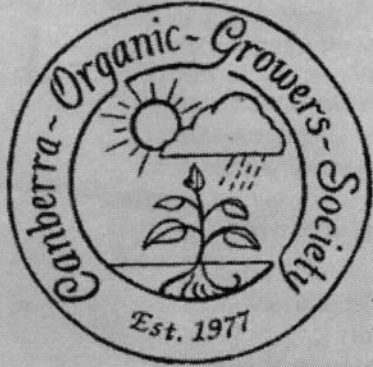


Janet Kopovci

Spring

Canberra Organic



ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

Quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.



VOL. 12 NO. 3

Spring 2004

CANBERRA ORGANIC

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gardening and general environmental issues.
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From the Editor



It's my pleasure to bring you this Spring issue of
Canberra Organic packed with lots of interesting items
contributed by members of COGS. I can take none of
the credit however, as I have been off travelling since
preparing the Winter issue. We all owe special thanks
to our Treasurer Adrienne Fazekas for this one, and,
consistent with our survey results, I know you will
appreciate the extent of the local content and the
practical advice for growing organically in the Canberra
region that is included. Thank you to all who
contributed!

Richard Reed has written about the pleasures of
gardening in our COGS community gardens in his
feature on Theodore Community Garden (pages 8, 9)
and I'm sure it will encourage you to get started with
Spring preparation and planting. It makes me impatient
to get back to the soil at Cook garden though I know I'll
have plenty of work to do on the green manure, spent
brassicas and the weeds among the onions and garlic!
Ben Bradey has given us lots of tips about urban
rainwater tanks based on personal experience
(pages 10-12). Adrienne has written a wonderful article
on crop rotation (pages 13-15) and provided an
extremely useful chart for planting, growing and
harvesting vegetables in Canberra (pages 18-19). The
results of the 2004 COGS survey are discussed by our
President (pages 28-29) and if like me you have missed
some recent COGS general meetings, you can catch up
courtesy of note-taking by Christine Anttila and Ben
Bradey (pages 26-27). Robin McKeown reports on her
food discoveries in Iran (pages 16-17) and in response
to Keri James' letter to the editor last issue has told us
about her experiences growing Australian bush tucker
plants (page 7).

Let's try and keep up the wonderful contributions from
COGS members in future issues of *Canberra Organic*!
Please also note the COGS Seed Exchange
arrangements (thanks Ray Harber!) and the review of
the CD-ROM available through 'Allsun Farms' near
Gundaroo, both mentioned on page 23. In addition
there are several local workshops/ courses, visits and
participation opportunities notified (see pages 4, 6, 25,
27, 29, 35) that are worthy of your attention.

Lastly, community gardeners need to remember that
plot levies are due on 30 September (COGS
membership must be current) and to attend the annual
meeting at their garden (dates and times on page 35).

Janet Popovic

Thanks to Arthur's Vegetable Clipart

For the Australian Community Gardens Network see
terraccircle.org.au/garden



President's Report Spring 2004

Welcome to my second report as President of the Society. I hope that having got through a cold Winter you are all fired up for the start of the growing season, whether in one of the Community Gardens or your own patch.

Having started with a reference to the weather, let me continue in that vein. To state the obvious, the Canberra Region has continued to be extremely dry. According to the rain gauge at Cook Community Garden we went from the 12th of February until the 25th of May (103 days or 14 weeks) without a fall of greater than 5mm in 24 hours.

By the end of June the garden was approximately 60mm behind the equivalent period in 2003, itself a very dry year, in total rainfall. In terms of a normal year the rainfall is 42% of the mean for Canberra.

Unless there are dramatic changes in the weather, and the Government is able to use the water from the higher dams it seems likely that water restrictions will be imposed again this summer. When planning your gardening activities for the coming season you should do as much as possible to incorporate measures to minimise water use, including building in a good supply of humus before planting, designing beds so as to minimise runoff and mulching the beds after planting.

I am expecting that the presentation by Bill Bencke from ACTEW at our October meeting will include a range of useful ideas on how we can practically manage our limited supplies of one of the pre-requisites of successful gardening (see below for more on the need for this).

My first report noted that I tend to have a fairly dim view of most politicians. One of the benefits of the society in which we live is that we are periodically given an opportunity to express our views on our current representatives through the ballot box. During the currency of this issue of *Canberra Organic* those of us who live in the ACT will have a chance to let the Territory Government know how we view their performance over the last 3 years. Perhaps in that period we will all have an opportunity to so advise the Commonwealth Government.

I urge you all to use this chance. In deciding who to support, look at the policies of all parties (and the independents) to assess the extent to which they support the principles on which COGS is founded.

Do they urge avoidance of chemicals in crop production? What is their view on genetic engineering? Are they committed to efficient resource usage and protection of the environment?

On pages 28 & 29 of this edition I have summarised the results of the Survey which we ran to find out what members want from COGS. It appears that most of the things we currently do are supported by the membership. There were also some new ideas put forward, but it will be difficult for new things to be added to our program, while maintaining the existing functions, with a constant level of resources available to do the jobs. I have indicated, in my article, some specific areas in which the Society will need assistance before we can expand our activities.

If people have a few hours to spare every three months or so and would like to help the Society in a small way, please let me know and we'll see if we can merge our needs and your availability.

An area in which you can help is by letting us know of interesting people who could come and share their organic experiences with us. The monthly meetings are a key part of the Society but it isn't possible for the Committee alone to identify speakers for each and every meeting. If you go to an entertaining or interesting presentation about a topic related to matters organic, or know of someone who is an organic practitioner with an interesting story to tell about their activities let one of the Committee know and we'll fit the person into the program for next year.

At the joint Committee/Conveners meeting on 10 August it was unanimously agreed that to meet insurance and water costs plot fees will rise from \$0.75 to \$1 per square metre for the coming season (and may have to rise in later years if costs continue to increase). Conveners will institute ways of minimising the water usage to reduce the likelihood of such further increases.

My last point is to apologise to any members (or other readers of the magazine) for a brief period of unavailability of the website recently. This appears to have been related to changes of personnel at the company who manage the domain registration and has now been resolved.

Happy digging (or no-digging) and enjoy getting ready to plant!

Martin Butterfield

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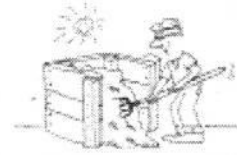
Organic Gardening for Beginners

The next beginners gardening course will be held on Sunday afternoons from Nov 7 to Nov 28.
The course will again be run by Keith Colls and held at the COGS Charnwood garden.

All enquiries should be directed to CIT Solutions on 6207 4441



Around the Gardens



Charnwood

Charnwood garden will again host the CIT Organic Gardening for Beginners course in November.

Cook

Most of the plots in the garden are battened down for the Winter with mulch or a green manure cover. However, a number of gardeners have battled against the drought and the depredations of hungry sulphur-crested Cockatoos and produced some excellent Winter crops. Very close planting seems to have provided a good degree of frost protection for broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, beetroot, silver beet and onions. There are a couple of vacant plots in the garden that are likely to be taken up in the Spring.

Alan Robertson

Cotter

Things have been quiet in the Cotter Garden during the last few months as winter has bitten. There is concern about how dry it is - even the winter weeds are struggling! Without rain to build up the soil moisture and the anticipated water restrictions, next summer could be difficult. There is one small plot available.

Andy Hrast

Dickson

The Dickson Community Garden currently has 4 plot holders. We garden together and at the moment are preparing new beds for a grape vine and apple trees using the espalier method. We have 2 vacancies.

Beby Bros

Kambah

Over the last few months we have farewelled some members who have moved interstate. Our special wishes go with Heather Pearce, our previous Convener, who dedicated so much time and effort to the Kambah garden. Heather has moved to the Melbourne area.

The vandals, on-going drought and a cold winter have affected our beautiful Kambah garden quite adversely. Only a small handful of gardeners have continued the up-hill battle and reaped their winter crop rewards. We currently have 9 vacant plots. Some of these have been neglected for a long time and need many hours spent on weeding and removing rubbish. We are planning a working bee in August in order to clean up these vacant plots so that they can be presented positively to prospective new gardeners. With this in mind, some flyers advertising for keen gardeners have been prepared for distribution as Spring approaches. Hopefully, as the weather warms a little, we can entice new members, re-ignite the interest of current members, and return our Kambah garden to its previous glory. Vandals have been a real problem, continually cutting into our chain mesh fence and cutting hoses, taking hose fittings, burning black plastic compost bins, stealing produce, wheelbarrows, mowers, garden tools, etc. We have very little left, and feel that we cannot replenish any assets for fear that they too will be vandalized or stolen. Despite the negatives, some gardeners, forever positive, have busily placed manure, straw, autumn leaves etc. on their plots with the expectation of a bumper season ahead!

Shirley Irvin

Northside

Most gardeners seem to have gone to ground this winter. There are a few winter vegetables here and there, but for the most part it's green manure or bare earth as far as the eye can see. I suspect the gardeners have decided it's just not worth the effort to grow winter crops in this unusually dry season with the ongoing water restrictions. Perhaps they are suffering exhaustion from hand watering during a long dry summer and autumn. There has been some movement amongst the plots with one plot holder finishing up, one person re-joining the garden after a short absence, another
continued next page....

Reminder -- All garden plot levies are due by September 30th 2004.

This years levy is \$1 per sq metre.

If you are unable to pay by the end of September, and wish to keep your plot, please contact your garden convener as plots which have not been paid for may be allocated to someone else.

Members are also reminded that they must remain financial members of COGS in order to maintain access to a garden plot.

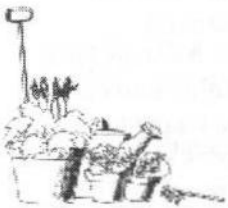
Annual Gardens Review

This years meeting was held on August 10th and attended by COGS committee members and the conveners of ten of the eleven gardens.

It was decided unanimously that the annual plot levy would be raised to \$1 per sq. metre for the coming gardening year. The increase in the plot levy is necessary because of the increased cost of water and the fact our Public Liability insurance premium remains high and has previously been subsidised by the members who don't have garden plots. This levy is payable by all gardeners before the end of September 2004 unless prior arrangements have been made with

your garden convener. Gardeners are also reminded that they must remain financial members of COGS in order to use a plot in a COGS garden and that membership fees are payable in addition to the plot levy.

The annual water allowance for 2004-05 will be 60kl per 100 sq. metre of cultivated area. Gardens which are billed for usage above this level will be required to contribute money from their garden funds towards the payment of the water bills. Garden water usage will continue to be closely monitored and gardeners encouraged to become more frugal in their water usage.



Around the Gardens continued. . .



expanding his holdings after a very successful first season plus one newbie to the garden. Several plots are under consideration after enquiries received as a result of the write-up in the last magazine.

Currently there are vacant plots available to grow food for 4 or 5 families. These plots are in good condition and ready to go. If they are not taken up soon, we will use the space to experiment with cereal crops to provide a constant supply of mulch for the other gardeners. Some plots have fallen into decay over the years and the garden committee will make a determined effort to clean these plots up so they become available in the seasons to come.

If it doesn't rain soon we will have to consider holding a good old-fashioned rain dance.

Ben Bradey

Oaks Estate

The garden will re-open in late August after being closed last year due to a lack of members. A new group of Oaks Estate residents has got together and started to tidy up the neglected plots and prepare for Spring planting. A working bee will be held on Saturday August 21st for a final cleanup before the garden officially reopens.

Theodore

Please see the article on Theodore Community Garden on pages 8 and 9 of this issue.

Organic garden needs new members

Mugga Mugga Community Garden is located near the historic Mugga Mugga homestead in Symonston, not far from Red Hill, Narrabundah, Griffith, O'Malley etc. The garden is not run by COGS but is organic. It is a small garden about 20m x 8m, fully fenced, with an automatic watering system (in the midst of being changed from sprays to dripper lines) and a fertile clay soil. We are looking for up to four more interested individuals or families to join us in working this garden to its full potential.

