Next meeting: Thursday 9 June 2022

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 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
- Observe social distancing
- A small plate of food for supper
- 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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PLEASE NOTE: ALL members are now welcome to attend ROGI meetings. Visitors may attend, \$5 entry.

ROGI webpage: ROGI Email: <u>www.rogi.com.au</u> <u>info@rogi.com.au</u>



Jerry Coleby-Williams tries on a gifted ROGI hat for size at a recent field trip to his sustainable house and garden. More photos and info on pages 11 and 12.

Diana's Doodlings

t's winter and my garden is still in need of a good clean-up after being away for a couple of months - remove spent crops and crop residues, refurbish garden beds with compost, and clear away any fallen leaves. If you are busy tidying up your garden like I am, just remember not to overdo it, and spare a thought for the insects that share our garden as they need food and shelter over winter.

It might be cold and wet, but it's still a magical time of the year to grow some of my favourite vegetables. They grow so much better and sweeter, in my opinion. These include Asian greens (such as bok choy, gai choy, choy sum, kai lan and mizuna), brassicas, salad vegetables (like lettuce, rocket, cress), peas, leeks and coriander. If you have yet to start on your winter crop, it is still not too late to sow seeds or plant out seedlings. You may find the information in the "Seed Sowing Guide" on the ROGI website handy. Don't forget to grow some annual flowers such as nasturtium, sweet peas, sweet alyssum, snap dragons or pansies, as they not only add colour to the garden, but also provide for insects including bees - which our next guest speaker, John Klumpp, will be focusing upon in his talk at the upcoming June meeting.

Unfortunately, the Saturday Member's Meeting scheduled for the 21st May at Oaklands Street Community Garden had to be postponed due to wet weather. A new date will soon be set.

There are some interesting garden visits planned for the next few months, when our fellow members open their gate and share their gardens with us. These are great opportunities to get some gardening tips, gain insights into garden design and/or maintenance, share knowledge and exchange information amongst members. If you have yet to go on such garden visits, consider taking part in the upcoming ones. Event information can be found in the newsletter and you can book on TeamApp.

🕋 ardening can be a very personal experience in our own $igsir {igsir}$ private gardens. Yet a large part of gardening experience revolves around sharing, love and fellowship. This sort of fellowship can often be found by joining a club like ROGI. ROGI creates a platform for people who share a similar interest to come together to socialise, learn new skills and have some fun. We are tapping into the collective wisdom of the group, which is considerable. All of us will benefit greatly if each of us contribute by sharing what we know. The sharing can be done through a topic focused talk, or just a short sharing of what's happening in your garden. This can include plants you are growing for the season, an interesting garden structure you are putting in, garden pests that you have encountered, a garden tool that you would like to introduce to us etc. Or if you prefer, you can also share this knowledge by contributing an article to the newsletter. So, please don't be shy and come tap on my shoulder for a chat.

If you would like to play a more active role in contributing to the club, I invite you to approach me or any member of the committee to have a chat. There are always opportunities for you to help out at the library, registration table, grow seedlings for ROGI plant sales, manage supper or take up a role in the next Management Committee!

Enjoy the cool, and I hope to see you at the next ROGI meeting.

Happy gardening! Diana Yeo, Vice President

June Meeting

Stingless Native Bees



John Klumpp, author of 'Australian Stingless Bees' has been interested in these tiny bees for many years, and recently an upsurge of commercial interest has led to more scientific attention and research.

The European honeybee has been very heavily studied but knowledge of our own bees is still limited, so there are discoveries still to be made about many aspects of our native bees.

One recent discovery has been the special sugars contained in stingless bee honey which appear to be beneficial for human health.

John's special interest is in the difference in natural hives of the two types of bees. Should we be building miniature honeybee hives to house native stingless bees when their natural nest structures and honey storage pots are so very different? John is now designing hives with the stingless bees' needs in mind.

