

# ROGI News

## PLEASE NOTE:

ROGI meetings will now be held on **Thursday** nights. To ensure we comply with regulations and our COVID-safe plan, only fully paid ROGI members can attend (see page 4 for payment details). Cash will be accepted on the night.

## Don't forget:

- Pay your membership dues
- Observe social distancing
- Bring a tool for sharpening
- BYO mug if you want coffee/tea
- There will be no supper
- Swap and share has resumed
- BYO basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Return washed seedling pots to the Plant Table
- Any questions for Plant Clinic

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*Photographed at Janet's, the unusual but beautiful flower of Passiflora maliformis (Sweet Calabash). It has small (5cm) passionfruit with skin so hard it sometimes needs to be broken open with a hammer. A fast growing evergreen vine, it is native to the Caribbean, Central America and Northern South America.*

## *Jill's Jottings*

**P**hew! So hot and steamy! How is your garden faring? Do you also have a successful crop of weeds? Because I've been away so much for these past five months, Ian has been unable to keep on top of everything ... and those pesky weeds creep up when you're not looking and then take over. The worst is nutgrass. A quote, 'Nut grass grows best in very healthy soil with good levels of sunshine.' That's us!

We've had several helpful organic suggestions (get a pig – 'they love digging and rooting around', smother it with lime/human urine/sugar). However, we know there are no short cuts with nutgrass (except using poison); the only safe and sure solution is digging it out, making sure to get every single nut. Who wants to come to our 'nutgrass eradication party'?



**L**ast year, we mentioned that we've been considering moving to TEAM APP so we can streamline communications with members, manage events and attendance, and enable purchases online, including membership. We've decided to go ahead with this and to gradually start to add events to it. So, what are the benefits of ROGI using TEAM APP?

- You'll find out about club events, such as Garden Visits, Workshops and Field Trips as soon as they are posted, and not have to wait till the meeting. You can:
  - ⇒ Book your spot for these events straightaway, and, where there are limited numbers, you'll know if you got a spot.
  - ⇒ Cancel your spot as soon as you realise that you can't come, allowing others to take your place.
  - ⇒ Register on the wait list, if an event is already full.
- You can make a purchase of products that ROGI, from time-to-time, may offer to members at a bulk discount. In the past we've

had organic chook feed, rock dust and books.

- Some Field Trips may incur a small fee for members - you can book and prepay via TEAM APP.
- When ROGI hosts a short course or subsidised workshop with a guest presenter, you can book and prepay through TEAM APP.
- You can pay your annual ROGI membership...a one-stop-shop - no need to visit your bank's website to make a payment.
- The newsletter link will be sent to you using TEAM APP.
- Chat groups, private or all members, can be set up for members with a common interest such as permaculture, biodynamics.
- You'll have the flexibility of interacting with TEAM APP on your computer or smart phone app on your phone or tablet.
- By reducing the strain on current and future volunteer committee members (that could be you!) it enables ROGI to continue and prosper.

**T**his is a new era for ROGI and we understand there may be some teething problems. Please bear with us while we navigate through these should they crop up.

TEAM APP will make running ROGI more streamlined and will ensure that everyone has simultaneous notification of upcoming events. The ROGI website will still be the repository of resources such as the newsletter, articles and library lists, and you will be able to access everything on our website as you can now.

To get TEAM APP please find instructions in the email accompanying this newsletter, or ask at the ROGI meeting—there will be someone there to help you.

**T**racey Mann has been a committee member since August and was in charge of COVID compliance. Tracey will have difficulty getting to our meetings on Thursday evenings, so has resigned her position. Thank you Tracey for your contribution to ROGI over the past few years. Toni Bowler has agreed to re-join the committee.

*Jill Nixon,*  
ROGI President

## Coming Events

FEBRUARY	<b>Thursday 11</b>	<b>1st ROGI Meeting for 2021</b>
	<b>Tuesday 16</b>	<b>Seed Savers Meeting</b> (see p. 16)
	<b>Thursday 25</b>	<b>Biodynamics Group</b> (see p. 11)
MARCH	<b>Thursday 11</b>	<b>ROGI Meeting</b>
	<b>Sunday 21</b>	<b>Garden Visit</b> (see p. 20)

## 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 2021	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 21-Dec 22
Single	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50
Family*	\$50	\$50	\$37.50	\$25	\$62.50
Pensioner Single**	\$20	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$25
Pensioner Couple**	\$30	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50

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

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

## February Meeting

# Mulch Matters

So what is the deal with mulch and soil biology?



Arborist Andrew Stovell will talk about his journey creating a quality composting mulch. He has been making mulch for over 10 years, and his company is the only supplier to Southbank gardens. For the last six years, Southbank has stopped adding any fertiliser to their plants.

All nutrients are now accessible from healthy soil. Landscape yards sell a wide variety of mulch, but the benefits are not always there. Why? Come along, listen, ask questions and let's share our combined knowledge about this subject.

