

Everything grows better with TLC

NEWSLETTER - MAY 2014



WHAT IS GROWING IN THE FOOD FOREST?

Looks like a Zucchini (tromboncino), but is in fact a pumpkin gramma trombone.



As seen below, it is an heirloom variety with large orange fleshed fruit with excellent flavour. Grows up to 60cm long. Good baked and steamed.



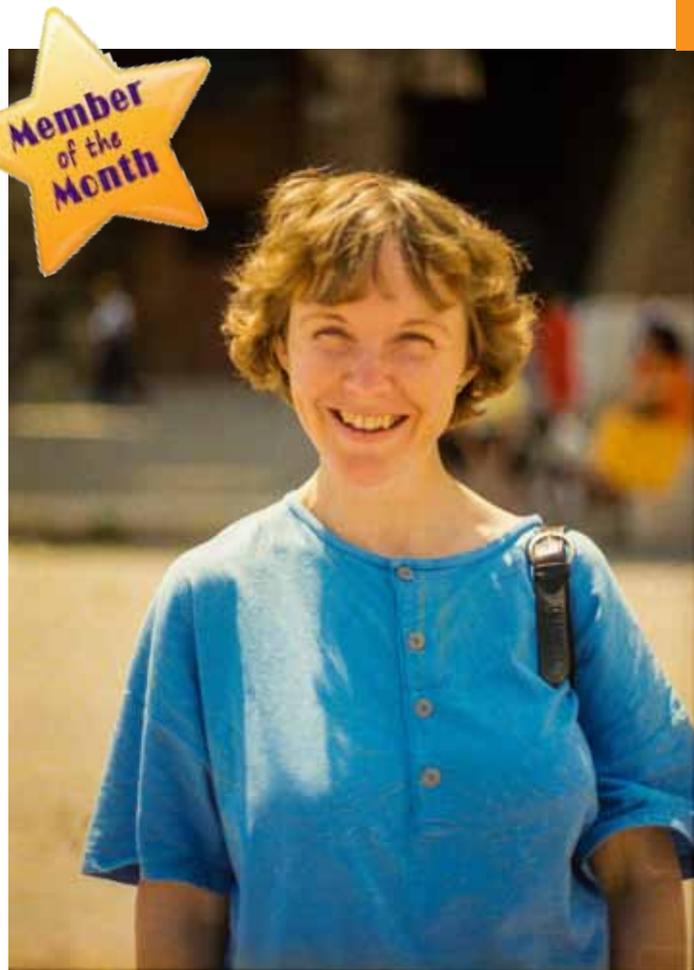
Please don't pick until fully developed and we can then share them out.

Not quite the same as this Gramma for making an old Australian recipe "Gramma Pie".



Perhaps next year we can plant the one for pie.





KERRY STIRTON

I come from a family of non-gardeners, and when growing up in Perth I can remember my Father wanting to cement the garden and paint it green. My Mother was not keen on that solution, so we grew up with lots of lawn and a formal rose garden.

I first tried vegetable gardening while living in Townsville and despite my total ignorance I was quite successful. That just goes to show how easy it must be.

I really became interested in vegetable gardening while living in Maidstone in the UK. By then Glenn and I had 2 young children and close friends who encouraged us to take over a half size allotment (about 5.5 Rods). By then I was concerned about

the length of time food was stored by the big supermarkets and wanted to ensure the best food possible for the family. The allotment was in a lovely part of Maidstone and can be visited through <http://www.maidstoneallotments.co.uk/sites/loose-road.html>. We gardened there for many years enjoying the bounty of our work.

I came back to Australia in 1996, bringing the family with me. At first we were too busy to even think about gardens, and when we moved into our present house we soon discovered that living next door to the bush does not make for easy gardening. In fact you get one good season, the goodies are then discovered by the local wildlife, and after that you are beaten to them every time.

I do enjoy vegetable gardening (notice how specific I am) and I was bemoaning the fact that I had just lost an entire crop of plums in one night when Hannah found the ad for TLC.

