

# Canberra Organic

## ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

Quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.



*Joan Buckie*

**VOL. 9 NO. 1**

**AUTUMN 2001**

## CONTENTS

<b>From the Editor</b>	3
<i>Deborah Avery</i>	
<b>Committee members and helpers</b>	4
<b>President's Report</b>	5
<i>Steve Sutton</i>	
<b>Community Garden Convenors' Reports</b>	6
<i>Georg Rehn, Katrina Willis</i>	
<b>Genetic Engineering News</b>	8
<i>Bridgett Farrer</i>	
<b>Growing Citrus</b>	10
<i>Pamela Seaton</i>	
<b>Xeriscape Gardens Program</b>	11
<b>Turning a Suburban Backyard into a Permaculture Paradise</b>	13
<i>Jenny Waygood</i>	
<b>Piailigo Apples</b>	14
<b>Loriendale Organic Orchard</b>	14
<b>From the Garden to the Pot</b>	16
<i>Conrad van Hest</i>	
<b>Organic Gardening Courses for Beginners</b>	17
<b>No-Dig Garden—A Fight Against The Contraries</b>	18
<i>Sigrid Drescher</i>	
<b>Tomato—<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i></b>	20
<i>Sigrid Drescher</i>	
<b>Corn Salad</b>	22
<i>Mary Flowers</i>	
<b>CIT Courses</b>	22
<b>Saladini in the Cooler Months</b>	23
<b>About COGS</b>	25
<b>Membership Application/Renewal</b>	26
<b>COGS Notice Board</b>	27

## From the Editor

Welcome to the first issue of the *Canberra Organic* of 2001 and the first with me as the Editor.

My interest in organic gardening came about when I poisoned myself by spraying various chemicals on my cherry tree. I was also growing increasingly frustrated by the taste of (or lack of) fruit and vegetables from the supermarket. Surely there must be a better way! I bought several books, searched the internet and joined COGS.

I planted strawberries under my cherry tree, spread mulch everywhere and when the cherry slugs came visiting I hit them with a kilo or two of flour.

The slugs disappeared for a couple of weeks until the rain came—which created a lovely strawberry gravy on the mulch which then grew an attractive green fungus—very happy slugs indeed. Then the rain really came down and my backyard was flooded—my drains were blocked because of the damper-like clumps that had formed from the flour.

OK, so I have a lot to learn ... and what better way to learn than edit this fabulous magazine!

As Jennifer Allen said in her last editorial, volunteers are desperately needed to keep this magazine going. If you can help with distribution and advertising please call me.

This is your magazine—if there is any particular subjects you want covered or you'd like to write a story please email me—I'd love your input. Photos of your successes (and failures would be appreciated too.

Happy gardening!

*Deborah*



*Joan Buckie*

*Basil*

# CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INC.

PO Box 347 DICKSON ACT 2602

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS & HELPERS

### OFFICE BEARERS

President	Steve Sutton	6292 5609	suttonsm@lightningpl.net.au
Vice President	Rod Therkelsen	6226 5086	sigandrod@interact.net.au
Secretary	Conrad van Hest	6288 2443	zsyphot@netspeed.com.au
Treasurer	Keith Colls	6251 7729	keithcolls@optusnet.com.au
Membership Secretary	Sigrid Drescher	6226 5086	sigandrod@interact.net.au
Editor	Deborah Avery	6231 8309	deboraha@interact.net.au
Librarian	Maren Childs	6254 9927	maren.child@dynamite.com.au
Seed Group Co-Ordinator	Rosemary Stevenson	6284 4238	rosemarystevenson@start.com.au
Public Officer	Conrad van Hest	6288 2443	zsyphot@netspeed.com.au

### GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rosemary Stevenson, Laurie Thompson, Adrienne Fazekas

### COGS FLYER

Pilots: Steve & Michelle Sutton

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

Book sales: Murray Dadds  
Produce table: Vacant  
Supper convenors: Marie Bahr, Rosemary Stevenson  
Librarian: Maren Childs



### COGS REPRESENTATIVES

Conservation Council: Bren Weatherstone  
Environment Centre: Steve Sutton, Deborah Avery  
Griffin Centre: Vacant

### INQUIRIES ABOUT ORGANIC GROWING

Email: [cogs@netspeed.com.au](mailto:cogs@netspeed.com.au)  
Telephone: Elizabeth Palmer 6248 8004

### GARDEN CONVENORS

Cotter:	Michelle Johnson	6231 6219
Charnwood:		6292 5609
Northside:	Rod Therkelsen	6226 5086
Oaks Estate:	George Rehn	6297 1036
Theodore:	Steve Sutton	6292 5609
Erindale:	Christine Carter	6231 5862
COGS Backyard:	Laurie Thompson	6288 7161

*membr*

### COGS ON THE INTERNET

<a href="http://www.netspeed.com.au/cogs">www.netspeed.com.au/cogs</a>	Web Manager:	Conrad van Hest	6288 2443
<a href="mailto:cogs@netspeed.com.au">cogs@netspeed.com.au</a>	E-mail Coordinator:	Vacant	

**COGS monthly meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm in Room 4 of the Griffin Centre in Civic.**

**~ VISITORS WELCOME ~**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome everyone! By the time you read this it will be mid February—the time of year I refer to as 'Time of Plenty'. At home and at Theodore the gardens have an abundance of produce. The most difficult decision is what to eat first, and how to store the rest of it for consumption in leaner times. Ten years ago the most difficult thing about growing my own food was how do I do it? Now the most difficult question is how do I make the most out of all this produce that seems to ripen all at the same time. In the last couple of years I have started to preserve some of my excess produce, I can say that the time involved in storing and preserving is well rewarded when you can open up a bottle of preserved fruit and have the satisfaction of knowing you have done it yourself. Over the years I've learnt about successive planting—this is when you keep up a regular supply of produce throughout the year by planting at regular intervals. I can honestly say that even through our cold winter months I usually have something in the garden to harvest.

Funding has been acquired from the Urban Services Community Renewal Program, part of the Government's overall Social Capital program, for setting up three new Community Gardens in Canberra. Over the next six months things will be pretty hectic in establishing these gardens. Please look at the details on the Community Gardens page. There are a group of people in Queanbeyan putting together a proposal for a garden to be set up there too.

A sub-committee lead by Keith Colls has done a great job in establishing a Beginners Organic Gardening Course (see page 17). It has taken a lot of time and considerable effort to get this up and running. Great work.

We had another great day at COGS Backyard on Saturday 4 November. Thanks to all the members who helped on this day. The concept of having a place where we can meet the public and show them what is being done is fantastic. With the adding of a few more fruit trees around the Earth Works Site; a dam to catch the excess water so this may be reused, the Xeriscape Garden is truly becoming a place for people to come and see more environmentally safe ways of gardening and living. ACTEW and CIT need to be commended for their commitment to this project. On Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 March COGS will present a talk at 2pm on Growing Organic Vegetables, hope to see you. Demonstrations will be held on saving water in your garden, mulching, composting, worm farming, growing of organic vegetables, lawns, roses and camellias on Saturday 7 April from 9.00am to 4.00pm.

Remember the seed saving group is waiting to receive your organically grown seed, which will then be added to our seed exchange.

On the first Saturday of the month the Environment Centre in the ROCKS Development (Kingsley Street, Canberra City) is putting on Green Living Days from 10am to 2pm. There will be a theme each month such as organic growing, solar energy, and alternative building methods; the first being on Saturday 3 March with David Read and Dave Tooley demonstrating how to plant and take care of trees and shrubs. Dave will also present his permaculture plan for the area.

With March fast approaching so is the Annual General Meeting. Please consider taking on a position on the committee to assist in the running of this great organisation or register your availability to assist us in any way you can. Just remember that many hands make light work.