If you are interested please contact Peter Cornhill on 6295 9851 after 7pm weekdays or at weekends.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read Keri James' letter to the editor in *Canberra Organic*, Winter 2004, as well as her notes on endemic bush tucker. So, I would like to share my experience in attempting to grow Australian bush tucker plants myself over 5 years on my south west sloping rather cool clay spot in Watson.

The oldest plant is 30 years old – the now weed-declared *Sollya heterophylla* (Min Min) – from Western Australia. It thrives near the front door and produces lots of small, elongated fruit, black when ripe and rather insipid to my taste.

I grew Southern Ocean Sea Parsley (*Apium prostratum*) for 5 years under a lemon tree until it succumbed to the drought last summer. It appears to be a true perennial parsley and an excellent substitute for real (biennial) parsley.

Tasmannia lanceolata at 5 years of age, in a shaded position, has had no berries yet. *Kunzia pomifera* (Muntries) dies consistently in the winter, so I have given up on it.

Mentha diemanica and *Mentha australis* thrive in pots (in shade) to prevent spreading in the garden. They die back in winter, but produce delicious mint the rest of the year. *M. diemanica* is inclined to get mildew if not in a sunny spot.

The Minyin (*Austromyrtus dulcis*), a beautiful feathery leaved shrub for shade with pink new growth and small white flowers, produces sweet small berries, but not too many of them.

My favourite – *Backhousia citriodora* (Lemon Myrtle) – grows in a pot under a north facing verandah and is somewhat frost tender. Not surprising, since it comes from rainforest in northern NSW where it is now grown commercially. One leaf, either fresh or dried, makes a wonderful tea, and crumbled, it is great in biscuits.

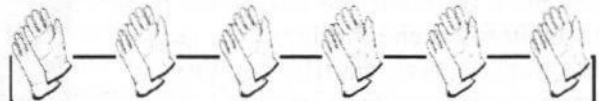
Rose Myrtle (*Archirhodomyrtus beckleri*) died in the winter, but Grey Myrtle (*Backhousia myrtifolia*) with aromatic cinnamon scented leaves seems to be doing well in a pot. The Riberry (*Syzygium luehmanni*) has grown

happily in a pot for 3 years. It is a small tree with very ornamental dark green shiny leaves and wonderful pink new growth. So far, no flowers or berries, but frost does not seem to bother it.

Lastly, *Erëmophila debile* (formerly *Myoporum debile*), a ground cover plant good in hard conditions. Mine is in half shade and produces white berries which age to pink and become very sweet then. It takes months for them to ripen and the crop is sparse. I think I need more plants!

My next attempt will be with *Backhousia anisata* (Aniseed Myrtle) which grows outside at the National Botanic Gardens, Black Mountain.

Robin McKeown
27.06.04



Gloves for Sale

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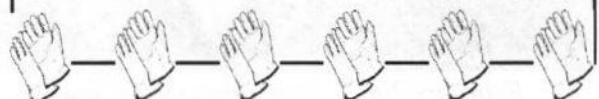
'Gastro-Gnome'

*Robyn

Tel/Fax: (02) 6287 3585

Mobile: 0414 501 578

Email: gasact@inet.net.au



Theodore Community Garden

A New Canberran's perspective

When I was asked to write an article about the Theodore Garden I first wondered about a history but realised that I did not know much about the history of the garden as we joined less than three years ago. I then wondered about a discussion concerning organic vegetable gardening but felt that that would be like preaching to the converted. I then decided simply to write about Theodore Garden and why I like to garden there.

I should add at this point that my wife and daughter are also very active in the garden. To ensure credit goes where it is due and to clear up any grammatical concerns the following may use "I" or "we" somewhat interchangeably. Frankly, if *we* did not like gardening at Theodore then *I* would not be gardening at Theodore.

Theodore Garden is one of the larger gardens under the COGS umbrella. It is worked on the allotment model and there are about fourteen families at the garden, each working between fifty and one hundred and fifty square metres. Allotments of these sizes can make a substantial difference to the family food budget and it certainly does in my case.

In fact, being able to have at least one hundred square metres was one of the reasons we joined. It also saved the back "lawn" which possibly is better left to my young daughter. Another reason we joined was the soil. Theodore Garden is lucky to have relatively deep clay loam which is a far cry from the soil at our

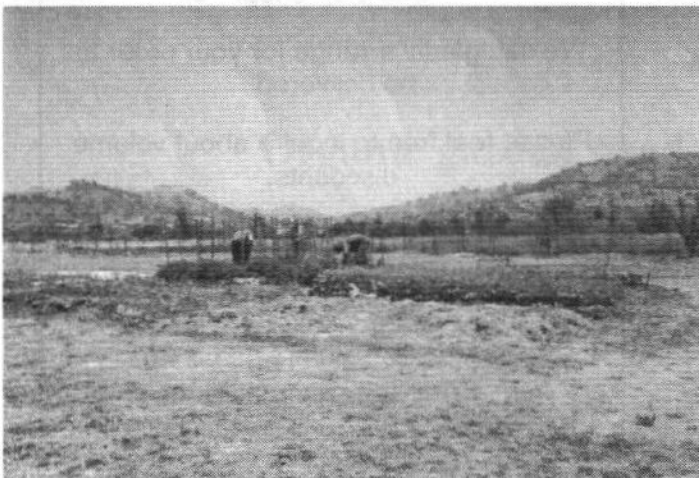
house. We knew that with some effort the soil would support good crops and as far as we could see there were no signs of things to steer clear of; sheep dips, dump sites, scalped earth etc.

Our plot was mostly virgin paddock. We spent a winter digging it over with a spade almost bending the spade blade back over itself with each sod. Just to drive the spade in often required our full weight and then possibly jumping on the spade. We kept going hoping that things would get better. I would watch Peter Cundall on the ABC's Gardening



December 2002 - our second gardening year

Australia jealously laughing at his flicking soil over in comparison to our sods that resembled bricks. But things did get better. The second winter the digging was much easier and now the third winter the digging is easy, almost as easy as Peter Cundall's. Of course the digging was part of a process of working in organic matter, sometimes compost, sometimes green manure crops. And over this time we were taking home vegetables, a few to start with and then more to the point that with preserving and growing different crops we now eat mainly what we have grown. The old harvest festivals and services that I recall as a child now make some sense. Not just the stowing away of the main harvest before autumn storms ruin things, but the end of some weeks of toil. February and March for us is busy. A morning picking vegetables is followed by an afternoon preserving vegetables. At least one day on the weekend is spent this way and often evenings are also



February 2002 - Five months after starting



November 2002 Working bee to dig up the new potato patch

employed. And then, with the last box load of tomatoes, capsicum or sweetcorn harvest is over. Bottles, freezer bags, strings of onions and rows of pumpkins are arranged in their place ready for use over Winter and Spring. So now I know the rejoicing of harvest festivals, the celebration of full stores, inner pride in knowing good food will be on the table for months to come and the temporary end of toil.

Reading back you might think that we question the sense of gardening. When it is wet, cold and the digging is hard we question our sanity, but after a moments reflection we know it to be worthwhile. Our food budget tells us so each week. The taste of our vegetables far excels the supermarket stuff and the choice of varieties and plants is wide open. Is that just grower's pride? Well maybe, but most of the other gardeners at Theodore have said the same.

The gardeners at Theodore are diverse; from families with young children to those with grandchildren, some are better off than others and some are physically fitter. One of the great joys of gardening is that a university degree or a high paying job is irrelevant. What matters is the doing and the sharing.

We typically spend Sunday morning working our plot. Around morning tea-time the signal goes out and we and other

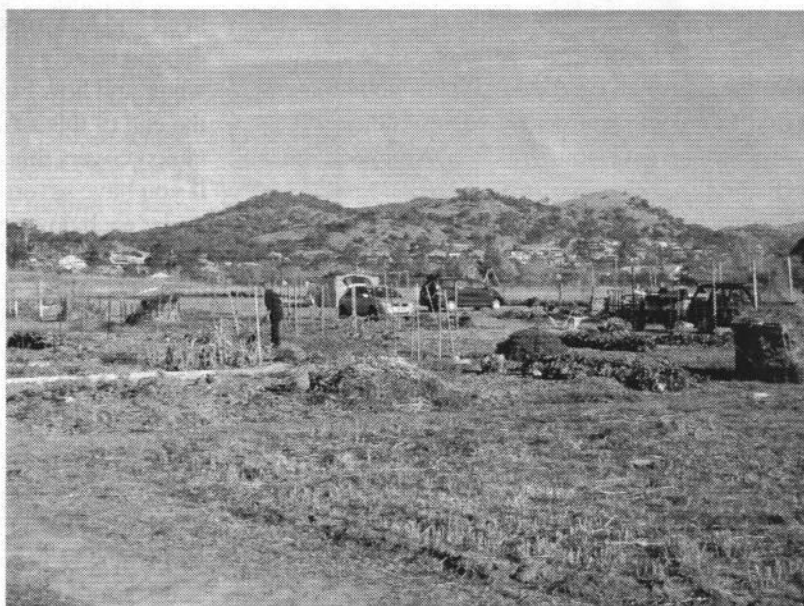
gardeners stop and have a picnic. We chat about the week, gardening challenges, zucchini recipes or whatever. These tea breaks are integral to Theodore Garden. I will admit that at times there is more chat than digging but the social side of Theodore Garden is very important to us. Coming from interstate Theodore Garden allowed us to make friends and fill the void created by the move.

One of our gardeners makes watering tins that allow effective flood irrigation into trenches or pans directly adjacent to vegetable plants.

Another is building a BBQ for everyone to use. Many times a patch of the garden has been mown without suggestion. On Clean Up Australia Day gardeners pitched in to clean up a large area around the Theodore Garden. Sometimes a plot is dug over by a group of gardeners and holidays are never a concern as someone always volunteers to keep an eye on our garden. Children play safely with many eyes monitoring their games, always ready with aid or food.

All in all, the best part of Theodore Garden is the gardeners. Without fanfare or seeking adulation or reward the gardeners help each other in many quite ways and really put the "C" into community gardening.

Richard Reed



A Sunday in July 2004

Urban Rainwater Tanks

Are you thinking of installing a rainwater tank on your urban property?

Do you expect to save money by doing so?

Well let me get one thing clear up front – even with the generous government rebates on offer, the tank will cost a lot of money and it will take a very long time before you come close to recovering your outlay by way of savings on your quarterly water bill. When I purchased my first small tank, I believed the marketing spin and expected to save some money by doing so. However, I quickly realised that a tank which costs around \$500 holds water to the value of about 45 cents. It would take more than a thousand refills to reduce my water bills by \$500 over time, especially if the water is only used during the drier months for garden irrigation. So why did I go out and buy another three tanks? While there was some concern for the environment, my main motivation was to counter the ever-tightening (and possibly permanent) water restrictions. It's re-assuring to know that I can water my garden at any time on any day.

Over the last year or so I have installed 4 tanks in my suburban backyard. Saving money was not a prime motivation for me and it shouldn't be for you either. You may justify your decision by knowing that you have done your bit to reduce the pressure on our water catchments and helped to delay the need for new or bigger dams in our pristine mountain environments. Maybe you are concerned about the increased flow of stormwater into local river systems. Before your house was built, most of the water that now falls on your roof was absorbed gently into the ground and held in the subsoil water reserves. Now it runs straight into rivers that are not equipped to deal with such a deluge, causing all manner of problems to the river systems. Taking responsibility for collecting at least part of your water also leads to greater awareness of water conservation measures that can be used around the house and garden. All very good reasons. But don't think the tank will save you money. It won't. It might save your children money - if the tank lasts that long.

The remainder of this article will cover the basic points you need to know if you are considering installing a water tank for the purpose of irrigating your garden. Using tank water for consumption in the house is a more complex topic which may be the subject of a future article.

Tank selection

Rainwater tanks are produced from a range of materials including concrete, steel and plastic. For most urban dwellers, plastic is the ideal choice. They are light for their size and easy to move into position. Expect a plastic tank to come with a 20 year warranty if installed according to manufacturer's instructions.

