

# ROGI News

Doors open at 6.15 so you can visit the library, stalls and seed tables or just have a chat over tea or coffee before the meeting begins at 7. Supper is served afterwards.

**Bayside Community Church**  
Macarthur St, (corner McDonald Rd), **ALEXANDRA HILLS**

**REMEMBER to bring:**

- washed pots/punnets
- swap and share items
- ROGI Rewards contribution (opt)
- a basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Questions for Plant Clinic
- Something for supper if you can

**Pay MEMBERSHIP DUES before 6.45 or online (we need form filled in please)**

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If you'd like to surprise someone with a gardening gift or encourage a friend to join our friendly garden club, how about a **ROGI Gift Certificate**?

It's easy - just fill in an application and bring cash. If you wish to purchase one online, complete an [application](#) and then pay online by bank transfer.

It can be posted to you or the recipient. For details please phone me 0419 987 870 or email [membership@rogi.com.au](mailto:membership@rogi.com.au) Rhonda



**B** is for *Brassica*, a genus with six species. The tiny first leaves that appear on brassica seedlings look rather like a capital B, so you can tell what you've got—sort of. It is a big family including cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, kohlrabi, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, turnips, mustards and more. They prefer to grow in cool weather in our climate, and some species *really* struggle. So, whatever you decide to grow, get them in the ground soon.

## Mike's Musings

This year April is the first month after the big bang – the bang that no-one has any idea where it will lead us.

All we know is that almost everything will become even more expensive. Fuel is just one thing, but when one imagines that fuel is used to cart everything we buy from a farm or a warehouse to the store ... you get my drift.

Sadly, this will affect us gardeners greatly. Stores like Rock & Soil, Brookies and others have already introduced a fuel surcharge. All bulk landscape supplies and soils, mulches are carried on trucks that require vast amounts of diesel fuel. Deliveries of seedlings and plants etc to stores like Timbara or Bunnings will become way more expensive as well.

### What can, and what should, we do as ROGI members?

Well, the good news is that a lot of the things we do already work in our favour:

Use Seed Bank or Seedsavers seeds, and seedlings provided by fellow ROGI members

Rather than buying a new plant, e.g. a veggie or a fruit tree, ask around within ROGI for someone who can provide a cutting

Make your own compost rather than buying it

If you can, recycle all your cuttings, leaves, barks and add manure and turn it into garden soil. Horse manure can be obtained locally for ROGI members (barter system)

Possibly, we could organise bulk buys for things like potting/ seed-raising mix and minimise delivery cost that way?

Ella and I are currently sowing lots of seeds for everyday staple veggies. The aim is to get self-reliant for crops such as tomatoes, salad greens, mustard greens, brassicas, carrots (maybe - we always struggle with carrots), onions, garlic and more.

Avocados, lately, have been plentiful and cheap most times of the year – so we've decided not to plant an avo tree, risking that prices may double but still be somewhat affordable.

For the last two years we've been experimenting with raised garden beds, pots and directly growing in our (improved over

time) clay soil. We still haven't got any clear evidence of what is best, but a picture is emerging:

Large raised garden beds require a lot of fill material that needs constant replenishing. We find the ROGI method of building a raised garden bed most useful for brassicas.

Growing in pots for us worked best for blueberries (they need acid soil) and as a temporary fix for small trees and shrubs.

Growing directly in soil worked for red radishes, daikon radish and some salad greens.

Biochar is another interesting input that was brought to our attention lately by Eric Van Zuilekom in his presentation.

From what I understand, biochar is a form of charcoal with myriad pores inside where useful microbes can live and water can be held. We can charge (or inoculate) raw biochar with our own compost, or we can buy it already inoculated. Biochar acts as a slow release soil improver for ever and retains water - with minimal maintenance once established. The ROGI committee aim for a dedicated session on biochar later this year, so watch out for it. We have very good reasons for looking positively at the months and years ahead. Sharing our crops, ideas and resources will become more important than it ever was. **ROGI is ready – are you?**

*We recently harvested some five-month turmeric and this is only 1/6 of it!*

*Amazing productivity! There are four more turmeric plants (three varieties) growing in their large pots —ours, one from Marissa and one from Linda Barrett.*

*Sharing is good. Thank you ladies.*

What on earth do I do with it all?

