



# Bundaberg Organic Gardeners

~working with nature~

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## NEWSLETTER JUNE 2022

### **Hello and welcome to our June Newsletter.**

Our last meeting was a great night where we welcomed new members and guests, shared plants, our home harvests, good food, conversation and of course learnt all about the world of kombucha from Bundaberg Ferments.

Due to BOGI's jam-packed Tuesday night agendas, we need to keep a tight schedule and start the meeting right on 6.30 pm. If you can, please be seated and settled by 6.30 pm. This gives our guest speakers a chance to give their presentations uninterrupted.

We also need to start our clean-up of the room right on 9 pm as many people have long drives home. If you are engrossed in conversation, please move to one side or outside onto the verandah when the clean-up begins otherwise you may be given a broom and brush!!!

**Our Supper Roster is BACK!** Please let Pam Biden know if you are on the list and cannot bring something. Please list ingredients to assist those with allergies and intolerances, and share recipes where you can. Please also be mindful of food health and safety when sharing food.

### **CLUB MEETING –**

**always the last Tuesday of the Month.**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Time:** Doors open **6.00 pm** for a **6.30 pm** start

**Guest Speaker:** Kyle Levier who works at G'Day farm in Childers

**Venue:** McNaught Hall (Uniting Church Hall)  
Corner Barolin and Electra Street, Bundaberg  
Attendance \$3-member, \$5 visitor, tea, coffee avail.  
Members please be reminded to wear your badges to the meeting

**Get your lucky door ticket (free with entry), bring along produce to show on the 'From My Garden' table and share in the free seedlings at the end of the meeting.**

*This Month's Supper Roster*

*Rose Apap ~ Daniel Critchlow*

*Les De Gunst ~ Karyn Ennor*

*Malcolm Fuller ~ Trevor Galletly*

*Greer Hardy ~ Joan Smart*

*Maureen Schmitt ~ Lenzie Duffy*

## Gin Gin Landcare Plants to be available at BOGI Tuesday night meetings

Bush tucker plants, herbs, bird, bee and butterfly attracting plants are just some of the plants available from Gin Gin Landcare that will be able to be ordered and collected at future BOGI Tuesday night meetings. Val Wright, who volunteers at Gin Gin Landcare Nursery, has come up with a plan to help Gin Gin Landcare, BOGI and time-strapped BOGI members. Members interested in buying plants can ring Ray Johnson on 0419 199 168 up until 4pm on the Friday preceding a meeting, discuss their plant needs and place an order with Ray. Val will then bring these plants to the BOGI meeting for collection and cash only payment.

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Tube stock sell at \$2.50 per plant and prices for larger pots depend on the pot size and plant type. From every plant sold, BOGI will receive \$0.50. In time, Val will have a plant list of what is on offer from Gin Gin Landcare to show BOGI members.

To start the ball rolling, Val will bring a small selection of plants to sell at our June Meeting.

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## Guest Speaker for June Meeting

Our guest speaker this month is Kyle Levier who works at G'Day farm in Childers. He has held cover crops workshops at G'Day and is currently growing his own patch of vegetables there, using the methods he has taught in those workshops.

Kyle will be presenting information about what growing cover crops can offer the home gardener. Cover crops are like a "green manure" when grown in a garden. They help to improve the soil by providing organic matter, nutrients as well as a host of other benefits.

Kyle will have packets of cool season cover crop seeds available, suitable for the home garden. These will be for sale at \$5 each.

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The **Taste Bundaberg Festival Farmers Market** will be held on Saturday August 6<sup>th</sup>. BOGI will have a large stall again this year. Marlene Kent, our Vice-President, is the coordinator and eager to get organised. We need volunteers for a sub-committee who will be tasked with distributing seeds, and asking members what they will plant for giving away at the event.

We are in need of a **Seed Saving Co-Ordinator** for the club, to organise and enable access to the huge variety of seeds our members produce. Please volunteer for this important job.

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## From the June Meeting May 31 Meeting

This month we were fortunate to have Mark and Jess from Bundaberg Ferments to tell the story of the evolution of their family business and to share their knowledge around kombucha.

