



# GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

March 2019

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## SOCIAL GARDENING

Wednesdays 8.30-11.00am

Come along and join in the fun!

Sundays 8.30-11.00am

All Members & Visitors  
Welcome

## What's Happening at The Gardens

It's a shame that the rain from Cyclone Oma didn't reach us as we all hoped. Apart from a possible shower this Saturday, March looks to be a month of a few days of showers and a few thunderstorms. This makes us find ingenious solutions to gardening and if you watch what the experienced gardeners are doing with their plots, you may get some great ideas. Or, just ask them!

## Let's Take Care of Our Soil

At this time of year and with the heat we have had, the main chore in the garden is watering, which is not always easy to do with the watering restrictions. The evaporation rates are very high, which if you have a bird bath in your garden you would notice that it needs filling every couple of days.

To minimize the loss of moisture from the garden, or even pot plants, it is very important to mulch. It is amazing the difference this can make. The maximum depth needed is 5cm, any deeper and water does not penetrate to the soil very well. I find the best mulch is sugar cane, but there are many other things that can be used. Leaves, garden clippings, bark chip, stones, compost, and shredded newspaper are some of the things that can be used. I never throw away lawn clippings, sprinkled over the soil regularly in a thin layer, they work very well. I think it is such a waste when I see people fertilize and water their lawn only to throw away all those wonderful clippings when they mow. When lawn clippings have been used regularly, the soil underneath is moist, loose, soft and full of worms.

Mulch will also keep the temperature of the soil more even, which keeps the roots of the plants cooler on the very hot days we have had and the plants will be much happier.

Another chore in the garden at this time of year is clipping back shrubs and plants that have become a little overgrown, these clippings can be put back on the garden beds to create a mulch, so it is not necessary to spend a lot on purchasing mulch. When you are watering, it is best to hose the water onto the root area of the plants. This way you know that each plant has had water to its root area and it is a great way to keep an eye on all the needs of your plants. If watering in the evening, try to avoid wetting the leaves of roses particularly as black spot spreads rapidly on damp leaves. - Jeanette



Toowoomba Mower Centre Supplying & Servicing

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## Tasks for March

**Herbs for Winter**—Cut back thyme, rosemary, bay and oregano. Bundle the stems together and hang in a dry spot for use in winter.

**Fixing**—Start the month by solving problems that arose over summer. Plant a shade tree to provide cool relief. In spots where soil dried out quickly, add compost and mulch.

**Planting**—Plant seeds for winter crops. For an outstanding crop of garlic, plant cloves this month. It can also be grown to perfection in pots on a sunny balcony. Water deeply prior to sowing carrot and beetroot, then keep moist. Thin seedlings to at least 5cm apart.

**Essential Feeding**—Feed the whole garden with an organic-based fertiliser to promote a flush of growth. Feed your lawn too. Use a well-diluted fish emulsion on brassicas to keep them growing fast. Apply dolomite limestone around stone fruit and almond trees and where peas, beans and asparagus, onions, celery and pumpkin grow. Deeply water rhubarb then feed heavily with fish emulsion, animal manures and compost. Water again.

**Re-potting**—Time to re-pot house plants using fresh, good quality potting mix.

**Pruning**—Prune berryfruit such as cape gooseberries, raspberry and other brambleberries by cutting out all dead, exhausted canes.

## Recycle

Reuse Styrofoam boxes for raising seed, rooting cuttings or growing salads. Styrofoam insulates plant roots from both winter frost and summer heat making them ideal mini-gardens for small spaces.



## Curious Art Festival

15-16 March

Empire Church Theatre

As part of the Festival

Prying Eye productions is calling on members of the TCOGA to share a plant with a story to help create *the garden of curiosity*

Lend a plant for the weekend.

You need to register at

[HTTP://www.pryingeye.org/plant-call-out](http://www.pryingeye.org/plant-call-out) and fill in details about your plant. You would also need to drop off your plant on 14 March, between 9am and 1pm.



### Herbs

Catnip,  
Chickory,  
Coriander,  
Dandelion,  
Dill, Feverfew,  
Lemon Balm,  
Marjoram,  
Oregano,  
Parsley, Salad  
Burnett, Salad  
Rocket, Sage,  
Thyme,  
Vetch,  
Watercress



Kale

## What to Plant in March

### Vegetables

Beetroot	Celery	Peas—Dwarf
Bok Choy	Chickpea	Radish
Broad Beans	Kale	Rhubarb
Broccoli	Kohl Rabi	Salsify
Brussels Sprouts	Leeks	Shallots
Cabbage	Lettuce	Silverbeet
Carrots	Onions	Spinach
Cauliflower	Parsnip	Swedes
Celeriac	Peas—Climbing	Turnip

## Birds in Our Gardens

On Wednesday two of our volunteer workers found an injured Tawny Frogmouth (bird). Sadly it was being attacked by Currawongs. Once rescued it was taken to Herriot House Vet Surgery to be treated. If you find any injured native wildlife, please contact your nearest vet surgery to ask if they would accept them. It is a wonderful service that they offer and after the wildlife is treated, if not seriously injured, they are returned to where they were first found. If they need ongoing care they are passed on to the right wildlife carer who will care for them until they can be released back into the wild. This is a very compassionate and caring service that is usually on a volunteer basis relying on donations.

