



What has been Happening in March

Hello happy gardeners,

It continues to be a hive of activity at the gardens, with many different projects happening across the park. As we have now come into Autumn, we will be returning to opening hours of 9.00am to 11.30am on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Toowoomba Regional Council (Council) celebrated Parks Week from 4 - 10 March. We had a few visitors that came through the gardens and joined us for morning tea. The open meeting was held on Sunday 17 March: thank you to the members who attended. The purpose of the meeting was to go through the current action plan and identify additional projects/activities to present to Council for the next financial year. The meeting also provided the opportunity for our members to discuss any ideas or workshops they would like to see undertaken at the gardens. We will be continuing to update members in relation to the outcomes for workshops and the action plan.

We are fortunate to have the students from Wilsonton High School at the gardens again, undertaking their volunteering program for the year. Thank you to our members who are volunteering their time each fortnight to assist with the students. There are several projects that have been identified for the students to undertake. If you have any ideas, look in the project book in the shed to see what is happening. On Wednesday 6 March, we had a visit from Member from Groom, Garth Hamilton. On 20 March the University of Southern Queensland conducted a focus group activity; more information is later in the newsletter.

The Council conducted its first round of Community Grants and we have put an application for an irrigation system for the driveway as well as the replacement of the fronts of the compost bays. A big thank you to Linda for putting the grant together and Jo and Margaret for obtaining the quotes. Notification will be in early April: fingers crossed!!

TCOGA is now a member of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce with a 12-month membership being provided and we thank them for their generosity: we look forward to building a positive and productive relationship with them.

Thank you to Rob from the Council for coming and repairing/replacing the taps in the members' garden.

The survey for our insurances has been completed for another year: this will then provide us with another 12 months coverage through Queensland Water and Land Carers Association (QWaLC): We thank QWaLC for their continued support of the community gardens around Australia.

If you are going away over the Easter holiday period and need your garden attended too, ensure you have put this on the whiteboard in the shed.

Membership renewals have now been completed. Unfortunately, we have lost some members but have also gained some so it has balanced itself out. We still have several garden plots in both the Founders and Members Gardens available for hire. Unfortunately, we continue to experience vandalism at the gardens, with more destruction of the banana trees and plants. We will continue to work with the Council and Police regarding this.

Stay safe over the Easter break and see you at the Gardens.

Kylie



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April

Events ■ Public Hols ■ Market Days ■

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 st Easter monday	2 nd Garden corner talk TCOGA- winter vegetables- Toowoomba North Bunnings 	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th Toowoomba Farmers Market Lindsay st Yarraman markets Corner D'Aguiar & New England Highways Crows Nest Markets
7 th PCYC Markets near TCOGA	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets Bunnings west-TCOGA Sausage sizzle volunteer event 
14 th PCYC Markets Makers Market, The Goods Shed	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th Toowoomba Royal show til the 20 th , Toowoomba showground	19 th Toowoomba Royal show holiday	20 th Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets
21 st PCYC Markets & Queens park markets Oakey Lions Sunday markets Campbell St, Oakey	22 nd	23 rd	24 th	25 th Anzac day 	26 th	27 th Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets Autumn vibes twilight market: The Goods shed,victoria street Gardens of the downs: Pittsworth and surrounds,til the 28 th Goombungee-Haden Agricultural show- Goombungee showgrounds
28 th PCYC Markets, Carbarlah Markets, Bunya Mountain Markets	29 th	30 th				

TCOGA News & Events

Visit by Federal Member for Groom – Garth Hamilton

On Wednesday 6 March, Garth Hamilton visited the gardens to discuss opportunities available to us as a community group, have a tour around the gardens and speak with our members at morning tea. Mr Hamilton was very impressed with the gardens, the projects we are undertaking and the dedication of our members in continuing to provide their time and energy at the gardens.

We discussed a number of issues, including the vandalism and opportunities to try and grow our membership. We will keep in contact with Mr Hamilton's office regarding these opportunities and will continue to work with them in relation to the grant for the funding of the education centre/clubhouse. (Currently this project is on hold as we are waiting for in principle agreement from the Council, having responded to numerous questions and providing supporting documentation.)

Mr Hamilton's office is in full support of this grant and the addition of the education centre/clubhouse for the Community Gardens.

Update on the bush tucker garden

We have established a partnership with the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) in relation to placement of students through the School of Agriculture & Environmental Science. The project will be for the students to identify the existing plants within the bush tucker garden, provide additional plants to expand the garden and provide a map with locations, traditional name, use and information on the plants. We are hoping that next semester there will be students that fit the placement requirements to initiate the project.

