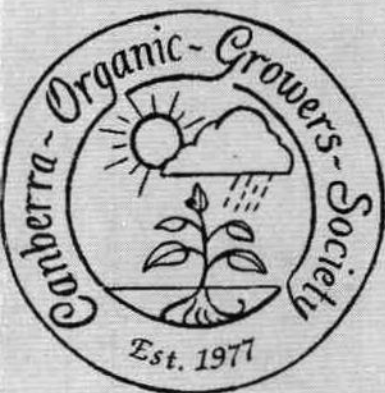


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Winter



Canberra Organic

Quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION **Inside!**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SACKED FOX TV
REPORTERS OVER "...THE HORMONE IN THE MILK"



VOL. 8 NO. 2

WINTER 2000

CANBERRA ORGANIC

Quarterly magazine published by the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

Vol. 8 No. 2 (Issue 30)

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CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

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Jennifer Allen

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Contact Jennifer Hendriks

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APOLOGY

The editors would like to apologize for printing an incorrect phone number for George Rehn in the last issue. The correct number should now be listed at the bottom of page three.

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Produce table: Vacant
Supper convenors: Marie Bahr, Rosemary Stevenson
Librarian: Maren Childs

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Environment Centre: Vacant
Griffin Centre: Vacant

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REMINDER

Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in
Room 4 of the Griffin Centre in Civic.

~ VISITORS WELCOME ~

FROM THE EDITORS



Nykita Allen

Sometimes change happens gradually and predictably, like the changing of seasons. Other times, it pounds in like a summer storm, clearing the air and making room for more change. The last issue of *Canberra Organic*, there was a new editor. Now there's another one! Jennifer Hendriks has volunteered to help hold the reins of the quarterly as efforts are made to streamline and strengthen the magazine. Diversified ecosystems are strong systems that adapt easily and creatively to change. The quarterly is moving towards imitating this natural system by inviting more volunteers like Jennifer to take part in making the magazine useful, educational and interesting. We are currently looking for an advertising/distribution manager for the quarterly. I am excited about getting even more people involved in COGS and in the very important efforts of organic growing. Happy reading!



Arie Hendriks

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome everyone. By the time you read this we will have had our first frost and things outside will be looking a bit gloomy. If you haven't already done so, it is time to tidy up the now dead summer crops. Make compost from them and either mulch the soil over to protect it, or plant a green manure crop in the vacant space. Soil should never be left bare.

June and July get so cold in Canberra that you just don't feel motivated to venture out into the garden, except on those sun filled afternoons which we get so few of. Don't just curl up in front of the heater and hibernate. Plan what you are going to do in the next twelve months. Plan your crop rotations. Have a look at how much you need to grow of your favorite vegetables to supply your family. Then sit down and make up a plan of successive plantings to give you this amount. I can't stress how important it is to take the time to plan how to get the most out of your backyard gardens.

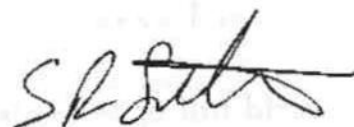
As you can see from the list of committee members and helpers, we still have three general committee member positions vacant. We also need to have representatives to the Conservation Council and Environment Centre. It would be good to have a representative from the commercial sector of the organic industry on the committee as COGS receives quite a lot of inquiries about the commercial side of organics. The members of the committee have very busy lives (raising families and working full time) and it is only with their dedication that we get so much done. It would be great to have all positions on the committee filled. Many hands make light work.

Three of our Community Gardens are having work done on their fences this winter to improve security. If you have some knowledge of how to erect fences or would like to come along to help and learn, it would be much appreciated. The dates and details can be found on the notice board (page 35). These hopefully, will be fun, fruitful events, each ending with a sausage sizzle lunch.

I have fielded numerous inquiries over the last couple of years about community gardening space, especially from people who live on the north side of old Canberra and the Woden/Weston area. We have a garden in each area but they are full and have waiting lists. Is it time to establish new community gardens in these areas? To do this we need to have an active group of members to set about canvassing the local government for vacant land and applying for grants to help erect fences and sheds and establish a water supply. Would the members like the committee to call a meeting of interested members who would like to be involved? The committee can supply support to this group but with the present workloads cannot take on this task by itself.

COGS BACKYARD. The Green Manure talks and demonstrations held in March were well-attended on both Saturday and Sunday. We will be holding a workshop on **Seed Raising Medium and Soil Blocking** on Sunday, the 16th of July, at the garden. On Saturday the 5th and Sunday the 6th of August, the Xeriscape Garden will be open to provide demonstrations on Rose Pruning, Compost Making, Mulch Gardening and Worm Farms and we will be providing information about Organic Growing (more details on notice board). On these two days we will cut down our green manure crops. Should we dig them in or should we mulch them over? Come along and find out the answer. Having the demonstration garden gives us a public place where we can explain the benefits of growing organically.

The farm visit to Joyce Wilkie and Michael Plane's property "Allsun" was a breath of fresh air for the twenty-five members who attended. To have a first-hand look at a working organic farm was great. I would like to thank Joyce and Michael for a truly fantastic outing.



Steve Sutton

South Coast Organic Wanderings...

by Rosemary Scott

Tip: Call in to the Moruya markets, held every Saturday morning. A good range of fresh organic vegetables, jams, sauces and relishes and honey are available at bargain prices.

I had the privilege of meeting up with some people in Moruya who were happy to share a glimpse of their lifestyle and their "organic" methods. Amanda and Ged Hardy and their daughters live on a little patch of "Eden", a few kilometers from Moruya. What a lifestyle – country living on good soil, minutes from the pristine beaches of the South Coast. Oops, I'm sounding like a Real Estate agent. But really, it was a heart warming experience. Amanda's patch is a large garden laid out under permaculture principles. Every plant appeared to be smiling – they were well mulched, sitting happily among suitable companion plants. There was a great variety of herbs, fruits, berries and vegetables, all benefiting from life in a milder coastal climate. For the height of the pest season, a system of hoops and "enviro" cloth is used as a physical barrier to keep butterflies, aphids and white fly at bay. The cloth is durable and allows over 80% light penetration.

Ged produces tasty, gourmet tomatoes using an environmentally friendly Hydroponic system. We spoke about the problems faced by growers whose aim is to be 100% organic commercial producers. Suitable seed sources for commercial production still pose a challenge with viability often being unreliable. Often the only solution is to use the means readily available to the conventional horticultural sector and adapt them to organic methods. Ged uses yellow sticky traps for whitefly in the poly tunnels. The yellow colouring lures the male flies into the traps. Sticky tape can be purchased in rolls for use around the garden. It is available from Bugs for Bugs.

This couple is reaping the fruits of their hard labour in their lovely lifestyle. Well done, Ged and Amanda, and thanks for sharing with the Canberra Organic Growers.

See Amanda's cure for downey mildew on cucurbits and a recipe for a fruit fly trap that really works on page 13.



Rosemary Metcalf - a good friend
by Dave Tooley

Our friend Rosemary Metcalf passed away recently after a long and arduous fight against cancer. I met her through joining Permaculture ACT. She was the most consistent and active member of any group that I have known.

Rosemary embodied the ethics of earth care, people care and fair share more than most. She was a cheerful giver, spreading her energy and resources widely most of the time.

Rosemary was truly committed to environmental repair and the sensible use of resources, and was a voice against inappropriate development.

In a world full of self-interest, Rosemary was an inspiration, generous to a fault. She had a way that was uplifting and supportive and made you feel that your efforts were worthwhile.

Her community spirit was always at the forefront of her actions and her attention to the small details always made people feel welcome, both at meetings and during courses.

I believe Rosemary is watching us, wondering what all the attention is about. Although she had no burning desire to be in the spotlight, this all needs to be said to celebrate her life in the right spirit.

My life is richer for the experience of her friendship, and her example of persistence is a message to all of us.

Recently, efforts have been made to establish a garden in memory of Rosemary. For those who wish to support this memorial garden, please contact Dave Tooley on 6231 2187.

The COGS Library

Maren Child, Librarian

maren.child@dynamite.com.au

I started looking after the COGS library late last year. So far, I have been getting to know the collection and finding out what you like to read. This knowledge will come in handy when we can buy some new books (suggestions are always welcome.)

I am a librarian by trade, currently working at the Dept. of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs library. I have a moderately large veggie garden at home and a plot at Mitchell community garden. I've been gardening all my adult life and enjoy reading about farming, rooftop gardens, and growing obscure crops. I'm interested in grains and have grown amaranth, wheat, millet and oats amongst others. My current curiosity is Pigeon Peas – the packet claims this is “the Indian dhal”, but I have no idea what to do with them – does anyone know? They're about 18 inches high now but I don't know if they'll make it when the frost comes.

The library collection is quite large and gets a lot of use. I'm getting some of our old favourites re-bound as they're looking rather well-loved. I don't always manage to get all the books out on the table at the general meetings, so if you can't find what you're looking for, ask me. Up to three books may be borrowed at a time, and they must be returned at the next meeting. If you can't make it to the meeting, please try to arrange for someone else to return your books. For example, give them to one of the committee members or myself or to a friend who is going to the meeting. You can renew a book twice if nobody has requested it, then it has to go out on the table again. If you want to reserve a book, let me know and I'll try to hold it for you when it comes in.

Some examples of the library's books:

The Seed Savers' Handbook by Fanton and Fanton (we have 2 copies) – very popular and very complete, giving instruction on general methods of seed saving, how to save seeds for many common and unusual vegetables, herbs, a few flowers, and a pollination table. Other books on seed saving in our library are:

Seed Production for the Australian Gardener (Barry)

Seeds for the Taking (Cole)

Saving Seeds (Rogers)

Save Our Seeds (Swartz)

New books available for loan now are:

Secrets of the Soil (biodynamics) – Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird

The New Organic Gardener – Eliot Coleman (revised and expanded edition, 1995) – the original edition has been one of our most popular books and is being re-bound.

Earth Builders Handbook – G. Simmons and A. Gray (editors) - shows you how to make mud bricks and a mud brick oven for your backyard.

You Can Have Your Permaculture and Eat It Too by Robin Clayfield. This is a highly readable and very comprehensive book about the principles and practicalities of permaculture. It contains garden plans, lists of suitable plants, recipes for cosmetics, and many recipes for food including instructions for making the staples of self-sufficiency like butter and pasta. There are even ideas for parties at the back of the book, such as a game where the group is divided into 'BIG, HUNGRY, FEROCIOUS ANIMALS' and 'small tiny timid delicious to eat animals'.

Recommended Books:

I can heartily recommend the following books, which are among my favourites:

Small Scale Grain Raising (Gene Logsdon) covers growing, harvesting, threshing, machinery, culinary uses, uses for animal feed, and lots of interesting stories about how it used to be in the old days.

The Herb Book (John Lust) is very thorough, covers medicinal and culinary uses, teas and dyes, and offers a very clear description of the plant (though it doesn't tell you how to grow it).

