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HERB GROWER

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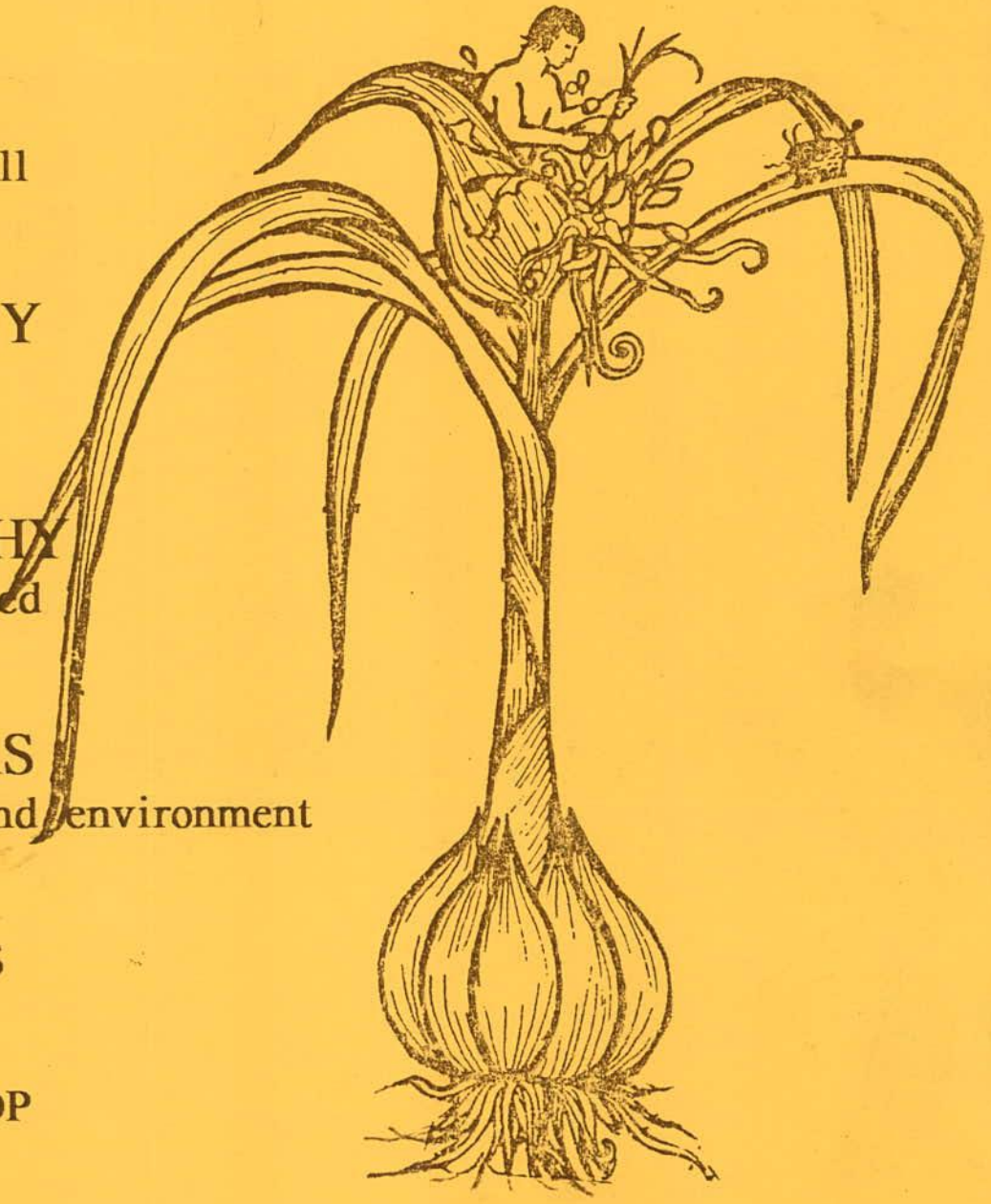

PLUS: MARKET REPORT, GARDENING BY THE MOON, CERTIFIED ORGANIC, LETTERS, GENETIC ENGINEERING, NEWSBRIEFS AND MUCH MORE .....

Ellie will get back to us
(phoned 8/7/94) G.

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EDITORIAL

Thank you to all the members who really feel a part of OHGA and returned the questionnaires. *On pages 6 and 12 you will see the outcome of it all. It was a bit of a shock to find out what AQIS wanted out of the whole thing. And since the total amount they required (± $26,000) was to be divided between the organic certification bodies, we have the sneaking suspicion that this is the reason why OHGA was finally allowed to be part of it all. More parties to divide the money by, so less to pay for the others (you know who I mean.) And of course they could not stop us forever, especially not when we started playing the game politically. Anyway, we've arrived but it costs.*

I hope that the fee-hikes don't put you off remaining a member of OHGA. I am a bit worried that we did not get more of a response, even though one-third of you returned the questionnaire. I get all of the newsletters that other associations put out and sure enough all of them, in editorials and president's messages, complain of the lack of interest and input by their members. So I guess that one-third is not bad.

Howard and I had a nice surprise at the end of April. We had entered the Northern Rivers Business Awards competition, the first time we ever did such a thing. A couple of weeks before the award night we received our invite to the night and then a TV crew showed up to do some filming. Still completely innocently we went to the dinner (you don't turn down a free dinner, right?). We met a few old and new friends and then it was time for the Rural Business of the Year Award. Herb Farms Australia! Amazing! So you see, herbs have come a long way. There are so many established horticultural and agricultural pursuits in this area but our herbs won the night! Howard now has a very heavy, but goodlooking plaque as a paperweight, too heavy for our walls.

We also had some bad news. After years of fighting them off, we were informed by Lismore City Council that they are definetely resuming our land to build a road! And they want it like yesterday. So we're busy with solicitors. It may go to the Land and Environment Court. Perhaps we can hold then off long enough for our echinacea crop to mature. Still, all that work and then for our farm to be concreted over. What a thought! Keep your fingers crossed for us.

A Brisbane weekend paper reprinted an article that came in from London entitled: Aged Ease Pains with Pot. It seems that a growing number of old age pensioners are turning to cannabis to ease ailments such as arthritis and rheumatism. The quarterly newsletter Arthritis Care said : "Cannabis is a good painkiller for people who've got long-term incessant pain." Most smoke or drink it as a tea-style infusion although some, including a retired CID officer, eat it in home baked hash cookies. The sudden demand for cannabis has surprised drugworkers. And a recent British Medical Association survey found that 75% of hospital doctors favoured the use of cannabis to relieve pain. There is now a lively debate going on about decriminalisation and the ban on its use for medicinal purposes. Great story. Good to know it's happening everywhere. Germany decriminalised cannabis in April of this year. It's time it happened in all states here too.

There's some messages in this issue, and a separate form, about membership renewal. Please don't let us wait too long because it is lot of work to put you all on file again. Also I hope to go to Europe at the end of August to visit my parents in Holland for my Dad's birthday and then on to Germany to see my elder daughter and two grandsons. It would be great if, by the time I go, I have most of you sorted out for mailing labels etc. Please?

Copy for articles and advertisements must be in by August 5

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Letters

Dear Elle and Howard,

I read with great pleasure your article in the most recent copy of "Acres". I do believe that the Organic Herb Growers of Aust. Inc. may well be for us.

I have always been interested in the properties of herbs and in growing them. We have an organic vegetable farm (very small). Our climate at the foot of the Snowy Mountains has advantages and disadvantages. We grow, wonderfully well, what we believe to be excellent garlic. Our climate has great extremes but low humidity, which makes drying the garlic very easy. However, I have long believed that we could grow herbs on a commercial scale too. Oregano and lavender grow very well here, mint too.

It bothers me that there are no herb teas (in bags, packaged for supermarkets) Australian made. The ones I enjoy most are the Natureland brand, which I believe is English. I look forward to hearing from you.

R. Sevenoaks, Berridale

A new enterprise, the Koala Tea Company makes Australian teas. Unfortunately they are not yet sold in your area, but will come soon.

Dear Friends,

I am growing herbs – some culinary – some medicinal – in the Manning River area. There are more herbgrowers here operating.

What can there possibly in for me or us to join your group on such a distance and the question can also be asked about the certification. Also are you principally a fresh herb growing fraternity? We dry most of it. Questions....

I would appreciate to get your group of people to know better and what is being done in Lismore and surroundings. And whether any of these things can be of use in our area.

Thanks for your answer.

T. van Winsen, Lansdowne NSW

Dear Howard and Elle,

Just a quick note to let you know how much we enjoyed the herb growing course in April.

I don't think we told you, but we have a Refugee Support Group here in Coffs Harbour, and we have many campesinos and Vietnamese farmers here. At present we are looking for some land to divide into allotments so that everybody can get growing! We have approached churches, service clubs and the council and we feel optimistic about it. Anyway, as soon as it all comes to fruition (hopefully by spring), we will begin herb growing!

Can you send us a list of all the seeds that you carry? Also, do you ever need lemon basil or spearmint?

Well, don't forget to enjoy life and when you're in Coffs, come and have a coffee with us! With love,

Sue and Pete Hallam, Coffs Harbour.

P .S. Why can't we get your tea here? The teas will hopefully appear in NSW soon and, yes, we can do with lemon basil and spearmint. Thanks, Sue.

Dear Howard,

I was pleased to hear that our area, just outside of Queanbeyan, has organised for a Rubin seminar! I am hoping to attend.

