

HERB GROWER

P13 P18 P14

PUBLISHED BY THE ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA INC.

Inside This Issue:

HERBAL BIRTH CONTROL

ANCIENT WISDOM OF WOMEN
PAGE 17

ASIAN HERBS

EASY TO GROW CULINARIES
PAGE 15

GARDENING CALENDAR

YOUR MONTHLY LUNAR GUIDE
PAGE 6

PADDOCK ON TOP

A CROSSWORD FOR HERB GROWERS
PAGE 10

ORGANIC PEST CONTROL CHART

PAGE 5

GROWER HINTS

PAGE 21

CERTIFIED ORGANIC

PAGE 8

PLUS: MARKET REPORT, NEWS BRIEFS,
and OTHER REGULAR COLUMNS



EDITORIAL

You may have noticed that this issue of the HERB GROWER is copied onto a different kind of paper and unfortunately the "100 % recycled" had to disappear off the back page.

We've experienced quite a few problems with the recycled paper since we started doing our own photocopying. Almost as many sheets of paper got stuck inside the machine as came out safely the other end.

Also all the rough bits tended to clog up the photocopier. I must say that the mechanics never complained even though we had made it clear that we were only interested in buying the machine, if we could use the recycled paper on it. They did warn us, but were out here in a flash, whenever we phoned them with yet another stuff-up.

One of them even did a whole run of one page of the HERB GROWER for me once, as I was fast becoming a nervous wreck.

That, by the way, was the issue in which quite a few members will have noticed an upside down page.

Fortunately things can change at any time. There is more and more demand for good recycled paper and one of these days, I'm sure, we'll find paper that is both good for our conscience and the machine. In the meantime we're stuck with this only partially recycled stuff. At least it's not chlorine-bleached.

If any of you know of good recycled paper or paper that's made of materials other than wood, please let me know. I'll be very grateful. I know there is paper made from bagasse, but that one is chlorine-bleached, a process that's really polluting.

I just read an interesting article in the "Daily Planet", an excellent monthly, published by the Tasmanian Greens. It tells of research in the Agricultural Institute in Wageningen in the Netherlands, where I once studied, into turning hemp into paper. Dutch farmers needed a fourth rotational crop. They choose hemp as the best rotation crop from over 30 options and initiated the project. At the end of 1993 a pilot hemp mill will be in operation.

The other good news is that the researchers estimate a reduction in soil pollution of over 50%, because the traditional 'potatoes/cereals/sugar beet' needed extensive use of agricultural chemicals.

Tasmania is considering putting up one of the hemp mills!

The Minister for Health has agreed by allowing renewal of licences to grow cannabis for the season. The license is jointly held by the Hemp for Paper Consortium and the University of Tasmania.

Good on ye, Tazzie!

I hope you've all had a good Christmas and that you'll have a great 1993! I am off to Holland with Freya to visit parents and other rellies, to Germany to admire my second grandchild, due any minute now, and then to India, where we'll meet Howard for a real holiday. He will finish this issue of the HERB GROWER for me. See you next year!



Frontpage illustration: from the Badianus Manuscript, Mexico 1552

ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA INC.

P.O. BOX 6171, LISMORE, N.S.W. 2480

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The HERB GROWER is the official publication of the Organic Herb Growers of Australia Inc.

New members pay a \$5 joining fee.

Yearly membership fee: Australia \$15 - Overseas \$A 28.

LETTERS to the EDITOR et al.

*If you'd like a personal
reply from the editor or
other committee members,
please enclose an SAE.*

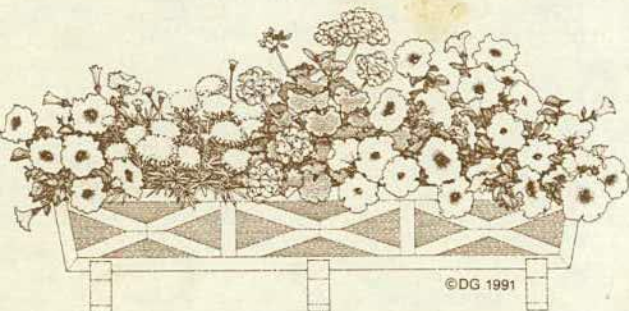
Dear Elle,

Here is a pesto sauce recipe, for those who love pastas; it's more economical than most and will serve ten people.

15 gr. sweet basil leaves
50 gr. pepita seeds, crushed
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 med. clove garlic, crushed
20 gr. parsley leaves
juice of half a lemon or lime
50 gr. low fat cottage cheese

Blend all ingredients in high speed blender, then add 100 gr. light sour cream and blend to a smooth paste. To vary the flavour you may add yoghurt or more lemon juice.

Serve cold with pasta, ravioli, lasagne or tofu. Guten Appetit!
Fred & Susan, Quambatook Org. Herbs,
Upper Crystal Creek, NSW.



©DG 1991

Dear Howard,

I am writing to you to ask your thoughts on the possible market for fresh chinese water chestnuts (*Eleocharis Dulcis*) for use as a medicinal. I have read that they are used in traditional chinese medicine. It is believed that the regular eating of fresh corms helps in the prevention of stomach problems, including cancer. They're also used to relieve fevers, diarrhea, indigestion, sore throats, jaundice, diabetes, hypertension, to strengthen the lungs and stomach, for hemorrhoids and mouth ulcers.

We have planted out chinese water chestnuts this season for the fresh market, but I would be interested to hear if there would be a market for this crop as a medicinal.

Any information you could provide would be appreciated.

Les Dean, 5 Valencia Ave, Mildura, 3500

Are there any chinese herbalists out there, who'd like to comment?

ADVERTISING PAYS

That's what our regular advertisers find. Do you have a business that needs more attention? A health practise that's not widely known? Then consider advertising in the HERB GROWER.

The rates are very reasonable, as you can see.

	FULL PAGE	½ PAGE	¼ PAGE
casual	\$45	\$34	\$20
regular	\$40	\$30	\$17

Other sizes also possible. We can even make up your ad for you. Contact Elle for more info.

GOTU KOLA

HYDROCOTYLE ASIATICA
CENTELLA CORDIFOLIA/ASIATICA

Swamp Pennywort/Indian Pennywort

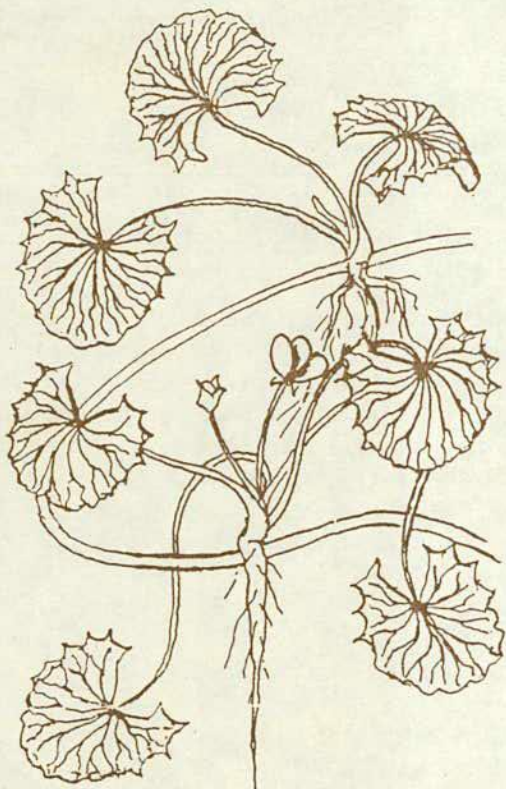
A SMALL UMBELLIFEROUS plant, growing in Southern Africa, India, the Southern United States and throughout the Pacific region.

Cent. Cord. grows naturally from North Queensland to South West Western Australia, including Tasmania, while Cent. Asiat. seems to occur along coastal areas only.

Both species are a creeping herb. The leaflets are petiolate, reniform, crenate, seven nerved and nearly glabrous. The plant prefers a damp place, but also grows in open locations, such as garden beds and lawns. Quite often it's found in protected spots under trees and shrubs or under fences.

