

Canberra Organic

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

Quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

VOL. 10 NO. 3

SPRING 2002

CANBERRA ORGANIC

Quarterly magazine published by the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.
Vol 10 No. 3 (Issue 39)

Articles may be reproduced for non-profit, educational purposes. For other purposes please obtain permission from COGS.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

Send on diskette (*any PC format, Microsoft WORD files preferred*)
or email to: info@cogs.asn.au
otherwise clean typed copy.

There are four issues each year;

Autumn (February), Winter (May), Spring (August), Summer (November).

Copy deadline is the 2nd week of the month prior to each issue.

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.

EDITOR:

Stephen Dean

PRODUCTION:

Stephen Dean

Software: Microsoft PUBLISHER 2002

Printed by AUSSIEPRINT on recycled paper.

ADVERTISING:

Contact Keith Colls 6251 7729

Email: info@cogs.asn.au

The Canberra Organic magazine is a unique medium for reaching people in the Canberra region who have an interest in organic food, gardening and general environmental issues. Our circulation is currently 400.

Advertising Rates

Price Price

Size 1 Issue 4 Issues

1/8 page \$9 (\$7) \$30 (\$25)

1/4 page \$18 (\$15) \$60 (\$50)

1/2 page \$36 (\$30) \$120 (\$100)

Full page \$72 (\$60) \$240 (\$200)

COGS MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SPECIAL RATE INDICATED IN BRACKETS

Contents

From the Editor	2
President's Report	3
News from the Cook Gardens	4
Melrose Primary School	5
Garden Reports	6
Around House and Garden	6
COGS Garden Policy	7
Letters to the Editor	9
IFOAM report	12
Plant Profile—Beetroot	13
Community Gardens Development	14
COGS Herald	15
Seed Bank	16
From The Garden To The Pot	19
Spring Vegetable Planting Guide	19
Committee Members and Helpers	20
About COGS	21
Membership Application/Renewal	22
COGS Notice Board	23

From the Editor

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Canberra Organic*.

The cold Winter months in Canberra are nearly over and it is time to plan and prepare our gardens for Spring planting of our organic fruit, vegetables and flowers.

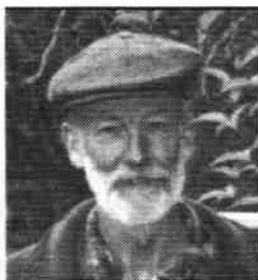
This issue has some new features - Letters to the Editor, Around House and Garden, and COGS Herald.

The editors are always looking for articles and photos from COGS members about the methods you use to grow your produce and your gardening experiences. Half a page to a page would be fine. We are especially looking for plant profiles — the how and why.

Canberra Organic gives us a way to communicate with each other and learn from each other.

Happy gardening

Stephen Dean



President's Report

Spring 2002

This winter seems to have been characterised by nice sunny days but quite severe frosts. The frosts have been so severe as to split water pipes in some of the gardens. There has been little rain this winter but, hopefully, there will be more rain before the weather starts to warm up. In the meantime, the cold weather is still with us but it will not be very long before it is time to start planting out the early spring vegetables. It is also time to sort through all those old packets of seeds hidden in the cupboard, throw out those which are no longer viable and buy any new seed you need. For those of you lucky enough to have greenhouses or even a warm windowsill, it is time to start your punnets of seedlings.

Don't forget the COGS seed bank has a wide variety of seeds available, many of them grown in the Canberra district. This year several of the community gardens have set aside seed raising plots to produce seed for the COGS seed bank. Many more volunteers are required if this is to be successful activity. If you are interested in helping out please contact either Laurie Thompson or your garden Convenor. COGS will also be producing seedlings for sale to members this year and for the various fairs coming up in spring. If you would like any particular type of seedlings please let Laurie Thomson know. The production of seedlings, like all activities in volunteer organisations such as COGS, depends on the help volunteers. If you are interested in being involved in seedling production, please let a member of the committee know.

Finally, on the subject of seeds, Rosemary Stevenson is organising a seeds swapping day where members who have saved seeds can swap seed they have collected with others and increase the range of their collection. See page 17 for details.

As many of you will be aware there has been a considerable amount of discussion amongst the committee members and garden Convenors about the operation of COGS community gardens. These gardens are an extremely significant activity of COGS and it is important that they are managed in a sustainable way. Last year the number of gardens was increased by four and there are now a total of ten COGS community gardens and this increase has added to the complexity of the administration of COGS. In order to ensure that all COGS members (gardeners and non-gardeners) are treated fairly and that there is appropriate accountability, the extended committee (general committee plus garden Convenor's) felt that some aspects of COGS garden policy (Appendix 4 of the Constitution) should be elaborated. After consultation with the COGS general membership and considerable debate within the extended committee agreement was reached on a garden policy consistent with Appendix 4 of the Constitution. It will come into effect on 1 September 2002. A copy of the policy is at page 7

I would like to thank all garden members who assisted Yoshi Toyoda during his research into the development of Social Capital through establishment of Community Gardens. This research was undertaken on behalf of the Department of Urban Services, which funded three of our new gardens out of their Social Capital fund. This research is potentially very useful to COGS as it demonstrated to government that funding the establishment community gardens is a very successful way to develop social capital. A full copy of Yoshi's paper is held in the COGS library. A brief summary of the results of his work is at page 14

With the warmer weather just around the corner there are a lot of events coming up which will be of interest to COGS members. In October there is the Green Living Fair, the Griffith Shops Fair, the Murrumbateman Field Day and further a field for those of you who may be thinking are going to sunny Queensland there is the Community Gardening Gathering on the 5th October at Crystal Waters. In November we have the Xeriscape garden spring plant stall. To keep you entertained and informed at our monthly meetings we have Jonathan Banks speaking about orchard maintenance in August, a panel night in September and Irene Hess-Oates speaking about herbs in October. To ensure that these activities are able to continue please consider volunteering to help at the fairs, give a talk at one of the monthly meetings or write an article for the magazine. Your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Happy gardening,

News From the Cook Gardens

Keith Colls

It is intended that every issue of the magazine will contain a brief summary of the activities of each COGS gardens. However, there will be a particular emphasis on one garden every issue and this time we focus on the Cook garden.

The Cook garden has been operating now for almost twelve months. It is one of three gardens funded by the Department of Urban Services through the Community Renewal program.

The work involved in establishing this garden was somewhat underestimated by those of us who were involved from the planning stage. Securing funding for the project and permission to access the land was relatively easy. The difficult and time-consuming task was reaching agreement with other nearby community groups, trying to convince them that COGS gardens would not have any deleterious effect on their operations or the surrounding environment.

There was no shortage of volunteers to help with the physical work of establishing the garden. The building of the fences, digging the trenches, laying the water pipes and taps and erecting the shed were all carried out by COGS members. The only professional input required was a licensed plumber to connect the water pipes to the water main which runs along the boundary of the garden and a draughtsman to draw up plans for submission to the government.

The garden is adjacent to a relatively busy road (Bindubi Street) and all our construction and gardening activity produced a great deal of curiosity in those who regularly travel down the road. People driving down the road would often stop and ask us what we were doing. Most were very impressed by our efforts. In fact, over half the plot holders were introduced to the garden and to COGS by this method. As a result our gardeners have a very strong local connection. In fact, some of them were even members of the local organisations who were very sceptical about the desirability of our garden in the early stages.

