

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 (**only fully paid members may attend**)
- Observe social distancing
- Masks are not required but are recommended
- 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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Betel leaf (*Piper sarmentosum*) is an ever-green, perennial creeper to 90cm that enjoys growing in a part shade position. The spicy leaves are popular in south east Asian cooking, eaten raw or cooked. Dr Kevin Redd tells us more about this interesting plant ps. 3-4.



Photo by Dr Kevin Redd

Coming Events

MARCH	Thursday 10	ROGI Meeting
	Saturday 26	Field Trip (see p. 6)
APRIL	Sunday 24	Garden Visit (see p. 6)

Your Membership Renewal is Due NOW!

How to renew your membership . . . fast and easy

1. Go online to <https://www.rogi.com.au/renew-membership.php>
2. Fill out the application, press SUBMIT.
3. Go to your online bank to make a transfer to ROGI - **BSB 633000, Account Number 136 137 296**
(Use your name as a reference please)
4. Find your 2022 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table at the next ROGI meeting.

PLEASE NOTE—We now have a 'square reader' so that you can make your payment with your credit card (at the ROGI meeting).

Member Category	Members Renewing For 2022	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 22-Dec 23
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

March Meeting

Gardening to Repair the Earth

We tend to feel rather powerless in the face of climate change. Big decisions need to be made and the small things we do seem to be making no difference. We can do more than we think, especially as organic gardeners. There is so much we can do to reduce consumerism, reduce waste, support biodiversity and we can even create our very own backyard carbon sinks, all while doing what we love the most - gardening!



Our guest speaker, Kate Wall, will look at ways we can do all of this, while creating a resilient and rewarding garden. Kate will talk about her new book, *Earth Repair Gardening; the lazy gardener's guide to saving the Earth* - sharing with us how to spend less, do less and yet enjoy our gardens even more, knowing they are helping to offset our own carbon emissions.

You're welcome to bring your gardening problems to 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 produce, organic gardening inputs and more.

To ensure that we comply with Covid-19 regulations, ONLY ROGI MEMBERS may attend. No visitors until further notice. To find out how to join, go to the MEMBERSHIP tab at www.rogi.com.au. Please note masks are not required, but are recommended. There will be no supper or drinks available.

Growing Betel Leaf (*Piper sarmentosum*)

By Dr Kevin Redd, Sustainable Cuisine

Our guest presenter from the December Christmas party, Dr Kevin Redd, shares with us one of the plants featured on the night:

Betel Leaf is commonly used in many parts of Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Westerners often call it 'Betel leaf', while in Thai and Khmer it is *Japloo* and in Vietnamese, *Lá lô t*. So let's delve a bit more into the taxonomy, growing requirements and culinary uses for this versatile and hardy perennial.

There are several other plants that are closely related and often confused by the common names associated with them. The most similar in appearance are *Piper betle* – the true betel leaf, *Piper capense* – the African long pepper and *Piper nigrum* – the true black pepper. The leaves of these three other species very closely resemble *Piper sarmentosum*, but are less common in cultivation in Australia. The growth habit of both *Piper betle* and



Piper nigrum are climbing vines, which makes distinguishing them in a garden setting a bit easier.

Once you have identified the plant and are ready to put it in your garden, it behaves like a creeping perennial vine or groundcover with lovely glossy, edible leaves. It has a relatively shallow root system and spreads readily given the correct conditions. Ideally the plant grows best in full to part shade (tolerating a bit of dappled sun), but the leaves can quickly yellow and burn if grown in too much hot or direct sunlight. While it does love moisture, it is relatively tolerant of the 'dry season' conditions. It can, however, look rather wilted during prolonged periods without rainfall. The good news is, however, that it is capable of recovering quickly when the first rains of the season arrive.

One of the biggest challenges many edible gardeners face is in filling shady areas with productive culinary plants (eg. underneath fruit trees, around bamboo plants, under eaves, etc). Betel leaf is perfect in all of these settings. Once established, the plant can cover large areas, and is therefore available for a very reliable year-round harvest!

The culinary uses are limitless - mostly as an edible garnish or platter decoration, but also used as a fresh green herb or wrap. The high protein content of the leaves also make it excellent in stir fries and other cooking applications where leafy greens are used. We find this is a 'must have' for gourmet gardeners and those who love producing authentic Asian inspired dishes. So once established, you will have an absolute abundance of leaves and here are a few quick and delicious uses:



The Thai style Miang or wrap

This is a 'one bite' dish that is ideally served to guests on arrival, or to have on platters for them to help themselves to in a party/sharing setting. It is very quick to make, and guests are always impressed when you serve these:



- Pick the leaves of the *Japloo* (Thai word for Betel leaf), ideally selecting ones of approximately the same size.
- Prepare fresh condiment/garnishes such as crushed peanuts, chopped coriander, finely diced chillies, chives/society garlic.
- Make a quick sauce with equal parts lime juice, palm sugar and fish sauce, ideally adding some crushed garlic and some chillies.
- Either grill or pan fry the meat/seafood/vegetarian items of your choice. Steak (beef) is great, so are prawns/chicken or tofu. Once cooked, cut them into thin strips and have them ready to use.