*I use lots of it for my joints (osteoarthritis) -*

*its anti-inflammatory elements work better than any medication.*

*There are numerous other benefits including, but not limited to, being a powerful antioxidant, being anti microbial and lowering 'bad' cholesterol.*

*We'll have **plenty** to give away in a few months.*



Mike ROGI Secretary

## Jerry Coleby-Williams' Final Open Day

Bellis Open Day 2026: Jerry's twenty-first and final annual Open Day at Bellis in subtropical Brisbane will be held on

**Mother's Day Weekend**

**9-10th May 2026**

**9am to 4pm**

Over 500 different climate-appropriate plants grow in our suburban garden in Wynnum for food, medicine, pesticides, to support biodiversity, including climate change-ready ornamentals.

Along with packet seed of locally adapted plants from our garden, copies of The Seed Savers Handbook by Jude and Michel Fanton, which guides the cultivation of over 100 different kinds of food plants, how to save their seed, and keep varieties true to type, will be on sale.

ADDRESS: **56 Daisy Street, Wynnum, Queensland 4178;**

ADMISSION: **\$10 CASH ONLY. Unwaged, students, and under 18 free.**

A CONDITION OF ENTRY is the disinfection of the soles of your shoes. No exceptions.

Admission gives you access to a unique range of locally adapted food and medicinal plants and seed at affordable prices.

This is your last chance.

If you haven't visited Jerry's garden before, make the effort to go. It is well worth it.

More information [here](#).

## Next ROGI meeting

**Thursday 9th April 6.15 for 7pm start**

**Bayside Community Church, MacArthur St (corner McDonald Rd), Alex Hills.**

## Fruit trees for our subtropical climate

George Allen knows a lot about growing \*exotic fruit trees in our climate, after experimenting with hundreds of varieties over the decades.

There are so many that grow really well and easily here, and taste wonderful, but often not well known, so not often grown.

George will bring along some that are in season now. Learn about them (and others) and have a taste.

Try something different from what you grew up with.

George is holding a soursop.  
Inset: red shatoot mulberry  
Right: achacha and jaboticaba

*\* exotic in the sense of not being local; thus from somewhere else, different, unusual.*



# Upcoming Events

## Next Garden Visits

**Nooshin's garden in Cleveland.**  
**2 - 4 Sunday 12 April**

**Erik's garden in Thornlands**  
**2 - 4 Saturday 16 May**

Bring along a small plate of homemade food or home grown produce to share, and a mug or cup for tea or coffee.

These are free events for ROGI members, but numbers are limited.

Please book on TEAM APP, at April meeting or 0401 157 713. Places are limited. The address will be sent to you before the date.

## Seed Savers

9.30 -12 Monday 20 April See p 9

## IndigiScapes Event for World Environment Day

9 - 2 Saturday 23 May

We need helpers for this event.

Expect an email asking for offers of help.

## Field Trip Sunday 14 June

With the current fuel situation, we cannot be certain that this Field Trip will go ahead. We'll see what the future brings.

## Bethania St Community Garden Cox Park, Bethania Street, Lota



## Workshop

### Introduction to Permaculture in Suburbia

**Sunday 3 May 10 - 2:30**

Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of productive ecosystems which have diversity, stability, and resilience. Learn about its foundations and ethics and how these can be applied in an urban setting. Using the Community Garden as a demonstration, we will consider how permaculture can be incorporated into our own communities, homes, and lives. **Free.** <https://www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org>

Bookings essential –  
Text 0439 048 585  
including your name  
and name of  
workshop.



Please continue to save these 250g strawberry punnets and bring them to ROGI. We use them at the fair at Indigi-Scapes every year.



Please return your empty and washed pots and punnets for re-use—giveaway table or seedlings table.

