

Next meeting: Wednesday 11 March 2015

ROGI News

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

**Salvation Army Church
Cnr McDonald Rd & Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS**

Admission

Members: Gold coin
Visitors: \$5

**Please bring plate of food -
savory/sweet or nibbles
preferably home-made.**

Tea/coffee provided

You are welcome to provide a quality plant to help share plants with other members. Bring a bag/box for your purchases and/or winnings.

See you Wednesday ...

Inside this edition

	Page
Jill's Jottings: notes from our president	2
Coming events/March Speaker/Membership	3
Herb— <i>Bidens pilosa</i>	4
Feb Garden Visit—Linda & Damien Brennan	5
Good Gardening Expo	8
Equinox Fair/Garden Visits/Ipswich Plant Expo	9
Energy Course;/M'ship Card/Giveaways	10
Native Bees & your Garden	11
Save the Pollinators	13
Critter of the Month—Friend or Foe?	15
Seed Bank News	16
Seed Bank Catalogue/Planting Guide	17
Crystal Castle Gardening Ideas	18
Library News	20
Punnets/Seed-packing/Produce Pics	21
Article request/Deadline/Plant Clinic	22
ROGI Shop products and price list	23
ROGI Committee Details	24

A meditation tepee covered with jicama (a bean family plant with an edible tuber) in Linda's garden. Seeds for this and many other plants are available from the ROGI Seed Bank.



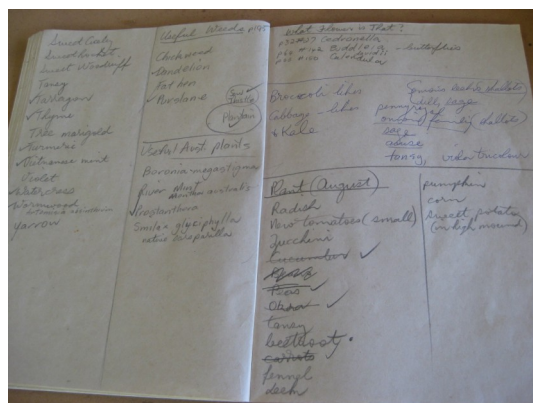
Jill's Jottings

Hello fellow gardeners

I can't believe it's autumn! It's 30° in the shade and sweatingly-humid yet the ground has dried out after all that rain we had from Cyclone Marcia. So it's back to watering the garden again, and laying down mulch to replace that which has broken down.

People are saying this is not normal for autumn. But is it? This is where keeping a gardening journal would be a good idea. It brings to mind the response from an elderly retired gardener when asked, 'Of all the tools you used, what was the best tool?' His reply? 'My diary.' Do you keep records? If so, it would be great for you to share your method with the rest of us.

This is mine, such as it is, but I'm not very consistent at keeping it up-to-date.



There's been a set-back with the Salvo's garden. Crows ate the sweet corn before it was harvested and the prolific butternut pumpkin plant has been decimated. Five pumpkins remain and are being nibbled by thin green caterpillars that have longitudinal white stripes. Luckily, the rest had been harvested before the deluge.



The leaves have all but disappeared—just skeletons remain. Same with the nearby

zucchini plant. Cucurbits certainly have trouble coping with that level of moisture for that length of time. The remedy for powdery mildew is to spray it with a milk and water solution (1:9). But how can you do that when it rains for a week?

So now all the plant matter must be put in the rubbish bin rather than in the compost. Then the beds will be filled with compost, as they've sunk considerably since October, and they'll be ready for the new crops to be planted.

Flowers to attract beneficial insects will be interspersed and some will be grown in pots so they can be moved to where they're needed. Gennaro will plant an avenue of pigeon pea trees to improve the soil where future fruit trees will grow.

The plan is to have everything flourishing and producing a prodigious amount of food by spring, ready for Costa's visit for the grand opening of the Salvo's garden.

Four people have offered to help and would welcome you should you want to join in this worthwhile activity. You'll learn a lot—even if it's just how to deal with cucurbits in wet weather! See John at the AV desk on a meeting night or talk to Gennaro or me.

Happy gardening ...

JM

Coming Events

March	Sat, Sun 7 & 8	Ipswich Plant Expo—see p9
	Wed 11	6.15 ROGI meeting—see right
	Sat 21	9—3 Equinox Fair Ormiston SS—see p9
	Sun 29	3pm Garden Visit Francois G. see p9
April	Wed 8	6.15 ROGI meeting
	Sat 11	9—3 Redlands Good Gardening Expo p8
	Sun 26	Angela S.—see p9

Membership Fees

- **Cash** payment at ROGI meeting
- **Cheques** made payable to “Redland Organic Growers Inc.” pay at meeting or by post (PO Box 1257, Cleveland 4163)
- **Direct Deposit** BSB 633-000 A/C No. 136 137 296 (Bendigo Bank—Capalaba Central Branch)

VERY IMPORTANT! Reference - Your initials and surname are essential to identify who has paid. This is our only way of knowing it's YOU.

Please bring your membership application form to the next meeting.

Email group@rogi.com.au for application form.

Membership fees for 2015 are now (over)due.

If you are not a financial member by the March meeting you will be charged the Visitor's entry of \$5.

Please renew online at your convenience, and ensure that you complete a new membership form when you are renewing.

Please provide evidence of pensioner status to claim discount.

Fees	New member/s joining in...			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec of following year
Member Category				
Single	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50
Family	\$50	\$37.50	\$25	\$62.50
Pensioner Single	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$25
Pensioner Couple	\$30	\$22.50	\$15	\$37.50

March Guest Speakers

Steve from Bayside Mobile Sharpeners will talk about the importance of keeping your cutting implements in good condition – to improve efficiency, ensure safety and achieve better results.

He will be available for the whole evening to sharpen tools. ROGI members may bring along one pair of secateurs to be sharpened for a nominal fee of \$2: ROGI will subsidise the full cost. This will be on a 'first come first served basis'. Steve will be at random ROGI Garden Visits during the year as a service to ROGI members.

Linda from Ecobotanica will deliver a 'show and tell' of beautiful flowers that are also edible—how to grow them and how to eat them.



Plant of the Month - the Herb *Bidens pilosa*

How good does this sound?

A herb that contains useful amounts of:

Chlorophyll	Vitamin C
Calcium	Iron
Potassium	Magnesium

Research has shown it can help alleviate these conditions:

Allergies, angina, baldness, biliousness, cancer, Candida, colitis, diabetes, fevers, gout, constipation, food poisoning, gastro-enteritis, gall stones, nervous problems, headache, haemorrhoids, insect bites, indigestion, urinary infections, liver diseases, heat rash, infections, malaria, parasites, obesity, rheumatism, scurvy, tonsillitis, tuberculosis, ulcers, vomiting.

