

NEWSLETTER



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(Special Tea
Edition)**

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What has been Happening — *January 2023*

We hope every one had a safe and Merry Christmas and a great New Year. The Main event that happened at the gardens in December was the Christmas party on the 4th with lots of members sharing a relaxing lunch together, along with Secret Santa which is always fun.

We also received a metal storage box kindly donated by the Toowoomba Regional Council. Kym Campbell also came for a visit from the TRC ;She has given us a lot of support during the year as well as bringing us welcome gifts of garden tools and hosepipes.

With the Rain earlier this month some of the members crops are growing great such as lily's maize crop and Carries Tromboncinos. The days have been quite hot and will be predicted to storm for the next few days so hopefully some relief for our thirsty crops.

Our members have been working very hard Clearing some neglected community areas, checking and changing the fruit fly traps and eradicating some of the pests such as the stink beetles, thanks for all your hard work!

And lastly the bench near the toilet area got a total refurb for Joanne while she was away. Absolutely adorable.

A few important notices this and next month including the permaculture workshop for next month, interests in first aid, the Toowoomba show and coordinator roles.



Adam and Angela



TOOWOOMBA
community
ORGANIC GARDENS

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1st New Years Day	2nd New years holiday	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th Cobb and co farmers Markets under the Windmills
8th PCYC Markets: Near the TCOGA gardens	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th Cobb and co farmers Markets
15th PCYC Markets: Near the TCOGA gardens  WORKING BEE	16th	17th	18th Brisbane Trade day: (agriculture and forestry- Redland Showgrounds, Cleveland	19th	20th	21st Cobb and co farmers Markets
22nd PCYC Markets: Near the TCOGA gardens & Queens park markets, Toowoomba	23rd	24th	25th	26th -Australia Day -Free Walk and Talk- Gumbi Gumbi Gardens- Thu, 26 Jan, 9:00 – 11:00 am, Darling Heights QLD	27th	28st Cobb and co farmers Markets
29th PCYC Markets: Near the TCOGA gardens Cabarlah Markets, Carbarlah hall, New England highway	30th	31st				

Unwanted Critters part 2

Part 2 out of 3 of our unwanted critters

Christmas Beetle (*Anoplognathus pallidicollis*)

Christmas beetles are widely distributed throughout Australia. The larvae of the Christmas beetle live in the soil and feed on grass roots, while the adults are leaf-eating and attack most eucalypt species. Active between November and February, grown Christmas beetles can devastate newly established eucalypt plantations and isolated trees within a few days because of their swarming behaviour.

Organic Control Measures for Christmas Beetles

The control of this pest is difficult because of the quickness with which these beetles defoliate a tree and move on to the next. Monitor your trees carefully and take action before the damage becomes severe.

You can try and knock them off the tree with a strong jet of water.

Keep in mind that by the time damage is noticeable it is usually too late to take effective action



Mealybug

Mealybugs are about 4mm long, soft-bodied and covered by white waxy coating insects of the Pseudococcidae family. They are a common garden pest that affects ornamental plants, citrus plants, ferns, orchids, greenhouse plants and trees. Mealybugs can usually be found in clusters underside of leaves and stem where they feed on plant juices. Feeding is accompanied by excreting of honeydew, which attracts ants and encourages sooty mould growth.

Organic Pest Control Measures for Mealybugs

Blast the insects off the plants with a strong stream of water. This is an effective method to get rid of mealybugs when applied in the early stages of infestation. Spray the plants daily!

Attract natural predators, such as ladybirds, lacewings and parasitic wasps, to control mealybugs by planting fennel, coreopsis, dill and bright flowers. Another beneficial insect is the mealybug destroyer (*cryptolaemus montrouzieri*) which can be purchased from garden shops.

Dab rubbish alcohol or methylated spirits on the mealybugs. This will burn them but won't harm your plants.

Prune the affected plants if the infestation is light.

