

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
Cnr McDonald Rd and Macarthur St
ALEXANDRA HILLS*

Don't forget:

- A small plate of finger food to share for supper (hot/cold)
- Your keep cup for a cuppa
- 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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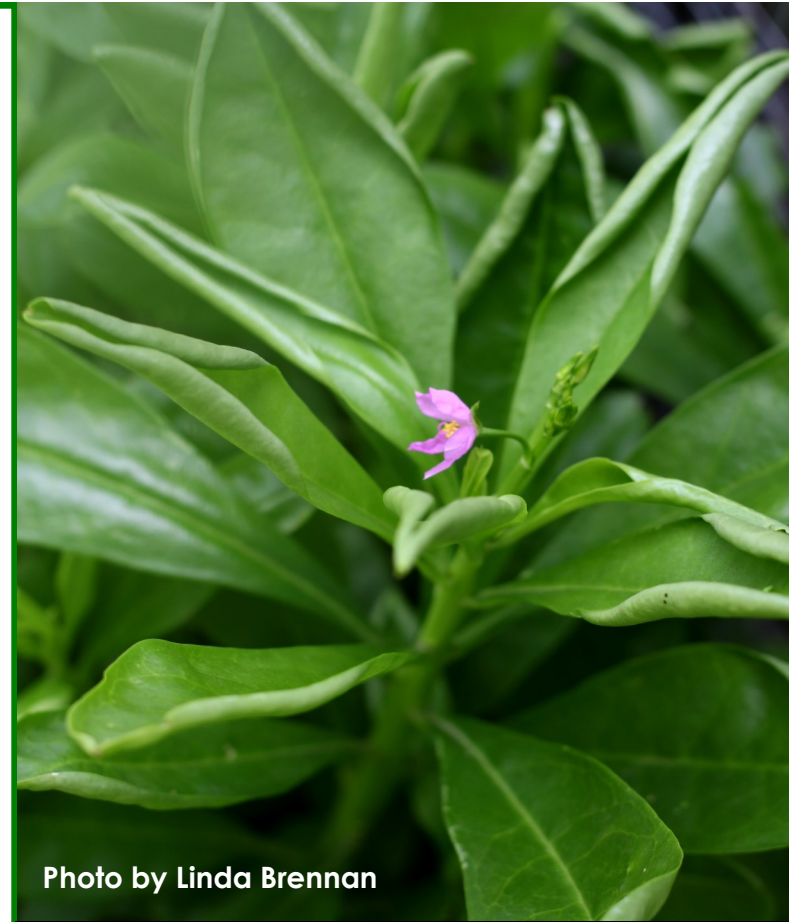


Photo by Linda Brennan

ROGI webpage: www.rogi.com.au
ROGI Email: info@rogi.com.au

Surinam spinach is a short-lived perennial that does well planted in partial shade or sun. The leaves are high in protein and rich in vitamins A and C, as well as iron and calcium. More on page 3.

June Meeting

From Grass to Productive Gardens



Kat Pearson recently made the career leap from engineering to horticulture, and loves it. She has always had a passion for gardening and plants.

After buying a property in 2018, Kat and her husband have been steadily turning the boring grassy block into a garden full of flowers and food.

They are on the banks of Wynnum creek, and as a result have quite sandy-silty soil. Regardless of your soil type though, the health of your soil dictates the health of your plants. Kat avoids sprays and tries to grow organically.

Healthy soil = healthy plants = more time for the fun stuff!

In her talk, Kat will share with us some key points in soil health, the different methods she used to start her garden beds, and a few of the more interesting plants she grows.

Bring along your questions for Plant Clinic and we'll see if someone can help. The usual attractions will be there - Seed Bank, the well-stocked library, some seedlings and plants, plus local honey, home-made jam, wax wraps and more.

All 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 really 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

FIELD TRIP

Sunday 30 June - 2pm

Our host Doug Hanning will open his amazing half-acre property at Camira to ROGI. We will take a tour to see his veggie gardens and 250 different fruit trees from all over the world. Doug has an Achacha tree, which fruited this year. He also has 30 dragon fruit of many flavours. To see what Doug has growing, go into Instagram and check out his photos at [dougs_urbanfarm](https://www.instagram.com/dougs_urbanfarm).

