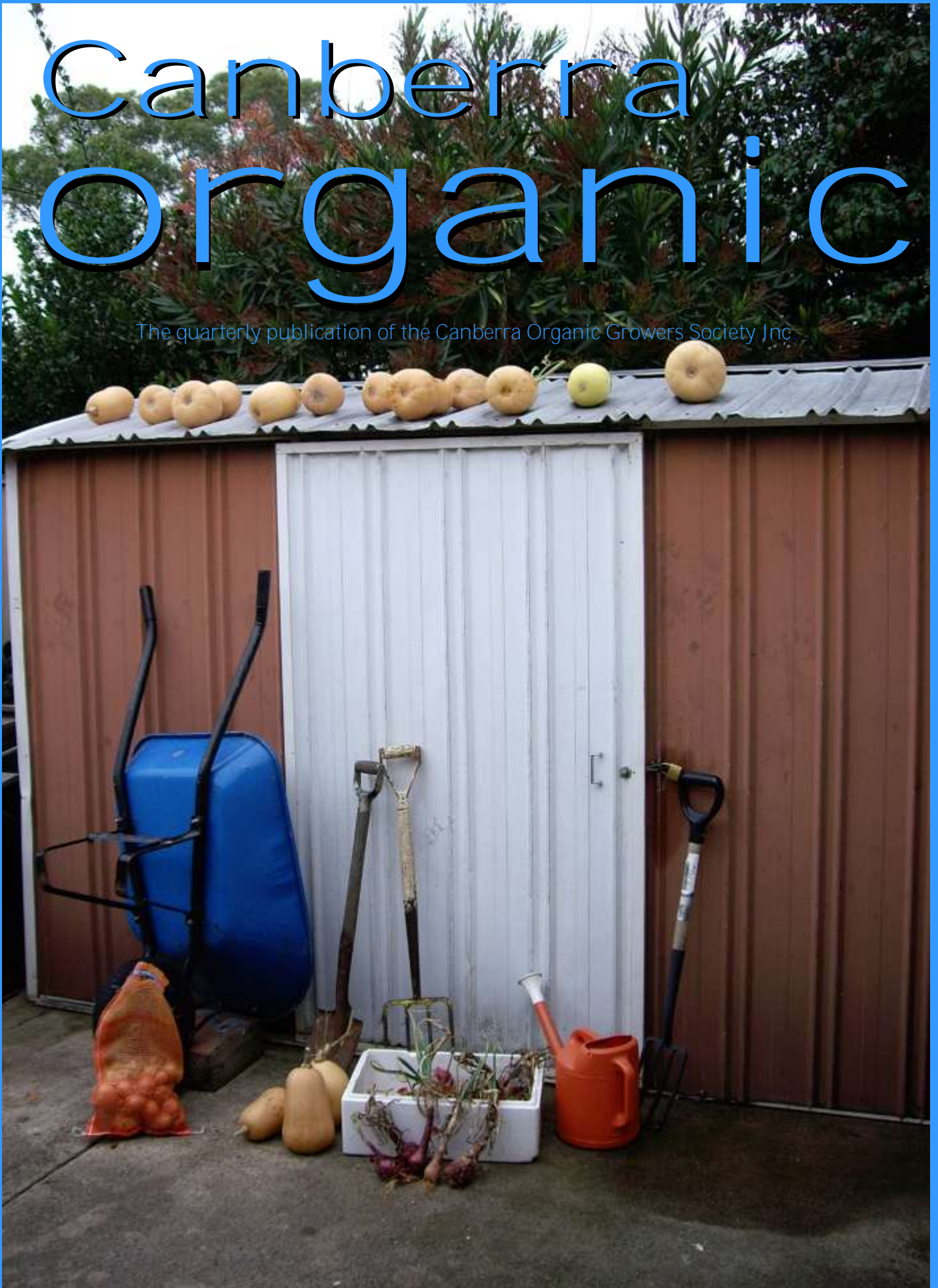


# Canberra organic

The quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.





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.

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### Front cover photo:

*Jim and Robyn Power's Garden Shed.*

### Back cover photos:

*Luciano Dedé- Kaleen Garden Plot*

*From top to bottom:*

*Strawberry*

*Zucchini plant in flower*

*Cosmos with Bee*

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## COGS MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE CHANGING

From September 1 2012 the COGS membership fee will rise to \$30 per year for ordinary members and to \$18 per year for concession members

All fees will now become due on September 1 each year. Pro rata fees will be payable over the next two years as current memberships become due until all members are aligned to the Sept 1 renewal date

For further details please see page 20

CANBERRA ORGANIC  
Volume 20 Number 2 (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.

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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**  
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Please contact  
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*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

## Editor's note

Welcome to my first edition, I look forward to bringing you lots of interesting information in the coming editions and hopefully inspire you to get out there and garden, organically of course.

Gardening is my passion and teaching and learning from others about the joys of gardening, cooking seed saving and storing produce is an everyday event for me. I love heirloom vegies especially tomatoes and have collected over 26 varieties.

On joining the Kaleen Community Garden, I have found an outlet for my passion and love spending time there with my parents, who also have a plot, and the many wonderful friends that I have made.

My husband and I have 4 boys, we run a large property maintenance business, mostly for Government in landscape type work.

Near Harden, we are setting up a 30 acre farm to live sustainably, we are growing fruit and citrus trees and are experimenting with wind generation and solar. We also have a small number of cattle and sheep. We hope to move there in the near future and expand on our gardening.



*Melissa Dede*

### ***Look out for new topics in the Spring issue***

*“Chook Chat” from Denae Starkovski*  
**Broody hens!**

*“Seedlings for Spring” from Melissa Dede*  
**How to raise early tomato seedlings inside.**

### ***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)

# President's report

Greetings everyone! This is my first report as President of COGS, and the first time I have served as President. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

My wife and I have been growing vegetables and a small amount of fruit in our backyard for about 15 years. My wife spent her first 7 years on a farm in Minnesota and has rural orientation; I grew up in a flat in Sydney and for much too long had little idea where my food and drink came from! I am gradually making up for lost time. For some years we had been aware of COGS, and joined a few years ago for the usual reasons of wishing to learn more about organic gardening and to meet like-minded people. We are glad we did.

We have plenty of space in our backyard to meet our needs — for the time being — and so don't need a garden plot. Instead we've joined the Backyard Garden and Seed Savers groups, and find these very interesting.

