

Next meeting: Wednesday 9 December 2020

ROGI News

PLEASE NOTE:

ROGI meetings are underway again, but with some changes. To ensure we comply with COVID-19 regulations and our COVID-safe plan, only ROGI members can attend. No visitors until further notice.

- observe social distancing
- no supper, tea or coffee
- no swap and share
- no ROGI rewards
- maximum 100 people

However, we will still have plant and seed sales, and members' stalls such as sustainability products, soap and honey.

The next meeting will be held on
Wednesday 9 December

**N.B. THERE IS NOW NO NEED TO BOOK
TO ATTEND THE MEETING**

Inside this edition

	Page
President's Message	2
Coming Events. Membership	3
December Meeting	3
Salvo's Christmas Food Drive	4
E-Waste Collection	4
Membership Renewal. NatraMin Orders	5
IndigiScapes Recycling Station	5
Nov Meeting—Erik van Zuilekom	6-8
Library News	8
Higgledy Piggledy Farm	9-11
Plant Clinic	12
Summer Spinach Alternatives	13-17
Latest Pest News!	18
Used Pots. Seed Sowing Guide	19
ROGI Committee and Office Bearers	20
Seed Savers News. Deadline	20



Sunflowers are a warm season annual, usually 2-3m tall. They add joy to a summer garden, attracting bees and birds. The flower petals are edible and brighten up a salad. The seeds can be saved to be eaten as a snack or as bird feed (chooks love them), or to be replanted the following year. Pictured above is sunflower Evening Sun (seeds in the Seed Bank).

Jill's Jottings

Hello fellow gardeners,

As I write this, the forecast is heat wave conditions in the next several days ... and the longer term forecast is for a wetter-than-usual summer. All of this impacts us as gardeners: first we need to water our gardens to keep them alive in the baking heat, and soon after that we need to be sure the plants won't drown in the deluges.

We all know about mulching and, I'm sure, put it in to practice. But what else can we do? This is where you can pick the brains of fellow members experienced in gardening in these challenging conditions. At our December meeting there will be opportunities for you to chat with others in between the various activities we have planned. Make the most of it and ask the questions – or answer the questions, as the case may be.

Do you find that you have seed packets that are near or even just passed their expiry dates? What do you do with them? Often I just sow the whole lot, on the assumption that the germination rate will be non-existent at worst, to low at best. Of course, sometimes Murphy's Law steps in and makes the whole darn lot come up. We have chooks so we can be benevolent and give them most of the seedlings, but I like to keep plenty growing ... you never know! So then we end up with a huge surplus. Which is all good.

Many things can be preserved. Except those that can't. The leafy greens in general, for example, and Malabar and Surinam spinach which the chooks will not eat. So then we spend time giving away the things that the neighbours want, and composting things they don't. Many people are not willing to try anything new ...

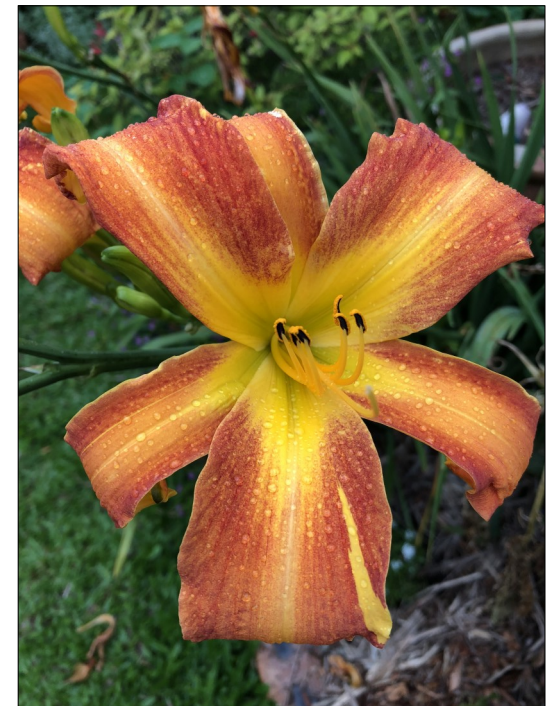
those 'weird' spinaches, "Eating flowers? Really? No thanks." Not even day lilies. Have you tried day lilies? They are really really nice, and can be eaten raw or cooked. And they're pretty. And they just come up year after year and increase in numbers.

Hopefully, by the time ROGI gets underway next year, 2020 will be but a bad dream and things can be back to a better normal. It would be good to get those ideas that we promised early this year back on the agenda in 2021, one of them being mini-workshops on such things as propagation, preserving, pruning and more. The film group fizzled because of COVID-19 restrictions, so we could do that again. Give us your ideas so we can make 2021 the best year yet.

I won't see you at the December meeting as I am having wrist surgery that morning. Have a great time at the meeting, get to know new people, learn lots, enjoy your gift and then have a lovely Christmas and summer before we meet again on the second Thursday in February. Some people have asked if they can visit my garden. Yes, but after I have completed the family project I am working on, which will be mid-January, so call me after then.

