



GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

October 2020

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What Has Been Happening at The Gardens

Another month has passed, and the warmer weather seems to have arrived. We started off the month with a very positive meeting with members from the Parks and Recreation section of the Toowoomba Regional Council. The Council is very pleased with the work and progress we have made in the gardens this year. They are keen to support us and work with us to develop a plan for the future development of the gardens.

The Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) and The Committee will be working together to develop a plan of the gardens and how we would like it to look in three to five years time. We were all in agreement that we wanted to see a strong and vibrant gardening community with more active membership and more community plots. We also stressed the importance of the need to upgrade our facilities particularly the toilet and member facilities. The long term plan would be to have a purpose built club house and a propagation area for plants. The key to all of this is of course money. Grants will be applied for and we will also be working to try to raise money to be able to provide these facilities. Once the first draft of the plan has been produced, we will be arranging planning sessions for members to attend to give their feedback. Change is coming to the gardens as they continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community. For that reason, it is important to make sure you take the opportunities provided to give your feedback. Please make sure you actively engage by coming along to the social gardening sessions on a Wednesday and on a Sunday and read the newsletters and emails which will keep you informed.

Our Spring Planning Session was held on September 5 and it was nice to see a few members attending so they could add their views. This was essentially a brainstorming session about what we could plant in the various parts of the garden. It certainly gave us some food for thought and has led us to do some research into the types of plants suggested. The key message which came out of the day was the need to keep in balance the amount of work to maintain areas of the gardens with the number of members who are regularly turning up on a Wednesday and a Sunday to put in the hard work required to achieve this.

The forecast rain has not arrived, but we keep hoping it will come. However, the gardens are very dry, and Toowoomba is still under medium water restrictions. This is another good reason to practice sustainable and organic garden practices as outlined in our Member Handbook. The soil is the most important part of any garden and it must be looked after by mulching and digging in extra compost and manure. Soil that is in good condition and protected with a good layering of mulch retains its moisture and therefore needs less watering. All members of the TCOGA are expected to ensure that their soil condition improves each year.

A core group of our regular dedicated members worked tirelessly during this month to ensure the gardens were looking their best for our Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers event 'Spring in the Garden' which was held on September 20 and 23. We owe a great debt to these members. Just imagine what we could achieve in the gardens if all of members could contribute just a couple of hours each month working in the community areas of the gardens on a Wednesday and a Sunday.

So, it has been a big month let's see what is in store for October.

See you in the gardens.

Wendy Snigg, President TCOGA



Seed Saving to Promote Genetic Diversity

Local Seeds is a marketplace for seed savers. You can buy and sell seeds online. Their mission is to encourage more people to save seeds, to help preserve genetic diversity, and to give people access to seeds that are adapted to their local environment. You can find more information about how it works and register to sell your seeds here: <https://www.localseeds.com.au> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/localseedsau>

COVID-19 Safe Practices at The Gardens

The TCOGA Committee asks that you:

- Do not come to social gardening if you are unwell
- Make sure you sign in when you come to the gardens
- Follow the 1.5m – 2m physical distancing rule at all times
- Please bring your own gardening gloves
- Bring your own cup for morning tea
- There are to be only **two people in the shed** at one time

Soap and hand sanitizer will be provided at the gardens, but members are also encouraged to bring their own.

The link below will keep you up to date with the latest COVID-19 situation and the latest government restrictions and health messages.

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au>

The TCOGA Committee will be following the advice from government to continue to manage this situation.

What to Plant in October

Herbs

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



Sage

Vegetables

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



Snake Beans



WE NEED HELP

For most of this year and especially in the early days of the shut down for Covid-19, a small group of dedicated members have been working hard to maintain and improve the community areas of the gardens.

There has been a great deal of weeding, mulching and planting done to get the Gardens in great shape for the Carnival of Flowers Open Mornings. We have had a lot of comment about how great it all looks and enquiry from visitors. The Open Mornings were a great success and we had excellent sales of plants and marmalade.

Now that the season has started to warm up considerably, all the plants are really putting on a spurt of growth including the weeds! The few workers that have done all the work so far cannot continue the pace, we are tired, and we need help.

We need all the plot holders that have agreed to do 2 hours work per month to now pitch in and help to keep the weeds under control and to help to keep the gardens progressing. Please don't feel that you cannot help us if you are unable to do heavy work, we need helpers with the watering, so if you can hold a hose you can help!

For members to know where the help is needed there is a white board in the shed that you can consult and choose an area that you wish to help in. Each area has a 'supervisor' a person that is familiar with the area and will make sure that your efforts are constructive and that you are not weeding or digging out new plantings, or you are watering where it is needed.

If that person is not available on the day, speak to a Committee Member as they will be aware of where you can help.

It is lovely to get out on these sunny spring days, to socialise with other members and help to maintain our gardens. We look forward to seeing all our plot holders in the coming Wednesday or Sunday mornings.

See you soon!

- Jeanette Walton

SEEDLING SALES

I have a selection of in-season vegetable seedlings for sale.

\$2 for a punnet

BARGAIN!