I'd like to thank the previous Committee for their hard work. I spent a year with them as an ordinary Committee member and witnessed first hand their dedication, enthusiasm and competence. In particular, I'd like to thank the outgoing President, Alison Killen, for her excellent job of steering COGS through the year. Our indefatigable Treasurer, Adrienne Fazekas, deserves our gratitude for looking after a vital area so well, and so does our excellent Secretary, Haydn Burgess in his area. As for the other members of the outgoing Committee, I tip my hat to you all. I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

The new Committee is about 50/50 old faces and new chums. Apart from the usual jobs of monthly meetings and producing the popular Canberra Organic magazine, we need to update the website and explore Internet-based ways of managing memberships and making information available. It's interesting going through old newsletters and magazines to discover what a wealth of information is in them — and in our member's heads. It would be a real boon to make as much as possible of this easily available.

We live in interesting times. The biggest challenge facing us is the demand for more plots and more gardens. In the past we have had to turn down offers of land for new gardens because we didn't have the capacity to manage them. We must think seriously about what sort of organisation COGS is. It's clearly

no longer a small gardening club where everyone knows everyone else; rather, it seems now to be an organisation providing services such as incorporation, insurance, fencing, plumbing, advertising, liaison with the ACT government and the media, and so on. We're looking at various ways to cope with our growth, and we will definitely be approaching you, the members, for your ideas and input.



Another potentially fruitful development is the ACT government's growing interest in urban agriculture, which of course includes community gardens. In March last year the ACT Legislature resolved to set aside community garden space in all new residential subdivisions and, among other things, to supply resources for support personnel, training, and to develop policy on local food production. There's an almost worldwide wave of interest in bringing agriculture back into cities to produce quality food as close as possible to where it's needed.

If you are watching the ABC's Gardening Australia, the sort of garden that Costa is creating on grassy verge could become a common sight. And there are of course other types of garden; for example, COGS is presently involved in the planning of a City Farm. If these trends continue, who knows what we will see in the coming years!

I look forward to it with great interest, all the more so because my other hat is that of a Researcher at the University of Canberra, looking into the topics of urban agriculture, food security, carrying capacity, and so on. COGS gives me an ideal place to start: real gardening by real people in a real setting.

I'd like to thank the more than one hundred members who took part in last year's survey: The data and information we were given have been very useful to help us plan the future of COGS and to contribute to the ACT government's important decisions about food growing within Canberra.

But now let's get back to our vocation of growing organic fruits and vegetables. In my backyard we just had The Summer That Never Was, and our harvest looks like it! How was yours? Soon we will all be preparing our gardens for the Spring planting. Never a dull moment!

*Walter Steensby*

# Around the COGS gardens

## Northside

Northside has had a name change to Mitchell Community Garden, as it is no longer the only garden in the North.

Not everyone who has a plot in Mitchell has been overly productive or fortunate in crops grown this time round. Even some of our stalwart gardeners bemoaned the weather, the rain, then the wind (fortunately our recycled BBQ and covered eating areas remained intact) and actual poor quality of some crops grown or in my case what did not grow.

Suffice to say that my Zucchini was plentiful and the surplus got turned into a pickle (after her indoors had done all the work) I then provided a hundred plus jars, labeled as always as Bobs Pantry, of pickle, jams and chutney to a very generous soul to assist her in raising funds for those in need in the community. Find our pickle and pickled onion recipes on page 10 of this magazine.

A higher percentage of plot holders mulched this time around, this did reduce water consumption and raised healthy crops. Lots more focus this last period on composting, many holders are reaping the benefits of a good organic compost.

We have had some changes in the garden recently, since we chopped up some larger beds some new members have joined us and they have brought with them a renewed energy and vibrancy to the garden, reflected in the work done in and out of the working bees. A lot of the plots and surrounds are looking great. While one or two still appear forlorn and unloved. I expect that will become the fate of several more through the winter period.

We now have 26 registered gardeners working 33 plots, approximately 1510 m<sup>2</sup>, our smallest garden is 15 m<sup>2</sup> and we have a few at 100 m<sup>2</sup>. Average size is 46 m<sup>2</sup>. By the time this goes to print we will have a plot available 62m<sup>2</sup>, great soil.

Our garden is still very diverse in cultures and different crop growing interests. We have had peanuts and oca; I thought it looked like a cross between a yam and a kiplfer spud. It was described to me as tasting like a sour potato, known to some as a Kiwi Yam originating from South America.

Mushroom experimentation is also taking place. We have strong Asian and Mediterranean influences in the garden and we still have a great blend of science, horticulture and organic specialists in the garden. We

have started to collect plot holder profiles and the first profile appears on page 11.

Additional recycled tools and equipment has come to us, repairs have been conducted on others as part of an OHS focus. We now have two lawn mowers, donated by David and Keith. Already put to good use by several plot holders doing their bit, Andy, Will, Bob D and of course Keith and David.

Phong spent some time on researching poly tunnels to be placed on individual plots, a standard for use has been agreed on and the first one has already gone up.

Many of you will know that we have a committee model as opposed to a straight convener model operating in the garden. Muriel has kindly volunteered to revitalise the community herb garden and has some great ideas for theming and plant sourcing.

Up coming projects during the winter period, we will be working on our tree issues, looking to get the road repaired after loosing it in the past flooding, pipe repairs and a boundary expansion. We have for several months been looking at putting in a pizza oven and a toilet and will actively focus on the capacity to follow through in the months to come.

Well I don't know about you lot, but I am looking forward to a crisp winter, cold mornings, cold nights and perfect days... well after 11am and before 4 pm seems to be just perfect... feel free to pop over to Mitchell and have a look around and chat to some great folk.

*Bob McAlister*

## Charnwood

As of early May, the Charnwood garden is looking quite tidy following the April working bee and plot



*Charnwood Gardeners at the April working bee*

holders getting stuck into the weeds that proliferated over summer. The garden normally holds a working bee each month, with each plot holder allocated to one of two working bee teams.

Participation is quite good, with 6-10 people turning up each month. Other gardeners who cannot make the working bee will often undertake a job such as mowing at another time. The garden community is grateful to those people who bring their own mowers to the working bees, as cutting grass is always the main job.

Gardeners have recently been planting and sowing brassicas, alliums and legumes.

Back in November my co-gardener Alison Killen planted a French variety of pumpkin. We recently harvested the pumpkin, and its sheer size has attracted much attention in the garden. As one fellow gardener said, 'It's real estate!'. It didn't make it to the Collector Pumpkin Festival, but ended up feeding heaps of school students at Orana School in Weston.

*Haydn Burgess*



*Haydn and Alison's large pumpkin*

### **Holder**

Unfortunately for the Garden Dave Rice has had to resign as convener. Dave has put a lot of effort into meeting and showing prospective plot holders around, organising the showing of our produce, regarding new garden plans, to name a few of his

good works. Our many thanks go to Dave. As the junior Co-convener, the Garden Committee agreed for me to take on Convener duties until the AGM in September.