After the couple had children, they took stock of their lifestyle and, with Jess as the driving force, decided to overhaul their diet. They ate according to keto principles and both enjoyed the health benefits with Mark losing 20kg of weight. Given this drastic change in diet, they wanted a drink that would align with their goal of maintaining a lowered stable blood sugar. Kombucha fitted the bill.

Mark explained that kombucha is a fermented tea made from tea, sugar and a SCOBY (symbiotic culture of bacteria

and yeast). Bundaberg Ferments have obtained their best results using green or oolong tea and organic raw sugar. After the fermenting process, there is very little sugar (the longer it is brewed, the less sugar there will be in the drink) in kombucha.

The process of their brewing grew from using 48 litres worth of 4 litres of glass containers sourced from Kmart to the 6 x 200 litre vats in use now. Half of these large containers are allocated to brewing the starter and half to the second ferments.

After fermenting the tea and sugar, a 'second ferment' can be made where flavouring (usually fruit) is added to the first ferment liquid and then left to rest for a second fermentation process. This results in the delicious products that Jess and Mark sell to the public. Bundaberg Ferments only use organic ingredients and to flavour their second ferments, they have found that they obtain the most reliable, replicable results by using dried organic fruits and plants. Their flavoured kombucha is sweetened with monk fruit which has a very low sugar content.

The flavours they sell at various retail locations around Bundaberg are: cascara (made from the flesh around the coffee bean); pineapple and ginger; and bush fruits. The alcohol content of Bundaberg Ferments' kombucha is minimal - always below 0.5%. Mark and Jess explained that there is limited scientific evidence for kombucha's health benefits but that the drink contains many vitamins and minerals, and possibly helps the body to detox and ward off free radicals. Kombucha can be easily made at home using a special crock, glass jar, bottle or even a stainless steel container as long as it is 304 grade or better.

In order to brew kombucha at home, you can purchase some kombucha from a retail outlet or obtain what is commonly called a SCOBY (but is in fact a 'pellicle' - a by-product of brewing kombucha - a cellulose mat produced by bacteria) from someone who is willing to share some of theirs.

(It is possible to wild ferment your kombucha where you leave your tea and sugar mix, covered lightly with a cloth, to develop its own SCOBY from the endemic microbes in the air at your place.)

If starting from scratch with some purchased kombucha, leave the product on the kitchen cupboard, lid off - just covered with a cloth. In time, the SCOBY (or mother, as it is sometimes referred to) will start to grow on the top of your kombucha. (A SCOBY will initially look like a clear film across the top of the liquid. Over time, if left in your brewing container, it will develop into a thick mat.)

Mark and Jess have generously shared a recipe that you can use to brew your own kombucha at home.

This will be sufficient for a 4 litre batch.  
8 tea bags or 2 tablespoon of tea (Bundaberg Ferments use 75% organic green tea and 25% organic oolong black tea)  
1 cup organic raw cane sugar  
2 cups of starter liquid (and part of a pellicle someone has shared with you if desired)  
Good quality filtered water.

Using boiling water, make tea, as per usual, with the tea, filtered water and sugar. Stir the liquid to dissolve the sugar.

After brewing and cooling, top up with the starter liquid and filtered water to make 4 litres.



Cover the top of your container with a clean cloth (a Chux-type product that has been doubled works well) and secure into place with a rubber band.

Start taste testing the brew after 7 days but it may take up to 4 weeks.

When it is of a suitable taste to your liking, you can:

\*decant into bottles and leave on the cupboard (keeping in mind that it will continue to ferment and become more acidic (tasting more like vinegar)

\*decant into bottles and place in the fridge (this will slow the process of further fermentation by 30 times compared to storing at room temperature) or

\*make a second ferment by placing kombucha and desired flavouring into a bottle, seal with the lid and store for a couple of days out of sunlight. 'Burp' the bottle in a couple of days and then continue to monitor and burp. Your ferment should be ready in approximately a week, depending upon variables such as the flavouring used, ambient temperature, your taste etc. Place in the fridge.

Happy brewing.

Thanks to Jess and Mark for the education and inspiration.

The following link is an interesting read is people would like additional information.

