



Summer 2006

Canberra Organic

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

The quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

All about Lavender Part 2

Bees

Community Gardening

Composting

Peak Oil Issues

The Wisdom on Tomatoes

Morshead Home Vegetable Garden

Q & A

Meeting Munchies

COGS Summer Planting Guide



Vol. 14 No. 4

CANBERRA ORGANIC

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medium for reaching people in the Canberra
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Our circulation is currently 450.

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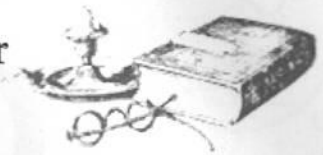
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From the Editor



There really should be something for everyone to enjoy
in this issue. It's good to have so many COGS members
writing for the magazine and also our readers
suggesting interesting material from other
organisations that we can draw attention to (thanks to
Keith Thomas for the UK Soil Association item on page
26 and to Cheryl Leisk for her initiative in bringing us
the Morshead story, page 8).

Your responsiveness augurs well for 2007—a new year
for new challenges but maybe also a celebration is
due—have you ever noticed that our COGS logo bears
the words “Est. 1977”? Should we not celebrate 30
years of fostering organic growing and the learning,
enjoyment, friendships and networks that have been
built over that time? How do you think we should
reflect this in *Canberra Organic* during 2007? We'd
love to hear your ideas to help us celebrate our history
in *Canberra Organic* and COGS activities.

Sophia Williams
Janet Popovic

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Check out the website or see me at the COGS open day at Holder garden on 2/12/06, or at Hall Markets, first Sunday of the month to have a yarn about your needs. Free delivery for COGS members.

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From the President Summer 2006

The busiest time of the planting year is here again at last, though the recent cold weather snaps remind us that some protection is still necessary for tender plants such as tomatoes, capsicums and eggplants. I hope you have great success with all the Summer vegetables - our clear sunny days coupled with wise watering of organically enriched and mulched garden beds can still produce wonderful crops even in challenging conditions. If you plan to grow cauliflowers, cabbages or Brussels sprouts for next Winter, don't forget to leave some space for planting these out in January.

Water restrictions

On 1 November 2006 Stage 2 water restrictions were introduced. Due to a reclassification these are essentially the equivalent of the Stage 3 water restrictions we've had previously. They apply in both the ACT and Queanbeyan and MUST be strictly adhered to in COGS gardens. Details are set out on page 19 but basically the use of hoses and other hand watering and drippers is restricted to alternate days, odds and evens system, between the hours of 7am and 10am and 7pm and 10pm (note that no sprinklers are allowed under this provision). Sprinklers may only be used once a week on *either* a Saturday or Sunday night, odds and evens system, *and only between 7pm and 10pm*. COGS rules also forbid any unattended watering in the gardens, *i.e., if sprinklers, drippers or weeping hoses are used you must be present for the entire time that they are on.*

Open Day Saturday 2 December 2006

Theodore, Holder and O'Connor gardens are open to members for inspection on 2 December - see page 4 for details on times and locations.

30 years in 2007

COGS, through its antecedent organisations, was established in 1977. I think this is a cause for some celebration of the quiet achievements of the past 30 years, especially as it is becoming increasingly evident that the objectives we set ourselves initially are still very relevant, even more needed, today and into the future. Take a

minute to review those objectives as set out in our regular information page on page 33 - how successful have we been? What are our major achievements? What are your memories of the people, occasions, milestones along the way? What are your ideas on how we should celebrate these? Do you have historical or current material we should display or publish? What special activities might we undertake to celebrate our history and achievements? Should we use this as a time to plan for the future and market our organisation more widely in the community at large? Would you like to be involved in planning and delivering some special COGS activities in 2007? Please give some thought to this and let me or any of the Committee know your views. Write, ring or email, or bring your ideas to the February general meeting.

'COGS Backyard' is no more

For several years now the Committee has appealed to the membership for support with the upkeep of COGS Backyard at the Xeriscape Gardens, Weston. Thankyou to those who have responded, participating on working bees and donating individual time and resources. The Committee has recently been forced to the conclusion that we cannot maintain the garden to the required demonstration standard and has therefore advised ACTEW that it will withdraw from COGS Backyard. The decision also took into account that COGS now has 12 community gardens across Canberra that are fulfilling the educational and demonstration purposes that underpinned our original involvement at Xeriscape. I am pleased to be able to report that Greening Australia will take over the COGS space in Xeriscape and that ACTEW has indicated that COGS would be welcome to participate in Xeriscape open day activities and to continue to conduct COGS/ CIT Solutions beginner gardening courses at the facility should we wish to.

I wish everyone a safe and happy festive season.

Adrienne Fazekas

COGS Community Gardens Open Day

Saturday 2 December 2006

—Program—

- 10am—11.30am Theodore community garden
*(located at end of dirt track at
end of Lienhop St, Theodore)*
- 12 noon—1.30pm Holder community garden
*(located John Reserve, Cotter Road,
100 metres west of Streeton Drive)*
- 2pm—3.30pm O'Connor community garden
*(located corner of Jarrah and
Brigalow Streets)*

This is your opportunity to be inspired to grow organically this Summer. Come and see three of the twelve COGS community gardens —

all different, all wonderful.

Speak to your fellow COGS members, discover some new plants and get some tips and tricks to make your own garden grow!

Don't miss it!

For further information you can contact the garden convenors whose details are listed on page 32 of this magazine.

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New Books in the COGS Library!

We hope you are enjoying the new library books! Here is another one that you might find exciting!

The Great Vegetable Plot—Sarah Raven

“A vegetable garden is a beautiful thing to make, with the extra bonus of producing the best possible things to eat. If you get it right, the whole place can become your market, your haven and your playground”

- Back cover of *The Great Vegetable Plot*

If you have any books that you feel should be an essential part of our library, or if there are topics that you would like more information on, then PLEASE let me know. Either see me at our monthly meetings or email me on nathsoph@hotmail.com

Sophia Williams (Librarian)



Around the Gardens



Cook

Some of you may have noticed two new things at the garden. Carl kindly organized a rubbish bin to be used for rubbish such as plastic and other non organic and non brick/rock type rubbish. Secondly we received a truck load of eucalyptus wood chip and at our working bee on Sunday 29 October a team of our gardeners spread this around the perimeter natives and the herb garden, much improving the appearance and hopefully water retention for the plants. We've developed a roster for mowing the common lawn areas to relieve our regular mowers. I am pleased to say that the Cook Garden is now full, with several new members joining this Spring. And we still have people who are interested in joining. This says something about our garden! *Rasima Kecanovic*
Stop press: One plot has just become vacant.

Dickson

This is a very small plot attached to the Majura Community Centre with a total fenced area 15m x 15m. We only have 2 plot holders, gardening co-operatively, both in the same family. This plot has a tenuous future but has had all the hard work done: soil improved, garden beds created and hundreds of self-sown lettuces, borage and calendulas growing wildly at the moment! We have planted potatoes, pumpkin, corn, zucchinis and tomatoes to supplement our home gardens. The Centre has just donated a pile of wood chips to improve the paths and we have a child-care centre as neighbour. Not your usual COGS plot!

Margaret Richardson

Holder

Firstly I would like to thank Jen and Jane for their role as co-convenors over the past two years. Secondly, the garden has seen three long-time plot holders move on, but with their departure new blood has arrived. The newcomers have certainly made their mark by taking on neglected plots and turning them into viable gardens in a matter of weeks. One has gone a step further by making a covered frame to protect the plot from the weather and the birds.

Over Winter and Autumn the garden has seen the communal compost bins turned over, communal fruit trees freed of weeds and border

boxes made, a new communal garden established with currants transplanted from 'COGS Backyard' and one garden member has planted a pine nut tree, with more to be established.

The garden is starting to be a hive of activity with plot holders tiding up plots, and picking crops grown over Winter and early Spring. Holder community garden has been fortunate to have a member working as a landscape contractor who can supply reasonable clean fill and who turns it regularly with grass clippings. Also a former member of the garden has generously dropped off tree mulch. Together with the regular grass clippings these supplies are eagerly used by plot holders.

A couple of working bees have been organised to tidy the garden in time for the open day in December. The garden currently has two double plots and two single plots available with varying degrees of work needing to be done.

Conrad van Hest

Mitchell

The warmer weather has resulted in a flurry of activity at the Mitchell garden. Weeds are being removed, Winter and Spring vegetables harvested and plots prepared and planted early with summer crops. The fruit trees enjoyed their pruning and manuring and we were rewarded with lush growth and blossoms – hopefully the promise of things to come.

We don't expect that the Spring green will last much longer – already things are starting to look pretty dry. A working bee in early November should have the weeds under control and the garden looking neat for Summer.

We have a couple of new faces at the garden – Kim and Jan - and a few old hands have left, including Ben, whose organisational skills and gardening advice will be missed. There has also been a bit of plot-shuffling recently, leaving a couple of smaller plots available for newcomers. All enquiries are welcome.

Monica van Wensveen

O'Connor

The fifteen plots in the O'Connor garden remain fully allocated with a waiting list of four. Steady progress has been made in the ten

months of the garden's existence with some gardeners producing good Winter crops and with progress well under way for Spring/Summer plantings. With a midday temperature of only 14 degrees and an expected frost overnight on the day this is being written, many gardeners are holding back on the planting of frost sensitive vegetables.

One aspect where O'Connor differs from most other COGS gardens is the extent of the communal garden beds and plantings. The garden has over one hundred lineal metres of communal gardens around the tennis court fences that enclose the garden. On the northern, Jarrah Street, frontage, which is our most public aspect, we have planted rhubarb and filled the rest of the bed with temporary plantings of artichokes, Tuscan kale, rainbow chard, celery, parsley and spring onions with some of the feral pumpkins and zucchinis emerging from the compost likely to be left to grow. Subsequent, more permanent plantings will include fruit trees, an understorey of herbs and possibly comfrey for green manure.

