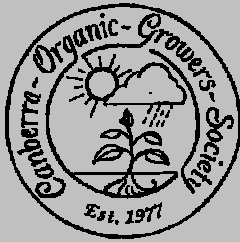




# Canberra Organic

Autumn 2011: Vol 19 No 1

Managing community gardens in Canberra  
Growing your own with Backyard Gourmet  
Kaleen Open Garden weekend



The **Canberra Organic Growers Society** is a non-profit organisation providing a forum for organic growers to exchange information and supporting 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](http://www.cogs.asn.au)

#### **Enquiries**

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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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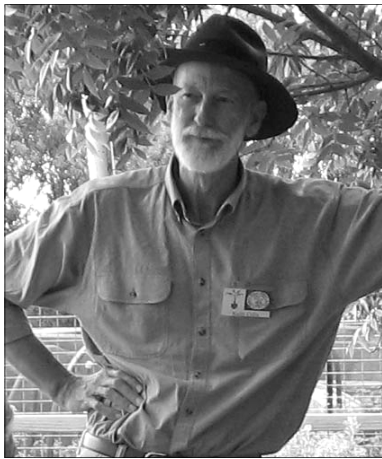
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## President's Report: Autumn 2011

What a difference a year makes in the garden. This time last year, Canberra's dams were less than 50% full. We were struggling in the heat with level three water restrictions to keep our gardens alive and

producing. This year the dams are 100% full. The abundant rain has saturated the soil and replenished the subsoil moisture. We are now all enjoying rampant growth in our community gardens and in our backyards. The weeds are also taking advantage of these excellent growing conditions, providing us with the opportunity to work off the excesses of the holiday season by spending much of our spare time in the garden weeding.

During the last three months, maximum temperatures were up by one degree above average and in January, minimum temperatures were more than two degrees above average. But perhaps the most notable feature of the weather has been the rainfall. While January's rainfall was about average, the combined November and December rainfalls were close to three times the average. This was also reflected in the 3pm relative humidity which was more than 10% above the average for the three months, November to January. Not surprisingly, these weather conditions have encouraged some fungal problems which we haven't had to deal with for quite a long time.

The COGS Committee is currently preparing a list of interesting speakers for our general monthly meetings throughout 2011. If you know of anyone who may be willing to speak at a monthly meeting on an organic gardening or farming related issue, please let a member of the Committee know. We are always on the lookout for new speakers. Activities that COGS will be involved with during the next few months include the Environment Centre's Harvest Festival on 26 March. Everyone is urged to enter the "Best Home Grown Vegetable" competition. There will also be beginners gardening courses in February/March and May/June and worm farming and composting workshops in April and June. In April we also hope to be conducting the first introductory workshop for new COGS community gardeners and those on waiting lists. The date has yet to be decided and will be notified through the garden convenors and on the website.

Our March meeting, as always, is the Annual General meeting where we elect the COGS Committee for the following twelve months. There is a notice about the AGM elsewhere in this issue. The AGM will be followed by a harvest night. Members are urged to bring along some of their produce to show and to discuss their gardening experiences, triumphs and failures, during the growing season.

I urge all COGS community garden plot holders to consider contributing produce to the Community Gardens display at the Canberra Horticultural Society's Autumn Show on 5 and 6 March. Last year Kaleen, Cook and Holder gardens entered a display which was very popular with the public. This is very good publicity for COGS and demonstrates to the public the quality of food which can be produced using organic gardening techniques. The prize money is an added bonus. It would be good if all gardens would contribute produce to the show. Details of how to enter the show are given in the notice elsewhere in this issue. Other events with fruit and vegetable competitions gardeners may wish to consider entering are the Royal Canberra Show from 25 to 27 February and the Collector Village Pumpkin Festival on 1 May.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent contribution made by the Kaleen and O'Connor gardens in publicising the value of community gardening and the quality of produce such gardens produce through their participation in the Australian Open Garden Scheme. Kaleen had a very successful open weekend of 5 and 6 February in cooperation with the Kaleen High School community and the school farm. O'Connor garden will be open on 26 and 27 February and I'm sure it will be equally successful.

This is my last report to you as President. I will be stepping down at the AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support, particularly the Committee members. I trust the new President will enjoy serving COGS as much as I have during my last three years as President.

I look forward to seeing you all at our monthly meetings and other events.

*Keith*

## CANBERRA ORGANIC Volume 19 Number 1 (Issue 72)

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

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

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

### EDITOR

Angela Spencer

### 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 Angela Spencer on 6258 0918 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 520.

### ADVERTISING RATES

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

Size	1 Issue	4 Issues
1/8 page	\$9 (\$7)	\$30 (\$25)
1/4 page	\$18 (\$15)	\$60 (\$50)
1/2 page	\$36 (\$30)	\$120 (\$100)
Full page	\$72 (\$60)	\$240 (\$200)

Articles in the magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of COGS. Products and services offered by advertisers are not specifically endorsed by COGS.

## Editor's note

Food security is one of the issues of the moment. In light of the very recent threat to food supply that the floods in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania and Cyclone Yasi in North Queensland have caused, it is an opportune time to reflect on the stark reality that the environment and weather can affect food security even in relatively wealthy country such as Australia.

The World Health Organization has defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (World Food Summit, 1996). The concept of food security also encompasses the idea that people need both physical and economic access to food and the ideas of food availability (sufficient quantities on a consistent basis), food access (having the resources to procure nutritious food) and food use (basic nutrition knowledge, adequate water).

The floods in Australia have shown that while we often delight in the wonders of our natural environment, we are also subject to the random destruction of natural disasters. It is a sobering thought but human beings are relatively insignificant compared to the vastness of our environment.

Apart from the lives lost, emotional impact and damage done to personal property, businesses and public infrastructure, Australians faced the very real short-term and long-term problem of food shortages and probable increases in food and grocery prices. Many of the crops growing in the flood-affected areas were intended to feed people in other areas of Australia, which means the food security issue affects all Australians.

As a society, if we did reduce our food miles, lived more sustainably and encouraged local networks of food production, we could claw back some of the control over how our food is grown and produced, thereby also protecting ourselves if natural disasters occur.

It is just one of the many reasons to grow our own fruit and vegetables in our own backyards and local communities! Next time someone asks you why you like vegie gardening, you can answer with "food security".

We discuss organic issues close to home in this issue of *Canberra Organic*. COGS President Keith Colls has updated his recent talk from the recent Community Gardening Conference. Thanks also to Gundaroo local, Cai Thomas, who has enthusiastically launched a fantastic blog and online forum called "Backyard Gourmet", which you should all visit in your internet gardening travels. Jyoti Dambiec from the ACT Vegetarian Society has given us some yummy recipes to try.

Happy sustainable gardening,

*Angela*

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## Contributors to this issue

### Articles

Warren Clendenning, Keith Colls, COGS Convenors, Jyoti Dambiec, John Grubb, Gerry Jacobson, Margaret Richardson, Angela Spencer, Cai Thomas, Monica van Wensveen.

### Photos

Gaetane Burkolter, Jyoti Dambiec, Adrienne Fazekas, Angela Spencer, Denae Starkovski, Cai Thomas, Monica van Wensveen.



*Another use for large zucchinis*

## Cover photos

FRONT COVER: The pumpkin harvest heralds in the Autumn gardening season

BACK COVER: The fruits of Autumn

*Articles and photos by Angela Spencer unless otherwise stated.*

## Let us know what you're doing!

We are always looking for stories, events, gardening tips, recipes and photographs to publish in *Canberra Organic*.

All contributions are appreciated and can be submitted via email to [editor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:editor@cogs.asn.au) or by mail to PO Box 347, Dickson, ACT 2602

**This issue of Canberra Organic is printed on recycled paper**

## Weather and water watch

Here are the Bureau of Meteorology's long term temperature and rainfall statistics for the ACT region. For more weather info visit the Bureau of Meteorology's ACT website: [www.bom.gov.au/weather/act](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/act).

TEMPERATURE	March	April	May
Canberra airport	max 24.5	max 20.0	max 15.6
	min 10.7	min 6.7	min 3.2

NB: Rain days are days with more than 1mm of rain; temperatures are degrees Celsius

RAINFALL	March	April	May
Canberra airport	50.7 mm	46.0 mm	44.4 mm
	4.8 rain days	4.8 rain days	5.1 rain days

### Seasonal forecast: February-April

- The minimum and maximum temperature outlook for SE Australia favours warmer daytime and night time temperatures as a result of cool conditions in the central tropical Pacific Ocean and warm conditions in the Indian Ocean.
- The outlook for rainfall for SE Australia is drier than average conditions.

### Water use and restrictions

- At 17 February 2011, Canberra's dams were 100% full.
- The daily water consumption, as at 17 February 2011, is 113.5 ML. For more information, visit ActewAGL's water networks website: [www.actewagl.com.au/water/networks](http://www.actewagl.com.au/water/networks).

## La Nina to continue flooding Australia

Weather data from the Bureau of Meteorology's annual climate statement for 2010 has shown that Australia recorded its third wettest year on record in 2010.

This was mainly due to a major La Nina weather pattern now causing record flooding and set to affect Australia for another couple of months.

The La Nina wet conditions of the second half of 2010 was in stark contrast to the drought-causing El Nino pattern of the first half of 2010.

The Bureau said the decade up to 2010 was the hottest on record, even though 2010 was the coolest year in nine years.

"This underscored that the warming of Australia's climate continues, even though individual years may be cooler than other years," the Bureau said.

La Nina conditions occur when tropical sea temperatures are cooler than average in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, and warmer in the western Pacific resulting in higher rainfall in

Australia and parts of Southeast Asia.

The El Nino pattern usually means less rainfall in the western Pacific, with warmer than average central and eastern Pacific sea temperatures.

