

ROGI News

PLEASE NOTE:

ROGI meetings will resume in July, with some changes. In line with COVID-19 regulations we will :

- observe social distancing
- no supper, tea or coffee
- no swap and share
- no ROGI rewards
- maximum 70 people

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

Our next meeting will be held on **WEDNESDAY 15 JULY** (stage 3 starts on the 10th).

This meeting will only be open to ROGI members (no visitors allowed). **YOU MUST BOOK TO ATTEND.** Please book your spot after the 15th June at info@rogi.com.au

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Janet's first violet Sicilian cauliflower for this year. It turns green when you cook it. She grew it in her new wicking bed, which is filled with soil and mulch from the chook run. An heirloom cauliflower, it is said to be one of the easiest to grow; it is also more insect resistant than other varieties.

Jill's Jottings

Hello fellow food growers,

Last month, I wrote about the nutritional benefits of eating a large variety of home-grown fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices and flowers. Growing this large range of plants is also one of the ways you can help guard against pest infestation.

The brassicas (such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and kale) in particular are vulnerable to the caterpillar of *Pieris rapae*. This is the pretty white butterfly you see fluttering around your garden. The other caterpillar pest comes from the cabbage moth *Plutella xylostella*.

It's very distressing to come into your garden and discover your precious broccoli has been targeted! You cannot be blamed for having murder on your mind!

Whichever caterpillars are the problem, there are many things you are advised to prevent and treat the problem: covering garden beds with butterfly netting, using butterfly-like decoys, picking caterpillars off individually, spraying with Dipel, planting upland cress *Barbarea vulgaris* nearby, putting crushed eggshells on the ground, spraying with garlic/neem/white oil/eco oil/pesticide, dusting with Derris, spraying or dusting with pyrethrum ... there could be more. Over the years I have tried the first five of these – the only one that worked for me was Dipel.

Companion planting is sometimes added to the list, and I think it should go at the top of the list. It has taken us a while to get enough plants growing to perform companion duties, and we have now achieved weeks of zero caterpillars! The chooks are none too happy about this situation, but we're delighted.

So ... how to do it?

The idea is to confuse the butterflies and moths with scents, shapes and colours. So we make sure that all brassicas are grown with guardian plants surrounding and among them. We use flowers such as dianthus, marigold, alyssum, viola, calendula, cosmos; herbs such as sage, coriander, basil, chamomile, parsley, lemon balm, fennel, lucerne, spearmint and eau-de-cologne mint (in pots); spring onion; leek; scented geranium.

This large variety makes it extremely difficult for the butterflies and moths to find the brassica plant they need to lay their eggs on. Too bad; they can use a nasturtium instead – they're in the brassica family as well, and are prolific.

Other pest control allies are birds. To ensure a steady presence of birds in the garden, it's necessary to have trees, shrubs and fresh water to attract them, and a good supply of food to make them stay. We often see a bird swoop down and carry away something to consume. They're so swift we can't identify their prey. I feel confident that, should an intrepid caterpillar happen to be on a brassica, a bird would be quick to snap it up.

Having great plant diversity ensures you have many beneficial creatures available to be your pest control. We seem to have the caterpillars sorted (touch wood!), but we're still having a problem with scale and sooty mould on citrus and gardenias, so we've ordered a new batch of Lacewing eggs and Chilocorus ladybirds. They are renowned for their ravenous appetites. Lacewings love aphids too - aphids usually invade brassicas towards the end of winter, so we'll be ready for them.

Growing your own food – it keeps you on your toes, but the rewards are worth it. Happy and productive gardening.

Jill Nixon, ROGI President

July Meeting

Local Knowledge

At our July meeting, we will be tapping into the experience of some of our ROGI members.

There's nothing quite like local and current knowledge when you're gardening—especially if you're new to growing food.

The conditions under which we are growing our food are changing, so it's good to hear from long-term gardeners to find out what they are doing to keep their patches productive.

- Frank will talk about soil.
- Mary and Rai will explain the importance of pH, how to test it, and how to fix it.
- Ann will give tips on the best things to grow now and in the coming weeks.



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 for sale are local honey, organic gardening inputs and more.

YOUR ROGI LIBRARY BOOKS ARE NOW DUE!!!

Please return your ROGI library books at the next ROGI function you attend—garden visit, meeting or film night.

Thank you.

Staying Covid-19 Safe at ROGI Meetings

We're delighted to be getting back together on 15 July – albeit with a scaled back monthly ROGI members' meeting at the Salvos church.

While the set up may be a bit different, we still aim to offer a great evening sharing gardening knowledge and meeting like-minded members – at a socially appropriate distance.

We will need some extra pairs of hands to make sure that we comply with all the Covid-19 protocols before and after the meeting, so if you can help out please contact Kathy on 0468 434 791.

Here are a few things that will be different in order to be Covid-19 compliant:

- **Register online before the meeting** - Only members who have registered before the meeting at info@rogi.com.au can attend. Numbers are limited because of social distancing protocols, and no guests can be accommodated. Please assess whether you are in the 'vulnerable' category before booking.
- **Venue set-up/breakdown** - The auditorium set-up must meet social distancing requirements and will only allow for 70 people to attend. Family members can sit together. Cleaning of all appropriate surfaces and chairs will occur before, during and after the meeting. Members may be asked to help with this.
- **Handwash, sanitiser, paper towels and disposable gloves** will be available for members' use throughout the building.
- **Plants, seeds and other sales tables** will be set up in the foyer to comply with protocols. One member at a time will be served. No change will be given, so bring lots of change if you are planning to buy anything. Queuing will be necessary and we expect it will take a bit more time than usual.
- **Library** - Please bring any books you have borrowed back. There will be a special collection spot. You may borrow more books at the meeting.
- **Kitchen closed** - No refreshments or supper will be served. Please bring your own bottle of water but no food for sharing.
- **ROGI Rewards** - There will be no rewards until further notice.

