

Next meeting: Wednesday 8 October

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

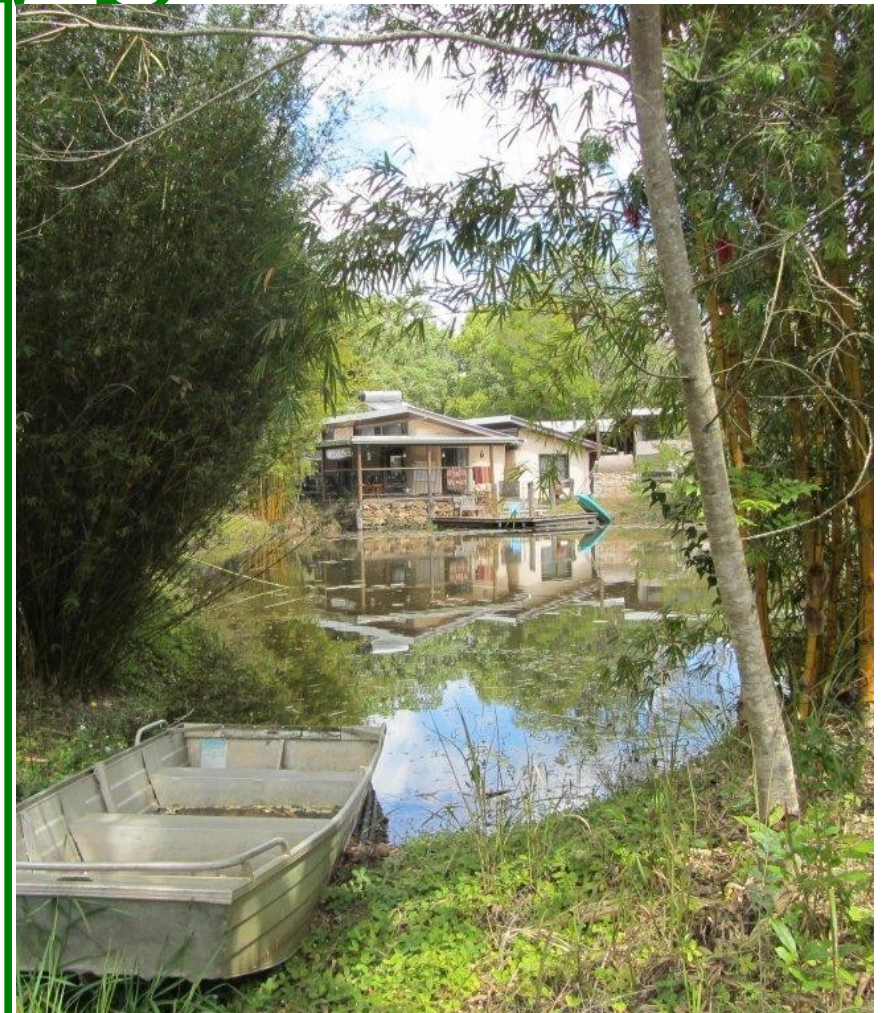
**Please bring plate of food -
savoury/sweet or nibbles
preferably home-made. Tea/
coffee provided**

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 ...

Inside this edition Pg

Jill's Jottings: notes from our president	2
Upcoming events/Guest speaker	3
Field trip to Zaytuna Farm reports	4, 5
September guest speaker summary	6, 7
Girls just gotta have fun	8
Seed bank news	9
Planting guide	10
BOGI Fair/Strawberry punnets	11
Library news/Did you know	12
No-dig garden workshop	13
Lebanese cucumbers/Koala count/ Request/Garden Visits	14
September Plant of Month—Yacon	15
Request for Articles/Plant Clinic etc	16
Shop Stock/Price List	17
Biochar	18
ROGI Committee Details	19



The lake at Zaytuna Farm—see pages 4 & 5

Jill's Jottings

October brings us Fair Food Week and National Organic Week, and it is fitting that these 'weeks' are held in the middle of spring – arguably the most productive time in the garden. There are activities organised including the BOGI Fair—see p11. For more information on these, have a look at:

<http://www.organicweek.net.au/core/events> and
<http://fairfoodweek.org.au/fair-food-week>

We at ROGI are contributing to these initiatives internally rather than holding yet another public event this year. As you may know, we partner with IndigiScapes and Redland City Council to hold the Redlands Good Gardening Expo in autumn every year, and also participate in Indigi Day Out and the Oaklands Street Community Garden Open Day.

On Sunday October 19 (right at the end of the special 'weeks' in October) we will be working with the Salvos to build up their new community gardens. On this afternoon, we will use all manner of organic materials and layer them inside the garden frames in such a way that they will compost down into a good quality growing medium. It will be rich in humus and biological agents and eventually will be seething with the living organisms that make for a fertile soil. See page 13.

As I write this I am in south-western Victoria and I may as well be in a different country. It is 2 000 kilometres away after all. Walking the

streets of this tiny town (population under 2 000) I see peach, plum, apple, nectarine, apricot, almond and quince trees beginning to produce their blossoms. There is an espaliered Jonathon apple tree beside the deck of our B and B. It's still so small but it produced lots of apples last summer. Wonderfully strong smelling lavender and rosemary are flowering everywhere and are covered in bees. Lavender is classed as a weed here. The bulbs are in bloom and the roses are poised, and everything looks so very green! However it hasn't rained for a while and the Glenelg River is dry – and this is supposed to be the wet season: it doesn't bode well for the bush fire risk in summertime.

Rosemary flower and bee at our B and B in Victoria.



The gardening 'rules' are so different. It is accepted that once the AFL Grand Final is over, then it should be safe to plant tomatoes and other fruiting vegetables as the risk of frost is reduced, but not guaranteed. In fact, it seems that frost is the biggest consideration before, during and after winter. In summer, it's the

wind and intense dry 45° heat that can happen in January and February. Summer can also bring very cold spells – typical unpredictable Victorian weather.