Steve Sutton

# Community Garden Convenors' Reports

## Oaks Estate

A few words from our little lot.

After the completion of our high fence we have had no more trouble with vandals and everybody is very pleased, our thanks to all those willing helpers who came to lend a hand. Special thanks to Steve for taking the initiative and getting it started, as I was rather useless.

The meeting and BBQ were successful this time (the last one was washed out). We elected Heather as our new treasurer and I think we should have a repeat BBQ in the not so distant future. A pity, not all members attended.

The warmer weather sure does wonders. Everything seems to grow extra well, after early setbacks. Some of our members came finally good and started to clean up their plots and planted some useful things. A little bit late, but I'm certain they will be successful.

I have harvested my garlic, so did Rosemary and Elva. The first lot of spuds have been dug out, it's them little ones, Joy called them skiddles or something similar. Since it is too early and they won't keep I boiled and skinned them and put most of them in the freezer. I'm eating the small ones of course.

Both Lore and Karen have had some good results from their gardens and I'm sure they are pleased with it. I've been eating my beans (french) since the year's begun, there's nothing like fresh veggies from your own garden. The asparagus were delicious, but since mid December I've left them alone to recuperate for the next season.

The tomatoes are ripening and I picked some before Xmas. Transplanted my onions and sowed some more beans and carrots. The climbing beans I sowed along the bottom fence are rather slow, that wind we had last year didn't do them any good either, it knocked them about badly.

Sad to say, Robert seems to have too much trouble working and I feel bad about his condition. I have found a taker for plot No. 1, all the person has to do is become a COGS member. The plot is starting to be overgrown with weeds again. I also handed application forms to two gents who seem to be interested in gardening. No's 5 and 6 are still very much covered in weeds and rubbish and the couch grass is taking over, I find it disheartening to say the least.

We had trouble with hoses, the fittings used to push off. I put it down to the high water pressure. Using plastics glue didn't solve the problem, so I purchased some Araldite and tried my luck with that, see how it goes—so far successful!

Gayle took notice of the article by Jonathan Banks in the last quarterly. She covered a whole plot with clear plastic, weighing it down and sealing the ground effectively. If she gets rid of the weeds that way, we will declare it a success, let's hope so.

Since the start of the year I have picked off and killed at least 60 of the green shield bugs not only from my own, but also from my neighbor's tomatoes, they are a curse. I would like to find a better way of getting rid of them, for they spoil everything. Lore tore her tomato plants out, because the bugs spoilt the whole lot.

**Georg Rehn**

### Learn to make a difference to the waste problem

The Earth Works courses are designed to give you the skills to reduce consumption and enable you to make changes at home, in the workplace, at school or anywhere you feel you could make a difference. At the field days, we show you the value of a cyclical, systems approach to composting and no-dig gardening. You can then use these skills to build or enhance your existing organic routine.

We also see some of what happens to things we no longer value in our fair city. Five three hour classroom sessions will help you develop a project and share your views with other like minded people. Prepare for a No Waste Lunch. Please bring your own mug and dress sensibly for field trips.

**Dates: 5, 12, 20, 26 March and 2 April (classroom sessions), 10 & 24 March for field trips.**  
**Ring CIT Solutions on 6207 4444      Course Fee: \$20      Course Facilitator: Dave Tooley**

## Moves to establish Queanbeyan's first community garden

Queanbeyan may have its first community garden this year in a long neglected part of the city.

The possibility of establishing the garden follows Queanbeyan City Council's purchase last year of an old railway goods yard from the NSW State Rail Authority.

West Queanbeyan residents opposed a factory proposal for the site and successfully lobbied the council to buy the property and turn it over to parkland, an asset in short supply in a precinct of the city with a high proportion of units and townhouses.

The goods yard is adjacent to the refurbished Queanbeyan railway station in Henderson Road. The council allocated space in the landscape plan for playing areas, barbecue facilities and a community garden but did not develop a garden plan.

Mayor Frank Pangallo opened the park in June last year and a community tree planting day suggested at the opening was held in November. Although poorly attended, the tree planting day became the catalyst for a garden proposal.

Three women who met at the tree planting day formed an informal group to develop a proposal for a garden to be operated under the COGS banner, drawing on the experience and success of COGS' community gardens throughout Canberra.

The community garden presents a wonderful opportunity to encourage residents to meet their neighbours, to enjoy the benefits of gardening and growing their own food, and to revitalise a neglected part of the city.

A proposal is currently being prepared for Queanbeyan Council with the aim of having the garden established in time for spring planting. Volunteers will be needed for projects such as fencing, shed raising and other activities.

If you are interested in supporting the garden project in any way or becoming a member of the garden please contact Katrina Willis (6232 9743), Maree Timbs (6297 5379) or Carol Walczak (6284 3025). An indication of the number of likely participants in the garden will help our proposal to the council.

**Katrina Willis**

## New COGS Community Gardens

These gardens will be operated under the COGS Community Garden Rules as in Appendix 4 of our Constitution.

COGS has secured funding from the Urban Services Community Renewal Program as part of the Government's overall Social Capital program to establish three new gardens in Canberra. We have chosen sites in Cook, Chifley and Kambah. Currently we only have permission to use the land for the Cook garden, this being at the south-east corner of horse paddock No. 2 in Cook. Our entrance will be off Bindubi Street. We have identified possible locations for the other two but it will be a little longer until we can secure the final permission to use them.

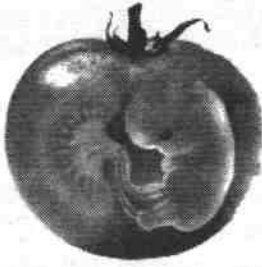
There will be a meeting of all people who would like to participate in the Cook garden at 10am on Sunday 18 February. For further information give Keith Colls a call on 6251 7729.

If you are interested in participating in the Chifley or Kambah gardens you can give Steve Sutton a call on 6292 5609 to register your interest.

It is hoped that all three gardens will be operating by the end of June.

### **GE-FREE FOOD LIST AVAILABLE**

Send SASE to: Martin Oliver  
Gene-Ethics Network Northern Rivers  
C/- BSEC, 123 Keen Street  
Lismore NSW 2480



## GENETIC ENGINEERING NEWS

Compiled by Bridgett Farrer

For those of you who wonder why it's GM (genetic manipulation) rather than G. modification or G. engineering—the latter terms to me seem to have a whiff of the spin-doctor about them, implying that GM is precise and controlled. 'Manipulation implies exploitation and chanciness, which seems a more accurate description of the GM industry!

Readers of the *Canberra Times* may have noticed that I have not of late been writing my usual letters attempting to correct the balance in the write-ups given to GM issues. This is because I have the feeling that the issue has now reached critical mass and the events are speaking for themselves. For example, in the last couple of weeks we've had front page stories about the rhesus monkey with jellyfish genes inserted. Now it's the mousepox virus. But let the editorial in the *New Scientist* (13 January 2001) tell the tale...

### "The Genie is out

Biotech has just sprung a nasty surprise—next time it could be catastrophic. Five years ago, *New Scientist* asked biomedical researchers if they thought genetic engineering (sic) could make a virus or bacterium more virulent than nature's worst. They replied that it would be difficult if not impossible, and would need a colossal research effort. Now it's clear they forgot one thing—the unexpected.

As part of a programme to develop a contraceptive vaccine for mice, researchers in Australia modified a mousepox virus to include the gene of a chemical called interleukin 4. They hoped IL-4 would boost the animals' antibody levels. It may have done, but that's irrelevant because to the researchers' surprise the mice all died. Adding the gene turned a merely nasty virus into a killer."

## Important Information for all Non-GMO Farmers— from the Organic Federation of Australia Inc.

On 4 December 2000 a deal was made between the ALP and the Federal Government to pass the Gene Technology Bill 2000 with a minimum of amendments, and almost none of the recommendations of their own Senate Report that were critical to the protection of organic farming systems.

