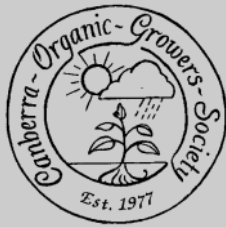


# Canberra organic

The quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

**Ladybirds in the garden**  
**Cool season legumes**  
**Kaleen Open Garden**



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)

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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 meetings. 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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Andrew Cairns, Dave Rice, Adrienne Fazekas, Margaret Richardson, Janet Popovic, Glynis Kennedy, Robyn Power

### Cover photos

Adrienne Fazekas

FRONT COVER:

A surprise visitor to the backyard strawberry patch

BACK COVER:

Clockwise from the top left:

Rodent damage to beetroot, zucchini and tomato

28 spotted ladybird larvae damage to a young pumpkin and a cucumber leaf

Powdery mildew on a zucchini

Pumpkin beetle damage to a zucchini

Pear and cherry slug damage to a quince leaf



Friend and foe: see pages 13 & 14

### WE LOVE YOUR INPUT!

Please send any comments, articles, photos, news items, event information or recipes to  
*Canberra Organic.*

**Email:** [editor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:editor@cogs.asn.au)

**Post:** PO Box 347 Dickson ACT 2602.

## CANBERRA ORGANIC Volume 20 Number 1 (Issue 76)

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

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

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

### EDITOR

### 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  
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 550.

### 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. Advertised products and services are not specifically endorsed by COGS.

## Editor's note

COGS is currently without an editor to oversee the production of future issues of the *Canberra Organic* magazine. This magazine remains very popular with members and for those members without a community garden plot it is one of the main benefits of COGS membership.

As a volunteer organisation COGS is dependent on its members to volunteer to do the jobs required to keep the Society running and to provide the benefits members have come to expect.

Production of *Canberra Organic* involves writing and sourcing articles and photographs, layout/desktop publishing, liaising with advertisers, organising printing and distribution to members and retail outlets.

If you would like to become part of the magazine production team please contact the COGS secretary at [info@cogs.asn.au](mailto:info@cogs.asn.au).



Friend or foe? See page 14

### ***Canberra Organic* by email**

*Canberra Organic* is now available via email as a 2 - 3Mb pdf file.

The email version includes colour photos.

If you would like to receive future copies of *Canberra Organic* by email instead of post please let us know at

[members@cogs.asn.au](mailto:members@cogs.asn.au)

This edition will be emailed to all those members for whom COGS has a valid email address.

If you do not receive your copy in the next two weeks, and would like one, please provide or update your email address by emailing

[members@cogs.asn.au](mailto:members@cogs.asn.au)

## President's report: Autumn 2012

What a wet, wet summer we are having! If I turn my back on my blackberries for a day the ripe berries grow a black mould on them and my tomatoes are taking for ever to ripen. I'm particularly enjoying walking in the garden first thing in the morning when it is cool and damp, the air smells of wet earth and the sun glints on the drops of water hanging from every plant. There's no better place to be.

This edition of the magazine includes the notice for our Annual General Meeting in March. This is an important meeting as it is when we reflect on the year that has been, and elect the committee that will guide the organisation through the year to come. I really encourage you to attend and to consider nominating for a position on the committee.

This has been my second year as a committee member and it's been a great experience. The people on the committee are wonderful – dedicated to organic growing, the environment, and supporting people's ability to grow their own food close to home. They are fantastic to work with and have been very supportive of me

personally as I learnt the role of president.

Being president of an organisation like COGS is a big responsibility and also very rewarding. You have the opportunity to speak for the organisation in a variety of forums, to advocate for organic growing both at home and in community gardens.

Unfortunately – and I say this with some regret – I will not be standing for a second year as president, although I hope to stay on the committee. I've found it hard to do justice to the role, in combination with a fairly demanding job. I am hoping that someone keen, with a little more time (or perhaps better time management skills!) will put their hand up for the job.



*Alison*

### Wanted: Volunteers for Heritage Project

To help celebrate Canberra's centenary in 2013, COGS is recording the personal histories of as many senior or long-serving members who are willing to be interviewed, and to compile their reminiscences into a small book to go in the Canberra Museum & Gallery, and to be made available to the general public.

Would you like to help? COGS Committee member Walter Steensby and member Bethaney Turner are looking for people who would like to share their stories. If you think you're suitable, or if you know someone else who is, please get in touch soon.

It'll be great fun, and it'll give younger people a way to learn from your lives and experience.

Contact Walter Steensby on 6254 3881 or [walter.steensby@canberra.edu.au](mailto:walter.steensby@canberra.edu.au) or  
Bethaney Turner on 6201 5732 or [bethaney.turner@canberra.edu.au](mailto:bethaney.turner@canberra.edu.au)

Hope to hear from you soon!

# Canberra Organic Growers Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7:30pm 27 March 2012

**The COGS Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 27 March 2012 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 27 March at 7.30 pm and please bring along some produce you have grown.



# Around the COGS Gardens

## Dickson

The last three months have been pretty quiet at Dickson garden – everyone has their head down busy in their own plots. The meagre sunshine has put a bit of a damper on our summer crops this year, but everyone is trying to make the best of what we've got, and lots of traditional summer veg is still thriving. We're also looking forward to the return of one of our gardeners who has been away for a few months. Now all we need are some sunny days to ripen up the tomatoes and everything will be good!

We've also gotten a bit of publicity, with Dickson garden being featured in the 2012 ACT Environment Commissioner's State of the Environment Report. It's nice to have some recognition for the work that COGS does in a wider forum.

*Andrew Cairns*



*A productive plot at Dickson garden*

## Charnwood

The influence of La Nina is not as strong this summer as it was last summer, but temperatures still seem rather mild for this time of year. Not great if you want your tomatoes to ripen quickly, but good for being out in the garden.

On a recent visit to Corin Dam a friend commented that dams look their best when full (Corin is 100% full as at 30 January). It is comforting to know we have plenty of water at the moment, but we need to maintain good watering habits developed over many years of dry weather.