There are several people around here who are considering growing herbs commercially (myself included) and we are happy that some time will be allowed for visiting several of our 'plots' to discuss possibilities. I will also try and get some core samples analysis. It may be that the few of us who are interested in consulting with you individually would pay you for your extra time – say the Monday after the seminar.

I have just qualified as a medical herbalist with Southern Cross Herbals with Denis Stewart, so I am particularly keen to investigate medicinals – particularly the rare ones. I have already started a specimen medicinal garden which will eventually be open to the public. I enclose a cheque for membership with OHGA – I really enjoyed looking at some of the past issues.

K. M., Queanbeyan, NSW

Dear Howard and Elle,

We were very interested to receive your letter of 29 May about OHGA becoming members of OPAC. Congratulations, after all that hard work lobbying. We think it is important to try to raise the $6000 p.a. for membership and have a few suggestions on how you might

CONGRATULATIONS are in order to the WOODFORD herb growing group, who have all just passed the OHGA certification inspection.

Letters cont'd

go about this:
1) Charge an entry fee of $2 for field days. Entrants could be informed that the money would go towards OPAC registration.
2) Increase membership fees to about $50. Professional membership costs over 4 times this amount in our areas. Perhaps a pensioner rate could be added for those with real financial hardship.
3) Our last proposal involves trying to consolidate the work already begun by OHGA. We suggest forming regional sub-branches, which could organise their own field days and meetings because it's usually over an hour's drive for us, one way. If the field days are held in Grafton, it's more like four hours, so we often don't go, because the outing takes the best part of a day for us. We work with between 6–10 growers in the Murwillumbah area and have considered even forming a cooperative to try to support each other, to share information and cuttings etc. There must be other areas who could do the same and rather than us all doing our own thing, it would be a much better use of resources both financial and human if we could be grouped under OHGA.

We have tried to maintain a high standard by encouraging new growers who supply us, to get certification through OHGA. Many find that difficult financially but it usually determines how seriously they wish to grow. Most growers would like to make some living out of growing, too. It would be good to be able to support those people through some organisational method, such as we propose.

If you think this is a good idea, we would be happy to organise the growers in our area to meet with the Executive at our place, at your convenience. Please let us know.

Fred and Susan Schack, 'Upper Crystal Creek" NSW

I'll put the sub-group question to the exec at the July 'Herb Grower' *send-off meeting. I'm all for it. Coordination can happen through the magazine. –Elle*

MEMBERSHIP IS DUE NEXT MONTH PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP FORM AND FEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BEFORE YOU FORGET.

AGENDA ITEMS OF OHGA COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN APRIL AND MAY

- Committee member Magda Verbeek is unanimously elected interim Vice-President.
- The OHGA sunflower logo to be trade-marked.
- Moves are afoot to set up a national organic umbrella group, to be called "The Australian Organic Agricultural Commission". In principle the committee feels that OHGA should take part.
- All Grade A certified growers to be sent 50 free organic stickers.
- OHGA to take part in the show of the Wollongbar Dept of Ag, entitled "A Taste of the North Coast" to be held in July.
- Now AQIS is involved, it is no longer possible to have the ad-hoc arrangement with members in other areas who sometimes acted as certification officers. Tony Ullman is the only OHGA Certification Officer.
- AQIS require a substantial fee (between $5,000 and $6,000) for their yearly audit and inspection. Elle to send a questionnaire to all members to decide in a democratic way how OHGA is to raise the funds.

Dear Mrs Rubin

Congratulations that you have been recognised as a national certification body. It is most important that you have a proper label and certification in order to be accepted in the EEC market, which is a very promising and growing market for your herbs. I therefore wish you a lot of success with your marketing activities.

I was surprised at the high costs you would have to pay in order to be certified and to be a member of the organisation AQIS. However you can avoid such high costs if you would appoint an importer in one country of the EEC who would file your certification enabling you to import to all the EEC countries. Once you have done this procedure you are entitled to do so. I had the same experience with organic wine from South Africa which can be imported now to the EEC countries through one importer in France.

If you would like to have more information, I can send you the relevant regulation of the EEC.

I would like to take this occasion to ask you if you could send me a copy of your growing standards. Thank you very much in advance.

With best regards,
BIO CULTURA, Dr. L. Zanoni, Zug, Switzerland

NEW OHGA FEES AND WHY

by HOWARD RUBIN

A big thank you to all those members who took the time to fill in and return our questionnaire. About one third of the membership responded and your views were carefully assessed at a special exec meeting held on June 18.

Several issues were raised by some of you, and I will try to clarify all your concerns.

Our association, which has currently 297 members, was founded in 1987 as the Northern Rivers Herb Growers and Marketers Assoc Inc. There were just a handful of us back in those days. In January 1990 we decided democratically to change the name of the association to reflect our national status and nationwide membership and the emphasis we place on organic growing principles. We are the only national certification body to have the word ORGANIC in their name.

At this same time, Jan 90, the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr John Kerin together with Ruth Lovisolo and Laurie Erwin of AQIS decided to form the Organic Producers Advisory Committee (OPAC), as a result of a report commissioned by RIRDC, written by Hassells & Co on the potential of exporting organic produce.

For many reasons, most still unknown to us, OHGA was not included in this original committee. Only the three other certification groups, (NASAA, BFA, BD) were invited to participate. As early as the first meeting, OHGA protested and asked for inclusion. And a letter in 91, confirmed that we would be considered for inclusion. But that never happened. The bureaucracy at work did not want another group to be involved. In fact, if they had their way only one group would be represented. But we persisted and continued to do the correct and ethical thing. We grew and certified organic growers, and established our reputation in the industry. After numerous requests to Harry Woods (Federal Member for Richmond) and ministerial intervention by Simon Crean, we were invited to attend the most recent OPAC meeting and were asked to become members.

But membership has brought with it a high price. Fortunately, all of our past activity has placed us in a good position and we were included in the first years audit for free. So although, we were not yet full members of OPAC, our first years fees have been paid for by AQIS under the current QA funding program. But these funds are now exhausted and the industry has to pay its own way from now onwards. The monies we are being asked to pay relate to NEXT year's, July 94–June 95, costs. Our first instalment will be due sometime this month, which will be paid out of our Treasury.

Many members asked what we were doing on the political front to address these issues. We have already made representations to our local member, Harry Woods, who heads up the Rural Industries Task Force. Unfortunately, as the other organisations are basically in favour of these fees, it will be difficult to effect an across the board reduction. But we have asked for a proportional representation. It is our view that the larger organisations should be paying a larger share of the fees, based upon the number of certified growers. As this is a user pay system, we feel that these groups are the real users of the system. We are also objecting to the principle of 100% cost recovery. It is our opinion that we as tax payers are already paying for these services, and to have to pay once again is a form of double taxation. Worse still is that we have no direct input into how these fees are used.

At the same time, OHGA has made an application to RIBES for a 50% grant subsidy to help fund some of these costs.

But the bottom line remains: if we wish to be part of the organic industry, and be an accredited organic certifying organisation, we will have to pay our share of the costs. Everyone who replied, felt that we should remain part of the organic industry. So we have tried to share the burden evenly, with a gentle nudge on all fee structures.

We prepared a graph from all the returned questionnaires and choose the middle path.

Joining fee to go up from $5 to **$10** (this is a once only cost paid by new members).
Membership fee to go up from $20 to **$40** with a concession, for anyone who requires it, at **$30**.
A new category called "corporate" of **$50** for any member whose business can contribute a little bit extra.
Certification application is raised from $5 to **$10**.
Certification annual fee is raised from $85 to **$125**.

Cont'd on page 10

GARLIC – ALLIUM SATIVUM

by Freya Rubin

Garlic has over the years proven to be a magical cure-all. A relation of the onion, it can grow to over 1½ mts tall. It is usually grown as an annual, and is harvested in early summer, although it is a perennial plant.

Allium Sativum has long flat leaves, the spear-like shape giving origin to its Anglo-Saxon name: "Gar" meaning spear and "Lac" meaning plant. The tall erect stalk in the center of each plant bears a rounded flower-head comprised of numerous pinkish-white petals. It is in early summer, as the flower-head dies and the leaves begin to turn yellow, when it is best harvested.

Garlic was used by the ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians for a list of complaints. Its active ingredient is a Sulphuret of the radical Allyl, present in all the onion family. The active properties of Allium Sativum depend on the essential oil which can easily be obtained by water distillation. A scientific study has proven that the active ingredient is so potent that, when garlic is grated and placed near vicious bacteria, it will remove it within five minutes.*

Garlic when used raw or slightly heated can be applied internally or externally. When cooked it loses its potency as the essential oil will evaporate.

The raw juice mixed with water can be sniffed to clear the sinuses or be applied externally to sores, blemishes and arthritic joints. A clove of garlic placed in the mouth near an abscess will help remove swelling and pain. Garlic is also said to remove tartar and firm the gums, making loose teeth take root again. Four to five cloves of garlic infused in water, vinegar or wine make an excellent hair rinse to stimulate growth and clear up dandruff.

Garlic has also been eaten to develop immunity to cancer, kill intestinal worms, arrest tumors, strengthen blood vessels and normalize blood pressure. It is invaluable in the treatment of bronchitis, asthma, infantile catarrh, intestinal complaints, diarrhea and hysteria. It can also be used as a stimulant, carminative, diuretic and emmenagog. If you don't like the smell, parsley eaten with, or after the garlic, is supposed to lessen the smell.

