



Autumn 2005

Canberra Organic

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

The quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

In this issue—

- Oaks Estate Garden, *p8*
- Success story at Cook Garden, *p14*
- Backyard Composting, *p20*
- Sweet pepper and tomato recipes, *p24*
- Autumn vegetable planting guide, *p27*



Vol. 13 No. 1

CANBERRA ORGANIC

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medium for reaching people in the Canberra
region who have an interest in organic food,
gardening and general environmental issues.
Our circulation is currently 450.

ADVERTISING RATES

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From the Editor



Our featured community garden in this issue (on
pages 8, 9) is Oaks Estate—congratulations Oaks
Estate gardeners for getting such good results so
soon after re-opening!

Your COGS Committee has found it very
interesting, indeed inspiring, to visit the various
COGS community gardens from time to time.
Several of the gardens have volunteered to each
host an 'open day' for other COGS members. As a
result Cotter, Kambah and Cook gardeners will
open their gardens to COGS visitors before the
cold weather sets in—thank you. We hope
members will take up and enjoy this opportunity—
if so, ask to extend this series of 'open days' to
other community gardens in the future. The notice
on page 10 gives details—and allow yourself to be
lured by Carl Were's produce featured on page 14.
Carl is a consistently successful gardener at Cook
community garden—thanks for sharing this article
with us Carl.

Betty Cornhill, Ben Bradey and Martin Butterfield
have continued writing for us this issue and Betty
also features in our report on the welcome gift
from NASAA to compensate for losses at
Xeriscape during the bushfires (see page 13).
Adrienne Fazekas has written an excellent and
timely feature on composting (page 20).

Please send me items to include in the magazine
and also let me know what topics you would like
covered as features in future issues—it is
encouraging to get members offering to write and
to get some feedback on content.

On page 11 is the formal Notice of the COGS
Annual General Meeting on 22 March. Please give
some thought to nominating as a Committee
member if you have some time to offer and an
enthusiasm for COGS objectives.

**One area where we need some support urgently
is in the management of COGS Backyard at
Xeriscape—it's actually a wonderful
opportunity for a member to have extra garden
space at their disposal at no cost while simply
growing organically. It is not necessary to be
present during the hours on which the public
has access but the garden needs to be kept tidy
because it is an educational project.**

Janet Popovic



President's Report Autumn 2005

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Canberra Organic*. As is always the case all your favourite themes are here together with some new material which will inform and entertain you!

I'll start with the weather. It has been very favourable for gardening over the past four months. Cook garden has received rainfall above the previous year for the last four months of the year and above median for the last three months. January has also been pretty good so far. From personal experience, and the Gardens I have seen, there is a good level of production for this peak season.

The picture appears not to be so optimistic for the dam catchment areas however, and restrictions are still in place and should be observed. Particular attention should be given to ensure that water isn't wasted: taps must be securely turned off and gardeners should be vigilant in spotting and fixing up leaks. This applies to both Community and home gardens.

I hope that many members will bring along their fresh goodies to Harvest night at the March Meeting which will follow the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 22 March at 7.30pm.

The AGM presents an opportunity for the election of members to join the Committee. There will be at least two vacancies from current members not renominating for the Committee this year. Becoming an active Committee member is a very good way for people to assist with furthering the aspirations of COGS. If you are interested in serving in this way, nomination forms

will be available at the February Meeting in the Griffin Centre.

My personal situation appears to be going to change quite a bit in the very near future, as I have been informally advised that I am likely to be successful in my application for a job overseas. The job will make keeping an active role in COGS impossible. While I regret leaving COGS, and other aspects of Canberra life, such a job has been my ambition for several years and the opportunity will not arise again. I hope to have completed my "succession planning" with the assistance of the rest of the current Committee before I leave the A.C.T.

I have promised the Editor that I will send over the occasional article about gardening practices that I encounter in the travels associated with my new job. The first of these will cover potentially entertaining times trying to unearth (sorry, couldn't resist a final pun) organic gardens in Manhattan!

I wish you all, as individuals and as a Community, well for the future. Happy digging (or no-digging). I trust you'll enjoy picking your crops and eating (or preserving) them.

Martin Butterfield

Contents



President's Report Autumn 2005 <i>Martin Butterfield</i>	3	COGS Committee and Helpers & <i>Canberra Organic Quick Quiz</i>	28
Around the Gardens, <i>Garden Conveners</i>	5	COGS Inc. Information	29
Notice: Stage 3 Water Restrictions Still Apply	7	Membership Application/Renewal Form	30
Oaks Estate Community Garden, <i>J Popovic</i>	8	COGS Notice Board	31
Come and See My (Community) Garden	10	Answers: <i>Canberra Organic Quick Quiz</i>	31
Notice of COGS Inc. Annual General Meeting, 22 March 2005	11	Alphabetical Index of Advertisers: <i>When you use the services of our advertisers, please let them know you saw their ad in Canberra Organic.</i>	
NASAA Donation to COGS	13	ABC Organic Gardener Magazine	12
A Bountiful Harvest, <i>Carl Were</i>	14	Betty Cornhill	10
Xeriscape Gardens—COGS Backyard	15	Eco Meats	6
Gardening Without Work, <i>Betty Cornhill</i>	16	Gastro-Gnome Gloves	10
<i>Junior Organic</i> puzzle page	18	Mooble	6
Yalleroo Organic Farm Visit, <i>Ben Bradey</i>	19	<i>Cover photo: Golden Bantam Corn, Cook Community Garden, January 2005</i>	
Backyard Composting, <i>Adrienne Fazekas</i>	20	<i>Back cover: From the COGS Community Gardens, January 2005</i>	
St Kilda Veg Out Garden, <i>Martin Butterfield</i>	22	<i>Left to right—</i>	
A Calf is Born, <i>Ben Bradey</i>	23	• <i>Zucchini, Cook.</i>	
Delicious Ways with Fine Produce— Sweet Peppers and Tomatoes, <i>Janet Popovic</i>	24	• <i>Beans, Queanbeyan.</i>	
From this Season 1994 (<i>COGS Quarterly Autumn 1994</i>)	25	• <i>Corn, Cucurbits and Silverbeet, Queanbeyan.</i>	
Organic Tips and Techniques	26	• <i>Black Russian Tomatoes, Cook.</i>	
COGS Autumn Vegetable Planting Guide	27	<i>Cover photos by J Popovic. New cover design by A Fazekas.</i>	



Congratulations from COGS to the Phoenix Garden Group and Chapman Residents Action Group. By the conclusion of the project at the end of November 2004 assistance had been provided to over 350 gardens by more than 400 volunteers in the wake of damage during the devastating bushfires of January 2003. Thanks to COGS members who were involved.



Around the Gardens



Charnwood

Charnwood has a new convener:
Garry Thomas.

Cotter

The summer chore of watering is underway. However it is paying off with good results already and indications of further good harvests. There is a large number of grasshoppers around the garden but to date fortunately there has been no serious damage to crops.

There are a number of people who have not been working their plots while at the same time there are people on the waiting list seeking a plot. This is not a fair situation and will have to be resolved.

Andy Hrast

Note: You can see Cotter garden on Sunday 3 April between 10am and 11am—see page 10 for further information. JP

Cook

In the short history of the Cook garden every summer has been completely different. Two summers ago we had a light frost on Melbourne Cup Day and days consistently around 30 degrees thereafter. Despite the high temperatures there was adequate humidity to allow soil moisture levels to be maintained. Last summer was categorised by low humidity that made it difficult to avoid blossom rot in the tomatoes.