In the sheltered but sunny south east corner we have planted eight citrus trees consisting of three lemons, Tahitian and Kaffir limes, and a mandarin, blood orange and cumquat, all of which are thriving. Further plantings are planned along the other frontages and temporary, Summer use is being made of some of the beds for potatoes, pumpkins and zucchinis.

Alan Robertson

Queanbeyan

Spring has been good for the Queanbeyan Railyard garden so far, with lots of new members joining us, resulting in an ever-expanding variety of plants in the plots! Like most gardens, we have had little in the way of rain, and are now moving into water restrictions again. Last year a careful program of high organic matter, deep watering and mulching saw most gardeners return a good harvest despite the conditions. Hopefully this year will be no different. Work has eaten my life lately, so I haven't managed to be down at the garden as often as I would like, but on the plus side many of my fellow gardeners have stepped up to keep the garden running smoothly - thanks guys!

On a more disappointing note, we have had the first serious incident of vandalism in a while, with the lock to the shed being broken off. It

appears that the would-be thieves either failed to get in past the twisted metal of the lock, or else they didn't see anything they fancied, as nothing was taken. Thanks to some ingenious work by Julian, we are now in the process of fitting a new set of chains to the door to replace the broken padlock fitting and will soon have a new lock in place.

Once again, thanks to the staff at the Minerals Council of Australia for providing the kitchen scraps from their office to feed our compost bins - without this 'green' material to balance out the 'brown' garden cuttings, these would take ages to break down. Thanks again to all our gardeners for helping to keep the place running so smoothly!

Cormac Farrell

COGS Displays

COGS had displays recently at both the Kingston Bus Depot Markets (22 October 2006) and the CSIRO's Discovery Centre exhibition "Life in the Suburbs", 25 October-3 November 2006 (pictured). If you have lovely photographs of organically grown vegetables or community garden gatherings that you think would be suitable for similar COGS displays in the future, please send these to The Editor, Canberra Organic, c/- COGS, PO Box 347, Dickson ACT 2602 or in jpeg format to editor@cogs.asn.au



Morshead Home's Vegetable Garden Project

I have been studying Community Education part-time at the University of Canberra now for some years. The degree included doing work experience and as my field of interest is aged care, I approached Morshead Home and was offered the opportunity to work with residents to start a garden project. I knew very little about gardening but if a willingness to be involved counted for anything then I was halfway there!

The garden project commenced in late July 2006 and after two initial meetings with the residents it became clear that the interest was around growing vegetables. One of the residents, Dave Percival, was very enthusiastic about growing vegetables for the other residents at Morshead. There were already beautiful flower gardens filled with roses and plants and so it seemed like a good idea to do something different.

While both Dave and I admitted that we had only a vague idea what we were doing, we would learn more about growing vegetables even if some of it was through trial and error. We both came from a farming background. Dave grew up on a farm near Inverell in Northern NSW before joining the Army and I came from the Snowy so we probably knew more about seeds and soil than we gave ourselves credit for.



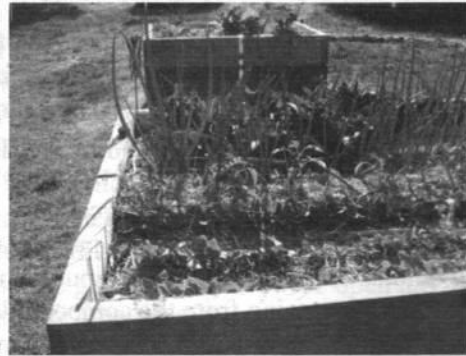
Dave Percival at the commencement of the project July 2006

We started off with a copy of the Yates Garden Guide, packets of seeds and seed raising mix and set to work planting vegetables that we could put in the shade house to establish in the colder months, ready for planting out when the weather got warmer. One of the first things we learnt was that we should have bought the 'Canberra Gardener' which is more specific to this region but we didn't do too badly with the Yates.

To date we have planted silver beet, radishes, spring onions, varieties of lettuce, carrots, potatoes, butternut and bush pumpkins, gold rush zucchinis, runner beans, butter beans (a bit too early but we have planted more and they are coming along), tomatoes, strawberries,

passionfruit and black currants. To our utter amazement everything is growing wonderfully (although the strawberries seem to have legs and disappear fast!).

Gradually we have added a selection of herbs such as parsley, chives, garlic chives, oregano, mint, coriander and basil. The soil is rich and well mulched which has obviously contributed to the success to date. We make our own mulch out of grass clippings, leaves, hay etc.



Radishes, spring onions, capsicum and lettuce - October



By mid November 2006 the vegetables were flourishing

One important thing became evident; we worked well as a team and that included everyone involved in the initial stages of the project.

Rob, the gardener, built the raised garden boxes making it easier for residents to work in the garden, and also built the trellis for the climbing beans. Hilda, one of the nurses, provided established seedlings and Mic, one of the unit residents, gave us strawberry plants while we waited for our seeds to emerge. Meanwhile, Trevor delivered some disused car tyres that we recycled into large containers for the potatoes.

More recently, many other people have contributed to the success of the project including Rodney from Rodney's Nursery in Pialligo, who generously donated two Black Currant plants one day when Dave and I

went to the nursery looking for suitable berries (without thorns) that could be grown for the residents. The overall supervisor for the project is Naomi and she largely gave us the freedom to run the project ourselves.

For those residents that do not yet venture out into the garden, they are kept up-to-date with 'work in progress' posters displayed by the front door. This also includes a suggestion box for residents and staff to provide input and everyone's comments are welcome!

Dave is now running the vegetable garden and is doing an excellent job. He takes all the seedling trays out of the shade house every morning so they get the benefit of the sun each day. He also waters all the plants and establishes new garden beds. I arrive every Sunday to help out where necessary and get updates on how things are going. I have the easy job! On Sundays we transplant the seedlings into the garden beds, mulch and talk about how we are progressing against our original plan. As Dave said "You don't realise how good gardening is until you actually do it yourself". One of the many benefits of garden therapy!

As the months have become warmer, other residents have been venturing into the vegetable garden and are showing an interest in the project. While not everyone wants to be actively involved they are welcome to sit and watch and feel included. One day Merlie, one of the residents, came out to the vegetable garden and helped. Dave and I also planted some Petunias with Merlie's help (kindly donated by Hilda) and are now called 'Merlie's Petunias' so it is not only vegetables.



Merlie in the vegetable garden 2 October 2006

There is something for everyone in the vegetable garden and this includes Dave's little yellow lorikeet called 'Peachy'. She has her own small garden bed of sunflowers which will provide an abundance of sunflower seeds for her and the other birds that are taken care of by the residents.



Peachy keeping an eye on her sunflowers – November

The next project is to find out how we can enter the vegetables in the Royal Canberra Show in February 2007. Again, we will need the support of other people if we are to achieve this. It might appear ambitious at this stage but it will be really interesting and fun to learn the finer aspects of vegetable gardening. Like the success to-date it is all about collective wisdom and the support of many people.



Dave Percival – November 2006

The vegetable garden is now taking on a life of its own and Dave has successfully developed a vegetable garden for the benefit of the Morshead residents. He is continually exploring options for improvement so if you would like to talk to Dave about the vegetable garden project please call in.

Cheryl Leisk

Morshead was officially opened in 1964 as a War Veterans Home and today accommodates approximately 80 residents from all walks of life requiring low to high care. Cheryl is an undergraduate Community Education student who contacted COGS about the project—thanks Cheryl. We thought readers would be very interested, perhaps enough to drop by and 'consult', Ed.



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Charnwood's Buzzing zzzzzzzzzzz



I have a half share in an orchard at the Charnwood Community Garden and am a keen hobby beekeeper. I have some beehives in the orchard and these have been very busy recently. The trees have set a lot of fruit due to the close proximity of the bees and I would be interested to compare fruit set in the Charnwood Garden with that in other community gardens.

Many fruits and vegetables benefit greatly from having a beehive close by. Stone fruit, berries and pumpkins require good pollination. Bees will gather nectar and pollen from the closest source to their hive so having a beehive in the garden has been of great benefit to plot holders at Charnwood. I also have beehives within 100 metres of the Oaks Estate garden.

Many gardeners have an understandable respect for bees and the sting they carry. Bees will generally sting if they are trodden on, trapped in clothing or hair, or if they are swatted. Bees will also sting to protect their hive. However, if you let the bees get on with their business of gathering pollen and nectar they will let you get on with your job of growing fruit and vegetables. If you are concerned about a bee landing on you the safest way to encourage it to fly away is to blow it away with a quick breath. In the unlikely event of being stung you should scrape the sting away with a fingernail. Do not pluck the sting out as this can inject more bee protein into the wound. Cold water or ice will reduce the initial pain of the sting and aloe vera or pigface rubbed on also soothes.

Responsible beekeepers introduce queen bees to their hives that produce very calm bees. Bees from non-domesticated hives such as tree hollows can be very aggressive to the point of being a nuisance. Domesticated bees will still protect their hive up to a range of ten to twenty metres from the hive entrance. This can be used to advantage. At the request of a friend I placed some hives next to a wire fence that separated his garden from a park. In the past many picnickers had been too lazy to walk 100 metres to the toilet block and preferred to use my friend's fence as an aiming point to empty their bladders. The



resulting odour did not add to his gardening pleasure but the bees encouraged the picnickers to do the right thing. My friend now enjoys greater fruit set and the much more fragrant smell of honey when in the garden!