NOTE: These steps can be done in advance and put together just before guests arrive.

Assemble the *Miang* (Thai for wrap) by these simple steps:

- Lay out *Japloo* leaves on a nice platter with the shiny side up.
- Place meat/seafood/vegetarian item onto the leaf (keeping in mind this is a ONE BITE dish, so not to over fill!)
- Drizzle a bit of the sauce over the meat/seafood/vegetarian item, which is sitting in the middle of the leaf.
- Sprinkle the condiments over the meat/seafood/vegetarian item as both a decoration and a burst of flavour.

The Vietnamese style cooked parcel

This is another 'one bite' dish that is most commonly made with beef and served hot.

- Pick the leaves of the *Lá lô*t (Vietnamese word for Betel leaf), ideally selecting larger ones that are too big for the *Miang* style uses.
- Make a dipping sauce with equal parts lime juice, palm sugar and fish sauce. Add crushed garlic, some chopped chillies and chopped coriander to taste.
- Prepare filling mixture: A few hundred grams of mince (can be all beef or beef + pork. For vegetarians a crumbed tofu works well too). Add finely chopped garlic, chillies, black pepper, salt and lemongrass to the mince. Mix well.

Assemble by these simple steps:

- Lay out *Lá lô*t leaves on a work surface with shiny side down.
- Place the meat mixture onto the leaf (keeping in mind this is a ONE BITE dish, so not to over fill!)
- Carefully fold in the sides of the leaf and roll into a neat little cylinder.
- Put a toothpick through individual leaf parcels, or use a bigger skewer to put 3-6 parcels onto one skewer.

It's ideal to prepare these in advance and then either get a hot BBQ or bed of hot charcoal ready.

- Cook either on a very hot BBQ or over charcoal. Take parcels on their toothpicks/skewers and put them on the heat.
- Generally only a few minutes cooking is required before flipping over and cooking the other side. Meat will take ~3-5 minutes per side, and vegetarian ones a bit less time.
- Once cooked on both sides, serve immediately with dipping sauce.

ENJOY!

Recipe - Ruth's Vegan 'Sausage' Rolls

Ruth Bolomey made some delicious vegan 'sausage' rolls at the ROGI Christmas party in December. Here's the recipe:

500g cup mushrooms
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1 brown onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
400g can lentils, drained and rinsed
1 tablespoon brown flaxseeds, ground
½ cup beef stock
2 teaspoons Dijon/wholegrain mustard (*can add extra to taste*)
1 cup rolled oats, ground
2 sheets frozen puff pastry, partially thawed
2 tablespoons milk (*any type*)
2 tablespoons pepita and sunflower seed mix, roughly chopped
Canola oil spray
Tomato sauce, to serve

- Place mushrooms in a food processor. Process until finely chopped.
- Heat oil and butter in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion, cook for 5 minutes or until softened.
- Add mushroom. Cook for 5 minutes or until softened.
- Add garlic and thyme. Cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
- Add lentils, flaxseeds and stock, bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer for 5 minutes or until almost all the stock has evaporated. Transfer to a heatproof bowl.
- Add mustard and breadcrumbs. Season with salt and pepper. Stir to combine. Set aside for 30 minutes to cool.
- Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan-forced.
- Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper.

- Cut 1 pastry sheet in half to make 2 rectangles. Place ¼ of the mushroom mixture along the long edge of each rectangle. Roll up to enclose filling. Repeat with remaining pastry and mushroom mixture. Cut each roll into 4 pieces. Place, seam-side down on prepared trays. Brush rolls with milk. Sprinkle with seed mixture. Spray with canola oil. Season well with salt and pepper.
- Bake rolls for 25-30 minutes or until pastry is golden and puffed. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly.
- Serve rolls with tomato sauce.

Keeping a Gardening Diary

Do you keep a gardening diary? For a number of years I have diarised (by date) when I prepare beds, plant, spray, fertilise, and also noting any diseases or problems. I have found this very useful, however it does have its limitations. Looking up when I planted sweet potato last year required searching through every entry for quite a few months until I found the correct one!

