

# NEWSLETTER

September 2023



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## What has been Happening in August

Hi everyone,

Thank you to the members that came to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday 06 August.

The new committee was elected and will be:

**President:** Kylie Higgins

**Secretary:** Vacant (Interim Kylie Higgins and Judith Wilson)

**Treasurer:** Tim Brett

**Committee Members:** Joanna McClelland, Margaret Lyness and Judith Wilson.

We still had one spot left and Suzanne Alpine has been nominated and makes up the four positions for committee members.

Coordinators are:

**Newsletter:** Angela Langdale

**Plot:** Joanne McClelland

**Media:** Carrie Slack/Linda Mangubhai

**Driveway:** Margaret Lyness

**Pathways:** Pauline Cridland

**Worm Farm:** Sharon Kinnear

**Compost:** Joanne McClelland/Tim Brett

**Accessibility:** Lyndell Chambers

**Permaculture:** Carrie Slack

**Orchard:** Judith Wilson/Michael Lane

**Bush Tucker/Native:** Kylie Higgins

**Wildflower/Native:** Clinton Smith

I would like to express my gratitude to the outgoing committee members for their invaluable contributions over the past 12 months. Your dedication and efforts have played a pivotal role in the growth and success of the Gardens. Additionally, I extend a warm welcome to the new committee members who have stepped forward to take on this important role. Your willingness to contribute your time, skills, and ideas is highly appreciated.

The support of the committee, coordinators, and members is crucial for the success and growth of the gardens. The collective contributions provide the foundation that enables the gardens to thrive, evolve, and become more inclusive and community oriented.

The committee meetings will be held bi-monthly with our first meeting held on Thursday 17 August. During the AGM the Rules of the Association were passed and will be provided to the office of fair trading. Also the new membership category of family was passed and will be included in the membership form. The updated Code of Conduct and TCOGA Handbook have been finalised and members should have received an email with these attached. Please read these as there have been a few modifications.

Unfortunately, it has come to our attention that some members are having produce or items taken out of their gardens without their permission. Please do not help yourself to other members gardens, we have a share table to allow extra produce to be circulated to members.

This winter has been much milder than usual with less rain, and the prediction of the weather forecast for summer is looking to be dry. This will possibly mean that we will be on water restrictions through this summer at the gardens. To prepare for this to help be water wise with your garden, a couple of tips are below for getting your soil right and mulching your garden.

The committee and I look forward to working with you all in achieving a cohesive, creative and fun community through the gardens, 'To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow' by Audrey Hepburn.

Take care and see you at the gardens,

Kylie



# September

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT



**TOOWOOMBA  
CARNIVAL**  
of FLOWERS

Community events in official TCOF program drop into the Toowoomba Visitor Information Centre (86 James St) to grab a physical copy .

**1<sup>st</sup>  
Nambour  
Orchid  
Society  
Spring  
Show**

**2<sup>nd</sup>  
Spring Plants Market -  
Native Plants  
Queensland-Belmont  
IndigiScapes Eco  
Markets-Capalaba  
Toowoomba Farmers  
Market Lindsay st  
Yarraman markets  
Corner D'Aguiar & New  
England Highways**

**3<sup>rd</sup>  
PCYC Markets  
near TCOGA**

**4<sup>th</sup>**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

**6<sup>th</sup>**

**7<sup>th</sup>**

**8<sup>th</sup>  
TCOF Festival  
of Food & Wine:  
Fri 8, Sat 9, Sun  
10 of Sept  
Laidley Spring  
Festival until the  
9<sup>th</sup>  
Glasshouse  
Country Orchid  
Society Spring  
Orchid  
Spectacular-  
Beerwah until the  
9<sup>th</sup>**

**9<sup>th</sup>  
Coucals Open Garden-Mount  
Crosby until the 10<sup>th</sup>  
Beaudesert Districts Orchid  
and Foliage Society Spring  
Show for Orchids & Foliage  
Plants-Canungra,until the 10<sup>th</sup>  
Toowoomba Farmers  
Market  
Yarraman markets**

