

TRY ADS FOR NN (C)



Health risks (P10) SK 9
OR ENV Health risks (P15) SK 9.

* P18 SK? 9?

MAY/JUNE 1995 \$2.50

Long Island

HERB GROWER

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT HERBAL OILS

The need for caution
Page 10

H E M P

What every farmer needs to know
Page 12

SONIC BLOOM

A revolution in food production
Page 18

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ORGANICS?

An overview by Alex Podolinsky
Page 6

ORGANIC SURVEY

Your ideas and comments
Page 20

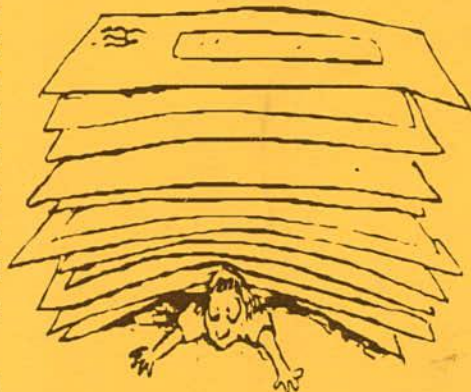
THE CONTRACT THAT AQIS WANTS

Should we sign this?
Page 13

HEALTH MINISTERS ABOUT TO BE SNOWED UNDER

If the National Food Authority (NFA) think that the 'domestic standards' question will go away by itself if they stall long enough, they underestimate the seriousness of the issue.

Howard Rubin, OHGA's President, spoke to John Hall, the NFA's officer currently in charge of the organic project, who said that the latest stumbling block is that the NFA does not know if they, under their charter, have the legal right to legislate labelling of organic food on the domestic market.

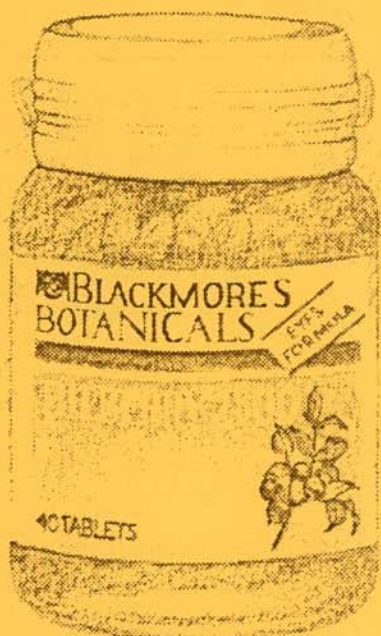


Until that question has been established, no other discussions will take place. The NFA acknowledge that they have received a large number of submissions from the organic industry, all in support of the AQIS application to the NFA, but they stress that the State/Territory Health Ministers are generally not supportive of organic controls.

As these Health Ministers have the majority of votes on the National Food Council, our next step must clearly be to direct our attention to their offices. *Continued on page 25.*

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Paddock on Top, Gardening by the Moon, Organic News, Observations, Interesting stories, Book Review, Letters, and much more



Bilberry 2500 Eyes Formula

Major interest on the potential therapeutic activity of Bilberry originated from the experience of the RAF pilots during the second World War. The RAF pilots having bilberry jam in their diets seemed to have better night vision. This gave rise to clinical research into bilberry fruit extract as a treatment for visual disturbances.

Benefits of Bilberry

Clinical research has shown that standardised extracts of bilberry:

- ☛ significantly improve night vision;
- ☛ aid in the function of the retina;
- ☛ assist in the relief of visual fatigue and eye strain
- ☛ benefit those performing fine detail work.

Guaranteed Potency

Blackmores Bilberry 2500 tablets are guaranteed to contain the equivalent of 2.5g (2500mg) of fresh bilberry fruit, with 6.25mg anthocyanosides, the active ingredients.



