

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
ROGI Email: info@rogi.com.au



Botanist Erik van Zuilekom explains the practices he uses in his garden. Pictured is the movable growing frame he made to utilise vertical spaces. More information and photos on pages 4-6.

Jill's Jottings

Hello fellow gardeners,

So, we've moved from summer into autumn, but it's feeling still feeling very summery. This is when we're pretty much over the endless watering (which is the case this year. Some years we're well and truly over the endless rain!) and start having dark thoughts about giving up on trying to grow anything in our increasingly hot summertime. Of course, doing that means leaving it to nature which would respond with lots of lovely weeds. The layer of mulch we would have laid down back in early December has long since broken down, and it's been too darn hot to get out there and lay a new lot. Hence, weeds reign supreme.

Some years I've planted cover crops such as buckwheat, mung beans, chickpeas, lablab beans, various marigolds or millet. Sometimes (this summer included) I've left in alyssum from my spring planting (each small clump of seeds can grow to cover a half-metre square) or allowed marigolds or cosmos to remain and madly self-sow wherever they like. Not always the best idea, something about one year's seeding means seven years' weeding!

There are many annuals that are productive over the summer and the fact of them being there, producing madly, encourages us to water and feed them, which is good for the soil and its load of life. Also they will keep the soil active and shaded from the worst of the sun's rays. Edible crops such as rosellas, snake beans, winged beans, okra, sweet corn, pumpkin, Malabar and Brazilian spinach are some of the annuals being harvested now. Notice that some of these would have been unrecognisable once upon a time to those of us with a European heritage.

As our climate continues to warm, we need to look to the growing habits of our northern neighbours and embrace the food crops that do well there. There seems to be a growing awareness and acceptance of the more unusual non-European foods that will not just survive, but also thrive without too much effort in our 'new normal' summers.

When I joined ROGI in 2009, I had no idea of these 'strange' vegetables. It was a steep learning curve, and required being open to the new and different. I'd never heard of cassava (although I'd eaten tapioca!) or lablab beans or yacon or jicama or bitter melon or Mexican cucumber or New Guinea bean (neither a bean nor from New Guinea!) or moringa or Kaffir lime or – oh lots of things. We've grown them all, and we still grow some. Our guiding principle - if we grow it, try it twice and still don't like it we pull it out (or transplant to someone else to try), and give something else a go.

Whatever, the days of 'meat and three veg' are long gone.

Sharing knowledge, ideas and experiences with other ROGI members is the best way to learn, and to stay motivated when things don't go right. Visiting others' gardens is a great motivator - whether at a ROGI Garden Visit or by inviting someone you've just met over supper to see your garden (and then they reciprocate). Other ROGI members are a great source of cuttings, saved seeds and seedlings.

On the topic of seedlings, we'd love to see more members bringing along their surplus home-sown seedlings for our stall. Also, can you help to staff it at meetings on a roster, so no-one is stuck there all the time. You learn a lot about plants doing this.

See you next Thursday evening.

Jill Nixon, ROGI President

March Meeting

Growing Microgreens Indoors

Jeremy Trevatt is the Managing Director of Natural Yield, a company based in Brisbane that specialises in delivering nutrients through microgreens. Jeremy will talk about the various benefits of microgreens and demonstrate how to grow them.



Growing microgreens requires minimal space and effort regardless of weather or climate. This makes growing them a convenient way to incorporate fresh, nutritious foods into your diet.

There will be short presentations from our Seed Savers group. Bring along your garden problems for Plant Clinic.

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 is held before and after the meeting. Please contribute by bringing a small plate of finger food to share (hot or cold). The meeting starts at 7pm.

ROGI Events

GARDEN VISIT

Tom Bohl, Birkdale

Sunday 15 March - 2.30pm to 4.30pm

This event is particularly suited for new gardeners, anyone interested in learning about permaculture, or experienced gardeners keen to provide feedback and share their knowledge.

In his garden set on a small 400m² plot purchased just over a year ago, Tom will share some of his early plans to develop this clean slate into a food forest and more self-sufficient home.

You'll also get to see simple garden beds and what can be done with minimal budget and time to get started straight away, whilst planning the longer-term vision. This will be the before visit, to be followed by an after visit several months in the future.

