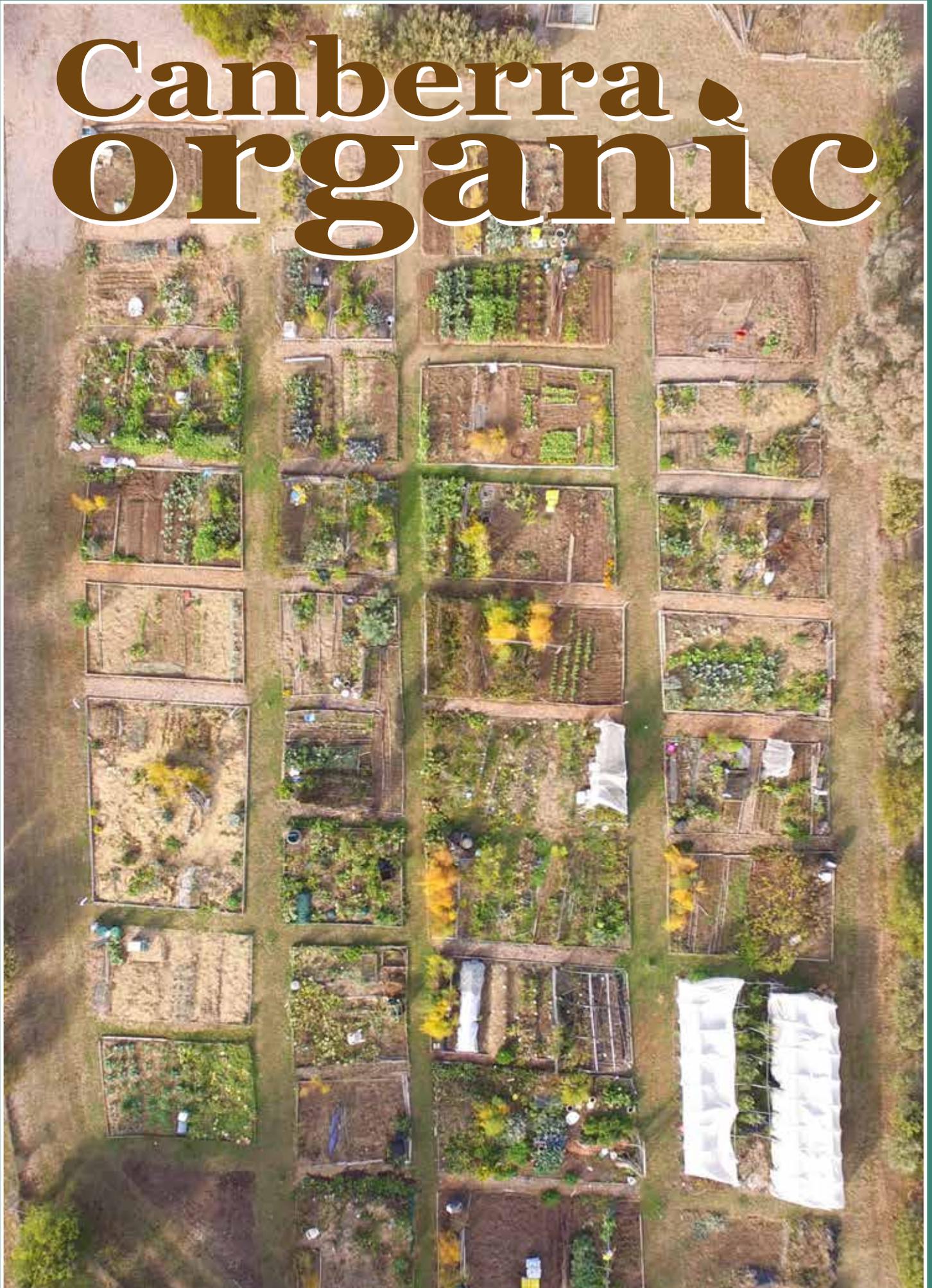


# Canberra Organic





## A glimpse of Swimbridge community garden in the UK

While visiting family in the UK my wife, Sandra, made a weekend trip to Swimbridge in Devon. Swimbridge's main claim to fame is being the hometown of Reverend John Russell, who bred the first jack russell terriers (Sandra and I are both fans of the breed). While wandering around the village she came across these community gardens, just over the road from the Jack Russell Inn.

The wildlife-friendly gardens were opened in December 2011 on unused church land. At the dedication ceremony, the local Arch-deacon told the gathered villagers: 'This new garden is a tribute to the work of many people and has created a lovely peaceful place to be enjoyed by everyone.'

The gardens feature an insect hotel, made from an old church window with the involvement of village schoolchildren and their head teacher.

Swimbridge is a quiet and tidy little village in the base of hills with mostly old homes, well renovated and kept. A shallow stream runs through it, passing between the church and the community gardens. Many of the younger people stay in the area. The garden was well tended.

—Matt Mawson (story); Sandra Watkins (photos)

[Ed.—I was delighted to receive this story from our wonderful designer Matt, with photos thoughtfully taken by Matt's wife Sandra. It's always interesting to see other community gardens around the world. Thanks Matt and Sandra!]



Top: The insect hotel built from an old church window

Above: Part of Swimbridge's wildlife-friendly community garden

# President's report

It's been a quiet winter except that it hasn't.

## New gardens

The new one in Coombs is getting close to completion. By late June it had been smoothed and grassed inside, and was perhaps waiting for the landscape consultant to draw up a plot plan. We have already had a small number of people express interest in gardening there.

Recall that we have been consulted by Riverview Developments on how to design and run a community garden in the West Belconnen development. An area has been allocated, and a plot plan and memorandum of understanding (MOU) for COGS management drafted. It will be a while yet before the garden is opened.

## ACT Biosecurity Strategy

On 28 June I attended the launch of the ACT Biosecurity Strategy by Mick Gentleman, Minister for Planning and Land Management. While agriculture is a small part of the ACT economy it is increasing in importance, and the ACT government will cooperate with community groups like COGS, the NSW government and other bodies to 'keep nasties out'—an issue that will become most important when international flights from Singapore into Canberra start in September. A copy of the strategy document is in the COGS library.

I was wearing both my COGS and Canberra City Farm hats, and was pleased to find that both organisations had good recognition among other attendees.

## Local and regional food economies

To help promote these we recently signed an MOU with Southern Harvest. Who? It's 'a business- and community-led

organisation focussed on growing local and regional food opportunities in the ACT and South East NSW through education, market opportunities, networking and advocacy'. Our two organisations have agreed to promote each other's events via newsletters, Facebook and websites, share our Facebook posts, link to both websites, and offer discounts to both sets of members. Hey, have a look already:

<http://southernharvest.org.au/>

## 'Agrihoods'

An most interesting trend in agriculture overseas is covered in a July article on the *MarketWatch* website which describes 'why farmland may become a more popular neighborhood amenity than a golf course' and that in 'seeking farm-fresh food for flavor and health, new-home buyers move to "agrihoods"'. In various parts of the United States a 'huge interest in locally-grown food' is developing, and people are setting up communities centred around farms where the green areas are an integral part of the design and not an afterthought. Perhaps most importantly, people are reconnecting with each other and rediscovering what community means. Splendid! This is part of what COGS is all about, is it not?

[tinyurl.com/jgo6ye3](http://tinyurl.com/jgo6ye3)

## Investing in organics

Continuing our overseas perspective, remember that in the early days of COGS organic growing was popularly thought to be all 'muck and magic,' producing fruit and veg that were feeble and lacking in nutrition. Big changes are afoot! The *Wall Street Daily* in May described the renaissance of organic farming in that home of synthetics, the USA. I am always nervous about the fate of anything that Wall Street sets its



sights on and we can only hope that the organic sector will not be assimilated into the corporate world with its farmers becoming yet another group of helpless price-takers. That said, this trend is most welcome.

