

# ROGI News

ROGI meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday night of the month, with doors opening at 6.15pm. Members can visit the plant table, Seed Bank, library and stalls, or have a chat and something to eat before the meeting. Please be seated by 7pm ready for the proceedings.

*Bayside Community Church*  
1-9 Macarthur Street  
ALEXANDRA HILLS

### Don't forget:

- Pay your membership dues **(unfinancial members will be charged as if they are visitors)**
- A small plate of finger food to share for supper (hot/cold)
- Return washed seedling pots
- Bring a basket/box/bag for your purchases
- Any questions for Plant Clinic
- A plant for ROGI Rewards
- Free swap/share/giveaway

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**ROGI webpage:** [www.rogi.com.au](http://www.rogi.com.au)  
**ROGI Email:** [info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au)



*Senna acclimis is an endangered indigenous species and a nitrogen fixer. Erik van Zuilekom grows it to use as a chop and drop bio-accumulator. It is tolerant of shade to full sun. Commonly known as brush senna or rainforest cassia, it grows on the margins of subtropical, littoral and dry rainforests in Qld and NSW.*

## Jill's Jottings

Hi fellow gardeners,

A lot has been written in the past several years about two social issues that are becoming more common - loneliness and the lack of contact with Nature (\*Nature Deficit Disorder). This was before the COVID epidemic came along and exacerbated both.

The Christmas/New Year period is apparently peak time for loneliness, and the relentless heat tends to drive people indoors for air-conditioned relief. So those of us without easy access to Nature must go out of our way to get ourselves in amongst it. This particularly applies to our youngsters, who would be happy to stay on screens 24/7 it seems.

In early January we took two grandchildren ages seven and 13 to see *Paddington in Peru*, after which we went to fantastic Beth Boyd Park for a long play. Next day was a train ride to Southbank, walking along the iconic Nature path and past the beach and across to the museum and GOMA. Then the next day to Indigiscapes for a couple of hours walking through the forest ('just like in Peru' said miss Seven) and riding the flying fox. They were exhausted, happy and full of Nature, and had so much to tell Mum and Dad ... and they didn't 'need' screens at all, until 'chill time' before dinner.

So it can be done, but it's a lot of work and it takes planning. Grandparents seem to have more time for it than busy parents have, and an intense session every few weeks or months probably isn't enough.

But what about the grown-ups? For some of us, New Year resolutions often include 'learn how to garden' or 'start growing my

own food' or 'get out and meet new people'. If that's you, then you've found the right place ... and any nascent loneliness or Nature deficit can be forestalled as well.

Being a member of ROGI can bring you so much. When you join, you are offered the opportunity to be connected with a longer-term member who can be your 'Buddy' – a point of contact who can answer your queries. This is a good way to find out who to ask if you have particular gardening-related questions. At our meetings, there is plenty of mingling time. You can approach any member – we all wear badges so you know our names. We want you to succeed in your gardening endeavours, so just ask if you need anything.

Once a month a member invites others for a Garden Visit, which is a great way to get to know other members in a different setting and see a variety of gardening styles. We also have occasional Field Trips further afield when the opportunity arises.

If you don't have a garden of your own, there are options. Community gardens are a great way to meet new people and also do some growing with guidance. There are community gardens at Oaklands Street in Alexandra Hills, Bethania Street in Lota and Wynyard Street in Cleveland.

Your ROGI committee works to find interesting experiences to maintain your interest and boost your expertise in growing your own food – organically, as much as possible. We're always open to suggestions.

Looking forward to seeing you all next Thursday.

Jill

\* <https://richardlouv.com/blog/what-is-nature-deficit-disorder>

## February Meeting

### Growing Food Organically in the Redlands

Our February guest speaker will be Linda Barrett, who will share her experience of growing food organically in her Thorne-side garden. Linda is a founding member of ROGI, and she also belongs to the Bethania Street Community Garden at Lota.

Linda will discuss garden preparation, plant choices for our area, some common problems and how to organically manage them.

She will give an overview of how to prepare for the temperate growing season - our Redland winter.

Linda has been gardening from her teenage years in diverse locations, and has a wealth of practical experience.

