

# ROGI News

Doors open at 6.15 for members so you can visit the library, shop or seed bank or just have a chat before our meeting at 7pm followed by our speaker.

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

## **Admission**

**Members:** Gold coin

**Visitors:** \$5

**Please bring plate of food -**  
**savoury/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 ...**

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I thought you might like to see my beautiful pineapple plant.

It's from a pineapple top that I cut off and planted approximately two years ago.

Here is the fruit starting to show—a reward for waiting this long.

Toni S

# Jill's Jottings

Hello organic gardeners,

How are you coping with this hot windy weather and no rain?

Our rain gauge actually has cobwebs in it! Some areas around Brisbane recorded the lowest October rainfall on record.

However, we're not going to allow that to stop us from gardening. We just have to use the available water wisely and well.

At our place, where the tanks went dry weeks ago, we've been bucketing the bathwater onto the fruit trees, and washing our hands over a bucket at the sink and pouring that around plants.

Every little bit helps – and the exercise carrying around all those buckets can't hurt either.



Last month's speaker, Steve from Nutri-Tech, hit a nerve with many people.

What he spoke about endorsed what we at

ROGI are all about – growing our own food on good soil to ensure optimal nutritional intake.

Many years ago when I used to teach nutrition, I would write up slogans for the classes to ponder, such as: 'eat only food that can go off – and eat it before it does' – that takes care of processed foods; 'eat food as close as possible to the way Nature made it, and where Nature made it' – that takes care of GMO and food miles; 'eat thirty different foods every day' – that takes care of variety and balance, and the SAD – Standard American (and Australian) Diet.

Think about that – the Standard Australian Diet is SAD.

Many people eat a disproportionate amount of wheat and dairy – wheat cereal and milk plus toast for breakfast, biscuits for morning tea, sandwiches (often with cheese) for lunch, cake for afternoon tea, and so on.

To consume 30 different types of foods a day, only one serving of wheat and one of dairy would count, leaving you to find 28 other foods. It sounds difficult.

However, when you try it you will find that you are eating more salads with a huge variety of fresh greens and raw vegetables.

If you want to eat grains or grain-like food, you will try rice, barley, millet and teff, oats, corn, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, rye and sorghum.

You will flavour your meals with more spices and herbs (even a dash of cinnamon counts as one food).

Gradually you will start feeling better and will know how to use all those unusual things you have growing in your garden as a result of giveaways at ROGI – jicama; yacon; Brazilian, Egyptian, Malabar and Ceylon spinach; Thai

basil; kangkong; okra; laksa leaf; galangal; pigeon peas; stevia; aibika, purslane and more. So start counting – aim for 30.

Field trips have been a part of ROGI since the beginning.

Plans are afoot to take a big leap and go on a botanical discovery trip to Borneo in 2016 if there is enough interest.

We have a member who lives in Sabah most of the year and a few of us have already visited there and can attest to its attributes.

Borneo is a food-grower's paradise and we're sure you would enjoy the experience of seeing it firsthand.

We want to know if you're interested, so talk to a committee member about it or get in touch with me to put your name down on the 'interested' list.

Not long until our final meeting of the year in December.

After the success of the gardening trivia quiz fun song-and-dance party last year, we will have another this year.

It will be like the usual trivia nights, except that all the questions will be about gardening, so if you're a new member make sure you sit at a table with some older members.

There will be prizes, and you will learn a lot about gardening as a by-product of the evening.

Bring a plate of finger food to share, and ROGI will provide punch and tea and coffee.

Also bring along a nice plant to swap with another member as a Christmas gift.

*In the meantime,*

*happy gardening*

*Jill*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>November:</b>	Wed 12	ROGI meeting
	W/E 22 & 23	Open Garden at Birkdale—see p5
<b>December:</b>	Sun 7	Garden Visit – Danny Bonney—see p5
	Wed 10	ROGI Meeting fun night see p2

**Date claimer:** Redland Good Gardening Expo – Saturday 11 April 2015

## 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 (eg. J.O. Blow) are essential to identify who has paid. This is our only way of knowing it's YOU. Please print it out and bring it and a membership application form to the next meeting. Email [group@rogi.com.au](mailto:group@rogi.com.au) for application form.

You can get in early and pay your 2015 fees at the November or December meeting, or pay online. This will reduce the queues in February. Fees for existing members are in the pink column.

Fees	New member/s joining in...			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 2014 to Dec 2015
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

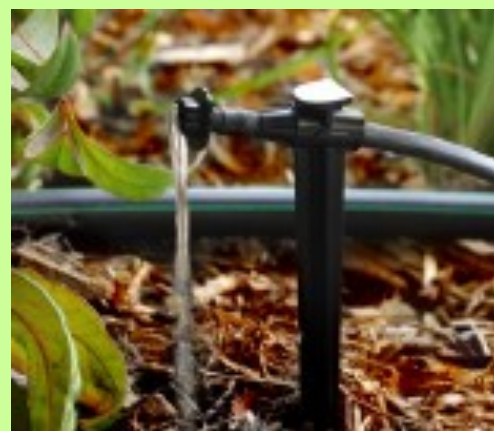
**Admission to ROGI meetings:**  
**Visitors: \$5    Members: Gold coin donation**

## 12 November Guest Speakers

Two ROGI members who are experts in their field will be our speakers

### Pipes, Pumps and Plants:

'How to get the water to where it needs to be in your garden'. Lindsay Peel has 33 years experience in irrigation. If you want to work out how to move water through pipes to your plants, then Lindsay is your man. Come along and pick his brains.



### Edible Flowers:

Linda Brennan, horticulturalist from Ecobotanica, will entice us to 'eat with our eyes' as she gives us a 'taster' on growing edible flowers. Linda's flowers appear on the menu at some of Brisbane's most exclusive restaurants and she'll share some tips to grow your own.





# Biochar by Keith Laker

I first became aware of biochar through the book *The Biochar Revolution* advertised in the Diggers' Club web-site whilst browsing for vegetable seeds to buy.

<http://biocharproject.org/tutorial/what-is-bio-char/>

<http://www.biochar-international.org/biochar>

Biochar is charcoal created by burning biomass (wood, bushcuttings, sugar cane waste etc) at high temperatures with limited oxygen. It is rich in carbon and locks carbon into the soil. Biochar is found in soils around the world as a result of vegetation fires and historic soil management practices. Intensive study of biochar-rich dark earths in the Amazon (terra preta), has led to a wider appreciation of biochar's unique properties as a soil enhancer.

