

Next meeting: Thursday 14 August 2025

ROGI News

ROGI meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday each month (except Jan). Doors open at 6.15pm. You can visit the plant table, library, seed table & stalls or just have a chat over tea before the meeting. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

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

REMEMBER:

- Return washed pots
- Swap and share
- ROGI Rewards
- Bring a basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Queries for Plant Clinic
- Pay your membership dues
- Bring a plate of food for supper (home-made is best!)
- E-waste for collection

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**Supper will be available
after the meeting only.
Tea and coffee before and after.**



Bethania St Community Garden fruit trees growing on berms with swales in between to catch and store rain-water. For an explanation of swales and berms go to <https://goodlifepermaculture.com.au/swale-pathways>

Many comfrey plants grow around the garden to confer their multiple benefits on the soil and the people.

Michael's Musings

August means Annual General Meeting (AGM). It's something we have to do for the benefits of being an incorporated association. Every year, the management committee is dissolved and nominations are sought from members. A member can nominate another member for the various leadership roles, or he/she can nominate him/herself.

This year, the committee wants to make it easier to be an office bearer. We did extensive consulting with our members (remember the survey?) and received valuable feedback. We now know that quite a few members would take up a role if the workload were manageable and the job itself more fun. So we've decided to do just that.

There are three committee positions that *must* be filled to be an Inc. These are President, Secretary and Treasurer. It is very desirable to also have a VP whose main role is to back up the President.

Managing events inside or outside the club is one of the most enjoyable tasks, and it requires some people skills. It's such a great achievement when a 'celebrity' has been secured as a speaker, or a field trip like the recent fantastic one to Mudbrick Herb Cottage has been arranged. Or when we get to see a member's productive garden (or a work-in-progress one) and draw great inspiration from it. How much enjoyment could it be if three or four people worked together in brain-storming, calling and scheduling?

What positions are actually to be filled?

We need **eight voting committee members** which comprise:

President	legally required	1
Vice President	optional	1
Treasurer	legally required	1
Secretary	legally required	1

Also 4 other Committee members who can choose which team they'd like to lead, for example:

Membership team	1 or 2 helpers/understudies
Events team	2 or 3 helpers/understudies
Newsletter team	1 or 2 helpers/understudies
Seeds/Plants team	2 or 3 helpers/understudies

All other roles may be vacated and filled at any time during the year.

The recent survey, completed by more than 45 members, has shown strong support for the Newsletter and Seed Bank/Seedsavers as well as our monthly meetings in general. Actually, 65% of all participants said they like ROGI as it is now.

The need for some change/improvement has been stressed as well:

- the room layout with tables instead of rows of seats was liked very much by most,
 - better ROGI Rewards was mentioned a few times (this is in the hands of each member to donate gift-quality items),
 - more 'engaging' speakers
- ... to name just a few suggestions.

The outgoing committee had a few ideas themselves about how to make ROGI more relevant and exciting.

This includes:

- An improved, more interactive and searchable website
- A shorter newsletter, focussing on events, links to resources, hands-on seasonal advice and one special feature per month
- Maybe finding a way to Integrate Seed Bank and Seedsavers to focus on proven heirloom seeds that are difficult to source – maybe trialled saved seeds could go into Seed Bank for sale (we would appreciate suggestions from you about how we could make it easier for you to access seeds from Seed Bank)
- A revised Plant Clinic that includes the general audience
- A better and more hands-on 'Buddy' system for new members

This upcoming AGM could be ground-breaking if we find enough members willing to put in a couple of hours a week into ROGI – knowing that the rewards are endless.

With good quality food becoming harder to source and, when available, more and more expensive, organisations such as ROGI are more needed than ever. Anyone with a few square meters of garden to spare, or even on a patio or balcony, can grow healthy food. Let's do it, and work together to encourage others to get on board and do it too.

See you at the meeting next week,

Mike, ROGI outgoing secretary



Your E-waste can be placed in the trailer in the car park at our **August meeting**. E-Waste is any electric/electronic product that has become non-working, un-wanted or obsolete, and has essentially reached the end of its useful life.

Sources of E-Waste include:

- IT and telecommunication equipment
- Large household appliances
- Small household appliances
- Consumer and lighting equipment
- Electrical and electronic tools
- Toys, leisure and sports equipment
- Medical devices
- Monitoring and control instruments

Ask your friends, family and neighbours to look for anything they may have lying around.

Please place it in the trailer provided and it will be delivered to Substation 33 who will re-purpose it into some pretty amazing items.



