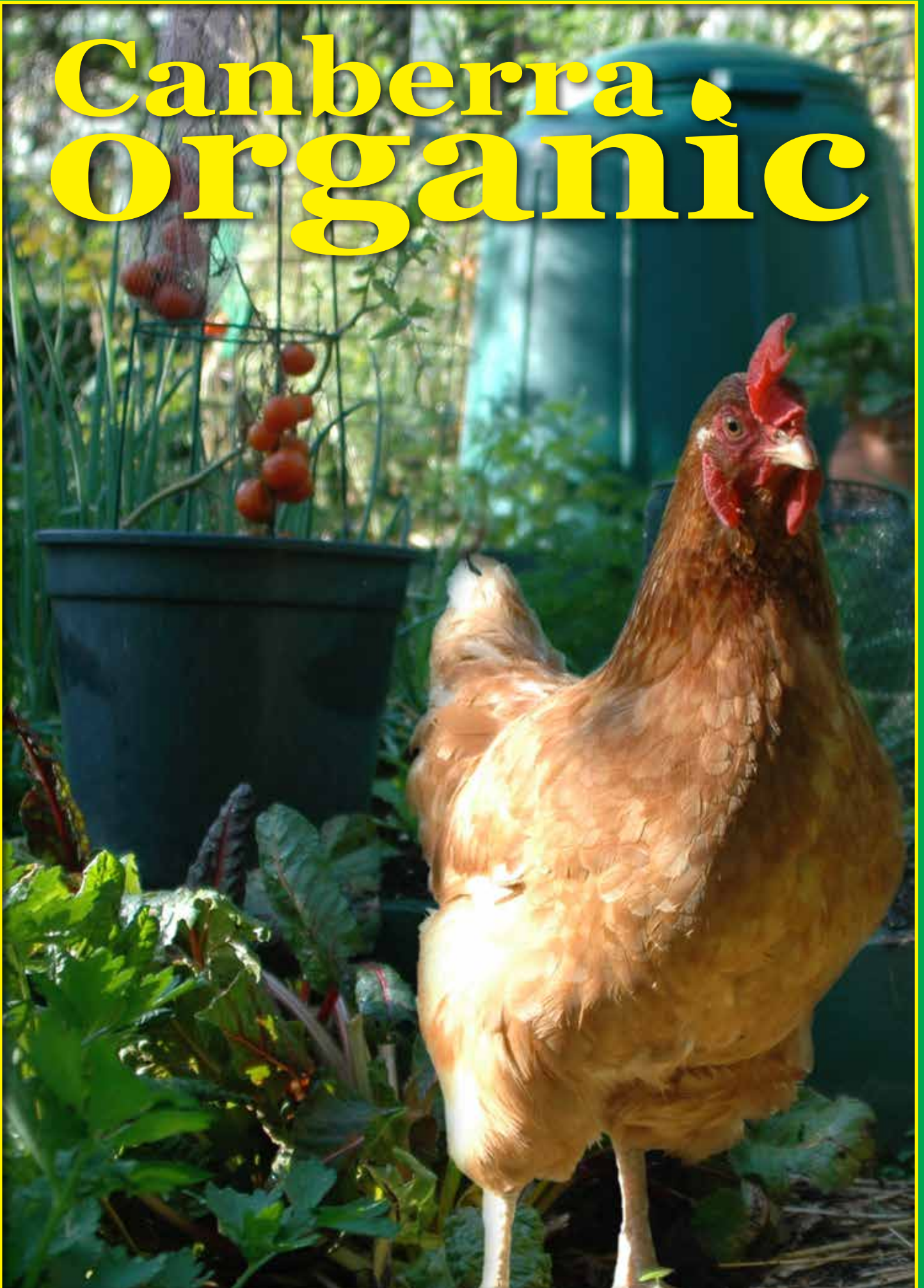


# Canberra Organic



# The hidden value of gardens

Walter says: *Here's a blogger I read and quite enjoy. This latest article nicely articulates and encapsulates key issues in gardening.*

*Smith neatly states a number of basic principles, e.g. 'value' should not be reduced to price. Oscar Wilde said that decades ago—too many people know the price of everything and the value of nothing—but it's good to have it re-stated in different ways and contexts. I do like pithy sentences.*

Reprinted with kind permission of Charles Hugh Smith.

Long-time readers know I tend to see the big issues of our era in small things. For example, I see capitalism's primary flaw—the market's inability to value whatever markets cannot price—in our society's blindness to the full value of vegetable gardens.

An example of capitalism's inability to value what cannot be priced by the market's supply-demand mechanism is the loss of the wild fisheries, for example, blue-fin tuna. The market can price the last wild blue-fin tuna caught, but it cannot price the loss to the sea's food chain and web of life, nor the eventual costs of this loss to humanity. As a result of this ontological defect, we cannot possibly make fully informed or wise decisions based solely on the market value of things.

If we rely on the market to value a vegetable garden, we would weigh the garden's harvest and calculate the wholesale value of the vegetables, or perhaps the price that could be fetched for the veggies [sic] at a local farmer's market.

Let's say the market determines the 'value' of the garden's output at \$200. If we calculate the hours of labor needed to maintain the garden and harvest the output, this appears to be a very low return on the investment of labor (time) and capital (seeds, soil, water, compost, etc.)

But does this market-calculated value truly capture all the value



Collage by Matt Mawson

intrinsic to a thriving garden? Even the most superficial survey of the spectrum of value created by a garden would find that the market captured almost nothing of a garden's true value.

Just off the top of my head, here is what a garden generates in non-market value:

- A soothing green oasis that offers visitors immediate health benefits: lower blood pressure, calming the mind, re-establishing a connection to the natural world, etc.
- A natural gathering place for those living nearby. A rooftop garden, for example, becomes a magnet for residents of the building, even if they express no interest in raising vegetables.
- A source of meaning and pride for those caring for the garden
- An irreplaceable 'classroom' for learning about interactive, dynamic systems, biology, ecosystems, insects, pollinators, soil, micro-organisms
- A source of inspiration for culinary education, art projects and other expressions of creativity and beauty

- A workplace where participants can learn perseverance, a work ethic, how to nurture natural processes, etc.
- An opportunity to learn the social skills of sharing and working with others
- A healing place for people who have never had experience with the natural world and with the healing powers of caring for something other than one's own narrow self-interest
- A natural rallying point to form a community out of disparate individuals or deepen the bonds between neighbours
- The joys of harvesting fresh, organic vegetables.

These ten sources of value unrecognised by supply-demand pricing of marketable output do not capture the full value of a vegetable garden, but they reveal how much of what I call the community economy is invisible to market discovery of price/value.

Thanks for reading.

— Charles

# President's report

Once again, COGS supported the Urban Agriculture Australia display at Floriade this year, and once again the display proved popular with the public. The wicking bed intrigued many visitors, as did the edible weeds display. People love animals, and the chickens were a big drawcard.

**Alpacas would have been nice, but there are limits to what one can stable inside the Floriade gardens.**

Most of the UAA display has been moved to the Canberra City Farm's new home in Turner, on the corner of Masson and Watson Streets. Have a look if you're passing by. COGS and the City Farm have somewhat different objectives of course, but we also have a great deal of overlap and seek ways to support each other.

On 15 September we applied to ACT Planning and Land Authority to expand the Mitchell garden. On 14 October we were advised that the land also has a grazing licence over it, and that other directorates need to be consulted. We are still waiting for an outcome.

The committee is looking into using old shipping containers as sheds in some of our gardens. Shipping containers are made of sturdy steel with doors and hinges to match, and are as good as inde-

structible. They're not very pretty but they can always be painted and decorated, or even camouflaged. If you'd like to see what a container looks like in a garden context, there are two on the new Canberra City Farm site.

You will recall from the last issue of the magazine that we were given a number of seeds for the 1944 Bullocks Heart tomato. All have found homes, so now we wait to see how many will come up. We took five and as I'm writing this, one has just sprouted. Here's hoping that the rest will follow suit. I've asked the other growers if they could keep track of their germination rates. We'll have to save the seeds if we like the result and want more—you sure won't find this one in the shops or catalogues!

As I said in the last issue, we're modernising our management systems. We hope that the first upgrade to the membership and financial systems will be complete by the time you read this. We're using a version of MYOB (Mind Your Own Business) which gives its users access via the Cloud [see below for explanation of what this is]. Our treasurer Maarten and a consultant have put a great deal of work into developing the new data and reporting structure, and migrating the data.



