

THE COGS

QUARTERLY

VOL 5 no. 4

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

SUMMER 1997



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Supper Convenors: -
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REMINDER: Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except December and January.) Our meetings are held at 7.30 pm, Room 4, Griffin Centre, Civic.

*****EVERYONE WELCOME*****

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

Preferably on Apple Macintosh diskette - Contact Editor, Joan Cordeaux for details on 201 5105 email: jcc@comserver.canberra.edu.au

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Joan Buckie

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 into nature with love, harmony and gratitude.

To all advertisers - thank you for your support

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by *Michelle Johnson*

The Horticultural Fair at the CIT / Xeriscape Garden in Weston was a very successful event for COGS, despite the storm on the Friday night just as we were putting up the tent and doubtful weather conditions early the next morning.

The plants on our stall sold well and earned us a tidy profit. There was a lot of interest in the seeds for sale, but unfortunately since we are only reselling Phoenix Seeds the profit margin is very small. It would be preferable to have a good supply of "COGS OWN" seeds to sell as these make a good profit. We would appreciate it if members could make an effort to save some seed for COGS through this season so we can sell to members and the public.

A steady stream of people went through COGS Backyard looking at our demonstration plots. After all the effort that has gone into establishing the garden it was good to hear some positive feedback on the garden and to see the beginning of its role as an educational tool for COGS. If you haven't seen it yet, come along to the afternoon tea at the garden on Saturday, November 29 (see notice in Quarterly).

At the Fair I was asked to give a short talk on organic growing as part of a seminar series CIT ran during the day. I decided to go back to basics and give a brief discussion on the definition of "organic", as in my experience many people only have a hazy view of what organic growing is about. I also found it useful from my own point of view to revisit one of the basic tenants of organic growing - building a fertile well structured soil - as they say in the old adage of organic growers: "Feed the soil, not the plant"!

For the interest of new members I will give the definition here too, as taken from the National Standards of Organic and Biodynamic Produce as it does provide food for thought:

"organic" means produced in soils of enhanced biological activity, determined by the humus level, crumb structure and feeder root development, such that plants are fed through the soil ecosystem, and not primarily through soluble fertilisers added to the soil. Plants grown in such a systems take up essential soluble salts that are released slowly from humus colloids, at a rate governed by warmth. In this system, the metabolism of the plant and its ability to assimilate nutrients is not overstressed by excessive uptake of soluble salts in the soil water (such as nitrates)."

Quite a lot to ponder on, particularly the way plants are fed through the soil ecosystem. The whole story of nutrient feeding by plants is a fascinating one. If you're interested, Alex Podolinsky's "Biodynamic Agriculture Introductory Lectures" is a good reference, as is Joy Larkcom's "Vegetables from Small Gardens". Nutrient uptake from the soil and water uptake are seen as separate functions of the plant when it is not force fed by soluble fertilisers. Photosynthesis occurs when the plant uses carbon dioxide absorbed through the leaves together with water absorbed through the roots to produce sugars and starches in the presence of light. Photosynthesis requires water - pure water - not water with nutrients dissolved in it. So a plant needs access to water alone. Other nutrients come from the soil itself in soluble form when the plant requires them. The two processes do not necessarily occur at the time.

The definition certainly reminds us of the importance of the soil ecosystem and this needs to be remembered when using liquid manures. These can be very beneficial and can afford a temporary boost for a plant, but they do nothing for the soil itself and therefore should not replace long-term measures to improve the soil in your garden.

All of the garden beds at COGS Backyard are planted out now and the season is well under way. From weather reports it looks as if we are in for a hot, dry summer, so good luck with the gardening. Our next General Meeting will be the Harvest Night in February and we hope to see some of the produce from your garden on show, as well as that from COGS Backyard.

As we go into the summer break, may I wish you happy gardening and a safe holiday season.

Merry Xmas!

The Internet Column

By John Allen

Email: jallen@pcug.org.au

COGS WWW Home Page URL: <http://www.pcug.org.au/~jallen/cogs.htm>



The Internet Column

By John Allen

Email: jallen@pcug.org.au

COGS Web Site: <http://www.pcug.org.au/~jallen/cogs.htm>

Let me know if you are on the Internet and if you would like me to forward organic E-mail received. It is a good opportunity to make some organic friends elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

Organic Gardening

This excellent site is by David & Kay Heaton. David has been organic gardening for over twenty years; and was at one time president of the Brisbane Organic Growers Society and a tutor at TAFFE. The URL is:

<http://www.powerup.com.au/~dheaton/page4.htm>

It covers composting, worms, soils, watering, raising seedlings, seeds, transplanting seedlings, fertilisers, no-dig gardens, building the garden, bugs and predators and pest control.

Then a comprehensive list of plants is presented, giving their growing times, when to plant, likes and dislikes with respect to soil and fertilisers.

Finally there is information on crop rotation, companion planting, herbs in the vege garden, the pH scale, natural sources of trace elements for composting, and book and magazine suggestions.

The information is oriented towards the Queensland climate but there is a wealth of generic information available and quite a few useful tips.

David's wife, Kay has a good site on herbs at:

<http://www.powerup.com.au/~dheaton/page1.htm>

Kids Valley Gardening Site

A great school holiday project for your kids!

Originated for the Pakenham Junior Horticultural Society, Canada. The URL is:

<http://www.arnprior.com/kidsgarden/index.htm>

This site is designed for children but is a good resource for anyone new to gardening. It leads you through step by step in developing a garden (even saying when to seek advise from parents etc.) The steps are:

Planning your Garden, Planting, Keeping Plants Healthy, Showing your plants, Flowers, Veges, Herbs, Shrubs

The emphasis is on using organic methods. It does mention use of chemical sprays as a "last resort" - I have suggested that they add more information about why chemical sprays should be avoided.

Genetic Engineering

Following on from the article in the last newsletter which contains a list of gene-free soy products, some disturbing information has come to hand.

The following is a summary of a press release issued in Montréal, 13 October 1997 by the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Ad hoc Working Group on Biosafety of the UN-Convention on Biological Diversity; distributed by the RTS genetics information email list. <rts@gn.apc.org>. Full text is available from me.

Eight scientists are urging all governments to bar products containing Roundup-Ready soybeans from the market on the grounds of injury to public health:

- 1) There is clear scientific evidence that application of glyphosate can increase the level of plant estrogens.
- 2) Plant estrogens are known to affect mammals including humans.
- 3) Feeding experiments were done on cows with transgenic and ordinary soybeans. A statistically significant difference in the daily milk fat production between the test groups was found. Those fed transgenic RR-soybeans produced more fat per day than those fed ordinary soya. All test groups had the same intake of soya per day (Hammond et al., Journal of Nutrition, 1996).

They are concerned that the increased milk fat production by cows fed RR-soybeans may be a direct consequence of higher estrogen levels in those soybeans. Growing numbers of children are dependent on soy-milk due to allergic reactions to cow's milk. Young children are especially susceptible to elevated levels of estrogen. Thus there is a clear and serious health issue at hand.

There is urgent need for further and independent scientific investigation. In adherence to the precautionary principle, until these investigations are completed, RR-soybeans should no longer be allowed to enter the food chain.

[Joan - can this please go somewhere appropriate where it is noticeable?]

Oops!

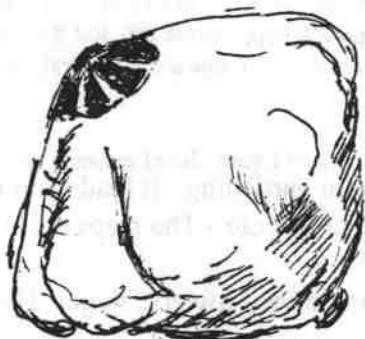
There was an error in the October 1997 Flyer, in the article "Gene Free Soy", part 2, please cross out the "not" in the second paragraph so that it reads as follows:

2. Tofu, tempeh, vegie burgers, meat substitutes

Products which do not contain genetically altered soy beans

Blue Lotus, Earth Star, Mighty Bean, Pureland, Simply Better/ Soy magic, Soyco, Super Soy, Nutrisoy, Cook-a-burra, Fortune, Kingland, Koala, Orgran, Soya King, Silken Firm, Nutal

Products which **do** contain genetically altered soy beans
Sanitarium, Longlife, Not-dogs, Not-burgers



ACT GREENS GALA DINNER
with
Dr David Suzuki
SATURDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER 1997 7.30 pm
NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE BALLROOM
(3 course vegetarian menu, live music)
\$50 per person
\$40 concession
David will give a talk and introduce his new book
'Sacred Balance - Rediscovering our place on earth'
For bookings telephone 6247 6305

Growing Flowers NATURALLY

by
JACKIE FRENCH

An A to Z of Flower Recipes

Calendulas

Calendula petals can also be used instead of saffron to give a pungent bite and a deep yellow colour and are good added to a seafood paella or plain boiled rice, or finely chopped and added to biscuits or cakes, or blended with icing sugar to give a bright natural dye. The petals can also be added to hen food to give bright yellow yolks.

