

NEWSLETTER

March 2024



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What has been Happening in February

March is already here and there has been lots happening at the Gardens. We have had some good rain again, which has been fantastic, but along with that comes the weeds and grass growing far too quickly to keep on top of it.

I'd like to thank all those members that attended the working bee on Sunday, 25 February, as well as a few new people that will hopefully become members. There were numerous projects completed, such as the pond in the permaculture garden with the inclusion of the safety mesh and mulch around the pond, as well as mulching of gardens and one path in the permaculture garden. The last two raised garden beds in the members' garden were completed, making all eight now fully functional.

I'd like to thank OneSteel who generously donated the mesh for the pond and Toowoomba Landscape Supplies for their support of the Gardens with discounted soil. It is with the support of our local businesses that we can get projects completed; remember to keep it local.

We also had a delivery of materials from Queensland Rail that will be used to border garden beds: we are happy to provide another use for these items - to reuse for sustainability. Thank you to Queensland Rail for their continued support of the Gardens.

There are several events happening in March and we would love to have the support from our members. Wednesday 6 March, at 10am, we will have a visit from the Federal Member for Groom, Garth Hamilton. Mr Hamilton will be joining us for morning tea and taking a tour of the gardens. This is an opportunity for members to meet and have a chat with Mr Hamilton and discuss the Gardens.

Sunday 17 March, at 9am, will be an open meeting for members. This will be an opportunity for members to provide ideas and suggestions for moving forward with the Gardens, workshops and other activities/events for 2024/25. The Committee will also complete the action plan for the Council and discuss the five-year plan for the Gardens, putting together a document for suggestions for members and those projects already identified.

Wednesday 20 March, at 9.30am, we will have a research group attending the Gardens from the University of Southern Queensland to discuss their project, Working on Wellness (WOW). See more information later in the newsletter.

We welcome back Wilsonton High School through their volunteering program, commencing Friday 1 March. The students will be involved in several projects around the Gardens. Thanks go to Jo, Carrie and Tim for assisting with the students. TCOGA has submitted a grant through the Council's Community Grant Fund for two projects within the gardens: an irrigation system for the driveway and replacement fronts for the compost bays. If we are successful, these will be two projects that are much needed for the Gardens.

Save the date for our fund-raising Bunnings BBQ, Saturday 13 April at Bunnings West. There is a roster on the whiteboard in the shed: please put your name down for a shift if you can assist. If we do not get the numbers to fulfil the roster, we will have to cancel the BBQ.

Thank you to everyone that has renewed their membership/plot hire, and welcome to those new members.

Look forward to seeing you at the Gardens.

Kylie



March

Events ■

Public Hols ■

Market Days ■

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1 st	2 nd Toowoomba Farmers Market Lindsay st Yarraman markets Corner D'Aguiar & New England Highways Crows Nest Markets DDEC Eco hut Launch 1A Heller st, Rangeville, 11am-3pm PARKS WEEK
3 rd PCYC Markets near TCOGA	4 th	5 th	6 th TCOGA Visit-Federal Member for Groom, Garth Hamilton	7 th	8 th Pittsworth show Til the 9th	9 th Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets
10 th PCYC Markets Makers Market, The Goods Shed	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets
17 th PCYC Markets & Queens park markets Oakey Lions Sunday markets Campbell St, Oakey Open meeting-TCOGA 9am Saint Patricks day	18 th Garden herbs for natural health, connect and learn , Toowoomba city library 6.30pm-8.30pm level 3	19 th	20 th University Researchers visit-TCOGA	21 st	22 nd	23 rd Toowoomba Farmers Market, Yarraman markets
24 th PCYC Markets,	25 th	26 th	27 th	28 th	29 th	30 th
31 st PCYC Markets, Carbarlah Markets, Bunya Mountain Markets						

How to build a Frog Hotel

The Ecological Importance of Frogs

As indicator species, frogs reflect the overall health of an ecosystem. A healthy frog population suggests a balanced environment, while a decline can indicate ecological disturbances. This makes them essential for monitoring garden health. Moreover, frogs are part of the garden food chain, serving as prey for birds and other wildlife, thereby maintaining ecological balance.

Building Your Frog Hotel

Creating a frog hotel involves simple materials and steps. You'll need PVC pipes, a container like a plastic tub or bowl, optional native water plants, pebbles, and safe, non-toxic paint for decoration.

