

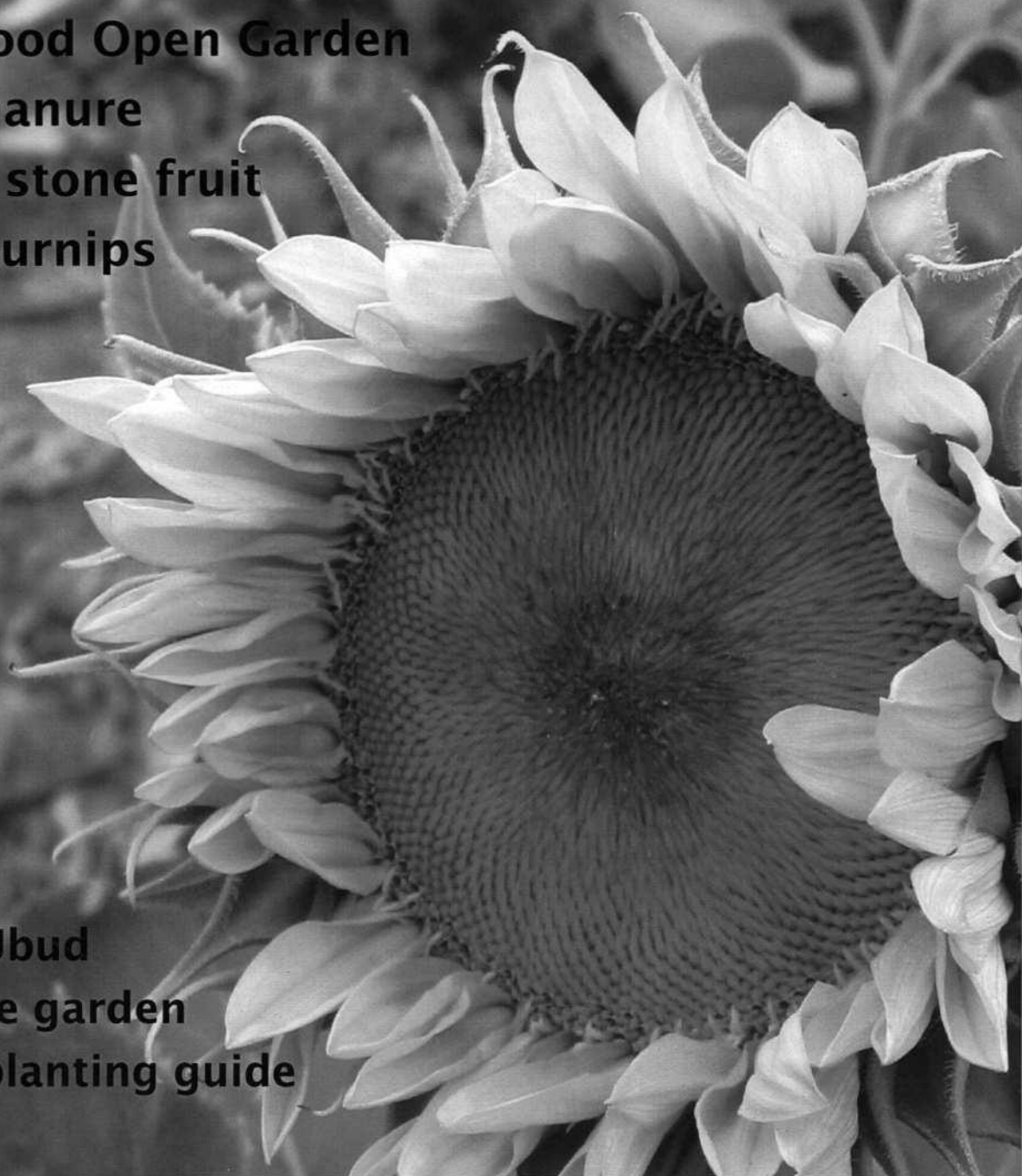


Canberra Organic

Autumn 2008 : Vol 16 No 1

Charnwood Open Garden
Green manure
Pruning stone fruit
Corn & turnips

Plus
Organic Ubud
Ode to the garden
Autumn planting guide





The Canberra Organic Growers Society is a non-profit organisation providing a forum for organic growers to exchange information and supports the adoption of organic growing methods in the community.

COGS encourages the use of natural methods to improve our soils, promote sustainability and produce fresh, nutritious food.

For information about COGS and organic gardening, visit the COGS website www.cogs.asn.au

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

COGS meetings are held at 7:30pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December and January) at the Majura Community Centre, Rosevear Place, Dickson.

Guest speakers, a produce and seed exchange and sales and the COGS library feature at each meeting. Visitors welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

COGS offers single, family, associate and overseas memberships for \$25 for one year (\$15 for concessions) or \$40 for two years (\$24 for concessions) for new members.

There is a membership application form in this magazine. Please contact the Membership Secretary or a COGS garden convenor for an information kit.

COGS COMMITTEE

COGS is run by a voluntary committee elected at the COGS AGM each March.

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From the President Autumn 2008

Welcome to another year of gardening with COGS.

Some good late spring and summer rains have brightened up the gardens and re-invigorated many gardeners. What a nice change it has been this summer to empty the rain gauge rather than hold the hose for hours. The community gardens I have visited recently are looking very lush and promise wonderful harvests over the coming weeks.

The COGS committee

Over the past year, the ten members of the current COGS committee have continued to keep the Society running smoothly on behalf of all its members and I would like to thank them all for the time, effort and dedication they have put into this task.

Several committee members will be stepping aside from their current roles after the AGM and this means the committee is again in need of some new members. If you enjoy any of the benefits COGS provides (magazine, meetings, library and access to a garden plot) please consider joining the committee and helping to ensure the ongoing viability of the organisation. The work involved is not very arduous unless, of course, it all has to be done by only a handful of people.

Some members I have talked to over the years about joining the committee have felt they were not sufficiently knowledgeable about organic gardening. Gardening knowledge is certainly not a prerequisite for committee membership - all you need is an interest in, and enthusiasm for the ongoing success of COGS.

AGM and Harvest night

The 2007 COGS Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 25th. This is the meeting where the formal business of COGS is conducted - receiving and approving the financial statements and

electing the committee to manage COGS for the next year.

As I mention each year, attending this meeting does not put you at risk of being drafted onto the committee but we do need at least two or three new members to enable the committee, and therefore COGS, to continue to function well.

Anyone interested in joining the committee who would like to know more about what is involved please feel free to contact either myself or another member of the committee.

To relieve the formality of the evening, the AGM is followed by the annual harvest night. This is your chance to show off your produce and to discuss the successes and failures of the season with other members.

This is my last report as I will be stepping down from the position of COGS president following the AGM in March, after three years in the position. The three year term is specified in the COGS Constitution and, despite the suggestion by a couple of members that we change the Constitution, three years is long enough. It is time for someone else to bring their ideas and enthusiasm to the position. My future efforts will be directed towards re-establishing the COGS seed bank and facilitating a seed exchange for members.

I would like to thank all the committee members, garden convenors and COGS members who have encouraged and supported me over the last three years and wish COGS the very best for the future..

Adrienne Fazekas

ACTEW Stage 3 Water Restrictions apply in all the COGS gardens
Handheld hoses with trigger nozzles, drippers, watering cans or buckets can be used from 7 - 10 am and 7 - 10 pm on the odds and evens system.

No watering is allowed outside these hours
Gardeners must be present while drippers are in operation

CANBERRA ORGANIC Volume 16 Number 1 (Issue 60)

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.

Articles may be reproduced for non-profit, educational purposes or with prior permission from COGS.

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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1/4 page	\$18 (\$15)	\$60 (\$50)
1/2 page	\$36 (\$30)	\$120 (\$100)
Full page	\$72 (\$60)	\$240 (\$200)

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Editor's note

Welcome to another year of *Canberra Organic* and to another year of celebrating gardening, consuming and enjoying organic produce in the ACT region.

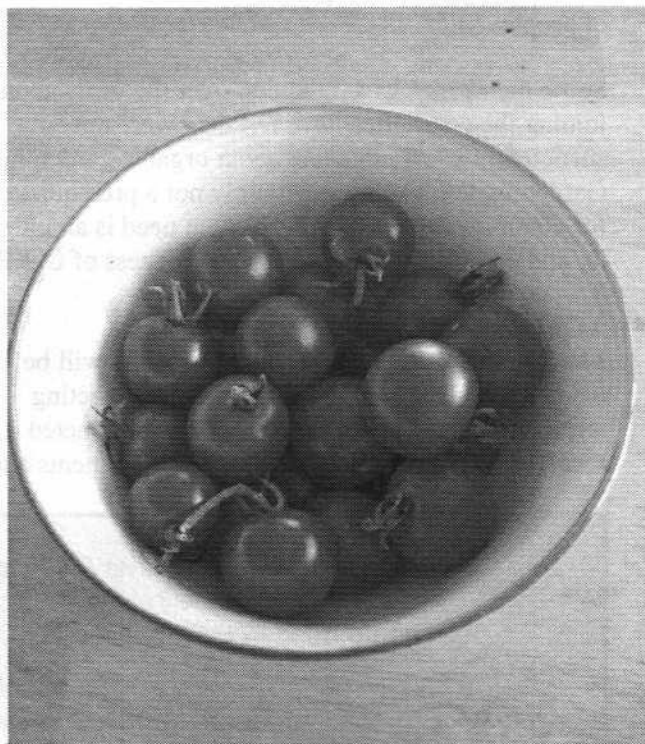
For a well deserved pat on the back to start the new year - I was pleased to read recently that the New Oxford Dictionary announced that its 2007 Word of the Year was 'locavore'. Market farmers and local producers should hold their heads high!

Autumn's *Canberra Organic* reports on the Open Garden at Charnwood, shares tips on pruning fruit trees, gives how-to guides on green manures, corn and the misunderstood turnip, discusses the rise of supermarkets and their impact on sellers of fresh produce - not forgetting our regular reports from around the COGS gardens and our autumn planting guide.

I was sent many photos for this issue that really capture the abundance of the harvest season - I wish we could produce them in colour, but I think they are stunning even in black and white.

The winter issue of *Canberra Organic* will feature hearty, healthy soups to warm the cockles of any gardener's heart. Please send your favourite recipes to editor@cogs.asn.au or to the COGS post box, to be in the running for a book voucher.

Monica



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This issue of Canberra Organic is printed on recycled paper

Contributors to this issue

Articles

Tim Carlton, Adrienne Fazekas, COGS Garden Convenors, Monica van Wensveen and Graham Walker. Rebecca Scott designed the front cover.

