

Next meeting: Wednesday 9 May 2018

ROGI News

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

Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS

Admission

Members: Free
Visitors: \$5

Please bring a plate of food (savoury/sweet or nibbles and preferably home-made) for supper after the meeting.

Tea/coffee provided.

You are very welcome to provide a **quality plant** to help share interesting plants with other members (**see p 14**).

Remember to bring a bag/box/basket to take home your items.

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Don't like sharing your produce with possums? Plant a native such as the small-leaved lillypilly (*Syzygium luehmannii*). They love the nectar of the flowers, and also the berries that follow .

Backyard Burlblings

Hello ROGI member,

On a recent visit to Canberra to mind grandchildren for the holidays, we were fortunate to be able to attend a Permaculture Festival at the Canberra City Farm, adjacent to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature reserve.

The Permaculture Festival was a free Community event to mark the opening of the 14th Australasian Permaculture Convergence, which is an annual four to five day event bringing permaculture adherents together from all over Australasia and further afield.

This year's theme of the Convergence was "Connectivity" of community, the environment, people, gardens, food, resources etc. in all its various guises.

Apart from the weather –Canberra had managed to turn on a very cold and blustery day—there was plenty to see and hear for everyone.

As heaps of kid's interactive activities had been advertised, we took our four year old grandson and his seven year old sister along, and they were not disappointed. In fact, one of the first things they did was to listen to Costa Georgiadis as they know him from ABC Kids as "Grubby the Garden Gnome".

They were not at all bored with his talk as he managed to entertain kids as well as adults in his long presentation about changing the way we do things by getting kids involved in the process of gardening, looking after the

environment and recycling waste etc. Somehow, kids seem to get it almost instantly while many adults struggle with entrenched attitudes.

There was a huge range of workshops and displays on offer—from restyling your clothes to get more use, to backyard aquaponics for growing more food, as well as the idea of empowering local food resilience by sharing or bartering, and using waste land such as verges and reserves.

Displays of flour grinding using bicycle power was a big hit with the kids, as were the native bee houses, chickens, and massive compost heaps and worm beds.



Craft activities for kids, where they used natural products like native seeds, feathers, bark, twigs and playdough to create masterpieces, proved to be a boon for us, as we could leave them there busily designing works of art while we explored some of the gardens and their reusing, recycling and reducing concepts.

We particularly liked the idea of cutting 1000 litre containers in half and reusing as garden beds (see photo right). They are easy to obtain on ebay.

Another feature of the festival was the launch of David Holmgren's new book *Retrosuburbia: The Downshifter's Guide to a*

Resilient Future. See review on page 12.

As a co-originator of the permaculture movement in Australia, Holmgren has been an influential voice over the last 40 years. He was one of the keynote speakers at the festival, but unfortunately we missed his talk as it was on early in the day.

David postulates that, if we start using our garden spaces more productively and wisely, we can increase our own food supply, reduce our costs and eat better quality food. In the process we will also be less dependent on big business interests and become more self-reliant. Sounds simple but it might mean having to give up many of our traditional ideas of what constitutes good garden design.

We found the Permaculture Festival inspiring and thought-provoking, as in the past we had used permaculture principles on a much larger scale than a suburban backyard. It was refreshing to realise that size is irrelevant.

The suburban backyard can be a vital part of our local ecosystem.

Julia Geljon
ROGI president



Coming Events

May	Wed 9	ROGI meeting	
	Sat/Sun 12/13	Open Garden	See p 7
	Tues 15	Seed Savers meeting	See p 13
	Sun 20	Garden Visit	See p 5
	Sun 27	Herb Awareness Day	See p 8
	Sun 27	Field trip (proposed)	See p 5
June	Tues 5	Herb Society meeting	
	Thurs 7	BOGI Meeting	
	Wed 13	ROGI Meeting	

Membership Information

- **Cash** payment at ROGI meeting
- **Cheques** made payable to *Redland Organic Growers Inc* - pay at meeting or to PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
- **Direct Deposit** BSB 633000. A/C 136137296 (Bendigo Bank, Middle St, Cleveland)

IMPORTANT! Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid.

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

Member Category	Members Renewing For 2018	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct18-Dec19
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

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

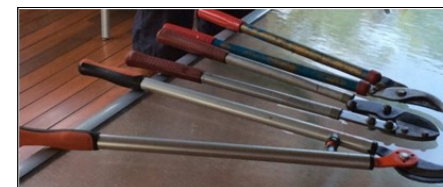
May Meeting

Choose-your-own topic

We will have **five workshops/discussions** which will go for twenty minutes. Choose which **one** you are interested in. Maximum of twenty people at each.

1. Tool care

Steve from Bayside Mobile Sharpening will talk about how to care for, shop for and store your tools. Plus troubleshooting tips. *Please note Steve will not be sharpening tools for everyone.*



2. About chooks

Davina will discuss how to have happy chooks so you get the best from them. Come with your questions and ideas.

3. About garden beds

Chris will outline the pros and cons of various garden bed types – which one is best for your purpose?



4. Ditch the plastic - make wax wraps

Margaret will demonstrate making wax wraps, and how to use, care for, fix and store them. Also, where to get supplies, and why it's good to use wraps.



5. Ways to deal with pests

Q and A with Steve: Some things you can do to stop pests getting to your bounty before you can.

Ashley from Mt Cotton Organic Farm will have his selected organic produce for sale inside the building. Remember - bring your reusable bags, boxes, baskets etc.

April speaker Peter Kearney on Biodynamics

Peter Kearney has been growing food organically to feed his family for the past 20 years. Through his own trial and error of using organic and biodynamic gardening methods, reading books and learning from other gardeners, he started his organic gardening and urban farming business in 2007. Since then, he has run educational workshops, an online organic gardening resource, designed food growing spaces and planned larger-scale urban farming for a diverse range of clients.