The benefits of adding biochar to soil are listed in *The Biochar Revolution* as follows:

- increases the water holding capacity of the soil
- increases crop production
- increases soil carbon levels
- increases soil pH
- decreases aluminium toxicity
- positively changes the microbiology of the soil
- decreases soil emissions of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane
- improves soil conditions for earthworm populations
- improves efficiency of fertiliser

You can make your own biochar using a home made TLUD (Top Lit Up Draught stove). I made mine from a design in the book and from watching YouTube videos of other people's efforts. This YouTube link shows a stove made from materials very similar to my own.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aYm0RYpgKA>

or, if you want to get really ambitious, look at



[http://www.biochar-international.org/sites/default/files/backyard\\_biochar\\_kiln\\_instructions.pdf](http://www.biochar-international.org/sites/default/files/backyard_biochar_kiln_instructions.pdf)

TLUD stoves burn waste wood from the top down rather than the bottom up. At the end of the burn process the wood is carbonized but retains its shape.

My TLUD stove is made from a stainless steel bucket, an upturned stainless steel bowl, a ducting connector and a short length of galvanized pipe for the flue.



Holes have been drilled under the bucket to let in limited air when the stove is first lit. The main air source is from the holes drilled around the rim of the upturned bowl. During the burn process the bucket is fractionally raised off the ground by sitting it on three long nails so a little air can enter through the holes in the bottom.

To light the fire from the top I spread a small amount of citronella lamp oil on the top layer of material and then drop a lit piece of paper, again dipped in lamp oil, down the flue. The fire burns brightly with virtually no smoke. TLUD stoves can be used as cookers and for heating water in many developing countries.

The skill, gained from trial and error, is in knowing when the wood has burned enough to carbonise but not too much so it turns to ash. I use a folded bit of paper inserted under the stove next to the nails. When it starts to scorch I know the heat has reached the bottom of the bucket and the burn process has to be stopped.

The three nails elevating the base of the bucket are removed to stop air coming in from underneath. The



flue and bowl are removed and the fire rapidly begins to die down. I smother the fire using the heavy lid of my cast iron Cheminea outdoor fireplace which fits the top of the bucket and leave it overnight to cool. You can also douse the fire with water to end the burn process.

The result is carbonised wood ready for inoculation. The charcoal has a very fine and porous structure which powerfully attracts and holds beneficial soil microbes and water. This can mean that, when initially applied, it can draw in microbes from the soil. For this reason many biochar makers believe it is better to inoculate the biochar with nutrients such as compost tea, worm juice, Seasol and other organic fertilizers and let it brew for about three weeks before adding to the soil. The recommendation is four parts compost to one part biochar. My compost is primarily grass cuttings and green waste made in a tumbler. I also add worm juice and castings and Nutri-tech Instant Humus. Everyone develops their own recipe. The mixture is then left to charge for three weeks before use.

Results? I've done some simple experiments where I planted identical seedlings, some with biochar some without. Below is an example of two pots of tomatoes, same species, planted at the same time. The biochar ones are on the left. (*note the possum guards*) In fact we have never had better tomatoes than we had this year, all either planted with inoculated biochar or have had biochar added later. We planted heirloom Periforme Abruzzese and Tigerellas. They have fruited phenomenally. Likewise our broccoli, cauliflower, beans and silverbeet.



## ROGI Garden Visits

These visits to members' gardens, which have been going since August last year, have become as valuable as the regular ROGI meetings. In an informal setting, members discuss garden problems and solutions, share successes, exchange plants and ideas, buy seeds from the seed bank, and go home inspired.

**Danny Bonney** will host the next visit on **Sunday 7 December** where we'll see the various modification he's had done to cater for his disabilities.

In **February** we'll visit **Linda Brennan's** certified organic showplace garden.

Whose garden will we visit in March, April and May?

Talk to Bernadine (who is doing Toni's job while she's on holidays) or any committee member about putting your name down.

## OPEN GARDEN

***Ian and Judy Wintle invite you to their 'Giving Garden'***

Winner of Gardening Australia's Golden Trowel

**Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd Nov 2014**  
(9:00am to 4:30pm)

Ian and Judy Wintle's visitor friendly garden is a one acre property which has become one of South East Queensland's best known sub-tropical gardens. Why not relax and spend a few hours in this wonderful garden. Welcome to the world of rare, bizarre and beautiful botanicals, this is the garden of avid plant collectors and there are thousands of unusual and interesting plants to be viewed while walking the long meandering garden pathways to shade houses full of plants.

Must sees include collections of amorphophallus, beehive gingers, costus and a fabulous collection of bromeliads. Sustainable and smart garden practices abound in this garden and inspires and motivates all who visit. Ian and Judy will be supporting the 'Lions Club' to raise money for disabled children.

### Refreshments

Lions Club will be providing refreshments all day. Sit back under our back patio and enjoy a refreshing 'cuppa', home-made delicacies or a sausage sizzle, and sit back and enjoy the views.

### Plant Sale

As usual, Judy has prepared a large variety of rare and beautiful plants that will be available for sale at very reasonable prices. Get in quick to get a bargain as the plant sale is very popular.

### On the Web

Garden Blog: [www.ianjudy.blogspot.com](http://www.ianjudy.blogspot.com)  
Product Reviews Blog: [gardenproductreviews.com](http://gardenproductreviews.com)

**Address: 5 Carlton Court, Birkdale - Ph: (07) 3207 4683**



# Cape Gooseberry & Three-Striped Potato Beetle

## Terry's talk in October

Last year I went through the process required to import seeds to Australia. I thought this fruit, uchuva, was unique to Colombia. After I imported and successfully germinated them, I researched and realised they were Cape gooseberries!

It goes by golden berry, Inca berry, Aztec berry, Peruvian cherry to name a few. The scientific name is *Physalis peruviana* or *P. edulis*—bladder of Peru or edible bladder. It is a Solanaceae, a nightshade, which includes tomato, potato, chilli, capsicum, wild tobacco and others. Cape gooseberry got its name being introduced to Australia from Cape of Good Hope circa 1810, but native to South America. It's not a true gooseberry, but is a true berry.

