Next meeting: Wednesday 9th March 2016

ROGI News

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

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Gold coin
Visitors: $5

Please bring plate of food - savoury/sweet or nibbles preferably home-made.
Tea/coffee provided

You are welcome to provide a quality plant to help share plants with other members. Bring a bag/box for your purchases and/or winnings.
See you Wednesday ...

Inside this edition

The 'super spice' turmeric is so very easy to grow in our climate and is such an amazing plant with proven health benefits.

Just wash it and then grate/zest it as you need it. As well as using it in curries and stir-fries, you can add to scrambled eggs and frittatas; mashed, steamed and roasted vegetables; and rice. Try it with greens, in soups and blended into a smoothie.

Linda's Letter

Notes from our Vice-President

Hello fellow members

As Jill is busy moving house, I am writing to you this month.

I always feel a sense of excitement at this time of year, as does any gardener in the subtropics, as we're preparing for our best vege growing season and it gives a sense of anticipation when you're planning what to grow, where to grow it and how to prepare the beds.

I want to be ready to get lots of goodies into my garden as soon as the hot weather starts to fade. The corn, cherry tomatoes, silver beet and climbing beans are making way for the next plantings.

I have one garden under netting and the chickens have been doing some of the work as they scratch, poop and scrounge each day under the net (back to the fenced run and coop at night). Another bed will have root crops – potatoes, beetroot, carrots and I'll try parsnips again. I haven't had much luck growing them BUT I love them roasted so want to give it another go. We'll see …..

One area I've been focusing on this year is to reduce the organic waste that leaves our block.

We've been here for eight years and many of the plants are well established and need regular pruning, while there are always spent banana trees and vegetables to take out. These prunings have, in the past, often been taken to the local dump, but now we are finding ways to use them.

We have been amazed how well our mower will chop up the soft wood and leafy cuttings and these are added to the composting piles as green matter. See photos—right.

For harder wood cuttings I dry these out and then mulch them using a small electric mulcher which takes branches up to 4 cm in diameter.

This woody mulch is added to the compost in layers with green waste and chicken manure or sometimes I just dig several holes in the vege patches bury it with some chicken manure …. I've been amazed at how quickly it disappears! (My reading suggests that it is important to have woody materials in compost to ensure the growth of good fungus for soil health.)

And then, on some beautiful sunny days, I sit in the shade with my dogs and just cut up the cuttings enjoying being outside and use this as a mulch layer.

Yes, some larger branches still find their way to the 'green bin' but we've significantly reduced our waste, while increasing the organic, nutrient and water-holding profile of our soil.

Gardening and nature provides us with ongoing learning and who needs a gym!

Happy autumn gardening. *Linda*

Coming Events

March	Thurs 3	7.30	BOGI meeting
	Wed 9	6.15	ROGI meeting
	Sun 20	2.30	Garden Visit * *see p 16*
April	Wed 13	6.15	ROGI meeting
	Sun 16	9—3	Good Gardening Expo *see p 21*

* Book with Toni on events@rogi.com.au or 0402 323 704

Membership Fees

2016 fees are now overdue. You will be a 'visitor' until fees are paid.

- **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** BSB 633-000. A/C 136 137 296 Bendigo Bank Capalaba Central

IMPORTANT! Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid. Please bring your membership application form to the next meeting. Email membership@rogi.com.au for form.

Please renew online at your convenience, and ensure that you complete a membership renewal form when you are renewing.

Member Category	Annual Fee for Renewal	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 16-Dec 17
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 any children under eighteen (18) years

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

March Meeting

Companion Planting

Learn what it is and the benefits of companion planting.

Hear how its principles can be applied in your garden:

- to attract beneficial insects,
- to mask and act as decoys to protect your plants
- to add nutrition.

Holly Smith will discuss companion plants and have various items for sale at the meeting. She and her husband have set up New View Farm which is a small permaculture project just outside Stanthorpe. http://www.newviewfarm.net

Holly will be selling fermenting cultures (kombucha, Jun and water kefir), wooden garden signs, hammered cutlery signs, handmade soaps, herb salts, fresh produce and some other handicrafts.

February Meeting Sowing seeds - tips for success *Gennaro De Rosa*

Why do some seeds fail to germinate?

True or False?

All seeds need to germinate in an ample supply of water, and some good soil...

FALSE!

What can we do to increase success?

Hygiene:

- Once seed-raising process has started, treat seeds as 'Newborns'
- Use clean containers, sterile seed raising mix, clean water
- Nurse your babies - don't let the potting medium dry or let them drown - they need oxygen just like us

Light:

- Seeds are fussy with light requirements
- Most seeds germinate best in dark
- Fine seeds need light to germinate; outdoors, only cover with fine layer of soil to prevent blowing away

Oxygen:

- Seeds are living and need oxygen
- Many seed packets say soak seeds 1-2 days
- Soaking too long deprives them of oxygen and may cause 'drowning'
- Alternative - wrap in moist paper for a few days
- Soaking wet soil (heavy rain/over-watering) can cause rotting or oxygen deprivation
- Seed-raising mix must drain well
- Keep seeds moist, but not wet

Lack of Scarification:

- Thickness & hardness of seed coat governs water penetration speed and time to germinate
- Some seeds (some perennial seeds) must be scarified (scratched, scraped, nicked) to sprout
- Nature's scarification is done by soil fungi and bacteria, sharp soil particles or by the crops of birds as the seeds pass through them

Depth:

- Seeds sown at incorrect depths may germinate unreliably
- Always check recommended sowing depths on seed packets
- If instructions are unavailable, check ROGI seed chart* or use the general rule of planting at a depth twice the seed's diameter

Bad Seed:

- If seed completely dries out during storage it loses ability to germinate
- The time that seeds remain viable depends on species & conditions
- Best germination results from seeds stored in a cool, dry, dark place

Seaweed solution:

- Produces enhanced seed germination
- Research showed increased germination
- Seedlings were stronger & more survived
- A significant advantage when planting under adverse climatic conditions

Undesirable Temperatures:

- Some seeds need cool temperatures to germinate
- Most need warmth (generally below 7° or above 33° C inhibits germination)
- Cold-tolerant types germinate best at lower temperatures
- Heat lovers eg tomatoes, nasturtium and corn won't germinate in cold months

Q *Which way up should a seed be planted?*

A It really doesn't matter. In Nature, the seeds just fall and manage to grow where they drop (although in Nature they probably have a greater failure rate)

For more on scarification, go to http://permaculturenews.org/2012/08/04/how-to-germinate-your-seeds

* See the **ROGI Seed Viability Chart** on pages 18 and 19 and contact Gennaro gennaroderosa@yahoo.com if you find anything that needs amendments and/or fine-tuning. This is a work in progress.