Peter made a very complex topic quite understandable in the short time he had available, giving some history, methods, current approaches and results.

The ideas of biodynamic farming and agriculture came about in 1924, when European farmers approached Rudolph Steiner to help them deal with severe issues of decreasing fertility in their soils, crops and animals. In a series of lectures Steiner developed concepts to put farm organisation and working with plants and livestock in the proper context with the forces that fashion living Nature.

Peter showed us that biodynamics is a way to lift our consciousness in understanding Nature while producing healthy, vital food for humanity. It also fits in with Australian certified organic standards.

The preparations, which most people have heard of, rely on timing both seasonal and appropriate moon calendar days to be at their most effective. They are made, mixed (energised), and spread/applied at very specific times for particular effect. For example, cow horn manure stimulates life in the soil so is used in spring and autumn. Small quantities are stirred in water and then applied in large droplets over the land, often flicking with a brush.

Compost preps made from herbs enhance and enliven compost heaps and teas. They are added into the heap with a small amount of finished compost at the time of building, or hung in bags in weed/compost teas.

Cow pat pit is used monthly on the appropriate days, especially when digging in green manure or after grazing a paddock. The BD tree paste rubbed all over the trunks or as a wound paste, as an annual application, keeps the bark and cambium healthy, building vitality in the trees.

Lastly, horn silica aids the ripening and storing of fruit and protects the plant against disease. It is used frequently by the many BD (biodynamic) grape/wine growers in Australasia.

Another integral part of biodynamics lies in paying attention to planetary movements and indications. Peter reminded us that those forces affect us as well as plants and animals. The moon orbits the earth every 28 days which, combined with effects of the 12 constellations, gives us 3 Earth days, 3 root days, 3 leaf days

and 3 fruit days each month to carry out appropriate gardening work or not, as the case may be.

The use of the biodynamic calendar (see next page) greatly aids in this planning and the many aspects have been researched and tested by various people in many countries. We have certainly seen undeniable evidence of planting at the right time when contract growing wheat grass for a therapy group. Regionally people have had to make some minor adjustments or replacement of ingredients; for example using casuarina in Australia instead of horsetail, since it is illegal to grow horsetail here.

All of the preparations are available from the Biodynamic Association, so you don't even have to make them yourselves. Also Peter has some upcoming workshops on Biodynamic gardening – check his website <https://www.myfoodgarden.com.au> for details.

There will be a ROGI field trip during July to Peter's garden, so watch out for those dates.

Reported by Chris McIvor



More on biodynamics ...

Tree paste recipe

This mixture should be applied in June, July, and August on all fruit trees and vines after they have been pruned.

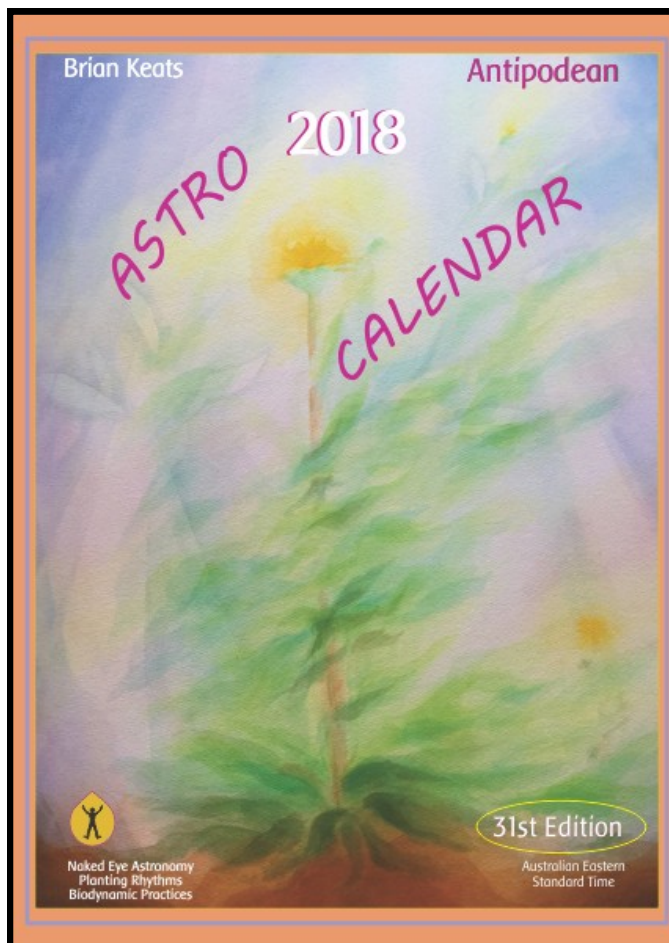
- 1 part cow manure
- 1 part silica sand or diatomaceous earth
- 1 part potting clay or bentonite

Mix together with sufficient stirred preparation 500 to make a thin paste. Use a white-wash brush to paint the trees up as high as you can practically reach.

In the case of a commercial orchard—make the paste thin enough to be sprayed. Make sure the paste has been strained. Also, that you choose a coarse nozzle and that you use a centrifugal pump rather than a diaphragm pump, which would be damaged with the nature of the materials. If spraying, make sure that you use diatomaceous earth rather than silica sand, as the diatomaceous earth is finer and more easily sprayed than sand.

The three ingredients of the tree paste—clay, sand and cow manure (humus) represent the three basic components of soil, which, in one way of looking at it, are united by the preparation 500. Rudolf Steiner speaks of the tree as being like soil raised up above the earth's surface, and that the bark is like the surface of the soil. The twigs that grow each year are like annual plants growing out of the earth. Steiner points out that the cambium—

the growing layer under the bark—is like the roots which supports these “annual plants”. With the tree paste we nourish and strengthen the “bark/soil” and the cambium of the tree to make the tree healthy.