Maximum 20 people. Please book your spot with Toni at tonibowler@hotmail.com or phone her on 0402 323 704.

SEED SAVERS GROUP *

Wednesday 17 July - 7pm to 8.30pm

It's winter, so we'll be exploring the joys of Brassicas. They grow so well in the cool.

What are they? How do we save their seeds?

How do we keep the seeds true to their parents for our next sowing? Which brassicas are likely to cross pollinate? Can we grow brassicas for warmer seasons?

We'll also be growing and saving seed for ROGI and sharing seedy companionship. Welcome to all members, but we have limited spaces so book early.

Please bring:

A cup for a drink.

Any seeds you'd like to separate and share.

A tray or box to take home seed punnets for growing on.

A small plate of food to share (fruit is good).

If you've booked and can't come, please take your name off the list so someone else can come in your place.

*** PLEASE BOOK ON TEAMAPP**

May Meeting - Choose A Topic

EASY CARE VEGIES - GROWING PERENNIALS


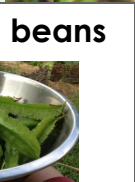
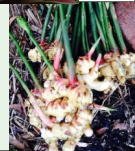


Presented by Linda Brennan

What is an 'easy care perennial' vegie? Perennial plants grow back annually from part of the plant. Most have a dormant phase. You do not need to replant every season like annual vegetables. Perennials are less work in the long term, and they have a permanent spot in the garden.

Soil preparation is very important as there will be long term planting in the one spot. Linda treats her clay soil as follows:

1. Add humates
2. Add compost
3. Add fertiliser (+ worm castings)
4. Address deficiencies (for example: minerals, phosphorous, magnesium)

Linda's tastiest perennial vegies:

Asparagus		<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Grow from seed or root crowns. Full sun to part shade. Pick at ground level when the stems are pencil thickness or fatter. Dies down in winter. Cut back and mound up with compost and cow or chicken manure to feed it well. Main harvest in spring to summer if kept well watered.
Beans: Wing beans		<i>Psophocarpus tetragonobus</i>	Grows from scarified seed in late spring. Reliable producer over warm season from Christmas onwards (daylight sensitive). Leave roots in to grow again next season. All parts edible. Needs humid wet summer. Does not need additional fertiliser. Recipes on the Ecobotanica website.
Ginger		<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Height about 1 metre. Dies down in winter after flowering. Dig up after leaves have died down. Needs fertile, moist soil. Grow from pieces with an eye/node. Plant in July/August in the ground or in a pot in full sun/part shade.
	Surinam spinach	<i>Talinum fruticosum</i> (<i>T. triangulare</i>)	Compact plant to 70cm. Full sun to part shade. Grows best in warm weather with irrigation and fertiliser, but will grow in harsher spots too. Grow from seed or cuttings. High protein leaves used as per spinach. Remove oxalic acid by blanching in water. Leaves are good to eat raw if you're not oxalic acid sensitive.
Yacon/Yacon/ Peruvian ground apple		<i>Smallanthus sonchifolius</i>	Height to 2 metres. Full sun, fertile soil. Needs staking, but install stake at time of planting in early spring. Produces many kilos of sweet, crispy roots per plant. Eat these peeled and raw or roasted. They can be dehydrated, and are excellent as chips. Good for diabetics, as it contains inulin. Grow from setts (growing nodes) in June-July. Harvest roots after flowering as plant dies down.

BEVERAGE BAR - Presented by Lara Brits

Lara makes fermented beverages for two reasons:

1. The taste. Complex, unique, satisfying. In a way it is a beer or wine substitute (a 'special' drink). It is NOT similar to a cordial (fruity, sugary) - but in that same way, it can be an alternative to cordial. Less sugar is good!

2. For the nutrition. As a substitute to alcohol or cordial, this is much healthier! Bacteria/yeasts in fermented food/beverages have been shown to improve gut lining (decreased leaky gut), increased nutrition (increased bioavailability of vitamin B and various enzymes) and improve gut flora (diversity and numbers).

