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NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024

Hello and welcome to your February Newsletter!

If you are like me, you are also looking forward to cooler weather! I have appreciated getting out in the garden when the heat has died down and pull up the many weeds which have enjoyed a sojourn in my garden! So prolific! The other thing that has gladdened my heart has been my snake beans! I've learned so much over this time – 1) not to plant so many seedlings at once – I think there were 8 + seedlings! and 2) prepare a good trellis support! When we arrived home after our time away, the beans had spread out horizontally!! So all I could do was to gather them up and push them back! They are now producing madly. What interested me is the number of ants at the top of the beans! I did a Goggle search and it seems they are protecting the bean from predators! Any clues? I just shake them off while picking them! We are enjoying them in our stir-frys! See you at our Tuesday meeting!

Warm regards, Deltry

Save the Date

Saturday March 16: Visit to the Greena Future Eco Shop, 100 Hughes Road, Bargara and then drive to the Maureen Schmitt Park at The Hummock!
Bring morning tea, a chair and lunch if you intend to stay after the walk and talk!

Could those on our supper roster (see last page) provide a list of the ingredients of your contribution due to various dietary concerns of our attendees! Thank you!

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CLUB MEETING – Tuesday 27th February 2024

Cub meetings are always the last Tuesday of the Month.

Time: Doors open 6.00 pm for a 6.30 pm start

Venue: McNaught Hall (Uniting Church Hall)
Corner Barolin and Electra Street, Bundaberg

Attendance \$3-member, \$5 visitor, supper available

Members please 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.

FEBRUARY SPEAKER

I'm sure you will all agree about the importance of recycling and doing all we can to save our environment! So, you will be pleased to know that our February Speaker, **Ramya Gopinath**, will be show-casing her business, **Greena Future Eco Shop**, Bargara, at our Tuesday meeting!



Ramya promotes affordable products for an eco-conscious lifestyle and she will be including information on how to

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle!

We look forward to welcoming Ramya on 27th

January 2024 Workshop Report – Lara Hawker

At our January meeting, three of our members shared their knowledge concerning the attributes of various plants. Maureen started the session with the plant, Sambung. Its botanical name is *Gynura procumbens*. Sambung is sometimes called the longevity plant or the diabetes plant. It is a fleshy perennial plant, growing to a height of approximately 80cm with yellow/orange thistle like flowers, originally from China and Burma, easy to grow, propagate and use. Other names this plant goes by are Sambung nyawa 'life extender', Daun Dewa, Akar Sebiak, Kelemai Merah, Bai Bing Ca. The branches can be trimmed to make the plant bushy or you can stake the stems.



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The leaves and stems are both edible and it makes great forage for chickens. It is good to note that the young tips are great as a salad green and it can also be used in stews, steamed and added to stir fry or soup. When cooking Sambung, it is best to put it in right at the end for the last minutes of cooking. It is thought to have many health benefits and contains minerals and vitamins. Studies have shown that certain compounds found in longevity spinach can help regulate blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity, making it a valuable addition to a diabetic-friendly diet. In addition to its anti-diabetic effects, longevity spinach has also been found to improve digestion.



Sambung can be easily grown from cuttings; just put a cutting in water and the roots will grow. Maureen showed us some cuttings that were 10 days old and you could already see their roots. Make sure that the piece you select for a cutting has nodes as this is from where the roots grow. You can also grow your cutting directly in soil. Take your cutting and plant it in an open potting mix in the shade. Roots will form in the same way as the cutting in the water.

As Maureen stated, it is possible to live without lettuce when you have the choice of eating Asian greens! <https://www.herbcottage.com.au/products/sambung-nyawa>

S O W T H I S T L E : T H E P E R F E C T E D I B L E W E E D

For our next session, Chris shared her knowledge about sow thistle or milk thistle - *Sonchus*. It is a very productive plant that can spread widely. It is like a dandelion in that it is classed as a weed. Like the dandelion, its seeds are spread by the wind and it has a similar flower. However, it is easy to tell the difference between the two, since instead of a single flower, sow thistle will have two or three flowers.



Sow thistle can be eaten in salads or added to stews or soups. It contains minerals and vitamins. It is thought to have medicinal properties and can be used as a painkiller when made into a tea.