Proudly Australian

EDITORIAL



First of all, let me apologise for the small print of some of the items in this issue. The census report took up so much room, that I had to cram the rest in. We did not have room for the Market Report, but Howard says that it's all very much the same as before. Basil, basil, basil and we're running out of it again. Boring really. On the medicinal herb front, we're now trialling Scullcap, the Scutellaria Laterifolia variety. There seems to be a world-wide shortage on the seeds are extremely hard to get and we have to pay through the nose for them. And then they only promised us a 30% strike-rate, which turned out to be more like 25%! But these few plants do well. If any of you do have a reasonable quantity of this scullcap, please let us know.

In this issue you will find an article by Alex Podolinsky, the Australian BD guru. I'm sure that his writing will strike a chord in most of you, at least it did in me. Even though Alex has a reputation of being a most difficult person, I find I really like and respect him. He talks in a no-nonsense sort of way, which is my preferred mode of communication as well. He is the man who certifies for Demeter and when his visit is due, the farmer starts quaking in his boots!

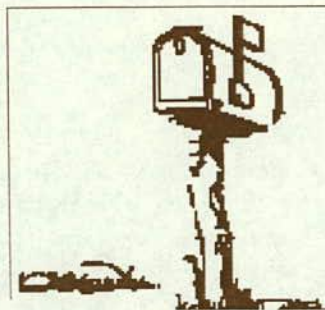
I also secured HERB GROWER an ad by the SONIC BLOOM people. Now I first read a NEXUS article on Sonic Bloom quite a number of issues ago and immediately became keenly interested in it. The article I wrote is sort of a synthesis of the NEXUS one and a letter that their Australian agent sent to me. Now as soon as the Lismore Council stop threatening to take my garden and actually pay up so that we can buy a new piece of land, I will immediately start on the Sonic Bloom. In the meantime, if any of you get on to it, let us know how you like it? It's been developed by a team of really dedicated and genuine people and it sounds great.

Hey, didn't the Greens do well in the NSW election. I feel that this is the beginning of a real force in politics. The thing with the Greens is that you know where we're at. We have real policies, radical ones to be sure, but that's what's needed now. And the Senators in Canberra showed everyone that there's no doing deals and compromises with the Greens. Green principles will not be changed for anyone or anything. Ian Cohen, who's our new Greens Senator for NSW, will certainly tell them. It's good news that Richard Jones, the Democrat Senator, is also re-elected. They'll no doubt team up and give them something to think about!

One of our neighbours, an old lady who we only know from saying hello to, knocked on the door yesterday with a kombucha culture for us. I'd heard and read a lot about this kombucha everywhere and some people had promised us some. Just now I made up my first batch from the mushroom (fungus, whatever it is, it looks like a large chapati) and I'll see how I go. No doubt I'll also be dying to give some away soon, as the thing is supposed to multiply with every batch, so if you want some, give me a ring and come and get it! We can all live to well over a hundred then! Or at least get rid of all our wrinkles, grey hair and gardening aches and pains, as promised in the accompanying blurb. I'll keep you informed of any miracle changes!

All articles in the HERB GROWER remain copyright
and may only be reproduced with the prior consent of the Editor.

Absolute copy deadline (for ads, letters, articles etc) for the July /August issue is June 1.



LETTERS TO OHGA

Dear Robyn,

Congratulations, you are the first 'Organic Farming Group' that we have as a member of our Association. I hope our two groups may have some fertile interchange in the time to come.

You have joined our Association as a group. This means that OHGA needs to purchase the preparations on behalf of your members. If there's enough interest in Biodynamics amongst your members, we would gladly help you to get started in making your own BD preparations, particularly BD 500 (horn manure).

You will find in the centrefold of our Newsleaf the price of the preparations - as a \$100 member, BD 500 is available for \$0.60/acre.

We have also a subscription membership scheme whereby your members can receive 4 copies of our 'Newsleaf' for \$20/yr (incl. postage) or, with the Astro Calendar, for \$35/yr.