**10<sup>th</sup>  
PCYC Markets &  
The Makers  
Market,The Goods  
Shed,Victoria street**

**11<sup>th</sup>**

**12<sup>th</sup>**

**13<sup>th</sup>**

**14<sup>th</sup>**

**15<sup>th</sup>  
TCOF Sideshow  
alley  
15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>  
-queens park  
TCOF Ferris  
wheel 15<sup>th</sup> to  
30<sup>th</sup>-queens park**

**16<sup>th</sup>  
TCOF Grand Central Floral  
Parade  
Eastern District Orchid  
Society Inc. Spring  
Show,Belmont until the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Toowoomba Farmers  
Market,Yarraman markets**

**17<sup>th</sup>  
PCYC Markets  
&  
Queens park  
markets  
Oakey Lions  
Sunday markets  
Campbell St, Oakey**

**18<sup>th</sup>**

**19<sup>th</sup>**

**20<sup>th</sup>**

**21<sup>st</sup>**

**22<sup>nd</sup>**

**23<sup>rd</sup>  
Therapeutic Horticulture  
Australia-Morning tea at  
TCOGA 10am  
Friends of Noosa Botanic  
Gardens Plant Sale-Noosa  
Botanical gardens  
Wondai Spring Garden  
Expo  
Gold Coast Rose Society  
Annual Show-Robina until the  
24<sup>th</sup>  
Ipswich Garden  
Spectacular-Silkstone  
Toowoomba Farmers  
Market,Yarraman markets**

**24<sup>th</sup>  
World Rivers Day  
PCYC Markets,  
Carbarlah Markets  
& Bunya Mountains  
Markets**

**25<sup>th</sup>**

**26<sup>th</sup>**

**27<sup>th</sup>**

**28<sup>th</sup>**

**29<sup>th</sup>  
Springtime  
on the  
Mountain-  
Tamborine  
mountain  
until the 30<sup>th</sup>**

**30<sup>th</sup>  
Moreton Bay Eco Fest-  
Caboolture town square  
Twin Towns & District Garden  
Club Flower & Garden Show  
Bromeliad & Tropicals Spring  
Show & Sale-Bray park  
Queensland Rose Society  
Spring Rose Show-Mt coot-tha**



## Plant profile at the Gardens-Custard Apples



Custard apples are a decadent and deliciously sweet sub-tropical fruit. The Australian custard apple is a hybrid of the sugar apple (*Annona squamosa*) and the cherimoya (*Annona cherimola*), and is unique to any other custard apples grown around the world. Originally native to South America, this luscious and flavoursome fruit has Australia as its largest commercial producer.

### How they grow

Custard Apples love growing in sub-tropical climates. They are large and spreading as a tree or perform well grown on a trellis (depending on the variety). The trees set many light-yellow coloured trumpet shaped flowers that emit a pungent, sweet smell especially in the late afternoon when the male pollen sacs burst open. Of these flowers, only a small number will set fruit.

The fruit takes between 20 and 25 weeks to reach maturity in sub-tropical climates where the days are not too warm and the nights not too cool.

### There are several Australian varieties

The two main varieties of Custard Apples, are the Pinks Mammoth and the African Pride. Fortunately for custard apples lovers, new varieties have started to emerge, as time has evolved.

These new varieties all started their life as a 'bud sport'. Essentially, this is the part of the plant that displays morphological differences from the remainder of the plant. In these cases, it was the fruit. The cause is generally considered to be a chance genetic mutation. The Hilary White, the KJ Pinks and the PinksBlush Custard Apples can be traced back to the Pinks Mammoth variety.

Australian custard apples are juicy, creamy, sweet and fragrant, with a tropical aroma and hints of vanilla. The cream-coloured flesh is soft and custard-like.

### How to choose the perfect custard apple

Custard Apples are generally pale green with knobbly skin, and have soft, sweet flesh with brown seeds.

The best time to enjoy the fruit is during autumn and winter, making custard apples a sweet and tropical treat during the colder months of the year. Although as new varieties are being developed, the season is extending to early summer.