**MYOB promises to serve our members better and save a lot of volunteer time.**

Members will be able to pay fees online. No more fiddly and lost cheques. The membership officer will be able to keep member records current, especially mailing addresses for the magazine and other communications. The gardens co-ordinator will be able to manage a waiting list based on up-to-date information. Garden convenors will be able to read and update local garden details themselves.

If you're wondering what the Cloud is, it's a network of remote computers on the internet which stores, manages, and processes data, rather than a local or a personal computer. Until recently we were running our management systems on a couple of overloaded laptops. The Cloud's remote computers can be absolutely anywhere; the whole thing looks like a single computer to the user.

The next task is to update the website. A website is such an essential tool these days, and since releasing the current website some years ago there has been a proliferation of web tools and systems; too many perhaps. We're working on specifications now and most likely will need more outside help to put it all together.

Happy summer growing, everyone!

—Walter

**The November COGS meeting is also our Christmas party and a chance to catch up with other members over a cooling drink and nibbles.**

**Drinks will be supplied but please bring a plate to share as this will be our last meeting for the year.**

**COGS meetings will re-start in February 2015.**

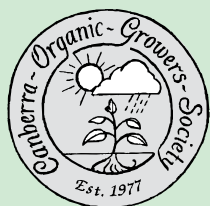


**Canberra Organic** is the quarterly publication of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.

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

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Editor: Sue Pavasaris  
Layout: Matt Mawson  
Proofreading: Jenny Clark and Walter Steensby



**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

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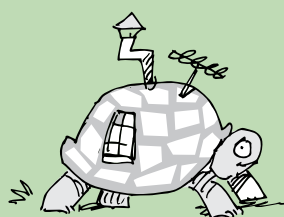
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**New Committee members needed!  
COGS needs YOU—  
please volunteer now!**



**Moving house or changing your email address?**

Please let COGS know so we can update our records.

Send your new details to our treasurer, Maarten

treasurer@cogs.asn.au

or to the president, Walter

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COGS operates 12 community gardens in the Canberra region, with the support of the ACT Government.

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# Editor's note

I am writing this after a wonderful morning in the garden, planting out my little tomato seedlings (and crossing my fingers that there will be no more frosts), and preparing germination trays for corn and beans. I've been harvesting English spinach now for months and the rocket is advanced enough to be cut for salads and sandwiches. Even better, there's a bumper crop of garlic coming along so I'll have to re-visit all those YouTube clips on how to plait it. All this activity seems fitting for the summer issue of the magazine!

This issue includes (republished with permission) an article about something COGS gardeners already know: gardening makes you happy! Thanks Michele for passing this on. It is therefore pleasing to see that schools like St John Paul II at Gungahlin are investing in school gardens. Not only will students learn the value of healthy food, but they will also know how to grow it and hopefully this activity will help them cope with the stresses

of exams and the school routine. It's a total win/win! And if they are growing zucchini they might like to try out some of the recipes Elizabeth Dangerfield has contributed in her article on zucchini.



Growing produce locally is one of the many issues filmmaker Simon Cunich explores in his film *Growing Change*. I was lucky

enough to spend some time with Simon talking about the film and about organic gardening in general. It's always interesting to hear some good news stories from overseas.

Speaking of overseas, Susan McCarthy generously shared her experiences talking to a community gardener in Stockholm, Sweden. As Susan said, Swedish gardeners have to cope with a challengingly short growing period, but it seems that gardeners like Anne-Sophie make the most of it.

These are but a few articles from what is an issue jam-packed with interesting snippets. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Thanks as always to those who generously contribute articles and photographs—it wouldn't happen without you!

As my chickens go into their usual summer egg-laying frenzy, I thought it was only fitting for *Crème* to join me in the photo.

–Sue

## Advertising in Canberra Organic

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	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)

Please contact [editor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:editor@cogs.asn.au)

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### Copy and advertising

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## Contents

The hidden value of gardens . . . . .	inside front cover
President's report . . . . .	1
COGS committee and garden convenors . . . . .	2
Around the COGS garden . . . . .	4
Dickson . . . . .	4
Cook . . . . .	6
O'Connor . . . . .	6
Oaks . . . . .	7
Crace . . . . .	8
COGS convenors' meeting . . . . .	9
How dirt makes you happy . . . . .	11
College garden project . . . . .	12
COGS budget submission . . . . .	12
Hotels for insects . . . . .	13
Interview with Simon Cunich . . . . .	14
The weather report . . . . .	15
Community gardening Stockholm style . . . . .	16
Zucchini . . . . .	18
Gary Sully talk: cider, lovely cider . . . . .	20
Summer planting guide . . . . .	21
COGS membership application . . . . .	23

### This month's cover:

Garden helper (photo: Sue Pavasaris)

## Dickson community garden

Welcome to new gardeners Carl, Sarah and Rodney!

### Working bee and path mulching

On 31 August we held our annual get-together to discuss plot holder responsibilities, COGS issues and general ideas to help make the Dickson COGS garden a pleasant and productive place to be. Most of the plot holders were present and the workforce exerted its power at the working bee following the meeting. The main challenges were to wheelbarrow and place mulch on all of the paths around and through the garden, mow the grass, weed the herb and mint gardens and have a general tidy up. The paths came up particu-

larly well as the attached photo shows.

**We also had an unexpected visitor to the garden. It was a frog buried about 15 cm in the ground.**

We relocated the native frog. Hope it enjoyed our recent bout of rain.

### Mulched paths to suppress weeds

What a wonderful time of the year in the garden! Several plot holders have planted marigolds and calendulas as companion plants and the colour is fantastic. Everything is growing well and the harvest is well and truly on. The communal

herb garden is doing very well, as is the mint garden and the raspberry patch. There are plenty of flowers on the raspberry bushes and we should see fruit shortly. Michele's broad beans look good enough to eat already.

### Broad beans busting out of their pods

In mid-August the Dickson garden was visited by students from the University of NSW studying sustainability as part of a field trip to view such practices within the Canberra region. The Dickson convenor provided an overview of the garden and COGS. Dickson College staff talked about the refugee and ESL programs at the school and how the garden is used as a resource in these programs. Following this the students wandered around the garden and asked questions about organic approaches.

Caroline, a student from the University of Canberra, has been volunteering in the garden as part of her sustainability course. She has been most helpful and has weeded our peppermint patch, planted out some variegated mint, potted some summer vegetables and helped weed the community patch. Apparently her Dad has a great hydroponics setup, growing vegetables, berries and herbs.

### Bunnings table

On 13 September I set up a table at Bunnings, Fyshwick, as part of their Spring Celebrations weekend (see photo on page 10). The table was set up with seasonal produce from my garden—cabbage, parsley, rocket, chard, fennel, lettuce. The day was spent handing out free heirloom seeds I had collected from the previous season, COGS membership forms and planting guides.

—Michele England  
(photos and story)





*Above: University of NSW students on a field trip to Dickson community garden*

*Right: Broad beans*

*Below: Caroline from the University of Canberra*

*Below right: Mulched paths*

*Opposite page: The native frog we discovered during our working bee*



## Cook community garden

Winter is finally over and spring is here. The weather has been wonderful and the garden received 40 mm of rain last week. As a consequence the Cook garden is looking quite lush and green gardeners are preparing their plots for the new growing season. Already I see beans popping up from the ground and even a few brave souls have planted tomatoes. I always wait until Melbourne Cup Day before I plant tomatoes.

We held our AGM on 14 September and we had a working bee beforehand. There were no new nominations for the convenor position so I was re-elected unopposed. John Tuckwell, Mario Serenellini and Kym Louis left the committee, but Julia Zachara wished to continue as committee member. Andrew Combe, Graeme Davis, Mike Avent and Alex Digan put their hands up to take on the role as committee members. As there is no limit to the number of members on the committee all the nominees were elected unopposed so we now have a committee of six gardeners!

None of our gardeners has relinquished their plots and left the garden in the past months so we have no new gardeners. We have 17 people on our waiting list.

– Glynis Kennedy

### Carrot, ginger and orange soup with star anise

Serves 2–3, vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free.