Most of the usual attractions will be there - Plant Clinic, the wellstocked library, some seedlings and plants, and the Seed Bank. Plus local honey, jam, wax wraps etc.

Bring along your unwanted gardening related items and surplus plants, cuttings etc for our Swap-and-Share table.

ROGI members and visitors welcome. Visitors: \$5 entry. Members: free

Please bring finger food (preferably home-made) to share at supper. Free tea and coffee.

ROGI Events

Thursday 9 June ROGI MEETING

Tuesday 14 June - 7 to 8.30pm SEED SAVERS GROUP * 8 Silverash Court, Capalaba

New members are most welcome. We will be saving home grown seed for sharing with our ROGI members. You'll get to take home free seed too. We're also looking at dahlia seed and how to save and sow them. This follows on from the 2021 meeting when we grew dahlias from tuber.

We will also focus on what to grow from seed and seedling for our gardens in winter. Please bring along paper bags or envelopes to take seeds home in, seeds of plants that you'd like to share, or seeds you've grown that need separating. We'll do that as a group and save some in the Seed Bank. We'll also grow seeds in punnets and pots that you can take home and look after for sale at our ROGI meetings.

Saturday 18 June GARDEN VISIT * Erik van Zuilekom, Thornlands

Hailing from a totally different climate in Victoria, Erik has established an amazing subtropical garden in a short time. There's been a steep learning curve, but the results speak for themselves.

CALLING ALL ISLANDERS!

We are keen to make contact with ROGI members who live on the islands in the Bay. The hope is to share garden and plant information with them and also learn about the history of the islands. (Russel Island had a pineapple cannery years ago for example). Our phone number is 0448 850 876. We live in Cleveland, so it's easy to get to the islands. *Peter & Rhonda Brigg*

* Please book to attend event on TeamApp or email ROGI Events Coordinator Toni at: <u>tonibowler@hotmail.com</u>. Address will be supplied closer to event date, please check your text/email messages.

May Speaker - John Daly By Jill Nixon

The Magic of Compost

Magic indeed! If we went to the May ROGI meeting expecting to hear 'more of the same' about compost, we would have been misled. Not disappointed. Those who paid close attention, may have been awed even by the amelioration of major, seemingly intractable soil problems that John has carried out by using particular combinations of compost!

John wasn't there to tell us the 'rules' about greens and browns, temperatures, and types of containers. He touched on it, of course, because no talk about compost should exclude it. We have much of this information on the ROGI website:

https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/compost-web.gif

Also, we had planned an afternoon ROGI meeting including a compost workshop for 21 May, during which we'd cover a lot of the basics. Unfortunately, this outdoors meeting has been postponed to later in the year due to heavy rain and muddy grounds.

Before we talk about the magic ...

John acknowledged that when he was studying at the agricultural college at Gatton decades ago, they didn't teach about soil or microbes or micro-flora and micro-fauna ... and many colleges still don't! So he has learned what he knows through experience and research. What John knows now:

- What is in the soil feeds the plants; what is in the plants feeds us. Make sure the soil is nutrient-rich by adding well-made compost.
- Soil is a bank of carbon, microbes, water and nutrients. You can't keep withdrawing from a bank without making regular deposits.

- Compost is fuel for micro-fauna and micro-flora. It provides a source of organic carbon, water and nutrients, so they can break down cellulose and other complex compounds into minerals and slow-release nutrient reserves.
- Soil organic carbon (OC) is the essence of soil health because of its contribution to soil fertility, soil structure, nutrient and water-holding capacity, and to the survival, activity and diversity of soil animals and microbes.
- If compost with sufficient OC but deficient in nutrients is added to soil, microbial activity will be stimulated, drawing available nutrients from the soil. Drawdown of nitrogen and phosphorus can occur leading to poor plant health.
- The smell of chook manure comes from ammonia (NH³) as the nitrogen is escaping. Composting the manure creates humus and fulvic acid, thus reducing nutrient loss.
- Biochar (stable carbon) added to compost when you add manures is beneficial, as it becomes a repository of microbes, reduces odour by absorbing various gases, adds bulk, and sequesters carbon. Composting helps to charge the biochar with nutrients without breaking down the biochar substance in the process.