### Tips to choose custard apples:

Shelf life is short, so buy smaller quantities more frequently.

Choose fruit that is pale green and firmer.

Avoid small (under 300g) and dark green (immature) fruit.

Ripe custard apples will give slightly under pressure when squeezed, similar to an avocado.

Custard apples have a fragile exterior, so a couple of spots or blemishes on the skin are normal. The inside flesh will still be of great quality.

Once the skin has turned purple or black, fruit has surpassed the best eating quality

### Tips to store custard apples:

Fruit that is firm to touch are best stored at room temperature and covered to hold their own warmth.

The best temperature range for ripening is 18 deg C to 24 deg C

It usually takes a few days for the fruit to be ready for consumption

To speed up the ripening process, place custard apples in a paper bag with a banana

Once ripe, store custard apples in the fridge and enjoy within three days

To experience the best taste, take fruit out of fridge and wait about five minutes before eating

### Nutrition

Custard apples provide sugars that give sustained energy and do not over react the body's insulin output like processed sugars. These sugars designed by nature are complemented by other natural products such as vitamins, minerals, fibre and protein necessary for energy production.

Vitamin Vitality-Custard apples are a well-balanced food having protein, fibre, minerals, vitamins, energy and little fat. This fruit is an excellent source of Vitamin C, a good source of dietary fibre, a useful source of Vitamin B6, magnesium and potassium, and with some B2 and complex carbohydrate.

Helps with Vitamin C:-100g of flesh will provide over 110% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin C. If eaten daily, a small custard apple weighing around 250grams is sufficient to obtain a person's Vitamin C intake, without the need for additional supplements. Custard apples also contain :Magnesium,potassium,calcium and copper.

<https://www.custardapple.com.au/>

## Mary Mountford

Have you received your copy of the latest telephone directory?



*Here is a (daily) reminder to everyone in our region that great green vegetables are only a spade of earth away; gardening is for all ages*

*Who else can you spot in the picture?*

**A reminder to gardeners who rent plots at TCOGA:**

PLEASE wash and put away tools as thieves are about when we are not:

*Extract from our 2011 newsletter showing Mary Mountford on the front cover of the Toowoomba white pages - with little gardeners too*

Mary Mountford was part of the history of the Toowoomba Community Organic Gardens long before this name was adopted. Gardening was her passion which she might have inherited from her mother; she put heart and soul into the Community Gardens. No job was too big or too small for her: she was a powerful digger! Mary was a 'no nonsense' person: kind, but prickly. However, you always knew what you were getting with Mary. During the high and low points in the Gardens history, she was always present. She helped our maize growers to establish their plots; she introduced us to circle gardens, and it was a family concern. She persuaded her ex-husband to be our treasurer; her son, Andrew, was always commandeered for hard digging and we got to know her son Bruce when he came down to the Gardens with his carer. The whole of Toowoomba got to know of Mary when she was on the front of the Telstra telephone directory. Mary was a character, a worker, and a good friend to the Community Gardens. We hope to honour her contributions with the planting of a fruit tree.





# What to Plant in September

Angelica  
 Alfalfa  
 Anise/Hyssop  
 Artichoke  
 Beans  
 Beetroot  
 Bok Choy  
 Borage  
 Broccoli  
 Cabbage  
 Calendula  
 Camomile  
 Cape Gooseberry  
 Catnip  
 Carrots  
 Caraway  
 Celeriac  
 Celery  
 Chervil  
 Chickory  
 Chives  
 Coriander  
 Dandelion  
 Dill  
 Echinacea  
 Endive  
 Evening primrose  
 Feverfew  
 Fennel  
 Fenugreek  
 Hyssop  
 Jerusalem Artichoke  
 Kale

Kohl Rabi  
 Leeks  
 Lemon balm  
 Lettuce  
 Marigold  
 Marjoram  
 Mizuna  
 Mustard  
 Mustard greens  
 Nasturtium  
 Oregano  
 Parsley  
 Pea-Climbing, Snow and  
 Dwarf  
 Potatoes  
 Radish  
 Rhubarb  
 Sage  
 Salad Burnett  
 Salad Rocket  
 Salsify  
 Shallots  
 Silverbeet  
 Spinach  
 Spring onion  
 Strawberries  
 Swedes  
 Thyme  
 Tomato  
 Turnip  
 Vetch  
 Watercress