With recent rain Charnwood is looking very productive. Corn is filling out, and beans are numerous. Most gardeners are keeping on top of the never-say-die couch grass. Thick mulch on paths has the double benefit of suppressing weeds and reducing the amount of mowing we have to do.

Special mention should be made of long-term gardener Gita Curnow, who has recently shifted enormous amounts of mulch by wheelbarrow to the garden's communal beds, which mainly consist of ornamentals and native shrubs to attract small birds. Gita has maintained the communal beds for many years. These beds make the garden a more pleasant space. Another pat on the back is for Steve Dangaard who organised working bees for many years. We are now looking for someone to fill his shoes.

In recent months we have welcomed Sam, Jenny and Maria to the garden. As at 30 January there is no waiting list and one (quite challenging) plot available.

*Haydn Burgess*

## Cook

Summer is here and the gardeners at Cook Garden are busy harvesting crops. The tomatoes in the garden have been slow to ripen because of the cool weather but in the past few weeks they seem to have started ripening. Beans, zucchinis, rhubarb and other summer crops are doing well

The Cook Community Garden now has two extra garden plots as the community herb garden (which was mostly weeds) and the land next to it has been turned into plots of 30 sq metres each. These plots were readily taken up by the people on the waiting list. The waiting list, despite the garden having two extra plots, one person on the list leaving Canberra, another finding a plot in another garden, still has 18 people on it. Some people on the list have their names on a number of the COGS gardens' waiting lists so they may get a plot at another garden before one becomes available at Cook.

We had a working bee at the garden at the end of November and we managed to eliminate a lot of the weeds which were growing in the communal garden areas.



*Looking west to Mt. Painter from Cook Garden*

## Around the COGS gardens continued

The mowing roster is working well and the garden is looking quite well kept. We bought two fold up tables so that we can now readily have shared meals at our community bbqs.

A number of our gardeners have small children and babies and it is great to see them in the garden. I am sure they will appreciate the hard work that goes into producing the produce for their meals.

*Glynis Kennedy*

### Holder

Everything seems to be flowing nicely at Holder. All the plots are occupied and we have 3 people on our waiting list.

Our monthly working bees are in full swing and much has been achieved to keep the grass at bay. With the extensive new developments going on close by, we have had an influx of mice and rats. While these haven't posed much of a problem, we have had a couple of snake moments. One lively character was found inside a compost bin.

The vegies are coming along nicely, although some are a little slow. With the late summer and intermittent rain periods, some crops are taking a little longer to ripen. The tomatoes are slowly but surely starting to mature. No such fear with the zucchinis though, most plot owners have had some excellent results so far.

Overall though, everyone is happy with their plots and the garden is looking great!

Can I put it out to all other plot holders throughout Canberra and the local area that everyone is welcome to come and visit us and exchange ideas on-site. Just about any time on a weekend someone is in attendance, but if anyone would like to prearrange a visit, please call Dave on 0418 699 959 or Steve on 0410 518529.

*Dave Rice*

### O'Connor

The O'Connor waitlist is very long and, as we are a small garden, we anticipate there will be few plot vacancies each year. We have a new manager reviewing the waitlist in the next month or so. If you have changed your email address or other details since you registered for this list please phone Deb on 6248 5485.

Recently we farewelled Tracy and welcomed Deb and Jess and Jack. Deb transformed her plot in a few months to one of the most productive and certainly the prettiest in the garden. Jess and Jack have built an amazing wicking bed in a plot that has problems with root intrusions and drainage; this is a very interesting experiment. The design principles are at <http://waterright.com.au/index.html>.



*A fine specimen of Holder's tomatoes in action*

Chris' plot earned a full-page feature in the Food and Wine section of the Canberra Times on November 30<sup>th</sup> last year.

The growing season began poorly, with some seeds rotting in the cold and damp and others being scorched. Tomato blight took out a lot of plants. However the damp "English" conditions produced a massive crop of berries for a couple of our gardeners. We are now getting reasonable levels of production but fruits such as capsicum are very late. We need to work on pest and disease management for our young apple trees which tried to produce us a small crop this year.

Gardeners have been pleased with a new cultivar of climbing bean called "Vitalis". A few of us have been growing something similar sourced from mature supermarket beans, so it is a relief to know we now have an alternative seed supply.

Rats and ravenous adolescent currawongs have been our major pests. The rats ate a precious crop of blueberries in a single night, and the currawongs are addicted to ripe tomatoes. Fortunately we have only seen a few green vegetable bugs in recent weeks!

Recent imports to the garden have been 10 cubic metres of aged horse poo, some clay to experimentally augment poor soil in one plot, and a gift of 40 litres of Steiner-recipe biodynamic worm tea.

*Jenny Clark*



# Kaleen Open Garden weekend

Kaleen garden held its second open garden weekend on February 11 and 12 as part of the Australian Open Garden Scheme. Over one hundred people attended despite some stiff competition from the Multicultural festival and the opening of the new Discovery Garden.

Garden members delivered a series of interesting talks during the weekend on subjects including: Setting up worm farms; Growing and using herbs; Introducing bees into your garden and Backyard chooks. A cooking demonstration using seasonal, organic produce proved very popular.

Produce including seeds, plants, honey, eggs and jams along with tea, coffee and cakes were sold to raise funds for the garden. The money raised will be put towards the cost of a pergola.

Many thanks to all those gardeners and their families who helped out over the weekend. Thanks also to Bunnings Belconnen, Superbarn Kaleen and Seasol International for generous donations and to Andrew Leigh MP and Giralang Scouts for the loan of marquees.



Glitter tattoos with Jenny from Bunnings Belconnen

Above: Some of the productive plots at Kaleen



Vaughn Winter's popular cooking demonstration



Sheltering from the afternoon downpour

# Weather and Gardens

Probably the most notable feature of the weather this summer has been the rainfall. During the three months November to January the Bureau of Meteorology reported 409.2mm of rain at its Tuggeranong station. This compares with a long term average of 173.7mm for this period. This has given our plants a remarkable boost, not to mention our wallets because of lower water bills.

