



GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

April 2020

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SOCIAL GARDENING

Sadly, due to the Corona Virus...

Wednesdays—Cancelled until further notice

Sundays—Cancelled until further notice

President's Update

Corona Virus Social Distancing Restrictions at Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens

Dear Members

In order to comply with the government's current social distancing rules social gardening on Sunday and Wednesday mornings will be cancelled from this Sunday March 29 until further notice. Volunteer Members (who do not hire a plot) and Associate Members (and their clients) are required to stay away from the gardens.

Individual Plot Holders can access the gardens at any time during daylight hours for garden maintenance and watering. Please come to the gardens alone. However, if you have concerns about your security when alone at the gardens you can bring one companion or arrange to meet one other plot holder at the gardens (i.e. Attendance at the gardens is limited to a maximum of 2 people to maintain an individual plot). If other plot holders happen to be in attendance at the gardens at the same time you are required to avoid any physical contact with them and maintain social distancing rules of at least 1.5 metres separation. I recommend that gloves are worn when handling TCOGA tools and hoses. Plot holders please remember that Toowoomba Regional Council Medium Level Water Restrictions still apply. Please bring along your own water container to keep yourself hydrated and your own hand sanitiser. Please do not use the community crockery and cutlery in the shed.

Access to the shed and the fenced gardens is unchanged but the lock on the toilet will be changed and access to the toilet denied to plot holders because we cannot guarantee safe hygiene requirements if it was in use.

Committee Members will keep the grassed area between the two fenced areas mown to ensure safe access to the plots. If you have any questions about these new gardening restrictions please feel free to email tcoga.president@gmail.com or tcoga.secretary@gmail.com.

In these difficult times we send our best wishes all our members and request your cooperation to limit access to the gardens to plot holders only.

Please remember the most important thing we can do now to keep our family and community safe is to stay at home and to limit essential trips to an absolute minimum. Remember to be kind and keep in contact via phone or email with your family, friends and neighbours. The following links will take you to a Queensland government web page which has a lot of information about COVID-19, government updates and contact information.

One of the many important contacts is:

If you have no other means of getting food or essential items, call 1800 173 349

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/queensland-disasters/novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hawke

(President)



Kombucha - A Healthy Drink or Just Another Fad?



There are shelves full of kombucha drinks in the supermarkets with all sorts of flavours to tempt the shopper. The facts are that

1. It is made from tea and tea contains lots of antioxidants, especially green tea.
2. It is a fermented drink which produces acetic acid (vinegar) and this can kill harmful bacteria. Fermented foods are good for your health.
3. It is made from tea which appears to have antibacterial properties, killing infection-causing bacteria but *not* the beneficial probiotic bacteria in the gut.

There are lots of unsubstantiated claims for kombucha (such as reducing heart disease, reducing diabetes etc) but no scientific research to back up the claims. I make kombucha because it is a fizzy drink made from tea,

sugar and fruit, so it costs very little apart from effort and the sugar is removed in the fermentation process. It MAY be doing good things and is certainly less harmful than sugary commercial drinks. It tastes good.

To make kombucha you need a friend to give you the 'starter' *SCOBY* (*Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast*) and to follow the instructions available on the internet with strict adherence to cleanliness.

If you have the time, the inclination and the *SCOBY*, try it!

- Linda

Quick Notes for Your Calendar

18-19 April—Showcasing Pittsworth & Surrounds

More information at gardensofthedowns.com—*Postponed until 2021*

3-9 May—International Compost Awareness Week


<https://www.compostweek.com.au/>

Sunday 21 June Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings North—*All suspended by Bunnings indefinitely*


Herbs

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Alfalfa/Lucerne | Dandelion |
| Angelica | Dill |
| Anise/Hyssop | Endive |
| Borage | Evening |
| Buckwheat | Primrose |
| Calendula | Fennel |
| Catnip | Fenugreek |
| Camomile | Feverfew |
| Chervil | Linseed |
| Chickory | Lupin |
| Coriander | Marjoram |

What to Plant in April

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Mustard |  |
| Nasturtium | |
| Oregano | |
| Parsley | |
| Salad Burnett | Artichoke |
| Salad Rocket | Asian Greens |
| Sage | Beetroot |
| Thyme | Broad Beans |
| Vetch | Broccoli |
| Watercress | Brussels Sprouts |

Vegetables

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Cabbage |  |
| Carrots | |
| Cauliflower | Celeriac |
| Celery | Lettuce |
| Chickpea | Mizuna |
| Daikon | Onions |
| Garlic | Parsnip |
| Kale | Peas— |
| Kohl Rabi | Climbing & |
| Leeks | Dwarf |
| | Potato |
| | Radish |
| | Rhubarb |
| | Salsify |
| | Shallots |
| | Silverbeet |
| | Spinach |
| | Spring Onion |
| | Swedes |
| | Turnip |

Naturally Air Dried Herbs

One activity you could think of doing in these times of recommended enclosure is to dry your herbs for cooking. This activity will allow you to have your favourite herbs ready to be used when you need them. Culinary herbs have been cultivated for thousands of years to add flavour and colour to our everyday cooking, owing to their fragrant or aromatic properties. The leaves and flowers of the plant are used to season food and drinks – for example, thyme, rosemary, basil, coriander, etc.

