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# HERB GROWER

Published bi-monthly by the ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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## OHGA OPENS OFFICE

Yes, we have finally come of age! OHGA now has an office, with Doug Andrews taking care of business. The office is located at 68 Magellan St in Lismore and everyone is invited to drop in, between 9 and 1 during weekdays.

Doug is an experienced herb grower, who has grown both culinary and medicinal herbs for years, organically of course, together with his wife Robyn, who has been OHGA's secretary for the past three years. He should be able to answer most, if not all, of your questions. We've only recently become aware that he used to work in bookkeeping, so he is ideally suited for the task.

Our aim is to make the office an inviting and comfortable place for people to visit, but we need your help in achieving this. If you have anything at all to contribute, we would be very happy to accept it. What we need is: book cases, some more decent chairs, a coffee table, cups, coffee, organic and herbal books and magazines, rugs, nice posters; you get the picture? If you have anything to spare, please give Doug a ring on: 066 - 220100. Our next AGM will of course be held there. In fact, we plan to make t our official opening party.

Just to prove that we're already part of the Lismore scene, our office was broken into in the middle of June, along with Noah's Ark and lawyers' offices next door! A door was smashed in and we needed a new one. Fortunately, nothing was stolen and don't worry, we've insured everything.

## ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Gardening by the Moon, The Life of Riley, OHGA's Mail, Certified Growers List, Year's End Market Report, The Thunder of Zeus, Interesting Stories, and much more .....*





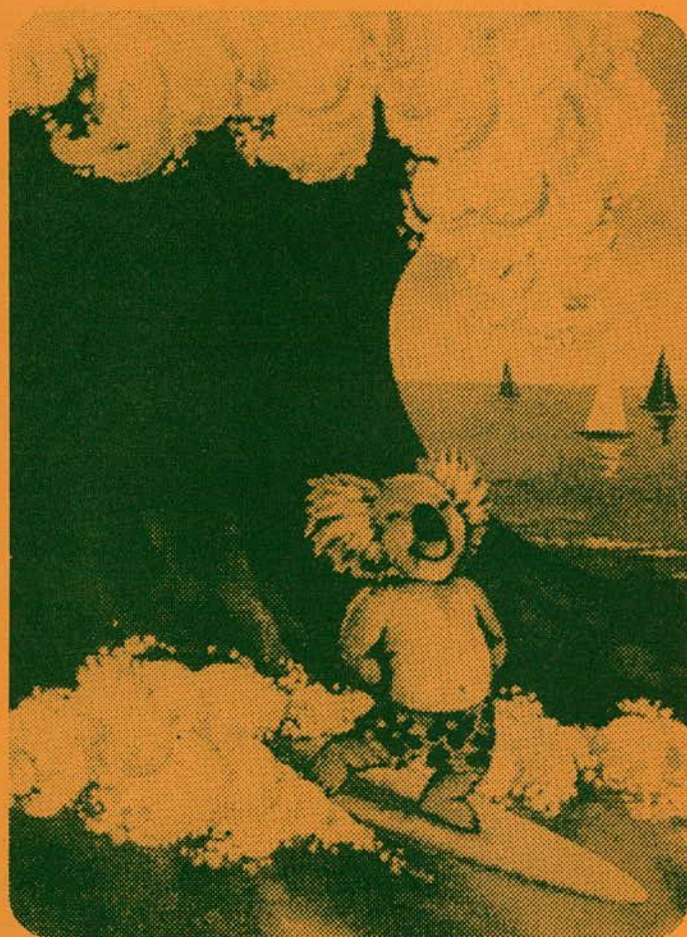
**The Koala Tea Company Pty Ltd**

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# No Worries Tea

When you see all the weeds grow, it's sometimes difficult to relax, but a cup of our No Worries Tea will restore your energy and sanity.

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why not try our  
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**Dreamtime Tea**  
**G'Day Tea**  
**No Worries Tea**  
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I wonder if it's as wet where you are, as it is here. So much rain! All my vegies have given up and it is almost impossible to plant new ones. The herbs, though, are powering away (as are the weeds), so at least we can still harvest, even if it's no fun in the rain.

I now have two assistants outside. William is the latest one to arrive. He hails from Holland originally, and comes to us via New Zealand where he now lives. He's checked in with us for the winter and does great work in my garden. Since he's used to the Kiwi weather, he thinks our winter is really lovely and is outside digging and planting in wind and rain, while we sit shivering by the fire! Randy, who's been working and learning with me for about four months now, showed unexpected talents as an illustrator too. He drew the herbs for "The Edible Lawn" article, the first one of two in this issue which I found on the Internet. As soon as one of us, probably Freya who's our computer-wiz, has learned how to set up a home page, OTGIA will be out there for all the world to see.

This is the last issue of the OTGIA year. Please don't forget to renew before the end of July. The usual procedure over the years has been of members renewing in dribs and drabs during the months leading up to Christmas. That hasn't been so bad in the past, although it created a lot of prolonged and unpaid work for some of our committee members. But now we have Doug in the office, who is being employed by OTGIA, and it would really be appreciated if you could send in your renewal soon. Unlike all of the here-today-gone-tomorrow organisations who get lots of governmental support to lease offices, buy computers etc. it's our OTGIA funds on the line. So I hope you won't let us down.

You may also think about joining our committee. There's at least one spot which will become vacant, the one of Treasurer. Not an easy one to fill, but if you can help us out, please don't hesitate to nominate. All of the day-to-day work is now done by Doug in the office, so the position shouldn't be too much of a hardship.

Deb, our committee member who took care of the wonderful OTGIA polo-shirts, has come up with t-shirts as well. They come in a natural unbleached and a nice green colour. A small sunflower, with The Organic Herb Growers of Australia in a circle around it, is printed on the chest and a larger one appears on the back. They go for \$18, available from the office, or with an extra \$5 p&p through the mail. Deb also commissioned "Organic Property, No Spraying" signs to put at the entrance of your property. I haven't seen them yet, but Howard (who's very fussy) says that they're great. They go for \$10. Really indispensable for us organic growers who are always threatened by chemicals, be it by councils or neighbours. With the sign up, they're not allowed to spray near your property.

Howard and I will be in Canberra at the beginning of July. The Australian National University, with sponsorship by RIRDC, is putting on an organic conference. At first they invited only one person of each of the certification groups, while the approximate number of other invitees was 60. Howard, along with Jan of NASAA and Arthur of the BFA, pointed out to them that it was ridiculous that we, the organisations that are the heart and soul of Australian organics, should be so underrepresented. So, in their generosity, they agreed that we could each bring one other exec member. Once there we will take the opportunity to have talks with NASAA and BFA on ways in which we can work closer together. Already we are sharing inspectors to do farm visits for us in places that normally would be out of OTGIA's range. We will also discuss the possibility of a common Organic Logo. Speaking of logo's: did you see the nice little article in the June Women's Weekly with the OTGIA logo alongside that of the other organisations?

About all that's left to say is: "Congratulations to Greg and Jane on the birth of Anthony! May he live long and prosper!"

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**Absolute copy deadline (for ads, letters, articles etc. for the Sept/Oct issue is August 20th.**





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## OHGA Polo's and T-shirts

YES, I would like to order:

- ☐ OHGA's polo shirt @ \$25  
S - M - L - XL - XXL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ OHGA's T-shirt, natural @ \$18  
S - M - L - XL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ OHGA's T-shirt, green @ \$18  
S - M - L - XL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ Organic Sign @ \$10  
quantity: ...

Please add \$5 (or \$2,50 for organic sign)  
per order for post and packaging.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/cash for \$.....

### NEEDED: OHGA TREASURER

It's early days yet, but Lea Bracker has already  
given us notice that she intends to give up her  
treasurer's position due to all the work she has  
before her on her new farm.

So come the AGM in early October, we will  
need someone who is familiar with financial  
matters and is willing to take on the job.  
Most of the financial work is now done by  
Doug in the office, but we will still need a  
treasurer to give us a financial report at the  
monthly meetings, and to balance the books  
at the end of the financial year. Let us know  
soon if you can handle the job.







## OHGA's mail

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed a cheque for seventy dollars, as payment for a business membership, joining fee and application for certification.

