

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2020

Ahhh finally we can smile a little with the recent and follow up rains we have been experiencing around Bundaberg. It is amazing what a little water can do for not only our ground and garden beds, but also for our own personal wellbeing, not to mention the weeds! Here's hoping the rain has been widespread and dams and water tanks are full.

It's time to start thinking about how you can become a valued member of our club. The AGM is coming up at the end of March, and there will be a number of positions vacant. Perhaps at this meeting it's a good time to speak to members currently filling roles and see if it's something you'd be interested in applying for. There are a number of smaller jobs too which are nice to share around so not one member has the burden of 'too much!' If you see something that hasn't been done yet, have a workshop to share, would like to speak about or teach your hidden talents - these are all welcome!

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, includes supper

FEES DUE AT FEB MEETING

Tuesday 25th February

- **Speaker To be advised.**

As always we will have the BOGI

~Library ~Shop
~Info sheets ~Buy & Sell
~Seeds ~Tea of the Month
~Lucky Draw ~Photos from workshops ~Freebies
~Workshop registration

Enjoy a Cuppa at Supper

Supper and Washing Up Roster for

February



Peaches & Sage

Kay Amsler

Suzanne Blanch

Ray Johnson

Fred Pennell

Heidi Brown

Tony Wolff

Alex Van Beek

Daniel Critchlow

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE.

I am challenging you to visit other BOGI club member's gardens. Go and chat with them and inspect their garden and learn. When you pick up a new tip, please drop a note to the editor to share it further.

newsletter.bundyorgard@gmail.com

Is there maybe one or two members you don't know yet, then go and invite them to your garden.

Trevor

JANUARY MEETING CATCH UP

At the January meeting Malcolm and Marlene Kent spoke about the development of an automatic wicking system they have been developing and using on their property.

Why – in an attempt to keep the right water level available to plants at all times, encouraging the roots to go down to the water. Keeping the roots at water level helps to prevent plant stress, therefore getting the best possible production out of plants and vegetables.

Malcolm said that he used cattle watering pods, a water inlet connected to an adapted chicken water float and poly pipe. He then adds a layer of rocks, filter press (mill mud) and either red or black soil. The filter press was used as it draws the water upwards. A layer of mulch is placed on top to lessen the evaporation from each pod.

If heavy rainfall occurs, a hole is drilled in the top of the inlet to allow excess water to flow away, not allowing plants to get flooded in.

Marlene added: The thing we are trying to achieve is to get organic growing into mainstream.

To achieve this you have to get the quality of your fruit & vegetables to their heights level, we hope the way we have worked with this system is easier to achieve without a great cost.

The advantage this system has over conventional wicking systems is consistent water leavers, which keeps water stress to a minimum, therefore increasing performance of the plants, which is our goal.

Less stress = Less disease.

Performance was our main goal, in saying that, the added advantage was a huge water saving.

It was suggested at the meeting, that a workshop would be organised later in the year to see the operation and set up of this system. Please see the Workshop Dates below as this is now happening!



Thank you to Malcolm and Marlene for taking the time to speak to our club and share your knowledge. I love seeing how hungry we all are for knowledge and want to know exactly how the process works. It almost felt like I was watching an episode of 'Shark Tank' at one point.

Jeanette brought in an AMAZING box of home grown goodies to show off and truly showed the fruits of an established garden, saying she had just plucked a few things off before the meeting. There were plums, passionfruit, pineapple, dragon-fruit, passionfruit, Loofah, eggplant, lemon, paw paw.

The Loofah is an impressive fruit and grows in similar conditions to pumpkin. The flowers are edible, the fruit can be eaten while young and green, and the dried fruit is a fantastic pot scrubber, foot scrubber and obviously biodegradable / compostable at the end of it's cleaning life.

A lot of interest was also created by the dragon fruit so I will share some tips below.

How To Grow Dragon Fruit

Dragon fruits come from Mexico and Central and Southern America. Not surprisingly they like warm conditions with mild winters and no frost. They can tolerate the occasional short burst of cold weather but ideally they should be kept above 10 degrees. They can handle heat, drought, humidity and poor soils but will grow tastier fruit with regular watering and rich soil.