This deal was despite twelve months of lobbying by the OFA of all political parties. In the lead up to the debate the OFA was lead to believe that amendments to take account of economic impact would be supported by the ALP. It was only on the day the Senate began debate that the significance of the pull out by the ALP became apparent on the economic issues. The Australian Greens supported the OFA amendments to the Bill to require the regulator to protect Non-GMO production systems including organic.

The Organic Federation of Australia advises all farmers that they should be particularly concerned if they are planning to produce Non-GMO, including organic, as there is no protection in this bill for them should contamination occur through pollen flow and/or inadequate seed segregation systems. This follows the US model where industry self regulation has led to massive domestic product recall and export market loss following CMO contamination of corn supplies with Aventis Starlink corn in September 2000.

### 1. Field Trials

The Regulator may impose buffer Zones of the basis of unknown risk to public health and safety and the environment. The Regulator will publicly notify locations of field trials unless the GMO company shows that the location should be kept secret.

## 2. General Releases

The Regulator may not refuse a license or impose conditions unless there is direct and 'significant' risk to public health and safety and the environment. If the Regulator imposed conditions related to economic impact (such as buffer zones to protect Non-GM farmers) then the GMO proponents may appeal to the AAP on the basis that such a condition is outside the terms of the legislation.

The Regulator cannot require public notification of General Release GM crop locations so Non-GM farmers can only find out by asking their neighbours, as in the US. The Regulator may not impose any requirement for Identity Preservation Systems (segregation). This will be left to the market, as in the US.

The Regulator may recommend Resistance Management Plans to reduce the risk of adoption and escape of herbicide resistant weeds (rotations) and resistant insect populations (non-GM crop areas).

The intention of the Bill is for General Releases to be literally covered by a General License, owned by Aventis or Monsanto (say) and that they will be required to inform farmers of some conditions. As in the US, this is exactly the system that led to the Starlink corn contamination.

## 3. Contamination

Any farmer wanting to claim organic status must have absolutely no detectable levels of GMO contamination, consistent with Australian and International Standards.

Advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission states that any farmer claiming Non-GMO status must have absolutely no detectable level of GMO present. Under Section 52 of the *Trade Practices Act* if there is any detectable level of GMO contamination then a GMO-free or Non-GMO claim is considered misleading and deceptive conduct.

As there is no notification of locations of general release GMO crop locations and no compulsory harvest tracking systems for GM crops it will be difficult to take legal action for loss of Non-GMO market premiums due to contamination.

The economic security of Non-GMO farmers is also reduced by the absence of compulsory insurance for all license issues. This implies a judgment on the part of the Regulator as to the risks associated with each license, but there is no reason why every release should not be insured, as insurance cost is a function of risk.

**The OFA recommends that all Non-GMO farmers share this information and express concern to their local State and Federal representatives, Agriculture Ministers, local Councilors, and Farmer Associations.**

**THE OFA would also like to know if anyone has information regarding the whereabouts of GMO field trials of canola in 2001.**

*OFA Secretariat*

*PO Box Q455, QVB Post Office, Sydney NSW 1230*

*Telephone: 02 9299 8016 Facsimile: 02 9299 0189*

*Email: info@ofa.org.au Website: www.ofa.org.au*

## CANBERRA ORGANIC

Vol.9 No.1 Issue 33

Quarterly magazine published by the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

Articles may be reproduced for non-profit, educational purposes. For other purposes, please obtain permission from COGS. Articles in the magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society. Products and services offered by advertisers are not specifically endorsed by the Society.

Contributions are invited. Send on diskette (PC format, Microsoft Word files preferred) or e-mail to [cogs@netspeed.com.au](mailto:cogs@netspeed.com.au). Otherwise, send clean, typed copy.

There are four issues each year: autumn (February), winter (May), spring (August), and summer (November). The deadline for copy and advertising is 15 January, 15 April, 15 July, and 15 October respectively. Printing is done by Aussieprint on recycled paper. Illustrations courtesy of Joan Buckie. For advertising queries, please contact the editor.



# Growing Citrus

Pamela Seaton

Citrus trees can be grown just about anywhere in Australia and will survive neglect and most climatic conditions. But if a few simple needs are met, they can reward you with the most wonderful sun-kissed fruit. The key elements to successful citrus growing are choosing the right variety, site position, correct watering practices, and soil condition.

Choose citrus varieties to suit your climate, as well as your family's needs and likes. Remember that the tree will mature and supply you with an abundance of fruit. How will you use all that fruit? Does the fruit of your chosen variety ripen all at once? Will the ripened fruit stay on the tree for a period of time? I have a mature grapefruit tree which is a prolific cropper of sweet and juicy grapefruit over an extended period of time. Even so, we couldn't possibly consume all the fresh fruit on our own, even after giving some away. We enjoy grapefruit juice, so I am happy to freeze the juice for later. If you have room for several orange trees, choose a range of varieties that mature at different times. My Washington Navel, Valencia and Joppa varieties ensured a long picking season of delicious oranges. If you have room for just one citrus tree, you can't go past the lemon for versatility, and nobody gets tired of freshly made lemonade.

## Position, Position, Position

Citrus trees do much better in a free-draining soil rich in organic material, and they need a sunny but protected position. Strong winds can break heavily laden branches. Citrus trees simply hate wet feet. If the soil is on the heavy side with a high clay content, or if it does not drain well, plant your citrus trees in large mounds above the normal soil level. Nothing will kill them faster than soggy soil that cannot breathe. Buying grafted trees does help, but even these will die a lingering death in poorly drained soil.

It is always a good idea to plant trees and shrubs with similar needs in the same area of the garden. Natives and citrus do not go well together. Citrus are heavy nitrogen feeders and need a good supply of phosphorus and potassium in order to fruit well. In short, they like a rich, slightly acidic soil. Natives on the other hand do not like too much nitrogen and tolerate only small amounts of phosphorus. So keep them in separate parts of the garden. Citrus trees quickly reveal that their needs are not being met. Their leaves turn yellow and they produce poor and stunted growth. They also fail to set fruit, or drop their immature fruit. There is nothing sadder than a struggling citrus tree.

## Water

Citrus have a fairly shallow root system which needs to be kept moist (but not waterlogged) and free of competition from other plants, especially grass. They do best with a thick mulch taken just past their drip line. This needs to be extended each year as the trees grow. Water regularly, especially when the fruit is growing rapidly. Remember how juicy oranges can be? You can grow shallow rooted plants underneath citrus if the ground is well watered and is supplied with enough nutrients, but it is generally not a good idea. I have grown some of my best strawberries and soapwort in the mulch under my citrus trees.

## Bio-Dynamic Seaweed Concentrate

The biologically active seaweed garden additive, BioActive, contains the trace minerals so prized by plants. These include carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium, calcium, sulfur, iron, molybdenum, magnesium, copper, manganese, boron, iodine and zinc. This product is processed using micro-organisms so the nutrients contained in this liquid seaweed are present as organic molecules which makes them better able to be used efficiently by plants and so increases the efficiency of the product.

*Inquiries to Lynette West  
30 McIntosh Street, Queanbeyan NSW 2620  
Telephone/Fax: 02 6297 2729.*

## Feeding

Citrus are heavy feeders, so give them a fairly generous supply of compost (preferably biodynamic) or chicken manure in February and September. Be careful with chicken manure as it can be too strong if applied heavily. I have also used pigeon manure which is even stronger, but the trees loved it in small amounts. Some of the healthiest citrus trees that I have seen, grew in or next to chicken runs, a testimony to their preference for well manured soils. Scatter the fertiliser under the mulch at the drip line where the feeder roots are, or place on top of old mulch at the drip line, before topping up and extending with new mulching material. Comfrey leaves can be added to the mulch to supply potassium for fruit setting and development. You can also make a rich comfrey liquid fertiliser by chopping up enough comfrey to fill a 10 litre container, filling it with water, loosely covering it and letting it sit for a few weeks. Dilute with water and apply it around the drip line area. Wood ash sprinkled under the trees is also a good source of potassium.