Well-known herb expert, the late Isabell Shipard 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' (a diuretic may relieve fluid retention in the body). I added these to the list of seeds I ordered.

To my surprise, when the seeds arrived and I opened the packet of seeds, 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!

It 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 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*.



Above: bud developing, and right: almost out and the flower.



According to Tim Marshall in his book *Weed*, 'If you can get some use out of a plant and manage it so it doesn't take over, you can safely reclassify it. It's no longer a weed if you put it to use.'
Weed is available from the ROGI library.



Above: *Bidens pilosa* is infamous for its seeds—the dreaded Cobbler's Pegs! Remove the buds or flowers before this happens.

Below: A healthy plant just waiting to be eaten.



Make use of this valuable herb that volunteers its services to you.

Just make sure you're the boss. Otherwise it's just a weed.

Garden Visit—Linda and Damien Brennan

About 24 intrepid ROGI members braved the remains of cyclone Marcia and were rewarded with an inspirational visit to the Brennan's Capalaba garden.

They had a clear vision for their 6 000m² (1½ acre) property when they moved in 20 months ago: to be self sufficient so far as food is concerned. Moving from a much smaller suburban block, they feel blessed to be well on their way to achieving it in their new home; though recognise the hard road ahead.

A well-known permaculture and horticulture educator, Linda is the driving force behind Ecobotanica, her home-grown business, offering regular organic gardening courses.

Here's some of what they have done so far:

- Designed the garden according to permaculture principles, such as zone planting, swales for drainage, reusing or recycling everything
- Installed 58 000 litre water storage
- Achieved first steps for organic certification
- Built up very poor soil and stopped chemical use on site
- Started composting, worm farms
- Created a shade house and a cob oven
- Planted an extensive vegetable garden, herb terrace, tea garden, edible flower garden, water garden and chicken house with annex
- Created extensive orchard as well as banana circles
- Milled and reused timber from a large tallowwood tree in fencing and garden structures
- Replaced weed plants with a colourful cottage garden in front garden

Future projects:

- Build a labyrinth to replace the original golf green, supporting their spiritual philosophy
- Offer a 'retreat experience' on the property
- Continue to improve the sustainability

Linda and Damien want to leave this property in a better state than they found it and, from what ROGI members observed, they are certainly well on the way to their goal in this labour of love.

A big thank you from ROGI members to Linda and Damien for sharing their journey and for such great hospitality at the afternoon tea afterwards.

Kathy Petrik

Enjoy some photos of interesting aspects and innovative ideas in Linda's garden over the next two pages.

Note the philosophy of re-purposing items.



Amaranth - three types of beautiful edible leaves.

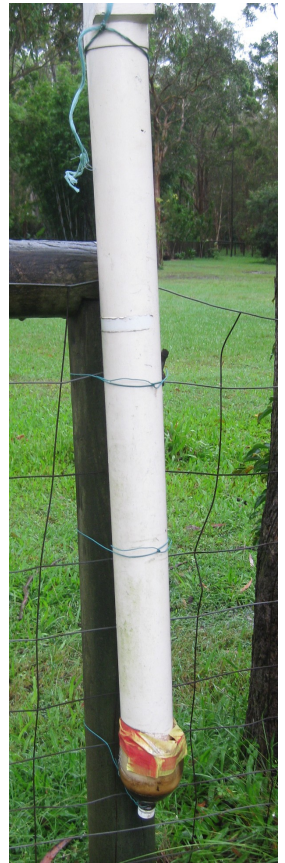


Below left and right: Garden structures— a garden arch and fencing—made from a tallowwood tree that was felled and milled on the property.

Linda and Damien's Garden—Re-using and re-purposing



Clockwise from left: Water chestnut in concrete tubs; teapots in the 'tea garden'. The former 'golf course' draped with old carpets from the house to kill the grass. Comfrey is stuffed into this poly pipe and it's filled with water to make comfrey 'tea' - note the half soft drink bottle at the bottom to drain off the liquid. The corn stalks are left in place ready to grow climbers eg beans—note the puddles. A worm farm in an old corner spa bath—note the worm 'wee' in the bucket. Seedlings being protected by upturned pots with their bottoms cut out—note the heavy layer of woodchip mulch on the walkways, which made the going easier in the very wet weather.



Linda and Damien's Garden



Clockwise from left: Tea garden at front with cob oven back left.
Talking about plants.

The orchard with the nature reserve next door.

Portable chook enclosure: they can spend the day clearing up old crops
thus preparing a new garden bed for Linda to plant out.

Sunflower seeds.

Selecting plants at the Swap-and-Share table.

Tunnel of shade cloth to protect young lettuce from the harsh sun.

Toothache plant *Acmella oleracea*—has numbing properties when the
leaves and flowers are chewed.

Sword bean *Canavalia gladiata*—can be used as for haricot bean.

The weather didn't prevent the ROGI crowd from enjoying the garden.



Redlands Good Gardening Expo

FREE
ENTRY

Saturday 11 April 2015, 9am to 3pm

Redlands IndigiScapes Centre, 17 Runnymede Rd, Capalaba

- Find out about growing your own organic food at home. Tastier, healthier food, the way it was meant to be eaten.
- Learn about native gardening and how you can use natives to create habitats.
- Composting, worm farming, mulching and how to recycle your green waste.
- Buy plants and seeds and get some great new ideas for your garden.
- Get the help you need with advice from the experts.
- Workshops & demonstrations, arts & crafts, music & food!



Proudly
presented by:



Redland
Organic
Growers Inc



Redlands
IndigiScapes
Centre



Redland
CITY COUNCIL

The Good Gardening Expo (GGE) is not long away now.

The GGE gives ROGI the chance to inform and encourage as many people as possible to grow as much of their food as possible—organically.

ROGI has a large display area with stalls where visitors can learn more about organic growing, buy seeds and items from our shop, sign up to become a ROGI member, and take part in fun gardening activities—see below.

To make this day a resounding success—as it has been for the past two years, we need members to have fun while:

- helping to put up and take down stalls and displays
- staffing the stalls, displays and activities
- helping manage the speakers' program on the day

So if want to be part of this enjoyable day or have any questions, please contact Kathy on 3206 1267 or 0468 434 791 or kathypetrik@tpg.com.au.

A child making a seed pot from newspaper—she then sowed a seed in it and took it home. A very popular free activity.



Workshop making a no-dig garden. ROGI members and visitors make a garden from scratch and plant it out with herb seedlings—all in less than an hour.





We will have a stall at this fair, and we'll raffle the popular ROGI Box Gardens from our display of small-space gardening. See an example of a box garden below. Frank will be there doing a presentation on compost worms.

See you there?