The damp weather has also given some garden pests and diseases a boost as well. Consequently, we need to be vigilant in keeping a close eye on pest population explosions and fungal diseases. At the time of writing this article it has been raining for several days and I have had a population explosion of twenty eight spotted ladybirds on my zucchini in the last couple of days. Hopefully my egg squashing on the zucchini leaves during breaks in the rain will keep the population under control. Other gardeners have also noticed a large increase in the number of pumpkin beetles during this bout of wet weather.

The relative humidity has also been considerably higher than normal during the last three months. The 3pm relative humidity was 46% compared with the long term average for the period of 36%. The high relative humidity together with the rain has been very favourable for a variety of fungal diseases to develop. Several gardeners have reported outbreaks of brown rot on their stone fruit. Wet leaves and warm weather are perfect for the germination of the fungal spores which produce brown rot.

In November the wet spring led to an outbreak of fleck, another fungal disease, on my quince. I'm hoping it doesn't return with the current relatively

cool, wet spell of weather. Maximum temperatures during December and January have been between 2 and 3 degrees cooler than the average and minimum temperatures were about 1 degree cooler than average.

The seasonal outlook issued by the Bureau of Meteorology in January for the period February to April suggests that we can expect about average rainfall, above average maximum temperatures and about average minimum temperatures as the La Nina event weakens in Autumn. Hopefully this will give us a good harvest this year if we are able to keep the pests and fungal diseases under control.

For more information on the climate and the Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlooks go to [www.bom.gov.au/climate](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate).

*Keith Colls*



An apricot with Brown rot  
*Photo A. Fazekas*

## 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 during Autumn.

Bulk deliveries to community gardens can also be arranged through your garden convenor.



Price: \$3 per bag

# Tree Onions

Tree onions, or Walking onions, are a very handy crop to have in your Canberra garden. Unlike 'normal' onions, they are easy to grow perennials and not fussy about planting times.

They provide onion bulbs and greens all year round and need only good drainage, plenty of sunlight and to be dug and replanted every few years. The bottom part of the plant is similar looking to shallots, but the top grows a bunch of small onion "sets" which can be planted whole in autumn or winter, or divided into single bulbs, and these will produce a whole crop the following year. You can eat these or pickle them but they are a bit fiddly to peel!



Bulbs should be dug when the tops begin to dry and fall over in mid-to-late summer. A good clump of bulbs will have developed by this time. When dug, allow to dry and then clean and separate bulbs. Store in a cool, dry place or hang up in open-weave bags.

The flavour is quite strong so they are great for



cooking, and you can increase the size of the bottom bulbs by preventing growth of tops.

And why are they called 'walking onions'? Because the top bunch of little onion sets will fall over, and start a new plant where they touch the ground. They will therefore 'walk' all over your garden if they aren't disturbed! There will be a supply of these onion sets for free at the next COGS meeting.

*Margaret Richardson*

References:

<http://www.egyptianwalkingonion.com/>  
[http://www.gardenexpress.com.au/growing\\_guide/tree\\_onions/tree\\_onions.html](http://www.gardenexpress.com.au/growing_guide/tree_onions/tree_onions.html)

## Horticultural Society of Canberra Autumn Flower Show

3 - 4 March 2012

### Once again the show will include a competition for Community Garden Displays

All COGS gardens are encouraged to enter a display of flowers, fruit and/or vegetables grown in their community garden. Entries are to be displayed in an area 750mm deep and 1200mm wide.

1st prize of a \$50 Bunnings Gift Voucher, 2nd: \$10, 3rd: \$5 will be awarded

for each of the following categories.

- Overall appearance and Quality
- Most outstanding flower exhibit
- Most outstanding vegetable exhibit
- Most outstanding fruit exhibit

For further details visit the Horticultural Society website at [www.hsoc.org.au](http://www.hsoc.org.au)  
or follow the link on the COGS homepage at [www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au)

# Ladybirds in the Garden

This Spring and Summer seem to have been very favourable for ladybirds. Many different species have been observed this year. As all organic gardeners know, ladybirds are considered to be very desirable residents in our gardens. Although not all ladybirds are welcome, most provide a very useful service in gardens by eating many of the common insects which cause us problems such as aphids, two spotted mites, whiteflies, leaf hoppers, thrips, scales, mealy bugs, eggs of pest insects and some psyllids as well as fungi such as powdery mildew.

To encourage ladybirds it is important to provide them with a suitable habitat. I have found that flowering dill and fennel attract huge numbers of ladybirds, possibly because the dying plants seem to attract a lot of aphids, but the adult ladybirds also eat pollen and sometimes the honeydew exuded from sucking insects so that seems to be an added attraction for the ladybirds.

To maintain a balance between the number of pests and their predators, such as ladybirds, it is important to regularly inspect the garden to avoid spraying when predators are present. Even organically acceptable sprays can severely disrupt the biological balance between pest and predator we are aiming for in our gardens. This requires that we are able to recognise the predator insects, their larvae and eggs. Because ladybirds (both beneficial and pest species) have been relatively abundant this year it is a good opportunity to consider the characteristics of the various species found in our gardens. The photographs which follow are from COGS members' private gardens or the Cook community garden.

## Identifying Ladybirds

Ladybirds belong to the order Coleoptera which comprises the beetles and weevils. Ladybirds comprise the Coccinellidae family of which there are several tribes, Chilocorini, Diomini, Coccidulini, Coccinellini and Epilichnini. All ladybirds undergo complete metamorphosis which means there are three distinct life stages or forms in which they may appear in the garden. It is useful to be able to recognise each of these. The adult female lays eggs on suitable plants. The eggs hatch into larva which gradually grow to full size and then pupate. After a few days as a pupa they then emerge as an adult ladybird. The appearance of the adult ladybird is well known to all gardeners but their larval forms and their eggs are less well known.