The Bureau said the severe floods in Queensland occurred in areas already saturated by heavy rains during Christmas and the second half of 2010.

The long-range forecasts show the current La Nina pattern will persist into Autumn, involving lower daytime temperatures, higher rainfall and more tropical cyclones during November- April cyclone season across northern Australia.

The 2010 rain has led to a dramatic recovery in water flows through the Murray-Darling Basin, with some storages at 80% at the start of 2011, compared with 26% at the same time last year.

*Source: Reuters*

# Canberra Organic Growers Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7:30pm 22 March 2011

**The COGS Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 22 March 2011 at 7:30 pm 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 on 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 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 or for nomination forms, please contact [info@cogs.asn.au](mailto:info@cogs.asn.au) or a member of the current Committee listed on page 2.

## COGS Harvest Night

COGS Harvest Night happens every March immediately following the brief Annual General Meeting. Harvest Night is an opportunity for members to bring along examples of the produce they have grown this year, in fresh or preserved form. We encourage people to talk informally about what they have brought along but if you just want to "show" rather than "show and tell" that's okay. It's also good to hear about what worked and what didn't work, what "new" plants you trialed and how the weather affected the season's harvest. Please join us on Tuesday 22 March at 7.30 pm and please bring along some produce you have grown.



# Around the COGS Gardens

## Charnwood

The Charnwood garden is looking a picture at the moment, due to the continuing rain and also the hard work of gardeners in their plots and at our working bees.

COGS President Keith Colls certainly agreed, as he chose the Charnwood garden as the backdrop for a photo that will feature on the front of the 2011 White Pages phone directory. Telstra features a local community group on the cover of the White Pages each year, and this year COGS was chosen. This reflects the growing interest around Australia in community gardens and organic food. Busy times ahead for COGS!

Gardeners report a great season for carrots and potatoes, but tomatoes are struggling to ripen with the cool, wet weather.

A couple of new gardeners have joined us in the last few months and there are two available plots.

Most communal fruit trees have now been 'adopted' by gardeners. Some trees will need some serious nurturing to become productive again.

*Haydn Burgess*

## Cook

The above-average rainfall of 2010 has resulted in the Cook garden looking greener than it has for years. It is possible to have too much of a good thing at times though, and some gardeners have had crops fail from being too wet.

It also doesn't take long for a small amount of weed growth to become a major feature of the plot, or for the grass around the garden to go from mown to in-need-of-a-mow.

We had a morning tea get together prior to Christmas, which was quite a success with an assortment of cakes, mince pies and other Christmas foods. The morning seems a more convenient time for some people, and I will endeavour to have a few more morning meetings before the cold weather returns.

There is still a substantial waiting list at the Cook garden.

*Wayde Margetts*

## Kaleen

September 2010 marked the first anniversary of the Kaleen garden and so far this season offers much promise, particularly through the benefits of consistent rainfall. Kaleen now has 21 members, together with

partners and currently a full complement of gardeners.

For the majority of our gardeners, the hard work of turning the first sod is over and we can all look forward to further soil enrichment activities and plenty of veggies. Notwithstanding the good rains throughout Spring, many gardeners are introducing drip irrigation systems and hopefully this will encourage other members to do likewise.

At the time of writing, we have been actively planning and preparing for our Garden Open Day which is scheduled for the weekend of 5-6 February 2011.

One initiative that has become a regular event is our regular Friday morning tea and seed swap. The gardeners who attend bring something homemade and some seeds to swap, with the dialogue extending in to gardening tips and ideas.

There has not been much of a "hungry gap" for a number of our keen members with Jerusalem artichokes, leek, rocket, silver beet, broccolini, kale and some stored pumpkin giving them a continuous crop through Winter and now in to Spring.



*Hanna and her fantastic summer harvest*

Summer definitely arrived in our garden with zucchini, potatoes and corn now ready for harvest, including a few self-seeded brave tomatoes also ready for picking. The local magpies have also benefited from the increase in garden activity, with the parent birds gathering up all the grubs to take them to the young ones located in a nearby tree. One advantage of our generosity is that the magpies are most friendly and not in any way a threat.

The Spring and early Summer has not been a good from an apiarist's perspective. The two hives located in the garden swarmed twice!

**Sprinklers may not be used at any time in a COGS community garden**



These swarming events have kept John Grubb, the garden's hobby bee keeper, most busy with another one of our gardeners, Denae Starkovski, starting a hive.

*John Grubb and Denae Starkovski*

### Holder

At the Holder garden, we are surrounded by tall grasses outside the perimeter of our garden fence, on all sides except for the small car parking space that was mowed during our last working bee in December. Fortunately the pollen has gone for the hay fever sufferers but the grass is now dry and crisp despite the rain.

We continue to have road works and other new infrastructure going up around us, but apart from the machinery noise, you can still hear the snippets of conversation from the bike riders, as they pass on their way out to Stromlo, riding their new bike path. Very interesting!

We made bee lines into our garden maintenance at our last working bee with lawn mowing and more lawn mowing, and a general tidy up of weeds underneath the fruit trees and the communal garden plots.

Our two fantastic Whipper Snipper gardeners cleaned up around the inside of the fence line so we can see the snakes coming! A mouse jumped out of the compost bin the other day so the snakes are not far away.



*The aftermath of a working bee at Holder*

We have had a few problems with water leaks due to gardeners turning off the main tap too tightly and this has caused some litres of water to leak around Gerry's garden plot, however I notice his plants are thriving from the experience, so I don't think Gerry is complaining!

The Bokashi experiment continues for composting green waste with much input from Simone and Steve and we appreciate their efforts.

All the seed exchanges that took place at our AGM are proving beneficial and I can see lots of climbing beans in plots all over the garden.

The fruit trees have responded to the rain and are producing lots of fruit though small and a big clean up of dropped fruit will happen at our next working bee.

The bee hives are gradually being moved slowly over to the new fence line on the south east and once this has occurred we will be creating the new garden areas. This area has been mowed and we are trying to keep on top of the weed growth and have stopped traffic over the area so as not to compact the soil.

Plots at Holder are still available and we have had applications for smaller plots. Subsequent to this we have divided up one of the larger recently vacated plots into smaller sizes of 20sqm so as to accommodate all gardeners needs and of course once the bee hives are in place we will have more plots available in the new area. We are still contemplating the design of the new area for garden plots which will be of different sizes.

At present we are a happy garden community harvesting absolutely loads of zucchini (see Caitlin below holding one specimen) squash, beans, potatoes, bush pumpkins, cucumbers and herbs like mizuna, rocket, basil and mint. The tomatoes, capsicum and eggplant have all had a good start and are growing well.

The Blue Wrens are flitting around between the seeding parsnips stalks and other secret overgrown places that they love in the garden. Meredith's sweet peas have made a lovely show as well as the double flowered pink and purple poppies that volunteered in some of the plots. Peter's dahlias are making a nice red exhibition at present though we are waiting for one of our new gardeners to show his style with his dahlias. John and June are experts in this field and we look forward to seeing their blooms.

We welcome to our garden Tim and Andrea, Vicky, John and June, Marina and Lisa, Chris and Peta.

*Heather Campbell*



*Caitlin holding a very fine zucchini*

# Kambah's summer harvest

Gaetane Burkolter from the Kambah community garden has reported on bumper summer crops bursting from some of the plot holder's vegetable gardens. Here's the evidence!



*Brynor (3yrs) and Caius (5yrs) with potatoes*



*Gaetane's Golden Nuggets*



*Jim's Butternut pumpkin*



*A tub of tomatoes (left) and some silverbeet (right)*



*A marigold poking its head up (right)*



## COGS green manure mixes are 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:

- **Cereal and legume mix** containing wheat, oats, rye, corn, field peas and vetch
- **Legumes only mix** containing field peas, vetch, lupins and subclover.

Seed is packaged in quantities suitable to cover about 25 - 30 square metres and is available at the COGS general meetings. Bulk deliveries to community gardens can also be arranged through your garden convenor.



## Kaleen's Open Garden weekend

The major event on the Kaleen Community Garden's calendar to start the year was our Garden Open Day, held over the weekend of 5-6 February.

Overall the garden was looking at its best and I thank all plot holders for the effort made in achieving this result.

The two open days were an all-encompassing exercise, but with the thorough planning and total commitment of our small gardening committee, we were well prepared and encountered no unforeseen events. The weather was kind to us and 104 people attended on the Saturday and 96 on the Sunday. Thanks to COGS, we had the use of a gazebo, trestles and the COGS banner. Some COGS magazines, pamphlets and green manure seeds were also available for sale. Thanks to Adrienne Fazekas for finalizing the accounting component of our endeavours.

Together with the sale of refreshments, garden produce, home made chutneys, herbs, seedlings and seeds, we made just over a \$1000. My sincere thanks to all the gardeners who contributed to such a successful outcome. Another key ingredient of our success was our presentations which were well received. Talks were held on, organic gardening practices, heirloom tomatoes, backyard chooks, and beginner's beekeeping.

Thanks also to Bunnings Belconnen (Bruce Huskins and Emma Hamilton). Through the store's sponsorship we were able to raffle a wheelbarrow, a selection of gardening tools and a compost bin. We were also lucky to receive sponsorship from Kaleen Supabarn. I also wish to recognise the support of Kaleen High school.

The school's P&C put on a sausage sizzle and the Agricultural department of the school provided access to the farm animals for the children to pet. Indeed, there was just as much interest from the adults!

We also received excellent PR and I am grateful for the support received from ABC 666 and 2CC, *The Canberra Times*, Pedal Power magazine and other local advertising.

Our successful outcome has prompted our gardening community to elect to conduct a similar Open Day exercise over the second weekend in February 2012.

*John Grubb  
Kaleen Garden Convenor*



*Great gardening prizes on offer at the Open Day raffle*

## Seed Saver's Group

At the recent meeting of the COGS Seed Savers Group, various items were discussed to help facilitate the ongoing operation of the group.