#### Ingredients

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 small bunch of coriander stalks and leaves finely chopped (save some leaves for garnish)
- 2 star anise
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger
- 500 grams carrots, washed and grated (not peeled)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon honey or sugar or agave syrup
- about 750 mL vegetable stock
- 1 orange
- 3 tablespoons of yoghurt to serve (optional)



#### Method

1. Sweat the onions, celery, coriander, ginger and star anise in the oil over a medium heat for 7–10 minutes until softened but not browned.
2. Add the grated carrots, honey and stock, bring to the boil then lower the heat and simmer, partially covered, for about 20 minutes.
3. Carefully pick out the star anise and blend the soup until smooth. Add the orange juice and season with salt and black pepper. Add more stock if it is too thick for you.
4. To serve: bring soup back to the heat and serve in warmed bowls topped with some coriander leaves and a swirl of yoghurt.



## O'Connor community garden

*Paul working on the ivy hedge at the south of the O'Connor garden block. The ivy is still to be fully eradicated.*

*(Photo: Andrew Hunt)*



## Oaks Estate community garden

Oaks Estate is on the border of the ACT and NSW, near Queanbeyan. The area under cultivation in the garden continues to increase, but there are still plots available—with some of the best soil in the Canberra region. It is ideal for potential gardeners from Oaks Estate and nearby parts of Queanbeyan and south Canberra, particularly those living in apartments or with small yards and little garden space. If you'd like some space to grow vegies, please ring Terry on 6299 2409, or email [oaks\\_estate\\_convenor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:oaks_estate_convenor@cogs.asn.au).

Our gardeners are a diverse mix of experienced and novice fruit and vegetable growers. This growing season we formed a committee to manage the garden. Terry Williams was elected as convenor and he has agreed to fill that role for 12 months<sup>1</sup>, going to COGS committee meetings and doing the necessary recordkeeping. However, the actual work of running and maintaining the garden will be shared among the gardeners, based on advice and ideas from all concerned.

– Ewan Maidment  
(photos and story)



<sup>1</sup>OK, so we kept him tied up in the shed and didn't let him have any say in the matter until he agreed to shut up and stop whingeing. That's close enough, isn't it?



*Spring preparation for the growing season at Oaks Estate community garden*



*Surviving the winter—artichokes at the Oaks Estate garden*



*Queanbeyan Railway Station—view from the garden gate. Steam trains stop at the station on the first weekend of each month*

## Crace community garden

It's been a busy 12 months for Crace community garden, which celebrated its first birthday in late September with the annual general meeting and a barbecue.

As outgoing convener Greg Parish noted in his report to the AGM, we've held five barbecues, two working bees and a passata-making day, and hosted a visit from the NSW Historic Garden Society. We've also achieved minor celebrity status through two articles in *The Canberra Times*. The committee and a couple of dedicated volunteers have developed garden rules, conducted a plant audit for the approximately 280 plants in the common areas, installed a fourth watering point, and attached metal numbers to identify our plots.

After a very slow start our compost bins are finally starting to produce useful compost. To help improve the way we use the 10 bins, we've divided them into zones, with several plot holders in each zone to take responsibility for—and reap the benefits from—their own bins. We've also constructed a timber pallet pen for weeds and bulkier green waste so that they don't clog the compost bins.

The last year has been a learning curve, not just for our committee but for many of our plot holders, particularly those who were new to gardening. This was reflected in the turnover of 11 plots, most of which

were because plot holders were unprepared for the level of commitment required to maintain the plot. Several plots had summer crops still rotting on the plant in late winter. This is something the new committee, led by new convenor John Atwood, hopes to address by proactively monitoring plots for neglect, and ensuring new plot holders are aware of not just their responsibilities, but also the advice and resources available to them within the garden's membership and through the COG's website.

We've got many exciting plans for the year ahead, including quarterly working bees and regular social events that celebrate the seasons. We're also improving communication with our plot holders, including through regular email updates. We will soon be implementing a new 'flag system' where plot holders can indicate various messages—such as excess crops that they're prepared to share—through planting colour-coded tomato stakes in their plot. We expect this will be particularly valuable during the anticipated glut of summer vegies in a few months' time.

It's been a great 12 months, and we're looking forward to continuing to build on the great work already done, increasing our collective gardening ability, and continuing to develop as a community.

—Diana Cozadinos (story and photo)



*Young gardeners Sophie and Michael Yang during a recent working bee*

## COGS convenors meet at Charnwood

COGS garden co-ordinator Richard Horobin met with other COGS garden convenors at Charnwood garden in October. Richard said the weather was perfect, and the garden looked superb. The group discussed many things as recorded in the notes below.

### 2014 census and fees

COGS financial year ended on 31 August. Convenors put in considerable effort in August and September to create lists showing members and the areas they rent. This is essentially a census of COGS plot holders. We rely on the quality of that data to manage COGS accounts and therefore determine the funds available to the gardens in the coming year. The COGS Executive thanks all convenors for this work.

### Garden abandonment or something

Choice of term is difficult because some terms have legal standing outside COGS which may make our group harder to manage, e.g. abandonment. The convenors will look for a term that works for us.

We need to deal with plot holders who do not do enough to justify holding a plot, as we have considerable demand for plots from new members. The current rules delay plot reallocation. It's not just very frustrating for the other gardeners and people on the waiting list—it can be a safety risk, too, as we are getting significantly more frequent sightings of dangerous legless reptiles near unkempt plots.

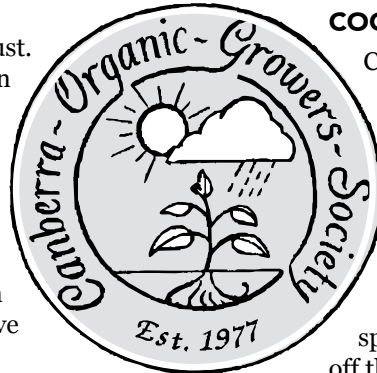
### Reasons for inactivity on the plot

If the plot holder is either unwilling or unable to maintain the plot to a standard that satisfies our expectations, there are at least three factors to consider:

1. **Expectations** can change. We can allow more time or lower our standards. Can we set standards that are measurable and consistent, e.g. time? We can use 31 August as a real deadline, because this is when we conduct the census and start invoicing people for their plots. Plots should 'look good' at census time to show that the plot holder really wants to keep the plot for the coming year. Similarly, during the main growing season, we should set high standards and short times for remedies, to maximise use of the plots. Outside the growing season, we can be more lenient.
2. **Inability** could include skills or health issues. Inability can be treated by either direct assistance or training. Inability is not a motivational issue—the plot holder is willing, but just can't do enough or do it fast enough.

3. **Unwillingness** is the thing about which we are all awkward. It can be treated by identifying either impediments or distractions. Impediments can be factors at the garden (grass too long; hose too short). We might be able to fix these. Distractions can be anything else that the plot holder really would rather do. We should ask such people what they would rather do, and help them go and do it.

Convenors hope to review these rules by 1 February 2015.



### COGS rules and garden rules

Convenors will also review local and COGS rules. Since COGS is the incorporated body, we members must follow its rules. COGS rules will be applied across all gardens, so they need to be more general; e.g. COGS rules should state the extent to which we follow the Australian Organic Standard #232. Local rules can and should focus on the specific needs of each garden; e.g. turn off the mains tap before leaving. Local rules should remind members that they must first follow COGS rules. Local rules must not contradict COGS rules.

### Communications media and telephone trees

We all receive many messages to which we need to respond, and then we get spam on top of that. COGS's issue is that few people respond or acknowledge our messages. There are other options, such as telephone trees and new media, but these require another user id and password. We discussed various options like GroupSpaces, but agreed to continue to use email.

Convenors are the key people to carry messages to and from members. Please acknowledge messages, so that we know you're getting them.

### Tools—new for old for Mitchell-2

When we start equipping the second garden at Mitchell, we could just buy new tools. That is a simple solution, but may lead to having them stolen ... word gets around. It's also a bit selfish for one garden to get new tools, leaving the others with old. However, we can use this opportunity to change all that. Existing gardens can get some new tools, and Mitchell-2 can get some 'heritage' tools. Each garden should donate an old tool to Mitchell-2 in exchange for a new tool. For example, Charnwood may donate a used wheelbarrow and get a new stainless steel fork and shovel in return. This spreads the benefits of the new garden throughout the other 12 gardens. It also reminds the Mitchell-2 gardeners that they belong with the other gardens.

### Tools—specific

Police advise us that, generally, tools are easily stolen and traded ... thus the need to lock them up, as we do now.

When selecting new tools, please buy the better tool—e.g. stainless steel forks and shovels, long-handled tools, cast metal rather than pressed metal, 15-year guarantees, brass tap fittings, DRAMM shower heads, and generally sturdy things. We're more like a small city council, and we need to buy robust things.