Photos

Roz and Trevor Bruhn, Tim Carlton, Cormac Farrell, Adrienne Fazekas, Conrad van Hest and Monica van Wensveen

Cover photos

Andrew and his guardian sunflower (front); Charnwood garden sink and spearmint; leek flowers; Tony's borlotti beans; ready to harvest plums (back cover); ordered organics at the Queanbeyan Railway Garden (this page); morning harvest of cherry tomatoes (opposite page).



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Around the Gardens

Cook

What a difference some good rains make !

Most of our members' gardens are looking lush, with plenty of vigorous growth and with much less hand watering required. In fact the rain has caused a few washaway challenges and remedies for this will be added to our task list for the next working bee.

Of course, it's not only our vegetables that are receiving the benefit of the more regular moisture. Competing weeds are having a field day and providing plenty of exercise for our gardeners, not to mention trying their patience. Grass cutting around the garden perimeter and along the network of access-paths is also a task that is coming along more frequently. But these jobs make a big difference to the overall appearance of the garden. (and we seem to be pretty successful in keeping Patterson's Curse at bay - for the time being at least.)

The rewarding part of all the hard work our members are putting in is seeing so many good results for our efforts and taking our produce home for ourselves and our (often very impressed) friends and neighbours.

All plots are allocated at present and we have a short waiting list. *John Bennett*

Cotter

The great variety of produce - mainly vegetables - planted during spring and early summer is continuing to produce good results for our gardeners this season.



December plantings at the Cotter garden

Although there were instances of plantings exhibiting stress or even dying (mainly peas) during the hot weeks late last year, the majority of our crops survived well with limited watering. The quantity and quality of

the produce being harvested is a just reward for gardeners, following their diligence in plot preparation and early nurturing of plantings which included spreading mulch.

The weather was kind to us in that there were no frosts in November and that meant one gardener being able to pick early varieties of tomato late in that month. Most of the other gardeners had to wait until early January for their tomatoes.

With the good falls of rain in December and January, our gardeners can expect to enjoy a bumper season for their many vegetables and to plant successive crops for autumn picking, provided that the coming months do not result in a return to hot, dry conditions.

There are no vacant plots in the Cotter Gardens and there are a couple of people on the waiting list.

Roz and Trevor Bruhn

Cotter Orchard

The November and December rains have turned our heritage orchard into a fruitful one. It is too soon to say, however, whether this first La Nina season will be enough to produce ripe apples without codling moth.

The improvements are enough to keep a small band of interested members inspired. We have been so inspired that a small sample of the interested turned out on a hot December day after Christmas to help Karl test his new chain saw. The result is that the rootstock growth and large dead branches have all gone now.

The orchard really is looking like an orchard should, instead of like a tangle of trees.

One thoughtful member has kindly donated some Bramley's Seedling and James Grieve material for Karl to graft onto our rootstock. They were her favourite apples when she lived in England. She's growing them in her home garden too, but had to order these trees from a specialist nursery in Victoria in the first instance.

During the 2002 fire from the Stromlo forest that preceded the 2003 fatal fire, the irrigation system for the orchard was burnt out. With the nearest standpipe about 100 metres away, it's not a simple matter to water nearly fifty trees by hand during the permitted times. Some burnt lengths of poly pipe remain, but their fate reminds us that any irrigation system really ought to be underground.

If any of you have any lengths of metal water pipe that are lying around waiting for a use, the band would be most interested to hear from you. Please contact Ann on a.smith@netspeed.com.au or phone 6285 2995.

Ann Smith

Holder

It was a pleasure to have decent rain in December that help keep water consumption down. Due to Holder's exposed position the garden got a battering from the heat and the northwest winds.

One sour note the garden was broken into week before Christmas and the lawnmower was taken - I suspect the same culprits have been in the garden previously and you wonder why they do it when there is no or little reward for them, not to mention the inconvenience they cause to the garden members.



Mario's plot is always full of produce



Eloide's plot - from weedy to bounty of produce

On a brighter note the long time gardeners along with the new gardeners (Peter K, Eloide, Kevin and Mary) have produced good crops of tomatoes, potatoes,

squash and zucchini so far, with corn, beans, pumpkins and cucumbers to follow.

The garden has several small plots available, which are grassed over, or overtaken by weeds. It's a challenge to start with but at the end there is a reward as the new garden members have found out.

Welcome back Gavin who is giving those idle muscles a good work out after a stint overseas.

As I write a cool change has arrived bringing much needed January rains. *Conrad van Hest*

Mitchell

As with our fellow gardeners around Canberra, Mitchell gardeners are enjoying the rains and warm weather. The garden is a hive of human and vegetal activity and we try to keep one step ahead of the zucchinis, tomatoes and beans. A few of our well-organised gardeners are planting winter vegetables and others are just taking pleasure in the summer bounty.

The garden is almost full, even though we have farewelled (temporarily we hope) one of our long-standing members. *Monica van Wensveen*

O'Connor

Hi folks! As I write it has been raining for three days!! It's just too good for words. The effect on our plots has been amazing as it must have been in yours. The difference between hand watering and rain is vast and shows that rain has 'power' in it and that chlorinated dam water piped from Googong has very little.

The zucchini glut is full on and one side of our garden resembles a jungle with long vines of ornamental grape dangling down out of the trees, reaching out for something to grab a hold of. Very pleased looking gardeners are coming in and harvesting the rapidly growing produce, and are enjoying the break from watering.

There's nothing more to report on our grant for a water tank as we now go through the long valley of government planning approval. Armadas of snails have been moving in on our plots from the neighbouring houses so we have been down there 'relocating' them - , losses have been minimal. It's just as well snails are not six feet long as they would move a lot faster, eat a thousand times as much and vegetable gardening would become a futile activity.

Our thoughts now are turning to winter planting - broccoli, carrots, cabbages etc. With the weather as it is I think they will be getting a great start so we will be enjoying this blessed rain well into this year. All the best to you all for the year of the rat!

Philip Woodhill

Queanbeyan

As with most, if not all of the other gardens, this last summer has been a tough one for the Queanbeyan Garden, with the water restrictions making it hard to keep a lot of the plants going and productive. The occasional soaking rains have been good for some though, and have particularly rewarded those who have worked on increasing the organic matter in their soil.

The plots that used green manure over winter have seen a sustained boost from each of the brief rainy periods, with some people raising fantastic crops of potatoes and pumpkins.



A well-organised and bountiful railway garden

The rain has also seen the weeds take off and take over in some cases, particularly for plots that are left vacant for any length of time. We currently have around 2-3 empty plots, which I am expecting to fill in the next few months once people come back from holidays. I am also planning to make the first Sunday of every month a working bee morning in the garden, and would appreciate people's thoughts on this.

Unfortunately the vandalism problems that occurred late last year have not gone away, with several attempted break-ins to the shed and occasional loss of tools left outside. Could I remind people to keep up the good work – lock the shed and the main gate, and hopefully they will eventually move to easier targets.

I haven't been around as much as I would have liked due to work in the last few months, but when I have been down in the garden I have been impressed with the level of activity and production that is being achieved. In the last few weeks the bean and corn crops in particular have really taken off, with some plants being trained over raised trellis structures to provide a shade house for more delicate plants.

I noticed that a lot of people have held off putting in tomatoes until we were more certain of the water situation, but in the last few weeks a lot of these have gone in and should be producing well before the end of the season. A few of us gambled with tomatoes in spring, and as a result are now about to receive the first harvest from the plants.

Cormac Farrell

Charnwood Open Garden

On December 8 and 9 last year, Charnwood opened its gates to the world. Through the Australian Open Garden Scheme, we had two open days, where we shared our vision of gardening with the public.

People came to see what had, somewhat extravagantly, been described in the Open Gardens magazine:

Inspiring community garden on public land is excellent example of fruitful, friendly co-operation. Created by members of the Organic Growers Society, sixteen individual allotments burgeon with incredibly bounteous fruit and vegetables produced in accordance with the Society's standards. Plots brim with everything from berries to pineapple guavas. Two communal orchards; mobile chook pen; shady children's corner. Talks throughout the day.

Fifteen minutes of air time on ABC's gardening program on the Saturday morning of the open day (8 December 2007) with Genevieve Jacobs and Steve Dangaard also served to heighten our anticipation.

While we had expected slightly larger crowds, what we got was a steady traffic of friendly people who were genuinely interested in what COGS is all about.

Although Charnwood is tucked away in the North West corner of Canberra, we had visitors from as far afield as Isabella Plains who saw this opportunity and were desperate to gain entry into this secret life we lead.

Probably the greatest success of the weekend was the recruitment effect. We signed up 5 new gardeners out of the adventure, and a longer list of people for whom we've whet their appetite, and who I like to believe, will enter the esteemed world of community gardening when the time is right.

The talks provided by Keith Colls proved to be very popular, where the topics included relevant information about COGS and the secrets of organic gardening.

We also learnt about our history, meeting one of the founding members of our garden who explained our history and described how tough it used to be.

A final element to the success of our open garden was that it galvanised us to revitalise the garden. Over the years, quite a bit of left over building materials, scrap metal, old chook pens, rotten wood and much unwanted material had accumulated.

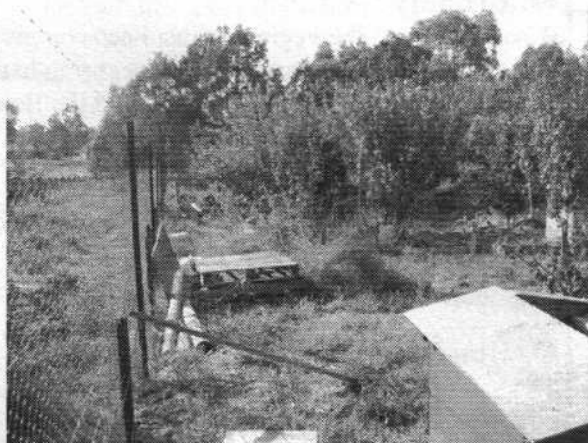
We transformed from a fairly disorganised and cluttered garden into a tidy and cultivated space. It took a lot of concerted effort and many trailer loads taken to the tip.

Thanks to the Charnwood growers for making this happen, particularly to Steve and Ray for the work on the transformation I noted above. And thanks also go to the Committee's Keith, Adrienne and Monica for their support.

Words and photos: Tim Carlton



Before....



...and after!



Organics in the news

ACT's hottest year

2007 was the hottest year on record for the ACT, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's 2007 Climate Statement. It was also the fourth consecutive hottest year and one of the stormiest in 40 years, with 38 thunderstorms. According to the BOM, these trends follow a national pattern.

GM in the ACT?

With the NSW Government's decision to lift the moratoria on genetically modified canola on 3 March, the ACT Government has said that it is unlikely to be able to continue the ban in the ACT. ABC news reports Jon Stanhope's comments "As a very small island in NSW, a jurisdiction that has now given the green light to GM agriculture, we need to be realistic about this in terms of our capacity in any event to protect or prevent the carriage into the ACT of NSW seed." Victoria is lifting its ban on 28 February, South Australia on 29 April and Tasmania on 16 November 2009. WA has not yet initiated a review.