Generally beekeepers charge a pollination fee for pollinating crops such as blueberries, oranges, almonds and most nuts. I am happy to provide a hive to any community garden in the Canberra area free of charge as a service to the community. The honey produced is reward enough for me because, like the other produce you grow yourself, organic honey is vastly superior to what is available through the supermarket. If you would like a beehive placed in your garden please discuss this with your convenor. I am happy to come to your garden to assess the best place for a hive to avoid any inconvenience to plot holders.

Mark Hosking
hosking@cpic.com.au



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Gardener Profiles

Lesley Pattinson



How long have you been a member of COGS?

I joined COGS in 2001 after reading an article in the *Chronicle* newspaper about the proposed use of land in Holder for a community garden. I rang the contact number. I knew this would be "my thing".

What spurred your interest in gardening?

Childhood experiences, endless days up old ancient fruit trees, dissecting leaves and mosses, and eating too many mulberries. There's something wonderful about being lost in a mulberry tree with stained clothes and hands. They made great cubby houses and provided endless fruit for the preserving, mulberry pies and jam. I enjoyed the fragrance of plants, the snapdragon lips that "talked" when touched. Gardens were full of fun and adventure and make believe.

What brought you to organic gardening?

I was interested in "alternative" gardening. That 1970s ideal of self sufficiency, growing your own food and eating "health food." I had an interest in growing herbs and explored their uses. Having a plot in a COGS garden enables me to grow food, flowers and herbs.

Do you have a garden at home?

I have a traditional garden block. The front has been replanted since the bushfires with lots of trees, shrubs, roses, lots of perennials, and fragrant plants. I'm a plant collector. My back garden is full of fruit trees and productive shrubs and plants. Lots of herbs and soft fruits, and a small vegie patch. I can always squeeze in more varieties, and naturally there's a lemon tree or 3, a hills hoist, BBQ and 3 little red hens.

Why did you choose to become part of a community garden?

I enjoy being part of my local community, and have been involved in projects that bring people together. There's so much knowledge and skills to be shared in community gardens, with working bees, and just gardening with others. Our garden in Holder has struggled on despite winds, drought, grasshopper plagues and bushfire. Sharing seedlings and produce, and ideas, makes for a happy contented gardener.

Favourite vegetable to grow?

Tomatoes, and lots of them. I enjoy those tiny heirloom seeds, propagation, and seedlings to plant, right through the season till harvest, and preservation. There's lots of ways to use tomatoes.

I mainly grow bulk food in my COGS garden plot. Lots of corn, potatoes, tomatoes, capsicum and eggplant, and silverbeet. I enjoy finding ways to store and preserve these foods.

You may remember Lesley's article "Preserving Summer's Bounty" in Canberra Organic Winter 2006. You may also remember her name in connection with the Phoenix Garden Group (post bushfire repair). However, you may not know that for a number of years Lesley has been our main supplier of tomato and other seedlings, a myriad of wonderful heirloom varieties, for the COGS stall held in conjunction with the Xeriscape Open Day and CIT Plant Sale.- Thanks Lesley! Ed.

Jen Johnston

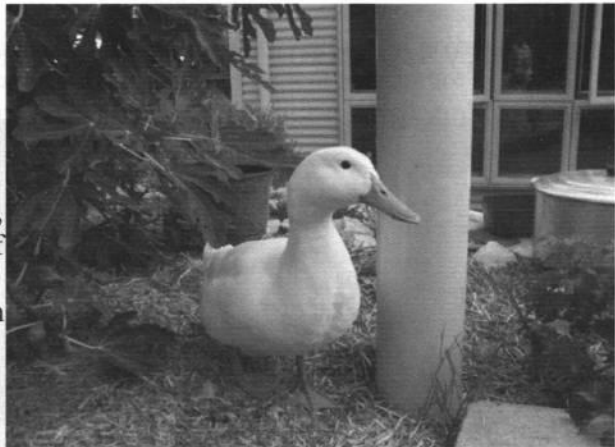
Some people like to jog, some like to meditate, I like to garden. Gardening has been part of my life, even when I was too young to go school and, to my father's dismay, brought home seedlings of blue floss flower and Queen Anne's lace from a friend's garden. These two flowers were weeds in central Queensland.

All through childhood I grew plants and had my own garden area within the family garden. This has continued throughout my life. With other keen gardeners in the family the competition for space has always been strong, and even now an ordinary suburban block is far too small to grow all of the plants that we would like to grow.

When Lesley Pattinson mentioned to me that COGS was starting a garden at Holder, this seemed like an ideal opportunity to expand the garden and have my own vegetable patch without moving. So I joined COGS, helped fence the original community garden and chose a double plot adjoining the western edge of the garden (fences for climbers figured in my long-term plans). Initially this was a thicket of couch, phalaris and other weeds, not to mention many stones from the fill that occurs in my part of the garden. Over time much, but not all, of the couch has been removed. As the soil was very heavy clay, over the years the beds have been built up to improve drainage and fertility. As I don't like having to keep weeding I've edged the beds with second-hand sleepers and bricks (plentiful in Duffy after the 2003 fire) and put in permanent pathways to save walking on the soil. These paths were mainly covered in sawdust, another 'gleaning' from a neighbour who always has too much for his own needs.

The garden is divided into three long beds running north-south: the widest one near the perimeter fence is planned as a fruit area; the others are for annual crops.

Ideally I would like my garden to be productive and pretty: a mixture of foods, flowers, fragrance and with lots of other life too. (We live in hope.) I've always liked the idea of a well-designed garden overflowing with flowers, vegetables and a haven for insects, birds and frogs. (Small birds are much better than me at getting rid of small insect pests such as aphids.) The concept of a beautiful kitchen garden or edible landscape has long appealed. Plus the idea of having a healthy



This is Puddles – one of the reasons that I like to garden elsewhere than just my backyard

soil supporting healthy plants just seems to make sense. Also if you grow it yourself you know exactly how it has been grown, you choose the varieties that you prefer and harvest when the crop is actually in peak condition. Or at least that is the theory. One day I would eventually like to be able to grow most of our vegetables, including enough for a year's supply of tomatoes. Given that our family uses at least 1½ -2 kilos every week this is not a small ambition. Or at least these are some of my aims.

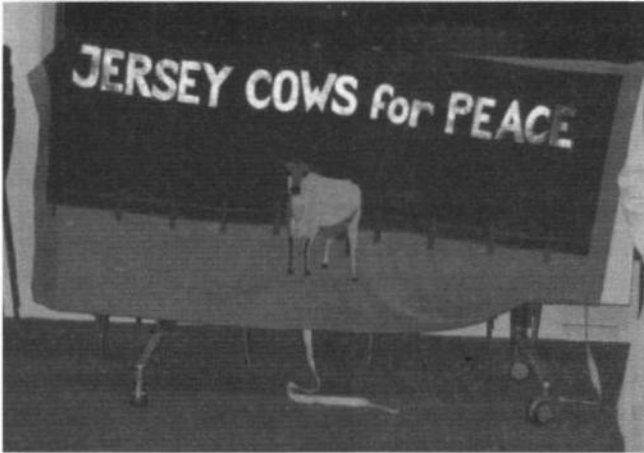
The reality so far is quite different. Much still needs doing to establish the permanent fruit area. The dwarf Lady Williams apple survived the 2003 fire but the scion of my Cox's Orange Pippin did not survive. The jostaberry bush has grown much bigger than expected: it needs to be chopped up into cuttings and replanted as a row of bushes along the western edge of the bed, where it will provide some protection from the almost incessant wind at Holder. The raspberries ventured forth, intent on conquest and so are moving to friends' backyards. Eventually there will also be rows of red currants, gooseberries and other berries. Now that my last school fete plant stall is over I can start propagating for myself.

The two dwarf stone fruit, a peach and a nectarine, seem to suffer from the late frosts at Holder. Indeed last summer was the first year that we didn't have a light frost between Christmas and New Year. The rhubarb patches so far are very small and the leaves have been reduced to lacy tatter, presumably by earwigs. Plus it would be fun to try a low fence of stepover apples, just to see if I can do it. My other two beds are for vegetables, herbs and

continued on page 18

Editor's Notes from Some Recent COGS General Meetings

Jersey Cows for Peace, and Cheese-Making - David Odell



salt, are added to milk which is heated to about 38°C, the whey drained off and the cheese placed in the cheese press lined with cheesecloth. The press is screwed down and the cheese left in the press overnight. The cheesecloth is then peeled off and the cheese is placed in the ripening room to age - cheddar is aged for three or four months, vintage for 6 months. Sixty litres of milk yields about 1 1/2 rounds of cheese; a new batch of cheese is started every 3 days. The drained off whey is fed to the chooks and pigs, mixed with molasses and given to the cows in hay, or put into the garden.

David brought along his lovely banner and spoke to the COGS general meeting of 24 October. David is a life member and former President of COGS.

He is a Bungendore-based organic grower who has kept sheep, geese, chooks, pigs and cows, but is now focussing on Jersey cows for cheese-making. David calls his produce 'clean and green' rather than it being certified organic because of the difficulty in always procuring organic feed

for the animals. David described how he had learned from experience the value of building a genetically sound herd for milk production. He is also very proud of the prowess of a 'deep pedigree' bull calf that is making remarkable contributions towards augmenting the herd with magnificent calves. This young bull's mother is recorded as having produced one ton of butter in a 12 month period.

David's main day to day activities are milking (by machine, two cows at a time, once a day in the afternoon), raising calves and making cheese, perfecting cheddar before going on to other types of cheese such as fetta or blue vein. To illustrate his talk about the process of cheese-making, David showed us the 60 litre stainless steel tub, large ladle and cheese press that he uses. Cheddar starter and rennet, later

David's beautiful jersey cows have personalities and apparently do notice when you raise your

voice or get alarmed when something is different. They have lovely names - such as Nerida, Patsy, Choir Girl and Golden (the Bull) - which are shortened versions of their formal registered names that follow the required naming protocol to reflect pedigree.