May your garden flourish and your harvest dreams come to fruition.

Jill Nixon, ROGI President



Coming Events

DECEMBER	Wednesday 9	ROGI Christmas Meeting
	Monday 14	Seed Savers Meeting (please note new date)
2021:		
JANUARY	NO MEETING	
FEBRUARY	Thursday 11	First ROGI Meeting for 2021

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** to BSB 633 000, Account Number 136137296 (Bendigo Bank, Middle St, Cleveland)
- **IMPORTANT!** Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid.

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

Member Category	Members Renewing For 2020	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 20-Dec 21
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

END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

This year there won't be the Christmas Feast that we've had for a few years now. However, we do have a **surprise** for you to take home. As well as popular features of our regular meetings—

- Plant Clinic
- Plants and seedlings for sale
- Seeds for sale and for free
- The well-stocked library
- Local honey and other wares for sale
- The give-away table will be reintroduced



You will hear about a new year initiative being planned, and what to plant in our hot, wet summer. ROGI committee members will show their favourite gardening tools/items—it might give you some ideas!

Since it's Christmas, you may want to bring along a 'gift' from your garden or kitchen—a nice plant (identified please), eggs, honey, preserves, pickles, jams etc—and you can take home one from someone else.

There will be drinks and individual nibbles for you to enjoy, and plenty of time to chat and get to know your fellow gardeners.

So, don't forget to bring:

- **A cup for your drink**
- **A 'gift' from your garden or kitchen**
- **A donation for the Salvo's Christmas food drive (see p. 4)**
- **Any e-waste you wish to dispose of (see p. 4)**
- **Give-aways to share with ROGI members**
- **Library book/s**

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**. When giving, please 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 lollies
- Bonbons
- Disposable 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



Please ensure foods are non-perishable with expiry dates well into next year.

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



E-WASTE COLLECTION

ROGI will be having an e-waste collection at our **9 December** meeting. Please put aside your unwanted electronic waste (e-waste) and bring it along to our final meeting of the year. E-Waste is any electric or electronic product that has become non-working, 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

Membership renewal—Yes, it's that time of year again!

How to renew your membership

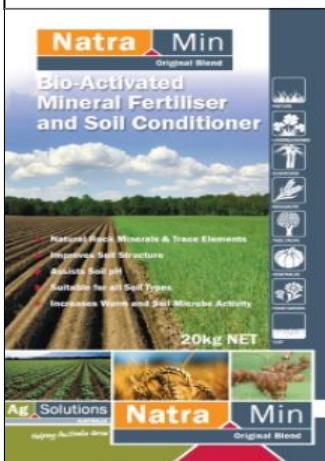
... fast and easy

1. Go online to <https://www.rogi.com.au/renew-membership.php>
2. Fill out the application, press SUBMIT.
3. Go to your online bank to make a transfer to ROGI - you will need:
BSB 633000, Account Number 136 137 296
(Use your name as a reference please).
4. Find your 2021 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table at the February 2021 meeting.

PLEASE NOTE—Cash payments for membership will not be taken until the February 2021 meeting.



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



NATRAMIN ORDERS:

Delivery of NatraMin rock minerals will be delayed until February/March 2021. If you wish to add an order, please go to the ROGI website and click on the link on the home page. Details about this wonderful product are in the November newsletter (pages 8-9), or you can read more about it here:

[Bio-Activated Mineral Fertiliser & Soil Conditioners \(agsolutions.com.au\)](https://agsolutions.com.au)

IndigiScapes Recycling Station

IndigiScapes has unveiled its all new recycling station! Now is the perfect time to clean out your home and recycle those unwanted household items that you weren't sure what to do with, and contribute to the goal of 95% of resources in Queensland being recovered by 2050.



Together we can keep everyday items out of landfill. The new IndigiScapes recycling station can take the following items off your hands:

- Thongs/flip flops
- Empty toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes
- L.O.L surprise toys and packaging
- Old art supplies
- Beauty products
- VHS/cassette tapes
- X-rays
- CDs/DVDs and small e-waste
- Mobile phones

IndigiScapes is located at 17 Runnymede Road, Capalaba. It is open 7 days a week, from 10am to 4pm.

November Meeting—Erik van Zuilekom

Design with Nature—Sustainable and Edible Outcomes

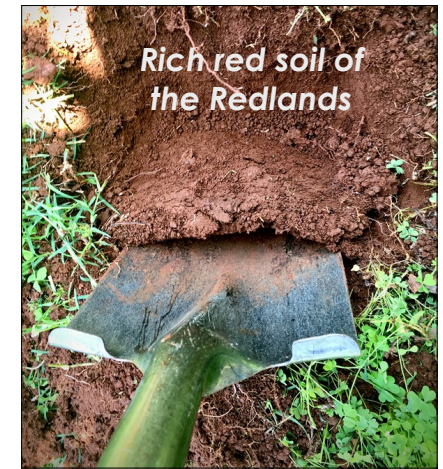
New ROGI member Erik van Zuilekom is a botanist and vertical garden designer. We were treated to detailed information about Erik's work and some wonderful images of vertical 'gardens' in nature, as well as some he has designed himself. *No plant lives in isolation*—Erik studies how plants are interconnected and applies this knowledge to his own back yard.