It is a straggly bush to 1m tall and wide. It produces golden yellow fruit surrounded by a papery lantern-shaped cover - a calyx, which contains a spectacular network of veins which can be revealed if you leave one in a worm farm. It's very hardy and will grow in poor soils. Leaves and flowers are considered poisonous (common amongst Solanaceae).



It produces a high yield, is rapid cropping and survives and fruits through the year. It can be weedy as each fruit has hundreds of seeds and can be spread by birds and likely possums.

The fruit is about the size of a marble with a delicious, sweet, tangy flavour. Its very more-ish - I'm always disappointed to realise I've eaten the last ripe one! They have thousands of uses - can be used in jams, chutneys, deserts, pies, also with meats. Unripe fruit may be poisonous, also not uncommon in this family. Nutritionally, it's high in beta carotene (vit A), B vitamins including B12, C, potassium, iron, calcium and phosphorous.

As you've probably realised, Cape gooseberry is very easy to grow. It likes full sun and tolerates a wide variety of soils, pH, as long as it's well drained. Too much fertiliser can result in excessive leaf and no fruit. It does like regular watering or fruits split after dry periods as tomatoes do.

### Pests and Diseases

Well, you might be thinking this plant sounds too good to be true. And you'd be right! Cape gooseberry is susceptible to three striped potato weevil. It does also suffer from fungal problems in damp conditions or with excessive watering.

## Three-Striped Potato Beetle

The scourge of my cape gooseberries! This beetle chews the leaves of my plants during the larval stage. I've not noticed it, but research indicates it will attack other Solanaceae plants. It appears there are several different, but closely related, species. They appear to breed up very quickly: I've been squashing all visible pests with my fingers regularly, and I'm still falling behind. I've also tried wormwood

tea, but haven't been consistent enough. The grubs seem to do the most damage, chewing the membrane from the leaves. They have the most disgusting behaviour: as well as weakening one of my favourite fruits, they collect and carry their poop on their backs!

### Control

A little Googling reveals the usual predators prey on this nasty little pest - green lacewings, predatory stink bugs, the spined soldier bug and the tachnid fly - so planting things that will attract these species makes sense. Neem is mentioned regularly, but I haven't tried it yet. I've also noticed a large number of small spiders on the plant which have been present since I first noticed the infestation. I haven't noticed any webs though. I think they are also preying on the beetles.

You've probably noticed that I'm a bit slack with pest control in my garden. I share a great faith with many other organic growers in Nature's ability to fill a void. I only spray when something is clearly out of control, and seldom enough to decimate the entire population. I often lose a crop to pests for a year or two. Most things, I find, will only thrive in excess until a predator moves in. It is usually controlled well enough after that.



Three-striped potato beetles ensuring the species continues!



# Garden Visit: Rhonda's Garden

Nearly 20 ROGI members packed into Rhonda Binns' Cleveland 840m<sup>2</sup> garden on a warm Sunday afternoon, eager to learn the tips and tricks of one of the organisation's founding members.

Over the 12 years Rhonda and her husband, Peter, have called this property home, they've adapted their growing practices to the challenges that competitive northern-neighbour gum trees have brought.

A good deal of the growing surfaces in the garden are raised beds or sizable pots to allow sufficient water and nutrients to find their way to the impressive variety of ornamentals and edibles.

With a base of typical local red clay soil, the garden beds are continually topped up with any organic matter available, such as horse and chicken manure and home-grown compost.

The garden is very inviting and full of eye-catching coloured annuals. It is well-loved and cared for and, for those of us with messy gardens, something to aspire to.

Rhonda also showed us a newly-established butterfly garden with buddleia bushes, pentas and milk weed to bring beneficials into the garden.

Other fruit and vegetables cultivated in the garden are: three types of lemons, limes, mandarin, cumquat, asparagus, zucchini, pumpkin, beans, strawberries, and chillies. Sprinkled in between are some herbs with medicinal values: herb Robert and radium weed.

The health of the garden was evident and even a bit of powdery mildew on the cucumbers was being devoured by beneficial ladybugs.

Rhonda also benefited from other ROGI experts who offered advice about controlling stinkbugs (use a handheld vacuum cleaner) and collar rot on a citrus tree (paint a mancozeb paste on the tree trunk)

Garden visits tend to give you an appetite and members shared a tasty afternoon tea. It's a great way to get to know like minded individuals - and particularly for new members to get involved and add to their gardening knowledge.

A big thank you to Rhonda for her hospitality and sharing her beautiful garden and knowledge with ROGI members.

Kathy P





# Garden Visit: The Wynn Family Garden

A few months ago we moved into our new home and are slowly getting settled. As a horticulturalist and garden designer I am never short of ideas for others' gardens but, as always, narrowing those down for yourself can be difficult. Having everyone over for a garden visit was a great way to see my garden through others' eyes and get some perspective.

The house is over 30 years old and the garden isn't much to speak of but it does have some well established fruit trees. Orange, lemonade, lime, cumquat, kaffir lime, Macadamia, mango, guava, lychee and sapote trees are in the front, side and back gardens. Like the house they had been a little neglected and all the citrus have been given a good prune with the sapote earmarked once we get a free weekend. We have plans for more fruit trees in the coming months: a dinner table discussion saw mulberries, wampee and Davidson plums added to the list.

One of our first jobs was the no-dig garden. We picked the spot that wasn't in the way of back yard cricket but still got good sun year long. While it was not quite big enough, I have already set the framework to expand it to double its size and once I get more compost will build it. As part of our crop rotation, not all our veggies and salad greens will go in the no-dig beds all the time. The side garden near the kitchen door gets full sun as it is on the northern side. It will be perfect for an additional veggie patch that will have less neat rows but a more eclectic feel. My husband, Jamie, has already planted his pumpkins and watermelons, one at each end, allowing room for them to spread and ramble during the summer.

My philosophy for our whole garden is to have plants that are edible, native or beneficial. Having had the tropical ornamental garden in our last house, we are keen to have a more productive

garden now we have more space. With the already-established fruit trees and now the veggie patch I have also planted flowers like cosmos, sunflowers, jasmine and marigolds. In the front yard I have low-growing herbs that will mimic a lawn but won't need mowing and keep out weeds.