Tanks are easily obtained through major hardware chains or specialist suppliers. When making your selection, check the estimated delivery time (can be up to 6 weeks) and whether delivery is to your door or the local distributor. Most suppliers will not include home delivery for smaller tanks. Also check out the local field days for special 'show prices' – you can expect to save around 10% by purchasing direct from a manufacturer's display at the Murrumbateman Field Day in October or the Canberra Show in February. There are also a number of companies specialising in a complete tank service (supply and installation).

Slimline tanks (usually around 600 -1000 litres) are quite narrow and designed to fit under the eaves of the house, making great use of otherwise wasted space. Expect to pay \$400 - \$600 for a tank this size. Standard round tanks are available in sizes from 100 to 30,000 litres. A 1000 litre round tank will cost about \$400 and a 5000 litre one will cost about \$800. Check the height of your guttering to ensure it is higher than the final position of your tank inlet (don't forget to include the tank stand in your calculations). Squat tanks may help here because they are lower, however they are more expensive for the same volume compared with tanks of standard height.

Plastic tanks come in a range of colours (black is always cheapest). In my experience some suppliers cater specifically for the rural market where design and style is not such an important aspect. Check between the major suppliers until you find a style to suit your backyard. My tanks were purchased from Bushman Tanks – mainly because I liked the look of their product and because they delivered to the door. But it's personal preference, so shop around.

An important consideration is: what size tanks do I need and how much water will I collect? This will depend largely on what you intend to do with the water and how big your roof is. The first reference at the end of this article (the ACTPLA guide to rainwater tanks) covers this question in great detail. In summary if you have several downpipes then a 1000 litre tank under each downpipe is optimal and you can expect to yield about 20,000 litres per year for garden watering only. To collect all the water from an average size house (150sqm) in one large tank you should go for a tank around 5,000 litres connected to all downpipes in a central location. Such a tank will yield about 60,000 litres of water per year when used for garden irrigation only. This takes into account the average irrigation usage pattern across the seasons. To buy this much water from ACTEW would cost about \$30. Still think you will save money? Such a tank will cost about \$800 before any rebates and you would have to spend about the same again to re-align your guttering and downpipes to a central location.

I purchased a 10,000 litre tank to collect all the water from my main house (150sq m) which is probably overkill – it has never been more than half full. The smaller 1000 litre tanks are attached to various outbuildings and tend to overflow on a regular basis during periods of average rainfall.

Government Rebates

Not that long ago it was illegal to install water tanks in Canberra backyards. Now the ACT government encourages you to do so by offering rebates. Rebates have recently been adjusted to make them more attractive for smaller tank purchases, but less generous for larger tanks. On offer now is \$150 for tanks 2,000 - 3,999 litres, \$300 for tanks 4,000 - 8,999 litres and only \$400 for tanks larger than 9,000 litres. You can combine your tank volumes to meet certain thresholds (eg purchasing two 1000 litre tanks will entitle you to a \$150 total rebate). Only one rebate per property is allowed and you will have to pay the supplier the full purchase price, submit an application for the rebate and wait about 3 weeks for the rebate cheque to arrive. I used my rebate to purchase a 10,000 litre tank – the purchase price of \$1300 was offset by a generous \$500 rebate (the same purchase would only attract a \$400 rebate now).

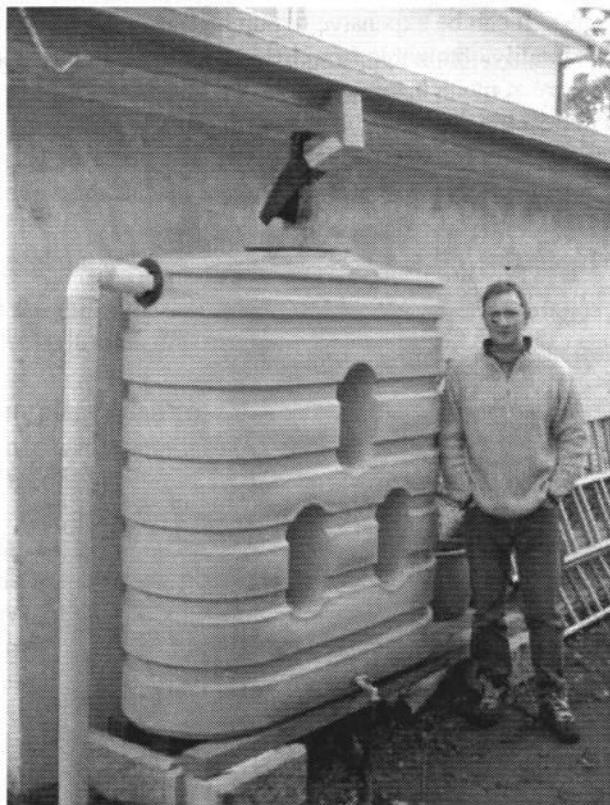
Tank installation

The most important installation consideration is a firm base so the tank is well supported and standing upright. It should not be leaning to one side otherwise the weight of water may cause strain and eventual collapse. A plumber is not required if you are using the water for irrigation purposes only. Unless you intend to connect a pump to your tank, you will need to raise the tank on a stand in order to get the water flowing out of the tank and onto your garden. The stand should be at least 30cm off the ground – the higher the better. 30cm is adequate for drip irrigation but not for a sprinkler – you will need a small pump (\$200 - \$400) in order to get enough pressure for a sprinkler. Remember that water is heavy (1000 litres = 1 tonne), so ensure your stand is built to take the weight of a full tank of water. Tanks greater than about 2,000 litres are too big for a stand, so can be placed on a raised dirt mound to get the necessary height above ground level. Make sure the tank is secured to the base (tied down or otherwise) so it can't blow away when it's empty.

Eventually it will rain properly again and your tank will overflow. The simplest method to deal with this is to direct the overflow into the closest stormwater drain. It is possible to re-direct the overflow to your garden, but make sure it is kept well away from buildings to avoid structural problems later, and is retained on your property. It is illegal to allow overflow to enter somebody else's property (it would be a waste of your water regardless of the legalities). You will be surprised at how quickly a small tank will fill. I didn't give consideration to overflow with my first tanks and

ended up with a huge mess on my hands after the first heavy downpour. Now my overflow is directed to a large ornamental pond. Hopefully that will never overflow!

Canberra residents should check with the ACT Planning and Land Authority and ACTEW AGL for regulations regarding the siting of tanks. There are restrictions on the siting of tanks in your front yard. You will need planning approval (and to pay a fee) for tanks in the front yard, larger than 17,000 litres, located in a heritage area, higher than 2.4 metres, of a light, reflective colour or if the tank is to be sited closer than 1.5 metres from side boundaries or 3 metres from rear boundaries and there is already another class 10 structure (eg pools and other water tanks) on the boundary. The ACT Government encourages you to install a tank, but you must abide by these guidelines otherwise planning approval at your expense is required. You should also check that your tank would not be located on an easement or close to powerlines. Check with ACTEW and the 'Dial-Before-You-Dig' service on 1100 before you select your tank location. Non-Canberra residents should check with their local council and utility providers for regulations in their area.



Ben with one of his 1000 litre slim tanks

Tank maintenance

Most tanks come with a large hole in the top covered with mesh to prevent debris entering the tank. This will be adequate if you are only using the tank for irrigation purposes. However if you intend to use the water for

continued next page ...

Urban Rainwater Tanks continued . . .

drinking (now or in the future), you will need to invest in a first flush diverter that will harness the first 50 litres or so during each rainfall. These first waters are diverted into a separate chamber, allowing the main tank to stay relatively clean. You can build a first flush diverter yourself or purchase one from your tank supplier for \$100-\$200. Ensure that all outlets are sealed with fine mesh (1mm square) to prevent the entry of mosquitoes. I have heard that placing a goldfish in the tank will take care of the mosquitoes, but I would not recommend that approach as I don't know how you'd ever get the fish out. Placing a thin layer of kerosene on the surface of the water is also not recommended as it may damage the internal wall of plastic tanks. Keeping sunlight out of the tank will reduce the likelihood of algae.

Don't forget to keep your gutters clear of leaves and debris. Forget about the plastic leaf guards – spend your money on a fixed metal cover if you don't wish to clean the gutters out by hand a few times a year.

Using the water

The simplest way to make use of your tank is to connect it to a drip irrigation or soaker hose system. Tubing with built-in drippers is very easy to lay out and use. It can be expensive to purchase in small rolls, but is readily obtainable from irrigation suppliers by the metre at much better prices. Avoid the temptation to connect the drip lines back to each other to form a loop. It's better to design your system like a capital 'E' so you can easily peel back the arms of the drip line

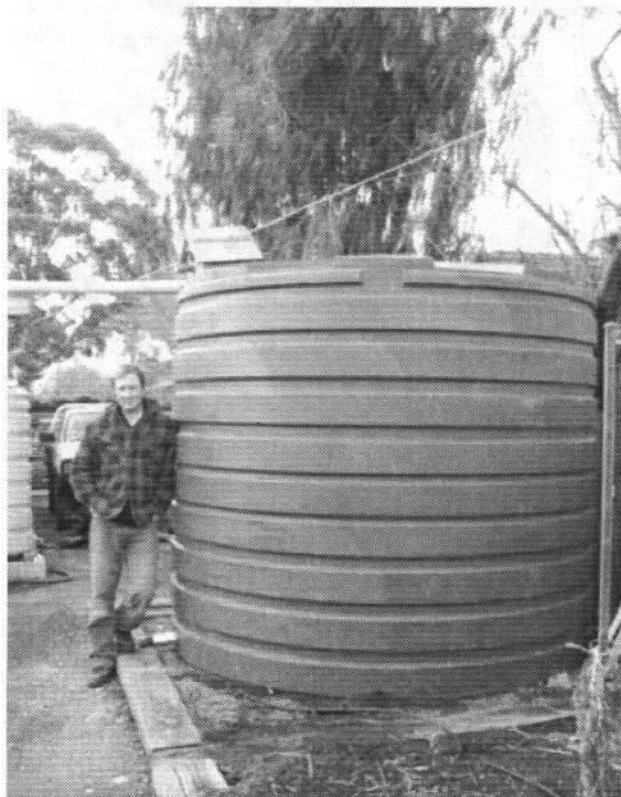
during seasonal garden bed maintenance. Always place an in-line filter on any drip irrigation system to reduce blockages caused by small particles in the water.

Using the water solely for irrigation is not the most effective use of a rainwater tank in Canberra. You will find yourself in either a feast or famine situation. This is because you won't have much use for the water when the tank is receiving the most inflows (winter) and you will find the tank will quickly run dry when you need the water most (summer). If you can connect your tank to the laundry or toilet then you will use more of the tank water during winter, improve your total collection figures and further reduce your use of mains water. But that's another topic.

Of course you can always take water from the tanks with a bucket to water pot plants. I find my plants respond much better with rainwater. You could connect a hose to the outlet tap and get reasonable flow if you keep the hose low to the ground, but raise the hose much above the outlet tap and the flow will cease. You could also use the water to top up ornamental ponds or wash the car by bucket if you are keen.

And finally, place a sign in your front garden advising the use of rainwater tanks. This will avoid any embarrassing situations if other residents question your lush gardens when theirs are turning to dust. If nothing else, it may spread the word and encourage others to install a tank of their own.
Happy harvesting.

Ben Bradey



Ben and his 10,000 litre tank

Further Reading

- ◊ Rainwater Tanks – Guidelines for residential properties in Canberra
Available from <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/publications/index.htm> (look under 'R')
- ◊ ACTEWAGL Website (search for 'rainwater tanks')
<http://www.actewagl.com.au>
- ◊ Not Just Down The Drain – a guide to re-using and treating your household water
by Stewart McQuire
- ◊ Sustainable Water from Rain Harvesting
by Environmental Conservation Planning Pty
- ◊ Water Conservation Advice from Victoria
<http://www.savewater.com.au>

Some plastic tank suppliers

- ◊ Bushman Tanks
<http://www.bushmantanks.com>
- ◊ Australian Rotomoulding Industries Pty Ltd
<http://www.aroplastank.com.au>
- ◊ TankMasta
<http://www.tankmasta.com.au>

Crop Rotation in a Canberra Vegetable Garden

What is crop rotation?