Apply insecticidal soap to the underside of leaves.

Spray any infested areas with a mixture of equal parts of dishwashing liquid and water. The soap will suffocate the mealybugs.

Spray the bugs with garlic or chilli soap.

Grow ant repellent plants to keep ants away from your garden. The ants protect the mealybugs from their predators.



Snails and Slugs

All garden pest snails and slugs are introduced to Australia and can pose a huge threat to your garden plants. They damage seedlings, leaves, fruit, underground tubers and plant seeds which can result in major production losses. Probably the most common garden pests of these are the brown snail (*Helix aspera*) and the grey field slug (*Deroceras reticulatum*).

Organic Control Measures for Snails and Slugs

Clean up potential breeding sites to reduce snails.

Handpick and submerge them into a bucket with soapy water.

Use organic sprays made of Quassia amara or other plants such as garlic and wormwood.

Spray a coffee mix (one part fresh espresso to five parts water) to the plants and mulch where slugs and snails are a problem. The caffeine in the coffee kills these pests.

Place a bowl of beer in a strategic location in your garden. Beer attracts snails and slugs, making them crawl into the bowl and drown.

Build barriers to protect vulnerable plants. Suitable materials include crushed eggshells, wood ash, sawdust, lime and wood shavings.

Use copper tape as individual collars around pots or raised garden beds. Copper repels snails.



Aphids (Aphidoidea)

There are more than 4000 aphid species, and around 250 of them are considered as pests for crops. You can recognize these critters by their little, pear-shaped transparent bodies (2-3mm) with long antennae and a pair of abdominal tubes called cornicles. Occasionally they have a white, woolly coat. Depending on species, they vary in colour and may be white, green, yellow, brown, black, or even pink. Two widespread species in Australia are the cotton aphid and the cabbage aphid, and because of their wide distribution on the continent, they are also common garden pests.

Aphids feed on fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, and variety of other plants by sucking sap of phloem vessels. They especially like brassicas. And are attracted to yellow flowers. For infestations:

Look for curled leaves, yellowing, browning, unusual leaf drop, or stunted growth.

Aphids can usually be spotted on tips of new growth and leaf undersides.

Check the leaves and stems for a sticky liquid substance. It's called "honeydew" which is produced by the aphids and can be a sign for the presence of these insects.

Keep an eye for ants on your plants as well, because this sugary liquid attracts them.

Examine the leaves and branches of your crops for black spots. It could be sooty mould which benefits from the honeydew secreted from sap-sucking insects, such as aphids.

Organic Control Measures for Aphids

You can efficiently get rid of small aphid colonies by simply crushing the insects by hand or prune the affected area of the plant.

Use a strong spray of cold water to rinse the affected plants. Make sure to rinse the undersides of leaves because aphids hide there.

Attract beneficial insects, such as lady beetles, lacewings, hover flies and parasitic wasps or praying mantis by planting Alyssum, Yarrow and Dill. Grow companion plants such as Chives, coriander, garlic, onions, petunias and radishes. Vacuum them up with a vac cleaner.

Aphids are companions to ants, so stopping the ants by growing tansy or other ant repellent plants will make them more vulnerable to being eaten as the ants protect aphids. Provide a bright yellow plastic dish, half filled with water to drown them as like are attracted to yellow and can't swim.

Putting a flattened square of aluminium foil around the base of plants to bounce light on the undersides of leaves.

Apply tomato leaf or garlic spray or a spray with home made chilli soap. Horticultural oil, Neem oil or insecticidal soap. (For severe infestations)



Teas available at TCOGA

These fantastic teas for your garden are available near the worm farm area behind the members plots (next to the shed). There is a red container with a lid near the worm farms if members could place their scraps in there, not directly into the worm farms. We ask our members to please bring in scraps, coffee grounds, shredded paper, newspaper etc for the worm tea. (The worms are not keen on citrus or onion scraps, thank you.) Everything is recycled to produce these teas and it decreases the need for use of commercial fertilizers which end up in our waterways and cause environmental damage.