Dianthus (Clove Pinks)

Clove pinks can be used instead of cloves. Choose strongly scented ones (carnations can also be used). Store them in sugar for a rich clove scent, or chop them and add them to fruit salad at the last minute.

Clove Syrup

Boil 1 cup of water with 1 dessertspoon of sugar and a slice of lemon for 10 minutes. Take away from the heat and add as many clove pink flowers as will fit in. Leave till cold, strain and use. The liquor can be kept in the fridge for some weeks.

Add clove syrup to stewed fruit or cakes.

Elderflower Champagne

Pick 6 elderflower heads. Shake out any beetles. Place them (the flowers not the beetles) in a large clean bucket, add 2 sliced lemons, a kilo of white sugar, 2 tablespoons of white vinegar and 4.5 litres of water. Mix well.

Cover with a clean tea towel and leave for 24 hours. Strain and pour into bottles. Seal. Leave for two months to brew but check every two days to release any excess gas that might cause the bottles to burst.

Warning This recipe is not entirely guaranteed – many things can go wrong, as you are using a wild and unpredictable yeast. Drink this at your own risk – and never if it smells odd, has interesting fungal growths... and try a little and wait a day before you drink the rest, just in case it has any unpleasant side-effects, like killing you or sending you blind. (On the other hand, elderflower champagne has been drunk for centuries, nearly always safely – and you may want to be part of its glorious tradition.)

Elderflower Tea

This is made from the fresh or dried flowers. It used to be taken as a remedy for flu and may possibly help reduce allergic sinus reactions. Elderflower tea is reminiscent of China tea. Both the black and variegated elders bear flowers. Simply pour boiling water over the flowers the same way that you make ordinary tea. Steep and drink. (Note Not the leaves, they're toxic.)

Hibiscus Cordial

Pour 3 cups boiling water over 3 cups of hibiscus flowers; chill, then strain. The drink should be pale red, sweet and refreshing.

Hibiscus Fritters

Stuff hibiscus flowers with cold fried rice. Secure with toothpick, dip in egg then flour and deep fry. Serve hot.

Honeysuckle and Orange Syrup

This is lovely poured over a plain cake; served with icecream or over small fresh cream cheeses, or used as a cordial with iced water.

1 cup icing sugar
half a cup honeysuckle flowers
half a cup fresh orange juice
1 teaspoon orange rind, cut into small thin strips, with no white at all
juice of 1 lime
juice of half a large lemon

Blend all ingredients except the orange rind. Place in a saucepan and heat as slowly as possible till just boiling, stirring all the time. Throw in the rind and take off the heat at once. Use hot or cold.

Lavender

Lavender is an excellent flavour for sweets and jellies and custards. Take a cup of white sugar, add a dessertspoon of chopped lavender tops – the more highly perfumed the better. Leave for a week, stirring every day.

At the end of the week the sugar should have dissolved. This can be used to flavour baked custards, icecream or to make lavender jelly.

Lavender Jelly

Strain off the liquid above and boil for a minute. Cool to blood heat, add a cup of water in which a tablespoon of gelatine has been dissolved. Leave it to set in a greased tray and cut into diamonds when cold. Dust with icing sugar and keep in a wooden box or tin between sheets of greaseproof paper.

Lemon Blossom Preserve

This is more delicate than marmalade, rich red and subtle.

10 cups lemon blossom, chopped
8 cups sugar
juice of three lemons

Rose Petal Sorbet

This is pale pink, both sweet and refreshing and one of my favourite sorbets. Serve it for dessert, or between courses, or as a first course on a hot day.

4 tablespoons chopped rose petals, preferably deep red
1 cup of water
juice of two lemons
4 tablespoons strongly impregnated rose sugar
4 whipped egg whites

Stir water and sugar till dissolved. Add the freshly chopped petals. Leave overnight. Strain. Add the lemon juice and whipped egg whites as gently as you can. Freeze. Stir just as the sorbet is setting.

Serve not quite hard. If necessary take out of the freezer for five minutes before serving.

Rose Petals with Fetta and Olives

1 cup fetta, in chunks
half a cup black olives
half a cup rose petals
half a cup walnuts
1 teaspoon grated orange zest
1 dessertspoon lemon juice
enough olive oil to cover all ingredients, about 1 cup

Place all ingredients in a jar; keep for at least a week in a cool place before using.

THEODORE COMMUNITY GARDEN

By Steve Sutton

On Sunday the 3rd of August our Annual General meeting was held, and once again I was elected as convenor of the Theodore garden for another year.

At the annual general meeting the subject of installing a better security fence was brought up. The financial aspect of installing a high wire fence is way beyond our means so one of our members has suggested that maybe we could grow a fence, thus making it difficult for unwanted people, especially kids to obtain access. If you know of some shrub or tree that can be grown around the garden that is relatively inexpensive or easy to propagate please let me know.

Another project we have started this year is the growing of our own mulch. At the moment we have put in a couple of beds of lucerne with varying degrees of success. I have also started to grow some Tagasaste Tree Lucerne at home which I hope will be big enough to plant out next spring. This should give us some good material to add to our compost bins.

Most plot holders have started planting and gradually the garden is coming to life. Lets hope we don't suffer the late frosts we suffered in mid November last year. This year will be quite challenging as the long term forecast is pointing towards a very dry summer. This means mulching everything to ensure that we make the best use of our water supplies.

If anybody is interested in joining the Theodore garden please don't hesitate to give me a call as there are a number of vacant plots available. A big welcome to our new members Tania, Jenny and Joan

Wishing you an enjoyable summer of gardening



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ECHINACEA

After listening to Kay Bishop's talk on herbs, I wondered if I could find out more about *Echinacea* on the WorldWideWeb. There were nine and a half thousand references, so I only read the first few! I was delighted to find that I can grow it in my garden and use it without any fancy extraction processes, so I ordered seeds from Phoenix Seeds. *Echinacea* has an excellent safety record. After hundreds of years of use, no toxicity or side-effects have been reported, except rare allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

There are essentially two types of immune cells, one of which is called "memory cell". Memory cells, as the name implies, remember specific foreign cells or chemicals to which they have been exposed, and react immediately when they are next exposed to those compounds. Drugs which affect the memory cells stimulate immunity only to one disease or antigen. Vaccines are an example of drugs which affect memory cells.

Most herbs for the immune system don't affect memory cells, but are general immune system stimulators (immunostimulants). They increase the activity of the immune system but are not specific to a particular disease or "antigen" (a protein against which immune cells act). Rather, they increase resistance by mobilising "affecter cells" which act against all foreign particles, rather than just one specific type (eg a measles virus).

Remarkably, since the discovery of penicillin, our scientists, in search of drugs against infectious disease, have looked only for chemicals which kill bacteria or viruses. Finally, they are coming to realise that it is possible to boost the immune system, which can then fight naturally against infectious agents, without the drawbacks of antibiotic therapy. While immune stimulants cannot replace antibiotics in some cases, they have proven far superior in others.

Echinacea was among the most popular herb used by Native American Indians. At least 14 tribes used *Echinacea* for coughs, colds, sore throats, infections, toothaches, inflammations, tonsillitis, and snake bites, among other uses. It was used by the Dakotas as a veterinary medicine for their horses.