There are four stages of compost:

- 1. **Consolidation** where all the factors involved begin to become active and the heating process hasn't begun can be a few days for 'hot' compost.
- 2. **The active stage**, where things start heating up through microbial activity and temperatures reach 55-70°C, and this needs to be maintained for 4–8 weeks. Reaching this temperature is important for well-made compost.
- 3. The cooling stage can take from 8 to 18 weeks.
- The curing stage, after which the compost is 'mature', from 18

 22 weeks is very important. Mature compost is when the CEC (Cation Exchange Capacity the ability of soil/compost to supply plant nutrients), nutrient-holding ability and water hold-ing capacity reach their optimum as soil conditioners.

May Speaker—John Daly (continued)

Ideally, compost should be mature and biologically stable. Otherwise, it may contain:

- seeds, spores, weeds and animal pathogens
- excessive amounts of plant waxes and lignums which create water-repellent conditions
- plant chemicals that are toxic to seedlings and other plants
- excessive levels of ammonium nitrogen (smelly) toxic to seedlings and other plants
- incomplete microbial activity of composted products (stage 2) which may cause nitrogen and phosphorus drawdown affecting plant growth

Immature or partially-mature compost should not be used as a fertiliser to grow plants.

So what was the 'magic'?

Here we are not talking about just how magical it seems that all these bits and pieces can be converted to such an amazing substance – everyday magic. John makes super-magic compost.

He told us about his contribution to Singapore's Gardens by the Bay. Singapore has terrible soil, and the chosen area consisted of acid sulphate soil - best described as 'marine muds'. It was toxic and nothing could grow in it. Engineers decided that the only thing to do was to remove this mud and dump it somewhere (not sure where that was going to be!) This process would have necessitated three truckloads every two minutes all day and night for two years. John accepted the task of ameliorating five acres of this mud, rather than having it removed. What did he use? Compost. Perfectly-made, biologically-stable compost. It is always easier and simpler to bring in suitable additives to help the native soil grow plants than to remove everything and start again with ... what? So what could potentially have become an environmental disaster became a world-standard showpiece.

Airlie Beach Marina is another example of acid-sulphate soil that John's company was able to improve. Another piece of magic closer to home is Brisbane's Airport Drive, which had been built on dredged sand. Sand is very porous. As landscaping was being undertaken, it was noticed that the organic fertiliser pellets were leaching into the water table and thus into Moreton Bay – not good. Similar to Singapore, this situation was able to be ameliorated with a quality soil conditioner (i.e. mature compost), in this case to hold the organic matter in the soil.

To be able to achieve such great things with compost in a much smaller way in our gardens is a worthy goal. Give it a go. John's website: <u>https://www.ecoenvironment.com.au</u>



The sand at Airport Drive

Same area (from a different angle) being able to support growth after using John's compost.

Note the high tide water in the drain.



Citrus Melanose By Linda Brennan, Ecobotanica

At this time of the year, we are harvesting our citrus fruits. We'd all love, smooth, shiny skinned citrus but it's not always the case. You may notice that your fruits, instead of being blemish free, are coated in a brownish film, or dry scabby spots, or even strands of dry brownish markings. That's citrus melanose. It's a fungal disease *Diaporthe citri*, that tends to get worse as a tree matures without previous treatment for this problem. It spreads early in the season and may be especially bad if the season has been a wet one, as the spores are dispersed through foliage and stream onto the fruit.

Spores also known as pustules, are evident as raised brown specks on the citrus skin and leaves. These specks are known as *flyspeck* melanose. They can be scraped off with the fingernail. A tree severely affected may have foliage yellowing. Melanose flowing onto the fruit from affected branches, twigs and leaves, beginning at the stem end, may resemble little streams. This distribution pattern is called 'tear staining'. Whereas fruits that pick up the disease early and severely, look like they have crusty caking. This is known as *mudcake* melanose.