[tinyurl.com/hfm32fp](http://tinyurl.com/hfm32fp)

## Website progress

We've got just about all design issues sorted and are now planning what data to migrate from the old site. We hope to have a demonstration version to show at our next COGS executive committee meeting (9 August) and to go live shortly after that. I'm really looking forward to this!

## Climate change?

Is it my imagination or has this winter been milder and wetter than usual? As I write it's wet and blustery but at 15°, hardly freezing. All that rain ... I needed to repair one of our front yard wicking beds and found that I needed also to drain its water reservoir. The rain was keeping it nicely topped up—too nicely—and it was waterlogged. Our backyard brassicas are growing slowly but steadily and we look forward to lovely broccoli. The kiwi vine is ready for the new season but our fig and apple trees still need pruning. Never an empty moment.

Happy spring planning and planting!

Walter

**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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**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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## Editor's note

Hello everyone! The winter solstice on 21 June always makes me think of the lengthening days and the coming of spring.

It also makes me think of the moon—what do you think of planting by the moon? I'd love to hear your thoughts. I know many successful gardeners who scoff at the idea of planting by the moon but I like to do so. After all, as respected gardener and author Annette McFarlane says: 'If the moon has the ability to influence the ebb and flow of the tides, is it too extreme to suggest that it may have the ability to influence the growth and movement of water within plants?' (*Organic vegetable gardening*, 2002, p. 34). The basic idea is to plant above-ground crops when the moon is waxing and below-ground crops when the moon is waning. When the moon is in its fourth quarter or a new moon, it's best to weed, prune and harvest.

Our spring issue is packed with stories from near and far and good ideas to get you out in the garden. Perhaps with spring in mind, there's a bit of a fertiliser theme in this issue: Bridget Norton shares her enthusiasm for rock dust; Simone Dilkara talks about lactobacillus serum. I was also able to encourage prolific contributor Elizabeth Dangerfield

to tell us a bit about herself!

We've gone truly global with this issue: our designer Matt and his wife Sandra have contributed a nice piece from Swimbridge, England; Glynis was touched by what HIAM are doing in Timor-Leste and would love us all to support this work; and I've been travelling in Asia so have included a couple of quirky photos of things I thought might amuse you.

Thanks so much to our busy convenors for taking the time to let us know what's happening in their gardens. Community gardening is all about sharing and, as our president Walter observes in his report, community gardening is back in vogue on the world stage.

Happy gardening everyone!!—Sue



Photos—

(Above) Spring is all about bulbs

(Below) Creative scarecrow in community garden on Pulau Ubin island

## Contents

Swimbridge community garden . . .	inside front cover
President's report . . . . .	1
COGS committee and garden convenors . . . . .	2
Editor's note . . . . .	3
Around the COGS gardens	
Kambah . . . . .	4
Dickson . . . . .	5
Cook . . . . .	6
O'Connor . . . . .	7
Fertiliser—preparing your soil for spring . . . . .	8
Recipe . . . . .	8
Elizabeth Dangerfield . . . . .	9
Extending your harvest . . . . .	10
Asparagus . . . . .	12
Companion planting . . . . .	14
HIAM in Timor-Leste . . . . .	16
Microbial inoculants . . . . .	18
The weather report . . . . .	21
Poem—The Forecast is Fine . . . . .	21
COGS membership application . . . . .	23
Spring planting guide . . . . .	24
What's on . . . . .	inside back cover

### This month's cover:

Mike Avent and John Drew supplied this great aerial photo of the Cook community garden



## Kambah community garden

When the cooler months of April and May come around some of our gardeners in Kambah retreat to their 'caves' and a number of plots become completely unproductive. The rest of us turn our hand to continuing organic production, making the best of the opportunity the cool weather offers for a great range of productive vegetable growing, generally in combination with green manuring as part of our ongoing crop rotation and soil replenishment program. Plantings of broccoli and cauliflower in early April by some gardeners have produced a crop in late June and we expect to continue picking through to August, at least, along with Asian greens, kale, chard, cauliflower and cabbages. We have found that plantings of brassicas in mid-May or later tend to be set back by the cold and do little through the winter.

One of the drawbacks of mid-autumn planting is the exposure to infestation of the caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly (*Pieris rapae*). One or two doses of a weak solution of the caterpillar-specific bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) is highly effective, especially when coupled with physical removal of caterpillars and visible eggs under leaves. In line with our serious commitment in Kambah to organic standards, this bacteria solution is the only pesticide we allow in the garden. We have found that some heirloom varieties of brassicas are somewhat resistant to cabbage white butterfly attacks, such as Broccoli (Cauliflower) Romanesco, Broccoli Purple Sprouting and organic Broccoli Umpqua.

... some heirloom varieties of brassicas are somewhat resistant to cabbage white butterfly attacks ...



We are continuing to regularly deliver vegetables to Companion House and since March this year, to the Communities@Work food pantry at Tuggeranong. These come from crops grown in our Sharing Garden (see photo) and from generous plot holder contributions. The top quality and absolutely fresh organic produce has included peppers, eggplant, lettuces, chard, pak choy, broccoli rabe, Tokyo bekana cabbage, komatsuna, kale, spring onions, daikon and fresh herbs.

In the last six months we are very happy to have welcomed eight new gardeners to the Kambah community garden, including two volunteers. The newcomers include Mimi, Zilong and their friend Noella who started in the garden at the end of February and are having great success with their autumn/winter planting (see photo of Mimi and Zilong). This is Mimi and Zilong's first venture into growing their own food and they are very happy with the help and friendship shown by everyone in

the garden and the community spirit. Mimi migrated to Australia recently from Jingzhou in the People's Republic of China and Zilong from Nanjing. Mimi has been pleased to show off her achievements in growing her favorite Asian vegetables to her family back home who have a lot of experience and offer plenty of advice.

–Neville Jackson  
(story and photos)

(Above) Mimi and Zilong surrounded by winter vegetables in their garden plot  
(Left) Our Sharing Garden with winter vegetables

## Dickson community garden

Dickson Garden is lucky to have a large glasshouse. This was recently renovated by the Dickson College with new panes, a thorough clean and the re-fixing of all panes. Thank you to the COGS Committee for the monetary contribution towards this renovation.

Some gardeners have over wintered their more delicate plants in the glasshouse, which is several degrees warmer on those chillier days and nights. Seen in the photo below are chillies bearing fruit, a passionfruit and a cape gooseberry. The gardeners at Dickson also use the glasshouse to get an early start with seedlings and potting on, prior to in-ground planting. Despite the current weather conditions this activity is expected to start soon.

Another current activity in the garden is the guarding of plants from our resident possum, but also from snails, slugs and cabbage moth (although I think the latter has departed for warmer climes). As you can see from the photos below, various methods are used including the top part of bottles, netting (COGS approved), bird cages, white plastic forks or whatever is available.

Those attending a recent working bee worked hard to clean up and mulch paths, remove couch grass from the compost and finish a pond that reuses an old bath. Many thanks to all who attended to tidy and create a water habitat in the garden (see photos at right).

I will be stepping down as Dickson convenor at the 2016 AGM. Maya Beretta, a long-time plot owner at Dickson, will be the new convenor and my thanks are extended to Maya for taking on what I have found to be a rewarding and learning role. I am now the COGS Librarian and look forward to helping you at an upcoming COGS monthly meeting. COGS has an extensive library and always invites an interesting speaker to these meetings.