Being here and talking with local gardeners has given me a new appreciation of the climate where we live – no frost, no 45° windy days, and the possibility of growing at least some edibles of all kinds (fruits, leaves, seeds, stalks, roots, tubers and flowers) all year round. I can't wait to get back home and plant out the seedlings that are growing up from the seeds I sowed before I left, secure in the knowledge that they won't be damaged by frost or scorching wind.

However, we do need to consider our summertime conditions—warmth and humidity—which certainly affect the viability of some plants. It's interesting that some people can grow a great variety of things throughout summertime, and others struggle to produce a small crop. Microclimates could be the reason. Gennaro has given some ideas for plants that are pretty foolproof in the heat and wet, and which are alternatives for the usual beans and leafy greens. See page 10.

I hope you are inspired by some of the stories and reports in this newsletter. Please send in anything interesting—pictures, stories, successes, failures—that others could benefit from. Also, we'd like to hear your feedback and, as always, any suggestions you may have to make ROGI even more relevant to you as a member.

Happy gardening,

Jill

UPCOMING EVENTS

Book for Garden Visits with Toni 0402 323 704 events@rogi.com.au

OCTOBER	3—12		National Organic Week
	Wed 8	6.15 for 7pm	ROGI meeting
	10—19		Fair Food Week
	Sun 12	9-3	BOGI Fair see p11
	Sun 19	1.30pm	No-dig garden workshop see p13
NOVEMBER	Sun 2	2pm	Garden Visit—Rhonda
	Wed 12	6.15 for 7pm	ROGI meeting

MEMBERSHIP FEES

You may pay 2015 fees at any time between now and February.

- **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 online. 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 for application form or go to http://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/rogi_membership_application_form_2014-new.pdf .

Fees	New member/s joining in...			
	Jan-Mar (Full year)	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 2014 - 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

8 October Guest Speaker

Graeme Sait

Nutrition Specialist

Healthy Soils, Hardy People, Happy Planet

In this timely presentation, nutrition specialist, Graeme Sait, highlights the profound connection between soil health, human health and planetary health. If "we are what we eat" and what we eat is grown in demineralised, lifeless soils, then compromised animal and human health would seem inevitable.

However, there is more involved in this equation. There is a growing realisation that sequestering carbon in the soil (building humus) is the only viable solution to rapidly reduce greenhouse gases to neutralise the climate change time bomb.

The good news here is that humus is also what determines food quality, pest pressure, irrigation requirements, and the need for petrochemical-based inputs in agriculture. We are looking at the ultimate win/win scenario when we build soil carbon. What

is best for the environment turns out to be what is best for all of us!

- Discover how to profit from science by working with nature rather than against her
- Understand the secrets of harnessing soil biology as your hidden workforce
- Be better equipped to handle the impact of peak oil, climate change and economic issues
- Hear invaluable information to improve your own health and that of your family
- Gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between nutrition and pest pressure
- Better understand mineral relationships in the soil

Zaytuna Permaculture Farm Visit

by Jill Nixon and Jocelyn Abrahams



Top: Salah explaining double-digging

Above: Bamboo stabilising a swale dam wall

Left: Large insect hotel with niches of varying sizes

Fifty-nine ROGI members went to The Channon to visit Geoff Lawton's 66 acre Permaculture Research Institute, a former dairy farm. Geoff has spent time in Jordan – and Zaytuna means olive in Arabic, an interesting choice since the climate in northern NSW is unsuitable for olive trees. Our guide Salah from Jordan did a course at Zaytuna three years ago and stayed.

Here are some of the features that struck me:

- Facilities are environmentally-friendly – composting toilets, natural ventilation and so on.
- The sloping site is contoured and swales have been created to maximise the use of water that comes on site. The swales have swivel pipes designed to drain in very heavy rain (150mm a night is not unknown!) – the dam wall is loosely packed and absorbent as well. Fruit trees are grown on the up-hill side of the swale.
- Bamboo is evident everywhere and used to: *Stabilise dam wall of swales, feed cows and goats, build things, slow silt in creek and trap it, be eaten – roots are prepared and eaten when Japanese volunteers are on site*

Make re-usable tree-raising pots, using very large diameter bamboo and cutting it lengthwise and hinging it so it can be opened and closed.

- Polyculture is practised – mixing up various crops to the benefit of them all
- Double-digging method – dig to shovel depth, then to fork depth – bio-intensive so can plant closer together – makes roots go deeper, but weeds grow faster as well, so mulch deeply (some of us wondered about the effect of this method on the mycorrhiza)
- A large 'insect hotel' has been built to attract various beneficial insects to help with pollination and predation over pests

- Singapore Daisy is prevalent – it is a weed, but as a ground cover it protects the soil instead of importing mulch. It is controlled by bringing in the cows who eat it.
- The fruit forest is two years old. Here is how they developed it:
- *Electric fence and the chicken tractor to clear the weeds – between two and five weeks.*
- *Plant fast-growing nitrogen-fixers – Fabaceae – particularly ice-cream bean trees.*
- *Plant desired fruit trees – one for every seven nitrogen-fixers.*
- *Before winter each year, 'chop and drop' nitrogen-fixers (use branches to create rich soil) and add more fruit trees, mulch heavily.*
- *Sow a cover crop of legumes such as lablab, cow pea below the swale.*
- *Every year check which fruit trees have survived and fill in the gaps.*
- A 'cow laneway' runs all the way around the property with 'suburbs' (paddocks) leading off from it. The cows spend two or three days in a paddock and are moved on to the next one that needs them to clear and fertilise it. They graze a great variety/diversity of plants/weeds/herbs. This is 'Natural Pasturing' (look up Joel Salatin and Alan Savory)
- Seed-raising mix is made on-site from 50% coir (reconstituted coconut fibre) and 50% sharp sand. Seeds are raised in either hand-made newspaper pots or the cells of egg cartons. Vermiculite is used as mulch over seeds.
- Potting mix is 70% compost and worm castings and 30% sharp sand.
- Chicken tractors get moved along as the chooks work at converting weeds, seeds etc into compost and mulch (and eggs). It takes 22 weeks for one to be back at the start.