Members who were at the meeting can testify that David's cheddar is very good! Here they are flocking to the tasting!

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An Introduction to Permaculture - Barbara Schreiner

Barbara addressed the COGS general meeting of 26 September 2006. Barbara is an architect, organic grower and 'permaculturist'. She described *permaculture* (origin "permanent agriculture") as "an invitation to look beyond the confines of your backyard, even your organic backyard, and embrace 'the world' as your own . . . a productive system that involves intimacy with the land."

Barbara drew a parallel between good architecture and good permaculture - if you observe your own behaviours and patterns of usage you will learn to put plants in the places where they will flourish rather than be neglected. Handwatering plants similarly provides the opportunity for observation and proper care and cuts down on importing highly processed equipment.

Using resources 200-300 metres from your home keeps environmental costs/ 'food miles' to a minimum. Examples given included: growing green manure and high nutrient plants such as comfrey in the garden; adding to the garden the organic matter accumulated in roof gutters; NOT digging the ground so that earthworms get to do the work better; getting local lawnmowing contractors to dump their cuttings at your garden rather than the tip; planting to encourage birds into the garden from the perimeter for pest control.

Barbara emphasised the value of the permaculture approach that embraces *multiple usage*. For example chooks in the garden eat the kitchen scraps, provide eggs, meat, feathers, scratch the soil and make manure whereas a battery hen system uses up large amounts of energy through imported/ manufactured food, lighting, cages, and chemicals. Another multiple use example is a corn crop when sited correctly - it's a crop, a support for growing beans, and a windbreak for other plants while welcoming wind for pollination.

"Permaculture is excellent for insomniacs", says Barbara. "There is no gardening problem that cannot be solved if sufficient thought is given to the problem and possible solutions".

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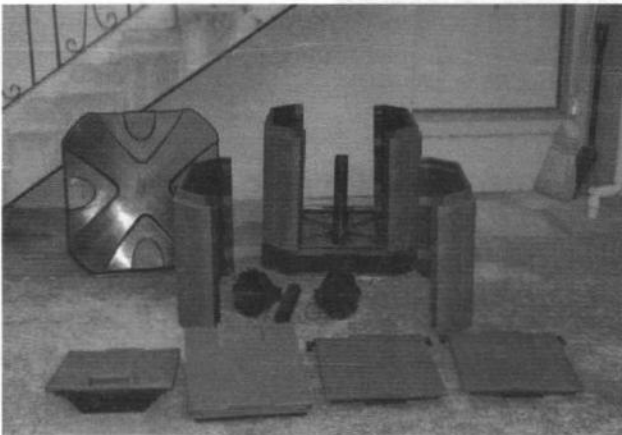
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A New Look at Composting

Subscribers to The Digger's Club will have seen an article in the most recent catalogue on the AEROBIN composting system. As a keen composter, operating three large (400 litre) black plastic compost bins, I read the article with much interest as it claims that one 400 litre AEROBIN will process 3.2 tonnes of green waste material per year, considerably more than the amount I process each year through my three existing bins.

The AEROBIN is claimed to work in a way that is hotter and more aerobic than a black plastic bin by being insulated and by having an aerating column up the centre. It also has a tank at the bottom to catch liquid leachate. It is expensive, at \$349 being more than twice the price of three ordinary bins, but if it lives up to its claims of producing top quality, aerated compost quickly, some gardeners, particularly those with limited work space and high volumes of material available to process, may find it an attractive proposition.



While I somewhat discount Digger's negative comments on the anaerobic, methane producing qualities of my existing bins, I was unable to resist the temptation to purchase an AEROBIN 400 which arrived within a couple of days.

The first thing that I noticed about the bin was the high quality of the materials and its construction when compared with the black plastic bins which are built to the cheapest possible price. I also noted the large access doors which should make compost removal easy though, with the central aeration column, you would need space to access both the front and back doors. I also noted, with some concern, that the aeration column only allowed airflow up to the lower of the two inverted cones, not both, as shown in the Diggers article.

The leaflet that came with the bin, describing how to use the bin and what waste materials to use, was well presented but had one statement of concern, namely: "Typical completion times of three to six months should be achievable. Allow more time in cold weather, or if only adding smaller amounts of material every so often." Such completion times would produce only 800 kg to 1.6 tonnes of compost per year, which is well short of Diggers' claim of 3.2 tonnes. I have emailed Diggers and requested their test data and await their reply.

I have installed the bin in the recommended partially shady spot and loaded it three-quarters full with partially composted material from a black bin which otherwise would have stayed there until around April 2007. After 48 hours, I lifted the lid, noted the rising steam, rescued the few surviving worms and measured the temperature of the composting material at a depth of around 100 mm. It was 48 degrees despite it being a cloudy day with an ambient temperature of 19° and a maximum over the two days of around 22°.

I will report back to COGS members regularly, through *Canberra Organic*, on my progress. Some questions that I want to answer are:

Does it live up to its claims to produce good quality compost quickly?

Will it kill off the tomato, pumpkin, zucchini and other seeds that survive through my existing bins?

Will it work if it is filled over time rather than all at one time?

How will I handle the large volumes of material awaiting composting when I clear out my spent crops at the end of both Summer and Winter?

Will it work effectively through a Canberra winter?



To find out the answers to these and other questions, tune in to future editions of *Canberra Organic*!

Alan Robertson

Reference:

www.aerobin.com.au



Community gardens there and here

COGS and Clogs



These two happy gardeners were one of the reasons I took a plot in the Mitchell garden. I met them a few years ago as they were enjoying a sunny morning in their allotments on the outskirts of a village in the eastern province of Gelderland in the Netherlands.

They were happy to stop for a chat and a tour of their gardens, which at that time of year were lush and leafy. Although their plots were small, each gardener had a small shed (some very elaborate) for rest, repast and storage and a well-organised design that made the most of the space available.

Because the Netherlands is so densely populated, backyards the size of those in Australia are extremely rare and I had the feeling that these plots gave the gardeners a sense of space that we take for granted in Canberra.

My father and uncles tell me that these allotments were much sought after during the war. Any available land was weeded and planted with enough vegetables to feed the family. Most often, the available land was found next to the railway lines, and many gardens are still found there, although gardening is now undertaken for pleasure rather than for food security.

The traditional railway plots provided fresh vegetables during the Summer and dry beans, stored potatoes and preserved sprouts in the Winter. In the gardens in Gelderland I noted cabbages, beans, onions, carrots, potatoes, beetroot, tomatoes and a smattering of sunflowers, growing in fertile well-tended soil.

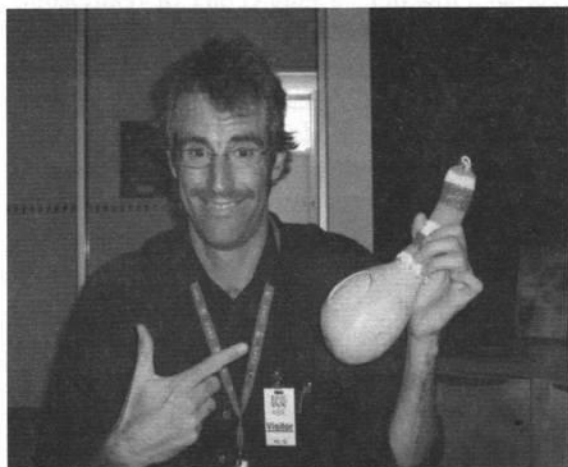
Obviously the Netherlands throws up different climatic challenges to those we face. For a start, it's much wetter and colder there. As we're heading into a long, dusty summer, Dutch gardeners will be preparing first for frosts and then for snow that can blanket the country from November to February.

And yes, clogs are still worn by some farmers and fishermen in the Netherlands. Traditionally farmers' clogs (or *klompen* in Dutch) have rounded, upturned toes and are usually made of light woods such as willow or poplar. I am told (by reliable sources) that they keep your feet dry, warm and safe and are easy to walk in - after a few days of discomfort.

If Canberra ever becomes as wet as the Netherlands, I'd be tempted to give clogs a go, but until then, I'll stick with my boots.

Monica van Wensveen

Veggie of the Issue—Ye Gawds, the gourds!



This Veggie of the Issue is courtesy of some remote villagers in South Africa who have come up with a remarkable use for a gourd, which could well be a butternut pumpkin. The ornate gourd has been hollowed out and is used for imbibing Zulu beer, which is best not served in glass due to the less than crystal clear and somewhat lumpy texture it is known for. The gourd has been decorated with bead work common to South African jewellery and tribal garb. Despite attempts to keep smut out of this column, Veggie of the Issues Managing Editor, recently returned from the African continent, had to concede it was somewhat suggestively shaped after on-air accusations from an ABC journalist - have they no shame!?

As a curious aside and something to warm the cockles of any COGS chook keeper, the Zulu villagers feed their free ranging chooks on the spent fermented grain after the Zulu beer is made. The grain, swollen and smelly after several weeks' fermentation in a lukewarm woven sock, causes a number of amusing side-effects, most notably the jolly chooks laying eggs all around the kraal (a Zulu village or small group of huts) rather than in their nests.