Jackie French's Chook Book is down to earth and covers everything from choosing breeds to making a feather mattress. It instructs you how to cook an elderly chook and why you shouldn't feel guilty about eating it (but I'm afraid I won't ever be able to face hurting our girls, they'll just have to die of old age.)

Other Topics:

The COGS library has many books about organic gardening and growing backyard vegetables, as well as about fruits, grains, nuts, herbs, and berries. There are also books about raising animals, crafts, drying and cooking garden produce, worms, compost and soil, pests, diseases and weeds, farming and a few books about ornamental plants and Australian native plants.

Look for upcoming book reviews by COGS' members beginning with Elliot Coleman's The New Organic Gardener (revised and expanded second edition) in the next issue. If you have a favorite gardening book you'd like to write about, please contact the editors.

Hello, I must be going

From Rod Therkelsen, COGS' Vice President

I am the vice president of COGS and the convenor of the Community Garden in Mitchell (also known as Northside Community Garden). The community gardens, which COGS fought hard for, need to be applauded, along with the plot holders. Community gardens offer people an opportunity to have a garden when possibly they could not: people such as those who rent, those who live in units, town houses or tents, people who have their own home but do not have the space - there are lots of reasons to join a community garden.

The Mitchell garden is just about full at the moment except for a 30 m² plot which is being looked after by two of the members until September, and a 60 m² plot which is vacant (any one interested?). The Mitchell garden is quite large with approximately 5500 m² of which 1000 m² plus is under cultivation. Currently, we have 22 plot holders who are a great bunch of gardeners (well, most of the time). Some do more than others, others do what they can (whoever did all the mowing the other day, thank you very much for a great job). All of the plots down at Mitchell are producing very well, bar a few. This year's harvest from Mitchell has been great. I reckon I have pulled out over a 100 kg of spuds,

buckets of zucchini, bags of corn, tomatoes, eggplants, strawberries, beans and more. I find it amazing what a 100 m² of soil can produce. It is simply fantastic. I love growing vegetables; just to watch a tiny little seed growing and to see what it produces, gives me lot of pleasure.

Mitchell Gardens is hosting two WORKING BEEs in June (oh no oh no oh no, oh yes oh yes oh yes, oh NOI) to erect a fence. You'll love it (really). The first day we'll be driving 8-foot star pickets into (hopefully) rain soaked soil to form the backbone of the new fence. Two weeks later we will put the fence wire up (the high voltage, razor wire, and guard dogs can be added on an as needed basis). I envision using the fence as a growing fence to minimize visibility and maximize security. Suggestions on plant varieties are welcome.

WORKING BEE:

WHEN: 4 June and 18 June, 2000.

TIME: 9 am till 12:30 pm, ending with a sausage sizzle

(A letter will be going out to all plot holders with further information.)

May your garden grow and flourish!

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY FESTIVAL

COGS will have an information stand at the World Environment Day Festival in Garema Place/City Walk on Saturday the 3rd of June 2000, 10am to 4pm.

If any members would like to assist in the staffing of this stall please contact Steve Sutton on 6292 5609

ORGANIC ADVENTURES

A visit to Bruce Mackay's banana farm in Coffs Harbour

By Jennifer Allen



Many people buy organic produce for the simple reason of taste. Organic bananas are one of the fruits that spoil you forever and make it almost impossible to eat a tasteless conventional imitation ever again. Organic bananas are creamy and hardly ever chalky or floury. They last longer and can be eaten at almost any stage of ripeness, from greeny-yellow to mud brown. Organic bananas are an edible testament to the potential of organics.

Bruce Mackay, of Coffs Harbour, also believes there is nothing like an organic banana, which is why his twelve acres are lined with healthy organic banana trees. These "stools" consist of one main tree and one sucker growing off the main tree. The sucker is encouraged to take its place the following year. Bruce has been certified organic for the last 8-10 years ("I can't quite remember how long," he quips) by Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA). His bananas are sold in Brisbane and Canberra in addition to an exclusive roadside stand in Coffs Harbour maintained by his six-year-old grandson (I was told that operating hours might vary).

The bananas are planted in rows rather than in a mass plantation (Bruce informs me that this is the "Queensland way") so that tractors can be used to harvest and prune the plants growing on often steep slopes. Tractor access throughout means that Bruce only needs the help of one other man to stay on top of the crop.

The banana tree forms a "bell" (see photo at right), whose reddish-brown petals eventually fold up to reveal tiny banana fruit forming at the end of white blossoms. This bell is ultimately snapped off and the fruit is left to mature. The bunch



is then covered with a plastic bag (or two depending on how damaged and recycled the first one is) to ensure a clean, warm environment for the maturing fruit. Picked green, the bananas are then washed, sorted twice and packed. Before they are shipped to retailers, they are exposed to ethylene gas to encourage ripening. Ethylene gas is a naturally occurring gas that some fruits emit as they ripen. If growers waited until bananas were ripe to harvest, transport of the product would be impossible.

It takes approximately eighteen months for a banana sucker to reach maturity and produce its one (enormous) bunch of bananas. Since banana trees are essentially a bulb, one tree will continue to produce as many suckers as the farmer will allow to mature. Unfortunately, many of Bruce's trees were blown over by a storm in early 1999 and the damage was severe. Production ceased for many months while Bruce and his wife, Shirley, cleaned up the mess. The trees are now producing again and production is getting back on track.

Weed control is important, as weeds compete with the trees for nutrients and sunlight. Bruce uses a mower and elbow grease, and grows nasturtiums as a weed mat and nematode deterrent. An in-ground irrigation system delivers water from a nearby stream while the water dragons hang out on banana props and eat bugs. Lining the fence are large ladyfinger

banana trees. Bruce doesn't bother to harvest them; they seem to be a bonus.



In addition to bananas, Bruce grows avocados and papaws and raises chooks. Almost an acre of bananas grows near the house and is fenced off to make a good home for the Rhode Island

Reds, Black Orbington Cross and Lowman Browns. The chooks feast on over-ripe bananas and papaws as well as Kiialla Organic chook food. The birds keep the bananas trees free of beetle borer and fertilize the soil. Bruce has to be vigilant about fencing as foxes can be a problem. The 110 chooks keep him busy with their production of 8 -12 dozen eggs per week which are sold locally.

The papaws grow in and around the chook pen. They are grown for the fruit as well as the leaves, which some people use for their alleged

anti-cancer properties. To make the fruit easier to harvest, Bruce cuts off the top of the plant at waist height to encourage side shoots. Since papaw trees are hollow and can rot easily if subjected to rain, old cans and tins are put over the cut stalks to ensure survival.

Bruce believes in a high quality, aesthetic organic product and his pride in his work was evident as he showed my husband and me around the farm on the back of his tractor. He is unfazed by the "blow-down" last year. Rather, he works on, knowing that beetles, foxes, crows and storms are just part of the organic cycle.

Have you had a recent Organic Adventure? Would you like to share your recent visit to an organic farm, garden or property with others? Write it up and submit to the editors! The inside front cover contains e-mail and phone contact information. Articles on disk, or sent as e-mail attachments are greatly appreciated.

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Contact: Costas Kounas
Shop 3 Jamison Centre
Bowman Street, Macquarie ACT

Phone: 6251 2670

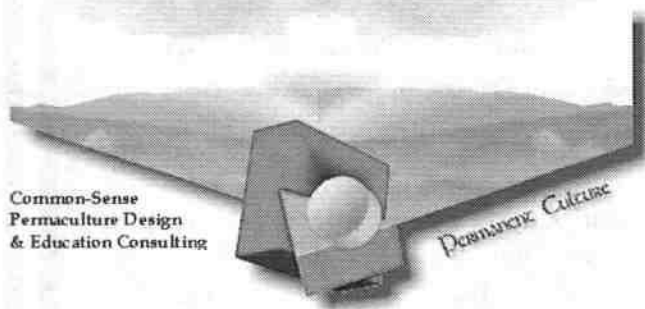
Want to help COGS build up its seed library?

Then meet us on **Saturday, May 13th, 1 pm**, at the **Oaks Estate Community Garden** (opposite the railway station) to help sort, clean, label and package local seed. No experience necessary!

For more information, contact Rosemary on 6284 4238.

Bring a folding chair. Tea and biscuits provided.

ECOS Design



Ph: Dave 'n' Di Tooley PDC
on 02 6231 2187
or Stephen Glasville PDC
on 02 6251 7720

Email: ecos@ecosdesign.com
Http://www.ecosdesign.com
PO Box 443
Jamis on ACT 2614

GREEN MANURES

Every Gardener's Friend

Information courtesy of Green Harvest, Maleny, Queensland

GREEN MANURES are a cornerstone of ecologically sustainable agriculture. They provide outstanding benefits for the soil, the crop and you, the gardener, by:

- Increasing organic matter, earthworms & beneficial microorganisms;
- Increasing the soil's available nitrogen and moisture retention;
- Stabilising the soil to prevent erosion;
- Bringing deep minerals to the surface and breaking up hardpans;
- Providing habitat, nectar & pollen for beneficial insects and reducing populations of pests;
- Improving water, root & air penetration in the soil;
- Smothering weeds.

GETTING STARTED

Growing a green manure crop is as easy as throwing out a handful of seed onto freshly cultivated ground, followed by raking to cover the seed. Digging-in isn't necessary, as by slashing & leaving the green manure crop on the

surface you have 'instant' mulch. This is cheaper than constantly importing mulch & doesn't introduce new weeds. Plants should be slashed while still green and lush, usually as flowers form. A combination of legume and a grass works well as the legume provides nitrogen & the grass (such as oats) provides the bulk of the organic matter.

WHAT IS A LEGUME?

Legumes are plants such as clover, lucerne, peas, beans, medics and chickpeas. An important advantage of legumes is their unusual ability to obtain nitrogen, a major element needed for plant. The plants form a symbiotic relationship with a group of bacteria called *Rhizobium*, which live within a specialized structure, called a nodule, on the plant's roots. The *Rhizobium* can take nitrogen from the air and convert it to the form plants can assimilate. This process is called nitrogen fixation.

WHY INOCULATE?

Rhizobium occur naturally, but they are very host-specific, that is, any one species of *Rhizobia* will only live with a few different types of legume. Consequently, when sowing legumes, the seed should be coated with a culture of the correct *Rhizobium* before sowing. This is referred to as inoculation. The bacteria are stored in peat, and as this is a living culture, it must be treated with care. It should be stored in the fridge and used within 3 months. To use, moisten the seed with a small amount of water and stir in the inoculant until seeds are coated. Then, to allow even spreading of the seed over the seedbed, mix in enough agricultural lime, superfine lime or rock phosphate to dry the mixture out (use approx. 6 g of lime to 100 g of seed). This is called pelleting and makes fine seed easier to spread. Do not inoculate the seed until you are ready to sow it and do not leave the inoculated seed in the sun.