Bring along a chair, a small plate of homemade food or home grown produce to share and a mug for a cup of tea or coffee (instant).

This is a free event for ROGI members, but numbers are limited. Please book on Team App or email group@rogi.com.au

Garden Visit - Erik van Zuilekom, Thornlands

Report & Photos by Ann Roffey and Erik van Zuilekom

Rather than repeat the history of Erik's property, please feel free to read the previous report on this amazing garden at:

<https://www.rogi.com.au/uploads/ROGINewsAugust2022.pdf>

Since our visit in June 2022 to botanist Erik's garden in Cleveland, 160 tropical and subtropical fruit trees and bush tucker trees have been planted. Other major changes include the removal of the huge *Ficus benjamina* tree that was dominating a large portion of their garden and their neighbours. The roots were coming up under the foundations of their house, so it was time for it to go.



Before



After

Removal of the titanic Ficus has allowed Erik to expand the network of rainwater harvesting swales and create two separate syntropic vegetable gardens on the swale berms.

The Jaboticaba has fruited multiple times in the three years since planting, rather than the typical 7-8 year wait. In its natural habitat of South America, Jaboticaba gets seasonally inundated. Erik has mimicked this by planting in low lying depressions excavated alongside the swale to maximise flooding over its root system. It is also surrounded by plants that hold water.



Above: New food forest with a mix of edibles and ornamentals.

Erik provides his plants with conditions that resemble the original habitats they evolved within. The citrus trees receive some dappled shade as they do not naturally grow in all-day full sun (many farmers do this to force cropping at the cost of water and nutrients and some sun stress). The taller tree creates shade for the citrus and raw material for mulching. He can pulse (chop) the tree to manage a dappled canopy above the citrus, and if he uses a nitrogen-fixing tree, then the entire system benefits from nitrogen release with each pruning event.

To help his citrus trees Erik adds compost and a fungal inoculant. He mulches below the trees with thick pieces of wood, and over the wood, manure and mushroom compost are scattered. The thick layer of branches and wood mulch help retain moisture, slowly decompose, and feed the soils. Importantly, wood stimulates fungal colonisation. Compost and manures provide nitrogen to feed bacteria, aiding decomposition, slowly, through the wood. The wood also prevents the disturbance of the citrus tree roots, as they are surface feeders and sensitive to damage. Doing this communicates to the tree and soil to become more fungally dominated. This is a trait of woodland and rainforest, which is the host ecology within which citrus have evolved.

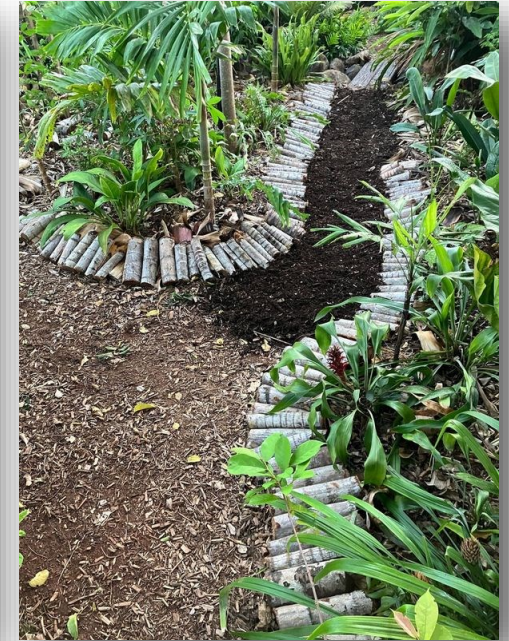
Garden Visit - Erik van Zuilekom (continued)



Left: One of the Birdie raised beds that will be converted into a wicking bed. It will be lined with a food grade pond liner. Large pots have been collected, with some of them left upturned to create an air and water void. Gravel will be used in between the pots, and this will then be covered with geofabric that will be pushed into the pots and filled with sand, with another layer of sand on top, followed by soil. These type of beds often splay out when filled with soil, so Erik has installed threaded rods to hold it together. NB. It is hard to wick more than 30cm.