Disappearing dirt

Geologists in the US estimate that we are losing about 1% of topsoil every year to erosion, according to the Seattle Post. While soil is also lost to urban development, pollution and changing weather patterns, experts say the global soil loss is a crisis mostly rooted in broadscale agriculture. Greater adoption of conservation farming, no-till techniques and organics are suggested as ways to reduce topsoil erosion.

Another good news food study from Europe

The BBC reports the results of a new EU-funded study which suggest (surprise!) that organic produce is better for you than conventional. Fruit, vegetables and cattle were grown on adjacent organic and non-organic plots across Europe, showing a general trend that organic food contained more antioxidants and less fatty acids. Researchers are focusing on understanding the differences, with systematic testing of farming practices now underway.

..and another!

Danish and British studies report that consumption of mostly organic meat and milk by nursing mothers improves the health qualities of their breast milk. Higher levels of ruminic acid, antioxidants and essential fatty acids were found, which are important for protection against heart and arterial diseases in particular.

Beckham - too big for his boots?

According to the UK's Carbon Trust and Daily Star, football star David Beckham has the 'biggest carbon footprint in the world'. With 15 cars and 250 000 miles of air travel in 2007, he clocked up 163 tons of CO₂, compared with 9.4 of the average British person.

Top Tips for AUTUMN

1 An apple a day

Knowing when to pick and how to store apples can ensure the taste of summer well into winter. Expect Galas and Jonathons in February and Red and Golden Delicious and Granny Smiths from late March. Give apples a quick clean, wrap bruise-free fruit loosely in newspaper and store in a cool, frost-free environment for weeks or even months.

2 Of mice and men and gardening

Mice are generally on the move in autumn. Ensure grain is securely stored and keep compost and gardens clear of edible debris. Block mouse-size holes around the house with steel wool.



3 Broadly speaking

Broad beans are the veggie that just keeps on giving. Plant them now for a nutritious, tasty spring harvest. They also fix nitrogen from the soil and the flowers are attractive to both pollinators and gardeners.

4 Thinking spring

Now's the time to prepare for spring blooms. Dead-head your roses, prune your lavender and plant spring bulbs now so they can establish before the cold hits.

5 Black is next season's green

To keep your compost active during the colder months, use a black compost bin situated in the sun. If you have an open bin, try covering it with thick black plastic or insulate the sides with hay bales.

"The trouble is, you cannot grow just one zucchini. Minutes after you plant a single seed, hundreds of zucchini will barge out of the ground and sprawl around the garden, menacing the other vegetables. At night you will be able to hear the ground quake as more and more zucchinis erupt."

Pullitzer Prize winning author Dave Barry

Weather Watch

Autumn - the season of harvest, lingering summer warmth and the first frosts. Here's a snapshot of what to expect, from the Bureau of Meteorology's long term statistics for summer temperature and rainfall.

TEMPERATURE	March	April	May
Canberra airport	max 24.5	max 20.0	max 15.5
	min 10.7	min 6.7	min 3.2

RAINFALL	March	April	May
Canberra airport	51.1 mm	46.4 mm	45.1 mm
	4.9 rain days	4.8 rain days	5.2 rain days

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

Seasonal forecast: February - April

- Across most of southeastern Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology reports no strong indication that rainfall will be either above or below average for this time of year.
- Both maximum and minimum temperatures are also likely to be average for late summer to mid autumn, with a 45-50% chance of exceeding the long term average.
- This rainfall and temperature outlook is mainly the result of cooler than average water in the equatorial regions of the Pacific Ocean, continuing higher than average temperatures over parts of the Indian Ocean and the current La Niña event.
- The La Niña is in progress across the Pacific and models suggest that it should persist through autumn.

For more information and regular updates, visit the Bureau of Meteorology's ACT weather website: www.bom.gov.au/weather/act

Banning bags?

China is banning production of ultra-thin plastic bags and banning free distribution in shops and supermarkets from 1 June this year.

According to their Cabinet, China uses too many plastic bags [3 billion a day] and does not dispose of them properly, leading to pollution and inefficient use of energy and resources.

Hot on China's heels, Environment Minister Peter Garrett has stated that the Australian Government would like a phase-out of plastic bags implemented by the end of 2008.

While not in the same numerical league as China, Australia reportedly has "4 million plastic bags floating around the place, getting into landfill, affecting our wildlife and showing up on our beaches".

Many countries and companies have experimented

with taxes, outright bans or elimination of low grade bags, with mixed success.

Swedish furniture giant Ikea introduced a five cent charge for each disposable bag in March 2007 and recorded a cut in use by half.

Some European countries have recently imposed levies on plastic bags. In Ireland, this resulted in an initial dramatic reduction in the acceptance of plastic bags, but the effect has not proved sustainable.

In the US, plastics and supermarkets industries claim outright bans result in a return to paper bags, which have their own environmental problems.

They maintain it takes more energy to recycle a paper bag than a plastic one. However, studies suggest that the average American family uses around 1500 bags a year and that less than 1% are recycled.

Options for Australia's phase-out will be discussed with State leaders in April.

Sources: Reuters, ABC News.

Canberra Organic Growers Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7:30pm 25 March 2008

The COGS Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday date date date at 7:30pm at the Majura Community Centre in Rosevear Place, Dickson.

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

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

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

1. Nominations of candidates for election as office-bearers of COGS, or newsletter editor, librarian or ordinary Committee members shall be made in writing, signed by two members of COGS and accompanied by the written consent

of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the nomination form).

2. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies in the Committee, the nominated candidates shall be deemed elected and further nominations shall be received at the AGM.
3. If insufficient further nominations are received, any vacant positions remaining on the Committee shall be deemed to be vacancies.
4. If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the nominated persons shall be taken to be elected.
5. If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot shall be held.
6. The ballot for the election of office-bearers, newsletter editor, librarian and ordinary Committee members shall be conducted at the AGM in a manner as the Committee directs.
7. A person is not eligible to hold more than one position on the Committee simultaneously except:
 - (a) the position of Public Officer
 - (b) the position of Membership Secretary, which can be held by the Honorary Treasurer.

For more information on the meeting and for nomination forms, please contact the COGS Secretary Ben Bradey on 6161 0329 or info@cogs.asn.au, or talk to another member of the current Committee (see page2 for contact details).

COGS green manure mixes now available

Each year COGS buys bulk seed that is mixed, packaged and made available to members.

This year there will be two mixes available:

- **Legume and cereal mix** containing field peas, vetch, ryecorn, wheat and oats
- **Legumes only mix** containing field peas, clover and vetch

Seed is packaged in quantities suitable to cover about 30 square metres and will be available from COGS garden convenors from late February or at the COGS general meetings.



Q&A @ COGS

Q "I have absolutely no luck when it comes to **growing coriander**. How can I stop it bolting?"

A Try some of these tips gathered from successful coriander growers.

- Coriander tends to bolt with the shock of transplanting, so make sure you sow seeds in the place you want them to grow.
- Coriander also bolts when the plant is shocked by a lack of water or a significant temperature change - this is a survival technique. Try to keep shocks and fluctuations to a minimum.
- Coriander likes a lot of light - a minimum of four hours of sunshine a day is recommended.
- However, coriander doesn't like too much warmth - the hotter it gets, the faster it bolts. Try partial shade.
- Soil needs to be well drained, with good aeration. If you are using a pot, fill the bottom with rocks or broken pot pieces to ensure good drainage.
- If you are growing coriander in pots, make sure they are at least 15cm deep so the roots have room to grow.
- Don't overwater coriander - it doesn't like its roots to stand in water.
- If all else fails, let the plant bolt, collect the seeds and try again next year.



Q "What is **Clever Clover**?"

A CSIRO researchers came up with the concept of Clever Clover in the 1990s, looking for ways for farmers to cultivate the soil without causing it any damage.

The Clever Clover system is based around green manures (particularly legumes) grown in cold wet weather that would naturally die back in late spring, allowing farmers or gardeners to plant summer crops directly, without tilling.

According to the Diggers website (www.diggers.com.au), "not only does it provide nutrients for your garden beds, it dies down and forms a mulch in time for the planting of summer vegetables. The dying roots provide valuable air pores for the roots of summer vegetables to grow into, creating a soil aeration".



Q "I used to spray my stone fruit trees in winter with a copper fungicide powder called Bordeaux (copper oxychloride) to control fungal diseases such as leaf curl. Now I notice that the chemical companies have replaced this product with a copper fungicide called **cupric hydroxide**. I understood that Bordeaux was a permissible fungicide in organic gardens. Is cupric hydroxide acceptable in organic growing? Apparently one difference between the two chemicals is that cupric hydroxide dissolves better in water than the old Bordeaux powder."

A Copper sprays such as copper oxychloride, copper (cupric) hydroxide and Bordeaux mixture (copper sulphate and hydrated lime) are used to control a range of fungal diseases including mildews and leaf spots. All are allowable under NASAA organic standards, but copper hydroxide is preferred.

One reference suggested that it is best not to use the sprays on plants in leaf as the foliage can burn easily. Best times are at leaf fall in late autumn or early winter and again just before the leaves appear in late winter or spring.

Copper hydroxide is apparently less likely to affect worms than other copper sprays, should the residue wash from your plants into the soil.



Q "When should I start to **harvest pumpkins**?"

A Pumpkins are ready to harvest once the vines start to die off, the fruit is a rich colour and the skin is tough enough to resist scratching with a fingernail. Try to harvest before any big frosts and leave some stem with the fruit.

You can store pumpkins in a cool, dry place that protects the fruit from frost. Lay your pumpkins out in a single layer to allow air to circulate.



Question on notice!

"Does anyone in the COGS network know the secret of **preserving plums** so that they turn out like the prunes you can buy commercially? Just drying them in the dehydrator seems to turn them into hard shrivelled things unrecognisable as prunes."

Please send questions or responses to editor@cogs.asn.au or to the COGS post box.