The most consistently proven effect of *Echinacea* is in stimulating phagocytosis, or the consumption of invading organisms by white blood cells and lymphocytes. To improve this, scientists incubate human white blood cells, yeast cells and *Echinacea* extract. They examine the blood cells microscopically and count the numbers of yeast cells gobbled up by the blood cells. Extracts of *Echinacea* can increase phagocytosis by 20-40%. Another test, called "the carbon clearance" test, measures the speed with which injected carbon particles are removed from the bloodstream of a mouse. The quicker the mouse can remove the injected foreign particles, the more its immune system has been stimulated. In this test too, *Echinacea* extracts excel, confirming the fact that this remarkable plant increases the activity of immune system cells so they can more quickly eliminate invading organisms and foreign particles.

Echinacea also stimulates the production of interferon as well as other important products of the immune system, including "Tumour Necrosis Factor", which is important to the body's response against cancer.

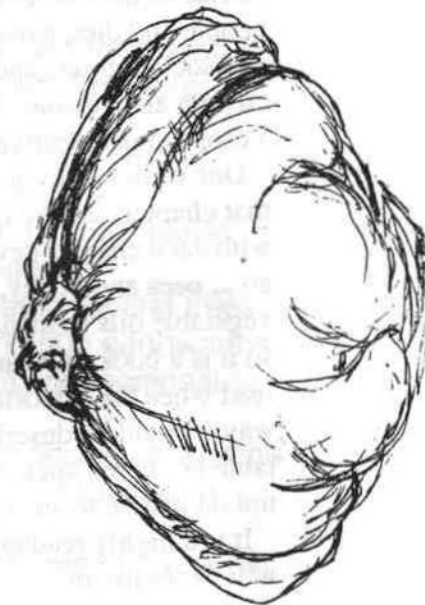
Echinacea also inhibits an enzyme (hyaluronidase), which is secreted by bacteria, and helps them gain access to healthy cells. Research in the early 1950s showed that *Echinacea* could completely counteract the effect of this enzyme, and this could help prevent infection when used to treat wounds. While *Echinacea* is usually used internally for the treatment of viruses and bacteria, it is being used more externally for the treatment of wounds. It also kills yeast and slows or stops the growth of bacteria, and helps to stimulate the growth of new tissue. It combats inflammation too, further supporting its use in the treatment of wounds.

Dosages: These vary with the condition under treatment. For instance, strep throat needs to be treated with a gargle, snakebite is treated by chewing the leaves and roots by the patient and applying the pulp to the snakebite area after the venom is sucked out and it is bleeding freely. Preparations vary, dosages vary. commercial compounds vary. The most common compound seems to be a combination with myrrh

to make a tincture. Also, capsules are available. As the formula varies, so does the dosage. Consult the manufacturer if commercially offered. Since no overdose or side effects have ever been noted, if the plant is used alone, dosage of tea or tisanes would not be too critical except with acute cases, after which taper off as symptoms disappear.

I have a horrible feeling that it will have a vile taste, but if I can prevent colds by chewing a leaf or two, it will be worth it! While I wait for it to grow, I have bought some *Echinacea* capsules for the flu season.

Ian McAllister



COGS would also like to thank
SOCIAL CLUB BOOKS
(Mike and Di Singleton)
Tel/FAX 6 294 2635
for their generous
donations of lovely books

From The Book Corner at Mountain Creek Wholefoods

This new addition to the COGS newsletter will focus on some of the more unusual and better books that are available on Herbs, food and cooking. With this issue I examine the books that explore the fundamental question 'Why we eat what we eat'.

HISTORY OF FOOD

Toussant-Samat

\$35.00 Soft cover/ 801pp.

Literally, one of the classics of gastronomic lore. Toussant-Samat covers the history of foodstuffs, the story of cuisine and the social history of eating.

Starting with the origins of mankind to exploring the transition from a vegetable to an increasingly carnivorous diet, the author tells an engrossing series of stories of the interrelationship between people and diet, between particular foods and social mores, and between dietary custom and cuisine; if from a very European perspective.

One of the many joys of this book is that chapters can be read in isolation, with each chapter devoted to a specific area; bees and honey, pulses, cereals, and vegetable oils to mention just a few. And so it is a book that can be picked up and read when the opportunity arises. In that way it could be described as a coffee table book, but such a description does not do justice to such a wonderful work.

It is a highly readable book that you will never tire of.

FOOD IN HISTORY

Reay Tannahill

\$27.95 Soft cover/114pp

In many ways this is a book that could be read in conjunction with the 'History of Food'. The main difference between the two books is that Tannahill examines the history of food chronologically rather

than by subject matter. The book has more of a sociological presentation but is still eminently readable.

While European focused, like Toussaint-Samat, its coverage of the Americas is better and includes a brief discussion of Australia and New Zealand.

In many ways Tannahill's 'Food in History' is equally as good as 'History of Food'.

THE CULTURE OF FOOD

Massimo Montanari

\$59.95 Hard cover/ 214pp

The subtitle 'The Making of Europe' explains the focus of this book.

Montanari weaves between the classes, regions and nations of Europe, between the habits of late antiquity and the problems of modernity. His emphasis is always on the impact of the evolution on culture.

While this is a scholarly book, it is written in a lively and highly readable style.

Available in softcover soon (and therefore cheaper!)

FOOD - AN OXFORD ANTHOLOGY

Brigid Allen (ed)

\$49.95 Hard cover 406pp

This is a remarkable meander down the roads of food writing, from the Bible to Thomas Wolfe, that covers the eating habits of families and individuals, how and where they shopped, their methods of cooking, the utensils they used and much more.

ON FOOD AND COOKING

Harold McGee

\$39.95 Hard cover/339pp

A unique blend of culinary law and scientific fact that examines food preparation and cooking.

Tremendous writing that exposes, in lay language, many fallacies and proves many old wives' tales. Every serious cook will find hours of pleasure and great reservoirs of useful information here.

In July 1976, the Canberra branch of the Natural Health Society invited Mike Lubke and his wife to come from their 5-acre farm at Bringelly and talk to us on their pet subjects. Mike on Organic Growing and Sister Joyce Lubke on bringing up children the natural, vegetarian way.

Mike's exuberant rhetoric could easily be heard at the very back of the hall, and afterwards we decided to have a meeting and form a group to foster organic growing in Canberra. This happened at Mim Arnold's daughter's house on 19 August 1976. It is noted in my diary as the "Inaugural Meeting of the Organic Growers Association, Canberra Branch.

Unfortunately, I was a little late for the meeting, and arrived just in time to hear Robert Jeremy telling the assembled group that "We don't need a president and secretary and treasurer and all that formal stuff, we just want to get together and talk about our problems." I have to admit that I did not have the gumption to go against this, so this was all we did.

Afterwards we enjoyed a wonderful supper of salads and vegetarian dishes, prepared by our hostess, and went home happily. That was the end of it. The group had no President or Secretary to call another meeting, so it wasn't till August 8 1977 that I got Mike to come again and talk to the Natural Health Society, and "This time," I told him, "I will be President, if no-one else will!" After the meeting we passed round a paper so that those interested could put down their names and addresses and phone numbers. There were about twenty names.

Next day Mike and others came out to see my Organic Farm near Murrumbateman, before returning to his own farm, west of Sydney.

Mike organised an exciting Organic Festival later that year at Luddenham showground, including a visit to his Organic Farm at Bringelly nearby. How enthusiastic we all were in those days. I slept in a tent and listened to such speakers as Peter Bennett and Mike and many others.

At our first meeting at the Downer Community Centre, we elected President, Betty Cornhill, Vice President Hanna Enders, Secretary, Ian Brown, Treasurer (can't remember), Librarian Gail Dadds.

Hanna and I were both going to another Organic Festival, this time at Colo River, and we were asked to select some books for the library, as Mike's association had donated \$60 for that purpose. I had just bought a Land Cruiser Truck for the farm, and drove it up for the festival, sleeping on the tray.

I remember an old citrus orchard nearby where they had treated several trees by simply putting dolomite around them and adding compost and 500 earthworms per tree several months before. The difference in these trees was phenomenal.

Soon after this we had a general meeting at which we had to decide on a name. Mike Lubke came, expecting us to be called The Organic Growers Association Canberra Branch.

To his consternation, the meeting unanimously rejected that name in favour of The Organic Gardening and Farming Society of the ACT.

At some point Peter Tuckerman became our treasurer and Joanne replaced Ian Brown as secretary, owing to Ian Brown's illness.