*The usual attractions will be there - Seed Bank, the well-stocked library, some seedlings and plants, plus local honey, home-made jams and more.*



**ROGI Members \$2-00 entry, Visitors \$5-00 entry  
Free tea and coffee**

**Supper will be held at the beginning of the night (6.30pm). It would be appreciated if all attending could contribute by bringing a small plate of finger food to share (hot or cold). The meeting starts at 7pm.**

## ROGI Events

### **ROGI MEETING**

**Thursday 13 February**

*Our first meeting for 2025.*

### **SEED SAVERS GROUP**

**Thursday 20 February - 7pm**

**'Introduction to Seed Saving'**

*To begin our year, I thought it would be good to reintroduce seed saving basics to our new members. We'll go through the basics of saving seed, from what and when, to how and why, plus problem solvers and quirky seeds.*

*If you have any seed heads, flower seeds or fruits that you've grown and would like to share or learn how to save and grow, please bring these on the night.*

*While it's an introductory meetup, we encourage all ROGI members to consider dropping in. There is a limit of 20, so please register. If you can't make it, take your name off the list so someone else can come. **Please register on TeamApp or call Linda on 0416 157 470.***

**Bring on the night:**

**A small plate of food to share for supper (I'll have herbal teas ready for us), seeds, a notepad and a pen.**



# 2024 Christmas Gathering

Photos by Ann Roffey



*There were smiles galore at our 2024 Christmas celebration.*

*Many thanks to the committee and all our ROGI members for a night of laughter, fabulous food and fun.*





2024 Christmas Gathering (continued)





# Growing from Cuttings

By Linda Brennan, Ecobotanica

**A cutting is usually** a stem or root piece that has nodes and may or may not have leaves. Cuttings are grown when we want to grow a replica of the parent plant.

**Is it necessary to sterilise pots?** In a professional situation, all cleaned pots are soaked in a 1% bleach solution to prevent transfer of pathogens.

## Propagation medium

Propagation media must be free of pathogens and be able to absorb some water, yet allow good drainage. We aim for about 30% Air Filled Porosity to achieve this. If you make your own cutting mix, try this: **1:1:1 Vermiculite or perlite : coco peat: sand**

**NB: Use the mix when damp, not dry.**

## Taking the cutting, time and season, storing material

Three types of cuttings can be taken from branches:

1. **Softwood** cuttings like coleus and tomatoes usually form roots more rapidly than semi hardwood or hardwood cuttings like gardenias or lillypillies. They can sometimes be successful just rooted in a jar of water.
2. **Semi hardwood** cuttings are taken in spring to early summer.
3. **Hardwood** cuttings are often taken in winter.

## Selecting cutting material

Choose a healthy, disease-free parent plant. Collect a bucket of water with a little seaweed solution in it. Identify the plants you'd like to take cuttings from, and cut root cuttings or stems cleanly with sharp secateurs. Plunge the pieces into the bucket of water immediately. The cuttings are best propagated into the growing medium within hours.

## Preparing the cutting

- Use sterilised secateurs. Cut your plant pieces to 10-15cm length. I like to have a cutting with 3 or more nodes.
- Make a straight cut at the top of the piece just above a node. Make a sharply angled cut below a node at the bottom.
- The cutting will be inserted  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its length into propagating mix, so remove any leaves in the section of stem that is to go into the propagation medium .
- Leave 2-4 leaves on the cutting. Large leaves may be trimmed to reduce leaf area and to prevent excess evapotranspiration through the leaf.
- I always remove the growing tip to encourage auxin production in the rooting end of the cutting.
- Water the cuttings into the pot.



## Rooting Hormones

Softwood cuttings and many semi hardwood cuttings are not usually dipped in rooting hormone, but it may be used for plants that are tricky to grow (e.g. red or white mulberries).

Two types of rooting hormones are available in Australia for the home gardener. *Yates Indole acetic acid with naphthalene* and *Clonex Gel in 3 strengths*. The purple Clonex gel is 3g/L Indole butyric acid and is suitable for softwood and semi hardwood cuttings.

If using a rooting hormone, decant some of the gel or powder into a *little* container. Dip the prepared cutting 1cm into the gel or powder, then push the cutting into the propagation media. You may have a number of cuttings in each pot.

## Growing from Cuttings *(continued)*

**Honey?** The purpose of honey as a cutting preparation is to prevent the growth of undesirable microorganisms on the tip of the cutting.

### Caring for cuttings

In a nursery, cuttings are grown under misting and part shade to reduce dehydration and give the cutting every chance of success.

At home, we aim to provide humidity, reduce dehydration and achieve success by keeping them in a part shade situation, creating a mini greenhouse effect with a plastic bag over the pot, or careful regular spraying or misting of the cuttings to increase humidity.

### Should we use a fertiliser?

Fertiliser is not required for the cuttings until they are developing roots and have been repotted. Adding fertiliser or misting with fertiliser can cause algae to grow and spoil your cutting.

### Transplanting

Remove from the pot and transplant when the cuttings are showing signs of new growth or when you observe roots in the base holes of the pot.