So, what can you do to ensure next season's crop is healthy and beautiful?

- 1. **Orchard health.** Prune away dead material from your tree. The fungal disease lives on dead material. Do not allow fallen fruit to rot on the ground - solarise them until they turn to mush before composting.
- 2. Paint your citrus trees annually with Biodynamic Paste in late winter after harvest. Paint as much of the bark, trunk and branches as possible. The paste can also be liquified and sprayed onto leaves using a special nozzle from Biodynamic Agriculture Australia Ltd, Bellingen - <u>https://biodynamics.net.au/</u>

<u>shop-our-range/#equipment</u>. Biodynamic Tree Paste is available from ROGI member Rohanne Young, phone 0418 983 203.

3. **Spray with Copper oxychloride**. Spray the whole tree around the time of petal fall, when the tiny fruit are starting to form. A further follow up is required 4-6 weeks after the first spraying, and possibly again if the disease is widespread, once the fruit enlarges. The copper must cover the fruit in order to be effective, so make sure you spray each fruit well.

Mite also affect citrus skins and the damage is easily mistaken. There are a variety of mites affecting citrus in our area. Mite damage affects only citrus skin, not the fruit inside. Broad mite affected fruit has a silvery dry skin, whereas Rust mite create a rust coloured stockinged effect, increasing as the fruit matures.

Specific Treatment: Follow tree health as for melanose plus... predatory mites can eat up the problematic ones; metallic blue ladybirds feast on mites, and the use of sprays (eg *Eco Oil*) will smother and kill mites.

Can we eat the fruit? Citrus can still be eaten and juiced, even when heavily affected. The fungal disease and mites affect only the skin of the fruit and doesn't affect the flavour of the fruit.



Unripe fruits show early melanose effects, beginning at the stem end of the fruit.

Citrus Melanose (continued)



This ripe Rangpur lime shows evidence of 'mudcake' melanose.



Melanose pustules can be seen on this Rangpur lime leaf, together with typical yellowing that occurs due to the fungal disease. Spray the whole tree including leaves, fruit and bark as outlined in the above article.



Rust mite has created an all over bronzing or stockinged effect on this Meyer lemon.



This ripe lemonade has patchy effects. This is called tear staining.

Upcoming Garden Events

11-12 June 2022

Cactus & Succulent Society of Qld Annual Show Saturday 9.00am-3.30pm; Sunday 9.00am-3.00pm Admission \$5.00 (children under 14 free) Belmont Shooting Complex, 1485 Old Cleveland Rd, Belmont Featuring display, competition thousands of plants for sale at very reasonable prices. Cultural advice, information, book sales, plant minding, plenty of free parking, refreshments. Website: cssq.org.au

8-10 July 2022 Queensland Garden Expo 2022 Nambour Showgrounds

Queensland Garden Expo is a 'must see' in 2022 for green thumbs and novice gardeners alike. Held in the Sunshine Coast hinterland town of Nambour from 8th to 10th July, this three-day expo is Queensland's premier gardening event attracting visitors from all over Australia. Some of Australia's leading Gardening experts take part in three days of lectures, demonstrations, and workshops. Go to <u>https://qldgardenexpo.com.au/</u> for info and booking details.

11-15 September 2022

Garden Clubs of Australia National Convention 2022

Registrants at the convention will have the opportunity to join likeminded friends for a wonderful experience with opportunities to visit horticultural and other attractions in and around Townsville and tropical North Queensland.

*Registrations close 30 June 2022. To request a full registration package, please email <u>townsville2022@gmail.com</u> or contact Shirley Haslam on 0438 253 312.