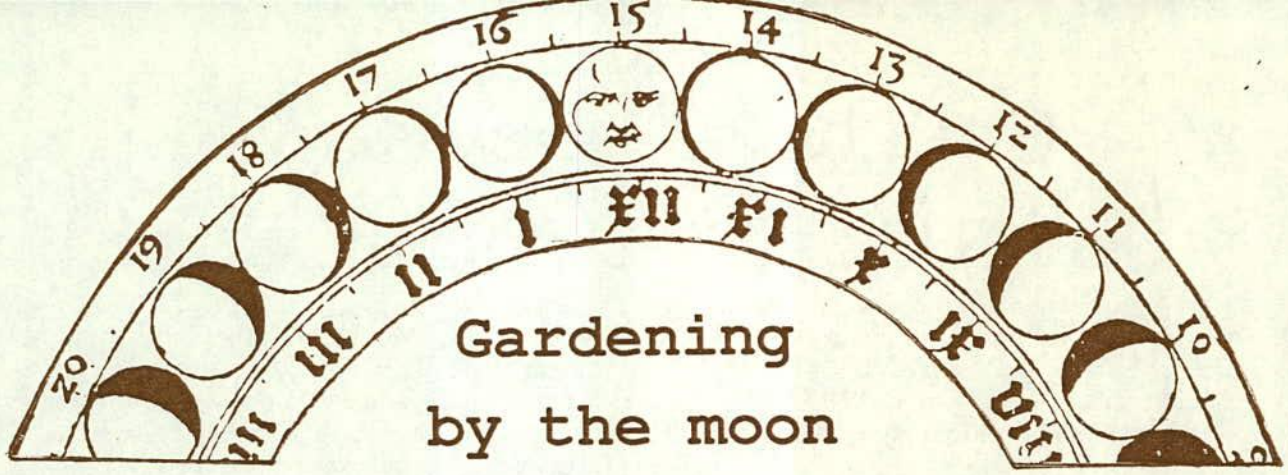
When cultivating this panacea, position it in full sun. It requires fertile soil with pH 6.0; if the pH is lower, add lime at approximately 100g per 2sq metres, about 4 weeks prior to planting. Do not add any animal manure later than 3 months before planting, as garlic doesn't want much nitrogen. Manure may also rot the bulbs.

Divide the bulbs into their cloves and plant the cloves separately, 3-5 cm deep and 15 cm apart, leaving 15 cm in between rows. The best time to do this is April to July, as the cold weather is needed to divide the bulbs. Keep weed free and water sparingly when needed. For new research pertaining to the cultivation of garlic see page 15.

Don't water the garlic 4 weeks prior to harvest, this helps the bulbs swell. Folding the tops over 4 weeks before harvest also enlarges the bulbs.

To harvest the bulbs, pull them up, dry them off and brush off the soil. Do not wash them or they will rot. Dry them for 2 or 3 weeks in the shade (the shade will prevent sunburn). If you wish you can save some bulbs to replant.

When fully dry, store them in an open weave bag or slatted box, in a cool dry area. The yield will be approximately 10 times the weight sown (1:10), and the evaporation rate is 65%.



Gardening by the moon

By Elle Fikke-Rubin

JULY

16 First quarter, no work.
17–22 Days to sow or plant seedbearing annuals. The very best days are Sunday and Monday, with the moon in Scorpio, one of the fertile watersigns. Beans, peas, coriander, dill and other fruit bearers that will grow in your district at this time of year. The same goes for flowers. If your area is warm enough, you can still plant marigolds, daisies and dianthus, to mention a few.
23 Full Moon.
24–29 Rootcrop and perennial time. This is a perfect time to plant fruit trees and deciduous ornamentals. Prepare the soil well, especially if it's a heavy clay soil, by raising the planting area or digging in compost and sand. Carrots, onions, kohlrabi, salsify, potatoes are some of the vegies that can be sown or planted, while herb-wise perennials such as chives, horseradish, mint, salad burnet, tansy, valerian, yarrow, lemonbalm and most others can go in, if it's warm enough where you are.
30–31 Last quarter, take a rest.

AUGUST

1–6 A time for cleaning up your bushes. If they carry a lot of woody and twiggy growth, they'll benefit from a pruning before spring growth develops.

If you want to start a new plot in spring, now is the time to prepare it. A good way to kill the weeds in your new area is to put black plastic down on it. Water the ground well first, and the sun's warmth will encourage seeds to germinate, but they'll die from lack of light. Weigh all corners of the plastic down, and in between, to make sure light will not get in.

Some seeds will need to go into the freezer now. If you plan to grow herbs like parsley or echinacea, their seed needs to be frozen in order to germinate well in spring. By freezing them, they think it's their kind of winter and they'll come up fast later on. You can stick them in wet sand or just put the seed packet in the freezer. Leave them there for a couple of weeks.
7 New Moon.
8–13 Days for leafy annuals. If your soil is too cold, start the seeds off in styro boxes in a warmer spot. Basil, chervil, dill, coriander, lettuces etc.
14 First Quarter, a day off.
15–20 Days for seedbearing annuals and flowers. In colder areas, poppies, violas and other spring flowers can still be sown, but where it's warming up, calendulas, phlox, alyssum and other summer flowers can be planted out. Put in some feverfew, pyrethrum, dill and borage. Also cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchinis, tomatoes.
21 Full Moon.
22–28 Time for rootcrops and perennials. Good days to plant citrus trees if frosty nights have gone. You can also put in carrots, parsnips, valerian, chives, horseradish, lemonbalm, oregano and most other herbs.
29 Last Quarter.
30–31 Cultivation days. And time to give your garden a good feed.

SEPTEMBER

1–5 SPRING!
(I'm writing this in the beginning of May. It's just getting cold! Spring feels a long way off.) Anyway, time to take that black plastic off and cultivate your new plot.
Enrich it with good compost or blood and bone; perhaps some lime or dolomite, especially if you live in a high-rainfall area where all the nutrients get washed out regularly.

Cont'd on page 11

The following article appeared in The Herbal Connection

PAPER WORKS

by Lee South

When David Munn saw what an effective and low-cost substitute shredded newspaper was for straw in the dairy cow barns of Ohio's Wayne County, he wondered if there weren't creative and economical uses for recycled paper in other areas of agriculture as well.

Knowing the sizable mulch-related expenses of such crops as strawberries, Munn, associate professor of agronomy at The Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute in Wooster, began investigating the feasibility of substituting newspaper. This led to a 2-year study comparing the crop mulch value of shredded newspaper with wheat straw, at similar application rates. Munn also wanted to see if high rates of newspaper mulch were detrimental to plants or soils.

He was impressed with the results. Shredded newspaper produced higher yields, showed good weed control, warmed the soil, and was environmentally benign.

Paper Chase

Here's how Munn conducted his trial. In 1990 he grew sweet corn, processing tomatoes, and soybeans three ways: unmulched, mulched with wheat straw, and mulched with shredded newspaper. He expected both mulch covers to affect soil moisture, temperature, weed control, and, therefore, yields.

In late May he transplanted 6- to 10-inch tomato seedlings 24 inches apart, in rows 30 inches apart. (Sweet corn and soybeans had been previously started there from seed.) The shredded newspaper--in strips 3/8 inches wide and 24- to 36-inches long, bought from the local Salvation Army at $30 to $50 per ton--was applied at 3.4 tons per acre, 6 to 8 inches deep. (By comparison, straw was applied 5 tons to the acre, 4 to 6 inches deep).

Soil temperatures at a 4-inch depth were taken several times throughout the growing season, as were soil cores, to measure moisture percentages.

The 1991 study was repeated in the same location as the 1990 work, using corn and soybeans as the crops. One addition to the second year's study: Pairs of outside border rows were used to evaluate whether high rates of newspaper mulch would be detrimental to the plants or adversely affect soil properties.

To test for this, 6-foot segments of the two pairs of border rows were used to create plots that received from 0 to 16 tons (specifically, 0, 2, 4, 8, 12, and 16) of shredded newspaper mulch per acre. Leaf tissue was collected from selected treatments to evaluate nutrient status and possible micronutrient excesses.

Impressive Results

Here's what Munn discovered over the two growing seasons:

Yields. The mulched tomato plants were larger, with more vines and fruit, than those grown on bare soil, and the biggest plants came from those rows treated with newspaper mulch. The highest yields for all three crops came in the rows mulched with shredded newspaper, and the lowest yields were under bare soil conditions.

Soil water content. Shredded newspaper and straw had similar impacts on water retention.

Weed control. Munn says the weed control benefits from the mulch should be emphasized. All plant rows had been roto-tilled lightly before mulch application, but no further mechanical or chemical weed control measures were conducted, and there was heavy weed pressure in the area used for the experiment.

In 1990, small annual weeds were suppressed effectivly by both mulches, while annual grasses in the bare soil rows reduced yields and interfered with hand harvest of the tomatoes. The wheat straw was clean and relatively free of weeds and weed seeds, but Munn says weedy straw mulch can actually introduce more of different weed seeds. Shredded newspaper, in addition to its lower cost and superior smothering of weeds, is free of weed seed.

In the 1991 experiment, shredded newspaper provided the best weed control; straw was significantly less effective than shredded paper in suppressing weeds, but was superior to bare soil.

Soil warmth. Soil temperatures on virtually every date were not significantly different between newspaper and straw, but the two mulches were always cooler than the bare soil treatment.

Heavy metal residues. Soil samples were collected from selected plots to evaluate organic matter and heavy metals content. Analysis showed no treatment-related differences in organic matter or the metals lead, nickel, chromium, copper, and zinc.

