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NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2020

Hello and Welcome! Well here we are, we made it to the end of 2020 which I'm sure has been a testing year for many of us. If there was one good thing that came out of it all it has to be the fact that so many people were forced to stop, and reflect, re-evaluate and sometimes re-invent what they were doing in their daily lives. The popularity of growing not just a garden but a food garden went through the roof and we saw every nursery running out of basic supplies and seeds. Although most of this was done in panic mode by shoppers, let's hope that some of those soil micro-organisms never get out from underneath their finger nails and the newfound love of gardening sticks. BOGI members should be proud of the way they banded together and grew seedlings, shared seeds and helped each other through uncertain times.

Following on from the AGM and our own elections, the following positions have been filled. Thank you to all that volunteer, and if you are yet to play a role but feel you want to get more involved please speak up.

President - Maureen Schmitt, **Vice President** - Joan Smart, **Secretary** - Karyn Ennor, **Treasurer** - Lara Hawker.

Ordinary members- Kay de Gunst, Chris Jeffrey, Pam Biden, Marlene Fuller.

Non-Committee members- Membership secretaries- Ross and Ramona Lane, Kitchen- Pam Biden.

Other jobs are not yet allocated as we are all helping with reduced numbers.

CLUB MEETING

Time: Doors open 6.30 pm
For a 7 pm start

Venue: McNaught Hall
(Uniting Church hall)

Corner Barolin and Electra Street, Bundaberg

Attendance \$3-member, \$5 visitor, Tea Coffee avail

Tuesday 24th November

Speaker: To be Advised

Don't forget to purchase your
raffle tickets at our next meeting.
Prizes will be drawn at the
Christmas Party 29th November.

From the President...

Glyphosate (Roundup) in question

I read with interest an article called 'Glyphosate in question'. I found the article in the local **BUNDABERG TODAY** paper released on Friday 6 November, 2020. The article was written by Paul McIntosh in the 'Paul's Paddock' segment.

The article was about Glyphosate usage in harvesting chickpeas. I quote: "As this annual chickpea plant matures irregularly and patchy, we have conventionally gone and sprayed the paddock with some knockdown herbicides like Glyphosate as one example. This makes harvesting easier, along with better quality chickpeas in the header bin".

"Now this is all very legal and duly registered practice in many countries including Australia, most importing countries have an MRL (Maximum Residue Level) as we do and this amount is talked about as 0.01 mg per kg" he said.

Apparently, the USA has a zero-tolerance level on many of Australia's pulse export crops.

I had no idea that Glyphosate was used in this way in Australia. As a regular eater of chickpeas, I will take extra care to buy organic chickpeas. I ask what other crops are harvested in this manner? Does Glyphosate accumulate in our bodies?? Maybe it's time to do some research on the subject!!!

It was unfortunate that Lenzie was not able to present his Grafting Workshop last weekend. The good news is that he is feeling much better and is back working in his garden. Hopefully he'll be able to present his workshop at another time.

For those unable to attend our Christmas Break-up on Sunday, 29th November, the club wishes you all a Happy and Safe Christmas and we look forward to seeing you at our first Meeting for 2021 on Tuesday, 26th January.

2021 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the Club with several guest speakers and outings already planned. However, everybody's input is greatly appreciated, so please do not hesitate to come forward with new ideas and suggestions. After all the Club is like our gardens, the more we put into them, the more we get out of them!!

Please be sure to check out our WEBSITE and see the new information added under
INFORMATION and then INFORMATION SHEETS
<https://www.bundaberg-organic-gardeners.com/>

**We want your feedback - is this the type of info / articles you want?
Do you want to discuss this info at meetings, garden visits?**

Give your feedback to Maureen or Trevor

Support the club by purchasing some products from our shop
RSPCA

From the October meeting...

We expect the numbers were down a little at last month's meeting with us experiencing some beautiful rain on the Tuesday afternoon. While it didn't last long, it was much appreciated. Our speaker was David Pitt, a long-time banana grower and I have included his notes to follow along with two of his favourite banana recipes.