A ROGI member will talk about what is happening this month in their garden. Bring along your questions for the Plant Clinic (see page 15), and we'll see if someone can help.

**Most of the usual attractions will be there—the seed bank and seedlings (at bargain prices), the well-stocked library - plus for sale are local honey, jam, wax wraps, soap etc.**

Brett from Peacock Saws will be present to sharpen hand tools for ROGI members. See page 4 for more details.

**No visitors yet - Members only.**  
**Please note that meetings are now on Thursday nights.**



## TOOL SHARPENING AT FEBRUARY MEETING

Brett from Peacock Saws will be providing tool sharpening at the February meeting ... this will be FREE for members.

- One tool per ROGI member
- Please write your name on the tool with indelible ink or name tag it
- Clean hand tools, not spades



### 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](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)**

**The March Newsletter deadline is 25 FEBRUARY 2021**

You might be interested in this DW documentary - how hybrid seeds have become big business:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljthwaFUW1k&feature=youtu.be>

## ROGI Memberships are DUE NOW

### 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 2021 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table.

**PLEASE NOTE: 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 6.45pm) 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.

*Once TEAM APP is up and running it will be even faster and easier to renew your ROGI membership!*



## December Meeting—Christmas Celebration



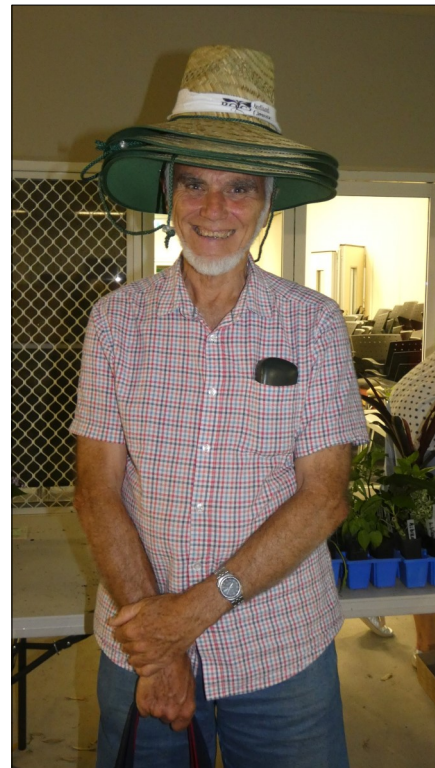
*Rhonda, Joy, Jan and Maureen*



*Catching up with friends after the meeting ...*



*Donations for the Salvo's Christmas Food Drive*



Maurie models the new hats—a Christmas present for all 2020 ROGI members. If you weren't able to make it to the meeting and would like to collect yours, they will be available at all meetings and events. Or you can pick them up from Jill's house in Birkdale or Jan's house in Wellington Point.



## ROGI 2020-2021 Committee—My Favourite Tool/Tip



### Lara Brits, ROGI Treasurer

This is my favourite tool. Not so much for what it can DO (although I'll get to that in a moment) – but for the journey it has taken.

This is a WHS bricklayers pointing trowel. It was made in England, in solid cast steel, in the days when good tools were made to last a lifetime. It travelled the sea, ending up in a little hardware shop in Karingba, Sydney in 1950, where it was bought by my grandad, Bob Sutherland.

My grandad is now 95, but in those days he was mid-twenties, and just starting his second career - building. Grandad takes pains to point out that this is not a brickie's trowel, and he never did much brickies work. The trowel holds barely any mortar, and should mainly be used for fine work like putting the cement capping on roof tiles.

So this little pointing trowel did minor tiling jobs and little paving jobs throughout the first 40 years of its life. For the last 30 years its attention has been turned to gardening. Grandad took it to the mission in the New Guinea jungle to establish a vegie garden. It was useful to my grandparents when they travelled in a little caravan around Australia. And it has been beside grandad as he set up a vegetable garden at his retirement home in Capalaba 10 years ago.

One year ago it came to me, as gardening is getting too much for Grandad these days. He prefers to spend his time writing stories for my sons! The pointy end is mighty useful for making furrows for seeds of whatever depth you desire. It opens holes to plant seedlings. It's good for turning compost and manure into the soil. You can pop out weeds or transplant young plants with it. But for me it's my favourite because of the history it holds within.



### Terry Sullavan, Committee Member

Imagine a device which could double the life of your tools! That would keep them from rusting and ensure they were always ready to use!

But before I get to that, just let me say that my most used tool without a doubt, is the humble garden fork. This always gets used before I plant anything, be it to prep a bed at Oaklands Street Community Garden or a single specimen at my house. It helps lift weeds, roots n all, loosens the soil to help those new roots, and aerates and mixes the soil with the compost. It can also be used as a lever to remove an old star picket.

