

ROGI News

ROGI meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday night of the month, with doors opening at 6.15pm. Members can visit the plant table, Seed Bank, library and stalls, or have a chat and something to eat before the meeting. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

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

Don't forget:

- Pay your membership dues **(unfinancial members will be charged as if they are visitors)**
- A small plate of finger food to share for supper (hot/cold)
- Return washed seedling pots
- Bring a basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Any questions for Plant Clinic
- A plant for ROGI Rewards
- Free swap/share/giveaway

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ROGI webpage: www.rogi.com.au
ROGI Email: info@rogi.com.au



'Bunchy Top' stunts the growth of banana plants and stops them from producing fruit. It is vital that all backyard banana growers and farmers learn how to detect the virus and destroy diseased plants. Our guest speaker from the Australian Banana Growers Council will tell us about this and more at our first meeting for 2024. More info on page 3.

The Presidential Rambles

Hi Members,

How about this rain, huh? The striped marsh frogs in my ponds have been having the loudest non-stop ping-pong tournament for weeks now. If my garden is any indication, everyone is being kept busy in ever-growing jungles. And here I was, foolishly thinking we'd have a dry summer.

Rainwater has five huge benefits over town water that I can think of. It's free, it does the watering for you, it's locally sourced, and it's not chlorinated - which is better for soil life. Rain also absorbs nitrogen from the atmosphere as it falls, giving plants an extra feed.

I've been diligent with soil health during these times of heavy rainfall by incorporating high fertility amendments to the soil through compost and manures. This helps to keep the plants and soil fed, and offsets soil leaching. It has also been an excellent time to replace minerals in the soil by adding rock dust, seaweed and other organic amendments. Rain helps minerals penetrate deeper into the soil near the roots where they are best utilised. All these actions are helping me build richer, biologically diverse soil.

Another task I've been busy with is pruning. I've done more in the past few weeks than the entire last year. Pruning when conditions are right, like now, encourages new healthy growth. The green matter produced by pruning, weeding and pulling out annuals feeds my compost, which will in turn feed my plants again. Be aware that pruning in this weather can lead to fungal issues, so I'm all about clean tools, sharp cuts, and sunny days for healing. In the longer term, pruning and thinning helps to prevent disease by improving air flow. I recently had an issue with leaf curl on my pomegranate. I lightly pruned the affected branches and some inner branches, thus increasing the air flow. Since doing this I have not observed any more leaf curl.

Instead of "making hay while the sun shines", I am a fan of making compost while the sky rains. Prunings easily break down in heavy rain if left on the ground, chop-and-drop style. Alternatively, they can be put in the compost or processed through the chicken yard. The chickens will eat anything edible, and turn and bury what is not with their constant digging and scratching. I stockpile branches and put them through the mulcher every couple of months. It produces a high-carbon mulch that can be spread over garden beds, or added as a brown component in compost. In this weather, greens will break down and usually can be left whole.

Planting is a breeze in this weather – wet soil makes digging a joy. The rain ensures the plants stay watered, and there's a bonus source of nitrogen. It's also a perfect time to direct sow seeds - the heat and moisture is ideal for germination and seedlings. When I don't know what to plant I go for some of my reliable favourites. My picks are cannas, tillage radishes, lucerne, sorghum, Mexican sunflowers and pigeon pea. These act as cover crops and many have edible components. Some of these are perennial, but easy to remove when it's time to plant something else. Many of these plants will self-seed, which can be very helpful for maintaining plant cover, but you do have to be vigilant around property boundaries to prevent weedy escapes.

Lastly, I'm stepping down from my role as president of ROGI. We're on the lookout for a new president, and if you've ever thought about it, now's your chance. It's incredibly rewarding, you learn a lot, and the wonderful committee provides plenty of support and encouragement. Join us in the next meeting, raise your hand, and let the adventure begin. Although I'm no longer able to be president, I'll still be a keen member and in my usual spot behind the AV desk. Looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

Kind regards,
Bevan Saul, ROGI President

February Meeting

Banana Bunchy Top Virus in Backyard Bananas



Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) is the most serious banana virus in the world, and is a huge threat to the banana industry and anyone growing banana plants on their properties. Bunchy Top is prevalent in South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales, with infections occurring on the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Gold Coast and all the way down to Lismore.

Our guest speaker Sam Stringer has been working as a plant disease inspector and community engagement officer for the Australian Banana Industry for 12 years. She strives to help all growers (commercial and backyard) learn how to grow healthy, disease-free bananas. Sam also has a personal interest in organic gardening, and will share some basic banana growing tips to help you get the most out of your banana plants.

We'll also hear from a ROGI member about what is happening in their garden. Bring along your questions for Plant Clinic and we'll see if someone can help. The usual attractions will be there - Seed Bank, the well-stocked library, some seedlings and plants, plus local honey, home-made jam, wax wraps and more.