Good for Crops, Environment

No doubt, wheat straw was an effective crop mulch cover for the reduction of high soil temperatures, conservation of moisture, and suppression of weeds.

But an unexpected result was that shredded newspaper--available at low cost from cities with recycling programs--was apparently just as effective as or even superior to wheat straw at keeping the soil moist and cool, and in suppressing competing weeds at 2 to 3 tons per acres. There was no apparent short-term (6 months after application) impact of high rates of newspaper on soil chemical properties, such as organic matter or selected heavy metals.

Also, very little troublesome residue was left on the soil surface at season's end to interfere with fall or spring tillage and preparation for a winter cover crop or the following season's crops--except in plots receiving more than 8 tons of newspaper mulch per acre.

Using this low-cost product in horticultural and agronomic mulches, Munn concludes, could help in community recycling efforts and save landfill space. (American Vegetable Grower Jan 1994)

When companion planting, avoid beans, cabbage, fennel and peas. Use beet, celery, fruit trees, lettuce, marigold, marjoram, nasturtium, oregano, parsley, potato, radish, sage, strawberry, thyme, tomato and yarrow. Garlic is said to be a good companion plant to dispel airborne and underground pests.

A spray can be made from 4 garlic cloves soaked for several days in a litre of cold water and then blended. It is said to kill ants, caterpillars and cabbage worms. An even stronger spray can be made by adding several red peppers and soap to make the mixture cling to the plant.**

For humans who are worried about predators against themselves, the old superstition of wearing a clove of garlic around the neck to ward off vampires, has still to be disproven.

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OHGA fees and why
Cont'd from page 6

In our estimate, this is the fairest distribution of increases. If all of our members continue, and we do hope so, we will not face any financial difficulties in meeting our additional taxation burdens.

Remember that all your membership and certification fees are TAX–DEDUCTIBLE.

This issue will not simply rest with our payment of fees. We plan to actively pursue a complete reversal of this decision, and continue to expose any inefficient bureaucracy that is unresponsive to the needs of a new industry. We have demanded equal representation on the OPAC board. After all, if we must pay an equal share of the costs, we must have an equal voice.

I would once again like to thank all those members and growers who have supported OHGA over the years and have continued to keep the faith. We shall continue to work on your behalf and shall not relent until the herb growing industry is firmly established with a fair go for all.

CERTIFIED Organic GRADE A

by TONY ULLMAN

LAST week my newly acquired BMW motorcycle and I began what I am sure is to be a long and happy relationship. We covered just over 1500 kilometres in seven days during which time I did about 20 certification inspections between Burpengary and Gympie and met a lot of really nice people.

I was there at the request of the Woodford Herb Growers Group, a cooperative, established around the Caboolture area in south east Queensland.

I was flat out trying to get the allocated number of inspections done each day; then get to the Post Office in time to send the soil and water samples I had collected to the laboratory for analysis.

A good portion of the evening was then spent writing reports on the properties that I had visited.

I could not have accomplished this were it not for the hospitality of Shirley and David Reeves and their family, who made their home available to me as a base to work from, and who made me feel very much at home.

My compliments to David and the area coordinators who did a great job setting up all the farm visits, a task which would have been very difficult and expensive for me to do by phone from Lismore.

One of the main objectives of this exercise was to allow growers who live in an area a considerable distance from Lismore, to share my travel expenses. The distance between Lismore and Caboolture was divided between all the growers I visited, who then only had to cover the distance to and from their farms and my base at David's home in Moorina, a very large saving for everybody concerned.

Having proved that this type of arrangement can be made to work and be of benefit to all, I would like to have repeat performances for other groups who live say more than 100 kilometres from Lismore. Up to about 500 kilometres each way I will be more than happy to ride my trusty BMW, but after that I think that a plane ticket and a hire car will be more practical.

The regions which we have identified as possible areas to set up other local groups are:

NSW	1. Taree, Kempsey, Hunter Valley
	2. Armidale, Glen Innes, Grafton, Coffs Harbour
	3. Sydney, Newcastle
ACT	1. Canberra
Vic	1. Melbourne
	2. Country
WA	1. Perth and Country
Qld	1. Toowoomba, Warwick
	2. Cairns, Atherton Tableland

TAS and SA

Howard is conducting a herb growing workshop in Canberra in September, so October looks like a good month for me to visit the ACT. Apart from that, I am flexible as to which months I organise visits for other groups.

What I need is a note from any members who live outside of the Lismore area who would like to be certified or who require re-certification. Tell me if you have any preference as to when I visit you and also whether you would be prepared to act as a coordinator for your region.
You can write to me at:
OHGA, P O Box 6171, South Lismore 2480.

For enquiries on certification matters, please contact Tony Ullman on 066 216397

Gardening by the Moon
Cont'd from page 8

6 New Moon.
7–11 Days to plant or sow sweet basil and bush basil, dill, Japanese herbs like mitsuba and mizuna, cabbage, lettuce, celery, cress and other greens.
12 First Quarter.
13–19 All this week, but particularly Sunday and Monday, is good to plant or sow seedbearing annuals and flowers. Beans, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, marrows, melons, okra, sweet corn, squash etc.
Add some edible flowers to your garden: calendulas, pansies, carnations and dianthus, chrysanthemums and nasturtiums.
HAVE FUN!

TO ALL MEMBERS, OLD AND NEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE IS DUE NEXT MONTH. PLEASE SEND US THE FORM AND YOUR CHEQUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF MEMBERS MAY 1994

OVER A THIRD OF THE MEMBERSHIP HAVE RETURNED THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU TO ALL WHO TOOK THE EFFORT.

Especially a big thank you to the three members who sent in a donation: Jenny Baker, who donated $20 to OHGA, Mavis Grayson who sent OHGA $50 and another member, who wishes to remain anonymous, who pledged $100. Fantastic!

First of all the membership fees:
One member wants the membership to go to $25.
35 members suggest $30.
18 members suggest $40.
24 members suggest $50.
And one member suggests it should be raised to $80!

As you will have read in Howard's article, the committee, based on your suggestions, decided on $40, with a concession rate of $30, for those who cannot pay the full rate. We hope that business-members will pay $50.

The once-only joining fee has been raised from $5 to $10. This will not affect anyone who is already a member, so we're sure you don't mind.

Certification fees:
Many members were of the opinion that the $5 application fee was too low; the committee has raised this fee to $10. For that money anyone, who applies to OHGA, gets the OHGA organic standards book and a farm questionnaire. It often happens that that is the end of the matter, because the applicant just wants to know the OHGA standards.

Most members stated that the certification fee of $85 was far too low. The breakdown of fee suggestions is as follows:
Up to $100, 4 members
Up to $110, 25 members
Up to $125, 21 members
Up to $150, 9 members
"Whatever is required" became a category of its own: 5 members.

Ten members suggested a levy on produce sold. The committee is unanimous in rejecting this idea. Not only is it unenforcible, but especially in herb growing which is so labour intensive, it is a question of the harder you work, the more you earn. Why penalise hard working people?

The committee decided to take the middle road and charge $125 for certification. On top of this fee, of course, remain the $55 for soil and/or water test (this is at cost) and the 40¢/km rate for travel. By getting together you save a lot of money on this. See Tony Ullman's article.

The problem really is that OHGA have to pay the same fees to AQIS as NASAA and BFA who charge ± $700 for certification; They have had government recognition for much longer and were able to build up a large membership. I know it's not fair and we are working on it. But in the meantime we have to take the scenario that we won't get away for less.

What more did members write? Sorry, but I must do this in small lettering, or I run out of space.
** Sue Hallam of Coffs Harbour suggests small inexpensive booklets on herbal topics for sale. Cooking, beauty tips, herbal remedies etc. A great idea; who has the time to do it? Any takers? And a big herbal fair with charges for display space.*
** Geoff Moxham of the Channon suggests a regular market stall for exposure and sales of herbs.*
** Teresa Heal of Rozelle says that as a city member she sees that raising the membership is the most equal way of sharing the burden.*
** Mark Loosemore of Pimlico feels that all OHGA members benefit by government recognition, not just the certified growers.*
** Maree Bracker and Kenrick Riley of Brizzie have several suggestions: 1. Conduct an annual "Herb Ball" with proceeds to go to OHGA. 2. A meditation circle to manifest money. 3. Rob a bank!!*
** Jurgen Achilles of Nymboida suggests a raffle, as do Mhoire and Darlene McIntosh who offer 50 mulch hay bales as a prize. We may take them up on it. Thank you!*
** James and Shilo Champion of Mummulgum say that if the membership is raised by $10 that is still cheap for the information and services provided.*
** G. Knox of Coramba suggests a membership drive, fundraising programs and company donations.*

A lot of members were outraged at AQIS. I agree and we're doing our best politically. The fundraising question came up a lot. Do we have an experienced fundraiser amongst the membership? This is a real art and takes time and effort. Anyone??? Let's hear from you.

ELLE

Fire in the Valley might be just a festival warming up

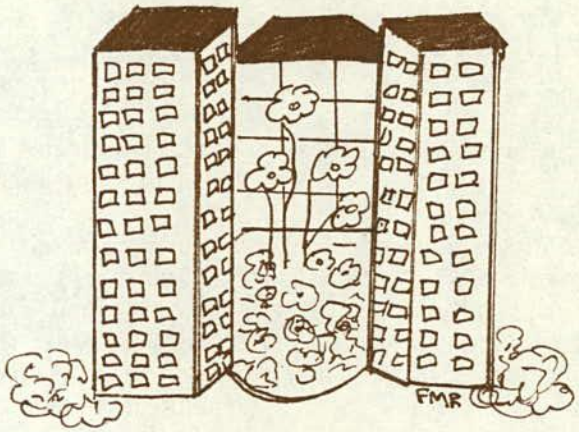
SOME weekends ago, I attended the first Winter Solstice Festival held in Brisbane's West End. It was staged by the Queensland Folk Federation - which runs the Maleny Folk Festival at New Year.