Crop rotation is the system of grouping vegetables according to their botanical family and planting each group in a different growing area each year. For example, the brassicas - cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower are all planted in one area and the alliums - onions, leeks and garlic in another. A well designed rotation system ensures plants from the same family do not occupy the same ground again without a gap of several seasons. Of course, in practice, there is never enough space to rotate all the vegetable families separately nor would you necessarily want to give an equal area of the garden to each family.

Why is it used?

Crop rotation is used as part of an organic growing system to:

- Reduce the carry over of soil borne diseases.
- Reduce damage caused by pests which over winter in the soil, as they emerge to find their host crop gone.
- Take advantage of the previous crop - for example leafy vegetables which require lots of nitrogen are planted after legumes which fix nitrogen in the soil.
- Make use of different nutrients and soil levels during successive seasons.
- For ease of care as plants with similar growing requirements are grouped together.

How do you actually do it?

The easiest place to start is by deciding which vegetables you want to grow and grouping them by family. Which vegetables belong to which family? Below is a list of many commonly grown vegetables and the families they belong to.

Family	Vegetable members
<i>Alliaceae</i>	onion, leek, garlic, shallots (known as the alliums)
<i>Apiaceae</i>	carrot, parsnip, celery, fennel, dill, coriander, parsley
<i>Asteraceae</i>	lettuce, endive, chicory, Jerusalem artichoke
<i>Brassicaceae</i>	broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, radish, turnip, swede, rocket, kohlrabi, mizuna, bok choy, Chinese cabbage, mustard (known as the brassicas)
<i>Chenopodiaceae</i>	beetroot, silverbeet, chard, spinach
<i>Cucurbitaceae</i>	pumpkin, squash, zucchini, cucumber, melon (known as the cucurbits)
<i>Fabaceae</i>	peas, beans, broad beans (known as the legumes)
<i>Poaceae</i>	sweetcorn
<i>Solanaceae</i>	tomato, capsicum, chilli, eggplant, potato, tomatillo (known as the solanums)

A mixed green manure crop is also often included in a rotation system to provide bulk organic matter, increase soil nitrogen, and to make use of beds which would otherwise be left empty during Winter.

As you can see, vegetables come from many different plant families so some extra groupings will need to be made to fit everything in. These extra groupings are generally based on similar seasonal, water or nutrition requirements. This information can be found in books on vegetable growing, most of which also contain information on crop rotation systems. However many gardening books (even Australian ones) describe three or four year rotation systems using standard British vegetables. These systems are not ideal for Australian conditions as they seem to assume that the growing season is only from Spring to Autumn and that crops such as tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants and sweetcorn are not grown in the open garden due to the climate. The garden is usually divided into quarters which are planted with brassicas, legumes, cucurbits and alliums, and roots and potatoes. Crops like tomatoes, sweetcorn and capsicums, if included, are squashed in somewhere and generally given a very small area. Others like cucumbers, eggplants and melons are often left out altogether.

In Canberra, where year round growing is possible, the Summer garden is filled with solanums, alliums and cucurbits and the brassicas and legumes are mainly grown from Autumn through to Spring or early Summer as they do not cope well with our hot Summer weather (beans of course being the exception).

Following a crop rotation system does require some planning and discipline. I find the simplest way to plan, and to keep records, is in the form of seasonal maps of the garden. These maps need only be simple sketches which record information on what is planted where and when.

continued next page ...

Crop rotation continued . . .

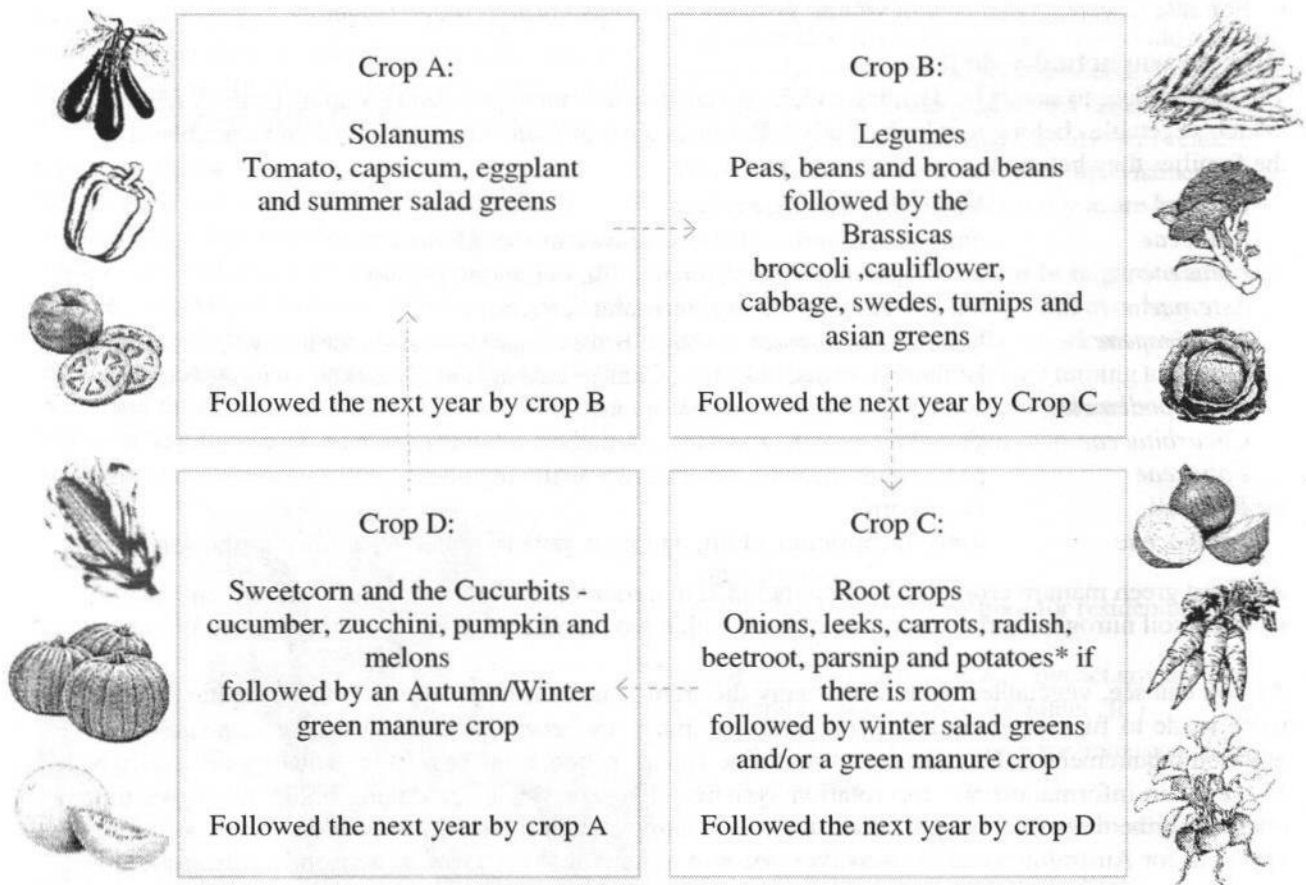
Each year I make a plan for the Summer garden and one for the Winter garden. These plans identify the areas where various vegetables will be planted. During the year details are filled in as plantings are made. Knowing what will be where the next season also makes it easier to avoid planting any impulse buys or gifts in places that later turn out to be inappropriate. After a few years you will have a good record of your garden's history that will save you any confusion about where the rotation is up to each season.

One other thing to remember is that if you are going to rotate your annual vegetables, perennial crops such as globe artichokes, asparagus, strawberries, raspberries and many of the herbs are best planted in a separate area so that they will not be disturbed.

A four year rotation scheme for Canberra

The scheme detailed below is a four year rotation using vegetables commonly grown in Canberra. It was designed by COGS members for use at 'COGS Backyard' in the Xeriscape garden in Weston.

The garden is divided into quarters and the following crops planted:



*Potatoes are included with the root vegetables rather than the other solanums for two reasons:
- they take up a fair amount of space and there is often not room in the solanum bed and
- their seasonal water requirements are somewhat different from those of tomatoes and capsicums.

This plan is only one of many possible rotation schemes - particular vegetables can be excluded or added depending on what you wish to grow. In any rotation system what you include, and how many of each vegetable you grow, will depend entirely on what you like to eat. There is no point growing vegetables that you or your family don't like just because they fit into some system.

There are only two important things to remember about crop rotation: that any amount of crop rotation is better than none and that gardening is supposed to be both enjoyable and relaxing.

An example of a six year rotation scheme

Below I've detailed the six bed, six year rotation I'm using in my plot at the Cook garden. I've included some timing information to illustrate how it all fits together in practice as the beds are rarely completely empty. Planting and harvesting times are intentionally vague as they depend on the particular season. This plan was devised to allow year round harvesting and the vegetables included are those I grow regularly. The peas, beans, broad beans, sweetcorn, carrots, beetroot and turnips are sown from seed and everything else (except the potatoes, shallots and garlic) is planted as seedlings.

The annual garden is divided into six areas of 10 sq. metres each and the following plantings made:

Bed A: Solanums

Plant tomato, capsicum, chilli, eggplant and basil in Nov/Dec, harvest until the first frost in Autumn when it becomes bed B

Bed B: Alliums

Plant spring onions, shallots and garlic in late Autumn

Plant the main onions (early and late varieties) in Winter.

Plant more spring onions in early Spring and plant leeks in late Spring

The garlic and onions are all harvested by February/March and in Autumn snow peas and broad beans are planted and it becomes bed C (although the leeks are still there until Winter)

Bed C: Legumes

Plant snow peas and broad beans in Autumn, plant more snow peas in Spring

Plant peas in Autumn or early Spring

Plant climbing beans in late Spring and bush beans successively through the Summer

The peas and broad beans are finished by Christmas and are replaced from mid Summer with Autumn and Winter salad leaves which are harvested until Spring when it becomes bed D

Any empty space is filled with green manure in Autumn

Bed D: Brassicas

Plant broccoli, mizuna and lettuce varieties in early Spring

Plant cauliflower, more broccoli, swedes and turnips in Summer

Plant rocket, mizuna, mibuna, pak choy and Chinese cabbage in early Autumn

Cabbages and Brussels sprouts would be included in this bed but I rarely grow them

The crops in this bed are harvested during Autumn and Winter and in Spring it becomes bed E (some late cauliflowers may still be there in early Spring)

Bed E: Root crops, silverbeet, spinach and potatoes

(half) Plant carrots and beetroot in Spring and again in late Summer, harvest from Summer until Winter

Plant silverbeet in Spring, harvest until the following Spring

Plant bulb fennel in summer

Plant spinach and more silverbeet (for the chooks during Winter) as space becomes available in Autumn

Celery would be included here if you wished to grow it

Bed E: Plant potatoes in Sept/Oct, harvest Feb/March

(half) Follow the potatoes with green manure which is dug in in Spring and it all becomes bed F

Bed F: Cucurbits and sweetcorn

Plant zucchini, cucumber, rock melon, pumpkins and sweetcorn in late Spring/early Summer

Plant green manure as crops finish in Autumn, dig it in in early Spring and it becomes bed A

This plan can be easily changed to a 5 year one by omitting the winter salad in bed C and the spring brassicas in bed D. If this is done bed C becomes bed D from Summer until Spring (with the beans remaining until Autumn) and the legumes, brassicas, roots and potatoes have all rotated through in two years rather than three.

Again this is only one of many possible rotation plans and could easily be adapted to include a different combination, or different relative quantities, of vegetables.