The first step in this process is to select the herbs. If your herbs come from your own garden, you will probably not need to wash them.



Check them to remove any insects or dirt, and if you find something unwanted please rinse the herbs. Harvest your herbs in the mid-morning to avoid the possibility of moisture and before the sun burns off their essential oils.

Prepare a bunch of herbs that you want to dry – about 5 to 10 stems (large bunches won't dry). Tie them with kitchen string; some people use elastic bands because as the stems shrink from drying the band tightens. Hang the bunches upside down in a well-ventilated room with very little air movement, away from the sun, and let them dry.

Avoid areas with excess humidity. Rafters in the house, an attic or a garden shed are good spots for drying herbs. You can also use an internal laundry line. In addition, you can wrap the bunches in muslin or in a brown paper bag with holes for ventilation so that while they hang it prevents dust from gathering. In one week or so - depending on the herb - you can start to use your dried herbs. Once the herbs are dried, you can hang them in your kitchen and use them as needed, or store them in an airtight container. This method is one of the cheapest and easiest, and it uses no preservatives.

Air-drying herbs is ideal for herbs with larger leaves, like mint, basil, oregano and marjoram.

This method keeps the flavour, colour and qualities of the herbs more effectively than other methods.



By achieving a good balance in the use of herbs, spices or condiments, we will always have a special touch and original, tasty and nutritious menus every day. It is time to be creative and to add flavour to our culinary creations.

- Emilio Anteliz
30 March 2020

Planting Guide

This is such a great guide it is worthy of putting in again this month!

April is still an important planting month. Get those winter crops in for a bountiful harvest. Here are some sowing details. Sow now:

| | Sowing Depth mm | Space Between Rows cm | Space Between Plants cm |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Asian Greens | 10 | 30-40 | 25 |
| Beetroot | 12 | 30 | 10-12 |
| Broccoli | 6 | 60 | 40 |
| Cabbage | 10 | 60-70 | 35-60 |
| Carrot | 10 | 30 | 5 |
| Cauliflower | 10 | 60-75 | 40 |
| Celery & Celeriac * | 5 | 60-90 | 20-25 |
| Florence Fennel | 5-10 | 45 | 25 |
| Garlic | 10 | 40 | 10 |
| Kale & Collards | 10 | 60 | 35-45 |
| Lettuce | 5 | 35 | 25-30 |
| Onions & Leeks * | 10-20 | 25-30 | 10 |
| Parsley | 6 | 30 | 30 |
| Pea | 15-25 | 45-60 | 7.5 |
| Potato | 130 | 35 | 30-35 |
| Radish | 12 | 25 | 2.5-5 |
| Rocket | 10 | 25 | 15 |
| Silverbeet | 12-20 | 45-60 | 30 |
| Spinach—English | 10 | 30 | 20-30 |

***Crops to start from April onwards ***

- Green Harvest Organic Garden Shop



Vegetables high in iron include green leafy vegetables, parsley and pulses such as peas and beans.

Keep well!

- Healing Foods by Miriam Polunin

Maintaining Your Health with Food

At this time we are all wondering what we can do to prepare ourselves for winter and the colds and flu season and in particular the Covid-19 virus. One great way is to eat healthy foods that support our immune system, respiratory system and also our emotional health.



To assist us to have the best immunity maintaining good hygiene habits such as washing our hands often and avoiding touching our faces will reduce the numbers of micro-organisms entering our bodies. We can also adopt a healthy lifestyle, combat stress with yoga, meditation or gratitude rituals, and ensure we have sufficient iron levels in our bodies. Helpful foods include shellfish, chicken liver, oily fish, wheatgerm, high antioxidant vegetables and fruit, such as oranges, carrots and sweet potatoes, unrefined grains and cereals, yoghurt, sunflower seeds and seaweed, garlic, cranberries, onion, chilli, honey, blackcurrants and green tea.

Support for your respiratory system includes the foods above plus red capsicums, citrus fruit, green leafy vegetables, watercress, ginger and chilli and crushed fennel seeds eaten, made into a tea, or mixed with hot water and inhaled to aid congestion

Emotional health is also important at this time and certain foods can help lift our mood including liver, wheatgerm, green leafy vegetables, peas, shellfish, oily fish, nuts and seeds, bananas are excellent, lettuce, celery, asparagus and unrefined carbohydrates, especially oats, barley, pulses, fruit and vegetables.

The Chronicle—Green Thumbs United

In early February an article appeared in The Chronicle about three of our members. Here is this article:

Recent rain brought a flurry of activity to the Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens as members prepare to plant their winter vegetables. The Chronicle dropped in to see what kept this garden growing.

Emilio Anteliz— Having lived in a city for most of my life, being in this garden is a big change. I used to grow a few herbs on the windowsill of my apartment but that is all. I am from Venezuela and I moved here in 2019. I have just harvested my first crop of carrots. It is a new experience; my life motto is to learn and to be challenged every day. People here come from different backgrounds, but they all have a lot of knowledge about organic gardening.

