

ROGI News

Doors open at 6.15 so members can visit the library, plant table, stalls and seed bank or just have a chat before our meeting starts. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Free

Visitors: \$5

Please bring a plate of food (sweet/savoury or nibbles, preferably home-made) for supper after the meeting. Tea and coffee provided.

You are very welcome to provide a **quality plant** to help share interesting plants with other members (**see p 21**).

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

Inside this edition

	Page
President's Message	2
Moon Calendar Dates 2020	3
Membership Renewal	3
Coming Events. Membership	4
February Meeting	4
Organic Christmas Feast	5,6
Feast Recipes	7,8
Success with Fermented Plant Juice	9
Plant of the Month—Pawpaw	10,11
Seed Savers News	12
Jaboticaba Recipes	13
Growing Vanilla Bean	14,15
IndigiScapes News	16
Book Reviews. 2020 IYPH	17
Garden Events February-April	18
Oaklands Street News. For Sale	19
Used Pots. Seed Sowing Guide	20
Meeting Info. Lagos Spinach	21
Garden Visits & Field Trips. Deadline	21
ROGI Committee and Office Bearers	22
Hive Parking for Native Bees	22



Fruit fly on Jill's Tromboncino zucchini. She harvests before they get too big, and then refrigerates—this seems to stop the development of fruit fly maggots. Unfortunately, bagging cucurbits against fruit fly only seems to make them rot.

Jill's Jottings

Are you still in a 'state' after the devastation wrought over this summertime? Do you feel sort-of helpless – like there's nothing you can do apart from donating money? Many people I've spoken with recently feel frustrated because it's all so BIG and 'what can one person do, anyway?'.

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey explained the concept of the Circle of Concern and the Circle of Influence. If the things that you are worried about (your Circle of Concern) are things you can do something about (within your Circle of Influence) – well and good. However, if you are concerned about huge things, such as the bushfires and climate change and the situation in Syria, etc – things that you personally can't control – then you're in for a stressful life. It seems there's quite a bit of this stress going around.

Most people, when faced with something of such magnitude, do nothing. Fair enough ... if nothing can be done. But this crisis is fixable.

So ... what can we do about this current situation in Australia? None of us is a premier or prime minister or even philanthropist who can make the BIG decisions and make things happen. But we can make big decisions within our Circle of Influence. We all know about installing solar panels and rainwater tanks and reducing our use of the car. What other decisions?

Well, you have already made a decision by joining ROGI and becoming an organic gardener – no matter where you are on that journey. We are part of a marvellous gentle revolution (to quote Peter Cundall) – an explosion of people choosing to grow backyard (and front yard, even) vegetables.

Our guest speaker this month, Green Dean, will speak about the personal and health benefits of gardening. But did you know that growing our own food organically helps us mitigate the causes of climate change in our own backyard?

Here's how:

Make compost: Use green waste, kitchen scraps and carbon sources such as newspaper and shredded office paper (read <https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/compost-web.gif> for how to make compost.) Allow your neighbours to contribute. This will prevent food 'waste' from going to landfill where it creates methane (at least 30 times stronger than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas), and keep carbon in the soil.

Nurture your soil: Increase organic matter in your soil. Apply your compost. Encourage the microorganisms in the soil – don't use poisons. Have a worm farm. Use rock dust. Grow green manure crops. Add bio-char. All of this increases your soil's humus levels – humus is the 'glue' that holds your soil together. According to Graeme Sait of Nutritech, *'An increase in just 1% organic matter in your soil means that this soil can now hold ... 17 litres of water per m² that cannot evaporate and is readily accessible beside the plant roots.'* Water is set to become the most precious commodity – 'the new gold' – so this is important.

Help someone else start a garden. Tell others about ROGI. As American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead said, *'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has'.*

So don't despair. Grow a garden and believe in the future.

Jill Nixon, ROGI President

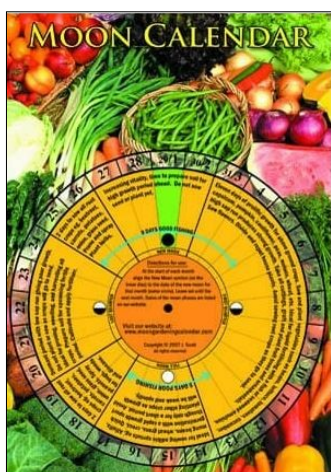
Moon Calendar Dates for 2020

At our ROGI October 2018 meeting, Anne Gibson the Micro Gardener gave us a talk about the many benefits of gardening by the moon. If you have one of her Moon Calendars, the dates for 2020 are on the right. At the start of each month, align the New Moon symbol (the green segment on the moving disc) to the date of the new moon for that month on the numbered circle.

FEEDBACK

Anne is very keen to know the results from ROGI's 'Garden Lab' experiments with moon gardening. So if you have a moment, please fill out a quick review regarding your personal experiences with using the Moon Calendar. Go to:

<https://themicrogardener.com/product/moon-calendar/#reviews>



NEW MOON DATES:

January 2020	-	25
February 2020	-	24
March 2020	-	24
April 2020	-	23
May 2020	-	23
June 2020	-	21
July 2020	-	21
August 2020	-	19
September 2020	-	17
October 2020	-	17
November 2020	-	15
December 2020	-	15

Membership renewal time -

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. Pick up your receipt at the next ROGI meeting.
5. Find your 2020 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table.

N.B. It takes 2 steps if you choose to renew online. Fill in your renewal form on the website and then go to your online bank and 'make a payment' with your surname as a reference.

The slower way to renew

1. Join the queue (between 6.15 and 6.45) at the next meeting.
2. Fill in the paper form.
3. Pay cash or cheque.
4. Collect your receipt and new Membership name tag at the following meeting.