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plus all your other gardening requirements from Richard and his friendly staff, call in and see them at 12 Victoria Street Hall or phone: 6230 2209.

PLANTING TIPS

- Check the pH, as legumes dislike acid soil;
- Correct any nutrient deficiencies (except nitrogen) before sowing;
- Cover the seed to a depth of 2-3 times the width of the seed & firm the soil;
- Irrigate in all but rainy weather for best results.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF GREEN MANURE CROPS

Green manures can be used to smother persistent weeds; they may also make conditions unsuitable for certain weeds by improving the structure and nutrient status of the soil. Good choices for weed suppression include lablab, cowpea, lucerne, sorghum and buckwheat. Green manures can also be used to undersow

crops, such as corn, to reduce weed growth and protect soil from erosion. Useful species for undersowing include subclover, cowpea, lucerne and woolly pod vetch.

Green manures can also be used to interrupt pest and disease cycles in much the same way as crop rotation. Particular green manures can be used to control root knot nematodes and root rot fungal pathogens, reducing the need to use toxic chemicals for soil fumigation. When plants such as rapeseed are dug into the soil, exudates released from the decomposing plants suppress these diseases.

The soil should never be left bare, vulnerable to erosion and weed invasion. Always put in a green manure crop to build up the soil.

WANTED:

HEAVY CROPPING BERRY SUCKERS

(E.G., RASPBERRY, YOUNGBERRY, BOSENBERRY, ETC.)

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Amanda's Cure for Downey Mildew on Cucurbits

Once a week apply to foliage a mix of 1 part full cream milk to 9 parts water.

Any vegetable, especially lettuce, seems to respond well to this mixture as a foliage spray. It also helps to control the problem of black spot on strawberries.

A fruit fly trap that really works!

*1 pound of honey
1 large bottle of vanilla
4 x 1.25 litre bottles*

Mix together by heating, let the mix go cold and add 1 cup of cloudy ammonia. Place in the bottles and hang on an angle in the tree.

ANIMAL CHIROPRACTIC



If you own a limping dog, are nursing an arthritic cat or racing a national champion horse then Animal Chiropractic could be for you. Animal Chiropractic is a

growing Complementary Therapy in Australia with more and more people realising the benefits for their animals. New COGS member, Dr. Abby Hassan, explains what Animal Chiropractic is all about.

WHAT IS ANIMAL CHIROPRACTIC?

Chiropractic is a means of restoring health holistically, by spinal manipulation, manipulation of other joints and soft tissue work. Chiropractic care can decrease pain and add quality to your animal's well-being, movement and performance. Any misalignments or subluxations (where a nerve is pinched by a stuck or rotated joint or by a tight muscle) of the vertebrae and other joints interfere with optimum health. Such misalignments can affect not only joints and muscle, but also every cell and organ in the body.

Most Animal Chiropractors work closely with Veterinary Surgeons, animal owners and other related bodies to ensure maximum benefit for the animal.

WHAT ANIMALS CAN BE TREATED?

Basically, any animals with vertebrae can be treated with Animal Chiropractic. Some examples of animals that can be treated by chiropractic include horses, dogs, cats, cows, sheep, goats, pigs, kangaroos, wallabies, ferrets, hamsters, rats, mice and more!

A vertebrate animal can suffer from subluxations often through a fall, some kind of strain or accident. Other animals may require Chiropractic simply to "fine-tune" their bodies for performance.

There is enormous potential for domestic and other animals to benefit from Chiropractic treatment if only more vets knew more about it.

Unfortunately, I have seen too many animals who come to me after a history of treatment with pain killers, anti-inflammatories, antibiotics, steroids or even surgery before trying Chiropractic as a last resort rather than as a complementary support to the animal's overall recovery and well-being.

WHEN TO TREAT ANIMALS?

Most likely, if the animal has a problem related to the muscular-nervous system or structural misalignments. This can cause physical problems such as subtle changes in an animal's gait, uneven wear of shoes in horses, limping, backache and crying in pain. Incontinence, limb-dragging, lopsidedness and reduced performance are also common indications that something is not balanced.

Subtle changes can also occur in the animal's temperament, such as uncharacteristic bad temper or moodiness for which no cause can be found. Furthermore, unexpected resistance such as napping, rearing and refusing are all ways in which animals express discomfort. Chiropractic is also recommended for animals that have had a difficult labour, after any kind of surgery requiring general anaesthesia, aged/arthritic animals to relieve pain/discomfort or general maintenance for well-being.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

An initial visit should include a full health history of the animal including age, breed, medication, complaint, duration of complaint, and other treatments the animal may have undergone. The Chiropractor will then assess whether chiropractic is an appropriate method of treatment. If so, the Animal Chiropractor is trained to diagnose bone misalignments with their hands, and to correct these subluxations with highly refined and very gentle manipulations, making use of the body's forces. After the treatment the symptoms may look or feel worse as the body undergoes the healing process. In general, improvements usually occur after one or two treatments. If Chiropractic is not an appropriate method of treatment such as with



acute soft tissue injuries (mainly ligaments and muscles), the Chiropractor may refer you to their Animal Complementary Therapists or back to your Veterinary Surgeon.

A CASE STUDY

Raph, a 10 year old female Border Collie, suffered from a gait problem, general arthritis and bowel complaints. Raph was tender near her lower back, her right front leg was not fully mobile and a lot of weight was compensated on her left front leg. A medical history check revealed that Raph's right leg had been sprained three times over the years but there were no broken bones.

In my initial consultation I discovered that Raph had a very mild atlas rotation and a misalignment around the upper thoracic region compensating for the sprained leg. There was also considerable distortion in the pelvis, with a resultant misalignment in the lower lumbar vertebrae. I treated the atlas, thoracic and pelvic region with Chiropractic. The lower lumbar was too inflamed to treat with Chiropractic, so homoeopathic arnica was used to aid muscular healing. T-Touch massage was also incorporated to build up muscle tone and lots of rest after treatment was recommended. Joanne, the owner, observed the following week that Raph slept a lot more and for longer, maximising the healing process.

In Raph's second treatment her front legs and gait were more mobile with little discomfort. The lumbar inflammation had subsided and I was able to palpate and treat this area as well with Chiropractic. Raph's behaviour also changed. She was a lot friendlier and more confident, knowing innately that I was there to help her as painlessly as possible. By the third treatment, Raph was very bouncy, cheekily greeting me back first, just to check that lumbar region again!

WHICH CHIROPRACTOR?

When choosing an Animal Chiropractor (with or without qualifications) make sure that they have experience behind them, come recommended by a previous happy client, genuinely enjoy their job and being with animals and that their Chiropractic treatment is not rough or violent. Also observe your animal while being treated. Do they look distressed or in a lot more

unnecessary pain or discomfort during and after the treatment? Trust your intuition as you are the best person to know what is benefiting your animal.

Abby has worked in both Britain and Ireland as an Animal Chiropractor for over seven years, treating greyhounds, race horses and domestic animals. Her philosophy on health and dis-ease is to treat the body naturally, in a non-invasive manner and as a whole-physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This applies to both humans and animals. Furthermore, clients are encouraged to participate actively in the healing process. Abby's academic and Chiropractic work is also complemented by other non-invasive healing techniques such as Reiki, Muscle Kinesiology, Flower Essences, Acupressure and Homoeopathy.

Abby works in the Canberra region. For further information on Animal Chiropractic, please contact Abby at the Birrubi Therapeutic Centre on (02) 6247 2493, or the RSPCA on (02) 6287 8100 or directly on (02) 6262 9331/Mobile: 0411 270914.

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Plant Profile: Delicata Squash

Delicata what?

by Jennifer Hendriks

Details: An heirloom variety also known as sweet potato squash because of its flavour or peanut squash because of its shape. Delicata has very sweet, nutty tasting orange flesh with a smooth, potato-like consistency, and grows on short vines that bear ivory fruits with green longitudinal stripes and flecks. It can be eaten immediately after harvest or stored throughout the winter into the spring. Approximately 100 days to maturity, it requires hot weather to grow properly. Average yield: 5-7 fruits/plant, each weighing around 1 kg.

If you were at this year's Harvest Night (February Meeting) you may remember at the end Steve asked if there were any more questions about mystery vegies. Someone asked, "How can I tell when my delicata squash are ready to harvest?" I certainly remember that particular question because not only did I ask it, but I also got a roomful of blank stares and then a question for me: *what's delicata squash?* I hadn't expected that response to one of my favorite vegetables. I have never seen it for sale anywhere in Australia, though I have looked and looked. In fact, shortly after moving to Australia for the second time, I searched the inventory of as many seed catalogues as I could find in the hopes that, if I couldn't buy delicata squash anywhere, I could at least grow it myself. But even my new plan of attack proved rather futile and it wasn't until my seeds should have already been in the ground that I happened upon a Phoenix Seeds catalogue that listed delicata squash. Within seconds of my discovery, I had placed my order for a packet of seeds.

Fast forward now a few months. Of the dozen or so seeds I planted, I only got one to germinate. Puzzling. But my one plant was a happy one and it bore *eight* fruits though none of them were even close to weighing 1 kg. But in America, I had never seen, let alone eaten one that big anyway. They were always much closer to 400-500 grams. At the Harvest Night meeting while trying to explain what this squash looked like, I even called it a *summer* squash, since I was confused by the fact that you can eat it right off the vine, skin and all. Most of the experienced gardeners said 'just whack one off and try it'. So I did. It was perfect. For the first time in more than two years, I was eating my favorite squash again.

I continued to make inquiries about the history of delicata since that appeared to be a mystery as well. From the books, web sites and people I consulted, this species of cucurbit (*cucurbita pepo*) originated somewhere in South or Central America and spread into northern Mexico and the southwest of the U.S. My confusion with summer squashes was somewhat understandable as this is the family to which zucchini belong. Delicata was introduced as a variety in 1894 by Peter Henderson and Co. of New York and remained quite popular into the 1920's and 30's. It has experienced a recent revival in the U.S.

and has gained quite a following in the specialty produce trade there.

So why is this variety of squash so unknown in Australia? In collecting material for this plant profile, I found two sources of seed in Australia: Phoenix Seeds and Digger's Club. The folks at Phoenix Seeds got their original supply from Johnny's Selected Seeds in America several years ago and thought that perhaps they were the only company selling them in Australia. The folks at Digger's Club got their original supply from the Seed Savers' Exchange in America and thought that perhaps they were the only company selling them in Australia. Clive Blazey mentioned that it was a poor yielder for them at Digger's, that they had to grow it out twice for seed and that the average yield was 3 fruits/plant. Hence, it would never make it onto a list of 'good yielders' which perhaps accounted for its apparent obscurity. I heard a similar story when I contacted the Seed Savers' Network in Byron Bay to see if they had any record of it. They received delicata seed twice--once in 1993 and once in 1995. Both times the seeds failed to germinate. How very odd, since one of the many suppliers of delicata seeds in the U.S. noted in their description of this squash variety that it was 'very productive'.

