



GROWING NATURALLY



Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens Association Incorporated

September 2021

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President's Report

My first task as President is to thank Wendy, the past President. Many things were achieved: Huge amounts of money in grants; to organise the Gardens to be COVID safe, (the paperwork was unbelievable on that one); Sausage Sizzles at Bunnings; building a great working relationship with Toowoomba Regional Council; Wendy's eye for detail and procedure with paperwork. The time and effort that was put in for the Gardens was incredible. Her dedication and vision is inspiring.

My leadership style will be a lot more relaxed. I make no apologies for that.

I can only speak for myself, but I believe that it is you, the members, who will run the Gardens. The Gardens are all about each of us, but not in a selfish way. We will work together to make great things happen.

For the Gardens to progress and not stagnate, I would love to see members work on projects that interest them and which will inspire them. Your ideas will be valued. Be involved. Be passionate about the Gardens.

My vision is for a strong community of passionate, caring, giving people who come together to share their strengths and weaknesses, their time, effort, ideas, knowledge, talents and their friendship in a safe space.

Let this wonderful space we are lucky to have, be rich with positivity, open discussion, support, laughter and camaraderie.

Let us now focus on the future.

Joanne McClelland

President

What Has Been Happening at The Gardens

Everyone has been busy getting things under control for the Gardens to look their best for the Carnival of Flowers. Hopefully it will be like last year, with over 200 visitors giving lots of positive feedback. We are developing a very good reputation for quality plants at a very reasonable price at the Open Days held during the Carnival, so hopefully you have some plants potted up



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



TOOWOOMBA
community
ORGANIC GARDENS

What Has Been Happening at The Gardens (*continued...*)

to sell, as this is a major fundraiser for us. If you need pots for your donated plants, we have plenty floating around. We are looking for lots of help on the open days to take people on guided tours, to answer questions people might have and help setting up and packing up please.

The mountain of mulch is quickly disappearing to where it is needed in the orchard and permaculture garden.

The sub-committees for the Grant money have been busy in the planning and consultation stage. We value member's ideas and suggestions, so please come forward and raise your ideas. Any questions, feel free to ask when you are at the Gardens.

The driveway is in a bit of a mess due to the construction next door. A Colorbond fence will be reinstated in the coming weeks, so we will get our car park back and also some money to replant our garden. At this stage the talk is about native plants and working with the Crows Nest Nursery to supply the plants. The free plant vouchers that come with the rates notice can be used. So, if you don't want yours, please consider donating it to the Gardens.

Morning tea is abuzz with conversions and laughter. It is a valuable time for us to socialize, problem solve and share. Speaking of sharing, please remember to bring a plate of goodies (savory or sweet) for the table. It's a great conversation starter, plus it revitalizes us to get some more work done before it is time to go home.

We are back on tank water, so water restrictions are back in place. The water is on daily from 7am to 10am. On Social days, Wednesdays and Sundays, it is on longer. Please conserve the water by mulching and remembering to check that the taps are turned off properly. Thank you.

See you at the Gardens

Joanne

What to Plant in September

Herbs

Alfalfa / Lucerne	Chives—Garlic	Oregano
Amaranthus	Coriander	Parsley
Angelica	Corn Salad	Salad Burnet
Anise Hyssop	Cow Pea	Salad Rocket
Basil	Dandelion	Sage
Borage	Dill	Savory
Buckwheat	Endive	Spring Onion
Burdock	Evening Primrose	Thyme
Carraway	Fennel	Watercress
Catnip	Feverfew	
Chickory	Horseradish	
Chamomile	Hyssop	
Chervil	Lemon Balm	
Chia	Loofah	
Chilli	Marjoram	
Chives	Mint	
	Nasturtium	



Nasturtium

Vegetables

Artichoke—Globe	Kohl Rabi	Squash
Asparagus Crowns	Leek	Silverbeet
Beans—Climbing & Dwarf	Lettuce	Shallots
Beetroot	Marrow	Spinach
Broccoli	Mizuna	Spring Onion
Cabbage	Mustard Greens	Squash
Cape Gooseberry	Parsnip	Sunflower
Capsicum	Peas—Climbing, Snow & Dwarf	Sweetcorn & Maize (frost tender)
Carrots	Potatoes (frost tender)	Sweet Potato
Celeriac	Pumpkin (frost tender)	Swede
Celery	Radish	Squash
Cucumber	Rhubarb	Tomatillo
Daikon	Rockmelon (frost tender)	Tomato
Eggplant	Salsify	Turnip
Jerusalem Artichoke		Zucchini
Kale		