Construction Process

Cut PVC pipes into varied lengths and smooth their edges.
Position the pipes in your container and stabilise them with pebbles.
Optionally, add water plants, enhancing the habitat's appeal.

Location and Care

Place the frog hotel in a shady, moist spot in your garden, away from direct sunlight.
Regularly check and refill with clean, dechlorinated water to ensure a hospitable environment.

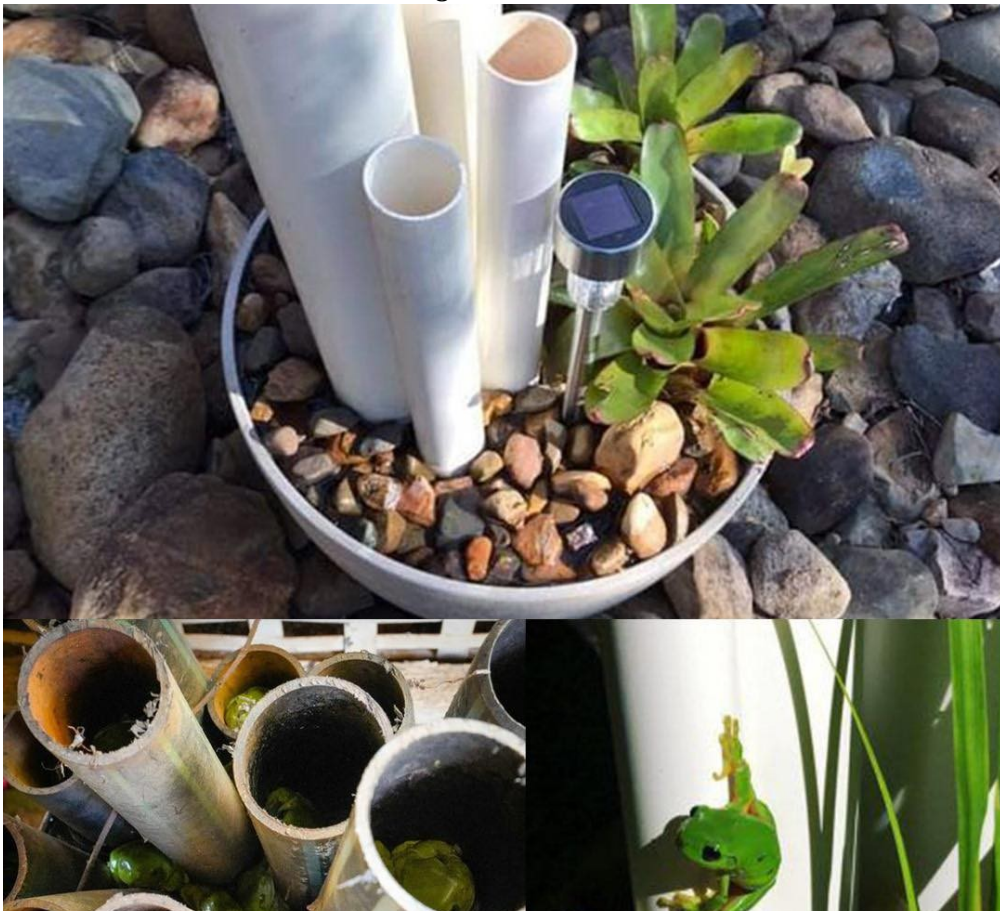
Personalising Your Frog Hotel

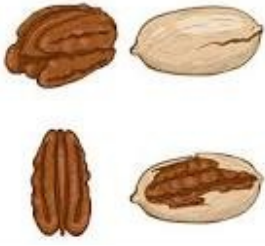
Decorate the exterior with non-toxic paint to integrate it aesthetically into your garden setting.

Additional Tips for a Frog-Friendly Garden

- Avoid using pesticides to ensure a safe environment for frogs.
- Supplement your frog hotel with additional hiding spots, like rocks or logs, to provide more shelter options.
- Keep water sources clean as frogs are sensitive to pollutants.

Installing a frog hotel is a simple yet impactful way to enhance your garden's ecosystem. By providing a safe haven for these beneficial creatures, you contribute to biodiversity and enjoy a healthier, more vibrant garden.





Origin

The pecan is a species of hickory native to the southern United States and northern Mexico in the region of the Mississippi River.

