

COGS



Quarterly.

No. 1.

FEBRUARY, 1993.

OFFICE BEARERS AND HELPERS 1992

Canberra Organic Growers' Society Inc.

President	David Odell	██████████
Vice Presidents	Elizabeth Palmer Julie Murphy	██████████ ██████████
Secretary	Joan Buckie	██████████
Treasurer	Andrew Collins	██████████
Membership	Michelle Johnson	██████████
Newsletter Editor	Sue	██████████
Asst Editor	Gay Baker	██████████
Librarian	Jonathon Miller	██████████
Committee:	Joyce Wilkie John Robertson Robyn Bellchambers Betty Cornhill John Ross	██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████
Garden Convenors:		
Charmwood	Kay White	██████████
Cotter	John Flowers	██████████
Oaks Estate	Peter Wallace) Caroline Paris)	██████████ ██████████
Tuggeranong	James Wilson	██████████
Watson	John Ross (Convenor) Miriam Nauenberg (Allocations)	██████████ ██████████
Representatives to State Council:	David Odell Joyce Willde Betty Cornhill	
Public Officer and Information on Organic Growing:	Elizabeth Palmer	██████████
Supper Convenors:	Sue Johnston Maree Bahr	██████████ ██████████
Produce Table:	Dorothy Berndsen	██████████
Book Sales:	Murray Dadds	██████████
Newsletter Poster:	Stephen Willis	██████████

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 23rd February 1993 7.15 pm
Room 4 Griffin Centre

TOPIC: Soil by Joyce Wilkie

VISITORS ARE MOST WELCOME

There will be the usual library, produce stall, seed bank and discount book stall, with a good supper and friendly talk afterwards.

Jackie French will address the Meeting, after the Annual General Meeting, in March.

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday 2nd March 1993 at 7.30 pm. at the Environment Centre.

Articles in this Quarterly do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society, nor are the products and services offered by advertisers specifically endorsed by the Society.

ADVERTISING IN COGS QUARTERLY

Size	One Issue	Three issues (consecutive)
Full page	\$20	\$45 (\$15 per issue)
Half page	\$10	\$22.50 (\$7.50 per issue)
Quarter page	\$5	\$11.25 (\$3.75 per issue)

Please contact the Editor to discuss the size and layout of advertisements.

CONTENTS.

Editorial
Election of Office Bearers and Committee 1993
Clever Clover Demonstration Day
Rural Correspondent
Orchards - Loriendale Organic Orchard
Soils
Summer pruning of soft fruits
Community Garden News

EDITORIAL.

At the last COGS Committee meeting it was decided that we would trial the issuing of the Newsletter on a quarterly basis. It is planned that the Quarterly will be published in February, May, August and November. As well we are planning to send out Notices in the intervening months, dealing with administrative matters and coming events.

It has become obvious to those involved in producing the Newsletter with the frequency and quality that we all like to receive in our mailbox every month, that it is beyond the capacity of our voluntary organisation to provide this upgraded service monthly. As soon as one Newsletter has been prepared and delivered, production must then begin for the next month. This leaves no time to plan and do research. I realise that a monthly Newsletter has been a COG'S tradition but if we wish to keep up to date with what is happening in the world of organic growing and also be better informed on how to grow our food successfully in this region we must have adequate time to do the work.

During 1992, Gay and I endeavoured to better inform our members about gardening in Canberra. Canberra's climate is unique. What works in Brisbane doesn't necessarily work here. What doesn't work in Sydney might work here because our climate is more conducive to organic growing. While our climate might be harsh in some ways this does work to our advantage. Our beautifully cold and frosty winters do keep down insect populations and decrease the incidence of disease. A dry hot summer reduces the chances of our gardens being affected by fungal diseases. To be a successful producer of food does take time and commitment. To publish an article that brings together local experience plus accurate information takes considerable time.

Through our association with COGS we have access to much valuable and interesting information relating to the environment in general and organic growing in particular. There is a lot of research being done both in Australia and overseas, but this information must be read, sifted and then presented. Stringent copyright laws now in force prohibit us from reproducing material without permission. Permission - if granted - takes a long time to obtain.

I also believe the new Quarterly should relate to what we need to be doing in our gardens and communities and on the farms so that we are able to produce our food safely and without detriment to the environment. To do this satisfactorily we really need assistance

from you, our members. There is clearly a wealth of information and experience among us, and this information needs to be shared. We need more local input and contributions from members. Will you help? We will get items typed. We are also happy to put into writing other people's experiences and knowledge if you would rather talk than put pen to paper. We also want to know what you want to know.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped with the Newsletter in 1992, particularly David Evans, Steve and Wendy Hodgman, Stephen Willis and Oliver.

Sue
Editor.

GARDENING AND OTHER COURSES.

Queanbeyan Adult Education - Course Coordinator Bill Palmer, Tel. 06-2992520 - are running a number of interesting courses, one of which looks like a very informative weekend tour of organic farms and enterprises on the South Coast and Braidwood, on 19-20 March 1993. Ring Bill Palmer for information and bookings.

Other courses include Small area Farming, Gardening without chemicals, and Harnessing earth worms for agriculture.

N.O.R.G. - - New Organic Resource Guide.

N.O.R.G. is an unusual updated version of the Henry Doubleday Research Association's organic contacts list. It includes information about organic, bio-dynamic and associated systems, growers, products, inputs, organisations, standards and certification. Available from: HDRA Aust. Inc. Bookshop, 4 North St. Mount Colah, 2079. Price \$6.00.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 23rd March 1993.

ELECTING YOUR COMMITTEE.

COGS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

The Canberra Organic Growers' Society Incorporated (COGS) is an association, without specific political or religious affiliation as a group, but with the common goal to nurture the following objectives which appear in no particular order:

1. To foster the use of organic methods in home gardening, horticulture and agriculture.
2. To foster organic agricultural knowledge.
3. To promote the production and consumption of certified organically grown foods, and the adoption of recognised organic standards.
4. To encourage and demonstrate the use of organic growing techniques.
5. To provide a forum for the discussion of matters of interest to organic growers in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding region.
6. To facilitate exchange of information and ideas between members with organic growers and groups from other States and Territories.
7. To assist members in establishing their own organic growing areas.
8. To administer community gardens operated under organic agricultural principles for recreational, educational or rehabilitation purposes and for self-supply of contaminant-free produce.