Toowoomba Mower
Centre
Supplying & Servicing



Toowoomba Mower
Centre
Supplying & Servicing

PLOT HOLDERS JOBS FOR THIS MONTH

FOCUS—Enriching the soil

- * Weeding my plot and surrounding paths / walkway
- * Adding large quantities of organic compost/manure
- * Applying a thick layer of mulch to protect soil
- * Check for pests
- * 2 hours of volunteering in the community areas of the gardens

Quick Notes for Your Calendar

There is very little coming up in the near future unfortunately...

Sunday 18 October - Noosa Botanic Gardens Spring Guided Walk— 8am—9am

<http://noosabotanicgardensfriends.com/event/spring-guided-walk-2/>

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

www.plantexpo.com.au

Spring in The Gardens – TCOF Event

This year we ran our Open Day as part of the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers events. We managed to get our information included in the TCOF brochures which helped get the word out.

Given that COVID-19 has caused so much havoc we were really unsure as to how the event would go. There were also some added complications and compliance processes that need to be met before the event could proceed.

The Committee is delighted to declare our Open Days a success!

Approximately 220–240 people visited the gardens. All of the visitors enjoyed talking to members and commented on how much work has been done in the gardens. Many of the visitors took advantage of the guided tours that we offered. Many of those who took the tour commented on how interesting the tours were and were particularly impressed with the knowledge and interest Clinton passed on during his tours. A big thank you to Clinton who made a special effort to come into the gardens on Sunday as well as his regular Wednesday visits.

There was considerable interest in our Plant Stall as visitors snapped up some great plants at some very competitive prices. A big thank you is due to Jeanette and Lachie who manned the stall throughout the event. We managed to raise approximately \$650 from the plant sales and the donation tins which was an excellent effort. We will be allocating most of this towards our plan to build a large raised bed area for our members with mobility issues. The rest will go to the purchasing of a new urn for members tea and coffee.

A big thank you also goes to all the members who volunteered on the two days to ensure that the event ran smoothly.

Planting Your Spring Vegetables

Vegetables produce the best results when grown quickly and for this a good water supply is necessary. To retain the moisture mulch the crops with compost, hay or grass clippings, leaf mould or rotted animal manure. This will keep the surface roots cool in hot weather as well as providing nutrients as it rots down and also keeps weeding to a minimum.

For a continuous supply of vegetables make small successive sowings, preferably in a north south direction on level sites, or across the contour on a sloping site using retaining materials like timber or bricks to stop the soil eroding. Plant tall crops on the southern side of the bed to prevent them shading smaller plants and endeavour to plant crops together that will mature at the same time so that all can be harvested and the bed prepared for the next planting. Perennial crops like asparagus and rhubarb should be planted in an area of their own where they won't be disturbed.



Pumpkins over a haystack

Consider growing cucurbits such as cucumbers, squash and pumpkins on a climbing frame if space is at a premium. I once had a crop of large pumpkins mature up a camellia tree without being encouraged.



Peas up a dead tree

Remove old crops and put them into the compost bin once they have passed their best and plant new ones.

Grow crops that you personally will use and enjoy. Leaf crops and salad vegetables are a good choice as they quickly lose their freshness after picking and transport to the shops, unlike some root crops that can take a long time to grow and will last well at the greengrocers.

Most crops can be grown from seed sown directly into the garden and the seedlings are usually more vigorous not having had to adjust from being transplanted. Prepare your soil by raking to a fine tilth when just damp, then apply your preferred fertiliser and rake it in. Seed sowing depth depends on the size of the seeds, but most can be planted at a depth of about 1cm. Compost or light materials like vermiculite make good covering as they help retain moisture.

TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COUNCIL WATER RESTRICTIONS

Summer Watering Times in The Gardens: 1 October – 31 March

Toowoomba is still on MEDIUM LEVEL Water Restrictions

You must use a hand-held hose with trigger or twist nozzle.

When can I water my plot?

Monday – No Watering Allowed

Wednesday, Friday and Sunday 5.30pm – 6.30pm

The council has an agreement with us to allow us to water the community and plot areas of the garden on a Wednesday and Sunday social mornings when we meet up to look after the community garden.

Mulberry Conserve

Mulberry trees are producing at their peak at the moment, so if you have access to one or have a friend who has one, try giving this recipe a try. It is pretty simple and quick to make.

Ingredients

2 cups of mulberries

450g (1lb) Sugar

Finely grated rind and juice of 1/2 lemon

Method

1. Wash and destalk the mulberries, place in a saucepan with sugar and lemon. .
2. Stir over low heat until sugar dissolves
3. Increase heat, boil gently 10 minutes, or until conserve jells when tested on a cold saucer.
4. Skim top of jam and turn into a large bowl; stand overnight, turning several times so that berries become plump and well mixed with the juice

5. Pack into hot sterilised jars and seal.

6. Makes 560 ml



2020—2021 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Wendy Snigg

VICE PRESIDENT: Jeanette Walton

SECRETARY: TBA —tcoga.secretary@gmail.com

TREASURER: **Kate Eglitis** —tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joanne McClelland and **Emilio Anteliz**

New Member Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

Newsletter Editor: Carlene Gardiner—tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter of Toowoomba
Community Organic Gardens
Association Inc.

22A Goggs Street

TOOWOOMBA CITY QLD 4350

tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com

Past Newsletters [Link](#)

<https://tcogardens.wordpress.com/newsletters/>