This summer has, until mid January, been characterised by consistently cool to cold nights which have delayed fruit set for tomatoes, eggplants and capsicum to the point where there might not be enough warm weather left to produce the bountiful crop levels we've had in the past. Additional difficulties included a sustained wet period in early November that caused severe blight in potatoes and mild blight in tomatoes. Tomatoes also have had to contend with green vegetable bug.

A moderate frost on 27 December was a further setback for pumpkins, zucchini and melons and crops of these cucurbits are likely to be reduced or in some plots, non-existent. Despite these trials Cook gardeners are

persevering and harvesting good crops of green beans, silverbeet, onions, garlic and other vegetables.

There are only three vacant plots at the moment and the imminent installation of a sign may attract local interest to fill these plots.

Many thanks to Carl who has installed a splendid wash basin on the back of the shed—with very fashionable twin basins!! The wash water drains into a bucket. The idea is that when the bucket is nearing full, gardeners will pour the bucket water onto the small native shrubs immediately to the south of the shed.

Cook gardeners are looking forward to showing COGS members around on the open day on 27 February between 5 and 6 pm.

Alan Robertson

Erindale

Considering the sporadic rainfall this season our garden plots continue to be relatively productive. Mind you, much has depended on how much gardeners have put in to what they have received.

This year we've harvested more raspberries than before. The blackberries are heavy in fruit though not as well pollinated or quite as big. My first crop of strawberries was nice and large—another scrumptious crop is now being produced. Spring onions are huge but then again I have decided not to waste garden space or my time growing brown or red onions again. It's been a pleasure growing perfect specimens of lettuce—so much so that sometimes it seems a bit of a shame to remove them. Unfortunately in the scheme of things there's no other option for them but to be brutally torn apart and eaten.

Some planted seeds have failed to sprout and we've concluded that perhaps it might be because of irregular watering or the suspect quality of the seeds themselves. Most other vegies are coming on well including tomatoes—especially those little pop-in-your-mouth 'cherry' ones. All in all mother earth is being kind and generous to those of us who have been conscientious, busy little ants.

Christine Carter



Around the Gardens continued ...



Kambah

Our garden at Kambah has been flourishing to say the least. Some plots have wonderful flourishing vegetables, others have flourishing small fruits, and others have flourishing weeds!! Oh, for some more members. Wonderful though those earlier rains have been, it has made looking after vacant plots a task that has simply been too difficult for the rest of us to handle.

We had hoped that our local vandals had moved on. However, just before Christmas they started again, breaking in either under, over, or straight through our fence. One night they simply pulled out every potato plant from eight separate plots. What ever motivates people like that? Regardless, our wonderful members have soldiered on and are about to reap their promised harvests.

If anyone has rellies, friends, even in-laws (!! in our Tuggeranong region who would love a garden plot, please invite them to phone us.

Shirley Irvin

Note: You can see Kambah garden on Sunday 13 March between 5pm and 6pm - see page 10 for further information. JP

Northside

At the time of writing, the race is on to see who will be the first to harvest a ripe red tomato. So far all gardeners have an abundance of green fruit just waiting for the right conditions to mature. No doubt by the time of publication, the race will be on to try and offload the glut of

tomatoes that seems to hit with a vengeance every February. Beans, cucumbers and corn also feature heavily in the summer plots.

In November we went over several vacant plots with the rotary hoe in preparation for sowing green manure.

We welcome our newest gardener, Monica, who acquired a plot shortly after it was laid down with lupins. She now has a healthy crop of lupins growing amongst her tomatoes and beans—both of which are doing extremely well.

The fruit trees have been prolific bearers for the first time in recent years. Unfortunately we were too late with the bird netting and lost the lot to the hungry birds. Maybe next year we will be more prepared.

Ben Bradey

Oaks Estate

The Oaks Estate garden has re-opened and is looking good. Please see the article on Oaks Estate on pages 8 and 9 of this issue.

Queanbeyan

Queanbeyan garden is flourishing. All plots are being looked after beautifully and there are wonderful crops of tomatoes, corn, cucurbits, brassicas, as well as magnificent banana chillies and capsicums.

Maree Timbs

We could do with some tips from Queanbeyan community gardeners on how to grow banana chillies and capsicum. JP.

Stage 3 Water Restrictions Still Apply in Community and Home Gardens!!!

Please water only in accordance with the current Stage 3 water restrictions—these allow hand held hose or manually operated dripper system watering between 7am and 10am and between 7pm and 10pm every second day according to the odds and evens system. A once-a-week use of sprinklers, only in the evening between 7pm and 10pm, on Saturday evening if you have an even-numbered street address and on Sunday evening if you have an odd-numbered street address, has been extended **until 27 February 2005**—please watch for further information in the media after that date.

Please be miserly with your use of water—**flood irrigation is not within the spirit or the letter of the restrictions! Hoses are to be hand-held and not to be left running unattended.**

Oaks Estate Community Garden



*Photo above: A view of Oaks Estate community garden after a tidy-up by a working bee.
Photo taken by Lisa Roberts, 16 October 2004.*

On 22 January COGS Treasurer Adrienne Fazekas and I accepted an invitation to visit the Oaks Estate Community Garden which is now alive and well again after a period of closure. COGS congratulates the new garden convener Robin Walter, better known as “Pockets” (as a lad he was often to be seen hands in pockets) for his commitment to re-opening the garden.

There are close ties between the garden and the Oaks Estate Progress Association. That Association is very supportive of the COGS philosophy that community gardens promote the benefits of organic growing while they give members ready access to a place where they can enjoy their individual gardens in an environment of mutual respect for the space and creativity of fellow gardeners.

The Oaks Estate garden is pleasantly situated next to parklands, as can be seen from two of the photos on this page. The top photo, taken in mid October 2004, shows the site after a major cleanup and removal of accumulated rubbish by a working bee. The next photo down shows the same view of the garden in mid January 2005 and demonstrates the commendable productivity within a neat environment achieved in the interim months.

Currently there are seven plot holders. Each gardener inherited a raised bed—or part thereof—with edging (I recall the frustration of turning grass sods at Cook before I could plant anything to start my garden!). Crops in progress include tomatoes, corn, cucumbers,



cabbage, broccoli, beans, potatoes, carrots, rhubarb and onions—see the photos on page 8!

On the day we visited the garden Megan picked some carrots and onions and Pockets had a wonderful harvest of juicy green cucumbers (see photo below). Pockets grew up in Tumbarumba and learned a few gardening tricks from his family. He's been a resident of the A.C.T. for about ten years now, and of Oaks Estate for about five years.



Oaks Estate garden has ample room to provide for more garden beds and additional members—only about one fifth of the available space is currently under cultivation and that's showing what can be achieved.

Thanks Oaks Estate gardeners for inviting us to see your garden—a great start and we are sure you will enjoy the fruits of your labour right through the gardening calendar!

Janet Popovic

Photos:

Page 8, second column, from top to bottom:

- 22 January view of the garden as developed since mid October 2004.
- Megan harvesting carrots.
- Looking back to the garden entrance across beds of thriving tomatoes and corn.

Page 9, first column, from top to bottom:

- "Pockets" Walter, the Oaks Estate garden convener, with the day's harvest of fine cucumbers, 22 January 2005.
- View of beds ready for more planting, looking towards the adjacent children's park.