Like Maleny, the Solstice Festival featured an array of food tents, jewellery and clothing outlets and some of the best folk, á cappella and blues music around. Like Maleny, there was a fascinating mix of ancient and modern hippies in bangles and beads, ferals with dreadlocks and feathers, would-be buskers, tired parents with ice-creams and pop-eyed tourists with sunglasses and cameras. And, like Maleny, there was the most amazing fire ritual to end the Festival. Hundreds of children had spent three days making lanterns and large sculptures out of wood and paper.

After sundown on Sunday, the kids gathered into a huge, candle-lit parade which snaked its way through the crowd before gathering in the middle of the park to place the sculptures atop large pyres of recycled firewood. With Sirocco playing in the background, a local Murri dance group made fire by twirling one stick into another. This small flame was used to light the fire torches which were then used to ignite the pyres under the huge paper and wood sculptures - some of them loaded with fireworks. It was a huge spectacle and the big crowd stood in awe. Many of them stayed for ages just watching the burning embers. Funny how an ancient fire ritual still has such a mesmerising effect on these modern metropolitans.

I suspect more and more people are seeking some enjoyment from festivals and rituals and this new one in Brisbane is probably here to stay. That got me thinking about what the festivals might be like in the year 2020. By that time they may be a monthly occurrence throughout every region. We may even have one in the Jiggi Valley in concert with the local Bungalung People. It may well be a combination of the traditional farmer field day and the alternative folk festival all in one.

Picture this. A farming family sets off from the other side of Lismore in their solar powered hovercraft. Strapped to the back is their traditional gathering of fallen timber. The drive up the Jiggi Valley winds through endless avenues of valuable young forest planted by locals at the close of the previous century. Noticable is the farm which was the last to convert to organics 10 years previously. Its soils, crops and livestock are already matching the health and vitality of its neighbours. The local school is joining in the festival. Former students who bred and helped plant most of the new trees as part of their environmental studies, are back to take



PADDOCK ON TOP

By Kenrick Riley

groups of kids on study tours to various parts of the valley. They point out the native plant and animals, the repaired erosion, the few remaining introduced weeds which are being removed for mulching. The kids hear stories about the valley from the Dreamtime to the present. Then its back to the Big Flat for the festival proper.

Here, traditional tents mingle among the resin-and-hemp roofed hexagonal display domes. The huge Earth Hall, which valley volunteers have been continually extending for the past 10 years, is a hive of culinary activity as local produce is cooked and served to the hungry hordes. Ancient and modern hippies with beads and bangles swap yarns with farmers in their familiar green linen. In one dome, a Clydesdale breeder defends the benefits of using two horses rather than one vegetable oil tractor for ploughing a four-acre herb paddock. In another dome, the latest crystal-technique, portable solar generators have attracted a big interest. In the tent next door, a women in a scarf reads Tarots. Across the avenue, a second-hand dealer spruiks up a storm over adze-heads, gudgeons and shovel handles. Hanging from his dome roof is a rare four-gallon, plastic chemical container with the original label - a reminder of the previous century's near fatal flirtation with the unnatural." Certified detox by Dept of Ag" reads its tag." Display only" reads the warning. Under the Cedar Grove beside the Farm Forest Advisory dome, celebrators unstrap their drinking cup from their belt and toast the Solstice with locally brewed beer and mulled wine.

Out in the middle of the Big Flat, the workshops have finished and the kids are lining up for the big fire procession. The donated fallen timber has been piled high on pyres as the Bungalung People make fire from wood. Sirocco plays in the background as the paper sculptures ignite. And ancient becomes modern for a moment.

This and that ....

New method to destroy organochlorines

A team from the WA University and CRA developed a new approach to disposing of toxic and inert organochlorine waste. It involves the use of mechanical energy to activate the inert carbon-chlorine bond and make it react with a base catalyst. Material containing organochlorines such as PCB's or DDT is loaded with a chemical reactant, such as quicklime, into a ball mill. The grinding action causes the OC to be de-chlorinated.

The method was successful in destroying 99.996% of a mixture of PCBs and DDT in 6½ hours. Large scale trials are being planned and a patent is pending. Detoxification at room temperature would be a great breakthrough.

- Australian Toxic Network News, March 1994

Holland sets environmental targets for chemical industry emissions

There is consensus amongst all groups in Holland that pollution needs to be drastically reduced to develop a sustainable chemical industry. The process which has been used is in the form of a "covenant" between the government and the chemical industry.

The agreement is accepted by the environmental lobby, who have serious reservations on aspects of timing and the extent of effort.

The covenant has been worked out between the central government, local government and industry and relates to the reduction of emission in three stages: in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

Firms have 14 months to produce a detailed plan for each plant site on the means for reducing pollution quota. All aspects of pollution will be considered, including water, air and soil emissions, energy saving, reduction of wastes, safety, odour, noise and internal corporate environmental management systems.

The government in turn must make a commitment not to unilaterally change the reduction requirements during that time. To date 95% of the 105 chemical manufacturers have signed the covenant.

- Australian Toxic Network News March 1994

Greenpeace reports that November 12, 1993 will go down in history as the day the marine environment was permanently protected from the dumping of industrial and radioactive waste. Australia supported the ban on radioactive waste dumping, but lobbied to allow *Pasminco EZ* to continue dumping toxic jarosite waste into the oceans off Tasmania. Pasminco is the only company in the world still dumping jarosite in the oceans.

Greenpeace has long been lobbying for a total dumping ban, but nuclear countries such as the UK, France, Japan, US and Russia showed a permanent ban would not come easily. Then, in October, three weeks before the London meeting, Greenpeace caught Russia dumping liquid radioactive waste in the Sea of Japan. The Japanese people were so outraged, it prompted the Japanese Government to call for an immediate dumping ban, which forced the US to support the ban also.

At the meeting only the UK and Russia still opposed the ban, but their votes were not enough to stop the permanent ban on ocean dumping.

Greenpeace Australia News, 4/5

Weed Fertiliser

Heard on the radio many years ago from an old 'stately home of England' gardener who specialised in roses:

Toss in a 44 gallon drum (with a lid) any green weed or vegetable leaves (i.e. not corn stalks or gone to seed parsnip roots) and lawn clippings. Fill the drum with water. Add a cup of wood ash once a fortnight. Urinate in the drum once a week. Dilute the mixture with ten parts of water before you use it - it should never be darker than pale yellow. Don't use it more than once a fortnight.

-Jackie French, Organic Growing winter 1992, via Just Organics.

Marigolds

US chemists have found that marigolds give off a volatile insecticide that is toxic to the mosquitos that carry malaria and yellow fever.

It has long been known in organic circles that marigolds help in keeping pests away from nearby plants, but the discovery of the reason could lead to an enormous market for marigold insecticide. If the insecticide proves as effective as other natural insecticides, such as the pyrethrins, it may be of tremendous benefit to countries still battling to control the two diseases.

The team of chemists from the University of Alabama studies three species of marigold and found that all had insecticidal properties. They also learned that the flowers were the most potent part

and that the Tagetes Minuta (our stinking Roger) species contained the most powerful insecticide. The chemists discovered that a number of compounds in the marigolds were insecticidal, including volatile chemicals called thiophenes. These killed the larvae and adults of both Aedes aegyptii, the mosquito that carries the malaria disease, and Anopheles stephensi, the mosquito that carries yellow fever.

-New Scientist, July 1993, via Just Organics.

Resource Security on the agenda again

The NSW Government has brought back the threat to our native forests we thought we had squashed: Resource Security through the Timber Industry (Interim Protection) Amendment Bill.

Resource Security refers to the government mechanisms for guaranteeing timber companies the right to continue logging priceless native forests through the creation of permanent logging zones. Publicly owned forest resources will be alienated for control by private companies, mainlyto feed huge export woodchip projects and new export pulpmills.

Resource Security if it continues to be pursued by the NSW Government will forever deny people the chance to properly protect our native forests.

- The Big Scrub Newsletter #58

BAMBOO, a potential source for paper

Richard Staples, Byron Bay based agricultural consultant and environmental activist, has recently published a report entitled 'Bamboo as a Pulp Source for Eastern Australia'.

Research into bamboo was prompted by the discovery that India makes about two-thirds of its paper from bamboo.

The report paints a picture of a papermaking industry based on bamboo, grown as part of a diverse pattern of land use. The area suitable for bamboo is essentially the well-watered coastal strip - which supports a high and rapidly growing population. For this reason a lot of attention has been paid in the report to the relationship between bamboo and the local landscape and its inhabitants.

Bamboo has long, thin, flexible fibres - ideal for making papers of high strength and useful for blending with post-consumer waste paper to maintain strength when making recycled paper.

Since a clump of bamboo is ready for harvest in between 5-8 years, the time frame is far less daunting than for a timber plantation which can take a minimum of 20 to 40 years to mature. The report suggests that 6 or 7 times as much cellulose material can be obtained per ha. from a bamboo planting as compared to a coniferous or broadleaved forest.