ROGI Garden Visits

Sunday 29th March

Francois G.—Capalaba

Francois said his large garden is a work in progress: it is like a jungle. I think that after all the rain and heat we've had, many gardens will resemble jungles. Of course, we love all gardens, and understand neatness isn't a necessary part of gardening. A bonus at this ROGI Garden Visit is that Francois will do a group workshop where we'll make wicking garden beds using broccoli boxes. You will have the opportunity to take one home, as we'll raffle them at the end of the day.

Sunday 26th April

Angela S.—Alexandra Hills

More information in April newsletter.

Sunday 24th May

Janet C.—Cleveland

More information in May newsletter.

ROGI Field Trips

21st June—Macleay Is. gardens

July—Mudbrick Herb Cottage

Please contact Toni 0402 323 704 or events@rogi.com.au to reserve a spot.

Also, talk to Toni about hosting a visit to your garden. We'd love to see it.



Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th March 2015
8am – 4pm (Saturday) • 8am – 3pm (Sunday)
Ipswich Turf Club, Bundamba



Entry: \$7/adult, children under 15 free, FREE PARKING

- Over 130 stalls of dedicated plant sellers and related products
- Organic and edible gardening
- Native and non-native plants
- Plant creche and variety of food stalls
- Educational sessions and entertainment for both adults and children
- Two stages featuring your favourite gardening experts – Costa, Paul, Annette, Noel, Arno, Annette, Claire and others
- Two full days of gardening talks covering organics, fruit and vegetables, landscaping, chickens, bees, butterflies and more
- Introducing the Grow and Eat stage

See the Plant Expo website for the Speaker Program and the exciting workshops planned for children in the KIDZ ZONE.

proudly sponsored by:



proudly supported by:



www.plantexpo.com.au

Sustainable Energy Systems Consultant and Educator, Trevor Berrill is preparing a community education course

Saving on Energy Costs – Electricity & Gas

for homeowners, small business and community groups.

The course will be run through a Project Grant from the Redland City Council, and will start in June this year.

He is seeking expressions of interest from community groups to support his grant application. Would you be interested in attending such a course (at no or very low cost)?

www.solarissustainablehomes.com.au

Please talk to a committee member directly if you are interested or with Trevor if you wish to ask any questions - 0400 177 283 .

'I did a course with Trevor about six years ago and came away with a new understanding of the way small changes can make a big difference in living comfort as well as energy consumption.' Jill Nixon



Trevor's sustainable home at Wellington Point.

Your ROGI Membership Card

Your

Name

2015



Please wear your ROGI Membership Card (aka Name Tag) to all ROGI functions. This is evidence that you are a member and entitles you to purchase from the ROGI Shop and borrow from the library.

It also allows other members to address you by name.

You may leave your membership badge with ROGI: just attach it to the cloth hanger at the end of the meeting and it will be there for you next time—whether at a meeting, an event or a garden visit.

Swap Share Give-away at ROGI Meetings

Right near the front door is the swap/share/give-away table.

This is for those items you don't need yourself and that others may be happy to have eg horse manure, shredded paper, volunteer plants you don't want, surplus chillies, empty pots, strawberry runners, cuttings and so on.

This is where you can work an arrangement with other members to do some swapping outside of the meetings.

Please be aware of the fire ant status of your area and do not bring plants or seedlings if there is any concern.

Native Bees and your Garden from talk by John Klumpp

A record crowd at the talk by John Klumpp, native bee enthusiast and expert, was testament to the growing interest in this fascinating and incredibly important part of organic gardening practices.

As organic gardeners we are increasingly aware of and interested in the creatures that cohabit with us. Bees, both the introduced European species and the many native stingless species, are part of this web of life that brings both vitality and frustration to our gardens. We are becoming more aware of their importance in our food production and also of their dwindling numbers.

Australian aboriginal peoples referred to the native stingless bees by a variety of names; however 'Sugarbag' is a term of European origin and probably relates to the way the honey was collected. Stingless bees were highly prized by aboriginal people and they used their honey as food and the highly prized cerumen building material, a mixture of beeswax and tree resin for medicinal, ceremonial and everyday purposes. The didgeridoo can't produce its deep throaty sound without cerumen around the mouthpiece, and knives, spears and other implements were held together with handmade string and malleable cerumen.

Fossilized specimens trapped in amber show bees have been around for at least 80 million years. It is possible stingless bees adapted to be among the first pollinators on our planet.

Some of the familiar solitary bees are blue-banded bee, leaf-cutter bee, carpen-

There are 1647 known species of native bees in the world, not all stingless, and in Australia we have about 12 species.

Many are solitary or semi-social bees and if provoked some can sting.

ter bee, teddy bear bee, resin bee and reed bee. We often see these darting from flower to flower in our gardens and they particularly favour flowers with purple or blue hues. These solitary and semi-social bees prefer hollow pipes and tubes in which to build their nest—bamboo pieces or drilled holes in timber, or holes found in rammed earth and clay.

At certain times of the year I often find the male blue-banded bees will hang in clusters along a dead fern frond resting together during the cool of the evening.

Where they nest and go to in my garden at other times of the year I'm still to discover, but I know they're there, as I see them actively gathering pollen and nectar during the day.

The colonizing stingless bees are in two genera, *Trigonula* and *Austroplebia*, and are rather difficult to tell apart for amateur beekeepers. You need to examine the hive itself and look at the construction of the brood shape to distinguish them. *Trigonula carbonaria*, the small black stingless bee that we're familiar with, is a social species constructing its hive

in hollow logs and trees in the wild but has been known to move into electrical junction boxes, household compost bins, staghorns, mud embankments and timber heaps they find suitable in suburbia to begin their bee colony. When the colony is healthy the *T. carbonaria* bees also daub tree resin around the entrance hole of their hive to deter

The usual characteristics of bees are that they collect nectar and convert it to honey and they collect pollen to feed their developing young, although there are two South American native bee species that collect and ferment meat protein to feed their brood.

predators and ants as an added defence mechanism. Unlike their predators, their legs are designed to walk easily across the sticky resin.

Native bees also differ from the introduced

European honey bee in other ways. As mentioned native bees make their hive structure using a mixture of wax and tree resin (cerumen) which provides a stronger defence system against predators and a more stable construction material in our warm climate, and the cells are arranged in spirals or a higgledy-piggledy manner, while the European honey bee constructs its distinctive hexagonal shaped cells using only wax.



Cerumen on mouthpiece of didgeridoo.



Small *T. Carbonaria* and large honeybee.



Trigonula carbonaria brood.

Native Bees continued

All social bees have three distinct sections to their hives that provide the essential elements for bee life, honey, pollen and the nursery where the next generation develop.