The not-quite-so-slow way

1. Fill in form online as in 'fast and easy' above.
2. Join the queue at the meeting to pay by cash or cheque.
3. Collect receipt and new Membership Card name tag at the following meeting.

SCROLL DOWN
CLICK ON DISCUSSION

Share your thoughts!
Let us know what you think

SELECT LEAVE
A REVIEW

Leave a Review Ask a Question Post a Video Post a Photo

RATE THE PRODUCT

How would you rate this product? *

Title

What is the title of your review?

Review *

LEAVE YOUR FEEDBACK - THANKS!

As a thank you, Anne will email a **Moon Calendar Gardening Guide - FAQ and Quick Tips** PDF to enhance the ways you use the Moon Calendar and layer your learning. It's got some interesting questions and answers to using the Calendar timing in different ways, including the best time to transplant and water as well as pre-soaking seeds.

Coming Events

February	Thurs 6	BOGI Meeting
	Wed 12	ROGI —first Meeting for 2020
March	Tues 3	Qld Herb Society
	Wed 4	Seed Savers Meeting
	Thurs 5	BOGI Meeting
	Wed 11	ROGI Meeting
	Sun 22	Field Trip (see page 21)

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/>

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

February Meeting

Live Longer and Stronger in your Garden

Growing our own food is one of the most important and powerful things we can do to protect our health and well-being now and into the future.

Green Dean will talk about the ways that gardening is good for you, and how it can improve your quality of life as you grow older.

If one of your 2020 resolutions is to get stuck into food growing, this night will be sure to inspire you to do it.



You'll also hear from a local gardener who'll tell us what is happening **"This month in my garden"**.

As usual, you're welcome to bring your gardening problems to the Plant Clinic and we'll see if someone can help. The usual attractions will be there—the well-stocked library, the seed bank and seedlings (at bargain prices) - plus local honey and organic produce for sale and more.

December Meeting — Organic Christmas Feast



Catching up with friends—Treina, Ruth and Chumie.

Terry and Gennaro at the Tech desk—always working hard. Thanks guys!



E-Waste donations for Substation 33.



Our donations for the Salvation Army hampers.

Borrowing a book for the holidays—Gabrielle and Viga, our hard-working librarian.



Steve from Bayside Mobile Sharpening doing a great job sharpening all our gardening tools—a Christmas present from ROGI.



December Meeting — Christmas Feast (continued)



ROGI members Bill and Karin get into the Christmas spirit.



Plenty of food for everyone.



President Jill tells us what to do.



Sharr proudly shows Jill the book her recipes are featured in—Working with Weeds by Kate Wall.

This book was featured in Annette McFarlane's column in the Sunday Mail recently, and has been added to the ROGI library. See page 17 for more details.



ROGI members and guests enjoying their organic Christmas feast.

Organic Christmas Feast Recipes

Thanks go to our wonderful organic Christmas feast organiser Sharr, and her merry band of helpers. The night went off without a hitch, and there was plenty of food for everyone. Here are some of the recipes you requested . . .

Pumpkin, Seeds & Berries Salad

1.3 kg pumpkin, approx.
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt, freshly ground pepper
140g mix Sambung and
Okinawan spinach leaves
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup coarsely chopped
*pepitas, roasted



Honey Vinaigrette:

1/3 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons local honey
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 tablespoon mustard
Salt, freshly-ground pepper

- To make the honey vinaigrette, shake all ingredients together in a jar with a screw top lid until well combined; set aside.
- Preheat oven to 200°C. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper.
- Peel pumpkin and cut into 2.5cm slices. Toss together with olive oil, salt and pepper until well-coated.
- Arrange pumpkin in a single layer on trays. Roast for 30 minutes or until pumpkin is well-browned and caramelised. Cool.
- Arrange spinach leaves, pumpkin, pepitas and cranberries in a large bowl. Drizzle with dressing.

**Pepita is a Spanish word for the edible (and highly nutritious) seed of pumpkin and squash.*

Watermelon and Feta Salad

700g watermelon
1 small red onion
180g feta cheese
Handful of fresh mint and fresh rocket

Dressing:

1/3 cup virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons local honey
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 tablespoon crushed garlic
Salt, freshly-ground pepper

- Scoop out and chop watermelon flesh into chunks, discarding the peel.
- Peel and finely slice the onion, crumble the feta, then pick the mint leaves (tearing larger ones), and add washed and dried rocket.
- Place all into a bowl and combine.
- Dressing—put all ingredients in a jar with a screw-top lid. Shake until well-combined; set aside ready for use.



Organic Christmas Feast Recipes (continued)



Other recipes from the organic Christmas feast can be found in the February editions of the ROGI newsletter in 2019 and 2017:

<https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGINewsFebruary2019.pdf> Page 4

<https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGI%20News%20February%202017.pdf> Pages 10-13

Every year an enormous amount of organisation and preparation goes into our organic Christmas Feast—from buying ingredients, setting out and decorating tables, to preparation of meats and salads, and making desserts. The wonderful PowerPoint, manning the membership payment table and the tech desk. Booking the tool sharpening and organising the e-waste collection. Typing up ingredients and booking a freezer van. This is all done by ROGI volunteers. Thanks go to all these helpers, especially Sharr, Mena, Margaret and Angela—we could not have held our annual celebration without you.



No-Bake Chocolate Tart

This tart is vegan, gluten free and paleo.

<https://leelalicious.com/no-bake-chocolate-tart-vegan-gluten-free-paleo/>

Yum yum—chocolate and berries! Teresa did one and a half times the quantity for the base. Make sure the dates are soft as they will blend better for the topping.