The main business of the Annual General Meeting will be to elect the 1993 Committee. Under the Constitution the Committee has a duty to control and manage COOGS' affairs according to the above aims and objectives.

Those of us at present on the Committee hope that members will come along ready to vote in the people whom they think will best promote the interests of the Society. We hope, too, that there will be members willing to bring new talents and ideas to the Committee.

Last year the new Constitution was drawn up and registered. The new membership system was introduced, and the Library was reorganised.

This year the Committee will be concentrating on developing COGS as a guide and source of information for organic growing among small growers in the A.C.T.

The Newsletter is being reorganised and developed; a programme of talks on the basics of organic growing, with handouts to be drawn up, and the Committee will be studying the question of certifying organic produce for small growers. There are six community gardens in the A.C.T. and the Committee will be seeking to work more closely with the A.C.T. Government in establishing such gardens.

THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee meets once a month on the Tuesday following the General Meeting, and also on the first Tuesday in February.

There are five Office Bearers and up to eight ordinary Committee members. The President supervises COGS affairs and Chairs all meetings. He or she may hold office for three consecutive years. The Vice-President takes over when the President is absent. The Hon. Secretary handles Committee and Meeting business and correspondence. The Hon. Treasurer looks after COGS financial matters and reports to Committee and General meetings. The Membership Secretary maintains a complete register of members, and a file of members' interests in the Society's activities, and also prepares introductory material for new members.

The general Committee members share various duties and activities. They take part in drawing up policies and organising programmes and activities.

VOTING.

All positions will be open to nomination. A nomination form is included in this Newsletter, and completed forms can be forwarded to the Secretary, c/o P.O. Box 347, Dickson, A.C.T. 2602., or brought to the Annual General Meeting.

There are also proxy voting forms for any member who cannot attend the AGM, but who wishes to vote on a particular matter at the AGM (or at any other meeting). These are available from the Secretary, Joan Buckie, Telephone 2865695 (best to ring before 9.30 am. or in the evening after 6 pm).

If only one nomination is received for a particular position, before or at the AGM, then that nominee will be declared elected. If more than one nomination is received for any Executive position, or

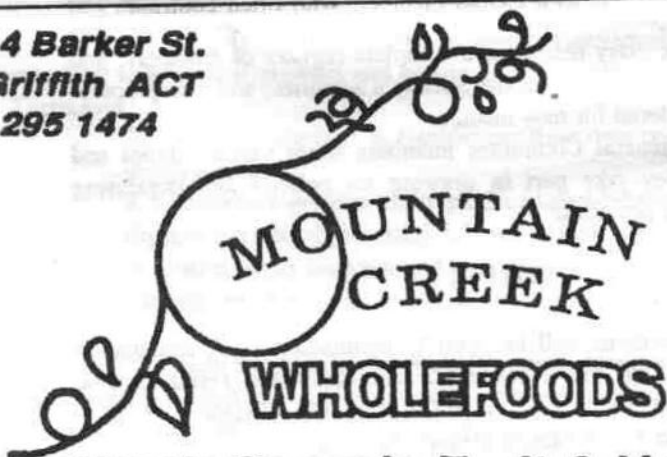
more than eight nominations are received for the general Committee, then ballots will be held in each case.

If there are not enough nominations received, then vacant positions will be left vacant - please don't let that happen!

Once again, please come and vote. COGS is developing rapidly, and we urge members to take part in that development. If you haven't time to spend on the Committee, you could still give occasional help in areas of your particular interest, such as helping with the Library, or doing research on gardening and other topics.

Joan Buckie.
Hon. Secretary.

14 Barker St.
Griffith ACT
295 1474



Fresh Organic Fruit & Vegetables

- Whole Grains & Freshly Milled Flour
- Herbal Remedies • Aromatherapy Oils
- Fresh Nut Butters
- Takeaway Vegetarian Lunches

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

COGS tour of Suburban Gardens.

A tour of suburban gardens in Canberra and Queanbeyan has been organised for COGS members on **Sunday, 7th March, 1993.** We will meet at the Cotter Community Garden at approximately 8.30 am. and look around this attractive example of COGS' Community gardens before leaving to visit an organic garden in Kambah. This garden has plantings with numerous vegetables, herbs and fruit trees. The home includes a very large kitchen for processing their home produce (jams, pickles, tomato sauce) and a storage cellar (dug out 'one wet, boring Christmas' apparently). A most interesting place.

We then hope to visit another garden in South Canberra, but this is yet to be confirmed.

We will return to the Cotter garden for a picnic lunch (bring your own everything) before travelling on to a Biodynamic garden in Queanbeyan belonging to a COGS member, who often contributes to our Newsletter. This quite large suburban garden will give us all a chance to see the results of applying biodynamic compost and other biodynamic preparations to improve the soil, as well as talk to the owner about the gardening methods used.

Because we are visiting suburban gardens we have limited the number of participants to 20, so those members wishing to attend should contact me on 231 6219, to put their names on the list of participants. ***Only those on the list will be able to attend.*** We hope to arrange car pooling on the day to cut down the number of cars needed.

It should be a most enjoyable and informative day. I hope you can join us.

Michelle Johnson.

* * * * *

Check your tomatoes for little dimples. If you have them, it is a good sign that the green bugs are back. They have reappeared due to the warm weather.

see Newsletter, April 1992, pp.11-13. 'Greenleaf bugs'.

From Your LIBRARIAN.

Dear Library users,

I am writing to let you know that I have recently undertaken a stock-take of the COGS library. At present we have over 250 book titles and a wide selection of newsletters from organic groups throughout Australia, as well as magazines such as Grass Roots. A full list of all titles held by COGS is available at the COGS library which is open at our monthly meetings.

Unfortunately many of our books have either been lost or not returned. If you have a COGS Library book please return it. On the address label of this copy of your Newsletter you may find a Reminder notice. If you do not have the book or are unable to return it, please contact me at home on 2470646 or write to me at: 2, Wilga Place, O'Connor, 2602.