The tree is cultivated for its seed primarily in the U.S. states of Georgia, New Mexico, and Texas, and in Mexico. The pecan is the state nut of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Texas and Louisiana, and is also the state tree of Texas.

Pecan derives from an Algonquian word variously referring to pecans, walnuts, and hickory nuts. There are many pronunciations, some regional and others not. There is little agreement in the United States regarding the "correct" pronunciation, even regionally. In 1927, however, the National Pecan Growers Association acknowledged variant pronunciations while designating one as official and correct: "pronounced as though spelled pea-con ... those in the habit of using any other pronunciation therefore be requested henceforth to adopt exclusively the pronunciation above specified above and hereby adopted by the Association

Growth

The pecan tree is a large deciduous tree, growing to 20–40 m in height, rarely to 44 m. It typically has a spread of 12–23 m with a trunk up to 2 m diameter. A 10-year-old sapling grown in optimal conditions will stand about 5 m tall. The leaves are alternate, 30–45 cm long, and pinnate with 9–17 leaflets, each leaflet 5–12 cm long and 2–6 cm broad. A pecan, like the fruit of all other members of the hickory genus, is not truly a nut but is technically a drupe, a fruit with a single stone or pit, surrounded by a husk. The husks are produced from the exocarp tissue of the flower, while the part known as the nut develops from the endocarp and contains the seed. The husk itself is aeneous, that is, brassy greenish-gold in colour, oval to oblong in shape, 2.6–6 cm long and 1.5–3 cm broad. The outer husk is 3–4 mm thick, starts out green, and turns brown at maturity, at which time it splits off in four sections to release the thin-shelled seed.

Disease and Pests

Pecans are subject to various diseases, pests, and physiological disorders that can limit tree growth and fruit production. These range from scab to hickory shuckworm to shuck decline.

Pecans are prone to infection by bacteria and fungi such as pecan scab, especially in humid conditions. Scab is the most destructive disease affecting pecan trees, untreated with fungicides. Recommendations for preventive spray materials and schedules are available from state-level resources.

Various insects feed on the leaves, stems, and developing nuts. These include ambrosia beetles, twig girdlers, pecan nut casebearer, hickory shuckworm, phylloxera, curculio, weevils, and several aphid species.

In the Southeastern United States, nickel deficiency in *C. illinoensis* produces a disorder called "mouse-ear" in trees fertilised with urea. Similarly, zinc deficiency causes rosetting of the leaves. Various other disorders are documented, including canker disease and shuck decline complex.

Uses

Pecan seeds are edible, with a rich, buttery flavour. They can be eaten fresh, roasted or used in cooking, particularly in sweet desserts, such as pecan pie, a traditional Southern U.S. dish. Butter pecan is also a common flavor in cookies, cakes, and ice creams. Pecans are a significant ingredient in American praline candy. Other applications of cooking with pecans include pecan oil and pecan butter.

Pecan wood is used in making furniture and wood flooring, as well as flavouring fuel for smoking meats, giving grilled foods a sweet and nutty flavour stronger than many fruit woods.

Nutrition

A pecan nut is 4% water, 72% fat, 9% protein, and 14% carbohydrates. In a 100 g reference amount, pecans provide 690 calories and are a rich source (20% or more of the Daily Value, DV) of dietary fiber (38% DV), manganese (214% DV), magnesium (34% DV), phosphorus (40% DV), zinc (48% DV), and thiamine (57% DV) (table). Pecans are a moderate source (10–19% DV) of iron and B vitamins. Pecan fat content consists principally of monounsaturated fatty acids, mainly oleic acid (57% of total fat), and the polyunsaturated fatty acid, linoleic acid (30% of total fat).

PARKS WEEK

Parks Week will run from 2 - 10 March 2024 with a wide range of activities designed to encourage residents to enjoy their neighbourhood parks and open recreation spaces. TCOGA will be having open days on Wednesday 6 and Sunday 10 March. It would be great if members could attend to assist during these days.

Working on Wellness (WOW)

The Working on Wellness (WOW) focus group will take the group through a series of activities to identify factors that help or hinder obesity and mental health and any relationships between these factors, along with identifying potential priorities and solutions. This focus group is one of a number of focus groups being conducted for Nuis's WOW research project, and information gathered will be utilised to advocate for and secure resources to reduce obesity and improve mental health across the region.

