



GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

February 2021

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What Has Been Happening at The Gardens

Welcome to 2021 in The Gardens

I trust that all of our members have had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break. Here's hoping that 2021 is a much better year for all of us. We are all looking forward to a year in the garden where we can build on the progress of 2020 and provide more social gatherings and other events for members. COVID -19 is still with us and we all have to continue to be vigilant regarding our hand hygiene, physical distancing and ensuring we stay home if we are unwell.

It has been wonderful to see the rain and the impact on our gardens is phenomenal. One can almost see the garden smiling as the rain sinks into the soil. The rain and the humidity have also resulted in rapid growth of weeds in all areas of the garden. Work continued in the gardens over the Christmas break and those of us who stayed put for the holidays did our best to keep the weeds at bay. We also managed to move the huge pile of mulch which was delivered by the council at the end of November, by distributing it around the community areas of the gardens. A big thank you to all those members who helped in the community areas of the garden.

This year we plan to have four or five working bees to help reduce the workload of our regular members who are always volunteering their time in the community garden. Each working bee will focus on an area of the garden which needs the most attention. We encourage all members to participate and work in the area which has been identified as the focus for the morning so that we can get the maximum result for our efforts. Participating in the working bees is a great way to get to know members you may not normally mix with as well as fulfilling plot holder's obligation to do 2 hours work per month in the community garden areas.

Providing COVID-19 restrictions are not reimposed, we are also hoping to hold some more social functions for our members. This may include lunch out at a local venue or at the gardens and / or a visit to other community gardens to see how they operate and to gather new ideas for our own little spot.

We have seen a lot more interest in our Facebook page and have had several new members join our community. They have been actively engaged in the activities at the gardens and are regular attendees at our social gardening days.

Our Mission Statement and key principles have been finalised and will be used to make any decisions regarding what happens in the gardens. These will be sent to you along with your Membership renewal notice.

Please remember to sign the Membership Book when you come to the gardens. Social members just need to sign-in, but Plot Holders need to write in the community task they have undertaken as part of their 2 hours per month obligation. Signing into the attendance book and wearing appropriate clothing/shoes ensures that you are covered by insurance.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the gardens.

Wendy Snigg

President TCOGA



TOOWOOMBA
community
ORGANIC GARDENS



Our Vision Statement and Key Principles for The Gardens

After much consultation with members, the Committee has finalised our Vision / Mission Statement and key principles. These key principles will be used to guide and govern the decisions which are made in relation to the running of the Community Garden.

Our Vision is that the Toowoomba Community Organic Garden is a place where people of all abilities will build friendships and community, promote health and well-being and grow fruits, vegetables and flowers using organic and sustainable gardening techniques.

Our Mission is that the garden will be a welcoming and inclusive outdoor community place where the focus is on people, sustainable organic gardening, learning and teaching and preservation of open space and native habitat for biodiversity.

Key Principles

- Build and maintain soil health
- Practice and promote water-wise gardening
- Practice organic and sustainable gardening which encourages and supports biodiversity
- Active participation by all members which encourages the sharing of knowledge and ideas and social connectedness
- Encourage a spirit of cooperation, consultation and inclusivity

(Members need to be aware that the Toowoomba Regional Council owns the land on which we operate and whilst they consult and collaborate with us, they have the final say on the land and infrastructure).

Quick Notes for Your Calendar

TCOGA Meeting at The Gardens—Saturday 6 February at 10.00am

13 & 14 March 2021—Brisbane Garden & Plant Expo – Rocklea Showgrounds

www.plantexpo.com.au

17 & 18 April—Showcasing Pittsworth & Surrounds

gardensofthedowns.com

15 & 16 May 2021—Pine Rivers Garden and Plant Fair—Pine Rivers Show Ring,

757 Gympie Road, Lawnton pineriversgardenandplantfair.com.au

9—11 July 2021—Queensland Garden Expo— Nambour

www.qldgardenexpo.com.au

25 & 26 September—Grow Expo—Gatton Showgrounds

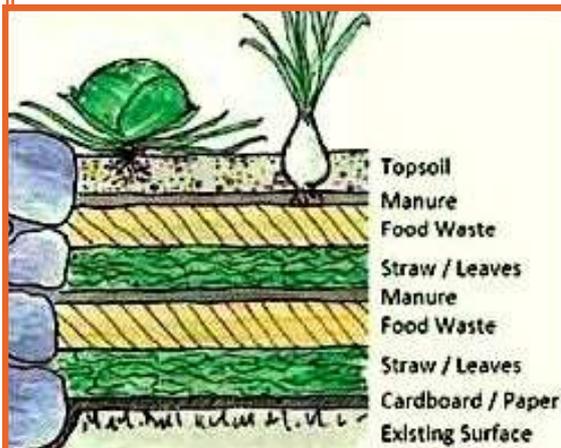
www.growexpo.com.au/

No Till Gardening or Lasagna Gardening: Reducing Waste, Improving Soils and Increasing Crop Yields

Lasagne gardening is one of the many names this method is known by, to enable no-dig, no-till, organic gardening that allows us to create a rich soil. It is a garden that is created on top of the existing ground. No-dig gardening was developed by gardening pioneer Masanobu Fukuoka in Japan in the 1930s, before being brought to Australia in the 1970s by Esther Deans, OAM, poet, writer, gardener and conservationist.