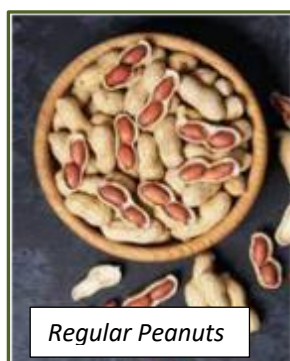
It can be dehydrated and powdered for use but be aware that the concentration will be much greater. The plant tastes best when young as the leaves are soft and reminiscent of lettuce or radicchio. As it gets older and it comes to flower, it becomes more bitter, therefore making it more suitable for cooking.

<https://www.diegobonetto.com/blog/how-to-identify-and-use-sowthistle-the-perfect-edible-weed>

PEANUTS

Lenzie concluded the sessions by sharing his knowledge about growing peanuts. He started his talk by affirming that many people are allergic to peanuts, so it is important to make others aware if you are sharing food containing peanuts! He grows three varieties: regular peanuts (such as the ones you buy in a shop), black peanuts and Spanish red (small round red peanuts). They all have a similar taste. Peanut plants are legumes so they can help improve your soil. Lenzie recommends alternating crops, e.g. carrots or broccoli, with a legume crop.

Peanuts grow under the ground. The top of the plant will begin to die off and then it is ready to dig up. If the soil is too hard, the peanuts will pull off when you turn it over. It is important to wait for it to be dry because if it is wet then the peanuts will begin to germinate in their shells. Once you have dug up your plant, turn it over and put a net bag over the fruits to protect it while they continue to dry out.



Regular Peanuts



Spanish Red



Black peanuts

Spanish Peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*) are small and consistently sized peanut, measuring approximately .5 to 1 centimetre in diameter and have a plump, round, to ovate shape. The peanuts are covered in a thin, red-brown, brittle skin that easily crumbles and flakes when handled. Beneath the skin, Spanish Peanuts are beige with a smooth, firm, and dense texture. Raw Spanish Peanuts emit little to no aroma and have a pleasantly sweet, nutty flavour that will intensify if the peanuts are roasted.

Peanuts have a unique growth pattern, known as geocarpy, where the netted and spongy pods of the plant ripen beneath the ground, acting a bit like roots by absorbing minerals directly from the soil. This phenomenon helps the plant to be a more sustainable crop by utilizing less water and returning nitrogen to the soil. Peanuts are harvested from the soil and left to dry for four to six weeks before being inspected and graded for quality. After inspection, the nuts are shelled and processed. Spanish Peanuts are used mostly in peanut candies, nut snacks, peanut butter, and oil extraction. Peanut oil is prized for its high cooking temperature and healthy fat content, although individuals with a peanut allergy will also be severely allergic to the oil. Did you know that peanut by-products are also used to produce over 300 derivative products, including flour, soaps, and plastics?

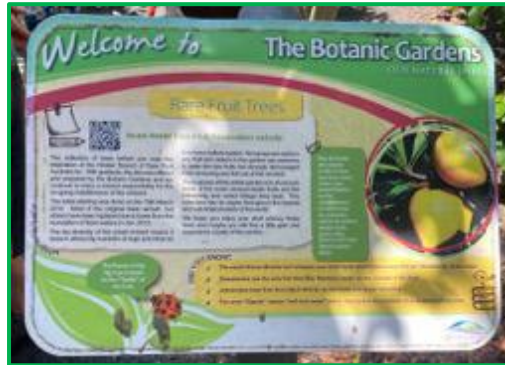
The Black Peanut (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) in the peanut family has high nutritional value and health benefits. It is rich in high quality protein, unsaturated fatty acids, contains large quantities of selenium, potassium and other mineral elements. More importantly, the peanut skin also contains flavonoids, BPSP resveratrolalcohol and other biological components with unique features. Black peanuts are rich in anthocyanins, inhibit free radicals, anti-oxidation, anti-radiation, anti-tumour, anti-aging and cardiovascular activity, anti-inflammatory, non-bacterial inflammation, such as arthritis prevention and can enhance the elasticity of the skin. It can protect the skin and promote skin health and other biological effects.

Check out this link for more health information: <https://www.agrocrops.com/en/peanuts-quality/new-improved-varieties-of-peanuts> There is also more information regarding health concerns since peanuts grow underground, where they can be colonized by a widespread mould called *Aspergillus*. This mould is a source of aflatoxins, which are considered harmful to health. If buying peanuts, ensure you purchase the best quality!