Deirdre's magic and the assistance and generosity of gardeners resulted in a beautiful and tightly packed table at the Autumn Flower Show. The table was a wonderful celebration of life, work and community at Holder garden, giving prospective community gardeners the opportunity to see the diversity of produce small plots can provide. There were several outstanding items on show, including Eileen's compelling lumpy, stripy, mystery pumpkin, Simone's monster pumpkin, Andrea's Preserves and John's prize Dahlias. The display resulted in the award of three firsts and a second place.

Heather has been active organising orders for a delivery of sheep manure and bales of lucerne hay to assist gardeners prepare their plot for next season's plantings. She has also been busy with her harvest and abundance of ripe red chillies. As shown in the photo below, she is drying them the Mexican way by making a Ristra - chillies on a string. In Mexico hanging a Ristra on your porch supposedly brings good luck all year round.



## Around the COGS Gardens continued . . .

Under Eileen's Ministerial, monthly working bees continue at the garden with ongoing clean ups of the ever-encroaching couch grass, mowing and trimming garden care for the "community plots" including the planting of raspberries, and planting chestnut trees around the garden perimeter. Plots are also showing the plantings of brassicas, onions, garlic, green manure and other crops for winter growing.

With the onset of the early cold weather and melting of the pumpkin and beans leaves, attention is being given to cleaning out plots and placing the material on compost heaps for Simone to work her 'miracle'. Using static fermentation to achieve pasteurisation to knock out weed seeds, pathogens, pests and diseases, Simone and her helpers provide rich compost for spring.

Within the next three months it is hoped that existing plumbing in the garden will be extended to cover the new garden area, providing water for 7 new gardens and a proposed mixed berry plot. With his past experience in laying garden water pipes, Conrad has been busy re-measuring distances for new piping, identifying the other materials required, supplier and pricing. A submission will be made to COGS seeking funding for the project.

*Steve Cook*

### **Erindale**

I think the majority of our gardeners were pleased with their abundant harvests over the last season. If not, well as the old adage goes, "As you sow so shall you reap" – literally applicable to gardening don't you think! Mind you, even though rewards are generally based on your efforts there's nothing much you can do, or take responsibility for, if the lack of sufficient heat during summertime affects productivity outcomes.

Say for example tomatoes were particularly slow in producing fruit and then taking excruciatingly much longer to ripen, if at all, given that they're presently remaining green and now only good for pickling or tossing on the compost heap.

Fortunately, other veggies fared better and gardeners are quietly going about the business of tidying up their plots in preparation for the semi dormant stage of winter

One of our longstanding plot holders Ray, who's in his 70's, was particularly proud of the best crop of

corn he's ever grown as for some strange reason instead of producing the usual two corn cobs per plant he boasted four.

All plots are taken and for the first time in our garden's history we actually have a couple of people on a waiting list.

*Christine Carter*



*Ray's four cobs per plant corn*

### **Kaleen**

After the busy period leading up to our Open Garden, followed closely by our success at the Horticultural Show, we have been enjoying a quieter pace in the garden. The mild weather and a bit of rain has made things tick along nicely without too much work – apart from the ever-present mowing. We are planning to plant some fruit trees in the winter, so choosing varieties and sites has begun.

Friday morning teas continue to be well attended, particularly in the school holidays, and we invite any other members who would like to join us about 10.30am Friday mornings.

Our waiting list is still long and we haven't had any vacancies for some months.

This year our plots were hit hard by the 28 Spotted Ladybird which wreaked havoc with cucumbers and rockmelons.

Now there is a plague of Harlequin bugs busily attacking the raspberries.





*Kaleen's display in the Horticultural Society Show*

.The mice have also been a problem around the plots and we have more than ever before. The local magpies have been busily helping to keep the problem down with their amazing eyesight. Several times we have witnessed them find a nest and take off with several small mice in their beaks.

We even have found small frogs in and around the straw in the garden and there is about to be a huge hatching of tadpoles, so look out insects. There are also two blue-tongued lizards which appear every now and then in different spots and cause a bit of consternation until we work out if they are snake or lizard. You usually just see a bit of the head.

Our garden is the playground to about 20 children, not counting grandchildren, and it was lovely to watch some of them last Friday after morning tea, running around playing together in the beautiful Autumn weather. We think we must hold the top spot for the biggest number of children in a community garden – can any of the other gardens beat this?

Our Friday morning get together is still popular every week we meet about 10.30 am we try to bring something we have baked with produce from the garden. We share recipes, magazines, seeds and gardening tips techniques etc pictured here you can see some of the children and a great amount of cooking—cherry jam, sourdough bread, pumpkin scones, choc zucchini cake, muffins etc.

Try setting one up in your community garden and write in and tell us. This is what community gardening is all about!

*Robyn Power*

### **Ristra**

With the abundance of ripe red chillies this Autumn I decided to air dry them the Mexican way by making a Ristra.

This is basically chillies on a string!  
The tying was quite tricky but the second Ristra turned out better as I got the hang of the knotting.

However the technique used heaps of chillies in each Ristra which was great and when they are dried you can apparently easily snap off one of two chillies to crush up into your Mexican dish, Indian curry or whatever dish requires some chilli.

There may be some more experienced Ristra makers in our gardening community, if so please send some suggestions about tying and braiding them!

*Heather Campbell*



# Bobs Pantry

## Pickled Onions

### Ingredients

- 1kg pickling onions
- ¼ cup salt
- 4 cups (1L) warm water
- 4 cups (1L) malt vinegar
- ½ cup (100g) sugar
- 1tbs mustard seeds
- 2 dried bay leaves
- ½ tsp powdered ginger
- 1 tbs dried chillies
- 6 cloves
- 1 tbs peppercorns



### Method

- Step 1: Take 1 kg of small pickling onions, place in a bowl and cover with boiling water. This makes them easy to peel. Allow to stand for one hour.
- Step 2: Peel the onions, (consider leaving the base intact to hold the onions together). Rinse them off.
- Step 3: Combine ¼ cup salt, 4 cups (1L) warm water, in a glass or ceramic bowl. Add the 1kg peeled, trimmed and rinsed pickling onions and set aside in the bowl for 24 hours. Consider placing a plate over the onions in the bowl to weigh them down and cover the bowl with a clean tea towel.
- Step 4: After the 24 hours have elapsed, drain the onions and pack them into the sterilized jars.
- Step 5: Combine 4 cups (1L) of malt vinegar, ½ (100g) cup sugar, 1tbs mustard seeds, 2 dried bay leaves, ½ tsp powdered ginger, 1 tbs dried chillies, 6 cloves and 1 tbs peppercorns in a non-aluminium saucepan over low heat. Cook slowly, continually stirring, allow sugar to dissolve and bring to the boil.
- Step 6: Simmer for 5 minutes and then allow to cool
- Step 7: Strain the liquid and pour over the onions in the sterilized jars. Seal (with a sterilized lid) and date.
- Step 8: Set aside in a cool, dark place for 3 weeks before eating. Refrigerate after opening.