But I remained deeply impressed by the fact that a roomful of experienced growers had never heard of this variety of squash. So I went back to my source of seeds and asked why it was so unknown here in Australia. Michael Self of Phoenix Seeds claimed to be just as surprised as I that it hadn't become more popular since it was one of the tastiest squashes he had ever eaten. He did mention, however, that in the past, he has had difficulty growing delicata if it had any competition from other squash. He said that it doesn't seem to like to compete with other varieties and will give up quite easily if forced to do so. But planted by itself, it grows just fine.

Having looked into the history of this plant has only made me more determined to encourage others to have a go at growing it. But perhaps the most reassuring bit of information I found out in researching squash as a Yank in Oz came from The Seed Savers' Handbook: 'Squash and pumpkin are interchangeable terms depending on what country you live in.'



The Udder Truth

An Interview with reporters Jane Akre and Steve Wilson

Editors' Note: To our knowledge, Bovine Growth Hormone is not currently used in the Australian milk supply. As a result, this article may at first seem irrelevant. The editors, however, believe this story to be a cautionary tale about the role of multinational companies involving themselves with our food supply for increased profit margins. We support Steve and Jane in their work towards making this issue known to the public, in part by printing this exclusive (and timely) interview conducted by COGS members Gerard and Giselle de Ruyter. Steve and Jane's case goes to court in June. Please visit their website at www.foxbghsuit.com and inform yourself about the role of multinationals in your corner of the world.

This article was transcribed from the taped interview by Jennifer Hendriks. Some changes were made solely to facilitate better understanding of the printed text.

STEVE: It was never our intention to do a story which said that milk from cows treated with a hormone was not safe or that it wasn't good for you, it was merely to give information. We were essentially trying to tell the viewer two things. One: back at the time when the US government was about to approve (Bovine Growth Hormone), consumers made it very clear in America that they didn't want this in their milk and they took to dumping milk in the streets to protest. The Food and Drug Administration (the FDA) went ahead and approved it anyway. Then the grocery store chains, the big grocers and the dairy co-ops got very nervous and thought, geez, we're gonna lose business because now that it's approved, these people aren't gonna buy it. So they put in ads in the newspaper and they held news conferences and they promised consumers that they would not buy any milk and sell any milk from cows that had been treated with this hormone until it had achieved widespread acceptance. So, fast-forward now about three years (from late 1993) and along comes Jane in 1997 and we have a 5 year old who loves ice cream. When (Jane) sat down to think of stories to investigate, she began to wonder what ever happened to that hormone. Did they decide never to use it, are they still not using it, or what's up?

GERARD: The idea came from your daughter?

JANE: Well, I was just curious because she was eating a lot of ice cream and I just wondered whatever happened to that issue, did that just go away or? Frankly, I thought it had just gone away because I hadn't heard anything. I figured this is probably not a story anymore but I had a list of 15 stories to check out and it was one of them. It turned out to be kind of a big story for many, many reasons.

STEVE: Anyway, the first thing we set out to do was to find out if (BGH) was being used. Jane picked 7 dairy farms at random, just looked at a list of all the dairy farms and made a loop around Florida. And she found at every single one of the dairy farms that they were injecting their cows. Some of them were quite reluctant

to say so and some of them told her quite frankly, look, we don't want to talk about this because if it gets out, people don't like this and we don't want to publicize it. Some of them just flatly refused to let her see them do the injections or take any pictures but all seven admitted they were using it.

GISELLE: So, could (the farmers) see the benefit of the injections?

STEVE: Well, I think what they thought was that there was a benefit and they thought that they were getting more milk out of every cow. But some of them also complained that they weren't having such great luck and that even though they may be getting some more milk, (the cows) were having health problems. They were getting sicker and they were having hoof problems and they were having problems with mastitis (which is an infection of the udder) and (the farmers) were having to use more antibiotics and their cows were burning out sooner - it shortened their effective life by about 2 years. So not everybody was totally in favor of it but it was one of those situations where it seemed like most of the people she talked to weren't terribly enthusiastic about it. Nonetheless, they felt they had to use it to keep competitive with the people who were using it. And what she found was that big factory farms, farms where they have hundreds or thousands of cows, were much better able to capitalize on the benefits because they could turn their animals over sooner. And if you have just a small farm of 50 or 100 head or 200 head, as did this one farmer that she interviewed, his cows were just dropping to the point where it decimated his herd. He was a third generation dairy farmer and he said it ran him out of business. He's now running an organic food business and he's doing great.

Anyway, we were essentially trying to pass around the information that if (the consumers) were still relying on those promises that (BGH) was going to help, surprise, it isn't going to help. (Milk suppliers) broke their promise. They just let everybody go merrily along and figure that, if you ever heard about (BGH) you would figure, well, it may be a problem in some other part of the country but here in Florida the farmers were not going to use it. And they had (this is sort of an aside) an ingenious PR spiel that whenever you would call, their answer was: we



have asked our suppliers not to use it. Read about (BGH) and you said, 'Are you using bovine growth hormone?' Every one of them in the industry had a written script and they would say to you, 'We have asked our farmers not to use it.' So you then jump to the conclusion that they're not using it, but the truth is all they ever did was ask. They never followed up. They never did anything to make sure (the farmers) didn't use it, they just simply asked. So it was very clever. It wasn't a lie, they didn't lie.

STEVE: We wanted to tell (people) that every bit of milk you buy in Florida has this hormone, except the organics. There were one or two organic places. But other than organic places, whether you knew it or not, or whether you wanted it or not, you were getting (BGH in your milk).

JANE: Just recently we were calling about the local milk because people wanted us to be able to answer questions about whether the local milk supply had (BGH) and we got the exact same line. So it was a national campaign orchestrated by a lot of PR firms of food companies and grocers and the suppression of this story was heavily managed by public relations. Something called the Dairy Coalition, (which was basically a front group for a bunch of industry groups) and they had a Washington address and they were lobbyists but would hand out these glossy pamphlets with information basically dispelling the fears. 'There's no problem.' Industry talk. That's all it was. But it's just amazing. I had never seen a story where facts were obscured so much. It's just incredible. I think it turned a lot of reporters off the track because, not only did they have this heavy spin and glossy brochures, but they paid doctors to be consultants. If you have any questions they send you these doctors and they all have the right answers. It's a campaign, it's propaganda.

STEVE: We wanted to tell (people) that every bit of milk you buy in Florida has this hormone, except the organics. There were one or two organic places. But other than organic places, whether you knew it or not or whether you wanted it or not, you were getting (BGH in your milk). That was the first part of this story. The second part of this story was, ok, so it's in our milk even though we didn't know it, let alone want it, and even though they told us it wouldn't be there, it's there. Is it dangerous? And we went back and looked at the science that had been done since it was approved. We were trying to see if the newer science deflected and reduced the concern and what we found was quite to the contrary. Without getting into a whole lot of science, the problem with the hormone was not the hormone itself. Monsanto immediately started to think of the hormone itself. But that's a trick response because (the) hormone produces a spin-off called insulin growth factor (IGF-I) which is another hormone and what IGF-I does is it simulates the growth of cells. And the latest science has shown that those of us who have higher levels of IGF-I in our bodies have a higher risk of cancer. We all have a bit of cancer in our bodies, all of us, even if you're healthy and your body will normally kill these cancer cells off. But what IGF-I does is that it keeps your body from killing off the cancer cells and causes cancer cells to grow because that's what IGF-I does, it causes cells to grow and it doesn't know a cancer cell from a regular cell. Suddenly, your risk of

cancer goes way up. And what they found in the latest research is that people who have higher levels (of IGF-I) have multiple increase in the risk of cancer. So the issue is, why would you want to do something or drink something that would elevate your levels of IGF-I and therefore your risk of getting cancer? What is the benefit? So the first part of the story was to tell you that, surprise, surprise, (BGH) is there and you didn't know it. And the second part was to say that there is a

growing line of evidence which suggests that this is a problem. Other countries have kept it out but the United States remains the only major industrialised nation that will allow this stuff to be used and they keep pointing to our government which has said that the public can be confident that this is safe. Well, (the FDA) came to this conclusion before any of the testing had been done. When they first started the tests in the late 1980's, they allowed cows at the University of Wisconsin, where they were testing this drug, to be injected with this hormone and then allowed the milk from these cows to be sold to students who were going to the University of Wisconsin and never told anybody. Even before they did testing, they were so sure that this stuff was safe that they had already made up their minds. Since it was an animal drug and not a human drug, it didn't have to be as thoroughly tested for human toxicity as most drugs are. So when you do the digging, you find out that the longest test that they ever did for human toxicity was 90 days and 30 rats. They took 30 rats and fed them the stuff for 90 days and then at the end of the 90 days, the rats didn't drop dead and they said, look, there's no reason to do any of the long-term studies on other animals because these rats have no problems. And then we come to find out that even though the Americans were told that these rats had no problems, when the Canadians looked at the very same scientific data, a third of the rats had lesions and cysts on their thyroid and prostates. (The Americans) now say they only got summaries of the studies where the Canadians looked at the full studies. They took Monsanto's word for it and never did the testing. So the point is that this stuff isn't going to kill you tomorrow or even if it's going to kill you in 5 or 10 or 20 years, the point is that the testing is 90 days on 30 rats. Before you pour this stuff on your kids' cereal every morning, you think there should be a little more testing. Before we take a risk on the whole human population by just putting it in the milk and let's see what happens, it might make sense to do some thorough testing.

JANE: The lines of evidence are that IGF-I is increased in the milk and IGF-I is not proven to be good for human health. As Steve has just mentioned, it's linked to tumour proliferation. So it isn't just the fact that it wasn't tested, but that we know there is more IGF-I in treated milk and so you put those two factors together and that's where the concern is for a lot of scientists. Anyway, we had the story, a four-part series, ready for

air in February of 1997 on television. (The station) was bought by Fox, though it had been an affiliate station, and that's only important because there was soon to be a management change and the people who hired us were going to be gone. (This) also helped lead to our demise because these were Fox people similar to Rupert Murdoch here - that sort of mindset. We had edited the piece and they had some initial concerns about it one way or the other, not overriding, though. They weren't going to take it off the air. They had radio ads saying watch Monday at 6 o'clock we'll have this story on... They just thought of it as another topical news item.

GISELLE: They didn't think it was going to cause a massive stir-up or anything like that?