As time permits I will plant more natives as mid-storey and ground covers. The fruit trees, poinsettia, palms around the pool and the large gum are doing a good job of a canopy but the mid level and ground covers will have flowering natives for colour and interest. We are also planning to take out all the weedy cocos palms around the pool.

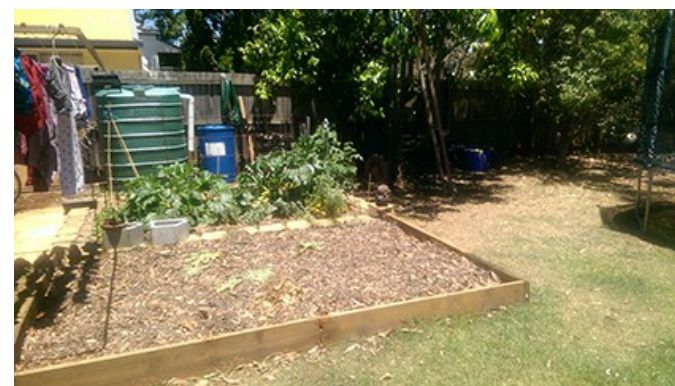
We are lucky to have good Redlands soil. Originally the area was cane farms, the first in Queensland, and after that there was bananas. Unlike some blocks, the land was never cut and levelled when the house was built, so all the good top soil has stayed in place. Digging holes is fairly easy and doesn't need a crowbar which is an improvement on our last yard. When we bought there was a thick layer of sugar cane mulch over all the garden beds. This was put in to spruce the place up for sale which I am pleased about and thankful it wasn't pine bark.

Like all gardens this one will be a labour of love, as will be renovating our kitchen, three bathrooms, five bedrooms—well the whole house really.

We haven't given ourselves a deadline, since a garden is never really finished, but we have told ourselves that we won't do anything major until we have seen all of the seasons and lived here for a while.

For now we are enjoying our new home, the space in the garden and the peace and quiet of our neighbourhood.

Naomi W



From top: Jones the dog and Darcy's insect hotel; making way for the veggie patch extension; seed packing around the dining room 'trestle'.



# MY GARDEN

by Mandy

## ROSELLA (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)

Family: Malvaceae

The photo is of my little rosella bush. I started this from a seed purchased at the ROGI seedbank around mid September.

Last year I started my seeds in mid December & they worked well but it was a long warm autumn, so I would say that from September to December are the ideal seed-raising times. Five to six bushes will give you heaps of red calyx for tea, jam, cordial etc.

They like a rich (well-manured) friable soil and a long warm growing season.

Shrubs grow up to a metre wide and up to 2 metres high. As the shrub is growing pinch out growing tips. It is advisable to cut off the early crop which is usually smaller and this encourages a bigger crop.

Cut the red calyx off with scissors.

Use the early crop for infusing as a

Right: Rosella calyx



tea. Separate the calyx from the green berry enclosed and dry the calyx on a wire rack for a couple of days. When dry, store in dark cupboard.

Save the green seed pods and dry them as well till they split and release the seed that you can save for next years crop. The tea is delicious especially with lemon verbena or lemon grass.

You will get your crop close to 6 months after planting.

The flowers are edible and can be used as a garnish although the flowers are very short lived.

The leaves are edible too and can be used as a spinach.

In some parts of the world the stems are used to produce a jute-like fibre called burlap which makes a very strong cloth.

The red calyx is rich in vitamin C and anthocyanins.

As a medicine, it is used as a laxative, a diuretic and to treat heart conditions.

### To make a delicious rosella jam:

- Strip red calyx petals and save.
- Keep the green berries and place in a saucepan with juice from 2 lemons and water to just cover the berries.
- Bring to the boil and turn down and simmer for one hour.
- Cool, then strain and keep the liquid and discard the berries.
- Add the red petals to the liquid and cook till soft and mushy.
- Weigh the mixture and add the same quantity of sugar.
- Stir until the sugar is dissolved and boil rapidly for 15 minutes.
- Pour into warm sterilised jars. Cool, seal and enjoy.

# Healthy Soil, Hardy People, Happy Planet

By Steve Capeness  
from Nutri-Tech

Next month we'll bring you the final instalment, covering:

How Hardy Are Our People?  
Nutrient Loss in Our Food  
It Matters How We Grow Our Food!  
It Matters How We Transport Our Food  
It Matters How We Cook  
An Exercise in Nutrient Removal  
Chemical Residues Reduce Resilience  
The Contamination Begins Before Birth  
The Solution – Grow Your Own.

Steve covered a lot of ground (pardon the pun!) in his presentation at the October ROGI meeting.

We will bring you a summary of his talk in two parts in this and then in December's newsletter.

We are what we eat, and what we eat comes from the soil. Therefore, the healthier the soil, the harder the people, the lower the pollution and the happier the planet.

Healthy soil can breathe freely which requires mineral balance, microbial support and human intervention.

'Organic by neglect' won't solve the problems – it's more of a hindrance. Humankind may have acted like a disease on the planet until now, but we are uniquely gifted with the intelligence, passion and purpose to turn things around.

- *A well-managed home garden is the ultimate wellness tool.*

## Elements of a Soil Health Program

1. Balance minerals and nutrition
2. Build organic carbon (decomposition of organic matter)
3. Boost soil biology

## Seven Secrets of Soil Health

1. Soil should contain at least 5% humus. Compost, green manure crops and humates help do this.
2. Soil requires mineral balance: Good calcium to magnesium ratio, phosphorus to zinc ratio of 10:1, full suite of micro-nutrients – from kelp, fish, rock-dust and humates.
3. Soil must have fully functioning soil food-web: A delicious smell (from actinomycetes), visible fungi, operational nodules on legumes, earthworms

4. pH of healthy soil should be 6.4 – this facilitates maximum mineral uptake. See pH scale p13. Plant sap (juice from a leaf crushed in a garlic crusher) should have pH 6.4 also.
5. Molybdenum is critical to allow access to the 74 000 tonnes of free nitrogen hovering above every hectare.
6. Healthy soil has a crumb structure and needs very little digging. Crumb structure means oxygen and moisture can enter easily, roots can develop unimpeded and earthworms and beneficial nematodes can travel freely, crumb comes from biology. Bacteria create mini aggregates that are bound together by fungi to create larger soil particles, facilitate crumb structure with humates from worm 'juice', or Instant Humus or an inoculum such as Micro-Force from Nutri-Tech.
7. A healthy soil must be self-protective (so you can avoid chemical intervention) which involves minerals and microbes, just as it does for humans. Protective microbes can be introduced (via compost tea or a similar brew of beneficial bacteria such as trichoderma) and applied for optimum plant health.