One of the earlier committee meetings was held at Ian and Alice Brown's in Fraser, and another at Gail Dadds' house.

Some of these meetings seemed to get a bit out of hand, as when Joanne our secretary, didn't turn up and I said I knew of no reason except that she had just got a job, and Gail stood up and stamped her foot and said, "I have a job, looking after my two small children, but I don't miss the committee meetings!"

Hanna and I had many arguments. I remember one. At the request of members I had worked hard for hours on the farm picking peas, and had brought two sacks full for sale at the meeting. However, I was a few minutes late, and Hanna came out to

the truck and told me off for keeping the members waiting to start the meeting. I pointed out that I had been asked to bring peas to the meeting, but she still continued to harshly accuse me until I was goaded into saying, "Listen Hanna, I am the president and you are the vice president, so just go and get someone to carry these peas in and stop complaining." I have to admit that she was right, though."

We had one hilarious meeting at the Downer Community Centre when Mackenzie Clay was the speaker. In the room next door the Pentacostals were having a meeting--a very noisy meeting. Loud singing and speaking, or rather shouting, with tongues.

Poor Mackenzie Clay found it difficult to make himself heard above the din, but he took it in good part, and I remember his passing different herbs and leaves and twigs around.

I also have a vivid recollection of going next door to the kitchen, to help bring in the supper, only to find that the plates of goodies had been raided. We never found out who, but we made a fair guess, and after that we locked the kitchen door while holding our meetings.

We had to move to the Dickson Library quite soon for lack of space, owing to having 70 members by this time.

After Andrew became President, we had most of our committee meetings at his rather central Braddon flat, and I had several customers for my organic vegies at the flats, one of whom gave me my yoghurt culture and told me how to use it.

I remember a particularly stormy committee meeting where Hanna and I were told off properly for holding a general meeting about comfrey after Dr Culvenor of the CSIRO had announced on radio that comfrey was a poison and should not be taken at all. I had been on the phone to Dr C in Victoria and also to Lawrence Hills in England, who had sent me a letter in a diplomatic bag to be read at the meeting and published in the Canberra Times and other newspapers in Melbourne and Sydney pointing out that comfrey had been used in the form of tea to help arthritis and rheumatism sufferers and was fed to stud racehorses and other animals in the UK.

The committee had voted not to hold a meeting, but Hanna and I thought it important to keep the many people who had been using comfrey tea, about the latest developments, so we held the meeting in our own names, and advertised it as such. Several hundred people attended the meeting held in the Dickson Library meeting room.

The comfrey controversy has raged ever since. Books have been written about the herb, and the latest was written very recently in which a letter was quoted from Dr Culvenor to an organic lady in Queensland, saying in effect that it would take 140 lbs of comfrey eaten at one time to kill a man, and admitting that it was not as dangerous as he had thought.

He had, in fact, killed rats in the laboratory with it in his later research, using the extracted alkaloids, not comfrey itself. At the time he made that fateful announcement he had not even used comfrey. He had used Patterson's Curse.

I gave an interview with Brian Minards on the ABC a short time after the comfrey meeting which was held on April 12 1978, broadcasting the latest news about comfrey.

Some people I noted who were at the big comfrey meeting were. Barney, Kim Fletcher, Hanna, Murray Shirley, Gail, Dorothy Noble, Sylvia Gloster, John Buttle and lots more.

Yvonne Willcox took on the job of secretary in October 1977, and she also was responsible for doing the newsletter, which was mainly a method of telling people what would be on at the next general meeting. When she left to go to Queensland, Barney Molnar took on the job. Shirley Carden was active at some of the early meetings. I remember she gave me heaps of garlic to plant at the farm.

In 1978 Andrew Brodie-Smith took over the job of President and Barney Molnar became Secretary. Murray Dadds joined us as Newsletter Editor, and I stayed on as Vice President.

Ann Wigmore came to Canberra, and the NHS committee under Beryl Diamond organised a very big meeting at the ANU for her to speak. This was a very good meeting. She was an amazing woman. She was nearly 80, but looked about 50. This was due, she told us, to throwing out the stoves at the Hippocrates Health Centre in Boston, which she had founded, and eating only raw food including her famous wheat sprouts and drinking Rejuvelac, a drink made from sprouting wheat.

Quite a few of the early members came out to my organic farm to work, and once we had a big day for NHS and OGFSACT members to come out and pick their own. I remember one person pulled up a Brussels Sprouts plant, thinking it was a rather loose cabbage. I managed to catch her before she lopped the top off, and we replanted it to produce lots of sprouts later on.

At that time I was supplying many families in Canberra with organic vegetables, washing carrots, etc far into the night. Some I delivered, but quite a few picked up boxes from my front porch.

I have not listed all the speakers we had in the first years, but at one meeting On Wed. 22 Feb. '78, I spoke on compost making, demonstrating on a plastic sheet with ingredients (except fresh manure) and a trowel.

At the March meeting I have only listed some who came, but not the subject. They were Hanna, Shirley, Gail, Jeff, Yvonne, Johanne and Paul Dann.

Paul had had seven experimental plots on my farm before I bought it, and whenever he visited to see how his pasture plants were going, he always said, you will never grow anything here without super. This meeting was a triumph for me because I had at last persuaded him to come to one of our meetings.

On Wed. 26 /4/78 we had our organic meeting, and on the following Saturday we had an all day Herb Seminar, I think, run by Kim Fletcher, who had a herb garden at her home in Lyneham.

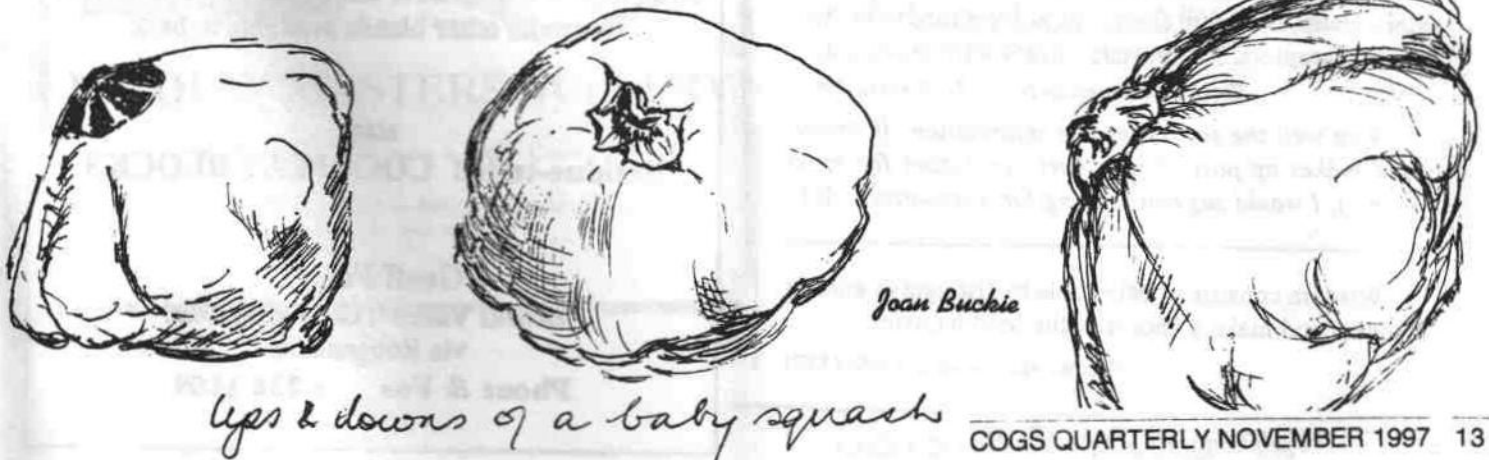
On 24/5/78 we had Mrs Hope come from Cootamundra to talk on herbs. One of the things she said impressed me very much. She said 90% of the herbs used in Australia were imported, and there was a huge opportunity to grow herbs for sale here. She said the climate was good, and they did not mind rather poor soil. Later when we visited her herb farm on the farm in Cootamundra she told us she had built up the beds putting compost on top of the solid yellow clay there.

In June '78 there was an Alternative Lifestyle Convention. My diary does not say where.