Choose a sunny spot and then boost the soil with compost, manure and certified organic pelletised fertiliser. A dose of eco- lime is also beneficial. Soil needs to be free draining as these plants rot easily if the roots sit in water. Clay soils are not ideal but if that's all you have then treat with eco- gypsum and plant on a raised mound. Alternatively they will happily grow in a large pot.

Mulch plants to protect their shallow roots and water in with eco-seaweed. Repeat the eco-seaweed a week later to encourage new roots to grow quickly.

If left to their own devices dragon fruit become a scrambling scraggy mess so a bit of training is in order. Plant against a thick stake or some other support and tie one or two main stems to the support to encourage vertical straight growth. Trim away any other side shoots. Once the stems have reached the desired height cut off their ends to encourage new branching shoots. These can then be allowed to spread out and hang downwards. Commercial growers often use a rose wheel and encourage side way branches to grow over the wheel making it easier for picking fruit.

Fertilising and Maintenance of Dragon Fruit

Every 2-3 weeks apply a mix of eco-seaweed and eco-aminogro as a foliar spray or watered in the soil around the plant. Each spring reapply eco- lime and replenish the compost/manure/organic fertiliser pellets. Check the staking to ensure plant is properly supported as it grows.

When established the top can become quite congested and large. Periodically remove some of the longer shoots to keep it under control and allow space for new growth to develop. This is important because flowers form on the ends of new season growth so each year you need new growth to get fruit. Less congestion tends to lead to bigger fruit as well.

Harvesting Dragon Fruits

Fruit is ripe approximately a month after flowering but this can vary with local conditions. Fruit will not continue to ripen once picked so you need to look for other signs before picking. Check that the colour of the fruit is bright and even all over and the small "wings" on the fruit are starting to wither. Lightly press the fruit in your hand and if ripe it will give just a little. Pick by twisting the fruit off the plant or cut with secateurs. The skin is not edible but the seeds are just like a kiwi fruit.

More on this from <https://ecoorganicgarden.com.au/gardening-tips/how-to-grow-dragon-fruit/>

PROBLEMS WITH SCALE INSECTS

Scale insects are small sap-sucking insects usually accompanied by ants. Scale can be spread by ants who are the Scale protectors and are addicted to the honeydew scale insects produce. Scale is found on citrus trees, native trees, roses, indoor plants, shrubs and many more. The scale insects suck the sap from plants which will weaken plants and even kill it.

Small outbreaks can be rubbed off using a damp cloth or toothbrush dipped in a soap solution; or spray with a Pure Soap or Oil Spray. Sprays will smother the scale insect by blocking the breathing pores and dissolving the scales outer covering so they dehydrate and die. Sprays must be applied thoroughly over the complete plant but will only kill the adult scale insects and not the eggs, so repeat spray about 10 days later and again in another 10 days. Ladybirds, lacewings, spiders, tiny wasps and small insect-eating birds are the natural enemies of scale.

Vegetable Oil Spray – can be used to suffocate mites, scale and other soft bodied insects. Even effective against grasshoppers. Avoid using on plants with hairy leaves and during very hot weather.

1 tablespoon dishwashing detergent and 1 cup vegetable oil. Mix together and store in an air-tight bottle. To use: Add 1 – 2 ½ teaspoons of mix to 1 cup water in a spray bottle. Spray on plants covering all leaf and stem surfaces.

Pure Soap Spray – Pure soap when mixed with water, can be used as a natural insecticide for the control of some sap-sucking insects including aphids and mealy bugs as well as controlling sooty mould. Can be repeated as many times as you like.

Dissolve 225g plain soap in 9 litres of hot water. Stir well to make sure all soap has dissolved. Cool before use. To use: Spray as required.

Below is a list of plantings suitable for our area this month of February.

Seeds to be planted directly into your prepared ground:

Asian Vegetables; French Beans; Snake Beans; Carrots; Chokos; Eggplant; Leeks; Lettuce; Marrow; Mustard Greens; Pumpkins; Radish; Shallots; Squash; Sweet Corn; Sweet Potatoes; Zucchini.

Seeds to be planted into seedling trays:

Chilli; Capsicum; Cucumber; Eggplant; Lettuce; Sweet Corn; Tomatoes.

The club has a seed bank library consisting of seeds from our member's gardens. Club members have the opportunity to swap or select organic seeds for their own home garden use.