Finally, the COGS library has a limited amount of money to be used for the purchase of Library resources; these may be books, magazines, tapes or videos. If you would like the library to purchase a particular item please contact me with all the relevant details - name of resource/item, author, cost, publisher or producer, where it is available etc.

The COGS library is a useful resource. By helping to locate books that are lost and by sharing information regarding titles that are relevant to COGS, we can ensure that this resource continues to be highly valued by the members of our society.

Jonathan Miller
(Librarian).

POTATOES. Pinch out flowers, and pick off seeds/apples to encourage more tubers.

RADISH & CARROT. Try sowing radish and carrot seed mixed. Pull the radishes (which mature first) to leave space for the carrots which come later.

COGS' CHRISTMAS PARTY BARBEQUE

9

At David Odell's
Bungendore property.

On Saturday, 5th December, 1992, a number of Cogs' members went to David O'Dell's property for the Christmas barbeque. David provided and cooked the lamb on a spit, as he did last year.

It did not rain continuously, only thunderstorms were around. David took us on a guided walk round his property. The area of a bit over a hundred acres is in the hills above the Bungendore plain, is fairly heavily timbered, and no pasture improvement had been done previously.

First he had put in dams, four of them, and is planning more. There is a small garden near the house, and the chook run encloses the orchard which he planted with nut and fruit trees, and what was the vegetable patch, so that the chooks improve the soil and have adequate free range.

We walked down to his boundary just over the brow of the hill, where he has begun clearing and levelling a place for his dairy and cow sheds; then into the paddock nearest the house. In this paddock, which was cleared of timber, he has planted thousands of grape vines because the site is ideally suited to grape production. The grass was thick, lush and above our knees, and David said it had taken five years of experimenting with various crops and techniques to get it to this state of abundance and richness.

We crossed the paddock, and then saw the area where the cows are, which has not yet had any treatment, though furrows were visible where a beginning had been made. The paddock still had a good covering of timber, and the cows and calves came when called as it was well past their feeding time.

It was a most enjoyable afternoon, despite the weather, and really interesting to see the early stages of establishing a property. One special feature was an area set aside as a bird sanctuary round one of the dams; the grass was rich and the trees gave a feeling of absolute peace and tranquillity. As we watched in the evening light, wild ducks came in to land on the water. One could not help wondering how many other people deliberately set aside a small piece of their property for wild life conservation.

On Saturday and Sunday, 5th and 6th December, 1992, Richard Sturzaker opened his garden to the public and one of our members joined the many other interested visitors.

Richard spoke at one of our meetings last February, [see COGS Newsletter Feb. '92, p. 8.] and he also had an article in Gardening Australia, November 1991, pp.52-55, on the subject of clever clover, so there were many people interested in seeing a practical demonstration of his theories.

The garden was beautifully laid out for the demonstration, each bed being numbered to show the sequence of growing, and a leaflet was available to each visitor describing what was in each bed. The whole theory was very easy to follow, scientifically presented and there was good logic to the tour.

The Notes given to visitors were as follows:

'Welcome to the original *Clever Clover* garden. This garden is a scaled down version of experiments by the CSIRO and the University of Sydney. The research is directed towards finding new and sustainable methods of vegetable production.

1. Start.

As you walk round the garden there are signs labelled 1 to 12. These numbers correspond to notes on this page and give details about what we are doing.

The garden beds are generally arranged in groups of three - clover (where summer vegetables are grown) then lucerne (where winter vegetables are grown) and then a bed where neither clover nor lucerne is grown (for vegetables which do not fit into the clover/lucerne system).

2. Eggplant, Capsicum, Tomato planted into clover.

The clover was killed by solarisation (see later). The seedlings of these early summer vegetables were planted into a mound of compost because the compost stays warmer than the soil under the mulch and is rich in nutrients.

3. Onions planted between lucerne rows.

The lucerne grows slowly during cold weather and winter vegetables are planted between the lucerne rows. Usually we grow crops such as cauliflower and broccoli in the lucerne beds between February and September. The lucerne is important because its deep roots take up excess water and nutrients from deep in the subsoil.

4. **Woogenellup sub clover.**

Woogenellup is one of the clover varieties in the Clever Clover kits. It normally dies naturally around the end of November but this wet spring has allowed it to stay alive (although it has stopped growing). Opposite the Woogenellup is the other clover variety in the kits, called Dalkeith. This variety is not as vigorous as Woogenellup and normally dies off earlier in the summer.

5. **Lucerne mown after pea crop.**

Sugar snap peas were grown between these lucerne rows during winter. Now that the crop has finished, and the lucerne has started to grow vigorously, the whole bed can be mown. Mowing should not be lower than 5 cm above ground level, otherwise the lucerne plants will be damaged.

6. **Our soil.**

Like most soils in Canberra, ours is not very fertile. The topsoil is shallow and overlies a dense clay subsoil. However, by managing the soil carefully we can still grow good crops. Once the beds have been made there is little need to dig the soil. The secret is to add lots of organic matter and to protect the soil surface with a mulch. The clover and lucerne provide this organic matter and protection, and their roots penetrate the clay subsoil. When the roots die they leave open channels into the subsoil so that water can infiltrate quickly. The roots of the vegetable crops can also use old root channels, and take a "short cut" down into the subsoil.

7. **Clover being solarised.**

Most gardeners need to start planting before the clover has died down naturally. Solarisation is a very good technique because the clover dies quickly and no chemicals are required. To solarise the clover, cover it with clear (translucent) plastic and make sure that the edges of the plastic are sealed to the ground with bricks, wood, soil or the like. The temperature under this plastic reached 55 degrees Celsius after only two hours on a day which had a maximum temperature of 24 degrees C. If you kill the clover before the seed is mature, you will need to re-plant it next autumn.

8. **Testing clover varieties.**

There are many species of plants which we can use as mulch crops and so far we have found sub clover to be the best. There are also many varieties of sub clover and we are still working out the most suitable ones for this purpose.