Nothing is wasted in Erik's garden. The offcuts from his fig tree are used as ornaments or for seating. This one (left) is growing some beautiful fungi. Garden edges are not bricked and mortared (right) so they can be changed as needed.



Some of Erik's favourite tools are pictured left. They include a Petersen's hoe for weed chipping, a broad fork (made by a friend) to dig up potatoes and cocoyam, a weed burner (bought online), and a Slammertool <https://theslammertool.com/>. Erik uses a machete to chop and drop, but other methods can include using a mulcher or mower.

Far right: The area where the fig tree was removed is brimming with life. Rainwater is collected off the roof of the old school house, and drains have been made to collect and utilise this. As the property is below the storm water level of the road, as much water as possible is collected and held onsite. It is moved to where it is needed via a series of rock drains and swales made by Erik.



Garden Visit - Erik van Zuilekom (continued)

Other noteworthy features of Erik's gardens are:

The use of pollinator corridors: Alongside pathways Erik grows all manner of flowering perennials, annuals and biennials. The idea is to select species to use as edible vegetables, medicinal herbs or spices. This simplifies harvesting and presents options for use. Many are either planted or allowed to colonise naturally. A few examples are **Marigolds, Zinnias, Alyssum, Oregano, Violas, Brazillian spinach, Native mint, Strawberries, Ashwaganda, Yarrow, Tarragon, Parsley, Society Garlic, edible Cosmos species, Celosia.**

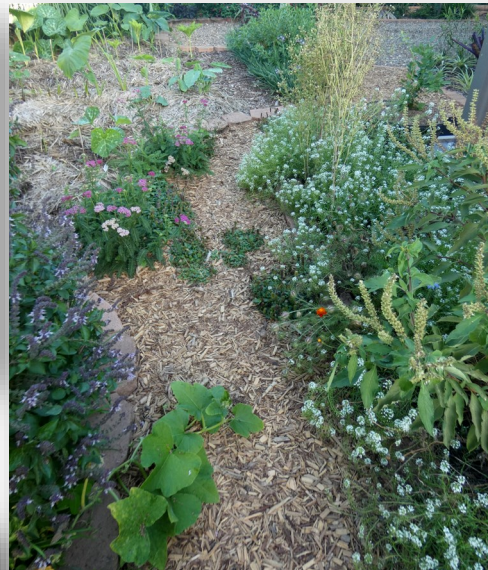


Above: Eat your edge! Growing edibles on the edge of gardens makes sense. Pictured is Brazilian spinach.



Above: Pollinator corridor.

Left: Bergamot *Monarda citriodora* growing beside pathways. It is a herb in the mint family. It attracts butterflies and bees. Flowers spring to late summer, grows best in full sun to partial shade.



Flowering plants grown for beneficial insects: Plants grown in pollinator corridors are part of the equation. Almost everything grown is evaluated for ecological support services. When growing vegies, Erik usually leaves 5-10% of plants to go to seed so he can save seed for future use and support invertebrates in their garden. Examples of indigenous species are: **Native Elderberry, Orange Berry, Lemon Myrtle, Blue Tongue, Celery Tree (*Polyscias elegans* and *P. australasica*), Psychotria, Indigofera, Micromelum, Neolitsea, Pavetta, Pilidistigma, Rainforest Senna** (endangered), **Cats Whiskers, native Lobelia, Aneilema.** A few examples of exotic species are **Fennel, Jute, Hibiscus, Calendula, Celosia and various Basil** (*Blue Spice* flowers almost year-round in their garden),

Green manure cover and chop and drop to improve soil:

The use of green manure cover crops and heavy chopping and dropping of garden prunings and organic accumulator species grown for mulch has caused his soil to explode with life. There were hardly any earthworms in the compacted soils, and now there are 10-20 per shovel load. Water use has dropped significantly, whilst quite acute nutrient deficiencies have almost disappeared through organic soil regeneration. Green manure crops are grown year-round to chop and drop. Living roots are more effective at improving soil than composted material, as living roots release exudates that feed soil microbiology directly.

