

Winter 2007

Canberra Organic

ORGANIC GROWING IN THE CANBERRA REGION

The quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

Canberra's climate Planting rhubarb Bread making
What to do with quinces Make your own winter teas
New COGS garden policies COGS winter planting guide



Vol. 15 No. 2

CANBERRA ORGANIC

Vol 15 No. 2 (Issue 57)

Canberra Organic is the quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

It celebrates organic gardening, local produce, information and social exchange and sustainability in the Canberra region.

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EDITORS

Monica van Wensveen and Sophia Williams

CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome submissions, ideas and feedback.

Contributions preferred in Word, Publisher or text format, on disk, as attached files or as clean typed copy.

Images should be sent as attached (not embedded) files, on disk or as original photographs or slides.

There are four issues each year - Autumn (February), Winter (May), Spring (August) and Summer (November). Deadlines for copy and advertising are 15 January, 15 April, 15 July and 15 October, respectively.

Please send contributions to editor@cogs.asn.au or Canberra Organic
PO Box 347 Dickson ACT 2602

ADVERTISING

Please contact Monica van Wensveen on 6255 4332 or email editor@cogs.asn.au.

Canberra Organic is a unique way to reach people in the Canberra region who have an interest in organics, gardening and the environment. Our circulation is around 400.

ADVERTISING RATES

Payment is to be made in advance. COGS members are eligible for the price in brackets.

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Editor's note

With all the current media around the perils of climate change and global warming, I was heartened to read a recent article in Time magazine about 51 things we can all do to cut carbon emissions.

There at number 25 was to support your local farmer and at number 39 was to create your own natural fertilisers (eg compost) to combat the release of nitrous oxide—a greenhouse gas. So, we're contributing to our future already!

Summer's packed away in my seed-box, green manure is out and waiting for a good drink and I'm anticipating the arrival of the first frost. Time to rug up and enjoy the winter edition of *Canberra Organic*.

This issue has our regular articles plus features on Canberra's climate, herbal teas, bread making, how to grow rhubarb and what to do with quinces.

Heartfelt thanks to Janet Popovic and Sophia Williams who have entertained and educated Canberra gardeners through many issues of *Canberra Organic* and have left very big shoes to fill! Thankfully, Sophia will continue with the magazine and brings a new addition to the editorial team – young Orlando. Congratulations!

As ever, we are keen for contributions, story ideas and feedback.

Enjoy winter in your garden

Monica





From the President Winter 2007

After a long, dry summer and autumn it was a relief to finally get some much needed rain in late April.

Hopefully the predictions of an easing of the drought will come true soon.

There is still time to plant peas, broad beans and spinach before the soil cools too much. These crops are frost resistant and will grow slowly through the winter before producing early spring harvests as the weather warms up. It's also time to prepare beds for Winter plantings of onions, asparagus and rhubarb crowns, raspberries and strawberries.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held on March 27th. COGS enjoyed another successful year in 2006 with our membership numbers and bank balance both increasing. The community gardens continue to be very well supported and the monthly meetings well attended.

A committee of ten was elected to run COGS for the next year. It was very pleasing to have six new members nominate for positions on the committee. I look forward to their ideas and enthusiasm and hope they will enjoy the challenges.

Water restrictions

Stage 3 are still in force in the ACT and Queanbeyan. ***These water restrictions do apply in the COGS community gardens*** and I would ask you all to please observe them and to ensure that other gardeners also comply.

It has recently come to the committee's attention that some gardens, and gardeners, are using excessive amounts of water - substantially more than last summer. Also not all gardeners are complying with the "hand-held" requirement of the restrictions, or the use of trigger nozzles. Inconvenience is no excuse, and leaving a hose or hoses running in your plot while you are gardening is not what is meant by "hand held" and contravenes both the letter and the spirit of the restrictions. It is also apparent that some gardeners are continuing to flood irrigate, also in

contravention of the restrictions.

I still meet gardeners who claim not to know the details of the restrictions or the fact that they apply in the COGS gardens. I have also heard it suggested by some gardeners that if our water bills are too large we should just put up the fees.

The committee has decided that gardeners who continually flout the restrictions will no longer be permitted to retain plots in the COGS gardens. One reminder about the rules should be sufficient and anyone caught a second time will be required to forfeit their garden plot.

It is in our own interests to be as frugal as possible in our water usage as the ACT is facing a serious shortage of water. If Stage 4 restrictions need to be introduced in coming months, as is strongly rumoured, the community gardens will effectively cease to function as no outdoor watering will be allowed.

New garden rules

As detailed on p26 the committee has introduced two new rules which will apply in all the community gardens. The first bans the use of CCA treated pine and also requires the removal of any existing treated pine by August 30th 2007.

The second restricts the type of structures that gardeners may build without prior approval, and requires that any existing structures conform to the new rule or be removed, again by August 30th 2007.

Members of the committee will be visiting all the community gardens over the coming weeks as part of a risk assessment we are conducting. During these visits both treated pine usage and unsafe or unsightly structures will be identified. Any gardeners with questions or comments on the new rules, or any other issues, are most welcome to meet with the committee members during these visits.

Adrienne Fazekas

Organic Gardener is now bi-monthly (that's 6 great issues a year!)



ABC
Magazines

Organic Gardener magazine is your guide to an organic lifestyle and presents clearly written features and stunning photography on all aspects of eco-living.



Organic Gardener's winter issue gets juicy as we lead you into the world of strange edible fruits and show you how to choose the perfect pear tree.

We reveal how to make household products from home-grown plants, and discover why a soil test may be essential for your organic garden and chook run.

Plus we feature simple Chinese recipes from Kylie Kwong, visit Melbourne community gardens, and tell how to keep your garden healthy this winter.

**Inspiration
Information
Practical advice**

ABC's *Organic Gardener* magazine is on sale from 6 June 2007 at only \$7.95 and is available from ABC Shops, ABC Centres, newsagents and online, or subscribe 03 8317 8110.

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Articles

Ben Bradey, Keith Colls, Gita Curnow, Adrienne Fazekas, COGS Garden Convenors, Jen Johnston, Jan Middeljans, Janet Popovic, Inge Thor, Monica van Wensveen, Graham Walker and Sophia Williams.

Photos

Andrew Bishop, Andrew Hodges, Janet Popovic, Rebecca Scott, Ann Smith, Inge Thor, Monica van Wensveen and Sophia Williams.

Front cover photo

DOJO loaves - Sophia Williams and Matthew Hulse

Back cover photos

DOJO bread seeds - Sophia Williams and Matthew Hulse

Pumpkins and quinces - Rebecca Scott

Thanks to Arthur's Vegetable Clipart



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Around the Gardens



Charnwood

Charnwood garden is proving to be very fertile, with two gardeners falling pregnant. Congratulations Sophia and Cath!