For many photographs of ladybird adults, larvae, eggs and pupae see

[http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_ladybirds/Coccinellinae.html](http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_ladybirds/Coccinellinae.html)

## Chilocorini tribe

Ladybirds belonging to the Chilocorini tribe are important predators of scale insects. They are usually shiny and rarely have the distinctive dots or markings on their wing covers that members the other tribes have. I did not find any in my garden this year, however, as they are such important predators, if you have a scale problem they can be purchased live from biological control companies (see [www.goodbugs.org.au](http://www.goodbugs.org.au))

## Diomini tribe

A member of the tribe Diomini (*Diomus notescens*) was present in my garden on the feijoa and in the Cook garden on corn, silverbeet, beans and pumpkins. These are commonly called the minute two spotted ladybird. They are very much smaller than the ordinary common ladybird, growing to about 2mm. They eat two spotted mites, and the eggs and small larvae of the moth *Helicoverpa* spp., commonly known as the corn earworm or tomato grub, so they are very useful visitors to the vegetable garden.



Adult minute two spotted ladybird on a bean leaf

## Coccinellini tribe

Ladybirds belonging to this tribe are very common. Thrips and aphids are their favourite food and some also eat fungi. Some of those found in the Cook garden are shown below and opposite.



Transverse ladybird (*Coccinella transversalis*) eats aphids



Striped ladybird (*Micraspis frenata*). They feed on pollen, nectar and fungus.



Spotted Amber ladybird with its distinctive white collar



Striped ladybird larva



Spotted Amber larva



Common Spotted ladybird (*Harmonia conformis*) has 23 very large spots and eats aphids



Fungus eating ladybird (*Illeis galbula*). Found on zucchini plants eating powdery mildew



Spotted Amber ladybird (*Hippodamia variegata*) is also known as the White Collared ladybird. It eats insect eggs, aphids and thrips.



Fungus eating ladybird larva

# Ladybirds in the Garden continued . . .

## Epilichnini tribe

Ladybirds belonging to the Epilichnini tribe are the most worrisome to find in the garden. They are plant eaters and cause considerable damage. They prefer high humidity. The wet weather we have been having this season is ideal for them. Many gardeners have noticed an explosion of ladybirds attacking their zucchinis. These have mostly been the 28 spotted ladybird belonging to genus *Epilachna*. There is also a 26 spotted ladybird belonging to the same genus. Not only do they attack cucurbits, they also eat beans, potatoes and tomatoes.

The adult ladybird can be easily distinguished from other lady birds simply by counting the number of spots on their wing covers. They have 28 small spots and are usually larger than the common beneficial ladybirds. Their larvae can also be easily distinguished from other ladybird larvae. Fully grown the larvae are about 6mm long, yellow-green and covered with long, black branching spines. These spines give them a burr-like appearance which is quite different to other ladybird larvae. Both adult beetles and their larvae eat leaves.



Pupa of 28 spotted ladybird



Larvae of the 28 spotted ladybird



Adult 28 spotted ladybird feeding on the upper surface of a zucchini leaf



Eggs of the 28 spotted ladybird



28 spotted ladybird larva feeding on the underside of a zucchini leaf

The larvae generally feed on the under surfaces of leaves whereas the adults feed on the upper surfaces. They also eat the skin of the young fruit of cucurbits such as zucchini. The life cycle of a ladybird takes about 5-6 weeks so there are several generations per year. The first eggs are laid in spring in small groups on the lower surfaces of leaves. Ladybirds spread as adults by flying, but they are also spread by gardeners moving infected plants, so check any plants you bring into the garden for eggs and larvae. They survive winter as inactive adults. Great care must be taken when controlling the leaf eating ladybirds to avoid damaging the beneficial ladybirds. Squashing of adults, eggs and larvae is probably the safest method. The yellow eggs are

found in rafts on leaf under surfaces. There are no biological controls available and while they will succumb to organically acceptable insecticides such as Derris dust there is great danger that beneficial ladybirds could also be killed.

### Ladybird Lookalikes

There are several species of leaf eating beetles which resemble ladybirds and can be quite destructive. One that has been very active recently is the banded pumpkin beetle (*Aulacophora hilaris*). It belongs to a different family of Coleoptera (the Chrysomelidae family) to ladybirds but like the 28 spotted ladybird it also attacks cucurbits.



Banded pumpkin beetle (*Aulacophora hilaris*)

They have a different shape being more elongated. They also have a quite different life cycle. Eggs are laid on the soil surface or close to the surface near the base of a plant. The larvae spend their whole development under ground and only the adults emerge from the soil to eat the leaves of cucurbits.



See <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/services/collections/scientific-illustrations/zeck/pumpkin-beetle> for more information on this insect. They can be very destructive in the garden.

### Biological Pest Control

One of the ways we can avoid the use of sprays (organic or otherwise) in our gardens is to take advantage of the natural biological controls provided by those insects which destroy common insect pests. Ladybirds are just one of a large group of insects which can be managed as biocontrol agents in our gardens if the gardener provides an appropriate habitat in which they can thrive. It also requires that we are able to recognise these “friends of the gardener” and to distinguish them from pests. It is hoped these photographs will help gardeners to achieve this aim.

Text: *Keith Colls*

Photos: *Adrienne Fazekas*

## What pest is that?

There are several sources of information in Canberra to help you identify plant pests and diseases and propose solutions:

- CIT Bruce offers a plant clinic at the Horticulture School on Thursdays, 4-6pm, during term. See [http://cit.edu.au/about/services/cit\\_plant\\_clinic](http://cit.edu.au/about/services/cit_plant_clinic) for details.
- Email [gardens@cogs.asn.au](mailto:gardens@cogs.asn.au) with descriptions and pictures of your pest or disease problem.
- Bring your problem along to a COGS general meeting to have it identified by experienced gardeners.
- Call the *Garden Gurus* on 2CC on 6255 1206, Saturdays and Sundays, 7am to 9am.



### COGS Facebook update:

The COGS Facebook page now has 131 followers! COGS aims to post interesting organic gardening and sustainable agriculture-related links and information and provide a forum for COGS members and other interested people. Search on "Canberra Organic Growers Society" within Facebook to find and "like" us.