The study of biodynamics can be rather complex. This calendar helps you to make sense of it all. It is 32 pages long and chock-full of information. Whether you want the full picture, or just the shorter version so you can get started, you will find what you're looking for in this guide. Find it at <http://astro-calendar.com>

Garden Visits

Sunday 20 May—Ruth Bolomey's garden at Capalaba. Ruth has completely transformed her small suburban block (much by herself) to accommodate veggies, fruit, and some exotics. She is currently replanting the whole of her front yard.

Sunday 24 June—Heather Clark, Victoria Point

Field Trips

EcoVillage Currumbin – proposed Sunday 27 May.

It is envisaged we'll have time to visit several gardens, the community centre and facilities, and award winning sustainable house and the RRR centre. Final details will be notified soon. <https://theecovillage.com.au>

It is also proposed that we travel by bus and that ROGI will partially subsidise members for the day to cover bus and visit expenses. Maximum of 50.

Self-catered meals but café is also available.

As always, space is limited, so book early.

Please indicate your interest at the May meeting to Margaret or secretary@rogi.com.au

Our Garden Visit calendar is full for 2018 (except for December). If you'd like to put your garden on a waiting list in case of cancellation—as happened in 2017—please get in touch with Toni, or Margaret while Toni is away.

Toni also welcomes suggestions for field trips and workshops related to RTGI's organic growing interests.

Gardening Tips for May

Anne Gibson

The Micro Gardener

With high temperatures and humidity for much of April, it seems we're going to have a very short autumn this year. Weather is typically warm and comfortable in the 20's during May, usually reasonably consistent rain and the bonus is, of course, a significant reduction in pests and diseases. With cooler temps and less humidity, powdery mildew, grasshoppers, many caterpillars and aphid activity generally reduce. So prime planting time!

If you haven't yet prepared your garden beds, a quick way to build healthy soil is to add rock minerals, green lucerne and top with another layer of mulch such as organic sugarcane or grassy mulch hay. The lucerne will attract worms which will help quickly turn this organic matter into humus rich soil. Keep watered with seaweed to activate the microbes. While this is breaking down, make 'pockets' or small holes in these layers and fill with potting mix. This way, you can be planting while building soil! I make my own nutrient-rich and moisture-holding potting mixes with an easy DIY recipe and improve bagged mixes to prevent them becoming hydrophobic. If you have your own compost and worm castings you can use these in your own potting mixes.

What to sow in May

This is prime time for sowing asparagus crowns, beans, beetroot, all brassicas (broccoli, rocket, kale, tatsoi, cauliflower, cabbages), broad beans, capsicum, carrots, celery, chard, chia, cool season green manures, cucumber (my favourite is cuca-melons, which are highly productive and require far less water), eggplant, garlic, leek, lettuces, peas, potato, radish, silverbeet, spring onions, sweet potato and tomatoes.



If you are impatient for peas and beans, sow bush/dwarf varieties first, then climbers. The bush peas and beans will produce flowers and pods earlier than climbing varieties because these need to put on more leaf growth before flowering. The dwarfs will give you a quick crop and three to four harvests. By then, your climbers will be producing plenty of peas and beans and will last much longer so you can extend the harvest. A simple strategy for enjoying these vegetables for longer.

Fruits

Try planting fruit trees such as Citrus, Black Sapote, Carambola, Coffee, Feijoa, Fig, Finger lime, Guava, Kiwifruit, Macadamia, Mango, Mulberry (easy from cuttings taken in the new moon phase), Olive, Passionfruit, Papaya, Peach (try tropical and dwarf varieties), Pecan, Persimmon, Pomegranate and Strawberry runners. Remember to remove any buds from young fruit trees so they can put energy into growing roots not fruit.

If your 'mother' strawberry plants are throwing runners, separate them and feed up well with compost and liquid seaweed to boost new root and shoot growth.

Fruit fly is a threat we all live with. Unfortunately, mild temperatures mean we can likely expect them earlier again this year, with more

generations recurring over coming months. Last year I thought I had the timing right with my traps and covers. However, they arrived a month early, so I lost most of my tropical peaches. So, now's the time to put your traps in place to minimise damage and control the life cycle. Other strategies that may help are to:

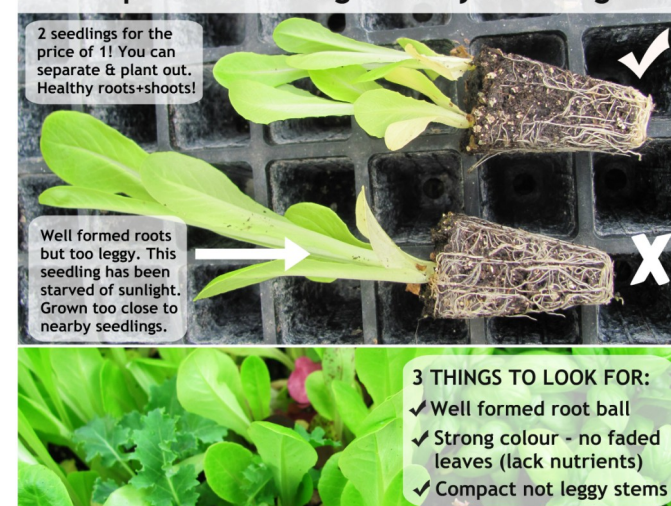
- 1) select early fruiting trees, to miss fruit fly attack
- 2) grow dwarf varieties or keep fruit trees small
- 3) cover with suitable exclusion netting.