Below: Beans and pumpkins dominate this corner

Photos listed above taken by J Popovic.



Come and see my (community) garden!

COGS operates several community gardens in the Canberra and Queanbeyan region. Each one is different and we think COGS members will enjoy seeing what's happening in someone else's. The convener of each garden and other members will be on hand to show you around in this first round of open community garden visits for our membership:

- Cook— Sunday 27 February, 5pm - 6pm. This garden is on Bindubi Street south of Cook, on the right hand side of the road as you head towards Woden, or a left hand turn into the garden about 150 metres along Bindubi Street if you have followed the Cook signposting from William Hovell Drive.
- Kambah—Sunday 13 March, 5pm - 6pm. The garden is accessed from Springbett Street. From Drakeford Drive turn into the northernmost entrance of O'Halloran Circuit, then Springbett Street—the garden is just past the old Kambah Woolshed and a tank-like green building.
- Cotter— Sunday 3 April, 10am - 11 am. This garden is off the Cotter Road at Curtin. Follow the sign to the Yarralumla Woolshed. There is a gate (not locked) just off Cotter Road. Pass through the gate (please close it after you) and about half a kilometre along the dirt road on the left is a gate, that will be left open, to the garden.

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COGS Inc.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
22 March 2005, 7.30pm

The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc. will be held on 22 March 2005 at 7:30 pm, in Room 4 of the Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic.

In accordance with Section 22 of the COGS Constitution the business of this meeting will be:

1. to confirm the minutes of the last preceding Annual General Meeting and of any general meeting held since that meeting;
2. to receive from the committee reports on the activities of COGS during the last preceding financial year;
3. to elect members of the committee, including office-bearers; and
4. to receive and consider the audited statement of accounts and the auditor's and committee reports that are required to be submitted to members pursuant to Subsection 73(1) of the Act.

Committee members will be elected according to Section 13 of the COGS Constitution which states:

- 1 Nominations of candidates for election as office-bearers of COGS, or newsletter editor, or librarian, or as ordinary Committee members shall be made in writing, signed by 2 members of COGS and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the nomination form).
- 2 If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall be received at the Annual General Meeting.
- 3 If insufficient further nominations are received, any vacant positions remaining on the committee shall be deemed to be vacancies.
- 4 If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated shall be taken to be elected.
- 5 If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot shall be held.
- 6 The ballot for the election of office-bearers, newsletter editor and librarian and ordinary committee members shall be conducted at the AGM in such a manner as the Committee may direct.
- 7 A person is not eligible to simultaneously hold more than one position on the committee, except:
 - (a) the position of Public Officer; and
 - (b) the position of Membership Secretary, which can be held by the Honorary Treasurer.

Please contact the Secretary Ben Bradey, phone 6161 0329, or speak to a member of the current committee (see page 28 of this issue of *Canberra Organic*) if you would like a nomination form.

NASAA Donation to COGS

The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) provides certification and inspection services which assist in facilitating market access throughout the world for NASAA certified organic product.

NASAA Chair and CEO, George Devrell made a welcome visit to Canberra at the end of last year, presenting COGS with a cheque for \$500 to assist the replacement of tools and equipment lost in the severe Canberra bushfires of January 2003. George indicated that this financial assistance was consistent with NASAA's wish to develop more supportive and formalised relationships with regional organic groups across Australia. While in Canberra George visited COGS Backyard at the Xeriscape Garden, Weston and also the COGS community gardens at Cotter and Cook.



NASAA Chair George Devrell handing over the cheque to COGS President Martin Butterfield in the company of Betty Cornhill (second from left) and Treasurer Adrienne Fazekas at the COGS Backyard demonstration garden, Xeriscape Gardens, Weston on 30 November 2004.

Photo by J Popovic

The money provided by NASAA is being used to replace the irrigation system destroyed at COGS Backyard with a dripper system allowable under the ACT water restrictions, for replacement gardening implements, and to purchase netting for the demonstration beds that are very prone to pillage by the ducks and cockatoos at Xeriscape. **THANK YOU NASAA!!!**

We understand that NASAA will include mention of COGS and a profile of our longstanding member Betty Cornhill, who drew NASAA's attention to our losses in the bushfires, in a forthcoming issue of its magazine *Organic Insights*.

Many COGS members will also be interested in the 2005 IFOAM World Organics Congress that will be hosted by NASAA in Adelaide in September. Please see page 23 for preliminary information.

A Bountiful Harvest



*Delicious strawberries harvested by Carl and Michelle from their plot at Cook this summer.
Photo: C. Were*

I'd heard about COGS. First I came across their website. Later I saw an article in "The Chronicle". The concept of the community garden sounded like it would really suit me.

Sometime later as I drove home from work I saw a fenced plot with garden beds in it at Cook. There was someone there. I turned the car around and went back. "Is this a community garden?" I asked.

That October long weekend in 2001 I started to till my first plot (40m²). A few weeks later (and still in need of exercise) I took to the soil with a fork in a 50m² plot.

My first summer's harvest produced what other garden members referred to as 'Carl's crazy corn' standing 8 feet or 2 ½ metres high. I'd read about companion planting corn with sunflowers but soon learnt that the cockatoos had more time to oversee my plot than I did. Being green to gardening I also planted 6 zucchini plants. Soon, having exhausted every zucchini recipe from fritters and soups to cakes—and eating zucchini everyday, it was all I could do to offload the excess to people I knew and their friends and feed the remainder to my worm farm.

The next summer I was fortunate enough to have so many tomatoes that I filled 52 jars with home made tomato pasta sauce.

My plot has permanent beds but most of it is open for crop rotation. One segment is permanently covered with bird netting and for the effort of putting it up I am able to pick raspberries and strawberries and many other things that the birds otherwise like to sample in a destructive manner. In Spring 2004 I was able to harvest 9kg of strawberries, 3 x 2litre ice-cream containers full of raspberries, 16kg of garden peas and 17kg of broad beans. I put my bountiful harvest down to Spring rains, which did more than I could ever expect to achieve from hand watering.

I also believe that the time you are able to dedicate to your plants and soil has a direct correlation to harvest yield. I compost, I mulch, I use worm castings and I like to use seaweed foliar sprays for the health of my plants and soil. I try to keep the weeds at bay and I follow the seasonal COGS planting guide as found at the back of this magazine.

Being a member of COGS and the Cook garden has been and continues to be beneficial. I have learnt from the experiences of others and have been able to observe different techniques available for growing which has been invaluable to a new gardener such as myself.

Carl Were
Cook Community Garden

Xeriscape Gardens—COGS Backyard

Xeriscape Gardens is a low-water usage garden established by ActewAGL. It includes COGS Backyard, a demonstration vegetable, herb and berry garden maintained by COGS that features a basic crop rotation system.

The gardens, located at the CIT entrance, Heysen Street, Weston, are open weekends from 1.00pm to 4.30pm. The Summer and Autumn program organised by ActewAGL is—

5-6 February

Xeriscape Gardens re-opens.

12-13 February, 2pm talk

Maximising your home garden productivity and water re-use presented by CSIRO water scientist and fanatical home gardener, Dr Richard Stirzaker.

26-27 February, 2pm talk

Minimising water use through landscape design and the application of Xeriscape principles presented by Xeriscape garden designer, Neil Hobbs.