<https://fermentaholics.com/whats-that-white-waxy-layer-growing-on-my-kombucha-brew/>

## Planting by the Moon – July

**(1/4 Moon to Full Moon) 7 - 13 July:** Increased light from the waxing moon benefits leaf growth, and root growth slows down. Best time to sow or transplant fruiting annuals.

**(Full Moon to ¾ Moon) 14 - 20 July:** Gravitational pull decreases and moonlight decreases, so leaf growth reduces and root growth increases. Plant root crops now (below ground).

**(1/2 Moon to New Moon) 21 - 28 July:** The waning moon is good for balanced growth. No sowing or planting during this phase. *Harvest vegetables, weeding, digging, pruning and cultivate. Apply mulch.*

**(New Moon to ¼ Moon) 29 July – 4 August:** Influences balanced growth; a lower gravitational pull decreases and this stimulates root growth. The best time to sow or transplant leafy vegetables.

### What to plant in July:

*Asian vegetables; French Beans; Beetroot; Broad Beans; Cabbage; Carrots; Cauliflower; Endive; Garlic; Kohlrabi; Leeks; Lettuce; Mustard Greens; Onions; Peas; Potatoes; Radish; Shallots; Silverbeet; Sweet Potatoes; Tomatoes.*

Plant these in seedling trays first: *Broccoli; Cabbage; Capsicum; Cauliflower; Celery; Lettuce; Silverbeet Tomatoes.*

## Upcoming Workshop

Date to be advised. Fruit Tree Pruning workshop

Lee & Freddie's property at Miriam Vale  
Ray Johnson will be demonstrating pruning of many fruit trees

Miriam Vale is about 1.5 hours from Bundaberg. Visitors are invited to camp or caravan overnight on the Saturday  
A bush camp and bush toilet are available.

## Garden Visit to Cat Wilson's Property at Gaeta. Saturday 4 June.

BOGI members travelled to Gaeta about 2 hours west of Bundaberg to visit one of our members. There were cattle on the unfenced roads. We did cross about 12 creeks that were flooded recently and showed plenty of high debris.

The sun was shining and Cat and Karl and their children greeted 5 BOGI members to their sanctuary in the hills. Cat and family are aiming to be self-sufficient for food and also derive some income from the property. Karl is currently working from home and intermittently travelling to the office. He also carries out a lot of manual work on the farm.

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Cat has 40 acres of timbered hilly country. We were presented with a property mud map showing possible sites and activities. Since arriving some 18 months earlier, the property has been very dry. However, the 2 dams are now full of water.

During this time the house yard grass has regenerated well with rainfall, tethered sheep, grazing ducks and ample manure. The fruit tree area has also benefited from wattles and pigeon pea being planted. Both of these are legumes and have already started to show soil building.

Cat is keen to develop herbs, fruit trees, vegetables and shade house areas. They are keeping sheep and ducks. The ducks are interesting – currently they are not laying and feed is expensive with no eggs. How do we encourage ducks to lay? What duck grazing plants can we grow?

We did share lots of ideas from our own experiences. However, we would like to invite other members with experience and knowledge to share and exchange info with Cat. Do you have a shade house? Grow herbs? Fruit trees? Vegetables? Please start emailing Cat [catwilson@tutanota.com](mailto:catwilson@tutanota.com) and share your passions.

One discussion we had was cucumbers. None were present, however, Cat would like cucumbers 12 months of the year. So varieties, planting times, in pots or ground, soil preparation, watering, trellis or not, preservation of fruit ..... please share your info.

Please discuss 8 or more greens with Cat also. Now that dams have water, I would look to finding some wet areas for bananas!!

We look forward to your thoughts and participation in future discussion in Open Forum.

Trevor Galletly



L>R Clockwise

\*The road in to Gaeta

\*Mother Duck

\* Some of Catherines Property

\* Catherine and her knowledgeable BOGI friends.

# SOIL BIOLOGY

Soil is full of life. It is often said that a handful of soil has more living organisms than people on planet Earth. Soil is the stomach of the earth - consuming, digesting, and cycling nutrients and organisms.