It appears that a bamboo-based paper industry could provide one alternative to woodchipping our native forests for paper feedstock.

- The Big Scrub Newsletter #58

GARLIC research at Cornell showed that straw mulch is advisable, deeper planting is better and nitrogen side-dressing a bad idea.

Researchers W T Angell and L A Ellerbrock in the Dept of Fruit and Vegetable Science conducted several experiments in 1991-1992 and 1992-1993, looking at strains of softneck, topset and elephant garlic, grown under fairly dry conditions with no irrigations.

-Straw mulch greatly improved winter survival, increased bulb yield, provided weed suppression and reduced the incidence of *Fusarium* bulb rot. However, the mulch did promote development of *Penicillin* blue mold, presumably because of the cooler, more moist environment under the straw. It may be necessary to move some of the mulch away from the plants in the spring.

-When cloves were planted at a depth of 1, 2 and 3 inches (from top of clove to soil surface) survival of all types was best at the deeper plantings.

-Two ammonia nitrate sidedress applications produced no difference in yields. However, the plants that received the sidedressed nitrogen suffered more disease.

-The seedstalks (scapes) of topset garlic were removed at three different times: when it first appeared, in the second coil and after it straightened. In some plots the seedstalks were not removed at all. The longer the seedstalk was left on, the lower the yield. However, yield reductions were minimal and it was not clear that the yield increases would warrant the time and effort required for removal of the scapes.

The Herbal Connection 3/6

PYCNOGENOL, a substance found in the bark of pine trees, may prevent diseases caused by free-radicals, according to recent French research. Free-radicals, those unstable molecules that bind to, and destroy the body's cellular structures and often lead to diseases, are checked by anti-oxidants. Pycnogenol has a molecular structure similar to flavonoids. Tests showed that this substance was 50 times more effective as an anti-oxidant than

Vitamin E. and 20 times more effective than Vitamin C. The Native American commonly made a tea from the bark of pine trees and recognised some health-giving quality it contained.

The Herbal Connection 3/6

JAPAN BANS MEASLES-MUMPS-RUBELLA VACCINE

The Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare decided in April 1993 to discontinue the use of the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine because of various problems associated with it.

One of the interesting effects of the vaccine ban for children under two years of age is that cot deaths appear to have declined enormously since the ban.

What Doctors Don't Tell You (UK) 4/9 1993

THE MORE FLUORIDE, THE MORE CAVITIES!

Fluoride is added to municipal drinking water supplies to (supposedly) prevent cavities in young children. However, a University of Arizona study, reported in the July 1992 *Chemical & Enigineering News,* found that "the more fluoride a child drank, the more cavities appeared in the teeth".

Townsend Letter for Doctors, April 1994

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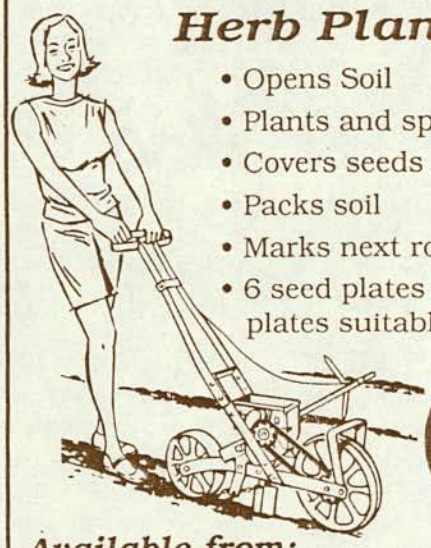

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ORGANIC COTTON DEAL

An Australian company has captured 15 percent of the Japanese organic cotton market, which is thriving on increased consumer interest in environmentally friendly products.

The deal between Australia's first organic cotton growers, the Goondiwindi Cotton Company, and a Japanese company, Sense of Wonder, was secured by the environment group Ark.

It will mean more than $1.5 million to the Australian organic cotton industry on an annual basis.

Ark was approached by the Goondiwindi Cotton in 1993 with a request to assist them in the marketing and sale of their first crop from Northern NSW.

As Australia's market was too small for the entire crop, overseas buyers had to be found.

The Japanese market–which primarily buys organic cotton to produce baby clothes, sheets and towels–was targeted because of it's rapidly growing organic cotton industry.

According to the executive director of Ark, Mr John Dee, Ark was set up to assist those businesses who chose to take innovative steps to reduce their impact on the environment.

Products that have minimum impact on the environment and human health had proved attractive to consumers, he said.

Ark is developing organic cotton products to "add value" to the cotton grown. One such product is an organic cotton tampon.

This product was intiated when research showed that women wanted a tampon that was grown and made without pesticides, phosphates, resin acids, chlorine bleaches and synthetic chemicals.

Testing is about to begin on this project, with the product expected to be ready for marketing in October for initial distribution into the Australian, United Sates and British markets.

On World Environment Day, Ark will launch its range of "Health and Environment" products which are made entirely form plants and minerals.

Ark products contain no petrochemicals, phosphates, chlorine-based bleaches, optical brighteners, animal ingredients, enzymes or synthetic dyes or perfumes.

The products are designed to work in cold water.

The Weekend Australian 4-6-94

"A TASTE OF THE NORTH COAST"

A Food and Wine Festival

on Saturday July 16

at the NSW Agriculture Institute

Wollongbar

The OHGA committee will set up a herbal food and drinks stall in the marquee. Any members who have herbal gifts for sale to contribute are very welcome. We hope to make some money for OHGA.

Please contact Magda on 066 298413

The Henry Doubleday Reasearch Ass. of Aust.

with Hawkesbury Earthcare Group

AN ORGANIC FIELD DAY

On Saturday, August 27 at 816 Comleroy Rd, Kurrajong from 10-4, info: 045 761220

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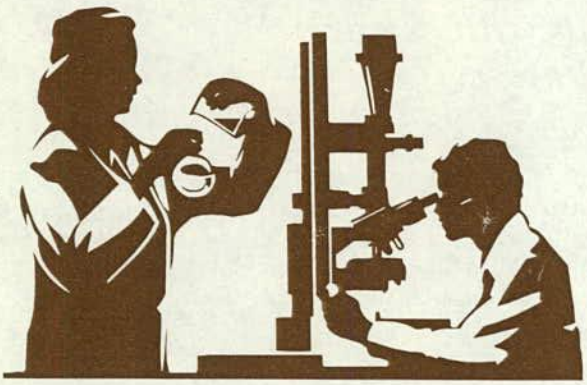
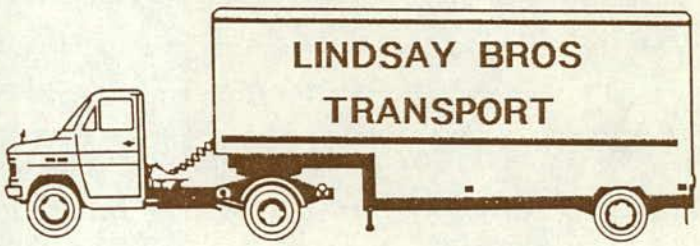


- MediHerb requires to buy organically grown medicinal herbs.
- Herbs must be certified as Organic.
- Organic methods that do not use chicken manure are preferred.
- Prices vary according to quality.

For further information including a full list and current prices please contact:

Mr Peter Purbrick,
Raw Materials Manager,
MediHerb Pty Ltd,
P.O. Box 713, Warwick, Qld, 4370.
Tel (076) 61 4900.



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HOW CAN GENETIC ENGINEERING BE "ORGANIC"?

The bio-industry continues to lobby that genetically engineered food products should be included under the organics standards. They want their weirdo organisms to be known as "additives" so that the food can be stamped as 'safe, and made in the most natural way possible'!

Their ideas of food for the future would include: potatoes with waxmoth genes, blackened catfish with trout gene, corn bread with firefly gene and milk from growth hormone supplemented cows. This is no joke - all these have been field tested! There is great resistance to these "Franken-foods" in Europe and the US - the term presumably based on the Frankenstein Monster concept.

How far are these mixtures of unrelated genes from the purely organic agriculture that the 'alternates' espouse? How significant is the risk to our environment and health?

Genetic engineering is directly at odds with the preference for the natural which imbues organic agriculture. Not only are modern gene transfer techniques wholly artificial, the organisms they produce can differ from natural or traditionally bred ones by containing genes from unrelated organisms - mice, humans, algae and so on.

Moreover, these organisms pose uncertain and, in some cases novel, risks to the environment and human health. These risks include new toxicants, diminished nutritional quality, new substances that significantly alter food composition, new allergens from non-food sources, diminished effectiveness of some antibiotics, unexpected effects, harmful side effects of deleted genes, "counterfeit" freshness, hazards to domestic animals, harmful effects on wildlife and habitats and uncharacterised genetic material and gene products.

Already in Australia a genetically modified baker's yeast has been approved and an engineered rennet has been in use since 1988. Many more are in the offing.....

Of course the labelling of the products is a central issue and the bio-industry knows perfectly well that 93% of its efforts go towards production and processing and only 7% for the benefit of the consumer. In these circumstances they just don't want the customer to know these facts from the labels!

In 1990 the Australian Conservation Foundation exposed the fact that 53 'transgenic' pigs were sent for slaughter and human consumption without proper authorisation and consumer knowledge.

At about the same time, a Japanese company manufactured L-tryptophan with genetically engineered bacteria and shipped it to the USA. 30 people were killed and 5,000 others afflicted with a crippling disease in this period and the US Food & Drug Admin. still does not rule out that the bacteria could have been the causative agent.