February meeting continued

There is a project that Gennaro has been working on for 23 years.
He has been growing Madagascar beans—a type of lima bean—which is white with red speckles.

The project is that he has been selecting those seeds that have the most red on them and then growing them, generation after generation, until he has achieved some that have a majority of red.

He has dubbed them Redland beans! After all, they are not from Madagascar.

Gennaro asked ROGI members at the February meeting to take home two of the Redland beans so they can help him with his project.
They are to sow the bean seeds and wait until the plant produces beans in about 18 months time.
As they harvest these beans, they are to put aside any that show an increased proportion of redness.
They are to save the reddest of them and then sow them ... and continue with the process, all the while selecting the seeds based on their redness.
How many more generations will it take to arrive at a pure red Redland bean?

Compare white-with-red-speckles Madagascar beans above with red-with-white-speckles Redland beans below.

(Note: these photos were taken with different cameras, hence the different shades of red.)

Recipes

Mad Bean Chocolate Brownies

Gluten-free, low-carb and high protein

1½ cups Madagascar beans** - cooked
5 eggs
½ cup almond meal
½ cup cacao powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
¾ cup raw sugar
⅓ cup coconut oil
½ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a 22cm square baking tin with baking paper.

Place drained and cooled beans into food processor and blend until smooth (you'll need to scrape the sides a few times).

Add remaining ingredients. Blend until just combined—don't over-blend or the finished cake will be dry and crumbly. (I think it's nice with small chucks of beans in it)

Pour mix into tin and bake for approx. 35 minutes, depending on your oven. It is ready when the top is set and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Leave to cool completely in tin, then carefully turn it out.

Optional: Dust with icing sugar or ice with an avocado icing before serving.

Sugar-free Avocado Icing

1 ripe avocado
4 medjool dates
⅓cup cacao powder
Pinch sea salt.
Water to thin out

Medjool are large fresh dates—very soft and super sweet. Dried dates are too hard for this recipe and will make it lumpy.

Place dates and cacao in a blender and blend till smooth. You might need to add some water. Add avocado and salt till smooth again. It is now ready to use as icing or even as a mousse.

Gluten-free chocolate brownies

Sugar-free avocado icing

** To prepare dried beans/peas – soak in water overnight; drain and rinse well; then cook in fresh water until soft. Drain, rinse again and use according to the recipe. It is important to discard the water as this reduces the incidence of flatulence.
The beans almost double in volume once they have been soaked and cooked.

Mad Bean Ragout (pronounced 'rag-ooh')

1 cup dry Madagascar beans **
½ cup dry pigeon peas **
1 tablespoon butter
1 large brown onion—diced
1 or 2 garlic cloves—minced or chopped
1 stick celery—chopped
1 large or 2 small mushrooms—diced
1 or 2 chillies (optional—to taste)
2-4 tomatoes—skinned and chopped
1 or 2 carrots—diced
1 or 2 zucchini—diced
Vegetable stock—about 1 cup
Herbs: parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano - finely chopped
Pepper and salt to taste

Prepare beans and peas in advance.

Melt butter in pan. Add onion, garlic, celery and mushrooms and cook on med-high heat stirring occasionally until onion is starting to turn brown.

Add prepared tomatoes, zucchini, carrots (and chillies if using). Add stock as needed. Simmer for about two hours until carrots are soft.

Add herbs and stir thoroughly. Taste and add salt and pepper to taste.

Serves 2 for 3 nights.

Serving ideas for three nights in a row.

- *With leafy greens and mashed potato*
- *Blend to make a pasta sauce and serve with pasta, grated cheese and a salad*
- *Add 1 cup cooked chicken and 2 cups spinach (or Malabar spinach) leaves and reheat until leaves wilt*

Shallots and Kang Kong Frittata

4 organic eggs
¼ cup liquid eg milk, tomato juice, broth
¼ teasp herb of your choice
Salt and pepper, as desired
1 cup your choice of filling *(see below)*
2 teasp butter

Beat eggs (lightly!) your frittata will taste much better than if you amalgamate everything as in an omelette), liquid, herb, salt, pepper in medium bowl until blended. Then add filling.

Heat butter in non-stick pan over medium heat. Pour in mixture; cook until eggs are almost set, 8-10 mins Remove from heat. Cover and let stand until eggs are completely set and no visible liquid egg remains, 5-10 mins. Cut into wedges and serve warm with a side salad.

Notes from Gennaro and Loretta:

This unfolded Italian frittata is perfect for brunch or a quick dinner. Fill it with leftover vegetables or a combination of meat, seafood or poultry, cheese, vegetables, pasta, grains, even rice.

The filling I used for the garden visit lunch was a whole lot of our shallots (almost caramelised) and a big bunch of kang kong added to the shallots towards the end just to wilt but not overcook them. Filling ingredients should be cooked, not raw. Pieces should be cut fairly small and drained well.

Or start frittata in a pan with ovenproof handle. (To make handle ovenproof, wrap it completely in aluminium foil.) Cook on stovetop until eggs are almost set. Sprinkle with shredded cheese and put under the grill until eggs are completely set and no visible liquid egg remains and cheese is melted or topping is lightly browned.

Serve wedges right from pan, slide uncut frittata topside-up onto platter or invert frittata onto platter to show its nicely-browned bottom.

Buon Appetito!

Plant Clinic

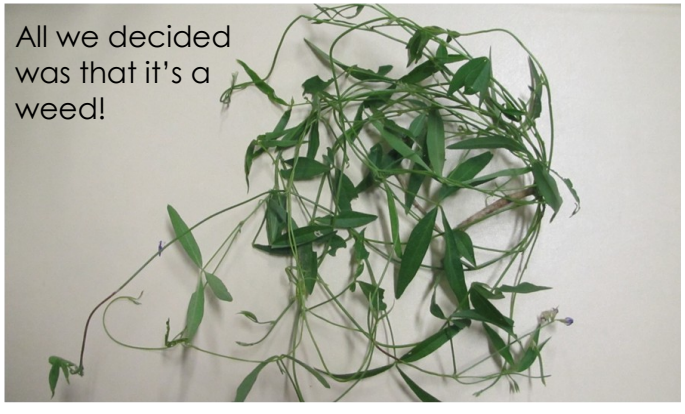
Julie K brought along choko leaves and chilli plant leaves for members to give her ideas what could be going on. Several members considered these plants.

The **choko** (below) has yellowing on both young and old leaves. It was thought that it could be a nutritional deficiency as the smaller leaf shows a pattern in distribution of the yellowing. Some damage by insects may have been evident also but this was hard to detect with the fluoro lighting and naked eye.

