

Canberra Organic





Many encouraging things are happening in the arena of community gardening, urban agriculture, and regional food economies. Indeed, the world seems to be approaching some kind of turning point when it comes to its food supply. Among other things, people are concerned for their health, what they and their children are eating, and how their diet affects daily life.

A new problem for city dwellers is becoming evident, termed 'nature deficit disorder'.

As our urban environments turn from green to grey, as we recklessly build over more and more green space, we lose touch with nature, forget that we depend on the environment and biology for our very existence, develop an excessively human-centred view of the world and lose empathy for other species. This deficit contributes to poor physical and mental health, lowered biodiversity in both city and country, and a range of economic problems.

In 2013 when the then Minister for the Environment, Simon Corbell, opened our Crace Garden, he told us that he values community gardens for two reasons: first, they build up connections and community within a neighbourhood; second, they provide an opportunity to grow some of our own food and reconnect with food production. These goals are still vital in 2017.

The ACT government said it will continue to seek ways to improve and strengthen the position of Canberra's urban horticulture and agriculture. Food- and agriculture-related policies the Greens took to the 2016 election are to:

- reserve agricultural areas for food production in our planning framework
- allow community groups to grow food on under-utilised open space areas
- increase funding for the Community Gardens Grants

President's report

- expand the role of volunteer coordinators to include support for community gardens
- implement the Guide for Residential Nature Strips to assist in small scale food production
- launch a local CBR food label.

These are most significant initiatives, being at the policy level, and if implemented will have widespread ramifications not only for COGS but also the entire community garden and urban agriculture movement in the ACT.

Caroline Le Couteur of the ACT Greens invited COGS to discuss any thoughts and ideas we may have for the new term of the Assembly to implement these policies. The meeting took place on 30 January. Sue McCarthy, Keith Colls and I attended the meeting and discussed the community garden system, how we might create more and where would it be good to locate them, and agreed to continue the dialogue.

Annual General Meeting

Please remember the Annual General Meeting on 28 February starting at 7:30 pm, in the Majura Hall at the Northside Community Centre, Dickson. All committee positions will be declared vacant, and some new faces would be very welcome. I have decided not to seek re-election as President but would like to stay on the committee in an advisory role.

Thanks and gratitude

The present committee is an excellent one, and I wish to thank all my fellow committee members for their commitment, dedication and hard work during the year. It's been a pleasure working with you, and together we have helped keep COGS the stable, useful and respected community garden organisation it has been for decades. Yes, decades. I also want to thank a number of people not on the committee who have gener-

ously given of their time and talents to help COGS along the way.

Yet again I wish to thank the garden convenors for their dedication and perseverance. COGS' democratic model of governance relies completely on the convenors for its success. It is they who look after our gardeners and keep the gardens running smoothly. If we had no convenors, we'd probably have no more than a couple of gardens—maybe only one—instead, we can offer 12 with another one on the way. Our system works!

I want to thank the COGS gardeners for being gardeners

Last but by no means least, I want to thank the COGS gardeners for being gardeners, supporters and yet more than gardeners. It's a bit scary to learn how many people don't know how to grow anything, or who rely on fast food because they don't know how to cook. Well, you are the ones who are preserving knowledge, honing skills and passing them on, pursuing a better way of eating and living. You set the example of growing high quality fruits and vegetables, maintaining heirloom and unusual varieties, enlarging the children's diet, helping the budget, getting exercise and building friendships and support networks, all contributing to longer and happier lives. The list goes on and the fact of the good outcomes is supported by research. It's for real. Please keep at it. You are noticed. You matter!

The future

I propose to devote most of my time now to the Canberra City Farm (CCF) and Slow Food (SF) organisations. Why?

Recall that in October 2015 the CCF signed a 10-year licence to use almost 20 ha of land on Dairy Road at Fyshwick. COGS and the CCF are complementary organisations but with different missions. The



CCF aims to educate about food, incubate new food-related enterprises, and is in a growth and development phase now which I find quite exciting. I have volunteered for two tasks: setting up garden allotments, and the integrated pest management of the orchard and vineyard.

Slow Food (SF) is an international movement committed to Good, Clean, Fair food for all. It began in Italy in 1988 as a protest against fast food and has grown to a member base of over 100,000 people in 150 countries. It's not just a dinner club! SF International also see the world at a turning point and recently resolved to set about creating relationships with like-minded organisations around the world. I hope to act as some kind of bridge-builder between Slow Food, CCF, COGS, and other like-minded organisations.

COGS is stable and steady, an important part of the regional food economy. The Canberra City Farm is in a growth and development phase, perhaps to become the Questacon of Food. Make no small plans! Slow Food is starting to capitalise on its successes and reputation to develop ways to grow clean and healthy food, and return good and fair value to all in the food system.

It's looking good for growing in Canberra.

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

It's raining as I write this introduction to our autumn issue—a welcome sound after our hot, dry summer and a big difference to our soggy spring. But what great tomato ripening weather! Gardening really does connect one with the natural world.

My thanks as always to those who have taken time out from this busy holiday/start of school year period to send in a contribution for our magazine. I am always interested to observe how themes naturally emerge in each issue, and in this issue there's a theme of communities getting together to make changes about how they get their food. Sue's book review explores the beginning of community gardening, while Walter's report on last year's Slow Food conference shows how communities are taking back control of what we eat. Gerry's tanka on pumpkins uncannily picked up the good-news pumpkin story in Walter's report. The resurgence of interest in traditional foods is clear in Mark's informative piece on feijoas, Elizabeth's enthusiasm about cauliflowers and Walter's piece on traditional Australian Aboriginal foods.

Great things are happening in the gardens, as reported by Charnwood, Cook, Crace and Holder and O'Connor is nurturing a resident lizard.

Finally, I thought I'd tell you about this photograph my sister Helen took in a remote part of south-western new South Wales when she was on a long road trip in January. Helen says the sign appeared in the middle of nowhere and she was impressed by the wonderful sense of sharing and community spirit it represented—even all the way out there! It just shows how popular and widespread the community gardening movement is. Happy gardening!

—Sue



Photo: Helen Carlile

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This month's cover:

Chris's and Peta's garden beds in Holder—beautiful to behold! (photo: Sue McCarthy)