What's Happening in my Garden this Month

Redlands in June is just great isn't it? The winter blue skies and cooler temperatures make for perfect gardening weather. We have certainly been hoping for rain and some is forecast, fingers crossed as our tanks need filling. On to our garden at this time of the year

Our citrus trees, which were planted in 2009–2011, have been producing well - this is the second year where we have not had to buy any oranges or mandarins. We were away for a long holiday earlier in the year, and the spined citrus bug did affect about 50% of the Fremont mandarins (these are my favourite, so 'Not Happy!'). These bugs cause browning and drying out of the fruit which makes them inedible. The navel oranges are large and juicy and I protected this crop by bagging nearly every fruit, ensuring the citrus fruit piercing moth could not access them. This moth causes the inside of the fruit to turn to an unpleasant jelly like mess! The navels ripen and sweeten up later than the mandarins, so we are starting to enjoy them now. Leaving them on the tree - just picking as we eat them - a couple a day.

Other fruit that has been powering on are our pawpaws – both red and yellow varieties. We have had so many this season that all the street enjoys them, as I put a box of 'free food' on the foot path. Our yellow passionfruit has also been producing well. This 'home-grown from seed' vine was planted about three years ago now, and has been a prolific producer. Lady finger bananas have supplied us with a couple of small bunches also. These fruit trees enable us to have a variety of nutritious fruit which we often make into fruit salads for dessert.

Our fruit trees are fertilised once a year with Organic Extra pellets. Intermittently throughout the year they are given a side dressing of compost, and the bananas get the manured sugar cane bedding from the chicken coop. The passionfruit thrives on our soil alone.



Linda bags her Washington navels to protect them against citrus fruit piecing moth. The cut fruit on the right shows the excellent quality of them.

The netted citrus tree (above right) is her Fremont mandarin, which unfortunately was attacked by spined citrus bug whilst they were away on holidays.



I have six beds for vegetables and plant these fairly intensively. These beds are all the same size and I always allocate at least one for leafy greens and brassicas. To prepare this 1.2 m wide bed, I laid down about 60 litres of semi-composted materials (from our home compost bins) into three 30cm deep trenches, dug the length of the bed, covered with soil, watered well and left it. After two weeks, I erected the supporting hoops, planted my seeds and then placed netting over the whole bed to exclude insects. I use the exclusion netting as soon as I plant, as it keeps out insects that can decimate a crop. No bees are required for any of the following vegetables: *Asian greens, lettuce, broccoli, kohlrabi, cauliflower, silverbeet and rocket*. Usually once during the growing period, I will water with a solution of Charlie Carp fish emulsion. I generally direct plant seeds into the

What's Happening in my Garden this Month *(continued)*

soil, thinning or transplanting if required. I use this bed for the whole season, interplanting new seeds/seedlings as I harvest. This way I get the benefit of good soil preparation, fertilisation and the netting does not need to be erected on another bed. Also, this is the only bed that I use an irrigation set-up. This is not on a timer – I just attach the hose for about 15 minutes to drip feed the bed about four times a week (I usually stick my finger into the ground beforehand to see if it needs watering). Because all my beds are the same size it is easy to move irrigation lines, hoops and netting.



Leafy greens and brassicas are covered with netting to exclude insects that can decimate a crop. These vegetables do not require pollination by bees. All the vegetables beds are the same size, so Linda can move the netting to other beds when required.



In the other beds I have several tomatoes which are doing well, with some small fruit developing. The exclusion bags from the picked navels is immediately put to use on the tomatoes. Other seasonal vegies that are growing include beans, climbing peas, beetroot, eggplant, perennial capsicum, fennel, zucchini, basil, tromboncino, spring onions, coriander, and potatoes. I am trying carrots but they do not want to play this year. Of course, the zucchini and tromboncino are close to the end of their season.

A wicking pot made out of an old polystyrene broccoli box is used for the daily picking salad greens. This small box keeps us well fed for our salads most days and has three types of lettuce – deer's tongue, brown and green mignonette, and also English spinach.



Using and not wasting our home-grown produce is important to me, so I do freeze a lot of blanched vegetables - especially Asian greens, beans and whole tomatoes, which allows me to easily add them into soups and stews. Mandarins have been juiced if we have had too many, as people do not seem to like the small seedy fruit, despite them being delicious. We freeze our bananas, and indeed our mango produced so well earlier in the year that we are still enjoying smoothies from these frozen fruits.



Above: Tomatoes and basil growing well against a repurposed fence panel. Right: Tromboncino zucchini grown in summer and almost finished.



What's Happening in my Garden this Month *(continued)*

No garden is without its challenges. Besides the insects already mentioned we have other wildlife who visit our garden. It is a constant fight with some creatures to see who gets the fruit first! We have a family of crows who have lived and survived on our garden for some time – with me okay with losing the occasional passionfruit and mandarin. But now they have invited friends to dinner, and the amount of fruit loss has increased. They pick off mandarins and passionfruit and will eat out the entire skin. And



... they have learnt how to get into our chicken coop and steal the eggs! Bill and I and the grandkids made a scarecrow "Snowy", and this seems to have worked in the chicken pen - with me moving his position every few days so the crows think he is human. We have netted our mandarin tree to deter crows, we pick off all the pawpaws at the first flush of colour so that rats do not get them, and we bag the bananas to reduce flying fox attack. We also have possums, but they have not been as destructive (at this stage).

Of course, our garden is not just fruit and vegies. We also have a variety of natives to attract birds and insects to the garden.

Jobs to do in the garden now – cut back your asparagus to the ground, dress with aged manures and/or compost, and mulch heavily. We prune many of our fruit trees in mid-July, to reduce size and maintain shape and structure. Remember you can use a lot of your prunings as mulch or organic matter for your compost pile - using your mower to cut up softer cuttings.

Happy Gardening. *Linda Barrett*

Why Worms?

By Frank Huysing and Marion Lennon

Do you have a garden that struggles to grow anything, and when you look over the fence into someone else's garden that is lush and healthy, you feel like screaming "WHY"? The answer is worms and their companion mates, scientifically known as "biota".

Scientists are discovering that biota, made up of bacteria, fungus and all sorts of critters (beneficial and non-beneficial) are present in the soil and work as a team to make the soil fertile. Even our bodies have this sort of biota, particularly in the gut, and they keep us ticking over properly.