## How Healthy are Our Food-Producing Soils?

- The vast majority of the thousands of soils that we at Nutri-Tech test are deficient in minerals and the micro-organisms that deliver those minerals.
- Every year since humans began the chemical agriculture experiment we have applied more chemicals to our

soils and there has never been a single year where there was a measured reduction in pest and disease pressure. This is the definition of unsustainable!

- There are now hundreds of herbicide-resistant weeds, for example, and there is not a single weed that we ever actually got rid of. Herbicides contaminate our soils and waterways. This is a bankrupt system!
- We mined the soil for decades with a simplistic NPK approach.
- We cultivated and irrigated to promote leaching and erosion.
- We have lost 2/3 of our humus and researchers claim irreparable soil-life damage from chemicals.
- The mineral balance that determines nutrient availability has been largely ignored. Excesses can be worse than deficiencies!
- Salt fertilisers have added insult to injury in terms of soil life destruction.

What do you think is the answer to the question 'how healthy are our food-producing soils?'

What are you going to do about it on your patch of soil?



**More from Steve's talk on p13.**



# Fruit Fly Trap Trials with Gennaro

Six ROGI members conducted trials in late September to see which of the four cheap organic methods was the most effective.

Here is what we did:

- Use small 500 ml clear plastic soft drink containers.
- Drill (about 6 mm), cut or burn (use hot skewer) 3 holes about a quarter way down each bottle.
- Place 50ml of attractant in container, replace lid and hang in tree - as shady as possible. The traps work by attracting flies into the holes. They can't find their way back out and therefore perish, or they drown.
- Place traps around your productive garden boundaries – hang them from trees, posts etc. There are 4 different types, so have a few stations around your property (the number depends on the size of your property) and place 4 different traps in close proximity to each other at each station. This will demonstrate which trap is the 'favourite' of the fruit flies.
- Count & record the number of fruit flies in each trap after 5 days and discard the contents.
- Renew attractant and count & record the number after 5 more days.
- Record the total number trapped for each system.

These are the four 'recipes' we used:

**Wild May** - about 50 ml of the attractant in bottle (available at ROGI shop)

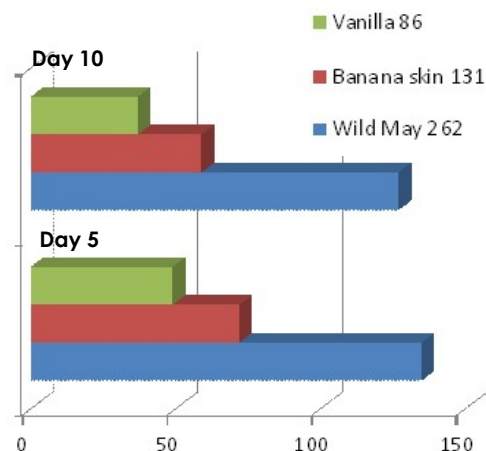
**Urine** - about 50 ml in bottle (free)

**Sugar, flour, banana skin** - 1 tsp sugar, 1 tsp flour, water to make a thin paste and about a quarter of a very ripe banana skin cut into centimetre squares - to get it into the bottle (very cheap).

**Sugar, ammonia, vanilla** – 1 litre water, 150gm sugar, 20ml cloudy ammonia, 3 ml vanilla essence. Mix and then put about 50ml in each bottle. (also very cheap)

**As you can see from the graph, Wild May (blue label) was the runaway winner over a period of two weeks, trapping 262 flies.**

Urine wasn't successful.



## How to attract male fruit flies so they can't fertilise the females who do the damage.

Use either this recipe or Wild May:

### Sugar, flour, banana skin

- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 500 ml water (more water than in original recipe – so they can drown)
- A dash of dishwashing soap to break the surface tension
- Very ripe banana skin (cut into small pieces to get it into the bottle).
- Use about 100ml of this mixture in each bottle, and several small pieces of the banana skin.

### Wild May (Blue Label)

Use about 100 ml per bottle

### Conclusion:

I had a long chat with Annette McFarlane about our fruit fly trials and she agrees that there is 'a lot more' experimenting and learning to do. My suspicion is that each mix attracts a different type of fruit fly at a different life stage (eg: male, female, old, young, this specie, that specie, etc)

In my humble opinion, the easiest and simplest way to keep fruit fly population low is:

- Hygiene! Pick up and dispose of all fruits you see on the ground or rot-

ting on the plant/tree. Do daily or as often as you can. Encourage the neighbours to do the same.

- Plant resistant varieties to discourage females from laying eggs.



Top: female Queensland fruit fly

Bottom: Banana skin fruit fly trap



# Zaytuna Farm Seed-sowing Method

Top photos taken by Ingrid Pullen and reproduced with permission.  
Information taken from <http://permaculturenews.org/2014/07/09/zaytuna-farm-permaculture-plant-nursery-paper-pots>

When ROGI members visited Zaytuna Permaculture Institute, we noticed they use the same potmakers as we do.

Here's why.

As with all permaculture, the plant nursery will embrace the three ethics of permaculture — Earth Care, People Care and the return of system surplus to the first two ethics.

Part of earth and people care is to reduce and eventually replace non-biodegradable plastic pots, trays and bags.

Using fossil-fuel-based plastic pots, trays and bags is the norm in the conventional plant nursery industry. Plants kept in pots for too long decline in health and have poor root development.

The transplanting of plant seedlings from plastic pots into the soil can cause transplant shock and set back growth.

The use of paper pots for vegetable and herb plants overcomes some of these disadvantages.

The seedlings can be grown to a larger size than in plastic pots as the paper pots are directly planted into the soil.

At Zaytuna they are doing trials to find better paper to use.

Note the use of vermiculite as a mulch to reduce the death rate of seedlings.

Right: The nursery—pots are packed tightly together;



Above: Using tool to make pots

Bottom right: Wooden labels, not plastic



Above: Seedling ready to plant, pot & all





## Radium Weed – Mother Nature's way to treat skin cancer?

Who would have guessed a common 'weed' found in almost everyone's backyard is being used by many to combat skin cancer?