This yellow *Cosmos sulphureus* seems to be a favourite of the teeny young praying mantids.
<https://walkaboutpark.com.au/australian-insects/praying-mantis>

August Meeting

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: A Gardener's Tale

At this meeting, Rose will talk about the challenges of being a productive gardener on a less-than-ideal block.

She will discuss some of her failures, successes and works in progress.

In particular, Rose will showcase an experimental garden in an unlikely location that proves there are edible plants for almost any situation.

It may help you to reconsider the various parts of your yard that you thought couldn't be productive.



Visitors most welcome—\$5 entry. Members—\$2 entry.
Please bring finger food (preferably home-made) to share for supper after the meeting.
Free tea and coffee.

Bethania St Community Garden Field Trip

The garden is set in a public park with no fences near Lota school and train station.

An interesting feature is compost bins locals to use, along with explicit instructions - see central photos. If you accept compostable materials from neighbours, this could be a useful guide for them.

It's evident great importance is placed on compost for the gardeners' use. There are old timber bays with slat fronts (below), and (far right) the familiar 'dalek' bins, and a swanky new design with slats complete with a secret locking mechanism to keep the compost safe.

Thank you to Linda Barrett for leading the tour.

These beautiful and productive gardens are used for events and workshops which are free. Have a look ...

<https://www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org>

How to compost

- Put your scraps in the 'hungry' compost bin.
- Cover the scraps with material from the 'brown' bin.
- Firmly replace the lid.

What to compost

- Fruit and vegetable scraps*
- Coffee grounds
- Tea bags
- Fresh garden clippings (shredded)

*Please cut your scraps into small pieces.

What NOT to compost

- Cooked food
- Meat and bones
- Dog and cat manure
- Oil
- Nappies
- Plastic (even if it is biodegradable or compostable)



Bethania St Community Garden



Informative labelling using Lumocolor marking pencil



Having clear information is important



The native bee hive is inside the shed with bee access through this black pipe.



Short plants & small bananas.

Falling over is a common issue with bananas. A good idea if you have spare crutches!



The shed is well-ventilated, and secure when shut.

Takeaways from Michael Wardle's talk about Permaculture in small to medium gardens *by Mike Qualmann*

(In no specific order)

WATERING: on average, in our climate, you'll need about five litres/m²/day for, veggies and small fruit trees. By comparison, wicking beds will only require 1.5 litres/m²/day.

MULCHING: Planting specimens close to each other saves on (expensive) mulch.

In newly-established spaces, try to plant using the Square Foot idea. Here's how it works:

Plant a number of plants, as per table, in a grid of about 30x30cm.

More info: <https://permaculture.com.au/harvesting-the-suburbs-and-small-space-gardens-micro-edens-series-2/>
<https://abundantpermaculture.com/square-foot-gardening-what-why-how/>

LAYERING: Have multiple storeys or layers of plants, such as a backdrop of vines, medium/tall growing plants below, and shade-loving plants at the bottom. Water from the top will trickle down.

PLANT CHOICES: Where space is scarce, every plant needs to work hard. The key is selecting plants that offer high yield, multiple uses and ongoing value throughout the seasons.

HIGH YIELD, LOW SPACE crops: Lettuce, spinach (Surinam!), rocket, cherry tomatoes (on trellises). Chilli, capsicum,

bush beans and dwarf peas in pots, radishes, baby carrots.

EDIBLE MULTI-USE PERENNIALS: Perennial basil, garlic chives, spring onions, oregano, thyme, rosemary, aloe vera, longevity spinach aka sambung Gynura procumbens, etc.

POLLINATOR ATTRACTING FLOWERS: calendula, nasturtiums, alyssum, marigolds, borage, cosmos and more. Edible.

Water features attract butterflies, dragonflies and other insects which will then attract birds. Sealed terracotta bowls or pots work well. Shallow spots for bees and butterflies to drink. Water plants, e.g. water lilies are a bonus.

Hanging buckets or colanders for growing herbs, strawberries, flowers.

Fumigators: chives and garlic are great.

To deter those pesky possums: Vegemite is known to work well!

Aloe Vera: provides a rooting hormone to simulate root growth.

Radishes and baby carrots can be grown in shallow containers or pots.

Michael mentioned an important issue with banana weevil. Here's a link: <https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/Banana%20Weevil%20-3.pdf>

The following is part of an article that appeared in our June ROGI News.