19-20 March, 2pm talk

Water-saving strategies and vegetable growing presented by Xeriscape organic grower, Laurie Thomson.

Easter 26-27 March—Closed

16-17 April

Water-saving strategies for irrigation and lawn care presented by CIT Weston horticulturists, Garry Dawson and Bruce Davies.

23-24 April

This will be the final open weekend until Spring.

COGS Backyard Working Bees

COGS needs your help to maintain COGS Backyard as a demonstration garden for organic growing. Please come along with your gardening tools and gloves:

- **Saturday 5 March, 2-4pm**
- **Saturday 9 April, 2-4pm**

ActewAGL Irrigation Workshop Dates

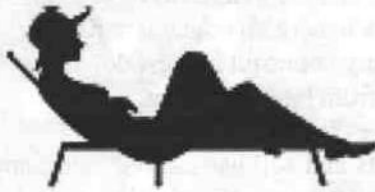
Thursday 17 February 2005

Thursday 3 March 2005

Thursday 24 March 2005

Learn about dripper systems—changing from sprinkler systems and suitable flow rates. Answers on mulching and drought tolerant plants. Entry by gold coin donation. Bookings necessary; phone 6248 3131.

Gardening Without Work



When I was running the Garden Stall for the Canberra Grammar

School there was an elderly lady who always allowed us to come to her garden to dig out plants to sell. It was an all day job, for we were expected to do a bit of work for her in the garden, and after we had finished we then took the plants back to my place to pot them up with some of my famous compost.

At that time I had been 'into' organic gardening for seven years and was reading every book I could lay my hands on on the subject, so I said to the old lady, "Have you read Gardening Without Work?" Quick as a flash she retorted, "There's no such thing!" She would not even look at the book, thus depriving herself of a most entertaining read. I read it several times during that period, and can still pick it up, open it at any page and find it hard to put down.

Ruth Stout, the author, made her name in the States by growing wonderful vegetables in a thick mulch of hay, and then writing several books about it. The mulch has to be at least 20cms deep. People came from far and near to look at her garden. They couldn't believe you could grow vegetables without first digging the soil, then watering and weeding and weeding *ad infinitum*. And spraying!

Her main objections to spraying, apart from not wanting to eat poisons, is that she wants only to do jobs she likes doing, and secondly she does not want to kill the friendly bugs with the 'baddies'.

She simply throws a handful of hay on top of any weeds that do get through the mulch. The book is called *Gardening Without Work, for the ageing, the busy and the indolent*.

In one place Ruth is talking about slugs and she writes, "I read somewhere that a shallow pan of

beer put into a garden at night will do away with slugs. (Whether they are dead or just dead drunk in the morning I don't know.) I wrote this to one inquirer and he answered: "I'm certainly not going to carry beer out to the garden for the slugs. If they want beer they can come in the house and ask for it like everyone else." "

My garden certainly cannot be done without work. My garden is a jungle. It started in the Spring with a brand new fence down the street side and what most people would consider a high enough wire fence to keep a little dog from jumping over, but Cheeky is a terrier and she has been practising jumping to try to reach the door handle in the laundry where she sleeps. She has reached to within an inch or two of the handle, so it was not hard for her to jump, catch her claws in the wire and haul herself up and over. She is a very determined little dog. The next step was to look for a loose board, as she had with the old fence, and because of careless workmanship she soon found one, and she was out and away. She crosses the

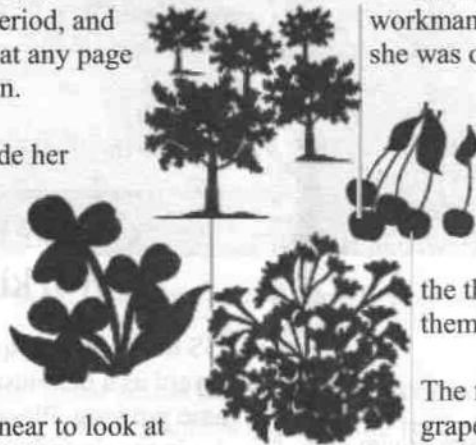
road without waiting for cars and so I watched in trepidation—my friend who often takes her for walks was able to get her to come back.

After that we put 26 nails in the thirteen boards that were missing them!

The fencers also chopped off the grapevine killing the 30 or 40 feet of it along the pathway fence as well as all on the fence they were replacing. This has resulted in hundreds of new shoots from the stump invading the vegie garden.

My plan of work on these hot days is to dig out oxalis bulbs along the pathway, early in the morning. Then as the sun moves above my grove of trees, I move into the first path of the vegie garden, doing the same job, then to the second pathway and finally to the grapevine and the jungle where the spiraea has come under the fence and is competing with the raspberries and self-sown Lemon Balm and the grapevine for the outside bed.

Already the grapevine has sent shoots across all the beds, so some will need to be tied to the



fences. I am missing the four or five boxes of grapes I usually get.

When it gets too hot to stay out in the garden, I then come in to do indoor work, keeping cool with water, getting into a cool bath if wet washcloths are not enough, and drink cold water with ice in it. The ice cube trays are kept busy all summer. What would I do without a fridge?

In Bermuda, before we had electricity on our island, we had an ice-box. We had to go every few days to a place where they made ice and get a big block, but after we had electricity laid on through an underwater cable we had a huge fridge which held milk and cream from our dairy, and butter when we made it. It was

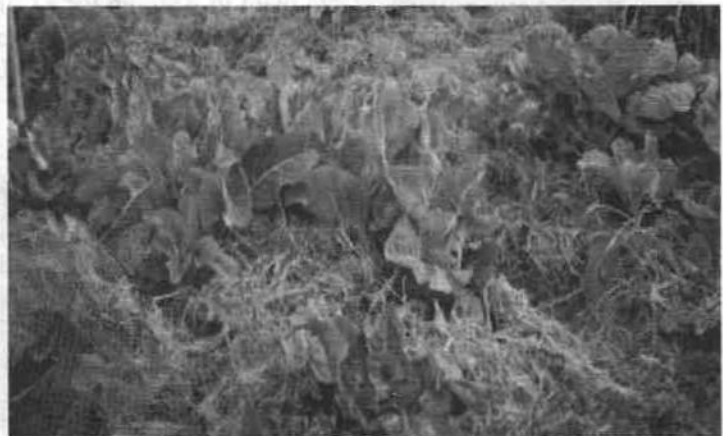
usually my job to turn the handle of the churn. The big wooden one took a long time to make butter but the two-quart size glass one was much easier, and I always had a glass of buttermilk when the butter came. Also I was often allowed to wash the butter, which I loved doing.

Ruth's first book, "How to Have a Green Thumb Without an Aching Back" seems to have disappeared now. Because I had two copies of this one I gave one to the Garden Club library, and later when they discarded their library, I got it back and gave it to the COGS library. Later, when COGS discarded it, it came back to me. It is still one of my favourite books.