The discussion focussed on envelopes, labels, rubber stamps, record keeping, seed saving equipment.

At our next meeting, it was agreed to have our first seed saving activity. By that time several members of the group will have seeds that need to be cleaned, accessioned and stored in the seed bank. It will provide much needed experience at basic seed saving skills.

If any COGS members would like to join the group or attend the next meeting, please contact Richard Aspden on 6296 4085 or Warren Clendenning on 0408293063.

*Warren Clendenning*

## COGS Library

The COGS library will be cranking into action again as 2011 gathers momentum after the Christmas break. The last general meeting of the year coincided with a book sale to cull a few superfluous titles from the COGS library collection.

Thanks to those who purchased books – we raised \$75 from book sales.

The COGS library books are available to all members to borrow at monthly general meetings. Remember to bring your membership card or number to borrow books.

If you are currently have any library books on loan, you can return them at the next monthly meeting (details at the back of this magazine).

*Margaret Richardson*

# Backyard Gardener's Group: An Evatt Garden

*Backyard Garden group member Jyoti Dambiec gives us a written tour of her suburban garden in Evatt, which is abundant with the earthly delights of vegies, worms and compost.*

## **A wander around**

We've been here in Evatt for ten years. Where the large vegie garden is now was originally heavy clay soil with a bit of grass and large trees. The government removed three big trees and in process moved the heavy clay subsoil to the top.

This was a blessing in disguise as this was the only space for a biggieish vegie garden. My vegie garden is set in garden beds with paver pathways between. The soil is now beautiful soil - at last!

We have three large rainwater tanks and two smaller ones, along with various large buckets collecting water



*Some thornless blackberries in Jyoti's garden*

at every dripping spot. We use a drip watering system in the vegie garden. Pressure from the slight slope is enough to make the drippers work with no pump. Compost is "my thing", hence we have five big enclosed compost bins. We used to have huge, open compost piles as I didn't like the sound of anaerobic bins. But I do use the anaerobic bins in an aerobic way by moving the compost from a full bin to an empty one. This makes compost very fast - and the bins are basically all big worm farms, with masses of worms. I recently set up a tier worm farm to get the worm juice.

When the weather gets hotter, I mulch. I have a framework set up which is covered with 50% shade cloth during the hottest parts of the year and the trees also provide some shade.

I garden intensely with vegies. At the moment we have beans, various tomatoes, radicchio, lettuce, capsicums, eggplant, carrots, potatoes, asparagus, herbs, rocket (and all that stuff), zucchini, feijoas, pomegranate, various grapes, figs, red, white and black currants, raspberries and boysenberries. Broccoli is a big thing in winter and it has been hugely productive over the last



*A lovely view of Backyard Gardener's Group member Jyoti's suburban backyard in Evatt*

two years - the trick is to allocate space for spring vegetables when the winter ones are still growing.

It's not a huge garden, but every bit is used. There are lots of flowering shrubs at the moment and we also have flowers growing in amongst the vegies, such as irises and poppies.

## **Compost capers**

The compost in the bins is what I'm really enjoying a lot and it will be nice to hang out with some like-minded souls who also get excited about worms. I've been composting a bit differently now I don't have open pile and it works brilliantly and it is much easier to keep the compost moist and worm-friendly, provided it is regularly turned to aerate. I've never seen worms like this - just masses!

In a new compost bin, I put a good sprinkling of the wormy older compost to start with and the worms just seem to take off! When you need to use the compost, the trick is to encourage the worms to stay in the compost bin. I've been finding my way with a few things, which is working well so far.

## **Sneaky slaters**

Last season was really hard in my garden slater-wise - the place was overrun. I seemed to spend so much time in Spring trying to catch them in various ways. I have since altered a few things - I haven't got as much mulch down as it provides a place for slaters to breed over winter.

Our climate in Canberra creates some challenges for gardeners - we need lots of mulch, which then can house slaters, plus they are drawn to the water when young seedlings are watered.

The Backyard Gardener's Group allows us to share (and hear about) things we've all discovered by trial and error.

*Jyoti Dambiec*

# Organic news

## Aussie Organic News

### Food Sustainability Covenant for Vic

A Sustainability Covenant was recently signed by the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria), Sustainability Victoria and the Australian Food and Grocery Council, as part of \$500,000 three-year plan to help food and grocery manufacturers in Victoria to produce items that are more sustainable by reducing water use, energy use and waste. About one-third of Australia's food comes from Victoria.

AFGC chief executive, Kate Carnell, said the covenant would better enable industry to produce clean, affordable, nutritious and sustainable food.

A range of projects are planned, including a feasibility study into food waste composting in regional areas like Albury Wodonga and Ballarat.

Source: *Australian Food News*

### No bottled water for UC

The University of Canberra (UC) recently became the first university in Australia to discontinue the sale of bottled water on campus, in a move initiated by students.

UC will immediately start phasing out the sale of bottled water while introducing new water bubblers, bottle refill stations and new chilled water vending machines around the campus.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Parker said the move was part of creating a sustainable campus as tap water has a lower environmental impact than bottled water.

Source: [www.canberra.edu.au](http://www.canberra.edu.au)

### New soil 'bible' released

An updated version of a popular soil analysis book, *Soil Chemical Methods*, was released in November at the Australasian Soil & Plant Analysis Council Conference in Canberra. The book, originally published 20 years ago as part of the Australian Soil and Land Survey Handbook series, is published by the CSIRO and provides an analysis of soils for factors such as carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus and toxic substances.

The new version, written by Dr George Rayment and David Lyons explains soil analysis procedures in the light of land management challenges faced today in Australia and worldwide.

"From helping farmers and farm consultants figure out how best to apply fertiliser to increase productivity and reduce nutrient losses to waterways, to guiding scientists conducting research across the country, the book sets out all that is needed for consistency across the soil testing profession", said Dr Rayment.

Source: *CSIRO*

### First GM legal battle in Oz

One of the biggest legal battles in the history of GM in Australia is playing out, with a WA farmer losing his organic certification due to contamination from GM canola.

Kojonup farmer, Steve Marsh, plans to take legal action due to financial losses suffered after losing the organic certification on his oat and wheat crops after 70% of his property was contaminated by Monsanto's Roundup Ready canola. In response, Monsanto will pay to defend its GM farmers.

WA Agriculture Minister Terry Redman said the de-certification was valid and "the threshold for accidental presence in organic crops is an important issue which needs to be addressed to enable coexistence." Mr Redman said zero tolerance for GM in organic crops is "unrealistic".

Source: *True Food Network*

## World Organic News

### The buzz about bumble bees

Researchers in the US have warned that four important species of bumblebees (distinct from honey bees) are drastically reducing in numbers in the US and around the world. Researchers from the University of Illinois published their findings in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, documenting a 96% decline in numbers of multiple *Bombus* species. The decline is thought to be due to a pathogen and inbreeding caused by habitat loss. The bees in the study are important pollinators of native plants, as are honeybees which are also being affected by colony collapse disorder.

Source: *Planet Ark*

### Grey areas of gray water

An Indian study has found that even the most poorly-performing kitchen gray water filtration systems can produce water clean enough for agricultural use.

A study by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in India published in the *International Journal of Environmental Technology and Management* examined ceramic microfiltration and different physiochemical treatments in relation to dirty kitchen water.

While the potential resource of gray water seems logical, affordable and effective waste water treatment is not available in many parts of the world and contaminants such as soaps, detergent, oil and grease are a problem. This study suggests that even a basic gray water system can produce water suitable for agricultural use.

Source: *Science Daily*

## Top tips for Autumn

### ☺ Cold hands, warm soil

Especially due to the recent rain, Autumn soils are still warm, making it a good time for new planting. Plants can establish root growth before the shock of winter. They may not grow much in the coldest weather but will burst to life in spring again.

### ☺ Sage, Rosemary and Thyme...

You can still enjoy your herb garden in the cold weather. Harvest any herbs that usually die over winter. Either use them freshly picked or you could dry them for use during the cooler months.

### ☺ Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater

Harvest your bounteous batches of pumpkins and enjoy them for the cool months to come! Store them in a dark, dry spot. And why not visit the Collector Pumpkin Festival?

### ☺ Strawberry fields forever...

Plant some strawberries now for fruiting in October and November. Prepare the bed with aged poultry manure or compost. The cheapest way to buy strawberries is to plant runners. Space runners about 30cm apart and apply mulch to keep the area weed-free. Fertilise with seaweed solution when flowers appear. Strawberries fruit well for around three years – after that, replace them with new plants in Autumn during the third year.



*There is no gardening without humility. Nature is constantly sending even its oldest scholars to the bottom of the class for some egregious blunder.*

~ Alfred Austin (English poet, 1835-1913)

## Digging Around the Web

*Getting the dirt on the Internet for you!*

### Down to Earth blog

<http://down---to---earth.blogspot.com/>

Written by a retired couple living in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, Down to Earth is a wonderful blog bursting with self-sufficiency. With a view that “mindless consumerism masks us all”, the blog centres on theme of self-sufficiency and the idea that simplicity liberates us. You can find “real food” recipes and topics such as saving seeds, making bread, bottling and preserving and saving money. Highly recommended.

### Compost for Horticulture

[www.compost-for-horticulture.com](http://www.compost-for-horticulture.com)

This is the website of the *International Symposium on Organic Matter Management and Compost Use in Horticulture* to be held at the University of Adelaide in April this year. The symposium will focus on organic soil and compost, soil degradation, food security and related issues. With an interesting array of speakers, it is well worth waiting for the proceedings to be published. Verdict— one to watch!