# Our Edible Garden Journey

Erik van Zuilekom

Erik shared both the philosophy and the practical steps behind transforming a home garden into a living, productive habitat. His message was as simple and complex as: *your home is your habitat*.

The food we grow and eat is part of the same living system we inhabit—and by learning from natural ecology, we can cultivate abundance in our own gardens while also caring for our environment.

## Learning from Nature's Design

In nature, no plant grows alone. Plants exist as part of a dynamic community, each one replacing others over time while improving air quality, enriching soil, and supporting life around it.

By observing how plants behave in natural ecosystems, we can learn how to design resilient and productive gardens.

When developing this garden, Erik began by studying what he already had: compacted [krasnozem](#) clay soil.

Though challenging at first, he found it drained over time and could support growth once managed.

Observation over months was his first approach—he looked closely at:

- how water flowed,
- where animals moved, and
- how people moved through the space, paying attention to topography and everyday activities.

## Designing with Water and Life in Mind

He developed his plan. He designed the garden for water management, creating [swales](#) along the contours to hold water in his soil.

On the lower side of each swale, he planted on the berms, taking advantage of retained moisture.

He used [syntropic](#) principles—mimicking forest systems by pruning regularly, practicing chop-and-drop mulching, and using wood offcuts to protect plant roots, edge paths, and manage water flow. These techniques conserve water and also build fungal-dominated soils that build lasting fertility.



## Soil First: Growing the Foundation

The garden evolved in stages, with soil improvement at its heart.

Sweet potatoes were used for two to three seasons to loosen and “mine” nutrients. Plants with deeper tap roots create channels in the soil and draw up nutrients into leaves that then decompose on the surface of the soil.

He emphasized growing his own biomass plants, using prunings to feed back into the system through chop-and-drop mulching (*photo below*). Complementing this were fermented bacterial and fungal teas that boosted microbial life and nutrient cycling.



## Our Edible Garden Journey continued

Erik turns his compost bays— aerated with PVC pipes— every couple of weeks ensuring oxygen reaches the microbes and the process remains aerobic.



He uses biochar, a stable, carbon-rich material created by heating organic matter in a low-oxygen process. When mixed into soil, biochar enhances water retention, increases aeration, and provides a habitat for beneficial microorganisms, which supports stronger plant growth. Inoculate biochar by soaking it in compost tea, or mixing it with compost (*right*). Over time, biochar contributes to richer, more resilient soil while also locking carbon into the ground.

## The Living Habitat

Throughout the garden, the planting design used complementary species. These create different heights and densities which protect the garden from strong winds, create micro-climates and also edge effects.

When considered as a whole, Erik demonstrated that a garden is far more than a place to grow food—it's a living habitat shared by plants, people, insects, birds, animals, and ... microbes. By designing intentionally, observing patiently, and working with natural processes, we can create thriving systems.



Erik stresses 'progress rather than perfection' - perfection is abstract and a distraction from happiness; progress nourishes and can be enjoyed, and worked with. 'No wrong, no perfection, only progress'.

As Erik's story shows, the key lies in balance with, not control of, nature: grow food, eat food, and live within the habitat that sustains you.

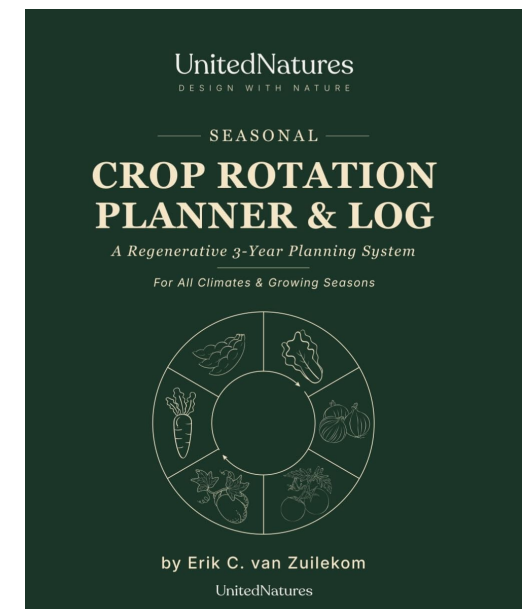
*Reported by Linda Barrett*

See page 6 for Erik's Garden Visit in May.