We are currently growing ginseng under shade cloth and about to invest in a second acreage of bush for 'purely' organic growing. I am a member of the Australian Ginseng Growers Association at council level. We have a current 'paid' membership of one hundred and forty two, with a further thirty interested unpaid members. The council's efforts at present are directed towards promoting ginseng as a worthwhile, valuable crop, and putting in place our own crop validation system. We also produce our own quarterly gazette. Could you please consider forwarding a copy of the quality assurance manual I assume you produced to attain AQIS certification? This would be a valuable aid for my associates whom have not undertaken this process before. I would return it if necessary. Thank you in anticipation,  
Jenny Ziolkowski, 7 Gooch Rd, Stratford 3862. Ph. 051 - 456751

*I printed Jenny's address and phone number in case other OHGA members are interested in the ginseng project. We don't have a quality assurance manual to attain AQIS certification. It's all been down to years of hard work and building up experience, I'm afraid. If you'd like to send me your quarterly journal regularly, Jenny, I could give our members some ginseng news. - Elle*

Dear Madam/Sir,

My wife and I have been growing organic vegetables on a small commercial scale for nearly five years. Until recently we sold on the conventional market at best prices for that market. Towards the end of our last season we became entangled with the organic market and although not certified then, we have recently been inspected by NASAA with a view of becoming certified. The trouble is, the more I learn about the organic industry, the more amazed I become at what appears to be an industry devoid of collective marketing effort.

The enclosed report is a suggestion to commence the very beginnings of good marketing practice. It would be good to hear from you if you have any thought or ideas regarding the suggestions in the report.

Regards, Geoff Simmons, Yeppoon 4703.

*Then follow several nicely designed pages in which Geoff basically says that there are too many organisations in the organic field, which are not working together. He suggests that OPAC should become a marketing body:*

"OPAC can provide a marvellous marketing opportunity for the industry, providing the certifiers can adopt a broader attitude to its function and not restrict it to only being a forum to discuss certification and standards."

*And also:*

"In 1992 a National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce was developed by OPAC and released in 1992. Then a working group proposed a revised draft standard in 1994. To date the standard has not yet been finalised. In the fast moving world of marketing, the idea of taking such a long time to develop a key document of any kind, would simply not be believed. It is frustrating that the members of OPAC could not even quickly agree to formalising a common set of standards, let alone make other important decisions!"

*I replied:*

Dear Geoff,

Thank you for your entertaining communication of April 26.

A few points:

- \* The work on the National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce is indeed continually revised and upgraded to be in line with the Codex world standards. There will probably never be a final version. However, in November of last year, OPAC finished the current revision of the Standard. The secretary, provided by the government, was to have them printed for sale and distribution. Please apply to AQIS for a copy. Then, perhaps, they'll pull their fingers out a bit. As the chairperson and secretary are both AQIS people, we, the certification organisations, are constantly at their mercy (and not at all happy with the arrangements, may I add).

- \* OPAC is an advisory committee, established by the government, with the one aim to set up the national standard. **It is not a commercial body.** It was created primarily because the EU wanted to deal only with government approved organic certification organisations. These organisations are audited yearly by AQIS at a fee of around \$5000 each.

- \* As far as the self-interest of the bodies goes: we are all accountable to our members, who after all pay yearly certification fees and the AQIS fee.

- \* The one logo will probably not be too far off, although I doubt very much that "OPAC" will be included on it. We're working on it and I'm sure an announcement will be made in the not too distant future.

- \* You must surely understand that certification for profit is a very real danger. The certification bodies or OPAC themselves, couldn't possibly be marketing bodies as well. That is not to say that





there couldn't be better communication and cooperation with existing marketers. We at OHGA are often frustrated ourselves. - Elle

*His speedy reply:*

Elle ... thanks for your quick response to the entertainment stuff I sent you!  
Yes, yes, yes, yes! ... OPAC and the Certifiers can easily sponsor the Great Organic Marketing Plan to lead the industry into sunshine and glory!  
First the basic foundations must be laid.  
The one logo. The one Standards Document with the National logo on the front and the Who's Who with the logo on the front.  
OPAC should feature on the logo. It will help to increase consumer confidence because of the perception of government approval of the organic industry ... certainly more so than the present situation where the various certifying organisations believe in fragmenting the industry by selfishly pushing their own logo.

Elle ... you say the one logo is not far off! How about a small wager? I'll owe you a bottle of organic wine if it happens under five years from now. Have you ever seen a committee decide a logo? I have! The first thing they do is to argue all interesting designs to a completely boring, ineffective blandness! A bit like the organic industry at the moment! Then the final decision is put off and off and off whilst the committee (of now experts) deliberate themselves into absolute confusion. Then they give up and call for new designs and so the process starts all over again!

How about accepting the design in the report ... calling an OPAC meeting next week, and we all get on with it! No umbrella organisation to be formed light years away ... just getting on with what already exists!

*Geoff submitted a logo design. Not bad. For the rest he doesn't seem to get it. His communications are put together like those american style "this is your chance to win the prize of a lifetime" brochures. Quite funny, but somehow annoying.*

*As for calling an OPAC meeting next week ... if only it was that simple. Unfortunately it's run by Canberra bureaucrats.*

*I'm very confident of winning that bottle of organic wine, though. -Elle*

*And another communication:*

Dear Elle,

The first reports I mailed out had almost zero response. Fair enough!

One certification organisation (you) wrote to point out the reasons why my ideas would be difficult to implement and a wholesaler rang to express great enthusiasm for the ideas.

Thanks for your response, Elle. Still, it's very early days yet and a low response level has more advantages than might, at first, be realised throughout the

industry.

Any further comments you might wish to make will be most welcome.  
Regards, Geoff Simmons.

Hello OHGA staff,

Just read the latest "HERB GROWER", which once again is extremely informative.

Included with my letter is \$30 cash for one of the polo shirts (a medium size if that's o.k.).

I do hope you didn't get too "washed out" with the Qld/NSW floods last week. We had 7" of rain. We all cried as it was the first rain on our property for many many months. I even got bogged in my driveway!!!

Look forward to the "new" T-shirt. Keep smiling.  
Regards, Jo Victoria Poxon, Kin Kora, Central Qld 4680.

*Thanks for ordering the polo, and we hope you enjoy wearing it. Congratulations on the rain! It must have been wonderful for you. For our part, here in Lismore, we've had way too much of it! Hardly seems fair, does it? -Elle.*

Dear Elle,

The May/June edition of Herb Grower has just arrived today and I just had to write to you straight away to say how much I enjoy your journal. I devour it like literary chocolate cake! It hasn't yet managed to make me plant those herbs but ... who knows ... maybe soon?

I just wanted to write in appreciation because I had exactly the same experience as the editor of the NASAA newsletter when I edited the newsletter of MAMA (Mothers' and Midwives' Action).

I don't think I would be much good for the 10th birthday committee - Melbourne is possibly too far away? Anyway I have just taken on the job of Vice President of Permaculture Melbourned, so that will do for now.

Speaking of Melbourne, I wonder how many OHGA members there are in our area, I know several and we are a keen bunch - perhaps we should organise a bit of cooperative help, working bees or something?

Anyway, Elle, keep up the great work, thanks for a reliable and informative chocolate cake.  
Virginia Solomon, Research. Ph. 03-94371909.

*And me not even a good cook! Thanks Virginia, your letter will sustain me during the long hours' work on the new issue.*

*A great idea, working bees etc. We always applaud cooperation. I printed your phone number so other OHGA members can contact you if they want. Good luck with the Permaculture. An excellent cause. - Elle*





# 1996/1997 RENEWAL FORM OF OHGA MEMBERSHIP

## ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

P O Box 6171, South Lismore 2480 Phone (066) 220100

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED MY CHEQUE (payable to OHGA) FOR  
MY OHGA MEMBERSHIP FOR 1996/1997

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

P.code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick appropriate box:

- |                          |                                |          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | JOINING FEE (new members only) | \$ 10.00 |
|                          | plus:                          |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AUSTRALIAN MEMBERSHIP          | \$ 40.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CONCESSION MEMBERSHIP          | \$ 30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP            | \$ 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP            | \$ 65.00 |

It may also now be a convenient opportunity for you to place an order for:

- ☐ OHGA's polo shirt @ \$25  
S - M - L - XL - XXL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ OHGA's T-shirt, natural @ \$18  
S - M - L - XL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ OHGA's T-shirt, green @ \$18  
S - M - L - XL (circle)  
quantity: ...
- ☐ Organic Sign @ \$10  
quantity: ...

Please add \$5 (or \$2,50 for organic sign) per order  
for post and packaging

I enclose a cheque/cash for the total of \$.....