### Sterilizing Jars

It is important that glass jars are sterilized before use. The following is a simple method:

Wash the jars and lids in hot soapy water, rinse and place upside down on a clean cloth or dish drainer to dry. Place on a tray in a cold oven. Turn oven to 110 degrees Celsius. When the oven has reached this temperature turn the oven off and leave the jars for 10 minutes. When cooled they are ready to be filled. Simmer the lids in boiling water for two minutes, drain and use dry.

## Zucchini Pickles

To make approximately 1.5 litres:

- 1 kg finely chopped zucchini
- 2 large onions finely chopped
- 1 red capsicum finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 ¼ cups sugar
- 2 cups white or cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons mustard powder
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- 2 tablespoons extra vinegar

Place zucchini, onions and capsicum in a bowl, add salt and mix well. Leave to stand for at least 3 hours. Drain well.

Combine sugar, vinegar, mustard powder and turmeric in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until sugar is dissolved.

Add vegetables and boil for 25 minutes.

Mix cornflour to a paste with extra vinegar and stir through.

Cook 2 – 3 minutes more or until thickened.

Spoon into warm sterilised jars and seal.

Store in a cool dry and dark place for up to 1 year.

## Gardener Profile

Thomas (Tp) and Yoko from Northside share their thoughts on their first season of community gardening

We joined the Northside Community Garden in late 2011. At the time, we had two years experience in growing veggies and herbs in about a dozen white polystyrene boxes on a west-facing unshaded balcony. We would have happily continued with this had our landlord not asked us to leave the beautiful apartment. We couldn't bring our enriched and alive compost to our new home, but Tp wouldn't let go of it. So it made sense to put it where it belongs - in the ground!

Since our first visit, fellow gardeners have generously provided us much guidance, assistance, moral support, and, of course, food! Coupled with persistence (weeding!), good soil to start us off, plus our amazing black gold, we have reaped a very decent harvest from our 80m<sup>2</sup> plot.

As of 31 March, we've harvested kilos of tomatoes (beefsteak, Russian black, yellow tumbler, green zebra, plus one unknown!), dutch cream potatoes, butternut pumpkins, and various leafy veggies. Since we can only visit once a week this summer, we dedicated a quarter of our plot to green manure to reduce the workload. Our healthiest plants appear to be those in that patch, which says much about our current techniques.



If I had to pick one topic to discuss it would be our bokashi! It is probably the most significant contribution to our soil. Commonly referred to as a method of composting, bokashi is in fact a fermenting process that replaces composting. In my opinion, it is superior for many reasons. It produces a fraction of the greenhouse gases that traditional composting gives off, thereby retaining significantly higher amounts of nutrients. Meats and egg shells can be added, and there are no odour or rodent problems. The main input required is bokashi powder (bran inoculated with EM microbes), which costs perhaps \$30 a year for a two-person

household. To summarise, it results in better quality compost, more quickly (one month turnover), and with less effort (i.e., no sorting of food waste, no odour mitigation, and no need to aerate and monitor).

We look forward to growing onion and garlic for the first time this winter!

*Tp & Yoko*

### Membership fees for COGS gardeners

From September 1 2012 membership fees and plot levies will be aligned

Both these payments will now be due on September 1 each year

Any gardeners renewing their plot this year whose membership does not currently extend to at least August 2013 will also need to pay a pro rata membership fee to extend their membership to August 31 2013

# Review of COGS Watering Rules (2010)

## Introduction

The COGS Committee has decided to review the 2010 COGS Watering Rules and has established a small sub-committee to undertake the review. The members of the sub-committee are: Andy Hrast (COGS Exec) and the convenors of the Cook, O'Connor, Holder and Oaks Estate gardens

The Sub-committee is seeking the input from gardeners before redrafting the rules. The current rules can be found at the end of this article.

**Please provide any comments to Andy Hrast on [ahrast@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ahrast@bigpond.net.au) or to any of the other members of the sub-committee so that your views can be incorporated into the development of updated rules.**

## Background

The use of water from the mains water system is one of the two primary ways that COGS interacts with the ACT Government and the ACT community more generally. The other is the provision of free land with access limited to COGS members.

The use of mains water by COGS gardens means that there is also an interaction with the Murray-Darling catchment and the need to recognise the needs of downstream communities and environmental flows.

Water is supplied to COGS gardens by ACTEW. Not all gardens are metered or in some cases the meters are not read. However all COGS plot holders pay the same water fees calculated on a plot area basis irrespective of whether there is a meter or whether it is read by ACTEW. The metering arrangements in gardens means it is not possible to attribute water use to individual plot holders.

ACTEW in response to a 10 year period of drought has introduced "Permanent Water Conservation Measures" for all domestic users as general water saving measures as well as building new infrastructure to augment the water supply. The full details of these can be found on the ACTEW website.

## Background to current COGS rules

The current COGS rules were developed in 2010 before the 10 year drought broke and water levels in the ACT dams were at levels of 30-40 per cent of capacity. They were developed in consultation with the garden convenors but there was no direct consultation with gardeners.

The COGS rules are to be read in conjunction with the ACTEW water restrictions and impose additional restrictions on COGS gardeners. For example COGS rules do not permit the use of sprinklers at any time.

## Style of current COGS rules

The COGS rules are written in a punitive format with serious but a limited range penalties for non-compliance i.e. eviction from the garden. The rules do not provide any option for a plot holder to pay additional fees or fines.

The COGS rules include examples of practices not allowed but it is not clear if those examples are exhaustive or illustrative.

There is no documentation associated with the rules giving a rationale for the extra restrictions in the COGS rules or any best practice water saving suggestions.

## COGS authority

COGS is the signatory to the licence agreements with the ACT Government for the gardens and its constitution give it the authority to impose rules on plot holders and their gardening practices in COGS gardens including additional water restrictions.

## Questions to consider

Is there value in COGS having additional more restrictive watering rules on top of the ACTEW restrictions?

What is the status of the examples given in the COGS rules?

Should sprinklers be allowed in COGS gardens? They were able to be used in COGS gardens in the past in line with ACTEW rules.

Why do all gardens have the same square metre allowance?

Why can't a garden decide to have a higher or lower water allowance and pay a higher or lower rate per square metre?

Why are trenches not allowed when ACTEW encourages embanking of plants to hold water?

Should penalties for non compliance with COGS rules be more graduated?

Would COGS do better to provide information about water saving rather than imposing tighter water restrictions?

Do COGS gardeners have a responsibility to other gardeners in the community to be best practice exemplars?