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc

7.30 pm Tuesday 28 March 2017

Majura Community Centre,
Rosevear Place, Dickson

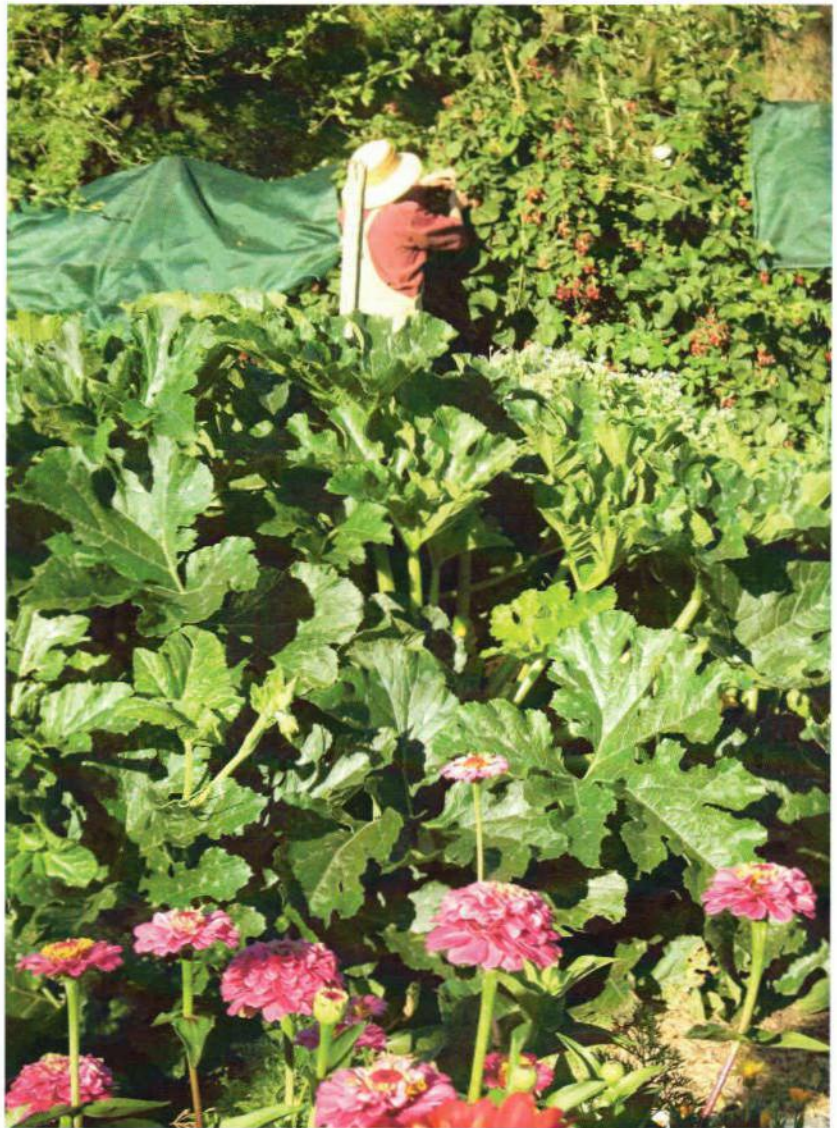


Charnwood community garden

Despite the hot windy weather that January brought, the Charnwood garden is brimming with produce. Pumpkins, beans and tomatoes are thriving in the warm conditions as are zucchini, corn and blackberries.

In the 2016 spring edition of *Canberra Organic* we reported Troy Lloyd's great success with his sweet potato crop, which he harvested in May last year. With Troy's assistance to propagate seedlings, several gardeners have planted sweet potatoes this summer and are eagerly awaiting the harvest in autumn.

The orchards did not produce as much fruit as in previous years, with apricots and plums very scarce. We attribute this to too many rainy days in spring when the trees were blossoming, resulting in poor pollination. Trees that were not netted were visited by white cockatoos, which destroyed any fruit before it ripened. Across the garden generally, we continue to battle against slaters, earwigs and harlequin bugs. Earlier in the season some gardeners had an infestation of a sap sucking flea-like bug which attacked raspberries, potatoes and dahlias—possibly the Rutherglen bug. The increased numbers of this insect were also likely due to the cool, wet spring.



Gita harvesting blackberries

Charnwood involved in Open Gardens

The Charnwood community garden will participate in the Canberra Open Garden Scheme over the weekend of 4 and 5 March 2017, 10 am to 4 pm. The garden comprises 45 individual plots which are planted with a variety of fruit and vegetables, flowers, and fruit trees. The garden showcases many different methods of growing produce and several of our gardeners will be present over the weekend to share their knowledge and experience.

Charnwood community garden is located on Sports Way, off Lhotsky Street in Charnwood ACT. Entry will be by gold coin donation. Proceeds go to a local Belconnen charity organisation.

Additional information on the Charnwood community garden, and community gardening generally, can be found by visiting the COGS website at www.cogs.asn.au

—Jo McMillan

Around the COGS gardens

In addition to the cockatoos, it has been a summer of currawongs, crows, white wing choughs, magpies, willy wag tails, peewits, red wattle birds, sunflower-loving rosellas and the occasional kookaburra. The usual silvereyes, yellow rump thornbills and blue wrens have been almost non-existent, although during the cooler months we were again visited by a pair of either flame or scarlet robins

The garden will participate in the Canberra Open Gardens Scheme over the weekend of 4 and 5 March 2017 (10 am to 4 pm). As we head into February, our gardeners are busy on their patches preparing for the open day and topping up pathways with fresh chip mulch. We are looking forward to showcasing the garden and hope that COGS members, as well as the general public, will find time to pop in for a visit.

—Jo McMillan (story and photos)



Bill's nifty bean trellis



Blackberries



Zucchini

O'Connor community garden note

For my first 25 years in this very urban, tidy and dog-ridden part of O'Connor there were no blue tongues. We then hosted Charlotte, a rescue blue tongue released just down from the O'Connor garden. Big mamma Lotte must have been a siren, as there have been blue tongues in the street ever since. As such wild animals prefer, three usually over-winter in my garage.

—Jenny Clark (photo and text)





Holder community garden

After a rather slow start to the gardening season, the heat of summer has finally hit the Holder garden in 2017—and our crops are (mostly) loving it! Our gardeners, maybe not so much. To avoid melting, our gardeners seem to be favouring early mornings. High gardener numbers tend to exacerbate our variable water pressure, but ‘community’ cooperation seems to get us all well-watered in the end.

The garden is producing some great summer eating: beans, zucchini, cucumbers and tomatoes, and more, of course, with good fruit set on pumpkins, trombolini and button squash, capsicums, corn and eggplants.

The cycle of our gardening year means our raspberries, boysenberries and strawberries are now

done, broadbeans dismantled, onions and eschallots out, and potatoes nearing maturity.

Holder is quite a hot garden, with no competing trees or shaded areas, so heat-loving crops do well. Shade cloth is a standard for many plots, protecting on the north-western sides, in particular, from high summer winds.

We netted most of the community orchard again this season. It is not an easy task, as our trees are tending to outgrow the nets or blow off in the wind, but with the assistance of a ladder and some oversized netting pegs we are anticipating a nice crop of apples in March. We also have plums, apricots and mulberries. Our grape vines along the external wire boundary are looking great. We also have transplanted pear

and pistachio trees, although these are yet to fruit.

Bees are back in our garden, with two hives down the southern end. We have several new gardeners, in particular for the new(ish) plots down the southern end beyond the orchard. These plots still need significant soil development, and couch grass eradication (an oxymoron—make that ‘couch grass management campaign’) the worst of which other plots established in 2001 now have behind them.

Garden management this season has mainly centred on mowing, whipper-snipping, weeding and mulching the communal beds, composting, and mulching and netting the orchard. We have a watchful relationship with resident and transient snakes,



Conrad's hollyhocks

Around the COGS gardens

following several encounters with one or more mature eastern brown snakes. In spring, a very well-attended working bee undertook major clearing of an abandoned derelict plot which our gardeners' observations indicated harboured a local snake nest. Luckily, the serpent family was away from home that morning!

Our bush rats have not yet reappeared in any numbers, though we expect they will once our corn fields come to maturity. Regrettably, rats seem to find corn mature enough for their dinner about one or two days before gardeners consider it ready. Last year, securely netting blocks of corn about a week before maturity kept the rats out for long enough, as by then they had easier food, like ripe tomatoes. But unlike other gardens, we have no possums, no significant cockatoo problem, and our high fence keeps out the kangaroos. Magpies keep us friendly company, especially if we are digging!

Summer is a time of fabulous abundance, and this year is no exception at Holder.

–Sue McCarthy (story and photos)



Josh's heritage pumpkins



Gerry's inventive tomato bed



Dave's tomatoes



Lisa's rockmelons



Tammy-marie's inventive re-use



Cook community garden

From rain last issue to sun this issue, the amount of produce growing in the Cook Garden is fantastic as you can see from the photos. Some gardeners have experienced problems with smaller than usual potatoes, but not Mario (see photo) who has excelled once again.

With the produce, and the vermin that tend to live in the compost, come the snakes. Greg Blood took this photo of a brown snake early one morning in January. It was near the main gate. Other, smaller snakes have also been sighted. A number of gardeners have lost corn, and I suspect there are some very fat rats and mice around somewhere.

The most notable change in the garden has been the construction of the new shed, funded under the ACT Government's Community Garden Grant Scheme. Our thanks to the government for the funding and to the hard-working construction team.

Another addition to the garden has been the hop vines, in a different location to that in the past. With a bit of tender loving care they appear to be thriving so can't wait to taste the end product. Happy gardening and please remember the water conservation requirements.

-Mike Avent
(story; photos as attributed)



Top: The lads (L to R)
John Bowderey, Andrew Combe,
Mike Avent, Peter Weddell
(photo: Karin Haynes)

Above: Mario's spuds
(photo: Mike Avent)

Left: Cook garden's visiting
brown snake (photo: Greg Blood)



Crace community garden

Weeds—Weeds—Weeds

It all looked so ideal. Lovely views over the grasslands, secure rabbit-proof fencing, raised garden beds, a storage shed, secure entrances and so much more. There even was well-compacted granite pavers surrounding all the beds and in the community areas. COGS had financed the purchase of tools and equipment so that plot holders had everything they needed to tend their plots.