Graham Walker

Some internet sites on gourds:

<http://www.twincreek.com/gourds/growing.htm> North Carolina Gourd Society, Tips on Growing Gourds

<http://www.gardenersnet.com/vegetable/gourds.htm> The Gardener's Network, Growing Gourds

http://www.ehow.com/how_9872_grow-gourds.html eHow, How to grow gourds

<http://www.foothillsfarm.com/ginnysgourds/growingtips/growingtips.htm> Ginny's Gourds & Crafts

continued from page 13: Jen Johnston profile:

flowers. Currently they are lush with overgrown green manure. However, soon they will have lots of tomatoes, beans, lettuces, potatoes and other vegetables. Homegrown food just tastes and smells so good compared with bought produce, and the food has travelled over a much shorter time and distance from the garden to the plate. This year I have about 10 varieties of tomatoes: some old favourites plus some new (to me) heritage varieties to try. Last year really emphasized the importance of having a range of cultivars, so that no matter what the season is some at least will flourish. I'm also trying several varieties of flat beans to see if I can find one which equals the delicious 'continental' beans that are available at market. There are also plenty of flowers planned: a good kitchen garden is also a cutting garden. Dwarf strawflowers are particularly good for attracting a wide range of insects. As it is likely to be a long hot summer I'm trying butternut pumpkins as a living mulch. I have high hopes so far, after managing several watermelons two years ago. Watering will be the biggest challenge, especially as you can't start before 7 am, which is late on a hot summer's day.

To me each year brings new challenges, new ideas to try out, new plants and varieties to grow, problems to solve and trying to think of ways in which to do things better, not to mention the difficulty of having enough time at the right time so that problems are dealt with in a timely manner. The other great thing about belonging to a community garden is that you meet lots of other keen gardeners and make new friends. The garden has very much increased interactions within the local area and led to new friendships and informal support groups. If you are also active in COGS this increases further and is very rewarding. I can't imagine not gardening and idea of the community garden is wonderful. It's like having a whole new neighbourhood and should be encouraged and supported vigorously by all of us.

Jen Johnston



A.C.T. Water Restrictions apply in COGS Gardens

Revised Stage 2 water restrictions are mandatory in the ACT, including in all COGS community gardens, from 1 November 2006 until further notice. ACTEW advises that these restrictions are enforceable and apply on top of the Permanent Water Conservation Measures that have applied over Winter and the first two months of Spring.

For garden watering, Stage 2 water restrictions mean:

Hand watering and drippers **only** are permitted 7-10am and 7-10pm as per the odds and evens system.*

Remember you need to attach a trigger nozzle to your hose.

ACTEW has also granted a general exemption for **limited use of sprinklers on weekends**: even numbered premises on Saturdays and odd numbered premises on Sundays, **and ONLY between 7-10pm**. No variation will be given to this general exemption.

It is illegal to water a garden to the point of run-off or pooling.

In addition it is a COGS rule that unattended watering is not permitted in the gardens.

If you are using drippers or sprinklers at times permitted under the water restrictions in your COGS garden you must be present in your garden for the entire time they are on.

***How does the Odds and Evens system work?**

It means that if your street number ends in an odd number you can use water as per restrictions when the date also ends in an odd number. Similarly, if your street number ends in an even number you can water as per restrictions when the date also ends in an even number. It is the street number, not the unit number that applies.

Why do these restrictions appear different to what we've experienced in the past?

The Stage 2 Water Restrictions now in force are similar to the restrictions we had during the Summers of 2003/04 and 2004/05, which at that time were labelled Stage 3. This change is due to a review of the Water Restrictions Scheme, which now comprises four rather than five Stages.

For how long will Stage 2 Water Restrictions be in place?

It depends. We can expect Stage 2 to be in place over Summer but ACTEW will monitor dam levels, water consumption, rainfall and forecasts and make assessments on a continuous basis.

For full details see www.actew.com.au or phone the Water Conservation Office 6248 3131.

We're hoping our border will encourage rainfall! Ed.

All About Lavender—Part 2



This is Part 2 of Ben Bradey's article on Lavender. Part 1 was published in *Canberra Organic*, Spring 2006. Ed.

In the previous article I discussed the different types of lavender and how to grow them. Now it's time to look at harvesting and using the product in a variety of ways.

Harvesting

L. angustifolia and *L. intermedia* are the best species for drying, with *L. stoechas* and *L. dentata* really only suitable for fresh flowers. If picking for dried bunches, pick when only 2 flowers are open on most of the bush (otherwise the flowers will fall off the stem when dry). If you intend to strip the flowers from the stems when dry for use in craft projects, you can wait until a few more flowers are open. As with all herbs, try to pick after the morning dew has dried but before the heat of the day starts to evaporate the volatile essential oils within. Between 10am and midday is normally the best time to harvest. Tie the stems into bunches and hang upside down in a dark airy place to dry. The darkness will ensure good colour is retained. Once dry, rub the bunches between your palms to release the flowers from the stems. Remove any foreign matter such as broken bits of stem that find their way in with the flowers. The bare stems can be used as mulch or fire starters on the winter fire. Stripped flowers should be stored in air-tight containers away from heat, moisture and light for use in craft projects during the year. *L. angustifolia* 'Egerton Blue' and 'Hidcote' have a deep purple colour that is particularly attractive when dried.

Flowers may also be left on the stem for use in dried flower arrangements – with the *L. intermedia* species being more suitable on account of their longer stems and bigger flower heads than *L. angustifolia*.



If picking for fresh flower arrangements it's better to pick a little later when most flowers are open. Change the vase water regularly to keep the flowers fresh.

Cosmetic Use

It's not surprising that lavender has been a popular ingredient in many cosmetic applications for hundreds of years – not just for the fragrance, but its healing properties as well. Lavender oil is one of the very few essential oils that can be applied directly to the skin. It's particularly effective applied directly to insect bites and burns.

The effect will be relaxing or uplifting depending on the species. The *angustifolia* varieties are generally relaxing, while the *intermedia* varieties will give a more uplifting effect. Oil from an *intermedia* variety should be labeled as 'Lavandin'.

Lavender is very effective in products designed to relax you after a hard day at the office or in the garden. My favourite bath soak goes by the name 'Balancing Lavender Bath Soak'. The salt and bicarbonate soften the water, while the oatmeal is soothing to the skin. Mix together 100g dried lavender flowers, 200g oatmeal, 50g bicarbonate soda, 75g salt (sea salt is best, but you can make do with common salt). Sometimes I like to add a tablespoon of dried calendula petals, a drizzle of jojoba oil, or a few drops of lavender essential oil for added fragrance. Often I add all three for a really luxurious soak! Add 1 – 2 tablespoons to a warm bath and relax with the wonderful relaxing fragrance of lavender. Place the mixture in a piece of muslin tied into a ball and allow the tap water to run through it if you don't like flowers floating around you in the bath. Squeeze the muslin bag to release the fragrance and rub it over your skin during the bath.

Medicinal Use

It's not practical for a backyard grower to distill their own lavender oil as special equipment is required. Lavender oil is extracted by passing steam through the harvested plant. A mixture of oil and water (called hydrosol) is produced. The oil floats to the top of the hydrosol and is

decanted. The remaining hydrosol is retained and sold as a by-product, often for lavender based room or linen sprays.

Here are some ideas on how to use the oil for medicinal purposes.

(a) place dried lavender into a small sachet, or cotton balls soaked with a few drops of lavender essential oil, to repel moths in your cupboard and keep clothes smelling great. Include dried peppermint, camphour laurel leaves, wormwood leaves, pennyroyal or lavender leaves in the sachet if you have them.

(b) sleep pillows are easy to make – just a larger version of the moth sachet. Use *angustifolia* flowers for a restful sleep. Tuck it into your regular pillow and the pressure from your head will release the scent. An eye pillow can be made by adding linseed to the dried flowers, thus producing a weighty bag that can be placed across the eyes while lying down.

(c) lavender makes a simple and effective insect repellent. Just dilute a few drops in safflower oil and rub on before you head outdoors.

Culinary Use

Lavandula angustifolia varieties may be used in cooking – particularly in dishes where you might otherwise use rosemary, sage or thyme. Use flowers only in sweet dishes such as icecream and cakes. Flowers and leaves can be used in heavier dishes such as roasts. I normally use dried flowers in my cooking, but fresh is also okay – just use half as much extra than you would for dried.

Experiment with different foods - my favourite is roast lamb rubbed with a small handful of dried flowers, sea salt, pepper, chopped garlic, and olive oil. Cover with foil while cooking to avoid burning the flowers too much. The delicate fragrance is imparted into the meat during cooking. Lavender chocolate and scones also go down a treat. A word of caution – don't use too much lavender – it should complement, not over power the dish.



It's simple to make your own lavender infused honey – just

gently heat a light-coloured honey in a double boiler and add a small amount of lavender flowers. Leave to infuse for a short while, then remove from the heat and place in the sun until cool. Strain and re-bottle. This



honey as part of a hot lemon drink is excellent for sore throats owing to the antiseptic effect of the lavender. Real lavender honey is collected from bees feeding on the nectar in lavender flowers. It has no aroma or taste associated with lavender. It's difficult to find because not many lavender farms are big enough to support a population of bees for this purpose.

Enjoy your lavender and check out the nurseries and specialist suppliers for new and unusual varieties. There are more and more coming onto the market every year. Consider replacing plants lost in the current drought with lavender – you won't be disappointed.

Ben Bradey

My Indulgence Time *a little luxury every day*

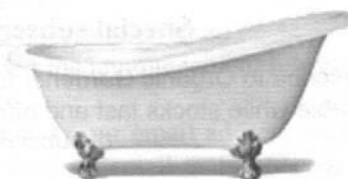
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The Erindale Garden

When the Erindale Garden was first thought of there were no COGS gardens in Tuggeranong, so this was called the Tuggeranong Valley Garden. Only later when we were starting the Theodore Garden was the name changed. The garden was the brainchild of Janine Edwards (later Janine Robertson). It was to be for the benefit of the residents in the Malahide Gardens flats, and COGS, which had just changed its name from the original Organic Gardening and Farming Society of the ACT, had been asked to help and in fact I organised getting a grant for fencing and getting water laid on.