So, what could it be, my favourite secret weapon that keeps my tools ready for action? Very simple and actually no big secret, WD40 spray oil. I always apply this after use to my secateurs, snips, mower, saws, clips and clamps, especially the hinges and blades. The difference between using rusty tools and well-oiled tools will no doubt stick in your mind too!



### Jan Haughton, ROGI Vice-President

My long handled cobra head tool is a great weeder and cultivator. It makes it so easy to get at those hard to reach weeds—I can use it whilst standing, there's no need to kneel down any more. A short-handled version is used in Asia, where it originated.



## ROGI 2020-2021 Committee—My Favourite Tool/Tip



### **Lisa Harsley, ROGI Secretary**

My favourite garden tool is a hand shovel purchased from Paddy's Markets at Teneriffe, Brisbane - in the days when the old wool stores in the area were old and derelict, before they were turned into the trendy area that it is today. I purchased the hand shovel over 30 years ago and from memory my investment was \$2. It's got a great handle for gripping and the scoop is perfect for digging holes and turning soil in small areas. It's been left out in the weather on many

occasions and surprisingly it hasn't deteriorated too much over the years.

My tip for everyone is to attend as many ROGI monthly meetings, field trips and workshops as your time allows. From every event that I attend I always take away something new to try or grow. My only problem is that there isn't enough time in the day to put it all into practice! This last year I have started to make my own soil using the information that I gained from the Permaculture Potager workshop, and I've been growing and experimenting with so many new plants that I have received from other members, the Seed Savers Group and bought from the fantastic plant sales table at each meeting. Some of my favourite plants from ROGI are the freckles and deer tongue lettuces, yakon, madras turmeric, surinam spinach and African blue basil. All are very easy to grow and delicious.

The committee is excited about the events planned for our members to attend this year, and I look forward to sharing these experiences and knowledge with all that attend. Happy gardening everyone.



### **Jill Nixon, ROGI President**

I use wooden pegs as plant labels. Write with a pencil as it doesn't wash off or fade, and then you

can erase it before reusing. When planting seeds, cover them with a wire waste basket or similar to stop the birds from taking them (I always sprinkle coriander seeds on the surface, as nature does). The basket can be held in place with thin tent pegs. Use a straddle pot over a balcony rail if the rail is thin enough. On extremely hot days we put up beach umbrellas over heat sensitive plants.



### **Rhonda Binns, ROGI Membership Secretary**

My favourite gardening tool is a curved serrated knife, which is very handy for slicing weeds off at the root to chop and drop, or scoring the weeds in between the pavers. The holster fits both the knife and my secateurs.





## ROGI 2020-2021 Committee—My Favourite Tool/Tip

### Tracey Mann, ROGI Committee Member

My tip for happy and safe gardening is to always use personal protection equipment (PPE). A daily check of the Bureau of Meteorology will reveal the ultra-violet (UV) index is regularly up at the dizzying heights of extreme for much of the year here in sunny Queensland. The Bureau recommends sun protection from about 7.30am until 4.30pm. "Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun" as the saying goes!

With Australia's skin cancer rate the highest in the world, protection is important! Staying out of the sun during the extreme parts of the day is the first and best way of avoiding skin and eye damage.

The ol' Slip Slop Slap, is catchy with its alliteration and has had an upgrade. To stay 'SunSmart' according to the Cancer Council of Australia we need to:

1. **SLIP** on protective clothing – collared shirts with long sleeves, tight weave fabric, cotton for coolness. Long pants, as legs get burnt too.
2. **SLOP** on some sunscreen – Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ or higher, broad spectrum and water resistant. Sunscreen should be applied *generously* 20 minutes before heading out and reapplied regularly. It isn't a suit of armour, so it should be used to complement other skin protection measures. The 'use by' date is not a suggestion; sunscreen does become ineffective.
3. **SLAP** on a hat – broad brimmed, tight weave, and large enough to protect ears and neck as well.
4. **SEEK** shade – under trees, shade structures, or an umbrella ... but watch out for the reflection.
5. **SLIDE** on your sunglasses to reduce eye damage. Wrap around types are best, check that they meet the Australian Standard.

Other types of protection in the garden that should be considered include:

**Mask** - wear when using potting mixes, perlite, vermiculite, lime, gypsum, dusty mulches etc. to avoid inhaling potential nasties,

not just Covid-19! The warning labels are there for a reason.

**Extra ear and foot protection** – recommended when mowing.

**Gloves** – for arachnids and slithery reptiles lurking amongst the undergrowth.

**Water** – and last, but certainly not least: hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. Or for us old-fashioned folk, drink plenty of water!

Although an ice-cold amber fluid may be refreshing at the end of a sweaty gardening session, it is a diuretic and has the opposite effect of hydration, with dire consequences. Stay safe!



### Ann Roffey, ROGI Newsletter Editor

Compost is such an important part of my gardening now. My favourite tool to help make it is this home-made compost aerator, made by my Dad. He copied it from one that was made by a friend who lives nearby, and who has given me invaluable gardening advice over the years. As you can see, it's a lot sturdier than others you can buy.