Community Gardens Galah Session

Community Gardens Australia are holding a session the 4th Sunday of each month from 4pm AEST via Zoom for anyone interested in catching up / chatting with other members from community gardens around Australia. If you are interested in the link, please email tcoga.president@gmail.com.

Heritage Festival – Royal Bull's Head Inn

The National Trust is celebrating the Heritage Festival from 18 April until 19 May with many events being held across Australia. This year's theme is *Connections*, to celebrate the rich and diverse stories of our nation, strengthen cultural and historical ties and encourage the community to forge new bonds. It acknowledges our link to people, places and the past, and the enduring connections that will shape the future of heritage.

On Sunday 5 May from 10am to 4pm at the Royal Bull's Head Inn there will be a market located on the grounds of the Inn. There is a small admission charge for a tour that delves into its rich heritage. There will be many stalls with a focus on heritage and handcrafts. Do go along to immerse yourself in the charm of the past and meet skilled artisans showcasing their craftmanship.

Volunteer Students Program

Some of the members will be unaware that we have a group of seven boys from Wilsonton High School who have committed to spending 2 hours a fortnight throughout the year to help us on a Friday morning.

Jo, Nette, Teddy and Carrie have worked with them in Term 1 and the program is going well as long as we are organised and have an Action Plan to start each session. The boys are keen to get stuck in once they know what they are doing and we have been full of praise for their efforts so far.

In the Permaculture Garden they have mulched the pathways, pulled out the pink flowering invasive plants that were taking over and started two new compost heaps .

We have also made a good start on weeding around the fruit trees, soaking them and adding fertiliser ,then spreading cardboard and mulch .

We want to keep our Action Plans interesting so the boys do a variety of work and we welcome anyone's input and suggestions for things you would like them to do. You can write these up in the back of the School Action book in the shed or speak to Carrie . We would like a couple of extra people to offer assistance occasionally on a Friday, as Carrie and Nette will be away on some of these days and Jo will appreciate some help.



The Olive

The olive, botanical name *Olea europaea*, meaning 'European olive', is a species of small tree or shrub in the family Oleaceae, found traditionally in the Mediterranean Basin. When in shrub form, it is known as *Olea europaea* 'Montra', dwarf olive, or little olive. The species is cultivated in all the countries of the Mediterranean, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, North and South America and South Africa. It is the type species for its genus, *Olea*. The tree and its fruit give their name to the Oleaceae plant family, which also includes species such as lilac, jasmine, forsythia, and the true ash tree.

The olive's fruit, also called an "olive", is of major agricultural importance in the Mediterranean region as the source of olive oil; it is one of the core ingredients in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines. Thousands of cultivars of the olive tree are known. Olive cultivars may be used primarily for oil, eating, or both. Olives cultivated for consumption are generally referred to as "table olives". About 80% of all harvested olives are turned into oil, while about 20% are used as table olives.

What are Olives

With their hard pits surrounded by flesh, olives are actually stone fruits (drupes) like cherries and peaches. But the fruit similarity ends there. Olives have a low sugar content (only 3% to 6%) and high fat content (12% to 30%), while other stone fruits have almost no fat and up to 30% natural sugar content. Olives also contain oleuropein, a bitter compound that makes them inedible when fresh. Green or black, colossal or tiny, all olives must undergo a curing process to remove that bitterness and preserve them. Due to olives' high fat content plus the salt needed to cure them

Difference between Green, Black and Purple

As olives ripen, they turn from bright green to purple to black. Green olives are olives that have been harvested when they are fully mature but haven't changed colour. Black olives are completely ripe when harvested. Purple olives, including Greek kalamatas, are picked somewhere in between the unripe and fully ripe stages. When the olives are picked determines the texture and flavour they will have after curing. Most olives are interchangeable in recipes, but flavours will vary depending on the type you use.

Different curing methods

SPANISH OR LYE CURED: MILD AND MEATY

Castelvetrano, Manzanilla, Gordal, California Ripe, and Mission

Don't be scared by the term "lye-cured": Food-grade lye is a GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) additive that is used to quickly and efficiently extract olives' bitter compounds. Lye curing yields firm olives that range from mild to sweet in flavour and are large enough to be stuffed and sliced. The process is sometimes called Spanish or Seville-style curing because it originated in Spain. Lye curing is used extensively outside Spain, including California, where the addition of an iron compound to black ripe olives makes and keeps turns ripe black olives absolutely jet black.