## How a bright mind can be reduced to mere sawdust

DO you remember this:

*"How much wood would a woodchopper chop  
If a woodchopper could chop wood?  
If a woodchopper could, then  
How much wood would a woodchopper chop  
If a woodchopper could and would?"*

You probably do. But what about this:

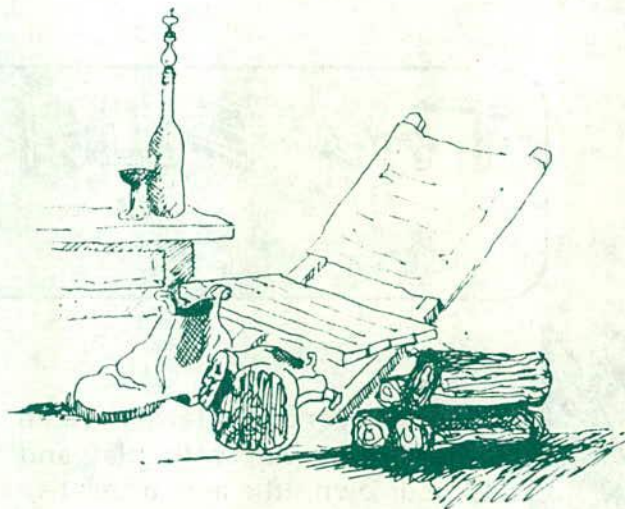
*"How many urns must a woodturner turn  
To justify a yearn for turning?"*

No? Thought so. Neither did I. Until I started to lead a double life. In the mornings I have been planting trees. In the afternoons, I have been chopping them up. (How could you? The waste. What about your ethics, your karma? The habitat, the environment, the ozone thingy, the economy, world peace.) To clarify: I devote my mornings to planting our forest. But the post-lunch siesta is now fully occupied with turning wood on a lathe.

This infatuation represents my first real attempt at a hobby. I had never contemplated the time where I might need an activity to ward off impending senility. But I have also never been captivated by the idea of sticking stamps in a book, or pins in a butterfly. (Why opt for solitary boredom when there are 1.2 billion complex earthlings to play with?) However, some months back, my neighbour showed me how to make a small vase on his wood lathe and invited me to use it when I wished. I was instantly hooked. My neighbour was instantly dismayed. Since then he has been pestered for more lessons than a driving school. And his lathe seems to magically kick into gear at all hours of the day and night.

I have not worked with wood before. No tree has ever needed to fear my approach. (Fortunately, none still will.) In fact, I have developed a great respect for timber. Until now, an old stick in the paddock was merely a piece of firewood. Now, I can't walk past a scrap of wood without wondering what it would look like turned and polished. The dead branch off the mango. The off-cut of a floor joist. Even an old groundsel tree, rooted out in the weeding, has produced a dense, fine-grained, white timber destined for one half of a chess set.

Using the lathe has opened up a whole new set of experiences. The first was pure fear. Pointing a razor-sharp chisel at a large, angry lump of speeding timber seemed like the ideal recipe for rapid amputation or, at least, a level of self mutilation which would make body piercing seem like a park walk. But, once that tentativeness was overcome, the practice produced a stream of coloured shavings which, themselves, have an



## THE LIFE OF RILEY

uncommon beauty. (And a use. They are the ideal fuel for burning weed seed to make our biodynamic peppers.) Turning wood also results in smooth, symmetrical shapes which have a myriad of uses. No longer can I window shop without loitering under tables or behind lamp stands looking at their legs. Kitchen utensils, which once never received even a cursory touch, are now fondled lingeringly. Door knobs are caressed. Pan handles are admired. If I see an antique dining suite with a huge, single, central turned leg, I faint. (Yes, it is all a little pathetic isn't it.)

Turning wood also unleashes the unique scent of the timber. We have planted about 100 tree varieties in our forest. It is fascinating to distinguish their leaf shape, their new growth colour and their branching habit. Now, I also wonder how each might smell. Even some of the old, termite chewed logs I have put on the lathe retain a remnant of smell. I am told that green camphor laurel is a real olfactory experience. And there, maybe, is a solution to what has become one of our most invasive weeds. Rather than bulldozing and burning the Northern Rivers camphors, we could still kill them - but leave them standing. Their dead roots would continue to hold the soil together while the pioneers regrow underneath. Their dead branches are ideal habitat for our native birds (the black-shouldered kite always perches on the top dead branch of a tree). And the camphor timber could be seasoned standing-up for later use . . . for wood turners of course. We might start a new boutique industry. We might launch a line of specialist spurtle shops. *"By 2000, no child shall live without its dibbler."* A rolling pin will be the symbol for reaching one's majority. Sounds a bit silly. But it does reflect the resource value of all timbers. And it shows me why reducing our old forests to mere woodchips is such a criminal waste.

- Kenrick Riley



. . . and your membership fee for the next year.



# The Edible Lawn

by R.J. Morris



Most gardens contain a lawn - it's an area where we can walk, play and relax, our own little area of relative privacy.

Now we could decide to be very practical and dig the lawn up to plant vegetables, but apart from losing our leisure area, sometimes we also feel constrained by convention and want our gardens to retain their accepted appearances. There is, however, a compromise.

Assuming that we do not want a so-called 'perfect' lawn, which consists almost entirely of grass and, apart from being quite boring to look at, offers very little diversity of habitat for a potentially wide range of birds, mammals and insects etc, we could introduce various plants that can provide food both for us and the wildlife, and a visually more attractive area with flowers for most of the year.

There are problems involved with this - we would have to allow the lawn to grow a bit longer, but all the plants listed below will tolerate fairly regular cutting and most would not object to being walked on quite often. Basically, if we raise the height of the grass cutter blades by about half an inch there should be no problems. The regular cutting of the lawn will ensure a constant supply of succulent young leaves. It would also be nice if the lawn could be left uncut for a few weeks in summer to allow the taller plants to flower.

## ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM - YARROW

This is a common 'weed' in lawns and succeeds even when the grass is cut very short. The young leaves make a tasty addition to salads. It is a good companion plant for grass, and its mowings will greatly enrich the compost heap. If left uncut for a month at any time during



the summer, it will produce some lovely flowers. The leaves are very rich in minerals and have medicinal properties. The plant is said to repel beetles, ants and flies.

## AJUGA REPTANS - BUGLE



For this to succeed, the grass would have to be allowed to grow a bit longer than usual. It does well in damp, slightly shaded areas and the young shoots can be eaten in salads. If left uncut, it flowers in spring and summer, the flowers being very attractive to bees.

## ALCHEMILLA VULGARIS - LADY'S MANTLE

Requires a slightly longer grass than usual. If allowed, it will flower in spring. The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked and the root is said to be edible but astringent. The leaves make a herbal tea.



## ALLIUM OLERACEUM - FIELD GARLIC and

## ALLIUM VINEALE - CROW GARLIC

Both grow well in grass. The leaves can be used as a garlic substitute. If allowed, they'll flower in summer.



## ANTHEMIS NOBILIS - CHAMOMILE

Grows very well in a lawn and flowers even if cut regularly. The flowers make a very refreshing herbal tea which is very good for the stomach, especially recommended for children. The





mown leaves will greatly enrich the compost heap. The flowers can also be used as a hair shampoo for those with fair hair.

#### **BELLIS PERENNIS - DAISY**

A common 'weed' in the lawn, able to tolerate constant cutting and still flower. It can produce flowers even in the middle of winter. The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked.



#### **CICORIUM INTYBUS - CHICORY**

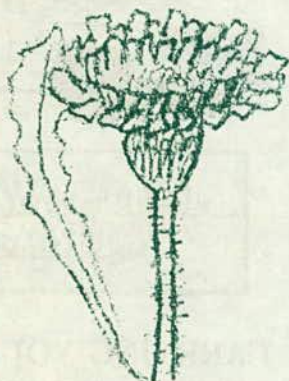


A marvellous plant with a deep taproot that brings up minerals from deep in the sub-soil. It will tolerate quite regular cutting but not if the grass is cut very short.

The leaves are an extremely valuable source of nutrients and can be eaten in salads. The root is also edible, or it can be dried, roasted and ground to make a coffee substitute.

#### **LEONTODON HISPIDUS - ROUGH HAWKBIT**

Looking somewhat like a dandelion, this plant is often found growing wild in the lawn and garden. It prefers a chalky soil. The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked.



#### **MELILOTUS OFFICINALIS - MELILOT**

This plant, a biennial, must be allowed to flower if you wish to keep it on the lawn. It can be cut regularly until early summer, but would then have to be left uncut until it had set seed. It could grow up quite tall, so you may decide not to put it in



the lawn. Nevertheless, its flowers are very attractive to bees, its leaves can be eaten in salads, and its flowers and seeds cooked with other vegetables. You could mow it regularly to prevent flowering of course, and sow fresh seeds every year.