Growing Bananas Organically in the Bundaberg area

Bananas are a perennial herb - the largest herbaceous perennial plant and related to gingers, heliconias and strelitzias (bird of paradise). There are over a thousand varieties of bananas grown worldwide. The most common backyard bananas are Cavendish and Ladyfinger, but you may also see Java Blue, Apple, Red Jamaica and Dwarf Ducasse.

Site Selection

Sheltered from winds in a sunny position, well drained and frost free. The ideal temperature range for banana growing is around 26-30°C with high humidity. Good ventilation and a sunny position will reduce the risk of fungal disease.

Sourcing

Check local nurseries for certified disease-free plants or tissue culture plantlets.

Planting

Plant a sucker that has come from a healthy banana. It should be about 1.2m with spear shaped leaves. Remove from the main plant with a sharp shovel, cutting downwards through the corm between the mature plant and the sucker. Cavendish bananas need 3m x 2.4m and Ladyfingers 3.6m x 3.6m spacing. Planting bananas too close together will result in smaller bunches of smaller fruit, poorer fruit quality and an increased risk of disease.

Nutrition

Bananas prefer rich, fertile, and slightly acidic soils about 60cm deep, so use lots of organic matter (compost) and apply nitrogen and potassium in the form of pelletised chook manure. It is better to fertilise little and often, preferably after rainfall. Approximately a large handful per plant per month. This will protect our local water resources from fertiliser run-off. Bananas don't have big root systems so keep the fertiliser near the trunk. At the height of summer bananas need about 50mm of water or 60L per plant each week. Frequency will depend on the water holding capacity of your soil.

Management

Suckers need to be removed from 4 to 5 months after planting, leaving two healthy, well-placed followers. Remove all other suckers regularly - this affects the weight of the bunch. Keep the leaves healthy, removing dead ones. This helps the quality of the fruit and prevents disease. If fungal diseases are present remove green leaves too. Cavendish plants may need propping to keep them from falling over. When a banana plant is mature, the corm stops producing new leaves and begins to form a flower spike or inflorescence. Some people break off the flower when bananas have formed so the banana plant puts its energy and reserves into growing big bananas, and not into growing a long stalk. However, the flower is attractive to birds so you might want to leave it. Cut the bunches when the fruit is 75% full and chop the plant to the ground with a saw or cane knife as it will die and is a risk of disease spread. Chop out the base with a spade. You can use it as mulch in other parts of the garden but away from bananas.

Biosecurity

Within Queensland, the law says you are expected to comply with your general biosecurity obligation (GBO) which means that you are responsible for managing biosecurity risks that you know about or could reasonably be expected to know about. Banana planting material may be moved only if it has been grown from tissue culture; and has been tested and found free of disease. A video about growing bananas from ABC TV Gardening Australia is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watchiv=DiTMnwkeTis>

Other information was given out which can also be found at

https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/378471/Banana_Industry_Biosecurity_Guideline.pdf

Banoffe Pie

Ingredients

- 23 cm diameter springform cake tin
- 1 x250 gin packet of Granita or Marie Biscuits
- 125gm butter, melted
- 1 x495 gin tin sweetened condensed milk
- 50 gin or 2 % tablespoons of butter, cubed
- 3 tablespoons or 60 gm golden syrup
- 4-5 firm bananas
- 400ml cream, whipped
- 50 gin chocolate, grated

Method

Crush the biscuits in a food processor until you have fine crumbs then add the melted butter.

Process again to combine. The crumbs should stick together when squeezed.

Press into the spring form cake tin halfway up the sides. Refrigerate while you make the filling. Place the cubed butter and the golden syrup into a saucepan and heat, stirring until melted.

Add the tin of condensed milk and stir on medium heat for approximately 5-8 minutes until the mixture bubbles, thickens and starts to change colour.

Remove from the heat and cool for a couple of minutes before pouring into the chilled crumb crust.

Refrigerate until cold and firm. The pie can be made up to this point and finished when you are ready.

Slice three bananas and mix them with the whipped cream.

Pour into the tart shell on top of the chilled caramel and smooth down to a nice flat surface.

Sprinkle chocolate shavings onto the top of the tart and then decorate with the final sliced banana.

