



# GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

October 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

We had our Carnival of Flowers Open Day on Wednesday. An energetic group of volunteers set up plants for sale and morning tea for visitors to partake of. It was a beautiful, warm day full of the promise of spring rain; a perfect day to visit. The gardens are looking amazing due to the hard work that has been done recently clearing the ground in the Permaculture area to put in new gardens and heavily mulching all of the trees with well-rotted cow manure collected off a farm at Glenvale. Following the AGM, we wish to thank retiring Committee Members Oliver Rook and Jane Knight for their assistance and dedication over the past year. It has been much appreciated. Also, many thanks to Jenny for compiling last months newsletter!

## Ghastly Galloping Gastropods



Well here we are, the first spattering of rain in months and the instant responders are they our plants? Oh no, of course not, it's those silent slithering slimy grim reapers of the garden; slugs and snails! At the first sign of rain they open their sealed snail trapdoors and make straight for...you guessed it, your carefully cultivated seedlings.

Now if you want to be rid of them you can always use the "pet and soil friendly" slug and snail baits. However, there is a better and more organic approach. It's called "fossick and feed". So, firstly you fossick under and around your broad-leafed plants and rocks, (best at dusk), to find the darkest and dampest spot. There you will find them lurking and lining up, an ambling army assigned to agricultural Armageddon. Just pop them into a plant pot, then feed them to your fine-feathered friends, your clucking chooks and dallying ducks. If you don't have any yourself, then find a friend whose privileged poultry will be delighted to dine on these delicious delicacies.

Alternatively, a saucer, or a snail-snaring shade-covered snail-catcher from the hardware store can be filled with beer. In the morning, the snaggle of snails will have snuffed-it in the beer.

So, if you want to guard against those ghastly, galloping gastropods, strike now before they gobble your garden!!!  
- Carlene

**Saturday October 12**  
**Bunning's BBQ Fundraiser**

Fellow Gardeners

On October 12 there will be a major fundraiser for TCOGA. We will be running a BBQ outside the Bunnings store in North Toowoomba. As the old saying goes "many hands make light work". The Committee would greatly appreciate members volunteering to help in the BBQ tent. As part of the agreement with Bunnings, the BBQ needs to be up and running as close as possible to 7am and must be serving until at least 4pm.

Not only is this a chance for you to get to know your fellow gardeners but it is also a way for plot holders to meet their 2 hours work commitment in the gardens per month. Make sure you encourage all your friends and family to go along to Bunnings and purchase a sausage and drink from our stall. There is a sheet in the shed and where you can put your name in a time slot to help. If you cannot do a full two hours any time would be appreciated. Please speak to Wendy, Mike or Andrew if you need any further information.

**Nasturtiums**

**Companion planting**

Nasturtiums are a very pretty flower to add to your garden and they are also a useful ally in the organic garden. Companion planting Nasturtiums amongst any crop that gets attacked by aphids will help to save your crop. Use the Nasturtium as a sacrificial plant, aphids are attracted to nasturtiums and will attack them ahead of any other plant.

Nasturtiums are not only useful as a trap crop but are also a great repellent to other plant pests. They can be grown easily and are a pretty plant attractive to many pests so is a very handy plant to grow. Pollinators are also attracted to the nasturtium flower making it a powerful ally in the organic garden.

Nasturtiums will grow in pretty much any soil type but don't use soil that is too fertile. If the soil is too fertile all that will grow will be foliage, and no flowers. Just sprinkle the seeds on the soil in Spring wherever you want the plants to grow and firm in. Keep moist but not over watered and they will thrive.

Grow Nasturtiums near Broad Beans or Runner Beans and the aphids that attack the beans will be attracted to the nasturtiums. This works with any plant that is susceptible to aphid attack. The leaves, flowers and seeds are all edible. The leaves taste peppery like water cress, as do the flowers. The seeds are also known as poor mans capers. If you don't eat all the seeds they can be saved easily and stored for the following Springs crop. Just keep them in a cool, dark, dry place and sow as above.