Anyway, back to worms, these wonderful critters are part of the soil biota team, in fact they are "the" leading part. Think of this biota team as a community that works for the good of all, something like the team that occupies your community. There are the elected rulers and their gofers that make things happen (or supposed to, but let's not get into that argument). Concentrate on the farmers growing our food, then next in line are the transport people who take it to the shops, who sell it to you, who eat it and flourish on it and produce waste, which goes to the waste disposal system people, that in a perfect world would process the waste and make it into fertiliser, that would go to the farmer, and so the cycle would go on and on.

Maybe not the best example, but surely you can see what we are getting at - in the soil, as long as the conditions are just right, the bacteria (and there are many types, lots that haven't even been identified yet) have a system where the beneficial bacteria keep the bad ones under control. For instance, there are bacteria that break down the rocks to get the minerals out of them and they then make it available to the plants. There are fungi, good nematodes, mycelium and all sorts of living things - all working together making the soil fertile ... and then there are

Why Worms? (continued)

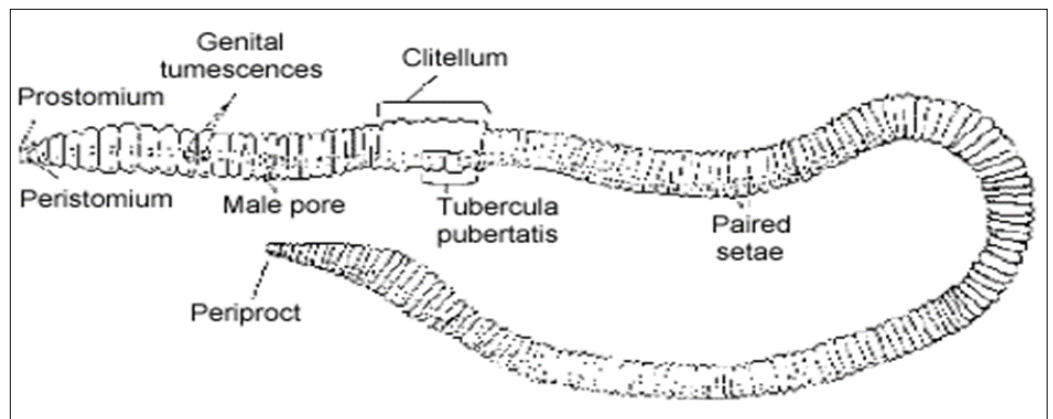
worms. When you throw a lettuce leaf, into your worm farm, you may have noticed that the worms do not gobble it up overnight. They will be waiting for the leaf to “decompose”, and when something is decomposing the process is aided and caused by bacteria. And that is what the worms will eat. Not having any teeth, the worms suck up the bacteria and also bits of lettuce, the material goes through the crop, (much like a chicken's crop), and with the aid of grit breaks down the material. This then enters its gut, which runs almost the entire length of the rest of the worm. After the crop there is a section that absorbs the nourishment for the worm's well-being, and from then on it is basically a “bacteria factory”.

Under the right circumstances most bacteria will double their number every 20 minutes - the conditions include temperature, food source and oxygen (air). You may well ask, if the worm does not have lungs and lives underground, how? A worm uses about the same amount of air as we do, weight for weight, and it absorbs all it needs through its skin and aerates the soil for the plants as well. As it digs tunnels it breaks out into the open every now and then - that way the air follows the worm around, which means that as it travels around your yard it is spreading fertiliser as well as beneficial bacteria and air - who could ask for more?

Other things you may wish to know: worms have no eyes but have very fine-tuned sensors all over their body that can sense light really well, as they wish to keep out of it (ultraviolet rays will kill them). They need to be moist (slimy), and will die if they dry out too much. They “sweat out” a sticky substance that contains nitrogen, which adheres to the tunnels they dig. When they move, the sticky substance they excrete prevents the tunnel from collapsing - handy when faced with danger and you wish to reverse in a hurry, and yes, they can back up pretty smartly! The trees and plants think the tunnels are great as well, they provide nitro-

gen and water storage when it rains - again, Nature doing its thing. Worms also produce antibiotics, at least three that have been identified - which explains why they are disease-proof and can only die if cut up with a shovel, dry out, get burnt by the sun or, of all things, drown, which stands to reason if you breathe through your skin. If you take a close look at a worm's skin you will see stripes that go around it's body - the area between the stripes are called segments, each segment contains certain muscles to move the worm, the number of segments and which body parts they contain help to identify the type and species of the worm in question.

The reproductive system they have has to be the envy of all living animals, particularly the female worms. First they produce “cocoon”, which grow on the outside of the body from an organ called the clitellum (*pictured below*), which is about 1/3 up from the snout. It is a bit like a bracelet, and as it becomes detached from the body the worm fills it with some sort of foam, and the worm backs out of the unfinished cocoon. The clitellum stays where it is and will be ready to do the same trick in a day or so. As the worm backs up and the cocoon passes over the male organ the sperm is placed. About 2-5 segments further, the cocoon passes over the genital tumescence to collect up to 20 eggs. Worms are bi-sexual, and these are then fertilised. As the cocoon slips off the worms snout, one end of the cocoon will seal while



Why Worms? *(continued)*

the other end will form a tiny tube for the babies to emerge. The mother/father involvement is complete - Wow, way to go! (See picture below).



When the conditions outside the cocoon are right, and about 21 days have elapsed, the babies will emerge - about as thick as one of the hairs on my arm and about 1.5 cm long. Depending on the species, (there are about 5000 of them), the babies can do the same trick as mum/dad in about 3-4 weeks, if conditions are favourable.

At one stage of our adventure into sustainable living and getting back to how our grandparents lived, we used to sell our worms at the Sunday markets, along with the "Compost-Worm-Farms" we make. On our display table we had a bowl with about 2000 worms and their bedding, food and a bowl of coarse castings in it. The worms were out of sight due to their habit of keeping away from light, and of course there was the old wooden kitchen spoon that we used to show the kids how to carefully dig down to see the worms. It was a big hit with the kids and some would spend hours with us, enthralled in the worms. But, have you ever noticed that every market has the shrieking mothers

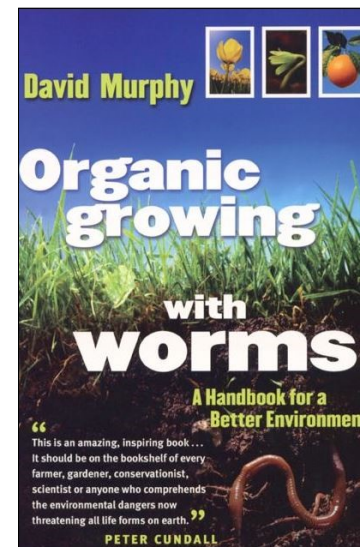
that would yell for the whole world to hear, "Keep away from those slimy things" at their little darlings.