Having recently relocated to the Redlands from southern climes, Erik has been very busy establishing an edible garden at his new residence. He has needed to adapt his approach to growing food organically in his home garden in our very different sub-tropical climate.

His property in Thornlands has the rich productive red soil for which the Redlands is renowned, and Erik has set about making the most of his new habitat by recycling and using the resources he already has. He has noted how water moves through the site, and has planned gardens accordingly.

Raised beds with netting to protect against pests have been made. Under the large ficus tree (which he is going to keep) four compost bays have been constructed, from which he harvests rich compost. Not content with the amount of grass from his own block, he also collects grass from one of his neighbours. The compost is covered with felt so it can breathe, and he finds it breaks down quicker. He has even managed to bake some potatoes in the compost heap!

Erik has more plans for the future, including planting a food forest with subtropical fruits—plants he was unable to grow in a cooler climate!



Nov Meeting— Erik van Zuilekom (cont'd)



Erik has found that in south east Qld he needs to bag the fruit against bats, possums, and fruit fly.



Right: The bananas were previously beside the mango tree, but have now been moved to where water from the site drains. A microclimate has been created by underplanting with cocoyam, which loves the dappled shade.

Existing espaliered fruit trees were in a sorry state, having had minimal care by the previous owners. They were surrounded by grass. A no dig garden was made by covering it with cardboard from their moving boxes, and it was then mulched. Currently they are planted in a straight line—Erik plans to relocate them to utilise them as living walls, a means to create separate areas within the garden.



2m banana circle created where water from the yard drains to



Mulch, fertiliser, inoculants applied



Left: The existing mango tree had anthracnose disease (from the neighbour's tree). To treat this organically, the surrounding grass was removed and soil amendments of humates, compost, potash and a mycorrhizal inoculation were applied. The tree was then defoliated. After regrowth, a silica foliar spray was applied using a tea of casuarina leaves—simmer 60g casuarina leaves in one litre of water for 20 minutes; strain; dilute 1 part:40 parts water and spray directly onto foliage. The tree is doing really well now, although Erik concedes that the anthracnose is almost impossible to completely eradicate. He seeks to manage it by retaining high air movement over and through foliage, planting 'separation' trees between the neighbour's tree and his, and focusing on generating a healthy mango tree with a strong immune response.



Bananas and underplanted cocoyam thriving!

November Meeting— Erik van Zuilekom (continued)



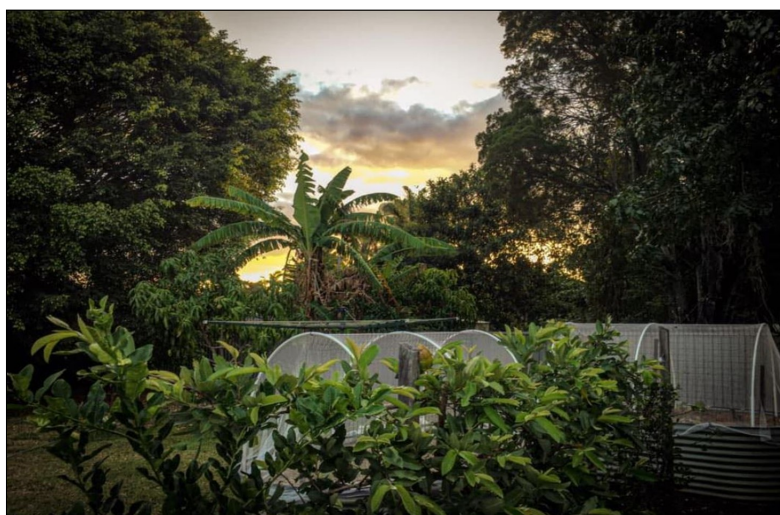
From this ...



In 10 short months Erik has transformed his back yard into an edible paradise. We hope to see more of it next year. Welcome to ROGI, Eric!



To this ...!!!