Even though tilling is used to improve the soil quality, it also has more negative than positive effects such as destroying living things and the continuous practise of this activity changes the natural porosity of the soil, and in consequence we have compaction, erosion and increasing water evaporation. By contrast, "lasagna gardening" builds gardens by "adding layers of organic materials that

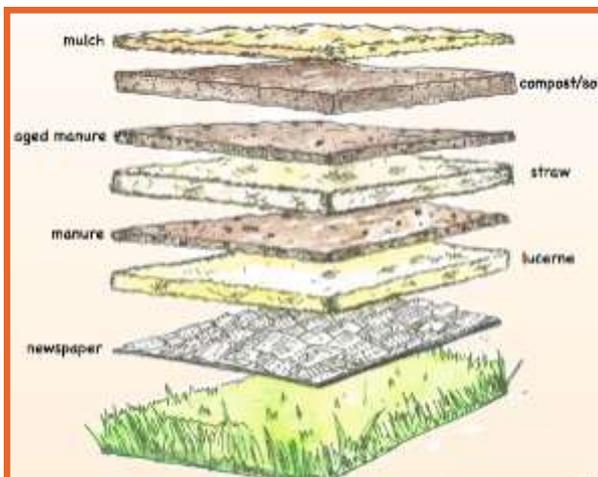
will 'cook down' over time, resulting in nutrient-rich soil that will help your plants thrive. Also known as sheet composting, lasagna gardening is beneficial for the environment because you're turning yard waste, kitchen scraps, and anything else you'd add to a normal compost pile into organic fertilizer to grow new plants" (<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-make-a-lasagna-garden-2539877>).



To make the compost lasagna style, it is necessary to have materials rich in carbon as wood and paper or cardboard and also materials rich in nitrogen such as green leaves

and manure. This is a homemade simulation of how soil is created in nature with different layers of materials and at the end, transforming these materials into a rich soil ready to grow vegetables or flowers.

This method consists of placing several layers of cardboard and/or thick newspaper (not shredded), on the ground, being sure to overlap the edges. Over this, add a layer of leaves or twigs (brown material), as this will help to break down the cardboard/newspaper quickly. (Browns include leaves, pine needles, peat and shredded newspaper). Then add a layer of greens or compost, (vegetable scraps, disease- and seed-free garden clippings or weeds, grass clippings or coffee grounds). You can create multiple layers of this composition to your

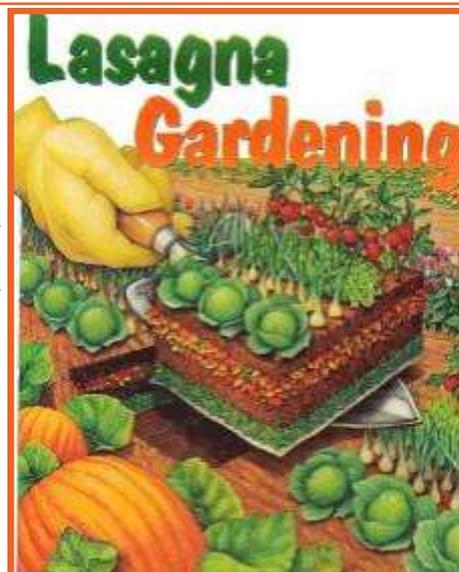


desired height. Finish off the bed with topsoil. Sprinkle each layer with water as you build the bed. Top the bed with a thick layer of mulch, straw, dead plant material or wood chips. Your layered garden will shrink in height as it decomposes. Just add more brown, green and compost layers annually. This is a brief description of the method; more information can be found online or at your local organic garden. This is a low-cost technique with excellent results and minimum equipment. To be able to complete this project, all you need is the ability to bend and use a shovel.



You can make a lasagna garden at any time of the year. However, autumn is the optimum time for many gardeners because of the number of organic materials available—fallen leaves, waste from garden clean-up, etc. You can let the lasagna garden sit and break down all winter. By spring, it should be ready to plant.

One final word of advice from Esther Deans' book: "One of the most important things about the 'no-dig' garden is just that – don't dig it! Digging a no-dig garden can spoil the wonderful work that Nature is doing for you – earthworms will be cultivating the soil, and they do not like to be disturbed, so let them work in peace." One final comment from me: this lasagna does not add fat, or calories to the gardeners.



Moon Planting Simple Guide

New Moon



The New Moon offers very little light and is a time of respite. Wait until the first shards of light appear before focusing on upward plant growth.