The **chilli** plant (below) looked to be suffering from a nutritional deficiency, and a fungal infection was also mentioned.

All members were reminded that we have recently had very hot and humid weather with little rainfall so many plants are under duress. It was suggested that the choko and chilli needed feeding.

The following three plants were a challenge for members to identify. If anyone knows what they are please advise us all next meeting, or by email prior.



The plant below has grown unexpectedly in the garden. A few members thought this may be a Tuckeroo, but with further investigation this is unlikely as the Tuckeroo has blunt or notched leaf tip.

Above: Small bushy shrub. Pale yellow flowers with a mild scent. The owner thought it was a native gardenia due to leaf similarity.

Plant Clinic

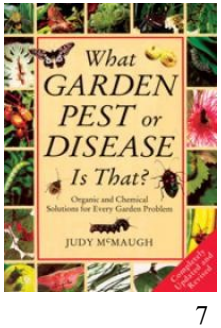
If you are puzzled by a pest, suspect your plant may be a weed or have a deficiency or a disease, Plant Clinic may help you.

Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts - fruit, leaf, root etc - as you can, and in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased) and fill in the form. Place the plant parts together with the form on Plant Clinic table well before the start of the meeting.

Someone will have a look and may be able to answer your questions.

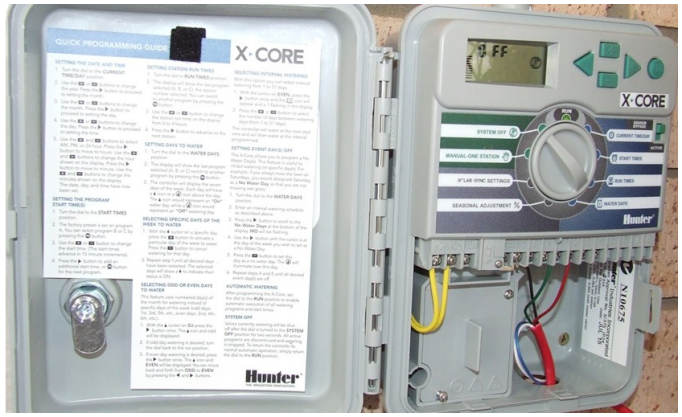
Please be aware that we do our best, but there may not be anyone present who can identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

ROGI library carries this book. It's such a wonderful resource that it's rarely available for us to refer to during Plant Clinic sessions. Maybe we'll buy another copy purely for reference during ROGI meetings. Actually, it's a good one for you to own at home.



Irrigation Workshop *with* Lindsay Peel at Margaret Sear's garden *by Mary Irmer*

Lindsay showed us how to set up a drip system to water Margaret's fruit and vegetable garden. He had already spent a couple of afternoons connecting the irrigation controller *(below),* pressure control valves and laid out much of the hose required.



The irrigation controller has a back-up battery in case of power failure and can be programmed differently for several stations or lines to turn the water on automatically as set. You can choose which days to water, how long to water and how often to water eg you could run a mist spray four times a day. If it's been raining, you can turn the program off manually. You could attach a device with a leather washer on the roof to measure the rain and it would override the program in times when there has been significant rain. Margaret chose to rely on neighbours to turn it off for her when she might be away during rainy times.

There is also a seasonal adjustment that changes the watering time eg halving watering time in winter.


Tank, pump and pressure-control valve

Water pumps die if they continue to run when the tank runs dry so Lindsay inserted a safety pressure control valve which stops the pump when the water is low.

To enable continuous watering, a float will be inserted in the tank. When the water drops below that level, mains water will turn on automatically to maintain a safe level of water so watering can continue.

Lindsay used one inch hose to make a ring around the vegetable garden from which each garden bed was connected with ¾ inch hose. He used the wider hose to feed ½ inch dripper lines so there wouldn't be as much strain on the pump. A circle was used rather than a single line to maintain the pressure of 20 psi (pounds per square inch). Each garden bed was fitted with a tap so that when not in use it could be turned off.

There were 15 micro jets at 300mm apart in each garden bed. A pressure of 20 psi means each jet would emit 2 litres per hour so 15 would emit 10 litres in 20 minutes or around one to one-and-a-half watering cans of water. Plants that need a lot of water could be planted close to a dripper or midway between two drippers. It is still important to water the new plant in when planting.

Tip - change the filter in your tank each year at the same time you change your batteries in smoke alarms.

Irrigation Workshop Continued

While the drippers are designed so as not to block up with saw tooth holes and can emit dirt particles, it is good to have a flush point in the main hose where it can be disconnected and any debris flushed through occasionally and also to disconnect the dripper lines in a bed and flush out occasionally as well eg when replanting.

Cutting the hosing. This proved to be much easier if you rotate the hose so the cutters slice through it. Note the healthy Malabar and Brazilian spinach.

Connecting dripper lines to tap and feed in line. Tent pegs secure dripper lines to ground.

Lilac hose (above left) usually denotes grey water use but, as these lines were going to be covered, It didn't matter which colour was used.

Neighbouring beds were joined and had individual taps.

The dripper lines were then covered with mulch so that the water penetrates the soil better to reach the plant roots and doesn't just wet the mulch on top or evaporate and dry out on a hot day .

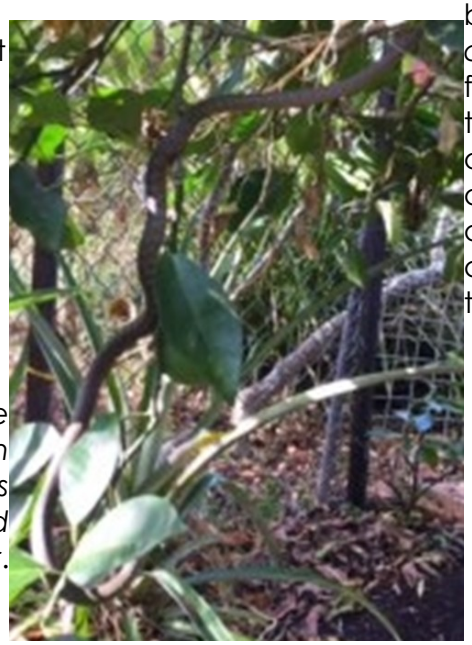
No drippers in sight at the end.

Visit to Margaret's Garden *by Mary Irmer*

Margaret bought her property in 1976. The bank thought that the area would not go ahead and so refused to give her a loan to build a house. Her parents helped out and she moved into her new house with a one week old baby. They had a septic system at first which resulted in beautiful green grass at the front of the house. Margaret was passionate about Australian native plants but grevilleas were not successful as they died off in the wet times.