French-style Apple Tart

<http://manufeildel.com.au/2015/12/classic-apple-tarte-tatin/>

Barbara made this delicious tart. She used a mix of Granny Smith and Royal Gala apples.



Success with Fermented Plant Juice

At ROGI's September meeting last year we had a round robin where you could attend three separate talks. One of the talks that I attended was run by Marian, and she introduced us to Fermented Plant Juice or FPJ.

I must admit that I didn't have a clue about what this was when I sat down, but I soon became fascinated! Sadly, Marian had run out of instruction sheets by the third round, but I decided to give it a try anyway. How hard could it be?

Well my first attempt was a disaster as I incorrectly and innocently washed the plant leaves! So, I just ended up with a sweet, sticky mess, as you need the bacteria on the leaves to cause the fermentation process.

Pineapple Sage

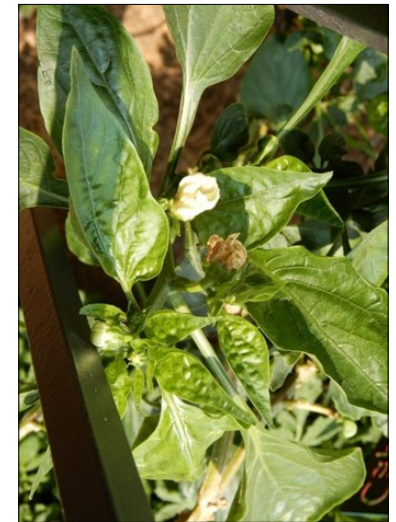
After I got the notes (*page 4, October 2019 newsletter*), I decided to give it another go. And this time I was a lot more successful! I used Samburg leaves and carefully macerated them with raw sugar, before placing the mix in a jar with a loose covering.

Within an hour the mix had shrunk considerably, and within 24 hours the mix had started to float as it was meant to! I was thrilled, but waited the requisite seven days before straining off the liquid to try it on my garden.

So that I could ensure that it was the FPJ that was responsible for any growth, I decided to limit the use to a couple of mixed pots that I had near my front gate, as I had just stripped them out in preparation for summer planting. I planted some seedlings of thyme, sweet basil and French marigolds. I also left some alyssum and a capsicum plant. Both had performed well over winter, but were exhausted, so I pruned them heavily.

The capsicum plant had absolutely no leaves, and I was going to pull it out, but I find that capsicums flower and fruit better in the second season so I thought I would leave it in. After I had planted the pot, I gave it a dose of the fermented plant juice. I followed up with another dose a week later.

The picture on the left shows the pot of herbs and flowers after less than three weeks. All that growth is in two weeks, as they were very little seedlings (except the alyssum at the front) when I planted them!



And the capsicum plant went from being a stem with no leaves to having several flowers (*see photo on the right*).

I have repeated this experiment several times now, and I must admit I have become a convert! I have made more of the FPJ using Wandering Jew, which sadly grows rampantly at my place over summer, and a fruit version using green mangoes.

So thank you Marian for introducing me to FPJ. If you listened to Marian's talk and haven't yet tried the FPJ, then I encourage you to give it a try!

Rohanne Young

Plant of the Month—Pawpaw

Whenever anyone asks me which plant in my garden has been the best value for money, my answer is always the \$5 bisexual red pawpaw that I bought in 2009.

This tree lasted for 8-9 years, providing our family, friends and neighbours with beautiful fruit. Then, from this fruit, I grew on a number of plants for our garden and others – and many were true red pawpaw, some were not, but this was not so bad as they were removed and another took its place.

Growing pawpaw

Pawpaw (*Carica papaya*), also called papaya in Australia, is an exotic, tropical fruit with a juicy, sweet flavour. Papaya and pawpaw are the same species, however they do look and taste different. (Note- the American Pawpaw is a different species).

In Australia, for marketing and differentiation purposes, the red-fleshed sweeter fruit is often called red papaya, while the yellow-fleshed fruit is called yellow pawpaw. There's also green papaya, which is either red papaya or yellow pawpaw picked green. For this article, I am now calling them all pawpaw.

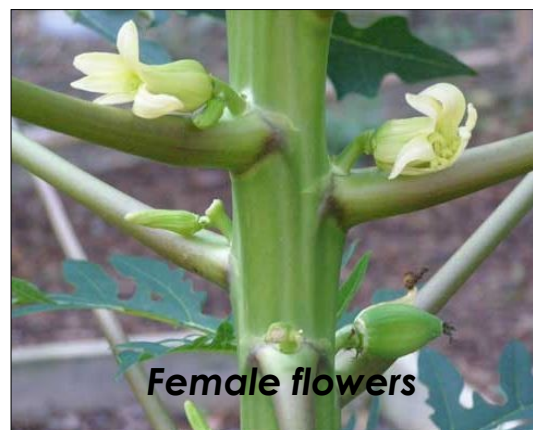
Pawpaw originated in southern Mexico and Central America, but is now widely cultivated in tropical areas around the world. It is understood to have arrived in Australia around 1875. The pawpaw industry in Australia is centred in the Northern Territory and northern Queensland.

Pawpaw grow generally as single-stemmed trees with a crown of large leaves emerging from the trunk. They normally live for about 5–10 years, although in commercial plantations they tend to be replanted every 3–4 years, as the fruit decreases in size or when they are too tall for easy harvesting. The size and shape of the pawpaw fruit depends on the variety, but most are round, pear-shaped or oval, measuring 10–50cm, and can weigh from 200g to more than 3kg. Within the central cavity of the fruit is an abundance of tart and edible black seeds.

