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What has been Happening in April

I know I start each article with how busy and exciting each month has been and April is no exception. For the people who attend regularly, you are part of all the exciting things happening. Hoping you are having fun.

DATE CLAIMERS FOR MAY

Member Open Meeting- 21 st May. This Meeting is all about explaining the new policies and to gather members' ideas/suggestions.

Tool Maintenance Workshop- 27 th May. Learn how to sharpen/clean tools.

We had a very informative and productive morning at the Mushroom Workshop with lots of participants. You will be soon eating yummy homegrown mushrooms. Please send us a photo so we can put it on Facebook to inspire others: we would appreciate that. Thank you to Ken. You can find Ken at the Cobb & Co markets each Saturday.

Our big fundraiser was the Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings. What a day that was.

Well done to those who volunteered for their 2 hour a month. I enjoyed working with our members in a different setting. The bank balance has increased by \$2333.40. It surpassed any expectations I had, mainly due to the very generous donation of the sausages, bread and drinks from the Wilsons Woolworths. All this was organised by the wonderful Cherie, our Treasurer.

We are lucky to have the support of so many local businesses. If you are ever in businesses, please thank them on our behalf; it is invaluable. There was one downside to the day. Again, thank you to Cherie for getting some of her friends to fill the empty timeslots on the roster. Thank you also to the very patient husbands of a couple of members who volunteered to cook. It was disappointing that we had to be relied upon non-members. Maybe another sausage sizzle in October? Let us all step up to the mark. Our Club, our money to spend on things that we want. Please do not take any offence, not my intention: just want to make member aware.

One big change at the garden is the Permaculture area. It will also be known as the Forage Garden. Aiming for diversity and changing our thinking that our food does not have to be grown in nice neat little rows. Go up and have a look, you will be surprised by what is going on. Also, all pruning is being recycled, thus closing the loop and limiting the waste that is going off-site. 'Chop and Drop' builds up the humus. Interesting stuff.

On the Show holiday the garden were vandalized. SAD. Don't know what the solution is: any ideas? Thank you to the members who went and tidied up on the Saturday ready for the Workshop on the Sunday. If ever any members are at the garden by themselves and you are feeling unsafe by any persons there, GET OUT. Ring 000. Please don't approach them. We can fix any damage but your safety is our number 1 priority. Not wanting to scare anyone, but please be aware of your surroundings and who is there.

I end with a 'That's Life' story. The day of the Sausage Sizzle, some members went to the garden. They signed up 2 new members and hired out a plot.

Lucky they were there. Getting dreadfully close to a Waiting List again...

Of course, COVID and the flu is making the rounds of the town. If you are feeling unwell, please stay at home.

Take care of yourselves.

Joanne



MAY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1st Labour Day	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6th Pine rivers Garden and plant fair ,757 Gympie road lawnton.From 8.30am,6-7th may QLD Orchid society Autumn show , Cobb and co farmers Markets Lindsay st
7th International compost awarness week  PCYC Markets	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12th Gasworks Twilight Mothers day market 5pm-9pm,76 skyring terrace, newstead	13th Aspley Orchid Society inc May show ,175 Edinburgh castle rd, Wavell heights from 8am. Cobb and co Markets
14th PCYC Markets Mothers Day 	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th	19 th	20th QLD Rose society Autumn rose show ,Mt Coot-tha botanic gardens,20th-21st may Cobb and co Markets Samford Edible Garden trail -samford village 20th-21st may Basilea farm open day ,Basilea living herbs,Burpengary
21st PCYC Markets & Queens park markets , Toowoomba TCOGA member open meeting	22 nd	23 rd	24 th	25 th	26 th	27th Australian Bushfoods conference ,Australian Technology and Agricultural college,North Maclean St Annes car boot sale ,highfields road,Highfields,from 9am TCOGA Tool maintenance workshop
28th Herb Awarness ,102 Mc donald road,Windsor 9am-3pm Green Heart fair ,Victoria Park,Herston PCYC Markets & Carbarlah Markets	29 th	30 th	31 st			

Plant profile at the Gardens-Rosellas



Botanical Name: *Hibiscus sabdariffa*

Common Names: asam balanda, bissap, edible hibiscus, flor de jamaica, grosella, karkade, lumanda, luo shen hua, meshta, omutete, paya, queensland jam plant, rajeab, rosela, roselle, saril, sorrel, susur.

