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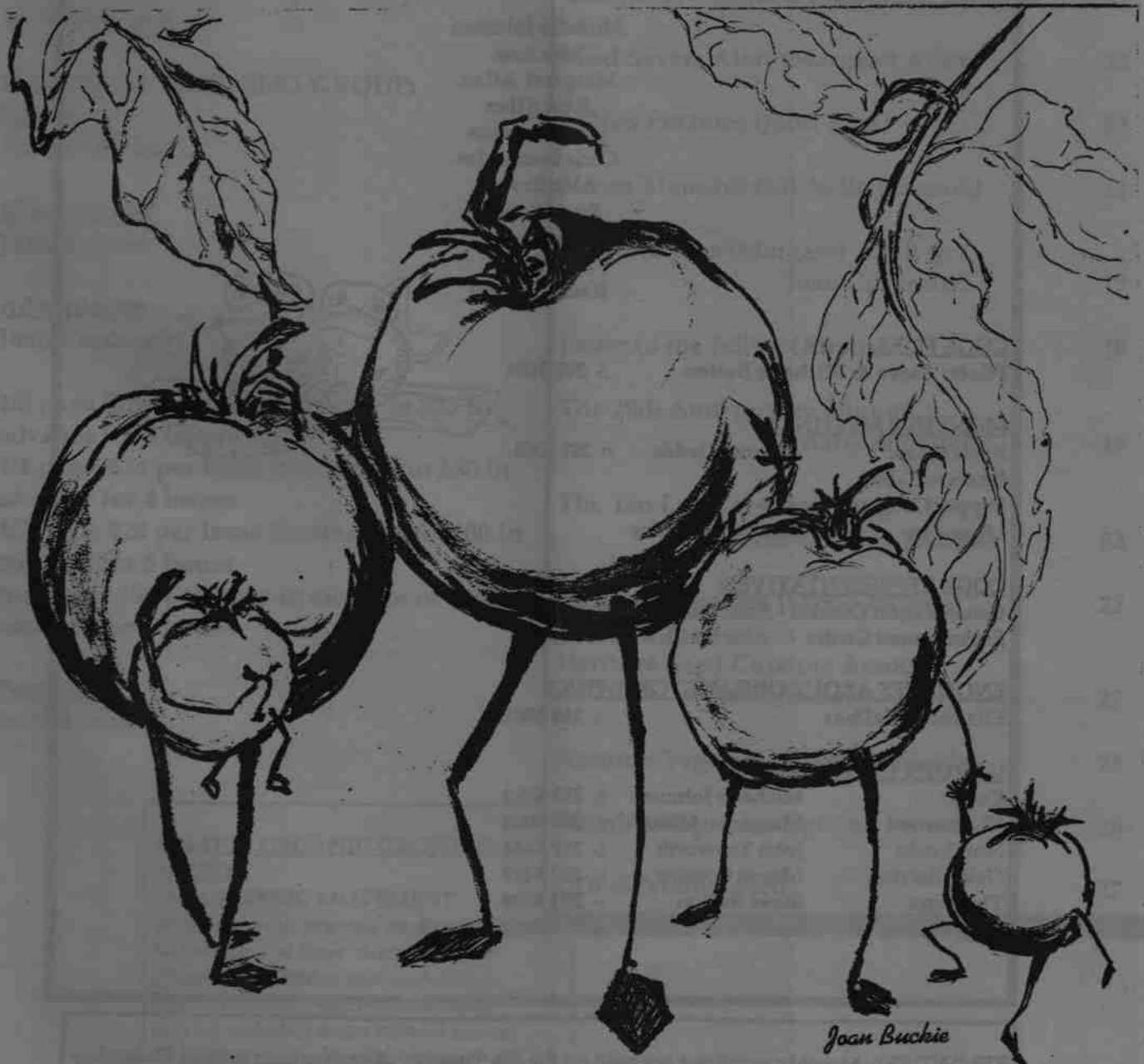
# COGS

QUARTERLY

VOL 5 no. 5

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

AUTUMN 1998



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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\*\*\*\*\*

## COGS QUARTERLY

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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.

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*By Michelle Johnson*

1997 seems to have sped by and we are now well into 1998. The calendar now says that it is Autumn, so I hope the weather realises this and decides to ease up on the very hot conditions we have endured this Summer. Some rain would be most welcome too, after the long dry.

For members of the Sub-Committee running COGS Backyard, our demonstration garden within the Xeriscape Garden at Weston, there has been little let-up in the jobs to do, but we have had the satisfaction of seeing the positive reaction of many members of the public as they have come through the garden.

As Steve mentioned in the February Flier, the garden has flourished since that first working bee in June last year, and for such a new garden has been very productive.

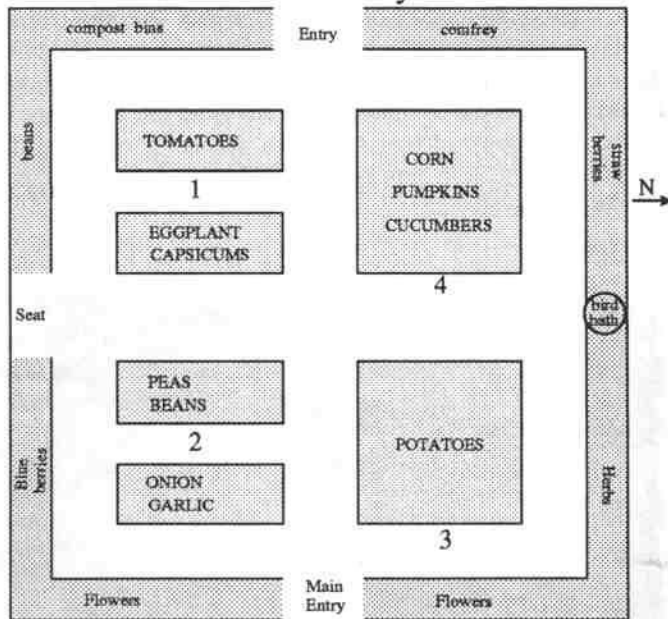
*FROM BARE EARTH:*  
June, 1997



*TO BOUNTY:*  
February, 1998



## COGS Backyard



The diagram opposite shows what we grew in each quadrant of the vegetable gardens, remembering that we are following a four year crop rotation system. To celebrate our success with the crops this year and to gain some publicity for COGS, we entered some of our produce in the Canberra Show and were delighted with the results.

From the first quadrant we entered some of our tomato crop. We grew a number of varieties of heirloom tomatoes and from these the Tigerella won first prize in the "small fancy tomato" category. Our Black Russian tomatoes won second prize in the "tomato of any other colour" category. I was interested to see that first prize was taken by a very attractive yellow tomato similar in size and shape to a Grosse Lisse, although flatter and slightly smaller than most Grosse Lisse fruits. I wish I knew what variety it was - if you have any idea let me know. Our collection of tomatoes (3 of 3 kinds) also won second prize. We collected a third prize for our Green Zebra tomatoes in the category for "green" tomatoes. What we didn't realize was that this category was for *unripe* tomatoes really, not green, as in the colour green, tomatoes.