In the 80's they were connected to sewerage and the paths at the front follow the sewerage lines as they dug up and left gravelly trails. As the soil tends to be acidic, Margaret grew camellias, azaleas and, more recently, blueberries and strawberries very successfully.

There were koalas and sugar gliders but with subdivisions nearby she hasn't seen either for some time. Bush turkeys, possums and rats are a challenge and she's lost chickens to carpet snakes.



There are some small green snakes. Here is one we spotted on our wander.

There seems to be a mineral imbalance in the soil which tends to make it very dry and, even with composting and mulching, the plants often have difficulty absorbing nutrients. Margaret is using gypsum and lime. Gennaro suggested that ash would be good.

We strolled the beautifully leafy and shady back yard complete with a couple of large self-seeded tallowwood and gum trees. Over 40 years Margaret has planted a paper bark, silky oak, grevilleas and *Brachychiton discolor* and more recently numerous citrus and fruit trees. The native trees are majestic but their roots are invasive and compete with other plants. They are very efficient at taking water and nutrients from the soil.

Margaret's son has built her a state-of-the-art chicken house to keep the carpet snakes from eating the hens.

Until two years ago, Margaret used shade cloth to cover her vegetables but was fighting a losing battle with the possums. She has had the garden covered with fine wire to keep the possums out. Unfortunately rats still manage to find their way in.

Note the one inch hose that was looped around the edge of the garden to attach the drippers for the garden beds. A trench will be dug and this will be covered as well.

This old gum tree with lots of hollows for birds and wild life on her neighbour's property was probably there before Captain Cook came to Australia

Garden Visit continued

Above: Monstera deliciosa with fruit. They taste like fruit salad and take a long time to ripen.

Above: Slow-growing Davidson Plum (about 3 years old) which Margaret is coaxing along.

Margaret's 40 year old custard apple tree has produced prolifically over the years. The fruit has been enjoyed by the wildlife - mainly possums. She bought some cloth fruit covers for the fruit last year but the possums tore them to shreds and still left no fruit. Gennaro suggested rolling up fine wire mesh around fruit already forming on the tree. Growing young plants is a battle with possums. They knock over the wire and jump on it to get the tasty young growth.

She was excited to see a flower on the pomegranate this year but then it was eaten. Gardeners are very resilient and optimistic!

Above: Margaret is using a lot of compost to grow a banana tree.

Above: Wampi tree that produces bunches (like grapes) of yellow fruit with tough skin.

Garden Visit continued

Above: Margaret has several citrus trees, one of which had a lot of gall wasps but if she cut the infected branches out she would cut out the immature fruit on the tree. As the gall wasps hatch in August, it is okay to leave the fruit to mature and then cut the gall wasp-infected branches before August.

Above: Brown Turkey Fig fruiting – fruit needs to be covered to keep birds and possums from enjoying all the fruits of Margaret's labour.

Above: Margaret's garden is abuzz with bees. Here under the jaboticaba tree is a hive of *Tetragonula* crbonaria bees while on the side patio there are *Tetragonula hockingsi* bees (slightly smaller in size).
Throughout the garden there are numerous other native bees; blue banded bee (males often rest at night along a fern stem in the cool), leaf cutter bee, teddy bear bee, peacock carpenter bee, cuckoo bee and resin bee.
Margaret makes cordial and jelly from the jaboticabas which seem to crop at least twice each year—usually following good rain.

Above: If you want to keep your pawpaw short so you can reach the fruit more easily, Gennaro suggests you cut it just above the winter growth where the growth lines are close together. If you make a cut anywhere else then it will die down to that point anyway. Pawpaw trees last for 6-7 years so you do need to keep planting them.

Thank you, Margaret. It was a lovely afternoon. Your garden is a credit to you. So much work, planning and planting has gone into your garden, for so many years. I think we all took stock and realised that maybe our gardens are not so hard to look after. When we see how much work it takes to keep your garden growing ... puts ours into perspective.
Thank you, once again for opening your home. We all had a lovely afternoon. *Treina D.*

Garden Visits are so interesting and popular: we get to see gardens of all shapes, styles, sizes and ages. If you'd like to show us your garden, get in touch with Toni. See page 16.

Growing Carrots

Recently I read an article in ABC Organic Gardener magazine. A local man from Manly West wrote about growing carrots in quite a different way from what I knew, claiming he has had wonderful success in growing them.

He planted five different rows.
1. The control,
2. Biochar was added,
3. Soft rock phosphate was added,
4. Mushroom compost was used
5. A combination of all.

Each row had a pH of 6—6.5.

He was quite sceptical about how they would go; assuming the carrots would fork due to the rich soil. Well ... he harvested kilo after kilo of wonderful straight carrots and the best row of all was the 5th row, a combination of them all - biochar, soft rock phosphate and mushroom compost.

Another interesting point made in the article was about plant pathogen fungus *Pythium*. This causes the tip of the carrot's taproot to rot and die back. He compared it to 'a pruned branch sending out new side shoots below the cut'. A damaged carrot root produces side shoots above the damaged tip that results in a forked carrot. *Pythium* is more of a problem in heavy, damp soils containing fresh manure than in light free draining soils.

He also believes fully decomposed compost is probably helpful because it contains beneficial microbes that can out-compete the *Pythium* and help protect the roots.

In summary, his advice to gardeners is:-
1 What matters most to carrots when it comes to forking is the friability of the soil not the fertility.
2 Therefore grow carrots in well-dug, friable soil and never add any manures or other high-nitrogen fertilisers before sowing.
3 Biochar, soft rock phosphate and mushroom compost can all help increase yield.
4 Fully decomposed compost is probably good.
5 Do not over water your carrots as this also encourages *Pythium.* Aim to keep beds just moist.

My favourite way to sow carrot seeds is to place seeds and sand in a jar and scatter the mix over the moistened prepared rows. Carrots will take 1 to 2 weeks to germinate when the soil is warm.
Cover the seeds in the 1st week with a piece of timber (below), as Linda Barrett suggested in her talk in November, to stop seed being eaten by birds, rats, possums, to retain moisture and to stop seeds from flying away with the wind and washing away with heavy rain.

In the seed bank we have a good selection of carrot seeds.

R: **Paris market**; Round baby carrot - the pick for heavy soil.

L: **Nantes**; very sweet, long carrot around 16 cm long. Days to harvest: 72

R: **Red Kuroda**: deep orange red colour 17-19 cm long and really good for juicing.

L: **Red Core Chantenay**: All purpose heirloom with great flavour, up to 14cm long

Seeds:
$1 packet for members.
$2 non-members.