JANE: It wasn't tabloid or anything. It was a serious 4-part series and it wasn't terribly sensational. It was kind of scientific and it was running during the sweeps period, which is a ratings period in the States where they run their special pieces that they want to attract a lot of viewers. It was ready to go on Monday and on the Friday before that Monday, the first of two letters came from a Monsanto hired lawyer that said your reporters are idiots, they're incompetent, their sources are scientifically incompetent. Stop with this story. The second letter, one week later, said that there will be dire consequences if this story is to run in Florida. It was no veiled threat to sue, it was a very blatant threat of 'we will sue you if you run this story'. And Monsanto sent a big packet, 15 pages of why this story was no good. We don't quite know how they knew everything that was in the story. That was a big question mark, because we hadn't sent them the script. We had sent them areas that we had wanted to talk about, to follow up with. After the first letter, our bosses said to give them another opportunity to talk. So we sent them some areas that we would be willing to set down if they had some more comment on this. But the second letter was very, very specific about what our series was about.

STEVE: What she means is, we wonder if Fox didn't send the story to Monsanto before it ever got on the air, so that they had a real good idea of whether or not they were going to have a fight on their hands, which is totally unethical for journalists. No journalist ever shows his story to the other side before they publish it. It's just not right.

JANE: And we have found out that Fox did this to another reporter in Kansas City about a story on a chemical sprayed in the house which has since been banned for that use. They gave it to Dow Chemical to review before air, which is really unethical, but they did it.

STEVE: Then they used the Dow Chemical comments to tell the reporter what to change, even though the reporter said that's not true. They said, no, Dow says

it's true, so just say it that way. And he knew that he was lying but he wanted to keep his job. He has three kids and a mortgage so he went along, but then he quit two months later.

JANE: Suffice it to say that Fox is the fourth network in the States, it does not have a long history of journalism in our country. It only has a 10 year old network there. It's a baby network and they do things kind of loose and fast, we think. That was our experience. So the story went into a nine-month review process and we re-wrote it 83 times. It was just an exercise to drive us crazy. It was pretty clear. It got nasty. They wanted us to throw our hands up and quit or to finally refuse to do something and they could fire us for insubordination. We saw that coming so we always made the effort to change something. If something was completely, blatantly false we'd say, well, here's some documentation, maybe you could live with it if you look at this and read this and blah blah blah. And that went on for 9 months and then they fired us.

GERARD: Was that a stressful time or was it just a side issue?

JANE: That's all we worked on. They had no idea what to do with us. They were completely frustrated because they wanted us to quit. That was real clear.

STEVE: Well, at first they said, if you don't do it our way you'll be fired in 48 hours. And we said your way is lying and we're not going to lie, so if you want to fire us you go ahead and fire us and then we'll go to the federal communications commission and we'll go to court and we'll see if this is how you want to do business. Well, they decided they didn't want to do that. So then that 48 hours came and went and we didn't hear anything. So we wondered, hmmm, now what are they going to do? The next strategy was to call us in and say, listen, we'll give you money. 'How about if we pay you off for the rest of the year? You don't have to do anything. Just run the story the way we want and

never talk about us and here's your money.' The first thing I said was 'maybe we'll do that' and Jane looked at me like I was crazy. But I said 'why don't you write it up and we'll think about it', thinking, number one, that I needed this in writing because nobody would ever believe that they were going to do this. And I never thought they were stupid enough to put it on a piece of paper, but they were (you'll see it on our website). They wrote it out and gave it to us and we said, naw, we're not going to sign that, and they said, well just send it back to us, and we said, naw we think we'll hold on to this. So after the threat to fire us didn't work, and the threat to pay us off didn't work, then came these 83 re-writes and at the end of all of that they called us in again and said, OK, listen how 'bout this. Now the first part I can understand because, if they are paying us money, they're obviously paying us not to go around and badmouth them and that's pretty standard and I can understand that. But why would they go out of their way to protect Monsanto and a news story. Once (Fox)



got themselves protected, if we then want to leave and go talk about Bovine Growth Hormone and Monsanto thinks that we're maligning them and slandering their company, then Monsanto can sue us and Fox is out of it. We didn't do it on Fox Television, we did it in public and Monsanto can come after us. But they were so concerned about keeping Monsanto happy because Monsanto was an advertiser and Monsanto was a potential litigant - somebody who could still sue them, I guess, by saying they learned all this and you paid them to learn it so you're a defendant, too. They were so concerned that they insisted on those two things. And we told them no again. We said that we did not get into the business of being investigative journalists to help big companies cover up the truth. We got into this business to tell these stories and if you don't want to tell the story, there's nothing that says you have to tell it. Just don't tell it. But you cannot tell it and lie. If you're going to do it, do it honestly. If you don't want to do it honestly, don't do it. And this they couldn't stand. So then we turned them down again and the general manager of the station, he's a salesman, he's never been at a big station before. This is his first big job managing for Fox. He doesn't want to screw up. But he doesn't really care about journalism, he cares about sales and making money. So after he offered us this \$200,000 news consultant deal and we turned him down, it baffled him. I'll never forget this. He just looked at us like we were from another planet. And he said he didn't get it, he had never seen anything like this, 'what is wrong with you people?' He said he just wanted people who want to be on TV. As if nothing else should be important except being on TV and you'll do and sell anything just to be on TV. And I said to him, you don't get it, we're not in this business just to be on TV, we're in this business to tell the truth, a totally foreign concept to him.

GERARD: That would have been a bit sobering for yourselves, realizing what you were surrounded by.

STEVE: Well that's why they brought us there. In fact, before they hired us, I had quite a reputation in the United States of doing controversial stories. Once Fox really got hold of the station and the general manager was gone and the news director was gone and these Fox people came in, they didn't want this anymore. If they just said that they didn't want us to do this (story),

we would have said fine. The problem was that they didn't just want to kill the story, they were scared to death that people would understand that they caved in to pressure and never told the story. So they felt that they couldn't kill it. They'd just put it on the air and lie and they'd force us to do it and, sooner or later, either through offers of money or threats of being fired or whatever, we'd eventually give in. Of course, we didn't ever give in.

JANE: I think we left out that during that nine-month period, and this is important, it wasn't to kill the story. It was to re-work it and put in things that were untrue. Like that the milk was the same, take out all the references to cancer except one, take out the credentials of the scientists in there so you have no idea who these people are or whether you should believe them or not. We always said to them, that they had the right to kill the story because it's their television station and it is a business and they have the right to know what risk they want to take and what they don't. But they don't have the right to start re-working the facts of the story and massaging it to make it more Monsanto-friendly and to take the meat out. They don't have that have right. That's where they have gone over the line. That's, I think, an important distinction.

STEVE: We had two-year contracts and we'd fought this out for a year. We did virtually nothing else for a year. Jane kept thinking, if we kept showing them enough documentation that eventually they would see that we were right and they would run the story.

GERARD: I would think that, too.

STEVE: Yeah, you would.

JANE: And we did win a few arguments.

STEVE: But I said to her, these people do not want to broadcast this story.

GERARD: What about your colleagues? Didn't your colleagues say, 'this is a point of principle, we're going to support you?'

STEVE: No. The problem was this was the first story we ever did. We didn't know anybody at this station. And they asked us not to discuss it in the newsroom, so we



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kept our mouths shut. Maybe that wasn't the smartest thing to do because, to this day, the people in that newsroom still do not know what happened. They have no idea what this was all about. So anyway, we had these two-year contracts and they had a clause in the contract that said at the end of the first year they could fire us for no cause if they wanted to. That was just kind of a protection for them, if they didn't like our work or if they wanted to go in a different direction and do different kind of work or they didn't want to do investigative reporting anymore, whatever. So they wrote us a letter and said, 'pursuant to paragraph such and such of your contract, we are terminating your contract at the end of this year for no cause.' Now this letter came from the woman who we had fought with the whole year. She was the station attorney and this was her chance, you know, to stick it to us. So I wrote her back and said that I got your letter, but we both know the truth here. It's not that you're firing us for no cause, because we've only done one story. It's pretty clear that you're firing us because we stood up to you to tell the truth on this story and you didn't like it. And she made such a stupid mistake. All she had to do was write us back and say, oh no, that's not the reason, we just want to go in a different direction, sorry that didn't work out, honest difference of opinions, goodbye. But she she sat down at her word processor and wrote, basically, you're damn right that's why we fired you, cause you wouldn't do what we told you to do, and (she) gave it to us in writing. So we kept that letter and decided we had a law suit at that point. We still didn't really want to do a law suit because lawsuits, I don't know how they are here, but at home they are expensive and they wreck your life and they go on forever. The problem was that they called us in and they told us by the way, we want you to understand that even though you're fired, you can never talk about the milk. I said excuse me? They said that's our story. I said excuse me? And they said there's a clause in your contract that says that anything you learned during your period of employment is confidential. And since you learned all these facts while we were giving you a paycheck every week, those facts are our intellectual property. Those facts belong to us. And they said if you ever, even after you're fired and leave here, tell anybody anything about the hormone in the milk, we will sue you for theft.

GERARD: Did you get legal advice?

STEVE: Oh yeah, we had legal advice from about mid-way through cause we saw where this was headed. So we were advised that they would probably never be successful in such a lawsuit but that it would be a long, expensive fight and in the end we'd win the right to keep talking and it would cost us a fortune. And so I said to the lawyers, come on, there must be some way that I can talk about these issues and we felt very strongly that we wanted this story to get out because

(...and Fox said) 'We'll hire you for a whole year and pay you \$200,000 and we'll call you news consultants. You don't really have to do any work. But there are two things you can't do. You can't ever talk about what a crappy journalism organization you think we are. And you can't ever talk about what you know about the milk.'

now nobody is going to do the story. In fact, we even talked to other news organizations and said, look, you why don't you take this story? And they essentially said, if Fox wouldn't run it, there must be something we don't know or if Monsanto is going to come after us the same way, we don't want that trouble. So nobody else would run it either.

GISELLE: There must be somebody with some guts...

STEVE: We didn't find anybody like that.

JANE: Well there's a legal precedent, malice, and if you do a story and you've already been warned about it, that could be considered

malice, that we did it anyway and (we) ignored those warnings.

STEVE: If the different station set out to do (the story), Monsanto would say to that station, you are on notice and we are telling you now, that another station thoroughly reviewed the work of those two reporters and found that it wasn't credible enough to air. If you go ahead and air it, you are deliberately, maliciously maligning our company. And then you have a different element that it was done deliberately. It's one thing to do a news story and make an honest mistake. In America, if you do a news story and you know it's false or you have reason to believe it's false, then the damages are just incredibly higher. So, nobody would take such a risk. So I asked our lawyers how can we tell? And they said the only way you can talk about it is if any of the details are in a court case. In America if you file a court case, anything that goes into the court case is then public record and you can talk about it.

STEVE: So we filed our lawsuit, and we put everything into the lawsuit, every document, every memo, everything - So now everything is public record and this is the only way that we are allowed to speak about it. They can't touch us now from a legal sense, and we're entitled to talk about our claim and what's pending before the court.

