

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, 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)

Inside this edition

	Page
Secretary's Message: <i>Mike's Musings</i>	2
Garden Visit in Cleveland	3
Erik van Zulliekom speaker	3
Community Garden events	4
Gardening on a Budget	5
Fair at IndigiScapes in May	6
Field Trip now in June	7
What's that smell in the garden?	7
Committee and contact details	8
General ROGI information	8
TEAM APP details	9
April newsletter deadline	9
Blushing beautiful beetroot	9



Lush, mild-tasting green leaves



Bud



Ready to form seeds

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 Rhonda

How good does this herb sound?

A herb with useful amounts of: Calcium, Vitamin C, Chlorophyll, Magnesium, Potassium, and Iron.

Research has shown it can help alleviate these conditions: Allergies, angina, baldness, biliousness, cancer, Candida, colitis, diabetes, fevers, gout, constipation, food poisoning, gastroenteritis, gall stones, headache, haemorrhoids, insect bites, indigestion, urinary infections, liver diseases, heat

rash, infections, malaria, parasites, obesity, scurvy, rheumatism, tonsillitis, tuberculosis, ulcers, vomiting.

Well-known Qld herb expert, the late Isabell Shpard once explained her interesting experience with *Bidens pilosa*: "Many years ago, when looking through an overseas botanical seed catalogue, a listing caught my eye, 'Bidens pilosa: an Aztec herb with diuretic properties'. I added these to the list of seeds I ordered ... then what? ... See page 4.

Mike's Musings

The Federal Government and the food industry are having talks about the food crisis they believe will develop over coming years and decades.

Their reasoning is this:

Increasingly random weather patterns, with no clear seasonal lines, together with a higher number of destructive severe weather events will lead to agriculture becoming a very volatile business. There will be little certainty for farmers whether a crop will survive and bring in money. Many of today's cropping areas will be lost forever due to increasing droughts (e.g. the Riverina), due to drought, increasing ferocity of storms and soil erosion. The recovery period between major events will become shorter and shorter.

Think of the coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef; while the reef generally has the capability to regenerate between bleaching events, events that occur one after another with hardly any 'quiet' time in between exceeds any capacity to regenerate. Darling Downs is another disaster waiting to happen – deprived of ground water due to Coal-Seam-Gas mining, and exposed to more and more violent storms ... you guess what I want to say!

The food industry's solution is for all of us to consume more processed (and even lab-grown!) food. The rationale is that in good years crops will be turned into preserved/processed food products to sustain us during the bad years.

Is this what we really want?

Well, this principle sustained humans for hundreds of years before modern times: preserving fish with salt (brine), meat with salt, turning cabbages into sauerkraut, preserving fruit with sugar and vinegar. But, in those days, it was a seasonal thing – getting through winter basically. Now we have to think about varying time frames with no certainty when the next big crop will be possible – the variability is just enormous!

What does it mean for us as organic gardeners? We are among the lucky ones, if we do things right. Preservation (and sharing) of abundant crops, and saving well-adapted seeds, has always be a strong point of ROGI. It is an issue that will only become more important in coming years

Equally important is to focus on growing hardy plants that can deal with a changing environment: more tolerant to drought or heavy rainfalls, growing tropical varieties of fruit trees as our previous SEQ sub-tropical climate is moving towards becoming more tropical. We need to become used to growing varieties of vegetables such as yam, cassava, taro, certain ['spinach'](#) varieties, snake beans and many many more.

We need to move away from those fruits and veg we grow just because we grew up with them as children and loved them so much (Brussels sprouts anyone!?). Most of them are cool temperate varieties. Popular examples are raspberries, most apple and pear and stone fruit varieties and some strawberries.

The challenge is on. More than ever before in our lifetime we have to reinvent our gardening. Move away from what we always did. Come up with new ways.

The rewards are massive: rather than relying on more or less 'artificial' food, we maintain our health (and weight) without having to resort to medications.

Every leaf and fruit we grow ourselves, be it rocket, mustard greens, spinach, beans – you name it – is a brick in our wall of defence against nutritional imbalance and, in the end ... sickness.

At no time in the last 100 years has food gardening, and organic growing in particular, been more important. Let's all be proud of being a part of this life-sustaining movement: being a participating member of ROGI.