#### **PLANTAGO LANCEOLATA, PLANTAGO MAJOR, PLANTAGO MEDIA - PLANTAINS.**

Very common 'weeds' in lawns. The lawn can be cut as often as you like and as short as you like without causing them any inconvenience at all, and they'll send up a flowering stem that is almost immune to the cutting abilities of many lawnmowers! Use the young leaves only, either in salads or cooked.



#### **PRUNELLA VULGARIS - SELF-HEAL**



Able to tolerate regular cutting, though preferably not to short, and still flower. The flowers are very attractive to bees. It prefers a moist soil and doesn't really like a chalky soil. Young leaves can be eaten cooked or raw. Medicinally it is used to treat cuts and bruises.

#### **SANGUISORBA MINOR - SALAD BURNET**

This plant is occasionally cultivated in the herb garden but grows very well in the lawn especially if the grass is allowed to get a little bit longer than usual. The young leaves are eaten in salads, many people saying that they taste somewhat like cucumbers. It prefers a chalky soil and will flower between May and August.



#### **TARAXACUM OFFICINALE - DANDELION**

A superb plant for growing in the lawn, able to tolerate regular cutting and constant



trampling. The quality of the leaves will be better if the grass is allowed to grow a little longer than usual, but this is not essential. It will manage to flower even if cut regularly, and a lawn of dandelions in flower is a beautiful sight in the spring, though it will produce the odd flower at other times of the year. The leaves are extremely nutritious and are best eaten raw, though they can also be cooked. The roots, like chicory roots, are a coffee substitute should you ever find that you've got too many plants in the lawn. The old and mown leaves are an excellent addition to the compost heap.



#### TRIFOLIUM REPENS - WHITE CLOVER

Another common 'weed' of the lawn. It flowers and flourishes even when cut regularly and short. It is an important food source for many caterpillars, the flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies, and we can eat the leaves -

raw or cooked - and the flowers and pods. It is an excellent companion plant in the lawn since it can supply nitrogen to other plants with the help of bacteria in the root nodules.



#### TUSSILAGO FARFARA - COLTSFOOT

This plant sends up flowering stems in spring before its leaves appear and are a sure sign that spring is with us once more. These flower buds can be eaten raw or cooked. The leaves appear after flowering and these also are edible. They are also used medicinally to treat coughs and



colds. The plant prefers a heavy moist soil and a sunny position.

\* Herb drawings by Randolph Butler

#### POST SCRIPT:

This article originates from "Plants For A Future", a non profit making resource centre supplying information on useful plants. They grow theirs without the use of artificial fertilisers, sprays or animal products (vegan-organic). Visitors are invited to spend some time working on the project with them, or to make a donation.

If you want more info on this very interesting and worthwhile set up, write to

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Ph. Bodmin (01208) 873554 or 872963

When I first read it, I immediately wanted to go out and plant a lawn, something that we are still missing in our garden. Possibly not all these herbs would thrive as much here as in the UK (our huge lawn in Wales had a lot of them already growing wild in it) but most of them will grow quite well, especially in grass that's left longer than your average lawn. A wildflower lawn is also a nice possibility, but a health lawn is what I'd like.

-Elle



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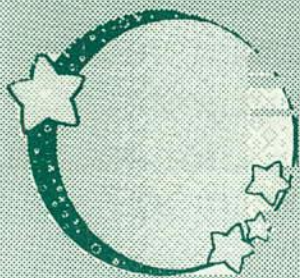
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# GARDENING BY THE MOON

by  
Elle Fikke-Rubin



## JULY

**17-23** Time for leafy annuals, like spinach, cresses, lettuces, cabbages, silverbeet, parsley and the japanese and chinese greens. If you're planning on growing basil, these would be good days to start the seeds off in trays or pots, in a warm spot out of frosts' way.

### **24 First Quarter.**

**25-29** Days to sow or plant seedbearing annuals and flowers: capsicums, broad beans, globe artichokes, tomatoes, zucchini's, broccoli, and in the flower department, you could try violas and pansies, poppies and calendulas.

**30-31** The second **Full Moon** of the month. Once in a blue moon ....

## AUGUST

**1-5** You can work with rootcrops and perennials during these days, especially on the Thursday and Friday, which are super fertile days.

This is a good month to plant citrus trees, but only if you're out of the frost zone. Actually, this is a good time to plant all sorts of trees and bushes, and also to split up or plant perennial herbs and flowers. If you don't grow any comfrey yet, you simply must put some in now. And sow some root vegies, such as carrots, beetroots, radishes, jerusalem artichokes, onions, swedes and turnips.

### **6 Last Quarter.**

**7-13** Days to clean up, prepare new beds, get in your mulch and buy your seeds and plants. Or you could make the very fahsionable and practical Luffa Soap. I saw these soaps in an upmarket shop not long ago, very expensive they were too, and thought what a good idea they were. Well, recently I read a very nice recipe for them in one of my exchange mags,

*The Herb Quarterly*, by a lady called Janice Cox. It goes as follows:

You need:

- \* 1 Tbls finely chopped luffa sponge,
- \* 1½ cups grated white Castile soap (approx. one bar),
- \* 1 Tbls water,
- and petroleum jelly.

Melt the soap, at the ratio of ten to one of soap to water, in the top of a double boiler and heat gently over medium heat. Stir occasionally until all the soap is melted. Don't allow to boil. It may take up to 30 minutes until the soap goes from dry and grainy to a smooth fluffy white pudding. Then stir in the chopped luffa sponge and mix well. When the mix is smooth, carefully spoon it into molds lightly greased with petroleum jelly. You could use muffin tins and cookie cutters. Fill the molds to the brim and work quickly, because the soap will begin to cool and set immediately. Tap the edge of the molds gently to remove any air bubbles in the soap. Let the soap cool off completely and turn out the bars on a wire baking tray to dry for at least 24 hours. Any rough spots can be smoothed out with a sharp knife.

Sounds great, doesn't it? I would add some drops of essential oils too during the melting process. Lavender or rosemary, mmm...

### **14 New Moon.**

**15-21** Especially the Tuesday and Wednesday are good days to plant or sow leafy annuals. So in go dill, basil, borage, coriander, parsley, lettuces, celery, silverbeet etc.

### **22 First Quarter.**

**23-28** A good time to plant or sow seedbearing annuals. Peas and beans (as companions to a leafy croplike basil or parsley, or to carrots or





sweet corn as they enrich the soil with nitrogen) or cucumbers, zucchini's, pumpkins. Also for flowers like marigolds, petunias and other summer flowering ones.

**29 Full Moon.**

30-31 Days to plant root crops and perennials, including bushes, trees and most herbs.

## SEPTEMBER

1-4 More days to plant your carrots, comfrey, valerian, horseradish, asparagus, rhubarb and even lawns (see the article on how, and what to plant in, an edible lawn).

**5 Last Quarter.**

6-12 Days to prepare beds, measure the pH and, if below 6.0, to add lime or dolomite. There are some herbs that like an alkaline soil, especially the mediterraneans like rosemary, oregano, thyme and french or spanish lavenders. Their places of origin are chalky rock soils and cliffs, mostly hot and dry in summer. They often give us problems in our humid wet weather, but if we're able to at least give them the pH that they like, they seem to suffer less.

**13 New Moon.**

**HAVE FUN!**

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## AUSVEG LEVY UPDATE

by Howard Rubin

In a recent radio interview on the ABC Rural Report, National Senator Brownhill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Primary Industries) was asked for his response to the claim by OHGA that we were not consulted on the AusVeg Levy nor did we feel that we would benefit from the revenue raised.

His response was to affirm his department's approval of the levy as the best means of raising funding for R&D for Australian horticulture. He further reiterated that the levy would benefit all industries and not just the larger ones.

However, he had concern that the Horticultural Research & Development Corporation (HRDC) and the Australian Horticultural Council (AHC), the people who will spend the money raised, should merge together into one big centralised super body. He thought that this would be the best way to go for marketing purposes into SE Asia. Senator Brownhill further stated that R&D is not just for on farm work, but it is now to be applied to overseas marketing.

In the meantime, in a positive twist to this saga, the Executive Director of AusVeg has written a letter to the Executive Director of HRDC and informed him that after due consideration, **AusVeg has agreed and recommended to HRDC that culinary herbs should be deleted from the schedule.** (A copy of this letter was sent to Tony Ullman, who is one of the OHGA members who officially complained about the levy.)