Erik's useful new book may interest you ...

This isn't another blank garden journal. It's a 3-year planning system built on regenerative principles, designed to help you rotate crops by plant family, build soil health season by season, and turn your observations into a compounding knowledge bank.

You can find out about it on his Facebook [page](#) and [here](#).



## Do you ever pause to reflect on the world situation and what the cycles of boom and bust have looked like in past years?

**I**t's sometimes hard to recall similar patterns and concerns from the past, but this year, with tensions in the Middle East and oil supplies impacted globally, I had a feeling of déjà vu. It was only in 2009 that I wrote an article for Subtropical Gardening Magazine, recommending ways we could avert food and fuel shortages. It began...

*As I write this article, fuel is predicted to rise in price to \$1.60 per litre by the end of this weekend. Not only does this have ramifications for our weekly fuel costs, but the cost of almost everything else we use and consume. Food will rise as freight costs skyrocket, our*

*clothing, produced in factories driven by fossil fuel energy will cost more, energy to keep us warm in winter and cool in summer, will impact upon our pockets; building costs will rise and even the humble glass of water will cost more as the cost of purification and pumping increases.*

But back to the present. To keep us well stocked in food for any future shortages should they occur, I'm planting food crops throughout the garden, not just the vegetable patch. No matter what happens in the supply chain, we'll always have a fresh meal on the table. Herbs in the cottage garden, broccoli amongst the roses

and hibiscus, beetroots in the wheelbarrows, and carrots and more wherever there's a space.

I'd like to share my ideas for those crops to grow now that will provide luxury levels of harvest for the cool season ahead. My own food production plan is to have lots of leafy greens; starchy fillers such as root crops; plant proteins such as beans and peas; fresh salad items, and fruits and fancy veg for fibre and their multivitamins planted throughout the garden. I'm already drying herbs for teas and bottling and drying excess fruits and veg. See over...



## Consider growing some of these for Cool Season Abundance

### Leafy Greens

Broccoli Di Ciccio, Sprouting Broccoli & Kai Lan	Quick to form delicious heads & all provide repeat harvests
Lettuce varieties, Sugarloaf Cabbage	Think salads. Non-hearting lettuces are repeat-harvest and faster producing by many weeks. Sugarloaf cabbages are delicate in flavour for coleslaw.
Silverbeet, Green or Red Kale, Tatsoi & Bok Choy	These are on repeat sowing for us right through until November. They're prolific and easy care, providing lots of meal potential.

### Root Crops & Starchy crops for quick energy on your plate

Carrots	Plant both Nantes and Baby Amsterdam or similar. The small ones are quicker to harvest.
Kohl rabi & purple turnips	These are sweet, even raw, when picked young. Leaves are edible too giving you two meals at once.
Beetroots - Bulls Blood (red) & Chioggia (Striped)	They take a while to develop full roots, but are worth the space as they can be held in the soil for many weeks as you work through your harvest
Potatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin, cassava, taro, yams, banana	Start potato crops soon. They take 16 weeks to produce spuds. Sweet potato stem pieces or root pieces take up to 12 months to yield but will give you edible leaves as they grow. Your cassava plant will store its swollen roots underground until you're ready to bandicoot them and harvest what you need in winter and spring. Taro and yams need fertile soil and moisture, but are abundant croppers. Yams grow well in the subtropical garden. Try winged yams and aerial potato yams. And don't forget to eat the excess <a href="#">banana stems</a> – they're super nutritious.