This is only a small section of "how worms work". There are many books to read - my favourite is by David Murphy called "Organic Growing with Worms" - hard to find due to its age, but libraries should have them.

Frank & Marion



Two worms mating—the two male parts are exchanging sperm. They only need to do this once in a lifetime.



These are eggs ("cocoons") of worms found in Frank's worm bin. The light coloured ones have just been laid, and the darker ones are closer to hatching.

Garden Visit—Vicky Leggatt

Our very first garden visit for the year was to new ROGI member Vicky Leggatt's one acre property in Capalaba. She has been there since 2008, and five years ago started transforming her front yard from lawn into an edible food forest. The soil was dug up and turned over, then lots of compost and gypsum were added to break up the heavy clay underneath.

Now the area is teeming with vegetables, herbs, flowers and even some cheeky galahs, who love to eat the sunflower seeds Vicky provides for them.

The back yard also has many fruit trees and more vegetables, chickens and an aquaponics system (*which is for sale, please see advertisement on page 11*). Thank you very much Vicky for sharing your productive and inspirational garden with us.

Ann Roffey



Prostrate Rosemary



Gaillardia



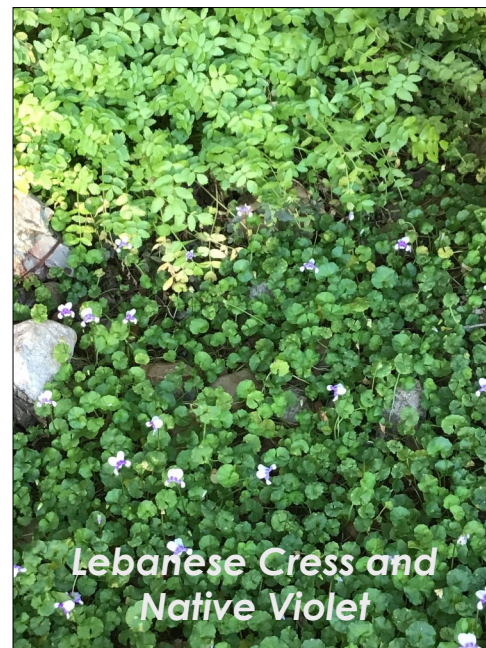
Yarrow



Leeks



Sunflowers are self-seeding from the bird seed.



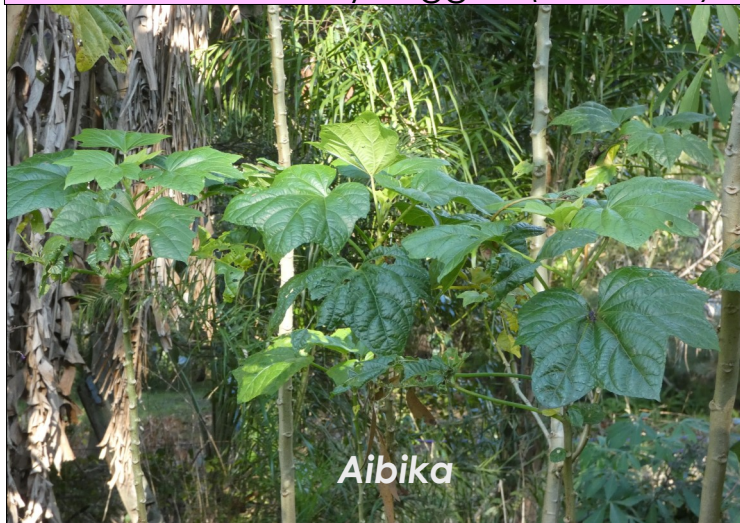
Lebanese Cress and Native Violet



Burdock (Arctium Lappa)

Burdock (*Arctium Lappa*) is a biennial herb native to Europe and Asia, growing to a height of 1.5m. The roots, flowers and other plant parts are believed to have a variety of health benefits. Burdock root contains vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. It can be consumed as a raw vegetable or cooked in stews, soups and other recipes. It is also found in some beauty and diet products. The plant should be grown in an open, sunny position. It will readily reproduce itself from dropped seed.

Garden Visit—Vicky Leggatt (continued)



Aibika

Aibika (above) is a short-lived perennial shrub in the sub-tropics. It grows 2-3m high and thrives when it is warm and wet. It is a very nutritious vegetable; the leaves are high in vitamins A and C and iron, and have 2% protein by dry weight.

<https://greenharvest.com.au/Plants/Information/Aibika.html>



Cumquat tree doing well in a pot

We all marvelled over Vicky's navel orange tree (below) which doesn't have any black sooty mould. Recently it was fertilised with mushroom compost, which may have helped.



Navel Orange



Right: A very healthy comfrey plant. Comfrey has one of the widest range of uses in permaculture. The leaves can be used in compost or as a mulch. They contain silica, nitrogen, magnesium, calcium, potassium and iron. The large, deep roots of the plant act to break up compacted soils. It is very effective as a weed barrier, and the leaves make excellent animal forage (in small quantities only).

<http://greenharvest.com.au/Plants/Information/Comfrey.html>



Comfrey



Vanilla Bean Orchid

Above: Four-year-old vanilla bean orchid happily growing up Vicky's curry tree. It can take 3-5 years for a plant to produce beans, and the plant will require hand pollination to help it fruit successfully.

Garden Visit—Vicky Leggatt (continued)



Gennaro demonstrates how to graft a plant on to a cutting of giant devil's fig (*Solanum chrysotrichum*) pictured on the right. This plant is declared a noxious weed in Brisbane City Council, however it can be used to graft an eggplant onto, as the plants are very vigorous. This will turn your eggplant into a tree (!) - providing a stronger root system, allowing it to support more fruit and tolerate diseases that affect the root system of the Solanaceae family.