AusVeg disputes the number of culinary herbs (see list in last edition) and suggests that a new list should be compiled. Hopefully, we will be consulted on that new list.

The levy issue is of course not over; and market agents are still deducting the levy from proceeds. It will be important for growers to maintain accurate records, so that, if and when the levy is no longer compulsory, you can claim a reimbursement.

This issue has revealed several major

concerns for most people. That an imposition can be put in place without any due process. That a levy is a form of taxation while the government promised no new taxes. And that OHGA's profile is still not high enough. AusVeg's argument was that they did not know about any herb grower associations. So to all our members out there, we need you to raise your voice, be proud of our association and industry. Let's make sure that we're not overlooked in the future.

One of our ideas to raise our public profile was to commission the polo's and t-shirts. It was a joy to see several members wearing their shirts at the last open day.

It has also come to our notice that the NSW vegetable growers have called for a delay to the implementation of the levy. At a meeting at Windsor called by the NSW Free Vegetable Growers Horticultural Council at the beginning of May, and attended by over 300 growers, they vowed to continue their opposition to the levy, which they say was introduced without adequate industry consultation; this is OHGA's argument also.

Present were Hawkesbury district vegetable growers, representatives from the Cambodian vegetable growers association, the Chinese-Australian vegetable producers association, NSW Farmers, the hay growers group, and vegetable growers from Cowra, Bathurst and Victoria. Neither HRDC or AusVeg representatives bothered to turn up!

Apart from the non-existent consultation process, the growers are opposed to the extra paperwork the levy collection requires and suggested that seeds are levied instead.

AusVeg chairman, Richmond - NSW grower, Brian Carroll, said the body had consulted peak vegetable industry representatives throughout Australia before issuing its recommendations.

Meanwhile, the NSW Farmers Association's horticultural section is lobbying for a horticultural secretariat to be established within the National Farmers Federation, which could represent horticulture industry views in the future.





# THIS AND THAT

## HERBAL MEDICINE TIPPED TO BOOM

A major herbal medicine boom about to hit Australia, will find it ill prepared with few controls of herbal products to guarantee safety and effectiveness, a US expert, Bastyr University Prof. of Botanical Medicine Michael Murray, warned. He said that herbal medicine would boom in Australia as it had in Europe and the US, when standardised products entered the market.

Prof Murray said Australians should call for herbal medicine makers to standardise their processing so they could rely on herbs to do what they advertised to do. "Standardised processing allows for quality control and is an essential first step to the scientific evaluation of herbal remedies" he said.

Clinical trials found saw palmetto extract was 2.5 times as effective at reducing men's enlarged prostate glands as one conventional medication. And St. John's Wort extract had been shown in 25 studies to be a more effective treatment for depression than some conventional anti-depressants, he said.

"Standardisation should cover cultivation, harvesting, identification, extraction, concentration, drying and screening for contamination by infectious agents, pesticides or heavy metals", Prof Murray said, "Just as you can't guarantee the caffeine in a cup of coffee, it is impossible to guarantee the exact composition of a herbal extract."

Standardised herbal extracts would take some of the pharmaceutical market and many drug firms were buying into the expanding industry, Prof Murray said.

- *The Northern Star*, 20-5-1996

## BANANAS MAY NEVER BE THE SAME

Genetically-engineered bananas may spare children of the 21st century the dreaded vaccination needle.

Scientists have high hopes that plants can be genetically changed to grow cheap vaccines, leading to the use of fruit for painless and plentiful protection against disease. Vaccinations would be delivered by eating bananas, apples or yams which have been genetically engineered to deliver a range of protection against familiar childhood diseases.

"My vision is to have a baby-food jar containing a transgenic banana that will protect against several infections," said Charles Arntzen of Cornell University's Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, in a recent article.

Axis Genetics Ltd of Cambridge, England, says it is making progress towards vaccines from plants.

They're growing plants to test the theory and work towards production.

"We engineer the virus in the laboratory and put it in the plant, on one leaf. This multiplies and spreads throughout the plant as it grows. The virus is designed to dominate the plant without killing it", Iain Cubitt, Axis chief executive said.

Axis says it is making progress towards producing a vaccine against common diseases in cats and dogs, and foot and mouth disease in cattle. Drugs for animals demand a less stringent regulatory regime and present a quicker route to market.

The company is also working on AIDS, malaria, measles, hep.B and flu vaccines, and ways to combat fungal infections and the treatment of colon cancer.

Until about 50 years ago, most medicines and drugs came from plants. Chemistry was harnessed and now most new drugs are produced in pharmaceutical laboratories. Genetic engineering has raised the prospect of reverting to the plant world.

- *The Northern Star*, May 25 1996

*Can you believe it??? Just imagine getting a dose of AIDS or malaria in your banana? -Elle*

## WHEN SAGE MAY BE THE WISEST REMEDY

A common garden herb might one day help tackle some of the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, say researchers from Newcastle upon Tyne.

Elaine Perry and her colleagues at the Medical Research Council's Neurochemical Pathology Unit at Newcastle General Hospital have discovered that sage oil inhibits the enzyme acetylcholinesterase (AChE), which may play a part in memory loss in Alzheimer's disease.

Progressive deterioration of memory is the main symptom of Alzheimer's disease. It is accompanied by a drop in the level of the chemical messenger acetylcholine in the brain. Treatments to slow memory loss have focused on AChE, the enzyme which breaks down acetylcholine. The drug tacrine inhibits the action of the enzyme and slows the progress of disease in some patients, but it can have unpleasant side effects, including damage to the liver.

In their search for alternatives, the Newcastle group set out to test whether a number of herbs that are reputed to enhance memory inhibit the action of AChE. "Plants offer a huge resource of varied compounds worth tapping into," says Jennifer Court, one of the researchers.

Of the 15 herbs the team investigated, sage oil





was the most promising. It was effective at blocking the action of AChE in tissue from the part of the brain responsible for memory. Importantly, it did not have a strong effect on a related enzyme.

Before sage can be used as a medicine, the Newcastle group will have to track down the active ingredient. They may then be able to provide a scientific explanation for the belief of the 17th-century herbalist John Gerard, that sage "helpeth a weake braine or memory and restoreth them being decayed in a short time."

- *New Scientist* 14 October 1995

## NEEM NEWS

Joe Friend from The Channon sent us his Australian Neem Newsletter #4 (AusNeem News, P O The Channon 2480, \$25 p.a.) with some good news bits. Some of them:

- The asterisks of 'caution' that were mysteriously placed aside neem and neem extracts on the list of federally approved products for official 'organic growing' have now been deleted.

- Research by Peter Boyers in Honaria, Solomon Islands, showed that neem leaf, crushed and dried, used as a mulch around a cabbage crop, cleared all the cabbages of diamond backed moths and other caterpillars.

- In Kenya, government people are now drinking fresh neem tonic in the morning as a preventative for malaria, which is apparently getting out of hand there.

- A Melbourne man took the future into his own hands last year, and instead of calling in the 'toxics-pest-control' company, went under the house himself and sprayed the bearers and all wood with a neem formulation.

- Rainbow region vegie grower claims that neem extract sprayed at least once onto his lettuce and tomato crops gave efficacious deterrence of both wallabies and grey kangaroos in 1993 and 1994, when they were 'bad'.

Joe warns us against some of the neem tree seedlings for sale around the markets in the Northern Rivers area. He says that they're freighted down from Cairns and that their survival rate, once planted in cooler areas, is less than 10%.

*I acquired one anyway, because I think that, like comfrey, no garden should be without at least one neem tree. We'll see, and I'll let you know how it*

*gets on.* -Elle

## EUROPEAN ORGANIC ACREAGES CONTINUE TO GROW

Acreages under organic production have been rising across most of Europe, and have now reached over 1 million hectares (from around 100,000 ha in 1985). There are over 48,000 organic farms today compared to 6,000 in 1985. Across the region an average annual growth rate of 33% per year will give some encouragement to the various country organisations campaigning for 10% of production

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being organic by the year 2000. (Taken from IFOAM Ecology and Farming Sept 95, which quoted recent figures from Nic Lampkin.)

The rise in the number of certified operations can be attributed to a large extent to the monetary support given to European farmers to convert to organic production by their governments.

NASAA Bulletin, March 1996





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# SAFFRON

*Crocus sativus*

SAFFRON was first planted in Spain by the Arabs, after they had conquered and settled the region.

By the fourteenth century, when European cooking was awash with saffron and spices, Spain had become a major exporter. Prices were as high as silver and cultivation quickly spread to the rest of Europe.