After the first year we had distributed guidelines to everyone. These included the fact that each plot holder was to maintain one metre around their plot and was expected to turn up at least twice a year to working bees. Dutch hoes were bought to help with the path weeding. These worked by cutting off weeds at ground level as you moved them back and forth over the paths. Problem: this also helped to break up the top layer of the granite and

produce a loose surface that acted as a great seed raising material!

Back to the drawing board

After much research two possible solutions were found. The first was to use a natural spray you could buy at the local nursery or hardware store that was made from pine oil. It worked very well, but considering the area needing to be sprayed multiplied by the cost, it was too expensive.

The second solution came in the form of vinegar—acetic acid. Normal household vinegar is 5 per cent and barely affects plants when sprayed onto them. We needed something considerably stronger. We sourced some 30 per cent vinegar from a local ethnic supermarket who strongly reminded us each time we bought it that we were not to drink it! Mixed 1:1 with water it did a good job but again, considering the area to be sprayed, it was still too expensive.

We also found that the strength of the vinegar quickly corroded the plastic washers in the spray bottles we were using.

Then someone had a brilliant idea. There is a commercial cleaners supply shop in Mitchell that sells 74 per cent acetic acid! It only costs about \$8 a litre which, when broken down to 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water, gives a cheap, effective bulk weed killer that does not accumulate in the soil. Next, we found that the local garden and hardware shop sells large spray bottles with fittings that are resistant to chemical damage.

It took some doing but at last we had an effective solution to weed control. We still have to nag some of the plot holders to be diligent with their weeding and the vinegar has to be kept secure to prevent accidental ingestion or burns—but it works!

—Liz Myszka (story),
Diana Cozadinos (photo)



Fast growth in slow food

Walter attends the Slow Food National Conference in Mildura, 17–20 November 2016

The sad situation

The world seems to be approaching some kind of turning point when it comes to its food supply. Concern is growing over the excessive use in agriculture of insecticides, herbicides, fungicides—veritable biocides—and of antibiotics in animal husbandry. The supermarket system views its inputs of foodstuffs as a cost only and seeks to drive those costs down, ideally to zero, with obvious consequences for farmers' incomes. Demoralised small farmers worldwide give up and quit, leading to loss of a great deal of knowledge, many essential skills and vital land stewardship functions.

Some farmers quit by changing occupations. Too many quit by suicide. It's all wrong.

In 2015 the World Health Organization declared that Roundup™ is

Duncan Thomson, owner of Murray River Salt, addresses the conference dinner

probably carcinogenic to humans. California is moving to do the same. Australia is not. The US Geological Survey has found Roundup in 75 per cent of air and rainfall samples taken from the Mississippi Delta region.¹ A recent epidemiological study finds links between prenatal pesticide exposure and autism.² What's more, the chemicals are losing their clout: herbicide-resistant weed species are proliferating, affecting something like 86 crop species in 66 countries.³ At the moment Australia has 125 herbicide-resistant weed species.⁴

Unease is growing about the nutritional content of our fruits and vegetables. Data from the US Department of Agriculture shows that since 1950 the nutrient content of much fresh food has declined greatly, halving in some cases.⁵ It is common knowledge that rates of obesity and diabetes ('diabesity') are out of control. Something is wrong.

And people wonder why we choose to grow organically.

It is in our most intimate relationships with nature, the very food

that sustains us, that the profound dysfunction of modern relationships is on display: mechanical materialism seethed in a stew that defines all human relationships in terms of competition, aggression and dominance. As long as we consider ourselves to be the only species that matters—the species intended to subdue the earth—we will never take proper care of it. Instead we will exploit it until it dies, taking us with it.

Slow Food is one reaction to this sad situation—a unique movement working at the grassroots level with the grand ambition of guaranteeing good, clean and fair food for all. Worldwide it has 100,000 members, 1 million supporters, 3,770 items on the Ark of Taste (saving foods at risk of extinction due to industrial agriculture, standardisation and globalisation), 2,400 food communities, 2,500 gardens in Africa, 1,500 convivia (local groups), and 500 presidia (projects to assist artisan producers) in 160 countries. Slow Food has always looked at the world of food from a holistic perspective, aware that talking



about gastronomy means talking about politics, that our choices, be they individual or collective, have an impact on our health, the environment, the economy, and society as a whole.

The national conference

The 2016 national conference in Mildura offered plenty to the delegates. A cultural tour was led by the Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team who took us to an area of Indigenous land where they are experimenting with scientifically designed land management and restoration techniques. It was telling to compare and contrast Aboriginal rubbish dumps and European ones (illegally dumped on their land): the former blends quickly with the landscape, the latter remains ugly and even dangerous for decades.

Later they taught us how to make damper. Terribly simple: 50/50 plain and self-raising flours, water, knead until it feels just right, and cook over an open fire. Very tasty with golden syrup!

We visited Ian Whitfield's quandong farm to learn that the quandong is a parasitic tree and difficult to get a good crop from, but he is succeeding after 17 years. We toured an asparagus packing plant whose entire output for

Australian markets is purchased by one Sydney retailer with no supermarkets in sight. We went foraging on the Murray River floodplain with local chef Andrew Ratcliffe for ingredients for that night's dinner—Indigenous foods such as saltbush and samphire which go well with Murray cod and mutton.

It was good to see the Indigenous communities represented. We were welcomed by the Riverbank Women and Men Dancers, and enjoyed a talk by Brad Moggridge, a Murri from the Kamilaroi nation, on hydrogeology and some commonalities between traditional and western sciences. A conversation is under way about how our land and waters were competently managed by the Indigenous people prior to European settlement.

The strong evidence of advanced Aboriginal agriculture and aquaculture is at last gaining recognition, if grudgingly.

It will surprise some to learn that enormous areas of the continent were carefully managed to maximise food production, and areas today unsuitable for either sheep or wheat (and therefore a 'desert' in European eyes) flour-

ished under the likes of yam daisies and kangaroo grass.

The last time I saw the Murray River it was a muddy ditch. This time it was overflowing its banks, and so was the Darling. We went to see the river junction at Wentworth but it was under water. We could have waded out to the observation tower along with some local children, but would have preferred the boat, which never arrived anyway. It was great to see so much water in two Australian rivers. The Murray cod are loving it and are merrily breeding away.

Talking of cod, it is odd how we are handling our fishing industry. Owing to good management it is 95 per cent sustainable with most fishing being done by small, family-level enterprises. Whole seine netting techniques have almost no by-catch, with 95–100 per cent survival rates. We're taking about 10 per cent of the biomass of small silvery fish; we could take 50 per cent and still get replenishment. Yet in Victoria the LOUD recreational fishing industry is regulating even sustainable commercial fishing out of existence. Not so long ago Port Philip Bay was declared off-limits to commercial fishing—a number of long-established fishing families lost their entire livelihood overnight, and the Melbourne public lost a good source of good protein at good prices. Is this good management of a food resource? What happened to fair food? No wonder foreign trawlers want to come here: if we won't take the fish, they sure will and our globalist federal government might well let them.

Slow Food Mildura's members are relatively young. Nationally the age distribution is 5 per cent under 35 and 20 per cent over 65, but in Mildura it's the other way around: 20 per cent under 35 and 5 per cent over 65. The young'uns were active and involved at the conference—a pleasure to be with. One of them explained that we particularly need activism from the younger generation, that they need to keep asking questions and keep demanding that governments explain themselves.





Education about food sources and production methods is very important.

He appealed to the older generation to share their knowledge and experience. Another under-35 was inspired to tell us that after the conference he intended to get back in touch with his grandmother and talk to her about her life and times, her skills and abilities. This drew applause from the audience.

A truly heartening story came to us from the Hunter Valley convivium. From the point of view of many farmers, the supermarket model is thoroughly broken. Pumpkin growers in the Hunter Valley are paid 20 to 25 cents per *pumpkin* while the supermarkets sell them for up to \$3 per kilogram. The price has not changed in 20 years, so it's little wonder our farmers are going out of business and food prices are so low. For Hunter River growers the cost of sending pumpkins to market about equals the price they receive for them, so what's the point of even trying? It was like this during the Great Depression when a farmer could send his produce to market and earn only a bill for the freight.