We'd love to see photos of your success at growing carrots. Send them in for the June or July newsletter. *Sharr Ellson*

Mealybugs

Fairly common in our warm and humid climate, these plant-sucking pests can weaken a plant. As they feed, they secrete honeydew and a wax coating forms over their bodies. The honeydew makes the plant sticky and encourages the growth of sooty mould.

Here are some tips for coping with them:

- Prune out light infestations
- Don't over water or overfertilise - they're attracted to plants with high nitrogen levels and soft growth
- Grow plants to bring natural predators such as ladybeetles, lacewings and, in particular, the Mealybug Destroyer *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* or purchase these beneficial insects (See: https://bugsforbugs.com.au and http://www.goodbugs.org.au)
- Squirt with a strong jet from the hose to remove them
- Insecticidal soap contains potassium salts of fatty acids, which penetrates and damages the outer shells of soft-bodied insect pests, causing dehydration and death within hours
- It's a good idea to control ants when releasing beneficial insects. Ants feed on the honeydew that the mealybugs produce and they protect the bugs from predators to ensure this food supply continues to be available for themselves. Put a band of horticultural glue around the base of the plant.

http://ecoorganicgarden.com.au/problem-solver/how_to_control_mealybugs

Ants feasting on honeydew secreted by these mealybugs on Margaret's hibiscus plants.

Left: the prey and (right) the predator - the 'Mealybug Destroyer' *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*

Critter of the Month

Spined Citrus Bug

Spined citrus bug (SCB), *Biprorulus bibax* (Pentatomidae: Hemiptera), feeds on the fruits of lemons, mandarins and oranges, causing drying and brown staining of the fruit segments, gumming on the skin and premature fruit drop. Although native to Australia, SCB only emerged as a major citrus pest in the late 1980s. They can decimate your crop.

Life cycle

The SCB life cycle consists of an egg stage, five nymphal stages, and an adult stage. Eggs are initially white but become mottled with black and red as they develop. Early-stage nymphs are marked with black, green, yellow, white and orange. Late-stage nymphs are mainly green with black markings. Adults are green,

15–20 mm long, and have a pair of prominent spines on the shoulder of the thorax.

Stage I nymphs congregate on empty egg shells and stay there until they reach stage II, when they disperse. Both adults and nymphs feed on fruit. Lemons and mandarins are preferred over other citrus fruits—the bugs pierce the rind of fruit of any stage.

Eggs are laid on leaves, fruit or twigs in batches of four to 36.

Development and survival

Development thresholds are temperature related. The fastest rates of nymphal and egg development occur between 32°C and 35°C; however, nymphal survival is highest between 25°C and 30°C. Average survival of SCB from a stage I nymph to an adult varies from 41% to 63%.

In Queensland there is four generations: in spring, early summer, mid-summer, and autumn and a female adult can live up to 18 months.

Adults overwinter in aggregations on non-lemon citrus that are near their feeding trees, or on their native host the desert lime, *Eremocitrus glauca*. Tight clusters of up to 50 adult bugs can be found in a single tree. The overwintering adults disperse in spring to nearby citrus and begin egg-laying.

Natural enemies

SCB eggs are parasitised by at least 12 wasp species. Parasitism can be as high as 60% to 100%, with highest parasitism occurring during spring to early summer.

Predators of SCB nymphs and adults include:

- spiders
- predatory bugs
- praying mantids
- assassin bug (*Pristhesancus plagipenis*).
- ants and lacewing larvae consume significant numbers of SCB eggs.

Management

SCB management should be centred on the conservation of natural enemies and removal of overwintering adults. Control by hand picking. Conservation of natural enemies is achieved by planting flowers and herbs that will attract predators and avoiding the use of chemicals. A ROGI member has used a 'dust buster' to vacuum up the adults (no spikes from spines) and also to move spiders around the garden to increase predation.

Reference: **http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/76733/Spined-citrus-bug-Primefact-217-final.pdf**

Reference: **http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/76733/Spined-citrus-bug-Primefact-217-final.pdf**

March Garden Visit

2.30pm Sunday 20th March
Ian and Jill Nixon
Birkdale

Although this house is over 30 years old, the yard is a fairly blank slate apart from the wonderful fruiting persimmon tree and a lillypilly tree. There are several concrete garden beds, but everything has 'gone to pot' as the house has been sitting empty for over ten months.

The plan for this ROGI Garden Visit is to have a brainstorming session on garden design. This is where you can play around with design ideas and discuss where you think things should go and why. We'll be considering aspect, drainage, soil type, shading and plant selection, and more.

Then, in a couple of years, we can all visit the garden again and see what has transpired.

As always with these events, there are limited spaces, so get in early.

Please book with Toni B. on events@rogi.com.au or 0402 323 704 for these and all club member events.
Toni welcomes suggestions for workshops and field trips related to ROGI's organic growing interests.
Also, discuss with Toni when you'd like to host a Garden Visit at your place.

Community gardens in the Redlands

Did you know that there are public community gardens at Cleveland and Alexandra Hills?

Oaklands Street Community Gardens

Located in Alexandra Hills, they were established in 2005 and are currently experiencing a resurgence in membership. The garden often hosts activities for children and young people with disabilities.
You are welcome to call by and visit to see if you wish to become a part of this friendly gardening community.

Open
Sunday 2pm—4pm
Wednesday 8am—11am
and Friday 9am—12noon

Delancey Street Garden Club

A plot of land beside the Heritage Garden is being managed by U3A. It is for U3A members, so you'd need to join. It is in the DPI site on the corner of Shore St West and Delancey St, Cleveland

Open
Mondays and Wednesdays
7.30am in summer; 8am in winter

As you know, we have our meetings at the Salvos, and they charge us a *very* reasonable rent. We'd like to support them in this venture. Maybe you have some potted plants or seedlings to bring along. Or something for the white elephant stall. Bring them to the March meeting or Friday afternoon or early on Saturday morning.