### Some interesting facts about Tawny Frogmouths

This Australian native bird (not at all related to owls). is a nocturnal hunter living on insects, snails, slugs, frogs and small birds and mammals. They are a master of camouflage. Their plumage mimics that of the roosting tree branches and they remain very still if spotted, resembling a broken tree branch.

They are territorial and mate for life. Both parents share the care for the eggs and chicks.

They tend to live in open woodland with plenty of mature trees and can be found throughout Australia.



As for the threats to this species, as with many of our other Australian species, these include habitat loss, cats, dogs, foxes. Being nocturnal, many have been hit by cars whilst hunting. - Joanne

## Membership Renewals

This year we have changed the way we are managing renewals. We have moved responsibility for renewing your membership and plot hires a little more toward members. Please process renewals in the same way as you process your other bills.

In the past committee members spent many hours following up members and having difficulty due to limited, or out-of-date contact details for many members. This year we are trying to ensure contact details are updated so nobody is missed when we send invoices out.

If you haven't received your invoice, it isn't because we don't want to keep you as members - we want you all to stay with us. You can ask us at the Gardens to take your contact details. We will then ensure you receive an invoice.

Early in March we will contact as many members as we can to confirm your membership is renewed, or to remind you that you are overdue. None of this means we consider you as just a number - we just want more time to make the Gardens a better place for everyone. Thanks, Mike



## Quick Notes for Your Calendar

**Membership Renewals & Plot Hire Payments:** email—[tcoga.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.secretary@gmail.com) for your invoice

**TCOG Open Days—Wednesday 13 March and Sunday 17 March—**For Garden Week 9—17 March  
Including Guided Tours of the Gardens, Talks, Plant Sales and Refreshments

**Brisbane Garden & Plant Expo—Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 March**

Doomben Racecourse, Hampden Street, Ascot

[www.plantexpo.com.au](http://www.plantexpo.com.au)

**Herb Awareness—Sunday 26 May**

Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Road, Windsor

[www.qldherbsociety.org.au](http://www.qldherbsociety.org.au)

**Queensland Garden Expo—Friday 12 to Sunday 14 July (Qld's Premier Gardening Event)**

Nambour Showgrounds, Nambour, Sunshine Coast

**Early Bird Tickets are now on sale from the website**

[www.qldgardenexpo.com.au](http://www.qldgardenexpo.com.au)

## Pimientos Rojos Asados (Roasted Red Peppers)

Emilio has thoughtfully given us this recipe to use while capsicums (red peppers) are in season and are cheaper to buy than usual. This is a staple of Spanish cuisine and is very tasty.

Spanish roasted red peppers in garlic olive oil are generally served warm with fresh bread as a snack, or as a light lunch. They can also be made into sandwiches.

Capsicums are rich in vitamins A and C as well as being a good source of dietary fibre, vitamin E, B6 and folate. They also help absorption of iron from a meal.

### Ingredients

**4 medium red capsicums deseeded and sliced**

**4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**

**3 cloves garlic, minced**

**1/2 teaspoon salt**

**2 tablespoons Spanish sherry, or balsamic vinegar**

### Method

1. Preheat oven and set to broil if you have this option. Heat to 230 degrees Celsius.
2. Place deseeded and sliced red capsicums on a baking sheet skin side up brushing on some olive oil

3. Broil the capsicums until they are blackened all over, approximately 10minutes
4. Set aside and let cool down enough to peel skins off.
5. Place red capsicums in a shallow bowl.
6. Whisk minced garlic, vinegar and olive oil in a small bowl and pour over capsicums
7. Serve with fresh bread.



## TCOG Open Days

In collaboration with TRC we have decided that our **Autumn Open Days for 2019** will be on **Wednesday 13 March AND Sunday 17 March**. They will be advertised by TRC as a part of their celebration of Garden Week

If you have ideas for our Open Days, or can contribute in any way, please talk to a Committee Member.

We plan to have guided tours, talks, plant sales and refreshments.

We hope the Open Days will promote the benefits of sustainable gardening; recruit new members; answer questions from other groups interested in using the facilities; talk to prospective partners and generally look for and share ideas.

If you are a member of an organisation that operates locally and may be interested in what we do, please feel free to invite them to visit on one of these days.

2018—2019 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Andrew Hawke

VICE PRESIDENT: Vacant

SECRETARY: Mike Knight—[tcoga.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.secretary@gmail.com)

TREASURER: Sharon Wendt—[tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Oliver Rook, Jane Knight, Chris Walpole

### Coordinating Volunteers

Garden Plot Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

New Member Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

Grants Coordinators: Linda Mangubhai & Sharon Wendt

Communications & Marketing Coordinator: Oliver Rook

Newsletter Editor: Carlene Gardiner

Project Coordinators: Andrew Hawke & Jeanette

Newsletter of Toowoomba  
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