I like to use a seaweed extract spray, such as Micro Nutrient King, on all my plants, as it seems to reduce damage from extremes of weather (heat and cold) and makes them less susceptible to fungal and insect attack. If sooty mould is a problem, use a little home made white oil. My worst nightmare with citrus was a plague of grasshoppers, which I managed to control with hand picking and a strong chilli spray.

## Pruning

Don't be afraid to prune citrus. Prune to shape for easy picking and to keep the tree structure open so that the fruit is exposed to the sun. Sun ripened fruits are definitely sweeter. Prune out deadwood, watershoots, shoots from the grafting stock (below the graft line), and any branches that cross over each other, after the last of the fruit has been picked. Old and sickly citrus trees respond well to a heavy pruning, the application of rotted manure or dynamic lifter out to the drip line, and a heavy mulching well past their drip line.

## Newly Planted Trees

I have found that removing the tiny fruit from fruit trees for the first two or three years after planting out in the ground encourages strong growth. It is

hard to forgo these first fruits but it's worth it, as the eventual fruit yield is greatly improved, and the trees are much healthier and stronger if you can just wait a couple of years.

Citrus are perhaps the easiest fruit to grow successfully if you just follow a few basic rules. Choosing the appropriate variety, good drainage, lots of sun, regular fertilising and mulching will ensure a prolific crop of sweet and juicy citrus.

*Author's Note: Lemon varieties suitable to Canberra include Eureka and Meyer, Orange variety would be Washington Navel, or try your hand at a Tarheiton Lime. Position is very important in Canberra, north or west facing is best, close to a wall. Expect to pay \$30-40 for a citrus tree.*

## Xeriscape Gardens Program Summer/Autumn 2001

### Lawns—new lawns and problems with old lawns

Special talks by Keith McIntyre  
Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 February (2.00pm)

### New Vegetables and Fruits

Special talks by David Young  
Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 February (2.00pm)

### Growing Organic Vegetables

Special talks with Canberra Organic Growers  
Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 March (2.00pm)

### Plants in Containers—Hanging Baskets, Large Pots, Small Pots, Barrels and Potting Mixes

Special talks by Peter Sutton  
Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 March (2.00pm)

### Plant Sale and Open Day

Specialist sessions on water saving gardening, mulching, composting worm farming, growing organic vegetables, lawns, roses and camellias. Let our resident experts help you with your garden problems.  
Saturday 7 April (9.00am-4.00pm)

### Courtyard and Patio Plants—Their Selection and Successful Culture

Special talks by Peter Sutton  
Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April (2.00pm)

# Turning a Suburban Backyard into a Permaculture Paradise

Session 4—3 September 2000

Jenny Waygood

Dave was right about the lemon tree. After piling on the pigeon poop (which was so kindly donated by Dave) about 6 weeks ago, it is now flowering very prolifically. I will have to prune off the sucker shoots, and some of the lemons, so I am assured of some nice sized lemons. I read somewhere that, even if you prune fruit off the tree, you don't lose overall crop weight. So, instead of getting lots of small lemons, I'm hoping for fewer fruit, but larger fruit.

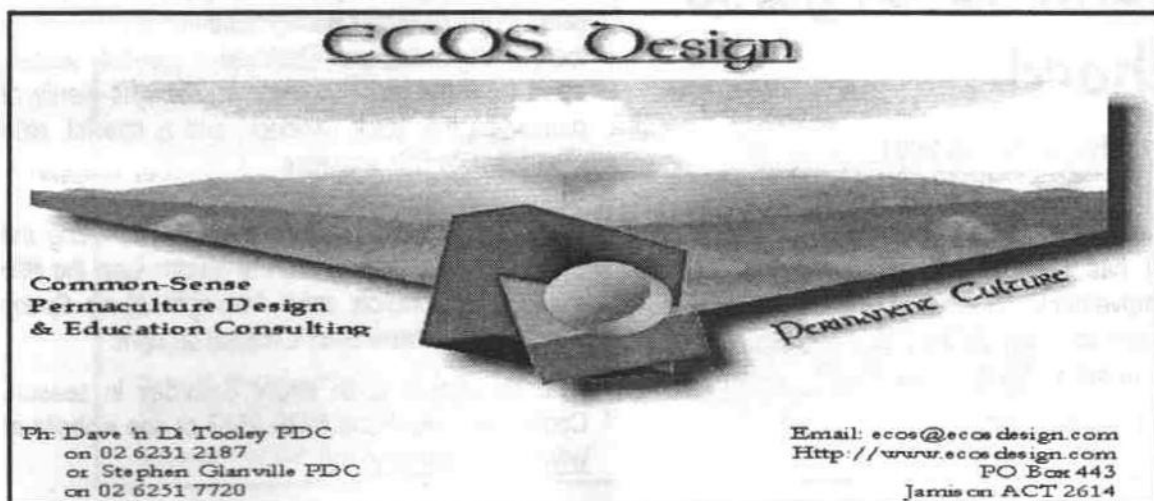
Dave Tooley and his helper Shane today made lots of changes to our Southern garden area (Dave Read came a little later). The picture in our (really Dave's) mind is to add some structure and semi-formality by including a herb spiral and rock edging. It is somewhat formal now, but it is just a bit messy, and so unproductive. We transplanted raspberries, two Banksias, and other assorted natives. We had to sacrifice a few of the bigger plants, as they would not have gone well as transplants. It was a very messy and physical job to clear the area of all the weeds, and take out all the roots and rocks, and then we could start the design stage. The clearing took about 1 hour, and then it was a matter of skimming off the top-soil (about 20cm), and pile it into the middle, where the spiral was to be. Then Dave Tooley worked his magic, and laid out lines of rocks. They then took to their shovels and dug along the paths, and *vois la*, a herb spiral and lovely formal garden.

I was then instructed to leave the garden alone, watering the area lightly to assist the soil to settle, before I could even look at planting anything. I can't tell you how frustrated that made me feel, as not only did I see it when I watered it, but I had to walk past it every time I went to the car.

About two weeks later, Dave, Dave and Shane came back with some plants, well that was somewhat of an understatement. About 10 punnets of herbs, flowers, vegies (including mixed lettuce and tomatoes), and some natives. He also presented me with a mulberry. You could say that I could have gone out and bought all this, but I would never have thought of some of the varieties that Dave bought over, and, the mulberry was a standard graft. I fell in love with it straight away. We got too and planted all the seedlings, and the tree, and it looked superb. The seedlings were, I thought, planted way close together, but again, I put my faith in the hands of Dave to see how it would turn out. I could only imagine what it would be like in 4–6 weeks, when things were ready to use, and the mulberry flowers and fruits.

We also planted zucchinis, onions, peas, and spinach in other areas of the southern garden. I can't wait for some bumper crops.

At that time, they also started a rock wall along the Southern side of the house. This area was a fairly thin area, and sloped up to the level of the neighbours yard. It ranges from 2½ metres deep at one end, to 4 metres deep at the other. The gradient was rather steep, so this area was rather a black spot for us, as we didn't know what would look good. Regularly we procrastinated over setting a rock wall along the length, but it seemed an awesome task for us. So when Dave suggested he could do it, naturally we agreed. We gathered all the spare rocks from the garden, stashed in various corners of the yard, and he and Shane did about 3 metres, two tiers, in just over an hour. I helped a little bit, but I couldn't help the feeling that you couldn't stop this train, these two really worked like a well-oiled machine.