The leaves are circular and heart shaped with toothed edges, sometimes flecked with white blotches or reddish dots. The leaf size can vary enormously, from 1 to 7 cm., depending on the location the plant grows in.

The plants root at the nodes and are easily propagated. The flowers are minute and are difficult to see with the naked eye. The fruits are a flattened disc of about 3mm. across and are usually in groups of three.



The plant contains an oily volatile liquid called vellarin, which has a strong smell reminiscent of the plant, and a bitter, pungent, persistent taste. It also contains tannic acid, madecassic acid and asiaticoside.

As a result of its reputed value in Asian countries, a French University carried out scientific tests and the plant is being used in virtually every country in Europe for medical purposes.

Like other members of the Umbelliferae family, which includes celery, parsley, fennel and carrots, to mention but a few, Gotu Kola has diuretic properties. Other beneficial properties of the plant are: anti-fungal, antiameobic, anti-spasmodic, tonic, mildly sedative, accelerates wound healing, anti-inflammatory effects on gastric and duodenal ulcers, blood-purifying. It has long been used in India and Sri Lanka as an aperient or alterative tonic, useful in fever and bowel complaints and a noted remedy for leprosy, rheumatism and ichthyosis (scaly skin) and is employed as a poultice for syphilitic ulcers. In small doses it acts as a stimulant, in large doses as a narcotic, causing stupor and headache and sometimes vertigo and coma.

In Asian countries it's referred to as the Elixir of Life.

I choose Gotu Kola as the Herb of the Month, since it's had a lot of publicity lately. A woman's magazine wrote an article about it's anti-arthritis properties and as a result we were swamped with requests for runners of the plant. I've been using it myself for quite a few years now and daily feed two leaves of it to the rest of the family. A ceylonese lady told me about Gotu Kola years ago and stressed that no more than two leaves should be taken per day.

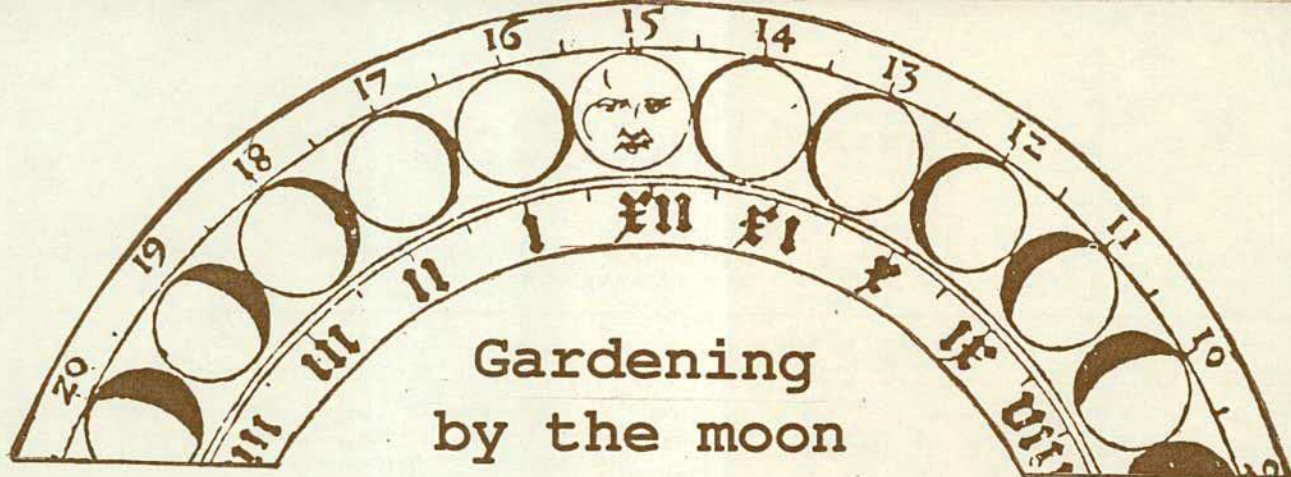
Elle

Organic Pest Control

This table was compiled by Steve Grace of Northern Rivers Rural Buying Service in Lismore. The information is intended as a general guide only. Always read product labels carefully, and use products only according to directions.

PRODUCT	CONTROLS	COMMENTS
Petroleum Oil (White Oil)	Scale insects, some mites, aphids, mealy bugs.	Avoid hot weather. Don't mix with sulphur or use within 21 days of a sulphur spray or dusting. Don't use oil on a regular basis as leaf pores are blocked and growth may be adversely affected.
Codacide Oil	Wetting agent for adding to most other spray products.	Made from rapeseed oil (Canola). Acts as a wetter, sticker, spreader and rainfastener. Also enhances the activity of other products, especially Dipel, Soap Spray and Pyrethrum.
Soap Spray (Safer's, etc)	Aphids, mites, mealy bugs, thrips, whitefly.	Use with Codacide or clear white oil. Care with use of white oil with soap. Follow up spray may be necessary after 5 to 7 days, especially with mites as eggs are not affected.
Dipel (Thuricide, Bio-Caterpillar Killer) Bacillus thuringiensis Berliner	Many different species of caterpillar.	Concentrated form of a naturally occurring bacteria only harmful to many butterfly and moth larvae. No contact action - residual only. Must be eaten by larvae. Feeding stops quickly but death may take a few days. Young stages of larvae are more easily killed. Best used with Codacide oil and applied late afternoon.
Derris Dust (Rotenone)	Caterpillars, aphids, etc	Made from ground up root of the Rotenone plant. Is more toxic than the alternatives. Dipel or soap spray may be a better choice.
Pyrethrum (Kendon, etc)	Broad spectrum knockdown. Kills most insects, including beneficial insects .	Made from Pyrethrum Daisy (flower extract). Best kept for difficult to kill insects which cause bad damage. Contact action only - very short residual life. TOXIC TO BEES . Best used with Codacide oil and applied late afternoon.
Garlic Spray (Garden Friend)	Aphids, thrips, caterpillars, slugs, etc.	Mainly has repellent action. May be added to other sprays for residual value and wetting action or used alone as deterrent.
Sulphur (wetttable and dusting)	Mites, white louse scale, powdery mildew, some other fungous diseases.	Avoid hot weather. Don't mix with petroleum oil or use within 21 days of an oil spray. May burn some sulphur-sensitive plants - refer to label or do test.
Lime Sulphur	Many mites and scale insects, powdery mildew, some other fungous diseases.	Mainly used as a winter spray on many dormant tree crops. Not compatible with petroleum oil, except winter oil on some deciduous tree crops.
Copper oxychloride	Fungous diseases - brown rot, anthracnose, black spot, downy mildew, etc.	Low toxicity, broad spectrum chemical fungicide. Allowable under NASAA organic standards.
Copper hydroxide (Bordeaux mixture, Kocide)	As for copper oxychloride.	Made by the combining of copper sulphate to hydrated lime. Similar compound to copper oxychloride, also allowable under NASAA standards. Available as pre-mix or bulk ingredients.
Q-Fly trap (Dak-pot alternative)	Attracts and kills male Qld fruit fly.	Wick contains sex attractant and insecticide. Does not prevent fruit stinging but leads to less fly fertility - less larvae. Trap is a good indicator of fruit fly activity in area of crop. Available without insecticide also, to conform to organic standards.
Q-Fly lure (Yeast autolysate, protein autolysate)	Attracts male and female Qld fruit fly	May be used in traps as attractant (yeast based). Not likely to prevent fruit stinging on highly susceptible crops but will reduce fly numbers and may provide adequate control in less susceptible crops. Use in conjunction with Q-Fly trap.

THIS IS A GENERAL GUIDE ONLY - ALWAYS REFER TO PRODUCT LABELS



Gardening by the moon

By Elle Fikke-Rubin

JANUARY

13-14 The best days this month to work with root crops and perennials. If it's not too hot in your area, now is the time to sow beetroot, radishes, parsnip, rhubarb and carrots as far as vegies are concerned.