On first observation, however, soil may appear as a rather inert material on which we walk, build roads, construct buildings, and grow plants. On closer observation, we see that soil is teeming with living organisms. Living organisms present in soil include archaea, bacteria, actinomycetes, fungi, algae, protozoa, and a wide variety of larger soil fauna including springtails, mites, nematodes, earthworms, ants, and insects that spend all or part of their life underground, even larger organisms such as burrowing rodents. The links between soil organisms and how they impact the soils chemical and physical properties is complex. All of these are important in making up the environment we call soil and in bringing about numerous transformations that are vitally important to life.

## Microbial Consumers and Decomposers

There are thousands of different types of bacteria, that can both help and harm people.

Only 5% of what is produced by green plants is consumed by animals, but the 95% is consumed by microorganisms. One gram of fertile soil can contain up to one billion bacteria. There are many different types of bacteria, and most of them have not even been discovered yet! Most of these bacteria are aerobic, meaning that they require oxygen from the soil atmosphere. However, other bacteria need to live without oxygen, and other types can live both with, and without oxygen. The growth of these bacteria is limited by the food that is available in the soil.

Soil fungi are also large components of the soil that come in various sizes, shapes, and colours. Mushrooms have underground roots (mycelium) that absorbs nutrients and water until they are ready to flower in the mushroom form. They tolerate acidity, which makes them very important to decompose materials in very acidic forests, that microbes cannot do, they can also decompose lignin, which is the woody tissues for decomposing plants.

<https://www.soils4teachers.org/biology-life-soil/>

## Regenerative Agriculture

“True regenerative farming improves plant and animal nutrition without trying for a simple reason: it does not fight nature – it aligns with nature.” Paul Hawken writes in *Regeneration: Ending the climate crisis in one generation*. Regenerative agriculture is at the heart of a regenerated society since it is the source of food, nutrition, and well-being. A third of our total climate impact comes from food and agricultural systems, as does a majority of human disease. The first principal of regeneration is to create more life. This is where we must start.”

A few more excerpts from the introduction of Hawken’s chapter on regenerative agriculture:

We know more about the surface of the moon than the surface of the earth. The moon is composed of known mineral fragments, whereas the soil is its own ecosystem comprising trillions of living, diverse organisms, most of which remain unidentified.

When you gather a teaspoon of healthy soil, you have at hand one of the most complex living systems on earth – one that in less than 150 years has been degraded by industrial agriculture. Roughly 35% of our carbon dioxide emissions generated by human activity since 1850 were caused by farming and deforestation.

The world over, 15 million smallholder farmers and tens of thousands of farmers and ranchers are employing methods to reverse the loss of soil, restore land, and bring agriculture and food back to life.

Regenerative agriculture is a whole-systems approach to soil, farming and crops, not a menu that can be cherry picked for good publicity.

## Member Contributions

### Paleo Vegan Drop Cookies - another delicious recipe shared by Deltry.

This recipe can be halved - makes a lot of cookies!

*I chop my fruit up in the Thermie before I add the flour and then the wet ingredients. I think it could be done very successfully in a processor, just reversing the order – fruit, dry ingredients and then the wet!*

*When the fruit is put in whole, I found that it wasn't spread throughout the mixture. So, some cookies were fruitless!!*

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#### Ingredients

2 Tbsp ground flax seed  
6 Tbsp water  
1/2 cup avocado oil see note\*macadamia oil or coconut oil (my choice) 100g  
3/4 cup organic rice syrup - 225g  
1 tsp pure vanilla extract  
1 tsp pure almond extract (optional)  
5 cups super fine almond flour or 2 1/2 blanched almond meal and 2 1/2 ground activated almonds  
6 drops wild orange Essential Oil or 2 large navel oranges zested  
3 drops cinnamon Essential Oil – optional – I love the cinnamon flavour! Or 1 teas ground cinnamon  
2 tsp baking powder  
1/4 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
1 cup dried cranberries \* or raisins/sultanas – check that cranberries aren't sugar treated!

#### Instructions

Preheat the oven to 160 -170 degrees and line a 2 large baking trays with parchment paper.