# Chateau Villandry: The Kitchen Garden

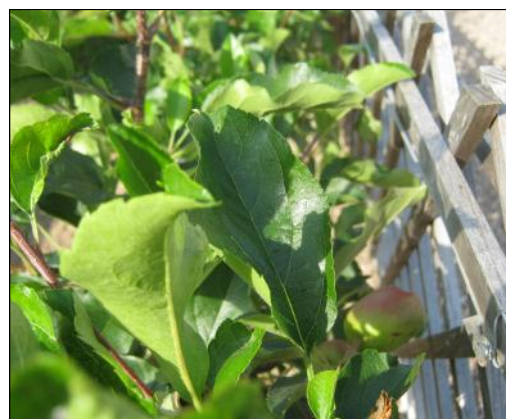


Chateau Villandry, one of the castles in the Loire Valley in France, boasts wonderful gardens including a restored Renaissance-style kitchen garden. It is laid out in nine squares of equal size that contain vegetable plantings in different geometrical patterns and colours.

Since 2009 organic cultivation has been reintroduced in the vegetable garden. Crop rotation is arranged in a three year cycle but two different seasonal layouts are planted each year. The photos show the Spring arrangement for 2011.

In particular I noticed spectacular groupings of red and green lettuce, broad beans, artichokes and borders of blue flowering sage. The outside perimeter of several beds are actually hedges of miniature apples and they were bearing fruit when we were there. See close-up of hedge below.

Villandry's kitchen garden of course is an



internationally renowned spectacular. It requires 85000 vegetable plants and 12500 bedding plants, 50 per cent of which are reared in the Villandry greenhouses.

If you have some ambitious plans for your home potager garden, some interesting planting plans can be found at [www.squidoo.com/potager-garden](http://www.squidoo.com/potager-garden). These are based on some famous potager gardens including Villandry.

Janet Popovic

Reference:

*Welcome to Villandry: Tour of the Gardens*, H Carvallo;  
[www.chateauvillandry.com](http://www.chateauvillandry.com)



# Community Gardens Thrive in Frankfurt

Our family spent four nights in Frankfurt during May 2011 but instead of staying in the CBD, we booked accommodation in Grosse Karben, a village some ten train stops from the city. The train line passed through pleasant countryside and a series of small villages/ townships and there was plenty of evidence of allotment or community gardening along the way including quite close to the city perimeter. On our walks by the river and through leafy parkland and open fields in Grosse Karben we came across one such group of allotments that reminded us of COGS gardens in Canberra, the main difference being there were small sheds on many of the individual plots. Leeks, onions and broadbeans were flourishing and supporting stakes had been put in place for beans and tomatoes getting underway. Chooks were being kept on some plots.

I was not able to locate information about this particular group of gardens at Grosse Karben in a web search.



However, it appears there is a well-established tradition of allotment gardening in Germany with regional variations in management arrangements. One system seems to be very similar to the COGS arrangement.

A different, current development in the Frankfurt area is reported at [www.cityfarmers.info/2010/04/08/city-slickers-take-a-farm-near-the-city-in-frankfurt-germany/](http://www.cityfarmers.info/2010/04/08/city-slickers-take-a-farm-near-the-city-in-frankfurt-germany/). An organisation manages a large cultivated area, and provides tools and seedlings. Vegetable seedlings are planted in longitudinal rows and people who purchase the use of a space allocation for a season get access to the rows of each vegetable type, with access to more variation within vegetable types the bigger (longer?) the tract of land you lease (and the euro value you purchase). You thus have the right to harvest vegetables relevant to what space you paid for, though the idea is you get to do the gardening.

*Janet Popovic*



## Berry upside down cake

This cake can also be made with plums, pears or figs instead of berries. It's delicious with ice cream and takes about 5 minutes to prepare.

### Ingredients:

1/3 cup butter or margarine  
1/3 cup sugar  
2 cups of mixed berries (blackberries, strawberries, blueberries and raspberries)  
1 1/3 cup flour  
1/2 cup sugar  
2/3 cup milk  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 egg

### Preparation:

Heat oven to 180C. In a greased medium sized cake tin heat butter until melted. Sprinkle 1/3 cup of sugar

evenly over the melted butter. Spoon berries evenly over the sugar mixture. In a medium bowl, beat the remaining ingredients with an electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds, then on medium speed for 2 minutes, scraping the bowl frequently. Pour batter over berries.

Bake for about 50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Immediately place heatproof serving plate upside down over cake tin; turn plate and



cake tin over. Leave pan over cake for about 1 minute so sugar mixture can drizzle over cake; remove cake tin. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm.

*Glynis Kennedy*

# Cool Season Legumes - Peas and Broad beans

Peas and broad beans are crops which grow well in Canberra over the cooler months when space is usually available in the garden. Both peas and broad beans are legumes which have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen in nodules on their roots. This makes them very useful in a crop rotation program as this fixed nitrogen is available for use by later crops.

## Peas

Varieties of peas available as seed include snow peas, snap peas, shelling peas and peas suitable for drying (split peas). Snow peas are eaten as young flat pods before the seeds start to grow, while snap peas, which are also known as sugar pods, are eaten whole - pods and seeds together. Many varieties of traditional shelling pea seed are available and are well worth growing as they can be picked while still young and sweet. Fresh young peas are rarely available for sale. Peas grown for use as dried peas are quite floury and not particularly palatable when eaten fresh. Purple Podded Dutch is the most commonly available of the dried pea varieties.

### Site and soil

As peas grow through the colder months they need a site that receives maximum winter sun and will benefit from some protection from cold winter winds. Soil should be well structured with good drainage. Peas do not enjoy wet soils and will struggle in heavy clay soils. The addition of organic matter such as compost or well rotted animal manure before planting will improve soil structure and drainage. Peas are not heavy feeders and if planted in a soil rich in organic matter should not need any additional fertilising.