But as demand fell, due to the change in taste patterns, production dwindled and only remained in Spain.

Today production is approximately 27,000 acres producing 80,000 kilos of dried spice. That's 3 kilos to the acre.

Saffron is grown on the same small-scale family plots owned by the same families who have grown saffron for generations since the Arabs.

The fact that Spanish cultivation has survived, given the odds against all small scale unmechanised agriculture, comes down quite simply to its unsurpassed quality.

In saffron this is judged in two ways: by the length of the stigmas, or dried filaments, and by their levels of pigment and essential oils which give colour, flavour and aroma. Spanish saffron's blood-red stigmas are not only longer but also contain much higher levels of the volatile aromatic and flavouring oils than those grown anywhere else. Nobody is exactly sure why this is so, since the plant variety (*Crocus sativus*) is the same around the world.

Climate and soil undoubtedly contribute, with the main producing regions all possessing an altitude of 700m with extremes of temperature at day and night, and alkaline soils rich in lime, gypsum and quartz.

But growers and scientists alike put more emphasis on the importance of an unbroken growing tradition.

Its legacy used to be thought of simply as

accumulated knowledge and skills.

Now though, it is thought that the unbroken span of a millennium may have allowed a genetic adaptation of the bulb stock to its environment.



Part of saffron's mystique is that this fragile flower has over that time stubbornly resisted all efforts to tame it into user-friendly growing and harvesting. Any changes tried so far, have affected the final quality of the saffron, and it is still farmed entirely by hand, virtually as it must have been grown in ancient Mesopotamia forty-three centuries ago. Alongside this, it keeps old fashioned customs, lost in modern agriculture: medieval land and weight measures, payment for work in kind and, above all, a family workforce.

Even the first stage of the growing cycle, the selection of bulbs and planting is a skilled task done entirely by hand. The same bulbs are used for

four consecutive years, multiplying as they grow, but also thinned.

Once planted, the fields must be kept weed free. It is when the harvesting comes in a brief week to ten days between October and November, that the whole family goes to work. Sons and daughters who live in the cities return home to help out. As you drive across La Mancha, you see rows of pickers, backs bent as they strip the landscape of their fleeting violet carpets. The crocuses must be picked at sun-up, their petals stripped back and their stigmas toasted all within a day.

In homes, meanwhile, the monadoras or peelers, mainly women, strip off the petals with lightning speed. To call the work of the monadora painstaking, delicate and fast, is an understatement.

An average family's production of one kilo requires 5 kilos of stigmas which in turn comes from





250,000 flowers. A practiced monadora can deal with 12,000 flowers per day. Finally the stigmas are dried in sieves over gas heaters: damp is saffron's greatest enemy. Then the family's crop is wrapped and stored in chests of drawers.

After the harvest, the bulbs are dug up, dried and kept for planting again. In the second and third year, the bulbs will produce their greatest number of blooms before beginning to exhaust themselves.

But if saffron growing and harvesting have remained almost antique, its quality control has been revolutionised by the introduction of photospectrometry. Nearly every strand is analysed for its levels of crocina, colouring agent, and safranin, its aromatic oil; and picrocina, its flavour.

The saffron is graded according to the proportion of potent crimson threads. Mancha selects the top quality, Rio is the next, and Sierra is the third. A fourth quality, Coupe, the most powerful of all, is made by removing a further 20% yellow or white strands. As an indicator, prices for the 94-95 crop fetched US\$1100 per kilo, with demand outstripping supply.

*This is an edited version of an article which appeared in "Herbs", the UK Journal of the Herb Society; written by*

*Vicky Hayward, a freelance journalist. The original appeared in "Spain Gourmetours". I thought that you may like to read a story similar to North Coast herb growing. - Howard Rubin*

## SAFFRON IN THE KITCHEN

Saffron is easiest to appreciate in pale ingredients, such as rice, pasta, potatoes, creamy sauces and bread dough. A high cooking temperature will kill its subtleties of flavour.

Powdered saffron can be added direct to food. The threads, though, need advance preparation; the easiest way is to cover the threads with hot liquid (water, milk, stock, wine etc) and leave them to infuse for 10-15 minutes. To bring out their full strength, you can also fry them very briefly in oil or butter at the beginning of cooking.

If your recipe calls for a pinch of saffron, this works out to roughly 12-15 strands.

If you buy saffron in thread form, a good quality thread should be blood-red; the higher proportion of gold or white parts, the less powerful they are. If the saffron is cheap, it's probably adulterated.

So, threads or powder? Powder offers speed and quantity control in professional kitchens. On the other hand, a skilled cook can pull much more varied effects from threads. Coming across the crimson-gold threads on your plate is like finding buried treasure. Good quality saffron keeps for up to 2-3 years. So if you're going to Spain, bring it back as a souvenir or a gift for friends.



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# MARKET REPORT

compiled  
by



**HERB FARMS AUSTRALIA**

The key to success in the fresh culinary herb market is good timing. While most demand is constant with slight adjustments, availability is seasonal. To have a crop while no-one else has it is good fortune.

Already we are facing shortfalls in **sage**. This is just the annual seasonal downside. Surprisingly no-one has yet conquered growing this herb out of season. **Basil**, which was once a precious commodity in winter is no longer that. North Queensland farmers have well and truly serviced this market, to the point of oversupply. No longer are there large price increases for a winter crop.

So it is timely, at the end of the financial year, to review the past year, and see if any trends presented themselves.

Total fresh sales, until May, were in excess of 12,000 kgs with the number one seller being **rosemary**. This is the second year in a row that rosemary was the best seller. Sales were consistent all year, peaking in October and November.

Over 2000 kgs of rosemary were sold with no downtime. Next in line was **oregano** with sales in excess of 800 kgs peaking in February and March. **Thyme** was a constant seller with 800 kgs spread evenly over the months. **Sage** was next in volume with only 500 kgs, peaking in February. Thereafter, in descending order, we sold: lemon thyme, lemon grass, sorrel, marjoram, basil, tarragon, chives, and rocket. Other smaller quantities were not worth recording.

The only trend which is always easy to predict is that whenever we don't have a crop available everyone wants it!! And likewise, whenever we had an abundance of a particular herb, the market was usually flooded with that one.

Herb growing has spread like wildfire. It will become more and more difficult to maintain a place in the market if price alone is the determining factor. Fortunately, all our produce is quality assured and certified organic. And there will always be discerning buyers for quality.



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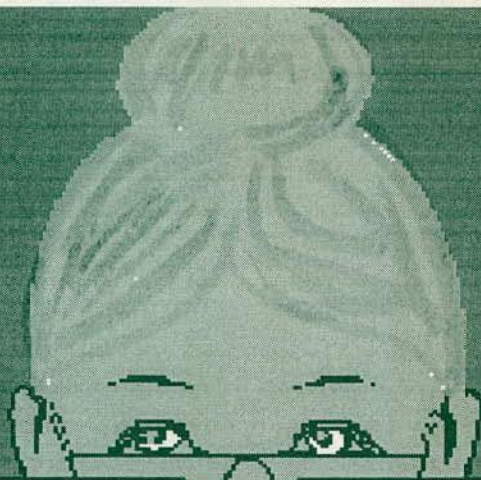
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| 1 Quart very good Brandy           | 1 two inch piece cinnamon stick |
| 2 Tablespoons whole coriander seed | 2 Cups sugar                    |
| 1 Tablespoon whole cumin seed      | 2 Cups water                    |
| 6 Whole cloves                     | 1/2 Vanilla bean, split         |

*Plus: 1 bottle very good white wine*

*Carefully warm the brandy to 115 degrees F.*

*Bruise the seeds and spices and add them to the warm liquid.*

*Pour the brandy into a bottle and seal it; store it in a dark place to age for at least one month.*

*Dissolve the sugar in the water and add the vanilla beans.*

*Combine with the aged brandy mixture, add the white wine, bottle it and let the entire mixture age another month. Strain the liquid and pour into bottles. Seal them and store in a cool dark place.*

*(Alternately put it through the blender, strain and drink in a cool dark place, and lay there to age for at least one month.)*

### The **Nimbin News**

**Community Access Press**



Nimbin News is a co-operatively run access magazine with articles and information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyle ers and others looking for the most sustainable way.

Subscriptions to:

PO BOX 209 NIMBIN NSW, 2480 ☎ 065 891184

\$25 for 12 issues (2 years), or \$2.50 sample  
back issues available - 6 for \$10 posted

THE ABOVE RECIPE was found in *Sage*, June issue, which is one of our exchange magazines.