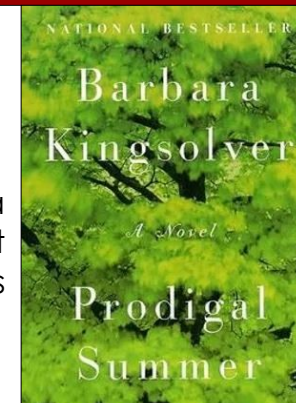
Photos by Erik van Zuilekom, report by Ann Roffey

Library News

New to the ROGI library:

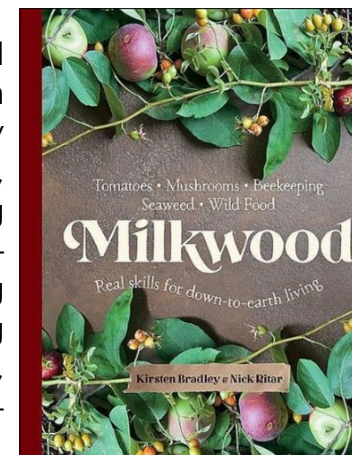
Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver

From an isolated mountain cabin, Deanna Wolfe, a reclusive wildlife biologist, is caught off-guard by a young hunter who changes utterly her self-assured, solitary life.



Milkwood by Kirsten Bradley & Nick Ritar

The authors left the city to start a small permaculture farm called Milkwood ten years ago, with a dream of living simply and within their means. Since then, they've been growing food and sharing skills wherever they've lived or travelled - from building biochar stoves to creating rooftop community gardens to teaching permaculture design. They currently live, grow, forage and keep bees on a two-acre permaculture farm near Daylesford.



PLEASE NOTE:

Library book/s are now due—please return at the next meeting. Books may be borrowed over the Christmas break, and will be due at the first meeting in February 2021.

Did you know?

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

Field Trip—Higgledy-Piggledy Farm

Higgledy-Piggledy Farm is an urban farm on a 1000m² block in Eight Mile Plains; it was founded in February 2010. Rell and Viv grow their own food organically, and share the abundance with others. They live by the principles of permaculture—care for the earth, care for others and fair share. They try to live sensitively and sustainably, and do not use harmful sprays on their produce or their animals. At the start of each year they have a garden plan, but by the end it looks like chaos—hence the name Higgledy-Piggledy Farm!

They have a menagerie of animals, who all perform a role on their farm—guinea pigs (mow the lawn and poo is used in a tea), chickens (lay eggs), a rooster (keeps the hens happy and sleeps in their built-in-wardrobe so he doesn't wake the neighbours with his crowing!), quails (lay eggs) and ducks (also lay eggs, provide pest control on plants, and manure), cats (mice catchers) and a dog (security guard). Meg the goat unfortunately passed away recently, and they are not going to replace her. They have found 1000m² is not enough for a goat, and they really should be kept in pairs.

There is a variety of fruit trees including mulberry, mango, lemon, lime, orange, bananas (cavendish and lady finger), paw-paws, sugarcane, elderflower, coffee tree, yellow guava and an avocado.

Two PhD students from Italy and Poland are lodging with them, and they also have Wwoofers stay occasionally—they all help out in the garden. A roadside stall is stocked with seasonal excess produce for sale. They have eight customers who buy eggs from them.

A future project for Higgledy-Piggledy Farm is a community garden on the verge. They already have a street library, and hope to extend this to herbs and veges grown from their fence to the footpath. After hearing about the farm last year when Rell spoke at ROGI, it was a delight to see it in the flesh.

By Ann Roffey



Guinea pig cage; vege garden; chook and duck enclosure.



Growing potatoes in bottomless buckets in the chook pen—wire on top to stop them being knocked over. Chooks happily scratch their greens.



Stall with seasonal excess produce is sold to the neighbours; street library made out of an old oven stocks books for lending.

Field Trip—Higgledy Piggledy Farm (continued)



A narrow passageway is still utilised for growing food. The choko vine seems to be doing really well against the fence.



Solving the world's problems on the verge.



Unique planter made from PVC pipe for growing strawberries; yacon growing in a tub; and a bath provides water for the ducks, who can access it via a ramp.



A bicycle wheel mounted on a pole with string for veges to climb makes a great trellis.



Field Trip—Higgledy Piggledy Farm (continued)



Cavendish banana doing well.



Aquaponics grow a wide range of vegetables for them—they use the Kratsky method. No pesticides are needed. Top right—Rell is holding up a plant for us to see the roots. Left are the coffee cups they punch holes in to house the plants.



Nutrients for the aquaponic system are provided by using the liquid fertilisers pictured above—they are not organic. Linda Brennan suggested googling 'organic hydroponics Qld' for organic alternatives. eBay came up with a lot of results, and there is also a supplier on the Sunshine Coast. Go to: [Aquaponics \(sunstatehydro.com.au\)](http://Aquaponics(sunstatehydro.com.au))



Left: Beautiful nasturtium. No seeds yet, but hopefully it will start producing them soon. It is a less prolific grower, so will not take over the garden.



RIP Meg the goat

By Ann Roffey

Plant Clinic



Pictured left is *Clerodendrum splendens*, also known as the Flaming Glory Bower Vine. This has become a suckering pest in the garden of one of our members. She wondered how to get rid of it.

The organic method of control is actually digging out all suckering parts and of course, removing the original plants. Left to its own devices, this plant will take over a garden fairly quickly. So keep up your job of hand removal. The cut and dip the stems method of weed control using Round-up is not recommended for organic gardens.