### Planting

Peas can be planted in Canberra in mid to late Autumn and again in early Spring. Autumn planted peas will grow through the Winter and start to flower as the weather warms up in Spring.

There are several methods for planting peas:

1. *Direct sowing*: Plant the seed directly at a depth of three times its diameter and about 5 cm apart. Water well once after planting and then do not water again until the first shoots appear in 7 - 10 days. If the soil is too wet the seed can rot in the ground before it germinates.
2. *Pre-germination*: Once pea seeds have started to germinate they are less likely to rot in soil that is too cold or wet. This method is also useful if you are unsure of the viability of the pea seed. Place the seeds in a bowl and just cover with water. The seeds will swell and after about 24 hours the developing root will be visible as a triangular



*Greenfeast pea seed*

*Above left: after 5 years storage, Above right: seed from the same batch after soaking for 24 hours. The developing root swelling is visible at the top of the lower right-hand seed.*

swelling. This indicates the seed has started to germinate and it can then be carefully planted into damp soil. The seed must not be allowed to dry out at this stage or it will die. If you can't plant it immediately it can be kept for a few days between moist paper towels. The root will appear and grow during this time and care needs to be taken to ensure it is not damaged during planting out.

3. *Seedlings*: Buy seedlings and transplant them or germinate seed in punnets and transplant when the seedlings are 5 - 10 cm tall. Peas seem to cope well with transplanting when small and this method is useful for early spring plantings when the soil may be too cold or wet for good germination.

If you have ever planted pea seeds which have never been seen again, method 2 or 3 may be worth a try.



*Home grown Snap pea seedlings ready to plant*

### Cultivation

Peas support themselves by means of tendrils which will wrap around any available support including other peas. Dwarf peas can be grown without support but the provision of a low trellis will make harvesting

easier. Generally dwarf peas are given a wire trellis 600 - 900 mm tall and climbing peas a 1.5 - 2 metre trellis.

Peas need constant soil moisture but little or no supplementary feeding. Overhead watering should be avoided as it can encourage fungal diseases such as powdery mildew and rust. Insect pests are rarely a problem through the winter months.

#### *Harvesting*

Young peas will be ready to pick about four weeks after flowering. Snow peas should be picked before the seeds start to swell. Shelling peas should be picked when the seeds have tightly filled the pods but before the pods become dull and rough. Regular picking encourages further flowering and fruiting..



*Pods of William Massey Dwarf peas ready to harvest*

Once all the peas have been harvested, the vines, which are now pea straw, can be used to mulch summer crops such as tomatoes or sweetcorn.

#### *Saving seed*

Peas are self-pollinating so saved seed will be true to type. To save pea seed the pods should be left on the vine to fully ripen - they will become light brown and papery.

If left on the vine for too long pea pods will split open and shed their seeds. Once the pods are completely dry the seeds can be removed and stored in a cool, dry place where they should keep for at least five years.

#### **Broad beans**

Broad beans have similar soil and site requirements to those of peas, although they will tolerate heavier clay soils than peas. They should be grown in full sun and given some protection from strong winds which can blow over or snap the plants.



*Dried pods ready for seed collecting*

*Above left: Kodiak shelling peas*

*Above right: Oregon Dwarf snow peas*

#### *Planting*

Sow broad beans in either mid to late Autumn (April - May) or in early Spring (Aug - Sept). Plant the seed about 1.5 - 2 cm deep and about 20 cm apart. Water after planting and keep the soil damp but not wet until the first shoots appear in about 10 days. If the soil is too wet the seed can rot before it germinates.

#### *Cultivation*

Broad beans are an undemanding crop and tolerate most conditions except very hot weather. If planted in a soil rich in organic matter then no further feeding is required. Broad beans tolerate frost but will not set pods while the weather is too cold. As soon as it starts to warm up in spring pods will appear. Trellising is not needed as broad beans have no means of attaching themselves. In a windy situation stakes and strings can be used to stop them being blown over and damaged and will also make harvesting easier.

#### *Harvesting*

Broad beans can be eaten at several stages of development: the young tips can be picked and steamed as a green vegetable during Winter; the young pods can be picked while the seeds are still small and eaten whole; larger green seeds can be shelled and used in numerous recipes; the pods can be picked when fully mature and the seeds stored for later use as soup beans.

#### *Saving seed*

Broad beans, like peas, are self-pollinating and are one of the easiest seeds to save. The pods should be left on the plant to fully ripen. As the pods ripen they shrivel and turn dark brown to black and become papery. Once the pods are completely dry the seeds can be removed and stored in a cool dry place where they will keep for up to five years.

*Adrienne Fazekas*

## Organic news

### Homegrown eggs on the rise

The growing popularity of the backyard chicken coop is giving commercial egg producers a run for their money, with homegrown eggs totaling 12 per cent of Australia's total annual egg production, according to Australian Egg Corporation figures. John O'Hara from Sunny Queen farms said the spring flush and resultant rise in backyard chicken coops this year has resulted in commercial egg sales falling by 6 per cent.

Egg Corporation statistics showed that the average Australian ate more than 210 eggs last year.  
Source: The Australian, January 30, 2012

### Growing Your Own may be banned in NZ

The individual's right to freely cultivate food is under threat in New Zealand, as a food security bill is currently going through the NZ parliament which would remove the right to grow food, save seeds and share produce with friends and family.

The NZ Food Bill aims to transfer the primary control of food from individuals to corporations in a bid to ensure food safety as part of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Codex Alimentarius scheme. In response to the Bill, the NZ Food Security Group said the Bill means that people would need government

permission to grow and share food.

Let's hope the trend doesn't spread to Australia!

Source: [www.naturalnews.com/034337\\_New\\_Zealand\\_food\\_freedom\\_human\\_rights.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/034337_New_Zealand_food_freedom_human_rights.html)

Also see: [www.nzfoodsecurity.org/2011/07/19/food-a-controlled-substance-not-in-my-backyard/](http://www.nzfoodsecurity.org/2011/07/19/food-a-controlled-substance-not-in-my-backyard/)

### Fungus in Amazon Consumes Plastic

A fungus with a voracious appetite for common plastic has been discovered in the jungles of Ecuador by a group of Yale students.

