

ROGI News

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

**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 preferably home-made - to share during the evening.

Tea/coffee provided

You are welcome to provide a quality plant to help share plants with other members. Bring a bag/box /basket for your purchases.

See you on Wednesday ...

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*Who doesn't love the beautiful juicy watermelon?
For our featured plant of the month, see page 10.*

Jill's Jottings

a note from the president

Hello fellow gardeners

Summer is officially here. Now the name of the season can truly reflect what the weather's been like for the past few weeks. As I write this there's just been another rain shower, accompanied by distant thunder-rumblings.

This humidity along with the heat has been making life rather uncomfortable for us humans. It surely must be affecting the chooks as well. Most days we've been collecting only one or two eggs from four hens, despite their area being well-shaded and the fact they are very well-watered and well-fed little chickens!

Of course, heat and humidity make things grow—especially weeds, it seems. Now I know I've often held forth on the seemingly magical qualities of many weeds, but really, enough is enough. Even the chooks roll their eyes when I serve them yet another helping of lush cobbler's pegs, sow thistle, dandelion and wild lettuce leaves. They used to love them, but now they're totally over them!

These greens are a part of our salads, but we still can't keep up, so they must be pulled and added to the compost bins.

This rapid overgrowth of previously-desirable plants and the work required to keep them

and their more 'kosher' cousins under reasonable control has led me to reconsider everything I've been growing in the garden.

Added to that gradual realisation, a recent conversation with a ROGI member really made me think. He told me that he'd visited a friend's garden where a bit of pretty much everything edible was growing, but it seemed that nothing was doing particularly well. There was just too much work involved catering to the varying needs of such a diversity of plants. He also had tried that once and he became worn out keeping up, so now he sticks to only those plants that he knows he can look after well and that he and his wife can and will eat.

I've fallen into the habit of giving anything and everything a go when offered a plant. Jicama? I've never heard of it, but yes please. Chamomile to grow your own tea? Yes please. Tulsi basil? Ooh, yes please. Yacon? Haven't heard of that either, so yes please. And so it goes ...

The thing is ... once you've grown them (and mostly they grow quite successfully) what do you do with them? Harvesting, researching, preparing, preserving can be a time consuming business. And that's fine—if you have the time, and if you have the storage space

(fridge/freezer/pantry) and if you enjoy the final product. That's quite a few 'ifs'.

I've spent many hours digging up and prepping cassava then par-cooking and freezing it; picking elderflowers and making cordial with them plus our limes and lemons; removing pigeon peas from their tightly-held position in their shells; collecting fallen passionfruit and freezing their pulp in ice-cube trays for use in the off-season; making kale chips; freezing snake beans before they grow as long as actual snakes. There's more, but you get the picture. Now I can't fit anything else in the freezer, like ice cream.

So (I think) I've decided that next year I'll be more circumspect in my choice of plants to grow. If it's difficult, fussy or time-consuming, I won't plant it—unless we *really really* love it.

I'll concentrate on the crops that are best-suited to our soil type and location and I will resist the temptation to experiment with interesting-looking plants. Sounds like a new year's resolution. I'll see how I go!

What are your thoughts on this?

Have you reached the point where you apply self-discipline to your plant choices? Write to the editor about it, please.

Enjoy your gardening,



Coming Events

December			
Wednesday	9 th	6.15pm	ROGI Christmas Breakup
Tuesday	15 th	2.30pm	Garden Visit - Linda & Bill Barrett
January			
No Meeting			
February			
Wednesday	10 th	6.15pm	ROGI Meeting
Sunday	21 st	TBA	Garden Visit - Margaret Sear
March			
Wednesday	9 th	6.15pm	ROGI Meeting
April			
Wednesday	13 th	6.15pm	ROGI Meeting
Saturday	16 th		Good Gardening Expo

ROGI Christmas Breakup



To celebrate another information- and friendship-filled year, ROGI is having its Christmas breakup on Wednesday 9th December at 7pm. Doors will open at 6.15pm as usual.

Be ready to answer trivia questions on lots of different gardening and Christmassy themes. Also, how are your drawing skills? There will be prizes for the table that scores the most points!

If you wish, you can wear something with a Christmas theme (but this is not essential). Remember to bring a plate of finger foods for supper.

Looking forward to a night of fun to celebrate another successful year of ROGI.

ROGI wishes everyone a very healthy and joy-filled Christmas.

Membership Fees

Renewal for 2016 may be paid in December or February. Payments can be paid by:

- **Cash**
- **Cheques** made payable to Redland Organic Growers Inc.
- **Direct Deposit** BSB 633-000 Acc 136 137 296
Bendigo Bank, Capalaba **Central**

Please bring your membership application form to the next meeting. You can email membership@rogi.com.au for a form—or you can complete one at the meeting.

Please provide evidence of pensioner status to claim discount.

Member Category	Annual Fee for Renewal	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 2015-Dec 2016
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

Exchange plants, cuttings, seedlings and home-grown

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

ROGI Rewards

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

Members' Sales

Items you have produced that are surplus to your requirements and that **you wish to sell** to other members eg eggs, honey, jam, seedlings, lemons – things that have cost you money (and time and effort) to produce. Please ensure items are labelled, named and priced. You may be asked to staff the stall if you are needed.

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 or cuttings, surplus chillies, empty pots or strawberry runners and so on. This is where you may want to work out an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

Bring a bag/basket/box to take everything home

Speaker

10th February 2016

Sowing Seeds for Successful Growing

Gennaro De Rosa

Gennaro's presentation will provide information about how to get the best plants and produce from seed.