BRINED: BUTTERY AND TENDER

Kalamata, Sicilian, Picholine, Niçoise, Gaeta, Manzanilla

Brined olives are soaked in a salt solution to draw out their bitter compounds and infuse them with flavour. They can be black, purple, or green and are plump, buttery, and juicy. Brined olives are also the ultimate olive for stuffing because of their size and firmness.

DRY-CURED OR OIL-CURED: ROBUSTLY SALTY AND CHEWY

Greek-style olives, Moroccan Beldi olives, French Nyons olives

Fresh black olives are first crushed or cracked, then packed in salt for a month or more to draw out moisture and bitterness. They're then soaked and rinsed to remove excess salt, dried, and coated in olive oil—which is why they are often labelled as oil-cured olives. Dry-cured olives have a robust flavour and hearty texture that is enhanced when they're tossed with herbs, spices, and citrus.

How to pit Olives

Place olives one by one on a cutting board. Set the flat side of a large chef's knife on top of the olive. Tap on the knife with your fist to flatten the olive and loosen the pit from the flesh. Use your fingers to remove the pit from the cracked olive.

<https://www.forksoverknives.com/how-tos/what-are-olives-types-storage-usage-tips/>
& Wikipedia

- TCOGA participation in USQ focus group on Health and Wellness
- This March, TCOGA members had the pleasure of participating in a focus group conducted at the Gardens as part of a project Working on Wellness (WoW!) in Toowoomba.
- The focus group was facilitated by Melinda Covey-Hansen, Research Assistant at the School of Health and Medical Sciences (Faculty of Health, Engineering and Sciences) University of Southern Queensland.
- The aim of WoW! Toowoomba is to gain an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' and community members' perceptions of obesity and mental health concerns in the Toowoomba region and the TCOGA focus group was one of a number of focus groups being held as part of the WoW! Project.
- TCOGA participants had the opportunity to share their perceptions, knowledge and beliefs of the health concerns, primarily obesity and mental health, for Toowoomba residents. Melinda, as facilitator, was able to take our group through a series of activities to identify factors that help or hinder obesity and mental health, the relationships between these factors and possible solutions.
- The information gathered through the WoW! Project will assist to inform the development of future health promotion programs and advocate for and secure resources to improve obesity and mental health across the region.
- TCOGA participants were therefore able to directly contribute to a future co-developed health promotion program through addressing the needs highlighted by participants.
- We thank Melinda and the WoW! USQ team by providing TCOGA with an opportunity to be involved in this valuable project.



What to Plant in April



Alfalfa
 Angelica
 Anise
 Artichoke
 Asian Greens
 Beans-Broad
 Beetroot
 Borage
 Broccoli
 Brussel sprouts
 Buckwheat
 Cabbage
 Camomile
 Catnip
 Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celeriac
 Celery
 Chickpea
 Chickory
 Coriander
 Dandelion
 Daikon
 Dill
 Endive
 Evening Primrose
 Fenugreek
 Feverfew
 Florence fennel
 Garlic

Kale
 Kohl rabi
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Linseed
 Lupin
 Marjoram
 Mizuna
 Mustard
 Nasturtium
 Onions
 Oregano
 Parsley
 Parsnip
 Peas
 Potato
 Radish
 Rubarb
 Sage
 Salad -burnett and
 Rocket
 Salsify
 Shallots
 Silverbeet
 Spinach
 Swedes
 Thyme
 Turnip
 Vetch
 Watercress

**What to look for
 Harvesting
 (Toowoomba -Darling
 Downs/TCOGA)
 approximate:**
 Last Apples
 Avocado
 Beans
 Beetroot
 Capsicum
 Carrots
 Chickpeas
 Chilli
 Last Corn
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Elderberry
 Figs
 Last Grapes
 Lettuce
 Limes
 Mandarins
 Last Melons
 Olives
 Onions
 Passionfruit
 Pecans
 Pears
 Persimmons
 Pomegranates
 Potatoes
 Pumpkins
 Radish
 Raspberries
 Squash
 Spring Onions
 Zucchini
 Last Tomatoes

Recipe of the Month -Olive Foccacia

INGREDIENTS

Filling

- 4 cups (512 g) all-purpose flour or bread flour
- 2 teaspoons (10 g) kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons (8 g) instant yeast
- 2 cups (455 g) lukewarm water, made by combining 1/2 cup boiling water with 1 1/2 cups cold water
- butter for greasing
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- flaky sea salt
- 1 to 2 teaspoons whole rosemary leaves, optional
- 1 cup sliced olives



METHOD

Step 1:

Make the dough: In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and instant yeast. Add the water. Then the olives. Using a rubber spatula, mix until the liquid is absorbed and the ingredients form a sticky dough ball. Rub the surface of the dough lightly with olive oil. Cover the bowl with a damp tea towel, cloth bowl cover, or plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator immediately for at least 12 hours or for as long as three days. **NOTE:** It is important the dough really be slicked with olive oil especially if you are using a cloth bowl cover or tea towel as opposed to plastic wrap or a hard lid. If you are using a tea towel, consider securing it with a rubber band to make a more airtight cover. If you do not slick the dough with enough oil, you risk the dough drying out and forming a crust over the top layer.