For more information on grafting an eggplant onto the Giant Devil's Fig, go to:

<https://deepgreenpermaculture.com/diy-instructions/grafting-eggplant-onto-devil-plant/>



Pandan (*Pandanus amaryllifolius*) is a strappy leaved tropical plant widely grown for its use in Asian cooking. In Chinese it is known as "fragrant plant" because of its unique, sweet aroma. Growing 1-2m high, it likes a lot of water, and will grow as a marginal plant on the edge of a dam or pond. In cooking it is used in rice dishes or tied in a bundle and cooked with food.



AQUAPONICS SYSTEM FOR SALE—\$4,500-00

Selling the complete setup. Includes all the pumps for water and air, filter, pipes, valves. Has four grow beds and two sump tanks plus a small tank for the little ones. Will throw in all the fish food I have, from fingerling pellets to a huge bag of 6mm pellets. The grow beds are all full of the clay/ceramic balls. The three 1000 litre tanks and swirl filter alone cost \$4600. Has only been used for about 18 months.

Vicky's contact details are provided in accompanying email.



Plant of the Month—Alyssum

(aka Sweet-Alison, Sweet Alyssum, Sweet-Alice)
Lobularia maritima

As a cascading fall of delicately perfumed blossoms, a filigree garden bed border or interplanted into pretty patterns, alyssum is a haven for beneficial insects and deserves a guest appearance throughout your garden. Not just for 'cottage gardens', sweet alyssum acts as a 'living mulch' shading the soil while beautifying your garden and promoting natural biocontrol against pests and weeds. For such a small flower, en masse they are chock full of nectar and pollen which hoverflies, in particular, love! Hoverflies lay their eggs amongst the tangle of alyssum blooms and their larvae have a voracious appetite for aphids and moth eggs.

Uses: Did you know that white alyssum is a top performer when it comes to attracting beneficial insects such as bees (native and European varieties), hoverflies, and parasitic wasps? In studies of roses and vineyards, alyssum (*Lobularia maritima* ssp *benthamii*) companion planting successfully reduced sucking aphids and fruit piercing moths by attracting these beneficial predators and parasites. Additionally, the pollination power of these beneficial bugs will have your garden producing more in no time! Frances Michaels, CEO of Green Harvest, mentioned on ROGI's visit in 2019 that she felt alyssum is the world's best insectary plant.

Alyssum is also edible and medicinal! While not overly sweet or flavourful, the fairy-sized flowers and leaves are a gentle garnish for cakes, or scattered in a salad. Alyssum was used traditionally for the treatment of fluid retention, colds, coughs and abdominal pain. (Always consult a health practitioner before starting any treatment, use in moderation and do not consume if you have any allergies or reactions).

Description: Related to mustards and crucifers, alyssum is considered an annual herb but succession planting will have alyssum

blooming almost all year round in your garden (under the right conditions). It is low growing with a long flowering cycle and it is a fabulous self sower once established!

Alyssum comes in a range of colours from the white of 'Carpet of Snow' to the pastel pink of 'Magic Circles' and violet flourish of 'Royal Carpet'. *Lobularia maritima* ssp *benthamii* is a hardier, vigorous and drought resistant variety used specifically for companion planting in crop gardens.

Growing information for the subtropics: Sow all year round 2-5mm deep, covered with fine sand or in seedling trays for later transplanting. Seed germinates best at 20°C soil temperature. Plant in full sun to part shade, spacing the seedlings at 10cm apart. Growing to a height of 12cm, alyssum tolerates a wide range of soil types, but consistent watering will see it thrive. Protect from snails and slugs (if required).

Interplanting: For best results in your veggie garden, apply the 'one in ten' principle: for every ten food plants, plant one flower. Alyssum is happy being 'interplanted' and this scattered arrangement will ensure that beneficial bugs have several landing pads in your garden to visit and spread their pollination and pest-defensive powers. Succession plant alyssum to ensure plenty of blooms throughout the year, although alyssum may see to that itself as it is such a good self-sower!

Alyssum interplanted with lettuce in a grid pattern
(Image source: The Garden Stamp)



Plant of the Month—Alyssum (continued)



Left: Cascade of white alyssum from Michelle's garden (author's photo)

Right: Dried alyssum stem with intact seed pods (left), small seeds, 1-2 mm (right) (author's photo)



Saving seed: The seeds are tiny and enclosed in individual, flat sheaths along the stem. Each seed pod has 2 seeds within it. Snip dry stems from the plant and rub the stems and sheaths to release the tan coloured seeds. It can be quite fiddly to separate the seeds from the chaff as the seeds are quite light, and will blow away with the chaff in even the gentlest of breezes. If you will not be storing the seeds very long, separating the seeds and chaff may not really be necessary. If you do feel the need, dabbing the seeds with a clean finger into an envelope, a pair of tweezers or a fine sieve may do the trick.

Where to buy: ROGI Seed Bank, Greenharvest.com.au, Bunnings, Diggers.com.au, local nurseries or saved seeds from an alyssum grower.

Article sources:

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/food-needs-flowers/9523262>

<https://biocontrolbeat.wordpress.com/2009/07/22/beneficials-sweet-on-alyssum/>

By Michelle Boutin



VALE TONY GALLAGHER

ROGI's honey man passed away on 25th June after a short illness.

You may have thought that Tony's only interest was bees and honey – after all, he had many hives in the gardens of many ROGI members and elsewhere ... and, like me, you'd be very wrong!

Tony was born in Vienna in 1937 to his Australian mother and Irish father. His father was a doctor who was studying orthopaedics in Austria. When the war broke out, young Tony (not a British citizen) was interred in a concentration camp in Britain.

After this somewhat inauspicious start, Tony became very accomplished. As a commercial fixed-wing and helicopter pilot, he was known to ferry ill people from Cooktown to Cairns Base hospital on occasion. He was a diving instructor. In his youth, he was in the army in Scotland. Tony was a sporting shooter and once won the World Masters championship when it was held in Australia.