Plant Family: Malvaceae.

Plant Description

A native of tropical West Africa, it prefers warm climates. Rosella is an attractive annual shrub to 1.5 m high with large, lobed reddish leaves and attractive yellow hibiscus-like flowers. Rosellas are easy to grow, with few pest problems, hardy and productive. Most soil types are suitable, provided they are rich and well-drained. Plenty of water is needed to maintain growth, flowering and fruit development, mulching is beneficial. Three to four plants is all that is needed to produce a good crop. Plants normally begin to crop when about 3 months old and cropping may continue for 9 months or until the first frost. The fruit is ready to pick about 3 weeks after flowering, when they'll be 2 - 3 cm across at their widest part.

Planting Details

Sow When: Sow in early spring in tropical areas, rosellas need at least 5 months frost-free to bear. Rosellas need a very warm soil to germinate, preferably over 25°C. In southern areas of Australia this would be as late as October outside. Some years the soil might take even longer to warm up. So gardeners in cooler areas need to start seed indoors using a small bottom-heat unit, or the top of the water heater.

Planting Depth: Cover seed with 12 mm of fine soil.

Spacing: Plant several seeds 50 cm apart and thin seedlings to the strongest.

Rosellas in Australia

In Australia, Roselle is known as the rosella or rosella fruit. The plant became naturalized over 1000 years ago. Its introduction to Australia is thought to be from interactions from Makassarese traders. Australia does also have a native Rosella *Hibiscus heterophyllus*. This is indigenous to eastern parts of New South Wales and Queensland and is one of 35 species of *Hibiscus* native to Australia.

Roselle jam is made in Queensland, Australia as a home-made or speciality product sold at fetes and other community events.

Uses

Food: the fleshy calyx is used in salads, jellies, cranberry-like sauces, jam and cordial, syrups and wine. Dried the red calyx is used for tea and it is an important ingredient in the commercial Red Zinger, Hibiscus and Fruit teas. The tea is very similar in flavour to rose-hips and high in vitamin C. Seeds are roasted and ground into flour. Young leaves can be steamed or stir-fried and are known as Red Sorrel in the Pacific.

In India, the plant is primarily cultivated for the production of bast fibre used in cordage, made from its stem. The fibre may be used as a substitute for jute in making burlap. Hibiscus, specifically roselle, has been used in folk medicine as a diuretic and mild laxative. The red calyxes of the plant are increasingly exported to the United States and Europe, particularly Germany, where they are used as food colourings. It can be found in markets (as flowers or syrup) in places, such as France, where there are Senegalese immigrant communities. The green leaves are used like a spicy version of spinach. They give flavour to the Senegalese fish and rice dish thieboudienne. Proper records are not kept, but the Senegalese government estimates national production and consumption at 700 t (770 short tons) per year. In Myanmar their green leaves are the main ingredient in chin baung kyaw curry. Brazilians attribute stomachic, emollient, and resolutive properties to the bitter roots. Hedge: Rosella is an attractive annual hedge or windbreak for the summer garden.

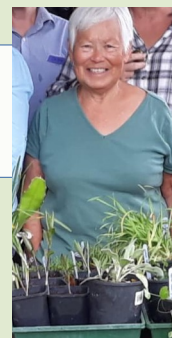
Nutritional value:

Rosella flowers contain 260-280 mg of vitamin C, vitamin D, B1 and B2 in each 100 grams.

Rosella tea itself contains very high calcium, approximately 486 mg per 100 grams. It also contains Magnesium, Omega 3, Vitamin A, Iron, Potassium, Beta Carotene and Essential Acids.

Member Profile

LINDA



I seem to have been a member forever. I joined in the 1990s when the group was named The Darling Downs Natural Growers Group (DDNGG) and we met once a month in one of the club houses (now demolished) in Water Street. We enjoyed informative speakers and could buy seeds and produce.