**ECOS Design**

Common-Sense  
Permaculture Design  
& Education Consulting

PERMANENT CULTURE

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

Email: [ecos@ecosdesign.com](mailto:ecos@ecosdesign.com)  
Http: <http://www.ecosdesign.com>  
PO Box 443  
Jarrns on ACT 2614

# Pialligo Apples

We have a 5 acre BFA 'A' grade certified organic orchard—mainly apples. We specialise in good-tasting, heritage, freshly picked apples. Apples not sold within a few days of picking are juiced in our cider press. The juice is unpasteurised and any unsold goes to make our cider vinegar.

The roadside stall at 10 Beltana Road is open during the season (mid Feb—mid May). This year we have a light crop so we will open Saturdays and Sundays only (9am to 5pm). If you cannot come when the stall is open, ring us to make other arrangements.

Apple varieties we sell include Gala (mid Feb), Macintosh (late Feb), Lord Lamboume (late Feb), Snows (late Feb), Golden Delicious (March), Mutsu (March), Grannies (March/April), Romes (April), Pink Lady (May) and about 60 other named and unnamed varieties.

We also sell apple juice, cider vinegar, vegies, and stonefruit and berries from the stall. All organic. Our jams are made with our own fruit. Honey (uncertified) from our own bees.

No Upick this year because of the light crop, but tours for school and other groups by arrangement.

See you soon.

Robyn and Jonathan Banks  
10 Beltana Road, Pialligo.  
Telephone/Fax: 02 6248 9228  
Email: [apples@dynamite.com.au](mailto:apples@dynamite.com.au)  
Web page: [www.apples.dynamite.com.au](http://www.apples.dynamite.com.au)

## Loriendale Organic Orchard

### 11<sup>th</sup> Apple Day—31 March 2001

The annual Apple Day at Loriendale Orchard will be held on the last Saturday of March, from 1.30pm–5.00pm. It has become a feature event for the organic movement, in the Canberra Region, attracting visitors from Sydney and the Southern Highlands as well as many locals.

So what is the attraction?

This is the one day of the year when you can wander through this organic orchard, see the bantam hens at work under the trees, and note the other organic practices which aim at building up the soil and biologically control the pests.

You have the opportunity to taste and buy a wide range of organically grown apples. Some of the 95 varieties planted at Loriendale have fascinating histories. Owen and Noreen Pidgeon have 14 varieties which originated from within Australia, with at least one from every State. Apart from the well known Granny Smith which most people know sprang up in Granny's back yard in Eastwood Sydney, did you know the famous Pink Lady, Sundowner and Lady William all heralded from Western Australia. The Bonza was first grown in Batlow, and it grows well at Loriendale.

For the energetic, there is the opportunity to make your own apple juice, on the C19th style hand operated apple press. Turn the handle to crush the apples and then wind down the press to produce the finest tasting apple 'nectar'. It's an experience to remember for young and old.

The family has developed a reputation for producing some of the finest apple pies in the district. They are a feature of the day. Or you can choose a slice as part of your Devonshire tea/coffee (or indulge in the country scones or freshly made muffins).

A range of organic jams, produced from the fruits and berries of the orchard, will be available. So too, the fine tasting tomato relish and chutneys. In the past two years, several people have taken these as gifts for overseas. There will also be other organic fruit (including the Japanese nashi and Chines Ya Li pears) and vegetables on sale.

The setting is in wide open space with plenty of outdoor settings to enjoy the company of friends and listen to the delightful background music provided by local young musicians. The road is now fully sealed, apart from the last 700 metres. There is plenty of parking in the 'back paddock' and a special, safe area for children's activities.

*Directions: Travel north from Canberra, along the Barton Highway, go across the border, past the little Wattle Park church; take first right along Spring Range Road, travel 5km. Orchard on right.*

[The orchard is open every Saturday in season. Contact via telephone 6230 2557 or see website at [www.loriendale.com.au](http://www.loriendale.com.au)]

# FROM THE GARDEN TO THE POT

By Conrad van Hest



The best way to savor your produce is to preserve them now and enjoy at later stage.

## Peach chutney

3 cup peaches  
1 cup white vinegar  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
1 teaspoon cardamom pods  
1 teaspoon fenugreek  
¼ teaspoon chilli flakes (optional)

Blanch peaches in saucepan of hot water, cool in cold water and peel skin off. Remove seed and chop roughly. In a saucepan add peaches, vinegar and sugar cook for 10 minutes on medium heat stirring often. Add the ginger, cardamom, fenugreek and chilli flakes mix in well, cook for 30 minutes on low heat stirring occasionally. Divide mixture into 4 x 250ml preserving jars, seal and preserve as per manufactures instructions. Cool, label and store in cool place.

## Crunchy pickled onion rings

1kg red onions  
24 whole cloves  
24 peppercorns  
4 teaspoon mustard seeds  
2 tablespoons dill tops  
6 cups organic apple cider vinegar  
2 cups spring or filtered water  
2 cups castor or brown sugar  
2 teaspoons salt (optional)  
2 teaspoons turmeric  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Peel onions and slice into thin slices (¼ inch thick), separate the slices into rings. Divide the onion rings among four clean 500ml preserving jars. To the onions add 6 cloves, 6 peppercorns, 1 teaspoons mustard seeds and ½ teaspoon dill tops. In a saucepan combine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, turmeric and cinnamon, heat to boiling then simmer for 2 minutes.

Fill the jars with hot liquid leaving a ¼ inch headspace, run a blade around inside walls to remove air bubbles. Seal and preserve as per manufactures instructions. Cool, label and store in cool place, let pickles mellow for a month before using. (Modified recipe from *The Good Stuff Cookbook* by Helen Witty)

## Zucchini relish

600g zucchini  
½ cup olive oil  
1 cup organic apple cider vinegar  
1 tablespoon castor sugar  
1 teaspoon ginger minced  
2 cloves garlic minced  
¼ teaspoon turmeric  
1 teaspoon allspice  
1 teaspoon fenugreek  
pepper and salt to taste

Zucchini cut into 100mm segments, then cut into half then depending on size cut into thirds or fourths, then finally cut into 20mm batons. Heat oil in saucepan add zucchini toss lightly for 5 minutes, drain liquid off return to heat add vinegar and sugar, simmer for 15 minutes or until liquid has evaporated by half stirring occasionally. Add the spices toss in lightly, cover and heat on low for 30 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning, put into clean preserving jars and seal and preserve as per manufacture instructions.

## Beetroot relish

1kg beetroot cooked, peeled and diced  
2 cups red onion chopped  
½ cup olive oil  
1 ½ cups Avaron organic apple cider vinegar  
½ cups castor sugar  
3-4 medium cloves of garlic crushed  
2 teaspoons ginger minced  
2 cups Roma tomatoes peeled, deseeded and pureed  
¼ teaspoons salt (optional)  
1 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon allspice

In a heavy pan heat oil add onions, cook on low heat stirring often, until golden in colour about 10 minutes. Add beetroot cook covered for 10 minutes stir often. Add vinegar simmer until liquid reduces by half. Add tomatoes, sugar, garlic, ginger, salt, pepper and allspice mix in well, bring to boil then reduced to low heat and cover. Cook until mixture thickens about 1 to 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally the last 5 minutes cook uncovered. Ladle hot mixture into hot clean jars seal and preserve as per manufactures instructions. Cool, label and store for six months.

# Organic Gardening Courses For Beginners

Last year, the Committee decided to run a series of organic gardening courses for beginners during 2001. It is hoped that these courses will encourage individuals and groups to produce their own organic food either in their own backyards or in COGS or other community gardens. These courses are aimed at complete novices and no prior knowledge or experience of gardening will be assumed. There will be a mix of written material, theoretical information provided at each session as well as practical gardening experience.