Rare Fruit Orchard Visit

On 10th February 2024, fifteen BOGI members visited the Bundaberg Botanical Gardens to see the rare fruit trees planted by the Hinkler Rare Fruits society and Botanic staff thirteen years ago. Lenzie was our guide on a rather warm Saturday morning and explained how the orchard was established. In 2010, Rare Fruit President, Ray Johnson, approached Bundaberg Regional Council with the suggestion to plant an orchard for rare fruit! The suggestion was followed up by the Bundaberg Regional Council and the Botanical Gardens designated a garden area near the Hinkler Hall of Aviation for this purpose. Ray supplied several trees from his property, some trees came from the Daleys Fruit Nursery and Lenzie also donated fruit trees from his former property at Hervey Bay. Thus, the Rare Fruit Orchard came into being!

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<https://www.discoverbundaberg.com.au/bundaberg-botanic-gardens-1/learn-botanic-gardens/4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVBo9JChaLE&embeds_referring_eri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.discoverbundaberg.com.au%2F&source_ve_path=OTY3MTQ&feature=emb_imp_woyt

The first link contains information about various sections of the Botanical Gardens. In the second YouTube link, Ray Johnson discusses the various trees in the Rare Fruits Orchard! Great information!

Lenzie said that there are several rare trees in the gardens that are no longer available to purchase! We wandered along the paths, viewing and learning about the various trees and shrubs! Some had fruit to sample while others were still in the growing stage! This was such a worthwhile field trip! Many thanks to Lenzie for sharing his knowledge and experience!

During the Taste Bundaberg Festival held between 30 August and 8 September 2024, a day is set aside to have a guided tour through the Rare Fruit Orchard. It is important to book your spot for this special tour! For those who were unable to attend our recent excursion, this will be a worthwhile event to attend!



Here is a selection of some of the names of the rare fruit trees to view in the orchard



**AGENDA FOR THE
2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (17TH)
Tuesday 26th March 2024**

Venue – McNaught Hall (Uniting Church hall)

6.00 – 6.30 pm Registration of Members and Visitors.

6.30 pm Open Meeting:. Marlene Kent-Fuller.

Apologies:

Visitors:

Minutes of the 16th AGM held on Tuesday 28^h March 2023.

Moved: **Seconded:**

President's Report:

Motion: **Moved:** **Seconded:**

Treasurer's Report:

Motion: **Moved:** **Seconded:**

Election the Management Committee

The nominations required: Forms are available at the sign-on table

| Position | Nominee | Nominated by | Seconded by |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

Committee Members (5)

Have you remembered to pay your annual membership fee?



You can pay on Tuesday 27th February at the sign-in desk

- by cash at the meeting, or
- by Direct Bank transfer:
 - BSB number 64 56 46, Account number 105739103,
 - Reference: YOUR NAME.

NB If using Direct Bank transfer, please add your name after the reference.

The fees are unchanged: Single \$15, Family \$25!

Give Away Table

**Could all those kind members who bring in their plants and seedlings to share,
please ensure they are labelled!**

Herb of the Month – Yerba Mate

I wonder how many of you have used this herb! It has so many verified health benefits that it deserves a place in everyone's pantry! However, moderation in its use is the key!

Yerba Mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*) is a hardy, attractive evergreen bush to small tree, up to 5 metres high, which is drought hardy and light frost tolerant. It has dark green, glossy, elliptic-shaped leaves to 10cm with fine, serrated margins. Petite, white flowers are inconspicuous, as they set close in the leaf axils. Small round seeds form in a bright red 5mm berry which makes the bush most attractive, giving it a similar appearance to Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) to which it is related. Propagation is by seed and cuttings (best started in late spring and summer).

This plant adapts to a wide range of climates. Isabel Shipard has found trees growing well in sub-tropical conditions. It is best to plant in a sunny position, in well-drained soil. 'How to use herbs in my daily life'- Isabell Shipard



<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/8-benefits-of-yerba-mate> This site has interesting information also!

What are the health benefits of Yerba Mate:

Yerba mate is a healthy and refreshing beverage that has several health benefits. The beverage is a good source of antioxidants, which can help protect the body against damage from free radicals. It also contains caffeine, which can help boost energy levels and improve cognitive function. It is also a good source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, potassium, and magnesium.