It originates from Bruce Kent and appeared originally in the December '95 edition of *The Herb Companion*.

If you're into herbal and other cooking recipes, you should go to the office, and have a look at all the exchange publications we have accumulated.

Many of them are basically cooking and craft newsletters. Our ideas for the office include a reading corner where you can sit and read them comfortably.





ACCORDING to a New York Times story, malaria is rapidly becoming resistant to the most potent anti-malarial drug available today. In the Thai-Burma region where researchers are studying drug resistance among the refugee population, resistance to mefloquine is now reaching 50% of cases. Among children, resistance is now 80%. Mefloquine, also known as Lariam, is the latest "last line" defense drug to fall to the ever resilient malaria parasite. "The parasite has developed resistance to all anti-malarial drugs that have been thrown at it," said Dr Nicholas White, director of the Wellcome-Mahidol University Oxford Tropical Research Program in Bangkok.

It was in Thailand that resistance to the historic standby quinine, a drug extracted from the Peruvian cinchona tree, was first seen in the 1950's, followed by resistance to chloroquine and Fansidar. According to Dr White, a Chinese herb stands as one of the last lines of defense against drug-resistant parasites.

The herb, *Artemisia annua*, is a sweet smelling species of wormwood known as "Sweet Annie" and in Chinese as "Qing Guo". The stem and leaves have long been used in Chinese medicine as an antipyretic, for chronic dysentery, and as an external bactericide for scabies, abscesses and eye disorders. In North America, the dried branches have become popular in dried arrangements. The plant is easy to grow from seed.

The anti-malarial constituent is artemisinin, a compound that has been shown to be effective against both *Plasmodium vivax* and *P.falciparum* species of parasites. In clinical trials, 1 gram of artemisinin was enough to cause the plasmodia to disappear within 20 hours in 95% of patients. In other trials, the salt form, sodium artemisinate, was found to be more than ten times powerful in killing plasmodia.

The World Health Organisation is sponsoring large-scale clinical trials of the artemisinin drug and preliminary results are encouraging.

Along with hopes of developing a malaria vaccine, drugs such as artemisinin from herbs are the latest last line of defense against malaria. "If we lose that battle, we are talking about untreatable malaria", Dr White said. "We are basically talking about places in the world where you cannot go. That would certainly make people sit up. It would mean you can't go on holiday to northern Thailand. You can't go to Cambodia. You can't go to northern Burma. And it might spread."

*ARTEMISIA ANNUA is a fast-growing giant (up to 3 m in height) annual member of the wormwood family. It has upright, often red stems and bright green saw-toothed leaves. Tiny yellow flowers appear in loose panicles in the summer.*

The herb is scheduled to be sent on a space shuttle mission in May. According to Dale Chamberlain, researcher at the University of Colorado, young *Artemisia annua*

plants will be sent into space in a specially designed environmental chamber designed by Bioserve Space Technologies of Boulder, Colorado. The plants are being supplied by Richters Herbs.

The purpose of the project is to determine the effect of weightlessness on the production of the anti-malarial drug in the leaves and stems of the plants. Young rooted cuttings, sent to space, will be compared with similar plants grown on earth.

The young cuttings that are to be sent to space will be taken from plants grown from material grown in China for the medicinal herb market. Until recently, authentic Chinese herb seeds and plants have been very difficult to get, but Richters have developed key strategic links to the herb industry in China and will soon be offering many rare and highly desirable Chinese herb seeds and plants to gardeners and commercial growers in the West.





## TAX:

### Are you in Business?

DURING the past two years the Australian Tax Office has been examining certain cases where people have claimed losses from primary production activities. A number of cases were identified where the losses were not allowable as the taxpayers were not carrying out a genuine primary production business.

With the end of the tax year here, you may be entitled to various primary producers' tax deductions. What do you have to do to be considered a genuine primary producer? In general, you will be considered to be in a primary production business if:

- \* you have actually commenced. Setting up or preparing to go into a business is not operating a business.

- \* your business has a significant commercial purpose or character. In other words, the activity is being carried out for commercial purposes and in a commercial viable way.

- \* your enterprise is undertaken in a business-like manner. Amongst other things, this can be indicated by: business records, business premises, licences or qualifications, books of accounts, a registered business name, although this is neither compulsory for tax purposes, nor proof of a business.

- \* you can show a profit. You should be able to demonstrate that your business has the purpose of



making a profit, even if it does not carry a profit in the short term.

- \* it is carried out in a manner that is characteristic of the industry. Elements such as the size/scale and manner of operation should be consistent with businesses in the same field or industry norms.

- \* it has repetition, regularity and/or continuity. Although, in some cases, one-off transactions can constitute a business.

- \* it cannot be more properly described as a 'hobby'. The activity is not being carried out primarily as a 'hobby' or

recreational pastime, although a hobby can turn into a business.

You also have to be either/or:

- \* an owner-operator of a farm, orchard or vineyard;
- \* a sharefarmer paid on a share basis;
- \* a lessee or a tenant of a farm;
- \* a person who owns a farm but employs a manager to run it;
- \* a businessperson or employee or other person with a share in a farming partnership.

You're **not** considered a primary producer if:

- \* you're an employee or manager who receives no share of profits but a fixed salary or wage;
- \* you're an owner of a property who has let it to another for a fixed rent
- \* you're simply a shareholder in a company that's operating a farming business.

If you're unsure of your status for tax purposes, contact your Tax Office, or hire an accountant.

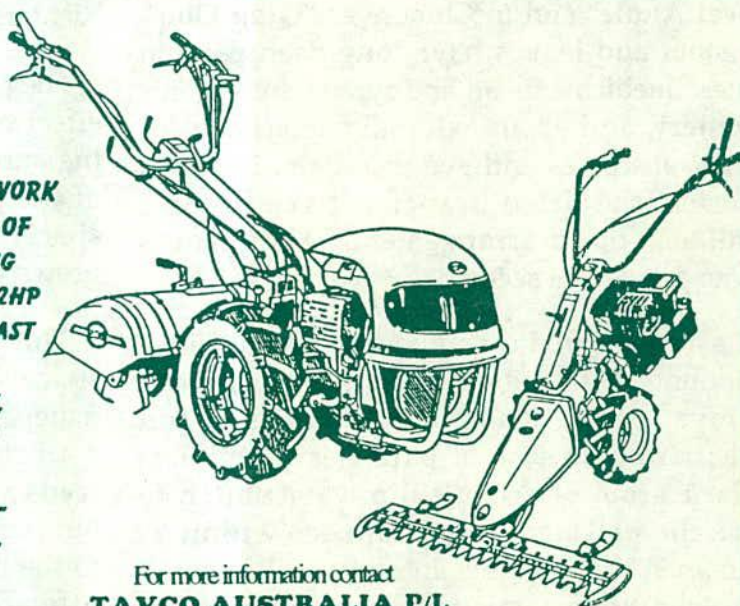
*Adapted from articles in 'NSW Agriculture Today' June 1996*



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# LIST OF CERTIFIED GROWERS AS OF JUNE 3, 1996

NAME - TOWN	CERT.No	GRADE	NAME - TOWN	CERT.No	GRADE
L Valuntas & J Achilles, Nymboida	192	A	T Maroney, via Casino	249	I
R & D Aitken, Tullera	197	A	J McHugh, Corndale	100	A
B & P Alcorn, Woodford	121	A	D McIlrath, Mullumbimby	209	A
R & D Andrews, Whian Whian	125	A	L & B McIntyre, Georgica	116	A
G Basten, Cawongla	230	I	B McNally, Wamuran	144	A
Brackers & Partners, Lismore	229	I	M Meadows, Montville	124	I
D Bristol & G Kemp, Brunswick Heads	111	I	W Mitterhuemer, Terry Hills	206	I
K & P Brown, Walcha	223	I	B Monro & R Bosch, Jiggi	237	I
A & M Brown, Walcha	224	I	D & P Moore, Warnerrville	238	I
J & D Carey, Tullera	119	A	S Moore, Nambour	105	I
S & J Champion, Mummulgum	215	A	P Morrow, Tyagarah	107	A
D Chard & J Littlewood, Eureka	211	A	N & G Nielsen, Pittsworth	243	I
C Checkley, Burragate	142	I	G & B Nixon, Byron Bay	120	A
C & R Colclough, Worongary	131	I	J Norton & D Angus, Mungay Creek	247	I
K & J Corocher, Coraki	132	A	B Offord & C McFarlane, Federal	112	I
J Crowther, Marom Creek	232	I	L & G Paul, Kyogle	178	A
F Davison, Markwell	135	I	A & A Pearl, Mullumbimby	118	A
S Day, Clunes	233	I			
G, K & A Delacour, Woodford	136	A			
K & R Doig, Wantirna	143	I			
N Thompson & I Ellerby, Stoney Chute	109	I			
D & J Ellis, Delaney's Creek	133	I			
R Fisher, Bowraville	203	I			
V & T Flett, Mummulgum	246	I			
T Forbes, Fernvale	242	I			
F & G Callagher, Clunes	122	I			
S Gibbs, Clunes	104	A			
P. Goff & D Corrigan, Wardell	123	I			
J & K Gordon, Cambooya	244	I			
D Grindrod, Murwillumbah	218	A			
D & J Halpin, Pearces Creek	126	I			
D McIntosh & L Hancock, Copmanhurst	234	I			
G Mariussen & P Harris, Wadeville	221	A			
N & J Hofstetter, Tullera	160	A			
C Hughes, Corindi Beach	158	A			
S & K Isaksen, Midvale	238	I			
C Howells & S Jackson, Murwillumbah	115	A			
D & JD James, Gympie	106	I			
A-L & H Jullie, Mount Mee	137	A			
P & J Kennedy, Georgica	110	I			
W & P Laird, Dunoon	207	A			
T & C Layland, Dyraaba Central	114	I			
J Lieschke, Tregeagle	170	A			