Relevant to his interest in bees was the fact that he had a degree in horticulture. Tony loved attending ROGI meetings. So much so, Tony's wife Joy tells me, that normally he wouldn't arrive home from work until around 7.30pm. However, on the second Wednesday of each month he would leave work extra early so he could be on time for the ROGI meeting.

Tony will be missed at our ROGI meetings. Our condolences go to Joy and his children and grandchildren.

Capsicum pH Problem

Greg asked for advice on his capsicum which was growing in a raised wicking bed. The capsicum had yellowing of the leaves (*pictured right*) while the veins remain green. Greg felt that this was likely to be an iron deficiency, as pH measures had shown the soil to be slightly alkaline. The soil in this bed had previously been treated with sulphur to adjust for a raised pH. A test of the pH on one side of the capsicum had given a reading of pH7.5, while on the other side of the plant the reading had been pH7.

Greg noted that some snow peas that he had growing in the same bed about 25cm away were growing and producing well. A pH test near the snow peas provided a reading of pH6-6.5. Gennaro was surprised at the different pH measurements on the soil samples, and wondered if these samples had been taken at the surface of the soil or whether they had been taken at depth. pH measures of soil need to be taken at least 5cm down into the root zone, as surface level pH measurements are very imprecise and often unreliable.

The ideal pH for growing capsicums is below pH6, although chillies can tolerate a little higher pH. As the capsicum was showing yellowing of both new and mature leaves, it is likely that other deficiencies including manganese also need to be considered. The pH scale is a logarithmic one, therefore a pH of 7 is several times more alkaline than the ideal pH for capsicums, which means many nutrients would be locked away and not available to the plant's root system even if they were present in the soil.

As cold soils will further slow down the uptake of nutrients, it is likely that most treatments for the capsicum plant will take many months to become effective. Gennaro recommended that Greg mulch the capsicum thickly to keep the soil as warm as possible, as well as doing a liquid foliar spray of seaweed concentrate, liquid fertilizers (low in nitrogen rather than fish based ones) and some liquid silica and potash as well as trace elements. All this will



assist in improving the capsicum's health as well as other plants in the same bed. Greg has already started these actions.

In the short term, at around pH7 most legumes and brassicas will do well in this soil, and that is probably why Greg's snow peas are happy there.

In the long term, if Greg adds additional organic matter and/or compost, the actual pH will not be as much of an issue. However, if he decides that he wants to continue to grow acid loving plants there, he should keep applying small regular amounts of powdered sulphur to bring the pH down to around at least 6.3, which is where many vegetable plants tend to do okay.

Regarding inconsistencies within the same bed, Gennaro felt that if sulphur was applied many months ago there was unlikely to be large inconsistencies across the soil in the root zone. Conducting pH tests around the root zones should result in measurements within one to two decimal points across the bed.

Gennaro also advised that for future reference, it is best to plant capsicum seeds around the end of winter (inside until they germinate, somewhere above 20°C - otherwise they will take forever) so that Greg can make the most of our long warm season and get lots of capsicum fruits.



Passionfruit not producing fruit

Garry asked for advice on his red panama passionfruit. The passionfruit vine has been in an above ground bed for the last two years. For the first year it produced a lot of foliage and flowers but produced very little fruit.

At the end of the season Garry pruned the vine harshly and fertilised the soil with chicken manure. He has also top-dressed the vine with potassium and applied a fruit and flower fertiliser, trace elements and boron. However, he is facing the same problem this year, with a lot of foliage and flowers, but the flowers have been dropping off before they developed into fruit. Any fruit that does develop generally drops off the vine while it is still small.

Gennaro advised Garry that he needs to learn to neglect his passionfruit vine. A lot of plants flower and set fruit when they are neglected rather than when pampered. Gennaro felt that the fact that it's growing well shows that the vine is getting enough water, but also that probably Garry was overfeeding the vine which results in more foliage and only small fruit.

Gennaro also advised that passionfruit vines should only be tip pruned or, if a severe pruning is required due to size or other considerations, then no more than one half of the plant should be pruned at any one time. Heavy pruning usually removes fruiting branches and stresses plants in the wrong way, as this makes the plant concentrate on growing branches and leaves rather than developing fruit. It is much better to prune say the northern half one year and the southern half the next year.

Finally, Gennaro recommended that the vine be grown in the garden rather than a largish raised bed, and that in south-

east Qld it is best to grow "subtropical" varieties like *Panama Gold* and/or *Panama Red* from seed.

Linda advised that in her experience grafted passionfruit failed to fruit despite good growth and she has previously removed three vines that were grafted. Two vines that Linda had grown from seed and planted in pots with large holes in the base (so they could grow through and into the ground), thrived and fruited really well.

Linda has a four-year-old passionfruit vine that continues to fruit, with only gentle pruning to remove dead wood and a bit of length. She advised that she does not fertilise her passionfruit vines at all.

Garry responded by noting that the biggest and sweetest passionfruit he remembers (which he was trying to emulate) had been grown by his father-in-law. Both plants were grown from seed rather than grafted, and despite different soil treatments—one in terrible soil where the vine was totally neglected, and the other in soil with lots of organic matter and mulch—they both had fruited well. He agreed that both plants were raised from seed which had been acclimatised to SEQ conditions.

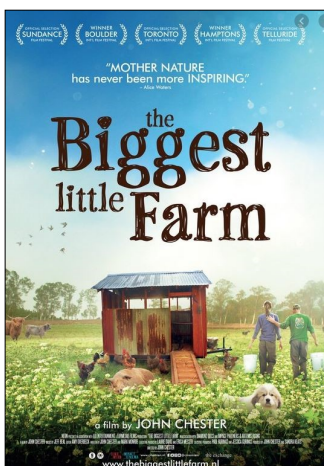
PLANT CLINIC

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

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

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

Film Review—The Biggest Little Farm



'The Biggest Little Farm' is a hearty documentary about that slumbering dream many of us entertain ... Chucking it all in, grabbing the dog, and setting up our own organic farm.

When the dog's barking got them evicted, Molly and John Chester's (not so obvious) solution was to take him to a farm. A vibrant, biodiverse, organic wonderland, to be created from 200 acres of sun scorched barren land north of LA. Molly and John have no farming experience and

no money. They balance these shortfalls with oodles of enthusiasm and a heavy reliance on a sage (but short-lived) permie mentor called Alan York.