When in 2016 the supermarkets decided that a crop of pumpkins wasn't cosmetic enough and cancelled the order, two Morpeth growers were on the verge of ploughing it all in and even leaving the land. Slow Food learned of this, organised a pop-up stall, got the local newspaper and radio station to advertise and promote a pumpkin rescue, and it went viral.

Customers started arriving at seven in the morning, at times 30 people were waiting in the queue, 20 tonnes were sold in 12 hours, and when the weekend was over all 40 tonnes had been sold, tens of thousands of pumpkins. The growers were overjoyed, having been given a fair price for a change for their hard work and a scheme for diversification, and the young son of one of them now sees a future on the farm. Not just a pumpkin rescue but also a grower rescue, a livelihood rescue, a diversity rescue.

The lessons seem clear to me. People want to help their local farmers, they want them as part of the village, they enjoy making contact with them, they want them to succeed, and they dislike pointless, wanton waste. I think a great many people would dearly like to reconnect with the origins of their food, with the real people who produce it—and course they would love to eat better. Could one reason for these desires be that deep down inside us at last we feel our industrial diet is doing us no good, and that we are searching restlessly for real food? It'd be nice to think so.

For us, the Slow Salt Dinner was the highlight of the conference.

The Slow Salt Dinner was hosted by the Murray River Salt company — you've seen the pink gourmet flakes sold in the blue tins? That comes from water sent from the Buronga Salt Interception Scheme into the Mourquong Salt Mitigation Basin

13 km north west of Mildura. Here the company extracts the salt—23,000 tonnes annually now, with plans for 50,000 tonnes—packages it and sells it at home and abroad.

The setting was stunning: white salt flats next to a pinkish salt lake. The tables and chairs were white, the tables had been laid with white tablecloths with a thick layer of salt spread over them. The day had been HOT, so I take my hat off to the people spreading salt and setting tables in the glaring salt works. The lake had that special, almost mercurial appearance of highly saline water—all the better to reflect the gorgeous sunset later on a balmy, calm evening. Live musicians provided a Brian Eno-like acoustic backdrop. The atmosphere was happy, relaxed, good natured. The dinner, created by local chef Stefano de Pieri, was consumed with care and gratitude. I will never dine in such a setting ever again.

—Walter Steensby
(story and photos)

¹ Michael S Majewski, Richard H Coupe, William T Foreman, Paul D Capel. *Pesticides in Mississippi air and rain: A comparison between 1995 and 2007*. Environ Toxicol Chem. 2014 Feb 19. Epub 2014 Feb 19. PMID: 24549493

² <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1307044/>

³ <http://wssa.net/wp-content/uploads/WSSA-comments-to-FIFRA-SAP-on-glyphosate.pdf>

⁴ <http://weedscience.org/summary/country.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.traditional-foods.com/nutrient-decline/>

The Year of the Pumpkin

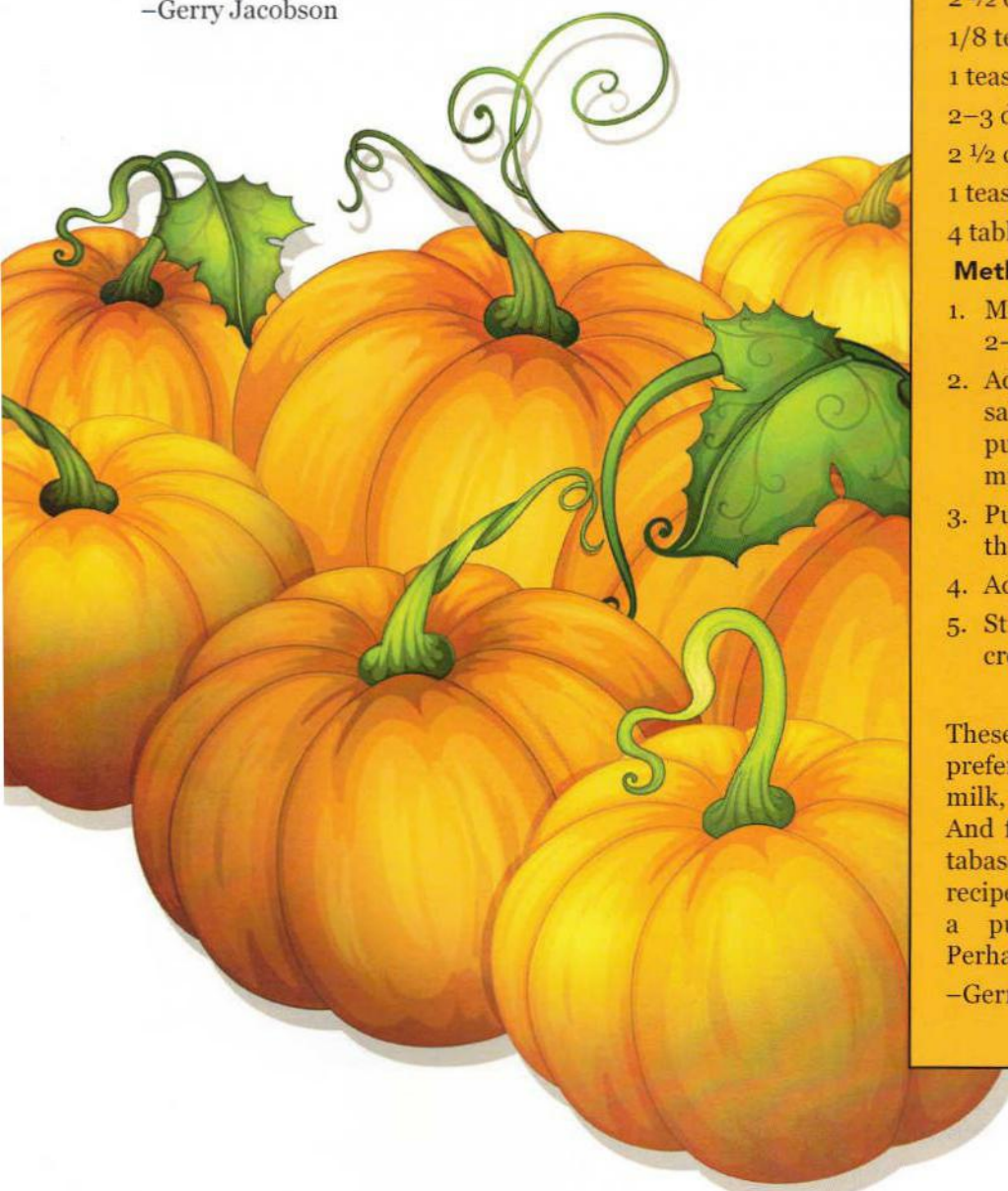
*eaten
the last plums of summer
now watching
the figs ripen
the pumpkins swell*

It was the Year of the Pumpkin. Threw a packet of mixed heritage seed in, and out came a variety of pumpkins that I'd never seen before. All colours, shapes and sizes. Bright orange, brownish, green, blue, round, smooth, rough, knobbly. About thirty vines tangled up together. There was no room for anything else in the plot that summer. Gave a lot away of course, and we lived on pumpkin soup all winter. Actually, when souped, they all tasted much the same.

*autumn
descends into winter
harvesting
the fruits of may
pumpkins ... persimmons*

Ever since then I've been more circumspect. Aim to grow half a dozen pumpkin vines. Doesn't take up so much space and it's enough for soups for about half of the winter.

—Gerry Jacobson



Pumpkin soup

Here is a recipe from a bedraggled and much thumbed *Nursing Mothers Cookbook*. The cover has long gone but it seems to be dated 1975. Those were the days my friend. We had three under-fives at that time. The pumpkin soup recipe is second in its bedraggled-ness only to the recipe for chocolate cake.



Ingredients

- 15 grams butter
- 2 tablespoons onions, chopped
- 500 grams pumpkin, chopped
- 2 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2–3 drops tabasco
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons cream

Method

1. Melt butter and fry onion 2–3 minutes.
2. Add pumpkin, stock, cloves, salt, and tabasco. Cook until pumpkin is quite soft, adding milk as liquid evaporates.
3. Purée in blender or push through a sieve.
4. Add lemon juice and reheat.
5. Stir in cream and serve with croutons.