Erik grows a mosaic of species tolerant of chop and drop: **Ice Cream bean** (to be pollarded above head-height), **Indigofera, Senna acclinis, Pigeon Pea, Lemongrass, Vetiver Grass, Cassava, Mexican sunflower** (not allowed to flower to avoid weed spread), **Bananas, Moringa, Canna edulis** to name a few. Essentially everything is chopped and dropped in some form, from trees to shrubs to tussocks to groundcovers.

Thank you Erik and Danielle for sharing your garden again with ROGI. It was truly inspirational to see the transformation that has taken place over the past two years.

Growing Food Through our "Summers"

Report by Ann Roffey, photos by Linda Barrett

Linda Barrett is a founding member of ROGI, and she also belongs to the Bethania Street Community Garden at Lota. Linda has been gardening from her teenage years in diverse locations, and at our first meeting for 2025 she shared with us a wealth of practical experience.

It is possible to grow vegetables all year round in the Redlands, as we live in a subtropical climate. Planning your vegetable garden to suit the season involves making the right plant choices. Utilise the ROGI website - located under the 'RESOURCES' tab are Seed Bank and Seed Savers list of seeds for sale/give away, a Seed Growing Guide Jan-Dec, and a Seed Viability Chart.

Linda was inspired by The Three Summers Approach by Robyn Francis, founder of the Permaculture College Australia in Djanbung Gardens, Nimbin NSW. Basically, there are three summers in our subtropical climate:

1. **Mediterranean summer** - starting in August with increasing temperatures and daylight hours. Spring equinox September 21. Hot and dry, perfect for mediterranean and tropical dry season crops like zucchini, squash, beans, cucumber (recommends *Redlands White*), sweet corn, bok/pak choy, lettuce, silver beet (*Fordhook Giant*), sweet potato, spring onions, beetroot (*Detroit Red*), cherry tomatoes, choko. Interplant some flowers to attract pollinators and beneficial insects (*zinnia, cosmos and marigolds*).

2. **Subtropical summer** - around November, heat and humidity increase. Storms around Christmas until April. The summer solstice occurs December 21/22. Grow crops that love the heat and are more resistant, such as brown/red leafy lettuces, okra, eggplant, chilli, capsicum, New Guinea bean, winged bean, rosella, Egyptian and Ceylon spinaches.

3. **Temperate Summer** - occurs after the Autumn equinox on March 20/21 until September. During autumn and through winter is the ideal time to grow European and temperate vegetables such as brassicas, carrots, kales, mustard greens, potatoes, onion, garlic and lettuces.



Examples of the three different 'summers':

Top left - zucchini (mediterranean)

Top right - okra, (subtropical)

Left - brassicas (temperate)

Left: One of Linda's beds is devoted entirely to brassicas (cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli). This is covered as soon as planted to stop insect and caterpillar damage.

Growing Food Through our "Summers" (continued)

Preparing for our Temperate Season - Soil

Healthy soil means healthier plants, which provides better nutrition for us. Think of the four 'M's when it comes to soil:

- ⇒ **Microbes** (in soil, compost and organic matter). These hold water and release nutrients
- ⇒ **Minerals** - rock minerals and fertilisers
- ⇒ **Moisture** - needed for microbes to work and nutrient transport
- ⇒ **Mulch** - regulates temperature, reduces evaporation and protects soil

Bed Preparation

- Plan your plantings and where they will go.
- Replenish the soil as plants take nutrients.
- You can build your own soil/growing media by following 'No Dig Gardening' info on the ROGI website under RESOURCES.
- Make compost - in bins, trenches, garden. Aim for diversity in compost; scavenge ingredients from neighbours etc. Linda uses a lot of lawn clippings.
- Add manures (Linda uses chook and worm castings)



Linda uses a Renegade 75 x 600mm auger (from Trade Tools, Capalaba) attached to her Ozito battery powered hammer drill from Bunnings to aerate her compost.



Prunings are 'mowed' to break them up to add to compost.

End result = beautiful compost!