This will include:

- how to pick and prepare seeds,
- how to plant them
- what to plant them in
- tips on getting good germination
- how to transplant them (if necessary) to get the best results.



ROGI is a beneficiary of the My IGA Card Program for the **Cleveland IGA** store.

This is how it works:

- Pick up a My IGA Card next time you are in the store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support

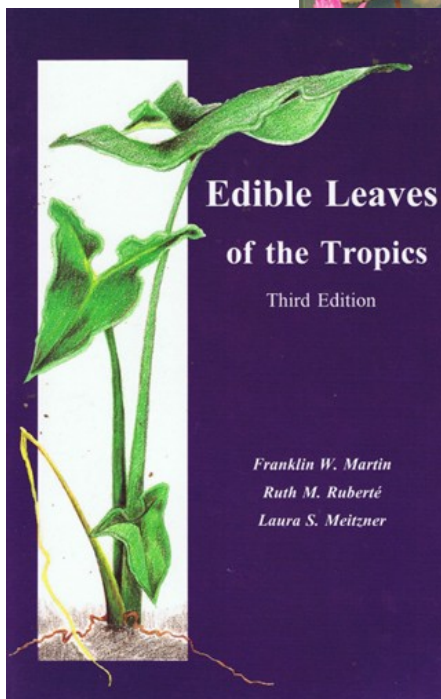
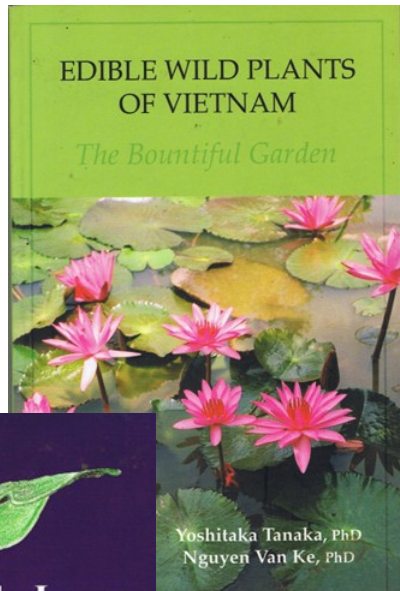
Then, every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, you are also helping to raise funds for ROGI.

ROGI uses its funds to help provide more services to members such as new library books, discounted gardening products, paid expert speakers, and free or low-cost field trips and workshops.



Trees for Staples & Green Vegetables George Allen

At our November meeting, George shared his knowledge of edible plants and how they often need to be processed to be safe. He highly recommended a couple of books to read further on the subject.



Moringa oleifera

Drumstick tree or Horseradish tree

- Leafy vegetables for warm climates
- Exceptionally nutritious leaves
- Young pods somewhat like asparagus
- Roots used as a horse radish substitute
- Edible flowers and buds (see photo)
- Seedlings tender, excellent cooked
- Top source of sulphur-bearing amino acids, methionine and cystine
- High in vitamins and minerals
- Fast growing - five metres in a year
- Will survive neglect
- Drought hardy



Acalipha species such as *A. hispida* (chenille) and *A. wilkesiana* (copperleaf) are edible-leaved shrubs that thrive in full sunlight and develop rich anthocyanin coloration.

The leaves are frequently variegated. These East Indian and Pacific Island plants are propagated from cuttings.



Jackfruit & other *Moraceae*

- Rich in potassium, calcium, zinc and iron.
- The seeds, flowers, young leaves, young fruit are all edible
- Fast growing and productive here.
- Dislikes wet feet in winter, well drained.
- Good shade, ornamental, good timber.
- Our two trees give 30x21kg & 50x5kg fruit twice a year
- A reliable food for an unreliable climate.



Top: a rich bounty of the enormous fruit

Above: Delicious flesh of the jackfruit (or jakfruit) - sweet and tangy. Note George's special knife for harvesting fruit and vegetables.

The seeds are high in protein, carbohydrate and minerals, and contain some phytochemicals and strong antioxidants. They are low in fat and should be cooked as, like many seeds, they have anti-feeding properties to stop animals eating them.

Jackfruit can be used at all stages of growth. Some of George's friends have many trees but eat all the fruit unripe. They are vegetarians.

The fruit is considered a meat substitute.



Top: Jackfruit seeds

Above: Baby Jackfruit Masala meal

Jackfruit Nutritional Analysis

Principle	per 100g	% of RDA
Energy	95 Kcal	5%
Carbohydrates	23.5 g	18%
Protein	1.72 g	3%
Total Fat	0.64 g	3%
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Dietary Fiber	1.5 g	4%
Vitamins		
Folates	24 gms	6%
Niacin	0.920 mg	6%
Pyridoxine	0.329 mg	25%
Riboflavin	0.055 mg	4%
Thiamin	0.105 mg	9%
Vitamin A	110 IU	3.50%
Vitamin C	13.7 mg	23%
Vitamin E	0.34 mg	2%
Electrolytes		
Sodium	3 mg	0%
Potassium	303 mg	6.50%
Calcium	34 mg	3.40%
Iron	0.60 mg	7.50%
Magnesium	37 mg	9%
Manganese	0.197 mg	8.50%
Phosphorus	36 mg	5%
Phosphorus	21 mg	3%
Selenium	0.6 mg	1%
Zinc	0.42 mg	4%
Beta Carotene	61 mcg	--
Beta Crypto-xanthin	5 mcg	--
Lutein-zeaxanthin	157 mcg	--

This is just a snippet from George's talk on edible trees. If you wish to know more, please chat with George and/or ask him for a copy of his PowerPoint presentation.