Native bees store excess honey and pollen in their comb structure, around the outside edges and across the roof area of their hive and this makes it much more difficult to easily harvest the honey.

A strong honey bee hive can produce up to 75kg of honey per season; a stingless bee hive might produce only 1kg. Honey bee honey has 18% moisture content which allows it to keep almost indefinitely.

A native bee collects nectar and converts it to honey with about 23% moisture so in time it will ferment. Their honey, known as sugarbag, is fresh and citrusy and when kept in the resin and wax honey pots of the hive, is prevented from fermenting by the natural antibiotics in the resins.

Within a native bee colony, the bees forage and fill their cells with honey enzymes and pollen. Native bee cells are different in size and shape for the honey and pollen cells from those used for the growing brood. These cells are filled with a mixture of pollen, honey and enzymes produced by the worker bees. The queen lays the egg on top of this liquid food and the cell is immediately sealed. Workers develop from fertilized eggs while drones develop from unfertilized eggs. Native bees do not produce Royal Jelly so the way they produce a new queen is to build a larger cell on the outside of the brood and the developing larvae will have more food than the other

developing bees thus making it royalty.

In an active hive there will be one laying queen, thousands of active workers, and several drone males. The extra queens work in the hive until a new hive area is found and established over several months, with new comb structure, pollen and honey cells. Then a new queen and some workers fly to the new hive and establish a new colony. The new hive is often supported by the older hive until it is fully established and actively working.

There are many ways you can establish a native bee hive. For colony bees you might be lucky to have one readymade in your garden in a hollow in a tree or earth bank. If not, locate a bee specialist such as John Klumpp who can provide an established hive for you.

A garden flowering with suitable plants will attract and sustain our native bees.

Australian native flowering ground covers, shrubs and trees around your garden along with varieties of flowering herbs such as Thai basil and borage will ensure you encourage and maintain a strong native stingless bee population in your garden.

An artificial hive has thick walls for good insulation and cooling. The hive can be a box construction or tubular such as John showed us. They need protection from the elements so must be positioned facing away from prevailing winds and rain, and under the shade of a tree or eaves of the house, usually covered with a metal roof or polystyrene cover.

The hive will have a small entrance hole which is easy to defend by the small species bee and another at the rear to ventilate the hive with cross air flow. A hive is usually moved or introduced to its new location in the morning. The entrance hole of the hive is sealed the previous evening and then opened when the hive is repositioned. The bees will be able to re-orient themselves with little trouble.



Potential Problems Hive predators include spiders, assassin bugs, Asian geckos, and wasps. These are mostly opportunists that require you to keep alert to their presence and relocate or remove if required.

The most troublesome predator is the **syrrhid fly** (or hoverfly), a wasp imitator. It can become prevalent when a hive is damaged in very hot weather, disturbed in some way or split. It will lay its eggs on the outside of the hive and the hatching larvae move into the hive

through the entrances and feed on the honey and pollen stores usually reducing the hive to a sticky mess that results in the loss of the hive.

Likewise the **phorid fly** will itself enter and parasitise the bees, thus colonizing a hive and the hive's destruction is very similar.

As well as the insect predators, the **cadagi gum** *Corymbia torelliana* is also a problem for native bee hives. It produces a sticky resin within its maturing gum nut alongside the developing seeds that is irresistible to the little bees that enter the gumnut to collect the resin. On leaving they take the cadagi seeds with them attached to their legs or body. Flying with the attached seeds is difficult and many bees drop in exhaustion or, if they make it back to the hive, the seeds are caught and deposited at the hive entrance to such an extent that they can block the entrance hole and prevent ventilation and necessary air circulation through the hive.

However, problems and pests aside, encouraging the native stingless bee into our gardens is a priority. To ensure a bee-friendly environment which entices them to visit and pollinate our plants and vegetables we need to provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen through the plants we grow and a chemical-free environment (as we do).

Reported by Margaret Sear

Save the Bees and Our Other Pollinators

Are you unwittingly killing the bees and other pollinators?

Our pollinators are bees, butterflies, moths, spiders, flies, wasps, birds, bats and ladybirds.

I really enjoyed the bee talk by John Klumpp, and I started thinking about my garden and the pollinators I have. We are quite lucky to have a couple of wild European bee nests in a giant tallowood in the hollows where it gets cut by Energex. The hollows have been home to many birds, carpet snakes and possums but for the last few years we've had one bee nest and then another. Our neighbours had a few bee hives some years ago and they must have been breakaways. The kookaburras love to dive into the hollow and come out and sit on a branch with honey dripping everywhere from the comb they break off.

Plants that attract bees.

Borage, lavender, African blue basil and other **varieties of basil** attract bees. When our **macadamia** trees come into flower, they are covered in bees both native and European. The **liquidamber** tree is another huge attractant to all bees when it flowers. Bees like the **citrus** trees when they are in flower and the **nasturtiums**. I now leave the wild **rocket** and normal rocket to flower as there are lots of na-



Rocket and nasturtium flowers.

tive bees around the flowers. I have seen bees on the **camelias, thyme** and **chive** flowers, **peas** and **sweet peas**. So bees love pollen- and nectar-rich flowers. I notice that the more flowers you have the more bees you attract, so I will grow more clumps of the flowers they like rather than individual plants. From my observation the bees seem to prefer **blue, purple, yellow** and **white flowers**. When Jo Hammond from Butterfly Host Plants gave us her talk on butterflies, she said that butterflies prefer blue/purple flowers. I have seen butterflies on my buddleja, blue plumbago and blue African basil. They also hang around the grape vine. It is lovely to see insects busy in the garden.

Enemies

Butcher birds sit in the gum tree and swipe at the bees. I presume they catch them and eat them.

But these pollinators have much bigger enemies ... MANKIND AND HIS CHEMICALS.

I read an article in *Good Organic Gardening* magazine written by Jo Immig, a writer and photographer with a passion about all things organic. Jo is the co-ordinator of the National Toxics Network (a not-for-profit organisation working to eliminate toxic chemical pollution www.ntn.org.au). Jo is an environmental scientist with expertise in issues of pesticides, genetically engineered food, indoor air pollution and children's environmental health. She has given permission for me to share her words.

Neonicotinoids aren't the only concern. Researchers are speculating that honeybees are succumbing to a perfect storm of stressors, including disappearing habitats, poor nutrition, viruses and GM crops.

As gardeners you might unwittingly be contributing to the problem by purchasing neonicotinoid treated seeds, potting mix or ornamental plants or even treating your pets with them.

When Something is Amiss with the Bees, the Ecology is out of Kilter

Apiarists attest to the continuing decline of bee colonies—a phenomenon known as 'colony collapse disorder' whereby bees abandon their hives and die. But who's monitoring the less economically important species and looking for knock-on effects higher up the food chain?

