

ROGI News

ROGI meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday night of the month, with doors opening at 6.15pm. Members can visit the plant table, Seed Bank, library and stalls or have a chat before the meeting. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

*Bayside Community Church
Cnr McDonald Rd and Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS*

Don't forget:

- Pay your membership dues
- Observe social distancing
- A small plate of food for supper
- Return washed seedling pots
- Bring a basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Any questions for Plant Clinic
- A plant for ROGI Rewards
- Free swap/share/giveaway

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PLEASE NOTE:
ALL members are now
welcome to attend ROGI meetings.
Visitors may attend, \$5 entry.

ROGI webpage: www.rogi.com.au
ROGI Email: info@rogi.com.au



Cosmos sulphureus growing in Marie-Antoinette's garden. She uses the petals in salads. An annual and very easy to grow, it will self-sow and is long flowering. The open flowers attract beneficial insects like lacewings, parasitic wasps, tachinid flies and hoverflies that feed on many pest insects and provide free pollination services. Cosmos comes in a variety of colours such as yellow, pink, orange and white.

May Meeting

The Magic of Compost

In recognition of International Compost Awareness Week, ROGI will focus on compost in May.

Our guest speaker, John Daly, will talk about all things compost - it really does seem to be a magical process. John has a wealth of horticultural knowledge and expertise in gardening, including landscapes, remediation and plant trials.

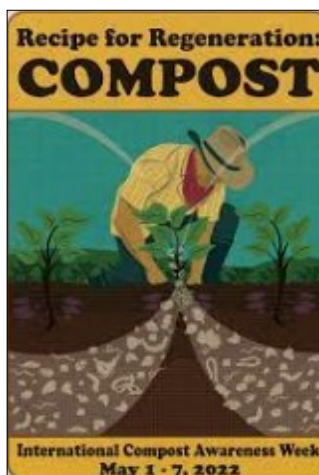
For over 40 years he managed many projects including Brisbane City's Botanic Gardens, parks and malls, as well as various private and public open spaces. He spent 18 years as a presenter on 4BC and ABC radio.

John is now a consultant specialising in soil testing, plant nutrition and growing environments.

Come with your questions.

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

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



ROGI members and visitors welcome.

Visitors: \$5 entry. Members: free

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

Have you paid your membership dues?

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.**

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, DSITI, 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.

ROGI Events

Thursday 12 May
ROGI MEETING

Saturday 21 May - 1 to 3pm
ROGI WORKSHOP *
See right for more details.

Sunday 29 May (please note change of date)
GARDEN VISIT *
Vicky Leggatt, Mt Tamborine

Former ROGI member Vicky Leggatt has invited us to view her new property on the mountain...featuring an avocado orchard and huge vegetable patch. More details closer to the date.

Saturday 4 June
INDIGISCAPES ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY FAIR

More information page 7- please put your name down to help out on the ROGI stall or make a mini-garden.

Tuesday 14 June - 7 to 8.30pm
SEED SAVERS GROUP *

For more information see page 8.

Saturday 18 June
GARDEN VISIT *
Erik van Zuilekom, Thornlands

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

*** Please book to attend on TeamApp or email Events Coordinator Toni at tonibowler@hotmail.com. Address will be supplied closer to the event, please check your email messages.**

ROGI Saturday Workshop - Compost; the Good and the Bad

ROGI will be holding an afternoon workshop for members about compost – the good and the bad. We'll be putting into practice what our speaker John Daly will be discussing at the meeting on 12 May. Please bring a bucket of your compost. Is it too dry, too wet or just right?

Saturday 21 May - 1 to 3pm
Oaklands Street Community Garden
Oaklands Street, Alexandra Hills
Bookings - please book on TeamApp
Visitors - \$5-00, please book on info@rogi.com.au

There will also be:

- Soil pH testing
- Seed Bank/seedlings for sale
- Swap and share
- Afternoon tea - bring a plate and your drink (please note there is no power available)
- Library books – pre order from list of books on the ROGI website and email your order to library@rogi.com.au



Plant of the Month - Glass Gem Corn

By Linda Brennan

The simple pleasures of rainbow food

At last month's Seed Savers meetup, I shared seeds of *Glass gem* corn. These were a precious summer crop from our garden. My first time growing this corn. (And the seed was expensive, only 12 seeds per pack!) Even though we did have some issues with rats and had to enclose individual cobs with aviary wire to prevent rodent attack, we still had a good harvest of rainbow coloured (or stained glass coloured) cobs of corn.