Another gardening friend also keeps a 'diary', but has a separate page for each subject (eg. one for lettuce, one for tomatoes, etc). Pages are numbered, and a list of contents at the beginning will tell you which page to go to. Or, you could use a book or folder that already has A-Z dividers, and do up a page for each subject.

For those of you who love digital devices, a search online revealed this "free" (*for the first 7 days only*) Gardening Journal: <https://www.growveg.com.au/journal.aspx> which can be used on a mobile phone or tablet.

Whatever method you choose, keeping a gardening diary makes good sense – you can refer back to what worked and also learn from your mistakes.

By Ann Roffey

ROGI Events

ROGI Field Trip

Saturday 26 March - 6.30am to late afternoon

Sunshine Coast - Noosa Botanical Gardens, Sustainable Cuisine

Join us for a fun-filled day on the Sunshine Coast, visiting the Noosa Botanical Gardens at Cooroy, where you will be able to purchase plants at their quarterly sale. Followed by a tour of the Botanical Gardens.

Later in the morning we will make our way to Kiels Mountain, where we will explore the edible garden at Sustainable Cuisine. Our host Kevin Redd will be providing a mouth-watering home-made lunch of wood-fired pizza and salad.

Book on TeamApp - \$15.00 per person includes bus and lunch.

ROGI Garden Visit

Sunday 24 April

Marie-Antoinette Harris, Wellington Point

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 info@rogi.com.au and help keep the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant.

**The April
Newsletter
deadline is**

24 MARCH 2022

My Sweet Potato Experiment

By Greg Lindner

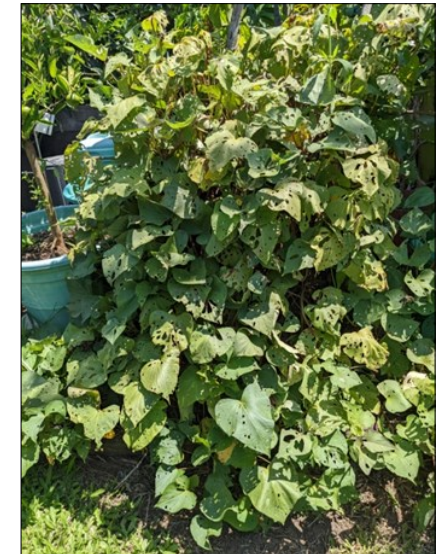
I have often failed at growing sweet potato - finding virtually no tubers, even after waiting for what I considered a long time from planting to harvest. Scanning the Internet returns a wide range of advice on how long to wait, four months to harvest being the shortest. I remember at one ROGI meeting the suggested length of time required for a harvest was 12 months.

Growing sweet potato also requires space and I am always trying to find ways to cram more into my allocated gardening space. I wondered if a sweet potato tower would work. I realized sweet potatoes don't grow like regular potatoes, some of which can be progressively mounded to increase the harvest.

Pictured on the right is my sweet potato tower just before harvesting. I actually harvested two towers, one bigger than the other. The harvest of both is pictured below in a broccoli box.

I waited far too long from planting until harvesting because I kept putting it off. It would have been around 20 months, and as a result some tubers were rotten, some had weevil holes and I wonder if some will be woody. However, overall the harvest should be worthwhile.

I have now started a new sweet potato tower and intend to harvest this one sooner.



My Sweet Potato Experiment (continued)



Here are the steps:

1. Create a cylinder made out of chicken wire. Use star pickets or stakes to hold the cylinder in a vertical position. Without the supports the cylinder will fall over.
2. Use sugarcane mulch to line the wire on the inside—make it like you are making a bird's nest. Work layer by layer.
3. Fill the hole inside with growing media - potting mix, compost, friable soil etc.
4. Layer by layer, work your way up the cylinder, filling the centre as you go. You can add pelletised fertiliser as you go if you want. The completed tower is now ready for planting.

5. You will need a stick or something to poke through the sides to make a hole to push the sweet potato slips through into the soil (I used a broken broom handle).
6. Starting at the bottom of the cylinder, poke the stick through the sides into the soil. Select a suitable sweet potato slip and insert into the hole made by the stick. If the sweet potato has roots all the better - but slips without roots will still grow readily. If you want, you could take cuttings and grow roots in water - they grow roots very easily.
7. Work your way around the cylinder layer by layer, until you have slips all the way around, top to bottom. Every slip has the potential to produce tubers.
8. Finally, give it a good water and keep it moist, especially until the slips grow roots and can sustain themselves.
9. Water occasionally, and don't wait as long as I did to harvest!



