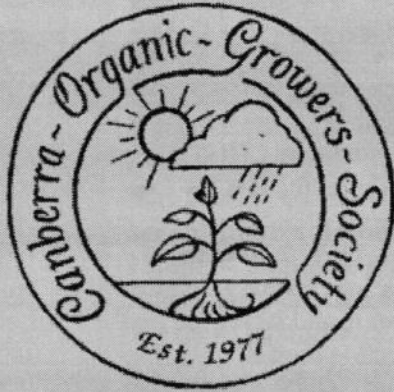


*Winter*



# Canberra Organic

**ORGANIC GROWING  
IN THE CANBERRA REGION**

Quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.



**VOL. 11 NO. 2**

**Winter 2003**

## CANBERRA ORGANIC

Quarterly magazine published by the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.  
Vol 11 No. 2 (Issue 42)

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otherwise clean typed copy.

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Articles in the magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

### EDITOR:

Janet Popovic

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Email: editor@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.

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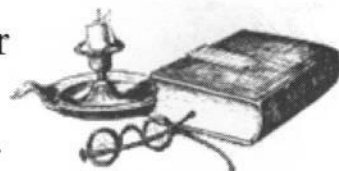
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## From the Editor



Hello, I'm your new editor.

Thanks to Stephen Dean for all his editorial work since Autumn 2002 and for his continuing contributions! I'm on training wheels – being guided by the Committee, especially Adrienne and Keith – thank you. I'm hoping that many COGS members will be generous in sharing their experiences (e.g. reporting on your proactive gardening/farming approaches, visits to field days or interesting locations, and on your reading or research) in this magazine. That would be a good way to ensure that we are reflecting the full spectrum of member interest and COGS objectives. Our new Vice President Martin Giese has started the ball rolling. He has a keen interest in permaculture philosophies and practices. In this issue he has written what I hope will be the first of a series of articles.

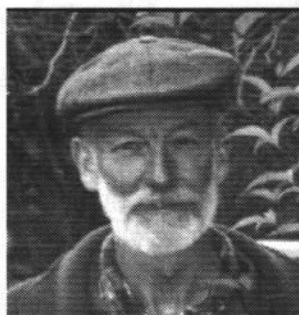
I am sure you will enjoy also the articles on the Holder and Dickson gardens and that you will be cheering on Beby and her fellow gardeners in the new venture at Dickson. It's good to see also that the magazine provides a forum for members to find out about events pertinent to their interests and for individuals to share specific opportunities for cooperative action. Because we all felt for the bushfire victims I will draw your attention to the opportunity to assist in the rejuvenation process through Phoenix Garden Group care of [chris.stamford@dotars.gov.au](mailto:chris.stamford@dotars.gov.au).

If you don't wish to write an article, how about emailing or phoning through to me some dot points, suggestions (including suggestions for interview topics or member profiles), or feedback on recent Canberra Organic items? I'm hoping for example that we could compile some COGS experiences with "no dig" gardens or report further on the success or otherwise of protective coverings in the garden.

Congratulations COGS award winners from the Horticultural Society's Autumn Show. I hope this means you will give some of your growing tips to other members in the next issue – on leeks for example!

**Janet Popovic**

Special thanks to Arthur's Vegetable Clipart.



## President's Report Winter 2003

The COGS Annual General Meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> March. I would like to thank all the retiring Committee members for their work during the year. It has provided a sound base for the new Committee's work during the next twelve months. Committee members elected at the AGM are listed on page 32. It is very rewarding to see so many members volunteer to work on the Committee. This is the first time for quite a while that all Committee positions have been filled at an AGM. New members make up half the Committee and I would especially like to welcome them. I look forward to a very productive year for COGS. Since the AGM Laurie Thomson has decided to resign from the Committee although he will continue to look after COGS Backyard. I would like to thank Laurie for all the work he has done for COGS over the years and wish him well. If you would like to join the new team please let me know.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by harvest night. Most gardeners appear to have had a reasonably successful season in spite of the very dry hot summer. Rockmelons, pumpkins and even a few watermelons have done quite well but the zucchinis did not like the heat so much. Water restrictions and the hot dry conditions also made it very difficult to ensure that tomatoes received a constant supply of moisture and consequently blossom end rot was quite a problem for many gardeners but carrots, as usual, were very successful. The drought also had an effect on the food supply of local birds and animals and there was a fair amount of competition between gardeners and the local fauna for food from the community gardens. Several gardeners netted their whole plots to outwit the birds but, in the Cook garden, were no match for the innovative kangaroo who worked out how to get through the gate.

Now that the weather has cooled down it's time

to tidy up our gardens for winter. Winter crops in most of the gardens are well established and the green manure crops are busily producing organic matter for the soil and fixing nitrogen for our spring and summer crops. We are still waiting for the "flooding rains" promised in Dorothea Mackellar's "land of drought and flooding rains". In the meantime we will have to cope with the level two water restrictions which have recently been introduced in the ACT and Queanbeyan.

All our usual COGS activities will be continuing this year. If you have any ideas for additional activities you would like to see COGS undertake please let me or one of the Committee members know. We are happy to listen to all suggestions. If you would also like to see your literary masterpieces about any aspect of gardening published in *Canberra Organic* feel free to send them to Janet Popovic who has taken on the role of editor for the magazine. The deadlines for each issue are on the inside front cover.

The drought may have given our gardens a hard time but it hasn't affected the interesting line up of speakers we are arranging for the monthly meetings held in the Griffin Centre during the year. The library is available at all monthly meetings and there are over 300 books covering a wide range of topics. All are available on one month loans. You are also welcome to bring along your spare seedlings and seeds for swapping with other members. I look forward to meeting you there.

Happy Gardening,

Keith Colls



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## Around the Gardens



### **Charnwood**

COGS held another successful Beginners Gardening course at the Charnwood garden. There are several vacancies.

### **Cook**

The cooler weather finally arrived and Cook gardeners were able to have their first garden BBQ for the year in early April. We all had a reasonably successful gardening season in spite of the hot dry conditions, although blossom end rot in the tomatoes was a problem for many. The weather conditions also caused a few casualties in the new wind break but those plants which succumbed have now been replaced thanks to the efforts of Alan Robertson. We welcomed three new gardeners to replace those who have moved on and at present there are three vacant plots.

*Keith Colls*

### **Cotter**

The Cotter Garden continues to have a high level of occupancy with only 2 vacant plots. Gardeners since the last report have been working hard at harvesting and preparing plots for the winter. The continuing dry and water restrictions have had some marginal impact on produce but gardeners have adapted well to the difficult conditions. Water consumption has dropped off with the onset of the cooler weather but remains relatively high because of the dry conditions. There is a lot of timber material left over from the clearing that was necessary after the bushfires. This is to be burnt off during the winter if there is rain.

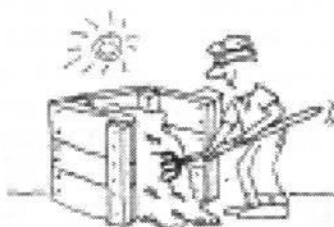
*Andy Hrast*

### **Dickson**

Our newest and smallest garden. Read all about it in its own article on page 10!

*Beatrix Bros*

## Around the Gardens continued ...



### **Erindale**

At this time of year which could be described as “semi-dormant” our plot holders are occupied with pulling up their spent summer plants. It wasn’t such a long time ago we were bringing home bags chocker block full of harvested produce. Laden with surplus vegies we bottled, froze or pickled as much as we could with the time and energy we had to dedicate. The remaining leftovers would not go to waste when given to appreciative family and friends. From now on we can do little more than keep our gardens tidy and well mulched until the warmer planting cycle comes around again.

*Christine Carter*

### **Holder**

The Holder gardens have recovered from the January 18th bushfires remarkably well. Many plants that were thought to have been destroyed have grown back strongly—these include dahlias, lilies, parsley, celery, potatoes, globe artichokes, silverbeet, carrots, parsnips, strawberries, grape vines and the ever present couch grass. Despite the drought and water restrictions, most plots have produced excellent summer crops, and the autumn plantings of winter vegetables are in full swing. Two gardeners have moved on and two new faces can be seen working their “new” plots. There are four people on the waiting list. See the separate article on Holder this edition. *Stephen Dean*

### **Kambah**

The Kambah garden currently has 2 vacancies. Despite the drought and the fires plots were again very productive. Gardeners are now cleaning up summer waste and have planted brassicas and onions etc. *Heather Pearce*

**Northside** There are several vacancies.

### **Oaks Estate**

Well, it was the worst summer in my experience of over many decades of growing. The heritage potatoes disappeared to the grasshoppers in late spring, though, now in autumn, the plants have resprouted. Maybe they would have any way, but



I did keep them mulched and moist through summer. Now I worry about frost so I am experimenting with some of my plastic tunnels to see if I can harvest in winter? The heritage peas just did not grow or were very stunted. The brambles along the fence mostly dried up, but some have survived. Even the ancient pear tree lost about 50% of its leaves and looked very sad. We fed plenty of birds with our sunflowers, and set up a bird bath which is well used. The garden is looking tidier as we have been able to keep down the weeds in vacant plots. There is a shade house under construction and we are working on making the garden a safer place by removing poorly constructed metal siding and other debris. We still have vacancies. Although there has been quite a lot of interest shown, there have been no new members lately.

*Rosemary Stevenson*

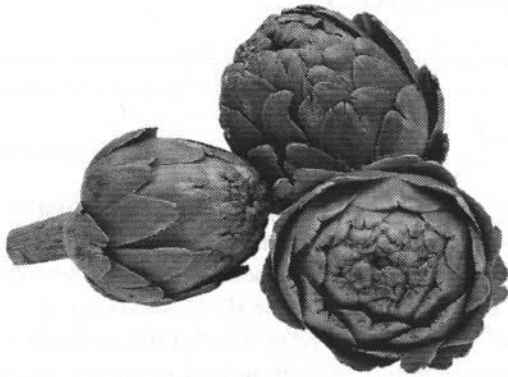
**Queanbeyan** All plots taken up.

### **Theodore**

On Saturday 12th April 2003 Theodore Community Garden held a planning meeting. This was very well attended with only a few of the gardeners either absent or unrepresented. Discussions ranged over immediate day-to-day issues to plans for next summer and beyond. Starting 27th April 2003 a monthly Working Bee will be instigated to conduct projects and give a focus for gardeners to get together. Theodore Community Garden is looking for new members. The gardeners are a mixed lot; some are mature, others have school aged or pre-school aged children, some are new to gardening and others are old hands. We all share a common desire to eat organically grown produce which when picked ripe and eaten fresh simply leaves the shop bought produce for dead. There are a number of large vacant blocks. These require some taming but now is the right time of the year to do it for next summer. Do not be put off by some hard work before you have talked to Theodore Garden Convenor Richard Reed, phone 6291 1897 (evenings).

*Richard Reed*





## A Permanent Culture in the ACT

A lot of people have now heard of the word Permaculture, and many believe it to mean 'Permanent Agriculture'. Bill Mollison however, the man who originally coined the word, had in mind for it to really mean 'Permanent Culture'.

When I was a wee lad I had often contemplated how things could be in our societies without the need to impose a heavy burden on our natural ecosystems to meet our most basic needs. I often wondered how a toy matchbox car was produced, with all the detail in design and insignias on the underside. How could such an object come into my possession? What was the long succession of events that made it possible?