Plant of the Month - Peas By Helen Stebhens

Peas are generally cool season legumes grown for their pods and seeds; they are part of the Fabaceae family. Like other members of this family, peas are nitrogen-fixing plants, with nodules along their roots in which symbiotic soil bacteria live. These bacteria convert nitrogen from the air into a form that plants can use as a nutrient.

Edible Pea Types grown in Australia

Garden Peas, *Pisum sativum* – also known as green peas, these are slightly sweeter than snow peas but need to be shelled as the pods are tough and inedible. Green peas are low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt. They are a good source of protein, vitamins, and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin B6, folate, and magnesium. They are also an excellent source of fibre, vitamins C and K, thiamin, and manganese.

Snow Peas, *Pisum sativum var. macrocarpon* – these produce flat, wide edible pods that are sweet in flavour and have a crunchy texture.

Sugar Snap Peas, Pisum sativum var. saccharatum – also known as snap peas or honey peas. These are a cross between garden peas and snow peas.

The above are cool season plants in Queensland. The below are more comfortable in hotter weather!

Pigeon Pea, Cajanus cajan is a perennial nitrogen-fixing, drought tolerant shrub growing 2-3 m, suitable for growing in warm temperate, sub-tropical and tropical areas. It is an excellent animal forage for warmer areas, providing high protein seeds, edible leafy greens and shelter. It is also useful for on-site mulch production. In India, pigeon pea is an important food plant - the seeds are 25% protein and can be eaten fresh or as split dried peas.

Dried seeds are used for dhal in India and contain five times more Vitamin A and C than green peas. The leaves and young shoots can be eaten cooked, they are fibrous and have a strong spicy odour. Sow autumn (frost-free areas only), spring and summer into warm soil.



As well as being low in saturated fat, carbohydrates, salt, and natural sugars, pigeon peas are a good source of protein and copper, and a high-quality source of fibre, folate, and manganese.

Info sources:

https://greenharvest.com.au/Plants/SoilImprovers.html, https://www.tropicalpermaculture.com/pigeon-pea.html

Chickpeas, Cicer arietinum (also known as Egyptian pea or Garbanzo bean) appear in early recordings in Turkey about 3500 BCE and in France 6790 BCE. India produces the most chickpeas worldwide, but they are grown in more than 50 countries. An excellent source of carbohydrate, protein, fibre, B vitamins, and some minerals, they are a nutritious staple of many diets.

Chickpeas were first grown in Australia as a commercial crop in Goondiwindi during the early 1970s. There are two main varieties of chickpeas that are cultivated, *Kabuli* and *Desi*. You can easily spot the difference between the two varieties by the colour of their flowers. *Kabuli* chickpeas have white flowers whereas the *desi* variety has purple flowers. *Kabuli* variety is also slightly taller than *desi* chickpeas.

Chickpeas are very low in cholesterol and low in saturated fat and salt. They are a good source of fibre, protein, and copper and a very good source of folate and manganese.

Plant of the Month - Peas (continued)

Determinate and Indeterminate Plants

There are two types of pea plants, the shorter bush or dwarf types whose growth habit is described as determinate, and the taller climbing indeterminate types.

Bush peas, also known as dwarf peas, are low growing, as low as 30-40cm high, but many can grow up to 70-100cm, and therefore may need staking or some other form of support. They're ideal for growing in pots and containers.

Climbing pea varieties can grow up to 2m in height and will need a support such as a tee-pee or trellis to grow over. Several pea plants can be grown over a single support structure. This form of vertical gardening can be very productive, while taking up little space in the garden.



Shiras peas (left) and Greenfeast peas (right) are both for sale in the ROGI Seed Bank.

Growing Traditional Peas (Garden/Snow/Sugarsnap)

Peas are planted in the cooler seasons in subtropical areas from April to September, and can be harvested in around 9-11 weeks. They like slightly alkaline soil, which can be prepared by adding a small amount of dolomite or garden lime. Mix in some compost to improve drainage if the soil is compacted, as peas do not like 'wet feet.' As Jerry Coleby-Williams noted on Gardening Australia, manure can add too much nitrogen. This encourages peas and beans to produce weak, sappy growth and invites mildew and aphid attack - their two worst enemies. Jerry soaks peas and beans in water overnight and adds a pinch of Epsom salts, advising that "the magnesium really helps to stir seed from dormancy into active growth."