Mediterranean herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and oregano can also be sown or planted. Rosemary takes a while to come up from seed, but thyme and oregano sprout easily and quickly, as do sage seeds.

Trees and bushes can also go in during these two days. Before planting, soak the hole you dug for them really well and also the earth you're using to backfill. Then sprinkle some blood and bone or Organic Life around your newly planted tree, water that in too and cover with a good layer of wet newspapers and hay or any other mulch you have in mind. Keep a daily watering up for about one week, after that once a week for about a month. By then they should be well established.

15 New Moon, so take the day off.

16-17 Two good days to take heel cuttings of lavender and rosemary. Find a strong looking new shoot, which is joined to an older woody branch and carefully tear it off downwards, taking some of the older twig with it. Prepare a mix of equal parts of sand, peatmoss and vermiculite.

Carefully strip the bottom leaves off your cuttings, and insert them into the mix.

Trim the tops as well. Keep the mix just slightly moist. In about six weeks you'll have new plants, which will be able to establish themselves before winter sets in.

18-23 These days can be used to weed or check for pests. Your citrus trees may

have unwelcome visitors in the form of large brown or black bugs. Be really careful with the monsters. They squirt a nasty fluid which can cause temporary blindness, should it be aimed at your eyes. Spray them with a pyrethrum spray. Strawberries, which have finished fruiting, can be trimmed of new runners.

Raspberries should be thinned out, rotten peaches and other stonefruit should be collected and either burned or put in a plastic bag in the hot sun. Don't let pumpkins run away with themselves, but chop off any non-fruiting runners.

24-30 This whole week should be devoted to planting and sowing leafy green annuals, such as lettuces, silverbeet, dill, parsley, coriander and cresses.

31 First quarter, a Sunday off.

FEBRUARY

1-3 Three more days off.

4-5 Time to plant flowers and fruiting annuals. Beans, broccoli, brussels sprouts, peppers, cauli's, cucs, zucchini's, corn and, in the tropics, also melons, eggplant and okra can be sown.

Broccoli, like all brassica's, likes to be surrounded by herbs and is particularly fond of dill, but does not like to be near tomatoes and strawberries.

Beans should be planted well away from all members of the onion family, such as chives, leeks and garlic, whereas cucumbers love the company of onions. Zucchini's flourish with nasturtiums.

6-8 This weekend is not suitable for sowing or planting. But there are perennial and rootcrop days coming up, so this is a good time to buy bushes, trees or

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perennial flowers and herbs.

9-13 Time to plant or sow the perennials. If you want to propagate any valerian, comfrey or echinacea plants, these are the days for it. Valerian and echinacea can be dug up and the roots cut into segments and replanted. Comfrey can just be split up, as the roots usually don't need to be cut. All three of these herbs prefer to grow in some shade.

14-22 Days to get rid of weeds and pests, trimming leggy flowers and herbs. If you have spring flowering bushes, such as azaleas, this is the latest month to do some light pruning.

Bulbs for spring flowers should be coming onto the market now. Blue bells, frittalarias, daffodils, freesias and anemones will all add to spring beauty. Keep them in a cool place until next month, when they can be planted.

23-28 Time for leafy green annuals or biennials. Parsley, coriander, lettuces, Chinese cabbage, silverbeet and cresses can all be planted or sown. Lettuces love to be surrounded by calendula's and strawberries. The best companions for parsley are chives and carrots, but whatever you do, don't plant your parsley plants near any kind of mint. They won't like it.

MARCH

1-2 Take these days off.

3-4 Two days to plant or sow seedbearing annuals and flowers. Coriander and dill should be sown (these two herbs qualify both as seed bearing and leafy green annuals). Also pansies, violas, poppies, cucumbers, capsicums, egg plant, tomatoes, broccoli and the quick maturing kinds of cauli. In cool areas broad beans can be put in. These grow really well together with potatoes. Both these vegies grow well in the no dig bed. If you have never used this method before, you'll be amazed at how easy it is. Select a sunny spot in your garden. No need to weed it. Sprinkle some blood and bone or pelletized manure, such as Organic Life, around and put your seed potatoes down. Store-bought potatoes will work too. Big ones can be cut into sections, but must have at least one eye. On top of the potatoes you now place a good layer of hay or straw, at least 20 cm. thick. On top of this you place a thin layer of compost, in which you pop the

broad bean seeds. Now water in really well. Keep it up for a week, at least once a day. Your broadbeans will put roots down and the potatoes send shoots up.

You must really make sure, though, that the potatoes are well covered. When this tuber gets exposed to light it turns green and is poisonous.

5-8 Not good days for planting or sowing.

9-14 Perennial and root crop time again.

Parsnips, onions, garlic, swedes, turnips, radishes and rhubarb, for instance, can be planted.

HAVE FUN!



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by RUSSELL QUINN

In October, I journeyed to Cooma, in the Snowy Mountains, where I had the pleasure of introducing Peter Mitchell to the OHGA Certification Scheme, as inspecting officer for that region. Peter and Shannon O'Boyle and their three children live on a property at Peak View, 40kms N/E of Cooma. Their main activity is growing medicinal trees and plants and keeping warm for much of the year. The cold climate, as with growers on the New England Tableland, reduces the growing season considerably, which makes it difficult to grow some of the more popular culinaries all year round. However, the medicinals are suited better to that climate. For growers south of Sydney desiring certification, Peter can be contacted on 064-54 3142, or at "Old School", Peak View, NSW 2630. Good luck Peter. In the Hunter Valley, the person to contact is Tony Lonergan on 065-43 7618 or at "Woodburn", Dorset Road, Muswellbrook, NSW 2333. There is still a need for members to carry out certification work in other areas. If you have an interest in being involved in this work, please contact me. Other areas which I recently visited were Copmanhurst, Tabulam, and Uki. Each area was differing in challenges and rewards. I will be in the Nambucca Valley in the near future. If you are in this region and wish to proceed with certification, let me know.

The question occasionally arises whether the use of "glyphosphate" herbicides (ie Roundup and Zero) are acceptable with the OHGA system. It may be the case that the active constituent in these products have what is termed "low toxicity" and does not persist for long in the soil. However, the "wetting agent", which is part of all commercial formulations has been found to kill fish in waterways. It corrodes iron and galvanized steel. This is evident in other products with claims of "low Toxicity" or "environmentally friendly". The hidden ingredients are not always mentioned on the label. It is far safer to make your own concoctions if you desire to use them, from known harmless sources. This not only gives you control and full knowledge of

what you are applying (which all organic growers would desire), but it is also withdrawing your support from the chemical companies which make along with these safe products, much more toxic ones. So the answer to the original question is NO! the use of herbicides is NOT accepted.

For growers who have had unfavorable soil residue test results, there exists a product called "Symbex" microbial soil activator, manufactured by Spraytech and is certified by BFA. It is a liquid consisting of microbial enzymes and bacteria. The carrier is whey (from milk). It is promoted as increasing the microbial population in the soil, in turn increasing crop yields. Increased microbial activity is a key factor in breaking down chemical residues. This is usually enhanced by cultivation of legumes, green manures, the addition of organic matter, manures and moisture. If the claims of this product are correct, it would be another tool in achieving cleaner soils. The Dept of Ag is currently conducting trials with Symbex on DDT residues found in dip sites. It is too early for any conclusive results, but I will pass the information on when it is reported.

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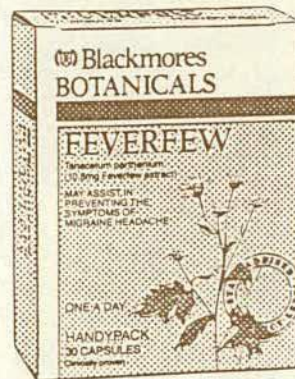
Migraine sufferers who recently took part in a U.K. clinical study showed reduced symptoms while taking daily capsules of freeze-dried Feverfew.

The leaves of the Feverfew plant are rich in sesquiterpene lactones, a substance thought responsible for the anti-migraine action.