Banana Coconut Bread (with GF substitutions)

Ingredients

- 300g or 3 large bananas mashed
- 150g or $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 125ml or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oil
- 200ml or $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup of coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 240gm or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cups plain flour
- 80gm or 1 Cup of desiccated coconut
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flaked coconut to decorate

Method

Preheat the oven to 170C. Grease and Line a Large loaf tin (approx. 24 x 10 cm)

Mix the first 6 ingredients in a bowl.

Mix the remaining dry ingredients (except the flaked coconut in another bowl.)

Mix the two mixtures together and pour into the loaf tin.

Bake for 45-50 minutes or until a knife inserted in the centre comes out clean.

To make gluten free Banana Coconut Bread replace the plain flour with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (160gm) of gluten free flour and 1 cup of almond meal.

Workshops and Garden Visits

All workshops have finished now for the year but there is much to look forward to in 2021 – check back next year to see what’s coming up!

What: Grafting Workshop
When: “Rescheduled for 2021”
Where: Rose & Michael’s property on the town side of Sharon.

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Lenzie will be demonstrating and participants will be grafting so bring your grafting knife and potted plants to graft.

Please register your interest at the next meeting.

What: BOGI Christmas Party!!
When: Sunday 29th November, 11am to 2pm
Where: Baldwin Swamp Shelter Shed, entry is off Steindl Street.

You can come earlier to help set up if you wish. The club will provide ham, chicken, dessert, watermelon, tea and coffee. Due to Covid restrictions, please bring your own plate, cutlery and tea mugs and a chair. If you haven't registered your name yet, you can ring Lyn McIlwain on 0438028246 or Karyn on 0447360882. It's always a good time to enjoy a chat and relax with other members.



The prizes on offer so far as a part of our Christmas Raffle, to be drawn at the BOGI Christmas Party.



A few garden tips.

- Shred old newspapers roughly and add them to your compost when you are short of brown or dry material.
- Pineapples can be easily grown from their tops. They take 18 to 24 months to produce a pineapple. If they are slow fruiting, drop a couple of ice cubes in the centre of them.
- Summer gardening. Try to work early in the morning and late in the afternoon; water in the morning or evening to avoid the heat of the day.
- Keep hydrated when working in the garden; take a bottle of water with you.
- A box of lettuce or other greens for Christmas when you don't know what to give that friend.



Teaming / Teeming with Microbes

COMPOSTS



Most members of BOGI use compost in our gardens. There are 2 main methods for making compost.

- Hot Compost**
- * recycles plant material and nutrients
 - * made by layering green & brown plant materials & manures
 - * heats up to 50 – 60 degrees C for several weeks
 - * often turned to prevent overheating
 - * heating kills seeds and all diseases and soil biology
 - * uses oxygen quickly when heating and becomes anaerobic
 - * 8 – 12 weeks to mature

- Cold Compost**
- * recycles plant material and nutrients
 - * uses mostly brown materials (no manures)
 - * kept moist by adding water
 - * add soil or mature compost to seed biology
 - * no major heating occurs
 - * preferably add worms after 3 – 6 weeks
 - * 10 – 12 months to mature
 - * provides fungal dominated compost
(required to fix long term soil organic matter)
 - * suitable for compost tea making



Garden Compost * Some well organised gardeners make a hot compost. The ones I make, are added to over time and sometimes a little and are left for months before use. Some gardeners use trenches drum compost in the garden bed – good to recycle plant material & nutrients. This generally attracts worms.



(
warm
or

Commercial Compost * generally all are hot composts – good for recycling plant material and nutrients and not spreading weeds or diseases. These do not improve soil biology balance. For those interested in further research and information I suggest reading Dr David Johnson's work on making cold (fungal dominated) composts and his work to show soil carbon increases using compost teas.

<https://www.csuchico.edu/regenerativeagriculture/bioreactor/>

While grazing on the internet I found this summary of modern agriculture – and be careful we are aware how we manage our gardens. Trevor

THE PROBLEM

A century of monocrop farming and reliance on pesticides has damaged our nation's once-fertile soils and the health of every Australian. The rapid increase in pesticide use over the past few decades has coincided with this explosion of chronic disease.