Did you know that compost has four ingredients? Carbon (browns), nitrogen (greens), water and air. A compost aerator provides the AIR!



## Plant of the Month—Pineapple

The pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is one of the few edible species of the bromeliad family. It is indigenous to South America, where it has been cultivated for many centuries. Pineapple production is restricted to tropical and subtropical climates, so it does extremely well in the Redlands and Brisbane.

In Australia, pineapples are sold as rough or smooth leaf types. The *Rough Cayenne* is small-growing with sharp, prickly foliage, but is sweetly flavoured. Smooth leaf pineapples are juicier than the rough leaf type. Plants grow to a height of 0.5m with a 1m spread.

Growing your own is very easy—simply cut off the top of a store-bought pineapple, making sure you remove all of the fruit's flesh. Then leave it to dry out for a couple of weeks. Prior to planting, strip some of the lower leaves to create a stub, and then plant into a pot or the ground. Pineapples must have good drainage (wet



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

*The pineapple was taken back to Europe on Columbus' second voyage. In its early days on the continent, the pineapple became such a fashionable item that many architectural motifs were styled after it, and the rich kept specially heated houses called pineapple houses in order to grow them!*

From Reader's Digest  
1001 Hints & Tips for the  
Garden.



*Jill and Ian Nixon grow pineapples in their front yard in full sun amongst herbs, flowers and other plants. They add compost to the soil before planting, and add Organic Xtra and liquid Seasol and Powerfeed occasionally when fruiting.*

roots are their enemy), so when planting in the ground plant on a ridge or into a raised bed. They are very hungry feeders, so add compost and mulch with lucerne, sugar cane or straw. The size of the fruit harvest depends on the nutrients and water the plant receives, so apply liquid fertiliser and additional compost at regular intervals. A full sun position is best, but they will tolerate part shade. They prefer an acid to slightly acid soil (pH between 4.5 and 6). It usually takes about two years to produce fruit.

The pineapple is loaded with nutrients! It is a good source of:

- vitamin C (needed for the growth and repair of tissues in the body)
- manganese (involved in the regulation of brain and nerve function)
- dietary fibre (important for a healthy bowel)

Fresh pineapples are also the sole source of bromelain, a combination of protein digesting enzymes that fight inflammation in the body.

By Ann Roffey

Sources:

*Organic Vegetable Gardening* by Annette McFarlane

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ingredientsprofiles/Pineapple>

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/growing-pineapples/9427700>



## Do you want to order NatraMin (Rock Minerals)?

ROGI will again be ordering a delivery of NatraMin rock minerals. **Please register your interest on the ROGI website—there is a link above the meeting details: “NATRAMIN ORDER FORM, click here.”** Orders will close one week after the next meeting, or when a total of 65 bags (a pallet load) is reached. First in, best dressed. After you order, an email will be sent to you with details for payment and the delivery date. Timbara Nursery in Thornlands is the pickup point.



Two options are on offer:

### **NatraMin Original Blend (Cost: \$13.00 for 20kg)**

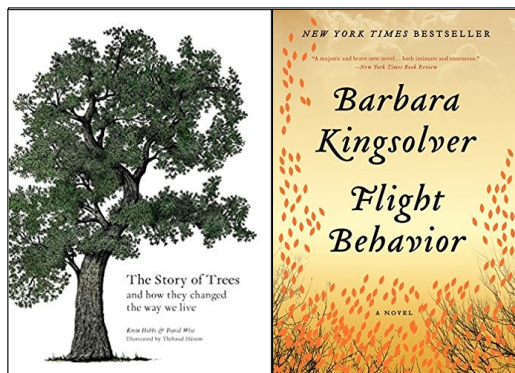
This is a bio activated broad spectrum mineral fertiliser and soil conditioner. It is excellent to restore the mineral and biological balance in all soil types.

### **NatraMin Cal-S (Cost: \$14.00 for 20kg)**

This product is being tested by the University of Qld School of Agriculture and Food Sciences and initial reports are very positive. NatraMin Cal-S is formulated with extra calcium and sulphur for dark, sodic, cloddy or crusting soils with a calcium imbalance and low in sulphur. It is suitable to use in small crops, cotton, lucerne, pasture and grain. NatraMin Cal-S is a cost effective alternative to gypsum as a soil conditioner, and contains high levels of silica as well as other essential minerals and trace elements.