9. **Weeds left in the lucerne during the summer.**

Lucerne has extremely deep roots. This means that it will continue to grow while other plants are dying due to lack of water. This year it

has been too wet for the lucerne to beat the weeds in this way. It is important to cut the lucerne before any of these weeds have made seed.

10. Not everything is mulched!

Mulches have many advantages. These include improving the soil structure, weed control, keeping the soil moist and cool in summer and the release of nutrients. There can be some disadvantages too. If weeds are not removed from the start, they can become even more of a problem because it is difficult to hoe when mulches are present. Secondly, mulches keep the soil too cool in spring. This corn was planted a month earlier than the corn planted in clover bed, because the soil was warmer. Thirdly, freshly rotting mulches can release compounds which slow the growth of vegetable seedlings for a short time. When seedlings are planted into a mound of compost., the initial rotting processes will have finished by the time the roots of the seedlings have grown out of the compost.

11. Tensiometer moisture meter.

This instrument records how hard the plants need to suck water to get it out of the soil. It is too expensive for the average garden (approx. \$80), but gives very valuable information. Our garden is watered by drip irrigation and we closely monitor the amount of water applied. We have never had an excess water bill!

12. Compost.

A good compost should get so hot that you cannot put your hand inside. The heat kills weed seeds and most diseases and speeds up the rotting process. To get a hot compost you must include the right ingredients, ensure it is moist but aerated, and make it big."

In reply to questions, Richard said his garden was about 1/4 acre, divided into about 10 beds; some had vegetables, some for experimental clover/lucerne crops. These points were clearly labelled to match the leaflet.

Dr. Sturzacker does not know of any local farmer following the system. The research aims to help start commercial growers cutting back on tillage. The system is not suited to small mixed bed such as companion planting. The beds in the garden each had one or two types of plants; if more than one type, they are planted in separate groups.

Clover is planted in March and dies down in warmer weather.

Because Canberra has a cold climate clover takes longer to grow and may need to be solarised for planting vegetables in time. Sub clovers are being used for the system. Surface clover is a weed and is not suitable.

Clover regeneration is still being studied. The lucerne is planted in rows to allow weeding, and vegetable planting. The weeds need to be killed off (by solarisation) before planting clover/lucerne, otherwise the weeds compete.

Our member said there was a continuing stream of people passing through the garden, but the clearly signed pathways between the numbered beds made it very simple for everyone to follow the sequence described on the leaflet - which was available at the garden entrance.

A small donation was collected to help fund clever clover project for Africa.

Fyshwick Garden Centre

6 Maryborough St. Fishwick.

Telephone: 06-2804274

2806432

OPEN EVERY DAY.

Supplier of almost everything any gardener would need.

Special services and 10% discount on front store items to COGS members - please bring your membership card.

BOOKS.

Academic Reminders, of Kembla St., Fishwick, are an excellent source for cheap gardening (and other) books. I have obtained several Rodale books here, the last one being the famous Encyclopedia of Herbs, all at approximately half their normal retail price. If you are not on their free mailing list, put your name down, or go and browse round their huge warehouse. They are open 7 days a week, and know their stock so ask if you can't find anything.

Gay Baker.

First let me congratulate your Editor for the initiative she has shown in proposing the new format. 'COGS Quarterly' promises to bring you articles and features directly relevant to the interests you have expressed and the expanded issues allow these to be dealt with in greater depth. We look forward to your comments and constructive suggestions in order to maintain this momentum in providing articles sourced principally from organic growing experiences in Canberra and its surrounding region.

Your 'Rural Correspondent' is already well known to you so there is no point in trying to hide behind a *nom de plume* and even if he were to do so, his parochial bias towards Bungendore, and Rocky Glen in particular, would soon reveal his identity. So this rural correspondent is making no apologies for being unashamedly self-indulgent in commenting on matters close to his heart, but he will try to bear in mind their relevance to the wider context by using particular experiences as examples for more extensive application.

The plan of 'Rocky Glen' is included with this issue as a reference point for many of my comments and examples, and has proved extremely helpful to me in planning the farm in order to make the best use of its natural features and to create a blending with those other features, such as roads and easements, that have been imposed by developers and the Council.

In subsequent issues I will expand on the philosophy I adopted before I started to develop the farm, but basically it was to be 'Organic and Common Sense'. 'Organic' because I had always practised organic methods and now wished to put them into operation on a larger scale than just the backyard, and 'Common Sense' because this was an area which was relatively untouched before I purchased (so I didn't have to correct the mistakes of my predecessors), but there was the prospect of being able to implement the ideas that had built up in the 40 years or so of hunger for 'a place of my own'.

In September 1992 the planting of 4,000 Pinot Noir grape rootlings commenced in order to establish a small cool-climate 'organic' vineyard as a core activity for the farm, which is in harmony with the soils and the climate and with the longer term objective of boosting the production of local wines.

I planted the first 1,300 on my own, but as it was critical that I got them in before it became too late (and before my back gave out), it was necessary to hire some casual labour from Jobline. Eventually the job was done - and with success - because only a very few decided they didn't want to grow.

Setting out the job took longer than expected because each of the rows had to be set out accurately with sight pegs, and double-ripped with single

tyne ripper behind my tractor; then it was a case of using a string line and measuring stick to make sure that each row was 2 metres apart and each hold was exactly 1.1 metres from the next - otherwise I wouldn't get them all in. Apparently 4,000 seemed such a nice round number when I ordered them, as I really hadn't measured up beforehand but had taken an educated guess. After the job was done I felt that I should have guessed a lot less - about 1,399 less.

To make sure that the grapes survived any possible dry spell, or even a drought, I had another large dam built last August and bought a Hatz diesel-driven pump and a travelling irrigator. So far I haven't had to use these because it has been the most extraordinary Spring that I can remember. It has rained on cue in the required amounts for the past three months (last year there was very little rain at all for three months at the hottest time of the year). Of course the lush Spring has brought its own problems, with the almost sub-tropical conditions as the grape vines became lost amongst the rampant vegetation.