Betty Cornhill

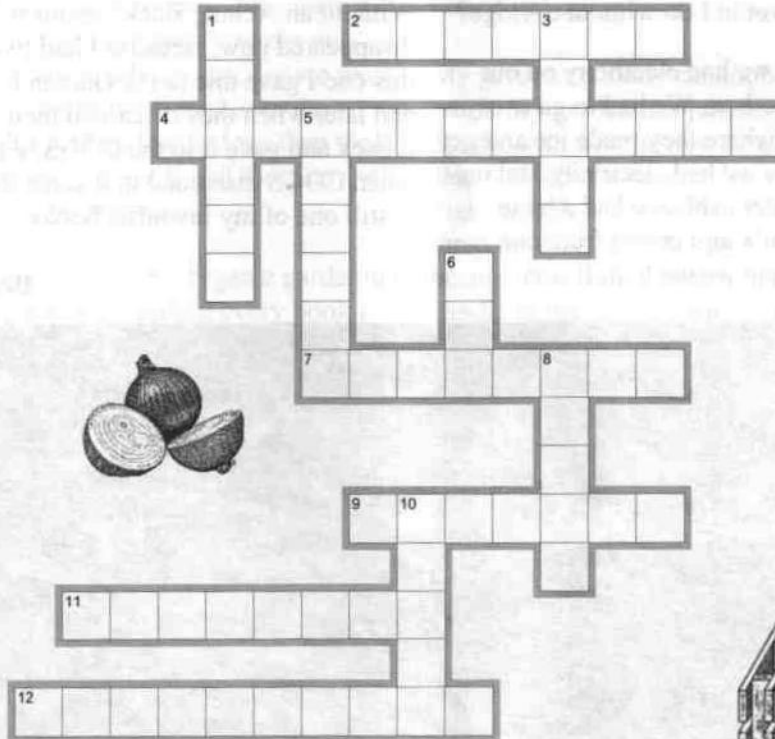


Photos: Pumpkins, lettuce and brassicas growing in thick mulch. Photos: J Popovic



Junior Organic Puzzle Page

Autumn Organic Crossword



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

CLUES

Across

2. The product of recycled kitchen and garden waste that is valuable for organic growing.
4. The autumn months.
7. Legumes in green manure mixes "fix" this in the soil.
9. A variety of lettuce you can plant in Autumn for a Canberra Winter.
11. A kind of brassica that should be planted in Summer or early Autumn.
12. Which beans can be sown in Canberra in April and May?

Down

1. Autumn product that can be added to the compost heap.
3. Sow seeds of this "make you cry" vegetable in Autumn.
5. Compost is made from nitrogen-rich and material rich in which other element?
6. A compost heap is turned to inject more what?
8. Autumn is the time to plant this type of manure.
10. Which "greens" can be transplanted in Canberra in March and April?

The solution is on page 23.

Yalleroo Organic Farm Visit



In late November last year, fifteen or so COGS members were lucky enough to pay a visit to the Yalleroo Organic Egg farm at Burra, a short drive from Queanbeyan. Catriona Maurice showed the visitors through the farm and its operations. Catriona had spoken to a COGS general meeting earlier in the year at a time when the region was in the grip of drought. The situation had improved vastly by the time of our visit, thanks to Spring rains. The free range chooks were happily frolicking in lush green pasture. Electric fencing keeps them in a designated section of a paddock and there are several mobile chook houses which are rotated with the chooks through the paddocks every few weeks. Nesting boxes inside the chook houses were full with eggs and the youthful visitors in particular joined in collecting the eggs into open cartons. Later COGS visitors were able to pack the large fresh organic eggs into the trademark blue cartons with the Yalleroo label for purchase at farm price—and they were delicious! Look for them in organic retail outlets.

We also checked out the ‘Chicken Hilton’, a separate holding area for hens, and the great view from a platform near an abandoned olive grove high on the hill.

‘Fancy’ the cow provides the daily milk for mixing with supplementary grain for the chooks and was very tolerant of our group of visitors.

Thanks to the Maurice family for having us take a look around Yalleroo. What seemed routine and even mundane to Catriona was most fascinating to those without a farming background.

Depending on the level of interest, COGS will organise more farm visits in 2005. If you know of a place you’d like to visit, or would like to offer your organic farming property for a visit, then please email info@cogs.asn.au and we’ll see what we can do.



Ben Bradey

Photos by B. Bradey and J Popovic.



Backyard Composting

What is compost?

Compost is partially decomposed organic matter resulting from biological decay. Well made compost is a brown, crumbly, sweet smelling earth-like substance.

Making compost can be as simple as piling garden waste in an out of the way corner and letting nature take its course. However, with the input of a bit of time and energy, the composting process will happen much more quickly and the final product will be of better quality.

Why do we use it?

Compost is a fundamental ingredient of organic gardening used to:

- Recycle organic matter.
- Improve soil structure.
- Increase the nutrient and water holding capacity of soils.
- Encourage the activity of soil microbes and earthworms.
- Provide slow release plant nutrients.

Compost essentials

There are five essential ingredients for making compost: food, air, water, micro-organisms and time. All these must be present in appropriate quantities for the composting process to proceed efficiently.

- **Food** (organic matter)—this is the raw material from which compost is made. Any vegetable matter is suitable but a good variety of 'browns' to supply carbon and 'greens' to supply nitrogen will compost more efficiently and the final product will be richer. The ratio of 'browns' to 'greens' should be around 20:1. 'Browns' include straw, fallen leaves, sawdust, shredded paper, dry brown seedless weeds. 'Greens' include fruit and vegetable scraps, green leaves and prunings, dead flowers, grass clippings, weeds and fresh animal manures. Things which should not be added to the compost heap include:
 - meat and dairy products which may attract mice and rats,
 - seeding weeds and weeds with underground stems such as couch, which may not be killed unless the compost gets very hot,
 - large branches,
 - domestic animal droppings,
 - sawdust from treated timber,
 - glossy magazines.

- **Air**—or at least oxygen, is required by the micro-organisms involved in the process of decomposing organic matter to form compost. Regular turning of the compost will provide sufficient oxygen. Earthworms entering the heap will also help to keep it adequately aerated.



- **Water**—a compost heap needs to be kept moist at all times. If it gets too dry the composting process will slow down or stop altogether. If it gets too wet it will also slow down and may become unpleasantly smelly.

- **Micro-organisms**—are the bacteria and fungi which do the actual work of breaking down dead organic matter to form compost. They are naturally present in soil and will enter a compost heap and multiply rapidly when conditions (moisture, aeration, temperature) are suitable. Compost heaps should always be built directly on the ground to ensure the presence of these micro-organisms.

- **Time**—making compost takes time. The composting process happens more quickly in warmer weather and can be speeded up by regular turning and the addition of activators such as blood and bone, fresh comfrey leaves or a small quantity of compost from a previous heap.

There are three commonly used methods for making compost: open heaps, closed bins or enclosures. Each has advantages and disadvantages and the choice depends on the volume of compostable material, the available space and how quickly you want the process to happen.



Open heaps are simply piled up as material becomes available. They are cheap and easy to build but can look untidy, attract rodents and are easily disturbed by birds in search of worms. Composting can be very slow in a backyard situation as heat and moisture can be rapidly lost from a small pile.

Closed bins are usually made from recycled plastic and are black or dark green to aid heat absorption. They provide a tidy solution for small gardens and are rodent and bird proof. Composting can be slow due to poor aeration or too much moisture and the volume is restricted.

Enclosures are simple structures which can be made from timber, wire mesh, bricks or straw bales. Usually two or three are built next to each other to hold different stages of compost. They provide good aeration and drainage and are usually cheap to construct. Enclosures, however, are not portable or vermin proof and require several square metres of ground.