JANE: And we also filed it because they did violate our contracts. You can't fire someone if they're telling you to do something illegal. Also, when they went to fire us, they missed the window for alerting me by a few days. So technically they're on the hook for that next year for me. They blew it in a couple of ways.

STEVE: So they get the lawsuit and they decide, OK, here's what we're going to do. We're going to do your depositions. A deposition is where they call you in before the trial and ask you all kinds of questions under oath. And you have to tell them everything you know. And that's so they don't get surprised in court. It's pre-trial discovery. So they called us in and they said, oh by the way, we're going to spend 4 weeks asking the two of you questions. Now we have lawyers we have to pay and you have to have your lawyer there so we pay \$200.00/hour for a lawyer, ten hours a day, that's



\$2,000/day, 5 days in a week, that's \$10,000/week, four weeks in a month is \$40,000. And by the time you pay for the transcript and all of that, it's \$50,000. Fifty thousand dollars of your money is gone and all you've got is your own testimony, which you already knew. It was just the opening antic. And what they were doing was saying to us, you want to come after us, we will ruin you. We will break you. We will take every penny you've got. So we went back to the judge and I pointed out that Linda Tripp, who told all she knew about President Clinton and Monica, told it all in three days. So I couldn't imagine they needed four weeks. So the judge said, OK. He knocked it down to just two weeks. So we got off for just \$25,000. But what that said to us was well, you want to play with the big boys, we will break you. And so I figured, we had a lot of depositions to take of their people. I've spent a long time as a journalist asking questions, and that's really all a deposition is. Why do I need to pay our lawyer to sit there for \$200.00/hour to ask the same kinds of questions I could ask. So I sent the other side a letter saying I'm going to represent myself and I'm going to ask my questions of your people starting next Tuesday at 10:00. Have them there. They wrote back and said you can't do that. And I said what do you mean I can't do that? In America there's a constitutional right to represent yourself if you want to and they said, well, that's true but a constitutional right is an all or nothing thing. You can't represent yourself just in asking questions of discovery and then use lawyers to write briefs and argue motions and all of that. Now I don't believe that's true, and that's another issue we could have won if we'd gone to court, but what they were trying to do was get us side-tracked into a whole different side issue which would have spent more money. So I decided, OK, here's what we're going to do, I'll fire the lawyers. So we told them we were going to fire our lawyers and going to proceed with our depositions'. And they said wow. They really liked this. They said you and Jane are going to go up against us and you're not going to have any lawyers? They figured they'd make short work of this. I said, no, you don't understand. The same lawyers who represent Jane and me are now going to just represent Jane. I'm gonna represent me. And they said 'you can't do that, that's a trick.' So they went to the court and said, Your Honour, their interests are identical and the same lawyers who are helping her are going to be helping him even inadvertently. This is just a trick so he can do his own depositions. And the judge kind of smirked and he thought this was kind of clever, I think, and he said Mr. Wilson, you'll abide by all the rules, won't you? And I said oh yes, Your Honour, absolutely. And he said, well I don't see why you can't do that. So suddenly I was my own lawyer. And boy, we started writing out subpoenas and taking depositions and I took about 75 depositions in four states and Washington D.C. (Jane's) lawyers would show up for the really important depositions and the others that weren't that important, I would do. So this drove them nuts and spent some of their money for a change because if I did a deposition in California or New York, they'd have to hire people in all these places and the bill kept going up and up.

GERARD: Did all these people lie? Faced with the truth, what did they say?

STEVE: A lot of them did not lie. A lot of them incredibly told the truth. For instance the news director, I asked him 'Did you ever in any of the 85 times you reviewed these scripts find one error of fact in any script Ms. Akre or I proposed to broadcast?' 'No'. 'Never one mistake?' 'No'. 'So this wasn't about getting the facts wrong, was it?' 'No'. We got lots of other incredible stuff. Oh, the lawyer for the other side said that once they got the Monsanto letters which set forth Monsanto's position and what Monsanto thought the story ought to say. (Fox) used that document as a road map to tell us how to write the story. And I said isn't that just taking one side of the story? Well, we knew what they were concerned about, he said, so we used that as a roadmap. But that's not the way it's supposed to work. So we have some very good testimony which would help us but in our country, the trick is to get to court. Because all of the pre-trial is so long, it's been now two years, we've had four court dates and they keep stalling and stalling and stalling. And they don't have to win on the facts. They can win just as well by default. They can win just as well by depleting our bank accounts, and making us go broke, and costing us everything we have to the point where we can't continue, and then they win by default and get to collect their fees back. (Fox) had a very good Florida law firm and they filed a motion to dismiss our suit saying there's not enough here that there should even be a trial. And the judge denied that motion. And then they filed what's called a summary judgement motion. That's another motion after you take some of the discovery. Look, we've heard a lot of testimony already, Your Honour, and there's nothing here that should go before a jury. You should dismiss the case on summary judgement. And they got that motion denied. Then Fox got really worried because they hadn't been able to stop us and we were still spending their money and we were running them all over the country doing these depositions. They decided they needed new lawyers, people with more juice. So they go to Washington and hire a law firm called Williams and Connolly. Now Williams and Connolly is the law firm that represented the President of the United States in the impeachment, Monica and Whitewater. The same lawyers that you saw on the floor of the US Congress and the US Senate arguing in the impeachment trial are the lawyers we're now fighting in this case. At \$650.00/hour, they're some of the best lawyers in America. So the first thing they do is file another summary judgement motion. And the (motion) is this high (Steve gestures) and it's meticulously documented and cross-referenced with court cases. It looks terrific and their arguments are pretty good. They brought up some novel arguments that a Florida state court jury should not be allowed to make a determination of whether or not a television station lied. The only people who can do that is the Federal Communications Commission, which is an interesting, novel argument. And that may be true if the issue is whether or not to renew the station's license. But that's not the issue in this case. The issue in this case is, did they ask us to do something that is illegal, namely, to lie on the air. Jane's lawyer, a small two-man law firm, sat at his word processor and said, 'you know, we've got the facts on our side. It'll be ok.' He was hanging in there. I'm not sure he thought he could win, but he was telling us he thought he could win and in the end he did win. And we won a second time. And this

just totally panicked them. Now they know there's going to be a trial.

GERARD: Is this the same judge?

STEVE: No, we've had three different judges. Every year they rotate judges. But all three judges have stood up for us. Now that they know we're going to court, they're trying to gut our case. They're going to file what are called 'motions in liminy' which is taking part of your case and eliminating it from the jury being able to hear it. For instance, they want to eliminate the fact that we were forced to sell our house. They don't want the jury to hear about that. They don't want the jury to hear about the fact that the National Society of Journalists gave us an award for ethics over what we did.

GERARD: They call that irrelevant or something?

STEVE: Yeah, that's their argument. And the first one that they wanted to eliminate was our expert witnesses. There are 15 of these motions that would eventually gut our case. And the first one that's been heard, just before we left Florida, was their motion that we couldn't have any experts. So we go to trial with this new judge and the other side gets up and says, 'Your Honour, this is really a simple case. We don't need experts to confuse the jury.' And I'm sitting there thinking, yeah, that's why we have the President's law firm down here from Washington, 'cause it's such a simple case. And then the next words out of his mouth were that it was very complicated, about this and this. And I said, 'Your Honour, how can it be both simple and complicated at the same time?'

GERARD: You said that?

STEVE: Yeah, 'cause I'm representing myself. So I stood up and said to the judge, 'it is complicated, Your Honour, and we need these witnesses'. And he said, well you know in the last year I've been sitting on the criminal courts and we use a lot of expert witnesses there and I think they're not a bad thing, so he overrules the guy and denies the motion and says you can have experts.

GERARD: Well, that's half the battle.

STEVE: Well, hopefully, hopefully, but then they'll have experts who'll just say the opposite, you know, who they pay. We don't pay our experts. They do it cause they think they're doing the right thing. So then they say, 'ok, Your Honour, if you're going to allow experts, you should not allow Ralph Nader.' Now Ralph Nader is a big consumer guy in the United States and he's known around the world, and Ralph Nader is our expert

witness. He's a big consumer crusader, he's been around for years. He first went after the car companies, seat belts, air bags, head rests, that's what he's most famous for. They said, Your Honour, they shouldn't have Ralph Nader cause he'll impress the jury and he'll prejudice the jury and inflame the jury and we don't want him coming in here and making us look bad, basically. They want to bring him in here to talk about the public interest. Now in America when you get a license to operate a television station, one of the conditions is that you operate it in the public interest. And we want Ralph Nader to come in and explain to the jury what it means to operate in the public interest. It means that you tell the truth and you tell people what they need to know, get people information so that they can make their own decisions. That's what the public interest is all about, and that you do that by putting the public interest ahead of your own interest of pissing off an advertiser or getting into a law suit. So we want Ralph to explain this to a jury and he's agreed to do it. And these people are scared to death that he's going to be allowed to come in. So (the Fox lawyer) says, you know, Your Honour, we don't need Mr. Nader to tell people what's in the public interest. They can figure this out for themselves. I'm thinking, oh geez, if we lose Ralph Nader.... So the judge says OK, Mr. Wilson, what do you have to say about that? And I said, well, Your Honour, Mr. Nader has testified before the United States Congress on 8 or 9 different occasions, counseling them about what the public interest means. Now it seems to me that if the United States Congress needs to rely on the expertise of Mr. Nader to understand what council over here says is a very simple proposition, if the Congress needs him, it seems to me that our jury ought to have the same benefit. And he said, yeah, I think that sounds alright. And he overrules them again. And he says you can have Ralph Nader, and you can have 4 other experts and you pick them. They've had a number of these losses. So that's where we are. It's a very long story. We go trial in 3 months on June 12th.

GERARD: On behalf of everyone here, I wish you all the best.

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SEED SAVERS

www.seedsavers.net

Each issue we feature an extract from *The Seed Savers' Handbook* by Michel & Jude Fanton, from the Seed Savers' Network in Byron Bay. This issue looks at asparagus. The 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 COGS.

.. Ed

"Without seed savers' networks, seed exchanges and local seed banks, we gardeners would have lost most of the seeds developed by our ancestors. It is a public scandal that these seeds have now been patented or subject to legal controls. It is also scandalous that large multinational corporations have gained control over our main food plants by seed patenting"

Bill Mollison

KOHLRABI Brassicaceae

Brassica oleracea var. *gongylodes* - brassica is the name used by the Romans for cabbage, and oleracea for "vegetable-like"; gongylodes means "round" in Greek.

Origins: Europe; kohlrabi was selected from the cabbage only about five centuries ago, when it was recorded as being in cultivation on the Continent, the English taking a shine to it three centuries later.

Description: Kohlrabi looks more like a turnip than a cabbage. The size of the swollen stem, which is the edible part, ranges from that of an orange to nearly that of a soccer ball. The skin may be light green, purple, or reddish.

Cultivation: Plant in autumn in warmer climates and in spring in cooler climates. It must be grown fast and harvested just as soon as it reaches full size.