How?? Fermentation is getting bacteria and sometimes yeasts to create food for you. Examples are beer, wine, sauerkraut, sourdough, yoghurt, kombucha. It has been done for thousands of years, and often in the most basic and primitive of environments. There are different types of fermentation - Wild vs controlled; Air vs anaerobic; Salt vs sugar.

Fruit Kvass - great to use up leftover fruit and pips/cores

- Fill one large jar (1.5-2 litres) approximately 1/3 full of fruit.
- Add 2-3 tablespoons sugar/honey and a pinch of salt.
- Top up with water and stir well.
- Sit on bench out of direct sunlight.
- Tighten lid and shake a few times a day (loosen lid afterwards to allow gas to escape). Taste daily.
- Drink is ready to strain and bottle when fizzy and slightly tart, with mild/no sweetness. This is usually 2-7 days, dependent on temperature and recipe.
- Will keep in fridge for several weeks. Tastes more tart with time. Loosen lid periodically to allow any built up gas to escape.
- Drink with soda water, I usually like 1/3 kvass, 2/3 soda.
- Flavours to try: *Melon and mint* (melon pulp/pips fine); *Apple, grape and cinnamon* (apple cores fine); *Strawberries and basil*; *Any berries*; *Stone fruit and ginger*; *Mango and chai spice*.

Fruit Shrub - fruity vinegar from 1700's; refreshing wine-substitute

- Fill one average sized jar (500ml) with 1 cup chopped/pulped fruit. Add 1/4-1/2 cup sugar.
- Top up with organic apple cider vinegar (with mother) and shake well.
- Sit on bench and allow to infuse (out of sunlight) for 1-2 weeks.
- Tighten lid and shake every few days (loosen lid afterwards to allow gas to escape).
- Ready to strain and bottle when it smells nice and fruity (will still be able to smell vinegar as well).
- Will keep in fridge for at least 6 months. Use as a flavouring in soda water, kombucha or cocktails. This is very strong - I usually drink it as a dash of flavouring (<10% of glass volume) in a glass of soda water.
- Flavours to try: *Pineapple and ginger*; *Berries and mint*; *Pear and cardamon*; *Apple and rosemary*; *Strawberry and basil*; *Melon*.

Tepache - Pineapple Beer

- Cut up organic, washed pineapple, leaving some flesh on the skins, and slicing your core into longitudinal wedges. Keep the flesh to eat, and fill one large sized jar (1.5-2 litre) with the sliced core and skin. Add 1/2 cup sugar/honey.
- Top with water and shake well. Sit on a bench out of direct sunlight.
- Tighten lid and shake several times daily (loosen lid afterwards to allow gas to escape).
- Taste daily - this is often a fast ferment (2-3 days).
- Ready to strain and bottle when it is bubbly with complex flavours and not particularly sweet. This ferment is often slightly viscous when finish, this reflects a higher concentration of natural yeasts and is not a problem. Tepache may contain a low level of alcohol.
- Will keep in fridge for a couple of weeks, getting more tart in taste as it ages. Drink with soda water in a 50/50 mix (or to taste). Add the beer to the glass first and pour soda slowly as it often gets a frothy head to it.

FOOD FOR FREE - EATING WEEDS

Presented by Jill Nixon

What is a weed? A plant growing where you don't want it; a plant that you don't know the value of; a plant growing in the wrong place; and more. All could be classed as a weed. Of course, there are many weeds that are toxic, relentless and incompatible with an organic, productive garden.

Many weeds are edible, palatable and nutritious – more nutritious than their cultivated versions in some cases. From a cultivation point of view, weeds don't need cultivating: they sow themselves and don't need watering or fertilising. This is because they will thrive in the place where they've chosen to grow. The perfect plant!

Like 'regular' plants, some weeds are perennial and some are annual and will arrive every year. As for any food that you didn't plant, do not eat it unless you can be sure:

- that you have identified it correctly
- that it hasn't been sprayed with chemicals
- that nothing has tainted it
(Dogs out for a wee walk for example, or exhaust fumes from vehicles, or from being walked on recently by muddy feet/shoes).