Happy gardening, help heal the planet,
Alan Johnstone, secretary Bio-dynamic Farming and
Gardening Assoc. in Australia Inc.,
P O Box 54, Bellingen NSW . Ph. 066 - 550404

The following letter arrived from AQIS on Feb. 22, '95.

Dear Mr. Rubin,

I refer to my letter of 15 December 94 regarding the issues agreed at the Charging Review Committee meetings.

As discussed in the letter, AQIS proposes to use a simple contractual arrangement to regularise arrangements between us, with regard to services and fees. I have had the Attorney General's Department draw up a draft contract, enclosed for your perusal and comments.

It will be necessary to finalise arrangements in sufficient time for budget discussions for 1995/1996. For this reason I would appreciate comments on the draft contract by the end of the month if possible, along with your agreement that this is an appropriate course to proceed along.

Yours faithfully, J. Melville, Manager Technical Services.

Extracts and comments on the contract follow in an article.

Howard's reply:

Dear Mr. Melville,

Thank you for your letter of 22 February 95 and the draft contract. On the 11 March 95, the OHGA Executive met to discuss the draft contract and related issues.

Our first concern, in light of the recent press release by NASAA and the BFA's plans to amalgamate, is that our share of the administrative costs is no longer equally shared. From the beginning of these discussions, we have asked for proportional distribution of costs based upon membership of the organisations. We were told that this is an unfeasible situation. Now that the basis for levying charges will be altered with this proposed amalgamation resulting in a

truly unrepresentative proportion, we are again seeking a revision to these charges. We do not dispute the cost, only the method by which it is to be apportioned amongst the certifying bodies.

Secondly, we find the idea of an indemnity clause not acceptable. If we pay for service, we reserve our right to seek claims for any and all losses incurred from those services provided.

Thirdly, it is our understanding that a detailed Auditor's manual has been prepared by the OPAC committee, and we would wish to see that finalised and called up, to be used in place of the expression "detailed administrative arrangements".

Fourthly, we find the language of this draft not to be in simple English. We believe that you could do better.

We are extremely disappointed at the delay in which the domestic standards are developing. As our growers do not export to the EU, it has always been our intention to be members of OPAC and have our certification system audited by AQIS, so that when domestic standards were in place, the OHGA would be a recognised organisation. If that situation is not to resolve itself quickly, and if favour of the OPAC/AQIS solution, we believe that the organic industry will not survive here in Australia. We would then wish to reserve our right to reconsider our involvement in the debacle.

We were always under the impression from discussions at OPAC meetings, that the word "organic" would be reserved for use by certification bodies or the like. And yet, every day on our television screens appears a commercial advertising a shampoo product called "Organics". What are we to think? and the public? This is just making a mockery of the entire industry.

I would kindly request an answer to our concerns and await your reply.
Yours sincerely, Howard Rubin.

The following reply arrived back on April 5.

Dear Mr. Rubin,

I refer to your letter of March 14 and thank you for your comments on our draft contract. I have now had an opportunity to consider the comments of a number of the member organisations.

In regard to your specific comments I find myself somewhat tied in terms of adjustments I can make. As you are probably aware Commonwealth agencies use the Attorney General's Dept. in drafting legal arrangements and some of the concerns raised by you are as a result of their direct advice.

To cover your issues one by one:

* I suggest we discuss the apportionment issue at future meetings of the "Charging Review Committee". As I understand it amalgamation of organisations is still some way off and I would propose re-consideration to the range of issues involved in the method of apportioning costs once it is either imminent, or has taken place.

* Although the issue of the indemnity clause was also raised by another member organisation I am advised it is a standard inclusion in Commonwealth contracts of this type and as such should remain.

* I see no problem with referring to the administrative arrangements developed by OPAC, presumably this is the Auditor's manual to which you refer in the section on administrative arrangements, but suggest we retain flexibility in the final wording to allow the group to make adjustments without the need to enter into a revised contract.

* On the issue of language, although the contract may not be the most simple possible, the other groups indicate they have no problems with it. The drafting

was undertaken by Attorney General's and I doubt there is value in attempting to further simplify it as this would involve additional legal costs in doing so.