As we had chosen a triangle of land overlooked by the flats, and close for the sake of many who were disabled, it proved to be a daunting job trying to lay out 15 plots with pathways in between, but eventually I got a retired surveyor member to do the job, with several others, all of us taking orders from him! Eventually, after much hard work on my part, and donations of two gates left over from the failed Bicentennial Garden, and the very much alive Watson Garden, the Housing Department were ready to have a Gala Opening. One of the keen gardeners from the flats had already optimistically planted out her tomato plants (in mid-September) and the Canberra Times was there with cameras at the ready. The Minister in his best suit was handed a spade. I was asked to show him a suitable spot to dig, and I managed to save the lady's tomato plants, which he had not noticed, and we had our photo taken.

It was all great fun, and certainly worth all the hard work. The volunteer convenor, James Wilson, who was English, had been out in his shorts, digging his plot, and that September proved to be mild enough, and the garden warm enough for all to survive. During the next year or two I visited the garden often, taking manure and grass mowings and even supervising one load of manure and straw from the showground, but as trees had been planted outside the big gate, the load had to be dumped outside and shifted in by hand.

Christine Carter has been the convenor for many years now, and is quite happy to continue in this role, but the Department of Housing wish to "resume" the land I believe. I suggest that they do a letterbox drop to find out if anyone living in the flats would like to have a plot, as this was the original intention of the garden, and it was only by the death of the convenor, and the illness of the original members from the flats that many plots became vacant and thus reverted to keen COGS members. These members work hard to get their vegetables. Some have elderly relatives who are on very low incomes, and it is worrying to have this takeover hanging over them.

We hope there is a mutually positive outcome for COGS gardeners and Malahide Gardens residents that recognises the physical and social capital assets invested over the years under COGS stewardship.

Betty Cornhill

COGS E-mail Announcement List

COGS has re-established an email announcement list for its members. The list will be used to notify members of the following :

- ★ reminders about upcoming COGS events
- ★ changes to the schedule/speaker line up for COGS events
- ★ information received by other organisations or people that may be of interest to COGS members (eg gardening courses, open days, exhibitions, requests for assistance)

You may expect to receive one or two emails a week from this list. To subscribe, simply send a blank email to the following address :

canberra_organic_growers-subscribe@yahoo.com.au

You will receive a welcome message containing details about the announcement list and how to unsubscribe if you want to.

Only the COGS Secretary can forward messages to participants and your email address won't be given to any other person or organisation by participating in this list. Send an email to info@cogs.asn.au if you would like anything announced. If appropriate it will be released to the other participating members.

Questions and Answers

Many of us have questions related to organic gardening and one of the benefits of being part of a community is being able to access our communal wealth of knowledge. A number of magazines run a question and answer page such as our friends at BOGI (Brisbane Organic Growers). We want to have a regular Q&A page within our magazine, where we are able to learn from the experiences of others, but it can only happen with your input! This is how it works:

1. You send your questions either to us or to the e-mail announcement list (see page 23).
2. We put your questions to the members at the next COGS General Meeting or collect responses through the e-mail announcement list.
3. We publish your question and the answer in the next issue of Canberra Organic.

If we cannot get an answer from the members who attend the next general meeting we will then publish the question in the magazine and ask for answers from our readers. Also if you disagree with the answer given please write to us so that we can give different view points and suggestions!

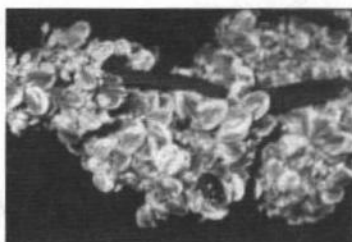
So here comes your part! Please send us your questions or answers to:

E-mail: editor@cogs.asn.au
Phone: 62551349

Snail Mail: COGS
PO Box 347
Dickson ACT 2602

Q: With the onset of warmer weather my rhubarb has sent up a flower stalk. If I let this grow will it reduce productivity? Or should I cut it off?

A: "Flowering will reduce the vigor of the plant. Energy is funnelled into the stalks instead of new growth for rhubarb growth as a vegetable. If the plant is grown as an ornamental the tall stalks of flowers (Victoria has white (greenish) ones) are quite impressive. To promote vegetable growth the flower and seed stalks should be cut out as soon as they start forming. The plant may still continue to produce the flower stalks so keep cutting."



Rhubarb seed pods
(Information and picture from *The Rhubarb Compendium*, <http://www.rhubarbinfo.com/rhubarb-growing.html>)

Q: I have small bugs eating the leaves on some of my plants. Is there an organic spray that I can use to fix this problem?

A: One reader suggested a home made **Garlic Spray** - for use against aphids, red spiders, mites, snails, slugs, thrips, pear and cherry slugs, scale and cabbage caterpillars.

Method: Chop two bulbs of garlic and soak in water for 2 days. On the second day add 2 tablespoons of paraffin oil and leave overnight (could try white oil instead of paraffin). Separately grate 25 grams of pure soap or pure soap flakes and dissolve in 1 litre of tepid water. Strain the garlic into the soapy water and mix well. Store in a cool place

Before spraying **dilute:** 1 part of garlic spray to 10 parts water.

Chillies or onion can be used instead of garlic.

(This recipe was sent in by Rasima Kecanovic. She found it in a *Gardening Australia* magazine and has been using it in her garden, particularly to protect roses.)

Meeting Munchies

I mostly try and make something for the supper using things out of the garden – hence the zucchini and beetroot cakes and their seasonal appearances! Unfortunately we can't grow sesame, but when we're contemplating cabbage cake in the winter, the sesame cookies seem a good alternative. Coming up in the summer months is the Lemon VB cake (verbena and balm, that is!).



Two-Sesame Biscuits

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 1/4 cups sifted flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup roasted white sesame seeds
- 1/4 cup roasted black sesame seeds

- ★ Cream butter and sugars. Add egg. Mix in remaining ingredients.
- ★ Place rounded teaspoonfuls on baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake 8-10 minutes at 180 degrees.

Chocolate Beetroot Cake

- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 cups plain flour
- 1 1/2 tps baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 1 1/2 cups castor sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 3 free-range eggs, beaten
- 1 cup cooked beetroot, pureed
- 2 tablespoons walnuts, finely chopped

- ★ Sift cocoa, flour, baking powder and salt
- ★ Mix with sugar
- ★ Add corn oil, vanilla, eggs, beetroot and walnuts and mix well, until purple...
- ★ Pour into a paper-lined 18cm round or square pan
- ★ Bake at 190 degrees for 50 minutes

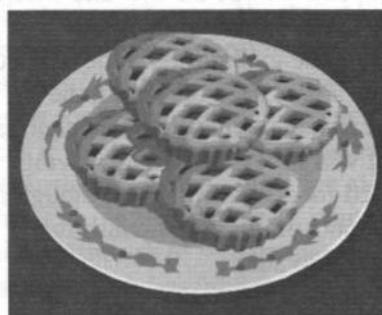
- ★ Allow to cool before removing.



Chocolate Zucchini Cake

- 185 gm butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups grated zucchini
- 1 1/2 cups self-raising flour
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 2 tps finely grated orange rind
- 3/4 cup milk

- ★ Cream butter and sugar
- ★ Beat in eggs
- ★ Stir in other ingredients – don't over beat.
- ★ Pour into 18 cm tin, lined with baking paper.
- ★ Bake at 190 degrees for 50 mins.
- ★ Leave for 5 minutes before turning out.



Alison Yamazaki

Thankyou Alison. Your treats at COGS general meetings are always wonderful! Ed

What happens to our food when the oil runs out?

During our lifetime most of us have enjoyed – even taken for granted – the benefits of 'cheap' oil. Peak Oil refers to the point when the maximum amount of oil that can be extracted globally is reached. Thereafter, production will tail off as remaining reserves become more difficult and more expensive to harvest.

Having looked into this issue in depth, the Soil Association is convinced that in the very near future (perhaps as soon as 5 to 7 years' time), all our lives will be changed significantly by this reduced availability and affordability of oil.

After the peak oil year – which could be as soon as 2008 - the price of oil is likely to rise dramatically. Putting it graphically, 'Imagine having a taxi meter in your car. Try tripling the fare and then see what happens!'

By 2021, it has been estimated that we will have to adjust to a supply of just 50% of today's volumes. Under that scenario, many of the services that we currently take for granted - cheap flights, cheap imports and global distribution of food - will be radically curtailed.

One of the greatest impacts will be on how and where our food is produced. The dominant models of intensive agriculture and the global food trade depend on vast inputs of oil. In a post peak oil world, the combination of higher transport costs, climate change and increased conflict will necessitate us all relying far more on re-localised food supplies. Even though it requires far lower amounts of oil, organic farming is not exempt from the need to adapt.

Peak Oil

The Issue

- the subject of 'Peak Oil' concerns the forthcoming peak and ensuing gradual run-down in global oil supplies, as the exploitation of existing oilfields is not fully compensated by supplies from new oilfields.
- the oil industry's reserves are highly overstated in public. Analysis of the figures shows the point of peak supplies is likely to be by 2008.
- contrary to popular opinion, new technologies such as 'enhanced recovery' and alternative oil sources (such as tar sands) are not a solution (eg. the latter is very energy intensive). Anyway, these are already included in the 2008 peak estimate.
- the increasing oil shortage will be compounded by the structural crisis that the industry already now faces, where it needs to make a massive infrastructure investment just to keep up with supplying the rising global demand for oil.
- the societal effects of the growing shortage will be compounded by the reactions of the stock market on oil prices and political responses to the crisis.
- so major global economic shocks in the near future seem pretty much a certainty and society is not prepared.