**What to look for  
 Harvesting  
 (Toowoomba -Darling  
 Downs/TCOGA)  
 approximate:**  
 Asian Greens  
 Asparagus  
 Avocado  
 Bananas  
 Beans  
 Broad Beans  
 Beetroot  
 Broccoli  
 Cabbage  
 Carrots  
 Cauliflower  
 Citrus  
 Celery  
 Custard apple  
 Edible flowers  
 Fennel  
 Ginger  
 Herbs  
 Kale  
 Leeks  
 Lettuce  
 Parsnips  
 Pumpkins  
 Radish  
 Rhubarb  
 Silverbeet  
 Snow peas  
 Spring onions  
 Strawberries  
 Swedes  
 Turnips

# Recipe of the Month-Edible Flower Cookies

## INGREDIENTS

### Dough

- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons orange zest
- 1 tablespoon lime zest
- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter softened at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- 2.5 cups (314 grams) all purpose flour
- 1 8<sup>th</sup> of a tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves \*optional\* finely minced

### Flower Topping

- Fresh Pansy Blossoms of desired colour or other edible flower of choice like violas
- Mint Leaves
- granulated sugar for sprinkling

### Egg Wash

- 1 large egg white lightly beaten



As the Carnival of Flowers is approaching our flowers will be in full bloom, many of them being edible. This recipe from [twocupsfLOUR.com](http://twocupsfLOUR.com) looks quite interesting and very suitable for Carnival of Flowers.

If your not too sure which flowers are edible there is an article in the July newsletter about which ones are edible.

## METHOD

### Step 1-preheat

Preheat oven to 160 C and line two large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

### Step 2-Stir ,mix and chill

In a medium bowl stir together the sugar, orange zest and lime zest to make a citrus sugar mixture using a fork or small whisk and let sit a couple of minutes.

Transfer the citrus sugar to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the softened unsalted butter and vanilla, then beat together on medium for 3-5 minutes until light and fluffy.

Add the flour mixture to the creamed butter and mix again on medium low until a cookie dough consistency is formed.

Dough should be moist but firm. (if you feel it is dry add a tablespoon of milk. Dough should NOT be sticky)

Remove the dough from the bowl and divide into two halves. Shape each half into a disc and wrap in plastic wrap.

Place the dough in the fridge to chill for 30 minutes.

### Step 3-Roll and cut

Place one half on a gently floured surface and roll out to ¼ inch thickness.

Use a 2.5-3 inch cookie cutter to cut out as many cookies as you can.

Transfer cookies to prepared baking trays, spacing 1-2 inches apart.

### Step4-brush and decorate

Using a pastry brush, gently coat a thin layer of beaten egg white onto the centre of each cookie. Then, gently press a flower blossom slightly onto the surface. The back of the blossom may need to sink into the dough for petals to lay flat. Sprinkle lightly with sugar.

Place the entire tray into the fridge for 10-15 minutes to make sure cookie dough is cold before baking.

### Step 5-Bake

Place trays on the centre rack of the oven. Bake for 14-16 minutes or until edges start to slightly golden in colour. Bake time may differ between ovens, so keep an eye on the first batch.

Place cookie sheet on a wire rack and let cool for 5 minutes. Then, using a spatula, transfer cookies off the pan and directly onto the wire rack to cool completely.

Repeat with remaining half of dough.



# Gardening Tips for September

## Maintenance

**Pruning** - Remove spent flowers and tip prune natives if they need it and keep an eye out for pests such as aphids.

It's a great time to fertilise the garden as plants burst into life especially citrus.

For natives be sure to use a low phosphorous mix.

Your lawn will also benefit from a feed. Anywhere that's looking a bit patchy, sow new seed. Sowing now means it will have a chance to put on some growth before it gets too hot.