Linda prepares beds by:

- Applying home-made compost to all beds
- Adding organic fertiliser to leafy greens and brassica beds
- Digging in comfrey leaves to her fruiting bed (e.g. tomatoes)
- Erecting hoops and netting for the brassica bed
- Erecting trellises (e.g. for snow peas)
- Watering and then mulching
- Little preparation is needed for the root veggie bed

When temperatures fall to about 26°C (after the Autumn equinox in March) Linda starts planting, initially with purchased seedlings. At the same time she starts growing from seed so she has plants ready to go for the next round.

Plant choice for the temperate season can include:

- Leafy greens such as kale, chard, Asian greens and lettuce
- Fennel
- Tomatoes
- Beans and peas
- Alliums such as spring onions and leeks
- Root vegetables such as carrots, beetroot and sweet potato
- A full range of herbs
- Brassicas (cabbages, broccoli and cauliflower)

Growing Food Through our "Summers" (continued)

Challenges & How to Manage Them

Linda has encountered many challenges growing organically in her Thorneside garden. This is how she manages them:

- Fruit fly, cabbage butterfly and possums - exclusion by netting and bagging
- Citrus leaf miner and mealy bug - home-made white oil
- Citrus bugs - pick off and drown in soapy boiling water
- Insects (e.g. grasshoppers in summer)- Linda makes up a strong black seaweed solution in a 45 litre bin, then adds 100ml molasses and douses plants fortnightly with a watering can. Grasshoppers hate it!
- Anthracnose on mango tree (an ongoing issue) - copper and sulphur sprays
- Mildew - milk spray
- Attract predators - insects, spiders and lizards
 - ⇒ Lacewings from 'Bugs for Bugs'
 - ⇒ Relocate praying mantis nests and spiders
- Sun and heat - shade cloth
- Garden hygiene - plants, compost, tools



Bag fruit to avoid fruit fly, cabbage butterfly and possum damage.



Pick Bronze orange bugs off citrus trees and drown in soapy, boiling water

Budget shade structure for raised garden beds



This structure can be put together in one hour. Add another 30 minutes or so for sewing. The frame is made of tomato stakes (green plastic coated steel) and 3-way plastic connectors.

We bought it online from 'Veggieland' in Victoria. We had the 30% shade cloth already, so the total cost including stakes, corners, shade cloth and freight was about \$100 for two shade units covering 2400 x 900mm planters and a height of 900mm. Elvira did a great job of sewing the shade cloth together with a normal sewing machine. The bottom stakes sitting on the top of the sleepers are fixed with bent-over nails. The two long sides can be opened depending on how much sun we want. When open, it's simply held up with pegs or clamps. When closed, loops in the reinforced shade cloth attach to small cup hooks in the frame.

By Michael Qualmann

Introduction to Seed Saving

The What and Why about saving seeds

By Linda Brennan, Ecobotanica

Why save seeds?

Free plants; to grow the best varieties for our conditions; to preserve genetic variability and resilience for food security; and lots more reasons ...

Avoid saving F1 hybrids

I take care to avoid saving seed of F1 hybrid plants, no matter how tempted I may be by the spectacular flowers or unusual fruit. If they are not sterile seed, F1 hybrids are most likely to revert to one of the parent plants over successive plantings. For example, you are likely to get cherry tomatoes growing from the compost rather than the perfect F1 hybrid tomatoes that you bought from the supermarket. Saving seed from those is not worth my effort.

Grow heirloom seeds

You'll often hear this term in relation to edible plants. It means seeds that have been passed down from generation to generation of growers. The plants that grow from heirloom seeds are the same as those grown generations ago. The grower selects seeds from the healthiest plants for desirable characteristics such as flavour, resistance to disease, their wonderful colour, fragrance etc.

Choose to save 'Open Pollinated' seed

To save seed that will grow into the same plant as the parent and to prevent cross pollination, enclose the unopened flowers with little gauze bags or enclose the whole plant in insect proof netting and do the pollination yourself as the flowers open. Use a small, clean paintbrush and pollinate using only the pollen from your selected variety. Keep the flower covered until the fruit or seed forms. By pollinating the plant in this way, we are ensuring we get seeds with predictable results each generation

Choose healthy seed

If your plant is diseased or if there are insects in the seed, you'll need to be selective about saving. Choose the healthiest plants for seed saving. Seed of beans or peas can harbour eggs of bean flies, so I freeze the dried seed for 2 days before packing it up for next season.