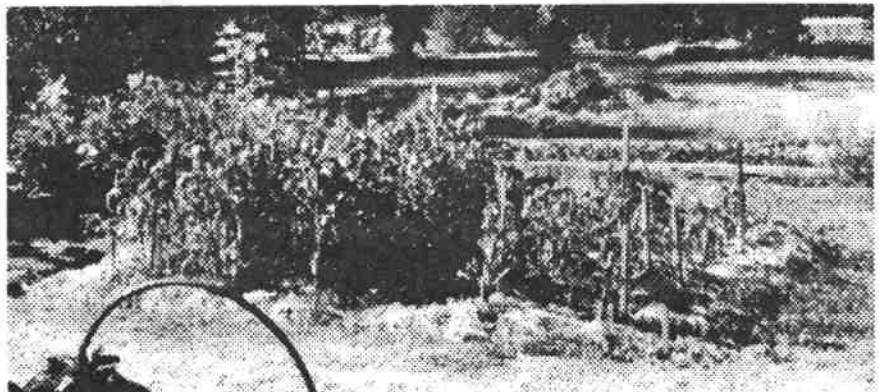
Our capsicums didn't win any prizes although we have been very pleased with the prolific crop we have had. Here we learnt a little about growing practices when growing a crop to show in a competition. We had let all the fruit stay on the bushes and had a lot of medium size fruit, some rather knobbly from growing close to other fruit, whereas for show we should have removed the later fruits and let a few early fruits grow large and straight. Our Japanese Long Eggplant won third prize, which was great since it was competing against the large block eggplant varieties. This variety I find excellent for eating though. It is much sweeter, no bitterness, very easy to chop up and its small size is more convenient to use. I'm saving some of the seed from this crop to put in our seedbank next season.

From the beds in the second quadrant we entered some beans from our legume bed. These weren't prize winners, but I was very interested to note that by the Sunday night of the Show - the produce having been entered on the Thursday - all the produce in this category had wilted badly except for our beans. I think generally organic produce does stay fresher than that that has been pumped up with soluble fertilisers.

From the root crops we won a prize with our potatoes too, and John Ross has written about preparing the bed for this crop in this issue of the Quarterly.

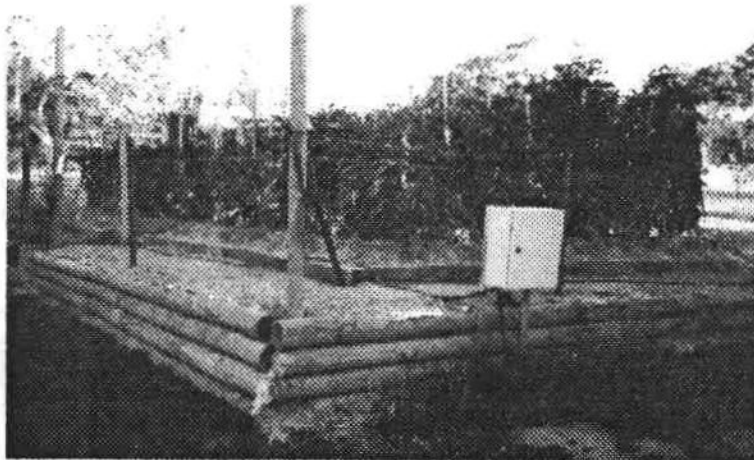
Our Crystal Apple cucumbers, grown under the corn in the fourth quadrant, won third prize in the "White Cucumber" category which was quite good considering they were yellow! This type of crystal apple cucumber is good eating and doesn't go bitter as it gets older, but I don't think it looks as attractive as the white skinned ones.

Our corn crop was interesting this year. We planted very thickly in case the cockies decided to attack the crop. They didn't, probably because they were busy eating the plums from a nearby Prunus. We left some rows unthinned, and thinned others to the "standard" spacing. Guess which ones did best? The unthinned ones! It was a dwarf variety which may have affected the results - larger varieties would need more space - but corn generally does like to grow closer together than many textbooks say.



We have already planted some brassicas for a winter crop, and soon the summer crops will come out of the beds and green manures will be sown. We must soon gather more materials to go into the compost bins. On the 4th and 5th of April at 1pm and 3pm we will be giving talks on organic gardening to the public coming through the Xeriscape garden, and this will be advertised by ACTEW as part of their program for the garden. COGS members are very welcome to come along. The talks will focus on composting and planting green manure crops, and there will be ample time to ask questions about these subjects and any others which may interest you. If you cannot come that weekend, you can see our garden any time the Xeriscape is open i.e. 1pm to 4.30pm Saturday and Sunday each weekend for the next couple of months. There will be members of the COGS Sub-Committee there each Saturday from about 3pm on to harvest the ACTEW tomatoes.

Mentioning the ACTEW Tomatoes brings me to another important project that your Sub-Committee has been working on over Spring-Summer. Early Spring COGS was approached by ACTEW to take part in an experiment they wanted carried out at the Xeriscape Garden. They basically wanted us to grow a number of tomato plants for them over Spring-Summer, the aim being to compare the yields of two different groups of tomato plants with one group grown with no fertiliser, another group fertilised with diluted urine collected from their office block in Civic. The project is part of their ongoing interest in use of sewerage in an "environmentally friendly" way.



We decided to take part out of interest in the experiment itself and also because we saw it as a fundraiser for COGS. COGS will be paid approximately \$2000 for our work at the conclusion of the experiment.

By mid November the garden beds had been set up to conduct the experiment: two plots, the Control Plot and the Urine Plot, with two sections in each plot - one with no Zeolite added, one with Zeolite added. Zeolite is a natural product used to supposedly help plants take up water from the soil. The plots are located near COGS Backyard, and are fenced and covered in birdnetting.

ACTEW installed the drip irrigation lines and the automatic watering system. The diluted urine has been fed to the Urine Plot through the irrigation line from a storage tank in the Xeriscape garden, all of which, I might add, was approved by the Health Department.

It was decided also to grow two types of tomatoes, Grosse Lisse and Roma. We planted 96 tomato seedlings in total, 48 in each plot. In each plot half the seedlings (24) were Grosse Lisse and half (24) were Roma. These were divided equally between the Zeolite and No Zeolite sections of the Plots.

The seedlings were bought from Joyce Wilkie and Michael Plane. They were small but sturdy and have all done very well. The Grosse Lisse in particular are a very good type. John Ross has spent a lot of time training the plants to a main leader, since both varieties want to bush. It has been noticeable that the plants in the Urine Plot have been bushier and leafier than in the Control Plot, almost certainly due to the nitrogen in the urine. It is difficult to tell just from observation if the plants in the Urine Plot have more or bigger fruits but we have begun weighing and recording the harvest and should get a clearer picture soon. It does seem to us however that the fruit from the Control Plot is a superior quality fruit with fewer marks and blemishes. We'll let you know the results of the trail after we have finished our report.

As you can imagine it has been a busy time for us out at the Xeriscape Garden, and while the ACTEW experiment will conclude in Autumn, work at COGS Backyard will continue, as will other projects in COGS. At the risk of sounding like a broken record the COGS Committee does need help from the members! This can take the form of helping with special projects like COGS Backyard. This is a very worthwhile project which gives us the opportunity to demonstrate to the public that organic growing does work. We can teach newcomers the tried and true methods of organic gardening and for the more experienced gardeners we can have some fun sharing our knowledge and experimenting with new and different techniques.

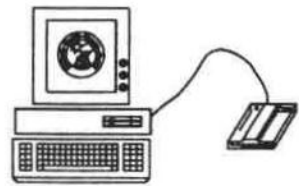
Please consider volunteering for some job at our AGM in March. If new Committee members can take over some of the administrative areas of COGS, this will free others already involved in projects. There are many ways you can help. COGS simply cannot continue to rely on the few workers we now have.