The garden covers an area of approximately half a hectare. It is divided into forty-six individual garden plots plus a communal area. The number of gardeners has gradually increased during the year and now we only have three vacant plots. In most of the garden the soil is reasonably good quality for the Canberra region but there is a small area where it closely resembles concrete. Although the soil is lacking in organic matter our organic gardening techniques should improve it considerably over the next few years, greatly increasing the amount organic matter and biological activity. In spite of the vagaries of the weather and the newness of the gardens all our plot holders had relatively good harvests this year.

The garden is in a very pleasing location with horse paddocks on one side and nature reserve on the other. It is an open sunny spot which is very pleasant on calm autumn and winter days but on windy spring days it closely resembles a freezing wind tunnel. We have tried to deal with this by planting native shrubs around the exposed boundaries but it will take some time before they are tall enough to have much effect. The planting of the windbreak is just one of the activities we undertook at the working bees we held during the year. Most of the working bees were held in the cooler months. It was just too hot during the summer. Besides planting the windbreak we have also prepared a communal herb garden which will be planted shortly and a plot for producing seed for the COGS seed saving group has also been prepared. Three communal fruit trees and two grape vines have been planted. At the last working bee we concreted in the feet for the pergola which we intend to construct next year behind the shed.

We are all very pleased with the progress of our new garden and look forward to the day when we are sitting under the pergola, eating the grapes from the vines above our heads and gazing out in wonderment at how well our gardens are growing. In the meantime we are all busily preparing our plots for the next season.



Melrose Primary Chifley Garden Project.

The students, teachers and parents of Melrose Primary School are enjoying the gardening project that has progressed over the last year. This winter in the vegetable garden in the junior courtyard the students are growing spinach, silver beet, garlic, peas, scare crows, onions, broccoli, cabbage, oriental radish and a mix of lettuce with a border of strawberries. This garden bed sits proudly under the plaque received in 2001 from the Open Garden Scheme. We hope to enter the next Giant Pumpkin competition held by Youth Haven Horticulture on Kambah Pool Road. Last season the students entered the giant tomato, sunflower and zucchini categories.

We have had the privilege to have the seed Librarian from COGS, Laurie Thomson, as special guest to show the students how to collect, store and sow seeds from the start of our gardening project. This project is now entering another spring.

In the beginning the school held a workshop, Composting with Organic Origins and Worm Farming with Back to the Future, sponsored by ACT No Waste. The children enjoyed this and we hope to hold the workshops again, as it is a benefit to everyone to educate our children to recycle waste.

The class of 2/3 and the members of the gardening club recently visited the Xeriscape gardens and the CIT Horticulture campus, thanks to Robin Morgan and Laurie Thomson. The students learnt how to take cuttings from different sorts of plants and then had a good day running around the huge campus.

The garden club meets every Friday at lunch time to take care of the chores that need to be carried out. These students are given the choice of six tasks and they usually do them in groups depending on the numbers.

These tasks are as follows:

- Weeding;
- Watering;
- Collecting food recycling bins from both courtyards, Canteen, Staff Room and the YMCA and feeding the worms;
- Turning the compost bins; and,
- Checking and recording the rain gauge.

In the school foyer, there will be a Garden Project/Garden Club notice board set up to display our goals, our achievements, all our activities, special guest helpers, suggestions, a list of seeds for sale and a record of precipitation for all the gardens, as the school has four courtyards.

In each courtyard are two garden beds. The junior courtyard has the vegetable garden, a herb and flower garden bed.

The senior courtyard has a flower garden in the school colours red, white and blue in a circular pattern and in the same courtyard is an ACT native garden bed. Every student planted one seedling

The library courtyard has a native bird attracting garden planted by a 1/2 class in 2001, a shade house, three worm farms, a three bay compost bin, tyre gardens and a lemon tree. This courtyard will be a hive of activity as spring approaches and the students raise all the plants from seed in a miniature hothouse.

The fourth courtyard is used by our MAP students (Melrose Autism Program) and plans for a sensory garden have been suggested. Any volunteers to help us to achieve our goal would be greatly appreciated.

We have expanded our project into the YMCA yard and have great plans for the future in this area. A large area has been rotary hoed for more vegetable beds. The new top garden bed in the YMCA yard has been topped up with the mature compost that the students have made over the last twelve months.

We hope to top the garden beds with yet another large load of soil to finish the raised beds and we are looking for a donation of soil, as soil can be quite costly. Our goals for this area include a chicken run and a garden bed for each class, one for the pre-school and the YMCA.

The compost bins are now empty and we are now ready to receive donations of compostable material, e.g. guinea pig, rabbit, chook, cow, horse litter, lawn clippings, leaves, small prunings and vegetable scraps to start the compost cycle again.

The school also has three worm farms, two for producing liquid fertilizers and one for worm castings (manure). Our worms LOVE pumpkin scraps as it increases their activity, but they do not say no to any vegetable scraps. The liquid fertilizer (liquid gold) is available for sale at a great price. It needs to be diluted by mixing fifty millilitres to five litres of water.

Children are encouraged to join in the activities of gardening as it can be very rewarding to watch plants grow and to pick and eat fresh vegetables. The experience of gardening together benefits the children greatly.

Happy gardening

Kelly Brown

GARDEN REPORTS

Oaks Estate:

The good news is that Oaks Estate Community garden now has water again after seven weeks with none. We have five vacant plots and have a space ready for growing seeds for the seed bank.

A BBQ is planned for Saturday 24th August when we'll fire up George's chimney and welcome him back from his holiday up north.

Queanbeyan:

We're coming up to our first anniversary and still attracting new gardeners to COGS.

We have two plots available, both are 9 sqm or, a large plot of 24 sqm.

We are making some common beds for the seed bank, fruit vines and trees. We have found common beds are quite useful given that the plots at Railway Park are relatively small. They allow us to make use of space around the boundary and other areas unsuitable for full-sized plots. We're using them to grow herbs and flowers, and vegies that take a lot of space - eg, we grew pumpkins last summer.

Charnwood:

Several vacancies.

Cook:

Four vacancies.

Erindale:

One vacancy

Holder:

No vacancies, one on the waiting list

Kambah:

No vacancies, four on the waiting list.

Theodore:

Six vacant plots.

QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY GARDENING GATHERING

Saturday 5th October 2002, 10am - 4pm at the EcoCentre, Crystal Waters, Conondale, Queensland. Cost: \$30 includes refreshments, **BYO lunch to share**
Please register by Friday September 13th

For more information contact:

AUSTRALIAN CITY FARMS AND
COMMUNITY GARDENS NETWORK (QLD)
Morag Gamble
50 Crystal Waters, Kilcoy Lane,

Conondale, QLD 4552

Ph and fax: 07 5494 4833

Email: morag@permaculture.au.com

AROUND THE HOUSE AND THE GARDEN

Compiled by Conrad van Hest

CONTRIBUTIONS MOST WELCOMED, ANY TIPS OR ADVICE YOU WOULD LIKE TO PASS ON, ALSO ANY QUERIES TO BE ANSWERED. POST OR EMAIL

Household cleaners that are not toxic and use common household ingredients

Toilet bowl cleaner – sprinkle baking soda around the bowl, scrub and rinse.