Worm tea contains large amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium which are essential nutrients in plant growth and health.

Worm tea is used to infuse and repopulate the soil with beneficial microbes, it will also help prevent diseases and pests in plants and the soil.

Worm tea will improve the soil structure and increase the soil's water holding capacity.

Unlike commercial fertilizers worm casting and tea won't burn your plants if you use too much.

- Worm tea should be diluted 50% tea with 50% water in your watering can.



Comfrey Tea Liquid Fertilizer is the organic Gardener's best friend as it is full of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

The nitrogen content helps with green leafy growth. Potassium is necessary for flower and fruit production and phosphorus helps the plants to remain vigorous and fight off disease and pests.

Comfrey tea will feed your plants and help reduce pests and also contains calcium.

- Comfrey tea should be diluted 1 part tea to 10 parts water and used once a week.



Borage Tea also contains nitrogen, potassium and calcium. Calcium improves water penetration, strengthens cell walls, activates enzymes, helps to maintain pH levels and increases resistance to disease.

- Borage Tea should be diluted 1 part tea to 10 parts water and should be used weekly. I suggest alternating between Comfrey and Borage tea.



Weed Tea is a great all round fertilizer and a way to utilize the phosphorus, potassium, nitrogen, magnesium, sulphur, copper, boron and other minerals and nutrients stored in the weeds leaves and roots.

Newly transplanted plants, blooming plants and those setting fruit will appreciate a dose of weed tea.

The tea is strained so no seeds are transferred.

Weed tea should be diluted 1 part tea to 10 parts water and can be used once a fortnight.



Lucerne Tea is applied as a general tonic for plants, increases the earthworm population and binds the nitrogen in the soil

- Lucerne Tea is also applied diluted 1 part tea to 10 parts water and applied once a fortnight.

-Sharon



Plants that can be used for making Teas

There are many uses for herbs growing in the garden besides providing a haven for butterflies, birds, and bees and impressing the family with your seasoning prowess. Plants for tea gardens are another way to employ your herbs. Very possibly, you already have a number of herbs suitable for the making of tea. Let's take a look at some of the best herbs for tea. The following is a list of plants that are good for making tea and which part of the plant to utilize:

- Mint** — Leaves, digestive and calming
- Passionflower** — Leaves, relaxing and soporific
- Rose Hips** — Buds once the bloom has expired, boost of Vit C
- Lemon Balm** — Leaves, calming
- Chamomile** — Buds, relaxing and good for a sour tummy
- Echinacea** — Buds, immunity
- Milk Thistle** — Buds, detoxification
- Angelica** — Root, digestive
- Catnip** — Leaves, calming
- Raspberry** — Leaves, female reproduction
- Lavender** — Buds, calming
- Nettles** — Leaves, detoxification
- Red Clover** — Buds, detoxification and purify
- Dandelion** — Root, blood tonic
- Linden** — Flowers, digestive and calming
- Lemongrass** — Stalk, digestive and calming

In addition to these herbs, some other useful herbal tea plants include:

- Calendula, Basil, Sage, Chrysanthemums, Feverfew, Horsetail, Hyssop, Lemon Verbena, Motherwort, Mugwort, Skullcap and Yarrow.