# The Internet Column

By John Allen

Email: [jallen@pcug.org.au](mailto:jallen@pcug.org.au)

COGS WWW Home Page URL: <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.

## Internet Guide for Farmers

A new *Farmers' Guide to the Internet* has been launched by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation in conjunction with Farmwide Pty. Ltd., the commercial arm of the National Farmers' Federation. It's hoped that the guide will help growers and other Internet users find what they need, from boots to fencing, irrigation piping to market information and weather forecasts to weed identification kits. The Guide aims to give growers confidence in connecting to and using Internet services. It provides a starting point from where to find information that is relevant to rural business. The guide costs \$25.00 and is available from:

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation  
Level 1, 10 Macquarie Street  
Barton ACT 2600  
Tel: (02) 6272 4539  
Fax: (02) 6272 5877

More information is available at:  
<<http://www.farmwide.com.au/whatsnew/>>

Source: *The Living Soil*, January 1998



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**Bt Toxin Kills Beneficial Insects** - Researchers at the Swiss federal research station Zuerich-Reckenholz were alarmed to find that *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) toxin from transgenic plants "jumped over" a food chain to kill useful insects. Transgenic corn containing the Bt toxin gene not only killed European cornborers (insect pests), but also killed the larvae of green lacewings, beneficial insects that feed on the cornborers. Another insect pest, the African cottonworm, survived after being fed the Bt corn. However, beneficial green lacewings that fed on the cottonworms died. Bt corn and potatoes, which are already on the market in Canada, are genetically engineered to contain the Bt toxin throughout the plant in order to deter insect pests.

**Ladybugs Threatened by Biotech Crops** - Recent studies at the Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI) found that potatoes genetically modified to deter aphids also damaged beneficial insects. The transgenic potatoes had snowdrop lectin (a plant protein) as the pest resistant gene in the potato, to suppress the aphids' feeding, growth and reproduction. (Ref: London Times, 22 October 1997) The aphids who ate the biotech potatoes were then fed to ladybugs, which naturally feed on the aphids. Consequently, the number of fertilized ladybug eggs that failed to hatch was almost three times higher. Also female ladybugs who fed on these aphids only lived half as long. As stated by the SCRI: "Our current experiments highlight the importance of assessing all transgenic crops genetically engineered for pest resistance in this way to be sure that any new type of pest-resistant crop plant does not jeopardize the delicate balance between pests and beneficial insects in agricultural ecosystems."

**Misleading Beans** - Albert Heijn, the biggest Dutch retail grocery chain, was found guilty of misleading advertising in promoting biotech soybeans as having the same quality as natural soybeans. Following complaints filed by the Dutch Natural Law Party, the Advertisement Code Commission in the Netherlands decided that Albert Heijn was guilty of false advertising and asked the company to stop making the misleading claims. Albert Heijn is part of the multinational retail chain Ahold, which subsequently filed an appeal. The Appeal Commission recently came to its decision and again found Albert Heijn guilty of false advertising.

**Farmyard Freaks** - By manipulating a gene related to muscularity, scientists recently produced a genetically engineered Belgian Blue bull with 20 per cent more beef than normal and weighing three-quarters of a tonne. Such animals engineered for increased muscle/meat content typically do not have the bones to support their own flesh. Hulking Belgian Blues can scarcely walk. Other genetically engineered animals include fast-growing pigs with painful joints, as their legs are tiny compared to the rest of the body; fast-growing chickens that suffer from heart disease and whose bones are so feeble they break on contact; and turkeys that are so fleshy that they cannot physically mate, but require artificial insemination.

**Biotech Cotton Failure** - In Mississippi, farmers could lose millions of dollars due to the failure of biotech herbicide-resistant cotton. Over an area of several thousand hectares, cotton plants have shed their cotton bolls, or produced small malformed bolls. Cotton plants from non-GE varieties were not affected. Legal proceeding by the farmers against the manufacturer are in progress. (Ref: New Scientist, 1 November 1997)

**Co-Op Begins Biotech Labeling** - Shutoken, a large consumer's co-operative union in Japan, which includes 14 co-operatives in the Tokyo area, is now labeling foods that are free of genetically engineered ingredients. So far, this system covers 17 major items, including Japanese mainstays like miso, tofu and shoyu. Plans are already underway to greatly expand the number of foods carrying the special label.

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## NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Our garden happened in response to the re-development of the old Starlight Drive-in site and it's neighbour, Watson Community Garden.

On the 29th June 1996 we had a working bee to relocate the shed and toilet. On 6th July we transplanted sixteen fruit trees, twelve of which are still with us, and on Sunday 4th August our garden was officially open for growing. We have retained a handful of former Watson gardeners and currently we have twenty plot holders.

Our garden is in a quiet, relatively secluded part of Mitchell. The paddocks next door are home to cattle and kangaroos in the early morning and late afternoon. The paddock opposite is a wildlife reserve and is stunning in August/September with its huge block of wattle in bloom. Our shed and toilet are tucked in amongst the trees on the eastern side and these same trees are a great asset when it is time for a spell and a drink.

This year we've erected a pergola with shade cloth roof and this will become a play area for the many young children of our gardeners. The sand pit is the next project. The area also has swings and is centrally located so the children aren't too far away from their parents.

I had a call last year from a prospective gardener wanting to grow a trial plot of echinacea. This was approved and we're all awaiting the first blooms. It should be a riot of colour in amongst our orchard trees. Many vegetables have already begun to spread from 1996 and it hasn't been uncommon for lettuce, silverbeet and, of course, tomatoes to simply appear. Likewise the dreaded couch has turned up and is ruthlessly dealt with. I get a kick tearing it out and leaving it in the sun to sizzle - must be my upbringing!

We planted climbing roses at the entrance of our garden. These are from former Watson garden inhabitants and bloomed well this season. We're consolidating and hope to remain here for many years to come.

I'll take this opportunity to give a special thanks to Parks and Gardens and to welcome you or your friends if you'd like to visit us. See you soon.

John Tuxworth  
Convenor

## ERINDALE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Erindale Community Garden is situated close to government units housing both young and elderly residents. Not many Canberrans know we exist as the garden is not very large nor conspicuous being surrounded by high fencing.

Personally, it is one of my regular sanctuaries. I enjoy toiling in the fertile soil that has been built up over the last seven years.

At times gardening may be strenuous exercise but it is well rewarded with bountiful produce that can be shared and given to appreciative family and friends.

We delight in consuming tasty meals we've grown and then can also enthusiastically preserve, dry, freeze, jam and pickle our own grown goodies.

This year we picked a bumper crop of sweet, fat, juicy blackberries which are grown in our community plot. At the time of picking Woolies were selling blackberries for \$4.50 a mere punnet!

A donation seed box is in the shed so whenever something bolts to seed they may be collected to provide a supply for all to use.

Carpets on the footpaths have been a God-send, gone are the days when we used a lawn mover and of course the couch would always inevitably creep under the boxing to invade our plots. As the carpet rots all we have to do is toss on another layer.

Thanks to me and my rabbits (yes, I'm taking the credit!) the garden has constant supplies of nitrogen rich manure, mulch and compost. Thanks to Michael Crowe and Andrew Copp we have deliveries of horse manure, carpet, wood for boxing and essential rubbish removals.