Building the compost heap

It is best to collect all the compost ingredients and build the heap in one go. Garden waste can be piled up until you have a sufficient volume or you can collect extra ingredients such as lawn clippings or fallen leaves from your neighbours or vegetable scraps from the markets. Try to have a good variety of fresh and dry ingredients to provide adequate carbon and nitrogen.



Shredding tough or woody garden waste before adding it to the heap will allow it to compost more quickly.

Build the heap either by adding layers of fresh and dry material or by mixing everything together before adding it. Water well as you go to ensure there is adequate moisture. The compost heap should be damp but not soggy. As the composting process starts over the next few days the heap will heat up and feel warm to the touch. The temperature can reach 60°C in a

large heap.

The compost is likely to stay warm for several days and then cool down. Once the compost cools it is ready to turn. If you are using a plastic bin simply lift it off, mix



up the contents and then refill it. If you are using an enclosure, either toss the whole lot into an adjacent empty enclosure or rake it all out, mix it up and refill the enclosure. While turning your compost make sure you add water if it is dry or dusty. If it is too wet, or is smelly, add some more dry material such as straw or shredded paper. The heap will probably heat up again and is then re-turned once it is cool. Depending on your energy and enthusiasm levels, this turning process can be repeated several more times to speed up composting or you can just leave it undisturbed to finish over the next few months.

Once the heap no longer heats up when turned it is ready to use. Another sign that it is ready is the presence of lots of worms. The compost should be brown, crumbly and smell pleasantly earthy.

Using compost

Compost is a wonderful soil conditioner and slow release plant food - you can never have too much compost! It can be mixed into the topsoil or used as a feeding mulch. Don't bury it too deeply or it will be out of reach of the plants' feeding roots. If using it as a mulch, keep it clear of the stems of plants or you may encourage fungal problems such as collar rot. Compost can also be added to potting mixes to provide slow release nutrients and to aid water retention.

Adrienne Fazekas

References

Henry Doubleday Research Association
www.hdra.org.uk/organicgardening/compost

ACT No Waste
www.nowaste.act.gov.au/ed/compostingfactsheet.html

Queensland Dept. of Primary Industries and Fisheries
www.dpi.qld.gov/environment/3679.html

Compost clipart courtesy of the California Integrated Waste Management Board at
www.ciwmb.ca.gov/gallery/WastePrev

St Kilda Veg Out Garden



As one wanders through the gardens, one comes across sculptures, paintings and installations integrated into the landscape. Many of the gardens themselves are works of art, and many of the gardeners are also artists.

The Veg Out Community Garden comprises 145 garden plots (Frances and I were quite surprised by the small size of the plots compared to those we are used to in COGS Community Gardens) as well as much communal space. Ten plots are held by local community groups and the remainder by private individuals. Private plot

While staying in Melbourne recently, Frances and I went for a walk along the beach and through St Kilda (aiming to inhale the smell of cakes in Acland St). As we came round the back of Luna Park we discovered a very interesting Community Garden and since a sign said visitors were welcome we swung in for a look and photo session. Some of the photographs are included here for your interest.

Since everyone in the garden seemed very busy we didn't like to interrupt them with inane questions but have instead taken some material



holders pay a 6 monthly fee of \$4/m² or \$2.5/m² concession. Once gained the plot remains under the care of the plot holder until they release it, at which time it is re-allocated to the next person on the waiting list.

Most plot holders grow vegetables and herbs (tomatoes are the favourite), but flowers and art work are popular. Letter boxes feature prominently on many plots.

Martin Butterfield

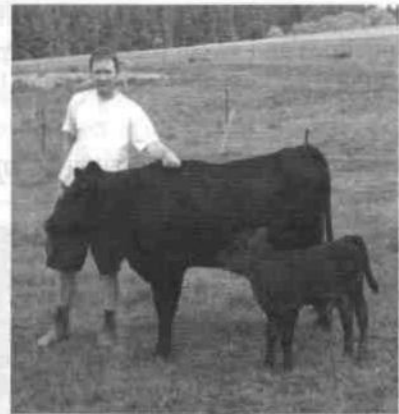
(Photos by M Butterfield)

from their excellent website (<http://www.vegout.asn.au/background.php>). There is much more on the site than what follows.

In October 1998, Port Phillip Council offered the site of the disused St Kilda Bowling Club as studio space to local artists. The Club buildings were quickly occupied on a month-by-month basis and a thriving artist colony began. However, the sorry sight of a former bowling green sprouting weeds drove several of the artists to turn the soil into what would become a series of plots and a community garden.



A Calf is Born



Finally the day had come—a new baby calf. It was a cool wet night in mid January when I first caught sight of the new arrival. I'd arrived at the property after dark and found the girls huddled together on the hill amongst the low shrubs. Upon approaching them, I was disappointed to see there were still just the three of them. No sign of any new calves. The cows followed as I walked back to the car, and out of the bushes popped a little calf looking for its mother. It was like a little bundle of joy emerging in the light rain. Dexters being from Ireland, I'm sure they felt right at home that night. The next morning I got up early to take a look at the calf in daylight. It was sitting quietly with its mother enjoying the sunshine—only to be disturbed by a camera-happy onlooker. Luckily for me the Dexters are good mothers and look after their offspring with little intervention from humans. But as a proud dad, I'll be on hand to watch as they develop into healthy happy organic Dexters. One other cow is also pregnant and we are expecting a playmate for the new calf any day now.

Incidentally the first calf is a boy whom we have named 'Saturn'. The decision now will be whether to keep him on as a potential prize winning bull, or send him off in 18 months time for Dexter steaks. Most likely it will be steaks and I'll have to buy a bigger freezer to fit them all in.

Ben Bradey

(Photos by Ben Bradey)

Shaping Sustainable Systems

15th IFOAM¹ Organic World Congress
20-27 September 2005
Adelaide

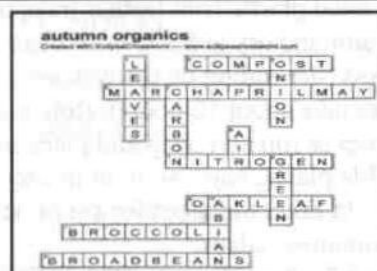
Topics to be covered at the Congress include crop production, food processing, animal husbandry, farming systems, water, regulatory systems, market development, education, community and eco-tourism. Topics to be covered as part of the associated Scientific Conference relate to research in plant and animal production, processing, food quality and health; quality systems in research, and methodologies; socio-economic trends and more! For further information as it becomes available check the web site:

www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam2005

¹ The International Federation of Agricultural Movements

COGS Green Manure Mix

Available at the COGS monthly meetings during Autumn—a mixture of grains and legumes for sowing in Autumn to provide bulk organic matter for increasing soil fertility. **\$2 per 500gm** packet which is sufficient to cover approximately 30 square metres.



Delicious Ways with Fine Produce

Reports from *Around the Gardens* suggest that COGS members are having mixed fortunes with the quality and quantity of normally bountiful summer produce. However, I've seen enough good crops to be optimistic that you will find useful the following ideas for processing and preserving tomatoes and sweet peppers. The peppers I have in mind are the sweet mild variety although some of the long "banana" peppers can have "bite".