#### **Linda's quick recipe for the cutting mix:**

4 parts ROGI seed growing mix  
(ingredients in ROGI's Sow, Plant & Grow Guide on page 2)  
2 parts clean washed playground sand  
2 parts extra coconut peat

The aim for this combination of materials was to create a mix with good drainage properties as well as the ability to hold the cutting upright. It also needed sufficient water holding capacity that the cuttings would stay hydrated without rotting. A cutting mix does not usually have fertiliser in it, but this was a quick option when I wanted to adapt what I had on hand.

## Tank Water Level



*I thought I would share with members what we've done with our water tanks to always be able to see how much water is left. It's basically a thin plastic tube connected to an outlet at the bottom and open at the top. It works on the basis of 'communicating tubes' - remember physics from high school? We move the tomato clip up and down to mark the current level.*

*It is best to be installed when the tank is empty (which might not happen for a while now!) I found RTM to be the cheapest source for the tubing.*

*By Michael Qualmann*



# Hello from Urunga

By Rohanne Young

Greetings from my new home and garden in Urunga, New South Wales! It's been four months since I attended my last ROGI meeting and, as several of my lovely ROGI friends have asked how I'm doing, I thought I'd give you a quick update.

For those who don't know, I left my beautiful, established sustainable garden in Thornlands and moved south to Urunga, just outside Coffs Harbour. I knew when I purchased my new home that I was going to replace the existing "low maintenance" garden with something that was edible and more sustainably focused. However, the garden wasn't just low maintenance! It has also been a huge education for me, to discover just how ill-informed some people can be when it comes to what to grow, and how to grow it. Even when visiting gardens to provide advice, I have never seen so many gardening mistakes in the one place!

My first task was to remove several environmental weeds that had been given pride of place in the front garden, including a huge patch of Mother of Millions, two Groundsel "shrubs" that were almost the size of small trees, Ground Asparagus fern and a tropical soda apple. And no, these weren't just weeds that had been overlooked, but were actively being cultivated, as mulch had been carefully spread around the plants!



Environmental Weeds: Asparagus fern, Mother of Millions and Groundsel



Citrus trees imprisoned in tyres



Citrus trees 2 months after tyres removed

The next job was to remove the tyres that had been placed around several citrus trees. Not just farm tyres, but steel belted radials! The poor trees had their roots baked, not to mention being starved of water and nutrients. All the trees have absolutely flourished since the tyres were removed, with their leaves changing from a sickly yellow mottled colour to deep green. The new growth has been amazing (see before and after photos above). Interestingly, the branches have spread out, as the trees had reduced their dripline in line with the external perimeter of the tyres!



## Hello from Urunga (continued)



My new property came with several animals including geese, chooks, ducks, guinea fowl and three very randy roosters. I've just had two broody hens provide me with 14 little chickens, which has been an education. While I've had chooks for over a decade, being in suburbia I couldn't have roosters, so I've never had just-hatched chickens. Thanks to a timely visit from Gail Bruce, I'm learning all about raising little chickens.

Creating a veggie patch was a high priority. I hadn't realized just how much I relied on my herb and veggie garden. I'm back to growing a wide variety of veggies including lettuce, Asian greens, red vein and green sorrel, kale, beetroot, parsley, basil and silverbeet. Although Urunga is still zoned as sub-tropical, it's a milder climate which I'm very much enjoying!

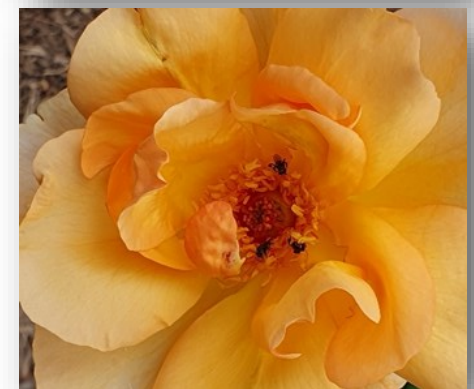


The next task is to create my fruit garden and bush tucker garden, planting many of the trees I bought from Thornlands including a Davidson plum, Burdekin plum and Black apple. Preparing them to be fire ant free was a major task, helped enormously by the ROGI talk on fire ants!

I bought several plants with me to remind me of my time with ROGI, but my favourite would have to be the pink lotus gifted by a ROGI member. All the seeds germinated and have been flowering beautifully (see photo right). My native bees have loved them and have pollinated the flowers, so I have more seeds. I'm going to add them to the dam on my property. Speaking of my native bees, all four hives transported well, and the bees are enjoying their new surrounds. They are particularly enjoying the rose garden (see photo bottom right).