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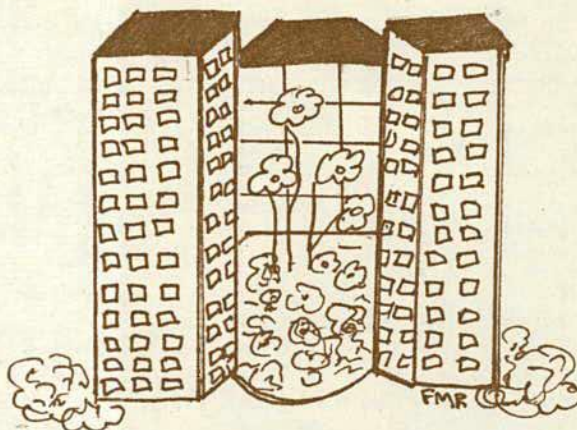
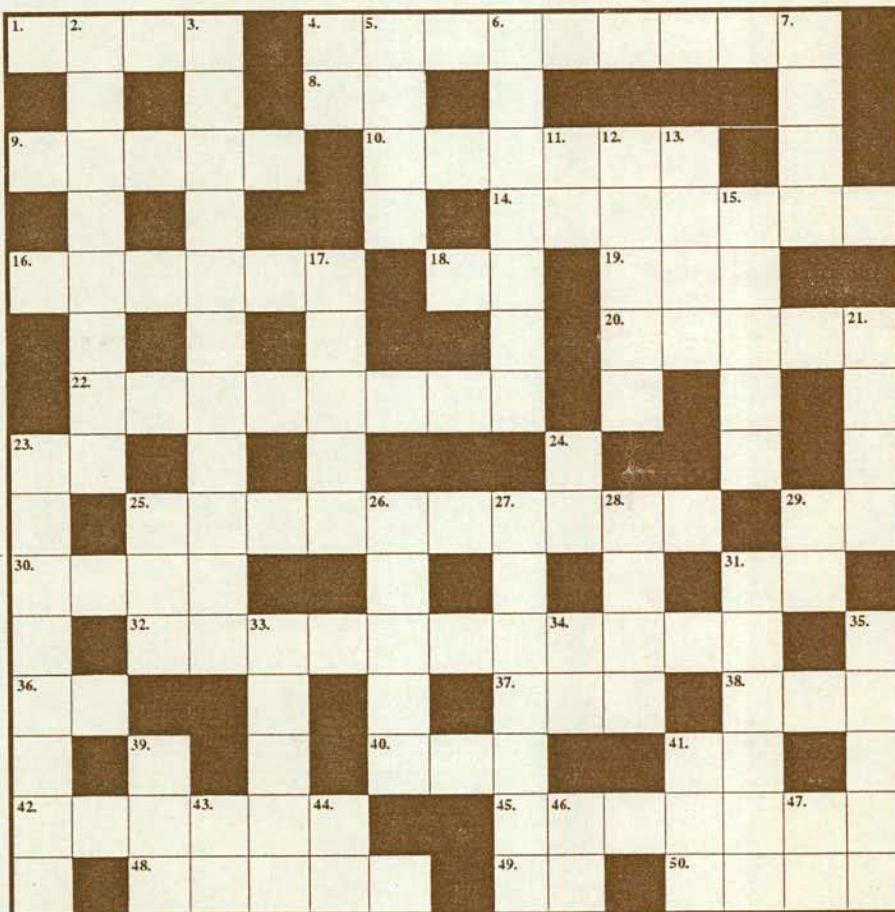
TREBLEJOHNS + MORE BLAC 0241

Across:

1. The wisest herb of all. (4)
4. A herbal hair of the dog. (9)
8. A transcendental note. (2)
9. A very old and wormy aloe. (5)
10. A dark, dyeing plant. (6)
14. Not "you so early", but on your own. (7)
16. Add herbs to this on a cold night to pack a punch. (6)
18. Black light that is best avoided. (2)
19. Unilateral Declaration of Independence (*abbrv.*) (3)
20. What Elle does on non-planting days. (5)
22. Twist this one and you will get a rope that wants to party. (8)
23. An Egyptian necessity for healthy herb farming. (2)
25. A colourful wharf which fixes up an itch. (6,4)
29. An olde you. (2)
30. Did you shut the gate? Nope! (4)
31. Sew shall ye reap. (2)
32. It stopped the saint wetting his bed (2,5,4).
36. A desirable pollinator without an end. (2)
37. A bit of get up and go mint. (3)
38. An Irish rebel confused by the invisible ether. (3)
40. Short tumult is a future holiday destination for organic farmers. (3)
41. Organic Rules (*abbrv.*) OK? (2)
42. Don't rest on this Caesarian hat-herb. (6)
45. A strand or two transforms a staple's colour. (7)
48. This house has hides for nomads. (5)
49. A lost, backward Martian tea farmer. (2)
50. If it is small, make sure you read it. (4)

Down:

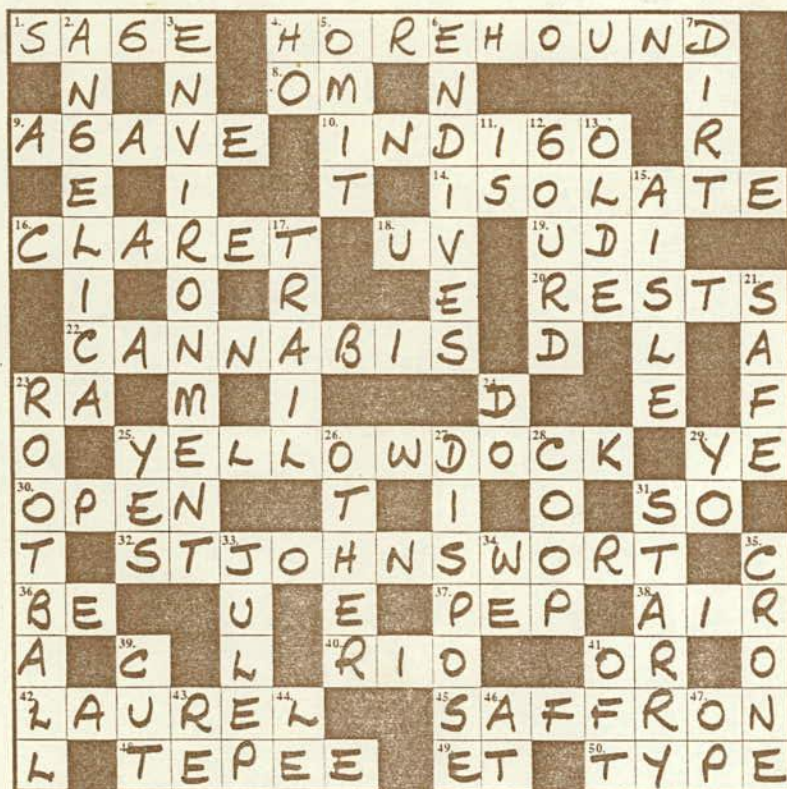
2. Perfect candy for an angel's digestion. (8)



Paddock on Top by Kenrick Riley

3. The small and the large world around us. (11)
4. Half a Santa's hail. (2)
5. Right action for nasty sprays. (4)
6. Pepper up a deep-pool salad. (7)
7. The source of all life is never clean. (4)
11. See he/she/it in B - 36 Across. (2)
12. Does the vine contain er . . . cucurbits? (5)
13. Ye coffee shoppe age. (4)
15. Walk down here for a rice shower. (5)
17. A snail's calling card. (5)
21. A banker's haven as a house. (4)
23. Don't bounce this one when transplanting a Boa Troll. (4,4)

24. Half an extinct bird will perform. (2)
25. Are you an incredibly brilliant herb farmer? (3)
26. Mother lost her head over an alternative. (5)
27. Episodes lose one vitamin into the compost. (7)
28. This chicken run is a self-help organisation. (4)
29. Yankee way to go is a short old ewe. (2)
31. Vincent's twinkling night. (6)
33. A mint smoothie for a summer's day. (5)
34. You and I are smallish in Scotland. (2)
35. A wise old woman. (5)
39. Those wise women don't do this to herbs with steel. (3)
41. Frequently poetic. (3)
43. In reference to. (2)
44. The French. (2)
46. Being there is faster than an XT computer. (2)
47. Pour half backward into a Xmas pud for a Happy New Year. (2)



VICTORIA CONFERENCE

Ballarat Area

5-6-7 FEB 93

HOWARD RUBIN of Herb Farms Australia will be conducting a three day conference on commercial herb growing. The workshop will include a guided tour and lunch at Yuulong Lavender Estate, Mt. Edgerton. All aspects of growing, processing, value-adding, marketing, of culinary and medicinal herbs will be covered.