Read more about NatraMin here: [Organic soil fertiliser. Npk fertiliser for soil regeneration \(agsolutions.com.au\)](http://agsolutions.com.au)

For more information check the ABC segment on rock minerals: <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/rock-minerals/9430552>



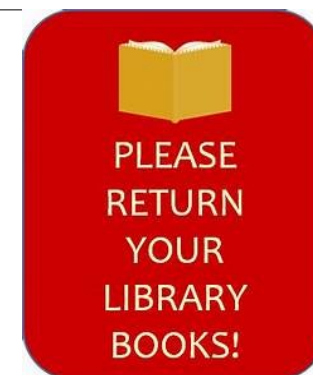
### **LIBRARY NEWS**

New to the ROGI Library:

- The Story of Trees and how they changed the way we live by Kevin Hobbs and David West
- Flight Behaviour by Barbara Kingsolver

Over the last few months we have been adding new and exciting titles to the ROGI Library. Come and check it out at the next meeting!

Lisa Harsley, Assistant Librarian





## New Biodynamics Sub-Group

As I advised at the ROGI December meeting, I am very excited to announce that the ROGI Committee have agreed to the creation of a sub-group focussing on Biodynamic gardening.

For those who are not familiar with biodynamics, it is a form of organic gardening and, like other forms of organic gardening, it is based on the principles of growing food without the use of artificial fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, or genetically modified organisms.

However, biodynamic varies from straight organic gardening by working to optimise all forces of nature - including forces of the sun, the moon, the planets, and subterranean forces. Biodynamics is underpinned by several preparations that, when applied correctly, can help with the fertility of your soils, the productivity of your fruit trees and reduce or eliminate the impacts of insects and weeds. Some of these preparations include BD500 (horn manure), BD 501 (horn silica), BD502 (yarrow), BD503 (chamomile), and BD504 (stinging nettle).

I only became interested in biodynamics after joining ROGI. Before that (and even since) I found that a lot of what I read about biodynamics was overly complex in the way it was written, and more off-putting than engaging. Introductory workshops in the Brisbane area are infrequent and can be quite expensive, hence the establishment of this group to help educate, instruct, and enthuse members. I particularly like the idea of trialling different biodynamic preparations and developing preparations such as biodynamic peppers with the group.

The focus of the group will be learning about, understanding, and exploring biodynamics, developing and using biodynamic preparations and sharing the results when biodynamics is applied in local gardens. Pictured right is my tropical peach tree, with in-

creased flowering after biodynamic fruit tree paste had been applied to the trunk.

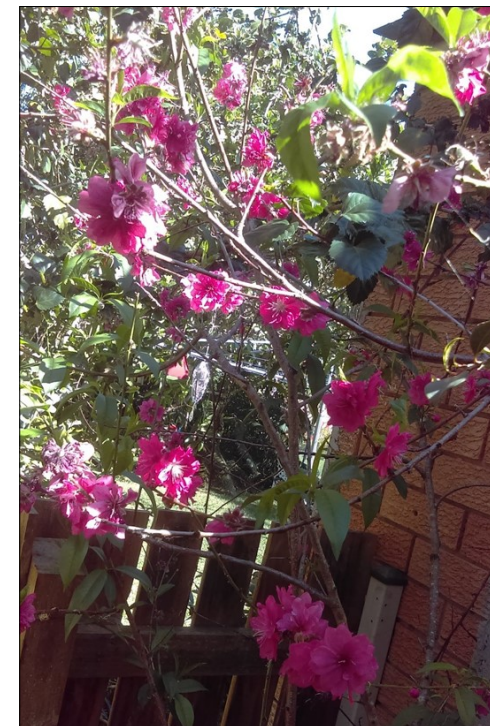
All ROGI financial members are welcome to attend the biodynamics sub-group, although numbers are restricted to 10 members per session (in line with Covid-19 restrictions). You do not need to know anything about biodynamics to come along, as both novices and those already practising biodynamics are most welcome to attend.

Meetings will be held in the form of workshops, introducing and exploring biodynamic principles.

Six workshops make up the introductory sessions, and members are asked to commit to all six. Sessions will be held bimonthly and will run for two hours on the 3rd Thursday of every second month, starting at **10am on Thursday 25 February, at my house in Thornlands.**

Several ROGI members have already signed up to attend the biodynamics sub-group, but there are still some places available. So let me know by email if you are interested in also attending. My email address will be in the covering email from the president accompanying this newsletter.

*Rohanne Young,  
The Delectable Garden*



## Keeping Backyard Chickens

There's more than one reason to keep chickens in your back yard. Not only do they lay delicious fresh eggs - they convert fruit and vege scraps, lawn clippings and leaves into beautiful topsoil, help control bugs and weeds naturally, and create excellent fertiliser!

The type of chicken you buy is very personal. If you want almost year-round egg production (in the first year or so), a commercial crossbred hen is hard to beat. These chickens are specifically bred for their egg-laying traits, which can put stress on their body, as they only tend to live for 2-3 years. Purebred chickens, on the other hand, usually live 5-7 years and thus need to be replaced less often. Whilst they might not lay as often as a crossbred, they usually lay for longer. However, there is an increased chance of broodiness and moulting.