### Protein crops

Beans eg broad beans, climbing beans, bush beans	Short on space? Grow climbing beans. Purple King , Rattlesnake and Lazy Housewife all grow well in the cooler months. Bush beans are suitable to tuck in between shrubs and fruit trees as productive fillers.
Peas	Sugar Snaps eg Cascadia, Snow peas and field peas are repeat harvest plants that also produce vertically allowing space for a crop underneath

### Salad and fancy items

Radish	Watermelon radish is the prettiest root crop ever!
Cauliflower Snowball	A mini cauliflower head for quick results
Leek	Leeks can be held in ground for many months and are easier to grow than onions. Try some from seed
Pawpaw	So easy to grow and so generous in their production
Tomatoes	Lots of varieties. They grow so well here in winter.

**Many favourite veg seeds are available for:**

**\$2 a pack from Geoff and Cheryl at the Seed Bank and from Seedsavers for free.**

**Visit our seeds tables at the next meeting and get your cool season crops in now for an abundant harvest.**

## Seed Security

Have you ever wondered where the seed that you buy from ROGI and other places (like the big green hardware store) come from? If you are like many, you wouldn't have given it much thought.

Australia doesn't really have much of a seed industry. Like other industries (think cars), it is too expensive to produce seeds in our own country.

So, the bulk of our seed is imported - even Queensland-based Green Harvest imports 75% of its seed!

Being reliant on imported seeds means that any laws brought into effect regarding these imports will have a huge impact on small organic seed sellers.

In the *ABC Organic Gardener (July/Aug 2018)* articles "Seeds of Discontent" and "Seed Biosecurity Alarm", concerns were raised about plans that the Department of Agriculture revealed earlier that year. They were considering introducing mandatory fungicide treatment of imported brassica seeds (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, rocket, bok choy and radish) – meaning that the seeds would no longer be considered organic.

The Dept of Agriculture has, thankfully, announced they would consider alternative biosecurity measures for the organic industry. But, as organic growers, we shouldn't be complacent.

The seed industry is controlled by 10 seed companies, and if plans to merge these into three companies eventuate, that means biodiversity of the industry is threatened. Large companies aren't interested in stocking

every single variety of say, tomatoes – they'll just sell the ones that commercial growers are interested in – the ones that look good, but don't necessarily taste good, and the rest will fall by the wayside.

And if a natural or **man-made disaster were to affect the northern hemisphere** (where the seed exporters are based), we would be in huge strife.

So what can we, as organic gardeners, do?

If you haven't started saving your own seed, do so now. This does mean a longer growing time, but think of all the beneficial insects you will attract when your vegetables start to flower before they set seed!

The original of this article by Linda Brennan was written in 2018 ... and look at what has come to pass.

Learn how to save seeds at ROGI Seedsavers group. Our next meeting will be Mon, 20 April from 9:30 - 12:00 at Linda Brennan's house.

Topic is **'When Are Seeds Ripe to Collect?'**.

You can book a spot on Team App or see Linda at the April ROGI meeting.



Avocados have been plentiful and cheap this autumn. Rhonda Binns made this recipe to take advantage of the glut.

### Easy Chocolate Mousse

2 or 3 avocados  
½ cup cocoa /cacao powder  
2 ripe bananas (can be frozen)  
½ cup milk/coconut milk  
2 -3 teasp honey  
Vanilla essence  
½ - 1 teasp cinnamon powder

Place all ingredients in a Thermomix or blender and blend 1-2 minutes until thick and creamy.



These were 50 cents each!

## ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Jill Nixon	<a href="mailto:president@rogi.com.au">president@rogi.com.au</a>
V. PRESIDENT	Linda Barrett	<a href="mailto:vp@rogi.com.au">vp@rogi.com.au</a>
SECRETARY	Mike Qualmann	<a href="mailto:secretary@rogi.com.au">secretary@rogi.com.au</a>
TREASURER	Rose Faleafa	<a href="mailto:treasurer@rogi.com.au">treasurer@rogi.com.au</a>
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Rhonda Binns, Tom Bohl, <b>vacancies</b>	