Members were inspired by speakers to establish community organic gardens. DDNGG did all the hard work in establishing the Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens and I probably took up a plot 20 years ago.

I have been a committee member, newsletter writer/editor, the secretary, the treasurer and the president during those years.

I have seen many members come and go. Lots of children have come to the gardens as babies and are now quite grown up. As a source of good health and good company, I have never stopped enjoying my Wednesday mornings.



What to Plant in May

Angelica
 Anise/Hyssop
 Artichoke
 Beans-Broad
 Beetroot
 Bok Choy
 Borage
 Broccoli
 Brussels Sprouts
 Buckwheat
 Cabbage
 Calendula
 Camomile
 Catnip
 Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celeriac
 Celery
 Chervil
 Chickory
 Chickpea
 Chives
 Chollards
 Coriander
 Corn salad
 Dandelion
 Dill
 Endive
 Evening primrose
 Feverfew
 Fennel
 Fenugreek
 Florence fennel

Garlic cloves
 Kale
 Kohl Rabi
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Linseed
 Lupin
 Marjoram
 Mizuna
 Mustard and greens
 Nasturtium
 Onions
 Pak-choy
 Parsley
 Parsnip
 Pea-Climbing and Dwarf
 Radish
 Rhubarb
 Sage
 Salad Burnett
 Salad Rocket
 Salsify
 Shallots
 Silverbeet
 Spinach
 Strawberries
 Swedes
 Thyme
 Turnip
 Vetch
 Watercress

**What to look for
 Harvesting
 (Toowoomba -Darling
 Downs/TCOGA)
 approximate:**
 Avocado
 Bananas
 Beans
 Beetroot
 Brazilian cherry
 Broccoli
 Cucumbers
 Custard apple
 Capsicums
 Carrots
 Chilli
 Chokos
 Eggplant
 Grapefruit
 Herbs
 Lemons
 Lettuce
 Limes
 Mandarins
 Pears
 Persimmons
 Pomegranates
 Pumpkins
 Rosella
 Rhubarb
 Sapote
 Silverbeet
 Spring onions
 Sweet Potato
 Tamarillos
 Tomatoes
 Zucchini

Recipe of the Month - Pickles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 & 1/2 cups distilled white vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds/1 teaspoon fennel seeds/1 teaspoon coriander seeds/1 teaspoon dill seeds(optional)any flavour extra you wish to add
- 2-4 large cucumbers, sliced 1/2 cm wide
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped dill
- 3 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups hot water

Cucumber harvesting is in full swing right now. Here's a simple recipe to preserve them so you can enjoy them off season.



METHOD

Step 1-

In a large, heatproof measuring cup, combine the vinegar, sugar, salt, and seeds with the hot water and stir until the sugar and salt are dissolved. Let the brine cool.

Step 2-

In a large bowl, toss the cucumbers with the dill and garlic. Pour the brine over the cucumbers and turn to coat. Place a small plate over the cucumbers to keep them submerged, then cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Refrigerate the pickles overnight, stirring once or twice. Serve cold.

Ideally if you want to preserve your cucumbers for a while just make sure your brine is extra hot and you have a fresh hot sterilised preserving jar ready. The pickles will be ready in 3 days but the longer they are left the more mature the flavour will be.

Notices

General Meeting

Just a reminder to all members that the general meeting will be held on Sunday 21 May commencing at 9.30am. This meeting is to provide the amendments/updates that have been undertaken by the

Committee on the governance documents. In particular the Rules of the Association which the Committee is bound by through the Office of Fair Trading and membership reclassifications. Other documents to be present for the information of the members will be the updated handbook, Committee position descriptions, a new grievance procedure and a TCOGA management plan.

The purpose of this meeting is for members to be able to ask questions around the Rules of the Association document and vote on this and the membership reclassifications. Copies of these documents will be available prior to the meeting on the day.

We will also be highlighting the action plan developed last year and seeking ideas for future projects for the gardens.