These days, no kids around, I prefer vegan. Omit the butter, milk, cream. Use vegetable stock. And for my taste a little bit more tabasco and lemon juice than the recipe indicates. Sometimes I use a pumpkin-kaukau-carrot mix. Perhaps a mix of each vegetable.

—Gerry Jacobson

***Of Cabbages and Kings:
The History of Allotments***
by Caroline Foley

How we community gardeners love our plots! This book helps us to understand how we got to a position where reasonably priced and accessible community gardens are a widespread and established social amenity for the urban dweller. We almost take them for granted—but this book illustrates the lengthy sweep of history for which we 21st century gardeners should be suitably grateful.

Spoiler alert: it is not a gardening book—much closer to a history book, really. If you want guidance growing better crops, read Peter Cundall or Annette McFarlane instead!

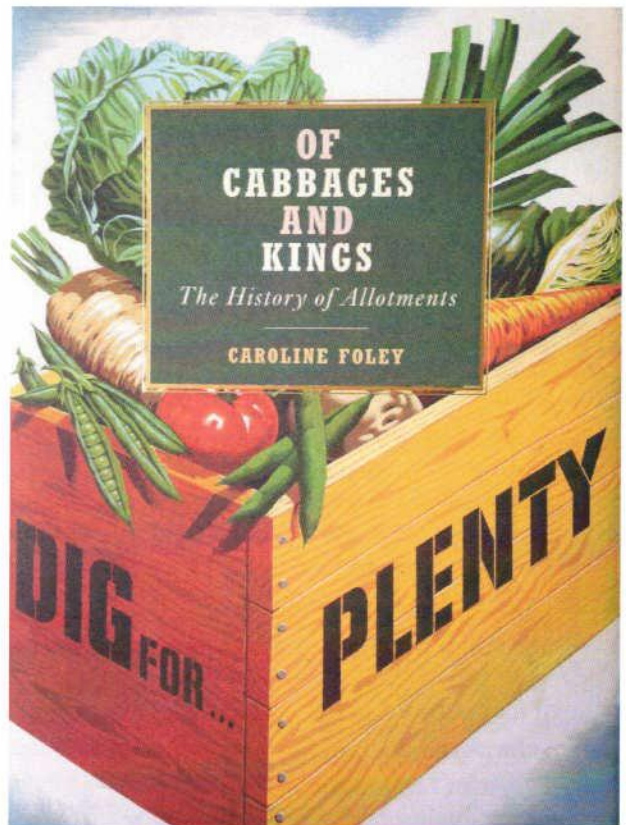
This very interesting read outlines the influences on the allotment movement in the United Kingdom made by kings and queens, politicians, and peasants over the last 600 years.

These days, when we head down to our community garden, it may be because we think home-grown is freshest, or because we like unusual or exotic varieties or want to save money, or because we prefer our fruit and veggies unpolluted, organic and sun-ripened. But the original allotments had nothing to do with leisure. For poor country folk in the United Kingdom in the 1600s, access to land and the right to dig could keep them from the workhouse.

The ‘common land’ was once the mainstay for the serfs living in a simple farming society. But the abolition of serfdom in the 16th century liberated not just the serfs but their masters too, and led to a widespread switch by landowners to less labour-intensive sheep farming. Arable land was converted to pasture. Within a century, the large acreages of the peasants’ commons were enclosed and shared among landowners, leaving peasants with nothing to their name but their labour for hire.

The author takes us down through history, from that time through to the land enclosures that created the now-familiar small fields of England from the original wide open countryside. She canvasses the effects on the rural labour market of soldiers and sailors returning from the Napoleonic wars, the Irish poor, and the development of agricultural machinery (the threshing machine being possibly the most resented of all, as it took away the main source of employment in winter).

She brings us into the 19th century with the Allotment Movement and the Labourers’ Friend Society—there was widespread debate at the time as to what was the best form of land provision for the



poor. Should it be potato grounds, cow pastures, a ‘cow and a cottage’, smallholdings, land attached to cottages, or allotments? An important motivation in providing land was to improve the workers’ ‘morals’ and keep them out of the alehouse.

By 1908, local councils were obliged by law to provide allotments, and by 1919 legislative references to the ‘labouring population’ were removed, and allotments were officially open to all. The patriotic Dig for Victory campaign during the Second World War followed, but the author outlines this within the much earlier history of allotments, and challenges any belief that this campaign itself gave rise to the allotment movement.

Want the detail? Read the book! It has 12 chapters, organised chronologically, and for the true detail-lovers there is a two-page outline of Further Reading, a lengthy timeline and a comprehensive index. There are some lovely illustrations throughout, including historical photographs and political posters of the day.

—Sue McCarthy

***Of Cabbages and Kings:
The History of Allotments.***

Author: Caroline Foley

Publisher: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2014

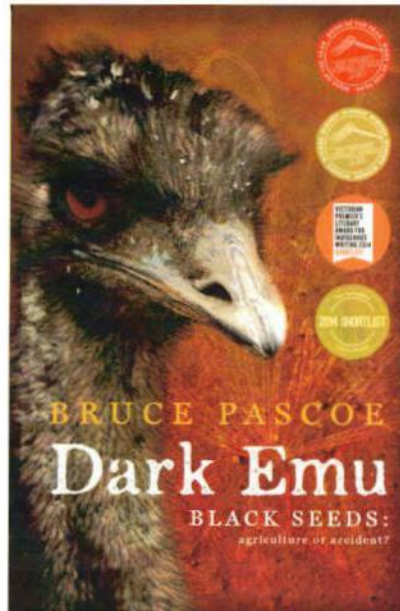
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library. 978 0 7112 3409 3

Ancient new food sources in Australia

It may not be too many years before some types of long-ignored grains and vegetables appear on the market.

Have you heard of murrnongs or yam daisies, a root vegetable? Kangaroo grass, a grain? Katoora or kooly or parpar or *panicum decompositum* or oat grass or barley grass, another grain? Coopers clover? Nardoo? to name just a few? I hadn't, not as foods anyway.

Please read *Dark Emu* by Bruce Pascoe. The author examines the eyewitness reports and artworks of early European explorers and settlers in Australia, and makes a strong case for removing the simplistic hunter-gatherer label given to the Australian Aborigines and replacing it with those of cultivator, house-builder, dam builder, farmer, irrigator, winnower, granary builder, baker and seamstress. The Australian Aborigines cultivated a wide variety of highly nutritious foods that the European



settlers either ignored—such as kangaroo grass—or grazed out of existence—such as yam daisies. Charles Sturt struggled and starved across tracts of territory where the Aboriginal peoples were growing and harvesting grains in abundance and living comfortably.

Fast forward to today and the Gurandgi Munjie Food Company in Yuin country (south-east NSW) have been growing murrnongs for five years and are close to being able to sell them commercially. This year they're preparing to harvest kangaroo grass and *panicum decompositum* (both deep-rooted perennials, great for the soil) and have crowdfunded a native grass harvester to help. Their request for \$15,000 was oversubscribed very quickly. I helped.

A whole new chapter in agriculture and economic enterprise could be opening up for us all. I am intrigued and excited!

—Walter Steensby

Read more here:

www.pozible.com/project/grow-the-seeds-gurandgi-munjie

(below) Yirrganydji Aboriginal woman hand sorting fruit and seeds eaten by the Indigenous people from the rainforests of Queensland.



Autumn is the time to start harvesting cauliflowers

Why should you bother growing, eating and preserving cauliflowers?

Because you like a challenge? Growing cauliflowers is not for the faint-hearted. Cauliflowers are sophisticated vegies.

**As Mark Twain quipped:
a cauliflower is a cabbage
with a college degree.**

If you grow them from seed in January, they might not germinate or grow well due to the heat. If you plant them as seedlings in February you might wake up one day to discover the wretched cutworms have detached the tops of the seedlings from the bottoms in a sort of vandalistic killing spree. Then of course, as soon as they look like they might survive infancy, every cabbage white butterfly in the vicinity descends on them to lay eggs. If the caterpillars resulting from this are not stopped at this stage they will strip the seedlings to stumps—the cauliflowers rarely recover from this setback.