In terms of your concerns I understand that AQIS and the National Food Authority met on 23rd March 1995 to discuss, inter alia, the development of domestic standards for the labelling of organic foods. The NFA has been granted an extension until 30th June 1995 to finalise its recommendations for the AQIS application and is currently pursuing a range of possible approaches to the matter.

You also expressed concern regarding the term "organic" on a range of products now available on the domestic market. The work of OPAC to develop a national standard had a specific focus on food and agricultural products such as fibres, although this department does not have a mandate to intervene on other uses of the term, you may wish to raise the issue at the next meeting of OPAC.

I am happy to discuss the issues again in person, or by telephone, should you wish. I can be contacted on (06) 2725589.

Yours sincerely, Jim Melville, Manager Technical Services.

Dear Elle,

I have received and read the latest (March/April 95) HERB GROWER with great interest as usual (as does my wife). The Multinational stuff is really frightening.

Regards, Leif and Ghita Groundstroem, Nimbin.

Elle,

I am enjoying reading and learning from the HERB GROWER. Each issue further strengthens my resolve to become one.

Please send back copies as per page #18 of the March/April 95 issue. Cheque is enclosed.

The article on Blood & Bone was most enlightening. Who can one trust?

Question: in the 'Gardening by the Moon' calendar you suggest crops to plant. This planting to which you refer, should this be seeds or seedlings??

Finally, the 'Vitec Fertiliser' advertisement shows BFA \$ NASAA certification. No such indication is shown on Arthur Riley's product SM6. Is their product allowable in a true BioDynamic regime?

In conclusion!!, thank you for taking the very positive step of joining the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Ass. of Aust Inc. This is a very welcome move much appreciated by we folk who also feel as does Darryl Wright. It is to be hoped that a closer liaison between BDFGAA & OHGA will ensue. Kind regards and appreciation, Raymond Livett, Homebush NSW.

Dear Raymond,

Seed or seedlings, whatever you have or can get. I use the dates for either. Often I use the appropriate days of one month to start the seeds off and of the following month to plant them out.

Arthur Riley's seaweed fertiliser has been certified by The Soil Association of England, which is a very respected organisation. I would surely think that this certification is valid for Australia, and allowable in any organic or bio-dynamic regime.

- Elle

Dear Elle,

As a small grower of medicinal herbs near Sydney, I am anxiously awaiting a visit to our property from Tony, with the view to being certified organic.

Are there any other growers near Sydney with the same problem? If we can band together I'm sure Tony will consider a trip "down south".

Regards, Geraldine, Grose Vale NSW

Please, all those interested contact Tony Ullman on 066-216397

ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

P O Box 6171, South Lismore 2480

1994/1995 committee:

President:	Howard Rubin	066-291057
Vice President:	Magda Verbeek	066-298413
Secretary:	Robyn Andrews	066-895441
Treasurer:	Lea Bracker	066-216397
Public Officer:	Alister Janetzki	066-298413
Member:	Dave Carey	066-282031
Editor:	Elle Fikke-Rubin	
	ph/fax	066-291057

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

The OHGA membership year starts in
September of every year.

For membership fees, see the form at the back of
the magazine.

Opinions expressed by contributors to OHGA publications are not necessary those of the Editor, executive members or the committee. Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information, the Association accepts no responsibility or liability for statements made or opinions expressed.

All articles appearing in the HERB GROWER are copyright and may only be reproduced with the prior consent of the Editor.

HERB FARMS AUSTRALIA

offer a 3-day organic herb growing course on May 22-23-24.

Location: Clunes (near Lismore & Byron Bay) Cost: \$120 p.p.

The course covers everything you need to know to set up an organic herb farm: budget, marketing, herb identification, what varieties to plant, seed raising, how to harvest, bed preparation, organic methods, companion planting, product development, etc. etc. If the weather permits we'll do some outside work, but in any case you'll go home with cuttings to start your own herb plot.