Constituents: volatile oil, chlorogenic, oxalic and neochlorogenic acid, rutin, mateine, caffeine (up to 1.5%) theobromine 0.2% theophylline, bitters, tannins

Vitamins: A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, C, E

Minerals: calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, silica

Actions: anti-inflammatory, appetite suppressant, cerebral stimulant, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, laxative, nervine, sedative, tonic

Medicinal Uses

In 1964 the Pasteur Institute researched the properties of yerba mate. Their conclusion was '*It is difficult to find a plant in any area of the world equal to mate in nutrition. It has most all the vitamins necessary to sustain life*'. Some references indicate that mate tea contains only about a third of the amount of caffeine as a cup of brewed coffee, while other references say the plant contains a xanthine alkaloid called mateine, which acts like caffeine but doesn't have the caffeine side effects. Mate has the effect of stimulating the mind, increasing concentration and easing depressive moods, while not interfering with sleep like coffee may.

Students preparing for exams often find mate helpful as it is a powerful mental stimulant, aiding understanding, assisting clear thinking and recall, with the added benefit of being soothing to the nerves, providing a tonic to the body at a time when the immune system needs extra help.

Although often used as a tonic tea by many people and drunk regularly as being in the same manner as China tea, it is regarded devoid of any undesirable stimulant action. The herb tea has been found in research to help in delivery of oxygen to the heart and muscles, an action most beneficial to health.

Body builders use mate to help tone muscles. Mate also has a beneficial action on the heart, toning the smooth muscles.

Mate tea is a satisfying alternative to a calorie laden snack, by decreasing the sensation of hunger and cravings. The tea has thermogenic properties that assist in burning fat.

Mate has been used for: diabetes, arthritis, gout, rheumatism, headaches, migraines, neuralgia, anxiety and stress, asthma, pre-menstrual discomfort, nerve pain, indigestion, toning the intestinal tract, urinary tract infection, kidney and bladder stones, irregular heart rhythm, obesity, fatigue as well as being used as a tonic for stamina and endurance building.

It is always wise to do your own research for the pros and cons for any foods and make an informed decision!

Book Review from our Librarian Joy!



The seed savers' handbook for Australia and New Zealand Fanton, Michel 631.521 FAN

The book begins with eight chapters on the issues around seeds globally and the practicalities of saving your own seeds. Three quarters of the book gives practical seed saving information on 117 food plants, mostly vegetables, with the remainder culinary flowers, herbs and spices. Each plant has a description, its wild origins, how to cultivate it, save its seeds or otherwise propagate it, storage of the seed and its medicinal and culinary uses.

Permaculture, biodiversity, organics and companion planting are the principles that underlie the contents of this book.

Michel and Jude Fanton wrote The Seed Savers' Handbook from experience and with a great deal of research. It has been a reliable reference book not just on propagating and breeding your own vegetables, but also for how to grow and use both common (corn, tomatoes, beans, cabbages, etc.) and unusual vegetables, such as turmeric, peanuts and several species of gourds.

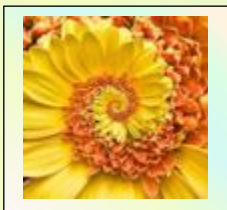
Included are many Asian and South American vegetables, herbs and spices.

At early 2014, 36,000 copies of the original edition have been sold with another 30,000 copies of translations and adaptations sold around the world.

This book is your lifelong guide to food security. As Covid emptied shelves, people turned to their gardens to secure a reliable supply of nourishing food. As our climate continues to change, so too must our crops.

Since 1993 *The Seed Savers' Handbook* has guided both experienced and novice gardeners in the cultivation of more than 110 food plants. Learn how to modify your crops to better suit your local soil and climate. Our multicultural society has a diverse seed history of seed conservation. Gardens and gardeners sustain our evolving food culture. All hands to the soil! **Jerry Coleby-Williams, Curator, Author & Conservationist:**

"If you cherish your greens devour this splendid book designed to save our shrinking vegetable heritage." **Derek Cooper, Presenter of Radio 4 in London UK**

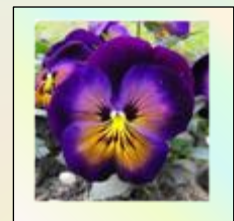


KIND HEARTS ARE THE GARDENS

KIND THOUGHTS ARE THE ROOTS

KIND WORDS ARE THE FLOWERS

KIND DEEDS ARE THE FRUITS.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR GARDEN AND KEEP OUT THE WEEDS

FILL IT WITH SUNSHINE, KIND WORDS AND KIND DEEDS!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Pole Saw on loan for BOGI members to help clear up your garden and yard!

The Pole Saw and accessories are stored on Kay and Les' property, and all it takes is a phone call to arrange the time and date of collection. Contact Kay & Les de Gunst on 0477014096.

A complete set of instructions has also been provided by Marlene and Malcolm.