The researchers from the Uni will be at the Gardens on Wednesday 20 March from 9.30 – 11am undertaking their group. There is a flyer with more information in the shed on the whiteboard.



What to Plant in March

Beans-Broad
 Beetroot
 Bok Choy
 Broccoli
 Brussel sprouts
 Cabbage
 Catnip
 Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celeriac
 Celery
 Chickpea
 Chickory
 Coriander
 Dandelion
 Dill
 Feverfew
 Florence fennel
 Garlic
 Kale
 Kohl rabi
 Leeks
 Lemon Balm
 Lettuce

Marjoram
 Onions
 Oregano
 Parsley
 Parsnip
 Peas
 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:**
 Apples
 Avocado
 Beans
 Beetroot
 Berries -
 Raspberry,Mulberries
 (second cropping)
 Strawberry,
 Capsicum
 Carrots
 Chilli
 Coffee
 Corn
 Cotton
 Cucumber
 Eggplant
 Elderberry
 Figs
 Guava
 Lettuce
 Onions
 Passionfruit
 Pecans
 Persimmons
 Pomegranates
 Potatoes
 Pumpkins
 Radish
 Squash
 Sunflowers
 Tamarillos
 Tomato
 Zucchini

Recipe of the Month -Pecan Pie

INGREDIENTS

Filling

- 150g (2/3 cup firmly packed) brown sugar
- 6 Tbsp. (¾ stick) unsalted butter
- 1¼ cups (packed; 256 g) light brown sugar
- ¾ cup (234 g) light corn syrup
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. finely grated orange zest
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 large eggs
- 2 cups pecan halves

Shortcrust Pastry

- 200g plain flour
- Pinch of salt
- 125g chilled butter, chopped
- 1 egg, lightly beaten



METHOD

Step 1

To make pastry, combine flour and salt in a large bowl. Add butter and, using your fingers, rub into flour mixture until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Make a well in centre of flour mixture. Combine egg and 1 tablespoon iced water in a small bowl, then pour into the well. Using a round-bladed knife, stir until mixture forms a dough.

Step 2

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and shape into a 2.5cm-thick disc. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Step 3

Preheat oven to 200C. Place dough on a lightly floured work surface and roll out to a 30cm diameter disc. Line pan with dough, then trim and discard excess. Refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Step 4

Line pastry with baking paper, fill with dried beans or pastry weights and bake for 20 minutes or until light golden. Remove beans and paper. Reduce oven to 175C.

Step 5

Melt 6 Tbsp. (¾ stick) unsalted butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add 1¼ cups (packed; 256 g) light brown sugar to melted butter, whisking until smooth. Remove from heat and whisk in ¾ cup (234 g) light corn syrup, 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract, ½ tsp. finely grated orange zest, and ¼ tsp. kosher salt. Lightly beat 3 large eggs in a large bowl; whisk in corn syrup mixture.

Step 6

Put 2 cups pecan halves in unbaked pie shell and pour corn syrup mixture evenly over them. Bake on hot baking sheet until filling is set, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cool completely. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream (if using).

Preparing Soil for Your Winter Vegetables

When the rain has stopped it will be time to prepare your vegetable bed for winter vegetables.

The first job will be to remove all old and spent summer vegetables. This will provide a ready space for planting seeds and seedlings of those delicious winter vegetables that you love.

Compost anything that can't be left on top of the soil as a mulch except weeds with seeds attached. Remember that plants need plenty of moisture, warmth and sunlight to grow, particularly in winter, so ensure that there are no tall plants left growing to the north, or east of your planting site. There is no need to dig over your garden, but you may want to use a garden fork to aerate the soil if it is compacted.

Next spread some good organic fertiliser over the garden bed. Whatever you can get hold of is good, whether it is aged or pelletised chicken manure, goat or cow manure, rock minerals, blood and bone or a mixture. If it is free, so much the better. Horse manure is not usually a good choice as it contains too many weed seeds and if from stables, may contain chemicals that have been used to treat the horses.

Work the fertiliser into the top of the soil by raking it back and forth, then cover the surface with a good thick layer of compost. This will act as a mulch while holding moisture and providing nutrients. Your garden bed is now ready for sowing and can be left to settle, or can be planted immediately with seeds or seedlings.

Committee and Contact

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