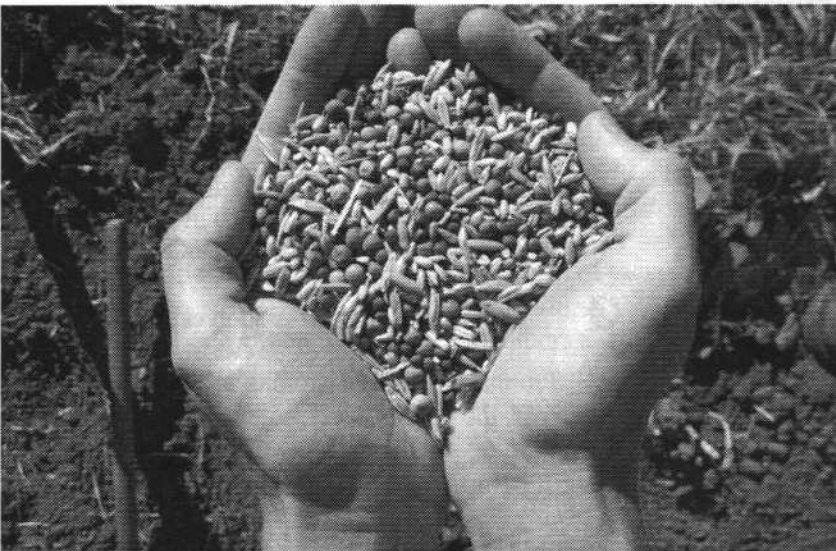
Boost your soil with green manures

Enhance soil fertility, suppress weeds, improve soil structure and build organic matter with these green miracles.

Why grow them?

Green manures have many benefits and are an invaluable tool for an organic gardener. They are not harvested, but incorporated into the soil when they are still green to contribute to the care and fertility of the soil.

Organic matter: A healthy soil should contain about 5% organic matter. While this might seem like a small component of the soil, it is a vital one. Worms and microorganisms decompose organic matter - such as is provided by green manure crops - into humus and other organic compounds, providing structure and biological activity to soil. The presence of humus also increases the amount of water that can be held in the soil, and hence the drought resistance of the garden.



Soil structure: Water holding capacity can also be increased by using green manures with deep, fibrous root systems. Their roots penetrate the subsoil (particularly of compacted soils), giving subsequent vegetable crops channels for their roots to access water and nutrients from lower levels in the soil structure. In addition, most vegetable crops are able to put down large root systems if the soil is loose enough - which is another important role of green manures.

Nitrogen fixing: Leguminous manures are able to absorb nitrogen from the air and transfer it to their roots via *Rhizobium* bacteria. When the green manure crop is incorporated into the soil, the nitrogen is

released in to the soil, giving a boost to following crops.

Nutrient recycling: Other nutrients such as phosphorus that would otherwise be leached from the garden are absorbed by the manure crop as it grows and made available to following crops in a form they can use.

Weed control: Green manures tend to outcompete weeds for water, light and nutrients. As they grow, manure crops prevent weeds from colonising bare ground left after the preceding crop has been removed.

Soil stability: Growing a green manure crop protects the soil surface from wind and water erosion and prevents leaching of nutrients.

Pest and disease management: Using green manures in a crop rotation system can help disrupt pest and disease cycles. Some manures release natural chemicals into the soil, some act against soil-borne diseases and nematodes and some attract beneficial parasitic insects to the garden.

When to grow them?

Although many green manures can be grown year round - whenever a patch of garden is free of crops for six weeks or more - there are three main ways to grow manures:

1. *As a crop during the main growing season.* A disadvantage of this approach is that the manure crop takes up valuable space at the most productive time of the year.

2. *As an undercover crop* grown with the main crop. A green manure planted after the main crop has been established can be a useful approach in cold areas where there is not enough time to plant manure after the summer harvest. It is also useful in warm seasons, where an early green manure crop can protect new seedlings from weeds and drying winds.

3. *As an overwinter crop.* This is the most common approach in the ACT region as manure crops are ideal to grow during the cold months, when vegetable plots might otherwise be left vacant. The time to plant overwinter crops is now - , as soon as the summer crops have been harvested, to allow time for establishment before winter.

Green manures are an important component of crop rotations. It is suggested that once soils have been made relatively fertile, it should be necessary to use green manure crops only once every four years. An example of such a rotation is:

Year 1: Tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants, leafy greens

Year 2: Onions, garlic or peas, beans, followed by brassicas

Year 3: Root crops

Year 4: Cucurbits, sweet corn, followed by a winter green manure crop.

Be aware that onions do best without a preceding manure crop and most root vegetables prefer soil without a lot of organic matter.

How to grow them

Prepare the plot by removing weeds, turning the soil and raking until level. Scatter seeds over the surface, using the density recommended by the supplier. Bags of COGS green manure mixes cover about 30 square metres of ground.

Tap over the surface to ensure the seeds are in firm contact with the soil and water in. Germination generally occurs within a few weeks and green manures will do the most good if left for at least 8 weeks.

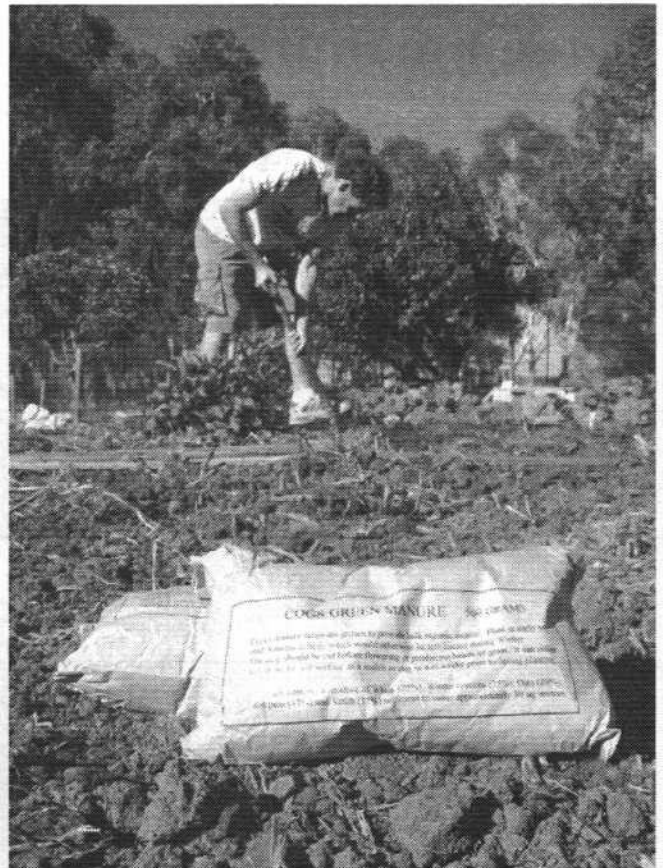
An overwinter crop should be either dug in or cut in spring, in preparation for summer plantings. If you are digging in, wait for about 4 weeks before planting summer crops to allow the green manure to properly decompose.

To dig or not to dig? Studies in the US suggest that the amount of nitrogen released from many cereal crops hardly differed between crops that had been dug in and crops that had been left untilled. However, decomposition is likely to be faster if the crop is at least partially chopped and roughly incorporated into the soil.

Don't let the green manures go to seed as they can become a nuisance. Try to get to flowering crops just before flowering and cereal crops before they produce a head of grain.

Which ones to grow

Which green manures you use will depend on your objectives for using them. For example, if your soil is compacted, try a green manure with deep roots. If you need to boost your nitrogen levels for your next crop, try a legume. If you need soil stability and weed



control, try a clover. If you need more organic matter in your soil, choose a bulky manure crop.

Other factors to consider when choosing a green manure are your soil type, the availability of water (particularly important when using a green manure in hotter or dryer seasons), the length of time from sowing to flowering (choose quicker growing varieties if you have only a short 'window' between vegetable crops) and adaptation to Canberra's climate.

It is often a good idea to grow a mix of green manures for optimise benefits.

The table over the page gives details of green manure crops suited to this region, and focuses on varieties to plant in autumn as an overwinter crop.

References and further reading

- Organic Farming: Which green manure will I grow (Christiane Jaeger, Victorian Department of Primary Industries Agriculture Notes, October 2003)
- Organic Farming: Green manures for vegetable cropping (David Madge and Christiane Jaeger, Victorian Department of Primary Industries Agriculture Notes, January 2003)
- Grow your own green manures (Organic Federation of Australia's Organic Living)
- BBC Gardening (www.bbc.co.uk/gardening)

Green manures

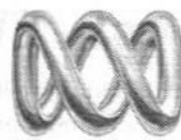
The following table gives details of green manures commonly used in the ACT region.

Words: COGS members and Monica van Wensveen

Photos: Monica van Wensveen

	Best sowing time	Winter hardy	Soil type	Root system	Weed control	Other comments
Barley	Autumn, early spring	Yes		Fibrous	Some weed control	Vigorous grower; increases uptake of phosphorus in following crop
Broad beans	Autumn	Yes	Likes heavy soil; tolerates water logging	Shallow	Poor weed control	Adds nitrogen; produces considerable organic matter
Buckwheat	Mid-spring	No	Tolerates poor soil	Short fibrous taproot	Smother weeds	Flowers attract hoverflies; extracts phosphorus; short growing season (8-10 weeks)
Clovers	Early autumn	Yes	Prefer loams	Taproot with spreading laterals	Smother weeds	Flowers attract beneficial insects; effective nitrogen fixers; not large amounts of foliage; loosens compacted soils
Cow pea	Spring-summer	No	Most types	Strong taproot with laterals	Smother weeds	Adds nitrogen; builds organic matter; prefers warmer weather; somewhat drought resistant
Field peas	Early autumn	Yes	Likes heavy soil; tolerates water logging	Shallow	Not vigorous enough	Adds nitrogen; produces considerable organic matter
Lupins	Early autumn	Yes	Tolerates most types	Deep, strong taproot		Attracts bees; effective phosphorus and nitrogen gatherer; not susceptible to fungal diseases that can affect peas and beans
Oats	Autumn	Yes	Range of soils; tolerates acidity	Fibrous		
Rye	Autumn	Yes	Range of soils; tolerates acidity	Fibrous; stronger than other cereals		Large amount of organic matter; drought resistant
Tic peas	Autumn	Yes	Likes heavy soil	Shallow	Poor weed control	Adds nitrogen; cheaper alternative to broad beans
Vetch	Autumn, spring, Summer	Yes		Taproot	Competes well with weeds	Considerable organic matter; nitrogen fixer; host for ladybirds
Wheat	Autumn	Yes		Fibrous		