- Compost is made from cow manure, mulch, food scraps and chook poo from the Australorps who scratch away and mix everything up in their search for grubs, worms etc.
- There are six bathtub worm farms with gravel at the base and downpipes to allow entry of oxygen. Covered to keep dark.
- They are fed only cow manure and compost manure from the toilets.
- Worm juice drains constantly – used for bio-fertiliser,
- When worm castings are ready, remove cover to send worms to bottom and collect castings for use as a component of potting mix.
- To make bio-available fertiliser: milk, molasses, dolomite, yeast, rock dust and the contents of cow's rumen in water and leave for three months. By then it has fermented (digested).
- There is a 'chook food forest'. This has old mature fruit trees and the chooks free range here. The nitrogen-fixing trees here are regularly 'lopped and dropped'.
- Other animals raised on the property are ducks, rabbits, goats and soldier flies. All meat animals are slaughtered on site.
- **A couple of 'take-home' learnings:**

A small area is more productive than a large area. Don't get too hung up on weeds

Glossary

Polyculture – growing a range of different crops in the same space imitating the way it happens in nature – the opposite of monoculture.

Swale – a ditch on a contour. The soil that is dug out becomes the bank downhill of the ditch.

Mycorrhiza – a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and a plant's roots, wherein the fungus colonises the host's roots for mutual benefit

Fabaceae – the legume/pea/bean family, which produce pods containing seeds. Most have symbiotic nitrogen-fixing bacteria in their root nodules, thus they enrich the soil in which they are grown.

Jill Nixon



Top: Honey feeding her calf
Above: Signing in at entry to Zaytuna
Left: One of the chicken tractors
Thank you to Wendy and Gennaro for photos.

ROGI Bus Trip to The Channon 14 September

It was a chilly start when we set out in two buses and a car at 7.30am. The weather was perfect and there was much anticipatory chatter on the bus as we travelled south. After a welcome pit-stop just over the border at Chinderah we drove a further two hours through green farming countryside to our destination.

First port of call was Zaytuna on the outskirts of The Channon. After meeting Salah, we had to sign indemnity forms, a new experience for me, but a sign of the times in which we live.

We set off at 11.45, very warm in the sunshine, to walk around the farm. It seemed Salah was in charge

while the owners were away, but it was clear that he knows the run of the farm very well. He said that farm workers are volunteers and interns, and that education is the reason for the farm's existence.

First stop was the kitchen garden surrounded by swales, then a young forest of fruit trees where the young trees are protected by fast growing shade trees. Then it was off to see chickens, ducks and geese that live under the shade of, while fertilising, a mature forest of fruit trees. Salah brushed off our concerns of fruit flies, assuring us they are not a problem in their area. We walked through paddocks where their two dairy cows, with calves, were grazing. They also had a few beef cattle, though I didn't see them myself. All these animals are used on site, to assist with the self-sufficient lifestyle - dairy cows milked, and poultry and beef cattle slaughtered for meat.

On the other side of the paddocks was a larger area of vegetables growing, where a large chicken tractor - the chickens are left in each area for two weeks - prepared a planting area for leafy greens. The vegetables are sold locally by a neighbour.

By 1.30pm, we'd seen very little shade, and not yet had lunch, so when Toni offered to take a bus load to The Channon markets, there was much interest. I'm afraid I joined the market-goers. During my time on Salah's tour, I didn't hear of any research being done at Zaytuna.

The Channon markets were vibrant and colourful, reflecting the local counter-culture. There were good quality local crafts and produce for sale, but it was a wholesome lunch that was my main interest and I was not disappointed. This was topped off with a most delicious Nimbin ice-cream which many of us enjoyed before boarding the bus.

Our buses left at 3.30pm. We were now tired, weary and glad that someone else had the responsibility of driving. There was much less chatter than on the trip south, though I did hear one voice still going as the bus pulled in to Capalaba at 6.15pm. The day's outing had been a very happy one for all who took part.

Jocelyn Abrahams

Phil Ryan's talk 10th September

Secrets of an Organic Gardener

Fourteen years ago Phil and Margaret lost their business and he was plunged into a depression that had friends and family concerned. He had nothing to do every day. Then, one day, even though they did not like gardening, and it was Margaret's birthday, someone convinced them to go on a bus trip with a group of people. It was to Jade Woodhouse's 2.5 acre permaculture gardens at the Sunshine Coast. So impressed were they that they said to one another 'This is what I want to do for the rest of my life'.

His doctor gave him the use of one acre of her 10 acres of schist, clay and shale for use as his garden – and he was off. Many friends and BOGI (Brisbane Organic Growers Inc) members came to his aid with information and tools.

Phil's Tips, Tricks and Tales

- Don't use town water (because of the additives) – rainwater is better
- Phil made a 'bucket worm farm' for a friend's mother for when she moved into a retirement home. Her neighbour was jealous and wanted one... and so on. He was busy with this for quite a while.
- Worm castings are 50 per cent richer than home-made compost. He has six old bathtubs that are his worm farms. From these he gets six 20 litre tubs of worm juice a week.
- He doesn't make compost these days: all the organic waste goes to the worms and he uses the worm castings.