Now is the time to act.

You're in the right place ...

Mike

ROGI Secretary

Next Garden Visit

Cleveland. 2 - 4 Sunday 12 April



Nooshin started gardening when she bought her first home as a young teacher. However, northern hemisphere gardening is very different from subtropical southern hemisphere gardening and she had a lot to learn. She says she still has much to learn but when help is needed the 'amazing members of ROGI' are happy to share their knowledge and experience.

Her garden is relaxed and low maintenance, flowers and vegetables self-seed and grow where they land, and she works with what grows. It is home to 4 chickens, 23 stingless native bee hives, a kelpie, a blue tongue and the resident magpie.

Her children grew up eating their afterschool snacks straight out of the garden.

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

This is a free event for ROGI members, but numbers are limited.

Please register to attend on TEAM APP or at the March meeting or 0401 157 713.

The address will be sent to you before the date.

Next ROGI meeting

Thursday 12th March 6.15 for 7pm start

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

Starting from scratch: our garden journey.

Erik van Zuilekom and his family moved to Thornlands from Melbourne in 2019, so he knows about adapting to a different climate.

Their garden is an inspiration being planted for only five years! The property is 1214 m² with about 500m² used for food production and ornamental gardens.

Erik is a botanist, living architecture designer, and Permaculture designer and is setting up their property as a homestead to grow healthy organic food for the family. Soon he will host gardening workshops through his business - UnitedNatures.

For this presentation, Erik will cover his garden journey, its development, trials, adaptations, results and lessons learned.

The garden has been [featured](#) on Gardening Australia with Jerry.

Bring your questions and note-taking equipment.



... from page 1.

To my surprise, when the seeds arrived and I opened the packet, the seeds looked very much like cobblers' pegs. When I checked the botanical name of cobblers' pegs, yes, what I had ordered from USA was, indeed, cobblers' pegs! One plant we definitely didn't need any more of!"



It's a good idea to learn the botanical names of plants!

Bidens pilosa is the most widely-eaten wild plant in many parts of world. Indeed, for many, it's a food for daily survival.

How can you make use of this very easily-grown and self-sown herb?

- Eat torn leaves raw eg in a mixed salad
- Eat leaves in soups, stews, curries
- Use leaves to make a tea
- Feed it to the chooks – like other leafy greens, it makes egg yolks look like gold

Chew flowers and leaves for toothache—they have anti-bacterial activity against dental caries pathogen *Streptococcus mutans*.

Now ... if only we can find a good use for those sticky seeds!

Jill Nixon

Bethania St Community Garden Cox Park, Bethania Street, Lota



Workshops

**Propagation for Winter & Spring Harvests
Thursday 12 March 9:30 - 12:30**

Learn various methods of propagation, including starting from seed and using existing plants. You'll take away some plants to grow at home.

Cost \$5 (cash only)

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

Gardening can be expensive but does not *have* to be!

Some expensive gardens, after an outlay of lots of money and time, can still not look and feel right. Maybe love and care are ingredients for an amazing garden ... and these are free!

During the talk, members suggested areas where money was expended –

- Fertilisers
- Mulch
- Water
- Plants that do not thrive or that die.

Kate reviewed the steps where we gardeners can all rein in costs.

Acquire knowledge

- Seek out local gardeners / look over fences and see what's growing well
- Join garden clubs
- Visit community gardens in the area
- Library for books and specialist talks; Internet e.g. Kate's [website](#)

Know and use your site's characteristics

- Sun / shade across summer and winter
- Slope of the site
- Water movement when it rains – especially in heavy downpours
- Does the water pool anywhere? e.g. if you have a slope – plant your bananas at the bottom so they can benefit from the water and nutrient run off.

What do you want from your garden?

- Style—formal, cottage, natural
- Be flexible
- Make a rough plan

Plan early if you want paths and access areas e.g. plan a path but do not construct hard edges – costs money and hard to move later (we all

change our minds) and gardens evolve over time.

Strategic plantings can protect other plants – a quick growing pawpaw can give shade from western sun. Consider water flow in your plan

Know your soil –

- Is it clay or sand?
- Is it free-draining?
- Learn to improve your own soil – you could start [here](#)
- Make compost and there are LOTS of sources of free organic matter

Compost.