The course hours are from 9am - 2pm. Plenty of time to enjoy Byron Bay while you're here.

For more info and a booking form, call Howard or Elle on 066 - 291057

AN ORGANIC INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

by Alex Podolinsky

Mid last century the German chemist Justus von Liebig discovered that plants can take in essential elements only when in water soluble form, ie not directly from the rock. Quickly ways were developed to make insoluble elements soluble, and the artificial fertiliser industry began.

After some decades artificial fertilisers were more consistently used, mainly on large, often sandy based German estates. Whilst close to Earth, owner operator small peasants on better soils, initially felt uneasy with agricultural quick results, coming with "bags". They were used to hard hand-labour, stable manure and urine results, forking straw-manure several times daily from under stabled animals and then from dung-heap onto wagon and hand-fork-spreading onto paddocks. In very few areas, following early Roman customs, minute rock dust, lime or sulphur applications occurred.

In many areas (including Australia) artificial fertilisers were not used by farmers till the twenties.

After years of artificial fertiliser results in east German areas, some discerning land holders noticed that the newly achieved bumper crop potatoes, grains and vegetables lacked in taste and that animals were succumbing to health problems formerly not noticed.

Old, natural peasant farming ended with artificial fertilisers. As a result, a need for new agricultural methods arose. Bio-dynamics (the system that grew out of Rudolf Steiner's agricultural foundation lectures of 1924) stood at the beginning of this. Pioneers were Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, Lilly Kolisko and others. In England, due to a similar fertiliser stress, somewhat later, actual "organic" farming was awakened by pioneers such as Howard and Eve Balfour. In the US it was Rhodale and others.

I knew many of these early pioneers and can testify to their utter commitment to organic and bio-dynamic developments in the sense of training farmers, converting soils to well structured biological activity capable of producing healthy plants not requiring chemical treatment and thus providing healthy food. The organic/bio-dynamic industry in all its striving, meetings, instructions was synonymous with *agricultural work*.

Developments in Australia were similar. Bio-dynamics spread widely from the early fifties. The main organisation was the Bio-dynamic Agricultural Association of Australia, an advisory body. The organic soil associations and similar organisations, likewise, pursued ideals of agricultural developments. To us all "organic or bio-dynamic" meant **AGRI-CULTURE**, and there was mutual respect in the moral responsibility to the future of Earth and those inhabiting it.

In recent years a fundamental change has occurred, which requires careful assessment.

Today when the "Organic Industry"

meets, the emphasis is on "Standards" and "Certification". A totally new bureaucracy has arisen from Government sides, but even more so, as private certification business.

Due to the now obvious pollution, the consumer is worried and demands organic/bio-dynamic food. In a time of international unemployment, a lucrative and self-perpetuating new certification industry has arisen. In the earlier days of committed organic/bio-dynamic producers, happy to find appreciative consumers, happy with the health of their production and the consequent income - honest, truly organically conversant producers - certification was not called for.

Increased consumer demand, promotion, extra money, new wholesaler profit chances, producers - not necessarily as committed or well instructed - government bureaucrats sensing a new "kill", 'regulations' ... 'safety of consumers' ...

Yes: simple standards, readily understood by farmers and consumers, have become a necessity and let there be an END to it. Not for the "creativity" in constant additions, conferences and waste of time and money.

However, as money is to be made, as well as power to be exerted, we have Standards galore and ever increasing inspection "developments", mainly on paper but: "justifying" extra costs, extra additional inspections etc etc, 95% on paper and undertaken by people who don't really understand a farm, and of which a virtue is made by claiming detachment and pointing a finger at originators of organic farming as too involved to be suitable certifiers.

Organic farm inspection is not an easy end-product inspection akin to a motor car duco inspection. It is a difficult farm-soil-plant-growth-animal production inspection. However proud a computer bureaucracy inspection system might be to be able to catch all in figures, it can, principally, not be done in this case.