The second query from Garry and Sophie was about their *Lots a Lemons* in a pot. It is looking hungry, nitrogen deficient and is affected by mites.

My recommendation is to remove the plant from the pot, soak the root ball in a big tub of water with a dash of seaweed and some Ecohydrate. Leave it in the tub of water until the root ball is saturated. It may take 10-20 minutes. Then if you want to put it back into that pot, root prune it before repotting, using an organic certified potting mix (e.g. Rocky



Point or Searles Kickalong Organic Potting Mix) and add in a little extra organic fertiliser. Once potted, apply a dilution of humates and fertilisers to the soil every three months. I give my potted plants fortnightly foliar feeds with Seamax. If you need humates I have some in stock, call 0416157470 to order.

Make sure you have a saucer under the pot. Finally, to treat the mites, spray with Eco Oil on top and under the leaves. Do this three times, 10 days apart to kill the mites.

The final query for Plant Clinic was about capsicum leaves that have been affected by mites. My advice is to keep your plants growing actively with alternating applications of Seamax foliar feed and a seaweed solution such as Seasol, on a weekly rotation. The seaweed will help to strengthen the cell walls. Apply Eco Oil as for the lemons above.

By Linda Brennan,
Ecobotanica



PLANT CLINIC

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

Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts - fruit, leaf, root - as you can, and in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased or very seedy) and fill in the form. Place the plant parts together with the form on Plant Clinic table (just inside the door to the main hall) before the meeting starts.

Someone will have a look and may be able to answer your questions. Any solutions will be given to you on the night and published on this page. Please be aware that, although we do our best, there may not be anyone present who can solve your problem or identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

Summer Spinach Alternatives

When the temperatures soar, spinach wilts and is no more. However, all is not lost. There are many spinach alternatives that thrive in our warm wet summers, so you can still have your leafy greens every day. Most of these cannot be bought from a shop, or even a market, so the best idea is to grow your own. Have a look at the offerings at our December meeting and go home with some seeds, cuttings or plants.

Here is a summary. More details on each in the following pages. Why not give them a go?

NOTES:

All leafy greens benefit from regular application of fertilisers.

Propagate by cutting: Take 15-20cm cuttings. Strip bottom leaves off. Bury half their length in a hole. Keep moist.

Scarify the seed with a file, sandpaper or even a knife to speed germination, which could take up to three weeks.

Oxalates are naturally-occurring substances found in plants, animals, and in humans. Our bodies always contain oxalates, and our cells routinely convert other substances into oxalates. For example, vitamin C is one of the substances that our cells routinely convert into oxalates. In addition to the oxalates that are made inside of our body, oxalates can arrive at our body from the outside, from certain foods that contain them. Consumption of foods high in oxalates should be avoided or limited by those who have kidney disorders, gout and rheumatoid arthritis.

Although many foods contain oxalate, only nine foods are known to increase oxalate in the urine and kidney stone formation. They are: beets, spinach, rhubarb, strawberries, nuts, chocolate, tea, wheat bran, and all dry beans (fresh, canned, or cooked), excluding lima and green beans.

<http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/urology-kidney/treatments-procedures/kidney-stones-oxalate-controlled-diet>

To blanch: sit leaves for three minutes in boiling water, then rinse in cold water before using. This dissolves the oxalates. The water used for blanching should be tipped out and not used in the cooking.

Name/s	Latin name	Raw	Cooked	Comments
Pacific spinach; Aibika	<i>Abelmoschus manihot</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate by cuttings. Perennial. Mucilage. Oxalates in large leaves. Mild flavour.
Brazilian spinach	<i>Alternanthera sisoo</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate by cuttings. Perennial. Good taste. Crisp leaves.
Malabar spinach; Ceylon spinach	<i>Basella alba</i> (green) <i>Basella rubra</i> (red)	Yes	Yes	Propagate by cuttings or scarified seeds. Self seeds readily. Perennial. Tastes of citrus and pepper. Mucilage.
Water spinach; Kangkong	<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Ching Quat – green stem Pak Quat – white stem	Yes	Yes	Propagate by cuttings or seeds. No bitterness.
NZ spinach; Warrigal greens;	<i>Tetragonia expansa</i> (Australian native)		Yes	Propagate by cuttings or seeds. Perennial. Oxalates. Texture like spinach.
Egyptian spinach	<i>Corchorus olitorius</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate by cuttings or seeds. Self-sows. Annual. Mucilage.
Suriname spinach; water-leaf	<i>Talinum fruticosum</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate from cuttings or seeds. Short-lived perennial. Oxalates.
Betel leaf -not 'betel' for chewing	<i>Piper sarmentosum</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate from cuttings. Perennial creeper.
Mushroom leaf plant	<i>Rungia klossii</i>	Yes	Yes	Propagate from cuttings. Perennial. Mild mushroom flavour. Crisp leaves.