Those that make it to adolescence are very demanding. Like all adolescents they like their bed—preferably with lots of well-rotted compost and organic matter, a pH on the neutral side, and with a little molybdenum to stop them becoming twisted and deformed. They also like lots of food—an occasional dusting of blood and bone or well-rotted chook poo—and, of course, they like a good drink too—worm juice, compost tea, seaweed liquid or even smelly fish solution suits them fine. But don't forget to leave out some beer for the slugs and snails, which will munch away inside the plant doing all sorts of damage if you can't entice them out.

Why bother? Because you will be rewarded with huge heads of creamy white curds that are delicious to eat. But don't think you are out of the woods yet because they are now adults. In our cold climate, they need beanies to keep the frost off their tender heads, so bend over some of the leaves of the plants to cover the flowers. Another approach is to place some garden fleece over them to keep them warm or plant them in a cage of vegie net—this will also stop the dreaded cabbage white butterfly getting to them. And keep an eye on them. Cauliflowers can go from *compos mentis* to senile overnight. Suddenly, your lovely, heavy, tightly-curled, creamy heads unfurl into loose, tasteless, want-to-be flowers. All that effort for nothing!

Cauliflowers are good for you!

Studies show that there are health benefits from eating both raw and cooked cauliflower. Key phytonutrients in cauliflowers are best preserved in raw or lightly sautéed cauliflower.

Steaming cauliflower for 10 minutes improves the ability of substances in the cauliflower to bind with bile acids and this helps to regulate blood cholesterol levels.

Cauliflowers contain antioxidant phytonutrients such as beta-carotene, beta-cryptoxanthin, caffeic acid, cinnamic acid, ferulic acid, quercetin, rutin, and kaempferol—quite a cocktail.

Like other crucifers, cauliflowers contain glucosinolates which benefit the cardiovascular, digestive, immune, inflammatory, and detoxification systems.

A good serving of cauliflower apparently will provide you with 77 per cent of the recommended

daily dose of vitamin C. It's also a good source of vitamin K, protein, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, magnesium, phosphorus, fibre, vitamin B6, folate, pantothenic acid, potassium, and manganese.

Interestingly, just because cauliflowers are white doesn't mean they are bland when it comes to nutrients. Cauliflowers are just as rich in phytonutrients as their green cousins.

**If you want to ramp up
your antioxidant intake try
eating purple cauliflower**

Purple cauliflower is crammed with anthocyanins. The greatest proportion of these antioxidants are in the outermost layer of the cauliflower so be careful not to overcook it or try eating it raw.

Growing cauliflowers

An important tip for growing cauliflowers is to choose the correct variety as maturing times can vary significantly. Also, choose the right sized variety—a fully mature cauliflower can easily feed eight people, which is a bit daunting if there are only two in the household.

Some useful varieties of cauliflower

Snowball Improved is an open-pollinated variety suited to cooler areas. It forms tight, pure white, small heads in 52 to 70 days and is good fresh or frozen.

Violet Sicilian (organic) is a late maturing variety of cauliflower producing purple, medium to large sized heads. Eat it raw to retain its phytonutrients and colour.

All Year Round is a good cauliflower to grow in spring or autumn rather than the depths of

winter. It has large heads that store well.

Phenomenal Early produces large white heads in 110 days.

Paleface produces large heads in 150 to 180 days.

Romanesco Green is minaret type of cauliflower—quite spectacular.

Harvesting and preserving cauliflowers

As mentioned before, it is important to harvest cauliflowers at the right time when their heads are still tight and heavy and with no discoloration.

To preserve cauliflowers, I usually turn them into a creamy soup, but you can freeze them.

To freeze cauliflower:

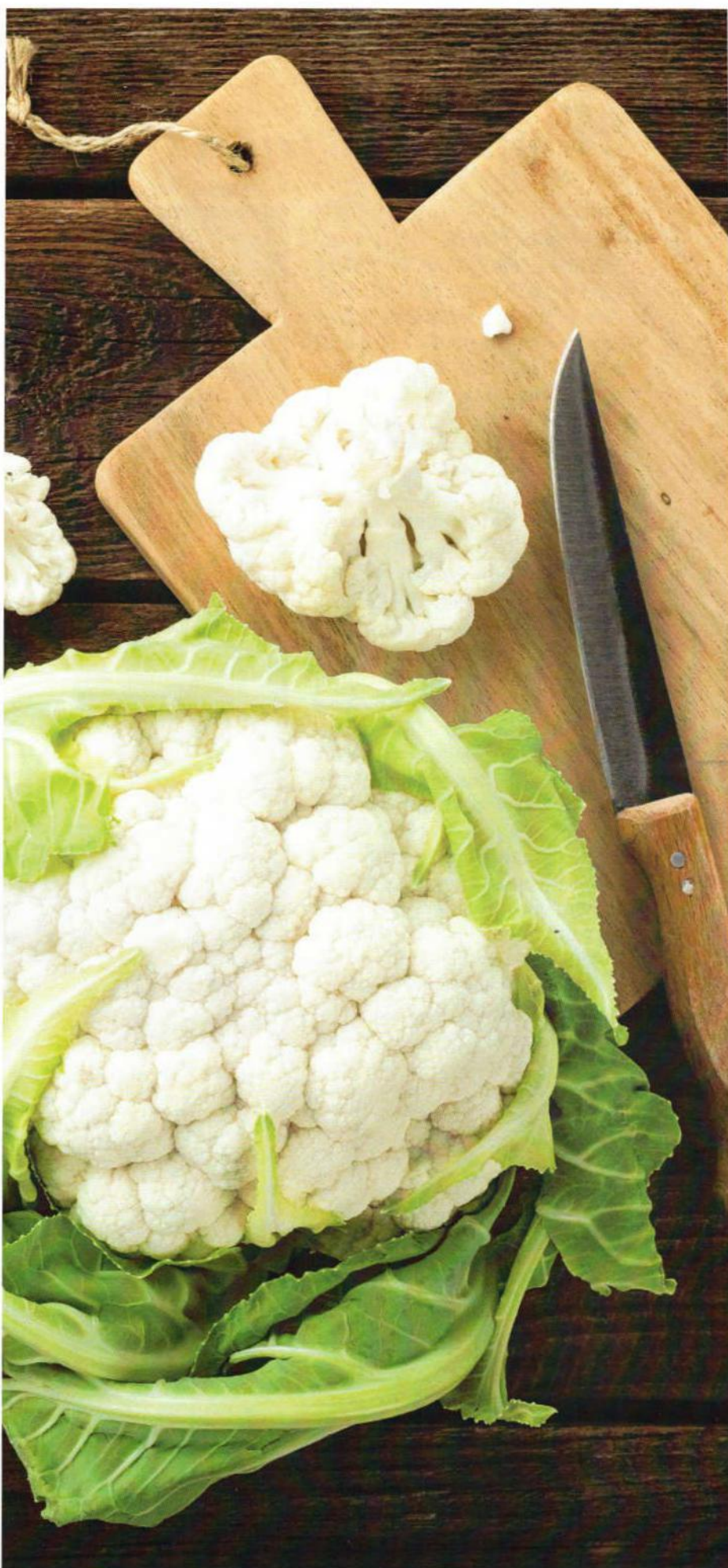
1. Cut into florets and soak them in salty water for 30 minutes to get rid of any insects and slugs.
2. While you are waiting, bring a large pot of water to the boil and also prepare a bowl of cold water and ice cubes.
3. Put the florets into the water, blanch for 3 minutes once the water has come back to the boil, drain immediately, add to the iced water. Leave for 3 minutes.
4. Then drain thoroughly as any excess water will expand on freezing making the cauliflower go mushy.
5. Freeze the florets separately on trays and then bag and label.

You can also add cauliflowers to pickles, relishes and chutneys and they are the main ingredient of piccalilli—that wonderful English mustard pickle that goes well with cold meat.

Cooking with cauliflowers

Gone are the days of simply serving cauliflower as a steamed vegetable or smothered in delicious cheese sauce. The culinary uses of cauliflowers have been reinvented, mainly because they can be used as a substitute for calorie-laden starchy vegetables. Try roasting them, turning them into cauliflower rice, making cauliflower fritters, grilling or pan frying thin slices, adding them to curries and salads, and they look spectacular cooked whole and topped with a sauce.