Peak Oil and Nitrogen Fertiliser

'Peak Oil' will substantially affect agriculture, as many aspects of industrial production are energy intensive. In particular, Peak Oil will affect the viability of N fertiliser, because 'natural gas' is the basic chemical from which nitrogen fertiliser is produced, and there are no realistic alternatives. The use of fossil fuel energy for N fertiliser accounts for 37% of the total energy used by UK agriculture and its price tracks the price of natural gas. UK N fertiliser prices are rising significantly and are the highest they have ever been. Comparative analyses of organic farming show that it requires about half the amount of energy to produce the same quantity of food.

Implications of Peak Oil for the Soil Association

On the one hand, the increase and greater volatility of oil prices, and increasing physical shortage of oil could mean:

- severe and prolonged global economic recession (ie. unemployment, low incomes/high cost of living, low expenditure, less business opportunities etc.). This could mean a fall in sales of more costly organic food.
- severe impacts on Western lifestyles (high cost of transport, food and other goods). This could lead to increasing social unrest, such as fuel riots.
- short-term and increasingly nationalistic Government policies. For example, more war in the form of foreign invasions to secure energy supplies.
- significant pressure for Government investment in securing conventional and centralised energy sources, ie. nuclear and coal.

- in response to the harshening economic climate, more pressure to exploit natural areas and general downward pressure on environmental protection.
- change or even possible reversal of the comparative power and stability of countries, with those that are less 'developed' and thus less dependent on fossil fuels and trade, becoming more stable compared to the West.
- rise in individual and company energy conservation and self-sufficiency measures, ie. wind turbines, solar panels, local biomass, CHP etc.
- less use of machinery and rise in the value of human labour (possible rise in interest in horse-power).

On the other hand, Peak Oil should mean an increasing move away from centralised and fossil fuel based systems, and a general move to self-sufficiency:

- rise in agricultural input prices, so reduced use of fertilisers & other inputs.
- more organic farming, because of greater comparative economic viability and greater interest in non-fertiliser based production. At some stage, organic food could become cheaper than non-organic which would significantly increase sales.
- more composting and use of sewage sludge, as alternatives to N fertiliser.
- rises in the cost of food processing and packaging (especially plastic), so less processed food and reduced viability of supermarkets. So, more whole food (though food companies could react by investing in renewable energy).
- less imported food especially less air freight, so more local food.
- economic pressure on the intensive indoor livestock sector from rise in the cost of electricity, so more outdoor rearing (and/or rise in use of anaerobic digestion).
- economic pressure on out-of-season indoor glasshouse horticulture, which is highly energy intensive, so greater seasonality (and/or rise in Combined Heat and Power (CHP) which is a form of efficient low-carbon generation of energy, where you use the heat during the electricity production for heating.
- reversal of the trend towards ever larger and more centralised industries and multi-nationals, because of higher transport costs and an increasing need to secure local energy and other resource supplies. So, more localised economies.
- greater interest in individual, community and national food self-sufficiency, ie. allotments, Community Supported Agriculture, direct sales, forward contracts.

What does the Soil Association aim to do?

The Soil Association is looking ahead and preparing for a post peak oil world as an organisational priority. Initiatives we want to take forward include:

- Focussing our 2007 National Conference on the theme of 'Food and Farming - Post Peak Oil'.
- Producing practical research to enable cities, towns and communities to re-localise their food supplies.
- Launching a national campaign, alerting public and politicians alike, to the urgency of this challenge.
- Promoting re-localised food systems in schools, hospitals and businesses.
- Investing in our local groups as key catalysts to build a new resilient food culture at the grassroots.

Over the last 20 years, the Soil Association has established organic farming as the most sustainable method of production and helped grow a burgeoning market for organic food. Now we must refine our focus if we are to adapt to the changing external circumstances which will touch all our lives very soon. The phrase that comes to mind is that we are 'building the ark of sustainable agriculture' for the new era ahead.

The challenge is immediate, but fear should not be the driver. The Soil Association is optimistic that we have the vision and means to create a new, localised food culture that will deliver long-term quality of life in place of the old dynamic of unrestrained globalisation and short-termist exploitation.

by staff of the UK Soil Association

This article was put together from the UK Soil Association internet site and sent to us by Keith Thomas - thanks Keith. The UK Soil Association has given us permission to reproduce the information in Canberra Organic. Ed.

The Wisdom on Tomatoes

By the time you are reading this you have probably already planted your tomatoes but if you haven't, or you've lost the first lot to cold weather, it's certainly not too late to start. I've scoured my gardening books and 'googled' the internet for tips on '*growing tomatoes organically in dry conditions*' and have come up with a motley lot of advice/ tips/ tricks, some of which at least may apply to your tomato growing situation this Summer. Of course lots of people develop their own pet practices and if you are an experienced tomato grower already you may or may not agree with some of it (pruning tomato plants for example). Nevertheless most of the material below that I have selected from my research represents the consistently appearing advice on best practice for tomato growing.

Firstly, here are nine growing tips, via an internet columnist, from Gordon Graham, the Guinness World Record grower of the heaviest tomato ever grown: "(1) Find the right variety for you; (2) Extend your growing season. Protect them from cold and winds at both ends of the growing season; (3) Let the sun shine in! Provide at minimum 8 hours of sun (real or artificial) a day; (4) Give 'em room! Before and after transplanting; (5) Build a better soil, well aerated, full of organic matter and with a pH of 6 to 6.5; (6) Keep it not too wet - not too dry!; (7) Provide good nutrition! Pay attention to what additions your soil may need to keep it well fed!; (8) Offer support! with stakes or cages; and (9) Prune well and pluck wisely by allowing just a single main stem and picking off all but a pair of tomatoes, thereby forcing the plant to put all its energies into those fruits." *Source: Tomato "Tidbits" by Linden Staciokas*

Variety -

There are so many varieties to choose from, try several (some will be more suited to your garden conditions and more disease resistant than others) and keep records of what grows well for you. See Jen Johnston's article on varieties on page 10 of *Canberra Organic* May 2006. During my internet search I kept finding comments that the small cherry type tomatoes (eg Sweet 100) are probably the very hardiest for tough conditions but I think we all also want to harvest a good crop of the large varieties. A number of gardeners in the Cook garden have noted that the Roma variety appears to have the best resistance

to pests such as green vegetable bug. For taste, my favourite smaller varieties are Tommy Toe, Principe Borghese and Jaune Flamme (seeds all initially obtained through Diggers) and this year for a larger variety I am trying Mortgage Lifter.



Optimal temperatures -

Optimal growing temperatures are reported as soil temperatures of 18-24°C, air temperatures 18-30°C during the day and 15-20°C at night. Cool night temperatures may be a more important reason for lack of fruit set than the "too much nitrogen" often quoted. However day temperatures consistently over 32°C can result in a period of poor fruit set also. Plastic covers help protect tomatoes just planted out and windbreaks are desirable to protect tomato plants as hot, dry conditions develop. Shading can be provided via shadecloth attached to staked supports. Some of the more unusual protective measures I came across were growing plants in a straw 'donut' and in a straw bale. The donut is 'a thick circle of densely packed straw, towering some 2 feet beyond the top of the plant', the open centre covered with very loose straw which is removed each morning to allow the sunlight in; in mid season the straw donut is demolished and used as mulch. (*Source: Tomato "Tidbits" by Linden Staciokas*) Using the straw bale method allows for two plants per bale. The bale is soaked with water and seaweed solution for a number of days to start decomposition. Two holes, 30cm deep and 15 cm in diameter are filled with rich compost for planting, support stakes added. The

bales need to be watered daily and watering with a weak seaweed solution every 10 days is recommended (Source: *Botannica's Pocket Organic Gardening for Australian Gardeners*, Random House, 2002).

Sunshine and watering -

"No such thing as too dry or too much sun for tomatoes. If it's too wet or cold, you can't fix that. If it's too dry, you can water. If it's too much sun, wait there's no such thing as too much sun for tomatoes. ... In dry/drought conditions I try to simulate rain. I alternate ground watering with plain water and half strength fish emulsion or blue juice. I also use foliar sprays."

(Source: <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/tomato/msg0519344825508.html?11>)

"Sun shines on leaves enabling them to produce carbohydrates which means more fruit set and larger, tastier fruit. You cannot make up for a lack of sunlight with water, fertiliser or hope ... give tomatoes at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day, and more is even better... Tomatoes prefer a moist soil and suffer when soil moisture fluctuates widely. When soil is dry for a period of time followed by soaking, tomato fruits will crack. Fluctuations can also contribute to blossom end rot, a common problem with the first fruit to set each spring... Mulch moderates soil temperature, reduces evaporative losses, prevents crusting and improves infiltration of rainwater into the soil. Mulch also can help deter some disease problems by reducing soil splashing up onto foliage and fruit from ... irrigation; ... lay 4 to 6 sheets of newspaper over the soil and young weed seedlings and then cover it with leaves to hold it in place and make the row more attractive." (Source: *"Growing Tomatoes Organically"* by Skip Richter, *Texas Gardener magazine*, online.)