Herbs and flowers

Some herbs just hate the heat – take coriander and dill for example. However, they thrive at this time of year and will produce hundreds of free seeds for microgreens and next season when they finish later in the year. Sow Borage, Chervil, Comfrey roots, Fennel, Lemongrass, Parsley, Pineapple Sage (easy from cuttings) and Sorrel. Plant your bulbs and flowers including Calendula, Cornflower, Daylily, Dianthus, Marigold, Nasturtium, Pansy, Poppy, Snapdragon, Sweet Pea, Viola.

Interplant your herbs and flowers between vegetables (particularly brassicas—the cabbage family) to attract beneficial predator insects to keep caterpillars and other insects in balance.

Tips for Choosing Healthy Seedlings



Garden Tasks

- If you haven't yet fertilised your fruit trees, particularly citrus, now is the time to do so.
 - Weed and mulch around fruit trees at the same time. Comfrey and arrowroot are ideal nutrient- and moisture-rich mulches.
 - Stone fruit like tropical peaches start flowering so will benefit from a liquid feed of seaweed, compost tea or diluted worm casting concentrate.
 - Keep moisture in the soil by topping up with a layer of mulch. This will help feed the soil and insulate the temperature.
 - Harvest any basil for pesto before it dies back and collect the seeds for saving.
 - Cut back arrowroot and perennials. Use the nitrogen-rich material to make compost.
 - Prune and remove summer crops that have finished. Recycle the nutrients to feed your garden.
 - Keep garlic, potatoes and asparagus well weeded. They hate competition.
 - Prime growing time for all leafy greens without having to compete with grasshoppers. Keep up liquid feeds for an abundant harvest. Add to smoothies, juices, stir fries and soups. Harvest early morning for maximum moisture in the leaves.
 - Plant a trap crop of Nasturtium or Upland Cress (see p13) to attract the Cabbage White Butterfly to lay eggs on these plants instead of your brassicas. Sacrificial plants make it easy to squish caterpillars in one spot instead of all over your garden. The cress is toxic to the caterpillars, so this helps break the lifecycle. A sneaky but effective strategy. Decoys, exclusion nets, cloches for young seedlings, interplanting and other organic controls can help you manage this pest. See back page.
- If you'd like to learn more about growing an abundant edible garden, I invite you to visit my website, themicrogardener.com and join my free monthly newsletter. Follow me on Facebook and Instagram where I share tips, videos and pics from my teaching kitchen garden.

Anne Gibson



Bellis Open Garden Jerry Coleby-Williams

The annual Open Day at Bellis will be on Mother's Day weekend. Over 500 different climate-appropriate plants grow at Bellis for food, medicine, pesticides, to support biodiversity and including climate change-ready ornamentals.

A great opportunity to visit an extraordinary 21st century cottage garden and take away ideas and inspiration for sustainable food growing and boosting beneficial biodiversity at home.

See and experience just how much can be achieved on an ordinary suburban block and find out how you can do it too. There will be plants and books for sale.

This year Jerry is delighted to be joined by **Dr Tim Heard**, a native bee expert and entomologist. **Each day at 2 pm**, Tim will split one of Jerry's native stingless bee hives. One hive of warm temperate-subtropical *Tetragonula carbonaria* and one hive of tropical-subtropical *T.hockingsii* will be split. If there's enough sugarbag, you may have a chance to taste their honey. These are two of the 26 species of native bee which visit or live at Bellis. www.sugarbag.net



"Bellis is not an attempt at self-sufficiency, but it is a living example of how we can turn our Aussie backyards into an environmental advantage, without compromising our lifestyle."

Everything growing here can be grown by an average gardener on an average income. Discover how to reduce your ecological footprint whilst reducing the cost of living." Jerry Coleby-Williams

Admission is \$10-00, under 18 free
56 Daisy Street, Wynnum

Sat 12, Sun 13 May 2018

Important notes

- * Wear sensible shoes (stilettos and mulch don't work)
- * Prior to entry you must be prepared to disinfect the soles of your shoes in the disinfectant provided
- * Unsuitable for wheelchairs and strollers
- * No pets
- * Supervise children at all times—plant spines, chillies and euphorbia sap may cause injury

IndigiScapes Children's Garden Workshop

ROGI co-hosted a children's garden workshop with Redlands IndigiScapes centre, on Sunday April 22nd.

Twenty children and their parents came along to the event. ROGI members Margaret Sear, Rhonda Binns, Melissa Kelk, Ruth Bolomey and Russell Turner assisted Ruth Dyer – education extension officer at IndigiScapes – to demonstrate and explain gardening in simple to understand terms.

Margaret talked about ROGI and the benefits of organic gardening and of introducing children to gardening at a young age.

They showed how to make a mini salad and herb garden using the children's own containers and boxes. The children got their hands dirty and planted a mix of seedlings to take home and nurture.

Ruth finished the morning by introducing the children to some easy-to-grow indigenous plants such as dianella and viola by planting seeds and cuttings.

It was a very successful venture which we hope will encourage more children and families to grow organic food and perhaps even join ROGI.

A report on the ROGI Garden Visit to Robyn's property in April will be included in the June ROGI News. We would welcome more people to help write these reports, so there's always someone to step in and also so that the job is shared around. Please get in touch: contact details on back page.



GET WELL SOON!

Garry Bromham, the treasurer of ROGI has been in hospital.

We are thinking of you Garry, and wish you a speedy recovery!

A big 'thank you'
to Ann Roffey who did a huge
amount of work helping to collate this edition
of ROGI News while I was away enjoying
grandmother duty. Jill



*Ladies, Lords & Goodpeople ~
the Queensland Herb Society
in 2018 proudly present a*

Medieval Herb Awareness

**Join us for a fascinating day
of herbal discovery as we
explore the importance of
herbs in this historic time.**

- Discover a wide range of medicinal and culinary herbs and plants for sale.
- Browse a vast range of stalls: preserves, teas, coffee, spices, skin care, gardening and more.
- Feast at Café Sage with herb inspired, home baked food with a medieval twist.
- **FREE** herbal talks and demonstrations with medieval relevance and interest.
- Delight in roving medieval entertainers.
- Dress in medieval fashion if you wish!