*Euphorbia peplus*, or radium weed or petty spurge, has powerful properties long recognised to aid various ailments, but its main claim to fame these days is to treat common skin cancers.

ROGI member George Allen decided he would give it a try when he had a medical diagnosis that a small mole needed to be treated.

He decided to try first the sap of this nondescript plant on the mole to see the result. After a couple of weeks he returned to his delighted doctor, who indicated no further treatment was needed. Watch and wait, with a checkup in three months was decided.

Says George, "I used one small drop of sap on the mole for two days and the area around the mole went red and sensitive. Ten days later it was hard to discern where the mole had been. I took macro pictures to document the changes over the ten days."

The plant's chemical properties have been researched widely and have been incorporated into an effective, but expensive, topical skin cancer cream, by an Australian scientist. One of the active ingredients switches

back on the natural self-destruct that cells have that is turned off by the cancer.

It also is being researched as a possible cure for myeloid leukaemia. "Lab tests had hinted that PEP005 might also be effective against leukaemia cells, so a team at the University of Birmingham in the UK decided to test it against cancer cells taken from eight patients with acute myeloid leukaemia, a particularly aggressive, difficult-to-treat cancer of bone marrow stem cells. It worked in seven of the eight samples..."

[www.newscientist.com/article/mg18624984.500-one-weed-takes-on-two-killer-cancers.html](http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg18624984.500-one-weed-takes-on-two-killer-cancers.html)

Also, look at this: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17264770](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17264770)



Radium Weed

# PLANTING GUIDE:

As supplied by Linda Brennan from the Annette McFarlane website

## November

Asparagus  
Capsicum  
Choko  
Cucumber  
Eggplant  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Pumpkin  
Radish  
Rockmelon  
Rosella  
Squash  
Sweet corn  
Sweet potato  
Tomatoes  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

## December

Asparagus  
Capsicum  
Choko  
Cucumber  
Eggplant  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Pumpkin  
Radish  
Rockmelon  
Rosella  
Sweet corn  
Sweet potato  
Tomatoes  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

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 Garden Visits.**

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

## Gennaro's Planting Tips

Gennaro indicates that with soil temperatures warming up, **Borlotti, Madagascar, and Lablab beans**, and **jicama** can be planted until February, as can **basil** and **pigeon peas** and **Egyptian spinach**.

Cuttings or seeds of **Warrigal greens (aka New Zealand spinach)**, **Malabar Spinach** (similar to **Ceylon spinach**) and **Kang Kong** are also best planted at the beginning of summer so we benefit from many months of growth/harvest before they go to seed.

Below: Malabar spinach



# Earthworm FACTS

- Intimately involved in shredding of organic matter, aeration of soil, aggregation of soil particles, distribution of microbes and minerals, provision of plant food and they increase microbe populations and aid root growth.
- Vermicast has 7 times more phosphorus, 10 times more potassium, 5 times more nitrogen, 3 times more magnesium and 1½ times more calcium than the surrounding soil!
- They have an inbuilt colloid mill that reduces particle size. Digestion is based not on enzymes but upon bacteria in their gut.
- Soil that has 25 earthworms per shovel will produce 300 tonnes castings per hectare which is \$30 000 worth of free fertiliser. On a ¼ acre block, that would be 30 tonnes and \$3 000 – still pretty good.
- Attract earthworms by providing fungi and protozoa to eat – compost or fungi inoculums can provide fungi.

You don't get two if you cut one in half – you just get a dead earthworm!

From Steve Capeness' talk

## Prescription for Protozoa

- If a protozoa were watermelon-sized, it would eat 10 000 pea-sized bacteria each day. They are important population police and nitrogen recyclers
- Favourite food of earthworms, but are compromised by neglect, chlorinated water, salt fertilisers and chemicals
- Organic lucerne is jam-packed with protozoa.

### Here's how to make lucerne 'tea':

Add a large handful of organic lucerne to a 20 litre bucket of water and include a food source like liquid fish, kelp and sugar. Aerate for 24 hrs using a dual outlet, fish tank aerator and then dilute 5:1 with water and apply with a watering can.

From Steve Capeness' talk

### To Make Compost Tea

In a 20 litre bucket of water, place a handful of good compost and add 200mL of kelp and fish-for-microbe food (eg Life-Force SeaChange) and aerate for 24 hours. From Steve Capeness' talk

## Soil Structure and Available Water

Increasing soil depth by 5cm represents an additional 250,000 litres of pore space per hectare to accommodate water.

### Aerobic Soil Depth (oxygen)

For sound root growth, the soil should have an aerobic layer (ie contains oxygen) up to 300psi. Anything above this will cause root resistance which will limit aerobic microbes, and uptake of water and nutrients. From Steve Capeness' talk

## Building Self Protective Soils

- Silica is the key mineral for protection as it strengthens cell walls of both microbes and plants. It also boosts plant immunity.
- Most soils are lacking soluble silica even though it is the second most abundant mineral on the planet.
- Silica can be introduced using fine rock dust or micronised liquid diatomaceous earth.
- Maintaining luxury levels of boron in your soil also helps to solubilise silica. Borax can be applied at 1 tablespoon per 10 square meters but do not exceed this rate.

*Note: borax dissolves best in hot water.*

From Steve Capeness' talk

## Recycling Strawberry Punnets

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

One of ROGI's main activities is to show people how to make a seed-sowing pot out of newspaper. After they make this pot they 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 need thousands of them, so please bring them along to every meeting and we'll store them until they're needed.





# LIBRARY NEWS and Book Review

Hello to all our members.

Joh and I look forward to seeing you in the library at the next meeting. If you have overdue books, please bring them or if you are unable to make the next meeting, please ring or email.

At the time of writing this there are no new books in the library. If you haven't checked out our books you will be pleasantly surprised at the good range we carry. This year we have had several members enjoy a book so much that they have purchased a copy for themselves.

If you are like me, I am struggling with the lack of rain, trying to keep up a huge supply of greens for green smoothies for the family as well as salads and, for the first time, a huge aphid attack on my kale. I have ended up cutting them off and bagging them and binning them as I was not getting anything to work. I will be looking up books on bugs and organic sprays myself at the next meeting. If anyone has any great remedies, please let me know.