We have joined the Australian Open Garden Scheme and are having an open weekend in December to show off our version of community gardening in Canberra. We're working on ensuring that the weekend displays our garden at close to its potential. This work includes a transformation of our communal areas into lovely corners of greenery, thanks to Gita.

Individual plots are being hit hard by the drought, with many of us not sustaining watering through the summer. While we haven't cropped heavily this autumn, we have shown our resilience and have grown, with the addition of two new members (welcome Cath and Margaret). So when the drought breaks, Charnwood promises to show a quick flush of green.

We do still have a few vacancies, with a range of plot sizes available. We're expecting to fill the garden up with our open garden weekend, although hopefully beforehand with some advertising in the local shopping centres.

Tim Carlton

Cook

The hailstorm in late February destroyed most of the crops in the Cook Garden. However many of the vegetables, such as capsicums, tomatoes and pumpkins started growing again. Not having frost so far this year, I may even have a few capsicums off the plants before winter hits.

Cook garden is full and there are two people on the waiting list. Most gardeners are preparing their plots for winter plantings. The regular monthly working bees have kept the garden fairly neat and tidy.

Our next major project for the garden is to fix the boundary road which is starting to erode and to tidy up the entrance to the garden.

Rasima Kecanovic

Cotter

Following the February rains and subsequent growth, gardeners were asked to make sure that their plots were weed-free and they responded well. Any autumn vegetables remaining have been harvested and the ground prepared for planting or sowing winter ones.

We continue to receive enquiries from people interested in renting a plot and, for the first time in years, there is not much that we can offer them. It is good to have keen new members who are ready to tackle difficult plots, ie ones that have not been worked recently and have been invaded by couch grass. Let's hope that the energy and enthusiasm of these 'new' gardeners are rewarded with good crops.

The need for vigilance on health and safety issues is being addressed and measures introduced to reduce hazards in the gardens. We have already purchased and fitted caps to star-droppers, but in the longer term, we are aware of other needs such as improving plot surrounds and to making paths safer.

Roz & Trevor Bruhn

Dickson

With the shorter days there is not a lot of sunshine on the gardens as there are many surrounding trees, and with such a small area is difficult to support sufficient gardeners to promote a sense of 'garden community'.

I'm sure the COGS committee would be interested to hear from anyone who might like to continue the Dickson garden despite these difficulties.

Margaret Richardson

Mitchell

Despite the dry conditions, Mitchell gardeners enjoyed a pretty good harvest. The last of summer vegies are nearly finished (although my super-zucchinis - the phoenixinis - are still producing) and there has been a flurry of late to get winter plants in and growing before the first frosts.

Some gardeners have decided not to plant during winter (we're in a frost hollow, so it's not an easy job!) and some have traded a crop of brassicas for a crop of green manure.

We've had a hard time lately with some thirsty gum trees on either side of the garden. The saga with our gate continues, but may now be fixed. We have also finally put some photos up on the COGS website if you'd like to see what the garden looks like.

The Mitchell garden is just about full, except for a small plot which will be pretty frosty over the coming months.

Monica van Wensveen

O'Connor

The change of season seemed to come quickly this year and it has seen an active time in the O'Connor garden. It's been out with the old and in with the new as people have been making way for the winter vegetables, clearing the emaciated summer vegetables and fluffing up the soil with whatever the chosen additives are.

Bags of sheep manure, precious amounts of compost (we didn't make enough through the summer!) - whatever people can find or source around Canberra is being dug into the gradually improving ground of the tennis courts we started with last year. It is amazing what grew here over the summer considering the hard and lifeless clay that was the base of our garden.

Gardeners can be seen looking hard at the ground waiting for seeds to appear or carefully picking green caterpillars off Brassica seedlings. The transition from the lush and tall growth of the summer to just seedlings and emerging seeds is a little hard to take. "Where has it all gone? Is this all there is?"

With the cooler weather and warm autumn days, however, the winter things are taking off

quickly and already there is English spinach that is almost ready to pick and still people are picking capsicums and eggplants, carrots and zucchini - the remains of summer, so the gardens keep giving and before long the broccoli will be up and nearly heading. There's always something to keep you going!

We have had some new people come to the garden bringing great new energy with them and the convenors duties are now being shared by half a dozen of the gardeners instead of it all being done by one person.

The Canberra Times paid us a visit and will be writing about the COGS gardens in the "Relax" section of the Sunday paper. A sandpit has been put in for the little ones which is of course very popular with them.

Altogether, we are well on track for 2007 and people are getting to know each other, with the help of some afternoon tea parties in the garden and enjoying sharing the space.

Philip Woodhill

Theodore

Theodore Garden has a number of vacant plots available. One of the benefits of the Theodore garden is that plot sizes range from 25 sq metres to 50 sq metres. This gives plenty of room to be able to rotate your crops each year and provides a space big enough to grow a good supply of your annual vegie requirements for your family.

Certainly if you live on the south side of Canberra and have the time and inclination we would welcome anyone wishing to have a larger garden bed available to them.

We have plots available that have recently been vacated, thus are well cultivated and only require clearing.

Tony Bennett

Stage 3 Water Restrictions currently apply in all COGS gardens

Hand-held hoses with trigger nozzles, watering cans and drippers may be used between 7&10 am and 7&10 pm on alternate days

No watering is allowed at other times

Organics in the news

Gold to Australia!

Forget cricket and swimming, a new report presented at the 2007 BioFach World Organic Trade Fair gives Australia gold for the world's largest land area under organic farming (11.8 million hectares). Argentina wins silver (3.1 million) and China picks up bronze (1.6 million). Thirty-one million hectares around the globe are currently certified to organic standards.

Proof that green is good

The UK's Daily Mail reported scientific evidence that organic fruit can be better for you. Studies in Britain, France, Poland and the US suggest that organically grown fruit has higher levels of important nutrients than conventionally grown fruit. Analysis of organic tomatoes, peaches, apples and kiwi fruit revealed greater concentrations of vitamin C, polyphenols, betacarotene and flavonoids which can help protect the body against heart attacks and cancer-causing chemicals.

Berry berry healthy

In more good news on the fruit front, ABC Online gave details of a new American study suggesting that an anti-oxidant found in blueberries and grapes could offer protection against colon cancer. Researchers suspect that the compound's cholesterol-lowering action may be the key.

The Queen goes green

The Ecorazzi website reports that the Queen of England has taken the advice of her greenest son, recently advertising for someone to "help phase out the use of pesticides from the Palace's gardens, improving environmental and conservation practices as well as maintaining a new organic vegetable garden at Clarence House". She is also undertaking carbon emission audits of her three official residences.

Junk food organics?