The fungus - *Pestalotiopsis microspore* – can survive on a diet of polyurethane (used for everything from garden hoses to shoes and truck seats) in an anaerobic environment (similar to the bottom of a landfill site).

The students published their findings late last year in the journal Applied and Environmental Microbiology, describing it as "a promising source of biodiversity from which to screen for metabolic properties useful for bioremediation."

Source: [www.fastcoexist.com](http://www.fastcoexist.com)

## 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

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## Lemon Tree, Very Pretty

My beloved lemon tree has been so generous this year. Is it because I pee on it every day as recommended by bloomin' Peter Cundall the great gardener? I 'eard 'im say it in a lecture at the national library not long ago! Or is it because of the generosity of the grey skies of La Nina, the great rainfall event, our best for 20 years?

Anyway since May we've been giving out lemons everywhere. Every week several bags to dance class, and anyone who enters the house is pressed to take a huge bag of lemons!

I usually ask if people can use some lemons, and they say modestly "Oh ... one or two!" "Ah!" I think "One or two dozen ...!"

As the lemons hang out there into December they get larger and squishier. So a kilo is 3-4 lemons whereas back in June a kilo was 6-8 lemons.

I make a jug of lemonade every day and of course daily salad dressings and a squeeze in every soup or pasta sauce. I often think I should preserve them – Moroccan pickled lemons are \$10 a tiny sachet in the deli. But I did this once, a few years ago, salted a large jar and we never actually used them.

I used to make lemon butter, lots of it. We had our own chooks so had really good quality eggs as well. It was superb lemon butter. But I went off it after heart surgery, forced to have a lowfat diet. Here's the recipe ... for those of good heart!



### Gerry's Lemon Butter

450g sugar  
250g butter  
6 free range eggs  
juice of 6 lemons  
grated rind of 4 lemons

Put sugar, butter, juice and rind into a double saucepan. Stir well until the sugar is completely dissolved. Add well beaten eggs, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon. Pour into hot jars and cover when cool. Keep in the refrigerator.

*Gerry Jacobson*

## Zucchini chocolate cake

This cake is seriously to die for - seriously!!

Served at room temperature with a topping of sieved icing sugar it looks pretty good, and served with a dollop of cream or ice cream it meets everyone's expectations of a great chocolate cake.

### Zucchini Chocolate Cake

2 cups plain flour  
1/2 cup cocoa powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 scant cup light brown sugar (I used Demerera sugar)  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon instant coffee  
3 large free range eggs  
2 cups of unpeeled grated zucchini  
1 cup of dark chocolate chips  
One 20cm cake tin lined with greaseproof / baking paper.

Sieve together the flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a bowl.

Put grated zucchini, chocolate chips and add 1/3 of the flour mixture and mix together to coat zucchini. Put brown sugar, olive oil, vanilla extract, instant coffee and eggs into a bowl and beat well together. Add the remaining flour mix and beat well together. It will make a thick mixture.

Add the zucchini mixture to this and gently fold together. Scrape into the cake tin, smooth top and cook in a moderate oven for 40 - 50 mins until cooked.

This recipe is from a blog by Clotilde Dusoulier called Chocolate and Zucchini which you can find at [chocolateandzucchini.com](http://chocolateandzucchini.com)

Apart from the great chocolate cake, she also has a rather nice fresh tart made with a base of puff pastry, cooled and topped with goats cheese and sliced fresh yellow baby zucchini, but you'll have to look at her blog to get the recipe.

*Heather Campbell*

## CIT Solutions Gardening Courses

### Organic Gardening for Beginners

5 May to 26 May

1-4pm x 4 sessions. Fee \$235

### Composting and Worm Farming

31 March and 16 June

1:30-4:30pm x 1 session each. Fee \$65

### Organic Pest and Disease Management for Home Gardeners

7 March to 21 March and 6 June to 20 June

7-9pm x 3 sessions each. Fee \$95

### Soil, Potting Mixes and Watering Systems for Home Gardeners

24 March to 31 March

10am - 12:30pm x 2 sessions. Fee \$80.

For more information or online enrolment phone 62073430, go to [www.citace.edu.au](http://www.citace.edu.au) or follow the links from the COGS home page.

## 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.

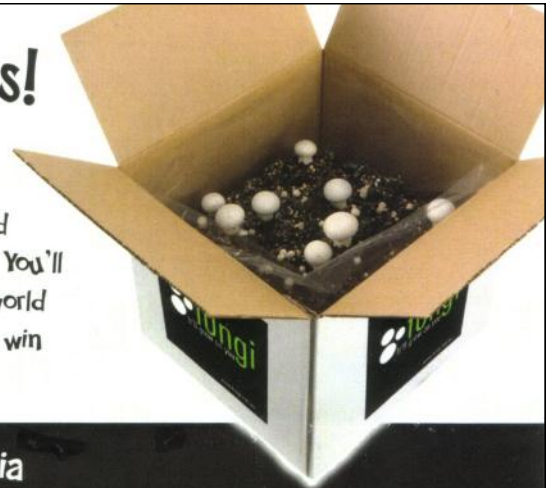
Only 166 kms from Canberra. Take visiting friends and relatives to see the South Coast.

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



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# Invitation

**Please join our cooperative!**

We are setting up a landshare growing cooperative at the historic 'Cuppacumbalong' at Tharwa. We are looking for interested and enthusiastic people to join us in our food security venture.

The beautiful Cuppacumbalong boasts:

- 2 acres of heritage vegetable gardens
- 2 acres for future orchards
- Ample water supply
- Lovely setting
- Food craft building (drying, meetings etc)
- Space for craft ventures
- Possibility of Saturday morning markets
- A land management agreement allowing 300 deep litter free range chooks

And so much more...

We are keen to discuss the venture with anyone who is interested in being part of our growing cooperative.

Please contact us for more information.