Sweet Peppers and Capsicum



Photos above: These beautiful specimens are from Queanbeyan community garden. Photo: J Popovic

Roast Pepper Salad—

Place the washed peppers on a rack in a baking dish in the oven, or under the grill, to blister the skin. Turn the peppers every few minutes to loosen all the skin and be careful not to burn the fruit itself—or yourself! Remove the peppers from the oven/grill and cover briefly, then strip off the skin. Place the skinned peppers in a bowl and toss with a generous amount of dressing made from olive oil, vinegar of your choice, crushed garlic and salt and pepper. You can serve this immediately or store covered in the refrigerator for a few days.

Sweet Pepper Leather—

Remove the skins as for roast pepper salad, then puree them in an electric blender. Pour onto the lightly oiled plastic fruit leather trays of a dehydrator and dry at 55°C until there is no stickiness (depending on the wetness of the mix this may take about 12 hours). Roll and wrap in clingwrap or roll and chop and place in resealable plastic bags; store in freezer. Use as you would dried tomatoes for soups, stews, pizza toppings, salads.

Tomatoes

Semi - dried tomatoes in olive oil—

Halve/ cut into thirds small tomatoes such as *Principe Borghese/ Tommy Toes* and dry in a dehydrator at 55°C for about 4 hours or until tomatoes are no longer watery and have a leathery appearance. If basil and other herbs such as oregano or thyme are available include these in the drying process. Pack semi-dried tomatoes with the crushed herbs into jars and cover with olive oil. Add a clove or two of garlic to the jar, crushed or whole depending on your preference regarding garlic flavouring. Store in the refrigerator.

Tomato leather—

Cook tomatoes and herbs of your choice, in a saucepan or frypan according to the quantities you have available, to reduce down the liquid content. Place the cooled reduced mixture on the lightly oiled plastic fruit leather trays of a dehydrator and dry at 55°C until there is no stickiness (depending on the wetness of the mix this may take about 12 hours). Roll/ chop and store as for Sweet Pepper Leather on this page. Use as a pizza topping or pasta sauce.

Smoke-Dried Tomatoes—

There are various methodologies described on the internet, for example using a Weber type oven. For copyright reasons this is not reproduced here but you can check it out on the net at <http://www.virtualweberbullet.com/tomatoes1.html>

Sun-Dried Tomatoes—

See a suggested method for sun-dried tomatoes on the internet at <http://ask.yahoo.com/ask/19990712.html>



Janet Popovic

From this season 1994— (The COGS Quarterly Autumn 1994)

Autumn Weather

by Michelle Johnson



Of all the parameters of the weather, the one uppermost in most people's minds at the moment is the rainfall. It will come as a surprise to nobody to read that, up to the time of printing this magazine anyway, the summer has been very dry. Statistics from the Bureau of Meteorology show that the rainfall totals in December and January for Canberra were 23.2mm and 9.2mm (!) respectively, well below the long-term averages of 53.9mm and 58.9mm for these months.

Looking ahead the rainfall forecast from the Bureau for February through to April is more optimistic, with close to average rainfall being forecast for this region. This means totals close to 56.5mm for February and Autumn values of 55.0mm and 52.1mm for March and April. The average for May is 52.1mm.

According to the Bureau, farmers on the NW, W and SW slopes and the Riverina can expect higher than average rainfall (let's hope they're right) but it will continue to be dry on the Far North Coast of NSW.

Although watering our gardens may be our top priority at the moment (early February), it won't be long before we must also keep an eye out for that unexpected first frost in Autumn. Do watch for frost pockets, particularly in low lying areas on clear bright nights.

The earliest the first frost of the season has ever occurred is the 2nd March in 1940, and in 54 years of data from the Bureau, the first frost has occurred sometime in March 17 times i.e., there is about a 30% chance of the first frost being in March. Certainly don't count on vegetables maturing in May since there is more than a 90% chance the first frost will have occurred by the end of April. The 9th April is the median date

for the first frost.

If the first frosts are light, you can protect your crops by covering them with an old blanket or shade cloth or some other cover. Some mulches may help, e.g., pebbles, but others such as straw are believed by many to attract frost. If your plants are damaged, spraying with water before the sun gets on them may help.

Handy Hint: Lacewing Hotels

by Michelle Johnson

Lacewings are very welcome insects in any garden. There are many different species in Australia, distinguished by their transparent wings. Of these, green lacewing larvae feed only on aphids, and it is estimated that each female lacewing lays about 300 eggs, and each larvae then eats between one thousand and ten thousand aphids! Others prey on red spider mite.

To help the lacewing over-winter in your garden, the Henry Doubleday Research Association in England suggests using "lacewing hotels".¹ These hibernation sites are simple home-made refuges made out of plastic drink bottles which are then hung from branches of trees, shrubs or fences at the level of maximum foliage.

Make each one as follows:

"Cut out the base of a large (1 or 2 litre) plastic bottle. Do not wash the bottle (Ed. note: adult lacewings eat nectar and will be attracted to the sweet residue left). Cut a piece of corrugated cardboard to fit the height of the bottle, roll it up and put it inside (see diagram). A thin piece of wire pushed through both sides of the base will keep the cardboard in place. Leave the top on to prevent water getting in. (page 20, Newsletter 132 HDRA).



¹ Newsletter 132, Summer 1993 HDRA



Lemon spray for eggplants—lemon juice mixed with water or water and garlic is used by one of our community gardeners to cure aubergine plants of most insect attacks during growth.

Germinating carrots—you need fresh seed. Thoroughly water the soil prepared to a fine tilth before and after sowing the seed. Cover the sown seedbed with hessian, plastic or planks of wood and remove these covers *as soon as* germination occurs (about 7 or 8 days later).

Milk (10%) and water mix—sprayed on mildew susceptible plants such as zucchini helps keep the mildew under control.

More compact bean bushes—Pinching out the growing tip on climbing beans when about 1 metre high will stop them going over the top of the trellis and produce a more bushy growth.

Source Peter Thompson, p23, COGS Newsletter, May 1989.

Increasing potato crop—When potato plants are approximately 30cm out of the ground lay them over carefully and cover with soil, leaving only the growing tip exposed. This will grow upright again. The process can be repeated, depending on the vigour of the plant and the room available.

Source: Peter Thompson, p23, COGS Newsletter, May 1989.

Spot on tomatoes—as found in Cook community garden this summer, seems to have been controlled by removing affected leaves, or the whole plant early on where badly affected. It is likely to have been spread by splashing during heavy storms. Overhead watering should be avoided and affected crop debris will need to be removed and crop rotation implemented. *Source: Cook gardeners.*

Green vegetable bugs—hatch quickly in long hot dry summers and attack (suck the cell content of) tomatoes and beans especially. The adults are bright green but in the nymph stage they are red,

yellow, orange and black. They mass near egg rafts for about 3 days without feeding then move *en masse* to attack the fruit. Pick them off by hand but hold a container underneath as they drop quickly when disturbed. Squash the bugs in folded leaves as the stink they emit is hard to wash off your skin. Vegetable bugs over-winter in weeds and spent crops so clear the debris of affected crops and cultivate the soil afterwards.

Source: Green Vegetable Bug by Sue Pettersson, pp11-12, COGS Newsletter April 1992.

Note: On a recent 666 ABC Radio gardening show a listener suggested spraying fruit and foliage attacked by vegetable bugs with a solution of water, ground up vegetable bug, a crushed clove of garlic and some pure soap flakes. JP

Harvesting and Storing Tips

Seeds of herbs for culinary use—

In Autumn harvest seed for culinary use from parsley, fennel, dill and coriander. This can be done by putting a paper bag over the seed heads on the plant, tying firmly around the stem and shaking it every few days until the seed is all off. When the seeds are dry, cut away stems and shake out the seeds; store in jars.