Organic Gardener



ABC
Magazines

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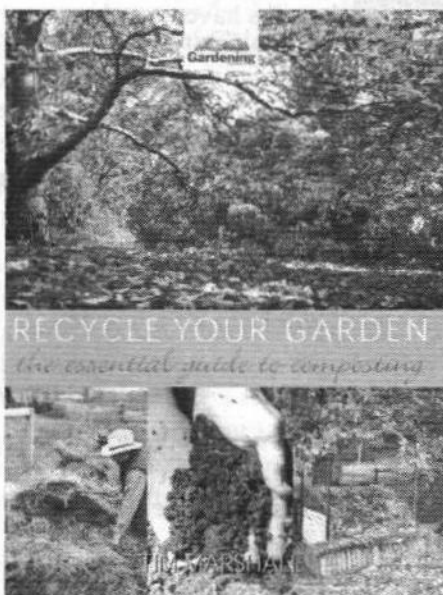
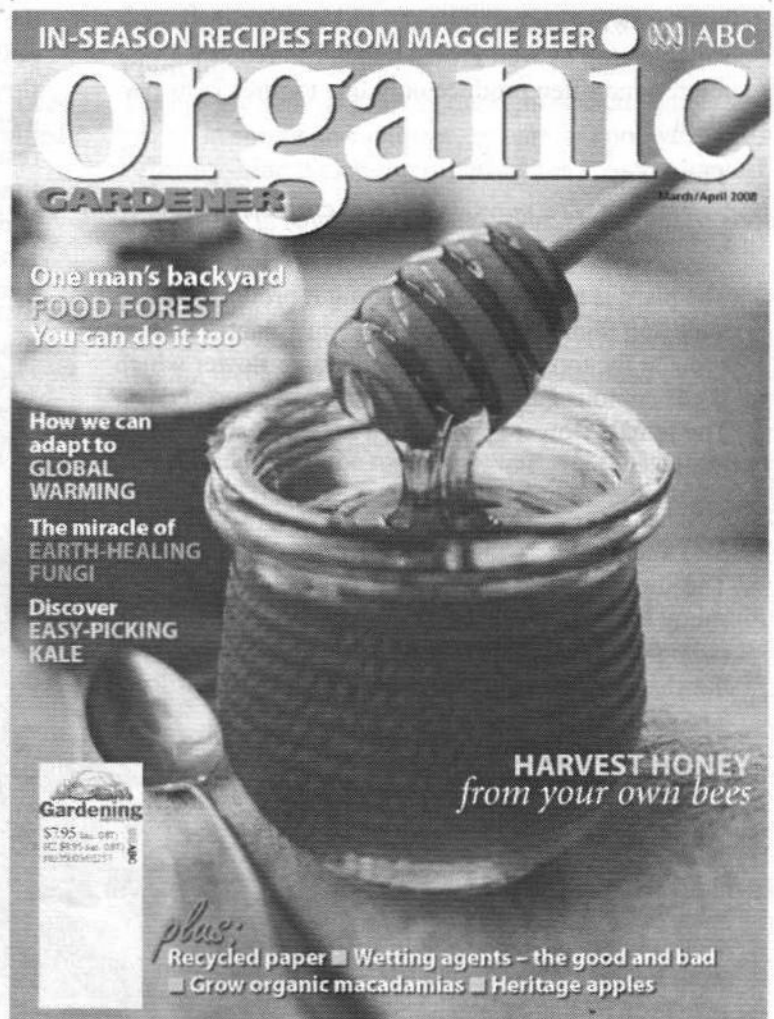
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Autumn harvest: SWEET CORN

Sweet corn is a warm season crop requiring average temperatures of 16°C to 24°C for optimum growth, and 80 - 110 frost free days from germination to harvest. If your growing space is limited this may not be a suitable crop as well grown plants can reach 1.5 - 2 metres and often produce only one to three cobs per plant.

The plant

Sweet corn, *Zea mays*, is a cereal crop originating from Central America.

The plant is monoecious, meaning it produces distinct male and female flowers on the same plant. The flower spike at the top of the plant is the male flower which sheds copious quantities of pollen over several days. The female flower appears as a bunch of silky tassels in the leaf axils. Pollination is by wind.

Site and soil

The site should be open and sunny but not subject to very strong winds which can knock the shallow rooted plants over. The soil should be well structured and rich in organic matter as sweet corn is a moderately heavy feeder.

It is an ideal crop to follow legumes or green manure in a crop rotation and will benefit from the residual nitrogen left in the soil by these plants.

Soil pH should be 6.5 and the addition of lime or dolomite prior to planting will be necessary if it is below 5.5.

Planting

Corn can be either direct sown or transplanted as seedlings in late spring or early summer once the risk of frost has passed. Most books suggest two or three successive plantings at three week intervals. In Canberra, the warm season is not always long enough and later plantings (January) may not succeed.

Sow the seed 20 - 30 mm deep and space the plants 30 cm apart. It is common to plant pairs of seed and if both germinate the weaker seedling is removed. These weaklings can be transplanted if you wish and will usually crop adequately. Seedlings emerge in 4 - 10 days. Plant corn in a block rather than a long row for more even and reliable pollination.

Cultivation

Sweet corn has a moderately high water requirement and needs adequate and even soil moisture throughout the growing season, particularly at the flowering and pollination stages. Avoid overhead watering at flowering as this may disrupt pollination. Pollination is a critical stage and uneven or undeveloped kernels will result if the plant is nutrient or water stressed at this time. Unfavourable weather conditions - either too hot and dry or too wet - may also affect pollination and result in uneven kernel set.

Sweet corn is a shallow rooted plant and deep mulching is useful to help maintain even soil moisture. Drip irrigation under the mulch is the most efficient method of watering. Leaf rolling is a sign of water stress and can occur on hot dry days even if there is sufficient soil moisture.

Pests and diseases

Sweet corn plants are generally untroubled by disease or insect pests. *Heliothis* caterpillars may be an occasional problem and can damage the tips of ripening cobs. The main pests are mice and birds which can quickly destroy most of the harvest. Netting the crop after flowering will prevent most bird damage.

Harvesting

Cobs are harvested by twisting them off the main stem when the silks have turned brown and dried and the kernels near the tip are well filled and have started to colour. The sheath can be peeled back from the top of the cob to check kernel

maturity. Very hot weather near maturity can result in rapid deterioration of the cobs which become tough and starchy. Sweet corn is best eaten as soon as possible after harvest but will keep for a few days if refrigerated.

References

- Dimsey, R 1995, *Sweet corn production*, AG0378 State of Victoria DPI
- Bird, R 2003 *Growing Fruit and Vegetables*

Words and photo: Adrienne Fazekas



Autumn planting: TURNIPS

A quick quiz: who likes turnips? I mean, who honestly can say that a winter without turnips is a winter wasted? A survey of family and friends revealed a range of views - from barely tolerant to downright scornful.

Why are these nutritious and versatile vegetables so underappreciated? Centuries of being fed to cattle and decades of overcooking and pureeing and can't have helped their reputation. Nor can assuming bigger is better.

Fortunately, new varieties and good gardening techniques are fuelling a turnip revival, such that this lowly vegetable is becoming as popular as other root crops.



Turnips (*Brassica campestris*) belong to the brassica family, along with broccoli, cauliflower and cabbages, and are closely related to swedes and daikons. They are easy to grow and easily recognisable, with white swollen roots, often with a purple crown.

They are one of the oldest crops in the world, found from the Mediterranean to the Pacific in ancient times and eaten by Romans and Greeks alike prior to the Christian era. Apparently Henry VIII was a fan of both the root and greens in more recent times.

Turnips have been immortalised in proverbs ("You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip"), in a strange verse by English poet Samuel Johnson ("If a man who turnips cries/ Cries not when his father dies/ Tis a proof that he had rather/ Have a turnip than a father") and by actress Marlene Dietrich ("I was raised almost entirely on turnips and potatoes, but I think the turnips had more to do with the effect that the potatoes"). They are even said to be the original Halloween jack-o'lantern.

Site and soil

Turnips tolerate poor soil, but will do better in richer soil. Soil that is well turned and composted will also reduce the likelihood of woodiness.

Planting

Turnips are easy to grow in the right season. They can be grown in spring and summer, but prefer cool weather. A February-March planting is perfect for a winter harvest.

Direct sow in rows about 30cm apart, at a depth of about 3 times the diameter of the seed.

Cultivating

Not much cultivation is needed. The seeds germinate in about a week and seedlings should be thinned to about 10cm apart after a fortnight.

Keep water up to the root to prevent woodiness, remembering that the leaves may not be a good indicator of dry conditions below the soil.

Harvesting

Turnip tops can be harvested once they reach 10-15cm. As long as the growing point isn't removed, the tops will continue to grow.

Start to harvest the roots when they reach the size of a golf ball or radish. If left to tennis ball size, they will become woody and tough and will start to lose flavour. Maturity is generally reached at about 8 weeks.

Some gardeners leave the crop in the ground and harvest as needed through winter, but it is important to ensure that the roots don't become too large.

Problems

Because they grow and are harvested so quickly, pests are not a major problem. They can be bothered by slugs, snails and aphids and pests that attack other brassicas may be attracted to the foliage.

Choosing and using

At the markets, choose firm turnips with a fresh smell. The small young ones will generally be sweeter and more tender.

Braise, mash, bake, roast or stir-fry them, add them to soups or stews, pickle them or even eat them raw as a crudite. Don't throw away the leaves - they are nutritious and tasty as cooked greens, in stock or in salad.

References and further reading

- The Canberra Gardener
- The Gardener's Network website
www.gardenersnet.com/vegetable/turnip

Words and photo: Monica van Wensveen

Pruning deciduous fruit trees - Stone fruit

The most commonly grown backyard deciduous fruits come from two groups - the stone fruits (including apricots, plums, peaches and nectarines) and the pome fruits (including apples, pears, nashis and quinces). This article will outline some of the hows, whys and whens of stone fruit tree pruning.

In the next issue *Canberra Organic* the pome fruits will be discussed.

Why prune?

Pruning of fruit trees influences both the growth of the tree and the amount of fruit produced. If left unpruned fruit trees will become too tall and tangled to comfortably and safely harvest and will produce much unproductive growth.

According to David Kilpatrick the objectives of pruning are:

- (a) to improve the size, colour and quality of the fruit,
- (b) to promote heavy and regular bearing,
- (c) to maintain the tree in a healthy condition, and
- (d) to enable cultural operations to be carried out conveniently and expeditiously. These cultural operations include harvesting, spraying and pruning.

Tree structure

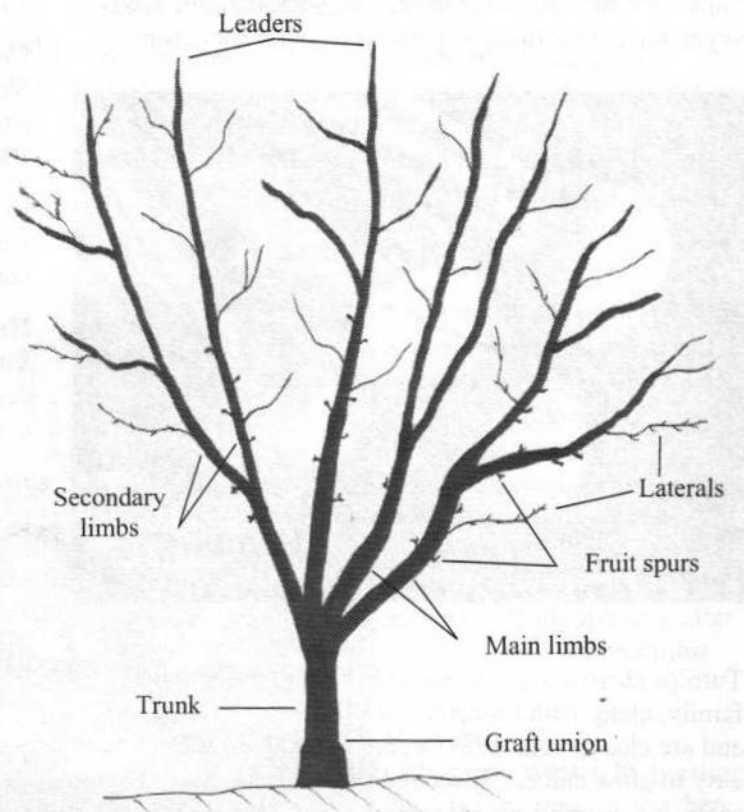
The above ground parts of a tree consist of the main framework of the trunk, the main limbs which arise directly from the trunk and divide into the secondary limbs which extend to the edge of the canopy forming the leaders. This framework forms the permanent structure of the tree and is developed over several years.