—Elizabeth Dangerfield



Trouble-free fruit: feijoas

Canberra's currawongs and possums make it a rare pleasure to find a largely pest free fruit: the feijoa (*Acca sellowiana*). This is the largest frost-tolerant high quality fruit in the Myrtaceae or myrtle relatives. The only other Myrtaceae fruits worth growing in Canberra are the Cherry of the Rio Grande, and the Chilean guava/Tazziberry (*Myrtus ugni*)—both of which have smaller, though very tasty fruits, but demand excellent drainage and thrice-weekly watering, respectively.

The feijoa's delicious fruits have complex aromatic flavours and, being well camouflaged, don't require sprays, nets, or other protection. Feijoa trees (or bushes) are also frost-proof and drought-proof—though in most years you'll need to water them if you want good crops. They are also tolerant of Canberra's heavy acid clays, though they perform far better if you give them a dressing of compost and mulch. And they have ornamental flowers with red stamens and edible white petals. What's not to like about feijoas?

Well, for one thing, the feijoas that Canberra's nurseries sell! These, despite their stickers calling them 'Favourite Fruits' and 'Pick'n Eat', are grown from seed, and the trouble with seedlings is like the trouble with children—they are produced by sexual reproduction, and so they are all different! You wouldn't buy an apple tree that was grown from seed and expect to get great fruit, so why buy a seedling feijoa? (Mind you, if you're planting a hedge of **20 seedlings, you'll probably get one or two good ones.)

Grafted feijoas do cost a bit more because feijoas can't be budded and, even for an evergreen, are tricky to graft. However, you'll get far bigger and sweeter fruit, and



you'll get fruit earlier in the tree's life.

One of the few nurseries in Australia that grafts feijoas is Daleys Fruit Tree Nursery. Though it is near the Queensland border, its on-line shop <http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/Plant-List.php> will deliver to your door in Canberra. Daleys offer seven varieties, for around \$30 a plant, plus a delivery fee. White Goose, Unique and Large Oval are early-season types (preferable in Canberra's short growing season), though if you have a north facing aspect, you may prefer the delicious Duffy and Apollo varieties.

And don't write off those 100,000 or more mongrel feijoa bushes/trees in Canberra gardens. They are all different, and some do give wonderful fruit. Four years ago Susan Parsons's column in *The Canberra Times* mentioned that I was looking for 'the best feijoa trees in Canberra'.

Over 50 people have so far come forward with samples of the fruit, and with twigs that I could use as scions. (Cuttings rarely work; you have to graft feijoas.)

After a taste test, I named each new variety after its donor, grafted the scions onto seedling feijoas that I had previously raised, and eventually donated the resulting

small trees to the Lindsay Pryor National Arboretum. Another large selection has been donated to the Canberra City Farm. Among them are varieties with edible skins, or that fruit very early or over a long season. Some have soft sweet fruit; others are firm and gritty like a good pear. Most are green, but one called Mercedes has bright vermilion markings. And one, its donor swears, has the flavour of wild strawberries.

If you own, or know of, an exceptional feijoa tree, please let me know.

Email: mark@Australianpoet.com

Cultivation

Don't lime them. Mulch well and plant them in a sunny position. They survive Canberra's winters, but grow only in the warmer months. Feijoas can be planted any time, but if you plant in summer you'll have to water them regularly till the roots spread. Fruits are late-season, April to June, and they self-harvest by falling. Fruits from some trees fall when perfectly ripe; others are

best stored for a few days after they fall.

Care of newly planted trees

Note that possums rarely, if ever, eat stems or older leaves, but (as with roses) they bite off the tender growing tips, which can stunt or kill a new tree that has only a handful of growing tips. So, in the older suburbs, where possum numbers are massive, you need to protect *any* new tree until it is about a metre high.

The simplest method is to place four tomato stakes around the new plant, near enough so that you can place a large upturned transparent plastic bag over them and over the plant, down to ground level. The sort of large thin bag that you get with your dry cleaning is fine. Remember to cut open the top of the bag, or the sun may cook the plant! Not only does the plastic bag keep off the possums, who don't like plastic, but it keeps out the cold winds, and creates a greenhouse effect that helps the plant keep growing through winter. Replace the bag when it starts to deteriorate.

Where to find good feijoas

All local nurseries sell seedling-grown feijoas. I often have a few for sale, both seedling-grown suitable for hedges, and grafted ones for better fruit. Daleys nursery sells grafted ones by mail order.

Fruits can be bought in season at Fyshwick markets—for \$2 a piece! Best to grow your own!

—Mark O'Connor
(story and photos)

Need an edible hedge?

I have about 20 feijoa plants, seedling-grown as in the nurseries, but at less than half nursery price.

From parent trees selected for fruit.

\$10 large, \$5 small.

Pickup north Canberra or O'Connor.

Also a few grafted fruiting cultivars: **\$25**

Contact Mark O'Connor
email me: mark@Australianpoet.com
phone 6247 3341.

New Zealanders think highly of feijoas, and have many varieties not available in Australia. In the famous Hamilton Gardens in NZ there is a 'sustainable backyard'. It contains one plum tree, one apple, one pear—and five feijoas!



Is the Q-fly in Canberra?

Researchers from Macquarie University and CSIRO have recently been busy around Canberra locating the maggots of *Bactrocera tryoni*, commonly known as Queensland fruit fly or Q-fly.

It's not a new pest—it's been round for over 60 years—and despite its name exists in many parts of Australia. Some of our COGS gardens have been assisting the researchers and gardens in northern O'Connor have been scrutinised for evidence of the pest.

The current sampling in the ACT is part of a country-wide survey of Queensland fruit fly populations, supported by the Horticulture Innovation Australia, Macquarie



Female (left) and male (right) Q-flies

University, the Australian Government and CSIRO. The Canberra Queensland fruit fly population, once securely established in the laboratory, will contribute to a long-term study that aims to improve understand of geographical variation in this pest species.

What should you look for? The researchers have said that Queensland fruit flies (one of many species of True fruit flies) are much larger than vinegar flies you find in compost and rotting fruit. Stone fruit is the Q-fly's preferred host.

The researchers said that vinegar flies, which is what most people think of when they hear about fruit flies, do not attack fresh or undamaged fruit. (There is one exception but that species does not exist in Australia at present).

If you have any information that might help, contact the researchers:

Dr Ronald Lee: ronald.lee@mq.edu.au and Dr Heng Lin Yeap: Henglin.Yeap@csiro.au

Thanks to Jenny Clark for the story and CSIRO for the photos.



Q-flies on 5-cent coin

Can you help?

From time to time COGS gets requests from members of the community to be involved in garden-related activities. Here are four recent requests in four different parts of Canberra. If you would like to be involved contact Jo, the Gardens Coordinator at the email address below.

Help wanted establishing a wicking bed

A Dickson resident would like to know if anyone in the COGS community could help her build a wicking bed at her Dickson

garden. Please email gardens@cogs.asn.au for additional information.

Garden space in Waramanga

COGS recently received a note from Lucia who has a large, well established organic garden in Adinda Street, Waramanga. Lucia is hoping to set up an arrangement to share her garden and would like to hear from anyone who might be interested. In return for shared use of her garden, Lucia would like help with some of the heavier work needed to keep the garden main-

tained. The garden has rainwater tanks, drip irrigation, compost bins and plenty of tools. Please email gardens@cogs.asn.au for additional information.

Help wanted to establish organic garden beds

A Monash lady would like to employ someone to help her set up garden beds. Please forward an email to gardens@cogs.asn.au if you would like more information.

Help with looking after a garden in Ainslie

Can you help an elderly man who loves his garden? If you can, please email gardens@cogs.asn.au

Drier conditions likely for eastern and central Australia; wetter for northern Australia

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) report issued on 31 January 2017 says that all El Niño indicators are neutral. Climate models indicate the tropical Pacific Ocean is likely to remain that way through the southern summer and autumn.