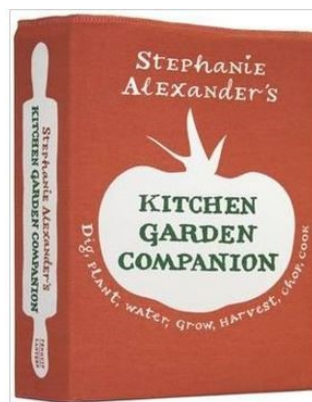
Although the idea was all honeybees and nectarines, the idealists are forced to reckon with both major setbacks (the gophers are killing the trees, the coyote are killing the chickens and the sow is trying to kill herself) as well as more minor hurdles (the sow has a rooster boyfriend named Greasy, and the ducks are over-fertilising the dam).

John is the husband, a lifelong cinematographer, and our narrator. It is his voice and his thoughts which carry us along, through jubilation, regret, doubt, anger, confusion, hurt, and acceptance. He isn't dogmatic in pushing a worldview, instead just telling his story, doubts and setbacks included. His keen and sympathetic eye for detail reward us with so many delightful moments – the feeding of hummingbird chicks, the effect of a raindrop on a bee ... The cinematography is totally superb.

Spanning the first ten years of Apricot Lane Farm, this film draws you in gently, delights you with details, engages you with personal stories, and challenges you with ideas. Grab the popcorn, this one's good for the soul.

By Lara Brits

Book Review



Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden Companion

Author Stephanie Alexander is a cook, food writer and restaurateur who is renowned for her work in establishing kitchen gardens in Australian primary schools.

The subtitle of this 771 page book is *dig, plant, water, grow, harvest, chop, cook*. A fitting description of what this book seeks to impart to its reader! It is not just a cook book, but a journey from the ground to the table—

with chapters devoted to getting a vege garden started, equipment needed (in the garden as well as the kitchen), a planting chart (hot, temperate and cooler climates included), and her expert advice for cooking with kids.

Then its on to the ingredients, in A-Z order. Each one with beautiful photos, and instructions on: the family it belongs to, soil type, soil preparation, climate, position, when to plant, the water requirements, how to plant, successive planting, harvest period, pests and organic control, companion planting, special information and how much to plant for a family of four. This is followed by growing and harvesting information, container planting, preparing and sharing, and finally some advice "especially for kids". Finally there are the recipes (over 250!), and it's easy to see why Stephanie is one of Australia's best-loved cooks.

I do have one criticism of this book, and that is the planting chart on pages 36-39 and the "when to plant" advice for each fruit/vegetable. Living in Victoria, the author does not have the experience of a hot climate and what will grow well. Cabbages, cauliflower and potatoes for example, should NOT be planted in January as advised. Accurate information for our climate can be garnered from the seed sowing guide in the ROGI newsletter or Annette McFarlane's vegetable and fruit growing books.

By Ann Roffey

Coming Events

JULY	Sunday 12	Garden Visit (<i>fully booked</i>)
	Wednesday 15	ROGI Meeting
	Sunday 26	Oaklands Workshop (<i>see p. 18, 21</i>)
AUGUST	Wednesday 12	ROGI Meeting & AGM
	Sunday 23	Garden Visit (<i>see p. 18</i>)

Membership Information

- **Cash** payment at ROGI meeting
- **Cheques** made payable to *Redland Organic Growers Inc* - pay at meeting or to PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
- **Direct Deposit** to BSB 633 000, Account Number 136137296 (Bendigo Bank, Middle St, Cleveland)
- **IMPORTANT!** Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid.

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

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

Garden Events August—September

Bethania Street Community Garden

Bethania Street, Lota

We are holding the following workshops in August / September but spaces will be limited due to social distancing regulations.

SOLAR COOKING

Thursday 20th August, 10.00am-1.00pm

Learn how solar cooking works, view a variety of solar cookers and make your own simple solar cooker to take home.

Cost \$10 - Bookings Essential on 0439 048 585

INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC GARDENING

Sunday 30th August, 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

VEGGIE GARDENING FOR A YEAR-ROUND SUPPLY

Sunday 13th September, 9.30am-11.30pm

We have the opportunity to grow food all year round. Topics will include our South East Queensland seasons, plant choices and how to plan for a harvest throughout the year.

Free - Bookings Essential on 0439 048 585

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

The Queensland Garden Expo (normally held in July) which had been rescheduled to 19/20/21 September is now CANCELLED.

Instead, a 3-day online event will be held THIS WEEKEND, 10,11,12 July at:

https://www.facebook.com/qldhomegardenexpo/?mc_cid=18450e57ff&mc_eid=62b3a34777

Workshops & Garden Visits

Upcoming garden visits will be limited to 20-30 people only. To book, please email Kathy at kathypetrik@tpg.com.au

Sunday, 26 July —Workshop at Oaklands St Community Garden

A double workshop featuring Bed Prep and Cassava uses and cooking. Cost will be covered by ROGI. Maximum 20 people. More info on page 21.

Sunday, 23 August—Wendy Lee, Belmont

This 2½ acre property features a vegetable garden, original bush, Russell Zabel native bee hives and chooks. Wendy is also starting a food forest, and would appreciate advice/help.

There will be plant sales at the garden visit, but no afternoon tea. If you wish, bring a chair and your own food and drink.

We'd like to hear from you!

For example, send us:

- A story about your garden
- A photo of an interesting plant
- An article about an unusual plant
- A request for items or information
- Specific garden or nutrition information
- A recipe for home-grown produce
- A notice that you have something to give away or sell
- A handy technique or tip
- A gardening problem solved
- Anything to do with organic growing
- A review of a ROGI library book

Please send your items to the editor and help keep the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant.

Email info@rogi.com.au

The August Newsletter deadline is 29 JULY 2020



BUSINESS FOR SALE



Do you like the horticulture industry? Rarely does a business become available for purchase that has excellent long-term sustainable growth and profit, in a huge expanding, consumable market, which also boasts the potential to scale up sales exponentially!