Over the last three years I have negotiated an unprecedented journey of awakening and enlightenment. A journey of rediscovering society, in particular Canberra, and a new appreciation of humanity's struggles. Permaculture is more than a system for the establishment of self-perpetuating wild gardens, it is more like a philosophy of the observance of nature.

And "Nature" comprises everything that is within, around and beyond us. Nature is the interaction of dynamic processes between all phenomena, and their comprehension, through our own logical deduction. It is the diligent observation of nature that makes it such an eye-opening experience. Be it the observance of the changes in one's own bodily functions, thoughts and energy levels, under varying conditions, or in the group processes amongst men and women in conversations about matters dear to their hearts.

We each share the ability to observe nature and to attain an awareness of our own observance by the deductions we make, in effect we learn through our own observations, as does a small child. And that is a key concept in Permaculture! In the organic food movement there is a great deal of concern about how

our food is produced. And that is understandable with so many highly subsidised monocultures eating away at our once fertile lands. No wonder we have seen the collapse of whole ecosystems in the industrialised agricultural landscapes of our nation.

On the subject of food it is interesting to understand our own, very individual, and very personal relationship with food. A wise and highly respected Buddhist teacher once said that our own ageing is the result of the consumption of gross food. Now how could that be so, I contemplated for a considerable period of time. That remark made me think about food in a new way and made me curious about other possibilities. It made me challenge previously held beliefs about what we need in terms of food and nutrition. And so it seems a few words changed the way I behaved, and this too became a lesson in the power of thoughtful speech in the presence of others.

First and foremost in this discussion on food is to understand ourselves, and our sometimes impulsive tendencies. We are more often than not preoccupied with many activities, and have little time to recognise that many of those activities are actually born from the cravings of a restless mind. Our cultures have often been following the addiction-forming cravings caused by our five sense organs; the eye, ear, nose, mouth and touch sense organs. These organs have mostly served to sense our external environments. We have neglected on the other hand the possibility for these organs to also sense our internal environments, made possible through self-awareness. Self-awareness (facilitated by breath meditation) is a process that allows us to experience new states of being alive. That is experiencing a state of being that was never before personally experienced.

Imagine a monkey leading an elephant with a rope. The elephant is our body and mind, and the five

senses become the monkey. Now that cheeky monkey makes us run all over the place and causes us so much suffering and grief. In self-observance we can see that the monkey is indeed a restless creature. And it is the consideration of this that makes it possible to train the monkey through diligence and self-discipline.

Many of the foodstuffs we eat today are ingested for the sensation or convenience rather than for the nutritional value of the food. Some of the most deleterious foods to our body include: excessive sugar, colouring agents, alcohol, coffee and highly processed foods. Coffee is interesting in that it makes us go to the toilet, and so what we eat does not even get digested. So if we are interested in protecting the environment, by reducing consumption, it is important to think of what we put through our own internal environment. Sugar robs our body of nutrition and causes us to age prematurely. It is also a very deleterious monoculture crop of the north destroying both rainforest and marine ecosystems.

Many alternative diets like vegetarianism, veganism and fruitarianism, proclaim a cleaner, healthier lifestyle. These meat free diets have often been praised for their abilities to cleanse the body and heal a variety of illnesses born from the more culinary sensual diets. Most meat eaters belittle such people for their simpler diets claiming that they need more protein and so encourage the consumption of meat.

Meat however must first be broken down by our body into simpler compounds before being reassembled into a protein suitable for our body. And this process requires energy to make it happen and this makes it a more inefficient food. Plant protein production however is over twelve times more efficient than cow meat protein production. If you had 100 kg of grain, a cow would turn it into 2 kg of protein while Single Cell Plant/Protein (SCP) would turn it into 25 kg of better quality and a more usable form of protein for our bodies to absorb.

During my youth I would sometimes eat, for weeks on end, just fruit. I would crave the next piece and devoured succulent strawberries by the bowl full. During that time I found that I had a wonderful clarity of mind and a fit and healthy

body. Now, some twenty years, and a few pallets of beer, wine, coffee, and bails of tobacco later, I look back at those days and ask myself what went wrong and why. This is where culture comes into the picture.

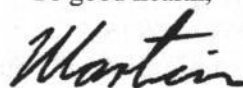
Changing one's own behaviour, and so that of society, is much easier in the direction of sensual self indulgence than in the direction of physical and intellectual growth. In some respects our culture has provided for the easier path of sensual fulfilment than the more effortful and life-enhancing path of personal and interpersonal growth.

When it comes to change, Permaculture is perhaps the most profound of all philosophies known today for the facilitation of cultural change. Permaculture is much older and a part of our existing cultures than many of us care to imagine. It is in the design of our cities, the global political economy and in our understanding of life itself through the sciences and religious institutions.

So what brings me to COGS and why have I decided to take up the position of Vice President? Well, as a Permaculture Consultant and Director of Permaculture ACT (PACT), I see that working with COGS is a mutually beneficial association. COGS already has a long-standing history in the organic movement here in Canberra. And it offers an infrastructure that is already in place for others to work with and to build upon. It is a tragedy though, that the recent bush fires have caused so much hurt and waste.

As Vice President I hope to learn more about the Association and the wonderful people who have made it all possible. Through your compassion and guidance I hope to contribute something useful and to build upon the most excellent work already achieved by so many others.

To good health,



Martin Giese  
Vice President

## From the Show Secretary, The Horticultural Society of Canberra Inc. ....

Possibly due to the drought – or the prices – or the better taste of home-grown vegies, this year saw a great increase in vegetable entries at our recent Autumn Show. We were pleased to welcome three of your members as vegetable exhibitors.

Whilst Bronwyn Beechey (Kambah) has been exhibiting with us for some time, this year we were all amazed at the massive number of vegetables benched by Graeme Davis (Cook). Graeme has been a member of our society since childhood and since his return from New Zealand has certainly given a few people a shake-up in many sections, but he is not undefeatable.

We were sorry to hear that Heather Pearce (Kambah) has not been well and we hope she has recovered by now and will be with us next year. In her place we welcomed Steve Taylor who, encouraged by Heather, made a good showing as a new exhibitor. We hope he enjoyed the experience enough to join us again next year.

Graeme won the Simmie Bowl for the most successful exhibitor, and both Champion and Reserve Champion vegetable ribbons for his collections. Next year a slight change in the schedule will see the championships awarded to individual vegetable units and Steve's wonderful leeks, which almost "pipped" him, will possibly have a better chance.

For our September Show we are hoping to welcome the COGS group as a display unit to encourage more of our members and visitors to get a good start in their own vegie patches. We also look forward to a closer examination of your methods that seem to work so well.

**Linn Doyle**



*The Horticultural Society of Canberra Inc.*

### *Show Dates*

Spring Bulb & Camellia Show:

13-14 September 2003

Iris, Rhododendron & Azalea Show:

25-26 October 2003

Spring Exhibition & Rose Show:

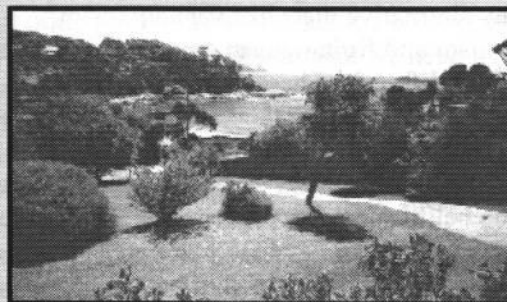
15-16 November 2003

Autumn Show 2004:

6-7 March 2004



***This is the one that includes the vegetable competition.***



## **Beautiful Holiday House**

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

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## A Snapshot of Holder Community Garden

The Holder community garden is located at the corner of Cotter Road and Stretton Drive, Holder and has been operating since August 2001. There are 46 plots, all currently taken up, with 4 people on the waiting list.

When the plots were first allocated most people rotary hoed their plots. Only one person did a "no dig" garden; the others spent hours digging over the soil and removing the couch and phalaris which occupied the ground. We continue to have a constant battle with couch invading the gardens.

Holder has a very beautiful herb garden consisting of thyme, garlic chives, golden oregano, mint, rosemary, horseradish and sage mixed in with a few perennials of verbena and penstemon which grow around the shed. There are six weeping crab apples in the middle of the herb garden.

An orchard was started last year which includes plums, apples, mulberry and peach trees. Some of these trees were damaged during the bushfires and so will be replaced this year. Grape vines and kiwi fruit have also been planted along the fence line and these were growing happily until the bushfires. Whilst they were damaged, the grapes have lovely new growth and seem to have survived the bushfires.

One member's daughters have been allocated a corner plot near the front gate. The girls have worked hard and have enjoyed making a beautiful plot with lots of flowers, basil and corn. It is great to have such a colourful plot at the entrance to the garden.

Members whose plots were damaged due to the bushfire have been able to get their plots up and running again in a short time so that now it is



hard to see where the damage occurred. Some areas of the herb garden were damaged but most of it continues to thrive. As a result of the bush fires we have lost all the pine trees along Stretton Drive, leaving us very exposed to frosts this coming winter. There have been discussions about what will be planted around the garden to provide us with protection quickly, but this is yet to be

decided.

This year members have had very successful crops of carrots, eggplants, corn, capsicum, garlic, potatoes, tomatoes and beans.

One member had a wonderful crop of beautiful golden delicious apples from her weeping apple in the middle of her plot.

We have 2 blue tongue lizards which now live in our garden plus some brown snakes which seem to have made the garden their home as well. As a result members are encouraged to wear enclosed shoes and long pants and be aware that there are snakes around. We also have cranes, choughs and other birds that scratch round in great flocks feeding off the garden. People have chosen to cover crops with wire or bird netting to protect crops from bird damage and to allow the crops to at least get established.

We have many local lawnmower contractors who leave the grass clippings and leaves in a pile in our garden. These are snapped up by plot holders to mulch their gardens or use around the plots to eliminate the weeds.

We are due to have a working bee in May to tidy up the garden before the cold weather sets in.

**Jane Andrews**



## The Birth of The Dickson Community Garden

Early this year an article appeared in the *Northside Chronicle* advertising a free organic garden course at the Majura Community Centre. The response was such that three separate groups were formed who were ably taught by Barbara Schreiner for four consecutive weeks on the benefits of organic gardening, ecology, "no dig" beds, composting, recycling, etc. Through Mission Australia, a 'Work for the Dole' team had fenced off an area on three sides - the fourth side is the curving wall with windows of the Majura Community Centre itself. I have been told by a reliable source that the entire enclosed area is equal to one plot in the Cook Garden!

The hands-on component of the course was to create beds by using newspaper, cartons, horse manure and straw. Punnets of seedlings were potted on and later planted in the newly made beds. Every student was asked to bring a bag of mulch which was used for the paths. Within the four weeks, part of the bare piece of land was transformed.

After the course was finished a number of people donated their time to maintain what had been done by watering the plants and removing the couch grass. Northside Community Service did not want

responsibility for management of the garden and Barbara is not able to continue on an ongoing basis due to other commitments. A meeting was held with Northside, Barbara, COGS and myself with the objective of COGS taking it on as part of the community garden operation. An "in principle" agreement was made on the proviso that someone would be prepared to be the Convenor, which I agreed to (heaven help us!).

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March a public meeting was held to ascertain whether there would be interest in membership of the garden and a small number of people agreed to become plot holders. The following Saturday, the members agreed to continue as a communal group by meeting on Wednesdays from 11-1pm and on Saturdays from 2-4pm. At that stage we had 5 plot holders (2 of whom are children) and 2 people who just wanted to help.