All ROGI Members - \$2-00 entry
Visitors welcome - \$5-00 entry
Free tea and coffee

PLEASE NOTE: We're trialling having supper at the beginning of the night (6.30pm). It would really be appreciated if all attending could contribute to supper by bringing a small plate of finger food to share (hot or cold). The meeting will still start at 7pm sharp.

ROGI Events

ROGI MEETING

Thursday 8 February, 2024

Our first meeting for the new year.

SEED SAVERS MEETING *

Wednesday 14 February, 7-8.30pm

The topic for our evening Seed Savers meetup is 'Saving Seeds and Growing Plants that Attract Pollinators'.

Pollinators are such an important part of every garden, we really can't be without them if we wish to grow our own food. At this meetup we'll grow a selection of plants from seed that are especially good for pollinators in your garden. We'll sow enough for you to take some home, and extras to sell at forthcoming ROGI meetings. It's always a terrific subgroup meetup each alternate month within ROGI, with a limited number of spots available for attendees. We alternate dates, days and evenings to be inclusive for as many members as possible. So if you'd like to come and join us, please book early via TeamApp. More info upon booking. You'll be made to feel very welcome.

*** PLEASE BOOK ON TEAMAPP**

2023 Christmas Gathering

Photos by Linda Brennan, Gabriella Marenco, Ann Roffey



Good food, fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all who attended the Christmas gathering.



2023 Christmas Gathering (continued)



Assassin Bugs – Good or bad in your garden?

It sounds quite ominous, doesn't it, finding an assassin bug in the garden. But just before Christmas I began finding lots of these native insects. They would come inside with my bunches of flowers (they may have been after bees or caterpillars or possibly aphids), they'd sneak in on the lettuce, perhaps while awaiting caterpillars), and they'd wander onto the kitchen bench from the freshly picked basket of beans. (I guess they had been looking for a meal of bean fly that lay eggs into the stems of the beans and cause the plant to collapse.)



I guess it just shows what a wide range of crops they inhabit while looking for a feed. This little one pictured left is probably the Golden-Brown Assassin bug (*Pristhecanthus plagipennis*), who at times is also called the Bee Killer Assassin bug. It's a silent predator that sits quietly in wait for prey to come along before it attacks.

It kills insects of many species by piercing them with its long proboscis and injecting acidic digestive enzymes that liquefy the contents

of the insect. It then sucks out the liquefied juices, leaving a mere shell of the original insect. Quite gruesome really. But if you happen to be stung by one, I must say from family experience, it burns like fury and you'll be left with a painful lump for several weeks.

The bug pictured is a juvenile and was about 1 cm long. As it eats and grows, it moults its exoskeleton to accommodate its larger

size. It will go through five or so 'instars' or versions of size and moulting until it reaches winged adulthood at about 3 cm long. By the way, the adults lay golden brown eggs in an upright cluster on leaves, bark and even on the ground. The eggs can be hard to spot.

What do they predate upon? They are non discriminatory and will ambush and consume anything that passes their way such as caterpillars, wasps, aphids, crickets, grasshoppers, mites and yes, bees.

Do we want them in our gardens? Most definitely yes! They are doing the natural job of pest control in your garden in a quietly stealthy way. There are even companies that supply packages of these insects to farmers, gardeners and growers who need pest control help.

Using pesticides such as pyrethrum will kill these good guys and a whole raft of insects both good and undesirable. So please keep any pesticide use, even so-called natural pesticides like pyrethrum, to a minimum.

And by the way, researchers at University of QLD have been analysing bug venoms and have a fascinating video of how they milk the two forms of venoms from these insects at this link:

<https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2018/02/assassin's-venom-system-packs-deadly-double>

Happy organic gardening,
Linda Brennan

Follow me on Facebook and Instagram as Ecobotanica to learn more about organic gardening.

Or, join one of my practical organic gardening classes. Find out more at: www.ecobotanica.com.au

Composting Workshop at Oaklands

Back by ever-popular demand is our composting workshop, where avid gardeners can learn how to improve their soil and increase their produce.

Kitchen and garden waste makes up nearly half of the average household rubbish bin, and releases harmful greenhouse gases when disposed of in landfill.

This workshop will teach you how to take these simple and free raw materials and turn them in to beautiful “black gold” compost to feed the garden and help the environment.

All welcome! It will be held:

At: Oaklands Street Community Gardens,
Oaklands Street, Alexandra Hills
On: Wednesday 7th February, 9.30 till 11 am
Cost: \$10 per person (includes handout and morning tea)

Bookings essential, please phone 0412 860 434.



Congratulations Toni!



Life membership was awarded at the Christmas gathering to one of our longest serving committee members, ROGI Club Events co-ordinator Toni Bowler. The honour of receiving a Life membership is granted to someone who has contributed to the club for a significant length of time.