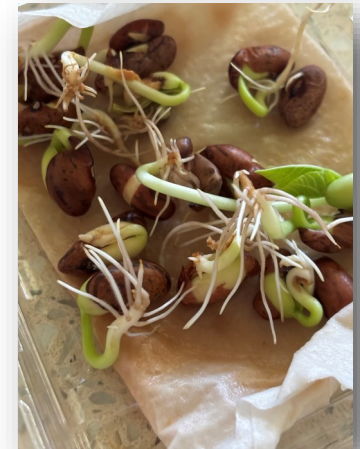
Green Harvest suggests that we 'Do not save seed from any plants that have a suspected virus disease'. This may include pawpaws with pawpaw mosaic virus, tomatoes etc. The virus resides within the cells of each seed. It cannot be treated to remove it.

Seeds collected from vegies that have fungal disease such as powdery or downy mildew can be affected by the same disease and may grow new plants with the disease. Beans may be contaminated by bean rust, and snow peas, pumpkins, melons and cabbages may also have a variety of fungal diseases.

When are your seeds ready to pick and dry?

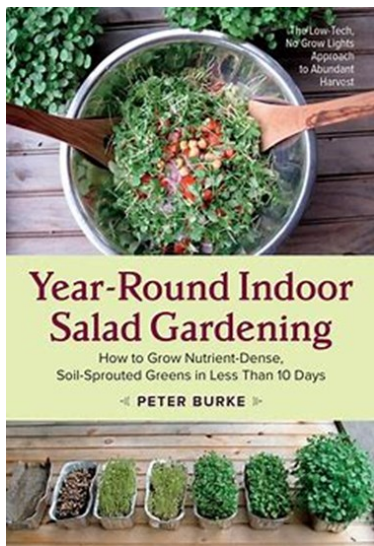
Gather the seed heads or pods at peak maturity - that is, as the seed head dries or just before in some cases. Some seeds like pansies, pop open when dry, so we collect these just before they are quite dry, and allow them to dry in a paper bag.

Seeds take 1-3 weeks on average to dry out before they can be packaged up. If packaged early, they will go mouldy and are useless.



Book Review

By Rose Faleafa



Year-Round Indoor Salad Gardening by Peter Burke

Doesn't seem possible, right? Think again! Burke uses the method outlined in his book to grow sprouted greens in as little as seven days. Through succession planting you too can be eating nutrient dense sprouts every day of the week. While the author does this out of necessity during the very cold Vermont winter, the reasoning and processes suit our opposite conditions. The ideas could also be adapted to balcony gardening, courtyards and patios, or by anybody who wants to maximise their productive patch.

According to Burke, all you need is a window sill with winter sun or some indirect light in summer. Easy to read with supporting photos and recipes, as well as instructions for a purpose-built shelf, Burke covers everything you will need to be successful. I'll be giving it a go.

What is Team App?



Team App is a FREE platform managing the communication and membership of ROGI.

With TEAM APP, you can:

- Keep up to date with club events in real time
- Not have to wait till the meeting to book your place for Garden Visits, Workshops and Field Trips.
- Make bookings as soon as they are posted on TEAM APP.

Here's how to get TEAM APP on your **smart phone or tablet:**

- Go to the App Store (Apple smart phones) or Play Store (android smart phones)
- Look for the TEAM APP logo (*pictured above*)
- **If you need assistance to set up your TEAM APP account, please see Diana Yeo at the next meeting for help.**

On your **computer:**

- Go to <https://www.teamapp.com>
- SIGN UP using your email address and a password
- Click on MY TEAMS and select your team as ROGI

You will now receive notifications of events, and you can make bookings to attend... it's so easy!

Upcoming Events

BETHANIA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Bethania Street, Lota

bethaniastreet@gmail.com

www.bethaniastreetcommunitygarden.org

Propagation for Winter and Spring Harvests Workshop - Thursday 13th March 2025, 9:30am to 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, including name of the workshop, your name and phone number.

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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 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

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 the ROGI Newsletter topical, interesting, local and relevant.

Email newsletter@rogi.com.au

The April newsletter deadline is 27 MARCH 2025