Glenn and I went up one Saturday morning and met Helen. She had us picking up bottles and other rubbish but I was not put off and joined shortly after. I was very pleased when John offered me my existing plot and even enjoyed all the work putting paper down and moving the dirt brought in on the back of Doug's trailer. I have loved the friendships forged in helping to make a garden. It's a pleasure to go and see all the changes each season brings and we get to eat the fresh food that has been grown.

Cheers Kerry Stirton



BORON DEFICIENCY

When John D harvested some of his Japanese Turnips recently, although fine on the outside, they were rotten inside.

He investigated and found it was Boron deficiency in his soil, probably following all the rain that can leach nutrients out from the soil.

This problem was dealt with by *Gardening Australia* a while back, with following article:

Presenter: Jerry Coleby-Williams, 02/12/2006

Jerry gives some gardening tips to survive summer

When it comes to summer it's important to use water wisely and also take particular notice of trees and other plants which can, because of lack of water, become stressed. It's when this happens that they express certain nutrient deficiencies.

One really common nutritional deficiency is boron, and you can see it on a mangelwurzel by the splitting of its roots. Two other common nutritional deficiencies are magnesium and potassium, and of course when plants are stressed by drought, watch out for pests because they move in.

When I had the soil at our property in Wynnum analysed, one of the key findings was that it lacked boron and needed to have a dose every three years. Boron's role in plant nutrition is mysterious, but it aids the use of carbohydrates and the movement of water and nutrients. Boron is a micronutrient, otherwise known as a trace element, and only small amounts are needed for plant health. It's an Australia wide problem, but it's particularly bad in south eastern Queensland and especially bad where vegetables are intensively grown on compost starved soils.

To make a simple boron solution get some borax powder - and 4 grams, a pinch, in 4.5 litres of water is all you need. Mix it in. That will treat 4 square metres of garden bed. It will last for three years but remember, never use any more than that, because too much can be as bad as too little.

Look carefully for mottling on the leaves of plants because this is an indication of magnesium deficiency, which is really common in Australia. It affects a range of plants including gardenias, rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, roses and citrus. The solution is to get some Epsom salts. Take half a litre of water, and put in half a teaspoon of Epsom salts, then shake and stir. Either water it on plants or you can foliar spray it.

The importance of adding magnesium is that it's chlorophyll food. Chlorophyll is necessary for plants to produce energy, so it's a simple solution to a common problem.

Peter Cundall visited a couple of months ago and he pointed out a potassium deficiency in the lemon tree; frightfully embarrassing. I did treat it, but it's still present. The yellowing is obvious. Now, potassium deficiency can affect just about anything, anywhere during the warm seasons. The effects are very widespread. It affects the metabolism of the plant's sap flow, the formation and the flavour of fruit. Potassium is sold as potash, in a soluble form. Use half a teaspoonful in 4.5 litres of water, stir that thoroughly and apply it at the roots. Do this during the warm seasons - so three times a year for this tree, and hopefully Peter can visit again and I won't be embarrassed.

In another part of my garden I've got another citrus - a lime. It's affected by citrus gall wasp - a significant pest and native to New South Wales and Queensland. If you're growing citrus in a fruit growing district, control is mandatory. During summer, when plants are stressed, expect a wide range of pests to move in. There is no need to be concerned about it, but vigilance becomes more important than ever. To control the pest, look for swellings on the young shoots. If you leave them, they'll build up and over time, kill the branches and trees become unproductive. Control is simple - just prune them off. Look for these during spring and summer and don't put the removed branches in the compost, instead destroy them so you can't reinfest plants.

Wherever you live and whenever plants are affected by drought it's important to feed plants little and often. If you give plants too much food when they're under stress, this makes problems worse. The best way to feed plants during drought stress is to use a water soluble fertiliser so you feed as you water the plants.

PLEASE NOTE:

Information contained in this fact sheet is a summary of material included in the program. If further information is required, please contact your local nursery or garden centre.

Copyright Restrictions: This fact sheet is for private and domestic information purposes only. It may not be copied, reproduced, sold or used for any other purpose without the express permission of the ABC.

<http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s1801782.htm>



May 3rd

9:00 am – 12:00 noon: Working Bee

12 :00 noon: Members Meeting

May 10th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon: Working Bee

May 17th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon: Working Bee

10:30 am – 11:30 am: Monthly Garden Talk

May 24th

9:00 am – 12:00 noon: Working Bee

May 31st

9:00 am – 12:00 noon - Working Bee

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT!



A WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Noel Davey, our long time worm wee provider, from Killara
Bernadette Lopez from Turrumurra
Merrin Telfer from Gordon

Welcome to all.

Great to have you all on board.

HAPPY GARDENING!

DID YOU KNOW?

Silver Beet and Swiss Chard are selections of beetroot that fail to develop a bulbous base but are grown for their abundant leaf harvest.

RAINFALL



APRIL: 82.2MM

Thanks to Janet and Ian Pollock for taking the rainfall readings at the garden!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday May 2nd

John and Tina presenting to the Beecroft Garden Club

Monday May 5th

Turrumurra Turratots (pre schoolers) will be visiting. Tina and John will be looking after them.

Saturday May 24th

9:00 to noon Macquarie University VegeSafe team are visiting to test our Garden soils and also they will test (for free), your plot soil and soil from home, if you bring a sample. They will also do friends and neighbours soil samples if they want to come along on the day. You have received details separately.

Saturday June 7th

Wentworthville Community Garden visiting the TLCG.

While gathering information on the best greenhouse for the garden's needs, a few of us visited the Wentworthville Community Garden last year. They were very generous with their experience, advice and morning tea. Wentworthville have arranged a visit to our garden on 7th June. I know it will be nice to show them our wonderful garden and offer a cake or 2.

Thanks Kerry Stirton



ROSEMARY

(*ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS*)

As I write this on ANZAC day it is an appropriate time to review this wonderful, hardy herb in the mint (Lamiaceae) family. Being native to the Mediterranean area, it grows wild on the Gallipoli peninsula. Its Latin name stems from 'ros' = dew, and 'marinus' = sea. Its use on ANZAC day reflects its ability to stimulate memory. The beautiful bank of rosemary together with lavender on 'the berm' is one of the iconic eye catching features of our TLC Garden.

It is a woody shrub that thrives in a sunny, well-drained alkaline soil that can withstand drought and cold. There are many cultivars and variations in both form and flower colour from mauve to pink, white and blue. It is best raised from cuttings taken in the autumn.

Through the ages it has been recognised for its important culinary and medicinal properties. It is high in iron, calcium and Vit B6, rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. There are many studies that show the benefits of rosemary essential oil to:-

- Enhance memory and concentration through improved blood circulation, it has been shown (Kyoto University) to significantly slow down brain ageing.

- It offers neurological protection through its carnosic acid to be able to fight off free radical damage.

Others show that rosemary oil:-

- Boosts the immune system, and as a massage oil it relaxes tense muscles and feelings of stress. It may ease arthritic pain, and can speed bruise healing when used externally.
- It promotes head hair growth and cures dandruff.
- Protection against macular degeneration has been demonstrated due to its carnosic acid component. Other anti-tumour properties are beneficial to leukemia and breast cancer.
- The culinary benefits of adding rosemary to cooking ground- beef mince show that it reduces the cancer-causing agents that develop during cooking. It also aids digestion.
- Adding rosemary to meat, breads and dressings adds a delightful aromatic flavour.
- Rosemary is used in the perfume and cosmetics industry.
- Rosemary is used as an air freshener, or as a deterrent to some pests, add it to a home-made insect repellent.

Rosemary is a remarkably useful and attractive herb which is not generally appreciated. In these notes I have focussed more on the lesser known properties. There is much useful information about rosemary on the web. There are some contra indications for the use of rosemary when pregnant and when on certain medications.

Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame

Thanks to Julie demolishing a hardwood paling fence and subsequently Neville's wordworking skills we now have some great hardwood plot signs for sale, in the shed. You may have seen them at the seedling sale.

These can be had for a donation of \$5, or \$10 if you feel generous and you can then name your plot.

I have purchased one and mounted an enamel sign on it, which is now to be seen in my plot.

Have a look and see if you would like one, and you can pass cash on to me in due course.

You can paint a sign or engrave it, or ?????, all ideas welcome.

Neville is happy to make some more if required.

Thanks Julie and Neville.

Regards, John