Fruit is not carried directly on the limbs but on laterals or spurs arising from them. Laterals are lengthy annual growths arising from the limbs which have both leaf and flower buds. If left to grow for more than one season, laterals become branches. Some species will also produce fruiting spurs from older branches. Spurs are short stubby growths arising directly from the branches, with multiple flower buds and can remain productive for many years.

It is necessary to understand where the fruiting wood on a particular tree occurs in order to promote its growth and to avoid inadvertently pruning it off.

Formative pruning is used to develop a strong, healthy branch structure in the years before the trees start

bearing. The aim is to establish a framework of well placed branches from which the fruiting wood will develop in later years. During this stage young trees should be allowed to retain as much leaf area as possible to hasten stem and branch thickening. Upright growing trees can be encouraged to spread by pruning the leaders to existing side branches rather than to a bud. Conversely spreading trees can be encouraged to more upright growth by pruning back to vertical



shoots.

Once trees start to bear compromises may be necessary between maintaining a healthy branch structure and promoting maximum fruit production.

Pruning tools

Clean, sharp and appropriately sized pruning tools should be used. Secateurs, long-handled loppers and pruning saws may all be needed. It is important to clean tools when moving between trees and from diseased to healthy wood. Wiping the blades with methylated spirits is sufficient.

When to prune

Traditionally deciduous trees have been pruned in Winter but it is now thought that Summer pruning of stone fruits is more beneficial. The warmer and drier

weather helps to promote faster healing of pruning cuts and reduces the chances of fungal or bacterial infections entering via these cuts. The main annual pruning can be carried out as soon as the fruit has been harvested. Any inward growing laterals, or crossing shoots can be removed whenever they are noticed.

Dead, diseased or damaged wood and any shoots from below the graft should be pruned out as soon as they are noticed.

Remember that the most important thing to know when pruning is where the flowers and hence the fruit will occur on the tree.

Apricots

Apricots are long lived, large trees with a moderately spreading habit. They can be susceptible to diseases such as gummosis and bacterial canker and excellent hygiene is necessary when pruning.

Formative pruning is used to create a vase shaped tree with three or four main limbs dividing into two secondary

limbs. Laterals will grow from these limbs and fruiting spurs develop on two year and older wood. Flowers are produced on both one year old wood and, as the tree matures, on spurs which arise from older wood. Apricot spurs are not long lived, but will bear for 2 or 3 years.

Prune immediately after harvest provided the weather is fine and warm. Reduce upright growths to a well-directed lateral and remove old, crowded or weak spurs. This will encourage the formation of new spurs. Severely cut back or remove laterals from the centre of the tree to promote good air circulation.

Peaches and nectarines

Formative pruning is directed to creating an open vase shape which allows good air circulation to reduce future fungal problems. A framework of 4 - 6 branches is developed from which the fruiting laterals grow.

Peaches and nectarines require heavier annual pruning than other stone fruit as they bear solely on the



previous season's growth. Once a lateral has borne fruit it will never fruit again. Each year, old growth needs to be replaced with new growth to prevent branches becoming long, willowy, and productive only at their tips.

Pruning consists of removing all laterals that have fruited, either completely, or to a new lateral shoot or bud near their base. Current season's lateral growth may need to be thinned to allow sun and air into the canopy. New growth should be pruned in early to mid summer and the remaining pruning completed immediately after harvest.

Plums

There are two distinct species of plums - *Prunus domestica*, the European plums and *Prunus salicina*, the Japanese or blood plums. In general the European plums tend to have a more upright habit and to form a larger tree. Fruit is borne mainly on semi-permanent spurs but also on the previous season's growth.

Japanese plums have a more spreading habit and flower both on the previous seasons growth and, to a lesser extent, on semi-permanent spurs which arise from 3 year old wood.

Most plums are naturally vase shaped so formative pruning consists of removing any inward growing branches from the centre of the tree.

Annual pruning after harvest consists of reducing upright growths to outward growing laterals and removing or reducing lateral growth to promote spur formation.

References

- Glowinski, L 1991, *The complete book of Fruit Growing in Australia*, Lothian Books
- Kilpatrick, D 1968, *Pruning for the Australian gardener*, Rigby
- Baxter, P 1981 *Growing Fruit in Australia*

Words, diagram and photo: Adrienne Fazekas

Canberra water update 11 February 2008

Good inflows into the ACT region's reservoirs and on target water consumption have reduced the need for tougher water restrictions.

"February has started well for our catchments with several good rainfall events and significant inflows into our reservoirs," said Managing Director Michael Costello.

More than 100mm have fallen in some areas and over one gigalitre, or a week's consumption, has flowed into our reservoirs. The combined dam storage level is now at 49.3% and could reach 50% in coming days. This is up from around 35% a year earlier.

At this time in 2007 Canberra was heading towards a mid-year introduction of Stage 4 Water Restrictions, the most severe stage of ACT's water restrictions scheme. Since then it has been postponed numerous times due to small improvements to dam levels.

"Thanks to good rainfall in some recent months and the water saving achievements made by Canberrans this summer, the forecast is now more optimistic," said Mr Costello.

"It's likely that we will avoid Stage 4 altogether this year, provided Stage 3 restrictions remain to be effective and the community continues with the very encouraging water saving efforts we are seeing."

"For now we will continue with the existing Stage 3 regime and reassess again towards the end of summer," said Mr Costello.



Source: ACTEW media release
www.actew.com.au

And the winner is.....

In honour of 'the awards season', here are some foods being recognised for their winning nutrient density by the News.com.au team.

A panel of Australian nutritionists and dieticians were asked for their pick of the most nutrient-rich foods across a number of categories. And the winners are...

Category: Fruit

Winners: Goji berries and paw paw

Berries are a great source of vitamins, antioxidants and folate and goji berries (from Tibet, Mongolia and China) are the nutrient kings. Pawpaws are loaded with vitamins A and C, iron, potassium, magnesium and fibre.

Category: Vegetables

Winner: English spinach

English spinach is full of fibre, vitamins, potassium, iron and two important antioxidants for eyes.

Category: Oil

Winners: Linseed oil and cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil

Linseed oil has a high essential fatty acid content and cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil has natural antioxidant and is the least refined of olive oils.

Category: Legumes

Winner: Soybeans

Soybeans are rich in fibre, amino acids and antioxidants and they can reduce the risks of cholesterol and cancer.

Category: Herbs and spices

Winner: Garlic

Garlic is both a food and a medicinal plant, reducing cholesterol and heart disease risk, thinning the blood and providing antibacterial benefits.

Source: 'Nutritious foods revealed'
by Julia Nekich, News.com.au website May 07
www.news.com.au/entertainment

www.cogs.asn.au

The COGS committee is reviewing and reinvigorating the COGS website in the new year.

If you have suggestions or ideas for content, now's the time to contact us!

Send your thoughts to editor@cogs.asn.au

The hidden price of bottled water

The world's fastest-growing beverage is a boon to the industry but a bust for the environment and for the more than 1 billion people worldwide who lack access to clean drinking water, according to a recent report from the Worldwatch Institute.

Excessive withdrawal of natural mineral or spring water to produce bottled water has threatened local streams and groundwater, and the product consumes significant amounts of energy in production and shipping. Millions of tons of oil-derived plastics, mostly polyethylene terephthalate (PET), are used to make the water bottles, most of which are not recycled.

"Bottled water may be an industry winner, but it's an environmental loser," says Ling Li from the Institute's China Program who authored the update. "The beverage industry benefits the most from our bottled water obsession. But this does nothing for the staggering number of the world's poor who see safe drinking water as at best a luxury, and at worst, an unattainable goal." An estimated 35-50 percent of urban dwellers in Africa and Asia lack adequate access to safe potable water, according to Worldwatch's State of the World 2007 report.

Consumers in industrial countries choose to drink bottled water for taste and convenience, while in developing countries, unreliable and unsafe municipal water supplies have driven the growth in consumption. Yet many poorer people who seek improved drinking water supplies cannot afford the bottled version. Bottled water can be between 240 and 10,000 times more expensive than tap water.

Global consumption of bottled water more than doubled between 1997 and 2005, securing the product's place as the world's fastest-growing commercial beverage. The United States remains the largest consumer of bottled water, but among the top ten countries, India has nearly tripled its consumption, while China more than doubled its consumption between 2000 and 2005.

In industrial countries with highly regulated water supplies, tap water has been proven to be just as safe, or safer, than its commercial counterpart. In the United States, regulations concerning bottled water are generally the same as for tap water, but are weaker for some microbial contaminants.

Source: Worldwatch Institute media release (May 07)
<http://www.worldwatch.org>

Eokomit

The ORGANIC way to healthy and fertile soil

Your garden's best friend, **Eokomit** is a totally organic combination of soil bacteria and microorganisms found in all healthy soils.

For composting all types of organic waste materials and the treatment of plants, vegetables and indoor plants, shrubs, fruit and flowers.

For detailed information on what Eokomit is and how it is used, please contact us:

Phone 02 9561 2727
Email eokomit@alwaysonline.net.au
Web www.eokomit.com.au
Post 68 Ravensbourne Circuit
Dural NSW 2158

Eokomit is available in three pack sizes for small, medium and large scale gardeners, farmers and growers

75g	\$18	treats 5 cubic m compost or 250 square m of land
300g	\$43	treats 20 cubic m compost or 1000 square m of land
3kg	\$175	treats 200 cubic m compost or 1 hectare of land

All prices include 10% GST plus postage and handling costs anywhere in Australia.



Eokomit can be ordered securely via our website using **Paypal**.

Here and there: Organic Ubud

In the slopes above Bali's Denpasar, the Ubud Farmers Market is helping bridge the gap between local organic growers and keen consumers.