Sunday 27th May
9am to 3pm
Albion Peace Hall
102 McDonald Rd, Windsor
• Entry is FREE •

Please note: No ATM on site.

Email: qhs@live.com.au
Telephone: 07 3279 6037

Visit our website closer to the date for speaker timetable

www.qldherbsociety.org.au

This event is supported by the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund and Hemit on Ward Council/Doc David McLachlan.



Plant Clinic

Q: What is this plant? It has self-sown in my garden.



A: Not really sure. It may be a 'cheese tree' - *Glochidion ferdinandi*, a fast-growing bushy native tree with glossy green leaves and small cheese-shaped fruit in summer that resemble miniature cheeses but are not edible. Small-to-medium sized tree or large shrub up to 5-7 m, and 3-5 m spread.

If you are unable to get identification of a plant from your local nursery, go to <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/herbarium/identify-specimens>. Fill out the Botanical specimens cover sheet, and send with your plant cutting (between two sheets of newspaper) to:

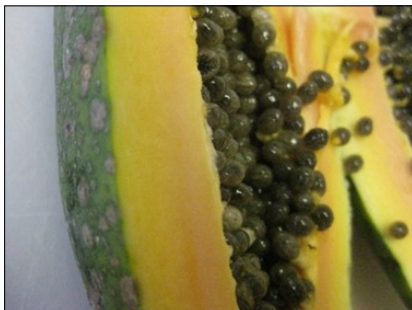
Botanical Information & Advisory Service
Queensland Herbarium, DSIT
Brisbane Botanic Gardens
Mt Coot-tha Road, TOOWONG QLD 4066

They will identify your plant for free and send you a reply by your choice of post/email/fax/phone.

Q: This is my pawpaw (top, middle). All the fruit are affected with these brown 'lesions', and it's getting worse. There is fungus on the leaves also.

A: It could be mite damage. The fruit appeared to be normal on the inside, although it is not ripe yet.

George has done extensive research



online, and feels that the problem is a fungal one. There is no mention of mites being a problem on the fruit, only on the leaves. There are two fungal pests that could be the cause - Brown Spot or Black Spot. Brown Spot is probably the one due to the warm wet weather we have had. Black Spot occurs in cooler conditions.

Brown spot

Cause. The fungus *Corynespora cassiicola*. This can be a serious disease in hot, wet areas and during prolonged wet periods throughout Queensland. The spores are spread during wet, windy weather.

Solution. Spray with a suitable fungicide from the Problem Solver Handy Guide, see <http://era.daf.qld.gov.au/id/eprint/1646/> for a downloadable handbook on pawpaw growing.

Black spot

Cause. The fungus *Asperisporium caricae*.

Solution. . Remove badly affected leaves and fruit to reduce disease pressure. This disease is more prevalent in cool conditions, for example winter. Spray thoroughly with an appropriate chemical from the Problem Solver Handy Guide.

Solution for Organic Gardeners is to spray a protective copper fungicide spray with a small amount of soluble oil as a sticker and a wetting agent. This barrier while present will stop cell growth

and prevent the fungicide multiplying. Potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate could be substituted, I do not know which would last the longest. Copper and potassium would both be used by the plants as nutrients. Copper is often deficient in coastal Qld so it has advantages, but can be overdone.

Q: My citrus (grapefruit and cumquat) are affected by something that makes these marks on them. What is it and what can I do about it?



A: It looks as if it is fruit-piercing moth damage - *Eudocima* species. The moth feeds by night, piercing the fruit and sucking the juice. This causes the sunken, bruised, dried-out, soft area. Rot will set in and the damage will allow fruit fly to enter and lay eggs.

These are *super-moths*! They can fly 40 to 50 km a night, and they can remember where they had the best feast and return night after night! Insecticides cannot kill them. One attempt to control them used to involve using tennis racquets at night! They are very bad this year.

One suggestion is to bag (using drawstring bags) the individual fruit or bunches of fruit - depending on the type and size of fruit.



R: This night photo of a fruit-piercing moth tucking into an egg-plant was taken a few years ago by Mena Stoke.

Plant Clinic continued

Q: My red papaya trees have flowers, but they keep falling off – only a few fruits have formed. They are growing on soil comprising a deep layer of broken down wood chip on top of clay enriched with lots of organic matter. The top layer is very porous and needs daily watering in hot weather. I have given them a number of applications of pot-ash and boron. All had a dressing of fowl manure in October and with dynamic lifter in January. What can I do?

A: A few suggestions:

From George: Boron requirements for papaya are high and it is very quickly leached from the soil, so your plants can still be boron deficient. You could make a solution of one gram of borax in one litre of water and add a bit of nitrogen in the form of about half a cup of urine. Spray the flowers with this solution. Or use Organibor - a slow release form. One of boron's jobs is to enable the plant to use calcium. Have you been applying it? Copper deficiency, which is common in coastal SE Australia, also can cause lack of fertilisation. Blue stone/copper sulphate is the safest for organics. I always understood that pawpaw/papaya are wind-pollinated, but I've read that insects can also pollinate them. The plants can be male, female or bisexual, so you need the right combination, but they can be pollinated by wind up to 10km. The red ones are often more tropical and don't set well in cooler areas, hand pollination would help. The more pollination, the bigger the fruit.