Having followed their passion in the horticultural industry for over twenty years, co-founders Garry Fraser and Des Warnock of **Batphone Australia Pty Ltd**, manufacturers and distributors of Plant of Health® eco friendly fertilisers, TUFFYS™ unbreakable tubs and other brilliant products, have decided to offer the business for sale. With pending retirement and other opportunities, it is time to pass the business to the next generation.

Batphone Australia Pty Ltd is based in Brisbane and has been manufacturing and distributing eco friendly horticultural products nationally for over twenty years. They also export fertilisers to Japan and India.

"We have enjoyed the past twenty years in the industry, and it's a great opportunity for new owners to buy into an established business, with great proven products, that are well accepted in the market." Des said. "This business is also Covid-19 proof - as people turn to gardening, which is growing due to lockdown with a significant jump in sales!"

Interested parties should email info@batphone.com.au with their company and/or contact details for a copy of the company profile/prospectus.

ROGI Committee Positions

The ROGI Annual General Meeting will be held on the 12 August, 2020. All committee positions will be declared vacant at the beginning of the AGM.

PRESIDENT

Leads and inspires ROGI
Delivers monthly meetings to members
Seeks guest speakers, field trips and other opportunities
Promotes ROGI and organic gardening to the community

VICE PRESIDENT

Assists the president in planning and delivery of meetings, initiatives and events as above
Stands in if president is absent

SECRETARY

Keeps records of the business of ROGI, including the rules
Records office-holders and trustees of the association
Sets agendas and records minutes of committee meetings
Completes and sends documents to Office of Fair Trading after AGM
Manages correspondence

TREASURER

Handles all monies paid or received and issues receipts
Deposits monies into ROGI bank account
Makes payments from ROGI funds with appropriate authority
Complies with Associations Incorporation Act
Submits report, balance sheet or financial statement to the committee on a monthly basis
Has custody of all accounting records of ROGI
Reviews transactions online prior to all meetings

COMMITTEE MEMBERS (4)

These may be Office Bearers of the club, or they may be members who want to be a part of the decision-making process.
The eight committee members (listed above) are expected to attend ROGI committee meetings. Currently these are usually held in the last week of the month.

POSITIONS VACANT: You may nominate for any committee position (vacant or not) if you wish to be part of the decision-making process. All nominations must be lodged in writing on the appropriate form beforehand, with a proposer and a seconder and signed by the nominee.

ROGI OFFICE BEARERS

Internal Events Secretary

Sources and coordinates member workshops, garden visits and field trips

Membership Secretary

Updates membership list monthly; sends to committee
Compiles list of visitors each month
Sends an individual welcome letter to each new member
Sends reminders to unpaid members in February each year

PR & Communications Co-ordinator

Handles advertising and press releases
Arranges maintenance of website and social media
Assists with newsletter compilation and editing

Public Events Co-ordinator

Organises public ROGI events (eg. Green Heart Fair, Indigi Day Out)

Website Manager

Manages and maintains the ROGI website

Newsletter Editor

Liaises with president, committee, and office bearers to publish their articles, upcoming events and other relevant articles/news
Develops ideas and arranges for members or self to write articles
Arranges for write-ups from events and speakers
Edits for accuracy of spelling, grammar, sources and facts
Sends finished document to president for review and distribution

Seed Bank Co-ordinator

Purchases, saves or procures fresh quality seed for seed bank
Maintains records of seed stock and rotates to maintain viability
Sells seeds at ROGI meetings, garden visits and events
Arranges for envelopes, labels and seed-packing days
Ensures seed bank has seasonal stock

Library Co-ordinator

Maintains records of books in stock and all loans; acquires new books

Supper Co-ordinator

Supplies milk, teas, coffee, sugar, ROGI herbal tea and keeps receipts
Lays out supper provided by members on table/s
Ensures kitchen is clean after meetings with help of volunteers
Launders tea towels, etc

AV Desk Operator/s (two or more people could share the job)

Operates desk on meeting nights

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.

At this stage, we ask that you NOT bring larger pots, as we are not having the swap/share/giveaway table.

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, you also help to raise funds for ROGI which we use to benefit our members.

Seed Sowing Guide

July

Artichoke: Jerusalem Artichoke
Asparagus
Beans: French
Beetroot
Broccoli
Cabbage
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Endive
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Peas
Potatoes
Radish
Silverbeet
Swede
Sweet Potato
Tomato
Turnip

August

Artichoke: Jerusalem Artichoke
Asparagus
Beans: French
Beetroot
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Eggplant
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Okra
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radish
Silverbeet
Squash
Sweet Potato
Tomato
Zucchini

For a list of the seed bank stock, please go to the ROGI website www.rogi.com.au and click on the RESOURCES tab.

Keep in mind that 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.

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

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PR, COMMUNICATIONS	Gail Bruce	info@rogi.com.au
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PUBLIC EVENTS	Ruth Bolomey	events@rogi.com.au
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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

Oaklands Street Community Garden Double Workshop 2–5 pm, Sunday 26th July Bed Prep and Cassava Uses & Cooking

We're very excited to be offering a special double workshop to ROGI folks! Our first beds were established 15 years ago and still produce great tasting organic produce.

Cassava is an easy to grow root vegetable which provides a third of the world's carbohydrates. We'll be serving up some cassava-based snacks for afternoon tea and prepping beds for beans, peas and carrots.

Topics Covered:

Gardening:

- * Why prep a bed?
- * Planning and crop rotation
- * Prepping for and planting beans, peas and carrots

Cassava:

- * Propagation and growing
- * Make fried cassava chips
- * Discover sweet & savoury snacks; learn to prepare tubers



Oaklands Street Community Garden is behind ALDI shopping centre at Alexandra Hills. Access Oaklands Street from the roundabout behind Alex Hills Shopping Centre, there is a sign on the corner. Turn right at the end and follow the path to the gate. Please drive slowly once you're inside.

Due to Covid-19 regulations, please bring your own gloves, fork and/or shovel. Please wear SunSmart clothes and sturdy closed shoes.

Maximum group size is 20. Please book your spot by emailing Kathy at kathypetrik@tpg.com.au

For more information talk to Terry on 0408 259 445.