Plant of the Month - Curry Tree

By Helen Stehbens

The curry tree (*Murraya koenigii*) is a small evergreen tree, generally growing 3-5 metres with long broad highly aromatic fern-like leaves. It produces clusters of small white fragrant flowers in summer, followed by shiny black berries. Other common names include *sweet neem*, or *kadi patta*. The *Murraya* genus comes from India and Southeast Asia originally, and also includes the mock orange (*Murraya paniculata*). But back to the curry tree!

Growing curry trees

The curry tree enjoys a warm, sheltered position. They are relatively resilient to pests and diseases, but may be impacted by mites, scale and psyllids.



Editor's Note: The curry tree is classed as a weed by Brisbane City Council.

Jerry Coleby-Williams from Gardening Australia warns "*this is not a low maintenance tree, and if you want to be environmentally responsible you're going to have to remove all of the flowers and seeds.*" Birds spread the seeds and the tree has significant weed potential.

The roots can also spread out and are prone to sucker, sprouting new trees (*pictured left*). Jerry recommends pruning them off, near ground level and pouring boiling water over the wound. This reduces sucker re-growth without killing the plant. The only drawback is that this should be done every month. I

grow my curry tree in a big pot, with a saucer, to avoid the issue of suckers. It seems very happy in a part sun/shade position.

Uses for curry tree leaves

The leaves are used in curries. They can also add flavour to chutneys, rice, soups, stews, vegetable or chicken dishes. Similar to how you would use a bay leaf, steep the leaves in the food as it is cooking and then fish it out. Another option is to dry the leaves and crush them for use. They retain their flavour and other qualities after drying.



Limbolee oil, which can be used in scenting soap, comes from the fresh curry leaves. Roasted leaves are added to the Cambodian soup called *maju krueng*. Curry leaves can also be made into a tea.

Leaves may have antimicrobial properties and other qualities. For further information, see articles such as:

[\(PDF\) CURRY LEAVES \(Murraya koenigii Linn. Sprengal\)- A MIRCALE PLANT \(researchgate.net\)](#)

and from *How Can I Use Herbs in My Daily Life?* by Isabel Shipard. The medicinal properties of curry tree are helpful in a wide range of digestive disorders.

<https://herbsarespecial.com.au/plant-information/herb-information/curry-leaf-tree/>

PLEASE NOTE - The berries contain a single large seed which is toxic and should not be eaten.

If the seed is removed, the fruit is edible. There are many recipes for curry leaf here:

[Curry leaf recipes and Curry leaf food : SBS Food](#)

and check out the recipe below for curry leaf pesto.



Plant of the Month - Curry Tree (continued)



Curry tree vs curry plant

Please note the curry leaf tree can be confused with the plant called "curry" (*Helichyrsium italicum*/*H. angustifolium*), pictured right. It has a wonderful curry fragrance, but is best used in pot-pourris, not for food. It can look similar to lavender. These shrubs are usually pest free. Powdery mildew can affect them, appearing as numerous white spots on stems and leaves. If you see signs of infection, remove the unhealthy parts.

Curry leaf pesto recipe

1 cup of fresh curry leaves (remove individual leaves from stem)
1 quarter of red onion, diced
2 large green chillies, chopped *
4 medium garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
½" length of fresh ginger stem, thinly sliced
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
Juice of a whole fresh lime

* Control how hot you want the pesto by adding/reducing the quantity of chillies

When selecting the curry leaves for making pesto, try to use the most healthy and mature leaves mixed with younger leaves to get a balance of flavour, taste and its natural oil.

In a food processor/hand blender, blend the curry leaves, onion, chillies, garlic and ginger for a few minutes; then add ground black pepper and salt. Continue to blend to get the pesto to the right texture. Remove the pesto into a glass dish and add the lime juice. Mix well and leave it for hour so that the natural oil from the curry leaves permeates in the pesto. Do not incorporate any olive or other oils to this, so that you can enjoy the natural oils of curry leaves. You can leave the pesto in the glass container in the refrigerator and use for up to two weeks. Use it as a spread on your sandwiches, mix with pasta, use it the same way you use chutney or salsa. Not only does it taste good, you know it does you good!

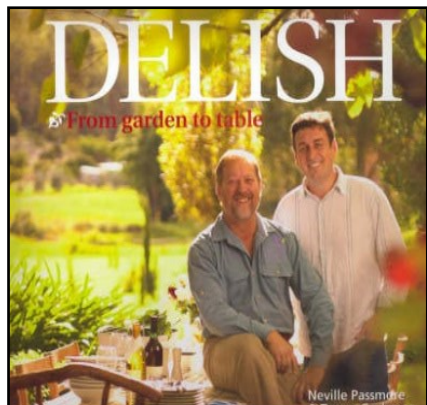
USED POTS NEEDED

Please **return seedling pots (that have been washed)** to the next meeting so that they can be reused, especially the 4-cell ones like these:



Also other clean used pots (small sizes up to 120mm diameter). Square pots are good too.

