



# GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

November 2020

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## What Has Been Happening at The Gardens

Thankfully it has been a bit more relaxed in the garden this month. After our very successful Open Days as part of the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers our regular workers had some time to slow down and appreciate the gardens. Without our regular members who turn up every week and work in the community areas of the garden this event would not have been possible. Coming along to our Social Gardening days on a Wednesday and Sunday morning enables members to meet their two hours per month of community garden work. whilst getting to know fellow gardeners. It also is a great way to find out what is happening in the gardens as well as picking up some great gardening tips and tricks.

The weather is warming up and I suspect that our social gatherings may start a little earlier and finish a little earlier to avoid the heat. As I edit this article, I am enjoying the rain that has been falling, even though it meant we had to postpone our 'Future Directions of the Gardens' Session and our Pizza lunch get together.

The gardens will be soaking it up and it will reduce the workload of members, as watering has taken up so much time. The rain and warmer weather will promote much new growth. With the new growth will come the weeds. I urge all members to help us keep the weeds at bay. The permaculture, community veggie patch and orchard will need particular attention. In the shed you will notice that the whiteboard has information about what jobs need attention. If you are unsure just ask one of the committee members. Weeding is not one of the greatest gardening jobs, but as was evident at the Working Bee Day back in August, working with others makes it much more enjoyable and so much more is accomplished.

Margaret Lyness has resigned as Secretary. We were saddened to hear of her decision but are very thankful for her contribution to some of the administration work that was needed, such as the design of the new Membership Form. Jeanette Walton was elected unanimously as Secretary at the last committee meeting on October 3.

The Toowoomba Regional Council donated 30 native plants for us to plant at the gardens. These will help to beautify the Native garden area. We chose a variety of plants including some larger shrubs and ground covers which will attract the birds and bees to our gardens. We hope to develop the Native garden area, but we will need more involvement from members to be able to tackle this area on top of what we have already undertaken.

Keep an eye out for an email with details of our Christmas Break up. It is not too late to respond to the email I sent out regarding possible dates for those members who would like to come along.

See you in the gardens.

Wendy Snigg

President TCOGA



## Land Cress (*Barbarea verna*) and Companion Planting

Companion planting is just one strategy in the overall organic gardening world. Plants grouped together can either be beneficial or detrimental to each other. Sometimes science cannot explain why this is so. It has come about from observation and experimenting by many generations of gardeners.

It is all about plant biodiversity. Plants can assist each other like deterring pests, attracting beneficial insects, fixing nitrogen and some say it enhances the flavour of some fruit and vegetables. But just because you have planted garlic around your roses doesn't mean you should never check them. Always observe, experiment and problem solve in your garden. It can be a lot of fun.

One of my all-time favourites is land cress / upland cress planted around my brassicas. My research into land cress has found that it is the Diamond Moth and the Large Cabbage Moth that are attracted to the land cress to lay their eggs. Upon hatching the baby caterpillars chomp on the leaves and die. They are poisoned by the saponins in the leaves. This fact has been proven by science. As for the smaller Cabbage White Butterfly / moth, they are also attracted to the cress and lay eggs but some say they don't die (but many others do). Whatever you believe, it can be used as a "sacrificial plant". Check it daily for any signs of infestation, pulling off the leaves where you find eggs, pulling off the caterpillars, or spraying with an organic pesticide which will kill them. In my plot I have never seen the need to do any of that since using land cress.



**Upland Cress** *Barbarea verna*  
syn. Winter Cress

Land Cress / Upland Cress is a biennial plant. The yellow flowers also attract beneficial insects. It grows 30cm wide x 30cm tall and it also grows anywhere you put your brassicas of course. Cress requires full sun, but I find it does better if you can protect it from the harsh western (afternoon) sun.

There is an article on companion planting in the Noticeboard at The Gardens, near the car park. Also I have a wonderful spreadsheet that I will put inside the shed.

Whether you believe in companion planting or not, I say what have you got to lose. Give plant biodiversity a go.

- Joanne

*Seeds available from:* [greenpatchseeds.com.au](http://greenpatchseeds.com.au); [heirloomharvest.com.au](http://heirloomharvest.com.au); [edenseeds.com.au](http://edenseeds.com.au)  
[theseedcollection.com.au/](http://theseedcollection.com.au/)

*Seedlings available from:* [herbcottage.com.au/](http://herbcottage.com.au/)