Jeanette Walton— I don't have a plot because I have enough of a garden at home, but I love gardening, so I am a social member. I help look after the communal areas and I grow seedlings at home and sell them from the shade house to make money for the gardens. People with plots here can buy the vegetable seedlings that I grow for the different seasons and all the money goes into the gardens bank account. I have only been involved for about a year. I joined after I moved to Toowoomba about three and a half years ago. I was looking for somewhere social where people shared my interests.



Mike Knight—We make things cheap so anybody can be a member. Membership starts at \$10 a year, or \$20 a year if you want a private plot. Members can do whatever they want with their plots as long as they do not compromise the organic nature of the gardens or don't compromise other

people's plots. We are in the process of moving from a summer when we did not grow very much because it was too dry, to preparing for March. This summer we grew a variety of potatoes, a row of each. Members harvested them a row at a time and everyone there on the day had enough for a meal to decide whether they liked that variety. We like to grow the varieties you cannot find in the big supermarkets.

Growing Peas

The garden pea is a climbing annual with some varieties growing to over 2m in height. Peas have considerable nutritional value and can be made into soup, cooked and when cool mixed into salads, or simply served alone tossed in butter and sprinkled with fresh mint.



Preparing the ground—Peas are cool season vegetables. In temperate regions sow seeds from autumn to early spring. Peas are adaptable to both light and heavy soil but good drainage is essential. Prepare the soil so that it is damp and crumbly, ready for direct sowing. If the soil is acid, dress with lime at the rate of 250-500g per square metre.

How to sow for a continuing supply—Tall or climbing varieties are best sown against a fence or a trellis. This gives the plants support and makes harvesting easier. Dwarf varieties are more easily grown if their tendrils can cling to some support like twigs or wire netting placed along the rows.

Apply a dressing of pre-planting fertiliser in a furrow on either side of the seed furrow. This allows the fertiliser to be absorbed without 'burning' the seeds. Cover the fertiliser furrows with soil and make the seed furrow about 4cm deep. Press the seeds into the damp soil, spacing them 3-5cm apart. Cover the seeds and firm the soil before raking lightly. Allow 50-60cm between rows for dwarf varieties.

Make successive sowings at three to four week intervals for a continuing supply. For the average family a 1-3m row of the climbing variety, or rows totalling 3 to 5m in all, of the dwarf varieties are usually sufficient at each sowing.

Sometimes it may be necessary to provide protection against birds. Make pea-guards from wire netting fixed over a wooden frame, or over wire hoops. Alternatively criss-cross black cotton between stout sticks placed down the rows.

Tending and harvesting—Seed sown in damp soil should need no further watering until the seedlings emerge. Too much moisture immediately after sowing can have a harmful effect on germination. Hoe regularly between the rows to control weeds, or mulch. When the seedlings are a few cm high 'hill' the soil against the row of plants to give it more support.. Peas need plenty of water, particularly when first flowers appear and again when young pods begin to form. Early varieties take 12-14 weeks to bear, but late maturing ones can take 2-3 weeks longer. Each sowing should continue to produce peas for 2-3 weeks. - *Illustrated Guide to Gardening—Readers Digest*

Megadarra - or Brown Lentils with Rice and Caramelised Onions

A delicious meal you can make with just a few ingredients if you have brown lentils and rice in your pantry. A good standby for those days when you don't want to go out and shop.

Ingredients

1 large onion (750g) halved and sliced

125ml olive oil

250g brown lentils (*hard to find but Betros has them in their weigh your own section*)

250g long grain rice

Method

1. Fry the onions in 3-4 tbs oil, stirring until golden
2. Wash the lentils and cook in 1 litre of water for 20 minutes. Now add half the fried onion and the rice. Season.
3. Put the lid on and cook on low heat for 20 minutes, until the rice and lentils are tender.
4. Continue to cook the remaining onions until caramelised.
5. Serve with the remaining olive oil and sprinkle the onions on top.

6. A variation would be to add 1tbs tomato paste and 1/2 tsp chilli flakes, or use bulgar (wheat) instead of the rice.

7. Serve with yoghurt and salad.

Serves 4



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| Toowoomba Mower Centre Supplying & Servicing | <p>Ph: 4630 2150 Fax: 4630 2600 3 Sowden Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350 robbie@toowoombamowercentre.com.au www.toowoombamowercentre.com.au</p> | Toowoomba Mower Centre Supplying & Servicing |
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2019—2020 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Andrew Hawke

VICE PRESIDENT: Wendy Snigg

SECRETARY: Mike Knight—tcoga.secretary@gmail.com

TREASURER: Linda Mangubhai —tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joanne McClelland, Chris Walpole, Jeanette Walton

Coordinating Volunteers

Garden Plot Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

New Member Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

Grants Coordinator: Linda Mangubhai

Communications & Marketing Coordinator: TBC

Newsletter Editor: Carlene Gardiner

Project Coordinators: Andrew Hawke & Jeanette Walton

Newsletter of Toowoomba
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