Scouring powder – sprinkle borax, baking powder or dry table salt on a damp sponge, scour, rinse and dry with a soft cloth.

Oven cleaner – heat oven on 100C for 10 minutes turn off and disconnect power, in large bowl put two caps full of ammonia and add hot water. Place in oven overnight, remove water but do not throw out, place in a sink with fresh warm water and use to clean the racks and oven. To remove stubborn stains sprinkle salt or baking powder, leave for 5 minutes and scrape away.

Disinfectant air freshener – dissolve 30 drops of either eucalyptus, lavender or sandalwood oil in 10ml vodka, add 2 cups distilled water, store in pump spray bottle and shake well before using.

Fridge odours – in a soup bowl place 2 cups of borax, put in fridge and change every 2–3 months. Note: put the used borax into the compost pile.

*Reference: Green Home Living magazine
www.greenliving.com, 1001 Greener Household
Hints by John Schluter*

An excellent fertiliser

Soak two coco peat blocks in a large bucket, add ½ cup of seaweed concentrate, 1/3 cup of carp juice, ¼ cup of potash and about 2 tablespoons of magnesium as Epsom salts. Stir this together and let mixture stand while the coco peat expands and the nutrients are absorbed. Add bulk to this by adding river sand to make an inexpensive fertiliser that can be used on lawns or any garden beds to add fertility to the soil.

*From Gardening Australia show
Friday June 14 2002
Topic: Seaweed
Presenter Peter Cundall*

COGS COMMUNITY GARDENS POLICY

Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define administration, coordination and funding arrangements, consistent with the Constitution, which will allow the current gardens to operate sustainably into the future.

The increasing number of gardens has increased the complexity of their administration, coordination and development. It also has funding implications for COGS and the funding arrangements proposed under this policy seek to ensure that the raising of funds for developing, operating and improving COGS Community gardens treat all COGS members (plot holders and non plot holders) equitably.

This policy provides for the establishment of a Gardens sub Committee of the COGS Committee, chaired by the COGS Vice President or delegate, to improve the administration, coordination and development of gardens as described below. The policy also defines duties of the garden convenors and the funding and financial accounting arrangements to be used by all COGS Community gardens. Details are listed below.

Role of COGS Vice President or delegate

Through chairing the Gardens sub Committee, the Vice President or delegate oversees and coordinates the operation of all COGS Community Gardens and reports any relevant matters to the COGS Committee.

Gardens sub Committee

1. The purpose of Gardens sub committee is:
 - to coordinate those activities which are common to all gardens, for example, the bulk purchase of straw or manure, roster for use of the ride on mower or any other shared equipment;
 - to strive to ensure that decisions of the COGS Committee relating to the operation of the gardens are carried out in all gardens;
 - to report regularly to the COGS Committee any information relating to the gardens which the COGS Committee may request, for example, the number of vacancies, cases of vandalism, lists of garden members, list of garden equipment and any information which the sub Committee deems the COGS Committee needs to know.
2. The Gardens sub Committee is a subcommittee of the COGS committee.
3. The Gardens sub committee consists of all garden convenors, the Vice President of COGS or delegate and Treasurer.
4. Vice President of COGS or delegate chairs the sub committee.
5. The garden sub Committee will meet every quarter or more often if it deems this to be necessary.

Gardens Funding Arrangements

1. An annual levy to be charged for all plots proportional to the size of the plot and payable, in advance, by the end of September each year.
2. All gardens plots will be levied at the same rate to ensure equity amongst gardens.
3. The size of the levy will be reviewed annually.
4. The initial levy proposed is 75 cents per square metre per year but may be raised or lowered at each annual review.
5. The levy may be paid in instalments by arrangement with the convenor (levy year is September to September).
6. The purpose of the levy is to:
 - buy garden supplies (eg tools, straw, manure etc);
 - pay water bills up to an annually defined limit which will initially be set at 25mm per week for 30 weeks per year;
 - carry out emergency repairs (eg burst water pipes etc);
 - carry out improvements (eg to build pergola, chook runs, buy communal garden fruit trees, wind breaks etc);
 - to provide funds for any other garden related activities agreed to by the COGS Committee.

Annual Review

A joint meeting of the COGS committee and the Gardens sub committee will be held in August each year at which the following arrangements will be reviewed and the rates for the coming garden year (Sept Sept) will be determined:

- the rate of the plot levy;
- the annual water allowance;
- the funds allocated for water, emergency/contingency, asset replacement and individual gardens;
- any concessions to be allowed (eg pensioners, care taking of unused plots);
- petty cash available to gardens.

Financial Management Of The Gardens

All funds currently held in COGS gardens bank accounts will be transferred to the main COGS bank account and all future funds collected from the gardens will also be held in the COGS bank account. These funds will be accessible by, and under the control of, the COGS Committee as provided for in the COGS Constitution. Levies collected from gardeners will be allocated to one of the garden funds, viz. the Water fund, the Emergency/Contingency fund, Asset Replacement fund or the Individual garden funds.

The Water Fund:

The proportion of the plot levy allocated to this fund will be sufficient to cover the cost of reasonable water usage for all gardens for one year. Initially this will be based on usage of 25mm per week for 30 weeks per year. This allocation may be varied at the Annual Review should experience indicate that this allocation is inappropriate. If a particular garden uses more than their allocation through wasteful water management practices an additional levy will be imposed on that garden to pay for the excess water usage. All water bills received by COGS will be paid from this Fund. The size of this fund will be restricted to one year's expected water usage.

Emergency/Contingency Fund:

The proportion of the plot levy allocated to this fund will be sufficient to cover the cost of possible emergency repairs to gardens resulting from vandalism, bushfire, water pipe breakages etc. The size of this fund will be reviewed at the August Committee meeting and will be based on estimates of possible calls on this fund during the next year. In the case of emergencies experience should be the basis for determining the size of this aspect of the fund.

Asset replacement:

This fund will cover the cost of replacement of garden assets at the end of their useful life, eg rusted galvanised water pipes etc. This fund should accumulate at the rate of the expected depreciation of the asset and be sufficient to cover its replacement at the end of its useful life.

Individual Garden Funds:

The proportion of the levy not required for the Water Fund, the Emergency/Contingency Fund or the Asset Replacement Fund will be allocated to the individual gardens in proportion to their contribution to the overall funds collected by gardens as levies but excluding any additional levies collected to cover excess water usage. These funds will be available for use by Garden Committees as they see fit with the proviso that in the case of items which become a part of COGS assets, that is, not consumable and >\$100 (eg a lawnmower), prior COGS Committee approval is obtained. Prior approval of items up to \$100 is not required but the Treasurer/Committee should be notified of purchases within three months of purchase. A petty cash amount from an individual garden's funds will be available to the garden if required. This amount will be determined at the Annual Review. Individual garden funds may accumulate from year to year.

Garden Convenor Duties

The general duties of garden Conveners are outlined in Appendix 4 of the COGS Constitution. This policy elaborates those duties as described below.