Adrienne Fazekas

Food Growing in Iran

I was fortunate to visit some of the mountainous areas of Iran in April/May of this year, where I was able to observe some of the food growing occurring in this nation of 70 million people. Iran seems to be fairly self sufficient in food production, although there are imports of, for example, wheat from Australia.

I have been informed that most farming practices do not include pesticide use, and we certainly saw no evidence of such use.

We visited first the Zagros Mountains in the west and south west of Iran. These are very high mountains, snow covered and rugged. Snow was still falling while we were there. Crops were not far advanced, but plants of wheat and barley were pushing up and sheep and goats with shepherds were on the move. Nomadic tribes were settled in this area about 50 years ago, but there is still some nomadic activity.

The staple foods wherever we went - and very healthy too - appeared to be unleavened wheat bread, eggs (often hard boiled) and other high protein foods. Magnificent yoghurt, mostly sheep or goat with some from cows milk was served at every meal and soft white cheeses were common. Barley was evident in thick soups as part of the main meal of the day. The main meal always consisted of grilled skewered lamb, chicken, sometimes beef and grilled fish which was almost always trout. Pilaf of fluffy basmati style rice was the usual accompanying dish, sprinkled with chopped pistachio nuts or almonds, thinly sliced citrus peel, Iranian saffron and red semi dried berberis berries. We were unable to find out which species of berberis, but suspected *B. vulgaris* which seems to grow commonly as an ornamental.



Negotiating for dried fruit and nuts, Zagros Mts



Fruit leathers in a grocery shop, Sareyn

Vegetables were in sparse supply, except when preserved. Presumably it was too early in the season for fresh ones. Spreads, in little packs for breakfast, were of sour cherry, honey, carrot and sometimes apricot. Desserts were rare. To drink, we had sour cherry juice in packs, mineral water and tea. Salads and lunchpacks contained lettuce, cucumber and tomato. A treat was fresh dates.

Villages in the Zagros were surrounded by quite big fields, so we think that there was probably co-operation agriculture. Often the fields were peppered with the alpine bulbs we had come to see, such as tulip, muscari, crocus, iris and fritillaria.

As we proceeded south, vendors from villages would display their wares in bulk by the roadside. The array of nuts and dried fruits was incredibly large. At a village near the Roch Pass, for instance, on display were: three types of pistachio, hazelnuts, three sorts of almond and dried fig, walnuts, peanuts, salted dried cherries, four types of dried apricot, spices we could not identify, two sorts of raisin, soya beans, lentils and many others, all locally grown.

The villages were flat roofed, with piles of straw and dung on the roofs and large mounds resembling haystacks round the perimeter. Animals were kept inside or in caves in the mountains. Poultry had their own houses, which were long low mud brick buildings with pitched roofs and small rows of windows on the south side. We did not manage to see inside any of these chook houses, which were usually about 100 metres from settlements.

Although the fields in the Zagros were damp and muddy during our visit, there was evidence of

irrigation from mountain streams and snow melts, often using plastic piping or open stone sided ditches. Qanats were reserved for the dry interior.

In the Alborz Mountains to the north and north east, leading down to the Caspian Sea, fields were smaller and the array of produce for sale much less. Wild and cultivated cherries and apple trees were in bloom along the roadsides and in mixed fruit orchards. Villagers were collecting about three varieties of wild garlic from the mountain sides, which we tasted and found mild, but could not identify. On sale in towns such as Zanjan were the biggest white onions I have ever seen, about half a kilo each. These were placed raw, but peeled in the centre of the dining table to bite into and were also very mild to the taste.

Down on the Caspian sea coast, where we descended from 2,500 metre passes to 37 metres or so below sea level, it was a different scene. Along the 200 km stretch of shore travelled, the climate had changed to a humid one, with thick fog, rain and obviously much warmer conditions. Here grew the rice, which the women were planting out into small paddies. There were date palms, 200km of orange blossom, figs and many other warm climate crops. We passed deciduous old growth forests of oak and hornbeam on the way down to Gorgan at the eastern end. It had the air of a rich agricultural town. At Lahijan grew the tea, the oldest tea factory being 150 years old. This part of Iran is on the ancient Silk Road, which would explain the early exploitation of the Chinese tea trade.

Rising again from Rascht, still near the Caspian into the high Alborz Mountains, we crossed many 2,500 metre passes such as the Asalem, obviously used in the summer for cattle, sheep and goat husbandry, but with little evidence of crop production. Huge irrigation schemes for this area, such as the spectacular Secdrud reservoir, built about 40 years ago, had obviously changed crop farming capacity in the Alborz, but again, it was too early to note what was to be grown. Many reforestation programs were underway though. Natural trees were scarce. I was looking for groves of the indigenous pistachio nut, but no success. We think wild pistachios might grow in more southerly inland areas, perhaps with other local ornamental plants like the persian lilac we saw flowering in inland villages. The famous date palms of Bam were considerably further south than our route took us.

Watermelons packed in small trucks, presumably from the Persian Gulf were being sold by the roadside



Animal and crop enclosures, Asalem Pass, Alborz Mts

in the Alborz, with unidentified greens, which looked a bit like bok choy.

Iran is a very large country. There was much we did not see. We will wait and hope that another opportunity presents itself to visit again.

Robin McKeown

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Planting, growing and harvesting times for annual vegetables in Canberra




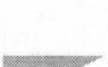
Have you ever wondered how you can have a good variety of vegetables from your garden every month of the year?


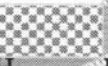
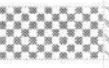


The accompanying table is designed to help those wanting to harvest vegetables all year round from an outdoor garden in the Canberra region. As well as planting times it gives typical growing and harvesting times. From this table it's easy to see what could be growing in the garden during any month of the year and what could be available for harvesting, as well as when the bed would be free for the next crop.

The timings of planting and harvesting should be used as a guide only as they can vary with the seasonal conditions.

The Spring plantings may need to be delayed if it's a cold season. Likewise the late Autumn harvest times could be brought forward by an early frost or extended by a warm season.

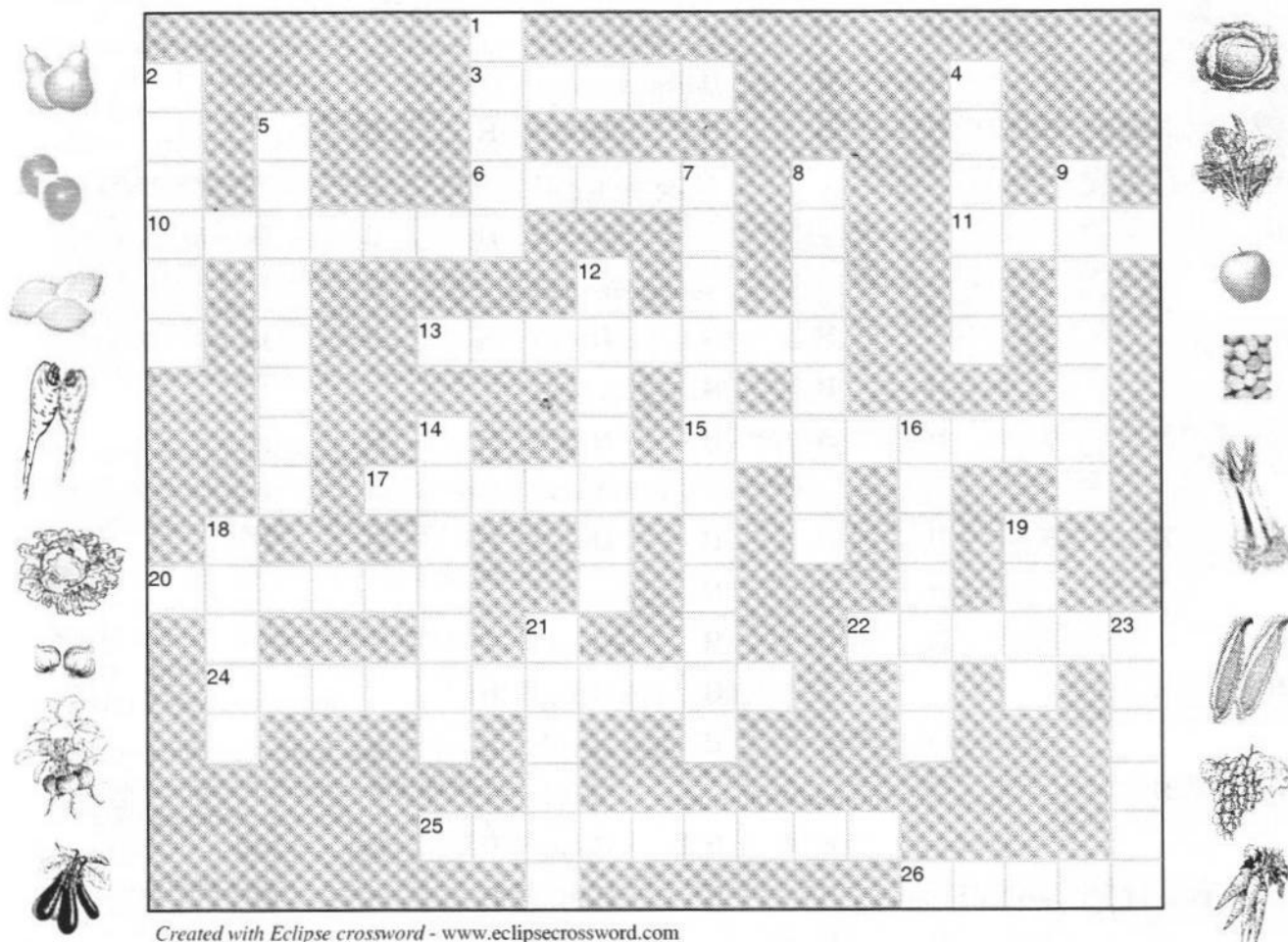
Those vegetables marked with a "T" are grown elsewhere in punnets and planted as seedlings either to save space in the garden or to enable easier protection of tender seedlings.

KEY	
	Plant the entire crop at the beginning of the block
	&
	First planting of vegetables which will have successive plantings
	Extra plantings can be made of different varieties or to extend the harvest
>>	Indicates existing plantings made in previous months
H	Vegetables that can be harvested during this month
T	Plant as seedlings

		JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Artichoke, Jerusalem	>> H		Plant		
Asian greens	T			H	H
Beans, bush					
Beans, climbing					
Beetroot	>> H				
Broad beans	>>			H	H
Broccoli	T >> H		H	H	H
Brussels sprouts	T >> H		H	H	
Cabbage	T >> H		H		
Capsicum / chilli	T				
Carrot					
Cauliflower	T >> H		H	H	H
Celery	T >> H		H		
Cucumber	T				
Eggplant	T				
Endive and chicory	T				
Fennel, bulb	T >> H				
Garlic	>>				H
Leeks	T				
Lettuce	T	H	Plant seasonal varieties every		
Melon, rock	T				
Onion	T				
Parsnip	>> H				
Peas	>>			H	H
Potato					
Pumpkin	T				
Radish					Sow monthly for
Silverbeet / Chard	T >> H		H	H	H
Snow peas					H
Spinach	T >> H		H	H	H
Spring onion	T >>				Plant every 2 - 3 months for
Squash	T				
Sweet corn					
Tomato	T				
Turnip / Swede	>> H				
Zucchini	T				

Junior Organic Puzzle Page

All the answers in this crossword are fruits or vegetables which grow well in Canberra.



Created with Eclipse crossword - www.eclipsecrossword.com

ACROSS

3. These can have green or yellow or brown skin
6. If these were spelled differently you might need a plumber to fix them
10. Used a lot in salads
11. Sweet and juicy
13. Sounds like it should be grown by chooks
15. Lots of kids hate this one
17. Used to make coleslaw
20. These can be used to make lemonade
22. Slice this up for sandwiches in Summer
24. What's big and green and white?
25. This one has ears!
26. You can grow climbing ones

DOWN

1. An a day ...
2. A strong smelling bulb
4. People make wine from these
5. You can make chips with these
7. You can make jam with these
8. Don't drop this on your clothes or it will stain
9. Big and orange inside
12. Popeye ate lots of this
14. Long and white
16. Rabbits love these too
18. A fruit with furry skin
19. These grow in pods
21. These can be used to make oil
23. You can fry these on the barbeque

The solution is on page 30



What is Organic Growing?