The systemic **neonicotinoid pesticides** are emerging as the key suspects in pollinator deaths.

The European Commission has enforced a two year ban on the neonicotinoid pesticides **thiamethoxam, imidacloprid** and **clothianidin** after a review by the European Food Safety Authority found data gaps and inadequate assessments of their potential ecological impacts. What are neo-nicotin-oids, aside from being difficult to pronounce?

They're a relatively new group of insecticides designed to kill insects by overstimulating their nervous systems (think uncontrolled twitching), ultimately leading to paralysis and death. Not a particularly humane method, you will have to admit.

Imidacloprid was the first neonicotinoid insecticide to come into commercial use in 1991. It is now the most widely-used insecticide in the world.

Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides. This means that when applied to a seed, plant, soil or animal, they move from the area first applied into untreated tissues, turning the whole plant or seed into

something indiscriminately poisonous.

First instance, seeds treated with neonicotinoids grow into plants that produce guttation fluids that contain toxic levels of the pesticide first applied to that seed.

Guttation fluid happens when the plant expels xylem sap, which forms droplets on the tips or along edges of the leaves, not to be confused with the formation of dew. Bees and other insects love it as a source of water and, if it contains pesticide residues, their health can be impacted, leaving them vulnerable to other diseases.

Unlike the European Union, Australian regulators have not placed any bans on neonicotinoids. ... there are gaps in the regulatory risk assessment processes and labelling requirements for pesticides in Australia to protect bees and other pollinators. Neonicotinoids are used extensively in Australia, so let's hope the APVMA gets on with the job of fixing assessment processes to better protect bees and other pollinators.

Imidacloprid (the key ingredient in Confidor™ and Conguard™), for instance, is currently used as a direct spray on cotton, fruit, stonefruit, apples, vegetables, turf, ornamentals, shrubs and roses. It is applied as a seed treatment in numerous crops... It is also used to treat soil for sugarcane, vegetables, apples, potatoes and ornamentals in pots.

Other neonicotinoid pesticides in Australia with uses that could impact on home gardeners include **acetamiprid** used in potting mixes, **clothianidin** used on turf and **thiacloprid** used as a foliar spray on camellias and roses in commercial nurseries. Neonicotinoid use in ornamental and home garden products has prompted targeted campaigns in other countries to remove them from use. Unless you are buying certified organic seeds, inputs and plants, you should start asking questions about neonicotinoid residues and steering clear of them in your home garden."

Very scary and lots of big words but we can make a difference by carefully reading the labels and avoiding the garden products with neonicotinoid pesticides, and any pesticides for that matter, and by telling people of the dangers. We can help save the bees and other pollinators.

There are interesting articles on the National Toxics Website www.ntn.org.au especially the one on the Northern Rivers (not far from home).

Jo has also given me some articles on glyphosate (key ingredient in Roundup™ and Zero™). She said that the PR campaign is that it is so safe you can drink it! This has been highly successful and ***Glyphosate is now off-patent and there are hundreds of brands containing it.*** we need to get the word out about its toxicity.

Glyphosate seriously impacts soil organisms and this leads to more weeds and unhealthy plants. If you would like to read any of these articles on glyphosate, please see me in the library.

Food for thought. I have been looking at potting mixes and seedlings and plants for sale but there is no information on what they contain. At Jo's suggestion, I am looking to find the Australian standards for these things and will write to a few of the companies that supply seeds and seedlings and potting mixes to see what I can find out.

Mandy Harrison



Top to bottom, L-R: Buddleja; Lavender; Borage; Thai Basil; Salvia.

Below: Cat's Whiskers; Alyssum; Cosmos



Critter of the Month - Friend or Foe?

Friend

Mealybug destroyer
The beetle *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*
Family: Coccinellidae



Ladybird beetle nymph looking for some aphids to consume.



Adult

Identification: The nymph mimics the mealybug that it consumes. However the appendages are longer and it moves considerably faster. If you see a fast-moving mealybug, don't hurt it, this is your friend in the garden. Watch out for the small yellow eggs (which have been laid inside mealybug eggmasses) and protect them.

Interesting Features: This fuzzy white "aphid eater" ladybird beetle larva has white waxy secretions that protect it from attacks from ants. The ants try to protect the aphids, which this larva eats, because they eat the honeydew produced by the aphids. *Cryptolaemus* also will feed readily on many species of soft scales.

To view a Time Lapse of Lady Beetle Life Cycle go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqddneGYkc4>. This isn't *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* but it is fascinating to watch.

.....

I hope you have enjoyed our first Critter of the Month. To expand our horizons and share in the learning about the ecology of our gardens, please consider taking photographs of the critters in your garden.

The procedure is:

- Investigate an interesting critter in your or a friend's garden and take a clear photo
- E-mail to ROGI info@rogi.com.au with as much information as possible
- I will confirm identification and send a reply
- The critter will be presented at a monthly meeting, by photographer or another
- Its story will be published in the newsletter
- You may catch the critter and bring it along in a container to a ROGI meeting.

Most people will have legless lizards in the mulch and soil of their garden. If anyone has a photograph please forward it so we can put it in the newsletter, as these are really important bug controllers and are too often killed.

Dave Praeger

For helpful information on critters—good and bad, read *Bug* by Tim Marshal. He explains organic methods and a balanced approach. Available for ROGI members to borrow from the ROGI library.

Bugs in the Bottle from February Meeting

Family Coreidae,
Genus : *Amblypetra* ,
Species indeterminable,
Commonly called the **fruit sucking bug**.
(The nymphs in the bottle do resemble the 2nd instar of the assassin beetle, except they have larger antennae with a lobe on the end.)
They are shy critters and move quickly, so this was a good find. References indicate the parents are a major pest of fruit and nut trees causing serious fruit drop. My suggestion would be to brush them into a bucket of water and drown them.

Dave P



News from the ROGI Seed Bank

Seed packing in February was a great success with many members turning up to help. It made a potentially large job into a very quick one. Thank you so much to all those who attended.

With the Autumn/winter season approaching, it is time to sow plants for the colder months. The seed bank is now well stocked with brassicas; cabbage, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, bok choy and tatsoi. There are also snow peas, sugarsnap peas and greenfeast peas.

New this month:

Phacelia A

hardy and easy-to-grow with fragrant, lavender-blue flowers with delicate, fern-like foliage. It has many uses in the organic garden; as an



insectary plant it will improve biological control by attracting hoverflies that control aphids; it smothers weeds and the extensive root system will improve the soil structure; the flowers are excellent bee forage. It is also a good cut flower and has a long vase-life with strong stems. Sow spring in temperate areas; autumn and early winter in subtropical areas. It is unlikely to germinate well in tropical areas.