Do gardeners have a responsibility to be more restrictive in the use of water in COGS gardens as many also have home gardens and could be perceived to be double dipping into the water supply?

Should COGS impose very severe additional water restrictions on its gardens in recognition of the already considerable benefits COGS members have obtained from the community ie the provision of free land?

### COGS Community Garden Watering Rules (2010)

1. ACTEW rules must be complied with at all times in all the gardens.

#### The ACTEW Permanent Water Conservation Measures now in force are:

During spring, summer and autumn  
(1 September to 31 May inclusive)

Irrigation systems, including drip irrigation, may only be used to water plants after 6pm and before 9am on any day.

A hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle, a bucket or a watering can may be used to water plants at any time.

At all times plants may only be watered without causing pooling or runoff.

2. Tap timers are not allowed in COGS gardens

3. 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.

4. Sprinklers are not allowed to be used in COGS gardens even when ACTEW allows their use

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 examples of practices which contravene the watering rules, but gardeners have attempted to excuse, are:

- 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
- watering outside the allowed hours
- using a sprinkler
- leaving drippers on while they leave the garden for a couple of hours

### COGS needs helpers and volunteers!

COGS is currently run entirely by volunteers. A surprisingly large amount of work is involved in keeping the Society going, and we are in constant need of people to take on jobs and help run the show. Obviously, in the absence of volunteers COGS cannot continue.

Right now we need **Garden Conveners**. Each of our eleven gardens needs someone to manage it. Yes, this can be a difficult task at times, and the Executive Committee is working out ways to make things easier.

**Your Society needs You!** Six conveners are resigning their volunteer posts in September: who will step forward to replace them?

The COGS Constitution states that if a garden has no convener then the task of managing that garden falls to the Executive Committee. This is all very well, but the Committee has little if any spare capacity to take over running any garden, and this means that conditions in a convener-less garden are unlikely to improve.

There are many other jobs for which we need people. We will be asking around in the near future.  
Stay tuned!

## Weather and Gardens

The wet and relatively cool, cloudy weather continued in February and March providing ideal conditions for various pests and diseases. Canberra airport received 311.8mm for these two months compared with the long term average for the same period of 107.1mm. Maximum temperatures were more than 2 degrees cooler than average. These conditions seem to have encouraged apple scab. It was a problem for quite a few gardeners. Although the older English apple varieties coped well with the cool, moist conditions, some gardeners reported that newer varieties such as Royal Gala were badly affected this year.

In April it dried out a little with rainfall of only 17.6mm recorded at the airport compared with the long term average of 46.0mm. This did not save my rhubarb from an attack of the fungal disease rhubarb leaf spot. It causes elongated lesions on the leaf stalks and brown spots and shot holes in the leaves. See the pictures below.



This disease can be caused by two species of fungi, *Ramularia rhei* or *Ascochyta rhei*. I don't know which was the culprit. *Ramularia* prefers a

temperature of about 20 degrees for infection to occur whereas *Ascochyta* prefers a temperature of about 25 degrees. The average maximum temperature for April was 20.2 degrees but the first week of the month had temperatures around 25 degrees so either fungus could have been the cause.

The weather also favoured the appearance of the fruiting bodies of the acellular slime mould *Fuligo septica*. These are quite spectacular when they slime their way out of the mulch. The fruiting body forms a large yellowish mass 15 to 20 cm in diameter and 10mm thick. This slime mould often leaves visible trails of slime as it emerges from the mulch. As can be seen from the picture of one (see below) which appeared in my front yard, it has the appropriate common names Dog's Vomit or Scrambled Egg Slime. I prefer its other more poetic common name, The Flowers of Tan. The slightly revolting appearance of this slime mould belies its beneficial role in the garden.



The Queensland fruit fly struck my tomatoes this year but the damage was minimal. I am hoping for some heavy frosts to kill any that may be thinking of overwintering in Canberra. But at the time of writing we have only had a couple of light frosts and the Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook predicts that the chances of exceeding the long term maximum and minimum temperatures up to the end of July is 60 to 65%, so that does not augur well for a cold winter. The Bureau also predicts that the rainfall will be about average for May to July so hopefully we will still have good soil moisture to give our gardens a flying start in Spring.

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

Keith Colls

## Seed Savers report

Overall it's been a very quiet year for the Seed Savers. This summer has been cooler and wetter than we've seen for quite a long time. While the extra rain is very welcome, not everyone has had the best harvest — including yours truly.

The last meeting in March saw no seeds processed or added to the collection, but as Autumn progresses we hope this situation will change.

We are learning which seeds can be successfully saved in an urban setting. Some are difficult to save due to problems with cross-pollination and loss of genetic diversity. We ran a few germination experiments earlier in the season, but results are mixed. We intend to carry out more experiments next season.

In urban areas it can be difficult to avoid cross-pollination. Some plants need a lot of distance from others, such as pumpkins with a 400m radius. In a typical older Canberra suburb a circle of that size can include about 400 houses with their gardens: who knows what plants are happily growing there? Pumpkins can be successfully bred by hand pollination, and we've prepared a document illustrating how to go about it. It'll be put on the website soon, but I can send you a copy (it's a PDF file) if you wish.

During the year we've had a couple of inquiries from members of the public asking about purchasing

organically-grown seeds, but no sales. It's really too early to begin marketing seeds to the public.

When it comes to the monthly meetings, some members have trouble getting to them. We're contemplating holding them on the same day as the Backyard Group meetings to give remoter people more of a chance to attend both.

We welcome new members of the Seed Savers' Group at any time. If you don't wish to join but have some seeds you'd like to donate, we'd be very happy to receive them. Just let us know their variety and origin if possible, when they were harvested, and any remarkable characteristics e.g. great taste or good colour.

Happy collecting!

*Cindy Steensby*



### Kumara or Sweet Potato



I have tried to grow it each year with little success. Getting the tuber to shoot takes months. I have tried putting it in water and leaving it in the dark, it takes ages. One year I managed to get one to shoot in winter and planted it out in Spring, but it still took a month before the leaves appeared. Once the runners took off I cut pieces about 30cm long and planted them into the ground. Each one had tubers, unfortunately the season was too short because I wasn't able to plant them until January. Last year I planted them at the same time as the potatoes, but they didn't appear until about February, again, didn't set any tubers. This year I cut off some of the runners in April before the first frost. At present they are happily growing in a glass of water and I top up the water regularly. However, we went away for a week and left them in the bathroom where they would get some light and perhaps a bit of warmth in the afternoons. I think it was too cold with the heating off and the older leaves yellowed and have dropped. I will have to leave them with one of our daughters next time where they will have a bit of warmth. In Spring I will just have to plant the runners out once the frosts finishes

*Robyn Power*

## COGS Backyard Gardeners group

This very 'informal' group was formed in August 2010, so that we could share ideas, problem solutions, and our passion for organic gardening in a social setting. We meet monthly at a different host-garden on a Sunday morning, and include morning tea. Our gardens variously include a huge variety of vegetables, herbs, chooks, water tanks, grey-water systems, bees, fruit trees plus ornamental plants of every shape and size. Most of our 20+ members live on the north side, including two with large productive gardens in close country proximity. It may be time to form a south-side group, as there is a natural limit to the numbers of visitors that can be accommodated in a visit to a home garden.