### The Free Range Cook

[www.annabel-langbein.com](http://www.annabel-langbein.com)

This NZ-based tv chef and author, Annabel Langbein, has a website chock full gardening ideas and recipes, with a focus on eating home-grown organic food that is in season. She says “my roots are deeply tethered in the earth in a satisfying cycle of growing, harvesting, cooking and sharing around the table”. Have a look at Annabel’s recipes or get updates via her blog or Facebook page.

### City chicks

[www.citychicks.com.au](http://www.citychicks.com.au)

This website is home to three Brisbane-based businesses—City Chicks, Eco-City Living and My Backyard Garden. Have a browse—you can buy chickens, bees, mushroom kits, soap nuts and lots of other eco-friendly products for your backyard growing needs. And there’s something extraordinary—nappies for chickens (to collect the chicken poo) - unbelievable but true! Well worth more than a look.

# Managing Community Gardens

*This is an edited version of a paper presented by COGS President, Keith Colls, at the Community Gardening Conference held at the University of Canberra on October 9-10, 2010.*

## Synopsis

The success of the Canberra Organic Growers Society (COGS) in developing community gardens is leading to an unreasonable workload on the volunteers who run COGS. To better respond to the demands for new community gardens it is necessary to examine other options for managing COGS and the gardens.

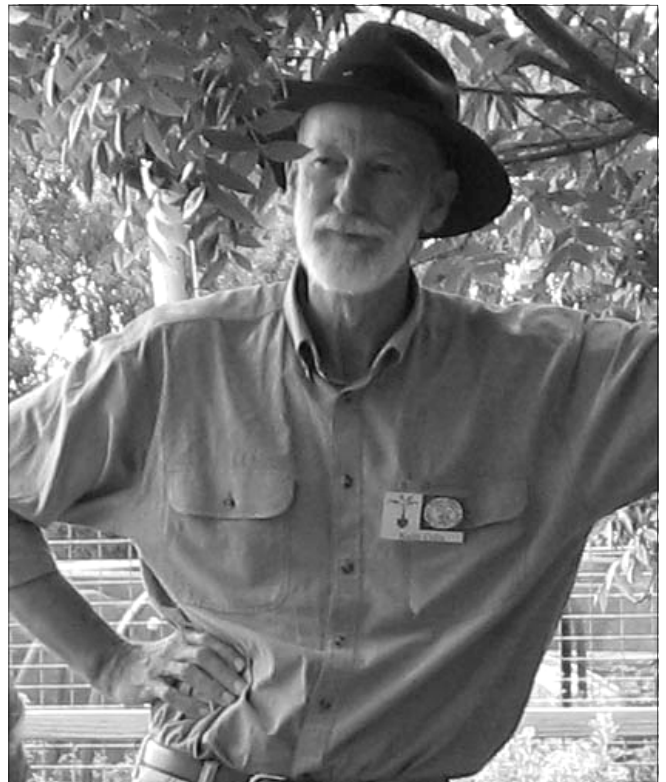
## History

COGS was established in 1977. The Constitution states that one of its eight objectives is “to administer community gardens operated under organic agricultural principles for recreational, educational or rehabilitation purposes for self-supply of contaminant-free produce”. The first COGS gardens were set up in the 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, the gardens had risen to 6 and by 2010, COGS was managing 13 gardens. Currently, about half of the COGS membership of around 420 (roughly 600-700 individuals) are plot holders in its gardens. While COGS is engaged in various other activities, managing community gardens is a significant proportion of the work of the COGS Committee.

## Challenges and Constraints

As the COGS membership and gardens have increased in number, the administration of the organisation has become increasingly complex. This has placed high demands on the COGS committee’s time, so it has been necessary to make adjustments to the way the gardens were managed over the past decade. As a result, the gardens have been encouraged to become more autonomous. However, increased autonomy had to be balanced with the need to ensure equity amongst COGS members with respect to the garden rules and facilities. Garden autonomy also had to be balanced with the financial responsibilities of the COGS committee to the whole of the COGS membership, (not just plot holders) and COGS’ obligations as an incorporated body under the Associations Incorporations ACT.

This means there has been a considerable increase in the number of garden rules to ensure gardens are all treated equally and plot holders are treated equitably. This has created a few challenges. Garden rules are not always appreciated by plot holders. Some see COGS becoming an increasingly rule-based bureaucratic organisation. The increasing number of rules is also



*Outgoing COGS President, Keith Colls*

seen by some as affecting autonomy of the gardens. They see the rules as interference by the COGS committee. Without careful management, this could lead to an unhelpful ‘us and them’ mentality amongst plot holders.

The prime responsibility for managing these tensions falls to COGS volunteer garden convenors. To assist them in dealing with these matters, in the last decade we introduced quarterly meetings of the garden convenors, chaired by the COGS vice-president. These meetings help ensure that convenors see themselves as part of the management team of the whole of COGS and to counter any sense of isolation from COGS that garden autonomy can engender. Convenors also play an active role in formulating any new garden rules. They represent the views of the plot holders in their garden so there’s some sense of participation by plot holders in the formulation of any new rules.

These responsibilities place garden convenors in a crucial position in managing the gardens. The success of the community gardens depends on the skills of the convenors. One of the challenges COGS faces is to ensure that convenors have the appropriate training and backup to carry out their role successfully. At present convenors are elected by the plot holders of their garden. This means that they do not necessarily have the appropriate background and training to manage the

garden successfully without further training, support and backup from the COGS committee. At this stage, the COGS committee, made up entirely of volunteers, has not had the time to provide that necessary assistance to convenors that the importance of their position in managing community gardens requires.

The time stress that the COGS committee is currently experiencing also prevents the adequate provision of orientation workshops and training in organic gardening techniques needed for new plot holders to comfortably settle into a garden. Many new plot holders are new to gardening or do not have any clear understanding of the requirements of gardening organically. Nor do they necessarily understand how community gardens, and in particular allotment gardens, operate. This can lead to tensions between new and established plot holders. Orientation workshops and training in organic gardening techniques should prevent such problems. COGS does conduct beginners organic gardening courses and worm farming and composting workshops in conjunction with CIT Solutions, but these are directed more towards the general public. While suitable for those new to gardening, they do not necessarily meet the needs of those who have some gardening experience but are new to organics and community gardening. To address some of these issues new plot holder training and orientation workshops and workshops to assist new convenors will start in 2011.

As COGS is self-funding, one of the most important challenges for the Committee is to ensure the financial viability of the organisation. One of the most significant factors affecting its financial security is the cost of water. All of the COGS gardens use the ACT domestic water supply and pay the full domestic price of water. For the larger gardens, this means that most of the water used is charged at the top tier for domestic water, which is currently \$4.01 per kl. To keep the cost of running the gardens at a reasonable and affordable level, it is necessary to carefully monitor water use to ensure that water is used as frugally as possible. It is relatively easy to manage the cost of water used for gardening itself, but there are two potential sources of significant and very large unpredictable water costs, these being undetected leaks in the underground pipes and vandal attack. In one recent example, there was an undetected

leak in an underground pipe resulting in a water bill of approx \$4000 for water not used by COGS. The cost of repairing the pipe was beyond COGS' resources and this garden has now been abandoned. Such leaks could easily bankrupt COGS if not detected quickly so there are measures in place to monitor all water meters regularly. But this puts added time pressures on garden convenors. Vandal attacks have also resulted in COGS losing hundred of dollars worth of water overnight. To control this, the water is always turned off at the meter by the last plot holder leaving the garden. In spite of these measures, undetected water loss remains one of the main threats to COGS financial security.

### **Where do we go from here?**

The demand for community gardens is continuing to increase. Unfortunately, COGS has had to decline about six offers of land and requests to establish community gardens in the last 18 months because COGS volunteers are stretched to the limit. A new model for the organisation is required if COGS is to respond to these demands. The development of such a model is one of the major tasks for 2011.



*COGS members at the Community Gardening Conference*

Since its founding, COGS has had no paid staff and has been run entirely by volunteers. Running costs have been funded solely by membership contributions and plot levies. The establishment of new gardens has often required government grants where the infrastructure costs were beyond the capacity of COGS savings but these costs were kept to a minimum. Grants were mainly used for purchasing the necessary hardware. The actual construction work such as building the fences and installing the water supply was undertaken by COGS committee members and potential plot holders. This arrangement has been reasonably satisfactory in the past but, as the demand for new gardens increases and the growing complexity of the management of COGS makes greater calls on committee members' time, it is not viable for the organisation to continue to grow in this manner.

There are a number of ways which the operations of COGS could be transformed to accommodate an increasing number of community gardens, but there are three key issues which any new organisational or operational model for COGS needs to address. They are: funding arrangements for new gardens, training for plot holders and garden convenors and also increased



support for COGS volunteers.

With respect to the funding arrangements, the capacity of volunteers to build new gardens from scratch on vacant land, such as those constructed in 2001 in Cook, Holder, Kambah and Queanbeyan, has reached its limit. The construction of any new gardens will need to be fully funded to allow their construction on a commercial basis by the relevant tradespeople. This will greatly increase the cost of building new gardens and will potentially reduce the number of gardens that can be constructed.

However, there are alternative ways of developing new gardens. One such means is a form of land sharing. This method has been used in the establishment of our last three gardens. COGS entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with lease holders who had land surplus to their needs. So far, COGS has one MOU with a church and the other two are with schools. All sites were already fenced and with mains water close by, which made setting up the gardens considerably more affordable and the gardens easier to construct than building on a vacant block. This arrangement has been very successful. It is probably the most viable way of constructing new gardens in established suburbs.

Another option involves entering into partnership agreements with the planning authorities responsible for developing new suburbs which incorporate community gardens. The possibility of COGS managing community gardens being built by land development agencies in new suburbs is being actively explored at present. Other joint ventures with private land owners are also being actively explored and will be developed further.