GARDEN VISIT with Tony & Linda Garbett

Linda and Tony bought their beautiful two acre property with views out to the Leslie Harrison Dam in 1980, before the Commonwealth Games. It was considered an overgrown block by their Brisbane friends who thought their outhouse rather primitive.

Tony said their passion over the years has been native plants and they planted a koala corridor along the length of their property and a rainforest at the back. Over the last few years, they've had more time and have become interested in growing food and using organic gardening principles: they've always been latent organic gardeners opposed to using pesticides.

The tall majestic gum trees are very efficient at sucking up the moisture from their surroundings and their roots competed with the fruit trees like the citrus trees that Linda and Tony planted. To minimize this threat, Tony put in plastic root barriers 60 mm deep. A 1.5metre root barrier would probably be needed to eliminate roots invading altogether.



Spectacular Flame tree near the property entrance

Not enough water limits what you can grow, so Linda and Tony have put in rain-water tanks which are used to water the vegetables and fruit trees. Their grey water diluted by rain is used for the rainforest which has flourished as they're careful about their use of phosphates. There is a bore but it has iron, minerals and

salt even at a great depth. To minimize surface water runoff and to improve the soil's water-holding capacity, they have incorporated sand, lots of mulch and compost. They have alluvial soil above one metre of clay.

We were amazed at how luxuriantly soft and spongy their beautiful green lawns felt. Tony had replaced the original grass with a broad-leaf drought-resistant buffalo grass.

Tony has making compost down to a fine art. One method, he uses a pond liner at the base to stop the tree roots penetrating it. He heaps up a variety of forest mulch, grass clippings, garden waste and Organic Xtra but no food scraps as that attracts the possums and rats. Temperatures in this pile reach 55° for four to five days. When he turned the compost it was teeming with worms.



Another method is a system of three large bins (on thick plastic to keep possums and rats out). He uses a variety of materials including food scraps and turns the composting materials at least once a week. New composting materials go in the first bin. After they've partially broken down they're shovelled into the second bin and then placed in the last bin to become mature compost complete with worms. He leaves some old compost in the bin to assist microbial activity in subsequent composting.



*Compost is turned weekly using a compost screw
Below: Finished compost teeming with worms*



Cylindrical compost drum rotates to mix the food scraps and other materials which then go in the first bin.

Garbett's Garden Visit continued ...

Their chicken pen is cleverly incorporated into a large enclosed garden to exclude possums. At one end is the chicken pen with a raised garden of green crops surrounded by panels of wire. The wire panels are held together by clamps that can be undone and the panels fold down over the raised bed enabling the hens to eat the green tips above the wire but not scratch the plants out.

To discourage rats, they have a feeder that the hens have to peck to release food. The chicken pen opens into the enclosed garden area where summer green crops are grown such as lettuce, herbs, peas and tomatoes. When Linda and Tony go away, they can leave the chicken pen door open and the hens can forage through the enclosed garden and are well fed, happy and safe.



Linda and Tony planted an orchard with the trees surrounded by mulched mounds - this was not successful as the water ran off when it rained and the roots were exposed and dried out more easily. They have dug out and replanted many of the trees in a raised bed enriched with chicken manure, seaweed and humates and covered with forest mulch.

Below: The Joppa and navel oranges and mandarins are thriving and produce a good annual crop.



The Meyer lemon was not looking as happy and Gennaro suggested that they are more suited to growing in pots as they are very fussy and you can control the conditions for growing them more easily in pots.



The Jaboticaba tree covered in fruit which everyone sampled.

Yummy!

Another of Tony's clever inventions is his solar-powered air pump tank for making weed tea from weeds such as oxalis, and wandering jew. A mesh container fits neatly into a drum he bought from Bunnings. The weeds are placed in the mesh suspended inside the drum. A solar collector is placed on top of the shed and powers an air pump that fits in the drum. In six weeks it produces weed tea that is similar in properties to seaweed solutions.



Solar collector on roof

Tony has made an easily-moved light cage of PVC piping and mesh with stiff bands of wire to support the mesh at the top to stop the possums jumping up and then being able to eat the tops of the strawberries.



Garbutt's Garden Visit continued ...

Making a Plant Cage to Keep Possums Out



The plant to be covered in on the right of this picture.

He used:

6 pieces mesh cut to size to enclose plant

18 washers to join mesh pieces—cut a slit in each

Cable clamps to attach lid



Linda and Tony in their orchard area. Note the lush lawn & the eucalypts in the background



Above is one of the vegetable gardens which has been enriched with compost and well mulched with pea straw. The red lettuce tolerates more heat than the green lettuce.

Gennaro recommended planting more corn seedlings – at least 30 as they are more likely to be pollinated by the wind if there are a large mass of them. However others reported that they achieved a good yield by hand-pollinating the plants. When the corn was small it had to be protected from possums but once it is taller it is hardier and not as likely to be troubled by them. As all the corn ripens at much the same time, you have to be prepared to harvest it all within a short timeframe - like a week.

The vegetable and herb gardens are planted five-six metres away from trees to discourage possums while nasturtiums, shallots and capsicum are planted around the edges to discourage them even more.

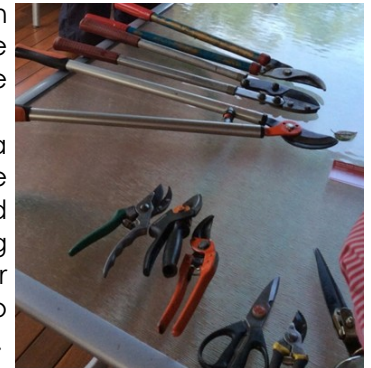


Another vegetable bed has a low wire fence around the perimeter - high enough to keep the hens from entering it when they are let out. Plants in this bed are more mixed and there is a wide variety. All were thriving.