*Margaret Richardson*

### ***Some garden tips from our backyard gardeners for Winter***

- Now that the summer vegies are finished, let the chooks into the patch to turn it over and eat the bugs. Put bread crates or wire around the winter seedlings so the chooks can't eat them.



*Gina and Mark's garden*

- Spray your fruit trees, plus leaves on the ground, with a copper spray e.g. Cuprox or Bordeaux mix as the fungal burden this year is so great it's best to reduce this now before winter.
- Try to have a big patch of Italian flat-leaf parsley then there will always be some going to seed. The umbels (flower-heads shaped like umbrellas) are great for attracting good bugs like hover flies, parasitic mini-wasps and tachinid flies which in turn eat bad bugs like aphids and caterpillars. If you haven't a patch already gone to seed, sow some now to be ready for spring; although slow to germinate you'll then have your patch forever! You could also plant some seedlings, in order to have the parsley plants at different stages.
- This season I followed Peter Cundall's suggestion

and planted sugar snap peas at the base of my old corn plants. Each one is now happily climbing up its stalk, though when smaller they needed small sticks to guide them in the right direction.



*Sally's peas growing up old corn stalks*

- Raised garden beds with lots of compost added, retained moisture better and thrived during the dry year better than crops in the ground.
- I spread an opened-out orange bag, held in place by small bag twists over old metal hanging baskets or wire hoops. This keeps out those pesky cabbage moths. See photo below.



- I don't think you can ever have enough compost, I can't make what I need so I get mushroom compost. The yield and health in my garden has improved enormously since I added LOTS of compost.
- Old bricks, made into a free-standing wall on the south side of citrus trees, can hold warmth to help the micro-climate during winter.



# Fruit Fly Exclusion Netting Trial

Last year our home at Kaleen and our community garden at Kaleen were badly hit by Tomato Grubs. Growing larger heirloom varieties with softer skin made the tomatoes a target by the grubs, and we even found them burrowing down into the stems of the plant. This was only evident when a whole branch of a healthy plant would suddenly die for no reason. We have had these grubs before but never as badly as last season. Our losses in the first few months of the tomato season were as high as 70%.

This season we purchased a lightweight but strong fruit fly exclusion netting from Green Harvest. The size we purchased was 3m x 2.8m for approx \$20 plus \$9 postage. We bought several and used them on small fruit trees as well. We found this size went over a small fruit tree (Angel Peach) and it was pegged at the sides and tied around the trunk of the tree. There are larger sizes available but this size suited us well and I even joined 2 to cover our tomatoes and the wire they were tied to at the community garden. See photo over the page.

In our home vegetable garden we put in supporting stakes at each corner and in the middle of the rectangular box. The net was slit open down the middle of each side for extra access and the sides pegged. See photo below. This was used for tomatoes and egg plants.



## Results

### Fruit tree

We found that there was a lot of brown rot on the Angel Peaches but feel that this was due to the amount of rain we had. The net also protected against hail storms and wind that would have damaged the fruit. In several places the branches managed to grow through the net and these holes will have to be repaired for next year. On the whole we found it worked very well with the Angel Peach, although the netting would be better if it was on a frame as the growing branches created quite a dark interior, excluding sunlight. It was handy that the fruit was caught in the net and didn't fall to the ground becoming more damaged. No earwigs or fruit fly to damage the fruit. We put the net on after the flowers started to die.

### Tomatoes

At home, the net worked very well and we had very few losses amongst the tomatoes this year. There wasn't any fungal problem and the incidence of tomato grub was down to about 2 tomatoes attacked. There was

## Fruit Fly Exclusion Netting Trial continued . . .

no fruit fly attack and no vegetable bugs got in. Very pleased with it.

At the community garden the net was very open to the wind and we had to tie it down well at the back of the wire so it wouldn't take off. We also placed bricks around the front edges to secure it. This made it more difficult to pick fruit and basically you had to undo the pegs at one side and walk in between the plants and the net. I found that I only picked when there were quite a few ripe ones, but it really wasn't a problem. The greatest advantage of the tomatoes being under cover, apart from stopping pests, was that they could be left to become a deep red before picking. This was evident in the increased flavour of the fruit. There were also a couple of tomatoes with the grub in them at the garden (goodness knows how they got in), but the losses generally overall were almost negligible.

The photo below was taken recently after the first

frost that hit most of the tomatoes. They weren't affected at all and some are still growing and flowering under the net. It obviously won't stop a heavy frost, but will help if there is a light one.

We also found that the net does stop a bit of rain so you need to be aware that they may need watering even if it has rained.

The net has been removed at home and rolled up and put away for next year. It is extremely tough and doesn't appear to have deteriorated. I consider them to be a good investment for easy pest control. We are trying to work out how we can use them next year on our espaliered cherry tree to stop the earwigs that had a wonderful time munching on our beautiful fruit. They also act as bird nets. Visit the website [www.greenharvest.com.au](http://www.greenharvest.com.au) for further information.

*Robyn Power*



# The Carbon Challenge

Step up to the Carbon Challenge

Get set to shrink your carbon footprint with the Canberra Environment Centre's Carbon Challenge 2012!

Thanks to the support of the ACT Government the Carbon Challenge (CC) is the Canberra Environment Centre's latest sustainability initiative which asks Canberrans to further reduce their carbon footprints! No matter where you stand on the path towards sustainability, you can always go further.

The Carbon Challenge and its interactive website was launched on Friday March 23, and encourages individuals and households to step outside their comfort zones and commit to new, self-nominated challenges over a 90 day period. Once these challenges have been registered online, participants are encouraged to monitor their progress and engage with others in order to go in the draw to win one of

many fabulous prizes.

## How to win?

Choose your challenge/s (in what way/s you would like to reduce your carbon footprint), commit to them over the 90-day Challenge period, record, and then submit your progress online. To be eligible for prizes, you need to commit to reducing your energy in the home or your transport use, and upload your previous electricity bills/tachometer readings so we can measure your progress.

Additionally, there will be workshops to attend and opportunities to interact with other participants online during the challenge.. (See back page )

So what are you waiting for? Sign-up today to save money and win prizes, all for reducing your carbon footprint and helping to secure a safe climate future! Register for the Carbon Challenge here [www.ecoaction.com.au](http://www.ecoaction.com.au).