From Gennaro: My first answer based on your notes I ... "I do not know". However, I might list what it could be and what your alternatives could be:

- Since we are heading into the cooler months, whatever you do will not show quick results. Most of the green fruits I have on my trees right now will just sit there for many months (until the soil warms up)

- If your papayas are not bisexual ones and aren't showing signs of fungal or other disease, it might simply be the result of poor pollination.
- You didn't mention how closely you planted those three trees (I suspect less than 2 metres) in my experience, one single tree produces a lot more than several small ones planted next to each other hence it might be best to remove the two weakest ones
- Poor genetics could also be a factor - have you seen the parent plant of your trees? if it was grown from seeds the mother most probably comes from Far North QLD and it will take many generations for its offspring to adapt to our climate.

If you feel that regardless of your excellent watering regime, your plants might still get too wet or too dry (both ends result in flower/fruit drop), incorporate some coir (say 15% of the total volume) in the top say 30cm, make sure you have a good 10 to 15cm of sugar cane mulch covering that soil (keep it away from the trunk) and give the whole area a bucket of seaweed solution each week for six weeks (for best result do it right away while it's not too cold and/or in late August)

Plant Clinic

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

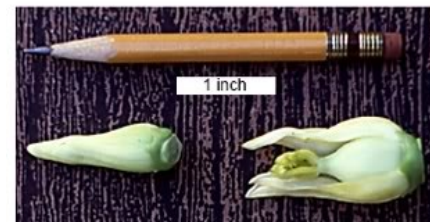
Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts - fruit, leaf, root etc - as you can, and in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased or very seedy) and fill in the form.

Place the plant parts together with the form on Plant Clinic table before the meeting starts.

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

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.

The three types of papaya flower



Female
conical bud; petals free; large ovary with prominent stigma; no stamens; does not form fruit unless pollinated



Hermaphrodite
cylindrical bud; petals fused at base; contains both ovary and stamens; self-fertile



Male
slender, spoon-shaped bud; petals fused at base; contains anthers but no ovary; cannot develop into fruit

Picture above from <http://thecitrusguy.blogspot.com.au/2012/06/potted-papaya.html>

Q: My bay tree is growing in a pot. Some of the leaves have these large brown marks. What is wrong with it?



A: It has been attacked by mites. You could spray it with eco-oil, but this could block the stomata on the underside of the leaves, which is where the characteristic oils come from. Since only some of the leaves are affected it may be best to just leave it be; you'll have enough leaves to use in cooking.

Plant of the month Lucerne

I was looking for a plant this week that would do a few things for me in our garden: Increase the number of worms in the soil and increase the beneficial insects in the garden. Bonus points if it can feed my family or chooks. And this is what I decided to plant—lucerne *Medicago sativa*.

Lucerne (as animal fodder) or *alfalfa* (common name) is a cool-season perennial commonly grown for feeding livestock (now my chickens) or as a green cover crop. Lucerne is highly nutritious and a natural source of nitrogen. It's ideal for improving soil quality and providing erosion-control due to its deep roots. Lucerne has been cultivated for generations and growing it in your garden is easy and really a must.

Lucerne is easy to grow and adapts well to nearly any garden. Tolerating a wide range of growing conditions, it is drought-resistant (which we need coming into the winter months) The one thing it doesn't like is wet feet. In fact, too much moisture can lead to mould growth.

When growing lucerne, choose an area with plenty of sun. Look for a well-draining area with a soil pH between 6.8 and 7.5. Prior to planting, you should clean the area, removing any sticks and stones and add heaps of organic matter like you would when planting any new crop.

Since lucerne roots quickly, it doesn't require deep planting; just sprinkle the seeds evenly onto the soil and cover lightly with more soil. You should begin to see sprouts within seven to 10 days. Once seedlings have reached about 15 centimetres, thin them as needed to avoid overcrowding issues (these can be eaten, or fed to the chickens.)

The bonus of growing lucerne was for our

chickens—I have grown it in three places, two that will flower and one that is just for the chickens. We will need to be harvesting and curing prior to it flowering (known as early-bloom stage). It becomes more difficult for chickens to digest once the plant matures. Harvesting at this stage also ensures optimal nutrient percentages, which is often found in the plant's leaves—unless you are a beneficial insect who will love the violet/blue/purple flowers full of sweet nectar.

Now remember I said I wanted something that was also going to help my worm numbers too? Several foods stimulate earthworms, but it turns out that lucerne has something pretty cool in it—Protozoa, which are single-celled microscopic organisms. They love lucerne and worms love protozoa. Protozoa numbers are often depleted in home garden soils due to an imbalance, and modern farming chemicals don't help larger scale farming. Earthworms will go elsewhere in search of their favourite food. If you want to return your garden to heaven for earthworms then you need to bring back the protozoa. I am going to try making a lucerne tea;



it can only be made with organic lucerne as the chemical used to control lucerne flea can seriously impact protozoa populations.

I got this recipe from the wonderful Graeme Sait:

Lucerne Tea Recipe

Take 500 grams of organic Lucerne and place in a 20-litre bucket of water.

Add 200 mL of [SeaChange KFF™](#) (kelp, liquid fish and fulvic acid).

Add 100 mL of molasses.

Aerate for 24 – 36 hours using a twin outlet fish tank aerator,

After brewing, dilute this mixture with water in a watering can and apply to your garden.