Only basic organic gardening techniques will be covered but it is expected that complete novices will, by the end of the course, be in a position to confidently start their own organic garden for the next season, either in their own backyard or in a COGS community garden. Course tuition fees include membership of COGS and those participants who do not have access to a suitable plot of land of their own will be encouraged to use a COGS community garden plot.

The courses will mainly focus on growing food plants and will cover such topics as:

- what organic gardening entails;
- composting, mulching and soil preparation;
- the constraints on gardening caused by sun/shade and Canberra's climate and soil and how to deal with them;
- basic tools and their uses;
- the use of pots and planter boxes as well as traditional 'backyard' gardening techniques;
- basic planting techniques (seeds and seedlings); and
- planting and growing times in Canberra for common plants.

The first course starts on Sunday, 11 February at 2pm at the COGS demonstration garden in the Xeriscape gardens in Weston. Subsequent sessions will take place at the Theodore gardens. There will be a total of four sessions (one per week) for each course and each session will be approximately three hours long. Participants will be charged \$140. The first course, and possibly the second, will be run by Committee Members

Keith Colls, Laurie Thomson and Rosemary Stevenson. Other members of COGS with long gardening experience, who have volunteered, will take individual sessions in subsequent courses. If you would like to help with the courses or run any sessions please contact Keith Colls on 6251 7729.

The courses will be advertised through various channels including the Canberra Times, the Chronicle, TV community announcements, Austouch, the ABC Local Events website and the COGS website. The Committee has also developed a flyer which is suitable for noticeboards in shopping centres or displaying in libraries etc. If you are able to distribute any flyers please contact Keith Colls for a supply. If you know of anyone who may be interested in organic gardening it would be greatly appreciated if you would bring these courses to their attention.

## HALL RURAL CENTRE

**Blood & Bone  
C.O.F.**

**Cow manure, sheep manure  
Gypsum, lime, dolomite**

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

**COGS is currently looking for a WebMaster to manage and update our award winning web page. If you have the knowledge and the time, please ring Steve on 6292 5609.**

# No-dig garden—a fight against the contrarities



A personal experience—Sigrid Drescher

Having moved to Yass almost a year ago we decided to create a no-dig garden rather than trying to convert the clay in the garden to humus. It took Rodney about three weeks to create a 50 m<sup>2</sup> (approx.) garden. This seems to have taken a long time having in mind the article that I read in the January edition of a garden magazine: 'Weekend project, create a no-dig garden in no more than an hour'. I wonder how anyone would do this that fast.

We used the materials we found like tiles underneath a huge cherry plum tree in the garden as enclosure and as pathway around the whole garden bed. We were happy to use all our cardboard from the cartons we have utilised only too many times over the last five years moving about every year at least once from one place to another. They provided the first layer to cover the grass with. On top of this we put a thick layer of straw. Luckily enough, we live in a rural area and with the help of a neighbour we got bales and bales of straw from a farm. The soil we got from the council tip as they sell all the composted and shredded material there. This was the third layer, on top of this came a layer of straw again and then sheep manure. The manure also came from a nearby farm, scrubbed away underneath a shearing shed. The farmer was only too happy to get the 'droppings underneath the shed cleared away. Finally on top of this came a last thick layer of fine soil (at least we thought so), no-dig garden finished. Because all this happened in winter everything could break down nicely and would be ready for spring planting.

Spring came and some rows of potatoes which were eager to get planted (they all had extremely long shoots) got in as first crop. They were mulched with a very thick layer of the remaining straw, one never knows when frost might hit in late spring. Slowly, slowly other 'stuff' got sown/planted like snow peas and pickling cucumbers, the latter protected by clear soft drink bottles acting as mini glass houses against the cold spring weather. Whatever I sowed directly into the garden germinated only hesitantly, did grow very slowly and had slightly yellowish leaves.

I started to study the books and diagnosed manganese and iron insufficiency of the soil due to an alkaline soil. I handwatered the plants with trace elements added and with seaweed fertiliser. It seemed to help but in the meantime the peas had died as all other leguminosae sown after them, reason unknown. The peas hardly had any crop and turned just yellow. All the different varieties of beans I had nurtured during winter and spring and then transplanted as seedlings into the garden didn't seem to like the conditions they found in the no-dig garden and looked miserable even after the addition of trace elements.

Having previously had a plot in a community garden in Canberra with fantastic soil and extremely good growing conditions it is devastating to see your vegies aren't growing properly and you don't know why and what to do.

## Backyard Poultry Organically

**Saturday 17 March 2001**

**(1 day course—morning seminar, .  
afternoon field trip)**

**Conducted by Morgan Kurrajong**

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 10.00am–10.45am | Introduction to keeping poultry organically. Choosing a breed. Sourcing birds. Housing and regulations       |
| 10.45am–11.00am | Morning Tea  |
| 11.00am–12noon  | Feeding. Pest and disease control. Sources of further information  |
| 12noon–1.00pm   | Lunch  |
| 1.00pm–4.00pm   | Field trip to four backyards with poultry in Canberra. Owners to talk about their experiences and techniques |

Cost \$30 for the day including lunch and morning tea.

Contact Morgan to book your place—  
Telephone: 6230 4846; or  
Email: [morgan@ko.inspired.net.au](mailto:morgan@ko.inspired.net.au)

Anyway, the various crops like zucchinis, tomatoes, corn etc. are on their way now. But still, they aren't as big as they should be and they don't produce a lot of fruit. One thing apart from the soil (the pH-test showed the soil being neutral) that seems to affect the garden are the incredibly strong winds we have blowing over our garden. I don't know if these strong and drying breezes, often the whole day long blowing, are a phenomenon only in Yass or if it is normal part of this hot summer, but definitely it doesn't help the course of growing vegetables successfully. We are new in this particular microclimate our garden provides so we don't know and have to experience it over the coming years. The leaves of the Jerusalem artichokes that grow along the fences to our neighbours are burned as are some of the tomato and pumpkin leaves. They look as if someone had lit a match underneath them.

As a summary of our gardening efforts I can say that we don't know if it is the quality of our soil (which has to be improved with more manure and compost) in combination with the strange weather conditions this summer or our layering of the different materials in the no-dig garden together with the strong winds or ..., whatever, time will show. It was a kind of relieve to hear from other gardeners that they are experiencing similar problems, but still there stays always this last bit of doubt in the own abilities.

Anyway, it was and is a strong learning curve for me as a gardener to deal under strange and new conditions in a new environment after having had no problems at all in the community garden (except vandalism by rabbits, birds and humans).



## Beautiful Holiday House

Just across the road from the beach at Garden Bay over the hill from Malua Bay surf beach.

Two minutes walk to sandy beach good for swimming, snorkelling, or teaching children to swim.

Easy drive to many other lovely beaches. House sleeps eight, large fenced garden where children can play within sight.

Pets welcome.

Cool sea breeze in summer, warmer than Canberra in winter.

\$190 per week outside holidays or \$80-\$90 for a weekend by the sea.

Only 166 kms from Canberra. Take visiting friends and relatives to see the South Coast.

Telephone Brian or Jackie on 6254 4977, or Betty on 6249 8323 for bookings and holiday prices.



**B. M. Evans**

In association with

## FYSHWICK GARDEN CENTRE

*Specialist suppliers to the horticultural & landscaping industry*

Open all day every day ... for every garden need

**16 Maryborough Street, Fyshwick ACT**

**Ph: 6280 4274, 6280 6432**

***Present your COGS membership card and receive a special discount***



# Tomato—*Lycopersicon esculentum*

## Some ideas what to do with them if you have plenty and some facts

Sigrid Drescher

In addition to its culinary attributes, the tomato boasts certain nutritious elements. Tomatoes are low in calories—about 30 to 35 for one medium tomato. One tomato supplies half of our daily supply of vitamin C, which is one of the cancer-fighting antioxidants. *Lycopene*, another tomato antioxidant that is part of the *carotenoid* family, has shown significant promise in fighting prostate cancer. Vitamin A and B, a little bit of iron, calcium, phosphorus, sodium and potassium are also found in tomatoes.