Northside has sent a draft Memorandum of Understanding to COGS that will be discussed at the May Committee Meeting. It is expected that agreement will be reached quickly to make the Dickson Community Garden the 11<sup>th</sup> and smallest COGS Community Garden.

**Beatrix Bros**



## COGS as a Local Seed Network



COGS is currently one of thirty-five groups from around Australia to have become involved in the Local Seed Networks project. Through this project COGS is hoping to increase the seed saving knowledge and skills of our members and the number and variety of open pollinated seeds regularly saved in the Canberra region.

The Local Seed Networks (LSN) project is an initiative of The Seed Savers Network in Byron Bay. The LSN project aims to decentralise The Seed Savers Network into many local networks over the next five years. It was begun in order to share the SSN's knowledge and enthusiasm amongst seed savers all over the country and to make better use of resources by encouraging the local saving and swapping of seed suited to the region.

A local seed network is simply a loose organisation of gardeners and seed savers who enjoy saving their own seed and sharing and exchanging interesting and different seeds,

cuttings, bulbs and information with others. Many COGS members already save their own seed from year to year and regularly swap or share some with their friends, neighbours or workmates. They often have excess seed and would willingly share this with others if a forum were available. This year COGS will be holding regular seed exchange and other seed related activities and starting to compile an inventory of seeds available for exchange that are held and maintained by individual members.

The September monthly meeting this year will feature a talk by Rosemary Stevenson on seed saving with a focus on seed exchanges and networks. Members are encouraged to attend and bring along seeds, seedlings, cuttings, bulbs etc. to swap with others, or to simply come along with all your seed related questions.

For more information about local seed networks and seed saving in general visit the Seed Savers Network website at [www.seedsavers.net](http://www.seedsavers.net)

## WWOOFing: Destination Italy!

In September 2001 I embarked on my 'once in a lifetime' independent backpacking adventure to Italy in pursuit of experiencing 'la dolce vita'. I wanted to live Italian-style and see as much of Italy's 20 regions as possible, all on a shoestring budget! Owen Pidgeon (organic apple grower extraordinaire) suggested I join the WWOOF Italia association prior to my departure to organise some farm stays. Some great advice!

You will have seen information about WWOOF included in *Canberra Organic Summer 2002*. General conditions are applicable world wide, but one has to join the organisation specific to the target country to participate. You can browse the WWOOF Italia website at [www.woof.it/gb/about.html](http://www.woof.it/gb/about.html). This includes the general obligations of WWOOFers and hosts. You can also obtain a sample selection of participating farms, grouped by geographical region, with a brief descriptive paragraph on each.

Organic farms in Italy are involved in the production of olive oil, or the cultivation of fruit and vegetables, the making of honey and countless preserves, the keeping of livestock, cheese-making etc, or a combination of these things.

Once you have paid a joining fee (it was \$45/year membership when I joined in 2001) which includes your workers compensation while staying at the farms, you get access to the comprehensive list of participating farms and their contact details (through internet access or hardcopy). It is then up to you to get in contact with the farms that interest you and organise a convenient arrival date, expected length of stay, whether or not your partner/children/pets are welcome and so on. Hosts may specify what kind of people they prefer as participants (personality traits, age, gender, spiritual philosophies, etc) and/or what things they are hoping to get out of the exchange (improved English, exchange of ideas on particular farming methods, cultural exchange etc). Indications of language/s spoken and accommodation arrangements (from bring your own sleeping bag and tent or sleeping in resident caravan, to staying in a fully furnished 'guest room') will generally be given.

The scheme's flexibility is a great bonus. During my 8-month trip I was able to combine WWOOFing on five farms (2 in Tuscany, 2 in the Abruzzo region and one

high up in the mountainous Trento region) with studying for a month in a university, playing and touring with an Italian chamber group, staying with Italian friends, and sightseeing - frequently using youth hostels and changing plans by the day. The up-to-the-individual approach means that with a bit of planning you can put prospective hosts on notice of an approximate time (what month) you would like to visit, do your travelling, and when your plans become more specific, ring up and confirm a specific date and time of arrival and duration of stay. Of course, as you would, some hosts set minimum or maximum periods of stay (and like to have an idea of your intentions so other WWOOFers/guests can be organised) and this means you can often 'pre-book' many farms and even do a continual WWOOFing circuit if you like! There is always work *somewhere*, as long as you're prepared for the less pleasant winter slog duties.



A business complementary to many of the organic farms is *agriturismo*. Agricultural tourism is a big industry in Italy. Numerous farms big and small open up their gates year-round to visitors wishing to experience country style living. Most *agriturismi* provide comfy B&B facilities and some also provide main meals, ranging from eating the home cooked meal with the family to a more formal restaurant setting, naturally, always serving local specialties made from only top quality home grown organic produce. Not all WWOOF properties are agritourism businesses - and WWOOFers don't always get access to the same facilities as guests! - but it seems that many do choose this path to support their trade, like the one I am about to describe.

My first farm stay was perhaps the best introduction a novice WWOOFer could ever hope for. I can still hear now the soothing "phrrrrth...phrrrrth" of olives flying from the branches gently thudding onto the netting below. Add to this the scenic views of the Abruzzo countryside, warm weather and good company, resting in the shade beneath 100 year-old olive trees. Then, as testament to our hard work, we followed the olives off to the community press, and half an hour later we were sampling the delightful fresh-as-fresh can be green, green organic extra virgin olive oil. Back at the property, we would sit in the informal restaurant and share stories with the guest tourists and the family over a delicious meal and local drop of red.

Of course not all WWOOFing duties are as idyllic as this. It was on subsequent farms that I discovered

the true meaning of the second 'W' of the WWOOF acronym. I vividly remember the putrid odour that I'm sure some of you will have experienced, of damp, rotten potatoes (but have you been squirted in the eye with the stuff while sorting them!). Or the time when I was directed to pull out truly 'uniquely' shaped carrots from the ground after a solid night of rainfall. Another memorable moment was my first encounter with "Max", the temperamental resident mountain sheep. Admittedly I was (calmly, deceptively calmly) warned to 'keep an eye on the one with the bell around his neck'. It wasn't however, until I was flying through the air, projected by an almighty wallop up the you-know-what and landing face down in the mud (100% pure *organic* mud no less), that I was able to gauge the need for the warning.



On one isolated farm in northern Italy a typical day went something like this:

- Rise early to collect wood from the shed and restart the little fire oven, the house's only warming device, responsible for the heating, cooking and hot water for showers.
- Feed the sheep, goats, chooks, cow, dogs, and milk the goats.
- Clean the stable, cut more firewood, prepare a patch of soil for next season's planting, sweep the floors.
- Afternoon child minding (occasionally they could be deceived into doing useful things!).
- From time to time, make cheese from the goat's milk collected that morning, bake bread, make Bach flower remedies and herbal infusions, recycled paper, sell produce to visiting customers.
- Cook dinner.
- On the odd occasion I even got to practice my Italian children's story-book-reading.



Apart from all the wonderful new experiences and skills learned while WWOOFing, there is also the unquantifiable positive cultural experience. Being accepted into a family's home and treated as one of them was such a buzz and honour for me, and I couldn't begin to tell you the many cultural observations one absorbs at the dinner table in a family home!

There are so many wonderful things to be said about the opportunities that this scheme can offer. For anyone considering taking up WWOOFership, I highly recommend it!

#### Some things they told me .....

- *The 'beard' from corn is a natural diuretic.*
- *The classification of extra virgin olive oil is when the level of acidity is below 0.05%. Acidity increases proportionately to the length of time the fruit is left lying on the ground after being removed from the tree; thus the day's pickings are usually pressed immediately.*
- *Olive harvest starts when a high proportion of the*



*olives is still green. This is because 2 months down the track (average length of harvest) the remaining olives are well and truly mature.*

- *The green 'immature' olives are still important to the production of the oil as they contain a natural preserving agent.*
- *You can eat the inner contents of the pods of the common beech tree. Though it is a time consuming process, you can also grind the pods to make a passable coffee substitute drink.*

**Jenny Popovic**

*Note Jenny will be talking about WWOOFing in Italy at the COGS general meeting on 27 May.*



## APPLE DAY and ORGANIC FAIR REPORT

Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Loriendale Orchard hosted its annual Apple Day on 5<sup>th</sup> April and welcomed more than 800 visitors from the Canberra Region and Sydney.

Everyone had the chance to taste the freshness and purity of organic apples originating from many countries. There was great interest in seeing the pressing of fresh apple juice on a C19th styled wooden apple press and the supply of the delightful sweet, delicious tasting juice could not keep up with the demand.

This year was indeed a drought year at Loriendale. It impacted most of all on the apple varieties originating from England and Canada. The usual supply of Cox's Orange Pippin and Spartan were not available. However, sections of the orchard still managed to produce fine tasting Bonza, New Gold, Smoothie, Fuji and Granny Smith - to mention a few of the 110 varieties that have been planted at Loriendale. The 2,500 trees in the orchard had to be watered by hand for several weeks after the dams ran dry in January.

The publicity for Apple Day brought many people in search of farm fresh organic apple pies. The 240 family sized pies sold within 2 hours. Fresh organic vegetables were also available. Owen was able to secure supplies of organic potatoes from Crookwell and tomatoes from David Watson at Bungendore to supplement Loriendale's own supplies of fresh beans, zucchinis and pumpkins. The dry, hot summer also did benefit the flavour in the fruit for jams, relishes and chutneys made during the harvest season at Loriendale. The afternoon has always sought to promote organic produce as widely as

possible. So people were able to taste organic steak, served with organic onions and relish on organic bread or sit and relax with organic tea or coffee accompanied by muffins, scones or cake made with organic ingredients. Perhaps you may have discovered the real French lass who cooked the 'true blue' French crepes and served them with dollops of Loriendale apple sauce and organic cream. Lucie is one of many overseas students who is studying in Australia for one semester (at UTS) - the difference is that her cousin Loic came to Loriendale last winter for 3 months to undertake an international farm training placement and learn about organics. Owen and Noreen have established a new international link and Australia is providing a base for some overseas young people to learn about the organic movement.

The weather was fantastic, relaxing in a peaceful rural garden setting was the go. And listening to some wonderful music provided by the Brindabella Ensemble, the Sing Australia Gospel Singers and the young musicians connected with the local Uniting Church who perform each year. You see, the other purpose of the day is to raise funds for a range of projects supported by the North Belconnen Uniting Church including TEAR Aust development projects and camping activities for teenagers in the A.C.T. Without the help of the big team of helpers from the NBUC nothing could have happened.

**Owen Pidgeon**



### Are you able to help bushfire victims restore their gardens?

Please contact Chris Stamford, *Phoenix Garden Group*, ph 6274 6589 (w), 6288 4049 (h), email [chris.stamford@dotars.gov.au](mailto:chris.stamford@dotars.gov.au)

Efforts are being focussed on



- Propagation – plants for everyone who needs them;
- Cultivation – coordinating free garden labour to help re-establish gardens lost to the fires;
- Education – getting some experts in to community meetings to discuss various approaches to garden design and maintenance; and
- Lobbying – for recommendations by the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce and action by the ACT Government that will help re-establish gardens lost to the fires.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORTS

## Committee's report to the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc. Annual General Meeting of 25th March 2003 presented by the President

It has been a very active year for COGS and the Committee. One of the most notable features of the year was the severity of the drought. It resulted in the first water restrictions in Canberra for several decades and had a significant effect on all gardeners. An upshot of the dry conditions was the disastrous bushfires which struck Canberra on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2003. Some of our members' homes and gardens were destroyed by the fires and both the COGS Holder garden and COGS Backyard at the Xeriscape garden were damaged significantly.

