



# GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

October 2021

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August / September 2021

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<https://www.instagram.com/tcogainc/>



## What Has Been Happening at The Gardens

The interested parties met with the Council to discuss our plans for the Disability Garden area, (which will be known as the Accessible Garden area). This is all to do with the Grants. The Council representatives were impressed by the planning of the Subcommittees and the enthusiasm for these projects.

Sometimes my head is in a whirl with the number of exciting projects that our members want to do. It is about their enthusiasm, learning, experimenting, problem solving, sharing and an interesting newsletter article. So if you have a project you wish to undertake, talk to a Committee member, or better still, come to the meetings with a brief outline of what you want. Then it will be discussed, budgeted and some help will be arranged if you need it.

We were approached by a tutor from U3A (The University of the Third Age), to give a talk on organic gardening. It was a fun morning out. Lots of discussion and questions which thankfully we were able to answer. The following week the group visited us at the Gardens. They enjoyed their morning and were surprised that it was so big and diverse (and also that they actually exist). Thank you to Ken for helping out. We are lucky to have such a wonderful space to share.

We have been enjoying some wonderful morning teas. Gee there are some great, innovative cooks. Ritu brought some food using vegetables harvested from the garden. What a beautiful gift that was. We really enjoyed it.

The Carnival of Flowers was a huge success for the Toowoomba region. For us at the Gardens, we were very busy with tours and discussion with people who care about growing their own food.

Gardeners are great recyclers. We see another use for things, or we say someone else might need it. At the moment we are asking if you could collect up small jam bottles, small pots, bread tags, the milk bottle tops and 2 litre plastic bottles.

The tank which was donated by the Council is in place. A big thank you to Ken (again) for the excellent job of installing it. We appreciate all your efforts. It is wonderful to have people who are willing to give up their time and use their expertise to complete projects. **That is what a Community Garden is all about.**

See you at the garden

Joanne

President



**TOOWOOMBA**  
*community*  
**ORGANIC GARDENS**

## Bush Foods in The Gardens

The bush food garden used to be very extensive as it was considered to be a very important garden for TCOG. Sadly, it was destroyed a few years ago and we are having to replant it. There are still some of the original food sources, such as the blue quandong tree and the lemon scented Myrtle but we lost the finger lime (now in fashion and selling for high prices in London!) The Warrigal greens are a useful, edible ground cover. Not everyone has room for a tall Davidson Plum (height 6-8m) but maybe you could consider the following small plants?

- Native raspberry (*Rubis rosifolius*) is delicious! It is a suckering shrub, up to 1.5m tall and I have eaten it at Goomburra and Eungella National parks. It is fruiting at the moment in the bush food garden.
- Old man saltbush (*Atriplex nummularia*) is a fast growing shrub and both leaves and seeds can be eaten. Cook the leaves with meat and you have a natural salty flavour. It has the advantage in that it can be grown in poor soils - sandy, salty or dry - though you need to water the plant initially to establish it.
- Warrigal greens can be used to make pesto and can be used as an alternative to English spinach.
- Finger lime can grow to 4-6m in a rainforest, but it will stay small in a suburban garden. There is also a round lime which can be grown in a pot. These limes can be used to give fish a citrus tang, or the 'pearls' can decorate a pavlova .
- Bush mint (*Mentha satureioides*) has a smell similar to other common mints and can be used in the same way. Grow this mint in a pot to stop it from spreading too far!

Check out your local native nurseries for plants suitable to your garden.

For a great cup of tea, add two leaves of Lemon Myrtle to hot water. Both the fruit of the Blue quandong and an infusion of lemon myrtle have a tangy citrus taste. The Blue quandong tree is a fast growing tree and the specimen at TCOG dominates the bush food garden.

- Linda



## 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		



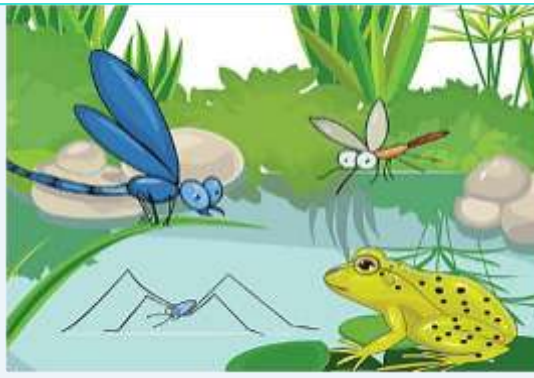
**Marigold**

### 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,	Turnip
Capsicum	Snow & Dwarf	Watermelon
Carrots	Potatoes	Yacon
Celeriac	Pumpkin	Zucchini
Celery	Radish	
Chinese Cabbage	Rhubarb Crowns	
Cucumber	Rockmelon	
Daikon	Rosella	
Eggplant	Salsify	
	Shallots	



**Okra**



## COMMUNITY GARDENS AND BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity in our Community Gardens is important as it supports human beings to live sustainably on a smaller scale in urban settings. Sustainability is important for the health and wellbeing of people and the broader community (both locally and globally).