VENUE: BALLAN TOURIST RESORT
FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY ALL DAY,
SUNDAY MORNING

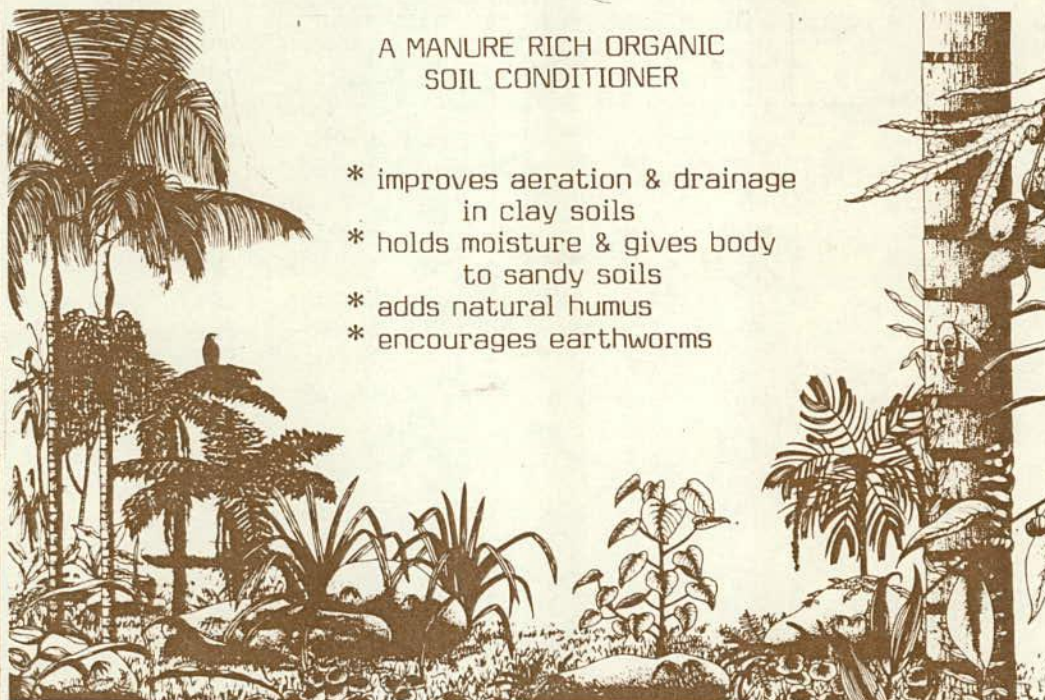
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GO GROW



HERB FARMS AUSTRALIA

Basil, basil, basil...that's all they seem to want! Every city, every agent, the same.. just send Basil. The entire country must be cooking with it by now. The mediterranean varieties have remained consistent, although the volumes have never reached those of basil. While the more unusual herbs have stayed in the ground rather than the pot. In general, it has been a good trading period. Stable demand, stable prices. There is certainly a lot of herb about. Probably only a few out of season herbs were in strong demand, but these were quickly found. Export is now starting to build up again, as the colder weather settles in to the northern latitudes.

During the really hot period we had a few consignments damaged. Not whole crops but every now and then, one variety would spoil. This can only be remedied by following the cardinal rules: harvest only quality, wash and chill, package correctly without overloading. Now with the rains upon us, growers must use extra care in draining properly. The herbs will absorb more water during the wet and this will be expelled during transport. The result will be more water in the bottom of the styro. Dip out all excess water at the depot before sealing.



PRICES RECORDED IN THE LAST PERIOD FOR NORMAL BUNCH SIZE

BASIL	.80¢
PURPLE BASIL	.80¢-\$1.30
CHIVES	.60¢-.80¢
LEMON THYME	.60¢-.80¢
MARJORAM	.60¢-.80¢
OREGANO	.60¢-.80¢
ROSEMARY	.60¢-.80¢
SAGE	.60¢-.80¢
SORREL	.60¢
TARRAGON	.60¢-.80¢
THYME	.60¢-.80¢

NURSERY LICENSES REQUIRED

On a recent visit to one of our Sunday markets, I met one of our growers, who was selling potted herbs. He told me that an Ag inspector asked to see his license; and not having one, he would be required to apply.

I rang our local Dept of Ag and made inquiries. So if this applies to you, take note, inspectors are about.

The Horticultural Stock and Nurseries Act requires that all nurserymen who propagate plants and resellers who sell them, are required to be registered.

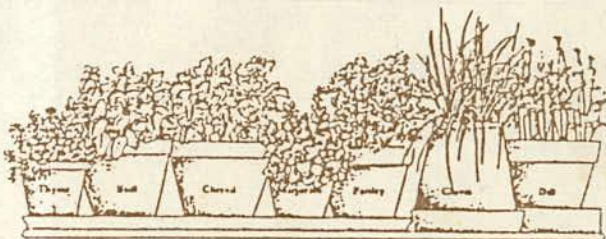
The application fee is for a nurseryman \$40 per annum and a reseller \$25 per annum. Registration fees do not go into State revenues. NSW Agriculture receives 20% for administration and the remainder is held in a special deposits account, which is distributed as grants for the development of the horticultural stock industry.

No person is permitted to sell nursery stock unless registered as a nurseryman or reseller. A registered nurseryman may propagate and sell on the premises covered by registration. Reseller registration does not permit propagation on the premises covered by registration. A separate Certificate of Registration is issued for each place of business.

Hawkers or itinerant sellers are required to obtain a resellers certificate. They may operate only at one place at one time and they must produce the registration certificate upon request.

Labels for herbs are not in the First Schedule, and therefore do not have to conform to any special requirements. But do remember that any claims made on a label as to the therapeutic value of the herb is illegal under the Therapeutic Goods Act.

For further information and application forms, contact your nearest Dept of Ag.



19 3len
X
TOBACCO is one of the most toxic drugs in the world. Opium poppies and Cannabis pale by comparison in destructiveness of the human body.

Well, surprise! An unidentified compound from tobacco, grown in cell culture, proved very effective in lowering interocular pressure. The disease caused by high pressure in the eye is glaucoma, sometimes treated by the active chemical from marijuana, delta-9-THC.

The tobacco compound proved considerably more effective, but only by intravenous injection.

(HerbalGram 27)

16 X
3len
CAPSAICIN, the chemical which makes chillies hot, has found yet another beneficial application. In the States a product which is based on capsaicin, called Counter Assault, helps protect hikers from grizzly bears. And over 1200 police departments and the FBI use capsaicin sprays as replacements for tear gas. When sprayed the gas causes involuntary eye closing and respiratory spasms lasting from 30 to 45 minutes.

Farmers in the S.W. are finding capsicums and chillie peppers a profitable crop. In New Mexico alone, 30,000 acres were planted last year.

(HerbalGram 27)

16 X
3len
CUBAN doctors are beginning to use natural, low-cost alternatives to expensive medical imports. One of these is fiber from the native sisal plant Henequen (*Agave sisilana*) as a replacement for surgical thread. The thread has been developed by a Cuban military doctor, Mario Gonzalez-Quevedo and is being produced in a small workshop in a Havana military hospital.

(Los Angeles Times, Feb. 1992)

UNLIKE in Australia, in the USA herbs and herbal businesses are getting the recognition they deserve.

Two herbal businesses were chosen as the top Small Business Exporters of the year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Voted No.1 was Paul Hsu of Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises Inc. of Wisconsin, who started his small

business of growing and exporting ginseng in 1974.