In the article Ann posed the question "How could this happen?"

It struck a chord with a member who forwarded it until it reached David Keenan.

Lithium Batteries - Not as safe as you might believe!

By Ann Bailey

Four years ago my Aunt and Uncle retired to their dream home - a self-sustained, off-grid house with coastal views on acreage, enough solar power to run the property and ample rainwater so they will never have to pay a power or water bill again.

They have made many improvements to the house, including the installation of an aquaponics system, a new kitchen, sun room, pool, and the replacement of 24 lead-acid batteries to 12 lithium.

On a Sunday evening in April this year, while sitting with a visitor at a table near the kitchen, a huge explosion ripped through the air.

After the explosion they discovered that two lithium batteries in the purpose-built pit had failed, only four metres from where they sat. Glass windows and doors smashed, the bathroom (including composting toilet) is no more, soffits and guttering destroyed on impact. They are happy just to be alive ... if the batteries had caught fire, all four would now be dead. Especially given there were two gas bottles located nearby.

The lithium batteries were housed in a 120mm thick concrete pit that was engine-designed and council-approved. The pit was adequately ventilated by two fans that ran continuously, with 100mm pipes going from the pit up above the two-storey roof, taking gas away from the house. The batteries themselves had fans in them. How could this happen? The company they bought the batteries from does not want to take responsibility for the fault.

Luckily, house insurance will cover the \$150,000 damage to the house. Shards of glass and pieces of PVC pipe are still being found within a 40 metre radius of the blast site. They will have to make do with a Portaloos for a while yet. While they await repairs on their house, they are keen to share their story to alert lithium



Damage from the lithium battery explosion at my Aunt and Uncle's house. They moved their bedroom to the other end of the house, as it

David has recently retired. He worked as an accredited designer and installer of lithium-ion battery systems, both on and off grid, and he trained and assessed electricians to design, install, maintain and fault-find on grid-connected battery systems.

[He also has a Permaculture Design Certificate from the Permaculture Institute.]

He has written a lengthy analysis which he sent to ROGI.

"I spent several hours gleaning what I could from the very limited information given in the July 2025 ROGI article, and more hours writing it up. It was a fun bit of detective work.

I note that the article says that the batteries did not burn, but contrary to the author's claims, if the battery had burned ..."

For the original and the full response from David go to

<https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/Lithium%20Battery%20explosion%20and%20response.pdf>

At our Seedsavers meeting, a small but enthusiastic group met to save and package seeds for sharing at ROGI. We also had a short session on backyard breeding!

The joys of creating a different plant from the one you may have started with.

Key points for us as backyard breeders:

- Select only the best and most desirable characteristics that you'd like to combine, and avoid breeding from hybrid plants.
- Cross pollinate in the mid-morning when the pollen is fresh. Avoid transferring pollen on wet mornings
- Isolate the flower and seed pod as they develop to prevent bees from pollinating
- Save the ripe seed and grow it on next season
- Rogue out/remove sickly plants and any with undesirable characteristics as they grow.
- Continue to grow your desirable seeds now that you've created plants with unique characteristics.

**Purple Sicilian
broccoli almost
in flower/seed**



Biodynamic Tree Paste

Linda is applying Biodynamic tree paste to all her fruit trees and roses. This mud-like paste is an enriching, pest controlling treatment for your trees, and may be painted on or sprayed on. The Biodynamic Farmers Association say this about it:

“Biodynamic Paste incorporates Biodynamic Manure Concentrate, terra cotta clay, basalt dust and biodynamic cow manure mixed in stirred horn manure (500), biodynamic nettle tea, fermented Equisetum (508) and Biodynamic Seaweed Concentrate.

Biodynamic Paste is used to:

- nourish trees, shrubs or vines through the bark, preventing the growth of algae and fungi
- prevent harmful insects from sheltering amongst the bark on the trunk
- heal any wounds on the stems or branches
- stimulates root growth and enables speedy establishment by dipping bare rooted trees, shrubs and vines into the paste before planting

Instructions for use:

Biodynamic Paste should be applied to deciduous trees, shrubs and vines when they lose their leaves in winter. It can also be applied to other trees or shrubs at any time of the year.”

It can be purchased via:

former member Rohanne Young rohanne.young@internode.on.net or through Biodynamic Farmers Association Bellingen. <https://biodynamics.net.au/product/tree-paste/>



Workshops at Bethania St Community Garden, Lota

Organic Gardening - Backyard Abundance

**Sunday 31 August 2025,
10:00am – 2:30pm**

Learn how to grow abundant organic fruit and vegetables in small suburban backyards.