I will feature only weeds that are available in my garden now (late autumn). Some plants don't have seeds, flowers or young/mature leaves at present so I haven't included photos of those parts.

Chickweed *Stellaria media*

An annual that pops up once the weather cools down. It can take over if you let it, but it's very easy to pull out by grabbing bunches of it. The chooks love it (hence the name) and it's good in salads. If it becomes overwhelming, or if you don't have chooks, add it to the compost.



Chickweed ID: Annual; branching tough thin stems; mohawk-like hairs on stems; star-shaped white flowers; mild taste.

Oxalis, Sorrel

These are very similar and they are related. All species are edible, with varying degrees of palatability. They all have the sharp tang of oxalic acid, which can be toxic in large amounts (you'd have to try hard to eat that much, unless you have kidney problems). Cultivated sorrel, grown for its long leaves, is popular in Europe. Sheep sorrel is similar and is a very resilient perennial groundcover.



Wood sorrel



Oxalis corniculata



Sheep sorrel



Pink wood sorrel

May Meeting - Choose A Topic (continued)

Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*

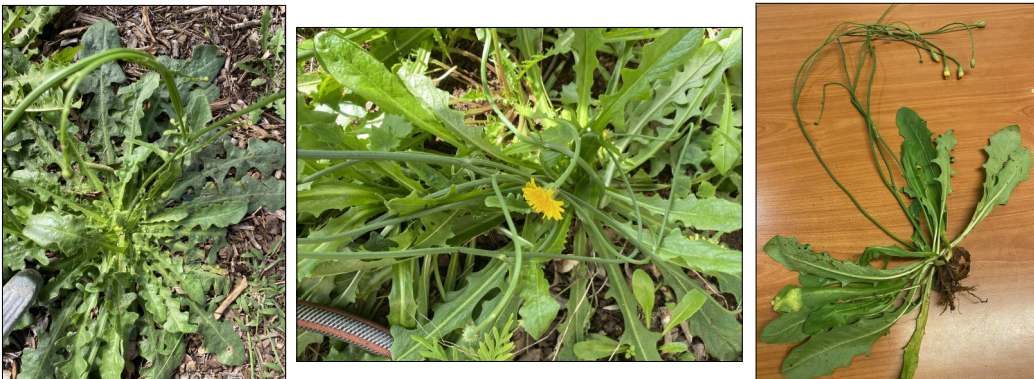
Many plants appear to be similar to dandelion, with rosette base, yellow flowers and puffball seeds. Probably the most common one is Cat's ear aka flat weed etc. Both are edible, but dandelion has medicinal properties. Whole plant is edible. Eat young leaf tips in salad or cook as for spinach. I introduced dandelion to our yard as it seems to not occur naturally here. Now it's everywhere!



Dandelion ID: Deeply cut leaves; one flower per stem; stem is hollow like a straw.

Flat weed *Hypochaeris radicata*

Cat's ear, flat weed, more common names. Edible, but not medicinal. Cook as for other leafy greens.



H. radicata ID: Leaves have rounded edges; several flowers on branched stems; stems are solid (not hollow)

Herb Robert

Geranium robertianum

An annual that reliably self-sows – the seeds are inside a cranesbill capsule, which expels them vigorously when they're ripe. It has numerous medicinal and herbal properties. The flowers and leaves can be eaten raw in salads.



Portulaca oleracea

Many people go to great lengths to thwart this plant, which is widely cultivated in Mediterranean countries such as Greece! It is extremely nutrient-dense and is a source of Omega 3 fatty acids. The whole plant is edible and can be eaten raw or cooked. After the yellow flowers come the seed capsules with myriad tiny black seeds that are particularly beneficial.

Amaranth viridis

Green amaranth is a common weed that has decided to live at our place. There are more than 50 species of amaranth. All are edible, although some may not be particularly palatable. Cook young leaves as for other leafy greens. Cultivated amaranth is grown for its seeds – they can be used as a gluten-free grain.