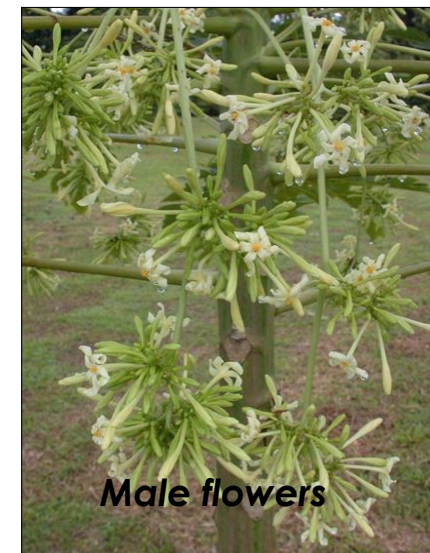
The pawpaw is a fast-growing tree that well suits the garden in

the Redlands. They have the advantage of an attractive shape, manageable size and tropical looking foliage, as well as the delicious fruits they produce. Although trees prefer freely draining, well-composted soil, mine have grown and thrived in an area of red clay soil with few problems. Please note that they do hate having wet feet. Pawpaw also don't like very acid soils. Optimum soil pH is 6.0 to 6.5. Plant in a warm, sunny position and keep well protected from frost. When planting, allow space between the trees to encourage air flow, which will reduce mildew attack and allow pollinating insects to roam freely around them. Mulch well after planting and water well.

Pawpaw trees can be male, female or bisexual (meaning they produce flowers which have both male female functioning parts). It is important to be aware of this. Male flowers are on a long stalk and smell lovely (some male specimens occasionally bear fruit.) Female trees flower close to the tree stem and these will need a male tree somewhere nearby for fertilisation before they can set fruit. Bisexual varieties, which are now readily available in garden centres, are self-pollinating, which can make them an easier option. Trees are easy to grow from seed. If you are growing the male and female papaya, one male will happily fertilize seven females or more; bees, flies and other insects pollinate the female flowers. I have also grown the bisexual pawpaw from seed, with about 50% being true to type.



Female flowers



Male flowers

Plant of the Month—Pawpaw (*continued*)

Pawpaw trees commence fruiting within 12 months of planting. Fruits take 60-120 days to mature, and will need a long warm summer to fully ripen. Healthy trees can produce approximately 30-40 kg of fruit a season. To reduce risk of possum, rat and flying fox damage, harvest the fruit just as it gets a blush of yellowish colour on the skin and allow it to finish ripening indoors. In Redlands, fruiting will slow down in winter months. Also, the trees can get some fungal problems in winter – black spot on their leaves. I do not treat this with anything as it seems to rectify itself as the weather warms up. I do give my pawpaw long acting boron once a year, but the soluble solution – one level teaspoon in nine litres of water can be used. Boron deficiency is evident with distortion of newer leaves, death of the growing point, inward cupping and stunted growth of the leaves, flower shedding and when fruit develop, they are likely to become deformed.

<https://agriculture.borax.com/crop-guides/fruit-and-nut-crops/papaya>

I also fertilise with Organic Extra twice a year. If the trees are nutrient deficient, they will not develop a solid stem and will grow tall and rangy. When garden pawpaw trees get too tall, it is possible to cut them and this will force limbs to grow from lower on the trunk. The tree must be lopped off where the growth rings are closest together, as this is where the trunk is solid (not hollow).

Uses

Each colour of pawpaw has its own taste. While predominately grown for the fresh fruit market, pawpaw may be used in juices, nectars, purees, jams, jelly or as dried fruit. Green pawpaw makes a good vegetable, tasting like a marrow – it can be used in soups, casseroles, curries, salads and coleslaws. It will also tenderise red meats – just slice and mix it with the meat for about one hour. It is also used in beauty products and topical treatments for skin conditions. Some people can have allergic reactions to pawpaw due to its latex content.

https://www.agrifutures.com.au/farm-diversity/paw-paw_papaya/

Health benefits

Pawpaw contains a unique bundle of antioxidants – vitamin C and carotenoids – that help bolster your body's defences. In fact, a single 150g serve of papaya (about one cup, diced) provides more than twice your recommended daily intake for vitamin C, and nearly a third of vitamin A. It is also a source of fibre, which helps with digestive balance, keeps you feeling fuller, longer and assists with bowel function.

<https://australianpapaya.com.au/about/nutrition/>

There are lots of claims about the benefits of pawpaw, and there is ongoing work by researchers in cancer and heart disease. All I know is that I love the taste, they are easy to grow in my garden and provide an ongoing crop of quality fruit.

Happy gardening!

Linda Barrett



Left—Ripe fruit is highly attractive to possums, rats and flying foxes. Pick when partially ripe, and finish ripening indoors. If the tree is low enough, tie an old shirt around the fruit and put wire around the base of the tree so it can't be accessed. Right—3 1/2 year old bisexual red papaya. Grow near a porch, deck or patio for ease of harvest.

Seed Savers News

At our last meeting in November, we learnt about propagating. Organic gardening expert Linda Brennan gave us some great hints on how to successfully start a new plant from a cutting.



John mixing our propagating mix—1 part vermiculite, 1 part coco peat and 1 part sand.



Garry and Sophie fill paper pots with the propagating mix, ready to plant our cuttings.

Linda demonstrates how to cut a plant to propagate from. Take the cutting from a healthy, disease-free parent plant in the morning or late in the day. Using sterilised secateurs, cut plant pieces to 10-15cm length. Make a straight cut at the top of the piece just above a node. Then make a sharply angled cut below the node.



A very healthy Brown Turkey Fig propagated by Linda on 12/09/19. Note the roots underneath the pot (right), that indicate the plant is ready to be planted out.



Our first meeting for 2020 will be held on **Wednesday, 4 March** at **7pm** at Linda's house in Capalaba. If you haven't attended a Seed Saver's meeting, please see Janet at the plant table to register your interest. More details will be sent by email. **All ROGI members are welcome to attend!** The topic of our next meeting will be saving seed and autumn planting.