On 30/6/78 we had a meeting to talk about comfrey with lots of information about it, and I also talked about 2-4-5-T and the fact that it caused birth deformities.

We had our first AGM on 26/7/78, which was when I stood down as President in favour of Andrew Brodie-Smith.

As can be seen, we had a very exciting start, and there was much excitement later in the life of COGS, which only became COGS when Shirley and Peter Carden were doing our first Constitution, and thought the name should be changed to something shorter. How right they were.



Ups & downs of a baby squash

Reproductive problems caused by Bisphenol A

A US study has found evidence that tiny doses of bisphenol A cause reproductive problems in rats and that humans are consuming similar levels of the chemical in food.

Bisphenol A is widely used in resins for lining metal food cans and previous studies have shown that it can migrate into the food.

A team led by Fred vom Saal of the veterinary biomedical sciences department at the University of Missouri-Columbia, has tested the effects of exposing male mouse foetuses to the chemical.

They fed it to pregnant mice at doses of two and 20µg/kg/day. When adult, the male mice developed enlarged prostate glands.

'Our findings show for the first time that foetal exposure to environmentally relevant parts per billion doses of bisphenol A, in the range currently being consumed by people, can alter the adult reproductive system in mice,' their report said.

The European plastics industry body, APME, gave a cautious response to the study results. APME recently published a position paper on bisphenol A, saying that it was not an endocrine disruptor. The paper was based on a study jointly sponsored by the US Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI).

The APME/SPI study found that bisphenol A was rapidly broken down and excreted when it was fed to rats and 'either could not be detected in blood or was only transiently present at low concentrations.'

'The pharmacokinetic results... call into question the results of vom Saal, since the results of this study suggest that virtually no bisphenol A would be present in the maternal blood at the dose levels used,' said an APME spokesman.

'The manufacturers of bisphenol A are currently sponsoring a rigorously designed study to determine if the results reported by vom Saal and co-workers are reproducible.' Vom Saal was advising on how it should be carried out, the spokesman said.

Some mice in vom Saal's study were given doses of octylphenol, a breakdown product of alkylphenol ethoxylates, detergent chemicals also claimed to be hormone disruptors. No prostate effects were observed.

European Chemical News, 7-13 April, 1997.

Note well the source of this information. If tinned food makes up part of your diet (as it does for most people), I would suggest looking for alternatives.—Ed.

Wisdom consists of being able to distinguish among dangers and make a choice of the least harmful.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527).

Fish in chips?

Genetic material from fish also appears to be a promising tool for increasing cold tolerance in potato plants.

The genetic material comes from winter flounder and it protects the fish from freezing in water as cold as 28°F. The material is the basis of an "antifreeze" gene that University of Idaho biochemist Dan Guerra incorporated into potatoes.

In laboratory growth chambers, Russett Burbank plants bearing the gene have survived temperatures down to 28°F — roughly the freezing point of ocean salt-water.

Frost damages plant tissues when ice crystals rupture cell membranes and allow cell contents to spill out. In the genetically engineered plants, water molecules at low temperatures form unstable, elongated spikes rather than plate-like crystals. The spikes fall apart before they can damage cell membranes.

Potato lines carrying the "antifreeze" gene are being field tested this growing season.

The Furrow, No. 2, 1997.

Unfortunately there are many more reports (some on other pages), on different items intended for human consumption that have been, or are in the process of being genetically-engineered. If this process continues at its current rate, most people in the world will be eating genetically modified food as part of their 'normal' diet within a very few years. I don't really think we can do anything to stop this, but I do think we should join forces with other like-minded people to insist upon labelling that shows the inclusion of genetically-engineered food.—Ed.

THE LIVING SOIL, AUGUST, 1997

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Beetroot and Cancer

You may have seen this article before because it's been around for some years. I think the message in it is very clear and well worth reading. Ed.

According to the prominent Australian nutritional consultant, Dr. Robert Buist, beetroot has been found to be a valuable food for cancer patients.

Carcinogenic free-radicals attack and 'suffocate' the energy-producing mitochondria inside cells by inhibiting the mitochondria's uptake of oxygen. Certain compounds in beetroot re-activate cell respiration by reversing this suffocation.

In 1958, Dr. Alexander Ferenczi, Department of Internal Diseases, Csoma, Hungary, reported the treatment of cancer patients with beetroot. He gave them 200 to 250 grams of raw, finely grated beetroot after meals, spread over the day. Patients who could not eat grated beetroot were given the juice.

Of 22 patients suffering cancers of the lung, stomach, rectum, breast, lip, prostate, uterus or skin, 21 showed improvement as a shrinking of the tumour, a gain in body weight of three to 11 kilograms and an improvement in appetite and general state of health.

Besides the benefits for cancer sufferers, beetroot acts as a liver tonic and provides some of the raw materials for detoxifying the liver.

Reprinted from the N.H.S. of Australia magazine, August/

September, 1992.

THE LIVING SOIL, JUNE, 1997

BIO-DYNAMIC FISH EMULSION

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The Dryland Gambler

Recently, I found the most practical book that I have come across. It is "The Permaculture Home Garden" by Linda Woodrow. 182 pages. \$24.95.

She works on a system of circular beds that are used in rotation in conjunction with chooks. The chooks are housed in a circular cage, which is easily moved from one bed to another. The chooks can then eat and scratch in the old residue after what ever was grown there has finished. I like the round bed idea, which I was starting to use before I found this book. A sprinkler, when used, reaches to the edge and no corners are left out. Beds about two metres diameter means that you can reach the centre without stepping on them. You don't have to worry about which way the sun is shining to protect certain plants etc., because there are no rows. After all, nature is round, only humans do things in squares and straight lines.

The other time saving method she uses is to do her composting on site on the vegie beds. Rather than cart all the garden residues to a special heap in the corner of the garden and then cart it all back again, why not make the compost on the beds to be used? It's close, worms that are in the soil will go into the heap when they are ready, any excess moisture can go into the soil and probably stay there for later on.

That reminds me of the time on the farm when I was feeding out hay in about February from a stack of round bales out in the paddock. Underneath each bale was as moist as could be. I fully expected to find worms there, and grain certainly would have sprouted there. That just showed me that a good thick layer of mulch will retain moisture. How do you sow wheat through one and a half metres of mulch - I had enough trouble with just one straw thickness.

If you don't use chooks with Linda's idea and the residue hasn't broken down by the time you want to plant something, then just make a hole in it and plant through the mulch. She also goes into companion planting and of course planting fruit trees around your vegie garden. That way you water your vegies and your fruit trees at the same time.

I recommend that you check this book out and the library should have a copy too.

GAVIN BEINKE.

THE LIVING SOIL, APRIL, 1997

COGS KITCHEN

Pickles

Kindly contributed by Wendy Rose of
'Pumpkin Creek'

BREAD AND BUTTER CUCUMBER PICKLES (You can also use zucchini)

8-10 medium cucumbers (Lebanese)
5 cups sugar
1 teaspoon celery seed
1 teaspoon salt
5 cups apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons mustard seed
1 1/2 teaspoons turmeric

Slice cucumbers, cover with salt and ice and leave for 3 hours,
Wash well in cold water
Place in large saucepan with remainder of ingredients
Bring almost to the boil.
Simmer for 5 minutes
Pack into screw top jars

PICKLED TURNIP

1 kg small white turnips
2-4 cloves garlic
1 raw beetroot peeled and grated (or sliced)
1/2 cup celery leaves
4-5 teaspoons salt
900 ml. water
300 ml. white vinegar

Peel, wash and quarter turnips.
Pack into a large jar with garlic cloves, placing raw beetroot
between layers.

Dissolve salt in water and stir in vinegar.
Pour over turnips, covering them.
Seal jars tightly.
Store in a warm place for 10 days, then transfer to a cool place.
Eat within 4-6 weeks

Betsy's Sultana Carrot Cake

Kindly contributed by John Allen

2 eggs
1 cup castor sugar
1/4 cup oil
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup plain flour
1 teaspoon bi-carb soda
1/2 teaspoon mixed spice
1 cup sultanas
1 1/2 cups grated carrots lightly packed (2 medium carrots)
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Combine eggs, sugar, oil and essence and sifted dry
ingredients in a bowl.
Beat on low speed, or with a wooden spoon until the mixture is smooth.
Stir in the sultanas, carrots and walnuts and mix well. Pour the
mixture into a well-greased 20 cm (8") ring tin and bake in a
moderate oven for 40-45 minutes.