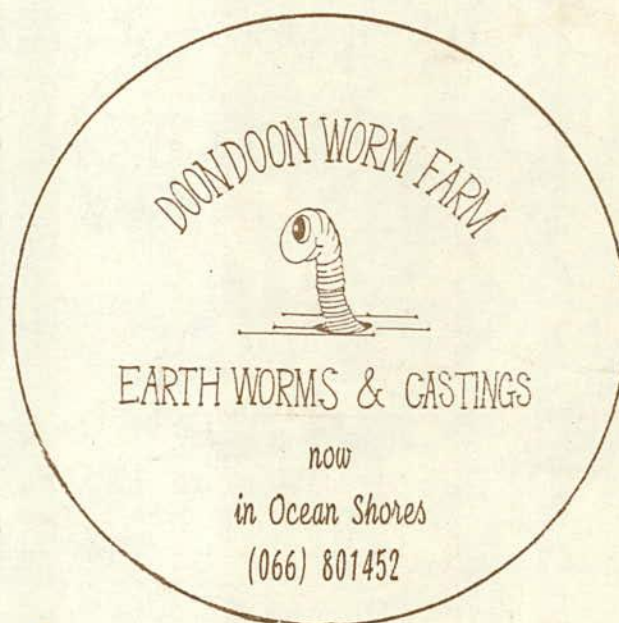
The National first Runner Up is Richard Steward, President of Frontier Cooperative Herbs of Iowa.

The business manufactures and distributes herb and spice products for the natural food industry. He and his wife Colleen started off in 1976, while he was still a student, in their small cabin on the banks of the Cedar River.

A JAPANESE construction company uses a scent program at its central Tokio headquarters, which works through the ventilation system and emits three different aromas each day. First a citrus fragrance, which wakes the workers up in the mornings and, after lunch, a light floral bouquet to aid concentration during working hours, but a woody scent to relieve tiredness during the lunch recess.

Two other companies, Seiko and Shisheido, joined forces and came up with an alarm clock which wakes you up by emitting a whiff of eucalyptus.

(Weekend Australian Nov.14)



Meinhardt Pty Ltd has become the first local consulting group to open an office in the United Arab Emirates. The firm has been awarded its first contract by the Public Works Dept of Abu Dhabi to build a herbal medicine clinic expected to cost A\$12 million.

Done before

YOUR NATUROPATH UNDER THREAT

THE THERAPEUTIC GOODS ACT is threatening Natural Health Practitioners. After banning the use of many herbs and homeopathic preparations, they're now intent on getting stuck into the health professionals themselves., thereby depriving us all of our freedom of choice in health care for us and our kids.

The Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs has recommended that the classification of Natural Health Practitioners as 'Health Professionals' be removed from the Therapeutic Goods Regulations on January 1994.

This means that Naturopaths will lose access to remedies registered under the regulations, and will only be able to dispense and advertise preparations for minor ailments such as coughs and colds.

All this when as many as one in four Australians regularly seek health care from naturopaths, because they're not happy with regular doctors or the chemicals they prescribe.

What can we do about it?

Write to your local paper and other media and the following politicians:

- * The hon. Peter Staples
Minister for Health Services
Parliament House, Canberra
- * Senator John Coulter
the Democrats
Parliament House, Canberra

and your local MP.

This is too important an issue to ignore! Even if you never get involved in any protest action, you have to agree that this issue needs action from everyone, including you!

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ASIAN HERBS a new export potential...

The Japanese and South East Asian markets are becoming increasingly easier to penetrate, provided that the quality of the produce is the BEST. While several culinary varieties are now becoming staples in their diet, such as Basil, rosemary, and mint; there does exist the opportunity to supply their own herbs. Most of the countries are quickly running out of growing space, and are facing pollution problems. The answer could just be to grow it here and export.

JAPANESE RADISH (*Raphanus sativus*)

Radish is called "Daikon" meaning Big Root, which is now internationally understood. Daikon is a staple part of the Japanese diet, and occupies one of the largest growing areas. It will grow very well here, and under the optimum temperature $\pm 20^{\circ}\text{C}$, it will grow quite vigorously and matures in 60 days after sowing. If the plant undergoes lower temperatures prematurely for some time, it will develop flower buds. "Hi-light", "April Cross" and "Easter" are extremely slow in bolting. Spacings are 6 plants per m^2 . Close attention should be directed to the prevention of mosaic virus, and nematodes and aphids.

KOMATSUNA (*Brassica campestris*)

This is a typical Japanese green. It is extremely easy to grow, and tastes like a mustard spinach. Grows better in the cool rather than the hot, when it will bolt. It grows really quick, in ± 45 days after sowing. The best harvest is obtained when the leaves are a height of 20cm, which is best for cooking because they are tender. Spacings are 400 plants per m^2 . It attracts aphids.

SERIFON or HSUEH-LI-HUNG (*Brassica juncea* var. *sabellica*)

This is another of the cabbage like crops which is very easy to grow. The leaves are a deep green and are pungent. It is sown in late summer to early autumn and harvested in fall thru to spring. Spacings are 20 plants per m^2 . It does not attract any pests.

MITSUBA or JAPANESE HORNWORT (*Cryptotaenia japonica*)

Though perennial by nature this herb is mainly grown as an annual. This is a very popular herb in Japan. It is a very easy grower. It can be considered to be the Japanese equivalent to our parsley. Spacings are 1000 plants per m^2 . The crop is harvested when the leaves are 20cm tall. It does not attract any pests.

MIZUNA or MIBUNA (*Brassica japonica*)

This is a Japanese cabbage cultivated in the Kyoto region. It prefers a cooler climate and will grow well in our winter months. It has a sharp pungent but pleasing taste. The mizuna has the jagged frilly edges. Best to harvest younger leaves, but it can be used in a mature stage. Like most cabbages it will attract pests, particularly aphids. Space the plants 100 to the m^2 in the early stages and thin out.

PERILLA or SHISO (*Perilla crospa*)

This is another staple of the Japanese diet, with the purple variety for the gourmet. It is very easy to grow. The young leaves are harvested and bunched. Best time to sow is late spring, with 25 plants per m^2 . It does not attract any pests.

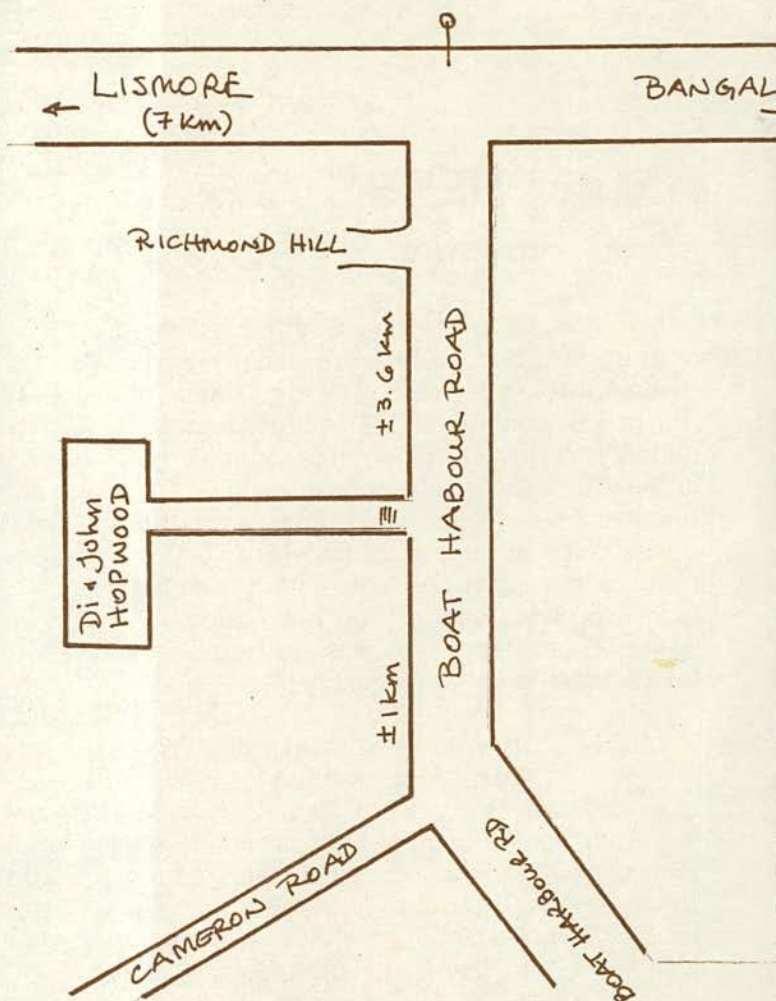
KANKON (*Ipomoea aquatica*)

One of the typical oriental green vegies particularly suited for the tropics. It prefers warm climate and much moisture. It can be grown as an aquatic plant. It is ready for harvest in 45 days from sowing, but needs tropical climates. Space 100 plants per m^2 . No pests.