Garden Conveners are expected to:

1. ensure that all plot holders are COGS members;
2. arrange for the collection of the annual levy and transfer of the levy monies to the COGS bank account;
3. take appropriate steps to ensure plot holders who have not paid the full annual levy hand back their plot;
4. bring to the Committee's attention any breach of the general garden rules (see Appendix 4 of the Constitution) as well as the agreed to local garden rules;
5. organise working bees and meetings of plot holders as necessary;
6. arrange emergency repairs as outlined above;
7. regularly notify the COGS Committee of the number of vacancies or length of waiting list for plots;
8. attend Garden sub Committee meetings as necessary or send delegate;
9. prepare, in consultation with the local garden committee, development / improvement plans for the garden and submit to the COGS Committee through the Gardens sub Committee as necessary;
10. submit expenditure proposals to the COGS Committee as necessary;
11. advise each COGS committee meeting of changes to the plot holders during the month or since the last committee meeting, any required expenditure for the garden and the water meter reading (where a meter is connected). This information may be provided in person to the meeting by the convenor or, if the convenor does not attend the committee meeting, it should be provided to the Secretary or President of COGS before the meeting.

**Is your product
organic, biodynamic,
GE free or
alternative?**

**Your advertisement
could be in this space**

Letters to the Editor:

Comments on COGS proposed New Policy on Community Gardens

As the founding President of COGS and Committee member for the first 20 years, I would like to present my thoughts on this policy.

At the very first General Meeting the members showed their individuality by voting against being part of the NSW Organic Growers Group which helped to start it.

It is this independent spirit which has kept our group going throughout the years, and will keep it going for many years to come.

The COGS general committee has always made a point of NOT interfering in the running of the gardens, of expecting the Garden Committees to do the work of running their own Individual garden.

The point I would like to stress is that each garden is different, and individual.

The Charnwood Garden started with its first section which had been covered and levelled with clay subsoil, so that they were lucky enough to be given several loads of compost, which they had to work hard to barrow to their plots. Later they had to have plot fees to cover higher fencing to try to stop vandalism and because COGS made it one of the General Garden Rules.

They have set their levy to suit their needs, at a good deal less than the fee proposed in the new policy. I feel that the levy system which Charnwood Garden Committee has developed of \$20 per plot for one or two plots, and another \$10 for a third plot if wanted is working well for that garden, just as the quite different system developed by the Cotter Garden Committee works well for that Garden. It has been developed to suit the individual garden and the garden members.

Some members can cope with bigger plots than others, and the garden committee at its annual meeting of all members decides whether to change the plot fees according to how much we have in the kitty. Our plot fees are at the present time for large plots \$35, for medium plots \$25 and for small \$20 per year.

We do not have to pay for our water, as we have a friendly arrangement with the Equestrian Centre People to do the work of cleaning up after their events. In exchange they include our water with theirs. This is not a matter of luck. We individual members put in about 160 man or woman hours of hard work for each of these larger events.

If we are forced to put our money into the COGS general account we will then have to ask the COGS committee every time we want to buy a new hose. After the fire Michelle was able to quickly get some new hoses (ours had been taken by the equestrian people to use to save their buildings and the Yarralumla Woolshed, which is a Heritage Building. If Michelle had not got those hoses in a hurry my entire plot would have been lost instead of just half of it including my compost heap. As I was away, my veggies were only saved by a friend who came as soon as the roadblocks were removed, and watered every other day until I got back. She could not have done this if Michelle and Richard had not got hoses in a hurry, and they could not have done that if they had not had the cash on hand.

We discovered at the Watson Garden how enforced policies wrecked the pleasant atmosphere of the garden. For four years the garden prospered and was a very happy garden, run by two conveners. It reached a total of 165 plots with 65 families being fed from them and children and adults alike working and playing in the good earth.

Then the COGS committee stepped in and announced that it was to be run by an elected committee, which turned out to be all those people who thought they could do better than the two conveners and volunteer roster of members for mowing. The result was worse. Also the introduction of plot fees reduced the number of members, as some could not afford the fees. Now the COGS committee is about to raise the fees for all gardens, in order to use the money to start more gardens.

This will end up with the demise of the Charnwood Garden, which is now struggling to get enough members. It would be a pity for COGS to have to admit defeat at the hands of vandals, plus their own policies.

The original policy was for COGS to get grants to start gardens as a gesture of goodwill towards the people who wanted to grow their own veggies. We used the fact that Organics is good for the Environment and also is good for the health of the gardeners, as an incentive to persuade "Life Be In It" and later the Dept. of Recreation etc. to give grants to start gardens.

Later COGS committees devised a set of rules for the gardens, but it was stressed that the Individual Gardens should run themselves, and as everyone these days is very busy and it is difficult enough to get people to sit on committees and do the work involved, it is silly to set up further committees and further rules. It is only giving the conveners a policing role, rather than a managing role, and this policing role was the downfall of the Watson Garden. The system of the gardeners running their own gardens, subject, of course to the general rules, is working well, and therefore should be kept going.

There are still pieces of land in Canberra that can be used for gardens, and it is the COGS committee's role to

continue to try for grants for new gardens, as the Environment is now an even more important issue than it was when I got the grants for the first 6 gardens, also there is a lot more talk about the quality of life and doing things for disabled people..

It is silly to talk of fairness to members who don't have plots at any of the gardens, because those members have had their chance to get a plot, and there are still plots vacant at most gardens and waiting lists at some, if members wish to have a plot, so it would not be fair at all to take the money paid in by gardeners who are putting a lot of work in on their plots, and use it to pay other gardens water bills, or use it to start new gardens.

Appendix 4 of the COGS Constitution is quite sufficient. There is no need to set up further rules. but the COGS Committee should make sure that there is a copy of that and also the National Standards for Organic Growing in the shed of each garden, and it is important for the Convener of the garden to see that new members read these.

If there are vacancies the garden convener can put a notice in the magazine, and the COGS Committee should be thinking about how they can sell more magazines to the public, rather than taking money from the gardeners at some gardens to support the use of water by other gardens. The COGS Committee should be looking at talking to ActewAGL about their green policy, which they are publicising all the time, and whether they can give the gardens a special price for their water, seeing they are growing food in an environmentally friendly way.

Betty Cornhill

Comments on the letter to the editor by Betty Cornhill about the community Gardens policy.

The policy referred to by Betty Cornhill is on page 7 I do not intend to address every point raised in Mrs Cornhill's letter. Instead, I wish to give a very brief outline of the history of the development of this policy and to correct the more important errors of fact in Mrs Cornhill's letter.

This policy is an elaboration of Appendix 4 of the Constitution. It is misleading to refer to it as a new policy. There is nothing in the policy which is inconsistent with Appendix 4 of the Constitution.

In fact, the majority of gardens have been operating largely in accordance with this policy for 12 months. However, some gardens seem to have forgotten their connection with COGS making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the committee to fulfil its obligations under the Constitution and the ACT Incorporations Act, especially in relation to financial management and reporting. This has also resulted in a lack of coordination within COGS on garden related matters. For this reason the committee felt it would be helpful if there were a written garden policy elaborating more clearly the practical application of the principles outlined in Appendix 4 of the Constitution.