The collapse of the Public Liability Insurance system in Australia also provided a considerable challenge to COGS. We were fortunate to be able to secure public liability insurance and voluntary workers compensation insurance but at the greatly increased cost of six to seven times the previous annual premium. This may require a review of membership fees during the coming year depending on the success of government's initiatives to make such insurance more affordable for organisations such as COGS.

### **Gardens:**

COGS operated ten community gardens (not including Xeriscape) throughout the year. All are operating well and six are close to full but Charnwood, Northside and Theodore still have many vacancies. Negotiations are currently underway to take over the Northside Community Services garden at Dickson as the eleventh COGS community garden. Vandalism was not a significant problem this year although some vandalism did occur at the Queanbeyan garden. We were fortunate that there was little damage.

The Committee made a significant effort this year to address the issue of the sustainability (particularly financial sustainability) of the increasing number of COGS community gardens. In consultation with all garden convenors the COGS policy on community gardens outlined in the Constitution was clarified and elaborated. This resulted in the establishment of a new

Garden Convenors subcommittee which meets every quarter to facilitate better coordination between the gardens and the COGS committee and to better manage the financial affairs of the gardens. This policy has put in place measures which should ensure the continued financial viability of all the gardens and the organisation as a whole.

### **Xeriscape:**

Thanks to Laurie Thomson and his band of willing helpers COGS Backyard at the ActewAGL Xeriscape garden has continued to provide a creditable promotion of organic growing methods to the many people who visit the Xeriscape garden throughout the year. COGS was also promoted through our stall at the open days and plant sales organised by the Xeriscape Council.

Unfortunately the fires of January 18<sup>th</sup> destroyed most of the Xeriscape garden, including the contents of the COGS shed, and the garden will not reopen until Spring 2003 when, hopefully, the other areas of the garden will have been regenerated. Laurie Thomson continues to be the COGS representative on the Xeriscape Council.

### **Library:**

The library has been operated this year by Beatrix Bros and Maren Child. Several new books and some second hand ones were purchased to broaden the subject matter available to members. There are over 300 books in the library and Maren Child created a new database to enable keeping track of book and loans more efficient.

### **Web Site:**

Maren Child has been in the process of revamping the web site throughout the year. Some of the out-of-date material has been removed and several of the COGS pamphlets and the planting guides have been added in

downloadable formats but there is still much more work to be done. In the near future it is hoped more information about the gardens will be added.

### **Membership:**

Adrienne Fazekas has written a new membership data base which links to the library and financial databases. Currently, as at 19/3/03, COGS has a total of 319 (334\*) members made up of:

- 275 (290) ordinary members;
- 10 (9) life members;
- 34 (35) institutions;

Of the ordinary members there are 219 full and 56 concessions. Currently 165 (139) members have garden plots.

\*Numbers in brackets refer to membership at March 2002.

### **Seed Bank/Seedlings:**

The seed bank and seedling production has become more active this year thanks to Laurie Thomson, Rosemary Stevenson and Beatrix Bros. Seeds and seedlings have been available for sale at most meetings and have proved to be very popular with the public at our stalls at such events as the Green Living Fair and the Xeriscape open days and sales. Beatrix Bros developed a seed bank data base to facilitate management of the seed bank which has proved very effective.

Unfortunately, the fires of 18<sup>th</sup> January destroyed the Nature and Society Forum greenhouses and other buildings where Laurie and his team produced the COGS seedlings and this has severely diminished COGS seedling production ability.

### **Organic Gardening for Beginners:**

Keith Colls, Laurie Thomson and Rosemary Stevenson ran several courses on organic gardening for beginners in conjunction with CIT Solutions. These courses were very successful with every course filled to capacity. Several participants joined COGS and some are continuing to help at COGS

Backyard.

### **Outings and Stalls:**

COGS continued to participate in outings and stalls which during the year included: Environment Day, Green Living Fair, Xeriscape Open Days and the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Gardens and City Farms Network get-together at Holder and Xeriscape gardens. These activities provided the organisation with good publicity and many seeds and seedlings were sold.

### **Monthly Speakers:**

We had many interesting speakers at the monthly meetings as well as useful interactions amongst members during the harvest nights and panel discussions.

### **Canberra Organic:**

Stephen Dean took over the role of producing *Canberra Organic* from Steve Sutton during the year. It continued to be a significant means of communication with COGS members as well as other similar organisations.

### **Thank-you:**

As President I would like to thank all Committee members and volunteers who put in such a great effort during the year and made COGS the successful organisation it is. During the year we welcomed Daniel McLindon to the Committee and farewelled Rosemary Stevenson after many years of committee work. I would also like to thank all members of COGS for their support of the Committee during the year and finally I would like to thank all those regular helpers, the garden convenors, the stall helpers, Marie Bahr and Mary Flowers for the delicious cakes and tea they serve at our monthly meetings and Elizabeth Palmer for fielding all the COGS phone enquiries.

**Keith Colls**

**CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INCORPORATED**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

<b>INCOME</b>	Note	2002 \$	2001 \$
Annual subscriptions		5232.00	4680.50
Bank interest		8.97	319.82
Cocopeat sales		-	10.00
Course tuition		1060.00	480.00
Donations		30.50	13.00
Farm visits		-	150.00
Garden income (plot fees)		6792.54	5177.25
Grants			38000.00
Internet advertising		-	50.00
Joining fees		422.00	533.50
Meeting suppers		111.30	167.55
Miscellaneous income		-	44.46
Quarterly advertising		30.00	502.00
Quarterly sales		154.00	875.00
Seed exchange		671.35	484.20
Stalls		937.20	1949.60
<b>Total income</b>		<b>15449.86</b>	<b>53436.88</b>
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Account charges		106.60	128.16
Administration		1197.50	520.85
Affiliated organisations		130.50	200.50
BBQs		-	26.48
Course		29.95	264.83
Depreciation	(6)	3511.00	2542.00
Equipment written off	(7)	429.00	200.00
Farm visits		-	443.10
Flyer production		120.00	160.00
Gardens – General outlays	(9)	2601.68	3726.89
Gardens – Tools & equipment	(2d)	1766.40	2699.50
Gardens – Water bills	(9)	807.00	444.00
Insurance		4900.50	731.12
Internet		88.00	-
Library		338.70	196.85
Meeting refreshments		31.65	-
Miscellaneous expenses		-	26.71
Postage		1014.80	1012.98
Quarterly production		1748.94	2003.25
Rental and storage		530.82	551.93
Seeds and seedlings		792.09	251.58
Speakers		65.00	-
Stalls		30.00	105.00
Stationery		80.56	116.05
Telephone		81.00	122.00
Xeriscape		180.88	195.45
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>20582.57</b>	<b>16669.23</b>
 <b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR PERIOD</b>		 <b>(5132.71)</b>	 <b>36767.65</b>
 The surplus (deficit) for period before abnormal items (Grants) is		 <b>(5132.71)</b>	 <b>(1232.35)</b>

The Statement of Income and Expenditure should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes to and forming part of the accounts.



## STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Note	2002	2001
		\$	\$
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS</b>			
Opening balance		50615	13847
Surplus (deficit)		<u>(5133)</u>	<u>36768</u>
Closing balance		<b>45482</b>	<b>50615</b>
Represented by:-			
<b>CURRENT-ASSETS</b>			
Cash	(10)	543	2835
Cash at bank		<u>11230</u>	<u>12895</u>
		11773	15730
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and Equipment	(8)	33709	34885
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>45482</b>	<b>50615</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	(2c)	0	0
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b><u>45482</u></b>	<b><u>50615</u></b>

The Statement of Assets and Liabilities should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes to and forming part of the accounts.

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	Note	2002	2001
		\$	\$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>INFLOWS</b>			
Annual subscriptions		5232	4680
Garden income(mainly plot levies)		6793	5177
Magazine sales and advertising		184	1377
Seed and seedling sales		1609	2434
Course		1060	480
Inflows from other activities		572	1289
<b>OUTFLOWS</b>			
Garden expenses		(3590)	(4366)
Magazine and flyer production		(1869)	(2163)
Postage		(1015)	(1013)
Insurance		(4901)	(731)
Seeds and seedlings		(792)	(252)
Outflows to other sources		<u>(2710)</u>	<u>(2703)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<b>573</b>	<b>4209</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM NON-OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>INFLOWS</b>			
Grants			38000
<b>OUTFLOWS</b>			
Payments for purchases of plant & equipment		(2764)	(33469)
Payments for purchases of tools & equipment		<u>(1766)</u>	<u>(2699)</u>
Net cash provided by non-operating activities		<b>(4530)</b>	<b>1832</b>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(3957)	6041
Cash at beginning of year		<u>15730</u>	<u>9689</u>
Cash at end of year	(10)	<b><u>11773</u></b>	<b><u>15730</u></b>

The Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes to and forming part of the accounts.

**CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INCORPORATED**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002 cont'd**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002**

**NOTE 1: FUNCTIONS OF THE CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY**

The Society exists to promote organic growing in the Canberra region.

**NOTE 2: SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The significant accounting policies adopted by the Society are stated to assist in a general understanding of the financial statements.

a) Statutory requirements

The Society is required pursuant to Section 72 of the Associations Incorporations Act 1991 to prepare accounts which give a true and fair account of income and expenditure and assets and liabilities of the Society for the most recently ended financial year.

b) Accounting method

As far as practical, the accounts have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. The Statements are prepared on historical cost principles.

c) Liabilities

Subscriptions and plot fees paid in advance are not recognised as a liability.

d) Tools and equipment

Purchases of garden equipment valued at less than one hundred dollars (\$100) per item are expensed in the year of purchase.

**NOTE 3: COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES**

As at 31 December 2002 there were no material commitments or contingencies

**NOTE 4: RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

During the year there have been no related party transactions.

**NOTE 5: AFTER BALANCE DAY EVENTS**

Since the balance date, 31 December 2002, there have been no events that are of a material value or likely to have a material impact upon the accounts.

**NOTE 6: DEPRECIATION**

Plant and equipment is depreciated at the rates shown below.

		2002	2001
		\$	\$
P&E at 31 December 2001		50417	17148
P&E lost 2002		<u>(429)</u>	<u>(200)</u>
		49988	16948
Accumulated depreciation at 31 December 2001		15532	12990
Depreciation 2002			
Fences	(5%)	896	
Plumbing	(5%)	493	
Mowers	(15%)	536	
Sheds	(10%)	101	
Other garden fixtures	(10%)	<u>1485</u>	<u>2542</u>
		3511	2542
Accumulated depreciation at 31 December 2002		<b>19043</b>	<b>15532</b>

**NOTE 7:** The P&E lost during 2002 was the lawnmower stolen from the Kambah garden in March 2002.

**NOTE 8: PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

	Cost 2002	Accumulated depreciation	Written down value 2002	Written down value 2001
	\$	\$	\$	\$
P&E at 31 December 2001	50417	15532		
P&E lost 2002	(429)			
P&E purchased 2002				
Fences		896	17016	17912
Plumbing		493	9364	9857
Mowers/Trailer	1713	536	4753	4005
Sheds		101	905	1006
Other garden equipment	<u>1051</u>	<u>1485</u>	<u>1671</u>	<u>2105</u>
	52752	19043	33709	34885

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2002 contd**

**NOTE 9: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

The comparative figures for 2001 have been altered to reflect the reclassification of garden expenses in 2002.