The tomatoes you find in your grocery stores were picked green and stored, for possibly weeks, in refrigerated quarters, then blasted with ethylene gas—which is the natural ripening gas in tomatoes—to redden them for market. Oftentimes they may be red, but they definitely are not ripe.

When you bring your prized possessions home from the market or from your own garden, store the tomatoes at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, with the stem end up to prevent bruised shoulders. To preserve the flavour, avoid refrigeration.

Is there any greater pleasure than growing and harvesting your own crop of tomatoes (hopefully organically grown)? No other vegetable or fruit is anticipated with such enthusiasm. There is hardly a summertime pleasure greater than taking your first bite of a ripe, juicy tomato fresh off the vine. But if you have a surplus and don't know what to do with it and all your neighbours, friends and relatives are saying 'Oh no, no more tomatoes!' then, here are a few ideas what to do.

### Making oven-dried tomatoes

Makes 2 to 2½ cups

3 pounds roma tomatoes, cored and cut lengthwise in half

1 tablespoon coarse salt

Place the tomatoes, cut side up, on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt. Let sit for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 250 °F. Bake the tomatoes until they are almost dry yet still slightly soft and plump, 5 to 6 hours.

To store oven-dried tomatoes, pack them into clean jars, cover with olive oil, and refrigerate, or freeze them in zip-lock bags.

### Oven-dried tomatoes in herb oil

Makes 2¼ to 2½ cups

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 sprig fresh rosemary

4 sprigs fresh thyme

2 sprigs fresh oregano

1 bay leaf

1 recipe oven-dried tomato

Place the olive oil in a small saucepan and heat until warm. Remove from the heat, add the rosemary, thyme, oregano, and bay leaf, and let sit for 1 hour.

Pack the cooled tomatoes into a jar and cover with the oil, turning the jar over several times to distribute the oil. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

### Making tomato paste

One case of tomatoes will make 2 to 2½ cups paste

To make your own tomato paste, peel tomatoes and puree them in a blender until smooth. For each 4 cups pureed tomatoes, use 1 teaspoon salt. Place the tomatoes and salt in a large pan and bring to a boil over high heat. Immediately reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is very thick, 1½ to 2 hours. Spread the paste on non-aluminium baking sheets and allow to cool. Cover with cheesecloth and put the baking sheets in the hot sun and dry weather. For the next 3 to 4 days, stir and spread the paste to ensure that it dries evenly. When it is the consistency of peanut

butter, place in sterilized jars and top with olive oil. If you live in a humid climate, put the baking sheets in a 250 °F oven for 4 to 5 hours.

### Freezing tomatoes

On the day the tomatoes are picked, peel, seed, and chop them. (Roma tomatoes are the best choice.) Do not drain. Place the tomatoes in plastic containers, with tight-fitting lids or in zip-lock bags. Freeze for 2 to 3 months. Use for sauces or in any recipe calling for canned tomatoes.

## Organic Origins

*Gardeners With Attitude*



### Who are we ?

Organic Origins is a Co-operative Enterprise based on Permaculture and organic gardening principles. Offering consultancy services and books. Community Education, Garden Design & Management, Herbs & Vegetables, Mulches & Manures, Compost Bins, Worm Farms, "No Dig", Raised & Easy Care Gardens, Creative Recycling, and Foodscaping, Big & Small.

**David Read or Dave Tooley**  
0409 070 189

Email: [kdread@primus.com.au](mailto:kdread@primus.com.au)  
PO Box 337, Erindale Centre ACT 2903

### Tomato dust

What to do with all those leftover tomato skins after peeling tomatoes? Why, make tomato dust. Place the skins on a baking sheet in a single layer and bake in a 200 °F oven until completely dry, 1½ to 2 hours. Then pulverise them in a spice grinder to make a fine powder or dust. Use the dust as a flavour enhancer when making fresh pasta dough, or add to vinaigrettes, sauces and soups.

From: Joanne Weir, *You Say Tomato—Peel, Chop, Roast, Dry, Freeze, Preserve and Enjoy*. Broadway Books New York, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1998

*Author's Note: A wonderful book, full of recipes and facts about tomatoes worth knowing*

## The Allergy Centre

***We have a large range of Allergy Foods,  
Organic & Biodynamic Grains, Dried  
Fruit, Nuts, Flours, Breads, Goats Milk,  
Meat, Yoghurts, etc.***

---

### Consultations by appointment

**Kaye Green N.D.**

Allergy testing  
Naturopathic Consultations  
Accredited Member A.N.T.A.

**Carole Nicola**

Qualified Therapeutic Masseur

Consultations covered by most health funds

---

**Contact: Costas Kounas**  
**Shop 3 Jamison Centre**  
**Bowman Street, Macquarie ACT**  
**Phone: 6251 2670**

# Corn Salad

Mary Flowers

Corn Salad, also known as lamb's lettuce (or nuselli in Switzerland) is a low growing hardy annual. It has been cultivated for centuries but also grows wild in England and Europe. As it is not affected by Canberra's frosts its mild-flavoured leaves are a very useful addition to winter and spring salads.

It is easily grown from seed which may be scattered, particularly as an inter-crop, in containers for transplanting or in rows from April to June as the seed may not germinate in hot weather. Later sowings may be helped by keeping them covered and watered until they germinate.

Although corn salad will tolerate a wide range of soil conditions it is best planted in well composted soil. It will self seed, particularly when the weather gets warmer.

Seedlings or mature plants may have leaves cut off them for use or the whole head may be cut. In either case the plants will make fresh growth.

In Winter, the quality of corn salad and its growth may be improved if they are protected with cloches or sheltered by other plants.

An illustration of one of the varieties of corn salad, 'Verte de Cambrai', appears in Joy Larkcom's excellent book *The Salad Garden*.

## Invitation

### Harmonious Sustainable Lifestyles Network

Have you noticed that people are more aware and actively pursuing greener living? Over the last 10 years or so we have seen 'Think Globally—Act Locally' taking some effect with people re-evaluating their behaviour and lifestyle choices contribute to greener global living.

Both city and country folk have been heard pondering many issues including community living, solar power, organic and biodynamic gardening, composting toilets, grey water catchment and usage, co-housing, rain water collection, community supported agriculture to name but a few.

The Canberra Environment Centre hopes to network the groups and communities together to foster support and strength that can come from unity.

If you would like to be involved please call Kathryn Searson on 6288 1391 (ah) or email [kathryn99@mbox.com.au](mailto:kathryn99@mbox.com.au)

# CIT Courses

## 1<sup>st</sup> Semester 2001

with Dave Read and Dave Tooley

### A systematic approach to composting and no dig gardening

- Reducing waste going to landfills.
- Compost principles, practices and materials.
- No dig, lazy gardening—rich vegies from poor soils.
- Discussion on soil building techniques—liquid and green manures.

9:30am–1:30pm, 24 February and 7 April

### Permaculture Course—Lazy Gardener, backyard gardening

- A basic introduction to Permaculture principles and techniques. Learn the art of correct placement in a functional and edible landscape.
- A balance of practical exercises and essential theory as well as visits to local examples of people living in a sensible and sensitive way.
- A workbook and tea and coffee will be provided—please bring your own mug and dress sensibly (hats, sunblock etc.).

9:00am–4:00pm, 12 and 13 May and 9:00am–1:00pm 19 May

### Permaculture Design—Base plan and concepts

- Options for designing your environment and food forest.
- Flow patterns, edge effects and energy flows, windbreaks and tree functions, landscape modification—swales, diversion drains, ponds and dams.
- Bring lunch and wear sensible clothing.
- Some knowledge of Permaculture theory and/or Introductory Permaculture course is a prerequisite. Bring pencils, compass and notebook.