At the back of their property, Linda and Tony have established a rainforest using grey water to maintain it. On hot days it is 10 degrees cooler in the forest. At the edge of the forest macadamia nuts grow, a very tall bunya pine drops its large nuts and a wax jambu has fruited prolifically during January and February for 20 years!

While we were in the garden, Steve the tool man put an edge on our tools.

Afternoon tea was a time to share recipes (see p13) and ideas while enjoying the beautiful views over the garden and out to the dam and rainforest.



Thank you Linda and Tony for sharing your garden with us and all the innovative ideas and inspiration you have given us.

We all enjoyed it immensely.

Mary Irmer

About to enter the magnificent rainforest

Killing Aphids Naturally

How To Get Rid Of Aphids Safely

Yellowing and distorted leaves, stunted growth and an unsightly black sticky substance on the plant may mean that you have aphids.

Aphids feed on a wide range of plants, and in severe cases the plant fails to thrive. As they feed, they secrete a sticky substance, called honeydew, which quickly becomes infested with black sooty mould. For this reason, it's important to take steps for controlling aphids in the garden.

Killing aphids naturally is not only better for the environment, but it is also a more effective way of killing the insect. Aphids don't respond well to insecticides, but you can get them under control by taking advantage of their weaknesses and making a few changes in the way you manage your garden.

Aphids have a number of natural enemies, and these insects are much better at controlling aphids than any other method available to gardeners.



Pampering and nurturing their natural enemies is an excellent method of organic aphid control. Introduce beneficial bugs, like lacewings and ladybugs, to your garden as a natural way to kill aphids. Nearby plantings of mint, fennel, dill, yarrow and dandelions will help attract these insects to your garden.

Pesticides are more likely to kill the predatory insects than the aphids, so the insect population usually increases after spraying. Using natural ways to kill aphids preserves the insect's natural enemies while creating a hostile environment for aphids.

While predatory insects are bent on destroying aphids, ants in the garden are the aphid's sworn protectors. Ants feed on the honeydew produced by aphids, so it is in their best interest to defend this precious resource. Getting rid of the ants so that the predatory insects can do their job is an important part of a good aphid control program.

Control ants by trimming the lower parts of the plant so that they don't touch the ground and give ants easy access. Coat the lower part of the stem with a sticky substance, such as Tanglefoot, to prevent the ants from climbing. You can apply the sticky substance directly to the trunk of thick-barked trees and shrubs.



Plant of the Month

WATERMELON

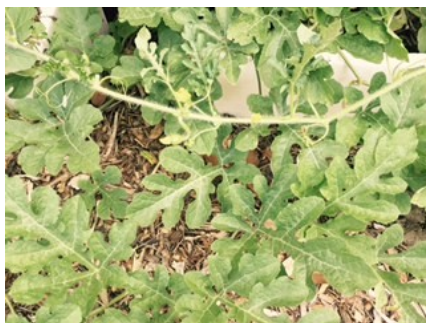
I think every Aussie kid has a memory of eating watermelon on a hot summer's day, with one hand blocking out the sun and the other hand holding a big chunk of watermelon and the juice running down to your elbows.

Now is a great time to be sowing your seeds (September until January). I like to soak my seeds in a diluted compost tea prior to planting just to give them a head start as they are quite a big seed.

A healthy sunny spot with at least six hours of sun a day is perfect for watermelons. They require plenty of moist, rich soil with a warm, frost-free climate.

Watermelon needs to be planted in hills and about .5cm to 2.5cm deep. For regular watermelon varieties, sow two to three seeds per hill, spacing the hills 1.5 to 3m apart. Small bush varieties may be spaced 1m apart.

Thin the seedlings to two seedlings one week after they have germinated.



Watermelons are heavy feeders; apply an organic all-purpose fertilizer during planting. Then spray with a worm tea and or seaweed mix throughout the growing season.

Cut back on nitrogen levels after flowers form to promote the growth of larger fruits. Phosphorus is needed for development of roots, flowers, seeds and fruit. Potassium is necessary for the growth of strong stems and movement of water in the plants and to promoting flowering and fruiting. Apply phosphorous and potassium until just before harvest.

Allow 80-90 days for bush varieties to reach maturity and 90-100 days or even longer for the larger varieties.

Working out when to harvest watermelons can be difficult. For the most part, when ripe, the curled tendril at the stem end dries to brown, the underside of the melon turns yellow or cream coloured, and the melon will yield a deep, resonant sound when thumped.

Watermelons are likely to cross-pollinate, so isolate each variety about 800m from other varieties to maintain purity.



When the fruit is ready to eat, the seeds are also mature. Collect the seeds, wash gently then rinse thoroughly and allow to dry and next year you can enjoy the juice running down to your elbows again.

Sharr Ellison

At our ROGI meeting this month, the seed bank will be selling watermelon seedlings and watermelon seeds to help you recall your youth or to encapsulate another generation's memory.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO

Your Garden: Getting it right from the Start

When: Saturday, December 12th

Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm

Where: Mt Coot-tha Library

Cost: Free

Discover the essentials for garden success starting with soil, which is the key to healthy plants. Learn tips on how to minimise labour and when to call in professionals. Bring a small sample of your soil for testing during the workshop. Presented by **Paul Plant**, editor of sub Tropical Gardening magazine. Bookings required.