Part of the problem was due to the fact I was waiting for an engine to arrive from America for the slasher, to replace the one that had blown up last season, and while this delay was taking place the grapes were disappearing from sight despite my best efforts to keep the growth at bay with a hand hoe. So there was nothing else for it but to buy a scrub cutter - a 28cm Ryobi with a wicked looking metal blade - which acted somewhat like a guillotine for some unfortunate grapes which suffered from my carelessness. However, being true survivors (and due to the fact that they are rootlings), they have put up new shoots as though nothing untoward had happened.

This is tedious, tiring and some consuming work, especially as the flies realise that I have both hands occupied, so I find it useful to make an early start, take a break during the heat of the day, and, if possible, do some more before it gets too dark.

When the slasher arrived, with its new 10hp Tecumseh engine it certainly was put to the test because even though it is self-propelled, it required a great deal of effort to tame the tangled mess that passed for a new vineyard. Now that I have gone over all of the area at least once it will be easier to keep the growth down.

Before planting the grapes I had sown the area to rape as a summer feed for the cows, and undersown it with lucerne to provide a green manure, and since it has been slashed it looks a lovely lush green with all the lucerne now providing a valuable surface mulch. Lucerne is called the 'king of fodders' because of its high protein content and its ability to bring trace minerals to the surface through its very deep roots. The lucerne, when slashed, rots into the surface, providing a 'blanket' against extremes of weather, and food for all of the soil microbes and earthworms - and of course is good for the crapes. Eventually, as part of my integrated farming system, this lucerne will be greenfeed for geese and free range poultry, so in anticipation of this I have

erected a 1.8m netting fence around the perimeter to keep them in, and to keep out the foxes. It will have an electrified top wire.

Of course, there will be some internal modifications when the grapes are on the vines, to avoid any conflict of interest as to who actually owns the grapes. Why Pinot Noir? Wine experts will tell anyone who is prepared to listen, that Pinot is a notoriously difficult grape to make into drinkable wine. It's not in the making, but in the grape itself, and this particular difficulty has been identified in the requirement for specific climatic and soil conditions. Why have I planted Pinot exclusively? Because I *know* that Rocky Glen has those special conditions for this special grape.

I look forward to sharing my thoughts with you again in the next issue.

Your Rural Correspondent,
David Odell.
Bungendore.

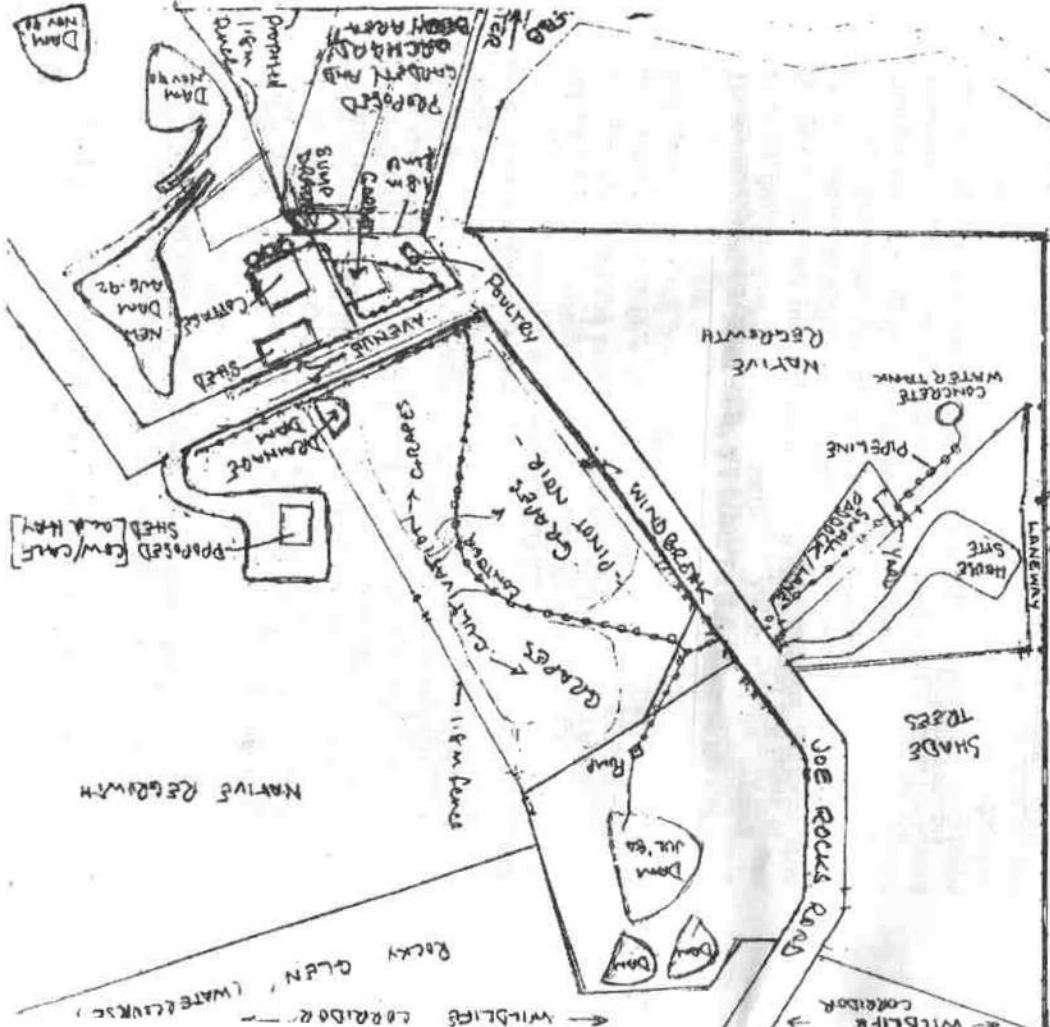
**JOSEPH'S A1 QUALITY
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES..
Shop 12 Fyshwick Market ACT.**

Markets open Thursday-Sunday.
8 am - 5. 30 pm.

Certified organically grown
produce a speciality.

Phone (06) 295 8938
Fax. (06) 295 1415.

SHADECLOTH. Stops lettuce bolting. Protects seedlings from cabbage butterfly and other flying bugs. Other materials such as old lace/net curtains, flyscreen wire also let rain through, filter light, and prevent bug attacks.