The fact is that a farm production certification is primarily based on the commitment and expertise of the farmer to being morally concerned for his soil and production, and on the certifier to be able to trust accordingly. These are values that can not be assessed bureaucratically.

The Bio-dynamic Research Institute Inc administers the right to the DEMETER trademark in Australia (registered since 1967).

We would not conceive to register a farmer on a first visit, even if his soil tests show no chemical residues and he signs an

affidavit to not having used artificial fertilisers or synthetic chemicals for two years. A definition of "organic" as "no fertilisers or chemicals" for two years in no way says that the farmer knows anything about organic-biological farming, nor that he is committed. Often it says no more than he could not afford fertilisers and chemicals.

When a farmer first approaches us, he is offered appropriate introductory agricultural reading and videos. Should he decide to convert, he can become a member of the Bio-dynamic Agricultural Association of Australia. The wide ranging advisory service of experienced farmers and scientists becomes available to him. A nearby experienced bio-dynamic farmer mentors him. Within a few years there will be soil structure, plant and animal development. Due to savings in costs of fertilisers, chemicals, vet fees etc. the net income rises. The new bio-dynamic farmer is happy and learns as much as possible about bio-dynamic agriculture.

During this process DEMETER certification has not arisen. But once there is the essential and appropriate soil structure and humus development, this becomes the initial, and very discernible, base for certification. I have not experienced a farmer who by then has not become committed.

I fear for our industry pushed by money and over promotion and more and more controlled by private certifiers, who make money out of dreaming up increasing certification requirements and who travel to conferences etc. like business tycoons.

Australia is one of the first countries to have National Standards enabling Government to Government accreditation of Certification Organisations as required for international marketing. Additional IFOAM accreditation represents an unnecessary luxury and added costs, born by producers. Due to the vast distances of Australia OPAC agreed to biennial farm inspection in Australia, except for export. IFOAM is geared to smaller country or dense population conditions. Accordingly, accreditation with IFOAM required annual inspection. Australian conditions would be better served with biennial certifications and extra, unannounced, check inspections.

Costs must be kept down. Competing conventional "clean green" agricultural producers - using chemicals! - pay no certification costs.

Furthermore, it is a fallacy to assume that ever larger certification organisations are more cost effective. For example, when there were only three such organisations in one European country, a wholesaler was to be charged over \$A20 000 annually. With redress to the EU court he could demand to be certified, instead, by one of the over 40 competitive organisations of another European country, at a fraction of the cost.

There are EU, IFOAM, Codex,

HERB GROWER

International Demeter Standards, those of individual countries and certifying organisations. They vary just enough to be confusing to a farmer who is to follow them, but all the more do they become "life" and "justification" to a bureaucrat. All standards of private organisations are subject to the appropriate National Standards yet they repeat, slightly differently worded, what is contained in the National Standards. Confusing - and every time there is an alteration to the National Standard, a costly alteration has to be effected to private standards.

To save confusion, unnecessary study, costs of alteration etc, the Bio-dynamic Research Institute's DEMETER Standard states it is 'subject to the National Standard and beyond this contains only the specific bio-dynamic requirements not contained in the national Standard.

FARMERS: beware of the purpose of certification. Attend the AGM of your certification organisation. Do not be hoodwinked. Insist on simplicity. Resist unnecessary bureaucracy.

The pioneers of organic and bio-dynamic agriculture would abhor what has become of their efforts as present day "organic agriculture".

ALEX PODOLINSKY is the founding Director of the Bio-Dynamic Research Institute, Powelltown, VIC 3797.