May Meeting - Choose A Topic *(continued)*

Wild lettuce

Lactuca species

Various species with slight differences. The appearance changes as the plant matures. Look for little spines along the back of the centre vein and white sap when you cut the centre. Taste is similar to lettuce with some bitterness as the plant becomes older.



Sow thistle

Sonchus species

Young plants are tender and succulent, but when older become tough and bitter. Cook the young leaves and stems as for other green vegetables such as in stews, curries and stir fries.



Sow thistle ID: Rosette base; small spines along leaves; leaf shape can vary widely; yellow flowerhead.

White sap exudes from stem when cut – this can discolour the leaves if it is not removed before cooking.

Cobbler's pegs *Bidens pilosa*

Eat the leaves when the plant is young before flowers form. They taste very mild and can be eaten raw or cooked in stews, curries and stir fries. This plant has medicinal properties, so keep it from going to flower and then to seed, and you will be rewarded.



Cobbler's Pegs ID:

Bright green soft leaves growing from square stems that can reach 1.8m; characteristic five-petal flower which develops black stick-like seedheads with barbs that attach to everything.

There is a huge amount of information about edible weeds on the internet, including videos, medicinal facts and opinions, and recipes. Go forth and learn more than I have included here. If you want to see my weeds up close and have a taste, please get in touch.

ROGI LIBRARIAN NEEDED

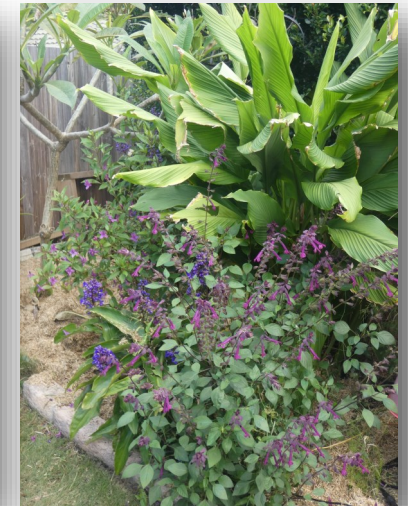
Our wonderful librarian Viga is moving on, so we need someone to volunteer to run the ROGI library on meeting nights. Perhaps two volunteers/friends could do it together. Please speak to Viga at the next meeting - she is willing to do training.

Anne O'Connor and her husband Gerry built their house on a suburban block in Capalaba 27 years ago. The garden is full to the brim with flowers, natives, and edibles, and has many 'rooms' to escape the daily grind. It's been a family affair to get it ready for our garden visit, with relatives lending a helping hand. They've laid new grass and completed garden edging to create safe and interesting areas to relax and unwind in. ROGI members enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon being shown around Anne and Gerry's garden. Thank you for volunteering to share it with us.



Out the front are some pawpaw trees. They were struggling with all the rain (and clay soil), but are doing better since Dynamic Lifter was added to the soil.

Right: A raised garden with mixed lettuces.



Around the back are lots of flowering salvias and edibles. Turmeric is growing well, and they have dragon fruit growing over a trellis with jasmine to hide the shed. A moringa tree has also been planted. Recently the grass was replaced with Augusta grass, it has proved very durable so far.



Left: Asparagus was planted four years ago, and has yet to be harvested. When the fronds die off, it's time to cut it back hard, and add lots of compost and cow or chook manure to feed the plant so it will produce heaps of yummy spears.

Garden Visit - Anne O'Connor, Capalaba (continued)



The fern house is home to orchids and ferns. The maidenhair fern at the back right has been passed down two generations.



Above: A great place to sit and relax and enjoy a cuppa.



The Peace Zone features a water feature and some shade-loving plants.



The succulent stand made by Anne's brother-in-law. It also hides the water tank. The thin tank has created a wall for privacy.

Below: The mosaic stepping stone was made at a workshop at Monte Lupo at Multicap Meadows, Eight Mile Plains.



An area with Australia pieces, exotics and some natives. The garden edging (from Stone Directions at Brendale) replaces rocks which Anne used to trip over regularly.

Garden Visit - Anne O'Connor, Capalaba (continued)



The mediterranean area features a number of citrus trees in pots. Again, the thin tank creates a wall for privacy and another garden 'room'.



There's plenty of zen in this garden!