Making Better Garden Soil

When: Saturday, December 12th

Time: 9am – 10.30am

Venue: West End Library

Cost: Free

Create soil enriching materials from your kitchen and garden waste. Worm farming, composting, Bokashi buckets and growing green manure crops can provide bucket loads of organic matter.

This session will focus on effective and successful techniques for these organic processes. Presented by horticulturalist **Claire Bickle**. This class will be held upstairs at West End Library. Bookings required.

Learning for Living

When: Sunday, December 13th

Time: 10:30am – 12pm

Venue: Garden City Library

Topic: Gardening in difficult sites

Cost: Free

Take a closer look at trouble spots in your garden and increase your understanding of how to manage these areas. Get advice on shady gardens, compacted soil, sandy soil, planting under trees, coastal planting, embankments and wet gardens from horticulturalist, **Noel Burdette**.

Bookings required. Phone Garden City Library on 3403 7745 to reserve your place.

Learning for Living

When: Saturday, January 9th

Time: 10:30am – 12pm

Venue: Stones Corner Library

Topic: The Potted Garden

Cost: Free

This workshop is perfect for those who may not have room for a big garden. Troubleshoot common problems associated with growing plants in pots from season to season. Discuss pot and plant choice, potting mix pitfalls, site and care. Presented by horticulturalist, **Noel Burdette**.

Bookings required. Phone Stones Corner Library on 3403 2170 to reserve your place

Make Your Own Bean Sprout Farm

When: Saturday, January 12th

Time: 10am – 11.30am

Venue: Bulimba Library

Cost: Free

Did you know sprouts are one of the freshest and healthiest superfoods you can eat? During this hands-on workshop presented by urban gardener **Roman Spur**, make your very own sprouting jar full of sprouts to take home and start growing.

Ideal for children aged 5-12 years and their grandparents. Bookings required.

Learning for Living

When: Saturday, January 23rd

Time: 10am – 11.30am

Venue: Holland Park Library

Topic: The Importance of Flowering Plants in Productive Gardens

Cost: Free

Learn about the valuable role that flowering plants play to aid in productive gardens. Presented by horticulturalist, **Noel Burdette**.

Requested Recipes

Continental Slice

Stage 1:

- 2 cups white SR flour
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 125g butter melted

In a large bowl, mix dry ingredients together and mix in melted butter. This is a dry mix.

Take half this mix and spread over the base of an oiled lamington tray (18 x 28 cm) – press down - quite a thin layer

Stage 2:

- Dates, chopped – ½ cup
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 teasp bicarb soda
- 1 teasp nutmeg

Spread dates evenly over the uncooked biscuit mix (above) – set aside.

In a container, mix up the milk, eggs, bicarb soda and nutmeg.

Add this to the bowl of ingredients that remain from stage 1.

Mix well – this makes a runny mix that may have a few lumps – do not worry about the lumps as these cook out. Pour evenly over the biscuit base.

Cook in a moderate oven (170°C) for about 30 minutes - until golden brown and just pulling away from the sides of the pan.

Variations:

Coconut (dessicated) can be sprinkled over the top (before cooking). Sometimes I make with no fruit and add lemon icing + lemon zest

Linda Barrett (it's really my Mum's recipe)

Pistachio and Turmeric Dip

- 2 tbsp fresh turmeric or turmeric powder
- 4 tbsp hemp seed or flaxseed oil (or olive oil)
- ½ cup pistachio nuts (or cashews)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 to 2 tbsp tamari
- ¼ cup cherry tomatoes
- dash of black pepper
- 1 lemon, juiced
- small handful of parsley
- little purified water (if needed)

Blend all ingredients until creamy in processor. If you want a sweeter dip, add a few dates. If too runny, add some flaxseed meal. Enjoy!

Heather and Garry Edwards



Capsicum and Walnut Dip

- 2 red capsicums
- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ cup walnuts (I slightly roasted mine)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 teasps balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teasp dried chilli flakes or fresh equivalent (eg 1 teasp chilli sauce)
- ¾ teasp salt

Place capsicums in a hot oven (200°C) and roast until well charred. * Remove from oven and place in paper bag to cool. Remove skin and seeds.

Heat oil in a frypan and sauté onion and garlic until soft. Add chilli.

Place walnuts in a food processor and process until fine.

Add onion mixture and remaining ingredients. Process till smooth.

Serve with rice crackers.

** This also can be done by securing the capsicum on a long fork and holding it over a gas flame while rotating it until the skin blackens*

Sophie Bromham

Left: Linda, Sophie and Sharr talking about the food at the visit to Tony and Linda's garden in November

These recipes come highly recommended by those who partook of the afternoon tea.

What on Earth is Brix?

Most of us have bought fruit that looks wonderful and have anticipated an equally wonderful taste sensation ... and have been disappointed. Just because it looks good doesn't mean it will have good flavour.

One of the benefits of growing your own is that you can delay harvesting until it is fully sun-ripened for optimal flavour. However, some fruits, such as avocado, need to be picked when mature and then they will ripen off the tree.

There is a way to know whether your fruit (and vegetables) will have delicious flavour and a good nutrient profile. You can measure their Brix levels (a system named after Adolf Brix in the 1800s). To measure it, you use a refractometer and this indicates the density of the fluid from the fruit or the leaf, and, since sugar is the main component, a high Brix reading means high sugar levels = sweet fruit!

Good keeping qualities and better flavour tend come with high Brix readings. Variables such as rainfall/irrigation levels, soil nutrition, sunshine, temperatures, variety and rootstock will influence your Brix levels.