Sow pea seeds at a depth of approximately three times the diameter of the seed. They're best sown directly into the soil when soil temperatures are between 8°C and 24°C. Once planted and watered in, avoid watering the seeds as they tend to rot easily from overwatering. When plants start growing, it is best to water the soil near their roots without wetting the leaves, as they are susceptible to powdery mildew. When pea plants start producing, pick the pods every day to increase production.

Good companion plants for peas are potatoes, radishes, carrots and turnips. Members of the onion family, such as shallots, onions and garlic are bad companions, as their roots exude antibiotic compounds into the soil which inhibit the nitrogen-fixing bacteria associated with the roots of leguminous plants.

Mulch around the base of the plant with organic mulch like sugar cane or pea straw to retain moisture. Climbing peas will need a supporting trellis to climb on as they grow. Choose a trellis that allows air movement through plants. Sow successive crops every 4-5 weeks to extend your harvest window.

Plant of the Month - Peas (continued)

Growing Pigeon Peas

Pigeon pea is a short-lived perennial growing for about five years before it dies. This plant produces large quantities of pods each filled with between three and seven small seeds. The seeds can be removed from the pod and eaten raw while still green, or the pods can be left on the plant to dry and the seeds collected as a dried pulse. It is a vigorous grower and produces lots of material for adding bulk to compost heaps; it can be cut back each year after the seeds are collected. The yellow and red pea flowers are quite attractive and provide nectar to beneficial insect pollinators. These bushes also make great windbreaks when planted along the outskirts of a garden.

This plant is well suited for tropical and sub-tropical climates and is best sown during spring, summer or autumn. It will crop well even on poor soils. Grow in full sun, sowing seed to 2cm deep. Soak seed overnight in water to promote even germination. Seeds will



take between 2 and 3 weeks to germinate. The time before the first pods can be harvested is quite variable and can be anything from ten weeks up to a year, depending on the sowing time and growing conditions.

Pick the pods green if you want fresh peas or leave them on the plant to dry. Pigeon peas are very heavy croppers, and the seed pods grow in big clusters at the end of the branches. It's easy to gather a good amount for a meal.

Growing Chickpeas

Sow seeds directly into the soil, as it does not transplant well. Chickpeas need full sun for at least 6 to 8 hours. Although they can grow in partial shade, the yield will be reduced dramatically.

Within 100 days after sprouting, your chickpeas will be ready for harvesting. They are best when they are still green. You can eat the peas directly off the vine.

If you are planning to get dry seeds, wait until the pods turn brown. The pods will split easily exposing the seeds inside. Each pod has one to three seeds inside. As the plant continues to produce fruit for some time, your harvesting season can continue for several months after planting before the frost comes.

Take care when harvesting chickpeas. The pods have spiky ends that could cause pain to fingers if they slipped inside the fingernails (use gloves!)



May Field Trip - Jerry Coleby-Williams

Report and photos by Margaret Sear

A Model, Affordable Sustainable House and Garden in Brisbane

Bellis is not an attempt at self-sufficiency but an indicator of how we can turn the suburban sprawl of Australia's cities to an environmental advantage without compromising our Australian lifestyle. We grow food, we harvest rainwater and solar energy and we treat and reuse our wastewater - all things that can be done with ease by any homeowner in Australia's suburbs.

Go to Jerry's website for more information on his horticultural and sustainable journey: <u>https://jerry-coleby-williams.net/</u>



Above:

Front footpath replanted with sweet potato slips. It took Jerry 7 years to get his footpath soil corrected. After he planted it out, the Council saw it was successful and they banned verge gardens. It took another 11 years till his verge garden was accepted and approved.