The garden policy reproduced on page 7 has been under consideration for many months. An early draft to promote discussion of this issue was circulated to all COGS members in February. A general meeting was called on the 2nd March to ensure that any member who wished to do so could participate in the development of the policy. Only three members attended and only one written communication (e-mail) was received (some months later) by the committee.

Two meetings of the extended committee (the general committee plus all garden convenors) were dedicated to discussion of the policy.

Final agreement was reached on the 17 June. It is intended to implement the policy starting on 1st September 2002.

In her letter Mrs Cornhill seems to suggest that had the policy been in place at the time of the Christmas fires which burnt the Cotter garden the convener would not have been able to immediately buy hoses for the garden. This is quite wrong and completely misrepresents the policy. Under the policy the convener would have been able to immediately buy hoses, as she did, quite rightly, after the Christmas fires, without any reference to the general committee.

Mrs Cornhill also suggests that the policy will prevent individual gardens running themselves. This is quite wrong. The management role of convenors will not be diminished. Individual gardens will continue to run themselves, within the constraints of the Constitution, but hopefully with better coordination and cooperation with the general committee and with other gardens if the policy is followed.

I would urge all members to inform themselves on this matter by reading the policy itself and not to rely on the interpretation of others or hearsay. If you have any questions about the policy any member of the committee would be happy to discuss them with you.

Keith Colls
President

Canberra Institute of Technology

RURAL TRAINING CENTRE PROGRAMS SEMESTER TWO, 2002 Enquires 62074953

Is Organic Farming for you?

A weekend workshop, which explores the principles of alternative farming systems, the differences between conventional and organic farming and the role of certification in marketing and meeting customer requirements.

Dates: Canberra region: Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 September 2002

Non FarmBis participants: \$380
After FarmBis rebate: \$95 (FB Activity No. 509369-21)*

Understanding your Soils

Three evening sessions and one field day covering the soil web, soil tests and understanding the results, includes the use of organic and conventional fertilizers.

Dates: TBC

Non FarmBis participants: \$300
After FarmBis rebate: \$75 (FR Activity No. 509369-21)*

* FarmBis eligibility is pending for Land Managers – An individual with custodial and/or stewardship responsibility for the sustainable management of the soil, land, water, vegetation or financial resources of a rural holding (>5 Ha).

Organic Gardening for Beginners

HELP!!!

COGS in partnership with CIT Solutions will be conducting the next beginners organic gardening course starting on Sunday, 3 November.

It will run over four consecutive Sunday afternoons starting at 1 pm. All sessions will be held at the Xeriscape garden.

The course is aimed at complete beginners and no prior knowledge or experience of gardening will be assumed.

There will be a mix of theoretical information and practical gardening experience provided at each session. By the end of the course, participants will be in a position to confidently start their own organic garden, either in their own backyard or in a COGS community garden.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in attending this course, enrolments should be made through CIT Solutions (course code ACT2188), phone 62074441, or contact Keith Colls for further information.

The course fee is \$90.

The production of *Canberra Organic*, has reached a crisis point. At this stage we have no volunteers to write or chase up articles or to solicit advertising. Nor do we have any volunteers to distribute the magazine for sale to our regular outlets.

Unless volunteers come forward in time for the next issue of the magazine, *Canberra Organic* will become a much diminished publication. It will not contain advertising, nor will it be distributed for sale to our regular outlets. Its content will be reduced to little more than a "what's on" list for members. If you do not wish to see this happen please volunteer for one of the tasks mentioned above.

Please remember that volunteer organisations such as COGS can only function through the goodwill and effort of volunteers. If you would like to help in anyway at all (whether related to the magazine or not) please talk to a member of the committee.

Your efforts will be greatly appreciated and you will be rewarded by a warm fuzzy feeling.

14th IFOAM Organic World Conference in Canada

Betty Cornhill is to attend the 14th IFOAM

(*International Federation of Organic*

Agriculture Movements) Organic World Conference in Canada during August 2002

One of IFOAM's mandates is to work towards developing a social agenda for the world-wide organic movement. Here Gunnar Rundgren, President of IFOAM, gives a personal account of how IFOAM manages this role.

The success of certified organic production in the normal market place has been quite astonishing. Key to this success has been the development of organic standards and certification. However, some feel that success has come at a high price; that organics has lost its roots or betrayed its visions. Small farmers that turned to organics as a safe haven protected from the structural changes in agriculture now find that competition in the organic sector is getting tougher and that the organic market can be as hostile as the conventional.

There is a large difference between what organic farming is and what many people in the organic movement and many organic farmers would like it to be:

Organic farmers who sell their organic produce in the open market for the highest price possible and thereby supplying mainly wealthy people may have visions of how they would really like things to be. Maybe they would prefer selling directly to the local community, but that community is not interested in buying for the price needed.

Organic farmers who are mechanising their production system in order to be able to compete, or simply because there is no interested labour force available, may suffer from the isolation caused by the loss of people on the farm. They may also find their increased dependence on external inputs and energy to be contrary to their wishes.

IFOAM also plays this double role. It lobbies for an international system of standards and accreditation, which has the major role of facilitating international trade in organic products. At the same time it promotes local marketing and direct consumer/producer relationships as well as a deepening of the organic concept, including social responsibility.

Having said that, it does not mean that IFOAM's engagement in standards development should cease or that the organic market that has evolved based on these standards should be seen as an adversary. IFOAM will continue to work with organic standards, certification and accreditation. It will also continue to support large-scale conversions of agriculture and markets to organics systems. Such conversions should not be considered as a bad thing as they liberate more land from agrochemicals and it give more people access to organic food. They also help to build a basis for research and technology development. The solutions to small farmers' problems will not be found in protectionist reserves for organics but rather in innovation and differentiation.

However, organic agriculture is more than just organic markets and standards; it is an approach to the relationship between human kind and the rest of nature. Some aspects of organic agriculture could never be 'standardised', as nature itself does not follow any standards. Others should not be standardised as there is also no need for standardisation of every item. The best things in life are not standardised - I am sure we don't want to have standardised friends, let alone standardised spouses! When it comes to food, standards have a place for some basic features like hygiene, but the differences between foods, those dishes prepared by different people or in a special way, is what makes food interesting to eat. Like food, agriculture - when too standardised - becomes the kind of recipe agriculture that we all want to avoid.

The different sides of organic agriculture need to be promoted and developed simultaneously. Some aspects relate to how we farm, others to how we trade or interact with local communities. Other initiatives place the organic farm into a wider landscape perspective. Hopefully, IFOAM can contribute more in the future to these developments. A good start is to recognise what is already going on around us, and make the good examples more visible.

Reprinted from "IFOAM" - the magazine for the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

Plant Profile - By Laurie Thomson

Beetroot

Planting - PH doesn't like acid soil. Add lime, Dolomite or wood ash.

Previous crops - well manured crop such as cabbage.

Time to Harvest - 5 to 6 weeks in good growing conditions.

Time between plantings - Plant a whole years supply in spring in staggered plantings (to do this successfully, you will need a well composted organic soil).

Sowing Seed - Sow seed directly into the ground 1 to 2 cm apart and thin to 8cm at first leaf. Provide heavy mulch if leaving in the ground for a long time. To encourage deep taproot give heavy and infrequent watering.