**NOTE 10: STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS**

Cash balances comprise:	2002	2001
	\$	\$
Cash at bank:-		
Main account (see Note 11)	10312	11745
Northside account	<u>918</u>	<u>1150</u>
	11230	12895
Cash on hand:-		
Cash&cheques not yet banked	175	438
Charnwood garden	303	256
Cotter garden	43	1845
Erindale garden	-	46
Northside garden	-	40
Oaks Estate garden	21	31
Petty cash	<u>1</u>	<u>179</u>
	543	2835
<b>Total cash</b>	<b>11773</b>	<b>15730</b>

**NOTE 11: FUNDS**

Monies held in the COGS main bank account are notionally allocated to one of five funds to be used for different purposes.

Fund	Opening balance 1 Jan 2002	Closing balance 31 Dec 2002
	\$	\$
COGS general funds	9233	3382
Water fund	-	3504
Emergency and Contingency fund	-	1020
Asset replacement fund	-	-
Garden sub-accounts	<u>2512</u>	<u>2406</u>
Main account total	11745	10312

**NOTE 12: SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BY GARDEN SUB-ACCOUNT**

Garden	Opening balance 1 Jan 2002	Income	Expenditure	Closing balance 31 Dec 2002
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Charnwood	256.13	183.99	137.07	303.05
Cook	603.51	1282.75	1346.32	539.94
Cotter	1845.20	804.68	2376.10	273.78
Erindale	45.97	180.00	196.11	29.86
Holder	1326.00	1687.00	2192.28	820.72
Kambah	433.00	953.75	981.15	405.60
Northside	1190.62	394.87	564.69	1020.80
Oaks Estate	25.39	294.00	577.74	241.65
Queanbeyan	(46.32)	304.00	233.29	24.39
Theodore	(297.81)	707.50	378.38	31.31
<b>Total garden funds</b>	<b>5881.69</b>	<b>6792.54</b>	<b>8983.13</b>	<b>3691.10</b>

These funds represent monies raised by gardens and kept in garden sub-accounts. Some expenditure on behalf of gardens through the main COGS account will not be reflected in these figures.

Garden expenditure figures include amounts transferred from garden sub-accounts to the Water fund and the Emergency and Contingency fund.

**CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INCORPORATED  
STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE**

In the opinion of the Committee, the accompanying Statement of Assets and Liabilities, Statement of Income and Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to and forming part of the Accounts:

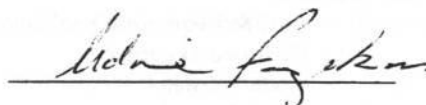
- present fairly the financial position of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc. at 31 December 2002, and the financial results of the Society for the year ending on that date.
- the names of the executive members of the Committee during the year ended 31 December 2002 were
  - Keith Colls President
  - Conrad van Hest Secretary
  - Adrienne Fazekas Treasurer
  - Victor Oates Membership secretary
- the main activities of the Society during the year were to facilitate and promote organic growing in the ACT and operate several community gardens.
- the net deficit of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2002 amounted to \$5133

This statement is signed on behalf of the Committee by:



President

Date: 11/03/03



Treasurer

Date: 11/3/03

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INC.**

I have audited the attached financial statements of Canberra Organic Growers Society for the year ended 31 December 2002. The audit was carried out pursuant to Section 74 of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*. The financial statements include:

Statement of Income and Expenditure  
Statement of Assets and Liabilities  
Statement of Cash Flows  
Notes To and Forming Part of the Accounts

**Scope of the Audit**

The audit was conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards so as to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the accounts are free of material misstatement. Procedures included examination on a test basis of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements and evaluation of the accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. The audit opinion relating to income is confined to amounts recorded in the primary accounting records. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and statutory requirements.

**Audit Opinion**

Subject to the above, in my opinion:

The accompanying Statement of Income and Expenditure, Statement of Assets and Liabilities, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes To and Forming Part of the Accounts have been properly drawn up in accordance with Section 72(2) of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* so as to:

give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure of the Society for the year ending 31 December 2002; and

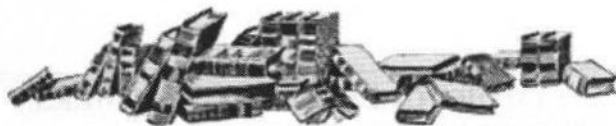
the assets and liabilities of the Society as at 31 December 2002.

The Society has no mortgages, charges or other securities of any description affecting any property of the Society at the end of the financial year.



P.E. Marstin CPA  
Hon. Auditor  
Canberra, ACT  
19 March, 2003

## From the Library



Prior to the February COGS Meeting a stocktake was undertaken to identify books present in the library and books out on loan that had not been returned by the due date. Fortunately some books were returned when members were contacted. Please return any books you may have overlooked returning so that our library books are available to all members. **Please note that books borrowed at one monthly meeting must be returned to the library at the next meeting.** If this is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances, please ask a friend to return them or let me know by phone or e-mail so that it may be noted.

The Committee has made available monies to purchase new and second hand books to add to the library. I will be concentrating on obtaining more specialist books on vegetables, fruit and herbs. If any member would like to recommend a particular book, please note the details such as title, author, publisher, year and ISBN number if available. If it is within our budget I will endeavour to obtain it. A new subject list will be available at the May meeting.

### Recent Additions to the COGS Library:

#### *Success with Small Gardens*

Marianne Scheu-Helgert

As the title implies this is a guide to designing a small garden or courtyard. A step system is used starting with identifying 'the ideal garden' then planning, building, planting and sowing. Although the timetable and plants are for the

Northern Hemisphere, it can be easily adapted for our region.

#### *Growing Peas & Beans*

David R Murray

The good layout in this book is easily followed. It contains information on growing, general care, handling pests and diseases, after flowering care, historic information and the value of eating peas and beans.

#### *Organic Living*

Lynda Brown

The focus of this book is on organic and ecofriendly issues and how to make changes in one's lifestyle to incorporate the key principles. The contacts glossary at the end of the book gives both UK and Australian addresses, phone numbers and websites.

Thanks to Laurie and Eril who donated numerous old copies of *Gardening Australia* to the Library. These are all stored in a box and are available for browsing and borrowing. We also have a number of current newsletters/magazines from other organisations whose areas of interest overlap with COGS interests (see recent acquisition list at bottom of this page).

Happy reading!

**Beatrix Bros**



### Journals Received from other Organisations

On a fairly regular basis COGS receives copies of journals and magazines from other organisations whose areas of interest overlap with COGS interests. The following have been added to the COGS Library recently:

- *Brisbane Organic Growers Inc. Newsletter April 2003*
- *Natural Growing Autumn 2003 Issue 133*  
Journal of the Henry Doubleday Research Association
- *Natural Heritage No.15 Autumn 2003* Journal of the Natural Heritage Trust
- *Suncoast Organic Growers Group April 2003*
- *The Web Autumn 2003*  
Threatened Species Network
- *Total Health the Organic Way April 2003 Vol. 1 No. 6*

### NETWORK OF CONCERNED FARMERS PRESS RELEASE (EXTRACT)

#### New survey shows 70% of Vic farmers concerned about GM canola

Melbourne, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003: The first comprehensive survey of Victorian farmer attitudes has shown that farmers are overwhelmingly concerned about the proposed introduction of GM canola.

“The survey, commissioned by Doug Shears from ICM Agribusiness and in consultation with the Network of Concerned Farmers, provides overwhelming justification for a statewide moratorium on the release of GM canola,” said Geoff Carracher, canola grower from West Wimmera, VFF member and spokesperson for the Network of Concerned Farmers. Key findings of the survey are:

- 71% of farmers surveyed have concerns regarding the commercial release of GM canola;
- 67% of farmers have significant concerns about the ability to market GM canola;
- 80% of farmers have significant concerns about the ability for GM and non-GM canola to co-exist.

...

The survey produced by the Paterson Group involved phone interviews with a random and representative sample of 200 grain growers in Victoria. The qualitative survey found that the overwhelming majority of farmers have a wide range of concerns:

- Only 52% of farmers surveyed consider that they have enough information to make a sound decision about the introduction of GM canola;
- 80% of farmers have significant concerns about on-farm contamination issues;
- 72% of farmers have significant concerns about the liability issues due to contamination;
- 71% of farmers have significant concerns about patent rights depriving farmers of the right to save seeds;

- Only 20% of farmers are confident that existing quality assurance systems are sufficient to ensure non-GM and GM canola can coexist.

“This is not an anti GM response,” Kinnear added, “even though most farmers don’t trust the biotech companies.”

“A large majority of farmers supports GM research. Their opposition to GM canola is specific – they don’t want GM canola released commercially based on the current technology, current markets and the inability of current quality assurance systems to stop GE contamination of conventional crops.”

*Further information:* Scott Kinnear 0419 881 729 or Geoff Carracher 03 5386 6261 [www.non-gm-farmers.com](http://www.non-gm-farmers.com)

#### Seeking disease control products for use in the Australian Organics Horticultural Industry

NSW Agriculture is investigating alternatives to copper-based fungicides for use in organic farming systems and is calling for companies and individuals to come forward with information on alternative products that can control plant disease.

Copper has been used for centuries around the world to reduce pests and diseases. Its use in both conventional and organic agriculture has led to copper accumulation in the soil, which has a detrimental effect on soil fauna (including bacteria, fungi and earthworms). A diverse, abundant soil fauna has been shown to outcompete and exclude pathogenic organisms in many trials around the world. The project team is keen to investigate natural products such as molasses which “feed” the friendly micro-organisms and may control some fungal diseases. Other strategies include the use of compost and compost teas, vermiculture products and microbial inoculants.

Dr Melissa Van Zwieten (plant pathologist) will develop a list of alternative products available to the Australian organic farming industry. Data on the efficacy of identified products and an evaluation of current literature will provide recommendations for future work in this area.

Companies or individuals wishing to contact the project can do so by phoning 02 6626 1126 or emailing [Melissa.van.zwieten@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Melissa.van.zwieten@agric.nsw.gov.au)

*Source: NSW Agriculture Media Release, 5 May.*

## RELEASES

**Office of the Gene Technology Regulator**  
GTR01/03 1 April 2003

### **GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR RELEASES BAYER GM CANOLA RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulator, Dr Sue Meek, today released for public comment a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan for the Bayer CropScience (formerly Aventis) application to commercially release genetically modified (GM) canola throughout Australia.

The Plan has been released for an extended, eight (8) week period of public scrutiny and comment until 26 May 2003.

“Over the past nine months I have thoroughly investigated the possible impact of the release of seven varieties of Bayer’s canola drawing on the expertise of a range of expert groups and key stakeholders to assist me in my deliberations,” Dr Meek said.

“The conclusion I have reached from these exhaustive assessments is that this GM canola poses no higher risk to human health and safety or the environment than is currently posed by the farming of conventional, non-genetically modified canola.

“As with the non-GM product, the genetically modified crop is of minimal risk. Therefore, only ongoing oversight requirements are included in the proposed licence conditions that I have set down in the draft risk assessment and risk management plan.”