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**3714 VIC**  
or phone 057 721377, Fax 057 722262





NAME - TOWN	CERT.No	GRADE
F Peterson, Woodford	250	I
P Phee, Coraki	205	A
A & B Pollock, Stoney Chute	108	I
M & V Potter, Peachester	140	I
M & B Potts, Lower Creek	248	I
J Power, Woodford	134	A
M Presland, Morayfield	151	A
E & H Rubin, Clunes	130	A
W & R Saw, West Kempsey	156	A
M Schmid, Lindendale	127	I
J & D Scholten, Booyong via Lismore	159	A
V Smith, McKees Hill	241	I
V & H Smith, Gympie	101	I
B Smith-Vaughan, Tyalgum	239	I
S & J Speed, Merimbula	128	I
S & B Stilgoe, Copmanhurst	235	I
J, R & N Stroud-Watts, McLeans Ridges	213	A
C Sweet, via Coutt's Crossing	231	I
D & S Thompson, The Channon	138	A
C Vandebeek & R Metcalf, Casino	225	A
M Verbeek & A Janetzki, Tucki	117	A
L. Waddell, via Casino	240	I
M Wade, Tyalgum	220	A
S & G Wallwork, Wyrellah	113	A
A & J Waters, Toowoomba	245	I
S & P Webb, Upper Copmanhurst	236	I
M & D Witcombe, via Kyogle	228	I
C Withell, Kyogle	169	A
D Wright, Morayfield	145	A

Notes: A = Grade A I = In Conversion

#### De-certified:

Adele & Thomas Kenyon, Inverell	226
Keith Spicer, Inverell	222
Chris Lane, South Lismore	227

**CERTIFIED**



**ORGANIC**

*by Tony Ullman*

Since Grafton is above water again, I finally managed to organise my trip down to the New England

district.

My motorcycle behaved very well, unlike last year, when one of my rear wheel bearings collapsed and I ended up having to ride about 150

km with the back end of the bike stepping 3 inches sideways every time I powered on or off. Having fixed that problem, I then got a puncture.

Owing to the recent events in northern NSW and southern Queensland, rain was the foremost thing on my mind, not the fact that Armidale is some 1000+ meters above sea level. It wasn't wet, but the morning I left it was minus 4 degrees, not very comfortable on a bike, I can tell you. So before I go riding in that part of the country this late in the season again, it's out with my trusty leathers, not needed since moving to the sub-tropics.

The flavour of the month from the certification point of view is tea tree. The buyers want certified organic oil, at least for the Euro-pean market, so the growers are looking for an accredited certification organisation.

Since tea tree contains an essential oil and is therefore strictly speaking a herb, it's right and proper that OHGA should be the certification body for this industry. There are some large plantations around Lismore but, I am sorry to say, most of them are full-on chemical users.

However, with an increasing number of organic tea tree growers producing oil in and around the Northern Rivers district, it suits them very well to have their certifying body based in the same area.

Although it is not a requirement of the national certification system as yet, at the request of one of our certified growers OHGA will now issue export certificates. An export certificate is a document which relates to a specific overseas shipment. It is issued by a certification body as proof to an overseas buyer that the produce contained in the shipment is certified organic.

If you are sending produce overseas and would like to obtain one of these certificates, just let me know and I will send you out the application form.

*The cost of the OHGA export certificate will be \$25 per issue.*





## FIFTH INTERNATIONAL HERB CONFERENCE

to be held over the weekend of  
8-9-10 November 1996  
at the Victoria and Albert Hotel, Mt. Victoria in the  
beautiful Blue Mountains of New South Wales, in  
springtime.

This year the Blue Mountains and Nepean Herb Group Inc is the organising group.  
If you want info, please ring Sue Perkins on (047) 88 1097.

## First Australian New Crops Conference

at The University of Queensland  
Gatton College from 8 - 11th July 1996

**Location and Venue:** The University of Queensland Gatton College is located in the Lockyer Valley, with Brisbane and the Gold Coast to the east, Toowoomba - the "Gateway to the Darling Downs" - to the west. Travelling time is approx. 90 minutes by car from Brisbane Airport.

**Aims:** \* to review new crops work in Australia;  
\* to foster cooperation in new crops research and development for mutual benefit;  
\* to identify new commercial initiatives in new crops research and development;  
\* to develop policy for new crops research and development in Australia;  
\* to consider the establishment of an Australian New Crops Research and Development Association (ANCRADA) and an Australian New Crops Journal.

**Registration:** Registration of AUD\$450 includes: Accommodation and all meals - Welcome Reception, Monday 8 July - Westpac Dinner, Wednesday 10 July - Conference Proceedings & a Book of Abstracts.

In the herbal category, there will be presentations on the following subjects:

### Mint rust and the peppermint oil industry of North-eastern Victoria

*Ms Jackie Edwards, The University of Melbourne;*

### The potential for a neem medicinal industry in Australia

*Joe Friend, Consultant;*

### Kesom Oil - A new essential oil for the international flavour and fragrance industry

*Murray Hunter, Brennan Flavours and Fragrances;*

### Guiding community adoption of potential new industry in a Central Queensland Valley

*Ms Jane Parker, Qld Dept of Primary Industries;*

### Propagation of *Bursaria Sponosa* by Cuttings

*Paul Kristiansen, Alan Fletcher Research Station;*

### The implications of seed germination and survival rates on the economics of the production of ginseng in Australia

*Tony Sadler, The University of Queensland;*

### The development of commercial ginseng production in Australia

*Mrs Charlene Hosemans, Australian Ginseng Growers Ass. Inc.*

OHGA will have an information stand at the conference. Magda and Alister will be there, so any members who want to have a chat with them know where to find them. For the Registration Booklet or more information please contact Sally Brown, Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education, The University of Queensland, Qld 4072.  
Tel: 07 3365 6360 Fax: 07 3365 7099  
Email: Sally@ceu.uq.oz.au

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Meadowsweet	Dandelion
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Chamomile	Marshmallow
Figwort	Scullcap

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|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Joining fee ( <i>once only payable</i> )    | \$ 10     |
|                          | <b>plus:</b>                                |           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Australian membership                       | \$ 40     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Concession membership                       | \$ 30     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Business membership                         | \$ 50     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Overseas membership                         | \$ 65     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Application for certification<br>(optional) | \$ 10     |
|                          | <b>total</b>                                | <b>\$</b> |

**Please note: OHGA membership expires  
on 31 August of each year. If you become a member in  
the middle of the year, you will receive all back copies**

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## HERB GROWER ADVERTISING RATES from January 1995

Full Page	½ Page	¼ Page
<i>casual</i>		
\$75	\$55	\$35
<i>regular (3 or more consecutive issues)</i>		
\$60	\$45	\$25

**Backpage:**  
Casual B/W \$100 Colour n/a  
Regular B/W \$ 80 Colour \$175

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

The cost of classified ads is \$2.50 per line  
payable when placing the ad, to a  
maximum of \$10.

(There are a maximum of 40 letters,  
incl. spaces, on one line.)

**COPY FOR ALL ADS MUST BE IN AT  
THE 1st OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO  
PUBLICATION.**

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He will ask you to send him a dried  
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to relieve those unpleasant symptoms and reduce recovery time

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