### Quick Notes for Your Calendar

**TCOGA Meeting at The Gardens**—Saturday 7 November 10.00am

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

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

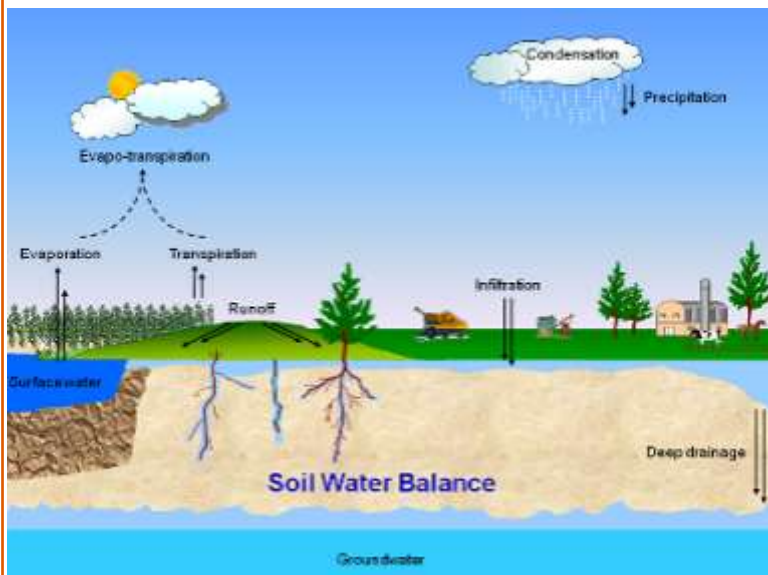
**Saturday & Sunday 15 & 16 May 2021**—Pine Rivers Garden and Plant Fair—Pine Rivers Show Ring,

757 Gympie Road, Lawnton [pineriversgardenandplantfair.com.au](http://pineriversgardenandplantfair.com.au)

**9—1 July 2021**—Queensland Garden Expo— Nambour

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

## Save Water, Protect the Soil and Develop Sustainable Practices in Your Garden



The current climatic anomalies affecting our region are part of a problem that is on a global in scale. It is causing high temperatures, below average rainfall and increased \*evapotranspiration (the sum of evaporation and plant transpiration from the earth's land surface to the atmosphere; BOM Glossary); all these factors contribute to the depletion of the soil moisture.

High evaporation rates reduce soil moisture, thereby affecting the development of your plants. This can be critical in hot, dry periods when water demand from plants is high, especially if there is already a reduced water supply (eg owing to low rainfall).

To minimise the loss to evaporation, and to keep the moisture in the soil to generate healthy crops, it is necessary to combine good practices such as the use

of organic compost, mulching, adding soil improvers / amendments and water wise use.

**Compost** improves all aspects of soil structure, retaining water and providing nutrition to your plants, among other benefits.



**Mulching** improves your garden soil by adding organic matter; covering the soil surface with mulch minimises the loss to evaporation and keeps the moisture in the soil. **Soil improvers** such as vermiculite and coir peat help with the moisture retention, and aid with drainage, aeration and retaining nutrients.



As a source of life, **water** is a precious resource that must be used rationally and wisely. Water the roots, not the complete plant. Even if you use rainwater, please use this resource in a wise way. Plant native species that have low \*\*hydric demands and that are adapted to the soil and climate of your region. Some of the plants in your garden might require more water than others, so apply the right amount according to the requirements of each group of plants. Remove the weeds regularly because these will take the water required for your plants. Water your garden in late afternoon or early morning to avoid the rapid evaporation of the water.

Cultivated, mulched soil will readily absorb water

And, last but not least, follow the regulations of your local authorities, and seek the wise advice of the experts in your local nursery, or in your community garden regarding how to learn and improve your sustainable practices.



Emilio Anteliz, 29 October 2020

*\*Evapotranspiration (ET) is the sum of evaporation and plant transpiration from the Earth's land and ocean surface to the atmosphere. Evaporation accounts for the movement of water to the air from sources such as the soil, canopy interception, and water bodies. Transpiration accounts for the movement of water within a plant and the subsequent loss of water as vapour through stomata in its leaves in vascular plants and phyllids in non-vascular plants. Evapotranspiration is an important part of the water cycle. An element (such as a tree) that contributes to evapotranspiration can be called an evapotranspirator.*

*\*\*relating to, or requiring an abundance of moisture*

## Future Directions in The Gardens Discussion

It was great to see so many of our members turn up to our discussion today, (1 November) about the Future Directions of The Gardens. We did some brainstorming about the key principles that would inform our future planning. Everyone present agreed that the garden should follow organic and sustainable gardening practice, use water wisely, and continue to build a diverse and supportive community. There were other points of discussion which will be incorporated into a mission statement and four, or five key principles.

We will use the information gathered today to come up with a draft mission statement for the gardens and four or five key principles which will be used to make any decisions relating to the community garden. The draft will be sent out to all members for their feedback after the next committee meeting.

All members are welcome to come and contribute to this draft. Our next meeting will be on Saturday November 7 at 10 am in the gardens in the shelter area. I imagine that the discussion about the mission statement and key principles will begin around 10.30am.