Interplant lucerne with everything

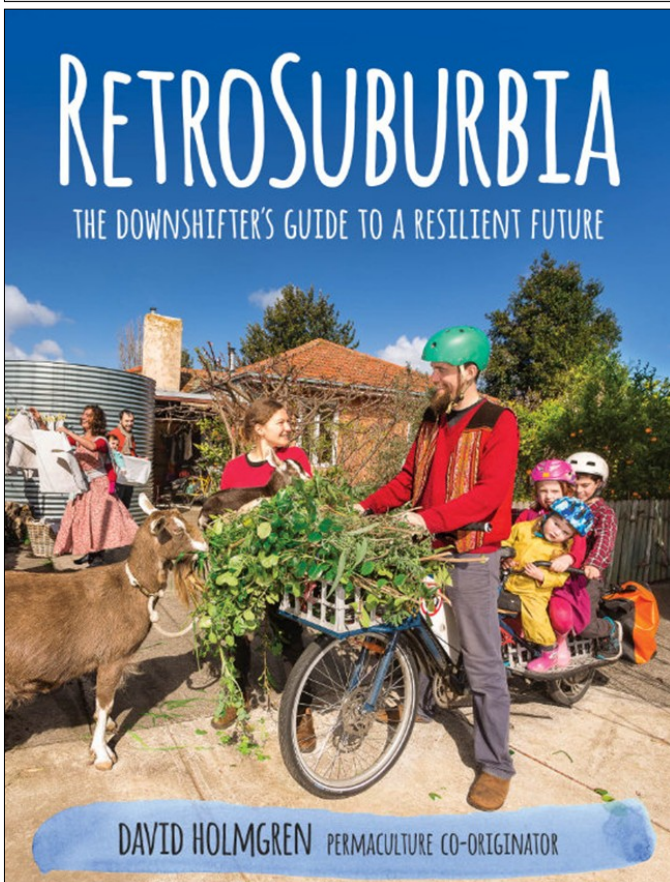
Buy a packet of lucerne seed and grow a host of seedlings in trays or pots. Liberally plant those lucerne seedlings throughout your food garden. Legumes such as lucerne offer three distinct benefits. They fix **nitrogen** from the atmosphere to help supplement the nitrogen requirements of all other inhabitants of your garden. They constantly release acid exudates from their roots to break the bond between **calcium** and **phosphate** in your soil. These two minerals form insoluble bonds due to their opposing electrical charges. The biological acids from legumes serve to release this bond and to trickle-feed both of these liberated minerals into the surrounding soil. Calcium and phosphate are the two of the most important minerals for **photosynthesis**, the most important process on the planet.

The acid exudates of legumes like lucerne encourage the proliferation of beneficial fungi, the creatures most missing in many of our soils.

by Sharr Ellison

Lucerne seeds are in our seed bank - \$1 packet for members (\$2 non-members) Also see page 13.

Book Review



David Holmgren is well known in Australian permaculture circles as the co-originator of Permaculture Designs and Principles along with the 'Father of Permaculture', the late Bill Mollison. Since Mollison's death in 2016, David has become the leading voice on permaculture in Australasia.

This new book by David has been many

years in the making, but at last it was published earlier this year. It promises to be a game changer, both within the permaculture movement and in the wider organic community.

The central focus of the book is that suburban food production capacity is the key factor in the adaptation of cities to challenging futures. He argues that this can be done by retrofitting suburban backyards and homes to be more self-reliant and resilient, both within our own households and the local neighbourhood.

In the introduction and chapter 1 he explains how retrofitting applies to three fields of action: the built field, the behavioural field and the biological field. All the things we have and do, in and around our houses and gardens, the way we live within that framework and in the wider community, can be related to these three fields. Therefore, they can all be changed and/or modified to make us more resilient to future challenges. He questions the notion that the future will be a faster, shinier version of the present. A view so often touted by our political leaders: if only we would work harder and make more money. David's view is that this could be the path to permanent debt slavery and he challenges us to start thinking differently.

The main challenges he foresees are related to finance, energy and climate:

"Collapse of the financial and property bubble of recent decades";

"Rising costs and/or shortages of energy, food and other basic needs";

"Worsening natural disasters driven by climate change".

If you read a book that would be valuable for our library please tell a committee member know about it—see back page.

We welcome reviews from readers of ROGI library books you've read. Please!

A while ago our refractometer went missing from the library. We want it back. If you know where it is, please arrange for it to appear at a ROGI meeting or garden visit. No questions asked.

He postulates that by thinking ahead and even doing a retrofit of our homes and gardens on a small scale, we are future proofing ourselves, our families and our communities to deal with these possible scenarios.

The reason this book focuses on suburban retrofitting is because that is where most of us live and spend most of our time. Hence it makes sense to "start at the backdoor", rather than yearn for a place in the country.

Chapters 2 and 3 give some excellent examples of a fictitious suburban street "Aussie Street"- where four families change and adapt, over a period of almost three generations, to changing circumstances; as well as various case studies of other groups of people or individual families.

From there on the book basically becomes a manual for looking at how we live and what we could easily change if we wished. There are numerous examples, diagrams, excellent drawings and photographs as well as an engaging text. While it is a large book, almost 600 A4 size pages, it is definitely not a coffee table book but a working manual.

I would thoroughly recommend buying this book, if you are interested in changing the way we currently live. You can buy it online for \$85.00 from the author <https://www.retrosurbia.com>

The ROGI library has two copies of this book for you to borrow, but you may have to order it and wait.

Reviewed by Julia Geljon

This book is among the many items available for loan from your ROGI library.

We also have pH test kits and needles for sewing shade cloth for you to borrow.

Seed bank news

Plant your own seed

at the next ROGI meeting

We'll supply a container to sow the seed in, ROGI seed-raising mix and the seeds.

At home, you need to:

- keep the mixture moist
- keep pots in a protected well-lit, shaded spot
- harden off new seedlings by gradually increasing their exposure to sun and heat
- water with weak Seasol solution or worm liquid when the second set of leaves appears (the first 'true' leaves)
- transplant into a larger pot or the garden

The seeds this month will be lucerne and landcress (seeds saved by Francke).

Seed Saving

The inaugural Seedsavers meeting was a resounding success. An enthusiastic band of members rolled out to learn about the authentic artfulness of saving seeds. The aims of the group are to develop knowledge for growing and saving seeds, to build our resources and diversity and, as Janet says, to help people to grow flowers and food.