Dr Meek said all of the GM canola varieties proposed by Bayer have been previously trialled under limited and controlled conditions in Australia and, as canola oil is used in human food, their oils have all been assessed and approved by the responsible food regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

“I have closely examined an extensive range of

possible risks including potential for toxicity, allergenicity, gene transfer to other crops, the likelihood of creating problem weeds and possible impacts on wildlife and soil micro-organisms but have found no appreciable risks that would adversely affect human health or the environment,” Dr Meek said.

Dr Meek said the commercial decision of whether or not to grow GM canola is outside the scope of the Gene Technology Act but she understood the concerns within the community about market and trade issues posed by the introduction of GM crops in Australia.

“There are a number of industry-focussed initiatives proposing ways for GM and non-GM canola to co-exist and I encourage farmers and the public to become fully informed about all aspects of GM crops,” she said.

The GM canola proposed for release by Bayer incorporates a novel breeding system using gene technology to produce hybrid canola varieties that will be marketed under the trade name *InVigor*.

Traditional breeding techniques are used to develop hybrid plants which display improved agronomic performance, known as *hybrid vigour*, but this is the first time in Australia that gene technology would be applied commercially to achieve the same effect.

The Bayer canola has also been modified to incorporate tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate ammonium which potentially provides additional weed control options when the crop is being grown.

Further information on the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (the final version of which will form the basis of the Regulator’s decision on the application) is available from the OGTR at [www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au). Comments on the assessment close on **26 May 2003**.

*Media inquiries: Kay McNiece 02 6289 5027 or mobile 0412 132 585*

## A First Year with COGS – Completed!

A number of people have asked me to write a follow-up article on my plot in the Cook community garden (*Canberra Organic Autumn 2003*) to show the picture for a full calendar year. In doing so I'm hoping that it will encourage others to share with readers their own personal experiences in attempting to grow particular plants, improving the soil, seed-saving etc.

The story from March 2002 to January 2003 was that I'd planned for a six bed system of rotation, planted and turned in green manure in three of the beds, spread lucerne bales, made compost on site and had some good harvests of lettuce, broad beans, broccoli, rocket, spinach, silver beet and chives. I'd also had moderate success with garlic, onions, beetroot, snow peas and cauliflower, and, in the beds prepared with green manure, the tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, pak choy and corn were looking promising. I'd picked the very first beans (mainly Purple King and a few purple flecked cream

Dragons Tongue – not "Purple Tongue" as I called it previously!), the first tomatoes (Tommy Toe), zucchini (Black Beauty, not "Black Jack"), cabbage (January King) and pickling cucumbers (COGS). I'd sown lucerne in the old onion beds as room became available.

I'd have to say that my optimism in buying a food dehydrator in anticipation of a bumper tomato crop paid off. It's been used extensively for drying tomatoes, herbs and figs – the figs from my home garden. However, I can't say that I have managed to squirrel away too much produce for the winter months because I did not count on the gourmet taste tests of family members and friends! Nevertheless, here's what happened from January to the end of April 2003:

*Late January* – I picked the rest of the crop of January King cabbage, well overdue for harvest according to the seed catalogue but not in reality. The cabbages were medium to small but, under the nets, appeared to have been protected from white cabbage moth – or perhaps it was just the time of the year! The heads were free of bugs and delicious. However, I harvested the bulk of the crop in a couple of weeks because when I lifted off the nets I discovered what I think were grey aphids starting to colonise the lower leaves.

I spent a lot of time tying back staked tomato bushes that I had elected not to prune but that threatened to close over the pathway between beds. Then the extreme heatwave conditions without rain caused the lush growth to brown off prematurely and I had to water at least three times a week rather than the once a week regime I had started with. However the yield did not seem to be adversely affected as I picked 2 to 3kg of tomatoes 2 to 3 times a week for an extended period, far more in the peak period. The harvest of beans (Purple King, green bush beans and COGS Giant Stuttgart climbing beans) increased, together with pak choy, silver beet, basil, zucchini and cucumbers. The yarrow Red Beacon began to flower. At home I planted seed trays with kale (unfortunately none of this ever made it to the Cook garden as the seedlings were badly attacked by snails as soon as they sprouted), Brussels Sprouts Ruby, Broccoli Purple, Cabbage Mini and Elephant Leek.



*February* – The dehydrator was in full swing by mid February, mainly drying many kilos of the small tomato varieties Tommy Toe and the beautiful apricot coloured Jaune Flamme, each tomato slice topped with a generous pinch of fresh basil.

For drying I cut the small tomatoes in half and sliced the larger ones. All were topped with fresh basil. Once dried we like eating them with or without olive oil dressing! On a few occasions I made tomato leathers by dehydrating the thick liquid produced by simmering tomatoes with handfuls of fresh basil. All tomatoes were in excellent condition when picked but because they were generally the small variety in great volume they easily got a little squashed on the way home. Anything with split skin then became an immediate candidate for simmering down to sauce. Sometimes I simply omitted the dehydrating process and put the cooled simmered sauce in the freezer for use as pasta sauce. Of course we kept a lot of tomatoes of all sizes for eating fresh.

By the middle of February I was also picking the larger tomato varieties I had planted – Maltese and Vivian, and Amish. As well as increasing yields of tomatoes for the table and the dehydrator and for giving away to friends, I picked zucchini (regularly



but there was never too much at any one time), cucumbers, gherkins, an abundance of rhubarb and the first delicious cobs of corn (Golden Bantam). To the amusement of others I had left the corn unpicked longer than I should have because, not having grown any before, I didn't recognise its readiness when the silks turned brown. About this time also a neighbouring gardener at Cook generously gifted a lovely ripe and very tasty



rockmelon - probably in sympathy for the three teeny green skinned specimens on my vines compared with the healthy ripe crop of melons in her patch! I also discovered with some amazement that I did have

some very good large carrots if modest in number. I never seem to have high germination rates with carrots but because I sow a lot of seeds frequently I still got some long white, yellow and orange Heirloom Mix and orange Baby and Mini Rounds over the summer season. February was also the time when I picked the first Long Purple eggplants, several varieties of potatoes and half a dozen conical shaped cabbages, the latter (under netting) having sunburned outer leaves but clean firm hearts. On reflection my February records show it was a *very* good month.



I had planted only one or two gherkin vines so I used the modest supply of gherkins as fresh crudites with dips or stored them sliced in a plunger style "beetroot container" with fresh herbs and a mixture of cider and balsamic vinegars. This way they were always eaten within a fortnight but without losing garden freshness.

When the substantial rainfall arrived towards the end of February all varieties of beans suddenly flourished and the capsicum and eggplant ripened better. There was suddenly an abundance of rocket, the self sown doing way better than that sown by me in a designated bed. The second planting of corn (8 Cobb F1) also flourished after the rain. It didn't produce the 8 cobs per plant that the name implies but it was delicious. On the other hand some cobs failed to fill completely with corn and some just never developed at all. I probably should have allowed much more space per plant than I did and should have watered it more so I'm not complaining about the yield.

At the COGS February meeting I bought beetroot

and mini cauliflower seedlings and planted those out straight away. I also planted brussels sprouts and broccoli I had raised from seed.



*March* - Early March was the best picking period for my eggplant. I had planted these at the end of the tomato beds but they were a little overwhelmed by the tomato plants. Other Cook gardeners who left more air circulation around each eggplant bush had superior produce in far greater quantities across a number of varieties. Of particular interest to me were the bright shiny orange (Turkish?) eggplant Adrienne grew. All through March the tomatoes, beans and rocket continued to crop prolifically and the cucumbers, zucchini and capsicum to produce modestly. In the first week of March I also sowed a mixture of carrot varieties with radishes to help break the soil crust for them. I also transplanted soft-leaf Lollo lettuce seedlings from a seed bed.

The beans were amazing. The Purple Kings I had planted from commercial seeds saved from my home garden the year before were plump and crisp as well as freely producing. The prolific Giant Stuttgart (the variety some members will remember Laurie showed us at a COGS monthly meeting last year) were almost *too* large - it was good to catch them at  $\frac{3}{4}$  maturity. The green bush beans had lower yields but produced over a long period. The pretty multi-coloured Dragons Tongues needed the moisture that became available with the return of rain. They were never in great supply but were a great visual complement to the other varieties. This is the biggest yield of beans I have ever had anywhere in one season and I attribute this to the successive planting of a number of varieties. Joined by Blue Lake Climbing beans and Dwarf Bountiful Butter yellow beans planted after Christmas, the bean crop continued until 7 April when I cleared out all but the last named variety for more plantings of brassicas for winter. At the height of production I was picking a very large bucket of beans every two days for about 3 weeks.

The potatoes were also pleasing. Those planted with lots of lucerne mulch did the best and left the soil looking good (the potatoes and the soil!). I had Nicola, Ruby Lou, King Edward, Desiree, Red Otway and Toulangi as a certified seed potato package deal but I seem to have acquired some lovely Pink Eyes as well. Of all the varieties I

planted only the Toulangis were a little disappointing, being small and comparatively low in yield though tasty. However, they happened to have been planted at the edge of beds with less compost and probably had less chance to retain moisture in the growth period. I could have planted more potatoes (I shared the seed potato package deal with a relative) because I can see that supply will not continue to meet family demand.



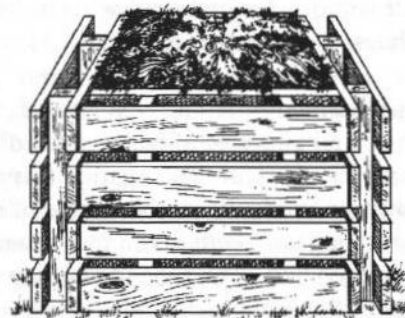
In the last two weeks of March I cleared and weeded last year's onion beds and sowed broad beans between rows of lucerne. I cleared one of two corn beds and planted mustard biomulch seed from a "clever clover" pack as a green manure. I cleared one of two tomato beds, keeping the green tomatoes to ripen off the vine, planted Russian garlic and transplanted garlic chives. I cut down the fennel (it had simply huge roots) and transplanted fennel seedlings to a new bed. I planted the old fennel and potato beds with Dalkeith clover from the "clever clover" pack as green manure. Corn, tomato and fennel refuse was assigned for shredding for the compost heap. The zucchini plants had deteriorated but were still producing. I picked the last of the good quality corn; the rest was inadequately pollinated or too late to mature. I picked three of some half dozen Golden Nugget pumpkins. I'll have twelve large Queensland Blue pumpkins from rampant vines that were planted in the gutters at the edge of the corn /cucurbit and tomato beds.

At the end of March I picked four rockmelons of a variety that is green skinned turning yellow as they ripen and green fleshed inside (I think this variety is Israeli Ha-ogen). The first couple were sweet and juicy, the last was less ripe, less tasty – probably maturing too late in the season – but it's been a thrill to grow something I never expected to be able to. I discovered that three melons I had thought were more of the Israeli Ha-ogen were in fact the French Charentais variety and these, along with three or four of the more traditional Sweet Granite variety were ripening. Nature continues to surprise: seeds of all three rockmelon varieties that I had sown very late all bore fruit! As already mentioned other gardeners at Cook have had good quality melons in reasonable quantity. They would have planted earlier (than 4 December!) and in better soil.