**Please email us for more information:**  
[cuppacumbalong@gmail.com](mailto:cuppacumbalong@gmail.com)

**[www.cuppacumbalong.com.au](http://www.cuppacumbalong.com.au)**

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Receive COGS magazine by email? Yes  No

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, and other organic or 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, pensioners and full time students. Copies of evidence for concession rates must be provided when applying for, or renewing 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 a 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

Plant winter hardy varieties of lettuce such as cos, salad bowl, oakleaf, butterhead and mignonette.



## 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 ryecorn.

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.

## Digging Around the Web

*Getting the dirt on the Internet for you!*

Acres Australia magazine

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

Calling itself the “national newspaper of sustainable agriculture”, Acres Australia is available both in print and online. It deals with issues surrounding sustainable farming, organic agriculture, farmers markets etc. There is material online and you can also subscribe to their “eUpdates” online.

You Grow Girl!

<http://www.yougrowgirl.com/>

This fun blog has been going for 12 years and appeals to those with a love for homegrown produce and urban gardening. There’s an abundance of projects and information on here, but above all, it is a great read that might get inspire you to get the “urban homesteading” bug.

Food Sovereignty in Southern Mexico

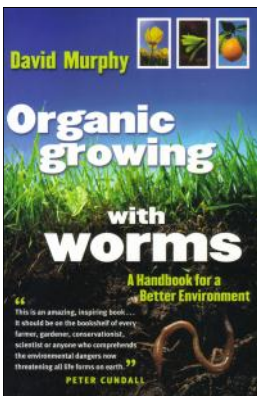
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/beyond-free-or-fair-trade-mexican-farmers-go-local>

An interesting online magazine article about localist organic food movement in Southern Mexico aiming to bring about food sovereignty.

## Librarian’s report

New acquisition now available for borrowing:

**Organic growing with worms: A handbook for a better environment** by David Murphy, Penguin 2005



The author is an expert in recycling organic wastes as a means of renewing soil fertility naturally.

His book contains a wealth of information about how earthworms can be harnessed to solve some of the major problems facing the human race.

Sections include practical advice on introducing worms to your soil, creating an instant garden bed, building your own wormery and how to create a worm-friendly environment in both the home garden and on farms. Readers can take as much or little direction from the book as they need, as there are quite scientific explanations underlying the physical, chemical, biological and organic principles explained.

*Margaret Richardson*

## Little Sprout’s Corner

*Sharing the joy of gardening with small people*

### DIY Fruit Leathers

Packing kids' lunchboxes for school can often be a daunting task, especially with the plethora of packaged and unhealthy offerings marketed as “healthy snacks” on the supermarket shelves.

Making your own snacks is a healthy (and cheaper) option, especially if you have a good supply of fresh fruit and vegetables. DIY fruit leathers are a sugar free and tasty alternative to the commercial variety.

How to make leathers in a food dehydrator:

1. Select a combination of fruit which has reached its peak in colour, texture and flavour. Make sure it is ripe but not overly ripe. Some yummy combinations of fruit are: apple and rhubarb, plum, apple and strawberry, apricot and plum or banana and raspberry.
2. Wash the fruit, remove the stems, pits and bruised areas. Peel the fruit if you want (or if you aren’t bothered, the skin will be pureed later).
3. Puree the fruit in a blender or food processor until it is smooth and easy to pour.
4. Add some sweetener if you desire, such as honey or concentrated fruit juice.
5. Spread the puree on solid food dehydrator trays, allowing some space around the edges and ensuring the puree is an even thickness.
6. Dry for approximately 8-10 hours – but keep checking it and it might also need more time.
7. When the mixture is pliable and easy to roll, roll up the mixture while warm and wrap tightly. Pack into an airtight container when cooled and store in a dry, dark place.

Fruit leathers can also be made using an oven: just follow steps 1 - 4 above and then spread onto lined baking trays and place in the oven for 2+ hours at 100 degrees Celsius.

*Angela Spencer*



# COGS NOTICE BOARD

## COGS Monthly Meetings

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

See the COGS website for further details:  
[www.cogs.asn.au](http://www.cogs.asn.au)

### 28 February 2012:

John Grubb: Beekeeping with a focus on introducing bee-friendly plants to your garden

### 27 March 2012:

COGS Annual General Meeting followed by Harvest Night

### 24 April 2012:

Speaker to be advised.  
Please check the COGS website.

If you would like to speak about a topic related to organic gardening, please contact the COGS committee via email at [info@cogs.asn.au](mailto:info@cogs.asn.au).

## Horticultural Society of Canberra Autumn Flower Show

3 - 4 March 2012

Sat 12 - 5pm

Sun 11.30 - 3.45pm

Lancaster Hall, Wesley Centre,  
National Circuit, Forrest



## Canberra Harvest Festival

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2012

12pm – 5pm

Environment Centre, Lawson Cres, Acton

What you will find at the festival:

Music, including popular local acts

A Gourmet BBQ and a variety of local and organic produce, food and drink

Local and/or organic beer and wine

FREE Sustainable Living Workshops

Kid's 'Biggest & Best Fruit & Vegetable'

Competition and Activities

Community Information Stalls

## The 22nd Annual Open Day at Loriendale

Saturday 31st March 2012

1.30 - 5.00 pm

At "Loriendale Orchard"

Spring Range Road, Hall

(2km north of border between ACT/NSW)



## Collector Village Pumpkin Festival

Sunday 6th May 2012

10am to 4 pm.

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

## Let's Talk About Gardening...

Did you know that you can now find COGS on Facebook?



Just search for the Canberra Organic Growers Society and "like" the page to receive interesting links and tips in your Newsfeed or to debate a topic.

## Garden jobs for Autumn

Collect and remove fallen and mummified fruit to reduce pests and diseases next season

Clean and sharpen pruning tools in preparation for pruning deciduous trees

Collect Autumn leaves for use as mulch or to add to the compost

Plant green manure as Summer crops finish and are removed

Order deciduous fruit trees for early Winter planting

Plant Spring flowering bulbs