Cabbage 'One kilo slow bolt'

A compact, 1-1.5kg, large, barrel-shaped cabbage 24 cm tall. The dark green, tightly packed, outer leaves surround the attractive yellow interior that is crisp and has a sweet flavour. Days to harvest: 50-55.



Kale 'Blue Curled Scotch'

Has finely curled, very decorative, blue-green leaves on a compact plant. It is extremely hardy, slow to bolt in spring and tolerant of both hot and cold weather. Grow it as a winter vegetable or as an ingredient in salad mixes. As a microgreen it has blue-green fringed leaves. It has a peppery cabbage flavour and is very nutritious; a source of folate, vitamin K, iron, iodine, calcium and vitamin.



Clucker Tucker™ is a hardy mix of all-important greens to keep your chooks healthy. Includes barrel medic, bok choy, buckwheat, forage chicory, clover, cocksfoot, linseed, lucerne, millet, forage plantain, silverbeet, sub-clover and sunflower. Most have vigorous root systems that will quickly regrow leaves that are

cut or eaten. Clucker Tucker™ is a blend of annual and perennial plants, many of which will self-sow. In a forage area, seed can be broadcast; the chooks will need to be kept off the area for the plants to establish. After they have grazed it down, the chooks should be taken off to allow it to reshoot. Where space is limited, grow it in seedling trays and then place in the chook run or bird cage once grown. In a pasture, used as a 'herbal ley'* it is a healthy addition for grazing animals. In temperate areas sow March -



May or August - October. In subtropical areas sow August - September or May - July. In tropical areas sow April - August. Broadcast seed 2 - 3 g/m² in a forage area. In a seedling tray use 1 - 2g per seedling tray. Angela Stafford

* **ley** - a field covered with grass or herbage and suitable for grazing by livestock

ROGI Seedbank

Root Vegetables	Fruiting Plants	Greens/Herbs	Flowers
Beetroot 'Chioggia' Beetroot 'Detroit' Carrot 'Nantes' Carrot 'Paris Market' Carrot 'Purple Dragon' Carrot 'Red Kuroda' Celeriac 'Caesar Organic' Florence Fennel Jicama Gennaro's own Onion 'Lockyer Gold' Radish 'Cherry Belle' Radish 'Daikon' Radish 'Purple Plum'	Bean Coastal Jack Bush bean Borlotti Red Rooster Bean Borlotti Gennaro's Own Bush Bean Provider Bean Bush Roc d'Or Bean 'Lablab' Climbing Bean, Lima— Madagascar Gennaro's Own Bean Snake Red Gennaro's own Capsicum, Perennial Capsicum, Bell colour mix Chilli, Birds Eye Chilli, Cayenne Cucumber 'Lebanese' Cucumber 'Lemon' Edamame (Soy beans) Eggplant 'mini-violet ruby' Eggplant 'Little Finger' Honeydew Melon Loofah Pea Sugarsnap 'Cascadia' Pea 'Greenfeast' Snowpea 'Oregon' Pea Pigeon, Gennaro's own Pea Sweet 'Mammoth Mix' Squash, 'Golden scallopini' Squash 'Green Hubbard' Sweet Corn 'Bicolour' Sweet Corn 'Legacy' Tomato 'Red Truss' Tomato 'Thai Pink' Tomato 'Grosse Lisse' Tomato 'Cherry Yellow Pear' Tomato 'Green Zebra' Tomato 'Oxheart Red' Tomato 'Tropic' Watermelon, 'Sugar baby' Zucchini 'Romanesco'	Amaranth, Grain Amaranth, Red Calaloo Basil, Dark Opal ... Italian large leaf ... Lime ... Thai Broccoli 'Green Sprouting Calabrese' Broccoli 'Romanesco' Cabbage - 'Cabeza Red'; 'Golden Acre'; 'Red Express'; 'One-Kilo Slow-Bolt'; Pak Choi; Chokito; Bok Choi Celery 'Tall Utah' Chervil (French parsley) Chicory Clucker Tucker for chooks Coriander Dill Garlic chives Kale, Tuscan Black; Blue- Curled Kangkong (Water Spinach) Kohlrabi 'Purple Vienna' Leek 'Giant Carentan' Leek, Varna Lettuce 'Great Lakes' Lettuce 'Lollo Rossa' Lettuce 'Marvel 4 Seasons' Lettuce, OrganicMix Lettuce 'Freckles' Mizuna Mustard Greens 'Red Giant' Mustard 'Osaka Purple' Mustard 'Ruby Streaks' Onion chives Parsley, Italian, Gennaro's own Parsley, Triple Curl Purslane, Jill's Own Rocket Silverbeet 'Rainbow Chard' Silverbeet 'Ruby Chard' Spinach, Egyptian, Gennaro's Own Spinach European Bloomsdale Tatsoi	Borage Chia Good Bug Mix Marigold 'sparky' Marigold 'Fiesta' Nasturtium 'Jewel Mix' Phacelia Queen Anne's Lace Sunflower 'Sunbird'
<p>This is an up-to-date list of the seeds in the ROGI Seedbank.</p> <p>They are listed in the same categories and colours as in the box.</p> <p>If you have suggestions for additions to our seed bank, contact Angela (see back page).</p> <p>Storing your seeds. Store seed in a sealed container in fridge or cool place—not a garden shed or garage that can reach over 40° in summer. They will die. In paper bags, they are open to the air and can take up moisture and lose viability, so pop the envelopes into glass jars or sealed plastic containers.</p>			

Seed Planting Guide

Compiled with information from Gennaro De Rosa and Annette McFarlane

March

Basil
 Bean lab lab
 Bean Madagascar
 Bean - French
 Beetroot
 Capsicum/Chilli
 Carrot
 Cauliflower
 Cucumber
 Eggplant
 Leek
 Lettuce
 Pigeon pea
 Potatoes
 Pumpkin
 Radish
 Silver beet
 Snake bean
 Spring onion
 Spinach (Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal)
 Sweet potato
 Sweet corn
 Tomato

April

Artichoke; Jerusalem artichoke
 Asparagus
 Bean: Lablab, Madagascar, French
 Beetroot
 Broccoli
 Brussels sprouts
 Cabbage
 Capsicum/Chilli
 Cauliflower
 Carrot
 Celery
 Chicory
 Endive
 Florence fennel
 Kohlrabi
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Onions/garlic
 Potatoes
 Radish
 Silver beet
 Spinach: (Brazilian, Egyptian, Warrigal, Kangkong)
 Sweet potato
 Tomato
 Yacon

Keep in mind that this is only a guide. Be aware that micro-climates and weather conditions may mean that certain seeds may be sown before or after the recommended times.

The ROGI Seedbank is available at ROGI meetings and at Garden Visits.