LOT
 2
 16.4 ha

ROCKY GLEN,
 BUNGENDORE NSW

Lot DP 1/19113
 WAMBOLIN
 23.11 ha
 ex roads



SUMMER ORGANICS at LORIENDALE ORCHARD.

Every season produces its own bounty and gives the grower some challenge as well. For this year, the challenge has to do mostly with very wet conditions.

MULCHING. A certainty for midsummer on our orchard. We now rely on bleached (not green) lucerne hay to provide a 6" deep mulch for all our trees. Soil life depends on organic matter; the richest soil is around our trees. Lucerne has the added advantage of containing many trace elements. Weed control is most effective with generous mulching. The ground retains its moisture and the soil remains cool. Finally pick up some moist soil and see the living organisms and earthworms doing their wonderful job.

It is essential to water deeply but not to flood. All fruit trees and nut trees have shallow root systems - the one main exception is the walnut. Kiwi fruit and hazelnuts have very shallow root systems. I am currently working on a 4-day cycle of watering around the orchard. Each time the soil and mulch is well soaked. Many orchardists use drip systems. I have chosen the full circle micro sprays on 6" rises. These finely spray the water about 3/4 metre on both sides of the tree - to cover the drip line more satisfactorily. Watering in the evening reduces dramatically the evaporation and it takes a good 5-6 hours of steady watering to really soak the soil.

Remember that the buds are now forming for next year's fruit so that watering through the hot season, after early harvests, is essential. I never cease to be amazed at the buds forming on the cherry trees before Christmas for next October; so picking requires care.

PRUNING. There is still some time for summer pruning. This is the best time for apricots and cherries - on dry days. The quick setting of the cut reduces the risk of virus infection. Once formed to shape, these trees require little pruning. For us, pruning is now primarily to keep the fruit picking height down and aid bird control. We have generally used the 5 x 4 metre bird nets on these trees. We may have to use two on the larger areas next year.

THINNING. An essential job for mid-summer with smaller trees. Remove parts of clusters of apples/pears leaving 2-3. On peaches/nectarines leave only one fruit per 3". For trees planted in the past two years I will leave one or two on the tree, just to get a first

taste. But remember, too much strain and stress this year sets back the fruiting levels the following year.

PESTS/DISEASE. We have had to deal with a few regular pests this year and some occasional ones as well. We have to set up the orchard in three distinct areas in the hope that an outbreak in one area could be contained. To a large extent this has worked. We need to understand the ways of pests and diseases to work out the most natural methods of control.

Apple Scab/Black Spot. This has been a major problem this year due to the wet, humid conditions in Spring/early Summer. Orchards in South Australia report 80% of fruit is marked. Most control is early in the growing season. For now, pick off badly market fruit; save the others for eating as it will only be surface damage.

Pear/Cherry Slug. This can run through three generations in a summer. Unless controlled completely it will recur and devastate the leaves. If you have only one small tree, good control can be achieved by physically squashing each slug on the leaves; I will often do this for my small Nashi pear trees. Talcum powder is effective. For my larger trees I have sprayed with pyrethrum - best sprayed in the evening. It is a natural product spray and a contact spray. My friend at the CSIRO tells me it is very UV sensitive so daytime applications may not be effective. For us, there is generally no wind, only in the early morning, and that single spray has been very effective. A concentrated effort in one year can eliminate this pest for some time.

Woolly aphid. This insect with its "cotton wool" surroundings badly affects apple tree branches. The most effective control is labour intensive but we have completely cleared it from our orchard. An equal mixture of methylated spirits and worm water with detergent is to be brushed on thoroughly. A job children can do - our 11-year old Felicity takes the credit for this success story.

Codling Moth. We had two years with no codling moth (just like Western Australia). Some new trees probably introduced it to one area. This last four weeks one section has evidence of a small outbreak. We are regularly inspecting and removing any fruit with signs of the inward journey of the moth.

The moth will overwinter in the soil at the base of the trees. We shall bring all of our bantam hens into this area for the winter to forage. Larger hens are as successful, they just dig more deeply around the root structure. (our bigger problem at the moment is to keep the foxes away from the hens. We may have to resort to an electric fence like our organic grower friend in the Adelaide hills who runs geese, ducks and hens).

Couch grass. An unusual inclusion in pests but one of our major challenges. We have found the best solution is to dig it out. This can best be done when the soil is moist as you need to remove all the white fibrous roots. Clean over the soil a few times, then mulch thickly around the trees.

HYGIENE. Orchard hygiene is essential for organic growers. That means a regular routine of collection for most of the year. The diligence of removal of diseased/infected fruit assists greatly.

- * November - hand removal of withered, curly leaf
- * January - removal of any apples with black spot
- removal of any fruit with fruit fly/codling moth
- * February - collection of fallen plums and peaches
- removal of fruit with the brown rot
- * May - collection of leaves around apple trees/rose bushes that were badly

infected by Black spot.

Owen Pigeon.

NOW AVAILABLE - ORGANICALLY GROWN

- Apples - 20 international varieties - late Feb-May
- Nectarines - late February
- Peaches - March
- Strawberries/raspberries - March
- Nashi pears - March/April
- Hazelnuts - April

Loriendale Orchard is 5 km along Spring Range Road, Hall. This is the first road on the right along the Barton Highway, in New South Wales.

Open: Wednesday-Saturday.

NOTE: Bleached lucerne hay available at \$3.50 per bale.
Special OPEN DAY on Saturday 3 April, 1993, 2 - 5 pm.
(details in March Notice)

As soils are the basis of all food production and the essence of an organic or biodynamic growing system, your Committee has decided to have SOILS as a major theme for 1993. Would you bring a sample of your garden soil to the February meeting and we will discuss how to understand more about its potential to grow fruit and vegetables and also different ways of improving your soil.

Many of COGS' books on organic growing contain information on soils. As well, COGS also has a set of tapes put out by Norwaves, a branch of the University of New England, Northern Rivers which are the basis of a course titled "Towards a sustainable agriculture" and the following is an outline of tape 2: 'The living soil'.