All plot holders contributed to the purchase of automatic timers. Now we can spend our precious time in gardening rather than watering. We simply switch on the timer and walk out the gate knowing water is being supplied during this particularly hot dry summer.

Christine Carter  
Convenor

# The Cotter Garden

*By Michelle Johnson, Convenor*

The Summer may have been long and hot and dry, but for those ploholders with time to keep up the watering, it has also been a rewarding one. The heat loving crops, such as tomatoes, capsicums, cucumbers and eggplant have done well and zucchini has thrived. Tomatoes did not ripen early, despite the early heat and this could have been because some days were so hot that the plants "shut down". I couldn't blame them if they did the heat was so tiring!

One additional benefit of the heat though was that our large grass area didn't need mowing once, in fact the grass has only just hung on. Let's hope for some good Autumn rains. Our paths between plots became a bit untidy at times, but overall the garden has looked good. Visitors have commented on its productivity and its special atmosphere. I certainly feel grateful for the opportunity to garden in such a place with such friendly and cooperative people.

In the past fortnight there have been a few unwelcome visitors to the garden. The mice have discovered our tomatoes, a brown snake has discovered our mice - and our warm compost bins - and lately I've noticed an increase in the number of large grasshoppers in the garden. Fortunately not much damage has been done. I've largely solved the mouse problem for my plot by picking the tomatoes before they are vine ripe, so I'm not losing too many. I guess with so much to choose from the mice just choose the best and ripest! They also show a distinct preference for some varieties of tomatoes over others. My Pink Lady tomatoes seem favourites, and the mice climb right up the plant after these, ignoring ripe Amish Paste tomatoes almost sitting on the ground. The Pink Lady are very sweet and juicy, and I can only suppose that this attracts them.

There have not been any serious disease problems this year. Even the wilt that affected many tomato plants last year has not been seen this season, again probably a benefit of the dry conditions since the wilt is caused by a soil-borne fungus which can be splashed onto the plants in wet weather.

As the cooler weather approaches we will need to have a clean up, and in particular, attack some of the weeds that have started to invade from the edges of the garden. That can wait for now though as we continue to enjoy the harvest.

## THE CHARNWOOD GARDEN UPDATE

Margaret Allen

It has been quite a productive season, with most things growing in abundance. The beans did not set seed so readily in the heat, so this crop suffered slightly. The garden is looking good but still plenty of work needs to be done regarding setting up of compost bins and getting rid of old carpet that is laying in wait for an unsuspecting foot to trip up. Membership fluctuates but is quite good at the moment. Some produce was lost to the light fingered variety pest, but garden members are encouraged to grow more than their needs to cover for loss to birds, environment etc. There appears to be many frogs and lady birds in the garden and it also seems that we have just acquired a resident cat, whom we hope will chase away or eat all the mice that come to the compost heaps for food. We plan to have an open day on the **21 March 9.30am to 11.30am if any Cogs members and friends would care to come over for a visit they would be most welcome.**

## SEED SAVERS ALERT

by *Margaret Allen*



*(Summarised from The Seed Savers' Handbook by Michael & Jude Fanton)*

We are all encouraged to save some seeds from our crops, but are we aware of just which variety of plant we are actually saving the seeds of?

From my own experiences, I have seen species of my own vegies disappear through cross pollination, such as bush nut pumpkin and corn. There are certain plants that will cross pollinate very easily.

When we are growing vegetables in a small confined area, it is very difficult not to end up with cross pollinated seeds.

In most of the vegetables, the male and female parts are in the same flower, these are called complete flowers. Exceptions to this are the curcubit family, where the male and female parts are on the same plant but in different flowers, and asparagus, where the male parts are on one plant and the female on another. Lettuce, tomato and okra have the female part so close to the male, that any wind movement causes the pollen to drop onto the receptive stigma. In peas and beans, self-pollination occurs before the flower even opens. This is called automatic self-pollination.

Plants such as lettuces, tomatoes, peas and beans are self-pollinated. They do not rely on insects and pollen from other individual plants to produce fertile seeds.

Natural cross-pollination occurs when two varieties of some vegetables are grown side by side, for example: a tomato will cross with another tomato from two to five percent; a capsicum will cross with another capsicum from nine to thirty eight percent depending on the variety.

Therefore, even self-pollinators should be isolated from each other as much as possible if you intend to keep the seeds.

To keep seeds pure, plants will need to be certain distances apart and the distance varies between plants. Hedges, buildings, barriers or ridges can greatly reduce crossing. When only a small amount of pure seed is needed, covering the blossoms of such fruit as tomatoes and capsicums with a paper bag is adequate. This is for self-pollinated crops only.

When collecting seeds, select only strong healthy plants, and the best time of the day is about 10am when the dew has evaporated.

Good Luck!!

*The Seed Savers' Handbook can be purchased from COGS for \$20 per copy plus \$2.50 postage. You can order a copy at the monthly meeting or send an order with cheque to:*

*Canberra Organic Growers Society  
PO Box 347  
DICKSON ACT 2602*

## COGS POTATOES by John Ross

On the 21 June 1997 the first turf was turned over at the new "COGS Backyard". The soil was dry and hard and perhaps the look of disbelief was understandable when I started to double dig the potato plot. The area had been graded some years earlier and I felt that a good depth of topsoil could be attained very quickly if the ground was dug over in such a way. It is my belief that deep digging where possible is beneficial in the initial preparation of garden plots especially in Canberra when the winter frosts can play their part in breaking down the soil.

I started to open up the plot by digging a series of trenches to the depth of 50 cm. When all the soil from the first trench was removed and placed to one side I filled the bottom of the trench with a quantity of cow manure and then inverted the surface matter and soil from the second trench into the first trench. This was repeated for each row until the material from the first trench was placed in the last trench. To complete the work I returned to the plot in September (spring) and with the use of my trusty garden fork spread all that lower natural goodness to the upper levels. It is important that this is done, as it increases the bacteria and organisms levels, which play a vital role in the conversion of organic matter to humus and mineral salts for use, by plants.

In most literature written on potatoes in Australia it indicates that seed potatoes (tubers) should be planted at depths of approximately 15 cm to 20 cm. I don't know if this is based on the assumption that people are working with shallow topsoil levels, but I always plant potatoes at double this depth. Potatoes grow from the tuber upwards and it seems such a crime not to use the maximum soil depth possible. I also plant with a space of 45 cm between rows and 35 cm between potatoes, which may differ from some, but have proven successful over the years.

Prior to planting, I placed COGS tubers in an open tray at the back of garage in a well light spot for four to five weeks to encourage the establishment of good strong shots. I like to see shots at least 5 cm long before planting and I only allow two to three shots to remain at the time of planting. I always use egg size potatoes, but larger ones can be cut into pieces as long as the cut surfaces are allowed to dry before planting.

Sometimes it's worth waiting a few days after digging before planting, this permit the soil to settle, but in my case "big boot" compression works just as well providing the area is raked level afterwards. I find the easiest way to plant the tubers is to open narrow trenches to the depth required and then lay the tubers (shots upwards) in the bottom of the trench then backfill. After planting all the rows, the area is again raked level. The leveling encourages the potato shots to come directly upwards to the nearest light. Some people form furrows straight away, but by doing so the potato shots tend to come through the side walls of the furrow and this makes it more difficult to tend the plants later. The other important thing is to plant potatoes in a North to South direction, as this allows maximum sunlight to reach each plant when they mature.