\$1 per packet for members. \$2 for non-members.

Gardening ideas from Crystal Castle *By Angela Stafford*

If you have ever visited the Crystal Castle at Mullumbimby you will understand why I would consider this to be one of the most beautiful gardens within reach of our area.

Set on a mountain, the grounds overlook a lush green valley and provide such a variety of plants and crystals in what I could only describe as artistic gardening.

Every time I visit the Crystal Castle, I come away thinking I must get into growing bamboo. Not only is it used for its beauty but also for its practical use in the vegetable garden.

I felt compelled to share some of the functional ideas put to use in the Crystal Castle vegetable garden.



Clockwise from top: Bamboo trellises used throughout; Potatoes in a wire circle; Tomatoes growing up bamboo frames; Gorgeous bamboo behind the central Buddha



Gardening ideas—continued



L-R: Cucumbers planted on the outside and lettuce on the inside, soon to benefit from the shade.

Not only is this tomato trellis functional, it's also beautiful.

Cherry tomatoes grow up the trellises and hang overhead – within easy reach. Was really hard not to pick them!

Moveable shade frames above the more delicate greens.

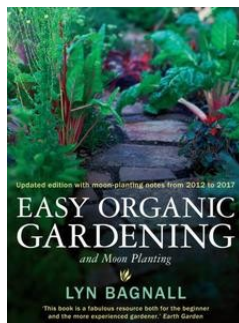
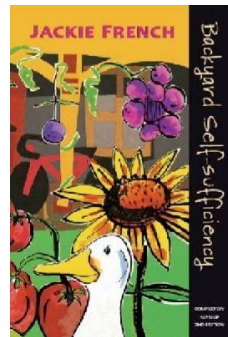
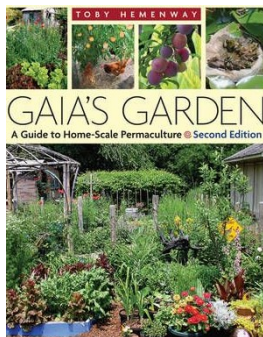


ROGI Library News

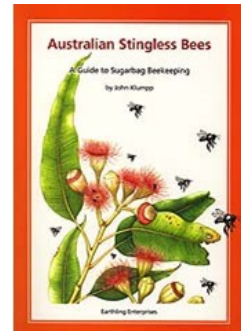
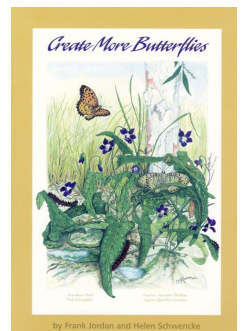
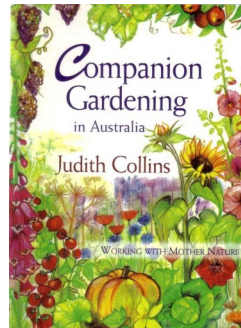
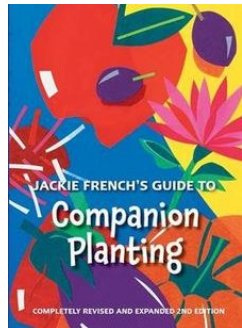
Hello to all our members.

We hope you all survived the tropical lows we had in February and your gardens did not get washed away. Everything will grow at a fast rate now. Add some organic fertilizer and rock dust, potash, dolomite and minerals to replenish what was washed away. We are coming up to a great growing season, so get your seeds and some general gardening books on growing these cool-season vegetables.

Here are some books I recommend:



Check out these books for good information on introducing on keeping pollinators in your garden.



For provocative reading try **Silent Spring** by Rachel Carson. Written in 1962, it is in the top 25 science books of all time. After noticed birds dying in the forests, she was responsible for helping ban the use of DDT through her work. In her words – 'The world of systematic insecticides is a weird world, surpassing the imaginings of the Brothers Grimm. ...It is a world where the enchanted forest of

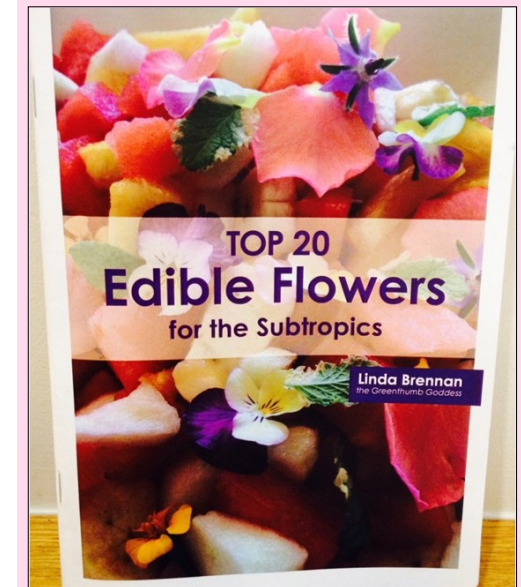
fairytale has become the poisonous forest in which an insect chews a leaf or sucks the sap of plant and is doomed. It is a world where a flea bites a dog and dies ... where a bee may carry poison nectar back to its hive'. Now in 2015 there are thousands more chemicals poisoning this world. See my article *Saving the Bees* on page 13.

I'd like to thank the following people who've kindly donated to the library:-

Marion and Frank (from our shop) - DVD **Origins: Our Roots, Our Planet, Our Future** by Well Org. A group of people, experts in their fields of ecology, food, etc, journey to the wilds in Africa with few belongings to get in touch with their real selves - being aware of nature and perils. They talk about the proliferation of chemicals in the world today, fossil fuels, plastics, pollution, foods we eat, our gut health etc. It makes you wonder when we became so selfish and self-involved that we forgot our duty as caretakers of this great earth for generations to come. I recommend you borrow this DVD.

New Book

New to the library is the hot-off-the-press book on edible flowers by ROGI member Linda Brennan.



Jan Acton - DVD **Waterwise Gardening** by Gardening Australia. It has everything you need to know to save water in your garden, and includes tours of water wise gardens, drought proofing your garden and drought-tolerant plants.

Karen Dekker brought in a box of books. We kept some for the library and placed the others on the Swap-and-Share table.

See you at the library for our next meeting.

Mandy and Joh



We want your used Strawberry Punnets

We need lots of **250gm cube-shaped strawberry/cherry tomato punnets** for use at our public events.

One of ROGI's main activities is making a seed-sowing pot out of newspaper. After making this pot visitors sow a seed into it and then carry it home in a strawberry punnet for safe-keeping.

At Redlands Good Gardening Expo and Indigi Day Out each year, we use thousands of them, so please bring them along to every meeting and we'll store them until they're needed.



Angela shows the replenished stock in the ROGI Seed Bank. It took only 20 minutes for the twenty or so members to finish the job.