## ACT Vegan & Vegetarian Society

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

The ACT Vegan & Vegetarian Society welcomes new members. We provide support and information about vegan and vegetarian lifestyles, and opportunities to meet others with similar interests.

We organise regular social events and workshops, including family-friendly events.

### Members also receive discounts from a variety of local restaurants and businesses

To find out more, or to join our free e-mail list, see our website at [www.vegact.org.au](http://www.vegact.org.au) or call 0417 464 675  
You can also find us on facebook.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The United Nations estimates that the meat industry causes more greenhouse gas emissions than all the cars, trucks, planes and ships in the world combined.\*

Producing 1 kg of beef takes between 50,000 and 100,000 litres of water, compared to 2,500 litres for 1 kg of white rice, and much less for most fruit and vegetables.\*\*

People on a plant based diet have far less incidence of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, MS and many other.

\*[Livestock's Long Shadow](http://Livestock's Long Shadow), [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

\*\*[Eating Up The World](http://Eating Up The World), [www.vegetarianvictoria.org.au](http://www.vegetarianvictoria.org.au)



# Changes to COGS Membership Fees

As part of a process of ongoing change intended to ensure that services, facilities and support for members are continued, both now and in the future, the Canberra Organic Growers Society's membership fees will rise from September 1 this year.

Membership fees for current COGS members will be increased to \$30 per year for ordinary members and to \$18 per year for concession members.

Membership fees are currently due each year on the anniversary of joining, but renewal dates will be aligned over the next year to fall due on September 1 each year, to make it simpler for those members who are also plot holders to pay a single fee in September. It will also save the many hours spent each year chasing up plot holders whose memberships have lapsed.

**This change means that all monies ie membership fees and plot levies will become due on September 1 each year.**

The changes to membership fees will allow COGS to maintain the current level of services in an expanding organisation currently being run by volunteers faced with an increasing workload.

The rationale behind the changes to membership fees is:

- Since fees were last adjusted, the number of our members and gardens has more than doubled, resulting in a significant workload for a small number of volunteers who maintain the membership, finances and gardens for COGS;
- Aligning the membership fees and plot levies to fall due on the same date will allow COGS to pay for assistance to process membership and plot payments, which will mean COGS volunteer committee will be better able to initiate and complete new projects for COGS members;
- The membership fee increase is intended to address the need to ease the current situation whereby volunteers are faced with increasing costs and workload to maintain the same level of resources and activities for COGS members.

Currently, COGS members pay a membership fee, which covers the administrative activities and services provided by COGS volunteers, such as:

- the production and distribution of *Canberra Organic* member magazine
- maintaining COGS accounts and banking for COGS as a whole and each community garden (including insurance, auditing, paying bills);
- maintaining a website for the information of COGS members and the local community;
- hosting and organising general meetings for the benefit of members (paying for the venue, organising speakers and refreshments);
- maintaining a presence at community events (looking after stalls, providing information to the community about COGS) and within the local Canberra community;
- negotiating with the ACT Government and other bodies, such as local schools and churches, to maintain and increase the number of community gardens in the Canberra region;
- maintaining and running a library of organic gardening-related books available to COGS members;
- coordinating the running of COGS community gardens and activities for members and setting the strategic direction of the Society, through the existence of a COGS Committee

COGS members who have a plot at a COGS garden pay plot levies in addition to their membership fee, which covers the provision of water and basic infrastructure and equipment needs at each garden. Plot levies were increased last year in response to Actew AGL's ongoing increases in water pricing.

It is important to remember that the changes are being made so that COGS can continue to afford to operate and deliver the many benefits that COGS members enjoy. COGS could not operate effectively without the financial contribution of members and the continued significant support and dedication of COGS members who volunteer their time, energy and resources to keep COGS alive.

Thank you for your continued support.

The COGS Committee

## Mangle-Wurzel

### Mangle What?

Mangle-wurzel is a multi purpose and biannual vegetable. Both the roots and the leaves are edible.



It used to be grown as animal fodder, growing all year round and used in winter/spring when nothing else was available. It's sometimes known as the 'Yellowbeet', the 'Mangold' the 'Mangold-wurzel' or the 'Manglebeet.' It's closely related to beetroot, silverbeet and sugarbeet, and they all share the same scientific name, *Beta vulgaris*.

The leaves can be used just like silverbeet as they taste the same. The roots have an earthy, crunchy flavour just like beetroot. You can grate them and use them in salads like coleslaw or you can juice them. You can also boil them and serve them just like beetroot.

Old recipes use mangle-wurzel to pickle and make beer.

Why not try something different and plant a mangle wurzel? I bought the seeds on ebay from Boondie seeds.

Mangel-wurzel needs full sun and regular watering and prefers a freely draining, well-composted soil. It produces the best and heaviest crops in a sheltered spot with mild to warm conditions.

*Denae Starkovski*

## Brussels sprouts: Plant now for next year!

For many a year I have tried to grow Brussels sprouts without success, they seem to always start setting and then go straight to seed. I tried to plant them late summer and early and mid winter always the same thing happened.

Well, Denae says she planted hers last winter and left them to grow all summer then you harvest the next winter Here is a photo taken on the first day of winter 2012 and they look great. Denae has picked a few already!

They contain vitamin A, vitamin C, folic acid and dietary fibre. Brussels sprouts, as with broccoli and other brassicas, contain sulforaphane a chemical believed to have potent anticancer properties.

To retain the sulforaphane sprouts are best cooked by steam or stir fry, try them dressed with olive oil, garlic and chopped fried bacon pieces. Yum.

Try planting now for next year!



# Prize Winning Sweet and Sour Zucchini Pickle

## Ingredients :

1kg of Zucchini  
2 onions  
1 cup of sugar  
2 cup of white vinegar  
1 tablespoon of salt  
2 teaspoons mustard seeds  
1 teaspoon turmeric  
1 teaspoon of chilli powder  
(or to taste)



Stir the vegetables after the first hour.

After 2 hours the vegetables will have softened and reduced in volume.

Turn the heat back on and bring everything back to boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring

## Method:

Place the vinegar, sugar, salt, mustard seeds, turmeric and chilli powder into a large saucepan that has a tight-fitting lid.

Bring to a boil and simmer rapidly for 5 minutes.

Finely slice the zucchini and onions.

Turn heat off under the saucepan and place the vegetables into the liquid.

occasionally.

Bottle immediately into hot bottles.

Allow to stand in a cool dark place for at least a week for the flavours to develop.

Refrigerate after opening.