You can learn more about Brix at <http://blog.nutri-tech.com.au/the-beauty-of-brix> and in *Organic Fruit Growing* by Annette McFarlane (available from ROGI library), where she gives the ideal Brix reading for many crops.

ROGI owns a refractometer for measuring Brix levels.

Since it can't be used at our evening meetings as it needs natural light, we plan to bring it (and a garlic press to extract the fluid) along to our future ROGI Garden Visits where you can have a go at using it.

Members are most welcome to borrow the refractometer for use in their own gardens. Please ask. We want it to be used, not left sitting on the shelf.

Jill Nixon



Above: nutmeg. Below L-R: seed on tree, mace



Nutmeg and Mace

Nutmeg and mace are two spices derived from the same tree. The most important commercial species is *Myristica fragrans*, an evergreen tree indigenous to the Banda Islands in the Moluccas (or Spice Islands) of Indonesia.

Nutmeg is the seed of the tree, roughly egg-shaped and about 20 to 30mm long and 15 to 18mm wide, weighing between 5 and 10g dried.

Mace is the dried "lacy" reddish covering or aril of the seed.

The first harvest of nutmeg trees takes place 7–9 years after planting; trees reach full production after 20 years. This is the only tropical fruit that is the source of two different spices, obtained from different parts of the plant.

When picked, the blood red mace is removed and dried. The nutmeg with shell is dried until it rattles and then the thin outer coating is removed leaving the inner nutmeg that we know. The thin outer coating is known as a 'blade' of mace.

Nutmeg has a slightly sweeter flavour. It is used for flavouring many dishes, both sweet and savoury, and is usually in ground or grated form. See page 14 for a recipe using nutmeg.

Mace is more pungent and tends to be used in savoury dishes, sauces, pickles and chutneys. Mace also gives a saffron-like hue to the dish.

Nutmeg and mace have a volatile oil that contains small amounts of myristicin and elemicin which are narcotic and should be used sparingly.

The nut should not be chewed or sucked especially by children. Myristicin poisoning is potentially deadly to some pets and livestock, and may be caused by culinary quantities of nutmeg harmless to humans. SO ... this Christmas do not give your dogs and cats any eggnog!

Linda Barrett

NB: This mace is not what is used to repel attackers!

Hello and Welcome to My Oasis by Pal Juvancz

A while ago I got really sick of having to mow the back yard so I decided to get rid of the grass. As an organic gardener, building the house out to the boundary line—like most new properties nowadays, was not an option.

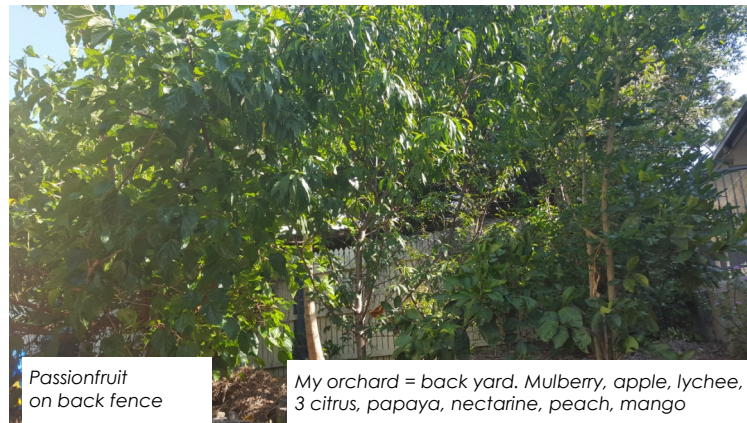
I designed and created three sections, a chicken coop with a run, a veggie patch and a fruit orchard.

The frame of the chicken coop is actually an old, unused greenhouse cut in half (yes it was a good size in its hey day) and I just built some shade and fencing around it, mostly materials from around the house.

The automatic rain water dispenser is a BEAUTY! Rain water from my water tank simply feeds into the blue plastic tub which has a toilet cistern floater in it which then feeds into a simple chook feeding trough. It provides a constant drip of clean water (adjustable by raising or lowering the blue box by a simple piece of timber under it) for the chooks and any overflow just waters the flowers in front of the chook pen.

There is a wooden framed box with chicken wire inside the coop: that's so the chickens can eat the new shoots but won't be able to scratch away at the roots, so in theory, will keep growing and all I need to do is move the box every now and then. A brilliant idea that I saw somewhere else.

The veggie patch was made in two stages, the back was done with bought 'prime veggie patch soil' brought in, which every ROGI member knows is just not good enough and the veggies grown in it show it, even though I've been conditioning and fertilising the soil for a couple of years now.



The front half was done with Frank's worms and is simply brilliant. Cardboard, thick layer of manure, WORMS and a thick layer of mulch plus eight to ten weeks = SUPER SOIL. (Much cheaper too than buying the soil.)

The orchard was prepared in a similar way: I simply covered the grass with cardboard and put a very thick layer of mulch (sugarcane) on it. Every now and then I simply replace the mulch and put cardboard over any weeds that start showing. How often depends on if I let the chooks out—they just scrape it away to bare dirt—oh well they need some free roaming too.

The fruits are absolutely amazing, simply can't keep up with the TONS of mulberries every year; the peach and nectarines are beautiful too but the bugs (fruit fly???) find it irresistible - so I usually end up 'sharing' - half the fruit is theirs and I end up eating around the 'taken' bits.

The passionfruit is getting old but still has some life left in it. The lychee never fruited (as yet). The mango is GORGEOUS. The citrus trees are getting there but not much off them yet!