We'll meet again on **Tuesday 15 May, 7-8.30pm**, to learn about how to successfully save seeds from 'wet' veggies such as eggplant, tomatoes and more.

Connect with Janet Crighton at the next ROGI meeting if you'd like to join the ROGI Seedsavers group.

*Linda Brennan
ROGI Seedsavers tutor*

Special Offer

For every five seed packs you buy, you'll receive one litre of ROGI seed-raising mix to sow them in.

Please **return seed-lining pots** to be reused. Especially the 4-cell ones. **Other clean used pots**—small sizes only up to 12cm diameter. Square pots are good too.

Our **seed-raising mix** (a blend of vermiculite, coir peat, perlite and biochar) works quite well. Now you can get some for your own use. We put it in used yogurt or ice cream containers. **Fifty cents a litre.** We can offer good prices as we source well and we are not-for-profit.

This guide is for sowing seeds, not seedlings. There may be several days or even weeks between the optimal time to sow a seed and to transplant a seedling.

Seed Sowing Guide

May

Artichoke; Jerusalem a/choke
Asparagus
Bean: Broad, French
Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Capsicum/Chilli
Cauliflower
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Endive
Florence fennel
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Onions/garlic
Parsnip
Peas
Potatoes
Radish
Silver beet
Spinach & Other spinach: Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal, Kangkong
Swede
Sweet potato
Tomato
Turnip

June

Artichoke; Jerusalem a/choke
Asparagus
Bean: Broad, French
Beetroot
Cabbage
Capsicum/Chilli
Cauliflower
Carrot
Celery
Chicory
Endive
Florence fennel
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Onions/garlic
Parsnip
Peas
Potatoes
Radish
Silver beet
Spinach
Other spinach: Brazilian, Warrigal
Swede
Sweet potato
Tomato
Turnip

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 Seed Bank is available at all ROGI meetings and Garden Visits.
\$1 per pack for members. \$2 non-members.**

For a list of the seed bank stock, please go to: <http://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/seed%20bank%20list%20March%202017.pdf>

Swap plants, cuttings, home-grown produce, seedlings.

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

ROGI Rewards

Good quality plants and other garden-related items brought along by members. Everyone who attends is eligible for a ROGI Reward. **Please label plant with its name and variety 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 - eggs, honey, seedlings, lemons, jam, sustainable craft items – things that have cost you money, time and effort to produce. Please ensure 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

(This is for members only)

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

Remember to bring bags/boxes/baskets to take everything home, including purchases of organic produce from Ashley.



I took this photo last week at Beaumaris in Melbourne's Bayside, right near Port Phillip Bay.

At first I thought, oh dear, it was a terrible invasive weed. Closer inspection revealed that it is **Warrigal greens**, aka New Zealand spinach, *Tetragonia tetragonioides*, a native. Credited with being a salvation for the first settlers as they struggled to find enough food to eat, it was also eaten aboard the Endeavour to help avoid scurvy. Joseph Banks took it back to England where it became trendy for a time.

Clearly it thrives on neglect in the poor, sandy soils of the bay. It is also growing near the sand at Wellington Pt, so give it a try. Ask around at a ROGI meeting for a cutting. A more hospitable environment will produce lush leaves—these were rather small.

You will need to destroy the oxalates in the leaves, so blanch them for three minutes before using in a salad, or steam them as for any spinach, or add them to soups, stews, curries and so on.

Jill Nixon



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 info
- A recipe for home-grown produce
- A notice that you have something to give away or sell
- A handy technique or tip
- A gardening problem solved
- Anything to do with organic growing
- A review of a ROGI library book

Please send your items to the editor and help keep ROGI News topical, interesting, local and relevant.
info@rogi.com.au

June Newsletter Deadline

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 30 May

ROGI is a beneficiary of the My IGA Card Program for **Cleveland IGA** store.

This is how it works:

- Get a My IGA Card at the Cleveland store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support

Then, every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, but you also help to raise funds for ROGI, which we use to benefit our members.



Did you know?

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

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

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—1st Thursday every month (ex Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor, 6.30 for 7.30pm. 33573171 <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—Wed & Friday 9 - noon, Sunday 2- 5pm. Oaklands St, Alexandra Hills. 0419987870

Cabbages and caterpillars

We're all familiar with those green caterpillars chomping through our brassica plants (cabbage, kale, cauliflower, broccoli, kohlrabi and so on), leaving a trail of destruction and droppings.

It's worth trying a few organic preventative strategies to see which suits your gardening style:

- Dipel™ contains *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that kills caterpillars. Spray both sides of leaves; reapply after rain. It kills *all* caterpillars including lawn grubs, but spray carefully or you won't get the good butterflies.
- Grow upland cress *Barbarea verna* or *B. vulgaris*. See p 7 and 13. Several of us have tried this with limited success, but Jerry C-W swears by it. <https://jerry-coleby-williams.net/2014/11/01/nannys-cabbage-companion-confirmed-caterpillar-killer-by-university-of-queensland>
- Make (or buy) decoy butterflies and place them near your brassicas, the theory being that the butterflies won't enter another's territory. I've seen a few butterflies together on the same plant, so not sure about that one! Worth a try, though.
- Plant greater diversity—lots of flowers, scented and/or stinky plants to throw the butterflies off the scent.
- Exclusion nets, cloches, cages can lock out the butterflies. I did this two years ago, and it worked—no caterpillars. However, the aphids were everywhere because the lacewings couldn't get in to eat them. My solution: remove the netting, spray with Dipel, and plant a living 'mulch' of alyssum, spring onions, violas, coriander and parsley to attract beneficials (eg lacewings) and confuse the pests.

Please let us know what has worked well for you, as well as how you have solved other problems in your garden.

Jill Nixon