Glass gem corn is not a sweet corn like the juicy corn you eat from the cob, it's a **flint corn** that is suitable for drying, grinding and making grain/flour from the dried kernels. **Flint corn** is typically made into thin tortilla type wraps and is ground to make coarse meals such as polenta. (There are a number of types of corn including dent corn, popcorn, sweet corn, flour corn and flint corn.) Let me tell you about the history of this corn. My knowledge originates from <https://www.nativeseeds.org>

Carl Barnes, a farmer with Cherokee Indian heritage, had a vital interest in growing and saving seeds that were part of his original ancestral heritage. He connected with others that had heirloom corn seeds and began growing corn. As he grew the different corns together, he selected out cobs with particularly colourful cobs and kernels, replanting them many times.

He met with another farmer Greg Schoen, sharing corn and techniques in 1994. Greg also began growing the corn and further developed the colourful range of cobs. In 2012 he posted a picture of a rainbow coloured corn cob that he called *Glass Gem* corn. It created a storm of worldwide interest that still has not abated. It's such a surprise and so pretty, it's hard not to fall head over heels for it.

If you have some Glass gem corn, you can expect to grow it over all but the coldest months of the year here in the Redlands. Each plant will produce 1-3 cobs of corn. Each cob on a plant will be different to its 'siblings'. If there are cobs that you especially like the characteristics of, save and label the kernels and grow those. Harvest your cobs when they are mature. Wait until the leaves are beginning to turn golden in order to develop the full colour.

Remove them from the plant and keep the husk intact. Dry them in a protected spot where rodents can't eat them. Once dry, 1-3 weeks later, shuck the kernels off the cobs, by rubbing two cobs together over a large bowl. The kernels will drop off. They may now be rinsed and ground into a cornmeal and used in cooking. Remember to save some for your next sowing.

Corn is a heavy feeder, so sow the seed in fertile moist soil about 15-20 cm apart in blocks. I also side dress them with Organic Xtra during the growing season, and give them regular foliar feeds of Fish and Kelp type fertilisers.

Part of my harvest of Glass gem corn. The cobs were all unique with colours that didn't disappoint.



Plant of the Month - Glass Gem Corn (continued)

Cooking with Glass Gem Corn

I made some ground corn meal from a couple of cobs of the freshly picked corn by cutting off the kernels, sending it through my blender with hot water to make a thick sludge and then adding it to bean patties with spices and herbs. The result was a chewy texture and nutty flavour. (The wet corn meal before cooking was greyish in colour.)

I have since read that if you are using dried kernels, an overnight soak before 15 minutes of boiling will help to create a softer kernel that is more easily blended or ground. This can then be made into flat tamales or mixed into bean casseroles and typical south American dishes.

However, for the time being, I'm very happy growing more of the corn from the seed I've saved and experimenting with developing the colourful cobs. I'm thinking a display of dried cobs will be my next project!

Buying Glass Gem Corn

I have generous sized packs of Glass Gem corn for \$3. Email me at linda@ecobotanica.com.au

Linda Brennan,
Ecobotanica

Garden Visit - Marie-Antoinette Harris

Report by Ann Roffey, Photos by Ann Roffey & Linda Brennan

Marie-Antoinette Harris lives in Wellington Point on an 876m² block with only one neighbour, as she has a Council bushland reserve on one side and at the rear. Tree roots from the reserve have impacted on her garden, unfortunately. She has tried raising the beds, but the roots are still very invasive. Linda Brennan suggested using a barrier made from heavy black plastic, used between the layers of pavers, which can be obtained for free from the tip.

We were treated to a tour of the garden, which has many different flowers, fruit trees, vegetables and herbs. Marie was born in Seychelles, and gave us some insights into the different uses of the edibles that she grew up with.

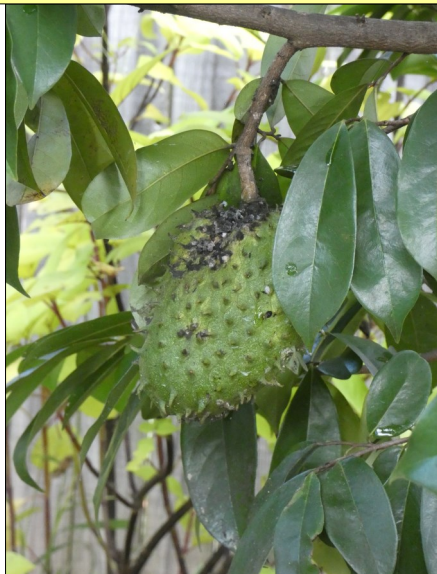


Marie-Antoinette extols the virtues of okra - it is very medicinal and good for prostates!