After all this hard work comes the first easy bit, you can just sit back and wait for the signs of the first shots to break through the surface and experience the speed at which they grow to a healthy plants. To protect this new growth, furrows are developed. I use a slimline shovel for this task, which in my case is a normal long handled shovel with the sides ground away. Furrows are simply formed by removing the soil between rows and placing it up and around each of the potato plants. This protects the plants from wind damage and increases the amount of soil that the potatoes have to grow into. Don't worry if you cover the plants, as they will soon reappear. I tend to establish the furrows over a period of time, increasing the depth between rows as the plants become larger. This year Canberra had some heavy rain half way through the growing season which washed the soil

into the bottom of the furrows, so on occasions such as this it will be necessary to reform the soil around the plants.

Now let nature take over again; apart from a bit of watering, potatoes are probably one of the easiest crops to manage. Well-formed potatoes will shade the plot completely and in doing so will restrict the growth of the normal type of weeds.

Harvest time depends on the variety of potatoes planted. The Sebago and Pontiacs that were planted in COGS plot have quite different growth times, the Sebago taking longer. In general I always leave potatoes until the tops die back completely to maximises crop size, but it is important not to leave them too long as they have a tendency to start shooting again. For those of you that like to pick early you can start to harvest when the lower branches begin to yellow. As a caution do not leave dug potatoes exposed to light as this causes toxic greening.

Storage of COGS potatoes was not necessary, but if required mature potatoes store best. A potato sack or well-ventilated box in a dark, cool shed is best, but please examine the potatoes for evidence of damage as rot can spread rapidly under such conditions. A friend of mine buries his potatoes in a straw filled hole in the ground. This worked really well the only problem with this is you have to remember where you stored them.

Happy growing.

---

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## GREEN MANURES

by Michelle Johnson

Are you interested in a simple, cheap way to:-

1. improve the fertility of your garden soil
2. enhance its drought resistance
3. suppress the germination and growth of weeds?

If you are, then you should be considering the use of green manure crops.

Green manure crops are crops grown, not to be harvested by the grower, but to be incorporated into the soil before they reach maturity to contribute to the care and feeding of the soil. It is an old technique of soil management that has unfortunately been forgotten by many farmers and gardeners who are no longer aware of the proven benefits of such crops - benefits that come at the low cost of the seeds for the green manure crop.

Green manure crops contribute directly to the fertility of the garden through the supply of important plant nutrients. Legumes in particular supply a valuable amount of nitrogen since their roots form an association with soil-borne bacteria that can transform nitrogen from the atmosphere into nitrogen compounds that can be used by plants. This is quite a complicated feat - and one which can save you the cost of fertilisers! Different nutrients such as phosphorous are supplied by other green manure crops.

Green manure crops contribute indirectly to nutrient supply as well. The process of decomposition of the crop aids in making further nutrients available that are already present in the soil but in a form that cannot be used by plants. It is believed that this happens through the actions of decomposition products including carbon dioxide and organic acids. An example of this indirect contribution is a barley crop. Peter Bennett<sup>1</sup> recommends growing a green manure crop of barley before a crop of tomatoes, since tomatoes have a high requirement for phosphorous and barley somehow increases the uptake of phosphorous in crops following it.

When incorporated into the soil, green manure crops can supply vast amounts of organic matter. Organic matter can also be supplied through mulches as well as through the incorporation of a green manure crop, but this usually involves greater expense. It can also be difficult to locate a source of good clean mulch such as straw that you know has not been sprayed with any chemicals, whereas, as an organic gardener, you know your crop is clean and does not contain unwanted chemical residues.

A good healthy soil should contain approximately 5% organic matter. While this may seem to be a small component of the soil, it is a vital one. According to the La Motte Soil Handbook "No other constituent plays such a major beneficial role in the soil environment and gets so little credit as does the organic fraction"<sup>2</sup>. Indeed it was

the emphasis placed on organic matter in the soil by the early proponents of organic growing that gave our method of agriculture its title.

Why is organic matter so important? Because decayed organic matter, or humus as it is called, is the key to soil structure, nutrient supply and the biological vitality of the soil.

The presence of humus in the soil also increases the amount of water which can be held in the soil<sup>4</sup>. This is critical in making a garden drought resistant. In a dry season water applied to a garden is wasted if that water runs away and does not stay near the root zones of the plants.

Drought resistance can also be improved in another way by the use of green manure crops. Many of the legumes used as green manures, such as alfalfa, lupins and sweet clover, are very deep rooted crops. Their roots can penetrate the subsoil and open it up which is an important improvement in compacted soils. Subsequent vegetable crops can use the channels in the subsoil to allow their roots to reach deep into the subsoil and obtain water from the lower levels. It is worth remembering that many common vegetable crops are capable of putting down a large root system if the soil is loose enough. For example, in a deep, well structured soil, tomatoes can put roots down 150cm with the main root zone down to about 55cm and pumpkin and sweet corn roots can reach down to 180cm, with the main root zone down to about 60cm<sup>3</sup>.

Crops can also obtain plant nutrients from the subsoil once it is opened by deep rooted green manure crops. Sourcing nutrients from these deeper levels of the soil has proved a major benefit for crops grown on farmland where the topsoil has either been eroded or has been worn out from overcropping. It is important in young gardens where the topsoil is thin. The clay subsoil in many parts of the Canberra region for instance can provide an excellent foundation for a soil-building program provided it can be opened up for the crops grown in it.

Another benefit of a green manure crop is that while the green manure crop is growing it prevents weeds colonising the bare ground left after the previous crop has been removed. In general it helps protect the soil surface from erosion and leaching of nutrients.

Green manures can be grown in three ways:-

1. As a crop during the main growing season, which, however, has the disadvantage of taking up valuable space at the most productive time of year
2. As an undercover crop grown with the main crop, but planted after the main crop is established. This is an extremely useful method for gardeners in areas with long cold winters where there is not time to plant a green manure crop after the summer harvest. It is an interesting area of research in vegetable growing and for more information see Eliot Coleman's "New Organic Grower"<sup>4</sup>.
3. As an over-winter crop, which is the most common way they are grown. In the Canberra region, Autumn is an ideal time to plant green manure crops in beds emptied of the Summer harvest. There is usually time to establish the crop before winter.

When establishing a garden, a green manure crop can be grown whenever a bed would otherwise be left vacant over winter. The only exception is preceding an onion crop, since onions seem to do best with no preceding green manure crop. Care should be taken with most root vegetables which do not appreciate soil with a lot of organic matter, so bulky crops should be avoided, as well as those high in nitrogen.

Once a good fertile soil has been created in the vegetable garden, it should only be necessary to replenish the supply of organic matter once in every four years, and the green manure crop can be grown at the end of a four-year crop rotation such as:-

Year 1: Tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants, leafy greens

Year 2: Onions, garlic or peas, beans,  
followed by brassicas

Year 3: Root crops

Year 4: Cucurbits, Sweet corn

followed by a winter green manure crop, then returning to Year 1 in the rotation.

The green manure crop can be dug in in Spring prior to planting crops for next Summer. Having dug in a green manure crop you need wait only 4-6 weeks before planting Summer crops.

