

second issue January - March 2010

Seeds in Time

quarterly newsletter of the Caboolture Seed Savers Club



*Enthusiastic attention
to the Biodynamics talk
on 27th February,
2010*



OUR VISION

Caboolture Seed Savers is a non-profit community group dedicated to all aspects of growing, saving and storing seeds.

We endeavour through our meetings and workshops, by sharing everyone's knowledge and skills, to develop an increase in home food growing, retaining local varieties and helping to insure food sustainability.

By collecting and sharing seeds and other plant materials we hope to preserve these locally adapted varieties for the generations to follow.



Seeds in Time is published by the **Caboolture Seed Savers** quarterly online only and is available to anyone free to download.

Closing dates for regular issues in 2010 are:

15th February for the **March** edition

15th May for the **June** edition

15th August for the **September** edition

15th November for the **December** edition.

Management Team:

Beecher - President

Michael - Secretary

Jessica - Co-ordinator

Elaine - newsletter editor

All enquiries to cabooltureseedsavers at gmail.com [no spaces, replace at with @]

Items, letters, photos for the newsletter to seedsintime at gmail.com [no spaces, replace at with @]

website: www.creec.org.au/

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and may not necessarily represent the management and members of CSS. All text is copyright and may be reproduced with permission and acknowledgement.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Things have been very busy on the farm the last two months. We have collected some seeds but many were left too long. So we are planting out lots of brown Romaine lettuce, Bok choi and Tomatoes (variety unknown).

Mangoes have been taking up our time - now finished but the weeds we neglected - it looks like another busy period coming up. Also the grass - but I am sure we are all in the same boat.

Beecher



Beth, our members' raffle winner at the February meeting.



EDITORIAL



Always a pleasure to edit a magazine especially when there's plenty to put in it!

Without our two co-ordinators, Jess and Michael though, there would be a lot of blank spaces!

So here's the drill: this is your newsletter so let us have more members adding some content to it.

I am happy to receive and print even the smallest item such as:

- garden-related jokes (“funny thing happened on the way to the carrot patch”);
- what is growing in your garden with or without photos;
- a garden-related event in your neighbourhood;
- a garden-related website;
- a favourite recipe;
- experiments you are doing in your garden;
- offers of subjects for monthly meetings;
- offers of speakers for monthly meetings;
- offers of venues for a garden visit;
- photos of a curious or large or even normal-sized vegetable or fruit you grew;
- anything else you can think of!

All copy can be sent by email to: seeds-in-time at gmail dot com or by snail mail to Seed Savers care of CREEC.

Specifically for the next issue I would like to feature a member's garden with photos. Take up a page with the photos - anything the author wants to say about their garden or garden tips in general. A volunteer will be welcome!

I look forward to a very full inbox for next newsletter!

Elaine

PS: donations for the raffle and seed bank are always welcome ☺



WHAT'S IN THE SEED BANK AT MARCH 2010

Basil - sweet	Capsicum	Chives - garlic	Coriander
Dill	Loofah - angled	Mizuna	Parsley - flat leaf
Pigeon Pea	Pumpkin	Sunflower	Watermelon
	Marigold		

MURMURS FROM THE MEETINGS - 1



January 2010 - Healthy Soils, Healthy Plants - jointly presented by Beecher and Michael.

Beecher spoke about the healing and beneficial effects of various animal manures.

Horse is regarded as a warming influence for the earth and beneficial for cold clayey soils.

Sheep provides mineral salts for tap roots especially root crops.

Pig is rich in Potassium (K) and has a good effect on upright, watery plants such as celery.

Poultry is rich in Phosphorus and needs to be well composted. It is good for fruiting/seeding plants such as corn, beans, peas, zucchini and tomatoes.



Cow is the best for all parts of vegetable plants. It is 'enzyme rich and sentient' to quote Rudolf Steiner.

Michael demonstrated the simple tests for checking the sand/clay content of soils. See the handouts as a separate pdf for more information and the pH scale and what nutrients are available/un-available at different pH readings.



MURMURS FROM THE MEETINGS - 2



Work Smarter, Not Harder ... a brief introduction to Biodynamic growing at the March meeting.

Our speaker was Rob Birse, an enthusiastic BD gardener of 30 years experience who is giving back to the BD world by introducing beginners to the practices.

Rob began by asking for reasons to garden organically. Answers included:

- developing an awareness about the growing of nutritious foods
- minimal destruction of nature
- healthy soil which enables everything (health plants = healthy people for example) and
- leads to a sustainable/self-perpetuating/self-sustaining organism with increasing soil health with a minimum of inputs.

Murmurs from the Meetings - 2 continued

And what the attenders knew about BD included:

- a reduction in CO₂ emissions
- planting by the moon and stars and working with seasonal cycles
- importance of the cow in agriculture and the horn preps
- and the big one - the soil/energy pathway.

This formula:

$6\text{CO}_2 + 5\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{C}_6\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_5 + 6\text{O}_2$ is photosynthesis (the making of starch by plants) and it spells out Carb-O-Hydrate which with N (nitrogen) are the building blocks of all living things. Plants take CO₂ (carbon dioxide) from the atmosphere and lock it up in organic matter. And it stays locked up whether the plant is alive or dead giving us natural carbon capture.

It has been estimated that if only 10% of degraded land was restored to arable then 6 billion tonnes of CO₂ (per year?) would be removed from the atmosphere.