Correct labelling will go a long way to avoid misrepresentation of the organics industry and they, together with the consumer and green movements, should ensure that their voices are heard clearly in this debate. Consumers should be able to count on the organic label to mean safe and fresh food made in the most natural way possible.

Source: Green Left, Feb '94 via Acres Australia.

This information was sent by Richard Hindmarsh, a social ecologist and member of the Aust. Gen-Ethics Network. His address is, Kalang Farm, Kalang Rd., Bellingen, 2454.

This article is reprinted from the Nimbin News .

To cultivate a garden and grow flowers from the sod
is to walk hand in hand with Nature
and be very close to God.

Helen Steiner Rice

It is claimed that 90% of the total weight and mass of plants is manufactured from what is taken in through the leaves.

The chirping of birds in the morning and evening, with the chirp of crickets, causes the stomata of leaves to open and take in the rich laden nutrients.

Research shows that foliar feeding is from 8 to 20 times more effective than ground-applications or fertilizers.

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ORGANIC FARMERS MORE FERTILE

London: Organic farmers, who eat pesticide-free food, produce more sperm than other men, according to a Danish study ionto the effects of chemicals on human fertility.

The findings, published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, are likely to fuel a debate over whether pesticides and food additives are to blame for a fall in male fertility in the last 50 years.

The Danish scientists said they found an unexpectedly high sperm density – about double the average – in semen samples from 30 men attending a seminar of the Danish Organic Farmers' Association.

Dr Annette Abell, of the University Hospital Aarhus, said: "This is of interest in the light of evidence that indicates a worldwide decreasing trend of sperm density in the general population."

A number of studies have shown men are producing only half as much sperm as in the 1930's, a change that some scientists attribute to chemicals in the food chain or increased female hormones in the environment. The team noted that most of the tested farmers ate a high proportion of home-grown food and organic dairy products. But, given the small sample, they said they could not make any firm conclusions about a link between fertility and pesticides.

Sperm density, the number of sperm calculated according to seminal fluid volume, and sperm count, the number of active sperm per million, are the two key measures of male fertility. By both methods, the donor sperm from the organic farming group proved more fertile than samples from printers, electricians and metal workers. The farmers had 100 million sperm per mililitre of semen compared with an average of 54 million for other men, and 227 live sperm per million sperm compared with an average of 181.

Some previous research has suggested that female hormones from contraceptive pills and cattle growth promoters that end up in food and water may partly account for the general sperm decline.

Reuters

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phoned Alison Moxam – she'll get back to us.

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HOMOEOPATHIC 1ST AID Cont'd

By JenniCarey

Homoeopathic medicines are not only useful in helping to heal injuries & other maladies more rapidly, they can also improve a persons overall health. The strengthening of the body reduces the chances of injury & of equal importance, it improves overall functioning by speeding the healing process after injury. An example is head injury; if treated homoeopathically in the acute stage it will help allay long term chronic problems like headaches, depression etc. Quite often homoeopaths see people who are suffering recurring depression & after thorough investigation, see the cause was a severe blow or fall on the head - sometimes 20 to 30 years before. If remedies are given in the acute stage, this suffering can be alleviated, not only short term but also long term. Severe head injuries require at least Arnica & sometimes Nat Sulph - it is best to consult with your practitioner for follow up treatment. I can't stress enough the importance of Arnica in acute injuries, followed by whatever other remedies are indicated for the specific symptoms.

So, to more remedies for the 1st Aid cabinet. As you acquire each remedy, take the time to get to know the use of each one so then you won't feel overwhelmed, this is why I suggest people buy a few at a time or as you need them or according to the circumstances you foresee you will need to cover. Seeing the winters' here I will cover a few of the remedies indicated for colds & flu's, & their other applications.

ACONITE - Covered in the last issue. 1st stage of cold or croupy cough from getting cold, especially after kids running around & getting heated then chill sets in in the evening. Remember **Aconite & Ferrum Phos** in early stages of colds & flu's.

ARSENICUM - Takes cold with every change of weather. **Chilliness**, violent sneezing, sudden **prostration.** Burning pains, better for heat. Copious watery, burning coryza, especially around nose & upper lip. Burning unquenchable thirst, desire to drink often, a sip at a time. **Restless.** Worse after midnight; 1 - 3 am. Desire for company. Severe weakening diarrhoea. Food poisoning - "Bali belly" - vomiting & diarrhoea together.

BRYONIA - Complaints develop slowly & are usually right sided. Wants to lie still & be left alone. Great thirst for cold drinks. Bronchial troubles. Splitting headache worse cough or **any movement** - better for pressure. **Dryness** of mucus membranes. Headache beginning am & gradually gets worse. Dry painful cough. Injuries & sharp pain worse motion. Any sprains etc that are worse on movement. Mastitis, pale red, hot & worse motion. Muscular or joint inflammations. Sprains worse motion.

CAMPHORA Often sufficient at the onset to cut short an attack, or at least modify severity. Coldness & shivering but averse to covering.

FERRUM PHOS - See last issue - early stage of colds, lots of sneezing & slight inflammation of the throat.

GELSEMIUM - Chills up & down spine; hot & cold by turns. **Dizzy, dull, drowsy & droopy.** Heavy feeling in lids & limbs. Trembling with weakness & malaise. Bursting headache from back of head to above & around eyes. No thirst. Relief from passing copious urination. One of our steers was down with 3 day sickness & this remedy pulled him out of it in an hour or so, he looked dizzy, drowsy & whenever he got up all he wanted to do was have a big werris (my husbands knickname for a wee!). Anxiety on anticipating an event. Stage fright. Diarrhoea from fright, anticipation or bad news.

EUPATORIUM PERFOLIATUM Tremendous aching **"as if the bones are broken".** Flu with high fever, flush, chills beginning in small of back; restless; thirst for cold drinks.

HEPAR SULPH - After exposure to cold dry weather; affects ears, nose, throat, chest. Discharge watery at first, then thick, yellow & offensive. Worse from least draught, or even putting hands out of bed; peevish & hypersensitive; sour excretions. Pharyngitis; stitching or splinter like pains in throat. Painful abcesses, boils. Injuries or sores becoming infected & pussy.

MERCURIUS - Easily chilled & overheated; **can't get temperature right**; sensitive to heat & cold. Easy profuse, offensive sweat without relief; very foul mouth & breath. Salivation at night. Symptoms worse at night.

NUX VOMICA -Chilliness & shivering after drinking fluids or from least movement; Better out of doors. Coldness not better for heat or bed covers; fits of sneezing after meals; excessively irritable; nose stuffed up all night. Excellent hangover remedy. Stomach upsets from spicy food or overindulgence. Detoxifies. Stomach or bowel cramps with painful ineffectual urge to stool. Constipation.

PULSATILLA - Chilly yet intolerant of any form of heat. Profuse, thick, bland, yellow-green discharges. No thirst. Child is teary & clingy. Worse from pork, fats & rich food.

RHUS TOX - Stiff lame & bruised on first moving; **Better for continued motion. Worse from being at rest.** Cold sores around mouth & vesicles on tongue. Arthritis, aching joints & injuries that are better for continued movement & warmth. Worse for cold, cloudy, damp weather. Better for stretching out affected parts. Herpetic eruptions; burning & itching, better for hot water application.

OSCILLOCOCCINUM - Flu & gastric focus. Paleness, weakness, fever, chill. Catarrh from eyes & nose; Clear then pussy. Stuffed up nose; sneezing, sinusitus. Pains as if needles in one or both ears. Has been found to be effective in treating the flu when taken within 48 hrs of onset of symptoms.

INFLUENZINUM - For preventative use unless there are indications for a specific remedy. Can use as an intercurrent with other remedies. Recommended for people who are ill, elderly & children, anyone susceptible to the flu chronically.

DOSAGE -see last issue; it is best to take the remedies in water as this hastens the time of healing. Stir the glass or strike the remedy solution bottle before each dose. Remember to stop the remedy when better. Use 12C to 30C potencies. As with any ailment it is better to take the indicated remedy as soon as possible after onset of symptoms. Hope everyone has a "flu - free" winter !

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MARKET REPORT

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BASIL continued to reign supreme. Unfortunately, our North Coast supply is quickly running out. The Far North Qld crops of Mareeba have just started to appear on the marketplace; so prices will remain stable for as long as their supplies continue. These crops are not certified organic, so there is certainly a market niche for any F.N.Q. organic growers.

Sage and **tarragon** have begun their annual decrease in supply and increase in price. It's truly amazing how this happens every year like clockwork. Russian tarragon, the old standby, has not been accepted this year as a replacement. I think that by now everyone must know that it has less taste. Winter tarragon has been a good substitute, even though its not from the tarragon family. Winter tarragon is in fact Tagetes lucida, which has a high concentration of estragol, the same as frech tarragon, thus the same taste. Tarragon is the key to making a good sauce Bernaise.

The **Mediterraneans** are all very strong at the moment and should continue through the winter months. Demand has increased with the cold southern temperatures. Demand is accross the board for all lines.

Any growers who are experiencing any difficulties with their marketing at this time of year should give us a call. HFA has a genuine shortfall of supply for most lines.

Any experienced organic certified growers who wish to expand their ranges this year, and wish to grow under contract for any of the medicinal or herbal tea crops, should drop us a line or call now. New growers should be planning ahead towards their spring plantings, by putting in a green manure crop to suit their local area. Allow approx 6-8 weeks. So for September plantings you want to have the green manure crop in by mid July. During August you want to start off your seeds in a good seed raising mix ready for spring plantings.