Right:

Discussion in front yard – after we all walked through a bucket containing a disinfectantsoaked towel (precaution to avoid unknown pathogens entering his property).

Below:

Jerry does a lot of propagating!







May Field Trip - Jerry Coleby-Williams (continued)









Below: Property excess water area that is the last place to collect excess water in times of heavy rains etc – so that nothing leaves the property. This is what waters the front gardens.





My Love Affair ... with Chokos By Roberta Bonnin

Like many of you growing up in South East Qld, my family's staple vegetables were cabbages, cauliflowers, green beans, peas, carrots, potatoes, pumpkin, onions, and CHOKOs. Parsley was the go-to herb. This was before we had tasted the produce of our Greek, Italian and Vietnamese neighbours, who enjoyed eating zucchini, eggplant, broccoli, okra, chicoria, snake beans, bok choy, snow peas, ginger and every type of garden herb.

Nowadays, the offer of surplus chokos is often greeted by a polite silence because of bad memories of watery veg. Sometimes there's a tentative acceptance of "just a couple please". There's no surprise about these reactions to the maligned choko. In former days, chokos were mostly left to grow as big as possible to feed a hungry family, then boiled and served – with butter, salt and pepper if you were lucky, or white sauce with parsley if you were posh. Sometimes it appeared as mock apple or mock pear in a chutney or pie. As a child, my nephew thought it was called choko because it might choke you when you ate it!

But I'm a choko lover. In my student days I had the opportunity to cook in what would now be called a pop-up restaurant in St Lucia. On the menu my vegetarian dish was a layered choko, pumpkin and macadamia gratin. I also discovered that chokos could be picked very small, steamed whole and eaten like baby squash.

Wikipedia tells us that in addition to the fruits of the chokos, or chayote (Sechium edule), the root, stem, seeds and leaves are edible as well. The tubers of the plant are eaten like potatoes while the shoots and leaves are often eaten in salads and stir fries. The fruits can also be boiled, stuffed, mashed, baked, fried, or pickled. Chayote, including the white seed, can be sliced and eaten with a salad dressing dip. Chayote fruit are used in a type of Guatemalan dish where a piece of cheese is placed between two slices of chayote and then dipped in egg batter and fried. In Taiwan and southern China, chayotes are widely planted for their shoots and young leaves. The plant is known in traditional Chinese: 龍鬚菜 as 'dragon-whisker vegetable'. In South East Asia its shoots, fruit and roots are widely used for varieties of curries. The tuberous part of the root is starchy and eaten like a yam.

For years I've been trying to grow chokos in my red soil garden at Wellington Point - like the vines that my grandparents grew here, or the heavily laden vines that grew over my sister's outhouse in Auchenflower. No such luck! I didn't know and wouldn't have expected that the choko has the reputation of being finicky.

Now, for the first time, I have chokos aplenty to eat and share. I wonder if the good advice I received about planting in compost and fertilising, then watering in well with the severe flooding rains in February, resulted in the vines growing vigorously to cover ten metres of fence along our big chook run. And with plentiful produce and the benefit of experience I have some new recipes to share.



My Love Affair - With Chokos (continued)

Roast vegetables with soy and ginger

Peel chokos (dip in cold water as you peel them). Peel pumpkin. Cut both into 4cm pieces. Toss in a mix of equal parts soy sauce and oil, and a generous quantity of roughly chopped fresh ginger. Roast at 200°C degrees, turning vegetables or shaking the pan occasionally.

Easy chokos in coconut gravy

Steam or microwave:

2 cups unpeeled or peeled young chokos and other vegetables (pumpkin, peas, beans, corn etc). Reserve vegetable water.

Gently fry:

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 large tablespoon chopped ginger
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 1 large teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chilli if desired.

Stir in:

4 tablespoons of tomato paste and a generous piece of lemon grass.

Add:

Steamed vegetables and 200ml vegetable water to fried mixture, then stir in 50gm coconut powder (tinned coconut milk can be substituted if preferred).