Grazing or harvesting reduces the top of the plant then the roots die but the carbon is still stored. Tilling allows oxygen (O₂) into the soil which 'burns up' the carbon!

Organic matter = soil carbon. An ideal combination of soil carbon and micro-organisms equal humus which allows nutrients to be available to plants and prevents the nutrients from leaching.

Plants get N from the air within the soil but micro-organisms must activate it for use even though N is 78% of the atmosphere! So why is N added to soil? Good question!

Now to the 'preps' (preparations). The two basic ones are a soil prep and an air prep. 'Life force' which is focussed by using cow horns to mature the preps in, is the same force with different names. Other names are Chi, Ki, Prana, Vital Force and other ways of describing the energy of the Universe which is pouring into the earth constantly. The soil prep - Horn Manure - captures the stronger life force from the winter season. The other prep - Horn Silica - captures the sun and enhances photosynthesis giving excellent flavour. The other preps are the heart of BD, namely the compost preps which turn organic matter into humus.

It was a lively and informative meeting. Many questions were answered and many more remain to be asked.

Footnote: Rob is considering running his own one-day introduction to BD closer to Caboolture. Anyone interested is asked to contact Jessica asap. The cost will be \$45 per person and you will learn much that is valuable at this day class!



WHAT'S GROWING IN YOUR GARDEN?

With a total area of only 600M² the actual area available for an edible garden is not great. But it is surprising what can be grown when there are no lawns and few ornamentals except some local native plants.

There are 10 above-ground 300L beds plus some others made earlier. There were more fruit trees on espaliers than there are now, the Persimmon is the only survivor from the time 7 years ago when the edible garden was started.

We're forever experimenting with this idea or that idea. We've taken the best bits from Mel Bartholomew's Square Foot Garden (especially his mix much modified but very useful). <http://www.squarefootgardening.com/> Now we're starting on some new beds in 160L bins which will become wicking beds. That's an idea from Colin Austin at Kookaburra Park at Gin Gin. It's showing the most promise in water-thriftiness. <http://waterright.com.au/> for the original idea.

The plants we grow most often are the basics we enjoy and which don't taste all that great when bought from the local shops. This includes lettuces of various kinds, tomatoes and shallots. In the summer the Asian Mix seedlings have provided us with months worth of greens where the usual lettuces bolt. Leaf Amaranth is very drought-tolerant - the leaves taste corn-like (or beetroot-like) and are delicious raw or steamed.

Cucumbers are flourishing now as have the Rockmelons. The Hales variety came up by themselves in the worm castings I bought to establish the above-ground gardens. The non-hybrid Banana Rockmelon grew well but the flavour was very perfumed and is an acquired taste.

We've been working on this garden for 8 years now. It was a starving-lawn desert and soon the lawn disappeared under 8 tons of wood chips. Surprising how quickly earthworms started to appear! At that time there were red-backed spiders everywhere including in the house. With the extra trees and more moist environment, there's many other spiders but so far, no redbacks. There's a flourishing colony of bearded dragons which call the yard home. There's even big green frogs breeding. On very wet nights there several choruses of frogs from a neighbouring property. I've dug up an Ornate Burrowing Frog, much to its annoyance but it's a rare species and we are honoured it made its home here.

Always trying to grow as much food for ourselves and not to buy in fertilisers. We use Bokashi buckets for our kitchen scraps and incorporate the contents into compost bins with shredded paper and sugarcane to make our own compost. With the Bokashi 'beer' and the compost, there's little need to add much else in the way of fertiliser. Although it seems like we can never make quite enough!

Elaine



L: Persimmons; centre: dragon;

R: Rockmelons



Isabell Shipard Visit – update

Isabell Shipards' is located at 139 Windsor Road, Nambour. We plan to meet at her place at 10am on the 10th of April where she will give a talk focusing on Valuable Herbs to Strengthen the Immune System, and Self-sufficiency food plants. I'm sure she would be willing to answer questions on other topics. The talk will last approx half an hour with tastings. Then after the talk there is the opportunity to look around the nursery, and purchase books, plants, etc. The nursery is open till 2pm.

If everyone agrees I thought it might be nice to have lunch at the local park only 5mins drive away. The park has toilet facilities and also a walk to a waterfall for the more adventurous. If you would like to do this could you please bring a plate either for yourself or to share.

How to get there: coming from Brisbane, turn left 1st traffic lights (Kentucky Fried Chicken) into Arundel Avenue;
go under railway bridge, over bridge, veer to left at roundabout,
turn right at 2nd roundabout into Windsor Road,
go about 1 mile down Windsor Road, to 5th drive-way on right past S.C. TAFE College; and watch for Shipards Herb Farm sign, at bottom of cement drive way.

Jessica

RECIPROCAL GARDEN VISIT

Following the invitation to members of the online Brisbane Local Foods forum to our Weed Walk and Isabell Shipard visit, a reciprocal visit has been arranged.

At West End (Brisbane) there is a young community garden at Jane Street, on the riverbank and adjacent to the Saturday Organic and Craft Market.

Our hostess is Jacqui and the visit will be on Saturday 17th April 2010 from 10am to 1pm. Bring you own lunch or buy it at the market next door. The Organic and Craft Market starts at 5am.

Parking for both the Market and the Garden Visit is either free in the streets or \$2 in Davies Park.



Elaine

There's a new game called supermarket roulette - you have to try and get all your groceries in the trolley before the prices go up.

Heard about the new oriental diet? You can eat all the food you want, whenever you want, but you are only allowed one chopstick.