(Of Note – Commercial fertiliser can be 'like giving kids lollies' – providing a flush of growth and greenery but, despite appearances, the plant itself may not be strong and thriving.)

Making compost doesn't have to be a chore. Here's an idea:

- Get a large bucket or tub and drill holes in side and bottom
- Sink it into the ground
- Fill it with **green nitrogen** and **brown carbon** materials. Info [here](#). Be sure you have a lid on it. (One of our members has some near her fruit trees).

This composting insitu allows worms to move in and out of the bucket, and soil microbes will have a party in your bucket. Just keep topping it up with kitchen scraps and dried leaves or torn up cardboard/newspaper.

Chop and Drop. Do not waste your prunings or old spent plants. These plants have worked hard mining minerals from the soil and are a valuable resource. Use as mulch around your plants. Over time they will return nourishment to the soil, feeding the microbes and in the process be an effective mulch, protecting your soil from heat, evaporation and weeds.

Get your plants – lots of ways to procure plants.

- Markets or stalls – e.g. IndigiScapes World Environmental Day event
- IndigiScapes nursery (\$3)
- School fetes/clubs/garden shows
- Friends/neighbours/make friends/get cuttings
- Propagate your own

Consider your plant choices: are they feature plants or filler plants?

- Feature plants are your big investment e.g. Grafted fruit tree or an advanced blooming tree.
- Filler plants provide many functions - you can collect these over time and can be edible. They can be:

- understory plants, beneath trees and larger shrubs—e.g. sambung and other perennial edible greens will grow as ground cover (a living mulch)
- little plants to tuck into small spaces.
- those that have a shorter life and attract beneficial insects and birds e.g. flowers, herbs.

Be conscious of and deliberate about your budget.

Reported by various members.

How can being in ROGI help your garden budget?

Prevent expensive mistakes:

- Listen to advice from expert speakers
- Visit gardens of experienced gardeners

Acquire plants and equipment

- Free and cheap plants at ROGI meetings
- Free cuttings from other members
- Advertise in ROGI News for items

Source access to compost materials

- Coffee grounds
- Horse manure
- Wood chips
- ... and more

'Never say no to a free plant – you can always take it out if it doesn't 'fit' your garden, or if you don't like it'

Join us to celebrate United Nation World Environment Day at IndigiScapes.

The 2026 theme underscores that climate action is not just about reducing carbon emissions—it is about **rethinking the systems that power our economies and repairing our relationship with the climate**. By doing so, we can secure a safer, healthier, and more just future for all.

The actual date is first Saturday in June, but IndigiScapes will have it early to fall within the council's 'Adventure Fest' time period.

ROGI has a presence at this Fair every year.



We meet many current and future gardeners who participate in the **pot-making/seed-sowing** activity, below. We've been doing this popular activity since 2012!



We will have our Seed Bank there for people to seek advice and purchase seeds suitable to sow now.

Something new for this year.

We've been asked to create a focus on compost. So we will set up a static display of many of the actual items that can be put into compost piles or bins.

There will be several recycled containers with charming Mini Gardens, similar to this one, planted in them, which will be raffled during the day.



Field Trip Sunday 14 June

Nourished Landscapes in Jimboomba

As experienced ROGI members know, and others can imagine, preparing and staging our stall at an event such as this needs member participation before, during and after the event.

Right now, we're seeking people who are happy to help with one or more of the many things to be done.

ROGI committee members) will be asking individuals we know who've had experience with this Fair.

Also we'd really welcome offers of help from people for whom this is a new experience.

Please be in touch: in person, by phone or text or email to discuss how you can help ROGI.



Success with coriander seeds in paper pot.

Doreen Jachmann is an experienced gardener who is passionate about sustainable living and the benefits of growing our own food.

On the 5-acre 'Land for Wildlife' property, Doreen implemented a permaculture design while working full-time, with the aim to be off-grid and more self-sufficient. Various regenerative planning and management techniques are applied across the property.

Perennial growing systems, water harvesting earthworks, zero waste nursery/worm farm, grey-water garden, and wicking beds have been set up. There is also an abundance of native trees and shrubs.