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to show off my little piece of paradise and please put me down for a garden visit for 2016 as I would love to see you all and welcome any advice you can give me.

I do have some questions I would like some answers to, so please catch up with me at the December meeting if you can solve some of my little mysteries.

Thanks, Pal

ROGI LIBRARY NEWS

Here we are – last Library News for 2015! We'd like to begin by asking all members to please check their book shelves at home to make sure they haven't any overdue ROGI library books sitting there gathering dust. We know how easy it is to overlook that book you borrowed a month or two ... or ... long ago but please return your books to the library at our next meeting.

Remember, if you haven't finished reading a particular book you can have it renewed (so long as no-one else has requested it).

At our last meeting ROGI member George Allen spoke about the use of tropical trees to provide both fruit and vegetables in the garden. The following books are available for loan from our library if you wish to pursue this topic further:

Berry Bounty by Allen Gilbert

Allen is a horticulturist, has worked as an organic garden advisor and has travelled to many parts of the world enhancing his expertise. In this book he covers how to grow traditional berries and also the more unusual, such as

feijoas, Goji berries, guavas, jaboticabas, mangosteens and tamarillos. Start growing your own super foods today!

Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture by Toby Hemenway.

Although published in the USA, it contains much useful information that can be applied locally:

Toby shows how to use permaculture's central message: Working with nature, not against, results in a more beautiful, abundant and forgiving garden. Part of this is the growing of an edible forest that yields fruits, nuts and other foods.

This updated and revised edition features a chapter on urban permaculture, designed especially for those of us suburbanites with limited growing space available. Whatever size yard, basic permaculture principles can be applied to enhance it!

Growing Fruit in Australia by Paul Baxter.

An oldie but a goodie, the cover describes this as "The complete guide to Berries, Fruits, Nuts and Vines for Garden, Farm and Orchard."

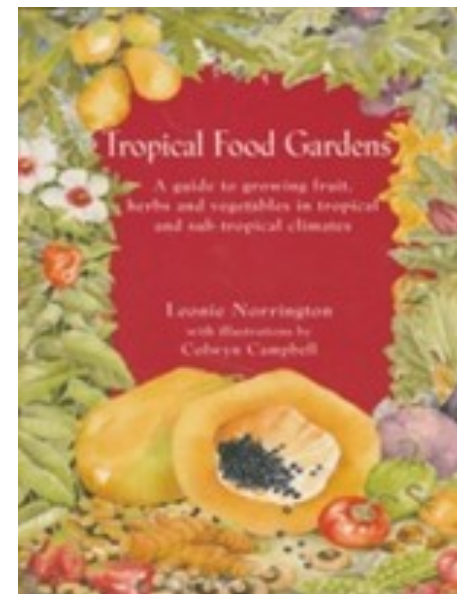
Whether you have room to plant one tree or a hundred, Paul shows how to plan an orchard to suit your resources and lifestyle. His book is divided into three sections: Planning and planting an orchard, including choosing trees to suit our climate.

Tropical Food Gardens by Leonie Norrington.

This is a great little guide to growing fruit, herbs and vegetables in tropical and sub-tropical climates.

While covering more than just trees, this book details how to grow such exotic fruit as abiu, rambutans and carambolas.

Chapters include planning and establishing different types of gardens, vegetables, fruit trees, herbs, using water in the garden, understanding the soil and managing pests.



These books will be on display and available for loan from the library at the next meeting. We look forward to seeing you then.

Angela and Stephen

Plant Clinic

Plant Clinic was busy at our November meeting and provoked discussion between our experts.

Below is a review of the issues presented, discussion and follow-up investigations after the meeting.

What's wrong with my fig?

Francke Wagner brought along a fig leaf from her small 18 month old plant. It has irregular mottled yellow markings.

There were two themes of discussion to try to solve this problem.

Nutrition: it may be a magnesium and manganese deficiency — application of these minerals to rectify.



Insect infestation: it was suggested that it could be a microscopic mite that is eating a fine layer from the leaves, but 100X magnification would be needed to see these tiny Fig Leaf Mites. A very real problem with mite infestation is that they can infect the fig with Fig Leaf Mosaic Virus which does look like Francke's leaf.

To treat for mites – spray with horticultural oils.

This does show how difficult it can be to make a diagnosis of an issue.

Beetroot leaves look sick!

Linda Barrett has these markings on her beetroot leaves – old and new leaves.



Cercospora leaf spot is a common fungal disease in beetroot and silver beet but is usually unimportant in well-managed crops.

This fungus affects bean, beetroot, capsicum, okra, silver beet, watercress, avocado, carrot and coffee. The beets are fine.

It is also important to remember that beetroot needs boron to grow well.

Solution: water with boron solution (one teaspoon in a watering can and give it a good mix) straight onto seed when planted.

What Is this?

Judy Poloni brought this cutting of an ornamental shrub to be identified.

Scientific name: *Breynia nivosa* 'Rosea-Picta'
Common name: Snow Bush.



The species is native to the South Pacific Islands. This is the commonly-grown *Breynia* cultivated for its decorative leaves. Useful as a hedge in warm, humid, frost-free gardens.

Beware—it can become a weed.

(Identified at our meeting as *Breynia oblongifolia* but with further investigation found to be a different species)

I am not getting any watermelons!

Judy Poloni also asked about a watermelon vine that is growing well with plenty of male and female flowers BUT the female flowers are not opening. Plenty of bees are around and she can see the young fruit forming ready for pollination.