EarthWay™

PRECISION

GARDEN SEEDER

*Suitable for
Herb Planting*



- Opens Soil
- Plants and spaces seeds
- Covers seeds
- Packs soil
- Marks next row
- 6 seed plates standard
plates suitable for herbs

**MAIL
ORDERS
WELCOME**

Available from:

J.T. ELLIS & SONS

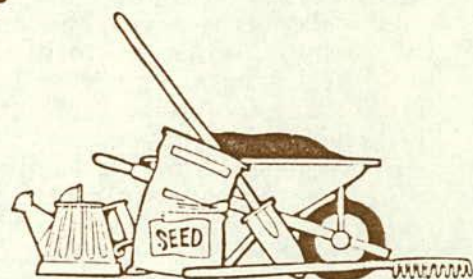
Freepost No. 2, KINGAROY QLD 4610

Ph: (071) 62 1244 Fax: (071) 62 4682



GARDENING by the MOON

by Elle Fikke-Rubin



MAY

15 Full Moon.

16-20 Days to plant or reposition trees and bushes. If your winters aren't too cold, this is also a good time to plant seedlings of perennial herbs such as lavender, rosemary, thyme, oregano, sweet marjoram, lovage, angelica, chives and others mentioned last month.. Vegies grown for their bulbs and roots, such as Jerusalem artichokes, carrots, onions and garlic, can also be planted or sown now. For strawberry lovers: new runners are usually planted this month. As strawberries are quite susceptible to viruses spread by aphids, it would be a good idea to interplant them with chives and garlic chives, or with pyrethrum. Don't over-fertilise your strawberries or the fruit runs the risk of rotting under huge foliage. Strawberries are as very healthy fruit, especially for teeth and gums. Fortunately the leaves have the same properties, and drinking the tea will help to heal spongy gums, as well as, by virtue of its alkalinity, neutralise excess acid in an upset stomach. The leaves can also be used in a bath for pains of the lower body. The fruit is said to whiten the teeth and good for diarrhea. Quite a marvel, the little strawberry plant!

21-22 Last Quarter. This time it affects two days, as the precise time is late on Sunday night.

23-30 A week to clean up your garden and prepare new beds if you're ready to expand. Checking for pests is also a chore which can be done.

31 A day to plant or sow leafy annuals. That means that lettuces, cabbages, endive, cresses spinach, rocket, dill, the Japanese greens, mustard and coriander can all go in.

JUNE

1-5 More days to plant leafy annuals. And speaking of those plants, I'd like to put in a good word for chickweed (*Stellaria media*), which is all too soon pulled out in winter. True, it's terribly prolific, but it's such a wonderful herb. I'm sure you know the plant I mean. It is small, has small soft pale green leaves and on the stem a one-sided line of hairs, which changes sides after it's reached a pair of leaves.

It has star-like little white flowers. The plant is very healthy, not only for us, but for chooks, caged birds, pigs, cows, horses and rabbits, who will all readily eat it.

When boiled or steamed, the leaves taste just like

spinach, and they're really tasty and fresh with a slight lemony taste, when eaten fresh in a salad. They're full of vitamins and minerals, just the thing we need in winter. A decoction made with the fresh plant is good for constipation, and a tea with the dried plant for coughs and hoarseness. Chickweed ointment, for ulcers and inflammation, is well known and chickweed water (same quantity of chickweed and water, sit 24 hrs) is an old wives' remedy for obesity.

I'm already looking for it now and can't wait for it to appear again.

6-7 First Quarter. Take the day off.

8-12 Days to start seedbearing annuals and flowers off. Again, dill and coriander, then peas, beans, capsicums, sweet corn and tomatoes, if your area is suitable. Flower-wise you might want to plant calendulas, daisies, pansies, violas, primulas and others you can get.

13 Full Moon.

14-19 Rootcrop and perennial days. June is the first planting month for roses. Companion them with onions and garlic or with chives. When planting, don't ever let the roots dry out. Don't fertilise the roses, but add compost and give them a porous soil. If your soil is hard, mix it with compost, leafmould or partly rotted grass clippings to keep it open. The reason for not fertilising is that you'd get lots of leaf and no flower.

These days are also good for planting carrots, beetroot, parsnips and other rootcrops; also for most perennial herbs, bushes and trees.

20-28 Cleaning and bug searching days.