Many hands make light work.

Then everyone enjoyed a tasty and wholesome afternoon tea before learning about the history of and plans for Linda's garden.



Bell pepper or Bishop's Crown
a variety of the chilli species
Capsicum baccatum
var. *pendulum*
They are mild and sweet with the
body having just a little heat.
Photo: Jenny Sando

Fruit bounty at
Jan's Serenity
Garden.
Red and white
dragon fruit,
mangos and
passionfruit.
Yum!



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

This is how it works:

- Pick up a My IGA Card next time you are in the store
- Register online
- Tick ROGI as the community group you wish to support

Then, every time you shop in the store and use your card, not only do you receive discounts, you are also helping to raise funds for ROGI.

ROGI uses its funds to help provide more services to members such as new library books, discounted gardening products, paid expert speakers, and free or low-cost field trips and workshops



Request for Articles

What can you share? It could be to do with:

- your garden
- a photo
- an unusual plant
- a request
- Garden/nutrition info
- a recipe
- a current affair of relevance to ROGI members.....

**Send your articles to
keep the
newsletter
Interesting and
relevant
info@rogi.com.au**

Newsletter Deadlines

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor by 24 March for the April edition.

Plant Clinic

Puzzled by a pest?

Not sure if your plant is a weed or a 'goodie'?

Does it have a deficiency or is it a disease?

That's what **Plant Clinic** is about.

Bring along your plant, fruit, leaf, root (as many parts of plant as you can) in a sealed plastic bag (if it's a diseased plant) and fill in the form.

Place the plant parts together with the form on **Plant Clinic** table well before the start of the meeting.

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

Also, see Critter of the Month on p15



ROGI Shop Products

PRODUCTS Dry	3Kg	1Kg	500g	100g	Each
Soil Conditioners					
Blood & Bone	9.50	4.50	3.00		
DE* Fine Food Grade	20.50	8.00	4.50		
DE* Pet & Garden	16.00	7.00	4.00		
DE* Pet & Garden 20kg					83.00
Dolomite	5.50	3.00	2.00		
Eco88	8.50	4.00	2.50		
Gypsum	5.50	3.00	2.00		
Humic Acid				3.50	
Organic Booster	6.50	3.50	2.50		
Organic Xtra	6.00	3.50	2.00		
Organic Xtra 25kg Bag					18.50
Organic Xtra 16kg Bag					14.00
Organic Xtra 5kg Bag					7.00
Rock Dust # 1 25kg Bag					29.50
Rock Dust # One Mix	7.50	3.50	2.50		
Rock Dust BCM	6.50	3.00	2.00		
Sea Mungus			3.00		
Turf Master	5.50	3.50	2.00		
Tools & Equipment					
Soil PH Test Kit					15.00
Banana Bags					3.50
Fruit Fly Excl Bag Set 4					5.00
Paper Pot Maker					28.00

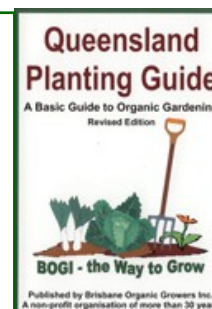
*DE is Diatomaceous Earth—can kill insects by desiccation.

For any pricing or technical advice, or if you have a suggestion, please refer to Frank on 3390 2277

PRODUCT Wet	5 Lr	1 Lr	500ml	150ml	100ml
Soil Conditioners					
Eco-Aminogro		\$18	\$10		
Ecofish	\$32				
Eco-Naturalure				\$15	
Eco-Neem					\$16
Eco-oil		\$22	\$16		
Fish & Kelp solution		\$13			
Potasium Silicate					\$3
Pest & Weed Control					
Burn Off		\$9			
Eco-Pest Oil			\$10		
Naturassoap			\$17		
Pyrethrum Spray					\$20
Wild May for fruit fly					\$2
Aloe Vera					
Aloe Vera Raw Material	\$33.50	\$9.50			
Aloe Vera Raw Bio Vertilizer	\$37	\$10			

Only ROGI members may purchase items from the ROGI Shop. So wear your membership card at every ROGI meeting.

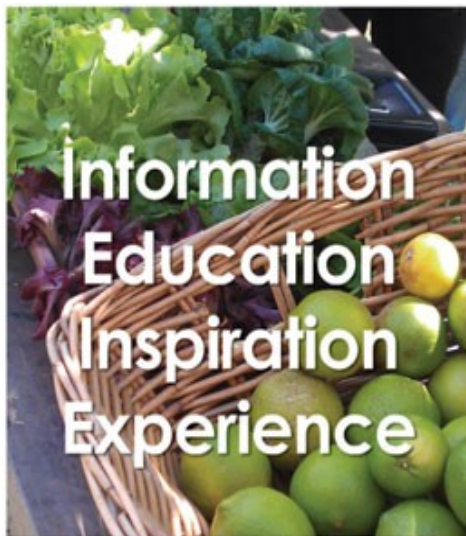
We have more copies of *Queensland Planting Guide* by Brisbane Organic Growers. These are \$7.00 for ROGI members. If you are a new gardener you will find this book a great help. It is also a handy reminder and reference for experienced gardeners.



Members' Sales Table

Adjacent to the ROGI Shop, this is where you as a member can place items you have produced that are surplus to your requirements and that **you wish to sell** to other members eg eggs, honey, jam, seedlings, lemons, avocados – things that have cost you money (& time & effort) to produce.

See Frank, Marion, Linda or Janet at the ROGI Shop.



info@rogi.com.au

www.rogi.com.au

PO Box 1257
Cleveland 4163

[www.facebook.com/
groups/
redland.organic.growers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers)

EXECUTIVE TEAM

President	Jill Nixon 0418 717 735 president@rogi.com.au
Treasurer	Lindsay Peel group@rogi.com.au
Vice President	Terry Sullavan group@rogi.com.au
Secretary	Margaret Sear secretary@rogi.com.au
Membership	Jenny Sando membership@rogi.com.au

TECHNICAL TEAM

Seed bank	Angela Stafford seeds@rogi.com.au
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COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

PR & Marketing	Kathy Petrik 3206 1267 info@rogi.com.au
Club Events	Toni Bowler 0402 323 704 events@rogi.com.au
Newsletter	Position vacant info@rogi.com.au

MEMBER SERVICES TEAM

Shop	Frank Huysing 3390 2277 group@rogi.com.au
Library	Mandy Harrison 3824 3222 library@rogi.com.au
Supper	Yolanda Sampson group@rogi.com.au

The views expressed
in ROGI NEWS are
those of the editors
and submitters, not
necessarily those of
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Join Us

See page 3 for current
membership fees



Working with stingless native
bees—no protective gear is
needed.