However, if you consider digging in the green manure a difficult chore, you will be pleased to hear the results of a study by US Department of Agriculture scientists: Apparently they found "that amounts of nitrogen released from residues of alfalfa, wheat, and sorghum hardly differed at all whether the plants were tilled into the soil or just left there, untilled and unchopped on the surface"<sup>5</sup>.

It seems therefore that you don't *have* to dig it in, but incorporating it into the soil may lead to a speedier decomposition of the organic material. A satisfactory compromise is to partially chop up the crop, leave it on the soil surface, but cover it with straw to give protection to all

the micro-organisms who will appear to feast on the organic matter and convert it into humus in the soil.

The following Table is a list of suitable green manure crops for Autumn for this region, along with brief comments which may help you decide which crop to plant. It is important to vary the types of green manure crops grown as they have different attributes and disadvantages. It is often a good idea to grow a mix of crops in the one bed to get the best results.

#### AUTUMN GREEN MANURE CROPS

##### Legumes: (fix nitrogen)\*

Broad Beans	Produce a large amount of organic matter. Can be sown late in Autumn. Will stand some waterlogging. Sow 35gms/sq m.
Field Peas	Similar to above
Lupins	Effective phosphorous gatherers. Contribute lots of organic matter. Not usually susceptible to fungal diseases which may affect peas and beans. Sow 16gm/sq m.
Sub Clover	Very effective nitrogen fixer. Not large amount of foliage. Sow 1gm/ sq m.
Tic Peas	Cheaper alternative to Broad Beans
Vetch	Large bulk. Competes well with weeds.

\* Some lucernes may also be suitable

##### Non-Legumes:

Barley	Vigorous grower. Increases uptake of phosphorous in following crop. Peter
Bennett	recommends planting 2 cm deep, 3 cm apart, 15cm between rows.
Oats	Grows in wide range of soils. Doesn't mind acidity. Tolerates very cold weather. Broadcast 10gm/sq m
Rye	Large amount of organic matter. Drought resistant. Sow similar to oats.

- NB.
1. Some legumes need to be inoculated to ensure the right bacteria is present in your soil.
  2. Flowering crops should be dug just before flowering, cereals before producing head of grain
  3. A crop will decompose in 4-6 weeks in late Oct-early Nov, but may take longer if it is a cold Spring.

##### References:

1. "Organic Gardening" by Peter Bennett, published by Australian & NZ Book Co Pty Ltd, 1979
2. "LaMotte Soil Handbook", LaMotte Chemical Products Company, 1930, reprinted 1985.
3. "When Should I Water?", Discovering Soils No.8, CSIRO Division Of Soils, Dr Kevin Handreck, 1979
4. "The New Organic Grower", by Eliot Coleman, Chelsea Green Publishing,
5. "Organic Gardening" Rodale Press, Dec, 1993 p15
6. "Green Manures" by Tim Marshall, Acres Aust. VI, No9 p33
7. COGS Newsletter Sep 1992



## CUCUMBER SOUP

(by Margaret Allen)

1/2 Kilo of cucumber  
1/4 tspn black pepper  
1/4 tspn cumin  
1 chopped onion  
2 tablespn butter

1/2 tspn salt  
1/2 tspn coriander  
1 tspn chopped mint  
4 cups of vegetable stock  
2 tablespn flour

Peel cucumber into very thin slices, reserve a few slices for garnish, put into stock along with chopped onion, salt and pepper, bring to boil, then simmer for about 25 minutes.

In another pan, melt butter and stir in flour, cumin and coriander, add some of the strained stock to mixture, when thickened, combine with the cucumber etc, add some mint and cook for a further 5 minutes.

Serve with reserved cucumber slices and a blob of yoghurt, a nice addition is a crusty warm fresh bread roll on the side.

## ORANGE AND BEETROOT SOUP

Joan Cordeaux

40-60g butter  
1kg Beetroot, raw, peeled and grated  
1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped  
2 medium-size potatoes, peeled and chopped  
1.5 litres vegetable stock  
300ml pure orange juice  
Small amount of freshly ground black pepper  
Small amount of shreds of orange peel for garnish  
Small amount of cream for garnish (optional)

Heat the butter in a large pan, add the grated beetroot and chopped onion, cover and cook gently for approx. twenty minutes until soft. Stir in potatoes and stir for about 1 minute before adding the stock and orange juice.

Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for about forty minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Cool slightly.

Put soup in blender and puree - return to the pan and again bring to the boil. Serve soup whilst hot and garnish with small dollop of cream with orange peel shreds - very colourful and appetising.



## New Season Seeds Available

As well as a variety of COGS OWN Seeds, the following Phoenix Seeds will be available at the February meeting. Note that the price has increased to \$2.00 per packet.

Beans: Adzuki, Bush, Butter, Ida White, Purple Queen, Redlands Pioneer

Climbing Beans: Purple King, Blue Lake

Beetroot: Lutz, Rapid Red, Sugar

Broccoli: Saga Fi, Raab, Brussel Sprouts, Catskill

Buckwheat

Cabbage: Lettucey, South China

Capsicum: Cal Wonder, Lipstick, Sweet Chocolate

Carrots: King West, Cauliflower, Snowball

Celeriac

Celery: Ventura

Corn: Golden Bantam

Cucumber: Armenian, Chinese, Crystal Apple, Mild East

Egg Plant: Black Bell, Neon F1

Leeks: Royal Mammoth,

Lettuce: Green Mignotte

Marrow: Maltese

Onions: Summer

Parsnip: Cobham

Pumpkin: Queensland Blue, Golden Crown, Golden Nugget

Tomatoes: Kotlas, Rouge de Marmonde, Yellow Cherry, Stripped German, Gold Dust

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I was thinking about 12 to start with

What type? there seems to be a lot of varieties, what suits this region, egg layers and meat birds.

How big does my hen house need to be?

Has any body got plans for a moveable pen I could move around my fruit trees?

If you can help could you please forward you replies to the COGS Editor and everybody can read the answers in the Quarterly.

Thanks for your help

Anon



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## THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

by Margaret Allen

It all started when somebody at a committee meeting made a comment that something special really should happen to mark the 20 years of COGS. A few suggestions were brought forward, and the possibility of a dinner was mentioned.

The president Michelle Johnson and myself decided to look at possible venues at which we could do the catering ourselves. None of the community halls we visited seemed to have what we were looking for. Next we looked at restaurants that would be prepared to cook an organic meal with the ingredients supplied by COGS.

We needed to provide some idea of a menu, to present to the restaurant. Cook books were dragged from the book shelves and poured over for suitable recipes. It had to be a varied menu that would suit every taste, so different options would need to be offered. It also had to have food items that were in season in November, and available from local shops. Armed with a print out of possible meals we proceeded to visit our list of possible venues.

We looked at Clancy's, the CIT restaurant, plus a few others. Olims was the only restaurant we contacted that was prepared to meet our criterion. It was a bonus that on the night that we requested the actual restaurant was available rather than a function room. The restaurant had the facility to open up into a larger room should it be necessary to cater for the extra numbers. An added bonus was the use of the patio for pre dinner drinks. So we booked for the 21 November, thinking that we had plenty of time in which to organise everything.