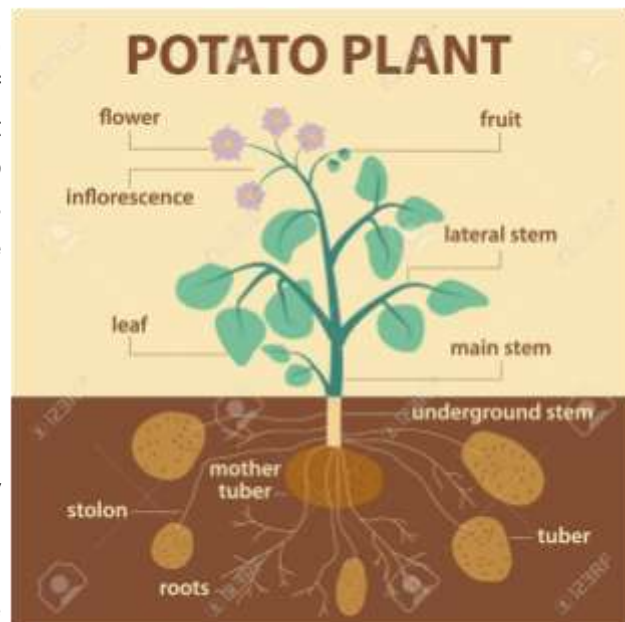


Plentiful Potatoes

Given how common and familiar they are it might surprise you to learn that the humble potato originated in the Andes Mountains of South America. The (reasonably poisonous) wild potato was first cultivated around 8000 years ago by Andean indigenous tribes, who over time developed less toxic, more palatable varieties. Potatoes were then brought to Europe by the Spanish Conquistadors in the 1500s. From there, via the effects of European colonisation, potatoes were introduced to the rest of the world.

Soil Preparation

Potatoes prefer rich, slightly acidic soil that has been prepared with well-rotted organic matter and blood and bone. Because they appreciate acidic soil, it is recommended that they be fertilised with a specialty fertiliser for acid loving plants during the growing period. Sufficient drainage is crucial for potatoes as they will rot in the ground if they are sitting in water, so steer away from planting in low lying areas, or in heavy, waterlogged soils. Seed potatoes should be buried 10 to 15 centimetres deep and watered well after planting. [Lining the trench with comfrey leaves, which have a high potassium content and decompose quickly, gives them a nutrient boost too. Ed.]



Growing

While potatoes will rot in wet soil, they are pretty thirsty plants. Your potatoes need to have moist soil at all times. They won't appreciate drying out. Once your potato plant has grown 15 to 20 cm in height, they can be hilled up to protect your growing tubers from sunlight. Hilling up, involves burying the stems of the plant in soil, compost or mulch, leaving only the top few leaves exposed. This process can be repeated a second time, once the plant has grown another 15 to 20 cm.



Growing in small spaces

With space at a premium in so many modern homes, growing potatoes in containers means that you can even grow them on an apartment balcony. The sky is the limit when it comes to what you can grow your potatoes in. You can buy specialty potato grow bags, but large pots, tall laundry baskets or even your empty plastic compost bags will work a treat. Really, any container that will hold enough soil and has adequate drainage will work. Potatoes have also been grown in tyre towers, although from an organic perspective it isn't recommended due to the chemicals and heavy metals that can be present.

Harvesting

Depending on your potato variety, your harvesting time can be anywhere from 12 to 20 weeks after planting. The easiest way to work out when your potatoes are ready to harvest is by looking for changing leaf colour. When the lowest leaves of your potato plant start to yellow, you can harvest new potatoes. You can either harvest the entire plant or you can 'bandicoot' around the base of the plant to take a few new potatoes and leave the rest to mature fully. Your potatoes will be fully matured when most of the plant has yellowed, or when it has died back completely. Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place, away from direct sunlight, because no one likes a green potato.



- Susan Peterson

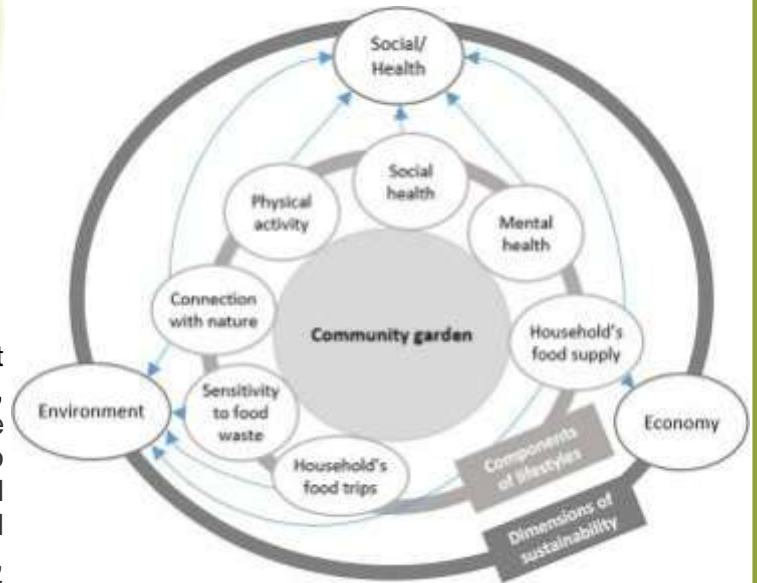
[The green colour is a useful indicator that levels of certain toxins that are harmful to humans, known as glycoalkaloids, may be increased and they therefore should not be eaten. Ed.]