–Michele England (story and photos)



## Cook community garden

**W**et! Wet! Wet! But who's complaining. The winter weather is having an effect on gardeners being able to access the garden as the ground and surrounds are absolutely saturated. This has meant that vehicle access to the garden has been restricted. It also means that as soon as the weather improves the weeds and grasses will become a problem.

What is obvious in the garden is that a lot of gardeners have managed to get the garlic bulbs in and they are growing well. Here's hoping they have learnt to swim!

It is great to welcome Fiona Honeyman and family to the Cook Garden. Also, we say farewell to John Tuckwell who has been a long-time member of the garden and former committee member.

The cover photo for this magazine and photos in this article were taken with a camera mounted on a drone, and I must thank John Drew for his assistance in getting and letting me use the photos.

Happy weeding.

–Mike Avent (story); Mike Avent and John Drew (photos)



*Mario's plot*



*Aerial view of Cook community garden looking north*

## O'Connor community garden

### Time to turn over Andrew's plot

Andrew Hunt has been a busy gardener at O'Connor gardens for the last 5 years, but in May Andrew emailed that he no longer had the time he needed to look after his plot.

He said:

*With kids and distance from home now it's simply not practical to maintain it properly ...*

*We tidied it up today so hopefully someone can come in and get a late winter crop or at least green manure. I've left the small compost bin in one corner that I used for food scraps, some netting and stakes. There's some old straw too, but wear a mask if spreading it. The herbs and raspberries at the back I've left in for the next person. Of course the sleepers I put in as edging are still there as well.*

*This is how I took it over about 5 years ago:*



*... this is it at its peak:*



*... and so it returns to dirt.*



### The O'Connor gardeners emailed fond farewells to Andrew:

Deb wrote:

*All the best. It's amazing how much can happen in a short time in our lives and it's great you can keep gardening. Thanks for your input and all the great work you've done at O'Connor.*

Vanessa wrote:

*Oh Andrew I am sorry you are leaving. You brought such energy and hard work to the garden. Thank you for all you have done, we really appreciate you and your significant contribution.*

... and O'Connor garden convenor Jenny wrote:

*Thank you Andrew,*

*Your photos are a fitting requiem for the time you have gardened with us. Good times but I am glad that you now have your own backyard and kids to keep you preoccupied ...*

*Might I have permission to send the photos and some of your comments on to the COGS magazine editor? These are a special documentation of one of the cycles within COGS gardens, and worth a small story.*

What a wonderful tribute! Thanks to Jenny, Andrew and the other O'Connor gardeners for the story.

Photos are from Andrew Hunt.





## Fertiliser—preparing your soil for spring

I have tried a range of different fertilisers over the years and found there to be a number of great products on the market.

Earlier this year I went to the local Sunday markets at Culburra Beach. I purchased a few seedlings and succulents from a gentleman selling a range of vegetable seedlings, native plants, herbs, roses and succulents. He also advised that I try his Organic Volcanic-dust Fertiliser. I had not tried a fertiliser like this before and had read mixed reviews online.

I used his product to fertilise my herbs and succulents that I have in pots under my pergola. In only a matter of weeks everything had grown so well and my herbs were very green and healthy.

I look forward to using this fertiliser in my vegetable garden bed this spring.

If you are interested in purchasing a similar fertiliser there are a range of volcanic-dust and Australian rock-dust fertilisers on the market.

—Bridget Norton (story and photos)



*Bridget's thriving patio garden*

## Cream of broccoli soup

Diana from Crace community garden has sent in this recipe, which she says comes highly recommended by plot holders Alan and Maudie Timmiss. The recipe is an old recipe given to them by their friend Judy.

### Ingredients

- 60 grams butter
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 leek (sliced)
- 2 teaspoons flour

- 5 cups water
- 2 chicken stock cubes
- 500 grams broccoli (trim stalks, cut into flowerets)
- salt, pepper
- 1/4 cup cream

### Method

1. Heat butter in saucepan and cook onion and leek until onion is transparent.
2. Add flour and cook for a further 2 minutes.

3. Gradually add water and stock and stir until smooth. Continue stirring until liquid comes to the boil.
4. Add broccoli, reduce heat and simmer covered for 15 to 20 minutes.
5. Purée, then return to saucepan if you've used a blender.
6. In the saucepan add cream and season with salt and pepper.

—Diana Cozadinos

## Recipe

## A little bit about Elizabeth Dangerfield

*Elizabeth Dangerfield has contributed a wonderful series of articles to Canberra Organic over the last couple of years and I, for one, have picked up many good ideas from Elizabeth's contributions.*

*I thought it was time to find out a bit about Elizabeth, who was happy to oblige and sent me the following. And by the way, if anyone has some ideas on how to (humanely) stop the rabbits from destroying gardens, I'm sure Elizabeth, and many other readers, would be very grateful!—Ed.*



I think I have gardening in my veins. My grandfather was the superintendent of a large park in Birmingham, in the UK and grew enormous dahlias and my father always planted a vegetable garden in every place we lived in Australia, even though he was in the RAAF and so had to leave the garden behind and start again every couple of years.

My husband Mike and I moved from Canberra to a five-acre block in the village of Gundaroo in 1994 because I wanted a bigger garden. There is a saying that one should always be careful of what you wish for because you might actually get it! This turned out to be the case in Gundaroo. The three-year plan turned into a five-year and then a 10-year plan. Many of the plants I loved failed to thrive in our very challenging environment.

Gundaroo is in a frost hollow, has low rainfall and is hot in summer. So my plan for a copse of birch trees has turned into a copse of lovely white trunked *Eucalyptus Mannifera*. Red hot pokers of all descriptions have replaced the foxtail lilies I have tried to grow. For some reason Spanish bluebells have naturalised in the garden and most of the roses have proved indestructible (except from the rabbits). A Gundaroo Gardeners Group has started up in the village and surrounds and we have learnt how to propagate Australian natives that grow well in the area—some even seem resistant to rabbits.

I love productive gardening and so the first thing we did was to plant an orchard. I wanted one like the ones I had seen in Hungary—full of blossoming fruit trees and naturalised bulbs. I should have realised

that my plans for a romantic English garden were never going to succeed when we had to plant the bulbs using a crowbar to make the holes! The rabbits ringbarked the young fruit trees and one drought followed another.

As former science teachers we were both keen on the idea of being as productive as possible and working with nature instead of against it (except for the rabbits). While we might not have saved any money we did managed to be self-sufficient in meat, vegetables and fruit for quite a few months of the year as we had some sheep and also grazed belted Galloway cows on the Gundaroo Common.

I would like to tread more lightly on the planet and so try to grow things organically and eat things in season, or produce that we have preserved. This doesn't always work—our attempt to freeze eggplants turned into brown mush. In fact the gardening experience has turned out to be a lot of learning from trial and error.

Fortunately, there are always gardeners willing to share their experiences, which is why I like the Canberra Organic Growers Society magazine so much. An article on how to stop rabbits eating my choice plants would be greatly appreciated.

—Elizabeth Dangerfield

*Troy's bumper crop of sweet potatoes at Charnwood community garden*



## Extending your harvest

Spring is the time for planting vegetables in our cold climate and with the rush of warmth, it is very tempting to plant all the seedlings you have raised, rather than ruthlessly culling them or sowing some more to plant later.

If you are not careful, you could end up with an enormous glut of vegetables all ripening at the same time so that many go to waste. So here are some strategies for extending the period during which you can harvest the fruits of your labour and have produce available just about all year round.