In Bali, there's often a big gap between a bright idea or a new product and bringing home the bacon. That gap is market access. An ordinary individual with a new product rarely has the resources to advertise and place that product so that it reaches the people who want to buy it. I've heard many stories of small farmers who took the leap of faith and stopped using chemicals on their produce, then found they had no way to sell their crops.

Ubud's Organic Farmer's Market provides a venue for small, independent organic growers and businesses to sell their wares. The self-managed co-operative offers a wide range of products every Saturday morning along one of the main streets in Ubud. The stalls hum with cheerful energy as buyers browse the wares, chat with the vendors and bump into old friends.

The tables are loaded with tempting things to buy and to eat. Sari Organic features soy products such as tofu, cheese and milk as well as pesto, sun dried tomatoes and vegetables. Bali Rungu sells a wide range of organic fruit and vegetables grown in the mountains. Made Giro's table offers a wealth of information on worm farming, composting, aerobic microorganisms and basalt remineralisation (he also has a tub of worms if you want to get up close and personal).

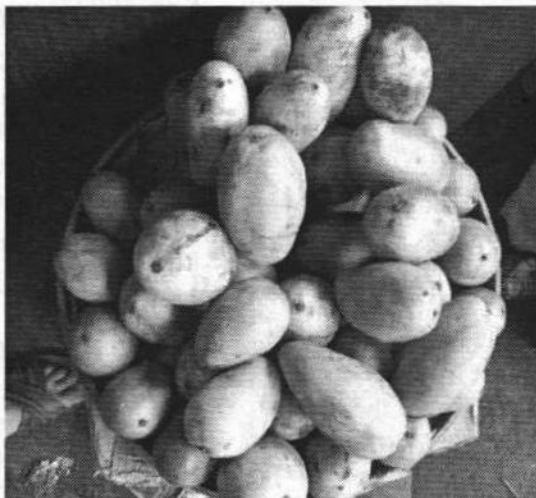
Sayu has products including seeds and an Indonesian language permaculture manual written specifically for Indonesian growing conditions, wild honey from the Non Timber Forest Products association, and items from her family farm in Negara. Kue's table groans under a delicious cargo of cakes, cookies, quiches and teas. Lilin's table features local medicinal plants, oils and natural mosquito repellent as well as information about the Bali Herbal Walk that she and her husband

have been conducting for several years - they are both the children of Balinese herbalists. Kebun Kita sells organic vegetables as well as home made tortillas. And Jus Ja offers wheat grass juice, jams, snacks and colloidal silver.

"Every week is better," says Gede of Bali Rungu.

"This is a great opportunity to sell my vegetables directly to the consumer. I'm now growing about 25 different crops and adding more all the time. My family thought I was crazy to farm without chemicals at first but now they are helping me."

Products change with the season and availability, but the markets are always a treasure trove of good things. It also provides an important opportunity to offer practical support to Balinese who are committed to organic growing.



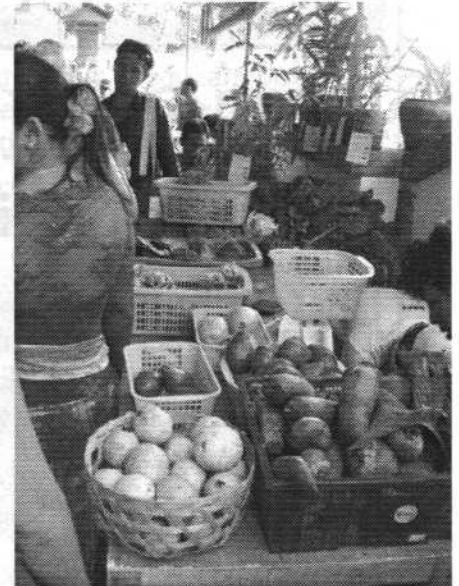
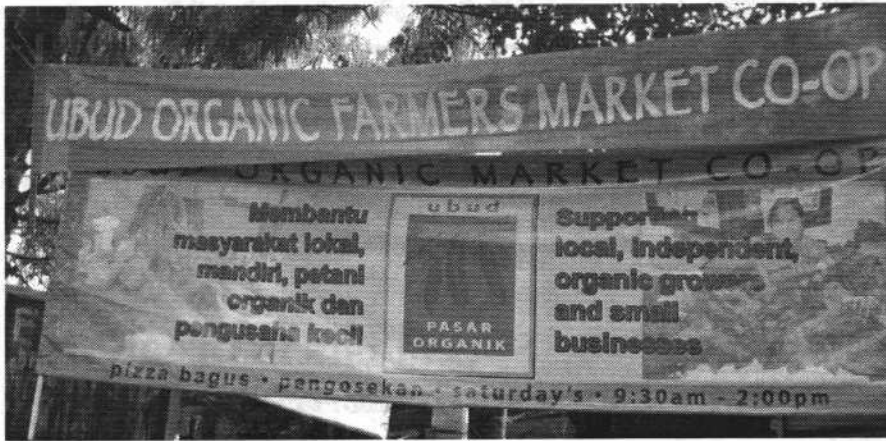
These are small producers, working a few acres of land or running small businesses. It's a pleasure to buy from them, and reinforces the value of what they are doing. Most products are also available throughout the week directly from the vendors.

Several of the stalls sell organic white, red and brown rice. This was a novelty just five years ago, when Ed Dunk brought a few bags of his harvest to a community event and was swamped with buyers. Now a number of growers are returning to traditional rice growing techniques, but it can be a challenging journey.

It's been about 40 years since chemical farming was introduced to Bali and now only a few of the old farmers remember the traditional farming techniques.



Now farmers buy and use chemicals (obat) without knowing what they are using, what the dangers might be and without protective any equipment. Chemical fertilisers contribute heavily to the loss of biomass and natural fertility, but most break down quickly after application. Pesticides are another story - most are



aggressively toxic. A Balinese farmer told me recently that in his village of 1500 people, about 100 farmers had died of cancer and other diseases in the past few years. Not only are farmers dying, but toxic pesticide residues are finding their way into water supplies all over Bali.

I Made Chakra, a young man from Pengosekan, remembers when the rice fields of his childhood teemed with eels, frogs, insects, fish and other creatures. Two decades of chemical growing killed the animals and destroyed the rich topsoil in the fields. A stint in Aceh with a permaculture trainer inspired him to return his family's 43 acres to growing rice organically.

"It was really difficult," he says now. In Balinese culture young people learn from their elders, not the other way around. "My father and older relatives didn't want to listen to me. At first they said that it wasn't possible to grow rice without chemicals. Then they told me that no one wanted to buy red rice anyway."



Chakra persevered and recently harvested about 550 kilograms of organic heritage red rice from about 20 acres. His next fear was that he'd have difficulty selling it, but between his family and eager buyers the entire harvest was soon gone. Now he is taking orders against the next harvest in mid-July.

"I asked eight neighbours to help me plant the crop, and three of these have asked to learn how to grow organic red rice with me. They can see for themselves how profitable it is." And eels have returned to his fields.

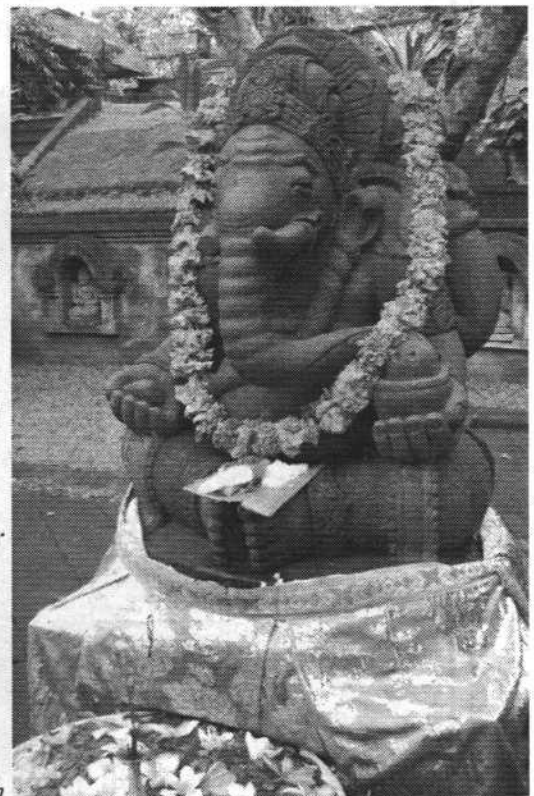
The Ubud Organic Farmer's Market is a great initiative, helping small independent growers and providing us with a good range of fresh, wholesome food.

Catherine Wheeler

This article was reproduced from the Greenspeak column of the Bali Advertiser. For more information visit:

- http://www.baliadvertiser.biz/articles/greenspeak/2007/farmers_market.html
- <http://blog.baliwww.com/bali-news-events/1016>

Photos: Monica van Wensveen



ECO MEATS

Your organic butcher



ORGANIC beef and lamb cuts including rump, porterhouse and T-bone steaks, sausages, mince, kebabs and fillet, cutlets and chops.

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GAME MEAT including emu, ostrich, goat, crocodile, kangaroo, rabbit & venison

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Specialists in organic pesticide-free meats

Shop 41
Belconnen Fresh Food Markets
Lathlain Street, Belconnen

Open Wednesday
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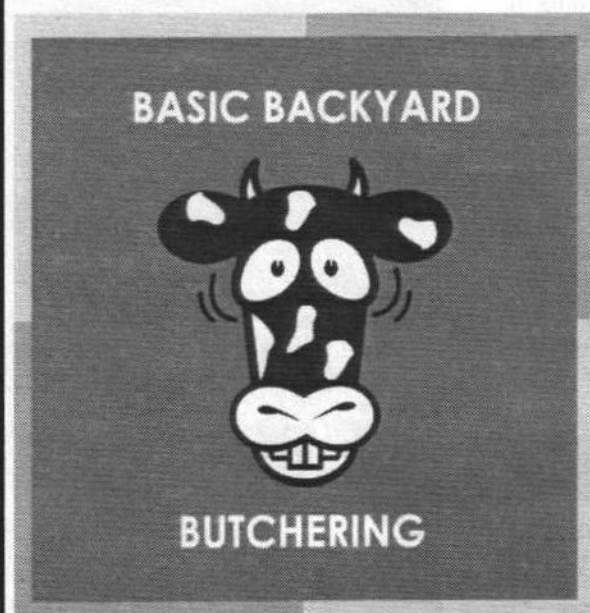
8am to 6pm

Phone 6251 9018
Fax 6251 9017



We also sell Supercharge and certified Alroc products for your organic garden

DVD Review **Basic Backyard Butchering** with Gino D'Ambrosio & William Dennis



Basic Backyard Butchering is not for the faint hearted or the vegetarians. But, as its cover sleeve describes, it is a very easy to follow guide for the amateur butcher.

Gino and William demonstrate deft knife handling skills in turning a large carcass into cuts for cooking.