A beautiful native hibiscus (bought from Indigiscapes).

Upcoming Events

QUEENSLAND GARDEN EXPO

Nambour Showgrounds, Sunshine Coast

Thursday 4th July, 8am - 4pm

Friday 5th July, 8am - 4pm

Saturday 6th July, 8am - 4pm

Sunday 7th July, 8am - 4pm

Tickets \$25-00 at gate or \$22-50 purchased online at

qldgardenexpo.com.au

BETHANIA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Bethania Street, Lota

Propagation for Spring Harvest

Saturday 13th July 2024, 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 spring crops, as well as general principles. You will take away some plants to grow at home.

Cost \$5 (cash only) - Bookings essential.

Email bethaniabooking@gmail.com to book your spot. Please provide your name and phone number.

Growing Healthy Citrus Trees

Sunday 4th August 2024, 9:30am - 11.30am

This workshop is an in-depth look at growing citrus trees, including lemons, oranges, mandarins, limes and others. You will learn how to select, plant and care for these popular fruiting trees. The community garden's variety of citrus trees allows the presenter to demonstrate fertilising, pruning and the identification, management and prevention of pests and diseases. Citrus grow well in our climate and, once established, can provide delicious fruit for decades.

Free - Bookings essential. Email bethaniabooking@gmail.com to book your spot. Please provide your name and phone number.

Unusual Fruits: Blackberry Jam Fruit

By Rohanne Young, *The Delectable Garden*

When I first started my garden in Thornlands, I had a rule that plants either had to be edible, perfumed, or interesting and/or a mix of these attributes. I have stuck with that rule, rather loosely interpreted in some instances! This has led me to have some interesting plants in my garden.

Sometimes, I forget this. I was reminded by a recent gardening visitor, who remarked on how many unusual plants I had, starting with the Vanilla Bean which greets you at the front gate.

One of my early purchases was a tropical shrub by the name of *Rosenbergiodendron formosum*, otherwise known as *Randia Formosa*. Its common name is the rather uninspiring Blackberry Jam Fruit.

I bought this plant because its flowers were said to be beautifully perfumed. I've had the plant for several years now, and up until this year, it has shown no inclination to flower or develop fruit. However, recently it has surprised me by both flowering and developing fruit. I say surprised, because, although it is a tropical plant, it is said to hate having wet feet and this summer hasn't been our driest!!

Blackberry Jam Fruit supposedly prefers the company of another *Randia Formosa* before fruiting. It's also said to flower within 2 to 3 years, whereas mine is up around the 8-year mark!! I am not sure if my newly developed Positive Biodynamic Pepper has had any influence?

Anyway, I thought other ROGI members may be interested in seeing one of the more unusual fruits that we can grow here in the Redlands.

I haven't tried the fruit as it is not yet ripe, but is purported to taste just like blackberry jam, hence the name. The fruits turn yellow when they ripen, which is supposed to be around October, but since nearly every other thing I've been told about this fruit has proved inaccurate, I will just wait and see!



Native Shade Trees

By Terry Sullavan

Many Aussies will, fondly or otherwise, recall burning a thigh on a seat belt buckle at one time or another in summer. It wasn't just imagined, a closed car in summer makes a near-ideal solar cooker. This article is way cooler than that of course! But before we chill, you may have seen something like this around the inter-webs...



Speaks for itself really. While humankind corners itself into air-conditioned boxes fuelled by coal, turns out our trees were our besties all along. Who'da thought!?!

Street trees are thankfully still a thing, and incredibly popular in carparks in summer. And when Dick Copeman came in March to speak at our ROGI meeting, I just couldn't see a better way to start converting some of these dead, heat island environments to living, photosynthesising carbon sinks.

So, I've been thinking that my street could do with a little more shade. Poincianas are well used around Redlands, but I wanted something native, as they're low fuss and pro-wildlife.

The Council website lists approved trees on Council land, highlighting those which are suitable for streets. Indigiscapes is also a great visit to see examples of native landscapes. Anyway, Dick was good enough to get back to me with a list of his recommendations, so here are his tips:



Cupaniopsis anacardioides
Tuckeroo, Beach tamarind, Green-leaved tamarind, Carrotwood (left)

Grows 8-12m, canopy to 5m diameter, non-invasive roots. Flowers attract butterflies and birds love fruit. RCC approved street tree.