The basic needs of chickens are as follows:

- Clean water—make sure ample, cool clean water is always available.
- Food—as a minimum a quality layer or scratch mix; ideally also regular access to grass, vegetables, food scraps and insects through free-ranging.
- Protection from weather—provide shelter from cold winds, rain, prolonged dampness and heat.
- Protection from predators—protect chickens from foxes, dogs, cats and birds of prey by surrounding and enclosing pens with mesh.
- A place to lay eggs—hens require a quiet, dark place to build nests and lay eggs. Line nesting boxes with straw, shredded paper or sawdust.
- A place to exercise—chickens like scratching, dust bathing, foraging and socialising. General space rule is at least one square metre per bird.
- Somewhere to roost—most chickens like to perch at night so provide rounded perches that are at least 50mm wide.

Chooks are flock birds and need company to be happy. Never keep just one chicken. Check council regulations as to how many you can house on your block. Most councils only allow roosters on acreage.



*Clipping chicken wings – sometimes necessary if the birds are 'flighty'.*



*Dust baths are a chicken's way of keeping clean. The fine sand or dirt in their bathing area helps them stay free of mites, lice and other parasites, as well as keeping their feathers in pristine condition.*



*Fruit tree growing in the chook run—nursery trays protect the roots.*



*Fermenting chicken feed grains preserves important vitamins as well as creating new ones. It leads to better eggs, better hen health and lower feed costs.*



## Keeping Backyard Chickens *(continued)*

We've been keeping backyard chickens for about 20 years now. They've been great pets for our three children—cuddled, ridden around the yard on kid's bikes, shown off to the neighbour's kids. They initially had a small pen which got moved around the veggie garden, and in the afternoon the kids would look after them for ½ hour each so that they could free-range around the yard. The chooks soon worked out if they weren't being paid attention to, and into the garden they would go, scratching out the bark and sometimes ripping up baby plants. Nowadays they have a much larger fenced off area around our shed, as I am sick and tired of them destroying my gardens! Their henhouse was made by my Dad from recycled materials, and is fully insulated and a real "Cluckingham Palace".

We've always kept either the brown or black crossbred hens, they are the best layers ever, and they don't usually get broody. We keep a flock of between three and six. Whenever one or two die, I buy a couple of new pullets (ready to lay hens), so we have a continued supply of eggs. Introducing new chooks can present problems however ... it's called the 'pecking order' for a reason! It's best to keep the new chooks separate for a few weeks to let them get to know each other gradually. Once they're together it can still take a couple of months for the older chooks to accept

the new ones, and the new girls will inevitably be at the bottom of the pecking order.

The girls are spoilt when it comes to food. First up in the morning they get their bowl of fermented grain—I soak a bowl of organic coarse grain in water, cover, and let it ferment for 24 hours. This is followed a little while later by porridge, and any fruit and veggie scraps I think they might eat (the rest go into the compost and to the worms). They always have an 18% fine layer mash in their vermin-proof treadle feeder, so they can feed on demand. The 18% refers to the amount of protein, and being egg layers, they need a lot. I've always got greens growing for them—lettuce, spinaches, lucerne, nasturtium and comfrey. I also grow "Clucker Tucker" from Green Harvest in small pots, which have wire across the top. Then when I give it to them, they're not digging out the roots and I can let it regrow.

One problem you may encounter occasionally is when a chook will eat its freshly laid egg. This is usually because she is older and the shell is thinner. You will notice broken eggshells, or she might literally have egg on her face (beak!). Add more nesting material to the nesting box, and ensure that it is dark. Try and collect the eggs more often, and add finely crushed baked eggshells to their shell grit so they get more calcium.







## Keeping Backyard Chickens

Jill and Ian Nixon keep the Isa Brown crossbreed hens for:

- the eggs
- manure (used in making compost)
- eating food scraps
- dealing with grubs and insects
- eating and spreading lawn clippings and weeds throughout their playground



They've put a *Chicken Guard* automatic door closer on each hen house (top left), so the girls are safe at night from predators such as foxes. If they're out they don't have the worry of enlisting a neighbour to shut the girls in.



Poultry forage seeds (pictured second left) from Eden Seeds are planted in the chicken run. The seeds are cast on the ground, and covered with fence panels. The chooks can eat the greens when they come up, but not dig up the roots.



To keep up a good supply of protein for chooks, raw meat scraps can be placed in a container with holes (left) to attract flies and produce maggots which drop from the heavens for the chooks to fight over. This should be kept well away from neighbours so it doesn't produce unwanted smells (and complaints).



Gennaro DeRosa has learned most of what he knows about keeping chickens from lots of reading on the internet, and from several library talks and presentations by poultry expert Claire Bickle <https://claire-bickle.com/> and Ingrid from <https://citychicks.com.au/>. The main obvious but important basics he has learned are:

- They need a comfortable place to shelter in.
- Fresh water and food should always be available. Provide high protein food and treats (at least 13% average).
- Anything with beta carotene (vitamin A) helps in forming a reddish yolk.

