



GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

October 2018

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SOCIAL GARDENING

Wednesdays 9.30-11.30am

Come along and join in the fun!

Sundays 8.30-11am

All Members & Visitors Welcome

We start another month with virtually no rain and the few showers forecast recently being only for the Granite Belt. Hopefully some will come soon to relieve the drought and refill tanks and dams. It's good to see people being innovative about producing food with minimal water and persisting with watering by hand from the tanks, or turning up on Wednesday and Sunday mornings when the town water supply is turned on for a short time so that hoses can be used to keep our crops alive.

About the only upside here is that the weeds aren't growing, so the cleaning up of the gardens is having a great visual impact. By mulching we will be able to maintain control of weeds that previously crept onto paths and into the orchard and garden areas.

Mulching of the plots continues and this will help to ensure a crop is achieved over spring and summer, rather than the plants dying from lack of water and the drying winds. Keep up the good work!

Sprouts Anyone?

Summer is almost upon us and water is scarce. You do not need soil and water to grow some nutritious 'vegetables'. Neither do you need to buy those expensive plastic boxes of sprouts. Try growing your own. You can buy a 'sprouter' or reuse a plastic tray and some wet kitchen paper. These are sprouted mung beans and they only take a day or two to be ready for the salad, or the stir fry. Any seed which has just sprouted is very nutritious and mung beans are versatile: they can be cooked when the shoot is just seen or taken to this level. Packets of seeds for sprouting can be bought at your hardware gardening centre. See which ones work for you.



Water Restrictions at The Gardens

Spring is a wonderful season. The Carnival, the beautiful gardens and parks, the trees putting on the new leaves, bees abuzzing, birds nesting.

Spring was also a time we could rely on some rain but sadly this is not the case this year. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, they are predicting a very below-average spring rainfall and higher than usual temperatures. As gardeners at home, as well as at the gardens, this not something we will look forward to. Our large water tank has been too low for safe use for a month now and we are relying on Town Water. Toowoomba Regional Council has introduced new water restrictions for the outlying towns that are on bore water. In Toowoomba we already have permanent water conservation measures to reduce our water usage to 200 litres per person per day.

These measures effectively limit watering at the gardens to watering with a bucket, or watering can, or using a hand held hose with a nozzle that shuts off when released.

For some time now we have restricted use of town water to Wednesday and Sunday, prior to 10:00 am. Watering time is limited to 20 minutes per double plot and 30 minutes per field plot.

ALL GARDENS ARE TO BE MULCHED TO CONSERVE WATER. As we have 37 plots and over 40 plot holders, and community areas to care for, everybody needs to be considerate and comply with these restrictions.



The rules and restrictions cause difficulty for some plot holders, so any suggestions to improve the situation will be welcome. For new plantings and extreme conditions, there is limited water available in the small tanks behind the shed and the tank by the pergola for watering can use. The Management Committee will be discussing and reviewing options - until then the existing restrictions apply.

There are other restrictions that may affect you at home, so we suggest that you take some time to explore the Council website to acquaint yourself with the current rules.

<http://www.tr.qld.gov.au/environment-water-waste/water-supply-dams/restrictions-incentives>



Celery—A Hidden Health Boost

Celery was grown as medicinal plant long before it was enjoyed as a food. Celery and its relative celeriac are good examples of how you should not underestimate the value of food just because it is about 90% water.

Therapeutic Properties

1. Helps blood pressure control—Celery's high potassium content and diuretic effect on the urinary system can help prevent and reduce high blood pressure.
2. Diuretic effect may help joint conditions—Celery stimulates urine production which may be helpful for joint complaints such as gout, that are related to the body's retention of unwanted substances.
3. Calming effects—Traditionally celery has been used to treat nervousness. The essential oil and seeds contain tranquilizing agents, some of which are also present in the stalks, although the amount has not yet been measured.



- *Healing Foods*

Celery is a biennial plant which is grown for its crisp succulent stalks. It has been used in salads and cooked dishes since the 17th century. The seeds are used as a culinary flavouring.

Most celery sold in shops has been 'blanched' or protected from sunlight. Blanching modifies the colour and taste of the stalks. Many home gardeners grow 'green' celery, harvesting the outside leaves progressively as needed.



Sowing

Celery is a cool season vegetable and prefers a temperate, or cool climate. Seeds can be sown from spring through to early autumn.

Because celery seed is small and seeds may take 14 to 20 days to germinate, sow the seeds in punnets or pots. Put the seedlings when several centimetres high into larger containers. Allow eight to ten weeks growth before transplanting into the garden. Space them 30 to 40cms apart each way.

Celery must be grown quickly, otherwise stems tend to be of poor quality. Water each day in hot weather and mulch the plants. Give side dressings of nitrogen fertilizer, or apply water-soluble fertilizer every 10 to 14 days.