Saving the Seed. Like the rest of this family, kohlrabi will go to flower in the second season, producing a dome of yellow flowers. When this

happens the actual edible part empties itself. The plant will cross with other Brassicas with the botanical name *B. oleracea*.

Several individual plants should be kept for reasons of diversity and for pollination purposes. The pollen needs to be carried by an insect from a flower on one plant to a flower on a different plant. Pollen is not acceptable to other flowers on the same plant.

Harvest the seed when the pods are brown and crisp. Thresh on a canvas as for broccoli and cabbage.

Storage: As with most of the cabbage family, the seeds will last from three to five years in dry storage. There are 250 seeds to the gram.

Usage: Kohlrabi can easily become stringy when left for too long in the ground. Steam the young ones and eat with butter.

On the Lookout: Artichoke Leaf and Blue Delicatessen. The Chinese have adopted this vegetable and developed a good many strains and recipes.



*Do you have an interest in writing or gardening?
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We are looking for articles covering plant profiles, book reviews, organic adventures, herbal concoctions and garden/farm lessons. If advertising or marketing is your strong suit, how about volunteering to spearhead advertising efforts for the quarterly? Whatever your forte might be, we could use your help. Contact either Jen or Jen (affectionately known as Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum) on 6278 4964 or 6260 6589. (PS it really doesn't matter which one you ring.)

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE POT

By Conrad van Hest



Roast potato and capsicum salad with aioli and roast tomato dressing

Salad

1.5 kg Nicola potatoes, peeled and diced
5 medium capsicums, halved and seeds removed

Preheat oven to 200C. Put potatoes on a greased baking tray and bake for about one hour or until cooked but firm. Put capsicum on another greased baking tray, bake for thirty minutes or until soft. When capsicum is cooked, let cool and then dice. Put into serving bowl with potato, ladle in aioli and toss lightly to combine. This salad can be served hot or cold.

Dressing

15 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
2 cups olive oil
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
3 egg yolks
30 roma tomatoes
pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 180C. Cut tops off tomatoes, cut in half and remove seed pulp. Place tomatoes on a greased baking tray and bake for ten to fifteen minutes. To make aioli, put eggs and garlic into bowl. With electric beater on low setting, slowly drizzle the oil into the eggs until all oil is incorporated and mixture is a thick, creamy texture. Next add lemon and pepper and mix in well. Set aside half of the aioli. The rest can be stored in the fridge in an airtight container for up to two weeks

Remove tomatoes from oven, let cool, then remove skins and place flesh into a strainer for twenty minutes to drain the liquid off. Add tomatoes to the aioli and fold in well.

Serving suggestions for aioli

- Instead of using butter or margarine, spread aioli on bread and top with your favourite salad.
- Smear aioli over cooked steak or chicken.
- Cook some onions and mushrooms, add aioli, heat, then pour over your favorite pasta and top with Parmesan.

Stuffed chicken breast with strawberry sauce

4 chicken breasts or plain kiev's

Farce:

100g mushrooms, diced
1 small capsicum, diced
1 tablespoon roquette pesto
1 free range egg
1 tablespoon white wine (optional)
pepper to taste

Sauce:

1 cup unsweetened strawberry puree
1 teaspoon organic apple cider vinegar
100g feta cheese
1 teaspoon rice syrup
6 fresh sage leaves

Pesto:

200g roquette
100g feta cheese
1/4 cup pepitas
100ml olive oil

Pesto - Put all ingredients into a blender and pulse until combined. Store in airtight container in fridge for two weeks.

Sauce - With a mortar and pestle, bruise sage leaves and then chop finely with knife. On low heat, add strawberry puree, stir, then add feta. Stir to melt. Add the rest of the ingredients, combine and cook for five minutes.

Farce - Put all ingredients into bowl, mix to combine.

Chicken - Carefully slit open the breasts lengthways three quarters of the way (pocket), put in tablespoon of farce, fold chicken over and seal with toothpick. Put on a greased baking tray and cook in preheated 200C oven for thirty minutes or until chicken is cooked. Serve with strawberry sauce and seasonal steamed vegetables.

Web pages:

Here are two web sites with good useful and interesting information on nutrition and health.

Eat well - live well: www.healthyeating.org

Foodwatch - www.foodwatch.com.au



CHOOKS - OLD AND YOUNG

by Betty Cornhill



One COGS' member learns some life lessons
from her faithful companions

In April 1996 I decided to get two Isa Brown pullets from David Odell. He informed me that they would lay an egg a day for two years and then I should kill them off and get more, as they would die anyway after such a mammoth effort.

"They don't moult," he said, "They just lay and lay and lay."

I was hooked and bought them. I named them Sally and Sunny, according to their character.

Sally was cheeky, and later I re-named her Naughty Girl, for she would jump for the pan of food, and if you were not careful she would tip the whole lot out before you could get it to the ground.

Then she tried pecking my bare legs, or my hands, and I seemed always to have bleeding wounds on the backs of my hands, and on my legs.

Many times I told her sternly that if she wasn't laying those beautiful big brown eggs, I'd wring her neck. I tried cuddling her, but as soon as I put her down she would turn and peck me.

For four years she laid an egg a day, then one day she did not come for her food, and I found her facing into a corner. She had given up the ghost.

She had always been at the bottom of the chook pecking order, and I believe she thought I, and any other human, was below her in the pecking order.

Sunny, on the other hand, was a delightful character. She was gentle and humble, moving away if the other hens looked at her. She was content to let them rule the roost, and she got her feed when they were finished.

They were both twenty-eight weeks when they started to lay, and at the age of four years, Sunny started to miss every second day, but still laid a very large egg every other day.

Now, at five years of age, she is having a new lease on life. She has had a sore foot, so I let her out on the grass of the back lawn. She has never scratched - they say Isa Browns don't, but she is learning to scratch on my compost heap. I tip the bin over for her, and she works away happily. I now call her Lady because of her dainty ways.

I have two brown leghorn crosses who are older than Lady. I call them The Oldies. They are still laying at the age of at least nine years, but they often go broody, which means they have to spend four days in my old dog kennel, with no food, only water. This always cures them, and they usually start to lay again after that.

Last November I decided to get four new young pullets, two white and two brown. The Oldies were outraged. They were so nasty to the young ones that I had to separate them, as the young ones were flying up into the vines to roost and get away from the Oldies.

I began to think one of the young ones was a reincarnation of Naughty Girl. She has the same trick of leaping onto the dish of food, tipping it out on the ground before you could put it down. She seems to be always hungry, but she was the first to lay an egg, and has laid one a day since she was 22 weeks old. The other white one started laying soon after, and now, four or five weeks later, the two brown ones have started.

The young ones and the Oldies still have to be separated most of the time, but when I am at home to watch them I let the young ones come into the Oldie's run. They are wonderful scratchers, and have a lovely time, and as long as they don't eat from the food dishes, the Oldies leave them alone.

They now know where they belong and go back to their own run to sleep. Of course a dish of food helps.

They all receive the same food which I mix with water, or milk and water, or even leftover yoghurt, or beetroot juice, or leftover soup. They love it all.

I cup each of black sunflower seeds, hulled oats, cracked corn, milo (sorghum), millet, and a small amount of linseed, plus 1 or 2 cups of laying mash.

Wheat is given in their self feeder, which I have put on top of a log in the young ones' run, as they were scratching dirt into it and then could not find the wheat.

The same happened with their water; they filled it with dirt, and then wondered where the water had gone!

I believe the sunflower seed helps them to keep laying, and the oats gives them stamina like the Scots, who can walk the hills all day on nothing but a bowl of porridge.

I give them green grass, clover, French sorrel, chicory, dandelion, Chinese cabbage, lettuce, dock leaves, land cress, milk thistle and chickweed from my garden and my Cotter plot.

They are good companions. I say hello to them from my upstairs bedroom window. If they want something they shout at me, and they keep on shouting till I go to see what they want. With the young ones it is usually that they have scratched dirt into their food dish, and can't find the food, and so are hungry.

The Oldies share their food with sparrows and many other birds that come to my garden. I say "shoo" from my bedroom window and they fly to the roof of the garage, and then fly down again as soon as they see where I am.

I've learned to share my money with other people, so why not buy enough chook food for them to share with the birds of the air.

They have taught me a lesson

If we all learn individually to share our money and our food with others, then there will be no starving people any more, and possibly no overweight people either!

ECOS DESIGN AND THE PERMACULTURE VISION

BY DAVE TOOLEY

IT NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME JUST HOW HOLISTIC AN APPROACH TO LIFE PERMACULTURE IS. THE CONNECTION WITH DESIGN AND PLACEMENT UNDERPINS THE EFFICIENCY OF BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND THE MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF OUR SYSTEMS. THE ETHICS OF EARTH CARE, PEOPLE CARE AND FAIR SHARE ARE THE "WAY" OF PERMACULTURE AND THE PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES ARE THE HOW. IT'S ALL IN THE LITERATURE, ALTHOUGH INFORMATION ONLY BECOMES KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE. HENCE MY LAUNCH INTO THE WORLD OF PERMACULTURE.

I HAD READ THE LITERATURE BACK IN THE SEVENTIES WHEN IT FIRST BECAME PUBLISHED. BUT LIKE MANY OTHERS, I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY WORK IN THE TROPICS, NOT HERE IN CANBERRA. SO IT WAS PUT ON HOLD UNTIL I DID AN INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE AND A DESIGN COURSE IN 1992 AND A CREATIVE TEACHING COURSE IN 1996.

WOW! DID THAT HAVE AN IMPACT. AFTER A SEVENTEEN-YEAR CAREER AS A GARBLOGIST AND A LANDSCAPER, I COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE THE SHEER WASTE OF SOCIETY, NOR COULD I SIMPLY ADD TO THE SUBURBAN SPRAWL.

I HAVE A STRONG BELIEF IN THE DESPERATE NEED TO REBUILD COMMUNITY AND DEAL WITH THE MANY PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT US IN MODERN LIFE. IN ORDER TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO THAT WHICH SUPPORTS US AND TO CONNECT WITH THE HOLISTIC APPROACH DESCRIBED ABOVE, I WILL REVEAL SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT I NOW FIND MYSELF INVOLVED IN.

FIRSTLY, I AM A TAI CHI INSTRUCTOR - I CANNOT SUPPORT A ROLE IN EARTH CARE IF I DON'T TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT COMMUNITY GARDENS HAVE MUCH TO OFFER SO I HAVE TAKEN ON THE ROLE OF ACT COORDINATOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN CITY FARMS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS NETWORK. THIS LED TO COORDINATING AND ESTABLISHING A PERMACULTURE PROJECT IN THE QUAMBY YOUTH CENTER. I AM NOW ALSO ABLE TO HELP THESE KIDS ACCESS FORMAL HORTICULTURAL TRAINING, WHICH I DELIVER THROUGH A C.I.T. PROGRAM.