*April* – I sowed the second bed cleared from corn with mustard seed as green manure, weeded a

number of beds and watered young seedlings with Seasol. The beans still produced early in the month, especially the Blue Lake and yellow dwarf. I picked tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, slowly maturing capsicum and banana chillies, loads of silver beet and rocket, the last of the pak choy, some of which were huge. I then reluctantly cleared the bean patch except for the dwarf yellow beans, to make more room for brassica seedlings and lettuce and beetroot seedlings. This extra rush of seedling plantings after the weekend Hall markets necessitated the clearing of some sprawling unstaked tomatoes. In the week after pulling out those plants the green tomatoes began to ripen off the vine. I've trimmed the lucerne for the first time to spread around seedlings as mulch.

What's left as at the end of April is the dregs of one bed of tomatoes, a row of capsicum, zucchini finding it hard to set fruit in the colder weather, some advanced brassicas and young brassica seedlings, small broad bean seedlings, beetroot, fennel and carrot seedlings, a couple of potato plants, silverbeet at various stages, the odd cabbage plant, rocket, slowly developing leeks sown last year (this year I produced seedlings yet to be planted out) and plantings of lucerne, mustard and clover. In the flower line there's self sown calendula seedlings, yellow marigolds, ongoing yarrow and pryrethrum daisies and a variety of nasturtiums waiting to be hit by the frost. When I do the next lot of tidying I'll plant the remaining beds with the COGS green manure mix. And start the compost heap with shredded refuse – this year I have yarrow and comfrey leaves to assist the



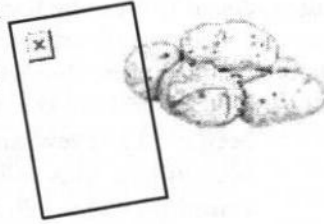
heating up process! And I can't wait till the broccoli produces - the first small heads are on a self-sown plant! And of course then I'll start all over again with the onion planting....

**Janet Popovic**

## FROM THE GARDEN TO THE POT

### Creamy Potato Soup with Leeks and Thyme

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium leek thinly sliced
- 1 small onion diced
- 1 tablespoon garlic crushed
- 2 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 6 cups vegetable stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 2/3 cup sour cream



Heat the unsalted butter in a large pot; sauté leeks and onion in butter until tender. Add thyme and garlic, cook 2 more minutes, and add stock, potato and bay leaf. Bring this to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender. Remove the bay leaf, puree the mixture stir the sour cream and season with salt and pepper, serve warm.

Recipe from the Earthbound Organic Farm website [www.ebfarm.com/recipes](http://www.ebfarm.com/recipes).

### Green Tomato Chutney

- 1.5 kg green tomatoes
- 1 kg cooking apples
- 350g shallots or onions
- 350g sugar
- 350g sultanas or currants
- 60g salt
- 10ml mixed pickling spice (or 10g ginger root)
- 9 peppercorns
- 6 cloves
- 600ml vinegar



Peel apples. Cut tomatoes, apples and onions into small pieces. Tie the spices in a muslin bag. Put all ingredients into pan. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 5 hours, stirring occasionally. The mix should thicken and turn golden brown. Put in bottles, and store for at least 3 months.

### Canadian Pumpkin Pie

- 2 eggs
- ½ kg pumpkin
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¾ cup evaporated milk
- Pie pastry



Peel, deseed and cut pumpkin into strips. Boil in water until it is soft. When cooked drain water off well and then mash up thoroughly.

Beat eggs lightly in medium bowl. Add pumpkin, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and salt. Stir until well combined. Blend in milk. Lay pie pastry into large pie shell. Pour filling into pie shell.

Bake at 230C for 15 mins. Reduce heat to 180C and continue baking 30-35 mins longer or until knife inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool.

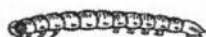
These recipes are reproduced with the kind permission of Owen Pidgeon, from *Loriendale Orchard Fruits of the Orchard Recipe Book*, obtainable at Loriendale Orchard, tel. (02) 6230 2346.

## AROUND THE HOUSE AND THE GARDEN PREDATOR PROVIDERS

Predator insects are one part of an organic gardener's pest control strategy. Provide food and shelter for them by growing flowers and herbs. Attracting beneficial insects to the garden is a major component of organic gardening. Predator insects such as hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds can lessen the damage caused by pests even if they don't completely control it. Backed up by other methods, these good guys are a great help to organic gardeners.

In many cases, the larvae of the beneficial insect feed on the pests, but the key thing is to attract the adults to stay and breed by providing the nectar and pollen from flowers that they prefer. There are two very important groups of plants that provide these flowers – Umbelliferae and Compositae. Flowers from these plant families are nice to have in the garden anyway as they are attractive in themselves and many of them have more than one usage. Umbelliferae members include vegetables such as carrots and parsnips as well as herbs such as parsley. In fact even a common vegetable like carrot has been used medicinally by herbalists.

Compositae include many popular cottage flowers and, as with the



Umbelliferae, some of them are better known as herbs with various properties.

**Common or pot marigold** – *Calendula officinalis* (Compositae). Calendula is hardy, likes sun or part shade, tolerates mild frost, is good in dry soils, but doesn't like it too wet. Put one or two in the garden and they happily self-seed. Plants do sometimes last more than one season, but get very straggly. Flowers all year round. The deep-orange flowers are used in ointments for skin irritations.

**Carrot** – *Daucus carota* (Umbelliferae). If you grow carrots or parsnips, simply let one or two go to seed. The delicate leaves and flattened flower heads are subtly attractive. The whole plant has been used in herbal medicine and the seeds, in particular dill, are good in digestion.

**Cornflower** – *Centaurea cyanus* (Compositae). Traditionally known for its beautiful blue flowers, there are also white, pink and red cornflowers. *C. montana* is a cornflower with white or blue flowers. An annual, the

cornflower flowers in spring and early summer. It doesn't like to be too wet and prefers full sun. It's called cornflower because its traditional habitat was fields of corn- that's the environment it likes. The blue flowers are said to act as a tonic and have also been used as eyewash. Juice of the petals has been used in inks and dyes.

**Common daisy** – *Bellis perennis* (Compositae). Flowers nearly all year around in warmer climates. Comes in various shades of white and pink, and likes to be moist and in full sun or part shade.



**Felicia** (Compositae). Several varieties. *Felicia amelloides* is known as blue marguerite and is a perennial. *F. heteropylla* is pale pink. Both grow to 30–40 cm, and flower spring / summer depending on warmth. *F. amelloides* "Santa Anita" is bushy and taller – to 60 cm – with large flowers present nearly all year round in warmer areas.

**Parsley** – *Carum petroselinum* (Umbelliferae). Probably the most common culinary herb in gardens. Prefers moist soil and partial shade. There are now several varieties available. Parsley tea is traditionally used as a diuretic.

**Sunflower** – *Helianthus* (Compositae). Needs little description! Fast growing and easy care and a great attraction to seed eating birds. Now available in a wide variety of colours. Older varieties, especially those grown for commercial seed were exceptionally tall – some taller than three metres – but dwarf varieties are available. Traditionally the seeds had many uses including as a diuretic and expectorant.

Remember to grow predator refuges close to the plants you want to protect and to get them going as early as possible. It's important to have the predator numbers building up before the pest numbers get too high.

*Soil and Health (NZ) Magazine March / April 2001 Vol. 60 No. 2*



## More on Plant Protection ...

### Seed mix to attract beneficial insects

There is at least one commercial "good bug mix" available. The mix contains red and white clover, lucerne, alyssum, dill, caraway, coriander, cosmos, buckwheat, gypsophila and Queen Anne's lace. The mix blooms most of the year providing a habitat for beneficial insects such as predatory mites and wasps, ladybirds, lacewings, hoverflies, tachnid flies and predatory beetles.



It is recommended it grow in an area where it can grow wild. I had this good bug mix growing and reseeding in wild state for more than one year. I noticed over this summer growing season a lot of ladybirds and other insects attacking a small aphid problem on the broad beans and resting in the shade of the silverbeet that has gone a bit wild.

*Conrad van Hest*

### "Min Plus" for your garden

Have you tried using rock dust in your garden? "Min Plus" is crushed volcanic rock derived from mineral rich basaltic rock deposits near Gladstone in Queensland. It has been used extensively in agriculture and horticulture for many years and research studies have proven its amazing properties in improving soil health and plant growth. I use it as soil improver, organic fertilizer and insect repellent. I have been using it for years and throw it over all my plants to give them a fine coating of the dust. I never see aphids, caterpillars or any other leaf sucking/chewing insect. I have tried many different rock dusts but "Min Plus" is derived from a unique volcanic 'pipe' and is in great demand from growers in Australia and overseas. It is not available at any retail outlets.

If you are interested in sharing an order to obtain a bulk discount price contact :

*Tony Bray ph 62310508 or email thebrayfamily@hotmail.com*

*Tony Bray*



### Barrier netting for crops

It is claimed that a new form of barrier netting protects crops against insects such as Silver Leaf Whitefly, Green Peach Aphids and the diseases they transmit.

Growers from the Burdekin in North Queensland embarked on a two year worldwide search that resulted in finding a technology developed in the Middle East. The non-woven crop cover is placed directly on beds after planting, held down by soil. No structures are required to support the netting—the growing seedlings lift it. Apparently good results have been obtained from trials with tomatoes, capsicums, zucchini, button squash, eggplants and lychee trees. If required to assist pollination the covers are removed when both male and female flowers are present.

There are heavier and stronger covers for frost protection as well as insect control. Depending on weather conditions and care of the covers these should last for one year, possibly two.

*For further information e-mail gunnadoo01@austarnet.com.au*



**Book Review – *The Natural Gardener A Complete Guide to Organic Gardening* ed. Jeffrey Hodges, Angus & Robertson (1995) Sydney ISBN 0 207 17351 6 (COGS Library 129-GO)**

This is a wonderful book of 20 Chapters contributed by nine different authors. It's a good meaty read even if you've already read quite extensively on organic gardening. The first Chapter "What is Natural or Organic Gardening" (by Peter Mayne) is followed by informative chapters on matters such as soil plant science, natural fertilisers, companion planting, mulch, natural pest controls and weeds. There are also specific chapters on pruning, flowers, roses, trees and shrubs, fruit, herbs and vegetables. Chapter 6 "Preparing Your Garden" (by Jeffrey Hodges) includes ideas for "no dig" gardens and crop rotation guidelines for multiple garden beds. Chapter 11 "Natural Pest Control" (by Jeanette Conacher), includes nine pages on physical, cultural and biological pest controls and "last resort" recipes for sprays. The author is careful to point out that the spray recipes developed from the natural ingredients are not necessarily non-toxic. Advice on the safe use and storage of home-made pesticides is included.



**Janet Popovic**

## Jerusalem Artichokes

The Jerusalem artichoke, (*Helianthus tuberosus* L.), a native of North America, also known as sunchoke, is easily grown in Canberra.

“Jerusalem artichoke” has been its common name since the 17th century. The plant has no connection to either Jerusalem or artichokes, but is, in fact, a type of sunflower--which explains why it is sometimes marketed under the name “sunchoke.” So, why is it called Jerusalem artichoke? One story is that the French explorer Champlain sampled the vegetable in the early 1600s in Massachusetts, where it was cultivated by Native Americans, and he likened its taste to that of an artichoke. Some years later, after the “chokes” had been introduced to Europe, the English added *Jerusalem* -perhaps a corruption of *girasole* (an Italian word that means sunflower).