### Containers for sheds

City Farm has obtained 'free' shipping containers for their Turner site. While COGS may not be able to get free ones, we can get them quite cheaply. COGS expects to get a 12 metre container for Mitchell-2. This is more than ample. Containers are much stronger than garden sheds, and more secure. They are 2.5 metres tall, 2.5 metres wide, and either 3, 6, 9 or 12 metres long. They do not need a concrete pad. Usually, they are mounted on four plates so that they are level. They can be painted either plainly or with murals. See what size you can fit in your garden and tell us what you want. (Installation needs either truck or tractor access.)

### Snakes

This year, we seem to have more snakes in our gardens than last. While the best advice is still 'wear gumboots and gloves' and 'stay away from snakes', we need to clean our gardens of refuse or long grass or piles of material that could provide habitat or food for snakes and their food—mice, rats, etc. A last resort would be to use 6.5 millimetre netting to create a snake-resistant fence around the plots, and manage the snakes that might appear inside the boundary later. Sheds and glasshouses are also attractive places for a reptile, so we need to find out how to manage that risk, too.

### Risk committee

Meg McFarlane, Neville Jackson, Michele England and Glynis Kennedy agreed to form the 2014 Risk Committee. The risk committee will visit each garden to assess its risks. Please support these people by being available to answer questions about your specific garden. Gardens should address as many risks as possible before 31 August. The committee expects to complete its review by the end of the growing season.

## Dickson community gardens celebrate spring with Bunnings



Michele, from Dickson community garden, at Bunnings, Fyshwick, where she set up a table at as part of their Spring Celebrations weekend on September 13 and 14. Michele said her table went well and there were several genuine enquiries about COGS. Overall:

- she gave away 20 packets of seeds (rockmelon, marigolds, leeks)
- she handed out 12 forms (membership, tips, spring planting guide)
- she chatted with 22 people about COGS.

Well done Michele!!!!

### President's contribution

Walter brought seeds from a 1944 tomato, and seedlings of yacón, a tuber, which were eagerly snapped up.

He also talked about a possible new site in Watson that has been suggested to COGS. If we can make this site work, we can argue for more gardens, and have them closer to homes. The site is under power lines, which will not affect users or plants.

Another option is created by the current interest in health-related or therapeutic gardening. We could ask hospitals and nursing homes if they could set aside areas for gardens.

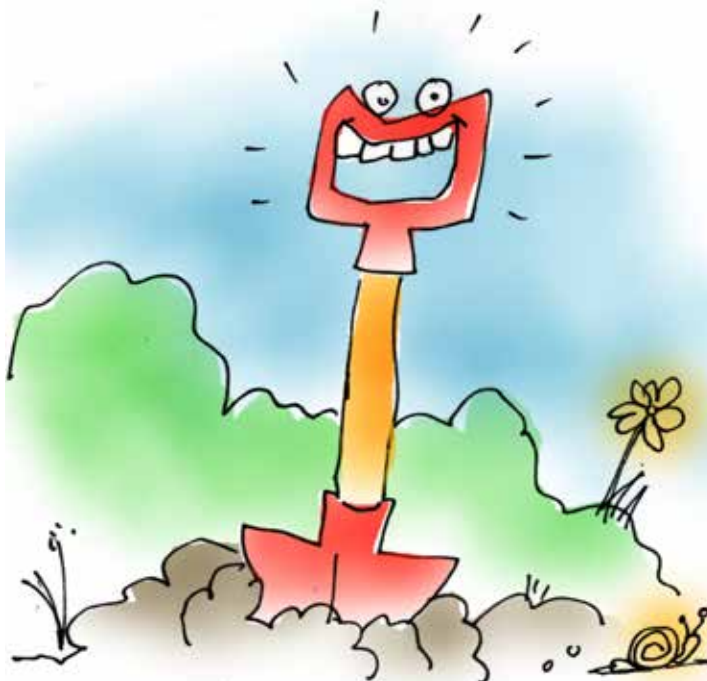
### Next convenors' meeting

February, 2015, at Cotter Garden, near the Yarralumla Woolshed.

—Richard Horobin

## Antidepressant microbes in soil: how dirt makes you happy

Michele Barson from Cook community garden sent in the link to this article, which she thought other readers might enjoy. It is republished with the kind permission of American website, Gardening Know How. The article was first published on 12 August 2014 and can be accessed directly via this link: <http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/antidepressant-microbes-soil.htm>



Cartoon by Matt Mawson

**P**rozac may not be the only way to get rid of your serious blues. Soil microbes have been found to have similar effects on the brain and are without side effects and chemical dependency potentials.

Natural remedies have been around for untold centuries. These natural remedies included cures for almost any physical ailment as well as mental and emotional afflictions. Ancient healers may not have known why something worked but simply that it did. Modern scientists have unraveled the why of many medicinal plants and practices but only recently are they finding remedies that were previously unknown and, yet, still a part of the natural life cycle. Soil microbes and human health now have a positive link which has been studied and found to be verifiable.

### Soil microbes and human health

Did you know that there's a natural antidepressant in soil? It's true. *Mycobacterium vaccae* is the substance under study and has, indeed, been found to mirror the effect on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide. The bacterium is found in soil and may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Serotonin has been linked to such problems as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt.

Most avid gardeners will tell you that their landscape is their 'happy place' and the actual physical act of gardening is a stress reducer and mood lifter. The fact that there is some science behind it adds additional credibility to these garden addicts' claims.

The presence of a soil bacteria antidepressant is not a surprise to many of us who have experienced the phenomenon ourselves. Backing it up with science is fascinating, but not shocking, to the happy gardener.

Mycrobacterium antidepressant microbes in soil are also being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn's disease and even rheumatoid arthritis.

### How dirt makes you happy

Antidepressant microbes in soil cause cytokine levels to rise, which results in the production of higher levels of serotonin. The bacterium was tested both by injection and ingestion on rats and the results were increased cognitive ability, lower stress and better concentration to tasks than a control group.

Gardeners inhale the bacteria, have topical contact with it and get it into their bloodstreams when there is a cut or other pathway for infection. The natural effects of the soil bacteria antidepressant can be felt for up to three weeks if the experiments with rats are any indication. So get out and play in the dirt and improve your mood and your life.

– Bonnie L. Grant

### Resources:

'Identification of an Immune-Responsive Mesolimbocortical Serotonergic System: Potential Role in Regulation of Emotional Behavior' by Christopher Lowry et al., published online on March 28, 2007 in *Neuroscience*, [http://www.sage.edu/newsevents/news/?story\\_id=240785](http://www.sage.edu/newsevents/news/?story_id=240785) <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lane/sites/default/files/images/gg607.pdf> p. 12.

Mind & Brain/Depression and Happiness – Raw Data 'Is Dirt the New Prozac?' by Josie Glausiusz, *Discover Magazine*, June 2007, <http://discovermagazine.com/2007/jul/raw-data-is-dirt-the-new-prozac>

# College garden project

Canberra's St John Paul II College in Gungahlin is really embracing gardening with this large-scale kitchen garden project. Bursar/business manager Keith Vardanega said that the next step is to have the irrigation system connected and then early next year to construct a fence around the area. Sustainability teacher Anthony Pitt and his students have already commenced planning a spring/summer crop for the canteen.



## COGS budget submission

Following an invitation from the ACT Government COGS has made a submission seeking funding of \$38,600 in the 2015 budget. The funding being sought is for:

- fencing for an expanded Mitchell garden (\$22,600). The expanded garden would provide an additional 36 garden plots each of 25 square metres
- new pipeline (\$16,000) to allow the Theodore garden to reopen.

The COGS Executive Committee estimates that the total cost of the proposed works at the two gardens

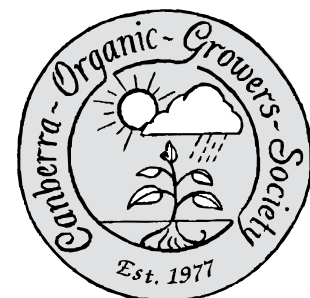
would be in excess of \$51,000. The balance of the funding (\$22,800) required to complete the proposed works would be met from COGS reserves.