Meanwhile, I am extremely busy keeping the weeds under control. The previous owners had unloaded a whole quarry-load of gravel and crushed stone on the property but neglected to add any weed mat. While I'm not a huge fan of weed mat (I find cardboard better), it is useful in deterring weeds. And when you have nearly five acres, every bit helps!!





## Hello from Urunga (continued)

I have also adopted some miniature cattle to help with the mowing. I call them my living lawn mowers. My dogs are totally fascinated with the Mooeys, as you can see in the photo. I'm not sure the Mooeys return the interest!

Although the move disrupted my work with Biodynamic Peppers, I'm back onboard and have created a few new ones including a pepper to control slugs in the garden and one for deer. This month I hope to create a pepper to control March flies. They are savage down here!!

I'm also working on a general-purpose pepper for controlling damaging fungi in the garden which, if successful, will control powdery mildew and blackspot!! The peppers can be ordered through my website, [The Delectable Garden.com.au](http://TheDelectableGarden.com.au)

I hope that you have enjoyed the update. Don't forget, if you are travelling south, do drop in for a coffee. I'm literally only five minutes off the highway, although it's so peaceful you wouldn't know it!



Yai Wen is fascinated with my new miniature cattle.

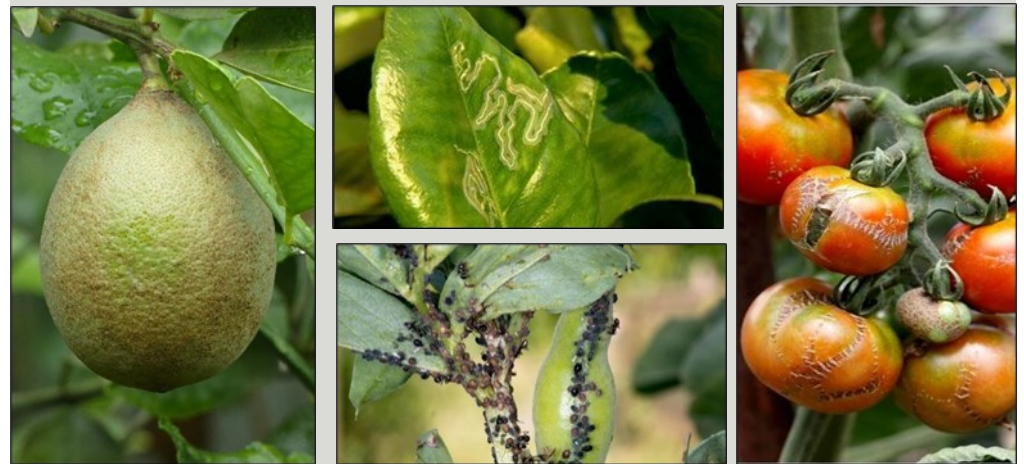
## PLANT CLINIC

***Puzzled by a pest?***

***Not sure if your plant is a weed or a 'goodie'?  
Does it have a deficiency or is it a disease?***

That's what Plant Clinic is about. Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts as you can—fruit, leaf, root etc) in a sealed plastic bag and fill in the form.

Place the plant parts together with the form on the Plant Sales Table. Someone will have a look and may be able to provide an answer. Any solutions will be given to you on the night and published in the next ROGI newsletter.



**Did you know?**

You can go online [www.rogi.com.au/resources.php](http://www.rogi.com.au/resources.php) and read every edition of ROGI News since September 2014.