- He foliar sprays (ie spraying the foliage) with diluted worm juice 1:4 with rain water. Do it early in the morning while the dew is on the leaves; spray the underside of leaf as well. *Don't foliar spray tomatoes, as wet leaves can predispose them to a viral disease.*
- Phil alternates the foliar spraying regime – worm juice, two weeks later seaweed solution and two weeks after that he uses his giant teabag. Molasses in these solutions help them stick.
- Giant teabag: about one kilogram of solid matter (eg compost, comfrey, worm castings) to make 'tea'. He wraps it in surgical stocking material. Can achieve 300 litres of 'tea' from each bag. These are available from Phil.
- Insects hate molasses, so don't spray in early evening when bees are most active.
- He uses dried seaweed and mineral rock dust in solution for seedlings and sick plants
- Don't pull out vegetables by the roots – cut them off at ground level. The root-ball has minerals that should stay in the soil.
- Magnesium (in Epsom Salt) helps flowering
- Tip-pruning helps keep fruit tree branches thick and strong
- Each new leaf is like a solar panel for the plant – collecting energy from the sun for photosynthesis
- Our fruit trees are like our prisoners – totally dependent on us – feed them twice a year minimum

- Phil paints the handles of his garden tools a bright colour (usually pink) so they don't become camouflaged in the garden!
- Sit seedling punnets in liquid seaweed before planting out.
 - *He uses a carving fork to lever seedling plug from its cell – this minimises transplant shock.*
 - *If they're root-bound, slice a sliver off each side and the bottom with a very sharp knife, then soak again before planting out*
- Vermiculite: holds seven times its weight in moisture. Use it in potting mix, as a mulch to prevent seedlings drying out, or mixed with coir (shredded coconut fibre) for raising seeds. It doesn't rise to the top like perlite tends to do.
- When using his seaweed/kelp/molasses solution, he blends it first in a one litre bottle and then adds this to the large container with the rest of the water. This helps to dissolve the very heavy molasses. It only works in warm weather: molasses is too thick in cold weather.
- At the end of a day of gardening, add 1 or 2 cups of Epsom salt to a bathtub of hot water and soak your toxins away. When the water is cold, bucket it out to use on the garden.
- Phil recommends everyone joins Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI) just to get their monthly newsletter. (You can borrow it from the ROGI library)

- Growing passionfruit:
 - Three posts, about 1½ – 2 metres high, spaced 6 metres apart = 12 metres total distance.
 - String a crosswire or two along the top between the 3 posts.
 - Dig 2 holes 50x50x50cm to plant the 2 plants, halfway between the posts ie 3 metres in from the outside posts. Above each plant hang strings/cords down from the crosswire for the plant to climb.
 - Plant a pipe in beside each plant – use this when watering the plant to ensure deep watering.
 - Feed well and often. Passionfruit is a big feeder.
 - As it grows up and reaches the crosswire, cut off tip and it will grow sideways along the wire.
 - It will cascade down from the crosswire. Trim it back if it becomes too rampant.
 - Plant bee-attracting flowers nearby.
- Tomatoes – he prefers Tommy Toe, an heirloom variety. Dig a trench; remove lower side branches when seedling is about 15 – 25 cm high. Lay the seedling down sideways along the trench so that it is in contact with the soil and then cover it with soil up to the remaining leaves. The old branch joints will become roots, making the plant stronger, and the plant will work out how to grow vertically.
- Wear a mask when using anything that is dusty (eg sugarcane mulch). Phil uses eye drops prescribed by his doctor to prevent dust causing eye problems.
- Double-potting principle for a warm climate:
 - Find two pots – one 10cm larger in diameter than the other—to grow your plant in
 - Place some broken-up polystyrene pieces

in base of large pot.

- Place small pot inside large pot and add potting mix and the plant.
- The outside pot is the one that will get hot (less so if it is white or cream)
- The inside pot will stay cool because the air curtain around it insulates it
- Use the finger-test to judge moisture content of soil before watering.
- Phil recommends Annette McFarlane's book *Organic Fruit Growing* (available from ROGI library)
- Phil has written a book *Secrets of an Organic Gardener* which is due to be published in the near future
- Thai basil is a favourite of bees. They LOVE it and it has a great perfume. Phil puts a piece in his pocket to keep away flies and mosquitoes.
- We need to grow LOTS of flowering plants – for their beauty and for the fact that they attract beneficial insects and other creatures into our gardens.

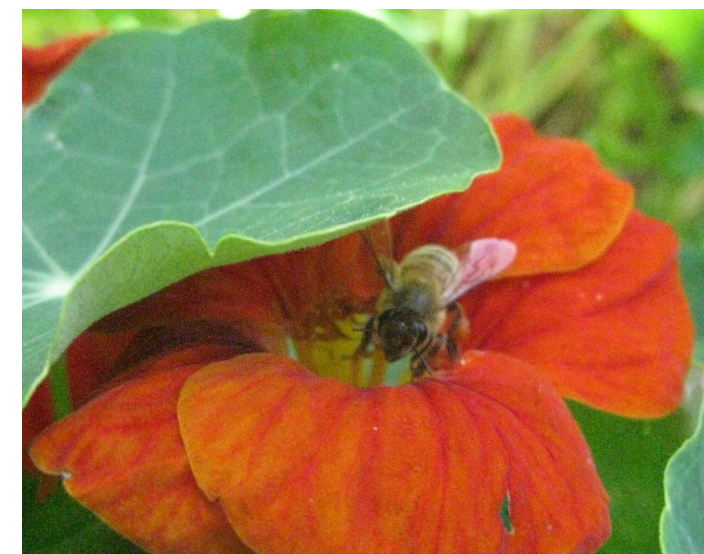
When eighty year-old Bill from Wynnum retired from BOGI, Phil asked him, 'Of all the tools you used, what was the best tool?' Bill's reply, 'My diary.'

Phil writes in his current gardening diary every day, and often refers to previous years' entries for the same time of year. This helps with planning. He has gone through several diaries over the years – they are simple school exercise books.

Right: Proof that bees are attracted to nasturtium flowers.



Top: Flowers of Thai basil and cat's whiskers, and below, rocket and lavender, attract bees.



Girls Just Gotta Have Fun!

By Helen Hart

It all started when I borrowed *Herbcraft* by Nerys Purchon and Dhenu Jennifer Clary from our ROGI library at the June meeting. The format of the book included, apart from the requisite sections on getting to know the herbs and how to grow, harvest and store them, chapters on Herbs That Heal, The Body Beautiful, and Eating Your Way to Health. There are lots of tables so you can match the herbs you have in your garden with appropriate basic recipes for all sorts of needs in the above chapters, and then choose whatever you have to hand in your garden or cupboard to fit the bill. I recognized the potential to make my own skin and hair-care preparations for almost nix, so easily, and to have fun doing it.