### Sow a succession of varieties

Most vegetables have varieties that mature at different times, or need to be planted at different times. By growing a range of varieties, you can have a succession of a particular vegetable over a long time. Cauliflower varieties are a good example of this:

- *All Year Round*: Smooth, pure-white 10 to 15 cm heads on medium sized plants. Best grown from February to September. Matures around 2 months from transplanting.

- *Alpha*: Small white, fine-quality dense heads, quick growing (ready in 68 days).
- *Snowball early*: A fast-growing variety ready 10 to 12 weeks after transplanting. Best sown December and January.
- *Phenomenal Early*: Snow-white heads protected by large leaves, suitable for warm climates. Harvest in 110 days.
- *Waikato Hybrid*: Superb snow-white heads best sown to mature in winter. Heads develop to around 1 kg in weight. The plant is large and upright.
- *Mini White*: A great space saver. May be sown directly where plants are to mature and thinned out to between 15–30 cm apart or raised in a seedbed. The closer the plants, the smaller the head. Sow November to February (in cold and temperate areas).

### Grow miniature vegetables

Vegetables varieties found in supermarkets are often selected because they are high yielding

and travel well. Huge vegetables may have been desired when large families were common but with more households consisting of couples and singles, a lot of vegetables are wasted because they are simply too big to eat before they deteriorate.

Try growing miniature vegetables especially bred to take up less room in your fridge as well as your garden. They have the added advantage that you can grow more of them and stagger your sowing and harvest times. There are many types of miniature vegetables available including beans, broccoli, cabbages, lettuces, pak choi, Chinese cabbage, corn, tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants, cucumbers, rock melons, pumpkins, watermelons, radishes, carrots and beetroots.

### Pick micro-vegetables

If you have sown a lot of seeds, pick some of them when really young and serve as micro vegetables. It is trendy, healthy and tasty to garnish dishes with tiny vegetables. Use your first thinnings of carrots, beetroots, leeks, fennel





as micro vegetables. You can also sow seeds of soft herbs such as basil and snip off their baby leaves soon after germination. Scatter these micro herbs over dishes for a tiny burst of flavour.

**Eat your vegetables young**

Harvest some of your vegetables before they reach full size. If you wait until they are all fully mature you will end up with a glut that, if you don't harvest and process at the right time, will quickly become over-mature. Baby beetroot, carrots, peas, potatoes are delicious. You can eat immature leeks, garlic and spring onions (which are just young white onions). If you pick broadbeans and sugar snap peas when they are very young you can eat them pods and all.

Young artichokes are tender and versatile and do not have a big hairy choke. Pick zucchini flowers when they are quite tiny and stuff for cooking. This way you will be more likely to harvest all your zucchinis without any of them growing into giant marrows. Harvesting some vegetables early gives more space for the remaining ones to grow and stimulates plants like beans to keep producing.

**Pick and freeze**

Pick vegetables and fruit at their perfect state of ripeness and freeze what you don't need immediately to process later. For example, freeze strawberries on a tray and seal in plastic bags. When you have enough you can defrost the berries to make jam, or syrups, jellies, sorbets, or add to drinks. Freezing on a tray first means the fruit or vegetables don't form a solid lump and enables them to withstand vacuum packing.

Be conscientious about picking your vegetables and fruit and you will have a bigger harvest over a longer period. For example, you can pick your tomatoes as they ripen, freeze them, and when you have enough, have a sauce-making day.

**Cut and come again**

Harvest just the leaves you need from leafy vegetables such as silverbeet and the plant will keep on growing. If the plant looks like it is going to bolt to seed, cut out the centre to slow it down. Some plants such as Chinese cabbages can be completely cut off and they will sprout more leaves from the base. Cut only a few stalks from

your celery as you need them and the plant will keep growing.

**Preserve your harvest**

Bottle your fruit, freeze your vegetables, and dry your fruit, beans and tomatoes. Make your own sauces, jams, jellies, chutneys, fruit leathers, and pickles. Store your potatoes, onions, pumpkins and nuts. If you plan your vegetable garden well and preserve your bounty you should need to buy very few vegetables out of season. It may not work out to be much cheaper than buying green groceries at the shop, but growing your own gives a great deal of satisfaction and you know the history of what you are eating.

**Save your seeds**

And if you don't manage to harvest all your vegetables in time to eat them, then let some of your plants go to seed. Some seeds you can eat, such as dried beans and corn (for popping). Other seeds such as fennel and celery can be used in cooking.

Keep seeds for planting in the following season. Recycle any leftover vegetable matter to make compost. Let nothing go to waste!

–Elizabeth Dangerfield

## Spring is the time to harvest asparagus

**W**hy should you bother growing, eating and preserving asparagus?

Asparagus is a plant on steroids. No sooner do you pick it than another lot of spears thrust themselves towards the sky. Its vigour helps to fill in that lean gap between early spring and late spring. It is best eaten straight from the garden. Often supermarket asparagus is woody or floppy from being stored too long and it is also expensive.

### Asparagus is good for you!

Some claim that asparagus is another super food useful for fighting depression and cancer and helping boost cognition. One thing for sure is that it contains a lot of vitamins and minerals:

- asparagus is one of the best natural sources of folate, or vitamin B9, which the body needs to make red and white blood cells in the bone marrow, to release energy from carbohydrates, and to make DNA and RNA. It is important to get adequate amounts of folate during periods of rapid growth such as pregnancy, infancy, and adolescence
- asparagus is a very good source of vitamins A, C, E and K and the trace mineral chromium
- asparagus is a good source of antioxidants
- the amino acid asparagine in asparagus acts as a natural diuretic
- asparagus is rich in fibre.

**If properly done your asparagus bed will last over 20 years and you will need a bobcat to remove it.**

### Growing asparagus

Thoroughly prepare your soil by digging it deeply and adding generous amounts of compost and well rotted manure. Make a deep hole for each asparagus plant with a mound in the middle and gently spread the roots of the asparagus crown around the mound and back fill. If you can get only male crowns, all the better because the female plant produces red berries which will seed everywhere in the garden.

Don't cut your asparagus for the first year and only cut it lightly in the second year. To stagger the harvest, cut only a quarter of your plants when the spears come up in spring—let the others form ferny plants. After a month or two, cut back a quarter of the ferny fronds and wait for new spears to come through. Meanwhile, stop cutting the first quarter. Continue doing this with the other half of the plants. If any berries start to form, cut the plants to the ground.



## Harvesting and preserving asparagus

Only harvest your asparagus for a few months to ensure that plants have a chance to grow to maturity before winter. You can get special knives to cut the asparagus spears under the surface of the soil, but a small, sharp knife will do to cut the spears off at ground level—be sure not to damage other spears that might be just under the ground.

To freeze asparagus blanch the spears for a few minutes, refresh in ice cold water, dry, freeze on a tray, then pack into a vacuum-sealed bag or sandwich bags and keep in the freezer. Although frozen asparagus spears taste a lot better than canned spears they are not as good as fresh ones, although they do make a great cream of asparagus soup!

## Cooking asparagus

Purple and green asparagus does not need to be peeled—just bend the stem and it will snap, leaving the tough base behind.

Asparagus straight from the garden doesn't need a lot of cooking. Just poach it in simmering water in a large, deep frypan for 3 or 6 minutes, depending on thickness of the spear. When it is cooked the stem should bend a little, but

not droop. Don't add vinegar or lemon juice to cooked asparagus as it will cause it to wrinkle and ruin its colour.

## Poached

Serve poached asparagus in one of the following ways:

- as 'soldiers' to dip into poached eggs or coddled eggs with butter and cream
- dressed with herbs and breadcrumbs or chopped nuts (e.g. walnuts, macadamia, pine nuts)
- sautéed in butter
- with hollandaise sauce, a browned butter sauce, pesto, lemony mayonnaise or aioli
- *au gratin*—placed in a shallow dish, covered with rough breadcrumbs, grilled bacon pieces, some grated parmesan and grilled until golden brown.