It was August when Michelle and I went forth to check the availability of our menu ingredients plus the prices. We were soon to realise how we would have to substitute certain items, like using quark instead of sour cream, oil for butter and honey for sugar. We then needed to calculate how much we would have to charge each person to cover our costs. Mountain Creek Wholefoods, Griffith Butchery, Organic Energy at Griffith and the Allergy Centre at Jamison and McLaren Vale Cellars (Robinvale Organic Wines) were the retail outlets we contacted. With note pads full of figures, we went to Michelle's house to calculate how much flour, milk, oil, carrots etc would cost per serve. That was quite an exercise, as I am sure the mathematicians reading this will realise and appreciate. We arrived at a figure of just over forty dollars per person, but decided that most of our members would find that rather expensive, so we compromised and decided on a figure of \$38. This was to cover pre-dinner drinks, soup, entree, main course, desert, tea and coffee, and wine with the meal. COGS would cover the short fall in monies.

Next came the advertisements, and we asked everyone to contact us by a certain date if they were interested in the event. By the said date only 13 people had paid for their tickets, but 20 had notified us to say they were interested. We started to think that maybe we had made a mistake and that COGS members just didn't want to celebrate our 20th Anniversary. Anyway, I made a few phone calls, and discovered that people just hadn't read the advert fully, and thought that they could just come along on the night, or, they hadn't realised that we needed to be notified so early in the piece. So after the word was passed around, the numbers bumped up to 45 and we decided that as a deposit had already been paid to Olims restaurant we might as well go ahead with the dinner even though COGS would likely be footing quite a large percentage of the bill.

We contacted Jackie French, who was very pleased to be invited as the guest speaker. Jackie offered to donate for the dinner lemons and avocados, grown by her own organic hands, and of course we said thank you very much.

The committee decided to have a trial run at our home for the dinner, and each committee member was responsible for bringing along one of the items on the menu. The initial soup that was selected was a lettuce, pea and herb soup, and at the trial run, it did not hold up to expectations regarding taste and consistency. So a zucchini and herb soup was chosen to replace it. The main meals were a success, but one of the desserts chosen - the cream caramel was a problem, honey was used as a substitute for the sugar but, it wouldn't caramelise without the sugar as an ingredient. I had heard that organic ice cream was available in Melbourne, but how did we get it to Canberra and how much would it cost us?

I contacted the Bio-dynamic wholesalers in Melbourne and asked their advice on how to organise the ice cream. They sent a brochure with the prices, plus the name of a frozen food transporter. Michelle and I then set about calculating the cost of ice cream per person, and found it to be within our price range. The carrier was contacted and he (Alan Todd of Todds Transport) was extremely helpful. Alan was prepared to charge us a minimal fee to transport it to

Canberra, the only problem was he was not allowed to deliver or pick up from retail outlets. I then contacted the Bio-dynamic wholesalers, who agreed to deliver the ice cream to a warehouse from which Todds Transport could pick up from. Michelle and I then went to visit the Seven Seas Cold Storage warehouse in Fyshwick. They were prepared to take delivery of the ice cream and store it for us until we were ready to collect it for the dinner, they would only charge us \$4 for the service. So ice cream was put on the menu.

The next problem was getting organic bread. Urambi bakery uses organic flour, but additional ingredients in their breads unfortunately are not organic. Michelle and I were not prepared to compromise as we had gone to a great deal of trouble to produce a menu that would be totally organic. The name of an ex member of COGS was mentioned, remembered because he used to bake his own breads. Dennis Rose was approached and agreed to bake the necessary number of loaves for the bruchetta and deliver them to the restaurant, which was very kind of him.

Another problem was the availability of organic sugar. We tracked down a refinery in Queensland, who were prepared to send us some samples. Unfortunately they didn't get their act together in time for the dinner. However, John at Mountain Creek managed to get delivery of some sugar from Switzerland the week before dinner, but it was very expensive so we purchased only the essential amount for the dinner and still used honey as a substitute where possible.

With the modifications to the menus, we then went back to Olims to talk to Roy the chef and to see if our calculations were correct about quantities needed for each item, and we also discussed the presentation of food and how to garnish them. Then off to see the retailers. Richard Odell at the butchers, made suggestions on the cut of meat most suitable for the dishes and also the best way to cook it to keep the meat tender and moist. John at Mountain Creek Wholefoods and Con at the Allergy centre provided all the condiments. Some goods such as quark, cheese and milk had to be ordered and we would have to pick them up the day (Thursday) before the dinner. Karen at Organic Energy would have everything bagged up in certain quantities so that each dish would be easy for the chef to organise, ie the soup vegies were together, the main course vegies separate and the fruit for the punch and deserts etc. Last minute change to ingredients in the entree avocado raspberry vinaigrette, as no raspberries could be purchased anywhere, so a substitute of raspberry jam was made. Fortunately that was the only hitch with the fruit and vegies. Everyone was very kind to us and provided all the goods at a very reasonable discount.

The wine and punch was the next item to be organised, we calculated so many glasses of punch per person, to gauge how many litres we would have to mix up. I was to make it up the morning of the dinner and bring it along in flagons to pour into the punch bowls along with the fruit I had cut up for garnish. We had asked everyone to nominate their preferences regarding fruit juices or red or white wine, so we thought that would be fairly simple to work out quantities. So numbers in hand I phoned Margo at McLaren Vale Cellars and placed the order to be picked up by me a week before the dinner. Only trouble was, we had not foreseen the number of people who contacted us at the last minute and said they would really like to come along. So an extra trip was required to pick up some more wine the day before the dinner.

Wednesday evening the 19 November, I made the Poppy seed cake with orange glaze, I had elected to bake this desert myself as it is much nicer if it marinates in the glaze for a good length of time.

Thursday the 20 November arrived, I went out to my vegie garden early in the morning and picked several kilos of strawberries for the deserts and garnishes plus all the herbs required in the recipes. Then with a car full of grog I went to meet Michelle at the retailers to pick up everything else to deliver to Olims so that Roy the chef could start preparing items like the stock for the soup. First stop, Organic Energy, next Mountain Creek, then the Butchery, and next on to the Seven Seas Store in Fyshwick to pick up the ice cream. We sorted everything out on the tables in the kitchen at Olims and found that Richard had forgotten to pack in the shin bone for the soup mix. So back I went to Griffith.

Friday arrived and the weather was perfect for drinks out on Olims restaurant terrace, the meal was wonderful, and the musicians (John and Steve Allen) and guest speaker were great entertainers and a good time was had by all.

#### **Thanks go to :**

Margo at McLarenvale Cellars and Robinvale Wines, John at Mountain Creek Wholefoods, Karen at Organic Energy, Richard at Griffith Butchery, Con at the Allergy Centre, Alan Todd of Todds Transport, Melbourne Bio-dynamic wholesalers, Jackie French, John Allen, Steven Allen, Dennis Rose, and all the people that came along to make it a successful evening, and of course all the staff at Olims who were so accommodating, especially the chef Roy.



## THE TEN LAWS OF GARDENING!

From David & Kay Heaton's Organic Gardening web site at:  
<http://www.powerup.com.au/~dheaton/page4.htm>

1. Nothing ever looks like it does on the seed packet.
2. Your lawn is always slightly bigger than your desire to mow it.
3. Whichever garden tool you want is always at the back of the shed.
4. The only way to ensure rain, is to give the garden a good soaking.
5. Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.
6. Autumn follows summer, winter follows autumn, drought follows planting.
7. Evergreens go a funny shade of brown in the winter.
8. The only way to guarantee some colour all year round is to buy a garden gnome.
9. However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones.
10. "Annuals" mean disappointment once a year.