COGS argues in its submission that community gardens are valuable in building communities, providing significant health benefits as well as the opportunity for growing their own food. The increasing population density in the newly developing suburbs and the inner city areas means the opportunities for people to garden and grow their own food are limited. The expected ageing of the ACT population, combined

with ACT policies encouraging older people to move to smaller homes, is likely to further increase the demand for garden plots in community gardens.

The full COGS submission can be found on the COGS Wiki.

—Andy Hrast



## Hotels for insects

*COGS vice president Richard Horobin thought COGS readers might be interested in this article published in the spring 2014 issue of Our Gardens, the quarterly magazine of The Garden Clubs of Australia. Our Gardens' editor, Patricia Prior, has kindly granted us permission to republish it.*

We cannot live without insects. They pollinate the flowers we enjoy including many of the foods we eat and predatory insects, such as aphids, kill those we would rather be without.

Many native bees and wasps are solitary creatures which do not live in hives and, because they have no home to defend, are not aggressive and rarely sting. They drag their prey into a hole to provide food for the larva which hatches from the egg or eggs laid on it. The opening to the hole is sealed to allow the next generation to grow before chewing its way out.

By maintaining neat and manicured gardens we reduce or remove many of the natural habitats, such as dead wood, of such desirable insects. An insect hotel not only addresses this imbalance by encouraging the insects we want, but can be an attractive garden feature in its own right.

I first heard of insect hotels when my son, Giles, built one for his partner and erected it in their garden. Since then I have seen many varied designs, sizes and materials.

An insect hotel is an easy weekend project which can use recyclable materials such as old fence palings for the main frame—even an old milk crate or stack of pallets could be used, or perhaps a tin, piece of pipe



or flowerpot on its side on top of a wall. The spaces are filled with whatever materials are at hand, such as corrugated cardboard, wood chips, twigs, bark or short lengths of branches. A variety of materials ensures a diversity of residents.

Drill holes of various sizes in the short lengths of branches, say 2 mm, 4 mm, 6 mm and 8 mm, and at a slight angle to prevent water from entering. Also ensure you do not go too deep and make a tunnel through the wood. Avoid wood with chemical preservatives or softwood as bees can suffocate in the resin.

A hotel could be located almost anywhere but preferably in the sun, to provide its inhabitants with warmth, and protected from wind and rain. These photographs (see also inside back cover) should give you some ideas if you want to try this project.

– Robert Ballinger (story and photos)

*Bob and his wife Sue (a member of Gordon GC) live at Pymble, Sydney. Their lovely garden is open from time to time to support the Motor Neurone Disease Institute. Enquiries: [bobb@primus.com.au](mailto:bobb@primus.com.au)*

### Photos:

(above) The hotel that Giles built

(left) On display at Hamburg's Garden World



# Growing change: an interview with Simon Cunich

Will the world be able to feed itself into the future? Are there workable alternatives to the current corporate-dominated food production system? Do community-based initiatives such as community gardens have a role to play? These were some of the questions that prompted filmmaker, Simon Cunich, to travel to Venezuela to make *Growing Change*, his award-winning documentary about that country's food revolution.

*Growing Change* screened to a sizeable audience including well-known television gardening identity, Costa Georgiadis, at the Canberra Environment Centre on 16 July. Simon Cunich was happy to talk to *Canberra Organic* about the film and his own journey from self-professed cynic to enthusiastic supporter of community gardening.

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'It was great to see the number of people—around 100 really enthusiastic people—who stayed on to talk about the film after the screening', he said.

'A lot of the questions focused on: "What are the lessons for Australia?" "How does it apply to us?" We need a conscious approach to planning our food system in the future that takes into account the environment and social impacts. At the moment it's up to the market to decide what we produce and how we produce it.

'The other lesson from Venezuela is that we can be really effective when local communities are able to work with governments at different levels to create change. That seems like a bit of a stretch for Australia at the moment when community food grants are being cut by the government but it's something to strive towards.'

Venezuela seems like a long way from Newcastle, where Cunich was living when he had the idea



Stills from Simon Cunich's documentary *Growing Change* (above and opposite)

for the film, but he said a combination of things resulted in him accompanying a group of PhD students from ANU and other Australian universities who were travelling to Venezuela as part of their research on food issues.

'I'd been getting involved in the local food community in Newcastle where I was living', he said, 'and that coincided with my interest in food politics triggered by the global food crisis in 2008. I was interested in things that would work on a global basis.

'I had a set of questions I was trying to answer: how can the world feed itself in the future and could Venezuela show it was possible? I had no script—it was my first documentary and I didn't really know how to make films. Every step was working out how to make it. I was shooting on HDV digital tape, which is already almost obsolete technology, and I ended up carrying around 50 tapes in my backpack.'

Although he only spent five weeks shooting the film in Venezuela, Cunich said the whole process ended up taking 18 months, most of which was trying to work out how to put it all together.

He had done a TAFE course in media production but managed to get into the Australian Film, Tele-

vision and Radio School in 2011 while he was working on *Growing Change* and completed a Graduate Certificate in Documentary.

'My interest in organic gardening was accidental. In Newcastle I moved into a sharehouse where the previous tenant had started a great permaculture garden. I took an interest and became passionate about it.'

Cunich said farming was in the family although the family farm near Cootamundra was sold when he was a kid.

'My dad and grandparents love to share stories about the farm. There's a long history of farmers in the family—the Cunichs ran cherry orchards in Young when they came to Australia from Croatia in the 1870s.'

In the past five years Cunich said he's noticed a greater community awareness of where our food comes from and people thinking about what they buy.

'I think a lot of that increased awareness has been expressed in people's consumption choices—for example, buying organic and shopping at farmer's markets', he said.

'In recent years I've done some work with the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance who are





‘But while there is a downward pressure on farmgate prices it’s hard to talk about the environment when farmers are trying to stay afloat.’

Sadly Cunich said his own gardening in Canberra, where he is currently based, is not going very well.

‘There’s a lot of shade in our garden’, he said. ‘I’ve had a go at growing veges but haven’t been very successful.’

– Sue Pavasaris

putting together a “people’s food plan”.

‘They’re doing great work in imagining what’s possible on a national level.’

Cunich said that although he was initially sceptical, he now believes community gardens are a way of

supplementing our food production and have benefits ranging from health to environmental.

‘Some change will happen through conventional production, for example precision farming where technology is employed to use inputs more efficiently’, he said.

*Simon Cunich specialises in making films about human rights, development, social justice and environmental sustainability. In 2013 he completed Stumbling in Hillary’s Footsteps, a documentary shot in Nepal, which aired on the ABC.*

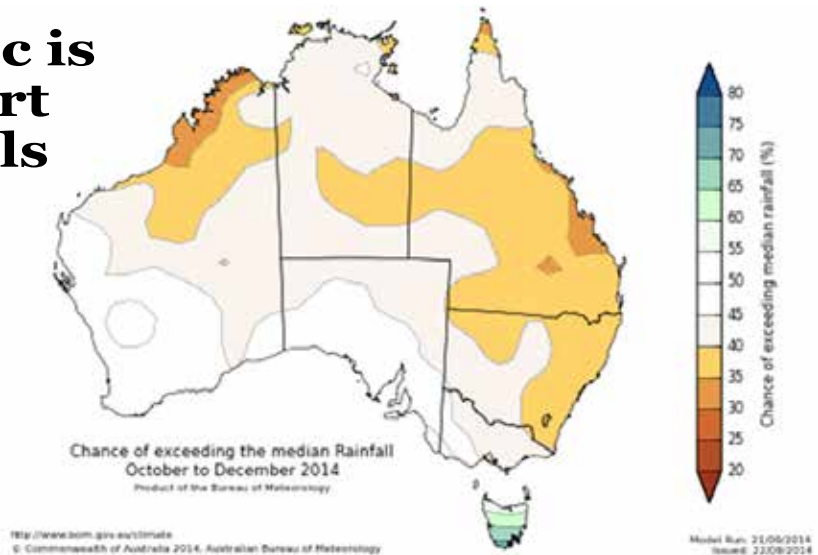
# Weather

## Tropical Pacific is warm, but short of El Niño levels

The Bureau of Meteorology report issued on Tuesday 21 October 2014 says El Niño indicators, as well as Australian rainfall patterns, continue to show some El Niño-like signatures, but remain in the neutral range (neither El Niño nor La Niña).

The tropical Pacific Ocean has remained warmer than average for more than six months, while the Southern Oscillation Index has remained negative since early June. However, neither has reached typical El Niño levels for any sustained period, and only weak atmosphere–ocean interaction appears to have taken place so far.