Any new model for COGS must provide for better training and support for garden convenors than they now receive. To cope with an increasing number of community gardens it will be necessary for gardens to



*COGS volunteers running an information stall at the 2010 Harvest Festival at the Environment Centre, Acton.*



*A happy crowd at the Kaleen garden's recent Open Garden*

be more self sufficient, but at the same time consistency across all gardens in administrative and financial matters must be maintained to ensure COGS complies with the administrative and financial requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. This will require better support for convenors by providing regular workshops for new convenors on garden management and for new plot holders to ensure they are aware of the basics of organic gardening and the rules under which the gardens operate. This would allow new gardeners to settle in more quickly and assist the convenor in nurturing the sense of the garden as a community of gardeners.

Increased support for the work of the volunteers who run the COGS committee is also necessary. It is unlikely that the work of COGS can be developed much further using only the contributions of volunteers. Means of generating income streams to pay for some activities and services to support the efforts of COGS volunteers need to be explored. For example, mundane (but essential) and time consuming administrative tasks, which consume the time of several current volunteers could be usefully carried out by a paid administrative assistant and would release volunteers for more creative and satisfying work such as developing and providing training programs for convenors and plot holders, negotiating partnerships with other organisations to establish new gardens etc.

Although COGS has been around for 33 years, it is still very much a work in progress. From this conference, COGS hopes to pick up some ideas that can be usefully applied in developing further its approach to garden management. Hopefully this will place COGS in a better position to be able to respond more effectively to the increasing demand for community gardens in this region.

*Keith Colls*

# Autumn planting: BROCCOLI

Cooking with broccoli is a bit like that girl with the curl (right in the middle of her forehead) - when its good, it's very, very good, but when it's bad, it's horrid. Luckily, growing it is much simpler.

Broccoli is a member of the Brassica family and like cabbage, cauliflower and kale, it needs fertile soil and cool weather to thrive.

There are a wide range varieties commercially available and the list is growing. The most common varieties currently grown are *Marathon* and *Greenbelt*.

## Site and soil

Broccoli can grow on most soil types as long as there is good drainage and plenty of nutrients. If drainage is poor, you could try using slightly raised beds.

Enrich the soil with compost and manure well before planting. Because broccoli is a heavy feeder, it will do well after a crop of legumes or a summer green manure crop.

It prefers an open, sunny position in the garden that is sheltered from the wind.

## Planting

Plant in late summer or early autumn - they need to be well established before the first frosts - for a late autumn-winter harvest.

Because space is likely to be tight in a summer garden, consider sowing seeds in a seedbed outside or plant seedlings in pots placed in the garden until there's enough space to plant out.

Plant seedlings once they've reached 10cm in height and space them about 50-60cm apart. If you're organised (or lucky), try a second planting 4-6 weeks after the first to lengthen the harvest season.

## Growing

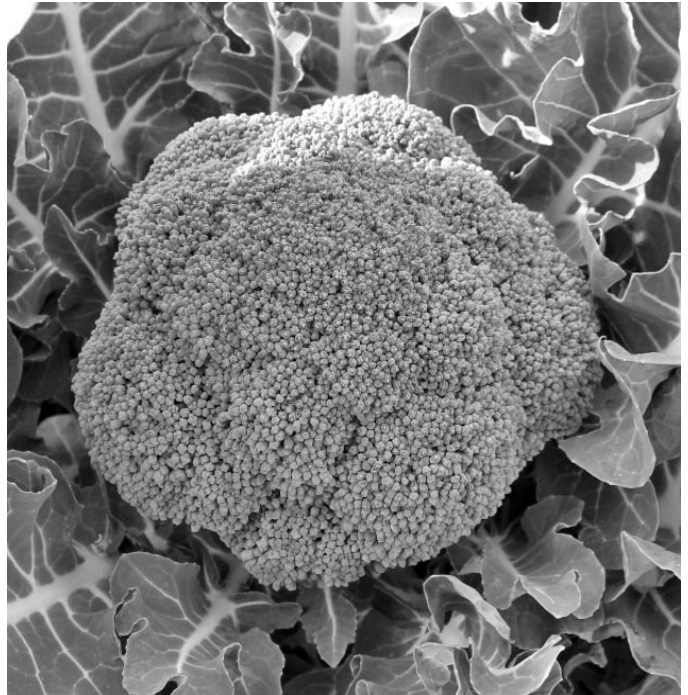
Water regularly during the growing season and use mulch to retain soil moisture and keep weeds down. Remember to water the soil, not the heads as water that settles between individual flower buds can cause fungal rot.

A dose of organic fertiliser or compost tea every couple of weeks - and particularly after the first harvest - will be rewarded with healthy growth.

If your plants are in a wind-prone position, you may want to stake them once they reach maturity.

## Harvesting

Harvest when the heads when they are at maximum size but before the flower buds turn yellow - the broccoli will taste more bitter once they turn yellow.



Use a sharp knife, cut stem of the main head on an angle. This will encourage the side shoots to develop for several months and regular harvesting will increase yield.

## Problems

Crop rotation and good hygiene should keep downy mildew at bay. Snails and slugs will need to be kept under control.

The biggest problem is likely to be cabbage moth, with too-early plantings and mature plants at the end of their season the most susceptible. There are plenty of home remedies for this pest - the most reliable is regular checking and picking the caterpillars off by hand.

## Choosing and using

At the market, choose compact, blue-green flower heads that smell sweet and have no open or yellow buds. Eat your broccoli as soon as you can after harvesting as the heads deteriorate quickly. You can keep for a couple of days in the crisper.

Broccoli is delicious steamed, stir-fried, tossed in pine nuts or vinaigrette, as a crudite or made into a creamy winter soup. For use in salads, plunge cooked broccoli into cold water to retain the fresh, green colour.

## References and further reading

- Organic Vegetable Gardening (Annette McFarlane)
- Harvest (Meredith Kirton)
- The Canberra Gardener (HSOC)
- Growing organic broccoli ([www.organicguide.com](http://www.organicguide.com))
- Organic gardening ([www.gardenzone.info](http://www.gardenzone.info))

*Monica van Wensveen*

# Autumn harvest: EGGPLANT

**Purple, pink, red, white, green, speckled, variegated, round, long, oval - eggplants are one of the most elegant and exotic members of the nightshade family.**

Eggplants are known as “aubergines” in Britain and France, “brinjal” in India and “melanzane” (or ‘crazy apple’) in Italy. It is thought that they originated in southern or central Asia, before making their way to the Middle East, then Spain and Italy with the Moors over 1000 years ago.

There are so many varieties to choose from! The most common in this region are probably the drought-tolerant *Black Beauty* and the early-maturing *Early Long Purple*.



## Site and soil

Eggplants like soils that absorb water effectively and drain well, so add plenty of organic matter at least two weeks before planting.

They will need a position in the garden with full sun - about 8 hours a day - and protection from the wind.

## Planting

Loosen the soil to around 15cm and break up large clods. Plant seedlings only once the risk of frost is negligible - November or December plantings should give an autumn harvest.

If growing from seed, sow in containers and keep in a warm place until about 10cm in height. Germination should occur in 15-20 days.

The bushes are quite compact, so allow about 50-75 cm diameter per plant.

## Growing

Like their tomato and capsicum cousins, eggplants are cold sensitive. Lengthy cool periods (even at night) will slow their growth and frost can kill them. For those unexpected cold snaps, protect young plants with shade cloth or a temporary cold frame.

Eggplants generally need at least 10 weeks to mature, although some of the newer or smaller varieties are quicker. They are pollinated by bees, so will need a healthy, active population near the garden.

With their shallow roots, they tend to be thirsty plants and a layer of mulch is a good investment to retain soil moisture. Their water requirements change over the growing period - fruiting plants require significantly more water than young plants. On the flip side, be careful not to overwater as the plants are susceptible to root rot.

## Harvesting

Harvest when the skin is bright and glossy and the fruit is firm. Cut the stems with a sharp knife or tool rather than pulling it from the plant as this can damage the fruit. Overmature fruit tends to be bitter.

## Problems

Eggplants suffer from many of the same problems as tomatoes and capsicums - wilt disease, root rot and nematodes in the soil. Crop rotation and garden hygiene will give your plants the best chance of beating these diseases.

## Choosing and using

Choose shiny, unblemished fruit that are heavy for their size and have a green stem. They can be stored in the fridge for about a week.

Avoid metallic bowls and carbon steel knives as they can discolour the flesh. To release bitter juices from larger fruit, sprinkle cut eggplant with salt and leave in a colander for at least 20 minutes. Rinse with cold water and pat dry. This will also prevent the eggplant from soaking up too much oil if frying.

Eggplants can be grilled, fried, baked or barbecued. They are perfect for Asian curries and antipasto and essential for moussaka, ratatouille, baba ghanouj and one of my favourite recipes - a Turkish dish of stuffed and baked eggplant called Imam bayildi, or ‘the imam fainted’.

## References and further reading

- Organic Vegetable Gardening (Annette McFarlane)
- Harvest (Meredith Kirton)
- How to grow eggplant ([www.howtogardenadvice.com](http://www.howtogardenadvice.com))
- City Food Growers ([cityfoodgrowers.com.au](http://cityfoodgrowers.com.au))

Monica van Wensveen

# Growing our own gourmet backyard

*Cai Thomas, the local founder of an exciting new chat forum focussing on organic backyard produce, Gourmet Backyard, shares his story...*

In late 2009, my wife and I were presented with the opportunity to live in the country outside Canberra. I grew up on a small organic farm and after spending over five years living in big cities, I was excited about the chance get back to a simpler lifestyle.

With ample space (250 acres) now at my disposal, I decided it was high time I reconnected with the earth. I yearned to grow as much of my own food as possible and spend time outside in nature as I did so. Having spent the first 18 years of my life as a vegetarian, I felt it was critically important that I understood exactly where the meat I now choose to eat came from.

With that in mind we began our journey.