With a new herb garden being built at the Oaklands Street Community Garden (OSCG) timed for this year's Open Day on 31 August, and Tony's hand-over of the herb garden to Anne and me as its guardian angels, an idea began to gel.

As Glenda almost single-handedly had been potting up what seemed a never-ending supply of plants for the Open Day, I decided that the more herbs we could sell the more funds we could raise for the continuing upkeep of the garden. **Herbcraft** shows how versatile herbs can be. With basic methods given to easily and cheaply make one's very own individualised herbal products and also

tables given in every section to show which herbs will best suit your own circumstances, I set about concocting and testing some recipes for Open Day. **Somebody's got to do it!** I wonder whether Cyndi Lauper did it - is that what she was talking about?!

To date my favourite is the Arrowroot Jelly for a facial mask base to which I added some blended surplus pawpaw (remember Lucas' Pawpaw Ointment?) and the herbs left over from my cup of herbal tea - the aroma that wafted up from the saucepan was sublime, and the mask firmly tightened up all those pores! So much fun!

The Cucumber Tonic is one I intend to have ready-made in my freezer for next summer's blistering days - so refreshing! Put your cucumbers in now, and voila!, you will have a use for some of your excess! A Cosmetic Vinegar works very well as a hair rinse - with rosemary in it - I'll swear my hair is getting darker again. I concluded that there were *endless* ways I could use this book and, after *reluctantly* returning it to Mandy so others could borrow it too, I attempted to buy it at Angus & Robertson. However it is now out of print, so I turned to an on-line second-hand book store and was able to buy my very own copy.

With help from Jill and Naomi and Kathy for a lovely poster and recipe sheets and Kevin and Ruth (OSCG

members) supplying aloe vera for a hair conditioner and face mask, I ran a demonstration stall at the Open Day. The favourite seemed to be the avocado mask and I have made a friend from Perth because of it - she was ecstatic and didn't want to take it off! Another friend I have made was a young discount pharmacy assistant who allowed me to borrow their store copy of their essential oils booklet which I had on hand to assist anyone interested in making the Cucumber Tonic recipe for those hot sticky days we will undoubtedly have later on in summer. I have given Stephanie our ROGI card and hope that soon she will come to see us. See what fun you can have using a little initiative!

My favourite herb right now is rosemary, which I discovered can be very quickly chopped up in that coffee grinder which I never use for coffee but is great for grinding spices in. My favourite cake recipe for taking out now is an utterly delicious Banana Rosemary Cake from the Queensland Herb Society cookbook.

But guys can have fun too! Of course I am talking about our field trip to Zaytuna - hiring a coach for our field trips, where appropriate, undoubtedly adds to the enjoyment of the whole day. I swapped seats at every stop to make the most of this opportunity to catch up with others and

join in some interesting conversations. I think it is a great bonding opportunity that comes along with what is always a fascinating and interesting day. If you haven't been on a ROGI field trip, then make sure you book for the next one. Hats off to the committee for organising this one!

On another note, we had a new family of three plover chicks from a "scrape" in the **front** yard this year for the first time (previously the site chosen was right next to my lemon tree in the **back** yard) - perhaps this means the parents are a new breeding pair. One of the delights of watching these capricious little birds was seeing one run down the shadow cast by the pole of my clothes hoist! They are almost fully-grown now and my alarm clock every morning for a while, although the mother's conversations with her babies, as they grazed in the grass outside my window, seems to have become intermittent of late.

See me for a copy of those recipes.



At my stall at the Open Day.

Helen

Seed Bank News

By Angela Stafford

It's spring time which means it is time for planting! Cut down all those brassicas that have reached the end of their lives and prepare for those plants that can withstand the Brisbane heat. Check out what's new below and the planting guide for this month. The seed bank is topped up with these new items and the other regulars for next meeting.

What's New!

Borage

A fantastic plant to bring the bees into your garden. Said to enhance the flavour and growth of strawberries and it self-seeds so once you plant it, you won't have to do so again! Use the little flowers in salads and as a decoration for desserts. The leaves are often eaten as well, although they are a little hairy. Have a look on the internet for many culinary ideas.

Health Benefits

Medicinally, borage is used to reduce fever and inflammation. It is also said to strengthen the heart and stimulate



circulation. Take as a tea or use the leaves as you would other greens.

Chicory – Red Dandelion

Red dandelion greens are not in fact dandelions at all; they are members of the chicory family. These bitter greens are more widely known as Italian dandelion. The leaves of the red dandelion greens are a deeper green than that of true dandelion greens and they grow upright and larger. They offer a bitter flavour with a bit of a bite; very similar to other varieties of chicory. Toss red dandelion greens with romaine (cos) or other lettuces for salads or use as a garnish for sandwiches. Wilt the Italian dandelion greens in cooked pasta or add to soups.

Health Benefits

Chicory is believed to cleanse blood and detoxify the liver. It stimulates the nervous system and improves concentration, albeit it can also be used to combat problems related to sleep. Additionally, the presence of choline and chicorine in chicory account for its bowel-cleansing properties. Inulin, tannin, chicoric acid, starch, minerals, and vitamins B, C and K are also found in this herb. The tannin in chicory acts as an astringent and detoxifier. Chicory is also a good source of beta carotene. It also possesses disinfectant and light antibiotic properties. Owing to the health benefits of chicory, it is often preferred over coffee.



Onion and Garlic Chives

A great addition to the garden. You can use both the green and the flowers. Both will provide the flavour of their respective namesake and are self-seeding. Use the flowers in salads and the greens in salads and cooked dishes. Chives also acts as an insect repellent in the garden.



Bell Colour Mix Capsicum

'Bell Colour Mix' is a special blend of several different kinds of sweet bell capsicum in colours of white, red, orange, yellow and purple. Fruit has a sweet flavour and crunchy texture. Capsicums are nutritious, high in vitamin C and ideal for stuffing and salads.





Chervil

Pronounced "SHER-vil", it is a delicate culinary herb used frequently in French cuisine. A member of the parsley family, chervil has a mild flavour with hints of liquorice or anise.