*Melissa Dedé*

# 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



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## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

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# 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	\$30	\$40
Concession	\$18	\$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 WINTER PLANTING GUIDE

## VEGETABLES

### Asparagus

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

### Broad Beans

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

### Kohlrabi

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

### Lettuce

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

### Onions

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

### Peas

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

### Rhubarb

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

### Other possibilities

Growers may wish to start a number of crops in late winter rather than early spring if the winter is mild or if they have a sheltered garden bed.

These crops include artichokes (Globe and Jerusalem), beetroot, cabbage, carrots, potatoes and radish.

Frost-sensitive vegetables such as capsicum, eggplant and tomatoes can be started early in August indoors but may need a heated glasshouse or warm spot to germinate and will certainly need protection before being planted out in spring.

## FRUIT

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

### Strawberries

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

### Berries

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

### Currants

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

	JUN	JUL	AUG
<b>Artichokes</b>		T	T
<b>Asparagus</b>		T	ST
<b>Broad beans</b>		S	S
<b>Kohlrabi</b>			S
<b>Lettuce</b>			S
<b>Onions</b>			T
<b>Peas</b>	ST	ST	S
<b>Rhubarb</b>			T
<b>Silverbeet</b>		T	S
<b>Snowpeas</b>			ST
<b>Spinach</b>	T	T	S

S = seed sowing; T = transplanting

# COGS Library Report

The COGS Library contains approximately 400 books, which members are welcome to borrow at our monthly meetings. There is no charge for borrowing and items should be returned at the following month's meeting. Books are available in the following topics: Food crops, organic growing, agriculture, animals, herbs, food & lifestyle, soil (including mulch, compost) and pests & diseases. We welcome suggestions of new items to purchase.

Our newest book is: *Plant protection.3: Selected ornamentals, fruit and vegetables* by Ruth Kerruish. Canberra, RootRot Press, 2007. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.



This extensive text-book, written for horticulture classes at the Canberra Institute of Technology, gives descriptions, host range, symptoms and signs of disease, and management for each disease-causing organism on a vast range

of commonly-grown useful plants. Information is presented by the host plant eg. broccoli, then readers can find the symptoms they are experiencing in their garden, together with conditions favouring the disease and control methods.

*Margaret Richardson*

## Digging Around the Web

### Permaculture media Blog.

Seed savers have released their first film from around the world "Our seeds". Also some interesting books listed.

<http://www.permaculture-media-download.com/2012/04/our-seeds-seeds-blong-yumi-free.html>

### Veggie Patch

Packed with details on organic gardening such as contact details for organic seed stockist, materials, books, community gardens, farmers markets and lots more

<http://www.vegiepatch.com.au/links.html>

*Sharing the joy of gardening with small people*

## Little Sprout's Corner

One day when packing lunches Alex exclaimed as he chose a piece of fruit "oooh there is a rotten pear in the bowl!" I said "well give it to me and I will put it in the compost bucket". It turned out it was an avocado!

### Frog pond (if you have frogs in your garden)

Children are fascinated by the world around them, The boys (4 of them) and I found my bathtub which had had cow manure and water (liquid fertilizer) in it, inundated by the heavy rain in summer, the frogs (which were in the garden already) found it a great place to lay eggs, and thus we found tad poles. The boys were delighted and we collected a few and took them to school in jars to show. The children were very excited. We returned the tadpoles to the bathtub and have been watching their progress all summer and now into winter they are getting larger and legs have been forming, I suppose they will be ready to leave the pond in spring and hopefully breed again.

This was an easy exercise. we just used an old bathtub (a big metal one) and placed some shadecloth over the top, then some wire over that to stop the littlies falling in (safety regulations in gardens) and then by accident I noticed tadpoles one day when using the water from the bathtub, the poor things came out of the water into the plants I was horrified when I realised what they were and carefully picked them up put them back into the pond. I then investigated the rose on the watering can and rescued a few more and then investigated further to find a large amount of eggs in the tub and lots of tadpoles.

### Gardening

Give children a small patch in which they can grow anything vegies, flowers etc. Encourage them to grow vegies they like. Fruit such as strawberries are



always a winner, annuals are good like snap dragons, make sure you teach them how to snap them!

*Alex Dedé, 6 yrs, with his snapdragons and a Katydid.*

### Getting them to eat Fruit and Vegies!

In our school we gave Alex's Year 1 a worm farm, and the children loved it. The first day one child brought an apple and fed the core to the worms. The next day the teacher exclaimed "they all brought apples to feed the worms". Easy try it!

*Melissa Dedé*

# 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)  
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).

## CIT SOLUTIONS COURSES

A range of courses related to organic gardening are Available

- Organic Gardening for Beginners
- Composting and Worm Farms
- Soil, Potting Mixes and Watering Systems for Home Gardeners

Details can be found at the following website:

<http://citace.com.au>

## Conservation Council Conference 21-22 September 2012

"Our Environment Our Future" is the title of our Spring Conference to be held on Friday 21 and Saturday 22 September at the Australian National University. Put the dates in your diary now!!



Learn new skills to help you tread more lightly on the Earth...

### Workshops

#### JULY ●

Planning Your Garden  
Wed 11th, 6pm - 7pm

Retro-Fitting for Renters  
Sat 14th, 10am - 11.30am

Heating your Home  
Tue 17th, 6pm - 7pm

Draught Proof your Home  
Thurs 19th, 6pm - 7pm

Home Made Jam  
Sat 28th, 10.30am - 1pm

#### AUGUST ●

Affordable Home Retro-Fitting  
Sat 4th, 10am - 11.30am

Seedling Sewing & Maintenance  
Sat 11th, 10am - 12pm

Co-op Tour & Veg Cooking Class  
Sat 18th, 12pm - 5pm

Chemical-Free Cleaning  
Wed 22nd, 6pm - 7pm

Japanese Style Pickling  
Sat 25th, 4pm - 5.30pm



#### SEPTEMBER ●

Eco Screen Printing  
Sat 1st September, 12-3pm

Investing in Energy Efficiency  
Sat 8th, 10am - 11.30am

Composting Made Easy!  
Wed 12th, 6pm - 7pm

Worm-Farming Made Easy!  
Thurs 13th, 6pm - 7pm

Intro to Permaculture 1  
Sat 15th, 3pm - 5pm

Intro to Permaculture 2  
Sat 22nd, 3pm - 5pm

Zoning in Permaculture  
Sat 29th, 10.30am - 12.30pm

\$5 a workshop for Carbon Challenge participants  
\$15 a workshop for the general public (concessions available)  
Limited places, bookings essential.

Locations of workshops vary,  
please visit [www.ecoaction.com.au](http://www.ecoaction.com.au) or  
ph. 6248 0885 for more information or bookings.



One of Jane Vincent's wonderful photos from her visit to Diggers at Heronswood. Her full report of this visit will appear in the Spring edition.