Feeding Plants - likes soil high in organic matter, well drained and low in nitrogen. Don't add any fertilisers high in N, e.g. liquid fertilizers made from manure.

Pests and Diseases - Virtually disease free, so good disease buffers - Boron deficiency is one of a few reasons for crop failure, leading to stunted growth, black patches on the skin, woody texture. Add Borax at a rate of a half-level teaspoon to four and a half litres of water per square metre.

Companion Plants - Onions, Silver beet, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Cabbage.

Harvest - May be kept for three months after picking (but better eating when young).

Use - Lush beetroot tops can be eaten like spinach (be careful of oxalic acid content)

Saving Seed - Pollinated by air borne pollen. The seed bearing plant is about 1.1 metres high with numerous branches from the base to the top. Seeds are produced along the entire length of those branches. When two thirds of the seeds on the stalks have become brown and partially dry cut the stalks. After two or three days the seeds will thresh off easily. Once separated from the stalks spread the seeds thinly, under cover for a week or more. Beet seeds remain viable for 7 years.



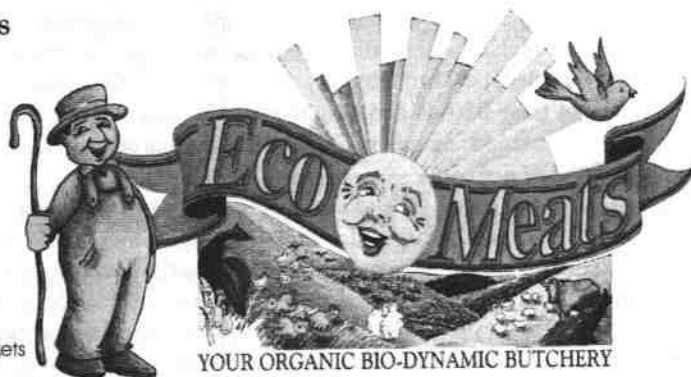
ECO MEATS



Specialists in Organic Pesticide-Free Meats

Organic Beef
Organic Lamb
Organic Pork
Organic Poultry
Organic Sausages
Game Meat
Crocodile
Emu
Goat
Kangaroo
Rabbit
Venison

Just the way Mother Nature intended!



Shop 35, The Promenade
Belconnen Fresh Food Markets
Lothlain Street, Belconnen
Telephone 02 6251 9018 Wednesday to Sunday

Community Gardens:

A Successful Development Of Social Capital In Canberra

By Yoshinobu Toyoda

Executive Summary

First of all, I would like to say thank you Department of Urban Services workers for participating in the evaluation I undertook of the community gardening projects.

Thanks to those who supported me, especially the dedicated support of Ms. Rebecca Vassarotti, Mr. Ross Burden, and Mr. Tony Bray. I am very pleased with how the research project developed and I won't forget happy times I spent with the colleagues in the Department. Thank you those who spent time with me and shared useful information, which helped my research a lot.

Speaking of my research project, I worked with the Department of Urban Services as an intern for three months because I am interested in participatory community development projects with building social capital by the Government. During my internship in the Department, I played a role in evaluation of the Community Renewal Program. The Department and I focused on the Community Garden Project to see whether it was successful as an example of social capital building in Canberra.

The Community Garden Project ran three community gardens with the Canberra Organic Growers Society, which is a non profit community organisation and aims to provide a forum for organic growers to exchange information and encourage growing fruits and vegetables using only organic growing methods.

In recent years, governments in Australia have paid attention to the significant function of social capital in practical fields of community development.

The ACT Government gave highest priority to the development of social capital; especially enabling participation and developing networks in the community.

The Department of Urban Services, one of the five governmental agencies in the ACT, believes that it is important that development projects be undertaken to build on our existing social capital.

The concept of social capital examines people's state of mind and behaviour. Elements of social capital such as trust, a sense of belonging, and sharing can build community development. Social capital is also the key to facilitate people's participation and interaction in their activity. Community development is the general term of improving quality of a community with many approaches and methods.

I analysed the role of social capital in community development by conducting observation in gardens and conducting a quantitative survey. In the report, I examined what kind of social capital actually has existed in the garden and how their activities by gardeners have worked on to build social capital in the garden.

The first finding is that social capital was built through the Community Garden Project in the ACT. As the paper discussed, the Community Gardens' activities generally create social capital because they bring together individuals to participate in a group activity. Through this, sense of shared interest grows. Gardeners develop good relationships with each other, which are based on a common understanding and a sense of sharing rooted in reciprocity. Social capital is strengthened by gardeners' participation in cooperative activities and daily interaction in community gardens. I observed through participant observation, gardeners' cooperative actions, which include networking, sharing information and organic products, managing common goods, helping each other, and resolving community critical issues.

Furthermore, gardening activity encourages the further development of social capital in gardens. Daily activities in the gardens include cultivating, weeding and watering individual plots; talking to plants; and interacting with other gardeners. Through daily activities, gardeners exchange information regarding organic methods and the talk of their friends and neighbours. Gardeners share their crops, warm-hearted behaviour, and smile among like-minded members in their daily gardening and working-bees. These activities encourage the expansion of networks and gardeners' participation

Most important, gardeners can expand and built networks with outside of the garden. Adding to these daily activities, the COGS has monthly and annual meetings which invite a guest-speaker from outside of the organisation. As another evidence, the expansion of their activity was indicated.

These three main findings proved that it is efficient for the development practitioners to work on communities of interest to build social capital in community development. And they should notice that community participation boosts to develop social capital in a community. Through these three findings, this study found that the key to link two concepts was community participation, which has been the main focus of the ACT Government.

As the paper has developed, I aimed at transferring the main role in evaluation of the CGP to gardeners themselves. Evaluation approaches include self-evaluation in the process of PLA.

In the future, the evaluation using the concept of social capital should be a community-owned one. In order for a community to do so, the simple definition and method of analysis of social capital should be developed. For the time being, it is hoped this thesis has provided insight into the subject of community development in actual fields and revealed important questions that will face scholars and practitioners in this field including myself, in the future.

This study was undertaken by Mr Yoshinobu Toyoda while he was a participant in the Australian National Internship Program conducted by the Australian National University. For the duration of his internship (ending 27 May 2002) he was located in the office of Policy Coordination of the Department of Urban Services of the ACT government. The purpose of his work was to evaluate the impact of the Community Renewal Project, especially focusing on the Community Gardens Project. Funding from this project was used to establish three new COGS community gardens during 2001. A full report of Mr Toyoda's work is available in the COGS library.

COGS Herald

Compiled by Conrad van Hest

Permaculture design course certificate course with Bill Mollison, 12th to 25th November 2002

The permaculture design course is a two week intensive course for anyone interested in gaining skills and perspective for sustainable living and productivity. A permaculture course is a way to share accumulated information with others.

For information and a course brochure contact: -
Permaculture Institute

View the brochure online

31 Bulla Road, Sisters Creek Tasmania 7325
www.permaculturedesign.com.au
Phone (03) 6445 0945 Fax (03) 6445 0944

New book *The Organic Factor* by Paul Rogers

Paul wrote this book after 27 years in the organic food and gardening movement, it reflects his own professional work in environmental health. Issues the book covers are analysis of why organic food is better, reviews the popular diets, the best diet and lifestyle approach for weight loss and also it covers healthy lifestyle of exercise and relaxation. For more information about the book and to purchase it online only go to www.organicfactor.com.