Seed Viability Chart See page 4

Name	Viability Period	Optimal Germ.	Days to Germ.	Special treatment prior to sowing
Angelica	0.5 yr	15-21°C	21 to 25	stratify for 6 weeks in crisper of fridge, then sow.
Artichokes, Globe, French	3 yrs	15-24°C	12 to 18	none
Asparagus	1 yr	24-30°C	14 to 21	soak seed in warm water for up to 48 hours, then sow in a dark place.
Basils, Sweet, Thai, Lemon, Purple, Anise	2 yrs	21-25°C	7 to 10	none
Beans: French, Snap, String, Snake, Kidney, Wax, Broad	3 yrs	20-25°C	5 to 10	12h soaking - might need inoculation of nitrogen rhizobium or bacterium - do not water until after germination
Beans: Sword, Madagascar, Lima, lablab	3 yrs	22-32°C	12 to 15	12h soaking - might need inoculation of nitrogen rhizobium or bacterium - do not water until after germination
Bean: Soybean	3 yrs	22-32°C	12 to 15	needs inoculation with nitrogen fixing rhizobium and sow direct
Bitter Melon, Murop Dong, Kerala	5 yrs	25-35°C	5 to 7	sow direct
Bok Choy, Mustard Greens, Chinese Cabbage	5 yrs	6-22°C	8 to 12	none
Borage	3 yrs	8-18°C	7 to 10	needs dark to germinate & sow direct
Broccoli, heading & perpetual types, Kailaan or Chinese Broccoli	5 yrs	18-24°C	10 days	seed needs sunlight to germinate
Brussels Sprouts	5 yrs	20-24°C	10 days	none
Cabbages, heading types	5 yrs	18-25°C	10 to 14	none
Cai Baphao, Chinese White Cabbage, Pak Choy	5 yrs	20-30°C	8 to 10	none
Capsicums, Sweet Bell Peppers, Sweet Hungarian	4 yrs	22-27°C	10 to 12	seed needs sunlight to germinate
Carrot	3 yrs	6-24°C	14 to 21	sow direct not too deep and keep moist
Cauliflower	5 yrs	20-25°C	10 to 14	none
Celeriac, Turnip-rooted Celery	6 yrs	20-24°C	21 to 25	none
Celery	6 yrs	20-24°C	21 to 25	none
Chervil	3 yrs	14-21°C	7 to 14	sow direct
Chick Pea, Garbanzo Bean, Ceci	10 yrs	20-25°C	6 to 10	12h soaking - might need inoculation of nitrogen rhizobium or bacterium - do not water until after germination
Chilli Hot Peppers	4 yrs	20-25°C	16 to 18	seed need sunlight to germinate
Chives, Chinese, Kau Tsoi, He, Garlic	2 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 14	none
Coriander, Cilantro, Chinese Parsley, Dhania, Ngó	3 yrs	10-28°C	7 to 12	seeds need dark to germinate and sow direct
Cucumbers, Apple, Continental, Lebanese	7 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 10	sow direct
Daikon, Japanese White Raddish, Cu Cai Trang,	5 yrs	12-25°C	3 to 8	none
Dill	3 yrs	10-18°C	7 to 14	none
Eggplant, Aubergine, Càphaó, Bringal	4 yrs	24-32°C	7 to 14	none
Endive, Escarole	5 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 10	none
Fennel, Finocchio	3 yrs	12-20°C	5 to 12	none
Garlic	*	12-20°C	7 to 14	seldom sets seed so it is more commonly propagated by division
Gourds, White Flowering, Turk's Cap	5 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 10	soak overnight then sow swollen seeds direct
Gourds, Yellow Flowering, Ornamental	5 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 10	sow direct
Kohlrabi	5 yrs	20-25°C	10 to 14	none
Leek	3 yrs	14-25°C	7 to 14	none

Lemon Balm	2 yrs	12-20°C	7 to 15	none
Lemon Grass, Hxa, Sha	0.5 yr	15-28°C	20 to 50	sow direct, low viability, best propagated by division of culms
Lettuces, Crispheads, Cos, Butterhead, Mignonette	3 yrs	8-30°C	7 to 10	none
Lovage	3 yrs	12-20°C	10 to 15	none
Lucerne, Alfalfa	10 yrs	12-20°C	4 to 8	needs inoculation with nitrogen-fixing rhizobium, unless grown for sprouts
Marjoram, Sweet	3 yrs	20-22°C	8 to 14	none
Mints, Mentha species and forms	2 yrs	8-20°C	10 to 22	none
Ngó Gai, *Eryngium foetidum*	3 yrs	15-28°C	12 to 48	none
Okra, Gumbo, Ladyfingers	2 yrs	20-34°C	7 to 14	soak seeds overnight
Onions, Spring, Shallots, Svcallions	3 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 14	none
Oregano	3 yrs	20-22°C	8 to 14	none
Parsley, Curly, Italian	1 yr	12-22°C	14 to 21	soak seeds for 24 hours, then sow direct
Parsnip	0.5 yr	5-20°C	21 to 27	soak seeds for 24 hours, then sow direct
Peanuts, Ground Nuts	2 yrs	20-30°C	18 to 30	make sure you secure raw peanuts not roasted!
Peas, Sugar, Snow, Climbers, Asparagus	2 yrs	12-24°C	7 to 20	sow direct into moist soil, then do not water heavily until they sprout (just keep soil moist)
Pumpkins, Butternut,Qld. Blue, Nuggets, Triamble	7 yrs	20-25°C	7 to 10	sow direct
Radicchio, Italian Chicory	4 yrs	20-24°C	6 to 12	none
Radishes, French Breakfast, Globe, Icicle	4 yrs	5-28°C	4 to 6	sow direct
Rau Munông, Kang kong, Water Spinach	1 yr	20-32°C	10 days	From cuttings is much easier than from seed
Rockmelon, Cantaloupe, Sweet, Musk, Honeydew	5 yrs	22-27°C	6 to 10	sow direct
Rosella, Jamaican Sorrel	2 yrs	22-34°C	7 to 14	none, but soaking overnight in water produces and even germination
Sage	4 yrs	6-18°C	18 to 30	none
Savory, Summer, Winter	3 yrs	10-20°C	7 to 14	none
Silver Beet, Swiss Chard, Rainbow Chard	4 yrs	7-20°C	7 to 12	none, but soaking seed overnight in water produces an even germination
Sorrel, Garden, French	3 yrs	6-15°C	7 to 12	none
Spinach, English, see Warrigal	1 yr	6-18°C	8 to 12	none
Strawberry, ever-bearing, spring cropping	2 yrs	12-20°C	21 to 30	none, however stratifying may increase germination, which is often erratic
Sweet Corn, Popping, Indian Maize	2 yrs	2-25°C	5 to 7	sow direct, beware since most seed varieties are F1 today
Thyme	4 yrs	12-18°C	21 to 30	none
Tomatoes, Bush, Climbers, Determinate, Indeterminate	4 yrs	21-25°C	4 to 7	none, but if saving your own seed, ferment for a few days then wash the inhibitor off and dry to store
Ts'oi Sum, Golden Cabbage	5 yrs	20-24°C	8 to 12	none
Turnips, Swedes, Neeps, Hakurei, Rutabaga	1 yr	7-12°C	7 to 10	sow direct
Warrigal Cabbage, Native or New Zealand Spinach, *Tetragonia tetragoni-oides*	4 yrs	10-20°C	10 to 20	self seeds prolifically on disturbed soil in full sun with good drainage
Watercress, *Nasturium officinale*	3 yrs	10-15°C	7 to 10	sow direct on wet media, do not cover as it needs sunlight to germinate
Watermelon	5 yrs	20-25°C	6 to 8	sow direct
Zucchini, Bush Squash, Acorn Squash	7 yrs	21-25°C	7 to 10	sow direct

Seed Bank Request

- Please return seedling pots the month after you have bought the seedlings so they can be re-used.
- Please bring along other clean used pots—sizes up to 120mm diameter.
- Collect and bring takeaway coffee cups so we can use them for the larger seedlings.