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.

Did you know? The ROGI website has a **SEED VIABILITY CHART**, compiled by ROGI member Gennaro DeRosa over many years. Feedback for improvements and constructive criticism are welcome. <https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGISeedViabilityChart-2016.pdf> Some seeds can only be stored for a short amount of time, but many can be stored for years. This is your go-to guide for how long they are viable for, the optimal germination temperature, how many days to germinate, and notes on any special treatment needed prior to sowing.

Jaboticaba Recipes

Jaboticaba Cordial

Ingredients

Jaboticaba fruit

Sugar -1 kilo per litre strained juice

Lemons - 2-3 per litre cordial (approx)

Citric acid -1 tablespoon per 1½ litres cordial

Directions

1. Harvest and wash well a large quantity of Jaboticaba fruit.
2. ½ to 2/3 fill your biggest stainless-steel saucepan. Cover the whole fruit (seeds and all) with water and bring to the boil. Simmer gently until soft—the fruit will often split and the water turns dark red. Strain through a muslin or fine cloth-lined sieve. Throw away (compost) the fruit. Only lightly squeeze the pulp, if at all, to keep the liquid as clear as possible, and measure the liquid.
3. Add the liquid back to the saucepan and add ¾ to 1 cup of sugar to every cup of liquid (1 litre of juice = 1 kilo of sugar). Heat gently until all the sugar is dissolved, stirring often. Once the sugar is dissolved bring to the boil for one minute only – any longer and it will turn to jelly.
4. Take off the heat; add the strained juice of lemons (depending on availability and to taste), and then stir in the citric acid. Bring back very briefly to the boil. Bottle into clean, dry bottles and seal while still hot.
5. Store out of the fridge until opened. Enjoy cold with iced water, soda water or mineral water.

Variations

You can add a blend of other ingredients to add variety to this recipe. To the second step of cooking the fruit add:

Lemon myrtle leaves – add a good handful of young leaves, crush a little.

Mint leaves – towards the end of the fruit cooking add a handful of mint leaves (depending on the taste you want). Common mint,

native river mint, ginger mint and chocolate mint are good.

Ginger – add slices or grated fresh ginger to cooking fruit.

Jaboticaba Jelly

- Follow the cordial recipe through to Step 2.
- Add juice and peeled/grated skin of a lemon to cooking fruit. Simmer fruit gently until soft, the fruit will often split and the water turns dark red. Strain through a muslin or fine cloth-lined sieve. Throw away (compost) the fruit—do NOT squeeze the pulp to keep the liquid as clear as possible. Measure the liquid.
- Add the liquid back to the saucepan and add a cup of sugar to every cup of liquid (1 litre of juice = 1 kilo of sugar). Heat gently until all the sugar is dissolved, stirring often. Once the sugar is dissolved, bring to the boil and boil rapidly until it tests as set jelly. Place small drops onto a cold saucer to test set.
- Take off the heat. Bottle into warm, clean, dry bottles and seal while hot.

Other ingredients as in the cordial recipe can be added to vary the flavour of the finished jelly.

I will have Jaboticaba fruit, bees-wax wraps and produce bags for sale at the February meeting.

Margaret Sear



Growing Vanilla Bean

Several years ago, I purchased a vanilla bean orchid for my garden under the (mistaken) belief that the flowers were perfumed. I was told that Vanilla Bean vines must be at least 15 metres long or about 3-4 years old before they will produce flowers. So, I was surprised and elated when the first flowers appeared after about two years. That elation was somewhat moderated by finding out that the flowers had little to no perfume! Not to be deterred, I did some research and tried my hand at pollinating the flowers to produce Vanilla Bean pods, which DO have an exquisite perfume when ripe.

Vanilla Bean vine showing several metres of growth.



Fast forward six years and I am now producing around 80 vanilla beans a year. This year, with the very early arrival of summer (I think we skipped spring altogether!) my Vanilla Bean plant was in its element—it started flowering in mid-September and went all the way through to the end of October. This meant more work for me, as you must hand pollinate the flowers if you want to produce Vanilla Bean pods. However, it also means the potential for a bumper crop!

Despite what you might read, Vanilla Bean orchids are your ultimate low fuss plant. All they require is a brightly lit area, without direct sunlight but with protection from the weather, and they will

flourish. They also need reasonable humidity, but this is easily available in the sub-tropics around Brisbane and the Redlands.

The vanilla bean vine is not bothered by any pests or diseases, except for root rot if left in wet potting medium. And even this isn't a problem once they get established, as they use their aerial roots more than the potted roots.

The plants are a climbing vine, so they do need a strong structure for them to grow on. I have mine growing up a brick wall and along structural beams under a porch covered in laser light (see photos right and left).



The only work involved comes if you want to produce vanilla beans, as you must hand pollinate each flower. And why wouldn't you, with an individual vanilla bean pod costing between \$7 and \$10 each, and a kilo costing up to \$1,000! The price is expected to rise this year, as farmers in Madagascar have begun replacing vanilla bean vines with coffee trees which require less work and have a much faster harvest cycle. Madagascar currently produces around 80 percent of the world's vanilla beans.