Purslane yoghurt dip



Reproduced from *The Weed Forager's Handbook*

Ingredients (serves four)

- 1 tightly packed cup washed purslane, stems mostly removed
- ½ cup good quality plain yoghurt
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Turkish bread

Method

- In a bowl mix together yogurt, garlic, oil, and salt.
- Add chopped purslane and fold through.
- Put in the refrigerator to chill.
- Serve with hunks of fresh bread.

NATIVE BEES (TAKEN FROM BRISBANE BOGI NEWSLETTER)

Some of the most common Native Bees in the Brisbane area are listed below:

- Stingless Bees (Tetragonula)
- Blue Banded Bees
- Cloak and Dagger Cuckoo Bees
- Resin Bees
- Teddy Bear Bees
- Great Carpenter Bees
- Leaf Cutter Bees
- Metallic Carpenter Bees

In a recent study in the Maleny area there were many different species of native bees identified. Australia has 1600 described species of native bees. Only 11 of them are stingless.

If you see a wasp or what you think is a wasp, it can be hard to tell the difference. Microscopically, a bee will have branched hairs somewhere on its body. It will also have different antennae.

There are 3 main species of native stingless bees in our area. *Tetragonula Hockingsii*, *Tetragonula Carbonaria* and *Astroplebia Australis*.

Over recent years, *Tetragonula Carbonaria* and *Tetragonula Hockingsii* have been cross breeding on a few occasions.

Bee boxes should be positioned facing north / north east so that they are facing the morning sun and should have sun until 10 or 11am.

In summer, the boxes require afternoon shade or open shade. Get a thermometer to keep an eye on the temperature inside your box. 37 °C in the heat of the day, but any higher is getting too hot.

The bees start to wake up when it is 22 °C but when the temperature inside reaches 42 °C the bees will die.

If the weather gets too hot, lock up the box and take inside. Sprinkling shrubs around the box can help it cool, if done before the temperature gets too hot. In other words, react early to reduce the temperature rise.

Bees forage up to 500m or a little more from their boxes.

To move a native bee box to a new location only move 1metre per day or take at least 1km (once locked up at night) for 3 weeks, then move back to new location.

When boxes get too full, they need to be split. If this is not done, they may colonise a new hive themselves. Stingless bee Queens mate in their hives or in flight.

Juvenile Bees do housework duties before they begin to fly for the first weeks of their lives.

Worker bees go out to work collecting pollen, nectar and or resin and when they die, they are not missed.

There are many commercially made bee boxes out there. Look and learn what is best before you buy. It is necessary to be able to see the bees so that you can manage your bees.

Boxes can be made of hoop or cypress pine.

Outer covers insulated with polystyrene work better in summer and in winter.

The bottom level is the brood chamber.

When nesting in a log, bees waterproof the whole nest chamber and build an insulated brood chamber called involucre.

It is a 51 day cycle from egg to adult. An adult's life is about 60 – 70 days.

Stingless bees destroy breeding cells after each brood hatches.

They first recycle cerumen and then discard cocoons that the bees grew in. When the cocoons are being discarded it means that bees are hatching out. This is a valuable indicator of the progress of the colony.

It takes 6 months after a queen dies for a hive to die if the hive does not re-queen after a split, division or transfer.

Predators will get into a healthy hive if the bee numbers are low and cannot keep guard. They will first reduce entrance size.

To decontaminate a hive, clean out as much wax and cerumen as possible, and then use boiling water to clean.

Small hive beetles leave something in the hives that attract other predators.

Spilt honey will attract other bees and predators.

Keep stingless bee honey in the fridge otherwise it may ferment.

Honey from stingless bees has a distinct citrus taste. It has a higher water content than other honey.

European honey bees do not die of old age, they wear their wings out.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ONLINE!

See the reaction of plants being eaten - follow the link !!

When Plants Sense Danger, They Cry Out With Calcium

<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/when-plants-sense-danger-they-cry-out-with-calcium/>

Have you heard of Milkwood? They are a permaculture practicing family who have a wonderful community based blog sharing recipes, building tips, and this one on how to keep your house cool in summer and warm in winter.