NEXT MEETING

Our bi-monthly field days are a big success. Last one held at Grafton attracted 80 people! Our next one takes us to the new property owned by our treasurer Di and husband John. The property was affected by hail damage, so it will be interesting to see how the plants have recovered.

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HERBAL BIRTH CONTROL

the ancient wisdom of women

POPULATION control was not much discussed at the Earth Summit in Rio, even though it's the single most important issue on the planet.

One reason is perhaps that it's hard to talk about contraception. Also it seems that ethics and public policy cannot keep up with medical breakthroughs.

But a fascinating article in the June issue of *American Scientist* magazine should make us think twice about the supposition that birth control is a modern issue.

In the article two historians, John Riddle, of North Carolina State University, and J. Worth Estes, of Boston University, argue that both in ancient and medieval times women used certain plants and herbs to control reproduction. Their article shows that knowledge of the extensive use of birth control throughout history, has been lost, distorted or suppressed.

The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and early Christians were quite willing to practise what the world leaders in Rio were afraid to even talk about.

According to Riddle and Estes, women in ancient times were very familiar with the contraceptive properties of various plants. One port city, Cyrene in North Africa, had birth control as its primary industry.

As early as the 6th century BC the Cyrenians were cultivating and exporting huge quantities of silphium, a kind of giant fennel plant. These plants were shipped all over the ancient world. Silphium seeds were crushed and turned into what one ancient writer call "Cyrenaic juice" which women took to prevent conception. The trade in silphium was so brisk that the plant became a symbol of the city, showing up on most Cyrenian coins.

In the Middle Ages, and even

earlier, a host of plants were made into potions and drinks to prevent conception or cause menstruation. Riddle and Estes say early doctors from Roman times, and through the Middle Ages, prescribed plants such as wormwood, artemisia, resin from myrrh, pennyroyal, queen anne's lace, squirting cucumber and rue to reduce fertility.

Many ancient historians and scholars describe these herbal potions as effective.

Demographic records from the Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages show there were periodic declines in the populations in Europe and the Mediterranean which cannot be linked to wars or epidemics. It is possible that these unexplained declines were a result of the widespread use of herbal contraceptives.

There are also some recent scientific studies indicating that some of the plants used by ancient to control fertility, do affect female hormones.

Mice, given daily doses of extract from the squirting cucumber, failed to ovulate. And pulegone, a chemical ingredient of pennyroyal, has been shown capable of inducing abortions in animals and human beings. Seeds from queen anne's lace have been shown to inhibit embryo implantation in rats. In fact, women in such disparate places as rural North Carolina and India still chew queen anne's lace seeds to reduce their fertility.

Why is this not widely known and discussed, given the world's population problems?

There are probably many reasons why ancient contraceptive practices have been lost. Record keeping in ancient times was poor, and wars led to the destruction and loss of much information on ancient

medical practices. The rise of Christianity and Islam seems to have led to the repression of knowledge about ancient and medieval birth-control practices.

The fact that women controlled the use of plants for contraception may have kept this information outside the mainstream of male-dominated science and medicine.

Modern medicine's skepticism about folk medicine may have led researchers to ignore promising leads or suggestive lay practices with respect to the control of fertility.

Our female forebears apparently knew a thing or two about birth control. The reason we cannot be sure exactly what they knew is the same one which accounts for our continued reluctance to talk about population control and family planning today – morality, medicine and sex make for a highly combustible mix.

(thanks to Graeme Eggins, who sent us a copy of this American article.)

NEW RULES ON SPRAYING

Under new laws, farmers and growers who spray their crops from the air, must fill in an application form, including a 'mud map' showing areas of concern to the pilot.

The Dept. of Ag.'s local pesticide officer, Mr. Lindsay Campbell, said the 'mud map' should include houses and susceptible crops or organic properties near the site, as well as school bus times.

Under the 1978 Pesticide Act, a grower must obtain the written permission of the occupant of any house within 150 meters of where the aircraft flies.

The new requirement is an extension of this rule.

(from the Northern Farmer, 20-11-92)



POLLUTION TAX

Canberra Uni Professor Peter Cullen is incensed with river polluters. So much so, he suggests that farmers should be taxed for the right to discharge nutrients, chemicals and salt into a drainage system. He cites the Murray-Darling basin as a trouble spot, and the outbreaks of blue green algae as a prime result of pollutants such as herbicides.

The Brisbane Organic Growers Inc. have recently initiated a petition to the Federal Government. They have federal parliamentarians ready to table the signed petition sheets, but first need 25,000 signatures.

If you worry about the increasing levels of poison in our water, food and air, you can now do something concrete by circulating the petition and leaving the sheet(s) in shops, your local library and other appropriate places.

Keep your eye on them and send any full sheets, with the number of signatories on the bottom of the sheet, to the Allergy Association.

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CERTIFIED ORGANIC
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GOOD NEWS FROM AMERICA

Senator Hatch of Utah, introduced the **Health Freedom Act of 1992** onto the Senate floor. This bill is the most important new piece of legislation effecting herbs, vitamins, and food supplements. Herbs are to be classified as food or dietary supplements and NOT as drugs nor food additives.

Senator Hatch stated that "dietary supplements can help promote health and prevent certain diseases. In our free market system, consumers should be able to purchase dietary supplements, and companies should be free to sell these products, as long as the labeling and advertising is truthful and non-misleading and there exists a reasonable scientific basis for the product claims." This does not mean that there will not be any control or checks upon the herbs used as a dietary supplement. But the burden of proving that the herb is injurious to health must be proved by the authorities before depriving the consumer. Previously, the manufacturer had to prove scientifically that the herb was safe, now the authorities will have to prove that it is not safe.

One of the most important aspects of this new act will change the labeling laws to allow claims that the various herbs are beneficial to alleviating a specific problem or improving the well being. These claims must be truthful and not misleading. They require scientific evidence, whether published or not, that provides a reasonable basis for the claim. Traditional usage will be acceptable. No longer will the stringent and expensive laboratory testing be required, as they are for synthetic pharmaceuticals. The act brings back common sense. Even common foods will be allowed to have claims made: i.e. garlic will lower your cholesterol, ginger will alleviate travel sickness, etc. Senator Hatch cites some incredible paradoxes in FDA policies, noting that in a free society people should have a greater freedom to choose their food and supplements. Sales of tobacco and alcohol are legal with only few restrictions, despite massive evidence that they are physically harmful; yet it is not legal to claim that peppermint is an aid to digestion

(this article is excerpted from a report by Mark Blumenthal published in the HerbalGram, number 27)



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THIS AND THAT.....

BROWN COAL from the Victorian coal-fields has the potential to be a valuable source of organic carbon for growers wanting to improve levels of organic matter in their soils.

It could be spread dry or in water through irrigation systems or boom sprays, but the suppliers warn against using large amounts in the beginning.

This finely crushed material could replace the HUMIC ACID products currently imported. It's noted that some brown coal exports to Japan are already being made.

Field trials showed generally, that it was the second crop that showed improved yields, but in vegetable crop trials in particular, improvement was seen for some 18 months while growing four consecutive crops.