Toni was involved with the setup of ROGI in 2008 through her job as a councillor in Redlands. In 2015, Toni volunteered to organise events for our garden club, a role she relishes. She loves the sharing of ideas, the friendships that are made through ROGI, and to see the beautiful work that people do in their gardens.

Toni loves that ROGI is an organisation genuine about the environment, with people passionate about growing organically. She really enjoys the social aspect of ROGI, and is inspired by the many places we visit. Thank you Toni for all the hard work you've done for ROGI!

Upcoming Events

CELEBRATE
WORLD WETLANDS DAY

FREE EVENT

OUR BAY - OUR FLYWAY

BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO A GREAT MORNING ON THE SHORES OF MORETON BAY AT TOONDAH HARBOUR

FIND OUT WHY TOONDAH RAMSAR-LISTED WETLANDS ARE AN IMPORTANT LINK IN THE GLOBAL MIGRATORY BIRD FLYWAY ROUTE

HELP PAINT A FLOCK OF HUNDREDS OF SHOREBIRDS FOR ART PROJECT

SAY HELLO TO LOCAL TOONDAH KOALAS

LEARN HOW WETLANDS HELP HUMAN WELLBEING

VIEW SHOREBIRDS THROUGH POWERFUL TELESCOPES

SAUSAGE SIZZLE, REFRESHMENTS, LIVE MUSIC AND COMMUNITY DISPLAYS BRING A CHAIR, HAT, WATER AND SUNSCREEN

SUN FEB 4TH 8AM - 11AM

GJ WALTER PARK, CLEVELAND
SHORE ST EAST ON THE FORESHORE BELOW THE GRAND VIEW HOTEL

TOONDAH HARBOUR, MORETON BAY

Organised by Toondah Alliance including:
Redlands2030 Inc, BirdLife Southern Qld, BirdLife Australia, Qld Wader Study Group, ACF Community Bayside, ACF, Koala Action Group, Stradbroke (Terrangeri) Environmental and Cultural Protection Association Inc.

For more information: facebook.com/BirdLifeSouthernQld

World Wetlands Day February 2024
Wetlands and Human Wellbeing

BETHANIA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Bethania Street, Lota

Harvest Share

Sunday 25th February, 2:30pm - 4:00pm

Everyone is welcome to join us for our Harvest Share, focusing on gardening, home grown food and local produce. Bring your friends and neighbours to wander through our productive garden, talk to our friendly gardeners, meet new people, have a cuppa, listen to some local music, and celebrate local food growing and community.

Are you a gardener or a foodie? Bring along any spare home grown produce or homemade food to share.

While this is not the venue to share household products, ornaments, clothing or books, it is the perfect opportunity to share the joys of our garden with your family and friends.

Gold coin donation - No booking required

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 Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant. Email newsletter@rogi.com.au
The March newsletter deadline is 29 FEBRUARY 2024

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Bevan Saul	president@rogi.com.au
VICE PRESIDENT	YOU???	vp@rogi.com.au
SECRETARY	Patricia Stuart	secretary@rogi.com.au
TREASURER	Bernadette Reid	treasurer@rogi.com.au
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Rhonda Binns, Toni Bowler, Romana Langdon Ann Roffey, Terry Sullavan	

OFFICE BEARERS

MEMBERSHIP SEC'Y	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	tonibowler@hotmail.com
PUBLIC EVENTS	Terry Sullavan	events@rogi.com.au
LIBRARY	Viga Misztal & Astrid Strich	library@rogi.com.au
SEED BANK	Geoff & Cheryl Rynja	seeds@rogi.com.au
SEED SAVERS GROUP	Linda Brennan	linda@ecobotanica.com.au
TECH DESK	Terry Sullavan, Bevan Saul	
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	pal@pcpals.com.au

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

Email: info@rogi.com.au **Webpage:** www.rogi.com.au
www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers

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
and Friday 9-noon, Sunday 2-5pm. Oaklands Street,
Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

ROGI Membership Renewal for 2024

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 -
BSB 633000, Account Number 136 137 296
(Use your name as a reference please)

4. Find your 2024 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table at the February 2024 meeting.

PLEASE NOTE—We now have a 'square reader' so that you can make your payment with your credit card (at ROGI meetings).
However, please keep in mind ROGI is charged for this option.

Member Category	Members Renewing for 2024	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 23-Dec 24
Single	\$35	\$35	\$27.50	\$20.00	\$42.50
Family*	\$55	\$55	\$42.50	\$30.00	\$67.50
Pensioner Single**	\$25	\$25	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$30.00
Pensioner Couple**	\$35	\$35	\$27.50	\$20.00	\$42.50

* **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.

Did you know?

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

There are also many handy articles covering a broad range of topics located on the Resources page ... have a look!