Garden Visit - Marie-Antoinette Harris (continued)



Pomegranate flower



The soursop tree is fruiting well

Comfrey leaves are a useful addition to compost - they contain silica, nitrogen, magnesium, calcium, potassium and iron. They can also be used as mulch, and readily decompose when soaked in water to make a liquid manure. The flowers are an excellent bee forage, and leaves are nutritious and readily eaten by poultry, but should only be given in small quantities.



Ambarella - fruit that tastes of mix between pineapple and mango, but with a crunchy texture.



Mexican tarragon



Left: Immature bitter melon in Marie-Antoinette's garden. Right: Mature bitter melon ready to be eaten. AKA bitter apple/cucumber/gourd/squash, carilla fruit, balsam apple, wild balsam-apple. From the family Cucurbitaceae, it is the most bitter of all fruits.

Bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*) is a vine grown widely in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. The edible fruit, which becomes more bitter as it ripens, is used traditionally to treat diabetes.

WARNING: This plant is listed on Brisbane City Council's weed list. Widespread in northern Qld, it vigorously competes with crops and native plants on the fringes of rainforests.

IndigiScares Environment & Community Fair

ROGI will hold a stall at the Environment and Community Fair on **Saturday 4 June** at IndigiScares in celebration of World Environment Day. The Fair will run from **9am to 2 pm**.

We will be giving out information about ROGI, organic gardening and related issues, and selling seeds. There will be the opportunity for everyone to make themselves a seedling pot from newspaper, sow a seed or few in it, and take it home and watch and wait for it to grow.

This is always a popular event with thousands of people attending throughout the day, and those who volunteer on the stall have a great time. We need many ROGI members to help in the various aspects of the day – setting up (the day before), staffing the stalls and activities, and packing up afterwards. People who have attended in past years say they've really enjoyed it and, as a bonus, have got to know fellow ROGI members who have since become friends.



To volunteer to help on the day or do a mini-garden, please call Jill, Lisa or Carolyn ASAP (phone numbers in accompanying email).



WE NEED YOUR PUNNETS!

After making a pot out of newspaper, children sow a seed into it and take it home in a punnet for safe-keeping. **Please bring along to the next meeting 200g, 250g and 500g cherry tomato or strawberry punnets for our activity.**

Seed Savers News

By Ann Roffey

Our meeting in April focussed on seeds - and there were plenty to save for ourselves and ROGI members. These seeds are from plants grown by members in the Redlands and outer lying areas; they are well suited to our local conditions. They are available for FREE at ROGI meetings.

A batch of Janet's seed-growing mix was made up, so that members can bring some home and grow seedlings for the Plant Table. If you can help, please see the [ROGI Seed Savers Group seed-sowing guide](#) on the ROGI website under RESOURCES.



Opening up dried rosellas to save their seeds.



Bonnie and Bridget with seed raising mix to grow seedlings for ROGI.



DID YOU KNOW? All seeds have different viabilities. Seeds can lose their viability if they are stored incorrectly. Seed stored in your garage or hot garden shed will die. Seed stored open to the air where it can take up moisture will lose viability. Store in a sealed container in your fridge. A seed viability chart is available on our website, go to **RESOURCES**:

<https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGISeedViabilityChart-2016.pdf>

The ROGI library has an excellent book on seed saving: *The Seed Saver's Handbook* by Michel and Jude Fanton.

Our next Seed Saver's meeting is at **7.00-8.30pm on Tuesday 14 June 2022** at Linda's house in Capalaba. We will be looking at saving dahlia seeds. We'll also chat about what to start from seed now in your patch. We have seeds to sort and bag up into little bags for sharing.

If you've collected seeds of veges, fruit or flowers that you'd like to share, please bring them along, (dried if possible) in a paper bag. We can help winnow, clean and dry or bag up the seeds.

Bring a tea cup and some envelopes if you'd like to take seeds home as well.

We have a limited attendance due to space and maintaining safe distancing, so please enrol asap on TeamApp. Please notify Linda if you can't come on [0416157470](tel:0416157470) as someone else will be keen to fill your spot. We always have more members wanting to come than spaces available.

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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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.

info@rogi.com.au www.rogi.com.au
PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163
www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—

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

Qld Herb Society—1st Tuesday every month,

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

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



BORAGE, herb

Beautiful borage thrives in the cooler months. Plant it beside strawberries to improve their flavour. Bees absolutely love the pretty blue flowers, and they're edible too! They make great garnishes for cakes, and can be used in salads, soups, sauces and drinks, including tea infusions.. It's an annual, and self-sows readily. Plant it once and you'll find it comes up again the following year. The plant grows 60-100cm high and will grow in sun to part shade in a moist position. It has a spreading habit, so allow a bit of room for it to grow.

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 June
Newsletter
deadline is**

26 MAY 2022