Biodiversity underpins sustainability through the creation, recreation, and maintenance of healthy ecosystems (which includes vegetation, invertebrates, vertebrates, fungi, etc). Through biodiversity we learn to observe, interact, understand, and 'partner' with our natural environment. Community Gardens, (though on a small scale), are places where we learn to observe, interact, understand, and 'partner' with our natural environment. Green spaces such as Community Gardens not only provide humans with peaceful places where we can contemplate and reflect on Nature and the Universe; but also provide space for growing vegetables, herbs, and plants that benefit our physical and mental health.



This Biodiversity also supports humans to engage with and modify habitats if important species are missing from this habitat. This could include wildlife such as mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. It may also include the many species of native plants which can support this wildlife. When environments are biodiverse, humans and hopefully all species within them, are more peaceful and relaxed in their environments and ecosystems. This is likely to have a ripple effect on local neighbourhoods and urban environments.

Have you seen our worm farm and frog pond at the Community Gardens, or perhaps you have seen our Kookaburras, Skinks and our Blue Tongue Lizard? And what about all the Busy Bees enjoying the Borage flowers ('Bees' Bread)? And don't forget the Acacias, Lemon Myrtles, and Mulberry Trees, sweetpeas and sunflowers. Next time you take a stroll through the Community Gardens take note of all the species living or visiting there. You will be amazed!

- Lyndell

## Comfrey and Borage Liquid Fertilisers

Hello fellow gardeners, I'm a new member and am assisting Carrie with tending the worm farms. Alongside the worm farms there are two drums in which I will be concocting a comfrey brew and a borage brew to be used as a liquid fertiliser. We will be able to use this on the gardens and sell containers of it on open days.

The comfrey liquid tea is high in phosphorus, potassium, calcium and nitrogen.

The comfrey liquid is a gentle liquid fertiliser and is to be diluted 50% liquid with 50% water and can be applied to the base of the plant, or as a foliar feed.

The borage liquid fertiliser is high in nitrogen and potassium and is to be diluted 1 part borage brew to 10 parts water.

We will have this running in the next week or so and it will be ready to use in 3-4 weeks.

Donations of empty 2 litre milk or juice containers would be very welcome.

*Happy gardening, Sharon*



Comfrey



Borage



## Perfect Pepinos

The Pepino is also known as a Sweet Cucumber (in its native Central America), or a Melon Pear (South America). It is part of the *Solanaceae* family.

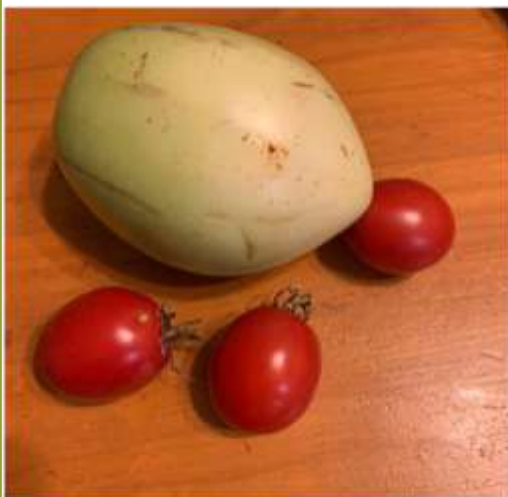
It grows as a perennial bushy shrub, which produces fruit for many months, often all year in warmer climates.



The bush produces clusters of purple and white flowers and although self-fertile, bees do help. The fruit is pale green, and as it grows larger and matures, it develops a purple stripe. At maturity it will also go yellow, still with the purple stripe.



The bush does best in a well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5 – 7.5. Use plenty of compost or worm castings. However, avoid manures, or other fertilisers which have higher nitrogen content to potassium or phosphorus contents, to get more fruit, and fewer leaves.



Pepinos will grow in a variety of climates, but although it prefers warmth, it will withstand short periods around 0°C if cut right back after fruiting and covered during frosts.

Use a trellis to stabilise the bush against strong winds and support the branches which grow quite heavy with fruit. If left to trail on the ground, fruit is more accessible to wandering wildlife. Tie branches for support as they grow.



One bush will spread to about 1 metre high and wide.

- Rosemary

## Christmas Party in November

We have set the date for the members Christmas Party:

Sunday 28 November 11am – 2pm at the Gardens



Please bring a plate to share and a gift to exchange – hand-made to the value of no more than \$10 (cuttings / jam / craft / sewing / art etc)

Any enquiries please feel free to contact Sharon 0427 655 686

## Carrot and Chickpea Salad

With daytime temperatures about to start climbing your mind may just turn to salad making...

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 can chickpeas drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped white, red or spring onion

### Method

1. Whisk olive oil, lemon juice, cumin, salt and black pepper together in a bowl until dressing is smooth
2. Add carrots, chickpeas, parsley and onion and toss to coat.

It can be eaten immediately or can keep in the fridge for two days.



## Quick Notes for Your Calendar

**Saturday 16 October - TCOGA Meeting at The Gardens—at 10.00am**

Major gardening events are still being cancelled due to public health concerns

<p><b>Toowoomba Mower Centre Supplying &amp; Servicing 3 Sowden St, Toowoomba</b></p>		<p><b>Toowoomba Mower Centre Supplying &amp; Servicing 4630 2150 <a href="http://toowoombamowercentre.com.au">toowoombamowercentre.com.au</a></b></p>
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### 2021—2022 COMMITTEE

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**Social Coordinator**—Sharon Kinnear

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