International models surveyed by the bureau suggest that warmer-than-average tropical Pacific waters are likely to persist. While there has been some easing in model outlooks over the past month, three of eight models reach



### Dam levels in the Canberra Region and capital cities

	ACT storages	Murray-Darling Basin	Burren-juck Dam	Blower-ing Dam	Syd	Melb	Bris	Adel	Perth
% full	86	65	79	65	88	80	84	83	33

El Niño thresholds by January and another two remain just shy of the thresholds for an event.

Australia has generally been dry and warm over recent months. A warmer central tropical Pacific late in the year typically heralds

warmer and drier conditions for parts of eastern Australia, as well as a reduction in the number of tropical cyclones in the Australian region and increased bushfire risk in the south.

–Andy Hrast

## Community gardening Stockholm-style

Susan provided the following background for her story:

*My husband and I were in Stockholm as tourists for six days in early September this year and took a sight seeing cruise on Stockholm harbour. The commentary on the boat pointed out a rather distant hill above the harbour edge and said there was a community garden up there. Back at our apartment, I googled it and decided it was a manageable walk (about 3 km each way) from Gamla Stan (the Old Town island) where we were staying. So I walked down there the following day and found Anne-Sophie in one of the lower gardens digging away. I felt uncomfortable about photographing her without her being ok with that, and I was surprised but delighted when she was so friendly and (given her age) had pretty good English. I did speak to a few other gardeners further along my walk, but unfortunately they had no or very limited English, and I have no Swedish at all. But in Anne-Sophie's case, we chatted for about 20 minutes, about her garden, the general set up, the seasons, the snow, the crops, the little huts (she even invited me to take a look inside hers) and the topics even ranged to the COGS gardens in Canberra! It just illustrates what a common bond the love of gardening really is!*



snow peas, lettuces, zucchini, little tomatoes, strawberries, blackberries, parsley and kitchen herbs. She was digging out troublesome oak roots, stockpiling stinging nettles for future fertiliser, planting French garlic, and planning to dig her potatoes that afternoon. Her flower-decorated pushbike rested next to an impossibly cute one-room wooden garden cottage and deck.

Anne-Sophie works one of 111 allotments at Tantolunden on Södermalm Island, Stockholm. These allotments were created by the city in 1918, originally to provide potato-growing land for Stockholm's poor and hungry, but now supporting a much broader gardening community. Each allotment has a different shape and different dimensions, separated by dirt laneways and ox blood-red picket fences. Each has its own cottage—individual in style but uniformly wooden and painted either red or yellow, and cohesively picturesque. The gardening 'village' is spread across the upper slope of a hill over-

looking Stockholm harbour, and extending down to the harbour foreshore.

Anne-Sophie pays 4,000 kronor per year (about AUD \$700) for her 420 sq m allotment. This includes use of the cottage (not for residential) and access to water and nearby community toilets. The cottage has power and a stove, and a small table, chairs and sofa. Anne-Sophie can grow whatever she pleases, provided she gardens actively. All the Tantolunden allotments are well kept, with manicured lawns, laden apple trees, cultured berry vines, and composting facilities.

Regrettably, I missed the community harvest festival by three days. Judging from the posters, I could have expected to see a variety of vegetables, fruit and flowers produced over what, even by Canberra standards, is a challengingly short growing season.

—Susan McCarthy  
(story and photos)

**W**hen Anne-Sophie arrived at the top of an 8-year community allotment waiting list over 20 years ago, she faced a plot on a steep exposed slope, with little dirt and large slabs of extruded granite and overhanging oak trees. Her growing season is a maximum of six months, from April to September, and is followed by several months of heavy snow.

Yet when I spied her digging industriously one afternoon in early September this year, she was in the midst of a colourful annual flower display, and a verdant variety of edibles—bush beans,



*Anne-Sophie hard at work on autumn tasks*



*Stadsodlar Festivalen – ‘City Grower’ festival*



*Sharing the harvest – ‘please take’*

## Summer is the time to harvest zucchinis

**W**hy should you bother growing, eating or preserving zucchinis?

Well, zucchinis suck up water like Elvis the fire-bombing helicopter!

What do you call tomorrow's zucchini? Answer—a marrow! Leave it for a day and you are likely to find that your tender young zucchini has turned into a marrow of gigantic proportions. Fortunately, help is at hand. You can eat zucchinis while they still have the flowers attached to them: the young marrows are delicious in many dishes and if they do get away from you, you can always stuff them. You can also cleverly disguise them in delicious food like cakes and pickles. With their high water content, zucchini grated and added to cakes helps the cakes turn out moist.

Like so many of our summer vegetables, zucchinis (or courgettes as the French call them) originated in Central America. They are a type of squash, and like squashes, belong to the species *Cucurbita pepo*. There are as many as nine varieties of zucchinis available for sale from online retailers, including some bright yellow beauties and some disconcerting round and crooked ones.

### Zucchinis are good for you!

Zucchinis are rather modest vegetables so one would not expect there to be many health benefits from what is essentially a bag of water, however:

- zucchinis contain very few calories
- zucchinis, especially those with yellow skin, contain antioxidants such as carotenes, lutein and zeaxanthin
- zucchinis contain a significant amount of potassium
- zucchinis contain vitamins and minerals, especially vitamins A and C.

So if you are trying to lose weight, eat lots of zucchinis to fill you up



*These zucchinis helped Holder Community Garden win a prize in the 2014 Autumn Flower Show*

as they have no fat, cholesterol and very few calories. Always eat the skin to get the best health benefits from your zucchinis. Zucchinis with skin are number eight of the top vegetables for providing potassium. Potassium is important for electrolyte balance in the body and reducing blood pressure. It counters the effects of sodium chloride or common salt. In our society we tend to eat too much salt. So cut down on the salt and eat more zucchinis, sun-dried tomatoes, spinach, silverbeet, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, kale, green beans, Brussels sprouts and asparagus. Yum!

### Growing zucchinis

Zucchinis are from Mexico. They love the sun and hate the frost, so plant seeds late in spring. It takes a lot of nutrients to produce marrows so enrich the soil with compost and manure. Mulch around the plants to conserve water—they love water. Plant a succession of zucchinis, as they are susceptible to powdery mildew, although you can cut off affected leaves. Renowned TV gardener Don Burke recommends spraying infected plants with a

solution of one-part milk to nine-parts water, but if you have new plants coming on you can just pull them out and dispose of them.

### Harvesting zucchinis

Be vigilant. Start by eating the flowers, then the baby zucchini. It is much more enjoyable to eat six baby zucchinis than one marrow the size of a log, although an occasional stuffed zucchini is delicious.

**It sounds heartless but if you don't search the plant diligently for young zucchinis it will put all its efforts into raising a hidden monster marrow.**

### Cooking with zucchinis

Zucchinis are delicate vegetables so they shouldn't be cooked too long or they will disintegrate. They don't have a lot of flavour so benefit from the addition of robust flavours. Zucchini goes well with pesto, tomatoes, onions, eggplants, capsicums and mushrooms. They are good grilled, oven-roasted or stewed, with lots of garlic, olive oil and herbs. They also go well

with cheeses such as haloumi, feta and goat's cheese; cured meats including bacon and prosciutto; and toasted nuts such as pine nuts.

### **Soups**

Zucchinis make great soups. Simply sauté some onions or leeks and a bit of garlic in a pot then add a couple of potatoes cut into chunks, cook for a couple of minutes with some chopped zucchini and add vegetable stock to cover. Simmer for around 20 minutes. When all the vegetables are cooked, cool down a little, add chopped fresh herbs such as parsley, and then purée. If it is too thick for your liking, add a little milk. You can garnish the soup with some fried croutons or bacon pieces, or add some cream or a dash of pesto. Peas also go well in zucchini soup.

### **Fritters**

Grated zucchini can be added to batter to make delicious fritters. Mix 1 beaten egg with 1/3 cup of milk and 1/2 cup of plain flour (or self-raising flour if you would like your fritters to puff up more). Add 2 grated zucchinis. At this stage, you can add other ingredients such as a small can of drained corn, or blanched frozen peas, finely-chopped roasted capsicum strips, finely-chopped herbs such as dill or parsley, finely-chopped chives or green shallots and spices such as paprika or cayenne pepper. You can also add grated cheddar or parmesan cheese or cubed feta or haloumi cheese or even a little ricotta. Heat a little oil in a frying pan or use a non-stick pan and cook the fritters for about 2 minutes per side or until brown and cooked in the middle.