## OFFICE BEARERS

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Rhonda Binns	<a href="mailto:membership@rogi.com.au">membership@rogi.com.au</a>
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	(Temp J Nixon) <b>vacancy</b>	<a href="mailto:jill.nixon@bigpond.com">jill.nixon@bigpond.com</a>
PR, COMMUNICATIONS	Gail Bruce	
CLUB EVENTS	Linda Barrett	
PUBLIC EVENTS	-	<a href="mailto:publicevents@rogi.com.au">publicevents@rogi.com.au</a>
LIBRARY	<b>Vacancy</b>	<a href="mailto:library@rogi.com.au">library@rogi.com.au</a>
Library Assistants	Lin Peart, Dee Armstrong	
SEED BANK	Geoff & Cheryl Rynja	<a href="mailto:seeds@rogi.com.au">seeds@rogi.com.au</a>
Seedsavers Group	Linda Brennan	<a href="mailto:linda@ecobotanica.com.au">linda@ecobotanica.com.au</a>
TECH DESK	Mike Qualmann & <b>vacancies</b>	
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	<a href="mailto:pal@pcpals.com.au">pal@pcpals.com.au</a>

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

[info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au) [www.rogi.com.au](http://www.rogi.com.au)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers>

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

**Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)**— 1st Thurs each month (not Jan). 6.30. Albion Peace Hall, McDonald Rd, Windsor. 0438 254 673 <http://bogi.org.au>

**Qld Herb Society**—1st Tues each month, Albion Peace Hall. 7.30pm. 0458 798 663 <https://qldherbsociety.org.au>

**Oaklands Street Community Gardens**—  
Mon, Wed, Fri 9-12 . Alexandra Hills. 0410 974 458  
<https://www.oaklandsstreetcommunitygardenqld.org>

**Bethania St Community Garden**—Wed mornings,  
Cox Park, Lota. 0439 048 585  
<https://www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org>

## General 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 and signs in is eligible for a Reward. **Please label plant with its name and some growing details before placing it on the table.**

### MEMBERS' SALES:

Items you've produced 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- on table outside

For items you don't want payment for— empty pots, cuttings, unwanted plants (named), surplus produce, shredded paper, strawberry runners and so on. Maybe arrange with other members to do some swapping outside meetings. Take home what's left after meeting.

### 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 form on the Plant Clinic table (just inside the door to the main hall) before the meeting starts. Someone will look and may be able to answer your questions. Any solutions will be given 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.*

Also, the **ROGI WEBSITE:** Under RESOURCES tab, you'll find:

- ROGI's month-by-month Seed Sowing Guide
  - Seed viability Chart
  - Good Bugs
  - No-dig gardening ideas
  - Permaculture
  - Copies of all newsletters since September 2014.
- ... and lots more. Have a browse.



It's good that it's possible to buy organically-grown herbs. However ... how much better and cheaper and fresher are those that you grow yourself from seed?



Coriander will readily self-sow if you leave it to flower and then set seed which fall to the ground and germinate. The flowers are favoured by many types of beneficial insects.

## Delta Matilda Snow Peas

I bought some packs of seeds for these snow peas from Jerry's open garden last year.



They've been well-acclimatised for our climate. As well as being beautiful they have a lovely texture.

Go to Jerry's final open garden and see what wonders you will find to buy.



## TEAM APP



With TEAM APP, you can:

- keep up to date with club events in real time
- not wait till the meeting to book your place for Garden Visits, Workshops, Field Trips.
- make bookings as soon as they are posted on TEAM APP.
- Cancel your booking if needed to free up a spot for someone on the waiting list

If you haven't already registered for TEAM APP, here's how to get TEAM APP on your phone or computer.

### On your smart phone or tablet.

- Go to the App store (apple smart phones) or Playstore (Android smart phones)
- Look for the TEAM APP logo. (above)

If you need assistance to set up your TEAM APP account on:

- **a phone or tablet**, someone can help you at the next meeting.
- **your computer.**
- Go to <https://www.teamapp.com>
- SIGN UP using your email address and a password. Click on MY TEAMS and select your team as ROGI.

## May 2026 newsletter deadline

Thursday 30 April 2026

Send contributions to [jill.nixon@bigpond.com](mailto:jill.nixon@bigpond.com)