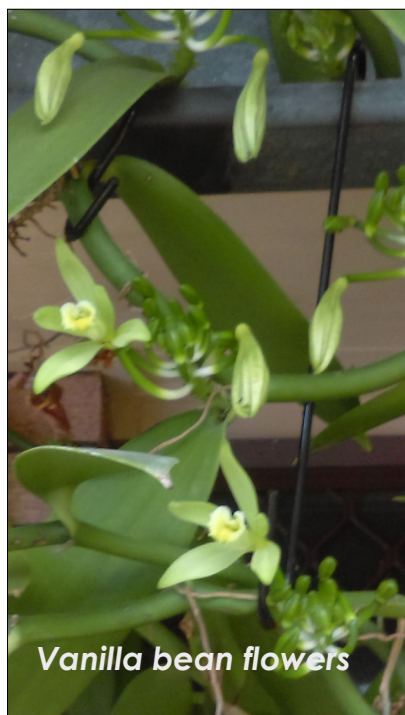
Vanilla Beans are the second most expensive spice in the world after saffron!



Vanilla Bean Pods

Growing Vanilla Bean

Vanilla Bean vines are part of the orchid family. In fact, they are the only orchid to produce an edible fruit. Like all orchids, they hate having their feet wet and will promptly die if left in water-logged potting medium for any length of time. Also, like most orchids, they prefer to be pot-bound and will sulk if placed into too big a pot.



Vanilla bean flowers

The Vanilla Bean flowers in Spring, with flowering starting in late September and continuing throughout October. Excessive cold periods or insufficient fertiliser will affect both the onset of flowering and the number of flowers produced.

The flowers are produced in clusters and will flower in succession, with only one flower open per cluster in a single day. Depending on the size of your vine, the flowering time can last up to five weeks, although my vine flowered for six weeks this year!

The vanilla bean is native to Mexico, where the flowers are pollinated by the Melipona bee. However, this bee is

not available in Australia, and our native bees don't appear to be interested in pollinating vanilla bean flowers. This means each flower needs to be hand pollinated in order to produce a Vanilla Bean pod.

The pollination process is not difficult, though it took me quite a few attempts before I was successful. I estimate that I have about a 15 percent success rate, but I am working on this! The biggest

problem is that you only have a very small window in which to pollinate the flowers. The flowers are open around 6am, and are only open for around six hours and only for one day! I have found that the earlier I do the pollination, the better my success rate. Flowers pollinated after 10am do not seem to hold the pollination, nor do they go on to develop vanilla bean pods.

To carry out the pollination you need to remove the pollen from the anther of the flower and place it on the stigma. This is best done using either a toothpick or a matchstick, or similar implement. The easiest way to do this is to break off the top petal of the flower to enable free access to the anther. This is the bit at the base of the flower stamen. Carefully collect the pollen on the end of your toothpick, then slide the toothpick under the tongue which hides the stigma. Wipe the pollen against the stigma and gently press together with your fingers. If you have been successful, you will see vanilla pods start to form within one week, as in the photo on the right. Flowers that have not been successfully pollinated will drop to the ground by the next morning, which can be a little discouraging! After 9-11 months you will be able to harvest your very own vanilla beans.



Vanilla bean vines will apparently grow from seed, but it is a very slow process and can take up to ten years to reach flowering maturity! The best way is to start with a cutting from an established and productive plant.

If any ROGI members are interested, I will have rooted vanilla bean vines available for sale at the February ROGI meeting.

Rohanne Young

IndigiScapes News



Join us to celebrate our Grand re-opening!

Friday 21 February 2020

10am to 4pm

Redlands IndigiScapes, Runnymede Road, Capalaba

It's time to celebrate. We're re-opening our doors on Friday 21 February! Bring along your family and friends and soak up some nature vibes at the new IndigiScapes Centre. There will be craft activities for the kids, music, local wildlife information groups, and the new and improved cafe will be open for business. Come along to see the new Discovery Centre and visit old friends. We can't wait to welcome you back!



IndigiScapes Nursery

Add a splash of colour to your garden. We have lots of lovely natives in flower at the IndigiScapes nursery. Come on down and say hi. We are open on the first Saturday of every month—9am to 12noon.



Solar incentives—Making solar affordable

Was it your New Year's resolution to take the plunge and install solar this year? One thing we are definitely not short of is sunlight, and going solar has become very popular, particularly in Qld. It's a great way to:

- Harness free energy for your home
- Reduce your power bill
- Shrink your carbon footprint.

Solar is more affordable than ever. The Australian government's Small-Scale Renewable Energy Scheme is making the investment in a sustainable future more affordable. For more information go to: <https://www.energy.gov.au/rebates/renewable-power-incentives>

Fire management workshop

Date: Friday 20 March 2020

Where: Redlands IndigiScapes, Runnymede Road, Capalaba

Time: 9am-12pm - Open to all

12.30 -3pm - Environmental Partnership Participants

Age: Suitable for adults

Join representatives from Redland City Council, Qld Fire & Emergency Service, and SEQ Fire & Biodiversity Consortium to learn more about creating an Individual Property Fire Management Plan for your property - balancing fire safety with conservation of bushland flora and fauna.

Bookings essential: Phone 3824 8611 to reserve your spot.

Book Reviews

Working with Weeds

By Kate Wall

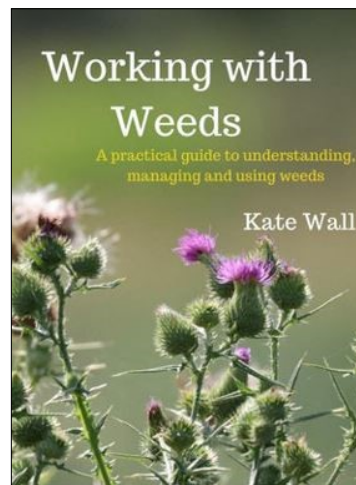
The author lives in Brisbane, so this information is entirely relevant to us in the Redlands. As an organic gardener, Kate has developed a pragmatic approach to weeds and their management. Hence the title - working *with* weeds rather than against them. It's an attitude that would serve us well if we want to cease our use of toxic and otherwise harmful chemicals in our gardens.