**Borage**

Borage is growing and flowering all over The Gardens at the moment, so here are some ideas for its use apart from as a cover crop.

The flowers look great in a salad or dessert. The leaves can be used too when they are very small. They have an interesting cucumber-like taste, but get hairy as they grow, so only take the smallest leaves for salads. Larger leaves can be used in soups and stews. Borage seeds prolifically and maintains a presence in gardens once established. It is a good companion for tomatoes and a good biodiversity plant that attracts butterflies and bees.

**What to Plant in October**

**Herbs**

- Alfalfa/Lucerne
- Amaranth
- Angelica
- Anise Hyssop
- Balsam
- Basil
- Borage
- Chickory
- Chives
- Chives—Garlic
- Coriander
- Dandelion
- Dill
- Echinacea
- Endive
- Fennel
- Feverfew
- Hyssop
- Lemon Balm
- Marigold
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Mustard
- Nasturtium
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Purslane
- Rosemary
- Salad Burnett
- Salad Rocket
- Sage
- Summer Savory
- Sunflower



Sunflowers

**Vegetables**

- Artichoke
- Asparagus Crowns
- Beans—Climbing, Dwarf & Snake
- Beetroot
- Broccoli Seedlings
- Cabbage Seedlings
- Cape Gooseberry
- Capsicum
- Carrots
- Celeriac
- Celery
- Chinese Cabbage
- Cucumber
- Daikon
- Eggplant
- Kohl Rabi
- Leek Seedlings
- Lettuce
- Mustard Greens
- Okra
- Parsnip
- Peas—Climbing, Snow & Dwarf
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Radish
- Rhubarb Crowns
- Rockmelon
- Rosella
- Salsify
- Shallots
- Silverbeet
- Spring Onion
- Squash
- Sweetcorn
- Tomato
- Tomatillo
- Turnip
- Watermelon
- Yacon
- Zucchini

## Cover Crops

Here are eight great benefits of cover crops.

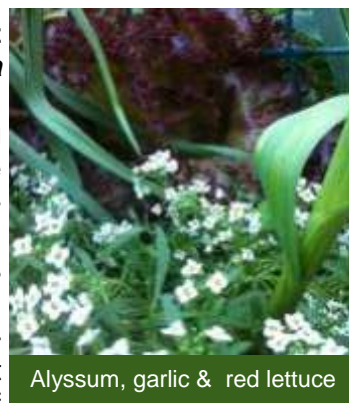
1. They produce large leaf area, or rambling growth that can be used to smother weeds.
2. They produce plant residues that provide mulch for the soil.
3. They attract beneficial insects into the garden to biologically control pests
4. They include plants with allelopathic effects that inhibit weeds or pests (for example, mustard used as a soil fumigant, or marigold to control nematodes)
5. They add organic matter directly to the soil from green manure roots, thereby encouraging microbial activity and creating a good soil structure
6. They capture (sequester) and eventually recycle nutrients that might otherwise leach over winter
7. They decrease infiltration time for water, thereby capturing more water into the soil profile
8. They hold soil in place and reduce or even eliminate erosion, and protect water quality.



Nasturtiums & sage under an orange

## Suggestions for Cover Crops

**White-flowering sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)** makes an excellent fast-spreading cover crop in the vegetable garden or vineyard. It is low-growing, perennial, attractive to the eye, encourages beneficial insects, grows easily from seed and self-seeds, but is easy to pull out if it encroaches too far, or if you want to rejuvenate the bed. Coloured alyssum is less vigorous than white. Alyssum grows in most soil types in full sun or part shade. (It also has a lovely perfume).



Alyssum, garlic & red lettuce

**Borage (*Borago officinalis*)** is a little taller than most cover crops but is good under fruit trees in unused areas.

**Corsican mint (*Mentha requienii*)** is possibly the lowest growing ground-covering plant rising to about 1 cm. It sits flat against the soil, provides excellent coverage and makes an attractive low carpet effect. It is suited to growing in cracks in crazy paving, in pots under other plants and does best with some sun. It produces a wonderful minty fragrance when touched.

**Gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*)** is native to northern Australia and Asia. It is edible, with medicinal qualities and grows from creeping stolons in wet areas. Use the young leaves like any other leafy green salad plant. Gotu kola is ideal as a cover crop under vegetables, flowers and garden plants in tropical regions.

Also use, Warrigal greens, Pennyroyal, Rocket, Mixed Herbs, especially prostrate forms such as Marjoram and Thyme which repel pests from brassicas and other long-lived crops. Basil goes very well with tomatoes and Nasturtiums are great too, bringing a myriad of benefits particularly deterring aphids from your other plants.

-The New Organic Gardener by Tim Marshall

## Quick Notes for Your Calendar

**Saturday & Sunday 5 & 6 October** 9am to 4pm & 9am to 2pm—**Brisbane Garden and Plant Expo**

Admission: \$10, Concession \$8 per person

Brookfield Showgrounds, Brookfield

[Plantexpo.com.au](http://Plantexpo.com.au)

**Saturday 12 October**—**TCOGA Fundraising Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings North**

Have you registered your preferred time to help out with this project yet?

Contact Secretary Mike now to offer a time you can come for an hour or two—[tcoga.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.secretary@gmail.com)

Or put your name down on the list in The Shed

**Friday 18 to Sunday 20 October**—**Buderim Garden Festival**

[buderimgardenclub.com/festival](http://buderimgardenclub.com/festival)



## Mulberry Pie

Mulberries are in plentiful supply at the moment and make a yummy pie. Perhaps you can try this one if you know someone with a large tree.

### Ingredients

500g of fresh mulberries  
¼ cup of sugar  
100g of butter  
2 tablespoons cornflour  
1 ¾ cup of self raising flour

### Custard

1 cup milk  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 egg yolks  
Dash vanilla essence

### Method

1. Separate the mulberries into two dishes. Put ½ the mulberries in a saucepan. Add a ¼ cup sugar and 2 tablespoons of water to the berries, simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes until the sugar has dissolved and berries are soft and jammy.

2. Add 2 tablespoons of cornflour to the mulberry stew to thicken. Set aside.
3. To make the pastry sift 1 ¾ cup of self raising flour and mix with 100g chopped butter (room temperature) and 2 tablespoons of water. Knead the dough until ready.
4. Roll two lots of pastry – one for the base and another for the lid of the pie to fit 20 x 30cm rectangular cake tin.
5. Place pastry in the bottom of the tin to make a case, add the fresh mulberries then fill it with the mulberry mixture.
6. Cover the mixture with the pastry lid and sprinkle with sugar.
7. Bake for 30-40 minutes 200C until pastry is golden.
8. Serve with custard, ice cream or cream.
9. To make custard, over a low heat place milk, sugar and egg yolks in a saucepan and gently whisk until it thickens – about 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold.



**Toowoomba Mower Centre**  
**Supplying & Servicing**



**Robbie Smith**  
Ph: 4630 2150  
Fax: 4630 2600  
3 Sowden Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350  
robbie@toowoombamowercentre.com.au  
www.toowoombamowercentre.com.au

**Toowoomba Mower Centre**  
**Supplying & Servicing**

2018—2019 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Andrew Hawke

VICE PRESIDENT: Wendy Snigg

SECRETARY: Mike Knight—tcoga.secretary@gmail.com

TREASURER: Linda Mangubhai —tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joanne McClelland, Chris Walpole, Jeanette Walton

#### Coordinating Volunteers

Garden Plot Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

New Member Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

Grants Coordinator: Linda Mangubhai

Communications & Marketing Coordinator: TBC

Newsletter Editor: Carlene Gardiner

Project Coordinators: Andrew Hawke & Jeanette Walton

Newsletter of Toowoomba  
Community Organic Gardens  
Association Inc.

22A Goggs Street  
TOOWOOMBA CITY QLD 4350

[tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com)