The Organic Factor web page
www.organicfactor.com

Besides buying Paul Rogers's book online the site also has a newsletter on organic food, nutrition, fitness and lifestyle. It is new site and still is being updated.

Organic gardening for beginners course presented by COGS

The course will give the participant the confidence and knowledge to start their own organic garden. For further information contact CIT Solutions phone 6207 4441 fax 6207 4666 email cit.solutions@cit.act.edu.au

A new debate which is now becoming a fad in America

Should we eat be eating live foods or cooked foods? There is now an interest in healthy living by trying to avoid eating cooked foods and eating them naturally, there are some interesting articles available on the Health Freedom Resources webpage www.healthfree.com

The COGS Seed Bank

As many of you may know, COGS maintains a seed bank with the objective of providing a source of locally grown, open pollinated, organic seed.

The seed bank aims to make available a comprehensive range of common vegetable and herb seeds, as well as the seed of some more unusual, or rare, vegetables when possible.

Seed is initially donated to the seed bank by members who have produced excess seed or who grow unusual or rare varieties of vegetables they think may be of interest to other members. Some difficult to produce seeds are currently sourced commercially in order to expand the range available. We hope that in future, as our skills increase, this will not be necessary.

Each season seed that is in short supply, or nearing its use by date, needs to be grown out to replenish the seed bank. This job has been done recently by Laurie Thomson with some help from other interested volunteers.

This year, due to a large donation from a private collection, the number of seeds needing to be grown out has greatly increased and we are looking for more members to become involved in this project to cope with the extra work. We have very scant information about many of the seeds and are hoping to find members willing to grow them this season to provide information as well as seeds.

This would involve growing the seeds, eating some of the vegetables or fruit produced, telling us how they grew, what they looked like and what they tasted like.

The seed would be provided free of charge, along with a report form to be filled in during the season, on the understanding that the information, and hopefully some fresh seed, is returned to COGS.

Several of the COGS community gardens have set aside a plot to be used this summer specifically for this project. If you are a plot holder in one of these gardens please consider helping out with the growing, the record keeping or simply with the taste testing. We are hoping this project will not be confined only to the community gardens so if you have an interest in a particular vegetable or would like to try growing something new and different here is your opportunity.

Lists of the seeds available can be obtained from Laurie Thomson, your garden convenor or any member of the COGS committee. There are currently over 200 different seed varieties for which we would like expanded information and/or fresh seed so you are sure to find something of interest to you.

A TRAINING COURSE FOR BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

You are invited to attend a competency based training course for biodynamic farming and gardening. This course offers you a unique opportunity to gain a very thorough understanding of the biodynamic system and develop the skills and knowledge to fully implement the biodynamic system within your individual situation.

Through attendance on this course you will learn how to

- Use the biodynamic preparations to create a fertile and sustainable farming or gardening system
- Learn how to develop farm practices that are in harmony with natural rhythms
- Learn the art and science of biodynamic composting
- Develop a farming or gardening system that enables you to grow any suitable crop at optimum levels of health and nutrition and balances both the material and spiritual aspects of nature
- Learn how to increase the humus content of the soil and identify the many benefits this brings to the whole health and structure of the soil and plants.

Cost of the course is \$450 (\$320 concession) plus \$85 for course manual. Please phone for registration details and a copy of the course program. Contact Lynette West Ph 6297 2729

SEEDY SATURDAY- SEPTEMBER 7-9-02

9am-12 midday

**SPONSORED BY : THE ENVIRONMENT CENTER
COGS
SEED SAVERS NETWORK**

Come to the Canberra Environment center on Saturday morning.

Bring your excess seeds, cuttings and tubers to exchange with other gardeners.

Tables and chairs provided

Morning Tea and Coffee available

Make a DONATION TO THE COGS SEEDBANK - choose some seeds in exchange.

Your chance to VOLUNTEER to grow out seeds for the seed bank and the network.

Try something new with our rare and unusual varieties of heritage and heirloom plants.

Comment:

Even though the COGS seed bank is relatively new and quite small, it needs volunteers to grow out the less common varieties in order to keep seed supplies fresh and viable.

Seedy Saturdays, which will coincide with Green Living days at the Environment Center, will hopefully attract new seed savers and inspire more people to curate heritage and heirloom plants.

Seed exchanges are a means of promoting and organizing the preservation, free distribution and exchange of open-pollinated seeds. The bio-diversity of the local region is thus enriched as more varieties become adapted to the local environment.

As climates change and gardeners have to cope with water restrictions and low rainfall, cold winters and poor soils, it is essential to increase the available choices of local food plants which are tough, disease resistant and easy to grow, nutritious and tasty.

It puts a bit of adventure and challenge into growing to try the rarer plants and you know that you are helping to increase the bio-diversity of the area.

Growing locally helps reduce the hidden environmental and other economic costs of buying in fruit and vegetables from other regions.

Over the last 50 years four fifths of the garden varieties of vegetables in Australia have been "lost". Seed Savers Networks and Garden Clubs are helping to source and save many plants that would otherwise disappear.

The Growing interest in unusual food plants is also fuelled by the Gourmet Food industry. Fifty years ago, there was only one type of potato available in Canberra, the Sebago. Now, thanks to growing interest and demand, there are dozens of unusual types of potatoes in the shops.

Put interest into your cooking by growing something you can't buy in the supermarket.

You'll be surprised by the unique taste and can be sure of increased nutrition through organic growing!

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE POT

By Conrad van Hest

Feta cheese, spring onion and sun dried tomato spread

500g unsalted feta cheese roughly chopped
1 bunch of spring onions cleaned and chopped
10 – 12 sun dried tomatoes marinated in oil
reserved oil of sun dried tomatoes
juice of 2 lemons
pepper to taste

In a blender add feta, spring onions and sun dried tomatoes, pulse till mix is partly mixed. Add oil and lemon juice, a little at first, blending till a spreading consistency, if too dry adjust with oil and lemon juice, add pepper to taste.

Serve with baked fish, spread on a sandwich or as a snack on a hot crumpet.

Pickled cabbage

Courtesy of Heather Gill

1/3 by volume of carrot
2/3 by volume of cabbage
half habanera chilli (very hot)
½ to 1 teaspoon of sea salt (optional)
2 cloves garlic

i.e. for 2kg pickle you require 1.54 kg of the cabbage and 460g of carrots approximately.

Grate or puree all ingredients in a blender and mix well, put into a large jar, glass or ceramic bowl. Put 2 or 3 whole cabbage leaves on top to cover the mix.

Place a plate on top of the mix to keep airtight as possible, weigh that down with a brick.

Leave for 5 to 10 days (summertime, longer for winter), taste to test readiness by taking some from beneath the top layer, if ready it should taste pickled, put into jars and refrigerate. Other vegetables can be added if desired.