Sambung; Life Extender (Malay)

Gynura procumbens

This vine grows 30-100cm and has a thick, fleshy feel. Stems are green with maybe purple tinges. Orange flowers (like milk thistle flowers) in spring. Makes a good ground cover. From the Asteraceae (daisy) family, sambung likes full sun to part shade and needs ample water and rich, fertile well-drained soil. Keep mulched and give a good haircut throughout the year to stop it taking over.

Isabell Shipard tells how wonderful this plant is: "...it is noted for its anti-viral, antihistamine, anti-cancer, anti-allergy properties, and is also a blood cleanser, tonic, diuretic and pain killer." She recommends taking 2-3 leaves a day as a routine for its health benefits.

The leaves have a mild flavour (some say better than spinach, others say they taste like green beans) and can be used raw in salads, added to soups, stir-fries, rice dishes, casseroles, and sauces. Use fresh or dried leaves for tea.



Malabar spinach; Ceylon spinach

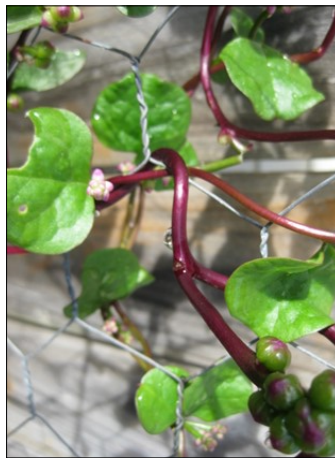
Basella alba (green) *Basella rubra* (red)

Perennial twining vine with rounded dark green leaves that vary in size with age. Needs vertical supports and hot temperature to thrive. Leaves are mucilaginous and high in calcium and vitamins A and C.

It prefers a moist fertile soil with plenty of organic matter and a pH of 6.5-6.8. Can be grown in part shade (which increases leaf size) but prefers heat, humidity and full sun exposures. Keep very moist to prevent flowering which makes leaves bitter.

Propagate by stem cuttings – just stick them in the soil and wait. Self sows from seed, or plant the seeds after scarifying – scratch the seed with a file, sandpaper or knife to speed germination, which could take up to 3 weeks.

Eaten raw in a salad it has juicy, crisp flavours of citrus and pepper. Cook it in soups, stir-fries and curries where it holds up better than regular spinach and doesn't wilt as rapidly.



Suriname Spinach

Talinum fruticosum

Tender perennial that grows erect, reaching a height of 30-100 cm. It bears small pink flowers and broad, fleshy leaves. Widely grown in tropical regions as a leaf vegetable.

It prefers moist humus-rich fertile soil but will tolerate poor soils. pH 5–6.5. Propagate from cuttings which root readily, or from seed (it will self-seed). Germination takes place after about five days, subsequent growth is very rapid if adequate water is supplied.

Leaves and flowers can be eaten raw, but this plant contains oxalic acid, so be careful not to eat too much. It has a light bitterness that adds a nice variation to a mix of salad greens...and the flowers in a salad are lovely.

Cook like regular spinach and discard any cooking liquid because of oxalic acid. Best lightly steamed, they should not be overcooked or they will become excessively soft and mucilaginous. Rich in iron, calcium, vitamins A and C.



Native Spinach; Warrigal greens; New Zealand Spinach

Tetragonia expansa

An Australian native, it is also known as Botany Bay greens, New Zealand spinach and native spinach. Long-lived, it has a sprawling habit and has weed potential as it self-sows readily. The triangular green leaves are fleshy and succulent. Tolerates heat, drought and frost– very hardy, pest and disease resistant.

Prefers loose well-drained soil in full sun, although semi-shade is preferred in very dry areas. Mulch well. Grow from seeds – soak first to soften outer skin. Propagate by cuttings.

Cook young leaves and stems as for spinach, which it looks and tastes like. It has high oxalate content, so not for eating raw.



Mushroom plant

Rungia klossii

A superb tropical green. It is a low-growing perennial to 60cm and will tolerate partial shade. It gets its common name from the slight mushroom flavour of the leaves. The dark green, thick and crunchy glossy leaves are ornamental with a lighter green marking. Pretty blue flowers in spring.

Propagate from cuttings and plant at 60cm intervals. It will tolerate most soils but prefers rich moist loam that is not soggy. Happy in semi-shade to full sun and grows profusely when well-watered and fertilised.

Use young leaves and stems raw in salads and sandwiches, quiches and omelettes. As a green vegetable, its crisp mildly mushroom-flavoured leaves can be added to soups and stir-fries at the end of cooking to ensure full flavour. Contains iron and vitamins A and C.



Egyptian Spinach

Corchorus olitorius

Hardy fast-growing annual to one metre. Once known as the food of the Pharaohs, it has been cultivated for thousands of years and is recognised for its medicinal and nutritional qualities.