What do we mean when we call ourselves 'organic growers'?- does it simply mean that we don't use artificial fertilisers or that we make compost and use mulch or is it more complex than that?

In Australia the official definition of organic growing is that which complies with the *National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce*.¹ For those new to organic growing, and as a refresher for others, included below is an extract from the Standard detailing the aims, objectives and general principles for organic production.

- i. *The basic aim of an operator complying with this Standard is to achieve optimum quantities of quality produce, while enhancing the sustainability of natural agricultural resources.*
- ii. *Emphasis is placed on management practices, use of renewable resources, the need for conservation of energy, soil and water and the maintenance of environmental quality.*
- iii. *The principle objectives . . . include:*
 - *the production of food of high nutritional value.*
 - *the enhancement of biological cycles in farming systems.*
 - *maintaining or improving fertility of soils.*
 - *working as far as practicable within a closed system by minimising the use of non-renewable resources.*
 - *the avoidance of pollution resulting from agricultural practices and processing.*
 - *the co-existence with, and the protection of, the environment.*
- iv. *The aims and objectives outlined above are achieved through management practices that create soils of enhanced biological activity, as indicated by the humus level, crumb structure, and feeder root development, such that plants are fed through the soil ecosystem and not, principally, through soluble fertilisers added to the soil.*
- v. *Plants grown in natural systems take up nutrients that are released slowly from humus colloids, at a rate governed by sunlight and warmth. Under such a system, the metabolism of the plant and its ability to assimilate nutrients is not over-stressed by excessive uptake of soluble salts from the soil water (e.g. nitrates). Therefore the development of soil structure and humus is fundamental to organic and bio-dynamic systems.*
- vi. *Organic and bio-dynamic systems rely upon crop rotations, use of residual crops, animal manures, legumes, green manures, mechanical cultivation, cultural control, minimal application of approved mineral-bearing rocks and aspects of biological pest management to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients and to control diseases, insects, weeds and other pests.*

As you can see, from points *vi* and *v* above, building and maintaining a fertile, well structured and biologically active soil is the foundation of organic growing. In the next issue of *Canberra Organic* we will include the general principles and standards for organic soil management and the materials that are permitted for soil fertilising and conditioning within an organic system.

¹ *National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce, Third Edition December 2002* written and published by the Organic Produce Export Committee of AQIS. Copies are available free of charge at www.aqis.gov.au/organic then click 2. Legislation

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COGS Seed Exchange

Attention Seed Savers! A seed exchange is being set up, for all COGS members who save their own seeds, in order to facilitate the sharing and swapping of seeds. Seeds will be available from the exchange either by trading other seeds that the exchange has not got a large supply of, or by purchasing them for a small fee.

Any excess seeds that you collect can be swapped for seeds from the seed exchange provided they are 'ready-to-go' and labelled. Seeds should be prepared as if for planting and only quality seeds should be exchanged. The information required with each batch of seed includes:

- the name of the plant including the variety if known
- the date the seed was collected
- your name and where the seed was grown
- any special notes or growing tips

Currently the seed exchange has a limited stock of the following seeds:

Red onions, Parsnips, Carrots (all year), Coriander, Asparagus, Celery, Rocket, Peas, Broad beans, Cos lettuce, Apple cucumber

The seed exchange will operate at each monthly meeting or can be accessed by arrangement at the Mitchell garden on weekends.

For further information please contact Ray Harber on 0412 882 367 after 6pm or have a chat with him at one of the monthly meetings.

From the Library

Growing Annual Vegetables

A Photographic Growing Manual For Gardeners
by Joyce Wilkie & Michael Plane

This new publication is not a book but a CD-ROM which works like a very user friendly website. Why a CD-ROM? As the introduction says 'What books cannot offer is the answer to the question "Could you just show me that again"'.

Joyce and Michael have drawn on their considerable experience of growing organic vegetables over many seasons at 'Allsun Farm' near Gundaroo, and put together a truly impressive resource for those interested in growing annual vegetables in the Canberra region. There is masses of useful 'how to' information and there are over 1000 photographs, many of which can be viewed as slide shows, to illustrate all the equipment and processes described.



Subject areas covered include:

Planning, Tools, Feeding the Soil, Preparing the Ground, Irrigation, Planting, Managing Weeds, Pests and Diseases, Covered Cropping and Harvesting. There is also an extensive A - Z of vegetables full of detailed growing information and recommendations on reliable varieties for this area.

Joyce has very kindly donated a copy of this CD-ROM to the library and it will be available for members to borrow at future monthly meetings. The CD can be used on either a Mac or PC with an internet browser installed (IE 5+ or Netscape 7 recommended).

Copies are available for purchase from the Allsun Farm/Gundaroo Tiller website at www.allsun.com.au where you can also view a demonstration copy of the CD.

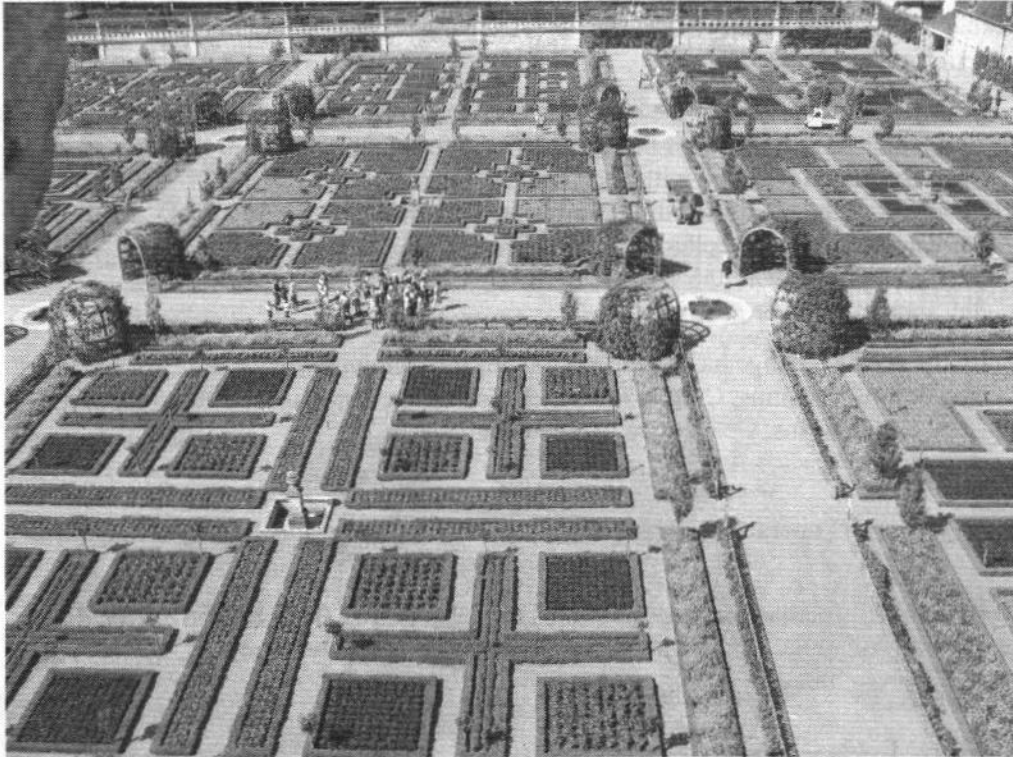


GE News



The GE News section has been held over and will reappear in the next issue of *Canberra Organic*

Vegetable Artistry at Chateau Villandry



This issue of *Canberra Organic* has some great ideas for planning vegetable plantings. I couldn't resist including these photographs of the spectacular summer display in the ornamental kitchen gardens at Chateau Villandry which I was lucky enough to see in May this year.

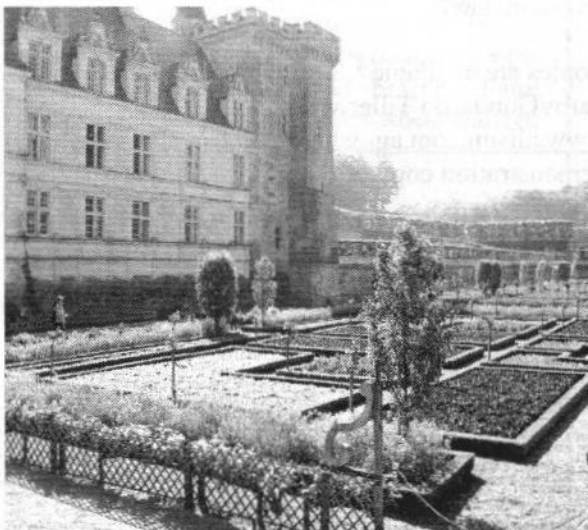
These photos give you an idea of the majestic setting, the intricacy of the layout, and the textures of the plantings but unfortunately you cannot see the brilliant yellows and golds of the marigolds or the deep reds and bright greens of

the mass plantings of lettuce and chards. The kitchen gardens are replanted twice a year, in Spring and Summer.

Chateau Villandry is situated in the Loire Valley about 250 kms from Paris and 15 kms west of Tours. You can find out more about it from the website www.chateauvillandry.com/anglais/presentation.htm. It has extensive ornamental gardens and an aromatic herb garden in addition to the kitchen gardens.

Janet Popovic

Photos this page: Various views of the ornamental kitchen gardens, Chateau Villandry, France— May 2004; photos by I. Popovic



Chateau Villandry ... continued

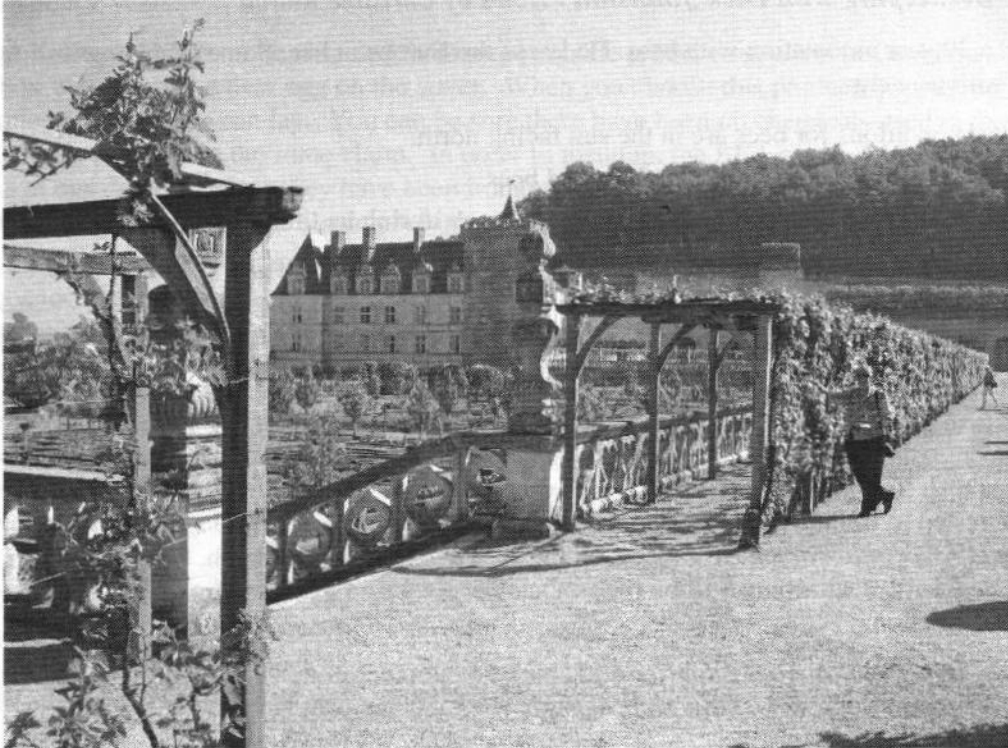


Photo: Looking back to Chateau Villandry from beyond the ornamental kitchen gardens; photo by I. Popovic

PRINCIPLES OF BIODYNAMIC FARMING AND GARDENING

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This one-day workshop covers the following topics:

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- Emphasis on humus formation.
- Role of the biodynamic preparations.
- Importance of balancing the qualitative and quantitative in nature.
- Biodynamic Preparation 500, its function and application.
- Principles and practice of biodynamic compost making.