On the other hand I am doing really well with tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, beans, lettuce and rocket and all my herbs.

Happy reading and happy gardening.

Mandy & Joh

## Fabulous Food from Every Small Garden

By Mary Horsfall (of Grassroots fame)

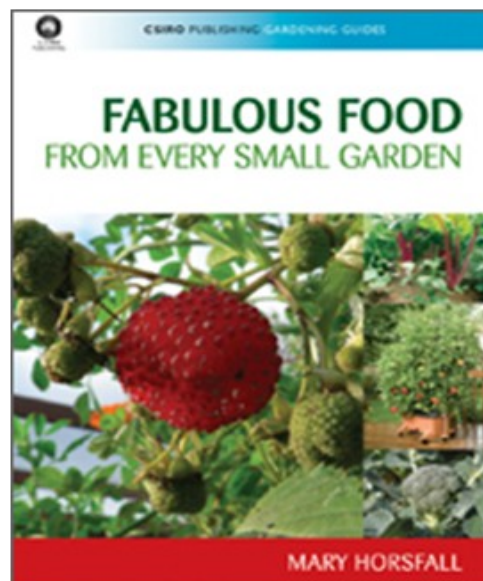
I really enjoyed this book and recommend it as I'm sure you'll find something in it to benefit your garden.

I was interested to find that after all her years of experience in all types of gardening she prefers no-dig gardening as it promotes more nutrition in the vegetables. She cites tests done by the CSIRO proving that organically home grown vegetables and fruit are more nutritious.

She lists 14 superfoods and then states that tests carried out by the CSIRO confirm that many native fruits are much higher in antioxidants than blueberries - Kakadu plum, Illawarra plum, Burdekin plum, Davidson plum, riberry (lillipilly), finger limes, Tasmanian pepper, Molucca raspberry brush cherry, Cedar bay cherry and muntries with some of the above being suitable for a small to medium garden.

She lists the top ten vegetables for nutrients from commonly eaten vegetables: broccoli, spinach, Brussels sprouts, lima bean, peas, asparagus, artichoke, cauliflower, sweet potato and carrot.

I found it interesting that we can grow most of those successfully with the exception of Brussels sprouts. Well, my



Brussels sprouts never form properly so I gave up even trying years ago and I have never tried to grow artichoke.

She talks extensively on compost and has a few tricks for speeding up the process, if you are not a compost turner, by the use of compost or manure teas.

There is an easy reference chart for nutrient deficiencies and how to tell what your plants need by the leaves. One of the nutrients, molybdenum, was new to me.

Take this book home from the library and enjoy the information from a lady with a huge amount of experience and expertise.

Happy gardening, Mandy

## Did you know?

Many herbs have strong scents that prevent pests from attacking them.

If you plant these among vegetables that are vulnerable to attack, the strong scent can confuse pests by masking the desirable plant's scent.

Some of the most common strongly-scented plants to use for masking are: calendula, catmint, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, feverfew, lavender, marigold, oregano, mints, nasturtium, pelargonium, rosemary, sage, tansy, thyme and wormwood.

Clockwise: marigold, oregano, tansy, lavender



## Seeds for the Salvos

With the raised beds built and the creation of the layers inside going on at full speed, it was obvious we would need plants to populate all that garden space.

A team of us including Margaret, Rhonda, Jean, Helen, Nooshin and I started making newspaper pots with the fantastic potmaker available at the ROGI Shop.

These were filled with a mix of hydrated coir peat and perlite, a sterile potting mix which provides the perfect conditions for seed raising. Into these pots we planted a mix of vegetables, fruit and companion plants that are suitable to be planted at this time of year.

Many of these seedlings are now almost ready for planting and the Salvation Army's garden is sure to be producing a bountiful crop in no time.

Angela



Vegetables	Fruits	Companion Plants
carrots snake beans pigeon peas lettuce corn radish	cucumbers capsicums sugar melons cherry tomatoes eggplant	large leaf basil borage chives coriander parsley sunflowers

# Making the 'Salvation' No -Dig Garden

On a hot Sunday afternoon in October about 20 ROGI members were joined by a few Salvation Army people to fill up the 500ml high garden bed frames that had been constructed by Darren from the Salvos and Work-for-the-Dole participants.

The area where the hall and garden are located had been cut and filled prior to building, so the underlying soil is of unknown and probably dubious quality, therefore building up was the better way to go.

We chose to use the no-dig method of layering various organic materials. The principle of layering different organic materials is based on how nature does it – leaves, dead creatures, branches and sticks, fallen fruit, plants that have died and so on all built up upon one upon the other and moistened by the rain and populated by numerous active biological agents. These materials have various proportions of carbon and nitrogen (see list) and when they end up in the ratio of 25 or 30 parts of carbon to one part of nitrogen (25:1 or 30:1), we call it compost and it's ideal for growing plants.

Nature does it well, but that takes time. We wanted to do it quickly. Members donated lots of things, as did Ki-Carma and Queensland Organics who produce some really good stuff, and the Salvos used some grant money to purchase what we couldn't get any other way. We went scrounging to find other things such as coffee grounds and so on.

The materials we used, their carbon-to-nitrogen ratio (C:N) and the order we used them – starting from the bottom are shown in the table.

One of the garden beds received some extra special attention from Frank who added rock dust, worm castings and activated bio-char as well as inserting four worm towers along with the worms. We will monitor the beds and observe any differences in the quantity and quality. Once the contents of the beds have settled we'll pull

back the 'blanket' of mulch, add more compost and plant the seeds and seedlings before replacing the mulch to retain moisture.

See over for photos of ROGI members in action

You can arrive at the next meetings in daylight and have a look at the progress of the gardens. Perhaps you'll be inspired to make one for your own back or front yard.