The place we moved to, even though it was big, had little infrastructure – just a few raised brick garden beds overflowing with couch grass. We got the beds cleaned up and then imported 10 square metres of mushroom compost to help bring the ailing soil back to life. After digging that through, we spread sugar cane mulch around and started planting. Of course, tomatoes were at the top of the list – you just can't buy real tomatoes anymore! Naively, we planted five zucchinis and four



*The vegetable garden, in its first year*



*Cai's farm on the outskirts of Canberra*

cucumbers – just for the two of us. A few weeks later we had fridges bursting with both and spent months coming up with inventive ways to utilise our excess. Good thing my wife and I both love to cook!

With a vegetable garden now in full swing, I decided the next step was to reignite my childhood passion for poultry. Fresh eggs, a place for the kitchen scraps and animals wandering about – what could be better?

I was given two Rhode Island Red hens and two Leghorn hens, for which I quickly built a mobile A-frame chook house. Not long after that, I decided more chooks and more space for them was in order. I built a 40m x 15m run with a 3m x 3m garden shed in it. The plan was to get some dual-purpose birds for both eggs and our first go at home grown chicken meat.

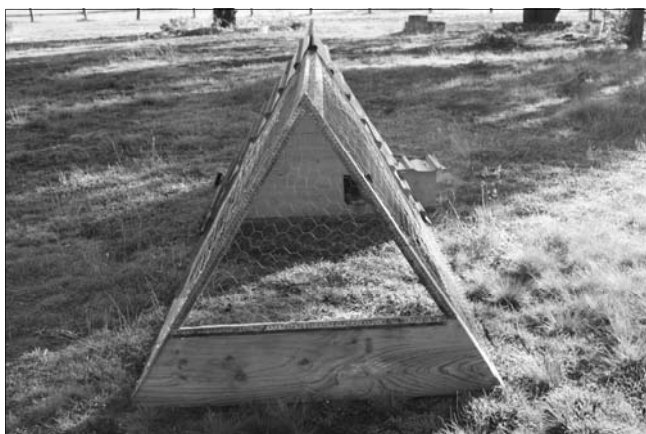
Of course, as a reformed vegetarian, this was a steep learning curve for me. I promised myself that if I was ever unable to 'do the deed' I would return to being vegetarian. We learnt what to do, and then eased ourselves in by doing 12 in one day. I found myself apologising to each chicken. It was tough at first, but the whole process was nowhere near as bad as I thought it would be and the satisfaction I found from having such a high quality of produce in our freezer was amazing.



*One of the first attempts at handling pigs*

Our next (and perhaps biggest yet) challenge was to rear two Large Black pigs for meat. We deliberately chose to purchase boys so we would not want to keep them. They have been with us for over two months now and we are already rather attached to them. We constantly remind one another of their purpose. Thus far, they have been great fun and are doing well.

We expanded our vegetable garden this year by doing some slightly more adventurous planting – like watermelons! We put a foot thick layer of mushroom compost over our compost bin and then



*The first chook house—an A-frame mobile style*

planted them into that. The theory is that the heat generated by composting scraps will aid the growth of the watermelons – it would normally not be hot enough for long enough to grow them where we live. This is working really well so far - we are perhaps two weeks away from our first home grown watermelon. We also have our first crop of pumpkins and potatoes in, and used our spare garden beds to grow a 12-month supply of

garlic over the winter.

In the midst of this massive lifestyle change, I found myself keen to share my experiences with others on a similar journey. I also wanted to learn from other people's experiences. I searched the Internet for hours trying to find a group to join. Finding nothing, I came up with the crazy notion of creating my own online forum. We named it Gourmet Backyard in honour of our attempt to create just that. In under a month we had over 50 members and more than 2000 posts.

Gourmet Backyard has since gone on to become a raging success – at least in our eyes! The majority of our members are from the Canberra district and it has grown to the point that it takes up quite a bit



*Planting strawberries*

of our time. We have had gatherings for local members and have met some lovely people we wouldn't have had the chance to know otherwise.

As our member count continues to climb and discussions on everything from ferret hunting to clover, chickens, cows and building wood-fired pizza ovens ensue, I feel confident that my efforts are worth it.

Go to [www.gourmetbackyard.com/forum](http://www.gourmetbackyard.com/forum) to see what we are up to. Good luck in creating your very own Gourmet Backyard!

*Cai Thomas*



# My Zucchini Summer

*No doubt many of us gardeners have come through the summer in Canberra with a fine stash of zucchini. With the extra rain bestowed upon us this season, many of us are enjoying mountains of the stuff! Including Cotter gardener, Gerry Jacobson.*

At the time of writing, it is high summer! I need to avoid the sun so I only go out to the Cotter Garden about once a week. I grow zucchini at home where I can inspect and pick them daily. I dislike the waste of seeing them swollen!

Out at the Cotter Garden, I grow more robust crops, those that don't need daily attention, like potatoes, silverbeet, leeks and rhubarb.

Of course this summer I needn't have restricted myself, but I wasn't to know it would be so cool and deliciously damp.

Something happened to my zucchini this spring. It was so wet in November and I think that snails ate most of the seedlings while I was enjoying the fleshpots of Sydney. Only two plants survived so we have a few zucchinis but not the usual February glut!

Hopefully other gardeners do have the usual glut, or more than, so here are two of my favourite summer recipes.



## Zucchini Tart

375g zucchini  
1 large onion  
1 green capsicum  
1 cup grated cheddar cheese  
1 cup self-raising flour  
½ cup olive oil  
5 eggs, lightly beaten  
salt, pepper

Grate unpeeled zucchini coarsely and finely chop the onion and capsicum. Combine with cheese, flour, oil, eggs, season with salt and pepper. Pour into well greased lamington tin (16 x 26 cm) and bake in moderate oven 30-40 minutes, or until well browned.

## Ratatouille

1 eggplant, chopped into 2cm pieces  
1 large onion, finely chopped  
1 tin pulped tomatoes  
1 green capsicum, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
4 zucchinis, thinly sliced  
1 tbs tomato paste  
1/3 cup olive oil  
salt and pepper

Warm olive oil in large frypan. Add the onions and then eggplant. Stew gently for 5 minutes. Add capsicum and garlic and stew for 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes. Add zucchini, tomato paste, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

*Gerry Jacobson*

## ~ Organic Gardening Courses ~

### The Canberra Organic Growers Society and CIT Solutions

Beginner's Organic Gardening  
Courses starting Sat Feb 26 and Sat May 14

Composting and Worm Farms  
Courses starting Sat April 9 and Sat June 25

Both courses are being held at the CIT at Bruce.

**For more information call 6207 4441  
or visit <http://citace.com.au>**

**Project SunShine**  
– increasing solar roof systems in  
the ACT by 1000 in 2011



## Did you know?

- Solar power is within reach of most homeowners in the ACT.
- Canberra has the second most sunshine hours out of Australia's major cities – but it has the highest carbon footprint.
- You can become an energy contributor and turn your home into a mini-solar power station by installing a solar system on your roof.
- You can use the clean, green solar energy you generate to earn money – which can be used to repay for the cost of your solar system OR for your daily energy needs.
- After the system pays for itself, it continues to earn you income throughout its long life, with panel output guaranteed for 25 years.
- That installing solar adds value to your home – it's an income generating asset.
- Current Government incentives make it more affordable than ever to install solar on the average family home.
- Producing your own electricity with a solar power system on your roof means a real reduction in your own carbon emissions – it benefits the environment as well as improving your household's bottom line.

***Project SunShine aims to spread the word about the benefits of solar to ACT householders. Together we can increase sustainable living in Canberra.***

***Project SunShine – it's a Conservation Council ACT Region initiative.***



***For more information about solar, you can download a handy consumer guide from  
[www.consact.org.au](http://www.consact.org.au)***

**For a quick and easy solar system quote from a reputable supplier  
you can phone **1800 993 334** and quote  
*Conservation Council ACT, or Project SunShine to receive an additional discount.*  
Email: [projectsunshine@consact.org.au](mailto:projectsunshine@consact.org.au) - Phone 02 6229 3200**

# Recipes to the Rescue

*Autumn is a scrumptious time of year! Jyoti Dambiec shares some tasty vegetarian recipes that can be used with produce leftover from our summer gardens and samples of our Autumn produce.*

Vegetarian cooking can be very quick and simple. Like anything, it's a matter of practice and tried-and-true recipes. There's nothing quicker to make than a tofu stir-fry, or a nutritious sprout salad or a meal of dhal and rice.

The following two recipes are tad involved, but also delicious and well worth the effort. They are from Kurma Dasa's cookbook *Cooking With Kurma - More Great Vegetarian Dishes*. It's a good idea to follow the recipe the first time as you'll get a great result, but then you may find you can take some short-cuts.

## Spicy Javanese Eggplant (Balada Terong)

(A spicy eggplant dish from Padang in Western Java that serves 4)

750 g small thin eggplants (5-6), cut into 1.5 cm rings  
3 large tomatoes, cut into quarters  
3 or 4 large red chillies  
2 tbs oil  
2 1.5 cm cubes galangal root  
Half a blade fresh lemon grass  
2 salam leaves or curry leaves  
2 tbs palm sugar  
1 tsp salt

Place tomatoes and whole chillies in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Remove the puree and set it aside.

Pour the oil into wok or pan over high heat. When the oil is hot, drop in the eggplant pieces in 2 or 3 batches, and deep-fry them until they are tender enough to pierce with a knife point. Set the eggplants aside to drain.

Heat another pan or wok over moderate heat and add the oil. When hot, drop in the galangal and lemongrass and saute for one minute, or until fragrant.

Add the curry leaves or salam leaves, fry momentarily, then add the tomato puree. Cook tomatoes for 5 or 10 mins until thick and saucy.