A profound change in the demographics of chronic disease is underway in the Australia and the world. Independent research from private laboratories and universities around the world, are implicating glyphosate – the active ingredient in the herbicide Roundup.

THE SOLUTION

Regenerative agriculture focuses on rebuilding organic matter and living biodiversity in soil, which produces increasingly nutrient-dense food year after year — while rapidly sequestering excess atmospheric carbon underground to reverse climate change.

It brings proven results for farmers to have a profitable business and livelihood. Conventional inputs become unnecessary, increased organic matter in the soil brings insect biodiversity which helps manage pest pressure and the end market for organic crops increases the overall value of their crop making product value the priority over the conventional method of purely valuing yield.

At a time when there are more farmer suicides and bankruptcies than ever, bringing back economic success and life on the farm has never been more important.

What's Happening In our Members Back Yards?



My little Olive turned 5 years old at the end of October. One of her thoughtful friends gifted her a subscription to a company called Seedle. They have varied subscriptions for children or adults where every month you receive a selection of seeds to plant now, Olive loves to receive special mail addressed to her, and of course to plant whatever comes. I just thought I'd share it with you as it might be an easy gift to give a friend or family member that lives far away <https://www.seedle.com.au/>



Check out Trevors beautiful Frangipani tree. "I grafted the red onto the white several years ago and now spectacular."

Member contribution – from Effie.

Effie has sent through some valuable information to share about the plant we commonly know as Sweet Leaf, the information below has been copied from <https://yandinacommunitygardens.com.au/sweet-leaf-sauropus-androgynous/>

Sweet Leaf (Sauropus androgynous)



Common names: Sweet Leaf, Tropical asparagus, Chang Kok, Star gooseberry, Katuk
Origin: Tropical and Sub-Tropical Asia
Plant: Sweet leaf will grow in most soils, including heavy clay. It tolerates high rainfall as well as dry conditions, will grow in full sun or handle shade.
Harvest: All year (growth does slow in winter)
Propagation: By seeds, suckers or cuttings

A prolific, heavy yielding nutritious green leafed bush which grows to 1-2.5m in height. It has flat, round orange/red flowers but generally does not set seed in SE Qld conditions.

Growth is prolific in the warmer months and slows down or goes dormant in winter. Fertilise regularly and mulch to retain soil moisture.

An extract made from the plant has been found to have strong activity again pine-wood nematodes and may have use against other species.

It has a high (49%) protein content and 14-18% fibre as well as vitamins (A,B,C) and minerals including potassium, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium & iron.

Sweet leaf has been used medicinally as a blood builder, cell rejuvenator and beneficial to circulation, intestinal flora and regular bowel elimination.

It is used extensively in cooking in East Asia as the leaves taste like fresh peas, with a nutty flavour.

Leaves can be added to salads, sandwiches, scrambled eggs, tossed in curries, dips, casseroles, stir-fries or used as a garnish.

Consuming large quantities of raw plant material can cause serious lung damage so cooking is mostly recommended

Here's a funny from Brisbane Bogi Newsletter...

God: Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there? What happened to dandelions, violets, thistles and stuff that I started aeons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long lasting blossoms attract butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colours by now. But all I see are those green rectangles.

St. Francis: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and earthworms. It's temperamental with temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St Francis: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilising grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

God: The spring rains and warm weather probably make the grass grow really fast. That must make the homeowners happy.

St Francis: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it some times twice a week.

God: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

St Francis: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

God: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

St Francis: No Sir. Just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

God: Now let me get this straight. They fertilize the grass so it will grow. And when it does grow they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St Francis: Yes, Sir.

God: These earthlings must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

St Francis: This will be hard to believe, Lord. When the grass stops growing, they drag out hoses and pay more to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground and form a blanket to keep moisture in and protect the trees and bushes. As they rot, the leaves form compost to enhance the soil. A natural circle of life.

St Francis: You had better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

God: No. In winter how do they protect shrub and tree roots and keep the soil moist and loose?

St Francis: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

God: Enough! St. Catherine, What movie is scheduled for us tonight?

St Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber" Lord. It's a real stupid movie about.....

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

Botanical Gardens Report

There is much happening over at the Botanical gardens right now, here is some of what they have sent through.