The Jerusalem artichoke is actually a tuber, or underground stem, that resembles a small potato or a piece of ginger root. But it has a sweet, almost nutty taste and a crisp texture that is quite distinctive. A versatile vegetable, it can be eaten raw or cooked, and added to all types of dishes. Like potatoes and other tubers, the Jerusalem artichoke stores carbohydrates, but most of them are in the form of *inulin*, a sugar that can sometimes cause flatulence. The vegetable is also an incomparable source of iron, almost on a par with meats, yet without any fat content.

### Soils

The Jerusalem artichoke is adapted to various soil types and cultural conditions. However, for best results, it should be planted in fertile sandy loams or well-drained friable soil in which tubers are easier to dig. Generally soils suitable for potato and sweet corn are suitable for Jerusalem artichokes.

### Planting

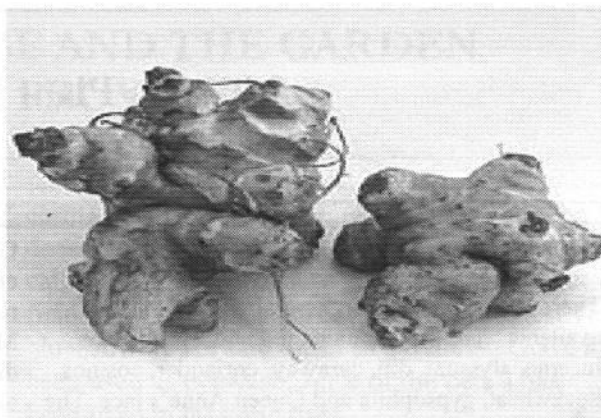
Planting should be early in the spring, when the soil can be satisfactorily worked. Later planting results in reduced yields. Whole tubers or pieces of tubers that are no less than 50 grams and have two or three prominent buds should be planted. Smaller seed pieces will reduce yields but larger seed pieces (over 50 grams) will not significantly increase them. Do not allow cut seed pieces to dry before planting. Plant 75 to 100 mm deep, in rows 1 metre apart with 50 cm between plants.

### Cultural Management

Control grass and weeds as the planting is being established. Tubers begin to form in mid January and may become 100 mm long and 50 to 75 mm in diameter.

### Harvesting

The crop should not be harvested until after frost. Tubers dug later in the season are sweeter but have less inulin. Look for clean, firm tubers with unblemished skin, which may be as glossy and tan as



the skin of ginger root, or a matte brown. They should not show a greenish tinge or any sign of sprouting or mould. Choose the least knobby tubers, and be sure they are not limp or spongy.

### Handling and Storage

The skin of Jerusalem artichokes is very thin. Care should be taken in handling to avoid cuts and bruises. The skin is also susceptible to rapid moisture loss so the crop should be put in storage immediately after harvest. Wrap chokes in a plastic bag, seal, and store in the refrigerator crisper. They will keep for up to two weeks. If the tubers are to be washed, fresh water sanitised with bleach should be used. Under cold storage facilities with a high humidity (85 to 95% relative humidity) and a temperature near 0°C, tubers can be kept for several months.

### Pests

Very few diseases and insects are known to affect Jerusalem artichokes.

### Precaution

The Jerusalem artichoke is a very strong growing perennial and can become a weed problem. Since it is nearly impossible to harvest all the tubers in a field or garden, there will be a large number of volunteer plants the following spring. It is important to destroy all these volunteer plants before they can set tubers in mid January.

### Nutritional Highlights

*Jerusalem Artichoke (raw, sliced), 1 cup (150g)*

*Calories: 114*

*Protein: 3.0g*

*Carbohydrate: 26g*

*Total Fat: 0.015g*

*Fibre: 2.4g*

*\*Excellent source of: Iron (5.1mg)*

*\*Good source of: Potassium (643mg), and Vitamin C (6.0mg)*

**References:** [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-1-a.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-1-a.html), [www.wholefoods.com/healthinfo/pro\\_jerusalemart.html](http://www.wholefoods.com/healthinfo/pro_jerusalemart.html)

**Stephen Dean**

## WINTER VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

### Asparagus

Prepare the bed before you buy the crowns to plant in late Winter - early Spring. Since this is a perennial crop which can last for up to 20 years it is well worth the effort of establishing properly. Asparagus needs good drainage and plentiful food and can be planted very successfully in a raised bed enriched with compost and well rotted manure. Seaweed is an excellent mulch. The crowns are planted in a trench, but with the roots straddling a ridge. Cover so dormant shoots are about 4cm below the surface. Do not harvest spears the first year, and only harvest for a few weeks the second year. Remember this is a long-term investment.

### Broad Beans

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

### Kohlrabi

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

### Lettuce

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

### Onions

Mid season varieties are often sown late Autumn or early Winter and long keeping varieties in Winter. However, the timing of mid or late season varieties is well worth experimenting with by making successive plantings to determine the best time in your specific locality.

### Peas

Peas can be planted in August/September for an early summer crop but may be very slow to germinate if the ground is still very cold or wet.



### Rhubarb

This is a perennial but plants generally only produce well for a few years, then fresh plants need to be started from subdivided crowns planted in late winter or early spring. It is very hardy, but it is a gross feeder and will appreciate lots of compost or well rotted manure and plenty of water.

### Other possibilities

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

Frost-sensitive vegetables such as Capsicum, Eggplant and Tomatoes can be started early in August indoors but may need a heated glasshouse or warm spot to

germinate and will certainly need protection before being planted out in spring.

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



### Strawberries:

Plant certified stock or propagate from runners (not from plants more than 2 years old however) in a soil enriched with compost or well rotted manure. Remove old leaves and excess runners to tidy up the plants in winter.

### Berries:

Raspberries, youngberries, boysenberries etc can be planted during winter while they are dormant. Remember these bear fruit on canes grown in the previous year so to prune remove all the old canes in autumn or winter making sure to leave the current season's growth for next year's fruit. Autumn fruiting raspberries bear on the current year's growth so are cut to the ground in winter after they have fruited.

### Currants:

Red, white or black currants are easy bushes to grow in Canberra as they withstand very cold weather and don't mind heavy clay soil. Currants produce a fruit rarely available commercially. They need to be pruned in winter to remove dead wood and around a third of the oldest branches to encourage new growth and allow for good air circulation.

### Gooseberries:

Like similar conditions to currants.

### Winter Vegetable Planting Guide

	JUN	JUL	AUG
Artichokes		T	T
Asparagus		T	ST
Broad Beans		S	S
Kohlrabi			S
Lettuce			S
Onions	ST	ST	T
Peas			S
Rhubarb		T	T
Silverbeet			S
Snowpeas	T	T	ST
Spinach			S

### S = Seed Sowing T = Transplanting

This table is a guide only, so observe the seasonal weather patterns before deciding when to plant, as there will often be distinct differences from one year to the next. The microclimate of your garden will also influence the times when you plant.

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

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**COGS FLYER**

Pilots: Vacant

**MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Book sales:	Murray Dadds
Produce table:	Vacant
Supper convenors:	Marie Bahr, Mary Flowers
Librarians:	Beatrix Bros, assisted by Caroline Nimmo

**COGS REPRESENTATIVES**

Environment Centre: Vacant

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

**Visitors Welcome**





## 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 the adoption of organic growing methods. COGS is an association without specific political or religious affiliation as a group. COGS has the following objectives – to:

- Foster the use of organic methods in home gardening, horticulture and agriculture
- Foster organic agricultural knowledge
- Promote the production and consumption of certified organically grown foods and the adoption of recognised organic standards
- Demonstrate and encourage the use of organic growing techniques
- Provide a forum for the discussion of matters of interest to organic growers in the ACT and surrounding region
- Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between members and with other organic growers
- Assist members in establishing their own organic growing areas
- Administer community gardens operated under organic agricultural principles for recreational, educational or rehabilitation purposes and for the self-supply of contaminant free produce.

### ADMINISTRATION

COGS is run by a voluntary committee which is elected annually at the AGM in March. The committee meets monthly and all members are encouraged to consider participating in the work of the committee.

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings of members are held in Room 4 at the Griffin Centre, Civic, at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except in December and January). Each month there is a guest speaker. Recent meeting topics have included Backyard poultry keeping, Worms, Herbs and Seed Saving. At the meetings there is a produce and seed exchange table and a bookstall. COGS seeds and seedlings are also available for purchase. Members may also borrow two items from the COGS library. A light supper is available after the meeting.

*Visitors are welcome.*

### QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

*Canberra Organic*, the quarterly publication of COGS, contains articles on organic growing, informs members of upcoming speakers and events, and includes planting and growing information specifically for the Canberra region. Members are encouraged to contribute articles.

### COMMUNITY GARDENS

COGS currently operates 11 community gardens in the Canberra region. Gardens are located at Charmwood, Cook, Curtin (Cotter Garden), Dickson, Erindale, Holder, Kambah, Mitchell (Northside Garden), Oaks Estate, Queanbeyan and Theodore. 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. Plot holders are required to pay an annual levy to cover the cost of water, insurance, tools and maintenance. The ACT Government has supported the establishment of these gardens through the ACT Office of Sport and Recreation and the Department of Urban Services Community Renewal program.

### INTERNET

COGS maintains a web site devoted to organic growing at [www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au). The site contains the COGS information papers on organic growing, seasonal planting guides, certification information, a page for children and links to related organisations and information sources.

### 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.

### CONTACT

COGS

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

*See over for membership form and rates*

## **SPEAKERS**

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

**May 27**

Jenny Popovic  
*WOOFing in Italy*

**June 24**

Martin Giese COGS Vice President  
*Permaculture and Organics*

**July 22**

Bronwyn Beechey for *The Horticultural Society of Canberra Inc.*

**August 26**

Owen Pidgeon  
*Introducing WWOOFers from Versailles*

**September 23**

Rosemary Stevenson  
*Seed Exchanges and Networks, introducing COGS seed exchange night*



## **Events**

### **World Environment Day Activities**

May-June 2003

See flyer distributed with this Quarterly and website address below.

### **Natural Farming Seminar, Pat Coleby,**

June 15, Hunter Biodynamic Group,  
02 4938 5308.

hmccall@onaustralia.com.au

### **Second National Organic Conference,**

2-4 October, Uni of Adelaide, contact  
Cat Mills 08 8370 8455.

ofaconf@nasaa.com.au

## **Web Sites to Try**

[www.actewagl.com.au](http://www.actewagl.com.au) Environment page, then to Xeriscape

[www.wedcanberra.net.au](http://www.wedcanberra.net.au) Living Land, World Environment Day 2003 activities spanning May-June 2003

[www.ofa.org.au](http://www.ofa.org.au) Organic Federation of Australia Inc.

[www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au) Biological Farmers of Australia Co-op Ltd (BFA)/ Australian Certified Organic

[www.nasaa.com.au](http://www.nasaa.com.au) The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA)

[www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au) NSW Agriculture (NSW Government)

[www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/3487](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/3487) Insect pests page

[www.health.gov.au/ogtr](http://www.health.gov.au/ogtr) Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

[www.geneethics.org/community](http://www.geneethics.org/community) Gene Ethics Network

[www.sapphirecoastproducers.com.au](http://www.sapphirecoastproducers.com.au) Sapphire Coast Producers Association

[www.bog.powerup.com.au](http://www.bog.powerup.com.au) Brisbane Organic Growers Inc.

[www.cctg.org](http://www.cctg.org) GAIA Volunteering, 4 month program starts 1 August 2003