Stir together the ground flax seed and water in a mixing bowl and allow it to sit for 10 minutes until it thickens up to be the consistency of beaten eggs. Stir this mixture occasionally. Once the flax eggs are ready, whisk in the oil, rice syrup, vanilla extract and essential oils (remaining wet ingredients) and stir well until combined.

Add dried fruit to remaining dry ingredients and stir well until a sticky dough forms. Drop the dough onto a parchment-line baking sheet, forming any size scone you would like. The scones will bake out in the same exact shape you drop them.

Bake on the centre rack of the preheated oven 12 – 15 minutes, or until the edges of the scones are golden-brown.

#### RECIPE NOTES

\* full-fat canned coconut milk – haven't tried the milk variety!

#### Recipe Adaptations:

If you prefer a crispier exterior, replace one cup of almond flour with one cup of arrowroot flour or tapioca flour (for a total of 4 cups almond, 1 cup arrowroot).

## Are you interested in learning more about what you don't know about gardening?

Don't have time to read articles or watch videos to increase your knowledge?

Have you considered listening to podcasts?

Here is one I am currently enjoying.



### All The Dirt Gardening, Sustainability and Food

Steve Wood and Deryn Thorpe

★ 4.7 (311) - HOME & GARDEN

Gardening, sustainability, food, organics. Weekly discussion, interviews and tasty garden to kitchen recipes

▶ Latest Episode

My favourite ways to listen to a whole host of topics from All The Dirt Podcast are while:

- going for a walk
- travelling in the car
- cooking
- folding the washing.

You can use your phone, iPad, tablet or computer to access a podcast app to play these podcasts.

Happy listening – from Donna Watton.

**Kale! Did you know there were so many varieties? Look at this beautiful display of colour Pam Biden has shared with us, taken from a Better Homes and Gardens magazine.**

Kale is in the Brassica family which includes Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage and Cauliflower. It will grow well with Beans, Beetroot, Capsicum, Celery, Chammomile, Chilli, Coriander, Cucumber, Dill, Geranium, Hyssop, Marigold, Mint, Nasturtium, Onion, Oregano, Potato, Rosemary, Sage, Silverbeet, Spinach, Tansy, Thyme and Wormwood.

It won't grow well near Garlic, Grapes, Strawberries or Tomato.

Kale is well known for being high in fibre, antioxidants, calcium, Vitamin C and K and Iron.



## Management Committee News:

Balance at end of April \$4562.39

Income & Expenditure for May

Leaving balance at end of May \$4385.79

**President – Maureen Schmitt**

**Vice President – Marlene Kent**

**Treasurer – Kay De Gunst**

**Secretary – Karyn Ennor**

**Committee Members - Trevor Galletly,  
Christine Jeffery, Joan Smart and Pam Biden.**

**Herbal Teas – Julie Burry**

**Library – Joy Millet**

**Supper – Pam Biden**

**Workshops and Field Trips – Trevor Galletly**

**BOGI Shop – Bruce McKay**

**Newsletter Editor– Cathy Critchlow**

**Assistant Editor – Donna Watton**

This is a beautiful article my aunt posted to me with a new apron. I hope you enjoy the story as much as I did. (Cathy)

## The History of Aprons.

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she had only a few.

It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. And when the weather was cold Grandma wrapped it around her arms. Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls, in the Autumn, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that "old-time apron" that served so many purposes.

They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron – but love.

### Deadline for July Newsletter.

**Please send through information to the editor by the second Friday of each month.**

We would love FEEDBACK from club members on anything and everything.

**Tell us about your successes and your failures in the garden and help others learn along the way.**

Let us know about community events or what's up and coming in the area.

To include notices and details of Club activities

email: [newsletter.bundyorgard@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.bundyorgard@gmail.com)

Or Phone Cathy 0403 430 969

### BOGI SHOP

Products available are:

- Liquid Lime
- Liquid Kelp
- Liquid Fish
- Mineral Granules
- Microlife
- Organibor and
- Katex Organic Super Growth.

They are available for sale at our meetings, but please contact

Bruce McKay on 41544405 for collection from his address in Walkervale.

**This is the official monthly newsletter published by and distributed to the members of Bundaberg Organic Gardeners Inc. Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information, the Club accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, or any consequence arising from them. For further information, contact the Secretary.**