The tape begins "Without the layer of earth - the living top soil - there can be no life and that includes no human life". The soil's fertility is the foundation of our food supply. In natural, undisturbed systems there is a continuous cycle of nutrient elements from soil to plant, plant to animal then animal back to soil through the endless repetition of birth and life followed by death and decay. Nutrients are continuously recycling. Agricultural practice disrupts this cycle by taking nutrients off the farm and these must be replaced.

Three schools of thought - conventional/chemical, organic/biological/ecological and biodynamic are examined, the main difference in approach being which component of soil is most important and the different ways of replacing removed constituents. Fertile soil consists (by volume) of the following components: minerals (45%), organic matter (5%), air (25%). Soils also have a biological component. Fertile top soil consists of 1% (by weight) of living organisms and over 27 tonnes of organisms can inhabit a hectare of farmland.

CHEMICAL AGRICULTURE. In 1840 Justus Von Liebig discovered that if you reduce plants to ash, three minerals - Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium - NPK - always remain. Scientists then calculated how much NPK is removed when a crop is sold off a farm. This was then replaced with the same amount of N, P and K in chemical form. Since then 60 of the 92 naturally occurring elements have been found in plants. Chemical farming has become a juggling of formulas followed by the application of fungicides, herbicides and pesticides. Nutrients are supplied in water soluble form allowing instant absorption by plants. Farmers are now moving to making their growing systems more sustainable.

ORGANIC/ECOLOGICAL/BIOLOGICAL. Between 1920 and 1940 many people became concerned that the constant application of water

soluble nutrients was having a damaging effect on the biological activity of the soil and hence the organic fraction in the soil. They believed that the 5% of organic matter is the key to soil fertility. Rodale and Howard looked at chemical farms and saw that the soils were becoming addicted to the chemicals that were being applied. Although there was an initial increase in soil fertility, over a period of years, the health of the soil was undermined because the natural regenerative processes within the soil were being inhibited. In the long term, a dependency on the chemicals results in farmers getting onto a fertiliser treadmill. The organic school of thought says that soil fertility is not solely a function of the available nutrients but a more complex function involving the action of bacteria and fungi. Organic gardeners and farmers maintain high levels of organic matter in the soil by adding manures, green manures and compost. They agree that chemicals must be replaced, but they disagree on the form that the nutrients must take. If extra minerals are needed they are applied as powdered rocks. The emphasis is on feeding the soil, which in turn feeds the plants via biological activity.

BIO-DYNAMICS. Bio-dynamic growers believe that life forces are associated with all life forms and because the soil is full of living organisms then it also contains life force. Biodynamic gardeners and farmers believe that this force is the most important aspect of fertility. If you look after the vitality of the soil then correct plant nutrition will follow. When produce is exported there is an out flow of vitality therefore you must replace this vitality/life force as well as the substances that are removed. Life force is replaced by making the soil receptive to the continuous, in-streaming life force from the cosmos. Biodynamic farmers say that the health of the soil is affected by the activity of extra-terrestrial bodies e.g. the sun, moon and the planets. The life force can be enhanced by the application of a number of homeopathic preparations that are made from combinations of herbs and manure. Biodynamic growers also maintain that nutrients can be replaced by alchemical transmutation of elements, something that mainstream scientists find impossible to believe.

The Norwaves tape on soils is a very clear discussion of the differences between the conventional, organic and bio-dynamic approaches. However, it is by no means comprehensive. The topic of soils comes up on a number of other tapes in the package and if the subject interests you, talk to the COGS librarian about borrowing them.

As a geologist I believe that it is possible to tap into the resources of our subsoils by careful use of non inversion tillage. In our gardens near Gundaroo we have shown that it is indeed possible to

deepen and, at the same time, improve our topsoil using organic methods together with deep tillage.

If you are interested in further reading on the 'making of topsoil' I recommend Chap. 5. 'Soil improvement on pasture lands', in P.A. Yeoman's book "The keyline plan".

Joyce Wilkie.



THE UNIQUE SOIL ENHANCER FOR A HEALTHY SOIL FUTURE

BIO-ACTIVE is a Biodynamic liquid seaweed containing live bacteria essential to humus formation and soil life.

Benefits to your soil: ★ Continuous soil fertility
★ Improved nutritional value of produce
★ Providing a sustainable environment for your plants

1 litre covers 1000 square metres (¼ acre)
Most effective when used each season

To order, please phone Lynette West (06) 297 2729
P.O. Box 179 Queanbeyan NSW 2620

PRODUCED BY BIODYNAMIC QUALITY FERTILISERS
creating a sustainable future for Australia

SLUDGE. Research in 1990, (and still going on), claims that sludge compost - with heavy metals - may have a beneficial effect on lead-contaminated soil. It lowers the lettuce uptake of lead, also in spinach, carrots and beetroot.

As the rain recently has produced very heavy growth on soft fruit canes and bushes, I asked David Young for advice about cutting back some of this growth now.

He advises judicious pruning by shortening new growth, and light prune now to increase the benefit of later winter pruning.

Black currants. Training and pruning. Fruit comes mainly of last season's wood; there should be eight to ten vigorous shoots per bush and after the third year remove two or three of the older darker shoots. Prune back weak shoots to two or three buds. Summer pruning after harvest will help to encourage better growth in the remaining shoots and long shoots can be tipped and the fruit bearing laterals shortened. Training shoots against a wire gives better sunlight. (The centre of the bush should always be kept open).

After the third year, cut all shoots to ground level in the winter.

Red Currants. In the second year, cut back main arms to produce side spurs, leave up to eight leading branches. (Keep the centre of the bush open). Prune any vigorous side shoots; leave short weak side shoots. After the fourth year one or two of the lower fruit bearing shoots can be removed each year (like roses). Young wood is cut back to produce side shoots. Summer pruning, as this helps to ripen the crop, and also encourages future flower buds. Cut side shoots merging near the fruiting sprigs back to three or four leaves just as berries ripen. Any dead wood should be removed completely.