Oreo cookies – the chocolatey epitome of junk-food – have gone organic. The Washington Times reported that Oreos are now "green, sustainable, pesticide-free, natural, earth-friendly". The news brings a divide between those who feel that organic + Oreo is a contradiction in terms, and those celebrating the idea that organic purists can now eat junk food.

Top Tips for WINTER

❶ Freeze!

To enjoy a taste of summer in the depths of winter, try freezing herbs with high water content in ice cube trays. Chives, mint, tarragon and basil all freeze well.

❷ Be mates with a rake

Fallen leaves are a ready source of free organic matter and minerals for your compost. Try shredding the leaves first and adding nitrogen (manure is great) to hasten the process.

❸ Cold storage

Some root crops - including carrots, beetroot and turnips can be stored in the soil for much of winter. Others - including pumpkins, apples and potatoes - should be harvested and stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated space. Be sure to dry and separate fruits to prevent bruising.

❹ Rug up and read

Winter is a great time for catching up with the latest gardening books and seed catalogues and for planning your spring garden.

❺ Go green

Green manure crops harvest nitrogen from the air, improve soil fertility, protect soil structure, keep weeds at bay and stimulate activity of soil organisms. Need more reasons?



"Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart"

Victor Hugo, Author (1802-1885)

Weather Watch

What's in store for winter? Here's a snapshot from the Bureau of Meteorology's long term climate statistics for winter temperatures and rainfall.

Temperature

	June	July	August
Canberra	max 12.2	max 11.3	max 13.0
Airport	min 0.9	min -0.1	min 0.9

Rainfall

	June	July	August
Canberra	40.3 mm	41.6 mm	47.1 mm
Airport	5.7 rain days	5.9 rain days	7.1 rain days

(Rain days are days with more than 1 mm rain; temperatures are degrees Celsius)

Seasonal forecast

- The seasonal outlook from the Bureau of Meteorology is for neutral rainfall conditions for most of NSW, with a 50% chance of at least average rainfall for May to July.
- There is little chance of returning to El Nino's dry conditions for the rest of 2007.
- Cooler than normal conditions are indicated in the southeast of the mainland.

For more information visit the Bureau of Meteorology's ACT website:

www.bom.gov.au/weather/act

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Most of our gardening books were lost in the recent hail storm but every 'cloud' has a silver lining.....

We've had the opportunity to 'replant' our gardening section with interesting books, including some you won't find in any other bookshop. We now have everything from organic and bio-dynamic to water-wise and self-sufficiency, as well as books specifically on the Canberra region and a selection by Rudolf Steiner.

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Is Canberra's climate changing?

The planets collided at the COGS meeting in March when guest speaker Clem Davis had his talk on Canberra's climate punctuated by a hailstorm no-one could quite believe.

Stormy weather and supercells

Tuesday 27 February was a day to remember for many COGS members. After one of our hottest, driest summers, Canberra was hit by a 'supercell' thunderstorm which resulted in a sudden, violent downpour and a city centre that more resembled Thredbo in winter than Canberra in summer.

Cook gardeners fared badly, with a season's work ravaged in the space of a couple of hours and the glass house badly damaged.

Earlier that night, Clem Davis gave a thought-provoking talk at the COGS monthly meeting on climate and climate change in the Canberra region – an eerie prelude of what was to follow.

Clem is a former senior meteorologist from the Bureau of Meteorology's offices in WA, the Northern Territory and Canberra. He has now 'retired' and is a Visiting Fellow with the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society. He is currently researching long term climate trends in the Canberra region.

Canberra's climatic character

Canberra's altitude, geography and topography are significant factors in shaping our characteristic weather.

Canberra sits 578 metres above sea level. The temperature of the atmosphere decreases with altitude at about 1 degree per 100 metres, which makes Canberra cooler than cities of similar latitude but lower altitude (it is 3-4 degrees cooler than Wagga).

We sit 120 km from the coast, away from the sea breezes that cool coastal neighbours in summer (Canberra is 1-2 degrees hotter than Bateman's Bay in the summer months; in turn, Wagga is 4-5 degrees hotter than Canberra).

The Brindabellas – beautiful as they are – act as a barrier to winter rain, leaving the city in a relative rain shadow.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), the main weather systems which produce rain in Canberra are fronts, North West cloud bands, cut-off lows, east coast lows and thunderstorms.

In winter Canberra's rain tends to be produced by cold fronts and thunderstorms in summer. These generally produce more rainfall in the ranges to the west of the city than in the east.



*Measuring and monitoring weather
(Photo: Monica van Wensveen)*

Canberra's average annual rainfall is 629mm over an average of 108 rain days each year. Historically, October is the wettest month (65mm) and June the driest (40mm).

January is the hottest month (average daily maximum is 27.7 degrees) and July the coldest (average max is 11.3 degrees and -0.1 degrees minimum).

On average there are 99 frosts and 44 fogs for the year, almost all occurring between April and October.

Is our climate changing?

Clem and his colleagues have been studying long term temperature and rainfall records (from 1938 in Canberra and 1871 in Queanbeyan), looking for trends and considering what might have caused them.

Some of Clem's findings:

- On average, Canberra's daily maximum temperature has increased by 1.5 degrees Celsius since 1940 and appears to have accelerated in the last 6 to 8 years.
- The average minimum daily temperature has also increased, by around 1 degree. These trends appear to be regional – Moruya, Wagga and Canberra (on around the same latitude) are all increasing at the same rate.
- Our winters are contracting, with warmer temperatures and fewer early and late cold outbreaks in September and May.
- Our summers are not getting longer, but they are getting hotter, particularly in January and February.
- We are losing raindays (days in which more than 1mm of rain falls). However, this may not seriously affect our rainfall as 63% of our rain currently comes from only 12% of our raindays.

Usual and unusual suspects

There is debate amongst meteorologists and other scientists about what is causing changes in our weather patterns.

While we are currently experiencing the driest period since the 'Federation Drought' of 1900-1902, Clem advises that dry conditions are not a new phenomenon in this part of the world.

El Nino is seen as the prime suspect for recent low rainfall. El Nino refers to a sustained warming of the central and eastern regions of the Pacific Ocean, resulting in changes in the atmosphere, which in turn impact on weather patterns across the Pacific Basin, including Australia.

El Nino events are a natural part of the earth's climate system that typically last for 12 to 18

months, often followed by a reciprocal La Nina event which can mean above average rain.

In late February, the BOM announced that our most recent El Nino event had ended after more than a year.

So is climate change – variations in 'modern' climate caused by human-induced activity - to blame for other trends in our climate?

According to Clem, at this stage there is no clear indication that climate change has had an impact on our weather. This is in part due to difficulties in measuring climate change, knowing what time periods to compare, having quality data and a solid and agreed understanding of its drivers.