Chervil leaves are delicate and curly, somewhat resembling carrot greens. Because of its delicate flavour, it is usually included in recipes such as salads and soups where it will not be overpowered by the other flavours. Chervil is great in an omelette.

Health Benefits

Chervil has been valued as a stimulant to brain activity and metabolism. It has also been used in eye washes to alleviate cataracts, detached retina and other eye disorders.



Soybeans (Edamame)

Have you ever eaten little bowls of steamed young soybeans doused with salt in Japanese restaurants? They are delicious! So why not grow

your own? They are hardy plants that produce a substantial crop and the greenery can be used as a green manure.



Squash, Golden Scallopini

These delicious, saucer-shaped golden fruits have scalloped edges that look quite pretty sliced and arranged on the plate. If you can't pick them fast enough, the fully mature fruit can be stored and eaten like a winter squash. Productive, bushy plants.

Sugarbaby Watermelon

Popular home garden variety that will fit in the fridge - round fruit 3-5kg. Red flesh is crisp, mouth-watering, with a sweet, rich flavour. Sets 4-6 melons per vine, easiest watermelon to grow.



PLANTING GUIDE:

As supplied by Linda Brennan from the Annette McFarlane website

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Asparagus
Capsicum
Chilli
Cucumber
Eggplant
French beans (not November)
Lettuce
Okra
Pumpkin
Radish
Rockmelon
Rosella
Squash
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 all ROGI meetings.

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

GENNARO'S PLANTING TIPS

Soil temperatures are warming up so **borlotti**, **Madagascar** and **lablab** beans and **jicama** can be planted from now until February, as can **basil** and **pigeon peas**.

Seeds and/or cuttings of **kang kong**, **Malabar**, **Ceylon** and **Egyptian spinach** also are best planted at start of summer so they have a few months' growth before going to seed.

Plant seeds or cuttings of **Warrigal greens** (aka New Zealand spinach) from now on as it performs best when the soil temperature is above 18 degrees.

Brisbane Organic Growers Inc

organic fair

sunday 12 Oct 9am - 3pm

102 Mc Donald Road, Windsor
(near Albion Railway Station)

free gardening advice & talks
free animal nursery

herbs

books

chooks

seedlings



jams

tools

fruit trees

food & drinks

No pets please

enquiries

email: bogifair@bogi.org.au

phone: 0403065107

website: www.bogi.org.au

Proudly supported by



Dedicated to a better Brisbane



NEW Location of ROGI meetings

Salvation Army Church,
1-9 Macarthur St,
Alexandra Hills

Recycle Your 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 at these events is to give people the opportunity 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 In-digi 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

Hello to all our members. Look forward to seeing you in the library for the next meeting. We have quite a few overdue books at present. If you have one, please return it to the next meeting. If you are unable to make the next meeting please email or ring.

COMPOST TEA MAKING

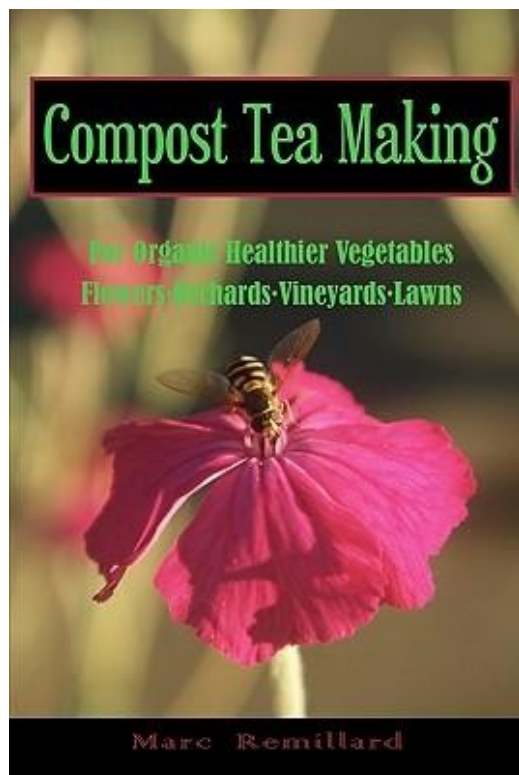
by Mars Remillard

This essential reference book explains why compost teas have such powerful beneficial effects for all plants. You will understand the importance of rejuvenating the microbial life in our soils.

There are simple recipes for brewing your own compost teas, making compost brew equipment and some info on worms. I have found that a compost tea is great on cold compost heaps in speeding the process up. This book is well written with some photographs, interviews and some dry humour.

It is our growing season now so check out the library, I am sure you will find books to help you with your garden. See you next meeting.

Mandy and Joh



Did you know ... ?

Did you know that it is a good idea to pick zucchinis when they are young and small?

Once a plant has succeeded in producing a fruit that is mature enough to have viable seeds, it seems to give up caring whether it produces any more, or even if it lives or dies.

So harvest your zucchinis small and, if you run out of recipes, feed them to your chooks if you can't cope with them all.



Zucchini fruit—pick them small

Did you know that ROGI is on the lookout for another member or two to help out with the newsletter?

We would like to have the newsletter ready for you at the beginning of the weekend prior to each ROGI meeting. However, this has proven to be impossible recently for a variety of reasons, one of which is that we don't have an actual newsletter editor. We have a member who is happy to use her artistic skills to make it look good, but we need an editor or two. Our editor's job would be to:

- Arrange for notes to be taken at Garden Visits, field trips, meetings etc —and written up.

- Collect articles from ROGI committee members—eg shop, seed bank, library.

- Take or source photos to accompany articles.

- Ensure all items are edited and proof-read.

Please consider helping ROGI out with this.

Workshop - Making a No-Dig Garden

The concept of making a garden without doing any digging was pioneered by Esther Deans in the 1970s, and has become more popular over the decades.

What are the benefits of a no-dig garden?

