAsparagusBeans: Snake, Lablab,BasilMadagascar, Soy, WingedBeans: Climbing, SnakeBeetrootBeetrootCapsicum/ChilliBorageCarrotCapsicum/ChilliChokoChokoCucumberCorianderJicamaEggplantJicamaEggplantLettuceJicamaMelon: Honey, Rock, WaterLettucePigeon peasPigeon PeasPumpkinRadishSilverbeet; other leafySpring OniongreensSquashSunflowerSweet Corn	Brd ryDecemberJanuaryAsparagusAsparagusAsparagusBeans: Snake, Lablab,BasilMadagascar, Soy, WingedBeans: Climbing, SnakeBeetrootBeetrootCapsicum/ChilliBorageCarrotCapsicum/ChilliChokoChokoChokoChokoChokoCorianderIstJicamaIstJicamaEggplantEggplantLettuceJicamaSthOkraOkraMelon: Honey, Rock, WaterCarotKaroOkraMelon: Honey, Rock, Water	DecemberJanuaryAsparagusAsparagusBeans: Snake, Lablab,Basil	Asparagus Basil Beans: Climbing, Snake Beetroot Borage Capsicum/Chilli
Sowing seeds (refer to relevant plant group below), grafting, plant propagation and foliar feeds, applying horn silica	1st-3rd, 5th-11th 28th-31st	1st-12th 27th-31st			Beans: Climbing, Snake Beetroot Borage Capsicum/Chilli	
Plant and care for fruiting annuals including tomatoes, eggplant, peas and beans	5th-8th 14th-16th 24th-26th	2nd-4th 10th-13th 20th-22nd 29th-31st			Choko Coriander Cucumber Eggplant	Choko Coriander Cucumber Eggplant
Plant and care for root crops including carrots, beetroot and potatoes	7th-9th, 16th-19th 26th-29th	4th-6rh 13th-15th 22nd-25th			Jicama Lettuce Melon: Honey, Rock, Water	Jicama Lettuce Pigeon Pea
Plant and care for flowering annuals	1st-3rd, 8th-10th 19th-22nd 28th-30th	6th-8th 15th-17th 22nd-24th		Pigeon Peas Radish Silverbeet Sovbean	Radish Silverbeet Soybean Spring Onion Squash Sunflower Sweet Corn Sweet Potato Tomato Zucchini	
Plant and care for leafy annuals	3rd-5th 11th-14th 22nd-24th	1st-2nd 8th-10th 18th-20th 27th-29th		Spring Onion Squash Sunflower Sweet Corn Sweet Potato Tomatoes Zucchini		
Peppers	Apply weed waxing moo create or ap animal pepp Apply animo hours before	pepper on n, do not pply insect/ pers. al peppers 48 e full moon.	Sweet Corn Sweet Potato Tomato Zucchini			
Apply tree paste	Waning mod 20th-31st	วท	PLEASE NOTE: This guide is for sowing seeds, not seedlings. There may be several of weeks between the optimal time to sow a seed and to transplant a seedling. Pl keep in mind this is only a guide - micro climates and weather conditions may r that certain seeds may be sown before/after the recommended times. <b>ROGI</b> <b>Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits. \$1/pack members.</b>			

F	ROGI MAN		OMMITTEE	Meeting Information
PRESIDENT	Co	arolyn Lassen	<u>president@rogi.com.au</u>	
VICE PRESIDENT	Di	ana Yeo	president@rogi.com.au	Please consider contributing to any of these at various times:
SECREIARY	Lis	a Harsley	secretary@rogi.com.au	
		ard Brits	<u>treasurer@rogl.com.au</u>	ROGI REWARDS:
	Eri	in Houselander, Jil	l Nixon	<b>Good quality</b> plants and other garden-related items brought along by members. Everyone who attends the meeting is eligi-
	OFFIC	E BEARERS		ble for a ROGI Reward. Please label plant with its name and
MEMBERSHIP SEC	RETARY RH	nonda Binns	membership@rogi.com.au	some details before placing it on the table.
NEWSLETTER EDIT	OR Ar	nn Roffey	info@rogi.com.au	
PR,COMMUNICA	TIONS G	ail Bruce		MEMBERS' SALES:
	Eri	in Houselander	<u>info@rogi.com.au</u>	Items you've produced that are surplus to your requirements
CLUB EVENTS	То	ni Bowler	tonibowler@hotmail.com	that you wish to sell to other members - seedlings, eggs, honey,
PUBLIC EVENTS	Jill	l Nixon	<u>events@rogi.com.au</u>	lemons, jam, sustainable craft items – things that have cost you
	Vie	ga Misztal	library@rogi.com.au	time, money, and effort to produce. Please make sure items are
SEED BANK	Se	ea savers Group	<u>seeas@rogi.com.au</u>	labelled, named and priced. It is preferable that you staff the
WERSITE	Ie Po	ny sullavan, enn F		stall yourself or time-share with a friend.
WEDSHE	10			
	info	o@rogi.com.au	www.rogi.com.au	FREE SWAP/SHARE/GIVE-AWAY:
		PO Box 1257, C	Cleveland 4163	For items you don't want payment for— empty pots, cuttings,
The views		<u>www.facebook</u>	<u>.com/groups/</u>	unwanted volunteer plants (named), surplus produce, shred-
expressed in		<u>redland.orgc</u>	anic.growers	ded paper, strawberry runners and so on. You may want to
and at ROGI	Other agr		ing organic mothoda	work out an arrangement with other members to do some
meetings are	Other gard	dening groups us	sing organic methods:	swapping outside of the meetings.
those of the	Brisbane C	<b>Drganic Growers</b>	Inc (BOGI)—	
Editor and	Editor and 1st Thursday every month (except Jan),		except Jan),	PLANT CLINIC:
submitters and	Albion Peo	ace Hall, 102 Mcl	Donald Rd, Windsor,	Bring along your plant problems—insect/plant/weed (as many
guest speakers,	6.30 for 7.3	30pm. 3357 3171	<u>http://bogi.org.au</u>	parts as you can - fruit, leaf, root) in a sealed plastic bag. Fill in
not necessarily				the form on the Plant Clinic table (located just inside the door to
Redland		Society—Isi iuesi		the main hall) before the meeting starts. Someone will have a
Organic		uce Hull. 7.30pm	$\sqrt{24200277}$	look and may be able to answer your questions. Any solutions
Growers Inc.	<u>mp.//www</u>		<u>7.01g.00/q11s</u>	will be given to you on the night and published in the newslet-
	Oaklands	Street Communit	<b>ty Garden</b> —Wednesday	ter. Please be aware that, although we do our best, there may
	and Friday	/ 9-noon, Sunday	2-5pm. Oaklands Street,	not be anyone present who can solve your problem or identify
	Alexandra	ı Hills. 0408 259 44	45	your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.