I AM ABOUT TO LAUNCH INTO A PERMACULTURE PROJECT AT KARRALIKA THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY WITH A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, DAVE READ. FOLLOWING THE PERMACULTURE MODEL OF COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE, WE ARE STARTING TO DEVELOP A PERMACULTURE STYLE NURSERY. DAVE AND I ARE INVOLVED IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THE R.O.C.K.S. [RESIDENTS OF CHILDERS AND KINGLEY STREET] AREA AND WILL BE THERE ON A REGULAR BASIS EVERY 3RD FRIDAY.

AS A BUSINESS, WE AT ECOS DESIGN ARE WILLING TO COMMIT EXTRA HOURS FREE TO MATCH ANY VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE. IF YOU HAVE ANY FREE TIME TO MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE AND THE R.O.C.K.S AREA LOOK MORE CARED FOR AND LOVED PLEASE COME JOIN US. WE WILL BE COORDINATING TRAINING SESSIONS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO DEVELOP SKILLS AS A SMALL RECOMPENSE FOR ASSISTANCE. I BELIEVE THE AREA IS A VITAL RESOURCE AND SHOULD BECKON PEOPLE TO FIND OUT WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER.

GRANT ROBB AND I TEACH INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE COURSES AND IN THE DESIGN CONSULTANCY SIDE OF MY BUSINESS, I WORK WITH ANOTHER FRIEND, STEVE GLANVILLE.

TEAM TEACHING HAS A STRONG APPEAL FOR ME AND I HAVE BEEN PRESENTING WASTE MINIMISATION COURSES (EARTH WORKS) WITH FABIAN VERON FOR OVER TWO YEARS NOW. ALL OF THESE FRIENDS HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO EARTH CARE AND A VISION OF A BETTER WORLD.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR ME IS TO USE THE BUSINESS STRUCTURE OUTLINED IN THE PERMACULTURE DESIGNER'S MANUAL TO CREATE A STRONG, DIVERSE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, LINKING PEOPLE OF LIKE MIND WITH THE VISION OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD. ALL OF THE PROJECTS MENTIONED ABOVE CAME FROM A BELIEF THAT THIS IS ACHIEVABLE (AS WELL AS NECESSARY AND URGENT). PERMACULTURE CAN GIVE YOU THAT VISION. THE ONLY CONSTRAINTS ARE USUALLY THE CHRONIC SHORTAGE OF FUNDS AND MATERIALS. I WOULD URGE YOU TO DONATE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TO THESE PROJECTS - YOUR TIME WHEN AVAILABLE (IN ANY QUANTITY), SEEDS AND SEEDLINGS, CUTTINGS, FRUIT TREES AND BERRIES ETC., TOOLS, NEWSPAPER AND LUCERNE HAY.

WINTER VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

Growers may wish to start a number of crops in late winter rather than early spring if the winter is mild or if they have a sheltered garden bed. Such crops include Artichokes (Globe and Jerusalem), Beetroot, Cabbage, Carrots, Potatoes and Radish.

Frost-sensitive vegetables such as Capsicum, Eggplant and Tomatoes can be started early in August but may need a heated glasshouse or warm spot to germinate, and will almost certainly need protection when planted out.

Asparagus

Prepare your bed before you buy the crowns to plant late winter - early spring. Since this is a perennial which can last for up to 20 years, it is well worth the effort of establishing properly. It needs good drainage and can be planted very successfully in a raised bed. It likes compost and well-rotted manure. Seaweed is excellent mulch.

The crowns are planted in a trench, but with the roots straddling a ridge. Cover so dormant shoots are about 4cm below the surface.

Do not harvest spears the first year, and only harvest for a few weeks the second year. Remember this a long-term investment!

Broad Beans

Late plantings of broad beans in June may be very slow to germinate. Better results are usually achieved with an autumn planting.

Kohlrabi

Prepare the soil well with lots of organic matter. Needs rapid growth for flavour.

Lettuce

Only plant winter varieties of lettuces (Cos, Salad bowl, Oakleaf, Butterhead and Mignonette varieties).

Onions

Mid season varieties are often sown late autumn to early winter and long keeping 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.

Rhubarb

This is a perennial, but plants generally only produce well for a few years, and then fresh plants need to be started from subdivided crowns planted late winter or early spring. It is very hardy, but it is a gross feeder.

Peas

The yield from peas planted in August could be diminished if there are severe late frosts affecting the blossom.

Winter is the usual time to plant or prune soft fruits, including:

Strawberries

Plant certified stock or propagate from runners (not from plants more than 2 years old however) on a soil enriched with compost or well rotted manure. On old plants remove

the old leaves and burn or throw them in the garbage in case they are infected with a virus.

Berries

Raspberries, youngberries etc. can be planted and old canes removed. Remember that these bear fruit on canes grown in the previous year only.

Currants

These bushes are easy to grow in Canberra as they withstand very cold weather and don't mind heavy clay soil. They produce a fruit rarely available commercially. They need to be pruned in winter to remove dead wood and allow for good air circulation.

Gooseberries

Like similar conditions to Currants.

Winter Vegetable Planting Guide

	June	July	August
Asparagus		T	ST
Broad Beans	S		
Kohlrabi			S
Lettuce			S
Onions	ST	S	S
Peas			S
Rhubarb			T
Silverbeet			S
Spinach			S

S = Seed sowing

T = Transplant

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.

Green Manures

Autumn was the time to plant green manure crops which can be dug in during spring, at least 4 weeks prior to planting your summer crops. Benefits of green manures are:

- They provide valuable nutrients for successive crops;
- They provide organic matter for soil micro-organisms to break down;
- They provide soil cover in winter, and
- They help aerate the soil.

Green manure crops suitable for planting in Canberra are:

Legumes: Broad Beans, Field Peas, Lupins, Sub Clover, Chick Peas, Vetch.

Non-Legumes: Barley, Oats, Rye.



INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Canberra Organic Growers Society is a non-profit organisation started in 1977 with the aim of providing a forum for organic growers to exchange information and encourage society to adopt organic growing methods.

The organic movement endeavours to provide an alternative to the mass of toxic chemicals, fertilisers, fungicides, herbicides and genetic modification used in modern agriculture. Using natural means of improving and preserving our soils produces nutritious, less contaminated food. Enriching the soil with compost, manure, green manure and mulches, and using companion planting, produces healthy plants which resist pest attacks and disease.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings of members are held in Civic at the Griffin Centre, Room 4, at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except in December and January). Each month a different speaker discusses organic growing or related issues, for example:

- Backyard Self-sufficiency
- Worms
- Permaculture

After each talk a light supper is available. At all meetings, there is a produce and seed exchange table and a book-stall. Members may also borrow two items from the COGS library.

Visitors are welcome (donation requested).

CONTACT

COGS
PO Box 347
DICKSON ACT 2601

Phone: (02) 6248 8004

E-mail: cogs@netspeed.com.au

Web: www.netspeed.com.au/cogs

FLIER & QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

These publications inform members of the speaker at the next meeting and any other activities coming up. Canberra Organic, the Quarterly publication, contains articles on organic growing as well as tips specifically for the Canberra region, such as a seasonal planting guide. Members are encouraged to contribute.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

COGS currently operates 5 community gardens in the Canberra area at Mitchell (Northside Garden), Curtin (Cotter Garden), Erindale, Charnwood, and Oaks Estate. Members may obtain plots to grow organic produce for home-consumption. These gardens provide a wonderful opportunity for people to garden with other organic growers, to share their expertise and learn something new at the same time!

At each garden, plot-holders may be required to contribute to the cost of water and other small expenses.

The ACT Government has supported the establishment of these gardens through the ACT Office of Sport and Recreation.

INTERNET

COGS has an extensive and highly acclaimed web site devoted to organic growing. The site contains all of the COGS information papers on organic growing, certification information, a page for children, links to related organisations and information sources, a picture gallery, the latest on issues such as genetic engineering, regional information and much much more.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

From time to time COGS organises other activities for its members. For example, we participate in the World Environment Day fair and arrange information days at "COGS Backyard". Seminars and workshops are also conducted.

See reverse side for Membership form and rates ➡

SPEAKERS

MAY - Tuesday 23rd

Richard Stirzaker

Scientist, Philosopher and backyard Farmer

Topic: Water and Nutrient Management

JUNE - Tuesday 27th

Steve Sutton

You can eat out of your garden all year round

Topic: Four Seasons Harvest

JULY - Tuesday 25th

Dave Tooley

Local Permaculture Consultant

Topic: Bringing us up to date on his many projects in Canberra whilst informing us on how easy it is to become involved in these.



AT COGS BACKYARD

Xeriscape Gardens, Heyson Street, Weston

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th of August from 1.00pm to 4.00pm

Rose Pruning Demonstrations by the Horticultural Society

Compost Making Demonstrations by Earth Works

Mulch Gardens by Earth Works

Information on Worms by Earth Works

Organic Growing Information by Canberra Organic Growers

PERMACULTURE ACT (PACT)

The next PACT meeting is on Saturday, May 20th

12 - 2 pm at Kingsley Street, Civic

(southeast corner of the Environment centre building)

Contact: David Read on 6296 3550

ENVIRONMENT CENTRE SHOP

The Canberra Environment Centre Shop offers products that are environmentally friendly and safe for you to use.

- Bulk biodegradable household and personal care products (bring your own containers)
- Wood products made from recycled or reject timber
- Natural dental care products
- Re-useable sanitary pads and organic tampons
- Natural cosmetics
- Natural insecticide
- Books on environment & sustainable technology
- Children's books
- Educational toys
- Games
- Calendars and diaries
- Australian made fashion clothing
- Gifts for the whole family

The shop is at Kingsley Street Acton

Ph/Fax: 6247 3064

Open Tuesday-Friday 9 - 5, Saturday 10 - 1

CHARNWOOD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Fencing Working Bee.

Sunday, May 21st at 9.00am to 12.30pm.

Sausage sizzle lunch for the workers.

If you can help, call Gerard De Ruyter on 6258 5903

NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Fencing Working Bees.

Sunday 4th and Sunday 18th of June at 9.00am to 12.30pm on both days.

Sausage sizzle lunch for the workers.

If you can give a hand give Rod a call on 6226 5086

OAKS ESTATE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Working bee to upgrade the fences.

Details to be advised in the flier.

WORKSHOP SEED RAISING MEDIUM and SOIL BLOCKING

Presenters Joyce Wilkie
and Michael Plane

How to make an environmentally friendly medium to raise your seedlings with demonstrations on using a soil blocker. People can bring along their own seed and take home some soil blocks already planted. Coco-peat and soil blockers will on sale.

Date: Sunday July 16th

Time: 1.00pm to 3.30pm

Cost: \$10.00 per person

Registration details in June Flier