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



DELISH From garden to table

By Neville Passmore and Trevor Cochrane

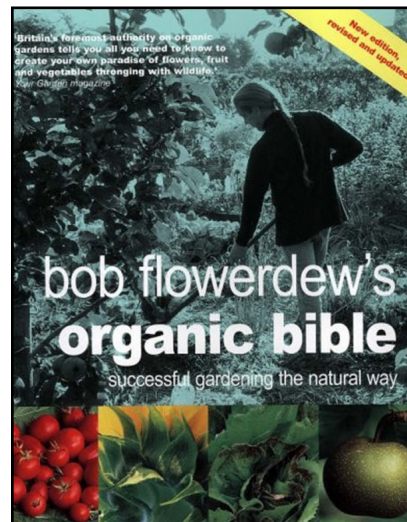
"If there was ever a time when gardens should be filled with fruit and vegetables, it's now."

These two blokes, 'The Garden Gurus' from TV in Perth, express their passion for gardening and food delightfully in this book.

The emphasis is on making good use of everything you grow – there are numerous recipes throughout, with beautiful photos. I have sticky notes bristling from the pages – one page has 'Cold Pressed Acerola Juice' and 'Barbados Cherry Milkshake' – handy for my next crop of *Malpighia glabra*. The 44-page chapter on tropical (and sub-tropical) edibles is comprehensive and particularly applicable to many ROGI gardeners. This book could be very useful should you find yourself with a glut of something – and all your friends have similar gluts.

While the strength of this book, in my view, is in the detail about the various fruits and vegetables, there are still sections on the various aspects of growing them. Be aware that they live and grow in Western Australia, where the climate and soils are very different from South East Queensland.

DID YOU KNOW? ROGI Library has a rich and useful collection of books, DVDs, magazines and newsletters for members to borrow for free. Don't have time to browse at the meeting? You can view them online at <https://www.rogi.com.au/resources.php> You can also request a title before the meeting by emailing our librarian Viga at library@rogi.com.au



Bob Flowerdew's Organic Bible – successful gardening the natural way

The premise of this book is that nature will do the work, so let it, as much as possible. Sounds good to me! Flowerdew (what a name for a gardener!) reminds us that plants want to grow and creatures want to multiply, so we can encourage these natural tendencies by giving them what they need and not giving them anything that hurts or harms them - the essence of organic growing.

He devotes a considerable amount of space to explaining the organic way. The first edition was published in 1998 when organic gardening was perhaps less accepted than now. I think this would be good for a gardener new to organic gardening to read and digest. We need a good understanding of the advantages and philosophy of organic food-growing to enable us to (often) stand back and just 'leave nature be'.

Of course, as expected in any book about food gardening, he goes into detail (224 pages) about design, soil, pests and good guys, diseases, 'weeds' and individual fruit and vegetables, including harvesting, storing and cooking the results.

One thing you become quickly aware of is that the author lives in England, and he goes into things like frost and snow and cold frames – just skip over this bit, and continue growing your tomatoes in our winter!

I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone – as a good introduction to organic food growing or, for more experienced growers, as a reminder and a boost to keep us going and growing.

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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.

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI) -

1st Thursday every month (except January)
Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor
6.30 for 7.30pm. 3357 3171 <http://bogi.org.au>

Qld Herb Society - 1st Tuesday every month

Albion Peace Hall. 7.30pm. 54268299
<http://www.qldherbsociety.org.au/qhs>

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

Meeting Information

Please consider contributing to any of these at various times:

ROGI REWARDS:

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

MEMBERS' SALES:

Items you've produced that are surplus to your requirements that **you wish to sell** to other members – seedlings, eggs, honey, lemons, jam, sustainable craft items – things that have cost you time, money, and effort to produce. Please make sure items are labelled, named and priced. It is preferable that you staff the stall yourself or time-share with a friend.

FREE SWAP/SHARE/GIVE-AWAY:

For items you don't want payment for - empty pots, cuttings, unwanted volunteer plants (named), surplus produce, shredded paper, strawberry runners and so on. You may want to work out an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

PLANT CLINIC:

Bring along your plant problems - insect/plant/weed (as many parts as you can - fruit, leaf, root) in a sealed plastic bag. Fill in the form on the Plant Clinic table (located 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 in the newsletter. *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.*