	Material	C:N	Depth	Action
16	Sugarcane mulch	90:1	5cm	Water
15	Compost	30:1	5cm	
14	Lucerne	12:1	Sprinkle	Water
13	Blood and bone Organic Xtra Cow manure	3:1	2cm	
		7:1		
		20:1		
12	Shredded paper – wet	175:1	thin	
11	Horse manure	20:1	5cm	
10	Lucerne	12:1	3cm	Water
9	Coir – reconstituted – very wet	100:1	2cm	
8	Mushroom compost	13:1	2cm	Water
7	Economy potting mix	30:1	1cm	
6	Coffee grounds	25:1	1cm	
5	Sugarcane mulch	90:1	3cm	Water
4	Dry leaves	60:1	2cm	
3	Horse manure	20:1	5cm	
2	Garden trimmings and potting mix to fill gaps Fruit/veg scraps, weeds, grass clippings, comfrey, yarrow Old tree trunks, sticks, branches	30:1	10cm	Water
		20:1		
		700:1		
1	Newspaper – whole, pre-soaked – overlap each by 1/3	175:1	1cm	







# A ROGI Friend in Need

## Cleaning out your linen cupboards?

Our ROGI past president, Bronwyn Elliott, needs your help. She is moving to her new home in mid-November and will have to put some furniture and other goods into a container for the move and for longer term storage. The furniture removal man is happy to do all the packing, padding and tying down of the furniture for her BUT he cannot give her the blankets and ropes for a long term loan (Bron needs to keep some of her furniture and other items in the container for several months). The removalist says she will need to supply the old blankets and ropes.

So ... do you have old blankets, doonas, quilts and also ropes that you can give to Bron?

If you can help please contact Bron at 0407 678 779 or just bring along the items to the meeting on Wednesday 12.

## Request for Pawpaw Leaves

We have had a request from a woman in Sydney who wants to purchase a regular supply of fresh organic healthy pawpaw leaves as an aid in the treatment of her cancer.

If you can help, please get in touch with Jill 3488 0087 or [jill.nixon@bigpond.com](mailto:jill.nixon@bigpond.com)



## The Salvos Herb Gardens

Near the entry to the hall, there are four raised wicking garden beds built and planted out by Darren and the Work-for-the-Dole men. The wicking system seems to be working well and is a great way of saving watering time and also reducing water use.

However, the herbs were planted without consideration being given to their individual needs: oregano had been planted with mint, and parsley and basil were with rosemary. It is a good idea to keep the Mediterranean plants – oregano, sage, thyme, marjoram, winter savory, rosemary, lavender etc – in close proximity as they have lower water requirements than other herbs. They have developed to struggle a little in the dry alkaline and rocky soil of their origins and in so doing produce the aromatic oils for which they are known and grown. Mint needs moisture and, because of its creeping habit, would soon take over everything else in the garden.

While we were filling the new garden beds, Gennaro took a group of ROGI members off to reorganise the herb gardens. Gradually new plants will be added and spent ones removed, so that there will always be herbs on hand when needed.

*Top right: Gennaro explaining where to put things  
Middle: Rhonda replanting a herb  
Bottom: Wicking beds—water goes in the pipe and drips through an outlet into the small watering can. The bed is sealed.*





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:

- an article about your garden
- a photo
- an unusual plant
- something in relation to gardening or nutrition
- a great recipe
- a current affair of relevance to ROGI members.....

Send your articles to  
keep the  
newsletter  
interesting:  
[info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)

## 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 the table below the **Plant Clinic** sign well before the start of the meeting.

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



## Newsletter Deadlines

Please send your contributions in by  
28 November for the December edition.

# ROGI Shop Products

PRODUCTS Dry 1/7/14	3Kg	1Kg	500g	100g	Each
<b>Soil Conditioners</b>					
Blood & Bone	\$8	\$4.00	\$2.50		
DE Fine Food Grade	\$20.50	\$8.00	\$4.50		
DE Pet & Garden	\$17.50	\$7.00	\$4		
Dolomite	\$5	\$3.00	\$2		
Eco88	\$8	\$4.00	\$2.50		
Gypsum	\$5.50	\$3.00	\$2		
Humic Acid				\$3.50	
Organic Booster	\$5.50	\$3.00	\$2		
Organic Extra	\$6	\$3.50	\$2		
Rock Dust # One Mix	\$7.50	\$3.50	\$2.50		
Rock Dust BCM	\$6.50	\$3.00	\$2		
Sea Mungus			\$3		
Turf Master	\$5.50	\$3.50	\$2		
<b>Pest &amp; Weed Control</b>					
Eco-Rose			\$11		
<b>Tools &amp; Equipment</b>					
Soil pH Test Kit					\$13
Banana Bags					\$3.50
Fruit Fly Excl Bag Set 4					\$5
Paper Pot Maker					\$28

PRODUCT Wet 10/9/14	5 Lr	1 Lr	500ml	150ml	100ml
<b>Soil Conditioners</b>					
Eco-Aminogro		\$18	\$10		
Ecofish	\$32				
Eco-Naturalure				\$15	
Eco-Neem					\$16
Eco-oil		\$22	\$16		
Fish & Kelp solution		\$13			
Potassium Silicate					\$3
<b>Pest &amp; Weed Control</b>					
Burn Off		\$9			
Eco-Pest Oil			\$10		
Naturasoap			\$17		
Pyrethrum Spray					\$20
<b>Aloe Vera</b>					
Aloe Vera Raw Material	\$33.50	\$9.50			
Aloe Vera Raw Bio Vertilizer	\$37	\$10			

## Deposits on Containers

The flimsy plastic bags and parcels we were using to sell and transport our goods, did not sit well with our way of life - "Recycle Everything" - thus we now use glass jars and food-grade plastic pails that can be used many times over, be it by us or yourselves.

So we have a small deposit charge on all packaging that will be refunded on their return to us, but please keep them clean and in good repair.



For any pricing or technical advice, please refer to Frank on 3390 2277



If you received a **COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF ROGI NEWS**, you will need to become a member to gain subscription rights to further editions.

ROGI has other benefits . . .  
So why not join us?

The views expressed in **ROGI NEWS** are those of the editors and submitters, not necessarily those of Redland Organic Growers Inc

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## TECHNICAL TEAM

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# Join Us

See page  
3 for current  
membership  
fees



**Noticed during our visit to Zaytuna:** a bamboo 'pot' to raise seeds of long-rooted plants such as trees.

The bamboo has been split vertically and then held together by split poly-pipe which has been wrapped and tied up.

When planting out the tree, the 'pot', with the plant inside, can be placed in the hole with the pipe and ties removed.

Once the tree has been back-filled, the 'pot' can be slid up and out and the soil firmed down.

This minimises root disturbance for the tree.