***There are also many handy articles covering a broad range of topics located on the Resources page ... have a look!***

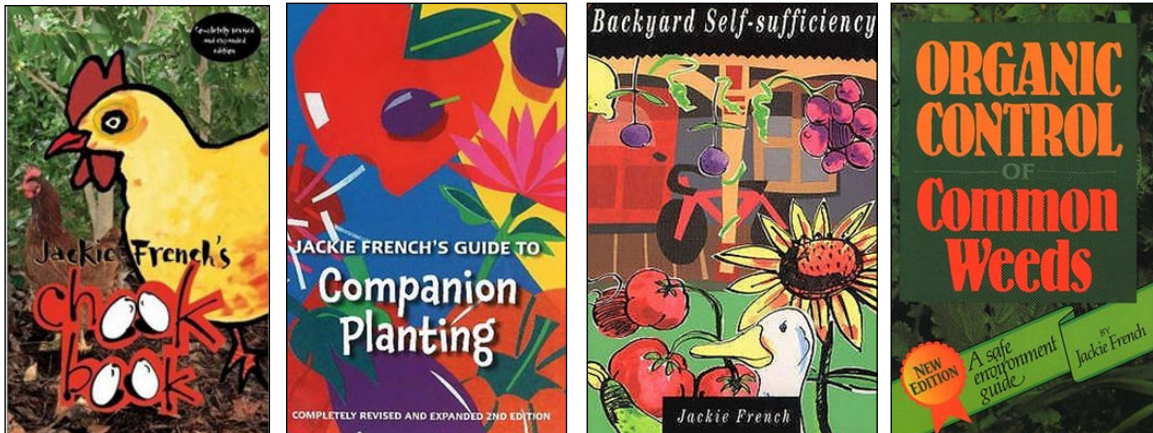


## AUTHOR FOCUS – JACKIE FRENCH

Jackie French is a much-published author of a wide variety of topics, both fiction and non-fiction. She writes books for children, young adults and the not so young. French also contributes to a wide variety of other publications, many of which are gardening based. Her knowledge about gardening and the environment is based on years of observation and practice on her property in the Araluen Valley. French's books are easy to read and often include anecdotes from her experiences. She has received many awards for her writing and work within the fields of child literacy and environmental conservation. Interestingly, she is dyslexic.

The ROGI Library has a selection of her works.

Adapted from: <https://www.jackiefrench.com/about>



## Upcoming Events



### BETHANIA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Bethania Street, Lota

[bethaniastreet@gmail.com](mailto:bethaniastreet@gmail.com)

[www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org](http://www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org)

**Workshops for March:**

#### Growing Organic Veggies for a Year Round Supply

**Sunday 2nd March 2025, 9:30am - 11:30am**

We have the opportunity to grow food all year round. Topics will include our South East Queensland seasons, plant choices and how to plan for a harvest throughout the year.

**Free - BOOKING ESSENTIAL - please text [0439 048 585](tel:0439048585), including the name of the workshop and your name and phone number**

#### Propagation for Winter and Spring Harvests

**Thursday 13th March 2025, 9:30am - 12:30pm**

Learn various methods of propagation, including starting from seed and using existing plants. This workshop will focus mainly on edibles and what to plant now for winter and spring crops, as well as general principles. You will take away some plants to grow at home.

**Cost \$5 (cash only) -BOOKING ESSENTIAL - please text [0439 048 585](tel:0439048585), including the name of the workshop and your name and phone number**

## ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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The views expressed in ROGI News and at ROGI meetings are those of the Editor and submitters and guest speakers, not necessarily those of Redland Organic Growers Inc.

Email: [info@rogi.com.au](mailto:info@rogi.com.au) Webpage: [www.rogi.com.au](http://www.rogi.com.au)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/redland.organic.growers)

Other gardening groups using organic methods:

### Brisbane Organic Growers Inc (BOGI)—

1st Thursday every month (except Jan), Albion Peace Hall, 102 McDonald Rd, Windsor, 6.30 for 7.30pm. 3357 3171 <http://bogi.org.au>

### Qld Herb Society—1st Tuesday every month,

Albion Peace Hall. 7.30pm. 54268299 <http://www.qldherbsociety.org.au/qhs>

**Oaklands Street Community Garden**—Wednesday and Friday 9-noon, Sunday 2-5pm. Oaklands Street, Alexandra Hills. 0408 259 445

## ROGI Membership Renewal for 2025

### How to renew your membership . . . fast and easy

1. Go online to <https://www.rogi.com.au/renew-membership.php>
2. Fill out the application, press SUBMIT.
3. Go to your online bank to make a transfer to ROGI - **BSB 633000, Account Number 136 137 296**  
**(Use your name as a reference please)**
4. Find your 2025 Membership card name tag on the hanger near the sign-in table at the February 2025 meeting.

**PLEASE NOTE—We now have a 'square reader' so that you can make your payment with your credit card (at ROGI meetings).** However, please keep in mind ROGI is charged for this option.

Member Category	Members Renewing for 2025	New member/s joining in...			
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct 24-Dec 25
Single	\$35	\$35	\$27.50	\$20.00	\$42.50
Family*	\$55	\$55	\$42.50	\$30.00	\$67.50
Pensioner Single**	\$25	\$25	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$30.00
Pensioner Couple**	\$35	\$35	\$27.50	\$20.00	\$42.50

\* **Family** - two (2) adults residing at the same address and their children under eighteen (18) years of age.

\*\* Please provide evidence of **pensioner** status to claim discount.

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please send your items to the editor and help keep ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant.

Email [newsletter@rogi.com.au](mailto:newsletter@rogi.com.au)

**The March newsletter deadline is 27 FEBRUARY 2025**