Overseas countries researching brown coal in the manufacture of fertilisers include USA, Germany, Japan, India, Turkey and Russia.
(Organic News, Feb.92)

BIOTECH INTERNATIONAL in W.A. has genetically engineered a sterile red fungus, which appears to help crops to grow faster and to increase their yield up to 40%.

Large government grants have supported the research of this fungus, which will be ready soon for the wheat industry and for general horticultural purposes.

It is claimed that the process is environmentally safe!
(New Scientist)

A **BRISBANE** company, BCD Industries at Seventeen Miles Rocks, is planning to use a toxic waste 'reversal' technique, which is already being used in the USA.

Instead of incinerating the materials, they add the chemicals and gasses that were removed originally and arrive back at innocuous substances like fuel oil, salt and water!

A company spokesman claimed that the process is safer than incineration, because here will be no air pollution. One of the good things about it is that the

company is developing a mobile plant to go to the waste, rather than the toxic waste having to be shipped all over the country, even the world.

(The Australian Sept.92)

GOING ORGANIC No. 11 mentioned that OPAC (the Organic Producers Advisory Committee), set up by ex-minister John Kerin, had approved OHGA as one of the organic certifying bodies. Issue no. 12 of the same periodical published a correction, saying they had been misinformed, and that only the three large organisations NASAA, BFA and Demeter were the recognized organic bodies.

Wrong again folks! Ms. Ruth Lovisolo, the Secretary of OPAC, has assured us, in person, that OHGA is definitely seen as one of Australia's organic certification bodies and is keeping us well informed of all the government decisions that are taking place in the organic field and those that will affect us on that level.

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Tel (076) 61 4900.

GROWER HINTS

by Dave Carey

"TO irrigate or not to irrigate", that is often the question.

Herbs in general are plants that grow well in a warm dry climate, not requiring a regular watering. The weather in N.E. NSW is normally warm and moist, thus creating ideal conditions for the commercial growing of herbs.

To be a commercial grower and to produce 12 months out of the year, we've found that we cannot rely wholly on the predicted rainfall. During warm and dry periods, which occur frequently, the grower will find that, by irrigating, regrowth of the herbs is greatly increased and they are able to be harvested again much sooner.

Most commercial growers have some irrigation system operating in herb garden.

The main method of irrigation used is the overhead sprinkler system. We set up sprinklers on our first half acre. Initially we didn't plan on a permanent irrigation system, but we soon realized that seedlings require plenty of watering in, that annuals need regular water and that established plants regrow quicker after harvesting when they're irrigated.

Here are some advantages I've found with this system:

- * It can be set up after your garden is planted. We used 1" poly along the garden boundaries and ran a normal garden hose to each sprinkler (approx. 10).
- * There's a variety of overhead sprinklers on the market, so there should be one that suits you.
- * Sprinklers or sprayers can be moved to other areas if required.
- * Blocked sprinklers are easy to maintain.

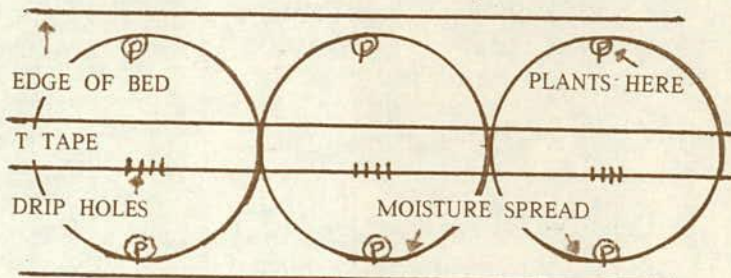
Problems with overhead sprinklers are:

- * They water both the herb beds and the isles in between. This not only wastes water, but promotes growth of weeds in the isles.
- * Penetration of heavy mulch on beds requires long irrigation times in order to actually soak the soil underneath.

In order to avoid these problems, we've set up drip-tape or T-tape irrigation in our second half-acre. As the beds were formed, we laid T-tape along the centre of the beds, before covering them with mulch.

The T-tape is connected to 1" poly, which runs along the ends of the garden beds. Each T-tape joiner has a tap, which allows us to irrigate

only the beds that need it. The T-tape has drip holes every 30 cm. The moisture spreads out to about a 15 cm. radius from the drip holes.



During dry periods, two hours every third day gave sufficient moisture to promote vigorous growth of young herbs. The moisture is directed only to the bed, the isles remain dry and relatively weed free.

Some problems with drip tape irrigation are:

- * High water pressure will cause damage to the tape.
- * Dirty water will drop the drip holes. We pump water from a 5000 gallon tank, using a 1 HP electric pump. This water is pumped up from a creek and allowed to settle before irrigating. A water filter will guarantee longer life of the T-tape.
- * More set-up planning and work is needed and the costs are marginally higher.



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GRANT FOR HERB INDUSTRY RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY of New England—Armidale has received a \$141,000 Government grant.

Ms Shirley Fraser, an Associate Lecturer in UNE's Department of Agronomy and Soil Science, has received the grant from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation to construct an integrated system of herb production and marketing during the next two years.

The grant will enable Ms. Fraser and her small research team to continue to identify herbs which are preferred by customers, and which herbs will be suitable to large-scale production on the New England Tablelands, as well as to perfect a system of mechanical harvesting.

"Because labour costs in Australia are relatively high, we need a system which minimises labour input. We will probably end up with a compromise of some mechanical and some hand harvesting", Ms. Fraser said.

Farmers in the Guyra, Tenterfield and Bellingen areas are involved in selection trials to help the researchers determine the varieties most suitable to the region's growing conditions. These trials also are isolating any impediments to the growing process.

The Armidale branch of the Challenge Foundation is supporting the research work which will assist it to gain a place in the local nursery industry.

So far 60 herb varieties have been found suitable to the New England Tablelands and hopes are held for the development of a chemical-free production system.

"Since herbs are a food product, care is needed if chemicals are used in the growing process", Ms. Fraser said.

"I feel there is a large demand for chemical-free herbs and I'd like to see a section of the industry go that way if possible", she said.

Encouraging Australian interest in a locally grown product, however, will be

one of the greater tasks of the researchers.

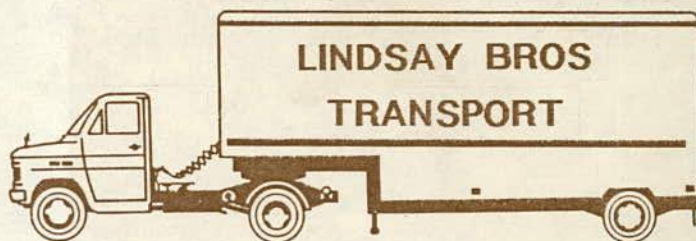
"Australians apparently don't perceive clean food, free of radioactivity and dust etc, as being important. Australia produces a good, clean product but much of that goes overseas. In turn, an often inferior, imported product is consumed by the local market", Ms. Fraser said.

While imported herbs had dropped from 95% of the overall supply in 1988 to about 80% in 1992, there still remained a need for education of Australians about the worth of the locally grown product, she said.

(from the UNE Gazette 7, Sept.15, 1992)

It's kind of ironic that the government gives a grant of this magnitude to do a study on organic herb growing. Many of us have been *doing* the growing, organic and all, and have been selling them for several years now. And all that without major studies at the expense of tax paying herb growers and others.

Elle.



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A MEMBER'S PROFILE

OHGA VICE-PRESIDENT ANDREW TSIKLEAS lives on a 15 acre property at Eltham in Northern New South Wales. Andrew is born and raised in Lismore, but lived in various places, such as Sydney and Brisbane, whilst working in the building trade and the hospitality industry. When he returned to the north coast, he also ran a lawn mowing business for five years and worked in other agricultural fields, in addition to his other occupations.

In 1990 he attended a herb-growing course, taught by Howard and Elle, and began to prepare some land for herb production. He now has a 1½ acre herb farm, where he's been producing herbs commercially for two years. He finds growing and picking herbs a satisfying way to make a living, even though mother nature causes a few set backs now and then.