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Recent COGS Monthly Meetings

April 27th Beekeeping with Dick Johnston - Notes by Christine Anttila

Dick has had a 20 year association with bees. He keeps the European bee. Some of the interesting facts Dick shared with us were:

- The ideal conditions for bees are in the sun facing north.
- In one colony there can be 50 to 60 thousand bees.
- One bee produces 200 mls (almost one cup) of honey during its life.
- In Spring as the Queen begins to build the population she can lay up to 1000 eggs a day.
- Swarms can occur if the hive becomes overcrowded.
- Summer is the peak harvest time.
- If the temperature is below 13 - 14⁰C the bees don't leave the hive.
- Smoking with pine needles is used to calm bees before handling.
- Apiarists are unsure why smoke pacifies the bees.

If you are interested in finding out more about beekeeping:

The Beekeepers Association of the ACT meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

A course on Backyard Beekeeping will be run in October 2004 by CIT Solutions in association with the Beekeepers Association.

Dick currently runs *Bindaree bee supplies* and can be contacted on 6281 2111 or by email at bindaree.bee@bigpond.com or visit his webpage at www.bindaree.com.au



June 22nd Catriona Maurice from Yalleroo Organic Farm - Notes by Ben Bradey

Catriona Maurice from Yalleroo Organic Farm spent the evening sharing her experiences of organic egg production with us.

She purchased the farm at Burra a year ago, and while it hasn't been all plain sailing, she is committed to her product and determined to make a go of it. With a bit of luck and lots of hard work, she might even make some money from the venture one day! Keeping the birds safe from predators has been a constant challenge. Electric fences have been ineffective at keeping marauding foxes away as have been the two alpacas she purchased to stand guard. More recently she acquired a Maremma dog, a breed well known for its protective nature. Losses to foxes have dropped dramatically. Her only problem now is what to do with the alpacas – they are eating her out of house and home.

Catriona feeds her chicks starter feed (crushed mixed grain) from Country Heritage. The mature birds are fed organically certified wheat supplied by an organic (BFA certified) farmer. At about twice the price of conventional grain, she can't afford to have too many non-layers in the sheds. A good layer will have a healthy red comb and a ball of wheat in their crop (throat). It is also possible to place two fingers between the two hip bones of laying hens – those which are broody will only have space for one finger. Broody hens are confined to a wire cage for a couple of days – the isolation seems to stop their broodiness within a couple of days. The birds are also fed milk that Catriona obtains from her two Jersey house cows every morning before dawn.

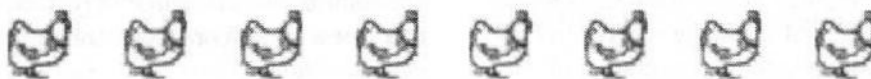
The farm is BFA certified – including all land management practices and the rotation of the birds around the property during the year. Certification is a major commitment, both financially and in terms of procedures, but Catriona believes the commitment she has made to certification comes through in the quality and integrity of her product. She has 500 birds of the Isa Brown breed. It is well known that bigger eggs are obtained by delaying sexual maturity of the birds. Conventional growers use artificial light to control this aspect of a bird's life. Organic growers must use natural daylight length and carefully time their breeding periods according to the seasons. She gives them shell grit in the evening to aid digestion and uses metal perches rather than wood to prevent mites. Pumpkin seeds are fed to the

birds to prevent intestinal worms. A bird will typically decrease in productivity by 20% per year. Due to the high cost of maintaining a bird in an organic environment, most are sent to the 'big shed in the sky' after about 2 years.

Eggs from Yalleroo Farm can be obtained from most organic produce suppliers in Canberra – look for the blue box with a large yellow egg on the cover. When you choose this product, you are buying the best organic egg that a hen can lay. You can be sure there have been no chemicals used in the process. Free range eggs can't make the same claim. In order to maintain the BFA certification, Catriona buys her chicks at one day old before they have been immunised or fed antibiotics – a common practice in the poultry industry generally. Unfortunately a high mortality rate results.

Yalleroo Organic Farm is a short drive from Queanbeyan and visitors are welcome on Sundays – telephone 6299 5062 to make sure they will be home first. Catriona is always willing to share her knowledge – something which will be of great value to those who have their own backyard poultry. Organic feed for your own hens is available from Organic Feed Supplies, Phone: 6161 6019.

COGS will be organising a day trip to the farm on a Sunday in mid to late November. Keep an eye on the magazine or an ear out at upcoming general meetings for further details or register your interest now with Ben Bradey (contact details on page 32) so you don't miss out. The date and full details will be available on the COGS website once they are confirmed.



July 27th Herbal Health and Skincare with Lisa Stewart - Notes by Ben Bradey

Lisa Stewart moved to Cooma from Sydney 5 years ago. She found the climate very harsh on her skin, so set about developing a skin cream to counter the drying effects of our region's climate. Her cream is based on four main herbs:

- comfrey for healing
- calendula as a sunscreen and healer
- German camomile to strengthen the skin tissues
- marshmallow to stop dehydration without clogging the skin

These herbs are prepared as a tincture and combined with aloe vera, bee and palm wax, almond and olive oils, shea and cocoa butter plus selected essential oils to produce a 100% natural product.

A potent garlic concentrate in liquid form is also prepared by Lisa and taken to boost the immune system, particularly at the onset of a cold. I can certainly vouch for its effectiveness – just be careful not to have too much otherwise you will end up with garlic breath for days!

The other part of Lisa's work is in providing advice on macrobiotic eating. It's essentially a means of getting yourself in balance with nature so your body is strong and healthy. Whole cereal grains should make up 50% of the diet, vegetables comprising 30% and meat 5%. The remainder should be condiments. Always look for whole foods which haven't been processed – these have greater enzyme activity which allows them to be more easily digested – thus reducing the amount of effort required by the body for digestion. Learn to read food labels and avoid products with numbers on the ingredients list. Such foods are likely to be highly processed. Full fat products are also good in moderation – modified milk has been stripped of its natural enzymes and isn't 'alive' any more, thus taking longer and using more energy to digest. For this reason fresh herbs are preferable to dried herbs, depending on seasonal availability.

It is preferable to consume your fat intake from vegetable sources because the molecules are much smaller than animal-based fats, and therefore quicker to break down in the body. Lisa prefers to dispense European herbs because our bodies have evolved to work in harmony with them. Chinese herbs are best left to those of Chinese descent according to Lisa. If you often feel tired and sluggish after eating it means you are not chewing enough. Chewing food properly (up to 50 times!) will ensure it is already largely broken down before entering the stomach.

Lisa provided an extract from a book containing useful diet tips for good health. Extra copies may be obtained from the Librarian if you missed out on a copy at the July meeting.

COGS 2004 Survey Results

The Winter 2004 edition of *Canberra Organic* included as an insert a brief questionnaire in which the Committee sought input from members of the Society about their views on the various programs and activities undertaken by COGS. Many thanks to Ben Bradey for initiating the design of the questionnaire and for undertaking the initial data processing of the completed questionnaires which were returned.

Members of the Committee undertook a review of these returns at a planning day on July 10th, and it was agreed that the best way of passing this information back to members was through a brief summary article in the magazine.

It should be noted that all we could work on was the set of questionnaires which were returned to us. We have no way of knowing whether the people who responded are representative of COGS members generally. In other surveys of this type it is found that those who respond are those who hold strong views in one direction or the other and the "silent majority" are usually also the "generally satisfied". We have assumed that this situation also applies to this Survey.

This presents quite a good picture of members' satisfaction with the Society's activities, as the number of more "negative" responses such as "no interest" or "don't care" were very low. Overall 34 completed questionnaires were received in time to be processed. This is equivalent to over 10% of the members of the Society, which is considered a good response rate for voluntary surveys.

Views on existing activities

The two most popular activities were the magazine and the gardens. For both of these, 25 responses (74%) rated the activity as "very important". Since only 1 response noted the magazine as "not very important" in contrast to the 8 occurrences of this response for the gardens (see below) the magazine is seen as the most strongly supported activity.

Magazine

In addition to the 25 responses of "very important" 8 rated the magazine as "somewhat important". One response noted the magazine "really is my only point of contact with COGS". There was a high level of consistency between the rating of importance for the magazine and the

extent of material read. Most people who rated the magazine as very important also read "every article" or "most articles". While many respondents said it was all useful in other cases they cited areas of particular interest. These covered nearly all sections of the magazine with the planting guide, organic tips and news of the gardens getting strong support.

Gardens

As would be expected, the respondents who had a garden (19) saw them as very important. So did 12 of those who did not have a garden! Perhaps they were like the person who saw the gardens as "not very important" but annotated that they "like to read about them"? Several of those who responded "Not very important" gave an annotation indicating that they didn't have enough time for a garden or (lucky folk!) had enough garden at home.

Other existing activities

Seed saving (11 responses of very important; 12 somewhat important), the Library (9; 13); General Meetings (8; 13 with 11 "can't attend"), were all well supported.

- It appears that Ray Harber's initiation of a seed exchange project is very timely (see p23).
- Reactions to the Library appear correlated to attendance at general meetings as that is the venue from which books may be borrowed. 16 responses noted that books had been borrowed in the last year.
- Noting that attendance at meetings is usually of the order of 30 people it was interesting to note that 20 respondents had attended a meeting.

There was more limited support for the website, plant sales and the bookstall with 12, 13 and 17 responses respectively of "not very important". There were very few responses of "very important" for these functions. Possibly reactions to the website are coloured by the need for a computer to access the site, compounded by a need for a more aggressive updating regime. I expect there will be further discussion of this in the (near) future. The issue of plant sales is considered below. Responses to the bookstall could be expected to be correlated with attendance at meetings, but since it involves spending money would be expected to be less "popular" than the free library service.

COGS Backyard had very limited support with 14 responses of "not very important" and 8 of "what is it?". This will be discussed further at Committee meetings, noting that it is an important link to organisations such as CIT and an obvious "public presence" for COGS (see below).

Additional Activities

26 respondents noted that they were interested in field trips, although only 5-7 were interested in weekday or overnight trips. If this activity is to go ahead, we would welcome suggestions for places to visit—the nominees to do the ground work (contacting site owners, coordinating attendance etc). This is not a trivial undertaking and cannot be embarked upon without additional effort (or giving up an existing activity).

A large proportion of respondents indicated an interest in attending workshops. This topic is very broad, and time has not yet permitted full analysis of the results. Hopefully we'll be able to do this before the Summer edition of the magazine. Scanning the topics cited by respondents showed particular interest in worm farming and permaculture for which good commercial courses exist in Canberra. Also of interest to several respondents was fruit tree growing. One way forward may be to find and advertise existing training facilities through the magazine/website. Those people interested in workshops on general organic vegetable growing would appear to be well served by taking up a community garden plot and gaining benefit from the massive practical knowledge of other gardeners.

Again 26 people were interested in seeing a COGS public presence and it was a great pleasure to see that 18 people were willing to volunteer to operate a COGS stall (you will be hearing from us to assist in meeting our commitments to run a stall at events such as CIT open days). This topic was discussed extensively at the planning meeting with three types of events being considered: commercial events such as markets; purely promotional events handing out leaflets and trying to get new members; and mixed events in which members are expected to be recruited and items such as seeds or plants are sold. It is noted that produce grown in community gardens may not be sold commercially, but plants raised by members may be sold for the benefit of COGS. A member of the Committee has volunteered to develop a list of potential events which we could attend and we expect to identify some likely candidate events in

the near future, perhaps focussing on those events where we can combine some fundraising with recruitment.