- There is no need to do any digging, so it's easier on the back
- The garden sits above the ground and can be as high as you like, eliminating bending if that's what is desired
- Because the soil below it is undisturbed, the condition of the soil is irrelevant. Therefore a no-dig garden can be used where the soil is heavy clay, very sandy, or water-repellent, or if it's been heavily churned up as in a new sub-division
- It's fairly cheap as you don't need to buy in a load of soil, but instead use many materials that may be considered to be waste
- It has excellent water retention

What materials are used to build up the growing medium?

Straw
Sugarcane mulch
Compost
Blood and bone
Sawdust
Newspaper
Shredded office paper
Manure – horse, cow, chicken, pig, sheep, alpaca (herbivore animals only)



The area of the no dig garden before the beds have been built

Lucerne hay
Fine wood chips
Coffee grounds
Mushroom compost
Grass clippings
Dry deciduous leaves
Comfrey leaves
Weeds (with no seeds)
Vegetable and fruit scraps
Stable sweepings
Chooks' nesting material
Wood chip mulch and sawdust both of which make a good surface for the paths between the no-dig garden beds.

How is it done?

Make or buy a frame for the garden bed. Lay the materials one upon the other in alternating layers until the frame is full to the very top. This can use a surprisingly large quantity of material, especially if it is 60cm or 80 cm

high.

Leave it to sit for a couple of weeks during which time decomposition will start and the contents will settle to about half the original height. Create pockets in the top layer of mulch, fill each with a good compost and plant the seeds or seedlings and water in well.

Come along to the workshop
Salvos on Sunday October 19
from 1.30pm and get some
hands-on experience.

Register your attendance with
Toni 0402 323 704 or email her.
If you are able to provide any
of the above materials, please
let us know.

You can then bring them
along to the October meeting
or, preferably, to the work-
shop on the Sunday.

Redlands' Koala count-a-thon survey 25 and 26 October

Koala Action Group are again holding their annual phone-in survey. Over the weekend they are asking people to report all sounds and sightings of koalas.

This data will help them get a better idea on where koalas are living and their numbers.

[Check out the website for more details](#)



ROGI Garden Visits—November & December

We're not visiting a garden in October (instead, we're starting one for the Salvos), so our next Garden Visit is to Rhonda's on November 2. A project planned for the afternoon is helping Rhonda deal with the abundance of worms in her compost bin, so we're hoping you can come along and help.

In December we'll visit Danny's garden in Carina. Danny, who has a number of disabilities, has planned his garden to suit his needs. I think people will be inspired by what he has had done.

Put your name down with Toni if you want to come—see page 3.

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 jill.nixon@bigpond.com



MY GARDEN by Mandy Lebanese Cucumbers

Last year I had great success with cucumbers, both the 'muncher' variety and 'Gennaro's own' as sold by the ROGI seed bank. I also planted the lemon variety but it was not as prolific as the muncher.

I started mine in seed pots filled with the coir and perlite mix we do at our displays (if you need the recipe I am sure we would have it in our storage cupboard). I grow my seedlings on the front verandah and they germinate very well as they get a lot of morning sun. I plant a few seeds every 3 to 4 weeks to get a continuous supply. Once they have sprouted a side leaf I transplant them into a previously-prepared area that has had lots of cow manure, blood and bone, and compost.

When the flowers appear I regularly dip a paintbrush into a male then a female flower to aid pollination and this helps with a bumper crop. The bees in my yard seem to prefer other flowers to the cucumbers. You can plant seeds from August to February. Powdery mildew does seem to be more of a problem in the humid stormy months.

I always water my cucumbers late in the afternoon but give them enough time to air dry any splash on the leaves by the time the night air hits. Or water them early in the morning. A milk and bicarb spray, or a soap and

bicarb spray seems to help powdery mildew in the humid months. Always pick off the infected leaves and discard in the garbage (not the compost). Lettuce, corn and pumpkin are great companion plants. pH 6 to 6.75. They are heavy feeders and take about 60 to 70 days to picking. Cucumbers have a high water content and contain vitamins B and C and are reputed to have cancer-fighting chemicals. We love them in our family and use them in salads, sandwiches, and green smoothies. If you haven't started any then visit the seedbank and get some in now. They are easy growing.



Yacon

September Plant of the Month —presented by Linda Barrett

Yacón (*Smallanthus sonchifolius*, *Polymnia edulis*, *P. sonchifolia*) is a perennial grown in the Andes for its crisp, sweet-tasting, tuberous roots. Another name for yacón is Peruvian ground apple. The texture and flavour is similar to jicama.

A relative of sunflower and Jerusalem artichoke, it produces a perennial rhizome to which are attached the edible, succulent storage roots. The rhizome develops just under the surface of the soil and continuously produces aerial shoots. Dry and/or cold seasons cause the aerial shoots to die back, but the plant re-sprouts from the rhizome. The tubers weigh from a few hundred grams to a kilogram.

A vigorous grower, it can reach over 2m in height with small, inconspicuous yellow flowers at the end of the growing season. It can tolerate hot summers, drought and poor soils. Plant the propagation roots with growing points (setts) in a well-dug bed in early spring.

The foliage dies back in the winter after flowering and then the tubers are harvested carefully to avoid damage to the tubers. Leave some in the ground for propagating the following spring. While usable-sized tubers develop fairly early in the season, they taste much sweeter after they have matured and been kept in a cool, dark place for several days.

I had a small crop from my first season – I used the tubers raw in fruit salad, and in curries and stews. It looks like a sweet potato and likewise oxidises when cut. I'd describe the taste a little like a nashi pear–

the texture is a light crunch—there are some fibres, but not like those in an old-type mango.

Companies have developed products such as yacón syrup and yacón tea. Both are popular with diabetics and dieters as it can counteract high blood glucose. The look, feel and taste of yacón syrup is similar to honey or maple syrup and it can be used the same—but with fewer calories.

Overall, it is a worthwhile plant to have growing in a few spots in your garden.



Glossary:

Fructooligosaccharide (FOS): an indigestible polysaccharide made up of fructose. Eating FOSs can promote better health of the intestinal tract due to a prebiotic effect - used by beneficial bacteria that enhance colon health and aid digestion. They taste sweet, but pass through the human digestive tract unmetabolised, hence have very few calories (25-35% of other carbohydrates).