There is a view that while our recent wild weather may or may not be caused by climate change, it may however be a taste of things to come under projected global warming.

Stay tuned.

Monica van Wensveen & Keith Colls



*Where has Canberra's rain gone?
(Photo: Andrew Bishop)*

References

Bureau of Meteorology website
<http://www.bom.gov.au>

Gardener profile: Jan Middeljans

Jan started gardening at Mitchell in 2006. After a bumper crop of pumpkins, sweet potatoes and chillies this year, he's been busy preparing his plot for winter brassicas.



How long have you been gardening? How did you start?

I have been gardening for about 65 years (I am 70). I started in Holland during WWII. My father was not home and my mother was very ill. At age 4 I had to nurse her, and look after my younger brother. This also involved cooking the meals and looking after the vegetable garden my father had started.

My mother grew up on a farm before giant chemical companies destroyed the natural farm practices. She had an in-depth knowledge of wild herbs and was a strong believer in natural farming practices (now known as organic). I was a keen listener and used every opportunity to learn from her and whoever else was willing to share their knowledge.

From that time on I have always had a strong interest in culinary achievements and the art of growing quality vegetables and fruit.

What are you growing and harvesting now at the Mitchell garden?

I started in Mitchell last winter. Unfortunately I was too late for the winter crops. I concentrated on getting my plot ready for spring plantings. Many years ago I came across a 20' x 5' gardening method and decided to prepare my beds following this principle.

The 20 x 5 method allows easy access to all crops and makes crop rotation very easy. I planted tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, corn, capsicums, chillies, onions, garlic, sweet potatoes, beans, peas, eggplant, zucchini, pumpkin and cucumbers.

Due to the intense heat, the water restrictions and the poor condition of the soil, my harvest was not as abundant as I would have liked. I had not improved the soil in any manner as I wanted to find out what it was capable of on its own - not much!

I am now planting winter crops, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, cabbage, broccoli and broad beans. I will also try some other frost hardy crops. To ensure better results I have applied compost, dolomite and sheep manure and mulched the plantings with pea straw. The plants appear to enjoy this combination.

What is your favourite vegetable to grow?

My favourite vegetables to grow are probably beans, or maybe tomatoes, or maybe potatoes, or maybe.....probably beans. I love eating them, especially some of the Dutch varieties (I'll be planting some of them next season).

Do you have any tips for new gardeners?

Learn to turn every scrap of organic matter into compost. Composting if done correctly is easy and takes only about six weeks. The garden loves it and also the worms that come with it. I have three compost heaps at home.

Now that the trees are shedding their leaves, it is a great time to make compost. The garden beds that were enriched with compost were the only ones that produced quality vegetables.

Jan's recipe for Rode Kool (Red Cabbage) is on page 25—a Middeljans family favourite!

Here and There

A work trip to Cairns in early May provided an opportunity not only to beat Canberra's dropping temperatures, but also to see what northern Queenslanders call local produce.

These photos were taken at 6:30am on a weekday at Rusty's fruit and vegetable market in the heart of the city. The markets were already crowded and the temperature was a balmy 20 degrees.

Amidst the tropical standards—pineapples, passionfruit, avocados and bananas—were an intriguing array of fruits not often seen south of the Tweed. Pumelos jostled with persimmons and papayas, bread fruit neighbored custard apples and rambutans nestled alongside dragon fruit.

Stallholders (some organic, some not) were mostly local growers and were very happy to offer advice and samples!

Inge Thor



Pick of the season: Time to harvest QUINCES

There are accounts that the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was actually a quince and that the gift of a quince started the Trojan War. They regularly featured at medieval courts and banquets and were revered as aphrodisiacs in Tudor times. So why doesn't this lumpy-looking pome fruit have more of a following today?

Quinces are refreshingly tart fruit that look like a short-necked pear and smell like a blend of roses and apples. The pale yellow flesh turns a beautiful pink colour when cooked.

Trees live for 20-30 years and reach maturity at around 5 years. Canberra's climate suits quinces, as with most pome fruit, they like a change of season. Unfortunately, the regional quince crop is unlikely to be plentiful this year, with orchards hit twice by frosts at the crucial fruit-setting period—once at the end of October and again at the start of November.

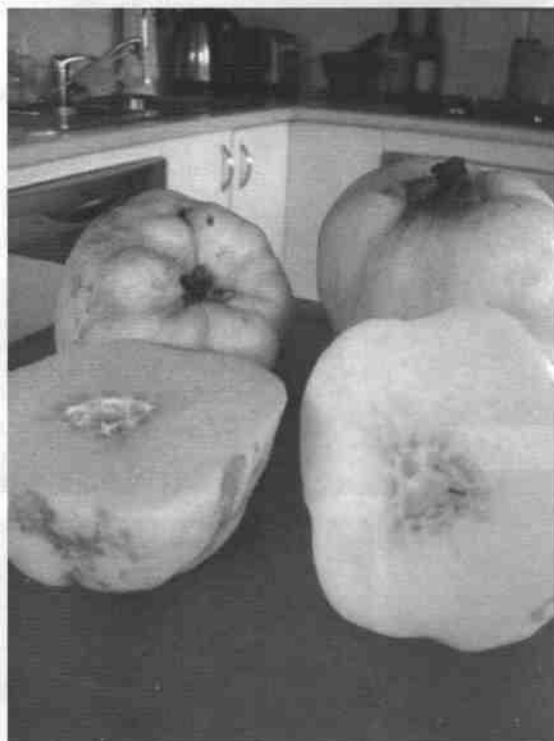


Photo: Rebecca Scott

Choosing quinces

Quinces ripen late in autumn and are likely to be available in markets through winter. Ripe quinces are golden yellow and shiny. Paler yellow quinces with furry outer coatings are not yet ripe.

Quinces have firm flesh and hard skin, so they won't soften. Those that are soft, brown or shrivelled are probably past their use-by date.

Storing quinces

If the quinces are not completely golden, store them at room temperature until they ripen and release their distinctive fragrance. At this stage, they should be used quickly or they may become floury.

They can be kept for several months over winter in a cool, dry place if stored in a single layer. Keep them apart from apples and pears as their aroma may affect the other fruit. Refrigeration is not recommended, but it is possible to freeze either whole or cored quinces.

Using quinces

Although a sweet variety was developed in the 1990s, quinces are generally too hard and sour to be eaten raw. Quinces poach well and unlike apples, their texture improves with cooking, becoming smoother and denser.

Because they are very high in pectin, they are perfect for jams and pastes. The unripe fruit actually has more pectin than the ripe fruit.

Quinces are very firm fruit, so a solid kitchen knife is essential for slicing and coring. A vegetable peeler or paring knife is useful for peeling.