Community Gardens and their Benefits for People's Wellbeing and the Environment

Community gardens have been the object of research owing to their benefits for people, communities and the environment. A review of different research papers revealed these multiple benefits. The following paragraphs outline some of these benefits according to different researchers.



Community gardens help with food security on a small scale, but they do not solve the issue of feeding big populations. However, there are some specific benefits for the community that go beyond simply providing food.



Community gardens help to create awareness about environmental issues such as climate change, recycling, soil protection, or water wise use. Among the environmental benefits, community gardens help to reduce the heat-island effect in cities, sustain and increase biodiversity, reduce rain runoff, recycle local organic materials to produce compost, or worm juice, help to extend the lifespan of landfills, support soil formation and its quality, foster nutrient cycling and reduce fossil fuel use from food transport.

Community gardens are open classrooms where the community can acquire information about healthy diet habits such as consuming fresh vegetables or fruits, and where they can share knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition and health, as well as being part of the interactions among the members. Community gardens are a vehicle for keeping and disseminating the culinary traditions from different cultures, thereby providing a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share their traditions.



Interacting with plants and having access to nature help to reduce stress and increase gardeners' sense of wellness and belonging. Also, they create associations to counteract problems of the modern society such as loneliness, the reduction of social ties in older adults, a lack of movement, or the social exclusion of immigrants, refugees, or marginalised groups.

Gardening requires physical activity and helps to improve overall physical health, endurance, strength, mobility and flexibility. Gardening encourages the use of all motor skills through walking, reaching, bending, digging, planting seeds and taking cuttings, through enjoyable activities no matter your age, ability or interest.

Community gardens are an inclusive environment where everyone is welcome, and the diversity is the common denominator. Therefore, they foster a sense of community identity, ownership and stewardship.



Banana Facts

One banana is a finger

A clump of bananas is a hand

And the whole collection is a bunch!

A banana sucker is a false trunk with lots of rolled up leaf stems. The giant hanging structure contains male flowers and female flowers which develop into the bananas with no pollination taking place. They are easy to grow and we harvest bananas at the Gardens. They will even grow in Tasmania and now you do not need a permit to grow bananas.

Bananas love organic matter and a soil pH about 6.5 and they are grown from suckers from existing clumps.

Cultivars include:

1. The usual Cavendish from the supermarket
2. The more expensive lady finger which I think last longer and have a better flavour
3. The Red Dacca which is the **best** and is found sometimes at the Cobb and Co market - if you get up early enough
4. Plantain varieties which are usually cooked as they are starchy
5. 5 Blue Java with a blue skin and a very soft flesh

Banana leaves make great plates with no washing up and they are compostable!

- Linda



Quick Notes for Your Calendar

1-30 September—Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers

<http://tcof.com.au/>

9—11 September—Laidley Spring Festival

<https://www.laidleyspringfestival.com/whats-on>

17—22 September—Toowoomba Clivia Show

toowoombacliviasociety.com.au/calendar/event-five-8dtjt

Sunday 19 and Wednesday 22 September—TCOGA Open Days
at The Gardens for Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers

Please come along to help and bring items like plants, jams & preserves to fundraise

25—26 September—Wondai Garden Expo

<https://wondai gardenexpo.com/>

Lumberjack Cake

This is one of my favourite cakes. It is very filling and contains healthy things like fruit!

Ingredients

- 2 large (400g) apples, finely chopped
- 1 cup (200g) chopped, pitted dates
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 cup boiling water
- 125g butter
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 cup sugar, (or less if desired)
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups plain flour

Topping

- 60g butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2/3 cup shredded coconut

Method

1. Grease a deep 19cm square cake tin, line base with paper and grease paper. Combine apples, dates, soda and water in a bowl and let stand until warm.
2. Beat butter, essence and sugar in small bowl with electric mixer until light and creamy, add egg, beat until combined.

3. Transfer mixture to large bowl, stir in sifted flour alternately with apple mixture, pour into prepared pan.
4. Bake in a moderate oven 50 minutes, spread with topping, bake about another 30 minutes, or until topping is golden brown. Cool in pan.

Topping

Combine butter, sugar, milk and coconut in pan, stir over low heat until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved.

Suitable to freeze.

Not suitable to microwave.

- Australian Women's Weekly 1993



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