Raw apple pie

From Organic Kitchen by L. Reynaud and D. Campbell

Pie base

1 cup soaked walnuts or almonds
1 cup seedless dates
¾ cup raisins

Filling

4 – 5 apples
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
juice of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon honey (optional)

Soak walnuts or almonds at least overnight and drain, place in food processor and grind to a meal, then mix in a bowl with remaining pie base ingredients and press into greased pie dish to form a crust. Peel and core apples, place in food processor with all other filling ingredients and process to chunky texture by using the pulse button, pour into crust and serve.

COGS Seedlings

Each Spring COGS produces punnets of vegetable seedlings and advanced tomato plants for sale to members and the general public. These seedlings are sold at stalls we have at the Green Living Fair, the CIT Plant Sale at Weston and at our monthly meetings.

In recent years these spring seedling sales have been the main fundraising effort of COGS for the year and have contributed significantly to our income. As with all our ventures, enthusiastic volunteers are the key to success.

This year some of our regular seedling growers are too busy elsewhere in their lives, so we are looking for new helpers.

The seedlings are currently being sown and help is needed to look after the growing seedlings until the sales in Oct/Nov.

If you would like to contribute to this fundraising activity please contact Laurie Thomson or a member of the Committee to find out what is involved.



SPRING VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

When direct planting with small seeds, e.g. carrots, bulk out first by mixing the seeds with sand. You can help the plants pre-germinate by keeping them in moist sand for about 4 days (no longer - don't let them actually germinate) before planting out.

When planting out large seeds, e.g. pea or corn, soak overnight in a weak seaweed solution prior to planting; alternatively, keep seeds moist between 2 pieces of moist kitchen paper for 3 or 4 days until seeds germinate, then plant out carefully. This is particularly useful if you are not sure of the seeds viability.

A seed should be planted at a depth 2-3 times its diameter, although it is better to plant too shallow rather than too deep.

Check your seed packets for their "use by" date as poor germination may result from planting after that time, or plants may show a lack of vigour when the seedlings come up.

Be prepared to protect your frost tender seedlings, as Canberra can experience harsh frosts right through Spring. Make your own cloches from plastic bottles with the bottoms cut out, or row covers for larger plantings.

CROP ROTATION:

Remember to rotate the crops you grow in a particular garden bed. Crop rotation is a most important practice for organic gardeners. Successive crops should not make the same demand on nutrients i.e. follow heavy feeders with light feeders, and should not share the same diseases or attract the same pests (this prevents a build up of disease problems, and losses from pests). There are numerous crop rotation schemes used, but try to keep to at least a 4 year rotation period and do not grow the same members of a plant family in the same bed in consecutive years. e.g. the solanum family - tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants, potatoes

PLANT VARIETIES:

It is important with crops such as cabbage and lettuce to choose the appropriate variety for the time of year. Lettuce varieties best suited to early Spring are Cos, Salad Bowl, Butterhead varieties and Mignonette.

Spring vegetable planting guide

Sept Oct Nov Dec

Globe Art.	T
Jerus. Art.	T
Asparagus	S
French Beans	S S S
Beetroot	S S S
Broccoli	S
Brussels Sprouts	S
Cabbage	ST ST ST
Capsicum	S
Carrot	S S S
Cauliflower	S
Celery	S ST ST
Cucumber	S S ST
Eggplant	S T T
Endive	S
Leeks	ST ST T
Lettuce	ST ST S
Marrows	S S ST
Melons	S S ST
Onions	ST T
Parsnips	S S S
Peas	S S S S
Potatoes	S S S
Pumpkins	S S ST
Radish	S S S S
Rhubarb	T T
Salsify	S S S
Silver beet	S S ST
Spinach	S S
Squash	S S ST
Sweet corn	S ST
Tomatoes	S ST ST
Turnips white	S

S= seed sowing

T= transplant

CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INC.
PO Box 347 DICKSON ACT 2602

COMMITTEE MEMBERS & HELPERS

OFFICE BEARERS

President Keith Colls 6251 7729 keithcolls@optusnet.com.au

Vice President Vacant

Secretary Conrad Van Hest 6288 2443 zsysphot@netspeed.com.au *glasses, balding, black hair*

Treasurer Adrienne Fazekas 6247 5882 afazekas@yahoo.com.au

Membership Secretary Victor Oates vicoates@pcug.org.au *balding, glasses*

Editor Stephen Dean 04 0335 3118 sgd@austarmetro.com.au

Librarian Maren Child 6254 9927 jbchild@cyberone.com.au *+ assistant, proper communication
gray hair 60+? not Maren*

Seed Librarian Laurie Thomson 6288 7161 diamondjim@bigpond.com

Public Officer Conrad Van Hest 6288 2443 zsysphot@netspeed.com.au *Bebe ←*

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

~~Rosemary Stevenson~~, Beatrix Bros, Heather Pearce, Heather Gill

Daniel has taken Rosemary's place

COGS FLYER

Pilots: Vacant



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Book sales: Murray Dadds

Produce table: Vacant

Supper convenors: Marie Bahr, Mary Flowers

Librarian: Maren Child

COGS REPRESENTATIVES

Environment Centre: Deborah Avery

David Read

INQUIRIES ABOUT ORGANIC GROWING

Email: info@cogs.asn.au

Telephone: Elizabeth Palmer 6248 8004

GARDEN CONVENORS

Cook Keith Colls 6251 7729

Cotter Michelle Johnson 6231 6219

Holder Stephen Dean 04 0335 3118

Kambah Heather Pearce 6296 6167

Erindale Christine Carter 6231 5862

Theodore Dave Read 6294 4001

Queanbeyan Katrina Willis 6232 9743

Oaks Estate Rosemary Stevenson 6284 4238

North side Richard Larson 6241 3024

Charnwood John Turnbull 6254 3070

04 1966 3440

COGS ON THE INTERNET

www.cogs.asn.au Web Manager: Maren Child 6254 9927

info@cogs.asn.au E-mail Coordinator: Conrad Van Hest 6288 2443

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 info@cogs.asn.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.

For advertising queries, please contact the editor.

COGS monthly meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except December and January) at 7:30pm in Room 4 of the Griffin Centre in Civic~

SPEAKERS

August 27 Jonathon Banks
"Orchard Maintenance"

September 24 Panel night

October 22 Irene Hess
"Herbs"

November 26 Neil Davidson
"Worms" tbc



Wanted

The COGS seed bank needs small pots (suitable for seedlings) and punnets for growing seedlings for sale at COGS stalls.

Our current supply of pots and punnets has dried up. If you have any old pots or punnets you can spare, please call Laurie Thomson on 62887161.

Dates to remember

October 19 & 20 Murrumbateman field day
October TBA Griffith Shops fair
October TBA Green Living fair
November TBA Green Living fair
November 9 CIT plant sale
Xeriscape garden open day

Xeriscape garden talks 2pm

(further info www.actewagl.com.au
environment page then to Xeriscape page)

Sept 7 & 8 Climbers, screens &
ground covers with Peter Sutton

Oct 12 & 13 Garden irrigation
with Al Robinson

Oct 19 & 20 Lawns with Keith McIntyre

Nov 16 & 17 native & deciduous trees
with Phil Unger

COGS Website has moved

The COGS website is now active on our own domain name, generously hosted by COGS member Karl Schaffarczyk at Inspired.net.au

The URL is now

[Http://www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au)

The new website is being developed by Maren Child, the web manager, and a small group of volunteers