When cold spread with a cream cheese frosting made by beating
together 30 g
(1 oz) softened butter, 60g (2 oz) packaged cream cheese, 1 teaspoon
grated lemon rind and 1 1/2 cups sifted icing sugar.

"Organic Energy" - vital and green

How did "Organic Energy" come about?

I first became interested in organic produce as part of an attempt to improve my own health. I experimented with conventional raw food, fruit and vegetables, which helped my asthma. Then I tried organic produce, and noticed a remarkable increase in vitality as well as reducing medication for my asthma by 90%. In addition, I found organic produce tasted better and so did my friends! Because of their enthusiasm (and my own), I started selling it.

I have been retailing organic produce since 1985. I first started from my backyard doing home deliveries, and as the business grew, moved to a Fyshwick warehouse. Then, as a drop-in shopping component grew, I moved to Griffith Shops almost four years ago, trading under the name "Organic Energy". It is continuing to thrive, and beginning to diversify

How is "Organic Energy" holistic?

Where the food comes from

Organic produce is more than the sum of its parts, and so is good health. Organic food is grown by people who understand the basic principles of creating a balance of nature. Therefore organic growing systems are biodiverse i.e. have lots of different kinds of plants and animals both above and below the soil, as a variety of living things help create fertile, clean, minerally rich, resilient ecosystems. The more simplified an agriculture is, the more likely it will go wrong, as any number of scary stories about soil loss, water eutrophication and chemical pollution can show us. *Buying organic produce is in effect a donation to the conservation movement, as it supports all those growers maintaining a balance of nature, and keeping natural systems healthy and robust. It is an investment in our future.*

Diet and you

I believe good health can really result only from a mind-body-spirit unity. *One can't tackle a health problem in isolation from the rest of one's life.* I see diet as part of the global approach to improving personal wellbeing. As a consequence of this, I am building a meeting room at "Organic Energy" for a weekly meeting of the Gerson group (coordinated by Stella Ashton). The meetings are for anyone interested in detoxifying and rebuilding themselves, not just the terminally ill. Stella will share her knowledge of the Max Gerson diet and therapies, and I will give information about the Hippocrates health program. Both advocate *living food*. Therefore sprouted grains and legumes (wheat, alfalfa, mung, lentils, sunflower and buckwheat) and wheatgrass juice will be available for sale at these meetings and at any time the shop is open.

What's in season?

At present time of writing, all the stone fruit is coming in: apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines. Mangoes have been in for about a month; and there are red and yellow watermelons, rock melons - summer is coming!

Shop info

"Organic Energy" trading hours are 8.30 - 7 pm Monday to Friday, 8.30 am- 5 pm Saturday. The shop can be contacted on 6295-6700. The home delivery orders are taken Mondays and Tuesdays, and delivered Wednesday evenings. The shop will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day.

There are also discounts for bulk buying. If you buy over 2 kg of any one type of produce, whole or half trays and boxes, or whole pumpkins or cabbages, the price will be reduced to wholesale price.

I look forward to seeing you in the shop!

Karen Medbury

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AMARANTHUS GRAIN BEANS: Scarlet Runner, Kentucky Wonder BROAD BEANS: Early Long Pod, Coles Prolific BASIL CELERY CARROTS CORIANDER GREEN MANURE MIX LANDCRESS LETTUCE: Butterhead, Mustard, Corn Salad Italian Curly PARSLEY PARSNIPS PUMPKIN: Blue/Green Thin skinned SILVERBEET SUNFLOWER: Bronze colour, Giant TOMATO: Grosse Lisse, Tiny Tim, Sweetie, Italian, Burley Sweetcrop

PHOENIX SEEDS

Price: \$1.50 per pack

BASIL BEANS: Blue Lake CAPSICUM: Calwonder Lipstick CARROT: Top Weight, Thumbelina EGGPLANT: Long Purple ENDIVE: Salad King KOHL RABI: Purple Vienna LEEK: Royal Mammoth, Pancho LETTUCE: Cos Verdi, Sucline ONION: Cream Gold, Comit PEAS: Multistar, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap SHALLOTS SWEDE TOMATO: Grosse Lisse ZUCCHINI: Rhonde de Nice

REMEMBER, I'll post 'em if you can't make the meetings - just ring me.
Leslie Thompson, Seed Librarian Phone 2416125

PLEASE SEND ME SOME SEEDS

NONPOISONOUS MOUSE AND RAT CONTROL

By Deb Scott.

If you hate the idea of using rat poison or carefully setting mousetraps, then this product should interest you. On a recent trip through Cabramatta, we stopped to have a browse through several Asian supermarkets. We discovered amongst the unusual goodies, a tin of Rat Glue. The glue is spread on a board and food is placed in the centre. Rats and mice walk across the glue to get the food and are completely stuck. The label was very descriptive and we immediately thought of several people who would benefit from a tin of Rat Glue. Indeed, a most interesting gift to bring back from our trip. A real conversation piece although we were a bit sceptical as to its effectiveness.

Alan decided he would have to put it to the test. He followed the instructions and left the board in the hay shed. Lo and behold, the next day there was a dead mouse securely stuck to the board. Al removed the mouse and next day there was another. I can guarantee that it does work, so next time you are passing an Asian supermarket, pop in and pick up a tin of Rat Glue.

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If you are considering using or conducting trials with worm products, or starting a domestic or commercial worm farm, make sure you

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Ben's Case History

by Dr Don Gray



In this issue I would like to give a true case history of someone who came to see me with recurring sinus problems. A lot of people get sinus problems, but this person is a young man - let's call him Bill, although that's not his real name - who is a footballer and his health problems don't let him train properly. Of course, they also affect his endurance and his ability to play a good game.

The sinuses comprise four sets of hollow cavities inside the skull. There are two in the forehead, one behind the nasal passages, and one in the cheeks. They all communicate with the cavity of the nose, and they are lined with mucous membrane similar to that of the nose. They warm the air we breathe in. When the membranes which line the sinus cavities become inflamed that's called sinusitis.

The most common causes of sinusitis are infection and allergies. Infection from colds, flu, etc., spread easily from the nose, because that is directly linked with the sinus cavities. Certain acts such as nose-blowing, sneezing, swimming and diving when a person has an upper respiratory tract infection can obviously make the infection spread faster.

Normally our bodies have a good anti-infection agent contained in the linings of the nose and sinuses. It's a mucous called lysozyme. However, today we have in our air, water and food, elements which pull down the ability of this natural protective agent. Tobacco smoke (whether it's you puffing on the cigarette, or someone near you), alcohol, many medications, and also infection will decrease your body's natural infection-fighting ability.

Bill is a big fellow, over 180cms,

and of solid build, so he has everything in his favour physically, except his lack of stamina, fatigue and difficulty in proper breathing which, he has been told, is due to sinusitis. The problems which he gets regularly every winter, usually start, he told me, with a sore throat. Then they develop into stuffiness which gives him sore sinuses above the eyes, and they last for several weeks. He also feels fatigued a good part of the time, even when he has not got an attack of sinusitis.

The treatment he has been getting has been the usual one of antibiotics, and he has had these about twice a year for several years. Now sinusitis may be caused by viral, bacterial or fungal infections. There are occasions when dental infection will spread to the sinuses also. Sometimes a primary viral infection will have a secondary bacterial infection associated with it, in which case antibiotics would help - at a price. Bill didn't know that antibiotics destroy the friendly bacteria that our bodies rely on for efficient functioning, nor how to replace these bacteria. I started off by going through Bill's history, and examining him. Apart from the symptoms already described, he had little in his past history to relate. He had at that time no soreness in any of the sinus sites, but was still drained of energy. He's a non-smoker, so next thing to get details on were his eating and drinking habits.

For breakfast he had two white bread rolls, spread with either butter or margarine. He also had some Wheatbix with added milk. Mid morning he had a snack - perhaps a coke and fruit - and he had something similar in the

afternoon. Lunch was a couple of salad roll. He likes jam and cordial, but he drinks no tea or coffee. Dinner was a big meal, meat and potato, and veg. After that he would go off for football training. He lives in a town, so they have the normal town water supply, but he was not a big water drinker.