There seems to be a need to renew interest in propagating plants for sale. This would appear to be best done through a workshop approach using a mentoring system to spread knowledge of propagation techniques so that a greater number of members are able to contribute to the work of raising seedlings. The details of this process (including identifying mentors and the venues for workshops) need to be worked out very soon if we are to do anything significant for the next growing season.

Martin Butterfield

Thank you to all those members who took the time to fill in and return the Survey.

Congratulations to
Mary Flowers
who was the winner of the book voucher.

INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE

the lazy gardener

green living for you and the earth

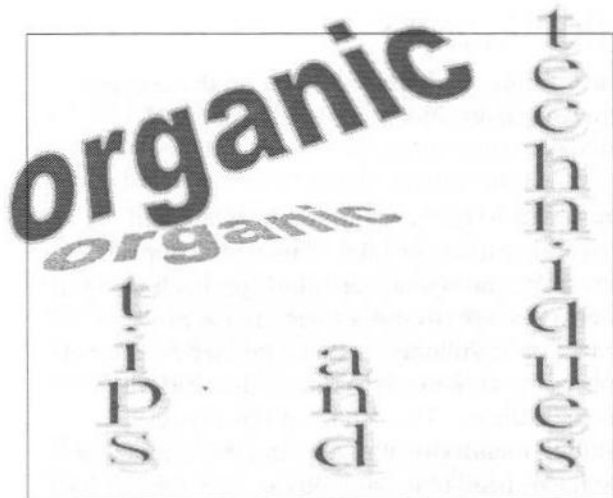
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In this edition we've included some tips from past issues - oldies but still goodies!

Growing brassicas

Extracts from "How to grow a Cabbage" by Jackie French, first printed in *The COGS Quarterly*, Vol 3 No.3 Spring 1995

Cabbage can be sown at any warm time of the year, though the firmest heads come from cabbage planted after Christmas for autumn, winter and spring.

Broccoli need more nitrogen than the other brassicas, as they give more crop per plant if you keep harvesting the heads. Don't just pick the central head. The more you pick your broccoli the more you'll get, although the heads will be progressively smaller.

Compost fed Brussels sprouts and cabbage tolerate extremes better than those fed on a high nitrogen

fertiliser. If you must use a high nitrogen fertiliser like dynamic lifter or hen manure, try to give a fortnightly dose of liquid foliar seaweed spray to help check nutritional imbalances.

Brassicas going to seed inhibit the germination of seeds around them, and the growth of other plants. Make use of this by letting a plot of brassicas go to seed in Spring -- then hauling them out two months later. The result is a nearly weed free bed for early summer planting -- and the massive roots have 'dug' the soil.

Snail control

From *Acres Vol 2, No 3 1994*

In his article on snail and slug control, Tim Marshall notes that if handpicking snails from the garden, they should not merely be crushed and left there. Mature eggs in the body may still hatch, contributing to future snail populations. He suggests disposing of their bodies by feeding them to your chooks.

More on snails

If you don't have chooks (or you have too many snails for the chooks to cope with), the snails can be collected in a small bucket and covered with boiling water. Once it's cooled this revolting mixture can be added to the compost heap.

Mulching

Mulch is essential to maintain soil moisture during the heat of Summer but should not be applied until the soil has warmed in Spring, as it can slow soil warming and thus slow plant growth.

From *COGS Quarterly November 1993*

"Egg King" tomato seedlings available again this year

This is the tomato that was available from Tony Bray three years ago and he will be getting seedlings from Sydney in mid September. The cost will be less than \$1 per plant.

"Egg King" is a Roma type tomato, deep red, about 12cm long, with very thick walls of juicy flesh.

It is ideal for sauce, purees or drying - an extremely versatile tomato with outstanding flavour which can also be used in salads and is great on toast in the mornings.

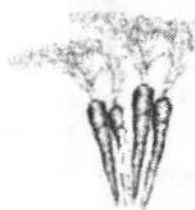
If you are interested in obtaining some of these seedlings please contact Tony on 6231 0508 to place your order.

Junior Organic crossword solution



SPRING VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

Spring is the main planting season in Canberra. The timing of some plantings may need to be varied depending on the particular season. Be prepared to protect your frost tender seedlings, as harsh frosts can occur right through Spring. Make your own cloches from plastic bottles with the bottoms cut out, or use row covers for larger plantings.



When direct planting with small seeds, eg. carrots, bulk out first by mixing the seeds with sand. You can help the plants pre-germinate by keeping them in moist sand for about 4 days before planting out (do not let them actually germinate).

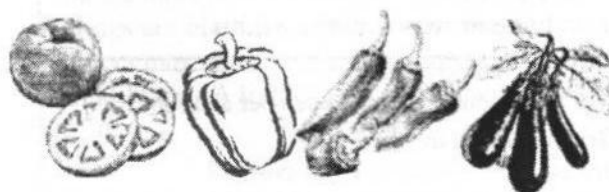
When planting out large seeds, eg. pea or corn, soak overnight in a weak seaweed solution prior to planting; alternatively, keep seeds moist between 2 pieces of kitchen paper for 3 to 4 days until seeds germinate, then plant out carefully. This is particularly useful if you are not sure of the seeds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

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

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

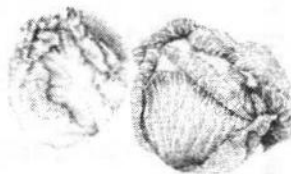
CROP ROTATION:

Remember to rotate the crops you grow in a particular garden bed. Crop rotation is a most important practice for organic gardeners. Successive crops should not come from the same plant families nor make the same demands on nutrients i.e. follow heavy feeders with light feeders. Also successive crops should not share the same diseases or attract the same pests - this prevents a build up of disease problems, and reduces losses from pests. There are numerous crop rotation schemes used, but try to keep to at least a 4 year rotation period and do not grow members of the same plant family in the same bed in consecutive years. eg the solanum family - tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants and potatoes.



PLANT VARIETIES:

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



	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Globe Artichoke	T	T	
J'salem Artichoke	T		
Asparagus	S	S	S
French Beans		S	S
Beetroot	S	S	S
Broccoli			S
Brussels Sprouts		S	S
Cabbage	ST	ST	ST
Capsicum*		S	ST
Carrot	S	S	S
Cauliflower			S
Celery	S	ST	ST
Cucumber*	S	S	ST
Eggplant*	S	S	T
Endive			S
Leeks	ST	ST	T
Lettuce	ST	ST	S
Melons*	S	S	ST
Onions	T	T	
Parsnips	S	S	S
Peas	S	S	-
Potatoes	S	S	S
Pumpkins*	S	S	ST
Radish	S	S	S
Rhubarb	T	T	
Silverbeet	S	S	ST
Snow Peas	S	S	S
Spinach	ST	ST	
Squash*	S	S	ST
Sweet corn		S	ST
Tomatoes*	S	S	ST
Turnips, white	S		
Zucchini*	S	S	ST

S= seed sowing
T= transplanting seedlings

* When planting these seeds before November the seed should be started in punnets indoors and the young seedlings kept in a warm sheltered place. Plant out the seedlings once the soil has warmed and the danger of frost has passed.

Canberra Organic Quick Quiz

1. Which of these vegetables belong to the same family: Rocket, Lettuce, Bok choy
2. Do carrots and radishes belong to the same family?
3. Why shouldn't you use the same bed to grow tomatoes one year and potatoes the next?
4. What is green manure?
5. Why is it good to include legumes such as field peas, vetch or lupins in a green manure crop?

Answers are on page 35. Too easy? Send your own quiz and answers for possible publication to editor@cogs.asn.au

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Cotter	Andy Hrast	6288 7262	andy.hrast@dotars.gov.au
Dickson	Beby Bros	6248 0063	bhabros@apex.net.au
Erindale	Christine Carter	6231 5862	ccarter@netspeed.com.au
Holder	Stephen Dean	6161 8803	sgd@webone.com.au
Kambah	Shirley Irvin	6231 6104	shirley.irvin@optusnet.com.au
Northside	Ben Bradey	6161 0329	ben.bradey@centrelink.gov.au
Oaks Estate	Martin Butterfield	6253 1286	president@cogs.asn.au
Queanbeyan	Katrina Willis	6232 9743	katrina.willis@aph.gov.au
Theodore	Richard Reed	6291 1897	rmjreed@ozemail.com.au
<u>Monthly Meetings</u>			
Seed exchange	Ray Harber		
Book sales	Murray Dadds		
Supper convenors	Marie Bahr, Mary Flowers		
Librarians	Beby Bros, assisted by Ben Bradey		
Web manager	Maren Child		mchild@starbytes.com.au
Telephone contact	Elizabeth Palmer	6248 8004	
Inquiries about Organic Growing		6248 8004	info@cogs.asn.au

To contact COGS

Email info@cogs.asn.au or visit our website at www.cogs.asn.au

COGS monthly meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except December and January)
at 7:30pm in Room 4 of the Griffin Centre in Civic
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 often 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 Charnwood, 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. 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
PO Box 347
DICKSON ACT 2602
Phone: (02) 6248 8004
Email: info@cogs.asn.au
Web: www.cogs.asn.au

COGS NOTICE BOARD

Don't forget to check the COGS website at www.cogs.asn.au for updates and new notices

Speakers

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

24 August

Martin Butterfield, COGS President
Birds and gardens

28 September

Ian Fraser, naturalist
Indigenous Food Plants

26 October

Bill Bencke from ACTEW
Rainwater tanks and greywater systems

23 November

Kim Pullen, CSIRO entomologist
Garden Pests

Please check the COGS website at www.cogs.asn.au for updates and confirmations.

Events

Saturdays

Gorman House Markets

Saturday mornings, 8am-11am

Growers Market, EPIC
(enter near Shell service station)

12 September

Biodynamics workshop - *see page 25*

25 - 26 September

Introduction to Permaculture course - *see page 29*

16 - 17 October Murrumbateman Field Day

23 - 24 October

Seed Savers' Annual Conference, Exeter—*see*
www.seedsavers.net

6 November

CIT plant sale

7 - 28 November

Organic Gardening for Beginners - *see page 4*

November Green Living Fair

November Visit to Yalleroo Organic Farm
Contact Ben Bradey on 6161 0329 for details.

Annual garden meetings

During September meetings are held in each of the gardens at which conveners and local garden committees are elected, plot levies collected and local garden rules reviewed.

All gardeners are expected to attend and are encouraged to become involved in the running of their garden.

The dates for this year's meetings are:

Charnwood:	Sun	12/9/04	1 pm
Cook:	Sun	26/9/04	12 noon
Cotter:	Sat	18/9/04	9 am
Dickson:	Mon	20/9/04	10 am
Erindale:	tba		
Kambah:	Sat	11/9/04	10 am
Holder:	Sun	19/9/04	11 am
Northside:	Sat	11/9/04	2 pm
Oaks Estate:	Sat	25/9/04	11 am
Queanbeyan:	Sat	4/9/04	3 - 3.30 pm
Theodore:	Sun	26/9/04	10 am-12 noon

Garden Regeneration Project:

(Canberra Urban Parks and Places)

Coordinator: Nina Stahl, Ph: (02) 6207 0142
email: nina.stahl@act.gov.au

Phoenix Garden Group Contacts:

Chris Stamford ph 6288 4049
Lesley Pattinson ph 6288 0293

Volunteer Gardeners Wanted

COGS frequently receives requests from worthy community projects for volunteer gardeners with some spare time to help. If you have the time to help with one of these projects please contact a COGS Committee Member (listed on page 32).

Canberra Organic Quick Quiz Answers

1. Rocket and bok choy are both members of the Brassicaceae family.
2. No - radishes are one of the brassicas and carrots belong to the Apiaceae family.
3. They are both members of the Solanaceae family and could encourage the build up of soil borne diseases.
4. Green manure is any crop grown specifically to be incorporated into the soil to provide bulk organic matter and thereby increase fertility - often a mixture of legumes and cereals.
5. Legumes have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen in the soil where it becomes available to succeeding crops.