### **Stuffed zucchini flowers**

Zucchini flowers are delicate so be careful when you stuff them. First remove the stamens from the flower. Gently place the stuffing mixture into the flowers and twist the ends of each flower to stop the stuffing from falling out. Dunk the flowers in a light batter and deep fry for a few minutes. You can stuff them with a mixture of cheeses such as ricotta and feta or goats cheese mixed with finely-chopped herbs and lemon juice and seasoning. Drain well before serving.



### **Salads**

Zucchini is a pleasant addition to salads. You can julienne it finely or make zucchini ribbons by peeling it lengthways with a potato peeler.

### **Pasta**

Zucchini goes well with all sorts of pasta, especially combined with a creamy sauce and delicate flavours such as crab, smoked trout or ham off the bone, peas and pine nuts.

### **Grilled**

Chunks of zucchini can be added to skewers with other vegetables such as capsicum, mushroom, tomato and eggplant. Just drizzle with oil and cook on the barbeque, turning frequently, or cook slices of zucchini on a griddle or grill, or bake in the oven.

### **Stuffed**

Medium-sized zucchinis can be stuffed with all types of leftovers such as risotto, beans and even left-over stew. Cut the zucchini in half lengthways and use a teaspoon to scoop out the flesh. It speeds up the cooking process—especially if you are using a pre-cooked stuffing—if you place the zucchini shells in a dish with a little water and bake them for a little while so they become tender but still firm. Dice the flesh and add it to your stuffing, then top the stuffed zucchini with some cheese or breadcrumbs to give a crunchy topping and pop back in the oven until browned.

You can cut the ends off a large marrow, hollow out the inside and stuff it with ingredients such as the meat from flavoured sausages or fresh breadcrumbs, mushrooms, pine nuts, sautéed onions, bacon and herbs. Wrap up the marrow with greased foil and bake it in the oven for an hour or more.

I once cooked a stuffed marrow for Christmas dinner, which fed 12, and while it was not as good as roast pork and crackling it was still delicious and far more healthy.

### **Preserving zucchini**

#### **Freezing**

You can freeze zucchinis but be aware that because of their high water content they tend to go mushy when defrosted. However, they are still good for soups, adding to stews or frittatas and fritters (just pat dry first). Before freezing, blanch slices or cubes of zucchini briefly to destroy any bacteria or enzymes that may produce off-flavours. You can also grate the zucchini but it needs to be blanched ever so briefly. Plunge the blanched zucchini into iced water, when cool and dry on paper towels. Freeze individual pieces on trays lined with baking paper and pack into containers—or even better, vacuum seal.

#### **Pickles, relishes and cakes**

You can pickle zucchinis in the same way as you would pickle cucumbers, and use them in relishes and chutneys. You can make zucchini cakes and freeze individual slices using freezer wrap.

#### **Dips and toppings**

One way of using lots of zucchinis is to chop them up and cook them in olive oil with lots of garlic and herbs and other seasonings until most of the water is removed (but don't let the mixture brown). About 1 kg of zucchinis will produce around two cups of cooked zucchini, which you can then purée to use as a dip or use as it is a topping or side dish. Freeze any leftovers in usable portions.

– Elizabeth Dangerfield

## Aah cider, lovely cider

**G**ary Sully, of Sully's Cider and Wine at the Old Cheese Factory at Reidsdale, was our very engaging speaker at the September COGS meeting. Not only did he explain many aspects of apple trees and cider-making, but he also supplied some of the factory's cider for tasting. Everybody was quick to queue up for a try of the delicious still and sparkling varieties, and the mood was very jolly.

Gary provided a range of information about traditional cider-making and the apples used for it, including the loss of heritage apple trees, the history of the beverage in both Europe and Australia and the characteristics of a good cider apple. For example, cider apples are generally a soft apple with an emphasis on tannins, which form the basis of good cider and very different to the eating and cooking apples to be found in supermarkets these days.

There is also a vast difference between traditionally produced cider and the commercially available product, which is generally made from concentrated apple juice from China, to which sugar has been added to boost the alcohol content, followed by water for dilution purposes. At Reidsdale, Gary and his family do the entire process, from growing the apple trees to the final bottling. The apples are picked, washed, crushed and pressed and the resulting juice



*Drawing: Matt Mawson*

placed into fermentation vats. Yeasts grow naturally in the open vats in the warmer months, while cultivated yeasts may be added in winter. This part of the process takes five or so months and then the liquid (undiluted) is moved to oak barrels to enhance the flavours. The whole process to bottling can take up to two years, with every vintage different.

The Braidwood district, where Reidsdale is situated, has long had a connection to cider production. Many of the early settlers in the region were retired naval and army surgeons, with a knowledge of cider as an antidote to scurvy. Cider apple orchards were planted

as early as 1840 on the banks of the Shoalhaven River and a family from Somerset called Wilton had a cider factory at Major's Creek from around 1880.

The apple trees themselves have a fascinating history. There are three surviving trees from the Wilton era, with grafts placed high above sheep-munching height. Gary and his family have scoured the region for other remaining trees and are actively grafting and growing orchards. Huge numbers of apple varieties have been lost: in 1918 a South Australian orchard was known to grow 1,400 varieties; Gary's orchards contain over 100 varieties. Some of the varieties he highlighted in his talk were Tom Putt, Foxwhelp and Wilson's (a Golden Pippin).

The Cheese Factory is open every Sunday, and the cider and other delicious and inebriating products can also be purchased at the Braidwood Farmers Market. Gary and his family also run workshops on many subjects, and I for one, intend to get to his 2015 apple grafting workshop. See <http://www.braidwoodmade.com.au/workshops.html> for details.

– Donna Vaughan

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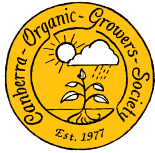
### Brown knees

My little forest of silverbeet.  
 Blighted by frost. Start to pull it out.  
 Community garden's in a horsey area.  
 Today there's lots of horse poo, spoiled  
 hay and straw scattered around.  
 Overcome by greed. Grab shovel  
 and wheelbarrow. Must collect this  
 stuff before someone else does.  
 Kneeling in the mud.  
 Paying homage on brown knees.

*mulching leaves  
 composting memories  
 half hidden  
 in morning mist  
 and smoke haze*

–Gerry Jacobson

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# summer planting guide

## Mulch and compost

In summer it is a good idea to mulch your garden beds to help keep the soil cool and moist. One experiment showed that a 4 cm layer of straw reduced evaporation by 73%. Be careful not to lay down a thick layer of sawdust or lawn clippings that can pack down to form an impenetrable barrier to water.

Soil with lots of compost contains all the nutrients your plants need for strong, healthy growth. In addition well-composted soil retains water and act like a sponge to keep your plants moist through dry summer days.

## Heat protection

On days of extreme temperature your plants may need to be physically protected from the heat. This can be achieved by covering plants with shade cloth secured on a frame eg weldmesh or irrigation pipe bent over to form a tunnel, with shade cloth secured by pegs.

## Watering

Try not to water the leaves of plants that are susceptible to fungal diseases (e.g. tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins and zucchinis) and try to water individual plants thoroughly, rather than watering a whole area.

Always follow water restrictions and check soil moisture before watering—a rostered watering day doesn't mean you must water.

## Weeds

Keep weeds down. They compete with your plants for food, water and sunlight. It is best to tackle them when they are small—before removing them becomes an exhausting exercise.

## Pests

Pests can multiply over summer. Don't reach for the pesticides. Observe if there are natural predators present, remembering that there will be a delay between the appearance of the pest and the subsequent build-up of its predators.

If you must spray, use an environmentally benign spray. Read books such as Jackie French's *Natural Pest Control*.

## Harvesting

Make sure you harvest your crop regularly—in most cases this will encourage your plants to continue cropping and you can enjoy your produce at its peak.

Remember to leave space in your vegie patch for those winter vegetables that prefer to be planted

in late summer—early autumn. Brassicas and other winter crops need time to mature before the extreme cold of winter sets in.