Easy quince paste

Peel, core and roughly chop two kilos of quinces. Place in a saucepan with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lemon juice and $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups of water and simmer, covered, for about 40 minutes. Rub the quince through a sieve into a bowl. Measure the volume of puree and add the same volume of caster sugar to the quinces. Stir together over heat for around 20 minutes, or until thick and red. Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pistachio nuts and spread into a lightly oiled baking tray or tin. Stand uncovered at room temperature for 24 hours, then wrap and store.

References and further reading

- The Farmers Market Companion
- BBC gardening profile
www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/plants/plantprofile_quince.shtml
- Dave Spratt, Gentleman Farmer

Pick of the season: Time to plant RHUBARB

Rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) is a member of the sorrel family with large heart-shaped leaves and red or green stalks. It originated on the Asian steppes over 2000 years ago, where it was used as a medicine to reduce fever and cleanse the body.

Rhubarb is a very hardy perennial. Although it can live for 10 years, it is recommended that new beds be established every 4-5 years. It will survive almost total neglect, but with a little care at the right time, it will flourish and provide stalks when there is little else in the garden.

The green stemmed varieties taste much the same as the red-stemmed ones and green rhubarb won't 'ripen' into red rhubarb. Don't eat the leaves though – they contain high levels of oxalic acid, which is poisonous to humans.

Site and soil

For best results, plant rhubarb in full sun, although it is fairly tolerant of partial shade. It will grow in most soil conditions, but prefers a neutral soil with good drainage that has been dug to around 60cm or more. It is a heavy feeder and will thrive on organic matter incorporated into the soil and rich mulch on top.

Planting

The best way to grow rhubarb is from root divisions taken from the crown or base of a healthy plant. For best results, choose pieces with good buds from the outer parts of old crowns. Plant in late winter about 60cm apart and 8cm deep in holes with generous amounts of manure or compost.

Rhubarb can also be grown from seeds or seedlings. Seeds should be grown in a seedbed in late spring or early summer and transplanted as soon as the seedlings are large enough.

Cultivating

In summer and other extended dry periods, rhubarb plants need regular water. When the leaves die down in autumn, add a new layer of manure or compost, making sure the crowns are not covered. Remove flower heads as they appear in spring as seed production will take energy away from stalk growth.



Photo: Andrew Hodges

Over time, plants will become crowded, resulting in tougher, stringier stalks. Divide the plants every 4-5 years, establishing a new bed with the healthiest roots.

Harvesting

Wait until the leaves are fully developed, then harvest by pulling the mature stalks from the crown, rather than cutting them, to avoid damage to the crown. The cropping season generally runs from January to April.

Don't harvest too heavily when the plant is young. In the first season, take only the bigger stalks and leave the thinner ones to grow and nourish the plant. In subsequent years, take no more than half the stems in one season.

Problems

Rhubarb is generally pest-free, but can be troubled by cabbage worms.

References and further reading

- The Canberra Gardener
- The Rhubarb Compendium
www.rhubarbinfo.com

Monica van Wensveen

Winter Teas

Winter blues? Warm up with aromatic teas made from fresh garden herbs.



Herbal teas have been enjoyed for centuries. Some are just for sipping and some are said to have medicinal qualities.

Many books favour herbs with exotic (and slightly alarming) names such as mugwort, woodruff, stinkwood and bugleweed. You can, however, make a wonderful variety of fragrant and healthy brews from what you probably have growing in your garden, plus a couple of ingredients from your kitchen.

Herbs through history

It is only comparatively recently that methods were developed for extracting and combining the active ingredients of plants to make modern drugs.

Prior to that, herbal remedies have been used to treat physical ailments in every civilisation in the world, with tried and tested cures passed from herbalist to apprentice and parent to child.

The first popularly available manuals on herbal medicines appeared in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, written mostly by apothecaries who had trained formally as doctors or surgeons. Although the authors tended to link herbs with astrology and superstition and exaggerate their medicinal benefits, the books are still referred to today.

Some of the earliest known herbalists were the Chinese emperor Shen Nong in 2735 BC who wrote an authoritative volume on medicinal herb use and King Hammurabi of Babylon around 1800 BC who recorded uses and prescriptions for curative plants.

There are also writings from ancient cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt and India describing herbal healing techniques. Archaeologists even believe that prehistoric people used herbs to treat illness before recorded history began. An example is the discovery of a Stone Age man in Iraq around whose bones were carefully packed yarrow and hyacinth leaves and marshmallow root.



Fresh herbs drying

Growing and drying your own

Most common herbs are not hard to grow and are well suited to Canberra's climate. They like full sun, well-drained soil and neglect. They tend to grow well over summer and can be easily dried for use in colder months.

When drying, pick the herbs just before they flower, ideally in the morning after overnight dew has evaporated. Bunch them together and hang in an airy place in the shade until the leaves are dry and slightly crumbly – about two weeks in my kitchen in summer.

Dried herbs are best stored out of direct sunlight in glass jars with airtight lids. Baby food jars with metal lids are perfect.

Herbs for health and pleasure

Herbal teas can be made from all parts of the herb plant, but most use mainly leaves, flowers or seeds.

The easiest way to extract the water-soluble substances from the herbs, thereby accessing the reported medicinal properties, is by infusion.

To make an infusion, a general guide is to pour one cup of boiling water over every one teaspoon of dried herbs or 3 teaspoons of fresh herbs, and brew for 5-10 minutes.

Mint is a staple for any herbal tea shelf. Peppermint and spearmint are good, but run-of-the-mill backyard mint works just as well. Mint is a hardy perennial that thrives on neglect and can be propagated from root divisions. Its medicinal repertoire includes easing nausea, headache, colds, and tension.



Home-made herbal tea trappings

Another tea staple is chamomile which is a spreading perennial that also grows well in Canberra. It has a gentle sedative effect and is good for relaxation and digestion.

Good herbs for winter months are rosemary, sage and thyme, all which are said to help fight colds and warm a chilly gardener.

For sweet toothed like me, a supply of honey or dried liquorice root is a must. Add honey to the tea once it has brewed. Add liquorice to the herb mix (it grows well in pots in my backyard). As well as adding flavour, it is said to aid digestion and to be useful battling colds.

Beneficial blends

Because of the array of ingredients available, herbal teas can exist in a kaleidoscope of



Fearless tea-taster Kate.

flavours, colours and aromas. Blending herbal teas is a matter of personal taste. Use the flavours you like as a base and experiment by adding other herbs. Try these basic blends to start.

A combination of mint, fennel seeds, chamomile flowers and liquorice is a tasty after-dinner blend and is also good for concentration.

Mint, orange zest and rosemary leaves is a fragrant cold-beater.

Use mint, chamomile and lemon balm as a base and add lavender and rose petals for a perfumed take-it-easy tea.