Most models predict the tropical Pacific Ocean to warm during this period, meaning La Niña is the

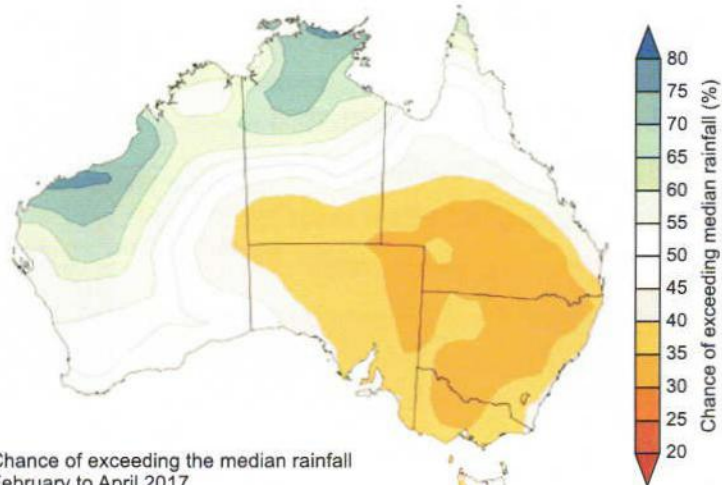
least likely scenario for winter/spring 2017. However, BoM notes that climate model predictions that span the southern autumn period tend to have lower accuracy than outlooks issued at other times of the year.

February to April rainfall is likely to be below average for parts of eastern and central Australia, but above average for northern Western Australia and northern part of the Northern Territory.

—Andy Hrast

Dam levels in the Canberra region and capital cities

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| ACT storages | 88% full |
| Murray–Darling Basin | 80% full |
| Burrinjuck Dam | 89% full |
| Blowering Dam | 89% full |
| Sydney | 88% full |
| Melbourne | 70% full |
| Brisbane | 73% full |
| Adelaide | 82% full |
| Perth | 26% full |



Chance of exceeding the median rainfall February to April 2017

Product of the Bureau of Meteorology

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

© Commonwealth of Australia 2017. Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Issued: 25/01/2017

Model run: 22/01/2017

Base Period: 1981–2010



Here's a joke sent in to the magazine. I think it's really funny. —Ed.

Why do people who live in the country only bother to lock their cars in February?

Because if they don't, they'll find a bag of zucchinis on the front seat when they get back.



EDUCATION

Food and
Farming related courses
in the Canberra Region

- Happy & Healthy Chooks – 26 March
- Beginners Beekeeping – 6 April

**Help us create a vibrant
local food community**

**Courses, farmers market,
local food news and events**

COGS members get 50% off membership

**Bookings
essential**

www.southernharvest.org.au
hello@southernharvest.org.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

Facebook: Slow-Food-Canberra-and-Capital-Convivium

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autumn planting guide

Brassicas

Late plantings of brassicas in March may be successful, but summer plantings are usually more reliable. In autumn, it is already too late to grow from seed. Take care too with the varieties chosen. It is too late to plant savoy cabbages, but the smaller ball-headed varieties should be successful.

Peas

Sugar snap peas may be sown in early March for a winter harvest, but the crop could be lost if there is an early severe frost affecting the blossom. Peas sown later in April–May will be ready for a spring harvest.

Lettuces

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

Leeks

Leek seedlings may be planted in early March for small leeks in winter, although summer plantings are more reliable.



Onions

Early varieties can be sown in April to early May to be harvested from spring to early summer. Mid season varieties are often sown in late autumn or early winter and long-keeping varieties in winter or early spring. It is worth experimenting with the timing of mid- or late-season varieties by making successive plantings to determine the best time for your specific garden.

Spring flowers

Remember that many spring flowering plants are best planted in autumn so they can establish before the winter cold, and then start growing in the early warmth of spring. Stocks, pansies and poppies can be planted as seedlings in March and early April. Others such as Virginia stock, candytuft, larkspur and sweetpeas can be sown direct throughout autumn.

Green manures

Autumn is the time to plant green manure crops so they can establish well before the frosts.

Green manure crops suitable for planting in Canberra are:

- **Legumes:** Broad beans, field peas, lupins, sub clover, tic peas and vetch.
- **Non-legumes:** Barley, oats and rye.

Legumes are very useful as they fix nitrogen in the soil while the non-legumes provide bulk organic matter.

Cut or dig in the green manure in spring, at least 4–6 weeks prior to planting your summer crops.

Flowering crops need to be dug in before flowering; cereal crops before producing a head of grain.

| | MAR | APR | MAY |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Asian greens | ST | T | |
| Brussel sprouts | T | | |
| Broccoli | T | | |
| Broad beans | | S | S |
| Cabbage | T | | |
| Cauliflower | T | | |
| Chicory | ST | T | |
| Chinese cabbage | T | | |
| Corn salad | ST | ST | |
| Endive | ST | T | |
| Garlic | | S | S |
| Kale | T | | |
| Kohlrabi | ST | T | |
| Leeks | T | | |
| Lettuce | ST | ST | ST |
| Peas | S | S | S |
| Onions | | S | S |
| Turnips | T | | |

S = seed sowing; T = transplanting

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

What's On



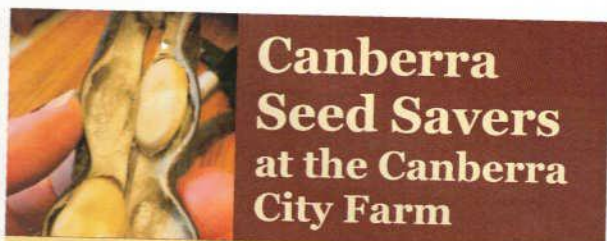
Conservation Council ACT Region

The Conservation Council is running a series of 'Environmental Exchanges' that may be of interest to COGS members. Sessions are on

Tuesdays from 12 to 2 pm at the Renewable Energy Hub, 19-23 Moore Street, Turner.

On Tuesday 23 May the topic is 'Overcoming the Growing Pains: Building a Sustainable Compact City' and on Tuesday 27 June the topic is 'Reducing Canberra's Waste Mountain'.

To find out more about these and other events you can email them at info@conservationcouncil.org.au



Canberra Seed Savers at the Canberra City Farm

Canberra Seed Savers had a great year in 2016: more seed savers from all across the region joined us growing and saving vegetable, herb and flower seeds. Seed savers start by planting and nurturing a seed, that becomes a strong plant that flowers and is pollinated, and sets an abundance of seed that is selected and saved and replanted by seed savers. Come and join us and be part of this magical cycle of life.

Seed Savers get together on the first Sunday of every month, from 2-5pm at Canberra City Farm. In peak season, we will also meet on some weekday afternoons at the Food Co-op in Acton. For more details go to www.ccfarm.org.au/get-involved/attend-a-workshop or follow us on Facebook or email Arian at arian.mcveigh@bigpond.com

Everyone is welcome to our get-togethers—you don't need to be an expert and you don't need to have a garden. Bring seeds, old gardening magazines, nibbles or drinks to share—or just bring yourself and help us to harvest and save the abundance of seeds.

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

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc

7.30 pm Tuesday 28 March 2017

Majura Community Centre,
Rosevear Place, Dickson

Diggers Club asks what you'd like to read about

If you're a member of The Diggers Club you can send them ideas for stories or questions about gardening for publication in their member eNewsletter, *The Heirloom Gardener*.

They also have a Harvest Festival coming up at their Heronswood garden on 11 and 12 March and are joining with the Botanic Gardens of South Australia for the Adelaide Heirloom Weekend on 8 and 9 April, 2017.

Find out more about membership at www.diggers.com.au

COGS green manure mixes Now available—

Each year COGS buys bulk seed that is mixed, packaged and made available to members.



This year there are two mixes available:

- Cereal and legume mix containing wheat, oats, ryecorn, field peas and vetch
- Legumes only mix containing field peas, vetch, lupins.

Seed is packaged in quantities suitable to cover about 25-30 square metres and is available at the COGS general meetings or on request.

Bulk deliveries to community gardens can also be arranged. Available for \$5.00 per bag.

Please contact Glynis on 6251 6641
or email glynken@iinet.net.au

The Slow Salt Dinner

(right) Duncan Thomson, owner of Murray River Salt, addresses the conference dinner

(below) The Slow Food tables were covered with a thick layer of salt
(photos: Walter Steensby)