Step-by-step Gino instructs us how to mark seams, follow the bone and use a hook, cleaver, band saw and knives with ease.

The menu format allows you to directly reference beef, lamb, pork or chicken and individual cuts. Even if you don't have access to large four legged animals I'm sure William deftly butterflying a chicken will impress.

Copies are available from Eco Meats.

Gino D'Ambrosio will be the guest speaker at the COGS meeting on 22 April and has very kindly donated a copy of this DVD to the COGS library.

The Co-op Food Shop

Kingsley Street, Acton
off Barry Drive

We provide an ecologically and socially sustainable alternative to supermarket shopping.

We have fresh organic and BD fruit and vegetables.

A large range of beans, flours, nuts, oils, tofu and tempeh is also available.

Tuesday and Thursday
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Wednesday Friday Saturday
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Phone 6257 1186

*Food Co-op Members receive
20% off listed prices*



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Local and Biodynamic producers of rare breed beef, free range & rare breed pork, raw honey and pastured free range eggs.

Available direct & all processes ACT health and NSW 'food safe' compliant.



Visit us at the Southside Farmers Markets every Sunday 9-12 or visit our website. More products will be added progressively.

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Beautiful Holiday House

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

Two minutes walk to sandy beach good for swimming, snorkelling, or teaching children to swim.

Easy drive to many other lovely beaches.

House sleeps eight, large fenced garden where children can play within sight.

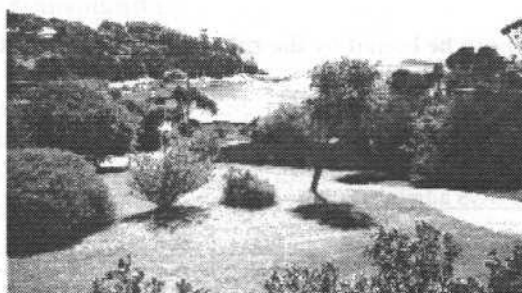
Pets welcome.

Cool sea breeze in summer, warmer than Canberra in winter.

Reasonable rates.

Only 166 kms from Canberra. Take visiting friends and relatives to see the South Coast.

Telephone Brian or Jackie on 6254 4977 for bookings and prices.





COGS AUTUMN PLANTING GUIDE

Brassicas

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

Peas

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

Lettuces

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

Leeks

Leek seedlings may be planted in early March for small leeks in winter, although summer plantings are more reliable.



Onions

Early varieties can be sown in April to early May to be harvested from spring to early summer.

Mid season varieties are often sown in late autumn or early winter and long keeping varieties in winter or early spring. It is worth experimenting with the timing of mid or late season varieties by making successive plantings to determine the best time for your specific garden.

Spring flowers

Remember that many spring flowering plants are best planted in autumn, so they can establish before the winter cold, and then start growing in the early warmth of spring. Stocks, pansies and poppies can be planted as seedlings in March and early April. Others such as Virginia stock, candytuft, larkspur and sweetpeas can be sown direct throughout autumn.

Green manures

Autumn is the time to plant green manure crops so they can establish well before the frosts.

Green manure crops suitable for planting in Canberra are:

Legumes: Broad beans, field peas, lupins, sub clover, tic peas and vetch.

Non-Legumes: Barley, oats and rye.



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

Cut or dig in the green manure in spring, at least 4-6 weeks prior to planting your summer crops.

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

	MAR	APR	MAY
Asian greens	ST	T	
Brussel sprouts	T		
Broccoli	T		
Broad beans		S	S
Cabbage	T		
Cauliflower	T		
Chicory	ST	T	
Chinese cabbage	T		
Corn salad	ST	ST	
Endive	ST	T	
Garlic		S	S
Kale	T		
Kohlrabi	ST	T	
Leeks	T		
Lettuce	ST	ST	ST
Peas	S	S	S
Onions		S	S
Turnips	T		

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 weather from one year to the next.

Vegie of the Issue - An ode to the garden

Well welcome to another Vegie of the Issue
We've got double-squash, toms and other plant tissue
Written just for today in couplets that rhyme
But far from my specialty so wince if you've time

We got sent in this rather unique bi-headed squash
Canberra Organic says serve at dinner parties
– won't you look posh
The science behind it I could not even guess
And the bee responsible, wish he'd visit my address

And turning to bees they've had rough year
With talk of disease and drought on the ear
But COGS is buzzing with several homes called a hive
Our winged friends keeping plants and pollination
dreams alive

And come February who could forget the zucchini
Turn your back for a mo and they're anything
but weenie
We use them as doorstops and for paper that
needs weighting
But best by far are the fritters; get grating!

I'm growing a lovely round yellow number this season
Variety of colour, shape and taste is the reason
It's a relative of the heritage Rondo de Niece
And cuts well in segments when you fancy a piece

Any yummy tomatoes oh how they abound
I tried two great new varieties this time round
I'll tell you about them and even how to collect seed
Because buying again next year – not what you need

The first is Stupice; not cherry but petite and not burly
It's tasty and hardy but best of all early
It beat Santa to my place by a sled length or four
And keeps cropping for ages and that I adore

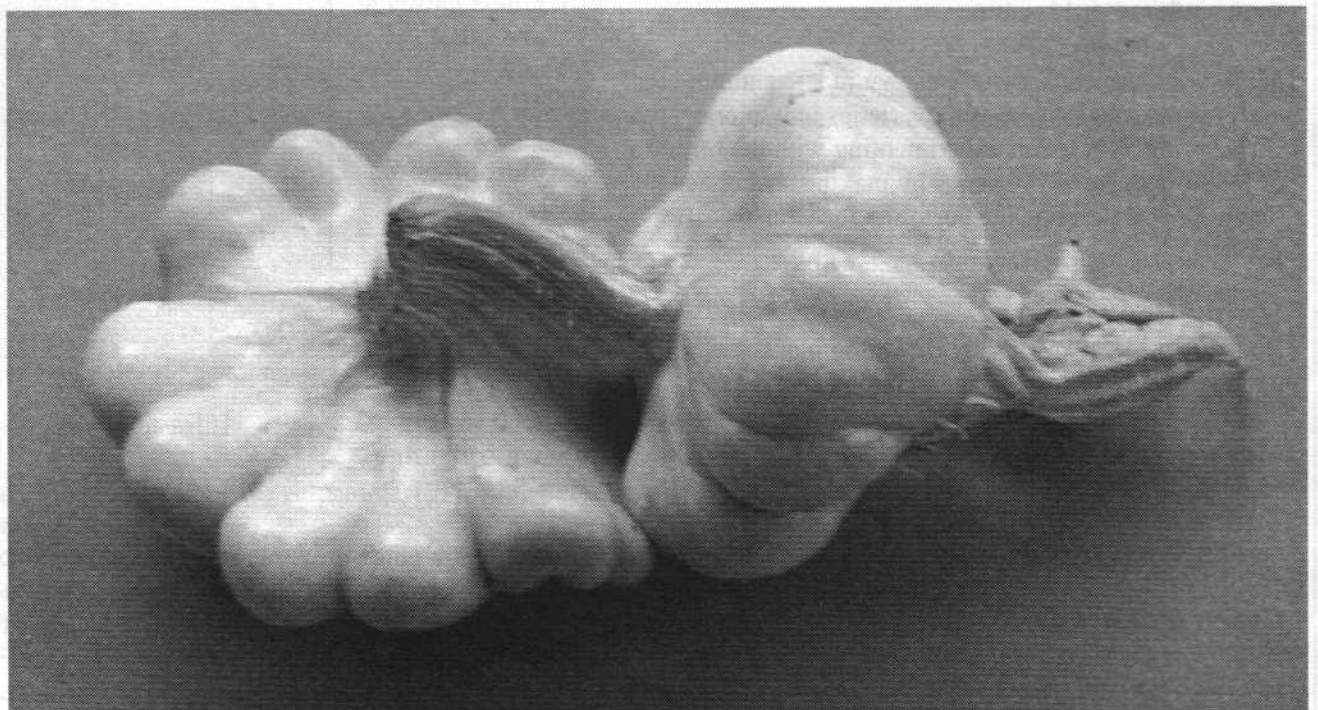
The other is a fave; ye old Mortgage Buster
For sleds full of toms, a finer stain you can't muster
Legend has it once paid off the breeder's
house and land
With big fat juicy toms one can barely fit in the hand

Now to saving the seed, such a noble quest
And the simple easy way I find works best
Just take wet sloppy tom seed and spread on
some paper
Dry, store, cut paper and plant when you need it later

And on that note I'm off to harvest and
make bolognaise
With home cooked toms the flavour's a craze
They're not like the shop garbage – hard and
without flavour
And more nutritious too, so do your body a favour

But I've only one issue as I get to the end of my rhyme
I've all the Italian herbs but I'm out of fresh thyme
But I've abundant oregano, parsley, basil and sage
Pay in the shops; not me – organic gardening's
the rage!

Graham Walker



Inspired by Roz and Trevor Bruhn's two-headed squash!

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 at our new venue
MAJURA COMMUNITY CENTRE
ROSEVEAR PLACE DICKSON**

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.

26 February 2008

Preserving your produce
Lesley Pattinson

25 March 2008

COGS Annual General Meeting

22 April 2008

Basic backyard butchering
Gino D'Ambrosio, EcoMeats

Events

Open Garden at Lanyon Homestead

14 March 2008, 10-11:30am

Graham Williams will hold a workshop on organic growing, seed saving, composting, water saving and more

Tickets \$55, includes workshop and tea
Bookings essential - 6943 2522

9th Australian Permaculture Convergence

20-24 March 2008, Sydney

For more info, phone 1300 887 145 or visit
www.permaculturenorth.org.au

20th Annual Seed Savers Conference

29-30 March 2008

Gulgong Showgrounds, Gulgong, NSW

Hosted by Castlereagh Seed Savers

For more information, contact
Dennis Grimshaw on 02 6358 8552
or email Frank Frost
frankshirley@well-com.net.au

Organic Gardening course

**CIT Solutions
Beginners Organic Gardening**

Sunday 2 March to Sunday 6 April
Weston Campus, Sundays 1-4pm

OR

Sunday 11 May to Sunday 1 June
Weston Campus, Sundays 1-4pm

For information, call 6207 4441 or visit
www.citsolutions.cit.act.edu.au

Horticultural Society of Canberra's Autumn Show

1-2 March 2008

Lancaster Hall, National Circuit, Forrest

Don't forget to enter the new competition for community gardens! Contact Graeme Davis on 6161 2304 by 27 February for more information

Environment calendar

- Clean Up Australia Day - 4 March
- World Water Day - 22 March
- World Health Day - 7 April

2008 has been declared the
**International Year of Planet Earth AND
the International Year of the Potato!**

Farmers Market

Every Saturday 8am - 11am

EPIC (enter near Shell service station)