Inulin: naturally-occurring polysaccharide produced by many types of plants. It is a means of storing energy and is found in roots or rhizomes. Most plants that synthesize and store inulin do not store other forms of carbohydrate such as starch. Inulin increases calcium (and possibly magnesium) absorption, and promotes the growth of beneficial intestinal bacteria. It is a form of dietary fibre and is sometimes categorized as a prebiotic. Conversely, it can be problematic for some through causing overgrowth of intestinal methane-producing bacteria. Eating large quantities (in particular, by sensitive or unaccustomed people) can lead to gas and bloating, and products that contain inulin will sometimes include a warning to add it gradually to one's diet.

Polysaccharides: complex carbohydrates consisting of two or more monosaccharides (simple carbohydrates) linked together. They are used for structure (eg cell walls) or energy storage in plants.

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

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 to the newsletter editor by 31 October for the November edition.

ROGI Shop Products

PRODUCTS Dry	3Kg	1Kg	500g	100g	Each
Soil Conditioners					
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		
Pest & Weed Control					
Eco-Rose			\$11		
Tools & Equipment					
Soil PH Test Kit					\$13
Banana Bags					\$3.50
Fruit Fly Excl Bag Set 4					\$5
Newspaper Pot-Maker					\$28

PRODUCT Wet 10/9/14	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			
Potassium Silicate					\$3
Pest & Weed Control					
Burn Off		\$9			
Eco-Pest Oil			\$10		
Naturasap			\$17		
Pyrethrum Spray					\$20
Aloe Vera					
Aloe Vera Raw Material	\$33.50	\$9.50			
Aloe Vera Raw Bio Vertilizer	\$37	\$10			

The ROGI Shop operates on a cash-only basis.
Only ROGI members are entitled to purchase items from the shop.

Have a chat with Frank if there is a special product that you would like the ROGI Shop to carry.

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

Biochar

by Frank Huysing (edited from Wikipedia)

Biochar is the name given to charcoal when it is used as a soil amendment. Like all charcoal, it is created by pyrolysis (decomposition brought about by high temperature) of biomass, and is a stable solid, rich in carbon and can endure in soil for thousands of years. Biochar is under investigation as an approach to carbon sequestration to produce negative carbon dioxide emissions. It can also increase soil fertility of acidic soils, and can increase agricultural productivity, as well as providing protection against some foliar and soil-borne diseases.

History

Pre-Columbian Amazonians are believed to have used biochar to enhance soil productivity. They produced it by smouldering agricultural waste (i.e., covering burning biomass with soil) in pits or trenches. Following observations and experiments, a research team thought that the Amazonian earthworm *Pontoscolex corethrurus* was the main agent of fine powdering and incorporation of charcoal debris to the mineral soil. (All worms are believed capable of this.)

Uses of Biochar

Soil amendment.

For plants that need high potash and pH, biochar can be used to improve yield. It can reduce soil emissions of greenhouse gases, nutrient leaching, soil acidity and irrigation and fertiliser requirements. Under certain circumstances it can induce plant systemic responses to foliar fungal diseases and improve plant responses to diseases caused by soil borne pathogens.

Studies show positive effects from biochar on crop production in degraded and nutrient-poor soils. Biochar can be designed with specific qualities to target distinct properties of soils. It reduces leaching of critical nutrients, creates a higher crop uptake of nutrients, and provides greater soil availability of nutrients. Biochar can improve water quality. Pollutants such as metals and pesticides seep into soil and contaminate food supplies, reducing the amount of land suitable for agricultural production.

The various impacts of biochar can be dependent on its properties, as well as the amount applied, regional conditions including soil type, soil condition (depleted or healthy), temperature, and humidity. Modest additions of biochar to

soil reduces nitrous oxide emissions by up to 80% and eliminates methane emissions, which are both more potent greenhouse gases than CO₂.

Water retention.

Because of its porous structure and high surface area, biochar is desirable in many locations due to its ability to attract and retain water. As a result, nutrients, phosphorus, and agrochemicals are retained for the plants benefit. Plants are healthier and fertilisers leach less into surface or groundwater.

Carbon sink.

The burning and natural decomposition of biomass and agricultural waste adds large amounts of CO₂ to the atmosphere. Biochar (stable, fixed, and 'recalcitrant' carbon) can store greenhouse gases in the ground for centuries, potentially reducing or stalling the growth in atmospheric greenhouse gas levels; at the same time its presence in the earth can improve water quality, increase soil fertility, raise agricultural productivity, and reduce pressure on old-growth forests.

Production

Pyrolysis produces biochar, liquids and gases by heating the biomass in a low/no oxygen environment. The absence of oxygen prevents

combustion. The relative yield of products from pyrolysis varies with temperature. Temperatures of 400–500 °C produce more char, while temperatures above 700 °C favour the yield of liquid and gas fuel components. Pyrolysis occurs more quickly at the higher temperatures, typically requiring seconds instead of hours. High temperature pyrolysis is also known as gasification, and produces primarily syngas. By comparison, slow pyrolysis can produce substantially more char. Both processes produce net energy. For typical inputs, the energy required to run a fast pyrolyzer is approximately 15% of the energy that it outputs. Modern pyrolysis plants can use the syngas created by the pyrolysis process and output 3–9 times the amount of energy required to run.



For your own research;
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biochar>
<http://www.ithaka-journal.net/55-anwendungen-von-pflanzenkohle?lang=en>

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**

Email:
info@rogi.com.au

Website:
www.rogi.com.au
Post: PO Box 1257
Cleveland 4163

Find us on Facebook
[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
Secretary	Margaret Sear secretary@rogi.com.au
Membership	Jenny Sando membership@rogi.com.au

TECHNICAL TEAM

Seed bank	Angela Stafford seeds@rogi.com.au
------------------	--

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

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

MEMBER SERVICES TEAM

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

Join Us See page 3
for current
membership fees



Zaytuna farm:
Top: Free-range ducks
Middle: Lush raised garden beds
Above: one of the paddocks