### Growing Potatoes

From David Heaton, COGS member in sunny Queensland

Potatoes like Comfrey. Dig a trench around 250mm deep, 300mm wide and half fill the trench with comfrey leaves. Backfill the trench, place your seed potatoes on top of the back fill, then cover over with the rest of the soil.

Then stand back and watch them grow. As the plant starts shooting out of the ground keep the plant covered by hoeing up the soil around the plant or throw heaps of compost or mulch over the plant. This way the plant will produce more potatoes and avoid the potatoes going green. Comfrey leaves also make good mulch.

David and Kay have a web site devoted to organic growing and herbs at:  
<http://www.powerup.com.au/~dheaton/page4.htm>



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PBR: 92/126, granted 30 November 1995  
tion and not Australian!

2: Aeschynomene villosa  
Name: Hairy Jointvetch  
Variety: Kretschmer  
Use: Pasture  
Appl Date: 2 September 1996  
PBR: 96/193, pending since 4 September 1996  
Owner: State of Queensland (QDPI)  
Origin: Mexico, US# PI-546929 aka CPI-93621  
Collected by Univ. of Florida on 1 April 1980 "off  
Hwy 140 to Pinoltepec, Veracruz." Not an invention  
and not Australian!

3: Arachis pinto  
Name: Pinto Peanut  
Alt Name: Mani Forragero Perenne (Spanish),  
Amendoim Forrageiro Perene (Portuguese)  
Variety: Amarillo  
Use: forage  
Appl Date: 3 October 1989  
PBR: 89/086, granted 4 August 1990.  
Owner: CSIRO  
Origin: Brazil, possibly CIAT or EMBRAPA  
genebank, CG number CIATFOR-17434  
Comment: Under FAO trust. (declared by CIAT).  
Has apparently been passed around genebanks for  
some time. Accession numbers include: CPI-0  
Brazilian seed company lists this as coming  
from EMBRAPA and CIAT. Conflicting passport  
information from different genebanks according to GRIN, it

Jean,

Thankyou for your support on  
this PBR campaign!

Enclosed is the list of  
illegitimately PBR'd varieties  
plus a copy of last winters  
issue of our magazine  
The Curator

Bill Hankin

# The Curator

**Issue No. 9  
Winter/Spring 1997  
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I WILL PLACE  
THE CURATOR  
IN COGS  
LIBRARY.  
(EDITOR)



### \* BRASSICAS

Late plantings of Brassicas in March may be successful, but usually Summer plantings are more reliable. It is too late to grow from seed. Take care too with the varieties chosen eg it is too late to plant savoy cabbages, but the smaller ball-headed varieties should be successful.

### \* PEAS

Sugar snap peas may be sown in early March for a Winter harvest, but the crop could be lost if there is an early severe frost affecting the blossom. Peas sown later in April - May will be ready for a Spring harvest.

### \* LETTUCES

Only plant Winter varieties of lettuces (cos, salad bowl, oakleaf, butterhead and mignonette varieties)

### \* ONIONS

Early varieties can be sown in April to early May, to be harvested late Spring to early Summer. Mid season varieties are often sown late Autumn early Winter and longkeeping varieties in Winter. However, the timing of mid or late season varieties is well worth experimenting with by making successive plantings to determine the best time in your specific locality.

### \* LEEKS

Leek seedlings may be planted early March for small leeks in Winter, although plantings are more reliably made in Summer.

## AUTUMN VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

	MAR	APR	MAY
Broad Beans		S	S
Broccoli	T		
Brussel Sprouts	T		
Cabbage	T		
Cauliflower	T		
Chicory	ST	T	
Chinese Cabbage	T		
Corn Salad	ST	T	
Endive	ST	T	
Garlic		S	S
Kale	T		
Kohlrabi	ST	T	
Leeks	T		
Lettuce	ST	ST	
Peas	S	S	S
Onions		S	S
Turnips	T		

**S = Seed Sowing**

**T = Transplanting**

NB 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 weather from one year to the next. The microclimate of your garden will also influence the times when you plant.

### \* SPRING FLOWERS

Remember that many Spring flowering plants are best planted in Autumn, so that they can establish before the Winter cold, and then start growing in the early warmth of Spring. Stock and poppies can be planted from seedlings in March and perhaps early April, others such as Virginia Stock, Candytuft, Larkspur and Sweetpeas can be sown direct throughout Autumn.

### \* GREEN MANURES

Autumn is the time to plant green manure crops, which can be dug in in Spring, at least 4-6 weeks prior to planting your Summer crops.

Benefits of green manure crops are:

- they provide valuable nutrients for successive crops
- they provide organic matter for soil microorganisms to break down,
- they provide soil cover in Winter and
- they help aerate the soil.

Crops suitable for planting in Canberra are:

#### Legumes:

Broad Beans, Field Peas, Lupins, Sub Clover, Tic Peas, Vetch

#### Non-Legumes:

Barley, Oats, Rye

NB. Legumes are very useful as they fix nitrogen in the soil.

Flowering crops need to be dug in before flowering, cereal crops before producing a head of grain.



## COGS NOTICEBOARD

**AGM** - Tuesday, 24th March 1998 at 7.30 pm in Room 4, Griffin Centre, Civic.  
Desperately seeking Committee Members & Helpers. **WHAT ABOUT YOU?**

### GUEST SPEAKER:

**JACKIE FRENCH** will talk on "Living the Good Life"

### NOTICE OF APRIL MEETING (28th)

Guest Speaker TBA

**COGS BACKYARD** - located at Xeriscape Garden, Weston

Talks on "ORGANIC GARDENING" at 1 pm and 3 pm - 4th and 5th April

There talks on composting and green manure crops. Seeds for green manure crops will be for sale. There will be time for questions on these topics and any other topics which might be of interest to members.

### FOR SALE

Pine chips

COGS has bought a truckload of Pine chips. Members can purchase these at the Cotter Garden on:

Saturday 28th March 1 pm - 4.30 pm

Sunday 29th March 1 pm - 4.30 pm

**COST: \$5 per trailer load (buyers load their own trailers!)**

Directions to garden: Turn off Cotter Road at Curtin to Yarralumla Woolshed. Last gate on the LHS, before the Woolshed.

**FARM VISIT (3 for the price of one)** Well, you asked for it, so here it is:

Farm visit to **Geoff Foster's** organic farm near Bungendore, plus **David Odell's** at Bungendore, then on to "Pumpkin Creek" Wendy Rose and Julian Woods place near Tarago.

**Saturday 25 April**, everyone to meet at 9.00am at the Cotter Garden. A 22 seater bus has been booked, cost is \$12 per person and any numbers above this will be able to follow in own vehicles at a cost of \$5.00 per person. Morning tea/coffee and scones will be served at Geoff Fosters place, then lunch of soup/sandwiches will be at Pumpkin Creek. I will need to know numbers and have tickets paid for by **Friday 3rd April**. So please be quick and let me know as soon as possible if you are coming along to join in the fun of the day. You can contact Margaret Allen on 62589004, and she will tell you more about the farms. **DON'T BE LATE PHONE Margaret NOW!!!**

Approximate time table for the day: Depart Cotter Garden 9.15am, Geoff Foster's 10.00am to 11.00am, David Odell's place 11.15 am to 12.15 pm, Pumpkin Creek 1.15 pm to 3.15 pm, then back to the Cotter Garden by 4.45 pm.