This is an information-rich book – there are 'aha moments' on every page. You can find out:

- What a particular weed will tell you about your soil
- Which weeds will improve your soil
- Which weeds are edible and which are also medicinal, and how to use them (*recipes by ROGI's Sharr Ellson*)
- How to deal with dangerous or declared or really pesky weeds without endangering yourself
- In-depth profiles of 41 weeds

This is not the sort of book that you would borrow once and read from front to back, although that would be the first step. Borrow it, and you'll see what I mean. You will want to own it.

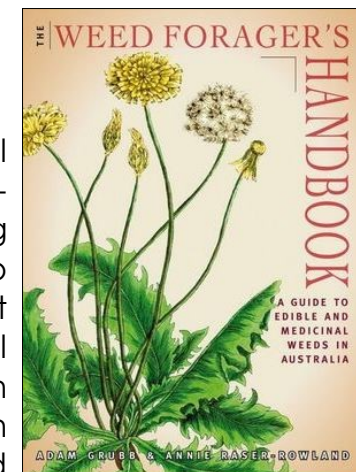
Book Review by Jill Nixon



The Weed Forager's Handbook By Adam Grubb & Annie Raser-Rowland

It would be easy to overlook this small book, which shows us that weeds are misunderstood by many. Instead of looking at weeds as invasive plants that need to be controlled, the authors show that many weeds are edible with nutritional and medicinal qualities. The book is in an easy to read format and focuses on weeds in Australia, providing history and culture, uses, medicinal benefits and notes of caution including information about nitrates and oxalic acids. Plant descriptions, clear photos and illustrations enables easy identification... you don't want to confuse chickweed with petty spurge. The authors have included their top 20 edible and medicinal weeds with some recipes. Nettle gnocchi and mixed weeds salad....delicious. This book is a wonderful companion to show how to embrace weeds and their unique qualities.

Book Review by Lisa Harsley



Would you like to do a Book Review?

We welcome reviews from readers of ROGI library books you've read. Please tell the newsletter editor or our librarian that you are doing a review, and email it to info@rogi.com.au.

International Year of Plant Health

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2020 as the **International Year of Plant Health (IYPH)**. The year is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development.



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
PLANT HEALTH
2020

Garden Events February—April

Redlands Orchid Show

Saturday 22 February—8.30am to 3pm

**Donald Simpson Centre,
172 Bloomfield Street, Cleveland**

Entry: \$3-00 Adults, children free

Magnificent display of blooms, orchids for sale, potting demonstrations, cultural advice, product sales, raffles, art and craft stall and light refreshments.

Bethania Street Community Garden

Lota Street, Bethania

Harvest Share

Sunday 23 February, 2.30 to 4.00pm

Wander through our productive garden, talk to our friendly gardeners, meet new people, have a cuppa, listen to some local music and get some fresh air. Are you a gardener or a foodie? Bring along any spare home grown produce or homemade food to share. Gold Coin Donation—no booking required.

Propagation—New Plants from Old

Thursday 26 March, 9.30 to 11.30am

Cost \$5-00, bookings essential—phone 0418 985 229

Learn various methods of propagation, including starting from seed and using existing plants. This workshop will focus mainly on edibles and you will take away some plants to grow at home.

Brisbane Garden & Plant Expo

Friday 13 March—9am to 8pm

Saturday 14 March—9am to 4pm

Rocklea Showgrounds, Corner Goburra Street & Pegg Road

Entry: \$10 per adult, \$8 Senior Concession per day

Children under 15 free

<https://plantexpo.com.au/> for more information.

Community Gardens and Permaculture Festival

Northey Street City Farm

Sunday 19 April, 8am to 12.30pm

Free Entry

The Festival will be held on the Sunday before the Convergence, in conjunction with Northey Street City Farm's weekly Organic Farmers Market. The Festival will showcase community gardens from around the region, as well as sustainable living in cities. Come and visit an established permaculture demonstration site and attend a free Farm tour on the day. You can also sample delicious organic breakfasts from the food vendors in the market.

Australasian Permaculture Convergence 2020

Monday 20 to Thursday 23 April

Camp Kindilan, Redland Bay

The 2020 Australasian Permaculture Convergence is a biennial gathering of permaculture people from around the country and the Asia Pacific region. All people with an interest in permaculture and regenerative development are invited to join us for 4 days of workshops, hands-on activities, and discussions on how we can both celebrate and support nature's abundance.

The Convergence is being organised by [Northey Street City Farm](#) on behalf of [Permaculture Australia](#).

For more information, go to:

<https://apc.nscf.org.au/>

<https://apc.nscf.org.au/apc-programme/>

<https://permacultureaustralia.org.au/apc-australian-permaculture-convergence/>

Oaklands Street Community Garden News

Happy New Year from the Oaklands Street Crew! Despite the hot dry conditions, we've been getting a feed from our secluded little corner of Alexandra Hills. Rockmelons, trombone zucchini, pumpkin and cucumbers have been finding their way to our tables.



We start off 2020 joined by our partners of 15 years, Connect 2 Group and the Redlands City Council, re-negotiating our LTO, or License to Occupy. If you are unfamiliar with community gardens, this is the contract which allows our community of volunteers to grow fresh organic fruit and veggies on public land in the Keith Surridge Park.

As is the way with many things these days, the updated document has become more complex and Connect 2's and RCC's commercial arms have been negotiating in good faith to arrive at the best outcome for the three parties. At Oaklands Street, we're optimistic that there'll be an agreement in place before the election on the 28th March 2020.

Oaklands Street provides a valuable service to the community by providing a place to experience growing organic produce and spend time in natural surroundings in a safe space. It is currently visited regularly by ROGI, Connect 2 clients, Smart Tots Childcare at Alexandra Hills, clients of the QLD Department of Youth Justice, and many other folks who are just interested in spending time with us in the laid back environment.