Sow seeds in summer time and keep moist. Self sows readily once established. Prefers very fertile soil and a hot humid climate. Tolerates both wet and dry soils and needs full sun. Has weed potential, so take care.

The youngest leaves and immature fruits are used in salads and the older leaves cooked as spinach. It is mucilaginous when cooked. The dried leaves can be used as a thickener in soups. Tea is also made from the dried leaves. High in iron, protein, calcium, folic acid and vitamins A and C.



Betel Leaf; Wild Pepper

Piper sarmentosum (not to be confused with 'betel' for chewing - *Piper betel*)
Evergreen, perennial creeper to one metre high. It has glossy heart-shaped leaves to 15cm with small white flower spikes. A vigorous grower, it is useful as a groundcover although it can be difficult to remove because of its suckering habit. A pot may be more suitable in hot wet climates.

Grows best in rich, well-drained soil in semi-shade. Keep moist but not soggy. Propagate from cuttings in summertime and plant up to 1 metre apart.

Leaves have a mildly spicy taste and can be eaten raw sliced when young or used to line platters or for wraps. Edible green/brown jelly-like fruits develop from the white flower spikes.



Cranberry Hibiscus

Hibiscus acetosella

Short-lived perennial shrub in subtropics—related to rosella. It grows rapidly to 1.7m high, and has deeply cut leaves similar to maple. The deep cranberry red leaf is highly ornamental; the edible flowers are small and a very pretty rose-pink.

A hardy plant, it thrives in warmth and wet; full sun but okay in part shade. It loves ample water, rich, fertile and well-drained soil that is kept mulched.

The young leaves have a pleasantly tart flavour—raw in salads or cooked as for spinach—as they contain oxalic acid. Do not eat large amounts. Leaves retain their colour when cooked.



Okinawa Spinach

Gynura crepidiodes

A dense, low growing plant to 70cm. Low-maintenance perennial leaf vegetable, it is hardy and relatively pest-free. Thrives in warm, wet conditions (e.g. our summers).

Attractive plant with shiny leaves that are green on top and purple beneath; flowers are very small and orange. Grows best in full sun to part shade and needs ample water and rich, fertile, well-drained soil that is kept mulched.

Okinawa has been used or is being investigated for use as an antioxidant with anti-cancer properties, an anti-inflammatory. It is also known as cholesterol spinach, and there are many claims that it lowers cholesterol.

Very nutritious eaten raw or cooked. Leaves and shoots are steamed, used in stir-fry, tempura, stews and soups. Young leaves taste better than older leaves.



Aibika; Pacific Spinach; Queensland Greens; Hibiscus Spinach

Abelmoschus manihot (was *Hibiscus manihot*)

Many types – different leaf shapes.

The most popular leafy green eaten throughout the Pacific—ideal for northern Australia. Attractive planted in groups in the garden providing a cool microclimate under its large leaves. Two main types grown locally—either finger-like leaves or a tri-lobed form. Large leaves contain oxalates.

Easy to grow in full sun or part shade, but prone to insect attack—grasshoppers and leaf curl caterpillars find it delicious. Growing near chillies and/or basil helps to protect it. It should be mulched regularly with compost and pruned down to about one metre (it can reach a height of four metres), to prevent it toppling and damaging neighbouring plants.

The large leaves, hibiscus-like flowers and stalks can be eaten. Stalks have a crisp celery-like flavour eaten raw or cooked. If overcooked leaves are mucilaginous, which helps to thicken stews. Use as a spinach substitute. High in protein, folic acid, iron, potassium, magnesium and calcium. Ideal vegetable for toddler's food as it is soft and easily digested.



Aibika



Brazilian spinach

Kangkong; Water Spinach

Ipomoea aquatica

Semiaquatic, tropical plant grown as a vegetable for its tender shoots and leaves. It is found throughout tropical and subtropical regions of the world. It's delicious, it grows really fast and you can pick it all year round.

Propagate by cuttings or seeds and fertilise regularly as it is very hungry. Kangkong likes to grow in very damp soil or even in water.

There are two major cultivars of water spinach—*Ching Quat* (known as "green stem") has narrow, pointed leaves and white flowers and is adapted for moist soils. It can be grown in garden beds and pots, provided there is always plenty of moisture. *Pak Quat* (known as "white stem") has broad, arrow-shaped leaves and pink flowers. It is adapted to aquatic conditions so can grow in a tub of water with liquid fertilisers.

Like most greens, kangkong is high in iron, but it's not even the slightest bit bitter. Use the thin stems and the leaves in salads and stir-fries (add the leaves at the end).



Kangkong Ching Quat



Kangkong Pak Quat

Brazilian Spinach

Alternanthera sissoo

Perennial low-growing bright green crisp crinkled leaves, it forms a dense clump to 30cm high. Grow as an edible ground cover or an attractive low-maintenance garden edging.

Full sun to semi shade. Loves warmth and moisture, but not wet feet. Prefers rich loam. Propagate by cuttings 60cm apart.