Simmer gently for 5 minutes to allow flavours to absorb. Add salt and lemon or lime juice and fresh coriander if desired.



- kg chokos
 onions, medium
 1/2 Tbs salt
 whole cloves
 peppercorns
 1/2 cups white vinegar
 tsp mixed spice
 cup golden syrup
 Tbs mustard powder
 Tbs curry powder
 Tbs plain flour
- 2 Tbs cold water

Method

Reprinted from the December 2018 newsletter- recipe from Margaret Sear.



- Peel and chop chokos. Place chokos and onion which has been peeled and thinly sliced into a large bowl. Sprinkle with salt, mix well to ensure everything is well coated. Cover and leave at room temperature overnight.
- Drain and discard the liquid.
- Tie the cloves and peppercorns in a square of muslin to secure. Place the vinegar, muslin bag, mixed spice and syrup in a large saucepan and bring to the boil.
- Add the choko and onions, cook for 20 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat, throw away muslin bag.
- Combine the mustard and plain flour in a small bowl, blend with water. Add to the Choko mixture, stirring constantly.
- Bring to the boil, simmer for 10 minutes. Allow to stand for 15 minutes.
- Ladle into cleaned, warm and dry jars (makes about 5). Seal and store in a cool, dark place.

Notes—This is also great to serve with crackers as a dip.



ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE			Mango Info; Potassium Nitrate for Sale	
PRESIDENT	Carolyn Lassen	<u>president@rogi.com.au</u>		
VICE PRESIDENT	Diana Yeo	<u>vp@rogi.com.au</u>	In June/July last year, I tried to make a v	ery old large mango
SECRETARY	Lisa Harsley	<u>secretary@rogi.com.au</u>	tree in our yard flower. I used a few meth	ods, such as smoking
TREASURER	Lara Brits	<u>treasurer@rogi.com.au</u>	and injuring the bark of the tree - howeve	er, no success. I could
COMMITTEE Rhonda Binns, Toni Bowler, . MEMBERS Erin Houselander		wler, Jill Nixon,	not buy any potassium nitrate, which is the usual method of making a recalcitrant tree flower - it was only available in 25 kg bags, and it was too late to get a bag.	
MEMBERSHIP SEC'Y NEWSLETTER EDITO	 OFFICE BEARERS ['] Rhonda Binns R Ann Roffey Gail Bruce & 	<u>membership@rogi.com.au</u> info@rogi.com.au	Being better prepared this year, I have bought a bag c few days ago - 25 kg for \$81, which is more than I need to do the job. If any ROGI member wants to buy some, it is \$3.25/kg.	
COMMUNICATION	S Erin Houselander	info@rogi.com.gu	L have done a few other things to in	morove the health of
CLUB EVENTS	Toni Bowler	tonibowler@hotmail.com	the manage tree recently, including the rer	moval of a large pine
PUBLIC EVENTS	Jill Nixon	events@roai.com.au	tree that was competing with it, and treating	ng the soil with lime.
LIBRARY	Viga Misztal	library@rogi.com.au	Information on the use of potassiu	m nitrate to induce
SEED BANK	Geoff & Cheryl Rynja	seeds@rogi.com.au	mango flowering is readily available on th	e internet - it is by far
SEED SAVERS GRO	JP Linda Brennan	linda@ecobotanica.com.au	the recommended and usual way to do th	ne job.
TECH DESK Terry Sullavan, Erin Houselander			Peter Brigg	
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	pal@pcpals.com.au	We'd like to hear from you!	
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.	info@rogi.com.au PO Box 1257, www.facebook.com/grou	www.rogi.com.au Cleveland 4163 Jps/redland.organic.growers	For example, send us: • A story about your garden • A photo of an interesting plantThe July Newsletter deadline is	
	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 <u>http://bogi.org.au</u>		 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 info@rogi.com.au and help keep the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant. 	
	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			