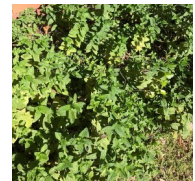
Nettle



Lemon Balm



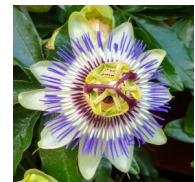
Mint



Chamomile

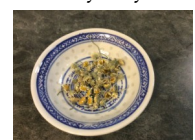


Angelica



Passionflower

How to Prepare Herbal Tea; In learning how to prepare herbal tea, first, choose a dry morning to harvest your herbal tea plants. The essential oils of the tea herb are highest in concentration before the heat of the day draws them out of the plant. Some herbs may be brewed directly following harvest, and some you may wish to dry. There are a couple of different methods, but the primary concern is to use even, gentle heat. A single layer of sprigs can be placed on a tray of a food dehydrator or a microwave lined with paper towels can be used. For the microwave, set a timer for a minute or less and watch closely to avoid burning. Continue to microwave in short bursts, leaving the door open between to let moisture escape, until dry. A low oven of from 100-125 degrees F. (3 to -52 C.) can also be used and, again, leave the door ajar and check frequently. You can also air-dry herbs for tea, taking care to protect from dust by placing in paper bags pierced with holes prior to hanging. Avoid drying herbs in a basement or other musty area as they may absorb odours or get mouldy.





What to Plant in January

Amaranth
 Basil
 Beans-Climbing,
 Dwarf & Snake
 Beetroot
 Brussels Sprouts
 Burdock
 Cape Gooseberry
 Capsicum
 Carrots
 Celery
 Collard Greens
 Chilli Peppers
 Chives
 Choko
 Coriander
 Corn
 Cucumber
 Eggplant
 Endive
 Echinacea
 Florence Fennel
 Kohl Rabi
 Lemon Balm
 Lemongrass

Marigold
 Mint
 Mustard Greens
 Onions
 Oregano
 Okra
 Parsley
 Potato
 Radish
 Rockmelon
 Rosella
 Sage
 Salsify
 Silverbeet
 Squash
 Spring onion
 Swedes
 Sunflower
 Sunflower okra
 Sweet potato
 Tarragon
 Thyme
 Tomato
 Turnip
 Watermelon
 Zucchini

What to look for

Harvesting:

Apples
 Banana
 Beans
 Beetroot
 Boysenberries
 Cherries
 Cucumbers
 Capsicum
 Carrots
 Chilli
 Corn
 Cotton
 Grapes
 Heat tolerant Lettuce
 Melons
 Onions
 Pomegranates
 Pumpkins
 Radish
 Raspberries
 Squash
 Stone fruits
 Strawberries
 Sunflowers
 Tomatoes
 Zucchini

Recipe of the Month -Apple and cinnamon crumble tea cake

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups self-raising flour
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1 tablespoon cinnamon
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1 Cup milk
 - ½ vegetable oil or coconut butter
 - 2 eggs
 - 3 small red apples peeled, cored and chopped
- For Crumble
- ¼ cup brown sugar
 - ¼ cup flour
 - 4 tablespoons butter softened
 - 1 tsp vanilla

With the recent harvest of red apples at the gardens, I have turned the excess into a tea cake using a simple muffin style recipe with a crumble top, great for those who would like the apple crumble taste but just served cold and more easily transportable.



METHOD

1. Soften the apples

In a sauce pot place the chopped apples .a few Tablespoons of water and a Tablespoon or two of sugar. Turn on the stove top to medium high and place a lid on the top to essentially steam the apples until soft. Crush the apple mix with the back of a fork.

2. Make the mix

Preheat the oven to 180 o C. Grease any sized loaf tin.

In a bowl, combine the flour, sugar, apples, cinnamon and salt.

In another bowl, beat together the milk, vegetable oil/butter, and eggs. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and add the wet ingredients. Stir just until combined – don't over mix.

Pour into the loaf tin.

2. Make the Crumble top

Combine crumble ingredients in a bowl and rub together using your fingertips until it resembles a breadcrumb texture.

Sprinkle evenly on top of the loaf mix.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean, 25-30 minutes.

Fundraising at TCOGA

The purpose of our Fundraising activities at TCOGA is generally to make improvements to the Community Gardens space. Our group is very fortunate to have 'stewardship' of this wonderful green space on behalf of the people of Toowoomba. In order to continually improve this Community asset, we commit to Fundraising activities so that as an incorporated Non-profit organisation we can remain viable for future generations.