## Cold

Serve cold poached asparagus with slivers of ham and chopped boiled eggs in mayonnaise. Cold asparagus is delicious wrapped up in fresh bread (with crusts removed) spread with herbed butter or lemony mayonnaise.

It goes well with mixed salad leaves, baby spinach leaves, peas, snow pea sprouts, goats cheese, grilled halloumi, smoked

salmon, mushrooms, parmesan, chick peas, prawns, grapefruit segments, butter beans, and capsicums. Serve with a creamy, mustardy dressing with a hint of sweetness.

## Barbecued

To chargrill asparagus, simply spray it with olive oil and cook it for 3 to 5 minutes. Cook until it is bright green and tender. Try wrapping it with slices of prosciutto before grilling.

## Stir-fried

Add sliced asparagus to stir-fries. Asparagus goes well with soy sauce, sesame oil, oyster sauce and toasted sesame seeds or almonds.

## Soup

- Add chopped asparagus (save tips to cook and use to garnish soup) to potatoes, garlic, onion or leeks that have been sautéed in butter.
- Add chervil or thyme.
- Cover with vegetable stock or water and cook until very tender.
- Purée and then put through sieve to ensure a smooth soup. Serve with cream.

Add asparagus to quiches, tarts, pasta, omelettes, frittatas, pizzas, risottos and fritters.

—Elizabeth Dangerfield



## Companion planting

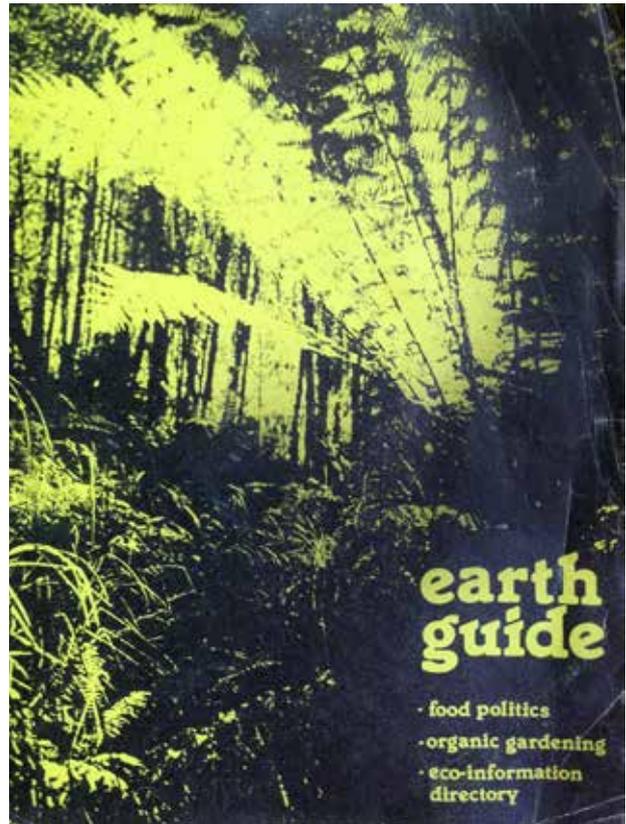
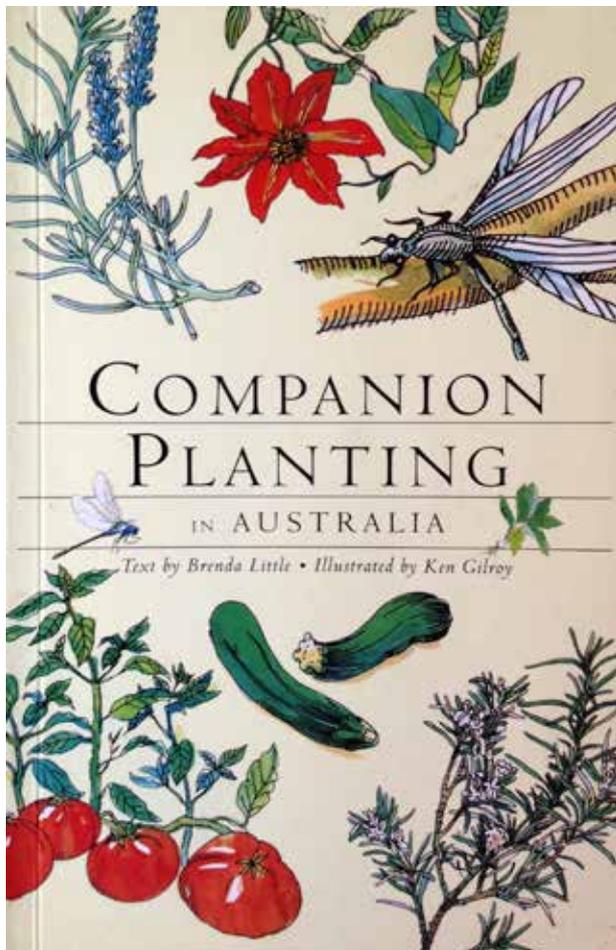
Ever wondered why your parsley is not thriving or why your strawberries are looking sad? It could be that they don't like the plant next to them—parsley is not keen on growing next to mint; strawberries and broccoli make unhappy companions.

If you moved the parsley next to some tomatoes, and grew your strawberries with lettuce or sage, they would be much happier.

I've always been interested in the concept of plants helping each other. Long before Mark Peoples gave me the *Earth guide*, from which I've republished the article on page 15, I was collecting information about good and bad companions.

One of my favourite gardening books is *Companion Planting in Australia* by Brenda Little, which, as well as being beautifully illustrated by Ken Gilroy, is written in a witty style. For example:

*Parsnip dislikes are easy to remember..they like peas, potatoes and pepper and won't fall out with beans, radish or garlic (p. 60)*



*Spinach ... likes to grow near strawberries. Although it is rich in iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C it is also high in oxalic acid, so don't be like Popeye and live on it. (p. 76)*

and, because garden companions also include animals, this gem about toads:

*Toads are very useful in the garden as they come out under cover of night and hunt slugs, cutworms and many other insects. Unfortunately they also eat earthworms but nobody's perfect. (p. 82)*

Little, Brenda 2000, *Companion Planting in Australia* (4th edn), New Holland Publishers, Australia.

The article on page 15 is reproduced from *Earth guide*, a booklet compiled by members of the Food Co-operative and the Conservation Society at the University of Melbourne and published in 1977.

'Companion plants' is part of a comprehensive section on organic gardening compiled by Mark Peoples and Greg Berry. It is reproduced with the kind permission of Mark Peoples.

*Earth guide* 1977, Food Co-operative and the Conservation Society, University of Melbourne, Australia.

—Sue Pavasaris

# Companion plants

In the past, emphasis has been placed on the inorganic nutrients, but recently organic compounds have also been found to be active in affecting plant growth. Among these are root excretions, organic substances present in leaves, stubbles, roots, etc. Consequently a plant has specific influences on the other plants and on the micro-life of the soil.

Plants growing together within the relatively small space of a garden or field may interact as a tall growing variety gives shade, thus helping or suppressing another species; or plants may interact by competing for water, or nutrients. One species may benefit the

other because it forms a deep and luxuriant root system, thus loosening the ground; or because it enriches the soil with organic substances and nutrients. There may also be the effects of excretions, odours, insect-repelling or attracting substances, biotic compounds and so on. These may directly influence the growth of other plants, or alter the population of micro organisms in the soil, or be effective via the animals crawling and flying in and around the roots, leaves and blossoms.