Tip: never fertilise on a really hot day. And be sure to water in effectively after application.

## Improve your soil

The key to establishing and maintaining a water-efficient garden is understanding your soil. Soils with high water-holding capacity, ample depth, effective infiltration and good drainage need less frequent watering and make best use of available rainfall.

A good, productive garden starts from the ground up, so revitalise and rejuvenate your soil by adding organic matter such as manures and compost, making sure that it is chemical free.

## Use mulch

Benefits of garden mulch

- It can reduce your need to water by 70%
- It reduces weeds that can compete for water, light and space
- It reduces weed-seed germination and makes it easier to pull out weeds
- It slows down rain run-off
- It insulates your soil and adds nutrients

Using mulch liberally and regularly helps retain soil moisture. It does this by reducing evaporation, restricting weed growth and improving soil structure as it breaks down. It also improves plant growth by providing insulation for plant roots.

Choose the right mulch - There are many different types of mulch to choose from: Organic mulch, such as sugar cane, pea mulch or pine bark, will decompose over time and help improve your soil.

Organic mulch should be reapplied frequently, preferably in autumn and spring, to replace the broken-down mulch.

## Planting

In September it's all about tomatoes. It's the best time to get them in to ensure a good crop before it gets too hot. There's a huge variety available in sizes and colours ranging from red to black, yellow and striped. As well as heirloom and cherries. When they're home grown, they taste delicious. Tomatoes grow well in pots, hanging baskets or in the ground.

Plant seed in pre-moistened soil and in about a week the seedlings should emerge. Fertilise every few weeks when the plants are growing.

Growing tomatoes is a great project for kids. Buy some seed and plant in little pots. Kids can watch them germinate and grow into fruiting plants.

Plant in a sunny well-drained position. It's preferable to select a patch that hasn't grown tomatoes the previous season. Mix in organic compost before planting. Remember to keep plants well-watered and feed regularly. Stake larger growing varieties.

Favourite varieties to plant range from truss tomatoes to the larger Beefsteak and another beauty is Roma. It has a high yield, fewer pest problems and is a wonderful cooking variety. Tigerella with its stripes and sweet flavour is another to look out for.

Also plant hibiscus. Plant these unsung heroes in a sunny spot and they will reward with spectacular flowers. They like well-drained slightly acidic soil.

Water regularly and, mulch with sugar cane or lucerne to protect the roots and retain water

It's also a good to plant evergreen trees such as eucalypts and acacias. There are many eucalypts that are ideal for the backyard. These plants have beautiful flowers, foliage, fruit and bark.

It's a great time to get edibles into the ground too. Try chillies, eggplant, sweet corn and cucurbits such as pumpkins, squash and cucumbers. These veggies will do well in a sunny spot.

## Harvest

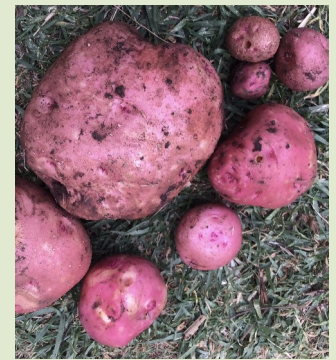
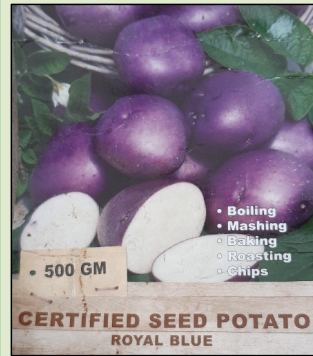
In September harvesting the last of the cabbages, cauliflowers, and broccoli.

Ginger and bananas are coming into season. They'll be sure to taste extra good because they are from your garden.

Gardeners get excited about spring. It's absolutely the best time of year as there's so much colour, and plenty to do.

# Organic Potatoes

Organic potatoes – yes please!



What is dinner without roast potatoes? or chips? or mash?

The potato is in the same family of plants as egg plant, tomato, and chilli. Did you know there are about 4000 varieties of potatoes which originated in the Andes of South America? How many varieties do you see on the supermarket shelves? The choice is usually 'washed' or 'unwashed'!