There is always something to be done at the Community Gardens. This includes upgrading individual and community plots; maintaining and upgrading facilities; installing renewable energy systems; and improving the accessibility and amenity of the Gardens for not only the benefit of TCOGA members but also for the broader community. We also continue to offer Workshops to our Members and the broader community. The purpose of these Workshops is to not only educate as many community members as possible about sustainable gardening practices; but also to introduce them to therapeutic gardening practices for improved mental health and social well-being.

At TCOGA, we recycle, reuse, and re-purpose what we can. As well, we make our Compost and Worm Teas (liquid gold for the gardens)! We rarely say no to Donations and are very grateful to those members and the broader community who choose to donate to us. But, it takes a lot of resources to manage a successful Community Garden. Some of the ways we have chosen to boost our income (i.e., additional to Membership and Plot Hire fees) is via Grant applications to various funding bodies. And of course, via the traditional 'sausage sizzle'. Also, we would rarely say no to Philanthropists who wish to support our Gardens and whose values align with ours.

A big, big, thank you to Bunnings North for the opportunity and support to run the recent 'sausage sizzle' Thank you to all to our wonderful Volunteers including Pauline, Martin, Emma, Susan St, Susan Sh, Michael, Fred, Angela, Adam, Judith, Sharon, and Jo. Together, our Team ran a very successful fundraiser! These funds will help our Community

Gardens to continue to provide food and nutritional security; to practice organic and sustainable gardening methods; to preserve open space and native habitat for biodiversity; and very importantly, to continue to promote social and mental health through therapeutic gardening practices. Please let myself or our Management Committee know if you have any innovative or interesting Fundraising ideas. Lyndell-Treasurer (tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com)



Notices

TOOWOOMBA SHOW 2023

Are you interested in participating in the Toowoomba Show 2023? There are various categories for entry and the Committee would like to see if any members would be interested in putting forward an entry to 2023. The Show will be held from 30 March until 1 April 2023. If you would like to grow something that can be used, please email Kylie at tcoga.secretary@gmail.com

FIRST AID

If you are qualified as a first aid officer and would be interested in being documented as a first aid officer for the gardens, could you please let Kylie know at tcoga.secretary@gmail.com.

DATE CLAIMER

Permaculture workshop 18th Feb 2023, more details in next months newsletter.

COORDINATOR ROLES

At the October open meeting, through the support of our awesome members, a number of different coordinators were identified to help assisting with the gardens.

They are:

Bush Tucker Coordinator – Emma; Native Garden Coordinator – Clinton; Plot Coordinators – Emma & Carrie; Central Pathway Coordinator – Pauline; Permaculture Garden Coordinators – Cherie & Carrie; Seeding Coordinator: Kylie; Compost Coordinators – Tim & Jo; Website Coordinators – Fred & Michael; Social Media Coordinators – Carrie, Linda & Amy; Worm Farm Coordinator – Sharon; Accessibility Garden Coordinator – Lyndell; Grant & Fundraising Supporters – Lyndell / Michael / Cherie / Sharon / Nettie / Kylie; Shed & Tool Coordinators – Nettie, Jess & Denis; Driveway Coordinator – Margaret and Bee Coordinator – Amy.

We thank everyone for expressing their interest in these areas and as you would have seen over the last few months, these areas are moving forward at the gardens.

If you have any ideas for these areas, please speak with the coordinator. We will keep you updated with the progress in these areas, watch this space!!

Commitee and Contact

2022-2023 COMMITTEE

President: Joanne McClelland

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Secretary: Kylie Higgins

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Treasurer: Lyndell Chambers

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Committee Members: Janette Golding, Susan

Sheppard, Pauline Cridland, Tim Bretts

Plot Coordinator: Carrie Slack

Newsletter Editor: Adam and Angela

Langdale

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