They also raise and harvest on-site ducks, geese, turkeys, chickens and pigs. On the property are several European and native bee hives.

Doreen has formal education in Environmental Monitoring of Soil and Water and achieved a Bachelor in Horticulture and a Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment.

The guided tour and discussion will provide you with LOTS of information and inspiration. Many of the elements she has implemented can be incorporated into suburban block. She is truly a powerhouse.

Depart Redlands 9.15. Return by about 2.00.

The cost is good value at \$20 per person.

Bring: food to share for lunch, hat, and so on.

BOOK * Team App
* Text 0401 157 713
* Name on form at ROGI meeting

This was originally scheduled for 24 MAY. Please check your availability for the new date if you've already paid.

'Erm ... excuse me, but why can I smell muscle rub in your veg garden?'

Well, here's the not-very long story:

When herbivores and pest insects attack crops, many plants release chemicals to signal to beneficial insects that lunch is nearby. This effect can be induced with a HIPV (Herbivore Induced Plant Volatile).

A common and easily-available HIPV is methyl salicylate (MeSA), also known as oil of wintergreen.

Studies confirm that oil of wintergreen attracts a variety of beneficial insects, including ladybugs, lacewings, minute pirate bugs and aphid-eating hover flies.

A DIY approach is to soak cotton balls in oil of wintergreen/methyl salicylate inside some empty take-away food containers with perforations, and placing them in the garden.

Oil of wintergreen is what gives the distinctive smell to liniment.

More information and research details [here](#)

Oil of wintergreen was initially and primarily derived from the leaves of the Asian native shrub *Gaultheria fragrantissima* through steam distillation. As with many such things, it is now synthesised.

During a tour of tropical rainforest in Sabah in Borneo in 2013, we were invited to smell leaves from a particular plant ... and it smelled like Dencorub.

So we saw it actually growing in the wild!

Jill Nixon

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Jill Nixon	president@rogi.com.au
V. PRESIDENT	Linda Barrett	vp@rogi.com.au
SECRETARY	Mike Qualmann	secretary@rogi.com.au
TREASURER	Rose Faleafa	treasurer@rogi.com.au
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Rhonda Binns, Tom Bohl,	vacancies

OFFICE BEARERS

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

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 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.

Beetroot

Beetroot is packed with nutrition. It is an excellent source of folate, and research has shown the red pigment, betalain, protects against heart disease and cancer. The deeper and darker the colour, the better. It's rich in potassium. The high nitrate levels help blood pressure and brain function. Beetroots are high in fibre and low in calories. More nutritional details online such as [here](#).

Beetroot -- How & when to grow it

Green Harvest has great information on [growing](#) beetroot in our climate. The weather is cooling down, slowly but surely, so it's time.

The dates in March this year for moon planting/sowing seeds of root crops are 8 & 9th and again on 15 & 16th.

If you don't already have seeds, you can get some from the Seed Bank on Thursday 12th.

Beetroot -- How to prepare it

It's so easy to buy a can. But ... grow your own and taste the difference. And they're organic!

Wash them to remove soil. Avoid peeling.

Boil them as you would potato—cook until a sharp knife will pass through.

Roast beetroots and serve as a hot vegetable or use them cold in a salad.

Freshly-**grated** raw beetroot is sweet and delicious.

Use it in fresh **juices** with other ingredients.

Beetroot **leaves** are also packed with nutrition and can be prepared as you would greens such as silver beet (their close relative), spinach or kale.

Remember to eat the fibre-rich **stalks**—steam until tender and add to the leaves which cook faster.

Too many to eat now? Preserve the excess for later. Advice on pickling and more [here](#).



Above: Chioggia is a pretty face, but not as nutritious as the beet-red blushing beauties.



Above: Cylindra is deep red, and, being long and slender, makes lovely even slices.



Right: Eat the leaves and stalks: they're like silver beet with benefits



Left: beetroot has compound seeds so a seed can produce a few plants. Thin when possible to allow growth. They push above the ground as they fill out.

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.

April 2026 newsletter deadline

Thursday 27 March 2026

Send contributions to jill.nixon@bigpond.com