We thank our patrons, volunteers, and long standing partners Connect 2 and RCC for their ongoing support of our gardens, and look forward to continuing to work together to serve the community and of course, growing flowers, wholesome fruit and veggies bursting with flavour!

Why not join us for a cuppa at Oaklands Street? We are open Wednesday and Friday 9am to 12pm, and Sunday 2-5pm.

Cheers, Terry

For enquiries, please call:
Glenda Brown - 0414 735 417
Terry Sullavan - 0408 259 445

RECONDITIONED CHICKEN TRACTOR FOR SALE

The size is 2.4 long x 900 H x 900 W. \$400, delivered free within the Redlands. Contact Allan on mobile 0473 784 724 or email him at allan.kingston@westnet.com.au



Used Pots Needed

Please **return seedling pots** 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.

Bigger pots, such as those you get through ROGI Rewards can be put on the swap/share/giveaway table in the foyer.



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

This is how it works:

- Get a My IGA Card at the Cleveland store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support



Every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, but you also help to raise funds for ROGI, which we use to benefit our members.

For a list of the seed bank stock, please go to:

<http://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/seed%20bank%20list%20March%202017.pdf>

Seed Sowing Guide

February

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

March

Basil
Beans: Climbing, Snake, French
Beetroot
Borage
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Cauliflower
Coriander
Cucumber
Eggplant
Leek
Lettuce
Pigeon Pea
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radish
Silverbeet
Spring Onion
Spinach: Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal
Squash
Sweet Potato
Sweet Corn
Tomato

Keep in mind that these are only guides. Be aware that micro-climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before or after the recommended times. **ROGI Seed Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits. \$1 per pack for members, \$2 non-members**

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.

Meeting Information

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

ROGI Rewards: Good quality plants and other garden-related items brought along by members. Everyone who attends the meeting (including visitors) are eligible for a ROGI Reward. **Please label plant with its name and some details before placing it on the table.**

Members' Sales: Items you've produced that are surplus to your requirements that **you wish to sell** to other members - eggs, honey, seedlings, lemons, jam, sustainable craft items – things that have cost you time, money and effort to produce. Please make sure items are labelled, named and priced. It is preferable that you staff the stall yourself or time-share with a friend.

FREE swap/share/give-away:

(Members only) For those items you don't want payment for—empty pots, cuttings, unwanted volunteer plants (named), surplus produce, shredded paper, strawberry runners and so on. You may want to work out an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

Remember to bring a bag/box/basket to take everything home



LAGOS SPINACH — *Celosia Argentea* aka quail grass, soko, feather cockscomb, velvet flower. It is an annual leafy vegetable which is hardy and drought tolerant. Leaves, young stems and young flower buds are used cooked. Leaves have a soft texture and a mild spinach-like taste. Known to self-sow.

Garden Visits & Field Trips

If you would like to host a garden visit in 2020, please see Toni Bowler at the next meeting or email her at events@rogi.com.au to put your garden on the schedule. Suggestions for field trips and workshops related to ROGI's organic growing interests are also welcome.

Sunday, 22 March—Field trip to Mini Farm at Camp Hill

The Mini Farm Project is a charity that converts under-utilised spaces into urban farms to grow food for those in need. If you wish to attend this field trip, please put your name down at the February ROGI meeting, or contact Toni to add your name to the list.

Sunday, 26 April—Garden visit to Terry Sullavan at Alexandra Hills

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 ROGI News topical, interesting, local and relevant. info@rogi.com.au

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE— Please send contributions to the newsletter editor by 26 February 2020

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Jill Nixon	president@rogi.com.au
V. PRESIDENT	Kathy Petrik	president@rogi.com.au
SECRETARY	Leisa Fien	secretary@rogi.com.au
TREASURER	Greg Lindner	treasurer@rogi.com.au
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Rhonda Binns, Toni Bowler, Ann Roffey, Terry Sullavan	

OFFICE BEARERS

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Rhonda Binns	membership@rogi.com.au
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Ann Roffey	info@rogi.com.au
PR, COMMUNICATIONS	Gail Bruce	info@rogi.com.au
CLUB EVENTS	Toni Bowler	events@rogi.com.au
PUBLIC EVENTS	Ruth Bolomey	events@rogi.com.au
LIBRARY	Viga Misztal	library@rogi.com.au
SEED BANK	Seed Savers Grp	seeds@rogi.com.au
SUPPER	By roster	group@rogi.com.au
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	pal@pcpals.com.au

info@rogi.com.au www.rogi.com.au

PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163

www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers

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

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 9 - noon, Sunday 2- 5pm. Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

HIVE PARKING FOR NATIVE BEES

We are always interested in keeping our native stingless bees in other people's backyards. We need new spots for the coming season.

Here are some requirements:

- * Suburban acreage
- * South, east and south-west side of Brisbane and also south of Brisbane along the coast to say Ballina.
- * The site needs to be safe, secure, tamper-proof, shady and accessible

We would like to keep at least 12 colonies at each site. Please get in touch if you think this is possible for your place, or you know someone who would be able to help.

Some ROGI members are already happy hosts to our bees (talk with Margaret Sear or Ann Roffey).

We do not pay an agistment fee—the benefit to you is that you enjoy the pollination services provided by our bees.

Russell and Janine Zabel
Keepers of Australian
Stingless Native Bees
0404 892139
bees@zabel.com.au
www.zabel.com.au



A FRIENDLY REMINDER: Please pay your membership dues for 2020 to receive the newsletter, free admission to meetings, and invitations to garden visits and field trips.
More information on page 3.