You will gain knowledge on the establishment and ongoing maintenance of a thriving backyard system. Acclaimed presenter, **Michael Wardle**, will use the community garden environment for hands-on activities, including design, plants and seasons, soil relationships, nutrient cycling for the backyard, preparing garden beds and crop rotation.

Composting and Worm Farms

**Sunday 14th September 2025,
9:30am - 11:30am**

Join us for this hands-on workshop, where you will learn the basics of composting and worm farming, various types of composting and what is compostable. There will be time for troubleshooting and answering your questions.

**Both workshops are free. Bookings essential
Text 0439 048 585 including your name**

Next ROGI Seedsavers meeting with Linda Brennan

**Sunday 19 October 9.30-12midday
Hands-on prac:**

How to Prepare Your Organic Soil for Planting

This session will be at the time of the lunar calendar with increasing vitality, when we prepare soil for growth, planting etc. It is a perfect opportunity to learn how to create the ideal conditions in your soil for excellent growth.

Linda has a particular technique to create good, fertile soil conditions and she will show us how she does it today.

Wear gardening clothes, bring a hat and gloves and a share plate for morning tea if you like.

Free for ROGI members. Book with Team App or at ROGI meeting.

*And please, remember to **save and bring along the seeds of any plants that have been particularly delicious or gorgeous**, so that we can share them with others.*



Garden Visit Thornlands

Sunday afternoon 17 August

Two properties in Thornlands

Rachael and her family moved into their house in Thornlands in 2019. The house is on an acre with many established fruit trees including ugli fruit and an unknown tree—possibly the 'watermelon tree'. She's in the process of establishing her edible garden and is keen to get feedback and suggestions from ROGI's members.

It's got good bones ... what next?

This may need a different approach from what Michael Wardle suggested last meeting for small gardens.

We will also have the opportunity to visit her neighbour's beautiful garden that's just across from hers.

This will be the before visit, to be followed by an after visit several months in the future
Book on Team App or at August meeting.



Please **return seedling pots** (that have been washed—soak them in a bucket of water) to the Plant table so that they can be reused, especially the small tubes, singles, 4-cell and 10-cell packs like these:



Brisbane Organic Growers Inc

Organic Fair

Sunday 31 August 8am - 2pm
102 McDonald Road, Windsor

50 Years of Growing Organically

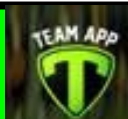
"Growing Organically has never been simpler"

- **Free** Demonstrations and talks
- **Free** gardening advice
- **Free** animal nursery
- **Stalls** selling herbs, books, seeds, plants, jams, tools and much more
- **Relax** with friends in the **BOGI Café**
- **Browse** the produce from members' suburban gardens
- Stay for the **Auction** of competition entries

September newsletter deadline
is Thursday 28th August.
Send contributions to
newsletter@rogi.com.au



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, Diana can help you at the next meeting.

On 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.

If you need help setting up or operating TEAM APP, please see Diana Yeo at a ROGI meeting.

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (all vacant)

PRESIDENT	president@rogi.com.au
V. PRESIDENT	
SECRETARY	secretary@rogi.com.au
TREASURER	treasurer@rogi.com.au
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	

OFFICE BEARERS

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Rhonda Binns	membership@rogi.com.au
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	-	
PR, COMMUNICATIONS	Gail Bruce	
CLUB EVENTS	-	
PUBLIC EVENTS	-	publicevents@rogi.com.au
LIBRARY	-	library@rogi.com.au
Library Assistant	Lin Peart	
SEED BANK	Geoff & Cheryl Rynja	seeds@rogi.com.au
Seedsavers Group	Linda Brennan	linda@ecobotanica.com.au
TECH DESK	Mike Qualmann, Erin Houselander	
WEBSITE	Pal Juvancz	pal@pcpals.com.au

info@rogi.com.au group@rogi.com.au www.rogi.com.au
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers>

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

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—Monday,
 Wednesday & Friday 9 - noon. Oaklands Street,
 Alexandra Hills. 0410 974 458

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

FREE SWAP/SHARE/GIVE- on table outside

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

ROGI WEBSITE: Under the RESOURCES tab, you will find:

- ROGI's month-by-month Seed Sowing Guide
- Seed viability Chart
- No-dig gardening ideas
- How to make compost
- Qld fruit fly research ... and lots more. Have a browse.