Cut French tarragon, lovage and chive leaves and dry them in bunches in a warm, dark place, free from undesirable fumes.

Harvest basil, pack into clean jar and cover with olive oil; keep in the refrigerator.

Source: Herbs Preparing for Winter by Robin Gale, p23, COGS Newsletter, February 1990.

Green tomatoes—Tomato plants with green fruit can be lifted when frost threatens and hung upside down in an open protected place to assist ripening or for later use in chutney-making.

Carrots—can be left in the ground over winter. Whenever carrots are harvested, remove the foliage as it continues to draw moisture from the roots. Carrots need some moisture when stored or they will dry out and deteriorate quickly. One method is to store carrots in damp sand, eg., in a box where sand and carrots are layered, sand as the bottom and top layers.

Pumpkins—When the stem is hard and dry cut the pumpkin with up to 1/2 a metre of vine. Never use the stem as a handle as the area around the stem is vulnerable to rotting if hurt. Store at an angle to prevent water pooling near the stem. Store in a cool dry place on a very thick layer of newspaper. *Source (above three items): p15, COGS Newsletter April 1992.*



Autumn Vegetable Planting Guide

Brassicas

Late plantings of Brassicas in March may be successful, but usually Summer plantings are more reliable. It is too late to grow from seed. Take care too with the varieties chosen eg it is too late to plant savoy cabbages, but the smaller ball-headed varieties should be successful.



Peas

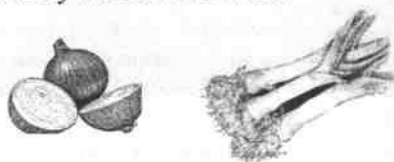
Sugar snap peas may be sown in early March for a Winter harvest, but the crop could be lost if there is an early severe frost affecting the blossom. Peas sown later in April-May will be ready for a Spring harvest.

Lettuces

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

Leeks

Leek seedlings may be planted in early March for small leeks in Winter, although plantings are more reliably made in Summer.



Onions

Early varieties can be sown in April to early May to be harvested from Spring to early Summer. Mid season varieties are often sown in late Autumn or early Winter and long keeping varieties in Winter or early Spring. The timing of mid or late season varieties is well worth experimenting with by making successive plantings to determine the best time for your specific locality.

Spring flowers

Remember that many Spring flowering plants are best planted in Autumn, so that they can establish before the Winter cold, and then start growing in the early warmth of Spring. Stocks, Pansies and Poppies can be planted as seedlings in March and early April. Others such as Virginia Stock, Candytuft, Larkspur and Sweetpeas can be sown direct throughout Autumn.



Green manures

Autumn is the time to plant green manure crops so they can establish well before the frosts. Cut or dig in the green manure in Spring, at least 4-6 weeks prior to planting your Summer crops.

Some benefits of green manure crops are:

- they provide valuable nutrients for successive crops;
- they provide organic matter for soil micro-organisms to breakdown;
- they provide soil cover in Winter;
- they help aerate the soil.

Crops suitable for planting in Canberra are:

Legumes:

Broad Beans, Field Peas, Lupins, Sub Clover, Tic Peas, Vetch.

Non-Legumes

Barley, Oats, Rye.

The legumes are very useful as they fix nitrogen in the soil whilst the non legumes provide bulk organic matter.

Flowering crops need to be dug in before flowering, cereal crops before producing a head of grain.

Autumn Vegetable Planting Guide

	MAR	APR	MAY
Asian greens	ST	T	
Brussels Sprouts	T		
Broccoli	T		
Broad Beans		S	S
Cabbage	T		
Cauliflower	T		
Chicory	ST	T	
Chinese Cabbage	T		
Corn Salad	ST	ST	
Endive	ST	T	
Garlic		S	S
Kale	T		
Kohlrabi	ST	T	
Leeks	T		
Lettuce	ST	ST	T
Peas	S	S	S
Onions		S	S
Turnips	T		

S = Seed Sowing

T = Transplanting

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

Canberra Organic Quick Quiz

1. Why should a compost heap be built on the ground?
2. Should a compost heap contain more carbon - rich or nitrogen - rich material?
3. How can you fix a wet, smelly compost heap?
4. Should you compost seeding weeds?
5. Should you add large quantities of grass clippings to a compost heap?

Answers are on page 31. Too easy? Send your own quiz and answers for possible publication to editor@cogs.asn.au

Please note that the Committee will change after the Annual General Meeting on 22 March 2005.

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Kambah	Shirley Irvin	6231 6104	shirley.irvin@optusnet.com.au
Northside	Ben Bradey	6161 0329	bbradeyau@yahoo.com.au
Oaks Estate	Robin Walter	6299 1339	
Queanbeyan	Maree Timbs	6297 5379	
Theodore	Richard Reed	6291 1897	rmjreed@ozemail.com.au
<u>Monthly Meetings</u>			
Seed exchange	Ray Harber		
Book sales	Murray Dadds		
Supper conveners	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

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, Bunda Street, Civic,
7:30 pm**

22 February 2005

Joyce Wilkie, Allsun Garden Farm, Gundaroo
*Asian / Winter Vegetables—what you can plant
now.*

22 March 2005

COGS Annual General Meeting—see p 11.
to be followed by *Harvest Night* (members display
garden produce—all members are invited to bring
along their produce to display/ talk about).



*Photo: A February day's harvest from a
Cook community garden. Photo by JP.*

26 April 2005

John and Margaret Allen, long time COGS
members and contributors, will speak about their
“sea change”.

*Note: This replaces the previously advertised talk
by Venie Holmgren on Permaculture (Venie has
advised she will now be travelling at this time).*

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

Events

Community garden open days for COGS
members—

Sunday 27 February, 5pm - 6pm: Cook

Sunday 13 March, 5pm-6pm: Kambah

Sunday 3rd April, 10am - 11am: Cotter

See page 10 for further information.

Saturday 5 March, 2-4pm

COGS Backyard Working Bee—*see p 15.*

Saturday 2 April, 1.30-5pm

Apple Day, Loriendale Organic Orchard
Follow the Apple Day signs from the Barton
Highway at Hall.

Saturday 2 April

Xeriscape Plant Sale, Weston
Green Living Fair, Revolve, Mugga Lane

Saturday 9 April, 2-4pm

COGS Backyard Working Bee—*see p 15.*

February to April 2005

Xeriscape/ COGS Backyard opening times and
ACTEW AGL Irrigation Workshops.

See page 15 for further information.

September 2005

15th IFOAM Conference, Adelaide—*see p 23.*

29/30 October 2005

Sapphire Coast Producers Association's Field
Days, Bega

Saturday mornings, 8am-11am

Growers Market, EPIC
(enter near Shell service station)

Saturdays

Gorman House Markets

Canberra Organic Quick Quiz Answers

1. So that earthworms can enter the heap and speed up the composting process.
2. Carbon - rich. The carbon to nitrogen ratio should be around 20:1.
3. Turn the heap regularly to aerate it, or add more dry material such as straw or shredded paper.
4. Only if you can be sure your compost will get hot enough to destroy the seeds.
5. Grass clippings are high in nitrogen and compost well if mixed thoroughly with dry carbon rich materials such as shredded woody prunings or autumn leaves.