The first thing I emphasised was the need to get a good water filter, and to drink plenty of filtered water. Good clean water is a source of energy. That may surprise you, but it shouldn't, because after all, our bodies are composed of about 2/3 water, and it's the most important single ingredient you can have, apart from air. I advised Bill to start the day with two glasses of HOT water, with a squeeze of lemon in it if preferred. Hot water is easier to take than luke-warm, and gives you a good start to the day, cleaning out your system and getting the digestion ready for breakfast.

I pointed out to Bill that breakfast should be the best meal of the day, because that's the meal that gives us the energy to go through the morning's work. Also, anything eaten between meals was going to slow him down, for the simple reason that a snack between meals makes the digestion system wait until the food that's just been eaten is the same consistency as the rest still in the stomach from the previous meal.

Lunch should be a good meal also, because that's what's going to give the energy for the afternoon's work. In each of these meals, breakfast and lunch, I pointed out to Bill that he got energy from the complex carbohydrates, like wholemeal organic bread, potatoes, rice etc.. With all due respect to Wheatbix, there's not

much energy value left in a food that's been processed to such an extent. In fact, we bought some Vita-Brits (not for ourselves, but for the dog!), and the dog wouldn't eat them!

What about that big meal at night that Bill has been having then? Well, the evening time should be when the stomach is given a rest - even if there IS football training to think of. Actually, to go training on top of big meal is the last thing Bill's body would be thankful for! I advised him to have a very light meal at night, to give his stomach time to relax.

That advice on meals is pretty general advice that can be applied to most people. Try it, and see the difference it makes to your health! Now the things that I specifically advised Bill to cut right out of his diet were: milk, cheese, butter, margarine, cordials, sugar and jam. Any one of these is enough to start sinus or upper respiratory tract infection. He could see the sense in what I was saying, but of course, people want to know what to replace things with. In this case Soymilk for milk, tofu or tempeh for cheese, tahini or a nut spread (not peanut - that's not a nut) for butter/margarine, water for the cordial and coke, dried fruit for the sugar and jam. You'll find a recipe for delicious natural jam made entirely from dried fruit, in this month's Organic Tuckerbox.

I also suggested that Bill got the following supplements:

Macrodophilus tablets to replace the good micro-organisms destroyed by antibiotics. Feverfew & Willowbark tablets (2 three times a day if he felt a sore throat or sinus trouble starting).

Calcium Ascorbate vitamin C powder (half a teaspoon three times a day before meals) to bolster the immune system.

Garlic oil capsules.- Pierce two capsules with a needle, then squeeze the contents up each

nostril, and letting it trickle down into the throat. It's amazing how efficient the garlic fumes are. Even if the liquid doesn't get to the trouble spot, the fumes will.

I also gave Bill a spare copy of Organic Lifestyle, and suggested he show it to his mother and see if she would make any of the recipes. Now, for the sort of lifestyle he's been leading, the changes I suggested must have sounded pretty radical, but long ago I found out that just making cosmetic adjustments doesn't help a person one bit. People come to me because they are sick, so I always presume they want to get well. It doesn't always follow - I think of one man who was poisoned at work very badly. When we got the results back showing his true condition we started to outline the changes which would make him well, such as dietary and other life changes. Imagine the surprise and disappointment we got when his wife said that they had a court case pending, and they didn't want him to get well until they had received a settlement. Now that assumes you can choose a time when you will decide to get well. Real life just doesn't work like that, and to us, it is just tempting God. Fortunately, such extreme cases are rare.

I usually ask people what they are prepared to change in their lifestyle to give them health. Dependent on their reply I can make a pretty good guess as to the rate and extent of their recovery.

In Bill's case, I put it to him, and he said he wanted to get well, so it's up to him now. However, there's one doubt in my mind, and I told him of it. I'm always wary when people (especially young folk) say that they are always feeling tired out. That's not normal, so it means there could be a deeper underlying

cause. I asked Bill to make the changes I had suggested, and to see how he felt for the next month (it's usually at this time of year when he gets his attacks). I said that if he was no better after one month on the programme I gave him, we should look for chemical sensitivities, especially as he lives in a town which seems to have more than its fair share of environmental illnesses.

There's still a very low awareness in Australia of the pollution risks from parts per million, or parts per billion, concentrations of man-made poisons which exist in water, air and soil. Even here in Tasmania (clean, green, etc. etc!) we have very little idea of just how much our environment is polluted. To read some of the information that comes from America, for example, should alert us to the way we are following their footsteps.

Instances which come to mind are the laws which make people have foundation work for houses sprayed with long-lasting pesticides, the way the councils ritually spray noxious chemicals along the roadside (full marks to Devonport for their truly environmentally friendly method of weed-eating!), spray drift from crop dusters, run-off of poisons into waterways, careless handling and storing of poisons, and the spraying of school rooms, which has resulted in many cases of harm to children.

Organic LifeStyle - Winter's end 1997

A - Z of Useful Plants by JACKIE FRENCH

HELLEBORE/CHRISTMAS ROSE (*Helleborus niger*)

Cultivation

Hellebore is a winter flowerer, with dark green, thick leaves and white to pink to green flowers. It grows from seed if planted as soon as the seed is ripe. Otherwise, divide old clumps. Hellebore tolerates semi-shade or sunlight.

Use

The roots and leaves of this can be used as an insecticide in the same way as derris dust. It will kill most insects, but is not poisonous to mammals.

Recipes

HELLEBORE 'DERRIS' Dig up the roots, dry them in the oven and pulverise them to powder. Hellebore can be used where derris would be used and is reputed to be about the same strength. It is traditionally used for leaf-eating insects.

HELLEBORE SPRAY Take 100 g chopped, fresh hellebore root, cover with 1 cup boiling water, and leave for 24 hours. Strain and spray.

HENNA (*Lawsonia inermis*)

Cultivation

Henna is also known as Egyptian privet or the mignonette tree. The red henna colouring is produced from the young shoots, which produce the best colouring, or from the leaves. Henna grows to about 6 m, with brownish-green leaves and fragrant red or white flowers. It tolerates cool to hot climates, and withstands light frost.

Use

Henna is a traditional hair colouring and conditioner. Small applications leave hair shining; a stronger mixture provides red lights; an even stronger mix, and the hair will absorb a rich red tone.

Recipe

HENNA HAIR COLOUR Take the henna leaves and dry them thoroughly, either in the oven or in sunlight. Crumble them in a paper bag till they are powdery. Add just enough water to form a paste. Alternatively, mix the paste with 1 egg instead of water to help condition the hair, or use lemon juice to make the eventual colour brighter. Heat the paste till it starts to bubble. Take off the heat and let cool.

Now rub oil into your scalp to protect it, and apply the paste to your hair as evenly as possible, taking small strands of hair and working the paste in. Finally, wrap your head in an old towel or something you don't mind staining, or use plastic wrap and then a towel. Keep your head covered as long as the henna is on to maintain an even temperature and even colouring. The henna colouring becomes richer the longer you leave it on. For a first attempt, an hour is probably long enough for strong red light. If you wish to deepen the colour, repeat the procedure. Rinse hair thoroughly after using henna, then shampoo.

HOLLYHOCK

Cultivation

Hollyhocks are short-lived perennials, often treated as annuals. Dwarf and tall varieties are available. They can be grown from seed sown in spring and summer, or from divided crowns.

Use

Hollyhock flowers can be shredded into salads, stuffed and boiled, or deep-fried. Hollyhock tea is like rosehip tea.

Recipe

HOLLYHOCK TEA Pour ½ litre water over 1 cup fresh flowers. Steep for 3 minutes, strain and drink.

HAZELNUT

Cultivation

Hazelnuts can reach 7 m if grown by themselves. They are much smaller if planted thickly for a hedge. Hazelnuts tolerate cold to temperate climates. Seedlings can take many years to flower; grafting onto suckers produces better results. Two varieties are needed for good pollination. If your hazelnut doesn't fruit, it may be too hot, or you may need another variety as well.

Use

Hazelnuts make wonderful hedges. The nuts can be used fresh or ground into hazelnut flour. Use instead of almond meal.