Good alternative to spinach in our hot summer. Nice taste without mucilage. Steam or use in stir-fries or curries – maintains its crispness when cooked. Can be eaten raw, it contains very minimal amounts of oxalates.

Latest Pest News! Fall Armyworm

Invasive exotic moth pest fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) was found on Australia's mainland in February 2020. Since then it has spread rapidly from its discovery point in Cape York, and is now active across much of northern Australia from Bundaberg to Geraldton.

The fall armyworm (FAW) is native to the Americas, and since 2016 has spread to 65 countries across Africa and Asia where it has caused significant economic losses. None of these countries has managed to eradicate FAW due to its insecticide resistance. It is known to damage more than 350 plant species including maize, cotton, sorghum, sugarcane, rice, wheat, and vegetable and fruit crops.

The adult moth is nocturnal and can fly 100km in a night and up to 500km in its lifetime. They are 32-40mm in length wing tip to wing tip, with a brown or grey forewing and a white hind wing. They are most active during late summer and early autumn months, but may be active year-round in tropical areas. The insect has a rapid life cycle, with eggs hatching in as little as a few days.

For more info go to: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/crop-growing/priority-pest-disease/fall-armyworm>



Fall armyworm moth



The larvae feeding on corn foliage

!!!ALERT—Have you seen fall armyworm? Early detection and reporting are key elements in controlling this invasive pest. Be on the lookout and report signs to **Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on 13 25 23**.

Serpentine Leafminer

Serpentine leafminer (also known as Pea leafminer) *Liriomyza huidobrensis* is not currently widely established in Australia. It was recently found (October 2020) infesting field-grown vegetables in western Sydney. A biosecurity response is underway to limit its impact and spread, with a view to eradicating the pest. It poses a serious threat to melons, vegetables, onions, grains, cotton, ornamentals and production nurseries.



Adult serpentine leafminer



Damage to plant stalks caused by larvae



Potato leaf damage caused by larvae

Leafminers look like tiny blackish flies (1-2.5mm) with yellow markings, but the most obvious sign is the distinctive trails or squiggle patterns the larvae leave behind on plant leaves.

The larvae of the Serpentine leafminer feed internally on plant tissue, particularly the leaf, creating the classic mining trails that are associated with infestation. The larvae then pupate in soil, hatching out as flies, which lay eggs on surrounding host plants spreading infestation and increasing damage. Damaged plants commonly have reduced yield and in some cases are completely destroyed.

For more info go to: [Serpentine leafminer](#) | [Business Queensland](#)

ALERT—If you suspect you have found Serpentine leafminer or vegetable leafminer in Queensland, report it to **Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23** or contact the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881**.

Used Pots Needed

Please **return seedling pots (that have been washed)** to the plant table so that they can be reused – especially the 4-cell ones like these:



Also other clean used pots (small sizes up to 120mm diameter). Square pots are good too.



Seed Sowing Guide

December

Asparagus
Beans: Snake, Lablab, Madagascar, Soy
Beetroot
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Choko
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jicama
Lettuce
Melon: Honey, Rock, Water
Okra
Pigeon peas
Pumpkin
Radish
Rosella
Silverbeet; other leafy greens
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomato
Zucchini

January

Amaranth
Asparagus
Basil
Beans: Climbing, Snake
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum/Chilli
Choko
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jicama
Lettuce
Marigold
Melon: Honey, Rock, Water
Pigeon Peas
Purslane
Radish
Silverbeet
Soybean
Spring Onion
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomatoes
Zucchini

February

Amaranth
Asparagus
Basil
Beans: Climbing, Snake
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum/Chilli
Choko
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Jicama
Lettuce
Marigold
Pigeon Pea
Purslane
Radish
Silverbeet
Soybean
Spring Onion
Squash
Sunflower
Sweet Corn
Sweet Potato
Tomato
Zucchini

Please Note:

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 these are only guides. Micro climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before/after the recommended times. **ROGI Seed Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits. \$1/pack members, \$2 non-members.**

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Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—

1st Thursday every month (except Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor,
6.30 for 7.30pm. 3357 3171 <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—Wednesday & Friday 9am - noon, Sunday 2- 5pm. Oaklands Street, Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

Seed Savers News

Our final Seed Savers meeting for 2020 will be held at **9.30am–10.30am** on **Monday 14 December** at Linda Brennan's house in Capalaba. We will be covering **green manure crops, soil life and soil fertility**.

All ROGI members are welcome to attend, however there is a **15 person limit**. Bookings can be made at:

[ROGI seedsavers 14/12/2020 Registration, Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 9:30 AM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rogi-seedsavers-14/12/2020-Registration-Mon-Dec-14-2020-at-9:30-AM)

Please BYO morning tea, and any seeds you'd like to swap or share.

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.

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 info@rogi.com.au

The February Newsletter deadline is 22 JANUARY 2021

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