Gennaro uses chilli powder to keep mammals away (birds do not have capsaicin receptors). All food and water is only ever accessible to the chickens. Besides weeds, he never throws food on the ground. His chickens live in a "doughnut" shaped area where the centre of the doughnut is a banana patch - resulting in happy large bananas and even happier chickens who feel safe but still have access to some sunlight when needed.



## Keeping Backyard Chickens *(continued)*

Frank Dobson swears by his *Biopod Plus* (pictured below), which recycles his kitchen scraps and turns them into a highly nutritious food for his chooks—black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*) larvae (BSFL). They are 15mm long, and look like a small black wasp. These insects are a great source of protein and calcium. Calcium assists in bone growth, nerve function and egg development.



The *Biopod Plus* can be purchased at:

<https://www.aquaponics.net.au/shop/products/96.php#more>

Or, you can make your own black soldier fly farm:

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/love-your-larvae/11184864>



During the Covid-19 lockdown, our son raised 3 baby chicks and made this pen out of our old swing set frame. Other parts were sourced from second hand shops to keep the price low. Wire is extended out from the frame and held down by rocks to exclude predators.

The chooks are now safe in their new pen but sometimes get bored. A gym made out of sticks and branches found in the bush nearby keeps them happy. For other ideas for bored chooks:

<https://the-chicken-chick.com/20-winter-boredom-busters-for-backyard/>

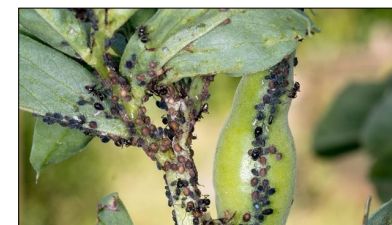


By Ann Roffey



**Puzzled by a pest?**  
**Not sure if your plant is a weed or a 'goodie'?**  
**Does it have a deficiency or is it a disease?**

That's what **PLANT CLINIC** is about. Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts as you can—fruit, leaf, root etc) in a sealed plastic bag and fill in the form. Place the plant parts together with the form on the Plant Clinic table (located just inside the door to the main hall). Someone will have a look and may be able to provide an answer. Any solutions will be given to you on the night and published in the next ROGI newsletter.





## Seed Savers News

Our first Seed Savers meeting for 2021 will be held at Linda Brennan's house in Capalaba on **Tuesday 16th February at 7.00—8.30pm**. We will be covering garden preparation for autumn and what to plant in March.

**All financial ROGI members are welcome to attend.**

Bookings can be made at: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rogi-seedsavers-1622021-registration-138555518285>

NOTE: couples will need to register separately.

### Please bring along to the meeting:

- Any seeds you'd like to separate, save and share on the night
- Brown paper bags/new or used seed envelopes/little zip lock bags for the seeds you collect
- A small plate of food for supper



### 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.

Gennaro at our last Seed Savers meeting in December with the tromboncino zucchini seeds he has saved.

## Seed Saving the way Mother Nature Intended

As many of you know by now, besides doing everything possible to leave the soil in my garden much healthier than I found it, I purposely choose a “hands off” approach. I prioritise growing soil in a garden size ecosystem and letting Mother Nature take care of as many jobs around my garden as possible. I use a similar approach to seed saving, which you might be able to replicate in any currently underutilised parts of your garden.

When you consult the ROGI Seed Viability Chart <https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGISeedViabilityChart-2016.pdf> it is clear that most seeds are only viable for a few years. Some, like parsley need to be planted no later than 12 months after harvesting. One great way around this issue is to have plants of a “living seed bank” planted around your garden. In the spirit of Permaculture principles, doing so achieves several goals all at the same time..... in no particular order:

- The most resilient seeds for your area - only the hardiest and most suited seeds of each variety of plant will survive and produce seeds.
- Providing food and housing for beneficial insects - *Apiaceae* aka *Umbelliferae* plants like parsley, coriander and fennel are particularly beneficial. However, almost any plant is better for creating a healthy and vibrant ecosystem than turf.
- Increase your soil biomass -the parts of the plants we use and eat only account for around 30% of its biomass. There is another 30% in the roots, with the remaining 40% being released in the surrounding soil as sugars and amino acids—which is what ultimately assists in keeping your soil spongy and absorbent (a cubic metre of healthy soil contains billions of beneficial microbes and 25000km of fungal filaments).
- Your own mini nursery - most plants self-seed, meaning that in some cases (basil, parsley, coriander and many others) as long as you keep invasive weeds at bay, your mother plants will drop viable seeds. The healthiest and strongest ones will grow at its base where you can harvest or transplant them if necessary.

Happy Gardening! Gennaro DeRosa



# Marcotting or Air Layering

By Greg Lindner

Marcotting is the technique of removing the bark and cambium layer of a branch on a tree and packing with a suitable media so that over a period of several months the branch forms roots. It can then be cut off the main tree to make a new cloned tree. I used coir.