Website redevelopment

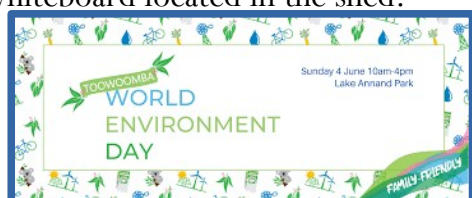
The committee are seeking people who have an interest or a background in website redevelopment, or enjoy writing, to gain a working party for the redevelopment of the TCOGA website. Michael has provided the committee with various new platforms which we have identified and will be moving forward with. We would now appreciate the help of members to redesign and update the content for the existing website. Please email Kylie at tcoga.secretary@gmail.com if you are interested. Thank you.

World Environmental Day

Sunday 4 June marks World Environment Day and TCOGA will be hosting a stall. This will be held at Lake Annand Park from 10am to 4pm and will include market stalls, street food, free kids activities, interesting speakers and free live music and performers.

If you are interested in helping with the TCGOA stall there will be a roster on the whiteboard located in the shed.

Please add your name.



Gardening tips for May

Mothers day is coming up ,and you might be thinking about giving a bare rooted rose bush, or be tempted yourself by the range appearing in chain stores before Mothers Day. Unfortunately, the premature lifting of these plants makes them a poor choice. If you're serious about roses, try to find a reputable supplier that waits until the bushes are fully dormant before digging and packing. While you are waiting for your order to arrive later in the winter, take the opportunity to prepare beds where you intend to plant them.If it has been quite dry, don't forget that the months traditionally associated with low rainfall and desiccating winds are still ahead. Keep valuable plants watered and top up mulch if it's been depleted over summer.

Flowers

It's getting too late to start from seed, most Annual Flowers for a winter-spring display. However, your local garden centre is sure to have a selection of seedlings for planting now. Seedlings are also more convenient because you avoid all the work and uncertainty of raising seedlings at home. Seedlings aren't all that expensive if you just need a few plants for a container or small area. Furthermore, some of the new and improved bedding plants may only be available in punnets or pots.

Divide perennials such as agapanthus, daylillies, daisies like gazania and shasta daisy, ornamental grasses, dietes, liriop.

Ease off on the water from rhizomatous and tuberous ornamentals like ornamental gingers and caladiums as the foliage dies off.

The end of the flowering season is the signal to prune and fertilise Tibouchinas such as 'Alstonville' if you want to keep the bushes dense, compact and primed for a spectacular display next year.

Vegetables

Sowing of a wide range of vegetables suited to cool and temperate climates can proceed: beetroot and silverbeet, cabbages, broccoli, onion family, peas, lettuce, carrots, turnips. Broad beans grow well in Toowoomba, but if you want to have a go, now is the time as we enter our coldest months.

Provided you don't have frost, you can also get away with growing a lot of veggies that would normally be considered summer crops in the colder latitudes such as cucumbers, zucchini, beans (the regular "French" or green beans), tomatoes and capsicums. Growth may be slower, however, with the colder temperatures and fewer daylight hours for photosynthesis. Real heat-lovers like corn, rosella and okra must wait until early summer, however.

Quiz-Answer

From April's newsletter (What is the bird most likely to 'demolish' our Pecan Trees in March?) Last year it was the Sulphur Crest Cockatoos, 2021 it was the Corellas. This year it was the Corellas again.



Working Bee

TOOWOOMBA COMMUNITY
ORGANIC GARDENS

Gardeners Gathering

2ND SUNDAY OF
EVERY MONTH -9AM

22a Goggs street

Bring along your hat, sunscreen and sturdy footwear; Let's team up to do some of the bigger jobs around the TCOGA patch.

Other bits and bobs that may come in handy:

- Cardboard for weed smothering
- Seeds or Seedlings
- Extra garden tools
- Your wonderful ideas

Please let the committee know if you have any ideas or feedback for making these days fun for everyone and great for the garden!

And each month we will have a delicious lunch, with everyone free to contribute. BYO cutlery etc.



Committee and Contact

2023 COMMITTEE

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