Please note that the guide to the right is a seed-sowing guide, not a seedling-planting guide.

There could be several days or even weeks between the optimal time to sow a seed and to transplant a seedling that you may have bought from a nursery.

Seed Sowing Guide

March

Basil
Bean Lablab, Madagascar
Bean—French
Beetroot
Capsicum/Chilli
Carrot
Cauliflower
Cucumber
Eggplant
Leek
Lettuce
Pigeon pea
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radish
Silver beet
Snake bean
Spring onion
Spinach (Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal)
Sweet potato
Sweet corn
Tomato

April

Artichoke; Jerusalem artichoke
Asparagus
Bean: Lablab, Madagascar
Bean—French
Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Capsicum/Chilli
Cauliflower
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Endive
Florence fennel
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Onions/garlic
Potatoes
Radish
Silver beet
Spinach: (Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal, Kangkong)
Sweet potato
Tomato
Yacon

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

Photos from 2015 Redlands Good Gardening Expo

Above: The busy ROGI area.

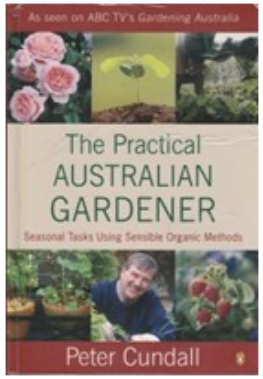
Left: Naomi and her team at the No-dig Garden workshop.

Right: How can you have a garden even if you don't have a garden? Have a box garden. ROGI members prepare these in advance and we raffle them on the day.

ROGI Library News

Last meeting saw us enthralled by Gennaro De Rosa, who gave us great advice on how to raise seeds effectively. A big thank you to Gennaro! It is in this vein that Stephen and I have chosen selections from the library collection. I hope this further helps anyone wanting to expand on this topic.

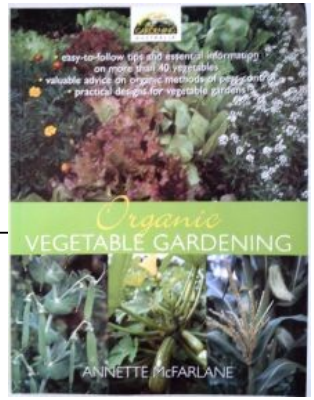
The Practical Australian Gardener
Peter Cundall



Key sections: How to raise seedlings p96; Germinating Difficult Seed pp 60, 161.

Although written for colder Australian states (Victoria and Tasmania), much of the information is transferrable. In 'How to raise seedlings' Cundall explains that 'propagation from seed is the cheapest and easiest way of increasing the number of plants in…the garden' and that 'light, moisture and a good friable soil are needs to be met when growing in containers'. He talks of temperature treatment of soil to eradicate fungi, pests etc, and alternatives to soil—giving a basic mix and additives for moisture retention. He covers, as in our recent talk, the depth for sowing fine seeds. He expands into germinating difficult seeds suggesting that to find the origin of the seed you are attempting to sprout is helpful to know the specific conditions needed for success and gives several examples of this. Overall: Small sections but helpful.

Gardening Australia: Organic Vegetable Gardening
Annette McFarlane



Key Section: Propagating and saving seeds, pp29 – 41; Need to know more? p117.

An in-depth chapter on propagating and saving seed covers: Why grow vegetables from seed?; Suitable mixes for raising seed; Sowing different size seeds, Optimum temperatures to sprout seeds; Why did my seeds fail to germinate?; What to expect; Direct and Container growing; Seed saving; What are hybrids and Non-hybrids?; Genetically Modified and Engineered foods and maintaining genetic purity; Types of vegetables and their relationships; Collecting, cleaning and storing seed. Overall: An excellent resource, worth a look.

Our Seeds: Seeds Blong Yumi
[DVD] *Michel and Jude Fanton*

"A film celebrating the keepers of the seed, the farmers and gardeners who preserve and share the source of our diverse food heritage. Filmed across 11 countries, this DVD outlines the effects of large seed corporations, hybrid seeds and pesticides. These common threats to food quality and health have local solutions." It demonstrates the importance of saving seed at a local level thus preserving both heirloom and traditional seed varieties.

Michel and Jude Fanton have worked tirelessly over the years saving seed and establishing local seed-saving networks. This short film is well worth a look.

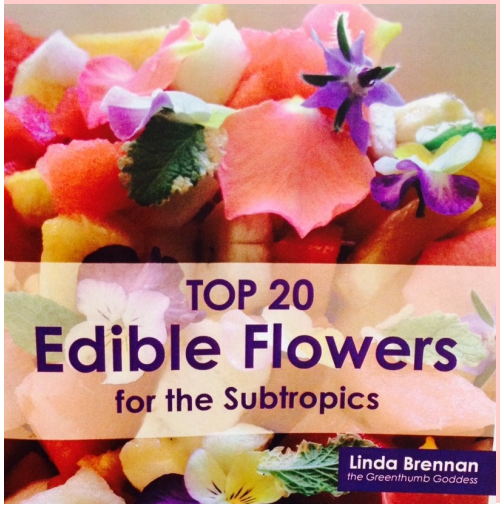
We look forward to seeing you at the ROGI library in March.

Stephen and Angela Legge

In February we heard how areas of Southern Moreton Bay Islands have been rezoned so residents can grow organic produce to sell and become cottage industries. One producer sells edible flowers and leaves locally and interstate to elite restaurants. So we've included a resource on edible flowers.

Top 20 Edible Flowers for the Subtropics *Linda Brennan*

Providing information on both poisonous and edible flowers, this book covers tips for healthy flowers, individual information on growing each plant, harvesting and defines which parts are edible. It includes recipes and visual photographs to identify some plants. On the inside last page is a reference to helpful websites on Organic, heirloom seeds and organic fertilisers. Overall: An interesting read.