This first quarter of the growing, or waxing moon is best for sowing and transplanting crops with edible leaves and stems like lettuce, cabbage, kale, broccoli and celery.

Waxing Moon



The Waxing Moon grows in light, improving sap flow skyward, focusing energy in the top growth of plants and trees.



Apply liquid fertilisers like compost tea and seaweed solutions now.

Plant or sow above-ground crops with enclosed seed and fruit such as beans, peas, tomatoes, zucchini, pumpkin and corn.

Carry out pruning and aerial propagation.

Full Moon



The Full Moon has the strongest gravitational pull and is the beginning of the diminishing moon.

This is the start of the reverse cycle of energy back toward the earth and plant roots and soil.



This is the best time to divide ornamental perennials and take cuttings.

When the first dark shard of the moon appears it is time to sow root crops.

Waning Moon



The Waning Moon diminishes in light, continuing to improve sap flow earthward and is the best time to focus on roots and the soil.



Sow or plant root crops such as carrots, beetroot, parsnip, radish, asparagus and potato.

Apply solid fertilisers to soils such as manure, compost and other organic fertilisers like rockdust and blood and bone.

Plant trees as well as long-lived perennials.

Getting the Most out of Your Membership

Social Gardening Mornings (Sunday and Wednesday)

- Focus of these mornings is to work in the community areas of the garden. Working together allows us to accomplish much more and have fun whilst working.
- Get to know other members
- Share gardening knowledge and ideas
- Get to know what is happening in the gardens and the local area
- A chance to spend time in a green space whilst actively taking part in beautifying one of Toowoomba's green spaces in the middle of the city
- Join in and contribute to the discussion about plans for the gardens during social gardening morning teas

Share Table

At TCOGA we have established community garden vegetable plots. All members of TCOGA have agreed to work in the community areas of the garden and as such are able to share in the vegetables that are produced.

Many of our plot holders share their excess produce with members via the Share Table.

Produce is placed on a table during our Social Gardening mornings and members can share in the produce.

Seedlings/Plants for Sale at Low Prices

Save money and purchase your seedlings for your plot or home garden from the TCOGA. All money raised from seedling / plant sales goes to TCOGA. We have seedlings for sale at very low prices for our members. The seedlings are of high quality and we try to offer a range of plants (particularly vegetables) for sale

Newsletter & Email

Every month a newsletter is put together containing useful information about what is happening in the garden as well as useful gardening information. Emails are sent out to inform members about social events which are planned as well as any important information which members need to know. We keep email communication to a minimum as we know people's inboxes can get bombarded.

How to contribute your ideas and suggestions

Committee meetings are held on the first Saturday of every calendar month at 10am in the gardens. All members are welcome to come along. If committee meetings are not your thing then the way to share your ideas, concerns, suggestions is during morning tea at the social gardening on a Sunday or a Wednesday.

What to Plant in February

Herbs

Basil
Chives
Coriander
Florence Fennel
Lemongrass
Mint
Oregano
Parsley
Tarragon



Brussels Sprouts

Vegetables

Amaranth	Celery	Potato
Climbing & Dwarf	Collard Greens	Radish
Beans	Cucumbers	Swedes
Beetroot	Endive	Salsify
Broccoli	Kohl Rabi	Silverbeet
Brussels Sprouts	Leeks	Tomatoes
Cabbage	Lettuce	Sweet Potato
Carrots	Mustard Greens	Spring Onion
Cauliflower	Onions	Turnips

Stollen Muffins

Thank you to Denise Howard for this lovely recipe. For those of you who can't get enough marzipan goodies, this will fill the gap between now and next Christmas. This recipe makes 12 muffins.

Ingredients

50g French Morello or classic Glace cherries (plus extra for topping)

80 mixed raisins

40g blanched almonds, chopped

Grated zest of 1 lemon

180g self raising flour

60g ground almonds

1 tsp baking powder

240g unsalted butter

180g caster sugar

3 eggs, beaten

1/2 tsp nutmeg

1/2 tsp mixed spice

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

120g marzipan, cut into 1/2cm cubes

Flaked almonds to decorate

Icing sugar to decorate

Method

1. Preheat oven to 190C (Fan170C).
2. Put cases in a muffin tin
3. In a small bowl combine the glace cherries, raisins, blanched almonds and lemon zest
4. In another bowl combine flour, ground almonds and baking powder
5. Beat butter and sugar in a bowl until fluffy, then slowly add eggs until well combined
6. With a wooden spoon fold in flour and almond mixture, then add nutmeg, mixed spice and vanilla extract
7. Lastly add fruit and nut mix and marzipan cubes. Fold in lightly until evenly distributed
8. Spoon into muffin cases and bake 20—25 minutes or until golden and a skewer comes out clean
9. Cool, then top with cherry, some flaked almonds, dust with icing sugar and serve.



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Past Newsletters [Link](#)

<https://tcogardens.wordpress.com/newsletters/>