It is not surprising then to find that when certain plants are grown together they encourage one another's growth, whereas others inhibit it. Companion planting is

the mixing of compatible plants together in a bed. Obviously there are various reasons why certain plant combinations are successful, but generally plants having complementary physical demands (e.g. light, moisture) are well suited to one another.

A good organic vegetable garden follows certain definite principles of plant symbiosis such as the use of a well-planned crop rotation, companionate plantings or juxtaposition of deep rooted plants with shallow-rooted ones.

Below is a guide to show which plants benefit when grown together and those being mutually harmful when kept in close proximity.

Plant	Companion	Antagonist
climbing beans	corn	onions, beets, sun flower, kohlrabi
dwarf beans	potatoes, cucumbers, corn, strawberries, celery	onions
broad beans	potatoes, inter crop with spinach	onions, garlic
brussels sprouts	peppermint, spearmint, early potatoes, aided by dill and oregano	strawberries, tomato, climbing beans
carrots	tomato, lettuce, chives, peas, aided by dill in early stages, but must be removed by flowering. Carrot fly repelled by onions, leeks, chives, rosemary, sage	
cauliflower	rosemary, celery	
celery	leeks, tomato, dwarf beans	
cucumber	corn (alternate rows), chives, marjoram, oregano, early potatoes, early cabbage. A few radish seeds repel beetles. Border with beans, kohlrabi or lettuce.	
eggplant	beans	
kohlrabi	cabbage moth is repelled by sage, tomato, rosemary, thyme, mint	climbing beans
leeks	onion, celery, carrots	
lettuce	strawberries, carrots, chervil, radish, brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cucumber	
onions	early lettuce, chamomile (one plant—four yards), tomato, lettuce	peas, beans
peas	radish, carrots, cucumbers, corn, beans, turnips, most vegetables and herbs	onions, garlic, potato
potatoes	beans, corn, cabbage, peas, broad beans, egg-plant	tomato, pumpkin, cucumber, sunflower
pumpkin	corn	potatoes
radish	peas, lettuce, chervil, cucumber	
spinach	strawberries	cabbage
sweet corn	potatoes, peas, beans, cucumber, pumpkin	
tomatoes	asparagus, parsley, basil, early cabbage, carrot	potatoes, fennel, kohlrabi
turnips	peas	

## The story of a small organisation making a big difference in Timor-Leste

It has been 14 years since Timor-Leste (East Timor) gained its independence from Indonesia in 2002. Since then the economy has steadily grown, the population has boomed and, most of all, the East Timorese people have had peace. However, it takes years to build an effective and efficient health and education system that will support a population. Malnutrition rates among children are still very high (around 50 per cent) and HIAM Health, a voluntary organisation surviving by donations, is addressing this issue with education programs for women.

HIAM Health derives its name from the acronym in Tetun (local East Timorese Language) *hamutuk ita ajuda malu*, which in

English means 'together we help each other'. The logo for HIAM Health is two hands with palms up: a symbol in East Timorese culture for 'my hands are free and ready to serve you'.

A cornerstone of community empowerment, HIAM Health educates and encourages Timorese to eat healthily and live well. A local non-government organisation (NGO) established in 2003 with a focus on empowering women and rehabilitating children, its goal is to use education to reduce the unacceptably high rate of malnutrition in Timor-Leste.

Mothers arrive at the clinic run by HIAM Health hoping only for their malnourished child to survive. However, they leave

equipped with lifelong skills that ensure the nourishment of their entire family.

In Timor-Leste, women are the primary caregivers of the family. The entire family depends on the mother for health and survival. Women make day-to-day decisions about diet, hygiene, disease prevention and treatment, especially with regards to young children. Beyond available economic resources and health care, every woman's decision is based on her ability to obtain knowledge and the autonomy to make choices. HIAM Health aims to empower the women of Timor-Leste to become everyday home gardeners, skilled family nutritionists and competent mothers.

Timor-Leste's communities are founded on the oral tradition and every success story spreads widely by word of mouth back in the village. HIAM Health believes that by teaching the women, the women will, in turn, pass their learning experiences onto the people in their villages.

Timor-Leste is fertile and almost anything will grow but the people are malnourished. The *National Nutritional Strategy 2012–2017* commissioned by the Ministry of Health in Timor Leste as stated





on the HIAM website ([www.hiamhealth.org/timor.html](http://www.hiamhealth.org/timor.html)) said:

*There is no clear consensus on the core cause(s) of malnutrition or on the large variations among districts. Among the reasons given for high levels of malnutrition were: the lingering effects of civil war and related disruption of livelihoods and government services, extreme poverty, low agricultural productivity, overemphasis on staple foods (especially rice), poor health services, lack of clean water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene, poor accessing to health services, low public investment and capacity in nutrition, insufficient public knowledge of what is good nutrition and the consequences of under-nutrition, and a plethora of “traditional” or “cultural” attitudes and beliefs and taboos around certain foods and eating practices. Many of these explanations are related, being causal or consequential to others. On the basis that there is some validity to all of these explanations, we concluded that a comprehensive, integrated and multi-sector approach would be an essential part of any national nutritional strategy.*

Given the complex causes for malnutrition in Timor-Leste, HIAM Health takes sustainable action to eliminate malnourishment. Women are educated to become active participants in their child’s

rehabilitation as well as being taught to grow their own garden and cook balanced meals. The idea is that as women see their child regain health, they personally experience the full value of nutrition, which is crucial in a country that learns by doing.

Every afternoon, the HIAM team conducts workshops for caregivers in its 700 sq metre training garden. They show the women how to develop and maintain their very own home kitchen garden.

HIAM Health also promotes community gardens in villages. Men and women selected by the community leaders receive education and training on basic vegetable gardening using permaculture principles, caring for the soil, compost systems, irrigation, nutrition and any other topic

the participants choose that is relevant to their community. At the end of the course, the group consults their community to gain consensus on having a village garden. If the community decides to have a garden the HIAM Health team assists the village with tools, seeds and advice so the project can be set in motion.

For more information on the work of this wonderful NGO visit HIAM Health’s website ([www.hiamhealth.org/timor.html](http://www.hiamhealth.org/timor.html)). It would be wonderful if you could also give a donation to an organisation that really is making a difference to the health of the East Timorese people. You can do this via the website.

–Glynis Kennedy (story; images from HIAM website\*)

\* images published with permission



## Microbial inoculants in the garden

Deep in winter a lovely group of COGS members gathered at the Northside Community Center to master the art of microbe wrangling. The workshop was part of the regular COGS monthly seminar series and this one was run by me—Simone Dilkara from Landtasia Organic Farms.

Without boasting too much, I do happen to have the best job in the known universe managing Landtasia's commercial composting facility where we turn pre-loved food and garden waste into beautiful certified organic compost. The beating heart of our composting process involves brewing and using our own microbial inoculants. The foundation of these inoculants is a lactobacillus-dominated brew that is generally referred to as lactobacillus serum.

These little guys are super easy to grow and can be used to make and do a whole heap of clever things in the garden. They are powerful digesters of organic material, crazy effective odour eaters, scary destroyers and out-competitors of pathogens such as E. coli and salmonella, serious disease



suppressors and perhaps most importantly, they quickly create the conditions for other beneficial bacteria, yeasts and fungi to move in and set up house.

**In the world of microbial networking, lactobacillus know all the right people in all the right places, and all the right people go to their parties.**

Once you have brewed your own lactobacillus serum it can be used as a soil drench or foliar fertiliser and added to compost bins and scrap buckets. It can also be used as the basis for brewing up other inoculants, microbial fertilisers and microbial formulations.