Link to article here

https://www.milkwood.net/2020/02/17/actively-manage-your-houses-temperature/?mc_cid=660b020d79&mc_eid=5770d45151

WORKSHOP REPORT

A great workshop at Ross & Ramona's to complete the wicking bed. Ross had prepared an outer frame with a false floor that gave the plants about 300 mm of soil to grow in. Firstly we laid out the pipe work and once it fitted correctly we commenced construction. Firstly the plastic liner then soil including organic amendments and finally mulch. Then seedlings were planted and shaded. We noted that watering will be from the top for about 2 weeks to allow the soil to settle in and the seedlings to grow a small root system. It looks great.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR PLACE?

This just in from The Haven at BuccaThe photos tell the story of life giving rain out at the Haven for this month, the driveway is being transformed by palm leaves, like Palm Sunday for our Saviour. The soil humps were placed to catch topsoil that was washed down, then they started to let go, so the palm leaves have been laid down to catch more. Its working! So the back paddock driveway is getting the same treatment. It's not messy, its permaculture. Lol. Next photo is of a monkey bar climbing frame that was given to us last year, the Madagascar bean I think Myra or Ray gave me survived the drought & has gone crazy happy in this rain. More beans have been planted under, along with more tough survivors, shallots & my beloved huckleberries. The 3rd photo is my take on country Vietnam! In our own back paddock no less. The chickens were here for 3 months, then moved on, the seeds were sown & scraps were thrown, & feed was scratched in, & behold.....we have the makings of some serious abundance happening courtesy of some God given rain! There will be, cover for the fungi & micro organisms, seeds for the birds, green pick for our 2 sheep Lamb & Chop, & a serious abundance of living food for us, both green & pumpkins. Giant sunflower seeds are heading for the sky, unplanted corn , perhaps cucumber, purslane, huckleberries, oats & more I haven't seen yet. I love the results of rain. In the main gardens, bath tubs & wicking beds, food is in abundance, green, white, red, black, all sorts. See you all on 23rd for our Green Green Greens workshop. Cheers Pam.





About 4 weeks ago we finally planted our green manure seeds from the BOGI Christmas party. The heat, humidity and rain were great for sending all the seeds up and covered one of our veggie garden beds in no time. We let them grow to about a foot and a half high, then chopped down with the shears and then turned in to the soil. This is where Olive comes in! When Dan was turning the soil he uncovered so many worms. Enormous big earth worms! I thought it was fantastic we had such life under the soil. Olive thought better of that and collected as many as she could and fed them to her chickens!!! This particular bed was filled with purchased soil and to begin with it was very poor. Over the years we have constantly improved it by adding manures and compost and I think it's safe to say whatever we plant next should have a good start to life. Our backyard seems to be a hideaway for lizards and the like which makes me so happy to know that, while it is small, we are improving or helping our little plot to thrive. The next day after this we uncovered a legless lizard who was keeping warm just below the surface. He was about a foot long and quick to slither off under a paver. It has been a big change for us over the past two years moving from property to a small suburban backyard and we are doing everything smaller. I don't mind finding skinks rather than goannas, and legless lizards rather than pythons – so there is always an upside to change. Cathy (Dan, Austin & Olive)

**PLEASE SEND THROUGH PICTURES AND STORIES OF
WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR PLACE.**

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

THIS Sunday 23rd Feb: Greens – Greens – Greens 9am – noon

Where: The Haven, Peter & Pamela Burgess, 47 Sheppard Avenue Bucca.

Bring: Please bring a bucket so that any stray seedlings or cuttings that you take will be in water from the instant of plucking. That will ensure your best chance of survival, if you would like to take home a feed of fresh garden greens, please bring a bag that will fit in your cooler or esky, again so that you can get the greens home fresh & not wilted.

Due to the rain we now have an over abundance of mozzies at the Haven. Please byo mozzie repellent, suitable clothing as needed & lots of micro bats! I hear they eat their own body weight in insects nightly.

Saturday, 21st March: How to build a self-watering wicking bed.

We heard the basics at our last club night but Malcolm and Marlene are now going to show us how to build a self-watering wicking bed from start to finish. This system apparently uses less water than a conventional wicking bed, makes greater use of nutrients and is ideal for home-gardeners. This will be a fascinating and informative workshop and a workshop not to be missed.