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CERTIFICATES MOVE A SICK JOKE: AMA

The Australian Medical Association has attacked moves to allow a Federal Government department to accept sick leave certificates from alternative health practitioners.

In an enterprise agreement 2400 employees of the Federal Attorney-General's department can use medical certificates from health service providers recognised by registered health funds.

The agreement means those employees can obtain medical certificates for sick leave purposes signed by alternative practitioners such as naturopaths, herbalists and acupuncturists.

But AMA Federal president Dr Brendan Nelson said he would be asking Federal Attorney-General Michael Lavarch to scrap the agreement. "We're just pandering to the stargazing of public servants", Dr Nelson said. "You might as well go to a hairdresser to get a sick leave certificate."

Northern Star June 4, 1994

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- an ecologically and economically sound method of irrigation.

LEAKY PIPE *shows:*
- a highly uniform porosity, ensuring an even distribution of irrigation water end to end.
- no mechanical or moving parts.

LEAKY PIPE *is economical:*
- making efficient use of irrigation water by delivering it directly to the roots.
- saving energy by the use of low pressure.

LEAKY PIPE *does not:*
- interfere with any surface activities.
- need an expensive control system when used subsurface as a continuously operating system.

LEAKY PIPE *can be:*
- used for almost any crop, orchard, groves.
- used for almost all kinds of irrigation purposes.
- used in level terrains as well as slopes.
- used for lawns and gardens.
- used for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields.

LEAKY PIPE *needs:*
- only a minimum of surveillance and maintenance.

LEAKY PIPE *installed underground is:*
- protected against intentional or unintentional damage.
- not subject to vandalism and/or theft.

LEAKY PIPE *makes it possible:*
- to use soluble fertilizers in small doses as and when needed and therefore, to economise on fertilizer use and achieve a higher efficiency.

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Just Add Water

spoke to David Bain – if he wants the info he'll get in touch in a week

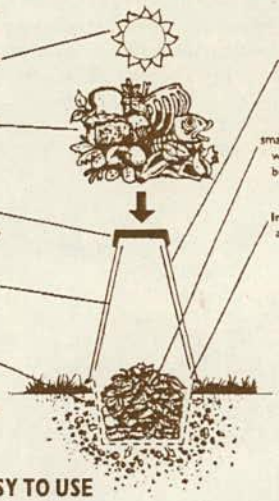
THE NATURAL FOOD WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

In a year, the average family adds over a tonne of garbage to the pollution problem. One third of this garbage is food waste, your kitchen scraps.

This food waste not only fills up tip sites, but it can form dangerous by-products in the tip, due to a lack of oxygen. Also food waste, when combined with heavy metals and other hazardous materials in the tip, can form a toxic soup called "leachate" which can contaminate the environment.

Green Cone is the natural way to completely dispose of all this food waste, without polluting the environment.

HOW GREEN CONE WORKS



Solar power from the sun heats the Green Cone, accelerating the decomposing process.

Food wastes the Green Cone likes include: vegetable scraps, raw and cooked meats, cooking oils, fats, bread and other kitchen scraps.

The secure lid ensures that unpleasant odours and smells stay inside the cone and are neutralised by the soil.

The double wall lets the sun's heat in and not out creating an efficient heat trap.

The basket is buried into the ground to give the decomposing waste good contact with the soil, which allows water and nutrients to return to the soil and lets air into the system.

Removable top section allows easy access to the basket while remaining child and animal proof.

Fertile compost is produced in small amounts. Over 80% of the food waste put into the Green Cone will be absorbed as water and nutrients by the soil.

Inside vents circulate warm, moist air into the basket, speeding up the decomposing process.

Green Cone Natural Accelerator Powder contains natural nutrients and micro-organisms which speed up the decomposing process and reduces odour even further.

GREEN CONE IS EASY TO USE

1. Collect your everyday food scraps and waste into your Green Cone Kitchen Caddy. The smaller the pieces the more efficient the decomposing process.
2. Add one level tablespoon (25 g approx) of Green Cone Natural Accelerator to make your Green Cone operate more efficiently, before you empty the kitchen container into the Green Cone.

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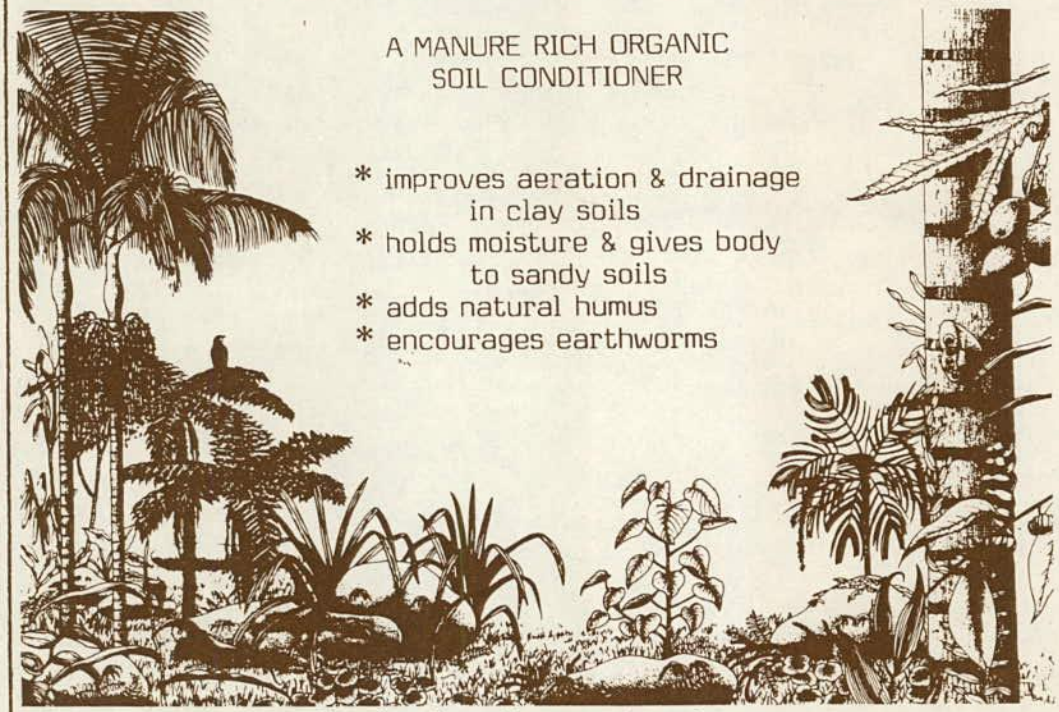

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NEW CHEMICALS LEGISLATION.

The new Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Bill was passed i March '94 despite objections from Green & Democrat senators, Australian Toxic Network, Toxin Action Group, The Australian Co servation Foundation, Australian Consumers Assoc.,Total Enviro ment Centre and Greenpeace.

They objected on five points:-

1. - No environment rep. on the National Registration Auth. Boar (NRA). 2. - No precautionary principle or pesticide reduction pra tices included. 3. - No access to "commercial in-confidence" data. 4 No appeal rights for the community re. registrations. 5. - Lack of o going monitoring procedures.

The Worksafe provisions that protect industrial workers were n adopted for rural workers in the Bill and thus the latter have no acce to proper information on chemical usage. These may affect wildli residues in food and water, house treatments and soil contaminatio It is noted that whilst solvents are recognised as a serious risk bo here and overseas, their importance in pesticide exposure is extreme under-rated.

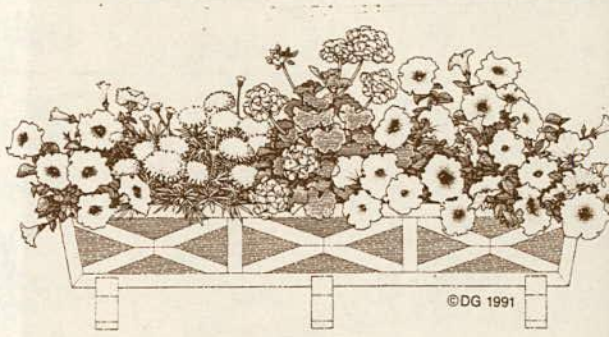
A fruit picker was badly exposed to pesticides in an accident a was diagnosed as solvent poisoning. The doctors could NOT obta the specific ingredients from the manufacturers who claimed it w confidential data!

Whilst the Bill ensures that manufacturers have the right of appe no such right is provided for the community. Furthermore, ma states have had legal aid withdrawn in civil or environment cases.

Lack of monitoring procedures is illustrated by a case where a search group revealed that no action had been taken by the Dept. Ag. on their own findings of autopsies of Central Coast wildlife. Th showed organophosphate residues in significant amounts and though the Environment Protection Authority were extremely co cerned, nothing was done.

Although millions are being spent on clean, green agriculture seems ludicrous that this Bill does not include basic pesticide red tion schemes. These are changes that the rural community needs protect its health, its environment and its future farming ventures

Source: Toxic Action Group via Environs Apr/May '



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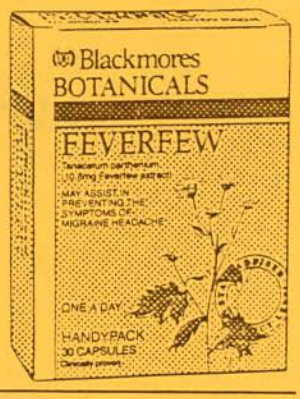

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