Back in September I marcotted two lychee trees, one at the Bethania Street Community Garden and another at one of the garden member's property. In December a good amount of roots had formed but I decided to wait another month. Here are the results:



*Roots Evident*



*Marcotted branch removed from the parent tree*

For a tutorial on Marcotting, go to:

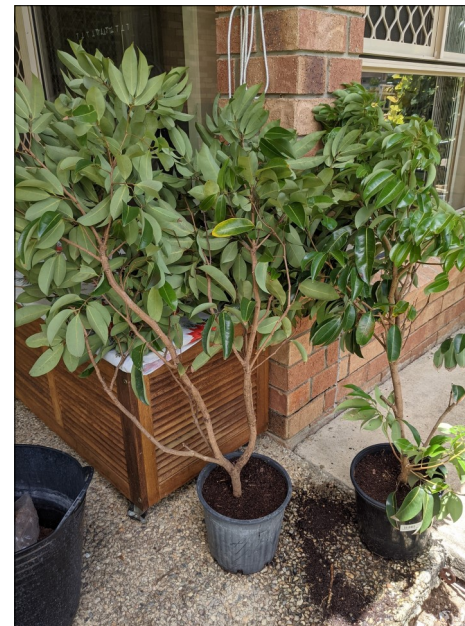
[Tutorial: Marcotting in 5 steps \(Air Layering\) - YouTube](#)



*Plastic removed ready for potting (Tree 1)*



*Plastic removed – pruning needed at root level (Tree 2)*



*2 trees potted up*



*2 trees pruned to balance foliage with root system*



## Oaklands Street Community Garden News

Christmas was kind to us at Oaklands St Community Gardens this year. In addition to all the rain we had, I'm thrilled to announce the installation of further tanks and water pipes have improved the watering situation, and of course, they're already full! Thanks to a Redland City Council community grant received last year and our volunteers, we now have two 5000 litre water tanks and a pump capable of watering all our cropping beds.

Another initiative is our second heritage crop thanks to the ROGI plant shop (and rumour has it, thanks also to Linda Brennan), Balinese corn! This was successfully grown over summer and we've saved several cobs for seed for next season. Little is known about this variety—corn is native to South America, but of course has now spread around the world. It would be interesting to learn how this Balinese variety was so named.

The first heritage crop was *Italian pink garlic*, handed out by Jill at ROGI a couple of years ago. These bulbs had been grown in the Redlands for 30 years. We now have a third generation ready to go in the ground this year. The interesting thing we've noticed about this garlic is that it stayed green for a month after our store-bought garlic died back, which resulted in bulbs nearly double the size!

I look forward to 2021 and sharing with you more gardening news, workshops, and developments regarding our Licence to Occupy.

Happy New Year!  
Terry Sullavan

*Interested in joining **Oaklands Street Community Garden**? We are located behind ALDI at Alexandra Hills. Access Oaklands Street from the roundabout behind Alex Hills shopping centre. Our garden includes common shared beds (not individual plots), and the produce grown is then shared and enjoyed by everybody, and is a regular talking point. Come for a cuppa and see how we operate. **We are open Wednesdays and Fridays 9am-12pm, and Sunday 2-5pm.***

*Our annual membership fees are kept to a bare minimum to cover our costs and allow anyone to participate. **Family \$20-00, Single \$15-00, Concession \$10-00.***

*For enquiries, please call:  
**Terry Sullavan - 0408 259 445***





## 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.

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



Eggplant



Cosmos



Gaillardia



Chilli

## Seed Sowing Guide

### February

Amaranth  
Asparagus  
Basil  
Beans: Climbing, Snake  
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

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

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

Please 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.**

### 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.

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The views expressed in ROGI News and at ROGI meetings are those of the Editors, 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 Street, Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

## Garden Events February & March

### **ROGI GARDEN VISITS**

Numbers will be limited to 25 people only. To book, sign on at the next meeting or email Toni at [tonibowler@hotmail.com](mailto:tonibowler@hotmail.com)

### **Sunday 21 March—Rhonda Binns, Cleveland**

A suburban block with organically grown vegetables and fruit trees, as well as other plants. Native bees have made their home in the water meter box, and they will be relocated later in the afternoon.



### **BETHANIA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Bethania Street, Lota

### **Harvest Share**

#### **Sunday 28th February 2021 (2:30pm to 4pm)**

Everyone is welcome! 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. This is the perfect opportunity to experience the joys of our garden.

**Gold coin donation. No booking required.**

### **Introduction to Organic Gardening**

#### **Sunday 28th March 2021 (9:30am - 11:30am)**

It's easy to start a vegetable garden. Topics will include location, soil, building your garden bed, seasons in South East Queensland and plant choice.

**FREE - BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL on 0439 048 585**