Included here are the recipes that were handed out at the workshop. These can also be downloaded as PDFs from our website:

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

In addition to bokashi bran, lactobacillus serum can be used to make fermented fish fertiliser, potassium tonic, grow tonic, fruiting tonic, and, well, just about anything. A wealth of information and additional recipes can be found at [www.theunconventionalfarmer.com](http://www.theunconventionalfarmer.com).

Happy fermenting everyone!

*Photos: (top) Walter introduces Simone Dilkara; (left) Simone Dilkara at work*



## Lactobacillus serum (mother culture)

### Ingredients

White rice  
Rainwater  
Full-fat milk  
Molasses

### Method

1. Wash rice in water. Keep water.
2. Leave water in a cloth covered bowl for 5 days.
3. Once rice water has soured, add two parts milk to one part soured rice water.
4. Leave milk/soured rice water in the cloth covered bowl for 5 to 7 days. Rice water/milk should separate out into curds and whey.
5. Discard curd. Keep creamy yellow liquid. This is your lactobacillus serum.

To store, add equal parts molasses to lactobacillus serum. Store in clean, sealed plastic bottle at room temperatures away from direct sunlight. 1:1 mixture should last up to 3 years.

To use, dilute 1:20 with rainwater. This is your working culture. 1:20 mixture should last up to 6 months. Discard if contents start to smell bad or off.

## 1:20 Lactobacillus serum (working culture)

### Dilution rates

For general use dilute 2 tablespoons of 1:20 working culture in 1 litre of water. Use diluted solution within 1 week. Always use non-chlorinated water.

### Applications

*Odour:* Use wherever odour is a problem—poultry sheds, kitty litter trays, animal bedding, stock yards, stables and kennels, smelly shoes, smelly drains, sumps and water dishes.

*Bokashi buckets:* Put into trigger bottle and spray onto food scraps each time they are added to your bokashi bucket. When full, seal and leave to ferment for 1 week before burying in ground.

*Compost heaps:* Add 2 tablespoons in 1 litre of water and spray onto compost heaps or under mulch to facilitate fermentation.

*Gardens:* Add 2 tablespoons in 1 litre of water and use as a soil drench or foliar fertiliser to increase nutrient uptake efficiency and disease resistance. Do not apply during strong sunlight.

*Septic systems:* Pour 2 tablespoons in 1 litre of water down toilet. Repeat regularly.

### Storage

Store at room temperature away from strong or direct light. Do not refrigerate.



*Bokashi bran*

## Bokashi bran

### Dry ingredients

10 litres rice bran or wheat bran  
5 litres fish meal, bone meal or chook poo  
5 litres seeds remaining from oil extraction: canola, soya, copra

### Wet ingredients

2 litres rainwater\* (or more)  
20 millilitres molasses  
20 millilitres 1:20 lactobacillus serum

### Method

1. Mix dry ingredients in large bucket.
2. Combine with wet ingredients.
3. Knead together until mixture becomes crumbly and sticky wet, like biscuit base.
4. Ferment in a sealed bucket or garbage bag at low temperature for approximately 1 week. Bokashi is ready when it forms a mould in your hand and crumbles when touched. It should smell sweet and fermenty. Do not use if it is still fermenting.
5. Store in an air tight container. It will keep for 1 to 2 months. It can also be dried in the sun before storage to extend shelf life.

—Simone Dilkara (story); Sue McCarthy (photos)

\* Using chlorinated tapwater will kill the culture.

## Accommodation and wholesome meals in Canberra



We are looking for a neat and tidy, *non-smoking*, humble person who is an animal lover and health conscious—or at least who wants to eat good meals with plenty of vegetables, legumes, fish and the occasional barbecue. Bit alternative, flexible and able to lovingly care for our Siamese cat and garden in owners' absence for a few days here and there.

We have a large organic garden, 4 toy poodles, Samantha (our cat) and 2 birds that are our special friends and entertainment—no more 'babies' please. We are in a quiet location adjacent to public transport to Belconnen and Civic.



Our particular likes are good karma, good food and sharing humble meals with our friends. The person should have a good sense of humor as we laugh a lot—not big on TV (just in the evenings) or the doom and gloom of repetitive bad news. Our adamant dislikes are dishonesty, animal cruelty, drugs and greed.

Irene cooks a lot, has written a health cook book, *A Wake Up Call* and works from home as a medical herbalist and nutritionist. There is a separate entrance for the clinic.

We have shared with others in the past and require a long-term arrangement for the right person or couple. Rent negotiable.

Please contact us to discuss options — Irene 0427 276 886 or Victor 0408 276 886  
Email: Irene@nutritionandyou.com.au — www.nutritionandyou.com.au

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## Warm waters to the north west bring above-average rain to southern Australia

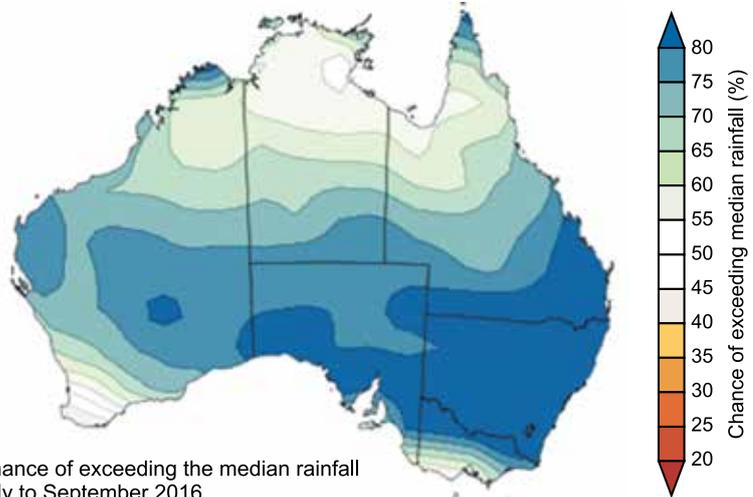
The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) outlook issued on 19 July 2016 says weather indicators in the Pacific Ocean remain neutral, while sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean to the north west of Australia are above average and are continuing to increase.

Climate models are forecasting the warmer waters in the Indian Ocean to the north west of Australia will persist through to the end of spring. This pattern of ocean temperatures in the Indian Ocean typically brings above-average rainfall to southern Australia during winter–spring as more moisture is available to weather systems crossing the country. It also tends to result in cooler daytime temperatures across southern Australia, and warmer daytime and nighttime temperatures in northern Australia.

Recent observations of cloudiness, trade winds and the Southern Oscillation Index show little change from normal patterns in the tropical Pacific. Recent modelling based on these weather and ocean indicators suggest a reduced chance of La Niña in 2016. Most climate models

forecast the central Pacific Ocean continuing to cool, but only two of eight models show La Niña developing by the southern spring.

On this basis the Bureau’s current outlook remains at La Niña WATCH. This means the likelihood of La Niña forming in 2016 continues to be a 50% chance. If La Niña does develop it will not be as strong as the most recent La Niña of 2010–12, which was one of the strongest La Niña events on record.



Chance of exceeding the median rainfall July to September 2016

Product of the Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate>

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Issued: 30/06/2016  
Model run: 26/06/2016  
Base Period: 1951–2010

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

ACT storages . . . . .	.85% full
Murray–Darling Basin . . .	.43% full
Burrinjuck Dam . . . . .	.65% full
Blowering Dam . . . . .	.71% full
Sydney . . . . .	.98% full
Melbourne . . . . .	.61% full
Brisbane . . . . .	.82% full
Adelaide . . . . .	.62% full
Perth . . . . .	.21% full

### The Forecast is Fine

outside  
the cafe window  
a woman  
with green fingernails  
taps the first day of spring  
gone to seed  
senposai ... broccoli  
head high  
bright yellow flowers  
and the bees of September

plum blossom  
and wattle in bloom  
I sneeze  
the hay scented hills  
of September  
in the garden  
this sunny windy  
morning  
planting the leeks  
for autumn soups

no rain  
in October  
and the weather  
forecast is fine ...  
what does 'fine' mean?