After our discussion today, a number of members stayed on to cook their pizzas in the wood fired oven and share lunch together. A big thank you to Trevor who helped to manage the fire, so it cooked the pizzas and they did not get baked too quickly and to Kate for arriving very early at the gardens to start the fire in the pizza oven.

Wendy Snigg

President TCOGA



### What to Plant in November

#### Herbs

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Alfalfa/Lucerne | Oregano       |
| Amaranth        | Parsley       |
| Balsam          | Purslane      |
| Basil           | Rosemary      |
| Caraway         | Salad Rocket  |
| Chives          | Summer Savory |
| Chives—Garlic   | Sunflower     |
| Echinacea       | Thyme         |
| Hyssop          |               |
| Lemon Balm      |               |
| Marigold        |               |
| Marjoram        |               |
| Mint Seedlings  |               |



Purslane

#### Vegetables

- |                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Asparagus Crowns                 | Cucumber             |
| Beans—Climbing,<br>Dwarf & Snake | Lettuce              |
| Beetroot                         | Eggplant             |
| Broccoli Seedlings               | Jerusalem Artichokes |
| Cabbage<br>Seedlings             | Kohl Rabi            |
| Cape Gooseberry                  | Leek Seedlings       |
| Capsicum                         | Lettuce              |
| Carrots                          | Mustard Greens       |
| Celery                           | Okra                 |
| Celeriac                         | Parsnip              |
| Chilli Peppers                   | Potatoes             |
| Chinese Cabbage                  | Pumpkin              |
| Choko                            | Radish               |
|                                  | Rhubarb              |
|                                  | Rockmelon            |



Rosella

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| Rosella             |
| Silverbeet          |
| Spring Onion        |
| Squash              |
| Sweetcorn           |
| Tomato              |
| Tomatillo Seedlings |
| Turnip              |
| Watermelon          |
| Yacon               |
| Yam                 |
| Zucchini            |

## Protecting Your Joints When You are Gardening

Gardening is a really good form of exercise, but doing some actions over and over can lead to swelling (inflammation) and pain if you have arthritis, and you may need to rest completely until the flare-up passes. Aim for a balance between exercising your joints and muscles to stay mobile without straining them. 'Little and often' is usually the best way, but switching between different jobs will also help. The following tips should help to avoid flare-ups:

### Change task to reduce repeated strain on the same joints

Do not feel you have to carry on until you finish the job. Try switching from one task to another after 20 minutes so that you rest some joints and exercise different ones for a while. For example, break up harder jobs like hoeing weeds with spells of something more gentle like pricking out seedlings.

Take a break between jobs if you need to and use a timer to help you pace yourself if you think it would be useful.

### Spread the load

When carrying items, try to spread the load by lifting with your hands and arms, rather than just your fingers. Try resting a tray of seedlings on your forearms, for example. Keep your elbows tucked in to reduce the strain on your shoulders and elbows.

### Use a garden stool

Using a stool is less tiring than standing/kneeling and reduces the load on your weight-bearing joints. You will be closer to the ground so you can use shorter, lighter tools. You will not be able to reach as far though, so you will need to plan your gardens around this, or buy long-reach or extendable handled tools. Make sure you can get up easily from the stool – avoid sitting too long and getting stiff as this will make rising more difficult. - From: [versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/living-with-arthritis/gardening/](http://versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/living-with-arthritis/gardening/)

## Balsamic Roasted Cauliflower with Pine Nut Tahini Dressing

When a kind person gave me a lovely cauliflower from her garden I decided to make this fabulous dish I had found in a gluten free cookbook. It is delicious and very healthy for you as well.

### Ingredients

- 1 head cauliflower**
- 3 tbs olive oil**
- 2 tbs balsamic vinegar**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper**

### Dressing

- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 tbs Tahini paste**
- 1 lemon, juiced**
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted**
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, plus more for garnish**

### Method

1. Position a rack in the centre of the oven and heat to 200°C
2. Trim the florets from the head of cauliflower, thinly slice them and transfer to a large bowl. Add olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper and toss to coat. Arrange the seasoned cauliflower in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet and cook uncovered for 25-30 mins, until the cauliflower is golden brown and caramelised.
3. While the cauliflower is roasting, make the dressing by combining all the ingredients in a small bowl.
4. Return the roasted cauliflower to the original large bowl, then add the dressing. Season with salt, pepper and toss to coat. Transfer the cauliflower to a serving platter and serve garnished with parsley.



2020—2021 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Wendy Snigg

VICE PRESIDENT: Vacant

SECRETARY: Jeanette Walton—[tcoga.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.secretary@gmail.com)

TREASURER: Kate Eglitis —[tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joanne McClelland and Emilio Anteliz

New Member Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

Newsletter Editor: Carlene Gardiner—[tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com)

Newsletter of Toowoomba

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