It was suggested that she open the flowers herself and hand pollinate - best before 10am as the pollen deteriorates as the day gets hotter. Watch how on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTRieu94F7M>

Reported by Linda Barrett

If you are puzzled by a pest, aren't sure if your plant is a weed or a 'goodie', or can't tell if your plant has a deficiency or a disease, Plant Clinic may help you.

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

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

Request for Articles

What can you share? It could be to do with:

- your garden
- a photo
- an unusual plant
- a request
- garden/nutrition info
- a recipe
- a current affair of relevance to ROGI members ...

Please send your articles to keep the newsletter interesting, topical and relevant info@rogi.com.au

Deadline for February issue: 22 January

Brazilian Spinach *Alternanthera sissoo*

This is a great alternative to the cool-weather leafy greens that don't do well in our hot wet summers.

A perennial plant with bright green crinkled leaves, it forms a dense clump to 30cm high. You can grow it as an edible ground cover or an attractive low-maintenance garden edging.



It thrives in full sun to semi shade with warmth and moisture, but not wet feet. Rich loam soil is best if possible. Easy to propagate by cuttings—plant 60cm apart.

It has a pleasant, non-acidic taste without mucilage (or 'sliminess', as some people call it!).

Steam or use in stir-fries or curries. It maintains its crispness when cooked. You can eat it raw as it contains very minimal amounts of oxalates.

Seed Sowing Guide

Keep in mind that this is only a guide. Be aware that micro-climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before or after the recommended times.

The ROGI Seedbank is available at ROGI meetings and at Garden Visits.

\$1 per packet for members.

\$2 for non-members.

You will find the ROGI seed catalogue here:

<http://www.rogi.com.au/resources.php>



January

Amaranth
Asparagus
Basil
Beans Climbing
Beans Snake
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum
Chilli
Choko
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Honeydew Melon
Jicama
Lettuce
Marigold
Pigeon Peas
Purslane
Radish
Rockmelon
Silverbeet
Soybean
Spring onion
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomatoes
Watermelon
Zucchini

February

Amaranth
Asparagus
Basil
Beans Climbing
Beans Snake
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum
Chilli
Choko
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jicama
Lettuce
Marigold
Pigeon Peas
Purslane
Radish
Silverbeet
Soybean
Spring onion
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomatoes
Zucchini

ROGI SHOP PRODUCTS

For any pricing or technical advice, or if you have a suggestion, please

Products Dry	3kg	2kg	1kg	500g	100g	Each
Soil Conditioners						
Blood & Bone	7.50		4.00	3.00		
Blood & Bone 25kg						29.50
Blood & Bone 16kg						24.00
DE Fine Food Grade		15.00	8.00	4.50		
DE Fine Food Grade 20kg						110.00
DE Pet & Garden	16.00		7.00	4.00		
DE Pet & Garden 20kg						80.00
Dolomite	5.50		3.00	2.00		
Eco88	8.50		4.00	2.50		
Gypsum	5.50		3.00	2.00		
Humic Acid					3.50	
Organic Booster	6.50		3.50	2.50		
Organic Xtra	6.50		3.50	2.50		
Organic Xtra 25kg bag						18.50
Organic Xtra 16kg bag						14.00
Organic Xtra 5kg bag				2.50		7.00
Rock Dust #3 25kg bag						29.50
Rock Dust #3 Mix	6.50		4.00	2.00		
Sea Mungus						
Turf Master	5.50					

Tools & Equipment

Soil pH Test Kit	15.00
Banana Bags	3.50
Fruit Fly Exclusion Bags set of 4	5.00
Paper Pot Maker	28.00

Products Wet	5 litre	1 litre	500ml	150ml	100ml
Soil conditioners					
Eco-Amingro		18.00	10.00		
EcoFish	32.00				
Eco Naturalure				15.00	
Eco-Neem					16.00
Eco-Oil		22.00	16.00		
Fish & Kelp solution		13.00			
Potassium Silicate					3.00

Pest & Weed Control

Burn Off		9.00			
Eco-Pest Oil			10.00		
Naturasoap			17.00		
Pyrethrum Spray					20.00
Wild May (for fruit fly)					2.00

Aloe Vera

Aloe Vera Raw Material	33.50	9.50
Aloe Vera Raw Bio Fertiliser	37.00	10.00

Executive details

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and submitters,
not necessarily those
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Growers Inc



Presented by
The International Cordyline Society
www.cordylines.org

The Tropical Affair

Saturday 6th February 2016 - 8am to 3pm
Sunday 7th February 2016 - 9am to 2pm

Mt Coot-tha Botanic Garden
Auditorium, Brisbane.

We've organised an incredible variety of tropical foliage plants including new release, rare plants and old favorites offering the best quality cordylines, bromeliads, gingers, costas, heliconias, orchids, palms and much more. Experienced growers and garden experts will be on hand to answer all your questions. There will be plant displays and a monster raffle. The event will be fully catered.

For more information contact the International Cordyline Society Secretary on (07) 3396 9936 or secretary@cordylines.org

Free Parking & EFTPOS available

Admission
Adults - \$3 Children - Free

There will be no ROGI meeting in January 2016 however the next ROGI meeting will be February 10th, 2016.

All articles for the next newsletter, due out early February must be received by 22nd January, 2016. Unfortunately late articles will have to be held over to the following newsletter. Would you like to feature your garden in ROGI News? Please contact Sue Eaton or send your article and pictures to info@rogi.com.au

Perhaps you may be considering hosting a ROGI Garden Visit in 2016. See Toni Bowler at the next meeting or contact her on events@rogi.com.au to discuss it further.