-Gerry Jacobson





## EDUCATION

**Food and Farming related courses in the Canberra Region**

- **Growing Small Farm Businesses Operations**  
Sunday 2 October – Caroola Farm Mulloon
- **Marketing**  
Sunday 16 October – Caroola Farm Mulloon
- **Finances**  
Sunday 30 October – Caroola Farm Mulloon
- **Introduction to Backyard Chicken Keeping**  
Sunday 6 November – Canberra
- **Beginners Beekeeping Course**  
Sunday 20 November – Caroola Farm, Mulloon

COGS members get the 'early-bird' price!

**Bookings essential**

[www.southernharvest.org.au](http://www.southernharvest.org.au)  
[education@southernharvest.org.au](mailto:education@southernharvest.org.au)

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**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

**GOOD:** quality, flavoursome and healthy food  
**CLEAN:** production that does not harm the environment  
**FAIR:** accessible prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for producers



Contacts us on:  
<http://slowfoodcanberra.com/>  
[slowfoodcanberranews@hotmail.com](mailto:slowfoodcanberranews@hotmail.com)  
Facebook: Slow-Food-Canberra-and-Capital-Convivium

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Landtasia Organic Farms

8884  
Kings Highway  
Mulloon

# Canberra Organic Growers Society 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 _____		Age _____
	Occupation _____	<b>Child 2</b>	Name _____
			Age _____
<b>Adult 2</b>	First name _____	<b>Child 3</b>	Name _____
	Surname _____		Age _____
	Occupation _____	<b>Child 4</b>	Name _____
			Age _____
<b>Address</b>	Street _____	<b>Phone</b>	Home _____
	Suburb/Town _____		Mobile _____
	State _____ P/code _____	<b>Email address</b>	_____
		Receive COGS magazine by email <input type="checkbox"/> or post? <input type="checkbox"/>	

(tick relevant box)

## 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?

## Garden plot request

For which garden(s) do you want to be on the waiting list? \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership agreement and signature

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

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

## 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.*

<b>Member</b>	<b>Full</b>	<b>Concession</b>
New	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$21.00
Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$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 \_\_\_\_\_ (please use your surname)

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_



# spring planting guide

Spring is the main planting season in Canberra. The timing of some plantings may need to be varied depending on the particular year.

Be prepared to protect your frost-tender seedlings, as harsh frosts can occur right through spring. Make your own cloches from plastic bottles with the bottoms cut out, or use row covers for larger plantings.

## Using seeds

When direct planting with small seeds—e.g. carrots—bulk out first by mixing the seeds with sand. You can help the plants pre-germinate by keeping them in moist sand for about four days before planting out (do not let them actually germinate).

When planting out large seeds—e.g. pea or corn—soak overnight in a weak seaweed solution prior to planting; alternatively, keep seeds moist between two pieces of kitchen paper for 3 to 4 days until seeds germinate, then plant out carefully. This is particularly useful if you are not sure of the seeds' viability.

Check your seed packets for their use-by date as poor germination may result from planting after that time, or plants may show a lack of vigour when the seedlings come up.

A seed should be planted at a depth 2 to 3 times its diameter, although it is better to plant too shallow than too deep.

## Crop rotation

Remember to rotate the crops you grow in a particular garden bed. Crop rotation is a most important practice for organic gardeners. Successive crops should not come from the same plant families nor make the same demands on nutrients; i.e. follow heavy feeders with light feeders.

Also, successive crops should not share the same diseases or attract the same pests—this prevents a build up of disease problems, and reduces losses from pests.

There are numerous crop rotation schemes used, but try to keep to at least a 4-year rotation period and do not grow members of the same plant family in the same bed in consecutive years; e.g. tomatoes, capsicums, eggplants and potatoes are all from the Solanum family.

## Plant varieties

It is important with crops such as cabbage and lettuce to choose the appropriate variety for the time of year. Lettuce varieties best suited to early spring are cos, salad bowl, butterhead and mignonette.

	SEP	OCT	NOV
Globe artichoke	T	T	
Jerus. artichoke	T		
Asparagus	S	S	S
French beans		S	S
Beetroot	S	S	S
Broccoli			S
Brussel sprouts		S	S
Cabbage	ST	ST	ST
Capsicum*		S	ST
Carrot	S	S	S
Cauliflower			S
Celery	S	ST	ST
Cucumber*	S	S	ST
Eggplant*	S	S	T
Endive			S
Leeks	ST	ST	T
Lettuce	ST	ST	S
Melons	S	S	ST
Onions	T	T	
Parsnips	S	S	S
Peas	S	S	
Potatoes	S	S	S
Pumpkins*	S	S	ST
Radish	S	S	S
Rhubarb	T	T	
Silverbeet	S	S	ST
Snow peas	S	S	S
Spinach	ST	ST	
Squash*	S	S	ST
Sweet corn		S	ST
Tomatoes*	S	S	ST
Turnips (white)	S		
Zucchini*	S	S	ST

S = seed sowing; T = transplanting

\* When planting these seeds before November, the seed should be started in punnets indoors and the young seedlings kept in a warm sheltered place. Plant out the seedlings once the soil has warmed and the danger of frost has passed.

# What's On

## COGS in the news

COGS received some great publicity from *The Canberra Times* recently, when Susan Parsons included a feature about Simone Dilkara, guest speaker at our June monthly meeting. Susan also gave the COGS meetings a good plug, observing that it 'was a friendly way to mingle with members'. You can read the whole story at <http://tinyurl.com/z5n6baa>

## Look out for our new website!

It's time for a fresh new look so we're updating the COGS website. Talented web designer Ben Winkler has been helping COGS come up with a vibrant new site that will make it easier for you to find the things you want, and enhance our profile as a strong community organisation in the ACT and beyond. The new site will enable members to log in to read the magazine, consult our library list and get members-only information about our events and services. The home page will feature images from our gardens along with news and events.

We're planning to go live towards the end of August so keep an eye out for it. We'd love to hear your feedback.

## 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 700.

### 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)

Articles in the magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of COGS. Advertised products and services are not specifically endorsed by COGS.

## COGS monthly meetings

Coming up:

**Sunday 28 August 2 pm**

Visit to Fetherston Gardens with Steve Utick. Steve is an expert on camellias and Fetherston Gardens in Weston has over 40 cultivars of camellias planted as part of a Canberra horticultural school collection established by the late Tony Fetherston. Steve has advised they should be in flower in time for our visit.

**Tuesday 27 September 7.30 pm**

Paulene Cairnduff/Keith Colls Q&A session.

**Tuesday 25 October 7.30 pm**

Tracey Bool (Erindale gardener and garden writer for *Canberra Weekly*) re seasonal planting for spring and summer.

**Tuesday 22 November 7.30 pm**

Christmas party and plant/seed swap, maybe wine tasting.

## 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.



Find us on:  
**facebook**

## Want to contribute?

We'd love to hear from you!  
Please send contributions to:  
[editor@cogs.asn.au](mailto:editor@cogs.asn.au)

	Deadline	Published
Autumn	mid-January	mid-February
Winter	mid-April	mid-May
Spring	mid-July	mid-August
Summer	mid-October	mid-November



*Troy's bumper sweet potato harvest  
at Charnwood community garden*

*(photo: Rebecca Bourke)*