Congratulations Lyn!



In December 2023, Member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett was proud to present Lyn McIlwain with a Lifetime Service Award from the Burnett Heads Community! Our club was unable to acknowledge her award at the time, as it occurred after our last BOGI meeting.

Lyn commented that she didn't feel she had done anything particularly special to deserve an award! Her upbringing was such that it was normal to be of service and help wherever it was needed and she has maintained that approach all her life!

News from the BOGI shop

Trevor spoke about Katek Organic Super Growth Fertiliser. This is one of the products that the group bulk buys in 25kg bags and then sells in smaller quantities (2kg) to club members. This product is a complete fertiliser containing live beneficial microbes and trace minerals. It is different to just buying chook manure and has the highest levels of calcium we could find. 300g of this product will cover a square meter but usage depends on your soil. Trevor recommends using this product when you plant and rake it under the mulch. If you haven't used it before, your plants may benefit from a second dose after about 4 weeks. You don't need to water it in.

Planting by the Moon – March – submitted by Kay de Gunst

(Last ¼ to New Moon) 4 – 9 March: 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) 10 – 16 March: Influences balanced growth; a lower gravitational pull decreases and this stimulates root growth. *The best time to sow or transplant leafy vegetables.*

(First ¼ to Full Moon) 17 – 24 March: Increased light from the waxing moon benefits leaf growth, and root growth slows down. *Best time to sow/transplant fruiting annuals.*

(Full Moon to ¼ Moon) 25 – 1 April: Gravitational pull decreases and moonlight decreases, so leaf growth reduces and root growth increases. *Plant root crops now.*

What to plant in March:

Asian vegetables; Choko; Carrots; Eggplant; French Beans; Lettuce; Leeks; Luffa; Marrow; Mustard Greens; Pumpkins; Radish; Shallots; Squash; Tomatoes; Zucchini.

Plant these in seedling trays first: *Capsicum; Cucumber; Chilli; Tomatoes;*



Members – You are welcome to share some of your herbs for our teas at supper time!



Please phone Tony on 0497 173 169 before the meeting to say which herbs you are bringing in for our supper tasting.

BOGI SHOP – See Bruce before or after the meeting to purchase any of the following gardening inputs. This is one way that the club supports its members by buying in bulk and sharing the savings.

Products available are:

- Liquid Kelp
- Fish Hydrolysate
- Mineral Granules
- Microlife
- Organibor
- Katex Organic Super Growth
- Molasses



They are available for sale at our meetings, or please contact Bruce McKay on 4154 4405 for collection from his address in Walkervale.

Committee

President – Marlene Kent-Fuller
 Vice President – Maureen Schmitt
 Treasurer – Kay de Gunst
 Secretary – Karyn Ennor
 Committee Members – Pam Biden, Lenzie Duffy,
 Christine Jeffrey, and Deltry Dickie.
 Herbal Teas – Tony Wolfe
 Library – Joy Millett
 Supper – Pam Biden
 Workshops and Field Trips – Linda Cameron
 0437 679 747
 BOGI Shop – Bruce McKay - 4154 4405
 Newsletter Editor– Deltry Dickie – 0414 992 553
 Assistant Editor – Joan Smart
 Note Taker – Lara Hawker

Deadline for March 2024 Newsletter

Friday 8th March 2024

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

Or Phone Deltry 0414 992 553

Please send through articles at any time, if they miss one newsletter, they will make the next.



Our Objectives

- *To promote the understanding of the health and environmental benefits of organic gardening and food production.*
- *To encourage members to grow some of their own herbs, vegetables and fruit using organic principles.*
- *To help preserve traditional, non-patented and seed heirloom varieties.*
- *To provide fellowship and enjoyment in growing and eating organic food.*
- *To encourage active participation by members in supportive and fun social activities in pursuit of the above objectives.*

Treasurers Report January/February 2024

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Opening Balance 1 st January | \$ 6355.19 |
| Income | \$ 1256.50 |
| Expenditure | \$ 226.87 |
| Closing Balance January | \$ <u>6355.19</u> |
| | |
| Visa Account -Balance | \$ <u>338.06</u> |

This Month's Supper Roster Tuesday 27th February

Lara Hawker Katrina Raynor, Maureen Schmitt,
 Peter Van Beek Val Wright Malcolm Fuller
 Rosie Blyth Jeanette Cox Bhavana Schukla
 Colin Walmsley Noelene Mackay Deltry Dickie

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.