- *Readers Digest—Illustrated Guide to Gardening*

What to Plant in October

Vegetables

Tomatoes, Eggplant, Cabbage Capsicums, Carrots, Celery, Chinese Cabbage, Cucumbers, Pumpkins, Watermelons, Rockmelons, Choko, Lettuce, Radishes, Beetroot, Onions, Parsnip, Potatoes, Radishes, Rhubarb, Silverbeet, Squash, Sweet Potato, Climbing & Dwarf Beans, Snake Beans, Spring Onions, Rosella, Okra, Sweetcorn, Zucchini

Herbs

Basil, Chives, Coriander, Dill, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Sage and Thyme



Quick Notes for Your Calendar

Brisbane Tomato Festival

20—21 October—Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt. Coot-the. Presented by The Diggers Club and The Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens & Sherwood Arboretum

diggers.com.au/whats-on/brisbane-tomato-festival/

Plot Report and Other Circumstances

For the first time in years there are no garden plots available for hire. At the same time applications for membership are at a new high. And we are facing very dry times.

Personal Efforts



Members should be proud of their efforts in many areas. You are proof people are interested in their food, being more sustainable, getting out and enjoying their gardens, being active, being social and learning. Congratulations for all the wonderful work being done: In helping new members feel welcome, in sharing their time, labour and knowledge with other members, in how neat and tidy the place is. There have been many hours of work and planning put in to make The Gardens tidy and more productive.

Community Hours

Near the sign in book is a note book where you can write down the community work you have done. It is vital that you write it down for us to keep track of the areas that are being cared for and for us to know that you are fulfilling the terms of your membership. If you haven't been doing your share now is a good time to make sure your name appears in the book.

To meet the challenges some plot rules become more important, even critical.

Watering of Gardens

Watering of gardens is under scrutiny with Council introducing restrictions and considering more in future. For the gardens to be sustainable we need to ensure we demonstrate best practice conserving the limited water supply. Hours of watering with town water end at 10 am Wednesday and Sunday. With all plots in use arriving early will ensure everyone has a chance to water their plot for their allotted minutes. Mulching is required to water our plots sustainably.

Ideas to help conserve water and to improve existing rules will be welcomed by Management Committee. We hope to get funding for improved water storage and watering systems soon. Otherwise we will need to raise funds directly, or restrict water usage in future.



Plot Waiting List

Every year some plot holders give up plots at renewal time. Others find it difficult for various reasons to continue to maintain their plots to their usual standard. With members waiting for plots to become available, any member who wishes to release their plot early is encouraged to talk to Jo or any Management Committee member. If you wish to keep your plot, but temporary circumstances make maintaining it difficult, please talk to Jo or any committee member about getting help.

The Management Committee may consider improving the speed and efficiency of the renewal process. This will in part reduce waiting lists for plots and reduce the time spent by Plot Coordinator and Treasurer chasing up member renewals. We are also talking about alternatives that may allow members to find ongoing shared gardening activity. Again, ideas from members will be welcome, especially if it allows more flexibility for members. Remember there is already an expectation that all plot holders are committed to contributing at least 2 hours gardening effort a month as part payment for their plot hire.

If your garden is looking neglected please mulch and tidy up ready for summer. Enjoy spring.

Harvest Loaf

When this loaf is presented warm for morning tea, it's an instant hit! It's easy to make and smells delicious when cooking. Try it when guests are coming at short notice.

Ingredients

1 large onion

50 grams butter

3 cups flour

2 tablespoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt (or less)

Pinch cayenne pepper (or chilli powder)

About 1 cup milk

½ cup sour cream (or natural yoghurt)

½ cup grated tasty cheese



Method

Chop the onion finely and fry in the hot butter in a pan. Do not let it colour; just allow it to become transparent.

Into a bowl sift the flour, baking powder, salt and cayenne. Stir the cooked onion and any remaining melted butter into the flour mixture.

Add sufficient milk to form a soft, but manageable dough.

When this is mixed, lightly knead the dough a few times on the floured board.

Have greased an 18 cm round cake tin.

Cut dough into 12 even-sized pieces. Roll each piece lightly into a ball and place, almost touching, in the greased cake tin. Mix the sour cream and grated cheese together and carefully spoon this over the top of the loaf.

Bake at 200 degrees C for about 30 minutes, or until the mixture is risen and golden.

Take from the oven and allow to rest in the tin for a few minutes before removing carefully.

When ready to serve, pull portions of the dough off the whole loaf.

2018—2019 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Matthew Gilroy

VICE PRESIDENT : Andrew Hawke

SECRETARY: Mike Knight

TREASURER: Sharon Wendt—treasurer@toga.org.au

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Oliver Rook, Robin Dixon, 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

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