"Plants need to "breathe" oxygen from soil air spaces ... The trick is to water deeply so that a strong and extensive root system develops. Dramatic cycles of wetting and drying at the surface of the soil are not good for tomatoes. ... To reduce disease risk, it is best to avoid watering late in the day, and to avoid splashing onto leaves when watering ... The sun is also important for burning off moisture from wet leaves. It is important for the surface of the leaves to dry out during the day." Re sunshine: "The most critical hours are those between 10AM and 3PM." (Source: *"Growing Gourmet Tomatoes in the Bay Area"* J Power, Blogger)

The most unusual tip I found about watering was to use carbonated water, eg, by making a small hole in a 2 litre plastic bottle, filling it with carbonated water and placing the cap loosely on top so as to control the flow of water at the rate of about one hour for the water to empty out. (Source: *Stephen Reiners, The Tomato Club Newsletter reported by Tomato "Tidbits" by Linden Staciokas*)

Soil and Nutrition -

"A winter green manure containing some mustard is beneficial before tomatoes. These plants have to perform over a long summer season so we put two barrow loads of compost to the bed (double our usual application) plus a liberal quantity of wood ash. This provides potash, necessary for good fruit." (Source: *Allsun Garden Farm, Growing Annual Vegetables*, CD, Joyce Wilkie and Michael Plane)

Crop rotation, appropriate pH level, organic matter in the soil and mulching are all advocated consistently. Clive Blazey recommends well decomposed animal manure, otherwise pelletised animal manure, or limited liquid manures; he says "under fertilise rather than over fertilise." (Source: *"The Australian Vegetable Garden, What's New is Old"*, Clive Blazey, New Holland Publishers, 1999)



Pests -

(1) birds (2) stink bugs (green vegetable bug)
Fabric crop covers are supposed to deter *birds* and insects. If you can be bothered, cutting nylon stockings into foot long pieces knotted at one end and placed over ripening clusters of tomatoes progressively is reported to prevent birds pecking tomatoes. An easier preventative method is to harvest early, as soon as a pink tinge appears.

A major pest experienced at Cook community garden in recent years has been the green vegetable bug or 'stink bug'. These pests damage fruit by piercing the skin and sucking the juices out, leaving behind yellow hard spots. "One option is to cover plants completely with a lightweight rowcover fabric to exclude these pests ... Keep an eye on plants to note when pests first begin to appear. Early detection leaves you better options for managing a potential outbreak ... some gardeners report success with planting a row of plants nearby to attract these pests away from the tomatoes ... Sunflower, clover and [autumn] planted oriental poppies are among the possible choices. When these pests appear on the "trap crop" simply direct sprays to these plants which allows the tomatoes to go unsprayed." (Source: "Growing Tomatoes Organically, Skip Richter, Texas Gardener magazine, online.)

The green vegetable bug usually drops down through foliage when it becomes aware of you so be ready to catch it from beneath and drop it into a container of soapy water.

Harvesting green tomatoes -

Larger lighter green tomatoes are the ones most likely to ripen off the vine. This is because there are mature and immature greens, the latter have not reached the stage in their development where they can ripen. "To ripen, the tomato must be essentially beyond growth, old enough to experience 'a sharp rise in respiration .. lose chlorophyll, (the source of its greenness) and develop lycopenes and carotenoids which give the fruit its final colour." (Source: Barbara Pleasant and Scott Meyer reported in "Tips for becoming a successful tomato-grower", by Linden Staciokas). Slice open green fruit. " If the seeds are covered with a clear gel which cause them to move away from the knife, then that fruit will eventually turn red and ripen. If the seeds are cut by the knife then those fruit will never

properly ripen. Compare the color and size of the tested fruit when harvesting tomatoes on your plants. Most similar fruit will eventually ripen and turn red". (Source: "Tomato Discussions: Some common questions and answers on how to grow and enjoy tomatoes." http://site.hgandg.com/topsyturvys/tomato_info.html)

Two final tips -

- (1) Remove any diseased plants and do not add them to the compost heap.
- (2) Save the seed of your successful tomatoes: To save seed from non-hybrid tomatoes, "leave the fruit on the plant until it is mature, pull it, squeeze juice with seed into a glass, let this ferment for two days adding water if needed. Rinse the seeds two or three times to remove debris. Seeds will settle to the bottom. After rinsing the seeds, blot them and place them in the sun to dry. Store the seeds under cool, dry conditions." (Source: as above, http://site.hgandg.com/topsyturvys/tomato_info.html)

Janet Popovic

Beautiful Holiday House

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

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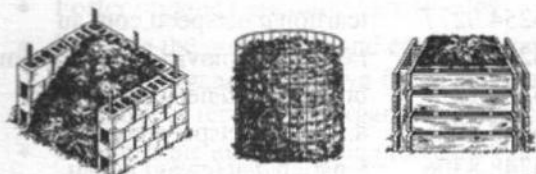




SUMMER VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

In Summer it is a good idea to mulch your garden beds to help keep the soil cool and moist. One experiment has shown that a 4cm layer of straw reduced evaporation by 73%. Be careful however not to lay down a thick layer of sawdust or lawn clippings that can pack down to form an impenetrable barrier to water.

Soil with lots of compost will contain all the nutrients your plants need for strong, healthy growth. In addition it will retain water and act like a sponge to keep your plants moist through the dry summer days.



On days of extreme temperatures your plants may need to be physically protected from the heat. This can be achieved by covering the plants with shade cloth secured on a frame eg weldmesh bent over to form a tunnel (secure the shade cloth with some pegs).

Try not to water the leaves of plants that are susceptible to fungal diseases eg tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchinis. Water with drippers, fill pots sunk into the soil near the plants, or if you must use overhead watering, water in the cool of the morning so the water can evaporate during the day.

Keep those weeds down. They compete with your plants for food, water and sunlight. It is best to tackle them when they are small—before removing them becomes an exhausting exercise.

Pests can multiply over summer. Don't reach for the pesticides. Observe if there are natural predators present, remembering that there will be a delay between the appearance of the pest and the subsequent build-up of its predators. If you must spray, use an environmentally benign spray. Read books such as Jackie French's *Natural Pest Control*.

Make sure you harvest your crop regularly - in most cases this will encourage your plants to continue cropping and you get

to eat your produce at its peak.

Remember to leave space in your vegie patch for those winter vegetables that must be planted in late summer—early autumn. Brassicas and other winter crops need time to mature before the extreme cold of winter sets in.



Summer Vegetable Planting Guide

	DEC	JAN	FEB
French Beans	S	S	
Beetroot	S	S	S
Broccoli	ST	ST	T
Brussels Sprouts	ST	ST	T
Cabbage	ST	ST	T
Cauliflower	ST	ST	T
Carrots	S	S	S
Celery	T	T	S
Chicory	S	S	S
Chinese Cabbage	S	S	
Cucumber	ST	T	
Endive	S	S	S
Kohl Rabi	ST	ST	T
Leeks	S	S	
Lettuce	ST	ST	ST
Marrows	T		
Parsnips	S	S	S
Potatoes	S	S	
Radish	S	S	S
Silver Beet	ST	ST	T
Squash	ST		
Swedes		S	S
Sweet Corn	ST	T	
Tomatoes	T	T	
Turnips		S	S

S = Seed Sowing

T = Transplanting

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 summer weather from one year to the next. Planting times will vary for different varieties of the one vegetable eg. December plantings of heading lettuce should be successful; February plantings should be the butterhead varieties.

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Monthly Meetings

Seed exchange	vacant		
Supper convenors	Volunteers - Please add your name to the roster!		
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To contact COGS

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

COGS monthly meetings are held at 7:30pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month

(NO MEETINGS December and January)

Venue: Meeting Room 6 The Griffin Centre

Genge Street, Civic

(opposite the old Griffin Centre site)

—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 Meeting Room 6 at The Griffin Centre, Civic, at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month (no meetings in December and January). Each month there is a guest speaker. Recent meeting topics have included Backyard poultry keeping, Worms, Herbs and Seed Saving. 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 at a small charge.

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 12 community gardens in the Canberra region. Gardens are located at Charnwood, Cook, Curtin (Cotter Garden), Dickson, Erindale, Holder, Kambah, Mitchell (Northside Garden), Oaks Estate, O'Connor, Queanbeyan and Theodore. Members may access 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 visit local farms and hold open days for members at our community gardens. 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

7:30 pm, Meeting Room 6,
Griffin Centre,
Genge Street, Civic

28 November 2006

Adrienne Fazekas and Keith Colls: *Plant Clinic*

There are no COGS general meetings in the months of December and January.

27 February 2007

Clem Davis

Changes in Climate in Canberra

27 March 2007

COGS Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Harvest Night (Members bring their garden produce and tales about successes and failures in the past season—everyone is welcome to participate.)

24 April 2007

To be advised

Members are invited to suggest topics and/or speakers that they would like for the monthly general meetings. Please contact Adrienne or a Committee member (see contact information on page 32).

COGS Meeting Suppers

Thanks to Alison, Eliza, Rae, and Alison for providing our recent general meetings with supper. Members enjoyed your tasty treats!

We need volunteers for 2007 meetings so why not advise which month/s you are able to go on this roster! (ring Janet 6258 2811 or email: editor@cogs.asn.au)

STAGE 2 (formerly STAGE 3)

Water Restrictions are now in force.

Please ensure that you do not breach these water restrictions.

Hand watering and drippers ONLY on weekdays according to the odds and evens system, 7-10am and 7-10pm.

Trigger nozzles must be fitted to hoses.

Sprinklers once a week on weekends (Saturdays for even street numbers, Sundays for odd street numbers)

ONLY 7-10pm

It is a COGS rule that gardeners must be present at all times drippers or sprinklers are operated in their COGS garden.

Events

**Jackie French's Garden Tour
COGS Members Only**

Saturday, 25th of November
(fully booked, cancellation list only)

COGS Open Gardens *see page 4*

Saturday 2nd December:
Theodore 10 → 11:30am
Holder 12 → 1:30pm
O'Connor 2 → 3:30pm

Thanks to Lesley Pattinson, Jen Johnston, Betty Cornhill, Peter Cornhill, Adrienne and Janet for supplying plants to the COGS stall in association with the CIT Plant Sale, and to Keith Colls, Adrienne Fazekas, Sophia Williams and Robin McMcKeown for manning the stall on 11 November at Xeriscape, Weston.

COGS E-mail Announcement List!

(See Page 23)

To subscribe, simply send a blank email to the following address :
canberra_organic_growers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au