Add the sugar and salt, stir to dissolve, and gently fold in the eggplant pieces. Serve hot.

NB: I use less chilli (1 or 2). I also don't deep-fry the eggplants, just shallow fry. It also works nicely without frying them at all if you prefer not to use oil. You can substitute fresh ginger root for galangal. Ordinary sugar can be used in place of palm sugar. And tinned tomatoes can speed the whole process up - but of course none of us organic gardeners would think of not

using our own delicious tomatoes!

## Curried Malay Noodles (Laksa) Serves 6-8

Laksa is a taste sensation - a delicious one-pot soupy combination of mild, chili-hot, rich, aromatic and delicate flavours, and a tantalising combination of crunch, soft and milky textures. This recipe looks long and complicated, but it's worth the effort.

### For the curry:

3.5 tbs dried tamarind, soaked in 1 cup hot water  
1 cup stringless beans cut into 2.5cm lengths  
Oil for deep-frying  
400g firm tofu, cut into 1.5cm cubes  
2-3 small thin eggplants, bias cut into 0.5cm rings  
1 tbs cumin seeds  
1 tbs coriander seeds  
5 or 6 large dried red chillies  
3 tbs oil  
One 5cm cube fresh peeled ginger, shredded  
One 2.5cm cube fresh peeled galangal, shredded  
Finely-sliced white inner stems of 2-3 stalks of lemongrass  
1 1/2 teas. yellow asafetida powder  
1 tsp turmeric  
5-6 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
1 tbs malay curry powder  
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper  
2 cups potatoes cut into 1.5cm cubes  
1 1/2 cups carrots, bias cut into 0.5cm rings  
2 cups rich vegetable stock  
2-3 tbs palm sugar  
2 teas salt  
4 cups (1L) thick coconut milk

1kg fresh rice noodles, or 350 g dried rice vermicelli

### The garnish:

2 cups bean sprouts, 2 small seedless green cucumbers (unpeeled and cut into matchstick-size strips)  
1 small bunch laksa leavesn (Vietnamese Mint), shredded  
coarsely-ground black pepper  
lime wedges  
sambal oelek, hot chilli paste (optional)

### To prepare curry:

Squeeze and strain soaking tamarind, discarding seeds and fibres. Set aside the puree.

Steam beans for 10 mins until tender. Drain and set aside.

Heat oil in heavy pan or wok. When very hot add the tofu cubes, a few batches at a time, and deep-fry until dark golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Deep-fry eggplant in same hot oil until tender. Drain and set aside.

Sprinkle cumin, coriander and dried chillies in small saucepan over moderate heat. Dry roast 5 mins or until



fragrant and slightly dark. Grind in coffee spice mill or coffee grinder.

Pour 3 tbs oil into 5 litre saucepan over moderate heat. When hot, add ginger and galangal. Fry 2-3 mins until opaque and fragrant. Add sliced lemongrass, fry for another minute. Sprinkle in asafetida powder and turmeric, fry momentarily, then add tomatoes. Stirring occasionally, cook for 5-10 mins until soft and broken down.

Add the dry-roasted spices, curry powder, black pepper, potato, carrot and vegetable stock. Stir to combine and cover with lid. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5-10 mins until vegetables are tender.

While the curry is cooking, cook the noodles briefly in lightly-salted boiling water. Drain and keep hot.

Add the tamarind puree to the simmering curry then add the cooked beans, sugar, salt, fried tofu, and coconut milk. Allow the mixture to almost come to the boil, add the eggplant, stir through gently and remove from heat.

#### To assemble the laksa curry:

Scoop a large handful of hot noodles into each individual serving bowl. Ladle on the curry. Arrange the garnish on top.

NB: I use less chillies - about 2. I also use one tin coconut cream (there's also a low-fat variety). If you prefer to use less oil, the eggplant and tofu can be shallow fried - or not fried at all. I often use chinese white wheat noodles - the ones that come in wide strips. You can buy asafoetida from Indian/Asian food shops and it also goes by the name of 'hing'. It gives a mild onion taste and aids digestion. It's good to add to bean and lentil dishes.

It is easier to use tamarind pulp rather than dried tamarind—this can be purchased in a 454 g plastic container from Asian/Indian food shops. It is a useful ingredient which adds a sour taste to curries, soups and chutnies. I also use it in sauce for stir-fried vegetables. Bharat is an excellent Indian shop in Oatley Court, Belconnen, which stocks a huge range of products, including asafoetida and tamarind pulp.

### **Brooklyn Pad Thai Serves 4**

From *Vegan with a Vengeance* (a friendly, fun cookbook!)

#### Sauce:

6 tbs soya sauce/tamari

6 tbs sugar

2 tbs tomato puree

2 tbs chilli sauce or hot sauce

3 tbs rice wine vinegar

3 tbs tamarind concentrate/pulp or lime juice

#### For the Pad Thai:

6 tbs peanut oil

450g firm tofu

1 medium-sized red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 tbs finely chopped lemongrass

125g bean sprouts

8 spring onions, sliced into 4cm lengths

2 small dried red chillies, crumbled

50g chopped roasted peanuts

4tbs chopped fresh coriander

Lime wedges for serving

Prepare the rice noodles according to the directions on packet. Set aside.

Mix together the ingredients for the sauce.

Preheat large non-stick frying pan over moderate-high heat. Pour 2 tbs oil into pan then quickly add tofu.

Stir-fry 4-5 minutes until the tofu is crisp on the outside. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Pour 2 tbs more oil into pan. Add the onion and stir-fry 30 seconds. Add the garlic and lemongrass and fry 30 seconds. Add the sauce and when it starts to bubble (a few seconds) add the noodles. Cook for two minutes, stirring constantly, then add the tofu, sprouts, spring onions, chillies and peanuts. Stir for 30 seconds.

Transfer to serving plates and garnish with coriander and lime wedges.

NB: I make this without onions, garlic and spring onions. I use one tbs finely-chopped fresh ginger root and 1/2 tsp asafoetida instead and fry it at step 3. The asafoetida only needs to fry for a few seconds. I also often use wheat noodles rather than rice noodles.

### **Buying ingredients for vegetarian cooking**

Check out the many Asian and Indian food shops as they stock a much greater variety of ingredients than supermarkets. Don't be afraid to try new things - there's a whole world of exciting ingredients out there! These shops are often cheaper than the supermarkets. Using whole-roasted spices such as coriander, cumin and mustard seeds is better than using 'curry' powders and it's easy!

On tofu: don't be afraid of this amazing vegetarian staple. Buy it from Asian/Indian food shops where there is a variety of brands and it's usually much fresher and tastier than the tired supermarket tofu. Get the freshest block you can find as older tofu can develop a vinegar-like taste. Tofu is a wonder food, high in protein and has no fat or cholesterol. It's also an excellent source of calcium if you buy the variety made with calcium sulphate not nigari. It comes in 'hard/firm' and 'soft'. The firm is the one to use for stir-fries. There are many ways to cook with tofu!

Jyoti Dambiec

President ACT Vegetarian Society

For questions about vegetarian ingredients, cooking or other related things, feel free to contact me at [president@vegetariansociety.org.au](mailto:president@vegetariansociety.org.au).

## COGS Community Gardens Watering Rules as of 1 November 2010

1. The ACTEW Permanent Water Conservation Measures must be complied with at all times in COGS gardens. Details are available at [www.actew.com.au](http://www.actew.com.au). Under these measures handheld hoses fitted with trigger nozzles, buckets and watering cans may be used at any time. Gardens may only be watered without causing pooling or runoff. Drippers may only be used between 6 pm and 9 am.
2. Sprinklers are not allowed in COGS gardens at any time, even when ACTEW allows their use.
3. Tap timers are not allowed in COGS gardens.
4. No unattended watering is allowed in COGS gardens. You must be present at all times while you are watering unless you have specifically delegated this responsibility to another gardener who is prepared to take on the responsibility for abiding by the rules.
5. The water must be turned off at the meter when no one is in the garden - this is the responsibility of the last gardener to leave.

Failure to comply with these rules will result in an official warning from either the garden convenor or the COGS committee. A second offence will result in forfeiture of your plot and eviction from the garden.

Some practices which contravene the watering rules, but gardeners have attempted to excuse, include:

- leaving hoses running on the ground while they are working in their plot
- taking the nozzle off the hose to water
- filling trenches with water
- using a sprinkler
- leaving drippers on while they leave the garden for a couple of hours

## ECO MEATS

### Your organic butcher

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

**ORGANIC** pork and free range organic chickens

**FREE RANGE GAME MEAT** including emu, goat, crocodile, kangaroo, wallaby, rabbit, duck & venison

**CONTINENTAL DELI** including pepperoni, cabanossi, trout, salmon, cheeses, organic stock, bread, bagels, dips, salami & smoked meats

**FAIR TRADE** Jasper coffee

LINDSAY and EDMUNDS Homemade Organic Chocolate



### Specialists in organic pesticide-free meats

Shop 41  
Belconnen Fresh Food Markets  
Lathlain Street, Belconnen

Open Wednesday  
to Sunday

8am to 6pm

Phone 6251 9018  
Fax 6251 9017



**Can't remember where you read  
that story about  
carrots in *Canberra Organic*?**

Problem solved! We now have a comprehensive index of articles published in the magazine from 2000-2010.

The index can be found on the COGS website at [www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au) or in hard copy form at monthly general meetings.

Thanks to Margaret Richardson for compiling this new index.

## 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.**



## ACT VEGETARIAN SOCIETY

### Want to help the planet, yourself and millions of animals?

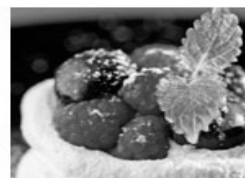
The ACT Vegetarian Society welcomes new members. We'd like to help you with information and support about vegetarian and vegan diets and provide opportunities to meet others with the same interest.