Recipe

HAZELNUT BISCUITS Cream ½ cup butter with ½ cup castor sugar. Fold in ½ cup ground hazelnuts. Add 1 cup of plain flour, 2 egg yolks and 2 whipped egg-whites. Handle carefully. Roll into small balls, flatten and bake in a hot oven till light brown. Take out carefully, as they are very fragile, delicate and good.

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Seed Packet Life -

verse by Lawrence D. Hills
from his book

'Grow Your Own Fruit and Vegetables'

One acre composted is worth acres three,
At harvest thy barns shall declare it to thee.

Write the year of buying on the packets when you fold them
over to put them away in a dry drawer in a shed or not too warm room,
and remember the span of each, sowing your new lettuce
seed in spring for it gets away faster than old which serves for summer.

You have in your drawer since Candlemas Day
All the seed packets you daren't throw away,
Seed Catalogue cometh as the year it doth end,
But look in ye drawer before money you spend.

Throw out ye Parsnip 'tis no good next year,
And Scorzonera if there's any there,
For these have a life that is gone with ye wynde
Unlike all ye seeds of ye cabbagy kinde

Broccoli, Cauliflower, Sprouts, Cabbage and Kale,
Live long like a farmer that knowest good ale.
Three years for certain, maybe five or four,
To sow in their seasons they stay in ye drawer.

Kohl Rabi lasts with them and so does Pei-Tsai,
The winter 'cos lettuce' to sow in July,
But short is the life of ye Turnips and Swedes
Sow next year only, enough for your needs.

Mustard and Cress for when salads come around,
Sows for three seasons so buy half a pound.
Radish lasts four years, both round ones and long,
Sow thinly and often they're never too strong.

Last year's left Lettuce sows three summers more,
And Beetroot and spinach-beet easily four.
But ordinary Spinach both prickly and round,
Hath one summer left before gaps waste ye ground.

Leeks sow three Aprils and one hath gone past,
And this is as long as ye Carrots will last,
Onion seed keeps till four years have flown by,
But sets are so easy and dodge onion fly.

Store Marrows and Cucumbers, best when they're old,
Full seven summers sowings a packet will hold.
Six hath ye celery that needs a frost to taste,
So hath Celeriac before it goes to waste.

Broad Beans, French ones, Runners, sown in May,
Each hath a sowing left before you throw away
And short Peas, tall Peas, fast ones and slow,
Parsley and Salsify have one more spring to sow -

Then fillen ye form that your seedsmen doth send,
For novelties plentie, there's money to spend,
Good Seed and good horses are worth the expense,
So pay them your poundies as I paid my pence.

Lawrence D. Hills, 1963

Footnote for Australian Gardeners. Obviously this is for the Northern Hemisphere, so for July read mid-summer and for April read early spring, and for May read late spring. However generally speaking I have found this little verse to be pretty accurate, as long as I have kept the seed dry and cool.
Betty Cornhill 12/7/97

(Reprinted from 'National Growing' Spring 1997, Journal of
Henry Doubleday Research Association of Australia.)

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MULLED WINE

(Southern Tablelands 4 Wheel Drive Club)



For each bottle of Claret allow
 1 cup sugar
 rind of 1 lemon
 rind of 1 orange (optional)
 1 cinnamon stick
 2 whole cloves
 1 cardamon pod (optional)

Pour wine into large saucepan. Add sugar and stir over low heat until sugar dissolved. Add lemon and orange rind, cinnamon, cloves, cardamon, heat slowly DO NOT allow to boil. Remove from heat taking out spices and serve.

APPLE KNOCKER

1 oz. Vodka
 4 oz apple cider
 pinch nutmeg
 twist of lemon
 cinnamon stick



Heat apple cider with cinnamon stick, nutmeg and lemon until near boiling, add vodka and heat through. Read to drink.

JINGLE BELLS DOWN UNDER

Dashing through the bush
 In a rusty Holden ute
 Esky in the boot
 Kelpie by my side
 Singing Christmas songs
 It's summertime - and I am in
 My singlet, shorts and thongs.

Oh jingle bells, jingle bells Christmas time's a beaut
 Oh what fun it is to ride in a rusty Holden ute
 Oh jingle bells, jingle bells Christmas time's a beaut
 Oh what fun it is to ride in a rusty Holden ute.

Dashing to the beach
 With a boogie board and towel
 Look at all the waves
 Hear the surfies howl "Yeehaa"
 Put your sunscreen on
 And don't forget your hat

'cos you will get sunburned if you don't remember that.

Oh Christmas time, summertime, mossies, bindii'
 Barbecues and sausages, tomato sauce and flies.
 Oh Christmas time, summertime, mossies, bindii'
 Barbecues and sausages, tomato sauce and flies.

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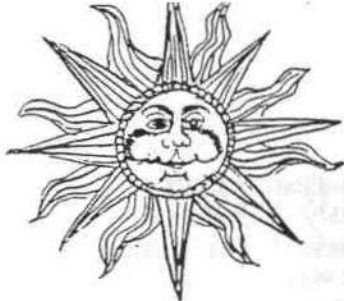
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VACANCIES NOV-MAR



SUMMER VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

	DEC	JAN	FEB
French Beans	S	S	
Beetroot	S	S	S*
Broccoli	ST	ST	T
Brussel Sprouts	ST	ST	T
Cabbage	ST	ST	T
Cauliflower	ST	ST	T
Carrots	S	S	S*
Celery	T	T	S
Chicory	S	S	S
Chinese Cabbage	S	S	
Cucumber	ST	T	
Endive	S	S	S
Kohl Rabi	ST	ST	T
Leeks	S	S	
Lettuce	ST	ST	ST
Marrows	T		
Parsnips	S	S	S
Potatoes	S	S	
Radish	S	S	S
Silver Beet	ST	ST	T
Squash	ST		
Swedes		S	S
Sweet Corn	ST	T	
Tomatoes	T	T	
Turnips		S	S

S = Seed Sowing
T = Transplanting

NB 1. This table is a guide only, please observe the seasonal weather patterns before deciding when to plant, as there will often be distinct differences in summer weather from one year to the next.

2. Planting times will vary for different varieties of the one vegetable.g. December plantings of heading lettuce should be successful, February plantings should be the butterhead varieties.

* In Summer it is a good idea to mulch your garden beds to help keep the soil cool and moist. One experiment has shown that a 4cm layer of straw reduced evaporation by 73%! Be careful however not to lay down a thick layer of sawdust or lawn clippings that can pack down to form an impenetrable barrier to water.

* Soil with lots of compost will contain all the nutrients your plants need for strong, healthy growth. In addition it will retain water and act like a sponge to keep your plants moist through the dry summer days.

* On days of extreme temperatures your plants may need to be physically protected from the heat. This can be achieved by covering the plants with shade cloth secured on a frame eg weldmesh bent over to form a tunnel (secure the shade cloth with some pegs).

* Try not to leave water on the leaves of plants that are susceptible to fungal diseases eg tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchinis. Preferably water with drippers, or if you must use overhead sprinklers, water in the cool of the morning so the water can evaporate during the day.

* Remember to leave space in your vegie patch for those winter vegetables that must be planted in late summer - early autumn. Brassicas and other winter crops need time to mature before the extreme cold of winter sets in.

* Keep those weeds down! They compete with your plants for food, water and sunlight. It is best to tackle them when they are small - before removing them becomes a backbreaking and exhausting exercise.

* Pests can multiply rapidly over summer. Don't reach for the pesticides! Observe if there are natural predators present, remembering that there will be a delay between the appearance of the pest and the subsequent build-up of its predators. If you must spray, use an environmentally benign spray. Read books such as Jackie French's 'Natural Pest Control'.

* Make sure you harvest your crop regularly - in most cases this will encourage your plants to continue cropping and you get to eat your produce at its peak!

COGS NOTICEBOARD

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A VERY
HAPPY NEW YEAR
EVERYONE**



Our first meeting in 1998 will be on Tuesday, 24th February at 7.30 pm in Room 4, Griffin Centre, Civic called 'Harvest Night' - please bring produce from your garden to be put on show and for discussion - also there will be produce from our own COGS Backyard.



Guest Speaker

JACKIE FRENCH

COGS

20th Anniversary
Dinner on Friday,
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at 7.30 pm Ollims Hotel