Raspberries. Once the crop is finished, cut out all old canes - i.e. those that bore fruit this year - and any weak, thin new canes. Leave 4-8 good, strong new canes per crown (root), and tie them to supporting wires ready for next year. If the new canes are very long (mine were over 7' tall), they can be 'tipped' back to an acceptable height. I cut mine to about 5'. If you have autumn-fruiting varieties, do not cut them until after harvesting the berries.

If you have suckers coming up where you don't want them, pull them up and cut them as close to the parent crown as possible. I find just pulling them up seems to do the trick. If you want to transplant any suckers, take the best ones and re-plant immediately; trim back any that are too long (over about half a metre).

COMMUNITY GARDENS NEWS.

WATSON GARDEN.

Over the past two months I have been keeping Watson Garden ploholders informed by letter on the various changes that have been introduced by the new garden Committee, and also to indicate the strong requirement to maintain a good gardening image, during the Planning Authorities' assessment phase of the proposed residential development. I'm please to see that the majority of ploholders have taken this on board and I'm sure we can keep up the good work.

The latest from the Planning Authority, in response to my last letter of the 7 Jan 1993 was, "Your comments on the location of the organic garden and your preference that the garden remains in its current location if and when the development of North Watson proceeds are noted. Your comments will be taken into account in the future planning of the area".

The garden committee have now introduced, with the consent of the ploholders, a new set of garden rules which are supplementary to the COGS General Garden Rules. These rules, in accordance with the new COGS Constitution, have also been ratified by the COGS committee.

Miriam Nauenberg has completed the audit of garden ploholders that David Evans started in November last year and she has name-tagged each plot to make plot identification a lot easier, especially for herself as the new plot allocator.

John Canny and I have made repairs to all the leaky taps and hoses and taken a full inventory of all the hose fittings, and at the next committee meeting an assessment of additional hose equipment will be ascertained.

On the evening of the 15 Jan '93, or in the early hours of the 16 Jan '93, we had some unwanted visitors in the garden, who set about to vandalise anything and everything that seemed to get in their way. The shed windows were smashed, the shed doors were just about ripped off their hinges, one of the kids' swings had one of its upright support bars broken and several ploholders had some of their crops ripped up. The peculiar thing I found about the whole incident was that after they had done their vandalising bit, they decided to make a collection of onions. I found two piles of onions the next day over the side fence, stacked up like tennis balls. All I can say is

at the current price of 59c a kilo in the shops, that organically grown onions must be worth a lot more. The only evidence left behind was a few size 10 barefoot prints.

Most of the plot levies have now been collected, but for anyone who still has to get around to it, please contact Miriam on 2489272.

John Ross
(Convenor).



MANURE FOR SALE

GOOD CLEAN SHEEP MANURE, 80 litre bags

Home deliveries \$4.00 per bag (6 bag minimum)

Also PRIME HARDWOOD available ALL YEAR

Debbie and Rowan Allan (Ph: 288 4569)

CLUB VEG ORGANIC SUPERMARKET.
9A, Sargood St., O'Connor, 2602.
Ph. 2571449.

OPEN 7 DAYS.

10 am - 6 pm weekdays.

9 am - 6 pm Saturday

10 am - 4 pm Sunday

5% discount to COGS members on fresh products and dried foods.

WATSON COMMUNITY GARDEN RULES - 2 FEBRUARY 1993

(Supplementary to COGS General Garden Rules)

1. Plotholders will democratically elect a new garden committee in October of each year. Notification of the date being given in the COGS newsletter prior to the election.
2. Plot levies are due on the 1 September each year and are require to be paid prior to the election of the new garden committee. Notification of payment and / or changes to the amount of levies will be posted in the COGS newsletter.
3. The maximum number of plots that can be held by any one member, is four of the larger plots or up to six smaller plots taking up the same area. Plotholders can only be allocated a maximum of two new plots at any one time and must prove that they can manage a bigger area before further allocation can be made.
4. Plotholders must take an active part in the maintenance of the grass in their garden zone and are directly responsible for keeping the grass around their plot(s) mown.
5. Plotholders are responsible for keeping the paths between their plots clear.
6. Plotholders are responsible for the upkeep of their name tag(s) attached to a stake on the corner of the plot nearest the intersection of the community garden road and Aspinal Street. They are also responsible for the staking of each corner of their plot(s).
7. Each garden zone should organise suitable representation on organised working bee days.
8. Plotholders should report any damaged or missing COGS equipment to the garden committee.
9. COGS tools, when used, must be handled with care and after use should be cleaned and returned to the shed.
10. Plotholders are not allowed to bring dogs into the garden.
11. Plotholders are responsible for disposing of their own rubbish.
12. When a plot is no longer required, it should be surrendered to the plot allocator.
13. Plotholders going away for a long period of time should arrange for someone to attend their plot(s) and inform the plot allocator of the period of absence.
14. Plotholders transferring to another garden should notify the plot allocator.
15. Cultivation of canes and other invasive species are not permitted i.e. Raspberries.
16. No fires should be lit by plotholders.
17. Vehicle access to the garden should be kept to a minimum.


Garden Convener
COG President

WHAT IS ORGANIC GROWING ABOUT?

The ORGANIC MOVEMENT endeavours to provide an alternative to the mass of toxic chemicals, fertilisers, fungicides and herbicides used in modern agricultural methods by utilising more natural means of improving and preserving our soils and to produce nutritious, less contaminated food.

WHAT ARE THE ORGANIC ALTERNATIVES?

By enriching the soil with compost, manure green manure and mulches we avoid disease and control pests through non-chemical methods, including encouraging the presence of beneficial insects to feed on pests, growing companion plants to discourage pest attacks, by growing healthy plants to resist pest attacks and disease and by tuning in to nature with love, harmony and gratitude.

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

4th Tuesday of the Month

February	23rd	July	27th
March	23rd	August	24th
April	27th	September	28th
May	25th	October	26th
June	22nd	November	23rd

December - Christmas barbeque.

BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

- * Access to Community Gardens at Curtin, Watson, Tuggeranong, The Valley, Charnwood and Oaks Estate for growing organic produce.
- * Quarterly magazine, with monthly Newsletter updates.
- * Excursions, social activities and seminars.