If you would like to join, simply use any of the payment options for membership on our website ([www.vegetariansociety.org.au](http://www.vegetariansociety.org.au)), including choosing a quarterly magazine, if you wish.

Memberships range from \$16 to \$30.

If you would like to know more, please contact us:

[contact@vegetariansociety.org.au](mailto:contact@vegetariansociety.org.au) OR [president@vegetariansociety.org.au](mailto:president@vegetariansociety.org.au) OR 0417 464 675



### DID YOU KNOW:

According to the United Nations, the meat industry causes more greenhouse gas emissions than all the cars, trucks, planes, and ships in the world combined.

It takes up to 7kgs of grain to produce 0.5kg of meat. The production of 1kg of beef takes 15,500 litres of water. 1kg of wheat takes only 1,300 litres of water.

**Eating vegetarian food is more environmentally sustainable.**

*"Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet." – Albert Einstein*

## COGS membership application/ renewal

**TO** The Membership Secretary  
 Canberra Organic Growers Society  
 PO Box 347 Dickson ACT 2602

### Application details

1.  New application *or*  Renewal
2.  Single membership  
 Concession Please attach copy of details  
 Family membership
3.  One year payment *or*  Two year payment

### Member details (Please print clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

If a Family Membership, please provide additional names

Adult 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Child 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Child 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Title for address label \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb/Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a plot in a COGS garden?

If so, which garden? \_\_\_\_\_

### I agree to follow the rules of COGS during my membership.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 (signature)

### For COGS administration

Membership number \_\_\_\_\_ Bank ID \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership benefits

- Monthly meetings with guest speakers, organic seed and seedling exchange and sales
- Quarterly magazine (*Canberra Organic*); reduced members' advertising rates
- Access to extensive COGS library
- Eligibility for plot allocation in a COGS community garden
- Excursions and social activities

### Membership categories

- Single membership: 1 adult
- Family membership: 1 or 2 adults and their children under 18 years
- Associate membership: Available to schools, businesses, and other organic and relevant interest groups

### Membership rates

Current membership rates for one and two years are:

<i>New members</i>	1 year	2 years
Single/family	\$25	\$40
Concession	\$15	\$24

<i>Renewing members</i>	1 year	2 years
Single/family	\$20	\$35
Concession	\$12	\$21

Concession rates are available for Commonwealth healthcare card holders and full time students. Copies of evidence for concession rates must be provided when renewing your membership.

COGS memberships are valid for 12 months (or 2 years) from the joining date.

To assist members a reminder letter will be sent with the last *Canberra Organic* prior to the membership expiry date.

If membership expires, the person in question:

- Ceases to be a member of COGS
- Receives no further publications
- Loses entitlement to any plot held in a COGS community garden

### Please send your completed application form, with cheque or money order to:

The Membership Secretary  
 Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.  
 PO Box 347  
 Dickson  
 ACT 2602

Cheques and money orders should be made payable to 'Canberra Organic Growers Society' or 'COGS'.

# 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 lettuce (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, wheat and rye-corn.



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 = ST= 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.

## Q&A @ COGS

**Q** “I try to eat produce that is in season, whether I grow it myself or buy it. But sometimes it’s hard to think of recipe ideas. How can I find out what to do with vegetables that are in season?”

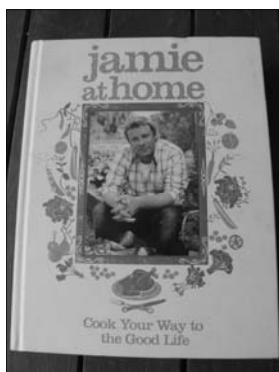
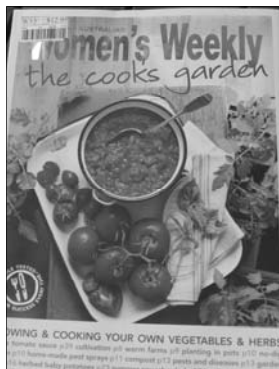
**A** Backyard vegetable gardens are growing in popularity and there seems to be a plethora of books and magazines out there that are focussed on organic gardening and also kitchen gardening.

The following books are handy to have on your bookshelf:

***Eat Fresh: Cooking Through the Seasons*** by Annabel Langbein, published by Simon & Schuster, 2009. Set out in seasons, this is a cookbook full of yummy recipes using seasonal produce.

***The Cook’s Garden***, by The Australian Women’s Weekly, available now at newsagencies. This useful magazine-style book is comprised of both growing tips and recipes, arranged in seasons.

***Jamie at home: Cook your way to the Good Life***, by Jamie Oliver, Penguin Books, 2007. This hardback tome is both visually stunning and functional. It offers scrumptious recipe ideas and vegetable growing tips for each season. Despite it being based on gardening in the UK, this book is still relevant for Canberra gardeners.



And if you want to preserve your produce to use in the off-season...

***How to Store Your Home Grown Produce***, by John & Val Harrison, Constable & Robinson, 2010.

## Little Sprout’s Corner

© Majura Primary School Kitchen Garden

Majura Primary School is the ACT demonstration school for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation. The Founda-

tion aims to help introduce children to the wonders and health benefits of good food grown in a productive food garden. Majura Primary has a thriving school kitchen garden



which serves to embed the positive benefits of kitchen gardens into the school curriculum.

Have a look at the school’s website—you’ll find pictures, recipes and a kitchen and gardening blog. You might get ideas to inspire your own children!

[www.majuraps.act.edu.au](http://www.majuraps.act.edu.au)



*This spot in the magazine is devoted to kids and gardening. If you want to contribute to the next issue, please email [editor@coqs.asn.au](mailto:editor@coqs.asn.au).*

## Useful spot



**Paddle pop sticks make great labels for seedling punnets or plant markers in the garden bed.**

# COGS NOTICE BOARD

## COGS Monthly Meetings

7:30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the  
**MAJURA COMMUNITY CENTRE,  
ROSEVEAR PLACE, DICKSON**

**22 March** COGS Annual General Meeting where the new COGS Committee for 2011/2012 will be elected. Will be followed by a harvest night so bring along your fruit and veg triumphs and disasters to share your experiences with others.

**26 April 2011** 'Feel good politics: The role of community gardens in the ACT' with Dr Bethaney Turner from the Uni of Canberra (and the Kaleen garden). This talk is based on the results of Bethaney's interviews with COGS gardeners undertaken in 2010.

### Eat Your Lawn

One of a useful series of workshops being held at the Canberra Environment Centre for Canberra gardeners has a focus on extending the growing season.

*Tuesday March 15, \$15, for more information email [info@ecoaction.com.au](mailto:info@ecoaction.com.au).*

### Plastic pots available

COGS member Melissa Dede has hundreds of plastic pots in various sizes that she would like to recycle. Please contact Melissa on 6166 1898 or 0420 478 2007 if you could use them.

## Want to help produce Canberra Organic magazine?

Do you have a yearning for gardening, a burning desire to write about organic growing, a penchant for Publisher or an eye for photography?

COGS is searching for a volunteer or two to help with the quarterly magazine, *Canberra Organic*. Production involves sourcing stories, writing, editing, photography and desktop publishing. The magazine is published 4 times per year, in line with the seasons.

If you are interested, please email Angela at [editor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:editor@cogs.asn.au) for more information.

## Out and About

### Slow Food Community Banquet

Slow Food Canberra is hosting an outdoor banquet in Garema Place to promote the social and health benefits of sustainability through food choice. The banquet will be followed by a screening of the film *Dirt*. *March 11, 6.30-10pm, \$15pp.*

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### Canberra Harvest Festival

The 3rd annual Canberra Harvest Festival will include information and market stalls, workshops, talks on sustainable gardening and food issues, a vegetable growing competition and more. Entry is free. *Saturday 26th March, Environment Centre, cnr Lawson Cct and Lennox Crossing, Acton.*

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### Calling all pumpkin eaters!

If you have a hankering for all things pumpkin-like, come along to the Collector Village Pumpkin Festival. There will be a pumpkin growing competition, pumpkin soup, pumpkin scones, regional produce, stalls, activities, performances and displays. Entry is \$5.00 per family. The entry fee raises funds to improve Collector community facilities such as the Collector Memorial Hall.

*Sun May 1, Collector Village  
[www.pumpkinfestival.com.au](http://www.pumpkinfestival.com.au)*

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### National Sustainable Food Summit

The National Sustainable Food Summit is being held in Melbourne in April. With speakers such as Tim Flannery, the Summit will focus on recent policy developments relevant to the issues of food security and the National Food Plan.

*April 5-6, ph (02) 9555 4203 for information or registration.*

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### For the urban farmer

Many city folk yearn for the good life in the country—a veg garden, keeping chickens, milking a cow. But there's no need to move to the country! Learn how to be an urban farmer with a CIT Solutions course. Enrol now!

*Monday June 20 6-9pm, Bruce CIT,  
[see http://citace.com.au](http://citace.com.au) for more details.*

Don't forget to check the COGS website and blog at [www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au) for updates

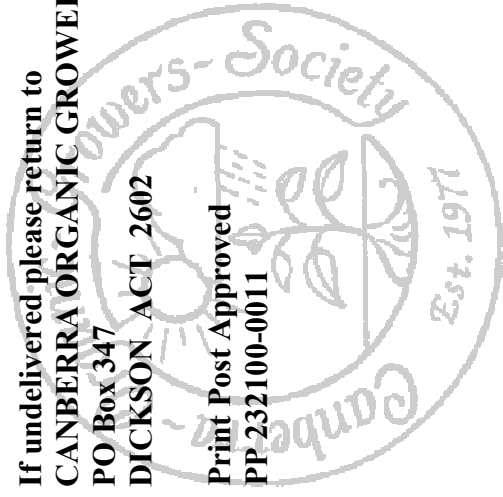
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