Meeting Information on self-watering wicking bed workshop

When: Saturday, 21st March

Starting time: 2 pm till wicking bed completed

Where: Chris and Malcolm Jeffrey's property at 411 BIRTHAMBA ROAD, South Kolan

Directions: Take the Bundaberg – Gin Gin Road and turn right into Ushers Road, which is a couple of klms past the Sharon Store and Servo. Travel to the T-junction at the end of Ushers Road and turn right into BIRTHAMBA ROAD. Drive a couple of kilometres and keep an eye out for the big "411" corrugated iron sign on the left hand side and turn here. Leave 20 – 30 minutes for driving from Bundy.

Bring: A plate of food to share with others for afternoon tea and a cup. Chris and Malcolm will provide tea, coffee, milk and hot water.

Contact Details: Chris Jeffrey - Mobile 0408027545

Who would like to host a workshop at their place this year, choose a month, first in best dressed, I need to get the year sorted for workshops soon as we will be away quite a bit this year. Please phone me with your ideas of what you would like to share, especially with new members who are keen to learn.



Have you checked out our Facebook page yet? It's a great way to connect and show what's happening in your garden, and see others tips and ideas too.

Search for **Bundaberg Organic Gardening Inc** and request to join the group online.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY!

Pick fresh produce at new Permaculture Garden (**now there's a headline that caught my attention!**)

A new garden at the Botanic Gardens is giving visitors the chance to pick some fresh produce while learning all about permaculture.

Bundaberg Regional Council's nursery operator Diane Southwell said the new Permaculture Garden was created from a vacant block of grass.

"The area was initially a blank canvas featuring only grass," she said.

"We incorporated a no-dig garden by laying fresh cardboard over the grass and adding lots of manures and filter press.

"Then, to help create the soil, we planted pumpkin to create a living mulch, some mustard seed and lots of legume trees which are fabulous.

"They are fixing nitrogen into the soil which helps everything grow." Diane said the Permaculture Garden worked with nature, rather than against it.

"We are creating our own ecosystem; we don't use any chemicals and we do a lot of companion planting, which is plants that work well together.

"We have planted quite a bit of mustard seed – it lets off certain aromas which help keep a lot of bugs away and it also helps us put that green manure back into the ground which creates some beautiful soil."

Diane said with the Permaculture Garden situated at the Botanic Gardens, Council was providing a place for the community to enjoy nature and learn about the benefits of growing produce.

"It's really good for the community to see how things can work naturally and how they can work together," she said.

How the Permaculture Garden works

Diane said the garden was situated in the nursery at the Botanic Gardens and visitors were free to pick ripe plants and produce of their liking. "When the public are picking something to take home, we just ask to make sure its ripe," she said.

"It is always nicer to have it ripened on the vine rather than on your kitchen bench."

To get to the Permaculture Garden, head to the right hand walking track at the bottom lake.

For Video and full story go to <https://www.bundabergnow.com/2020/02/15/pick-fresh-produce-at-new-permaculture-garden/>



BOGI SHOP

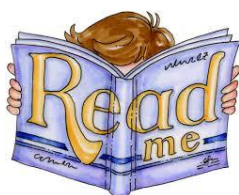
Products available are:

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

If you would like to buy any of these products please make arrangements with Les de Gunst by phoning 4152 9587. They are also available for sale at our meetings.

The library catalogue is maintained by our Librarian, Kay de Gunst.

The catalogue can be found at <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/BOGardeners>. Each item's record includes a cover picture, title, author, publication date, the Dewey Decimal Classification and subject tags. There is also the facility to read and write reviews and to rate each item.



Deadline for March Newsletter

5pm Friday 13th March

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 or

Heidi 0410 561 314

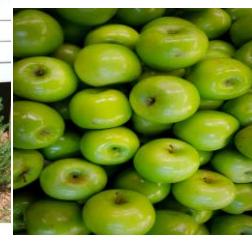
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Advanced Notice

Supper and Washing up Roster

March

Rosemary & Apples



Karyn Ennor

Richard Amsler

Kay De Gunst

Marlene Rayner

Jill Galea

Joan Smart

Tony Wolff

Julie Burry

Elizabeth Hunter

If you would like to contribute a dish when you are not on the roster, please do so. They are always welcome.

For dietary purposes – please list all ingredients

Please note that these members are also requested to assist in sweeping and cleaning up after the meeting.

If you are unable to come to the meeting, please advise Pam Biden (ph 4159 4223) so that other arrangements can be made

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.