To a traditional cup of lemon juice and honey, add a couple of chunks of fresh ginger, one or two sage leaves and a sprig of thyme to fight coughs and colds and ease a sore throat.

References and more information

- Rosemary Hemphill's *Herbs for all seasons* (in the COGS library)
- John and Rosemary Hemphill's *Herbs: their cultivation and usage*
- David Hoffmann's *Holistic Herbal*

*Monica van Wensveen
All photos from Rebecca Scott.*

DOJO BREAD - nourishing body and mind

Braidwood baker Matthew Hulse opened eyes and set mouths watering with his talk on bread making at the April COGS meeting

Matthew Hulse has baking in his blood. He's the grandson of a baker and the nephew of a pastry cook.

Nearly 3 years ago, Matthew left a corporate career in Sydney and moved to Braidwood in search of a 'tree change'. He spent a short time working in the local bakery before establishing DOJO BREAD just over a year ago.

'Dojo' means 'to learn about yourself' and in addition to baking, Matthew is a student of Aikido and the founder of the Braidwood Aikido Dojo. He says that the mindset of a martial artist is perfect for making good bread.

Making bread

At the meeting, Matthew showed a range of breads - including rye, focaccia, wholemeal and fruit bread - and shared some of his breadmaking secrets.

He adds malt, honey and molasses to his fruit bread to give sweetness along with nutrition. Caraway seeds are added to his rye bread as an aid to digestion.

A mix of sea salt and table salt is used - sea salt for its high levels of micronutrients and table salt to keep the cost down. The reason people in high country are generally less nourished than those at lower elevations is that the micronutrients in the soil they crop tend to wash downhill over time.

The DOJO bakery uses a long fermentation process for its grain. Because grain has evolved chemical defences against being eaten, it needs to be ground and fermented for people to be able to digest it properly.

Someone from the audience asked how to start a sourdough culture. An old wives' tale is to find an Italian grandmother, steal a piece of her dough and put it in your sock.

Photos this page: An array of breads from the DOJO bakery, and Matthew at work in Braidwood.

Photos opposite page: Matthew addresses the meeting and members sample DOJO breads.



The DOJO bakery

DOJO BREAD is located in a laneway just behind the main street. It is one of Braidwood's oldest buildings and has been used as a brewery, stables and a workers cottage.

Matthew is justifiably proud of his position as the community baker. He supplies many local commercial outlets and knows most of his customers by name.

The bakery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 9am to 1pm. On most days he sells out before closing time, but on quiet days he happily takes left over bread home to share with family and friends.

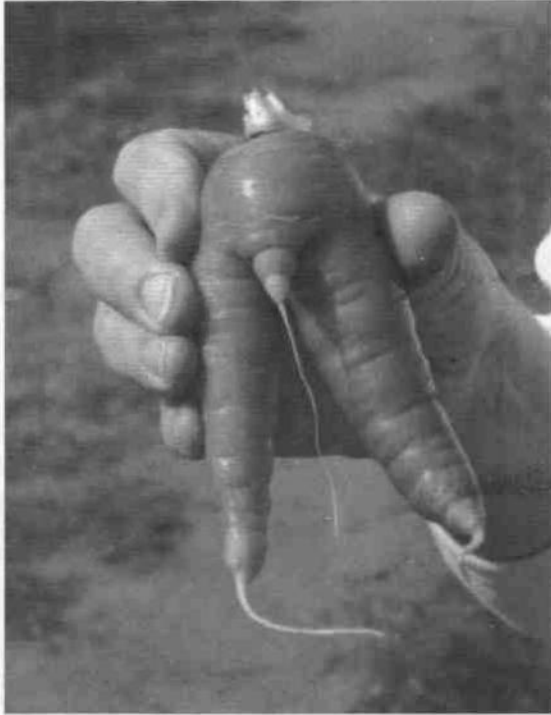
At the end of the talk, Matthew sliced up the loaves he brought with him and served them with organic butter, cheese and dips - much to the delight of the hungry COGS audience.

For more information, visit Matthew at Rear Lane, 91 Wallace Street, Braidwood or at www.dojobread.com.au.

*Ben Bradey and Monica van Wensveen
All photos by Sophia Williams or supplied by
Matthew Hulse.*



Vegie of the Issue: A very naughty boy (carrot)



The grower of this little (or not so little depending on how you look at it) fellow wished to remain anonymous – you have to when you have skills like this or everyone wants a novelty carrot.

“In the kiwi fruit family there are male and female plants,” said the talented carrot sculptor. “At Cook Garden Mother Nature has approved that the same applies in the carrot family. Here is a photo of ‘boy’ carrot.”

“Sometimes the soil is very clayish at the garden and if the plant has no room to grow down then it decides to try if the next door’s soil is softer, if not then it tries the next door again. The boy carrot decided that he cannot find any better soil and gave up after three tries.”

The lesson here (unless you enjoy this kind of thing) is carrots like nice rich friable soil, no big lumps or stones and very well rotted broken up organic matter.

Basically anything the carrot runs into as it grows may cause misshapen carrots, which isn’t what we aim for but can be a source of giggles.

“At the dinner table I told my son that these carrots are the first ones from the garden. Then I took the boy carrot from the refrigerator and showed him and told him: ‘I got one boy carrot from the garden but I didn’t want to boil the boy carrot.’ My son burst into laughter.”

And once again gardening brings joy to the world.

Please send your **Vegie of the Issue** to graham.walker@csiro.au or editor@cogs.asn.au and don’t forget to include quotes, anecdotes or a brief covering note.

Graham Walker

COGS Seeds

Several members have recently expressed their interest in becoming involved in a COGS seed bank or seed exchange. The aim of a seed bank would be to provide a source of locally grown, open pollinated, organic seed for COGS members. COGS has maintained an active seed bank at various times in the past but in recent years the stocks have dwindled to a few packets of peas, beans, tomatoes and lettuce. Plots are set aside in several of the community gardens to provide growing areas for seed production and all we are missing are a few volunteers to coordinate activities, grow and harvest the seed, clean and package it, bring it to meetings to sell or exchange

Anyone interested in becoming involved in a COGS seed saving project is invited attend a meeting at 7 pm in Room 6 of the Griffin Centre on Tuesday, May 22 to discuss this project for half an hour before the regular meeting.

Organic standards talks begin in May

A new committee charged with developing an Australian Standard for organic food produce will hold its inaugural meeting in early May.

The committee was established by Standards Australia following an application by the Organic Federation of Australia for official guidelines for domestic and imported organic food products.

“An Australian organic standard will provide the organic industry with a uniform national benchmark for the production and the marketing of organic produce on the domestic market”, said OFA Chair, Andre Leu.