Step 2:

Line two 8- or 9-inch pie plates or a 9×13-inch pan with parchment paper or grease with butter or coat with nonstick cooking spray. (Note: This greasing step may seem excessive, but with some pans, it is imperative to do so to prevent sticking.)

Pour a tablespoon of oil into the centre of each pan or 2 tablespoons of oil if using the 9×13-inch pan. Using two forks, deflate the dough by releasing it from the sides of the bowl and pulling it toward the centre. Rotate the bowl in quarter turns as you deflate, turning the mass into a rough ball. Use the forks to split the dough into two equal pieces (or do not split if using the 9×13-inch pan). Place one piece into one of the prepared pans. Roll the dough ball in the oil to coat it all over, forming a rough ball. Repeat with the remaining piece. Let the dough balls rest for 3 to 4 hours depending on the temperature of your kitchen (Note: no need to cover for this room temperature rise).

Step 3:

Set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat it to 220 degrees celcius . If using the rosemary, sprinkle it over the dough. Pour a tablespoon of oil over each round of dough (or two tablespoons if using a 9×13-inch pan). Rub your hands lightly in the oil to coat, then, using all of your fingers, press straight down to create deep dimples. If necessary, gently stretch the dough as you dimple to allow the dough to fill the pan. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt all over.

Transfer the pans or pan to the oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the underside is golden and crisp. Remove the pans or pan from the oven and transfer the focaccia to a cooling rack. Let it cool for 10 minutes before cutting and serving; let it cool completely if you are halving it with the intention of making a sandwich.

*A note from the Editor: I want to kindly thank Linda ,Gill and Sharon for harvesting the TCOGA olives and giving me some buckets of olives. They are currently in a brine solution and will be used for this recipe which I will be bringing for a morning tea to share if it goes well.

Maintaining Your Health with Food

Maintaining Your Health with Food At this time we are all wondering what we can do to prepare ourselves for winter and the colds and flu season.

One great way is to eat healthy foods that support our immune system, respiratory system and also our emotional health. To assist us to have the best immunity maintaining good hygiene habits such as washing our hands often and avoiding touching our faces will reduce the numbers of micro-organisms entering our bodies.

We can also adopt a healthy lifestyle, combat stress with yoga, meditation or gratitude rituals, and ensure we have sufficient iron levels in our bodies.

Helpful foods include shellfish, chicken liver, oily fish, wheatgerm, high antioxidant vegetables and fruit, such as oranges, carrots and sweet potatoes, unrefined grains and cereals, yoghurt, sunflower seeds and seaweed, garlic, cranberries, onion, chilli, honey, blackcurrants and green tea.

Support for your respiratory system includes the foods above plus red capsicums, citrus fruit, green leafy vegetables, watercress, ginger and chilli and crushed fennel seeds eaten, made into a tea, or mixed with hot water and inhaled to aid congestion, emotional health is also important at this time and certain foods can help lift our mood including liver, wheatgerm, green leafy vegetables, peas, shellfish, oily fish, nuts and seeds;bananas are excellent, lettuce, celery, asparagus and unrefined carbohydrates, especially oats, barley, pulses, fruit and vegetables.



Committee and Contact

2023-2024 COMMITTEE

President: Kylie Higgins

Tcoga.president@gmail.com

Secretary: Judith Wilson

tcoga.secretary@gmail.com

Treasurer: Tim Brett

Tcoga.treasurer@gmail.com

Committee Members: Joanne

McClelland, Margaret Lyness, Linda

Mangubhai, Suzanne Alpine


Plot Coordinator: Joanne McClelland

TCOGA.plotcoord@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Angela Langdale

Tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com

**Newsletter of Toowoomba Community
Organic Gardens Association Inc. 22A Goggs
Street, TOOWOOMBA CITY, QLD, 4350**

 **Instagram**

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

 **Newsletter Email**

Tcoga.newsletter@gmail.com

 **Past Newsletters**

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 **Facebook**

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

 **Website**

<https://www.tcoga.org.au>