Trevor says you must check out the new growth of the fig tree that Lenzie and Ray and Austin pruned severely on our visit to the Botanic Gardens in June

Over in the Rare Fruit Tree Orchard...

The Peanut Butter Tree is back in flower (photo on the left with yellow flowers)... and the Panama Berry is also in flower with fruit in various stages of ripeness, but still mostly green and orange at this stage with only a few red berries.



Throughout the Gardens you'll see social or society garlic planted as a groundcover and border plant. *Tulbaghia violacea* hails from South Africa.

This is a low maintenance plant with pretty star shaped edible flowers. It thrives in the full sun.

Below Left The Maha Janka mangoes have taken off, these have been described as the one of the world's most flavoursome mango! Below Right: *Alpinia zerumbet* is Shell Ginger or Variegated Shell Ginger. You can see how it acquired its name as the pearly white flowers with a tinge of pink on the outside look like pearl coloured seashells. The green and gold foliage is used to wrap food in Asia. The plants near the front of the cafe have flourished as they have part shade.



The wampee in the rare fruit tree orchard has green fruit, the cheese-wheel tree in the rare fruit tree orchard also has orange and green fruits.

Field Trip and Garden visit reports.

Notes from club visit to Pam Biden and Lyn McIlwains gardens at Burnett Heads on 25th October, 2020 by Maureen Schmitt

As a first-time visitor to both these gardens, I must say how impressed I was. Both these gardens illustrate the gardening "destination" whereas I obviously am still on the gardening "journey".

Pam and her husband Paul's front and side garden is a delightful mix of colourful flowers and shrubs not to mention the line of roses all in full flower. Then toward the back of the house the more edible fruit trees and vegie garden come into view. Some trees, like the various types of mulberries and stone fruit, were planted in the ground and netted against birds and fruit fly whilst other fruit trees like edible figs and blue berries were in pots.

Despite the heat, the vegie garden was still productive and we all tried some of the strawberries that were still bearing well. Paul introduced us to their chooks at the back of the yard whilst giving us useful hints as to what has worked for them on their red soil block.

Then it was off to Lyn's place and another eye-opening garden. After a delicious afternoon tea and lots of constructive discussion on plant growing, Lyn took us through her large shade-clothed igloo that had everything growing in it from herbs and vegies to mulberry trees. Then it was outside to view the numerous fruit trees in Lyn's large back yard.

It was really great to hear first-hand how Lyn has created her wonderful garden. Then, believe it or not, it started to rain and some of us had to head off.

Altogether we had a most enjoyable and interesting afternoon visiting two exceptional gardens at Burnett Heads. There is no better way to learn than from the people who are already doing it and obviously doing it well.

Thanks again Pam and Lyn.

Freebies

Free Bamboo - Lengths between 2-4 metres

Please see Maureen if you are interested in some bamboo which has died and fallen over. It has been cut into lengths about 2-4 metres and averages a diameter of between 2-4 inches. You would need a trailer to carry it away and something to cut it up with.

Seed Bank

Our seed bank currently contains Dill, Loofah, Bok Choy, Black Pumpkin, Cos lettuce, Lucerne or alfalfa, Spinach (tall), Lemon grass, Jicama yam, mini capsicum, large radish, Parsley, Desert Rose, Marigold, Dwarf snake bean, watermelon, Gerbera, Egyptian spinach, Moringa, Desert Rose, pawpaw, rockmelon, jalapeno capsicum.

Would you like to grow some of these or do you have seeds to add? Then contact Trevor 0417196315

Handy Information

- ❖ Buy organic seeds locally at Woodgate, Claudia and Charlie who have a business Simply Organic Farming@gmail.com 0407699283.
Sign the petition against Coal Mining at https://www.plantogrow.org.au/protect?utm_campaign=plan_to_grow_petition_qld&utm_medium=email&utm_source=lockthegate
- ❖ **Local honey suppliers**
Bundy Honey, 5 Banks Court, Bargara 0438 882 220 Bundy Honey, 89 Honors Rd, Bundaberg 0409 921 600

Deadline for January 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 success 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 ph 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.