The standards would be used to define acceptable inputs and organic production practices and Leu hopes they will assure customers of the quality and safety of organic produce.

More information from www.ofa.org.au.

OFA honour for Betty Cornhill

In its February-March issue, Acres Australia announced the Organic Federation of Australia's Lifetime Achievement Awards, recognising and celebrating Australia's organic pioneers.

Among them is COGS' own Betty Cornhill. In addition to a lifetime of avid gardening, Betty's organic achievements include active and influential memberships of the Soil Association, the Henry Doubleday Research Association and the Organic Gardening and Farming Society of Australia.

She is a past president and Life Member of COGS and a Life Member of the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia.

She shares this latest honour with Donald McFarlane, Dick McNeill, Marjorie Spear and Yvonne Swindell.

Congratulations Betty!

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YOUR ORGANIC BUTCHERY

Library news

The library has four beautiful new books. All from Gardening Australia, they have straightforward informative text, good illustrations and photos and are really worth a look. All are written for Australian conditions.

Habitat Garden by Peter Grant

Habitat Garden shows you how to create gardens to attract wildlife and be suited to the climate, water and soil conditions of your local area. Includes advice on how to select and propagate native plants, manage weeds and pests, and build a multipurpose pond.

Recycle your garden: the essential guide to composting by Tim Marshall

This book looks at how composting works and outlines the multiple benefits for your garden. It also shows how to build a foolproof heap and maintain it well. It shows how the materials

used for composting can go much further than kitchen and green waste.

Organic Vegetable Gardening by Annette McFarlane.

An easy to use guide to growing vegies. Tips and info on more than 40 vegetables, planning and designing your organic garden, propagating and saving seeds, pest control, what to plant when (in your climatic zone) and more. A good beginner's book certainly, but by an experienced and enthusiastic gardener, so probably something for everyone.

No-Dig Gardening, by Allan Gilbert

This book contains essential information on how to create your new no-dig garden, including materials, types of gardens, what and how to plant, and ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting. This claims to be the first comprehensive book on no dig gardening to appear since Esther Dean's Gardening Book in 1977.

Alison Yamazki

Behind the scenes

Ann Smith took these great behind-the-scenes shots of the recent Sunday Times (15 April) photo shoot at Cook, O'Connor and Cotter gardens.

Pictured are Trevor Bruhn, being photographed by Canberra Times' Kate Leith and Keith Colls being interviewed by Emily Sherlock.



Mouth-watering Munchies!

DATE CAKE

250 - 300 g dates, pitted & chopped
¼ cup warm water
125 g unsalted butter, softened
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup brown sugar, preferably dark
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
3 eggs, at room temperature
1½ cups SR wholemeal flour

Preheat oven to 170 °C. Grease and line large ring tin or 2 bar tins. Mix dates with water, heat gently in saucepan to soften, stirring so doesn't stick. Remove from heat and cool.

Cream butter, sugar and vanilla; add eggs one by one. Mix bicarbonate into dates – it will froth. Fold dates and flour into creamed mixture. If too wet, add extra flour. Put into tins and cook for c. 45 minutes or until done. Cool ten minutes or so before removing from tins.

I find that this makes one large ring tin or 2 moderate bars. This is actually a sticky date pudding without the sauce. It makes an easy, delicious cake.

Jen Johnston

RODE KOOL (Red Cabbage)

½ a Red cabbage
1 large Granny Smith apple
1 heaped tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon Virgin olive oil or butter
1 teaspoon allspice
2 tablespoons vinegar (balsamic or red wine)
Small quantity of water
Salt and pepper to taste

Remove outer leaves and core of the red cabbage; slice finely. Peel and core the apple and cut into small chunks.

Place a small quantity of water in a saucepan (just enough to cover the bottom). Add all other ingredients.

Cook on slow heat for 20 to 40 minutes. (The time depends on the age of the cabbage and your preferred texture of the cooked cabbage; do not overcook) Stir occasionally.

The red cabbage dish is traditionally served with boiled or mashed potatoes and stewed beef. However, any cut of beef, pork, lamb or game complements this dish. This is a family favourite.

Jan Middeljans

PUMPKIN SPICE CAKE

Mashed pumpkin in the mixture keeps this cake moist for a week or more if stored in an airtight container. The recipe is taken from Margaret Fulton's Creative Cookery book.

125g butter, softened
2 eggs
¼ cups sugar
2¼ cups self-raising flour
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup milk
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup cooked, drained & mashed pumpkin
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1 teaspoon nutmeg
½ cup chopped walnuts
¼ teaspoon ground cloves

★ Grease a rectangular cake tin about 33 x 23 cm and line the base with greased greaseproof paper. Set the oven at moderate (180°C).

★ Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, then beat in the eggs one at a time. Sift together the flour, salt and spices. In another bowl, combine the milk with the pumpkin and bicarbonate of soda.

★ Add the flour and pumpkin mixtures alternately to the creamed mixture, beginning and ending with flour. Stir in the nuts. Turn into the prepared tin and bake in a moderate oven for 50 to 55 minutes, or until cooked when tested with a skewer. Cool in the tin for a few minutes, then turn out onto a rack to finish cooling.

(Note: Gita's preference is to double up on the spices, and add a bit more mashed pumpkin and less milk. But don't use too much pumpkin or it will be too moist and go mouldy.)

Gita Curnow

New COGS Garden Rules

Two new rules were approved by the COGS Committee at their March meeting – one on garden structures and one on CCA treated timber in COGS gardens

The use of CCA and Creosote treated timber in gardens. (added March 2007)

The use of timber treated with copper chromium arsenate (CCA) or Creosote is no longer permitted in any COGS garden.

Where such treated timber is already present in COGS gardens it must be removed by the beginning of the 2007 gardening year (September) if:

- it is in contact with the soil;
- it is accessible to gardeners or their children; or
- rainfall or irrigation water can come into contact with the timber and run onto the soil.

Where treated timber does not meet any of the above conditions it may remain in the garden subject to the explicit approval in each case by the COGS Committee.

Structures permitted in COGS gardens. (added March 2007)

Structures in individual plots which do not require specific individual approval by the Committee are:

- compost bins;
- those which support growing plants
- eg trellises; and,
- those which support bird netting to protect crops,
- provided that concrete footings are not used.

Structures in communal areas which do not require specific individual approval by the Committee are:

- a communal lockable shed;
- pergolas;
- green/glasshouses;
- trellises and bird netting support for
- communal crops.

Expenditure of funds in excess of \$100 still requires Committee approval.

Sheds, pergolas and green/glasshouses must comply with the appropriate Australian Standards, eg footings for pergolas must comply with AS2870, timber members must comply with AS1684.2.