Exchange plants, cuttings, seedlings and home-grown produce

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

ROGI Rewards

Gift-quality plants and other garden-related items brought along by members. Everyone who attends a meeting is eligible to acquire a ROGI Reward. ***Please label plant with its name and variety before placing it on the table.***

Members' Sales

Items you have produced that are surplus to your requirements and that **you wish to sell** to other members eg eggs, honey, seedlings, jam, lemons – things that have cost you money (and time and effort) to produce.
Please ensure items are labelled, named and priced. You may be asked to staff the stall if you are needed.

FREE swap/share/give-away

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

Bring a bag/basket/box to take everything home

Recycling & Re-using

Please collect, save and bring along the following:

- **250gm cube-shaped strawberry/cherry tomato punnets**

One of ROGI's activities is making a pot out of newspaper. After making this pot, visitors sow seeds in it and take it home safely in a strawberry punnet.

- **220 to 400gm clean empty ring-pull cans**

These are for use in the 'taking a cutting' activity at the Gardening Expo (GGE).

- **Take-away coffee cups**

For growing seedlings for sale at GGE. No lids please.

(Please don't ask for these in place of real cups: just collect those that other people have left lying around.)

ROGI is a beneficiary of the My IGA Card Program for the **Cleveland IGA** store.
This is how it works:

- Pick up a My IGA Card next time you are in the store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support

Then, every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, you are also helping to raise funds for ROGI.

ROGI uses its funds to help provide more services to members such as new library books, discounted gardening products, paid expert speakers, and free or low-cost field trips and workshops.

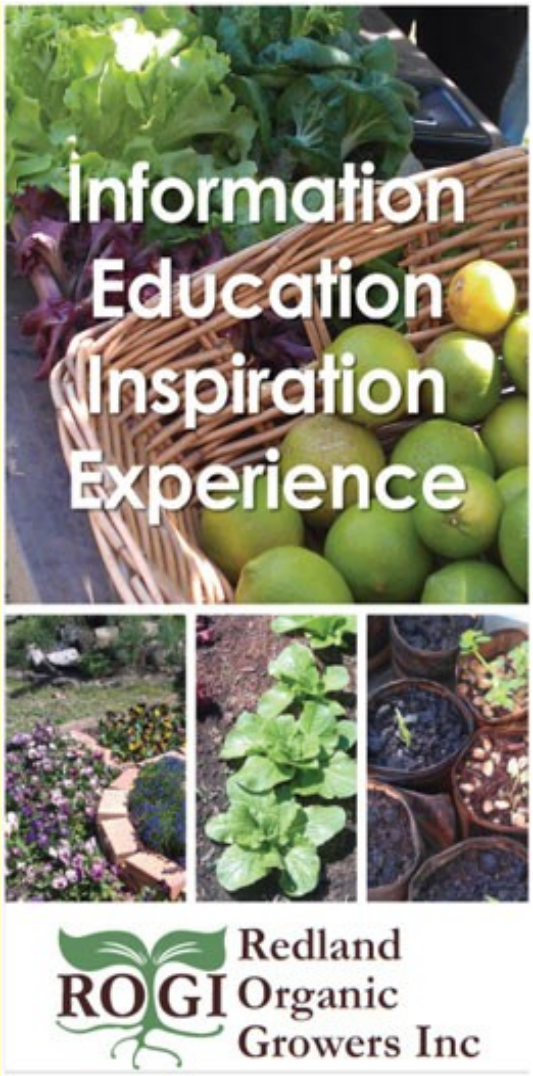
Request for Articles

What can you share? It could be to do with:

- your garden
- a photo
- an unusual plant
- a request
- garden/nutrition info
- a recipe
- a current affair to do with organic growing

Send your articles to the editor and help keep the newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant

info@rogi.com.au



Dragonfruit flower. They are night bloomers and are pollinated by nocturnal creatures such as moths and bats. The flowers glow in the dark. Just beautiful.
Dragonfruit are ripening now. Look out for cuttings of these cactus plants which are available fairly easily from ROGI members and then you can grow your own.

March Newsletter Deadline

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 30th March for the April edition.

Request:
If you donated a very healthy-looking mulberry plant to ROGI Rewards at the February meeting, please can you get in touch and let us know what type of mulberry tree it is?
Jill 0418 717 735 Thank you so much.

ROGI Shop Products

Products Dry	3kg	2kg	1kg	500g	100g	Each
Soil Conditioners						
Blood & Bone	7.50		4.00	3.00		
Blood & Bone 25kg						29.50
Blood & Bone 16kg						24.00
DE Fine Food Grade		15.00	8.00	4.50		
DE Fine Food Grade 20kg						110.00
DE Pet & Garden	16.00		7.00	4.00		
DE Pet & Garden 20kg						80.00
Dolomite	5.50		3.00	2.00		
Eco88	8.50		4.00	2.50		
Gypsum	5.50		3.00	2.00		
Humic Acids					3.50	
Organic Booster	6.50		3.50	2.50		
Organic Xtra	6.50		3.50	2.50		
Organic Xtra 25kg bag						18.50
Organic Xtra 16kg bag						14.00
Organic Xtra 5kg bag				2.50		7.00
Rock Dust #3 25kg bag						29.50
Rock Dust #3 Mix	6.50		4.00	2.00		
Sea Mungus						
Turf Master	5.50					

***DE** is Diatomaceous Earth—can kill insects by desiccation.

Tools & Equipment	
Soil pH Test Kit	15.00
Banana Bags	3.50
Fruit Fly Exclusion Bags set of 4	5.00
Paper Pot Maker	28.00

Products Wet	5 litre	1 litre	500ml	150ml	100ml
Soil conditioners					
Eco-Amingro		18.00	10.00		
EcoFish	32.00				
Eco Naturalure				15.00	
Eco-Neem					16.00
Eco-Oil		22.00	16.00		
Fish & Kelp solution		13.00			
Potassium Silicate					3.00
Pest & Weed Control					
Burn Off		9.00			
Eco-Pest Oil			10.00		
Naturasoap			17.00		
Pyrethrum Spray					20.00
Wild May (for fruit fly)					2.00
Aloe Vera					
Aloe Vera Raw Material	33.50	9.50			
Aloe Vera Raw Bio Vertiliser	37.00	10.00			

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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TREASURER	Garry Bromham		group@rogi.com.au

COMMITTEE MEMBERS Kathy Petrik, Toni Bowler, Sharr Ellson (Ian Curtis has resigned, so there is a vacancy)

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

The views expressed in ROGI News are those of the editors and submitters, not necessarily those of Redland Organic Growers Inc

Margaret's creative pieces:
Mosaic stepping stone and chook house sign.
'Hotel' to attract beneficial insects.