9:30am–3:30pm, 19 June. We meet at CIT Weston for a field day at Williamsdale.

# Saladini in the Cooler Months

Michelle Johnson

One of the challenges of gardening in the Canberra region is providing produce from the garden over the cooler months of the year. Fortunately a number of crops can be planted in the winter weather to mature in the cooler months. Some of these will overwinter and can be harvested in early Spring, for example, carrots can be left in the ground provided we do not have a wet winter.

Salads in particular do not need to be confined to the summer months as there is a wide range of plants which can be used to make up a salad in cooler weather (see also the article on corn salad). A combination of the leaves of these plants constitutes a 'saladini'. Saladini is a term coined by Joy Larkcom as a description of a mixed salad with a large number of ingredients, sometimes 20 or 30, which are balanced and blended to give a range of colours, flavours and textures. It is derived from the Italian word *insalatine* a term referring to numerous small leaves forming the bulk of an *insalata* (salad). The table opposite gives a list of some of these plants which are suitable for growing in this area and which can be harvested in Autumn and Winter. Some of the interesting and less common leafy plants mentioned in this Table are discussed below. A more complete discussion is given in Joy Larkcom's book *The Salad Garden*, which is recommended to all gardeners interested in growing salads.

**Lettuces** such as the Butterhead varieties with their soft textured leaves, Mignonette varieties, Cos lettuces with their more upright stems, and the Oakleaf lettuces with their looseleaf growth, are all cool season varieties. They can be planted in early Autumn to provide leafy salads in late Autumn-early Winter and these varieties can be planted again in early Spring to grow until the warmer weather when they will readily bolt and go to seed. Their growth in the colder months can be extended by protecting them with some kind of cloche, or growing them in containers placed in a warm sheltered position. All lettuce varieties appreciate a good soil and an ample supply of water, so they can grow quickly without check.

Another variety which is well suited to Canberra's climate is the **Salad Bowl** lettuce. This loose-leaf variety with indented foliage is very hardy, growing well into Autumn. It selfseeds readily, and if you let a

plant go to seed in Summer you will find Salad Bowl seedlings appearing in late Winter or early Spring, at a time when few other lettuces will grow. Another useful cool weather variety is **Black Velvet**, a non-hearting lettuce, unaffected by Canberra's frosts. Both of these varieties are 'cut-and-come-again' crops which can be harvested by taking a few leaves off the plant as required. The leaves can be cut when quite small or at a later stage, making these lettuces useful over a period of months.

These lettuces provide the bulky mild-flavoured cool season salad ingredients. Leaves from other plants provide the zest and variety needed in a salad. Two such plants are Rocket and Land Cress, both of which grow well in Canberra.

**Rocket (Arugula)** is a very worthwhile salad plant. It has a peppery taste which adds a welcome spiciness to a salad. Mature leaves may have a very strong flavour. It can be grown from seed from Spring until Autumn, but it is the plantings in the cooler months which will do the best. It can stand most frosts. It grows quickly and can be first picked after 4 weeks and continue to be harvested as a 'cut-and-come-again' crop. However a crop of rocket cut late in Autumn will then lie dormant through winter, but quickly start its regrowth as soon as any warm weather arrives. This plant does not selfseed as readily as other crops mentioned and it would be wise to collect seed each year in Summer and propagate the plants as needed.

Land Cress is a low growing plant which will remain green all winter. It is very hot and should be used sparingly in salads, particularly in hot weather when the flavour becomes overly strong. The flavour is very similar to watercress. The small young leaves provide the best picking.

It is a very hardy plant which will survive a degree of neglect. However it grows best in moist soils and enjoys some light shade. Avoid hot dry soils. Since it is a small plant it can be intercropped between tall vegetables such as brassicas. The best sowings are late Summer to crop from Autumn to Spring.

## Plants for 'Saladini'

(from Joy Larkcom's *The Salad Garden*, p158, Appendix)

### FOR AUTUMN

<b>Bulky</b>	<b>Sharp and/or Distinctly Flavoured</b>	<b>Mild and/or Crisp-Textured</b>	<b>Colourful and/or Ornamental</b>
Lettuce, autumn varieties	Green chicories	Abyssian cabbage	Lettuce, 'Salad Bowl' varieties other red varieties
Chicory, red	Curley kale	Corn Salad	Red chicory
Endive, broad-leaved curly leaved	'Mizuna'	Iceplant	Cabbage, red ornamental
Cabbage, red ornamental Chinese	Spinach/chard	Purslane	Ornamental Kale
Oriental Brassicas	Sorrel	Claytonia	Flowering oriental mustards
Oriental leafy mustards	Shungika	Salad Rape	Yellow & ornamental tomatoes
	Coriander	Fennel	Capsicums
	Cress, garden land	Kohlrabi	Salad burnet
	Dandelion	Celery, leaf self-blanching trench	Flowers, <i>Bellis perennis</i>
	Rocket	Cucumber	Borage
	Mustard	Carrots	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>
	Fennel	Hardy root crops	nasturtium
	Celeriac	Chickweed	
	Radish, summer winter pods		
	Chinese chives		

### FOR WINTER

<b>Bulky</b>	<b>Sharp and/or Distinctly Flavoured</b>	<b>Mild and/or Crisp-Textured</b>	<b>Colourful and/or Ornamental</b>
Winter lettuce	All chicories	Cabbage, Chinese	Coloured winter lettuce
Chicory, all green types red 'Witloof'	Curly Kale	Abyssian cabbage	Red chicory
Endive, broad-leaved curly leaved	Hardy oriental mustards	Corn Salad	Cabbage, red ornamental
Cabbage, red Savoy ornamental Chinese	Spinach/chard	Claytonia	Flowering mustard flowers
	Coriander	Salad rape	Flowers <i>Bellis perennis</i> <i>Viola spp</i>
	Cress, garden land	Celery, trench	
	hairy bitter	Hardy root crops	
	Dandelion	Salad Burnet	
	Rocket	Chickweed	
	Mustard		
	Leaf celery		
	Celeriac		
	Winter radish		

Author's Notes: Those variety names recommended by Joy Larkcom which are not readily available in Australia have been omitted from these lists.

Joy Larkcom lives and gardens in a part of England which experiences severe frosts in the wintertime with temperatures falling to -10oC, and plants growing through frosts there should survive Canberra's frosts. Growers, however, should experiment for themselves to find the best planting times for these plants in their own garden.



## Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

# 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](mailto:cogs@netspeed.com.au)

Web: [www.netspeed.com.au/cogs](http://www.netspeed.com.au/cogs)

### FLIER & QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

These publications inform members about 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, Theodore 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 appraised 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**

Room 4, Griffin Centre, Civic, 7:30pm

### **February**

*Jackie French*

Jackie will talk to us about the 20 most essential plants to have in your Canberra garden (and the 10 silliest!)

### **March**

Annual General Meeting

Reports and election of office bearers for the next twelve months followed by Harvest Night. Bring along your produce to share your successes and failures with the rest of us.



### **ENVIRONMENT CENTRE SHOP**

The Canberra Environment Centre Shop is temporarily closed for renovation. Watch this space to see when it opens. The Library is open Tuesday to Friday, 10am-3pm.

### **Theodore Community Garden**

Plots are now available to grow organic produce for home consumption. Inquiries to Steve on 6292 5609

### **PERMACULTURE ACT (PACT)**

Please contact David Read on 0407 070 189 if you are interested in becoming involved with the permaculture group within the ACT.

**Do you know of an event that the readers of *Canberra Organic* would be interested in hearing about? Why isn't it here? Did you email Deborah the details?**

**DO IT NOW!!**

**[deboraha@interact.net.au](mailto:deboraha@interact.net.au)**