Where local garden rules permit, structures to house livestock may be built on individual plots or communal areas provided both the following conditions are met:

- the structure complies with the appropriate ACT legislation, eg the current ACT Public Health Regulations for poultry;
- before construction begins, the COGS Committee approves both the building plan and the building materials.

Garden committees may impose an upper limit on the maximum area of the garden which may be occupied by livestock housing.

Any structures, other than those listed above, require approval by the COGS Committee before construction begins. All structures must be safe and must not pose any risk to other gardeners or the general public.

All structures must be of an aesthetic standard appropriate for the surrounding neighbourhood and of sufficient standard not to bring COGS or the garden into disrepute.

The final arbiter of the acceptability of the aesthetic standard of any structure will be the COGS Committee.

Where structures already exist in gardens, they must be made to comply with the above rules by the beginning of the 2007 gardening year (September) with the exception that in cases where concrete footings have been used, those footings may be retained.

In the case of livestock housing its construction may be approved retrospectively if the particular structure meets all the other standards.

WINTER PLANTING GUIDE

VEGETABLES

Asparagus

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

Broad Beans

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

Kohlrabi

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

Lettuce

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

Onions

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

Peas

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

Rhubarb

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

Other possibilities

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

Frost-sensitive vegetables such as Capsicum, Eggplant and Tomatoes can be started early in August

indoors but may need a heated glasshouse or warm spot to germinate and will certainly need protection before being planted out in spring.

FRUIT

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

Strawberries

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

Berries

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

Currants

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

Gooseberries

Like similar conditions to currants.

Winter Vegetable Planting Guide

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

S = Seed Sowing T = Transplanting

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

COGS Committee Members & Helpers

President	Adrienne Fazekas	6247 5882	president@cogs.asn.au
Vice President	Keith Colls	6251 7729	gardens@cogs.asn.au
Secretary	Ben Bradey	6161 0329	info@cogs.asn.au
Public Officer	Benny Glasman	6247 9954	catherine.knight@bigpond.com
Treasurer	Margaret Richardson	6248 8306	ainsrich@actewagl.net.au
Membership Secretary	Peter Cornhill	6295 9851	members@cogs.asn.au
Librarian	Alison Yamazaki	6161 0146	alison.cumming-thom@anu.edu.au
Editors	Monica van Wensveen	6255 4332	editor@cogs.asn.au
	Sophia Williams	62551349	nathsoph@hotmail.com
General Members	Martin Largey		

GARDEN CONVENORS

Charnwood	Tim Carlton	6254 0277	TCarlton@homemail.com.au
Cook	Ras Kecanovic	6258 7174	rasima@bigpond.com
Cotter	Roz & Trevor Bruhn	6282 1214	bruhn2605@netspeed.com.au
Cotter Orchard	Ann Smith	6285 2995	a.smith@netspeed.com.au
Dickson	Margaret Richardson	6248 8306	ainsrich@actewagl.net.au
Erindale	Christine Carter	6231 5862	ccarter@netspeed.com.au
Holder	Conrad van Hest		zysyphot@netspeed.com.au
Kambah	Steve Taylor	6231 4344	taylorclan@iinet.net.au
Northside	Monica van Wensveen	6255 4332	editor@cogs.asn.au
Oaks Estate	Terry Williams	6299 2409	fourofus@cyberone.com.au
O'Connor	Peter Strong		peter@strongs.biz
	Vedanta Nicholson	6247 9297	vedanta@pcug.org.au
Queanbeyan	Cormac Farrell	0422441358	cormac@netspace.net.au
Theodore	Tony Bennett	6291 0257	anthonycbennett@bigpond.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Seed exchange	Vacant		
Supper convenors	Volunteers needed - please add your name to the roster!		
Web manager	Ben Bradey	6161 0329	info@cogs.asn.au
Telephone contact	Elizabeth Palmer	6248 8004	
Enquiries about Organic Growing		6248 8004	info@cogs.asn.au

To contact COGS

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

COGS monthly meetings are held at **7:30pm** on the **4th Tuesday** of each month
(except 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 Room 6 at the Griffin Centre, Civic, at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month (except in December and January). Each month there is a guest speaker. Recent meeting topics have included Backyard poultry keeping, Worms, Herbs and Seed Saving. At the meetings there is a produce and seed exchange table and a bookstall. COGS seeds and seedlings are often available for purchase. Members may also borrow two items from the COGS library. A light supper is available after the meeting.

Visitors are welcome.

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

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

COMMUNITY GARDENS

COGS currently operates 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 obtain plots to grow organic produce for home consumption. These gardens provide a wonderful opportunity for people to garden with other organic growers, to share their expertise and learn something new at the same time. Plot holders are required to pay an annual levy to cover the cost of water, insurance, tools and maintenance. The ACT Government has supported the establishment of these gardens through the ACT Office of Sport and Recreation and the Department of Urban Services Community Renewal program.

INTERNET

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

OTHER ACTIVITIES

From time to time COGS organises other activities for its members such as garden and farm visits.

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**

A Plant Clinic will be held at all monthly meetings. Please bring any pest or disease problems for identification and share your experience with other gardeners,

22nd May 2007

Questions and answers
From the members

26th June 2007

Growing Hazelnuts and Chestnuts
Stewart Deans

24th July 2007

All about chickens
David Odell

22nd August 2007

Practical Cheese Making
Benny Glasman

**Visit www.cogs.asn.au for updates
and confirmations.**

Events

The Horticultural Society of Canberra is holding its first **Mid Winter Seminar**, featuring

- Dr Richard Stirzaker of CSIRO Land & Water, whose garden often becomes his laboratory
- Mr David Glenn of Lambley Nursery, well-known for introduction of plants for dry gardens
- Mr Finbarr O'Leary, Executive Director of Swanes Roses Australia
- Saturday 21 July from 9:30am
- Wesley Hall, corner of National Circuit and Fitzroy Street, Forrest

Booking and payment of \$30 per head (includes boxed lunch and morning and afternoon teas) can be made to the Treasurer, GPO Box 1388, Canberra, ACT, 2601

Enquiries: 02 6254 8017

Roster

COGS Meeting Suppers

Volunteers are still needed!

Please put your name on the roster (available at meetings) or ring a committee member to volunteer.

Thank you!

ACT water restrictions

Stage 3 water restrictions apply in all COGS gardens. Hand-held hoses with trigger nozzles, watering cans and drippers may be used 7-10am or 7-10pm on alternate days.

No watering allowed at other times

COGS E-mail Announcement List!

To subscribe, simply send a blank email to:
[canberra_organic_growers-
subscribe@yahoo.com.au](mailto:canberra_organic_growers-subscribe@yahoo.com.au)

Environment calendar

- World Environment Day - 5 June
- National Tree Day - 29 July
- National Science Week - 18 - 26 August
- Wattle Day - 1 September
- Biodiversity Month - all September