Flindersia australis
Crow's ash, flindosy or Australian teak (right)

Grows to 10m, canopy to 8m diameter. Produces a small 5-lobed flower and woody inedible fruit. RCC approved street tree.



Native Shade Trees (continued)

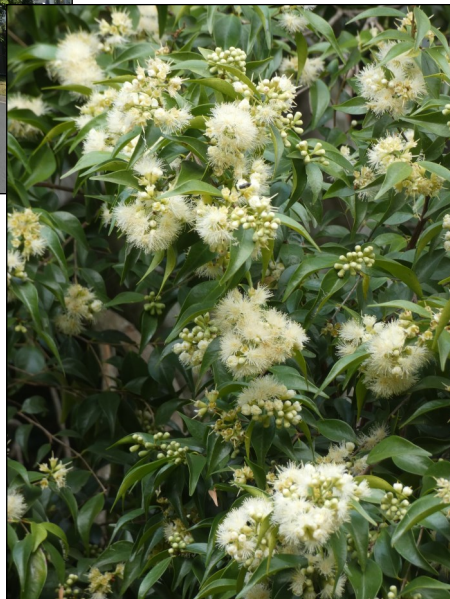
Lophostemon confertus
Brushbox (right)

Grows to 8m, canopy to 5m diameter.
Small root system, fine flowers and
woody seed. RCC approved street
tree.



Syzygium or
Waterhousia floribunda
Weeping lilly pilly (left)

Fine flowers, produces edible fruit.
Can grow to 10m. Tip prune to keep
< 5m. RCC approved street tree.



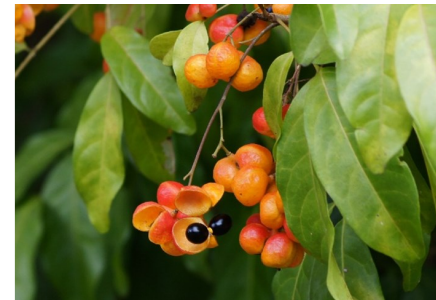
Syzygium luehmannii
Riberry, Small leaved lilly
pilly (right and far right)

Grows 8 -10m tall in most
gardens, produces fine
flowers and edible fruit.
RCC approved street tree.
Tip prune to keep small.



Harpulia pendula
Tulipwood (right and below)

They are mostly seen up to 6
m tall but can grow to 24m.
Small flowers, yellow, two
lobed capsular, inedible fruit.
Approved on RCC land.



Sources:

ultimatebackyard.com.au

austplants.com.au

australianplantsonline.com.au

aussiegreenthumb.com

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<https://www.techpedia.pl/app/public/files/44781.jpg>

Dick Copeman, March speaker at ROGI,
many thanks!

ROGI MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Email: info@rogi.com.au **Webpage:** www.rogi.com.au
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

PLANT CLINIC

If you have an odd-looking pest, think your plant may be a weed or have a deficiency or a disease, Plant Clinic may help you.

Bring along the insect or plant (as many parts - fruit, leaf, root - as you can, and in a sealed plastic bag if it's diseased or very seedy) and fill in the form. Place the plant parts together with the form on the Plant Sales table (just outside the door to the main hall) before the meeting starts.

Someone will have a look and may be able to answer your questions. Any solutions will be given to you on the night and published on this page. Please be aware that, although we do our best, there may not be anyone present who can solve your problem or identify your plant, especially if it is not related to organic gardening.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

We'd love to hear from you! For example, send us:

- A story about your garden
- A photo of an interesting plant
- An article about an unusual plant
- A request for items or information
- Specific garden or nutrition information
- A recipe for home-grown produce
- A notice that you have something to give away or sell
- A handy technique or tip
- A gardening problem solved
- Anything to do with organic growing
- A review of a ROGI library book

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

Email newsletter@rogi.com.au

The July newsletter deadline is 27 JUNE 2024