Potatoes are rich in vitamin C and a source of potassium; potato skins contain fibre so important for gut health. They are also a source of starch that is beneficial for our gut microbes because it is resistant to digestion but can be broken down by our own gut bacteria, providing them with fuel to function and thrive. (A note of caution: never eat green potatoes as they have been exposed to too much light and they develop the toxin Solanine.)

Traditionally, August is the month to plant potatoes - I always hear Mary Mountford telling me that this was her mother's advice.

However, I have just harvested a bumper crop and I think I planted them early this year. (A garden diary would be useful!) We are advised to buy seed potatoes from the nurseries, but I often use the potatoes from my kitchen which have sprouted 'eyes'. I like the varieties 'Dutch Cream' (grown widely in Tasmania) and 'Kipfler' which are expensive to buy when available. This year I had to buy 'Royal Blue' – sometimes you must break out of your comfort zone! There are lots of methods of growing potatoes, but common steps are:

- Dig a trench /hole.
  - Line with comfrey leaves (which decompose quickly giving your potatoes a nutrient boost).
  - Add the seed potatoes and cover with soil.
  - As the plants grow hill them up with more soil (or compost or mulch) leaving only a few leaves exposed.
  - Continue hilling up as the plants grow tall. Keep watering.
  - When the leaves start to turn yellow (12-20 weeks after planting) you can harvest your crop.
- Complete dieback is also a good time.

## My method:

In my plot at TCOG I have a tall white bucket with the bottom cut out. It is placed in a sunny position.

I have added compost and manure to the bottom and then comfrey leaves and then threw in 3-4 seed potatoes. I will then follow the steps above.

## Carrie's easy method:

"I dug up a few remaining tiny potatoes in my garden at the beginning of the year and left them on top of the soil.

The next week I covered the whole garden in thick sugar cane mulch and forgot about them until they popped their heads through all the mulch. When I noticed the plant was dying back this week, I dug down and found a couple of huge potatoes as well as six other smaller ones. How easy is that!"

Linda & Carrie

## Visitors at the Gardens

I have organised with the committee for a group of members of Therapeutic Horticulture Australia (THA) to visit the gardens on Saturday 23 September at 10.00am. This visit will be part of an itinerary of garden site visits in Toowoomba over 22-23 September. These THA members who work in the horticultural therapy area, are very interested in community gardens as many of them use community gardens as part of their work. They would love to meet any members who would like to meet them over morning tea on Saturday 23/9, 10am at the Gardens. They are an enthusiastic group and like all gardeners are very generous and encouraging of any endeavours involving plants.

*Susan Stevens*

## Updates at the Gardens

Update of the Garden beds in members garden

If you've been to the gardens you would have seen that we are underway with the project of the removal of the old garden beds. We were incredibly fortunate to receive support from Ron Dolton, who generously donated his time and equipment to carry out the removal of the old garden beds. We received the new garden beds the following day and are working together to assemble and get these beds ready for hire. Thank you to the team members who have been working to help with this project.

## Updates on the website

Our partnership with the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) for the development of the TCGOA website is processing with the committee providing their approval for the chosen platform that will serve as the hosting environment for our new website.

This is a significant step forward in our efforts to enhance our online presence and provide a user-friendly platform for our members and the community to engage with us. Collaborating with USQ brings valuable expertise and resources to the table, ensuring the websites quality and functionality. In the coming weeks, we will be actively working alongside the university's team to curate content and photos that accurately represent the essence and offerings of our community garden. This content will help showcase the diverse range of achievements and initiatives that our garden has to offer. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

## Committee and Contact

### 2023-2024 COMMITTEE

**President:** Kylie Higgins

[Tcoga.president@gmail.com](mailto:Tcoga.president@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Vacant (Interim Kylie Higgins and Judith Wilson)

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

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 **Instagram**

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 **Newsletter Email**


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 **Past Newsletters**

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

 **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/TCOGardens/>

 **Website (new website in progress)**

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