	DEC	JAN	FEB
<b>Bush beans</b>	S	S	
<b>Beetroot</b>	S	S	S
<b>Broccoli</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Brussel sprouts</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Cabbage</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Carrots</b>	S	S	S
<b>Cauliflower</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Celery</b>	T	T	S
<b>Chicory</b>	S	S	S
<b>Chinese cabbage</b>	S	S	
<b>Cucumber</b>	ST	T	
<b>Endive</b>	S	S	S
<b>Kohlrabi</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Leeks</b>	S	S	
<b>Lettuce</b>	ST	ST	ST
<b>Marrows</b>	T		
<b>Parsnips</b>	S	S	S
<b>Potatoes</b>	S	S	
<b>Radish</b>	S	S	S
<b>Silverbeet</b>	ST	ST	T
<b>Squash</b>	ST		
<b>Swedes</b>		S	S
<b>Sweet corn</b>	ST	T	
<b>Tomatoes</b>	T	T	
<b>Turnips</b>		S	S

**S = seed sowing; T = transplanting**

This table is a guide only—observe the seasonal weather patterns before deciding when to plant, as there will often be distinct differences in summer weather from one year to the next.

Planting times will vary for different varieties of the one vegetable e.g. December plantings of heading lettuce varieties should be successful; while February plantings should be the butterhead varieties.



## 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 2500 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 diseases.\*\*

\*Livestock's Long Shadow, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)  
\*\*Eating Up The World, [www.vegetarianvictoria.org.au](http://www.vegetarianvictoria.org.au)

## Beautiful Holiday House

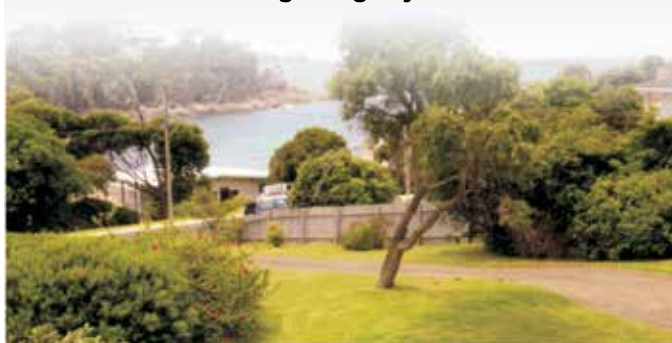
Just across the road from the beach at Garden Bay, over the hill from Malua Bay surf beach

Two minutes walk to a sandy beach good for swimming, snorkelling or teaching children to swim. Easy drive to many other lovely beaches

House sleeps eight, with a large fenced garden where children can play within sight ■ Disabled access and bathroom ■ Pets welcome ■ Cool sea breeze in summer, warmer than Canberra in winter  
Reasonable rates ■ Only 166 km from Canberra

View at [www.maluabayhouse.com](http://www.maluabayhouse.com)

Telephone Brian or Jackie on 6254 4977 or 0422 630 665 for prices and bookings, or email [briangolledge@yahoo.com.au](mailto:briangolledge@yahoo.com.au)



## Slow Food®

Canberra - Capital & Country Convivium

**Q: What is the opposite of fast food?**

**A: It's Slow Food, of course!**

The International Slow Food Movement stands for:  
**Good, Clean and Fair Food for all**

Canberra - Capital & Country Convivium (4C) events give you the opportunity to appreciate our **local produce**, and to meet their wonderful **growers** and **producers**, right on site!

4Cs is not only about learning – it's also about having an enjoyable time while doing so. Looooong table lunches are a 4C speciality. Come and Join us!

[www.slowfoodcanberra.com](http://www.slowfoodcanberra.com)

## MULTIFERT

organically produced eco-friendly fertiliser

This is your chance to experience what a number of the COGS gardens have enjoyed for the past two years!

Finally on sale is our unique worm tea, bio500, seaweed, ormus, carp and zoopoo combination liquid fertiliser will blow your mind.

Available in 2 litre or 20 litre sized concentrate for \$8 and \$25 respectively.

On sale weekends at Nicholls.

**Phone**  
**0407 437 490**  
**for details.**





# COGS Membership Application

Please contact members@cogs.asn.au with any enquiries

## Member details - Please print clearly, especially your email address

*A membership year runs from September 1st of the current year to August 31st of the following year.*

<b>Adult 1</b>	First name _____	<b>Child 1</b>	Name _____
	Surname _____		Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____
	Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____	<b>Child 2</b>	Name _____
	Occupation _____		Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____
<b>Adult 2</b>	First name _____	<b>Child 3</b>	Name _____
	Surname _____		Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____
	Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____	<b>Child 4</b>	Name _____
	Occupation _____		Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____
<b>Address</b>	Label _____	<b>Phone</b>	Home _____
	Street _____		Mobile _____
	Suburb/Town _____	<b>Email</b>	_____
	State _____		Receive COGS magazine by email? <input type="checkbox"/>
	Postcode _____		

## Volunteer details

*COGS is a volunteer organisation and thus relies entirely on volunteers for its continued operation.*

As a member, in which areas would you be prepared to volunteer some time or skills? Please tick below.

Area	hrs/wk	Area	hrs/wk	Area	hrs/wk
Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Website/IT	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Suppers	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Library	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Finances	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Convenor	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Seed Saving	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Other	_____

## Membership agreement and signature

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

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

## Payment details

**Memberships are for a family unit of one or two adults and their children under 18 years of age.**

*Full membership costs \$30, Concession membership costs \$18.*

*Concessions are available to Healthcare card holders, pensioners and full time students.*

**Both** adults must be eligible for the concession rate to apply **AND** evidence must be provided.

*An additional joining fee of \$5 (\$3 for concessions) applies to all **new** memberships. This only need be paid **ONCE**.*

*Applications will be sent back if there is no reference for direct deposits.*

Member	Full	Concession
New	\$35.00	\$21.00
Renewal	\$30.00	\$18.00

**Please send your completed application and payment (no cash) to:**

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

### Payment by Direct Deposit to

Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc.  
Westpac Bank, Petrie Plaza, Canberra  
BSB 032-719  
Account 291247  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Reference \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment by Cheque/Money Order to

'Canberra Organic Growers Society' or 'COGS'  
Payment attached to completed application

**Direct Deposit is the preferred payment method.**

## COGS Administration only

Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_ Bank ID \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt No. \_\_\_\_\_

# Eco Meats

## YOUR ORGANIC BUTCHER

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

Free range pork and organic chickens

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

CONTINENTAL DELI including pepperoni, cabanossi, trout, salmon, cheeses, organic stock, salami and smoked meats

FAIR TRADE Jasper coffee

LINDSAY and EDMUNDS homemade organic chocolate



## Specialists in organic pesticide-free meats

Shop 1 Building 2  
Belconnen Fresh Food Markets  
Lathlain Street, Belconnen

Open Wednesday to Sunday  
8 am to 6 pm

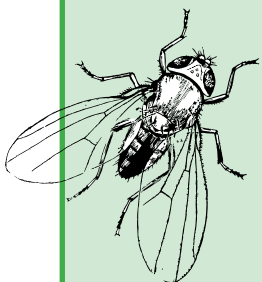
Phone 6251 9018  
Fax 6251 9017



## Permaculture eXchange membership now open

Join Permaculture eXchange today and become part of our growing network of like-minded locals in the Australian Capital Region.

Members support Permaculture eXchange through membership fees, use of the newsletter and website to promote courses and produce, volunteering their time and sharing knowledge and ideas. In return they have access to a range of member benefits. More information and applications at: <http://www.permacultureexchange.org.au/membership-2/>



## Fruit fly bait

Thanks to Veronica in Toowoomba for this 'recipe':

Mix 100 mL honey, 100 mL vanilla and 100 mL urine in a 600 mL drink bottle (leave the lid off) and hang near fruit affected by fruit flies.

## Permaculture courses in the Canberra region

### Introduction to Permaculture Course

29 and 30 November 2014

Start your own journey to self resilience now.

Our **Introduction to Permaculture Course** is the first part of our part-time, modular Permaculture Design Certificate course to be run throughout 2015. Other course topics and workshop weekends include:

- Water
- Soil and Earthworks
- Designing for Climate
- Animal Systems
- Property Planning
- Property Design

More information and online bookings at:

[www.permacultureexchange.org.au](http://www.permacultureexchange.org.au)

E: [admin@permacultureexchange.org.au](mailto:admin@permacultureexchange.org.au)

T: Penny on 0400 165 403

COGS members  
get the 'early-bird'  
price!

  
**Permaculture  
eXchange**

***Insect hotel on a wall in the  
German town of Bad Münstereifel***



*Photo by Robert Ballinger*



## Community gardens in Stockholm

*Photos by Susan McCarthy.  
Read her story on pages 16 & 17)*