29-30 Leafy annuals days. See beginning of the month.

JULY

1-5 More days to plant or sow leafy annuals, if your climate is right for it. Try cabbages, lettuces, silverbeet, cresses.

6 First Quarter, take the day off.

7-11 Days to work with seedbearing annuals and flowers. Broad beans, peas, capsicum, where possible. In the tropics even melons, cucs, zucchinis and pumpkins are feasible. Lucky gardeners!

12 Full Moon.

13-19 Perennial and rootcrop time. Beetroot, carrots, potatoes, kohlrabi, onions and garlic; valerian, comfrey, lovage and other herbs that like the cool weather. Not a lot of people manage to grow lovage long term, as it gets a bit too hot here

for it, but if you can grow it, it's a wonderful herb. It's the original plant of which 'maggi', the soup condiment was made and is especially good for physical weakness. A decoction of the root clears up pimples and freckles. An infusion of the root was recommended by the old herbalists for gravel, jaundice and urinary troubles, being a diuretic. Culpepper wrote that the seeds were even better than the roots, and that an infusion of them "being dropped in the eyes taketh away their redness or dimness...".
HAVE FUN!

Observations

by Magda Verbeek

A tale of dragons and damsels...

This time of the year is the best. One can feel the earth breathing a sigh of relief from the heat and drought. Animals and insects are wearing their best coats and the flurry of activity is contagious. You can't look anywhere at the moment without seeing something walk, slide, fly, creep, glide, slither, pull, flutter, dig, eat, hide or build.

Rather than do an autopsy of all the negative things in the garden that we're all too well aware of like caterpillars, flea beetles, Rutherglen bugs, weeds etc etc, I thought I would instead highlight the wonders that surround us each day.

Have you noticed the dragonflies and damselflies? I was fortunate enough to have a dragonfly in the palm of my hand, its four wings spanned 5 inches, and were the stuff of fairies. Its eyes were reflective and transparent at the same time and made up most of its head. Behind the wing segment, its tail ran for 3 inches in a pattern of green and gold, brown and grey, and below, its legs made a basket. Then it flew away!

Yet that dragonfly wasn't seeing me, not an image of me. The cluster of light sensitive receptors which made up its bulbous eyes were sensitive to detecting movement in 360°. Dragonflies spend most of their adult life on the wing and can perform aerial aerobatics with such alacrity that they can snatch flies out of the air and then devour them in flight. They can eat their weight in food in half an hour and fly at 14 meters per second!! Damselflies are a smaller version of dragonflies and prefer sucking juice from soft bodied insects. They hold their wings together at rest, and for example, can hover motionless to pick off aphids one by one.

With so much activity going on, wouldn't it be amazing if we could see or smell the array of chemicals in the air. Interestingly, most insects don't rely solely on their "sight", but also on the perception of chemicals in their environment. Insects have a sense of smell (olfaction) and taste (gustation). Olfactory receptors are most commonly found on antennae, but sometimes on mouth parts and egg laying organs. They detect chemical vapours.

Gustatory receptors are located in the mouth parts, but can also be found on the lower leg segments. These receptors detect the chemical nature of solid and liquid materials. Insects themselves exude chemicals to communicate. PHEROMONES are released by one individual and

induce a response in another individual of the same species.



DRAGON FLY WITH PREY

ALLELOCHEMICS are released by individuals of one species and induce a response in individuals of another species.

Furthermore, insects produce an array of sounds which are used to attract or confuse other insects. Most of these sounds are low frequency and low intensity, but some (like crickets) are not.

Did you know that the green vege bug in Australia has a different song to the green vege bug in the Mediterranean? And that by discovering and isolating these songs, scientists have been able to isolate the exact and appropriate pheromone to use in bait traps? (snippet from ABC radio!)

Our dragonfly lives in a world of light, smells and sounds. Fortunately we do too, how else could aromatherapy work, or why else do we salivate at the smell of food. With a bit of practiced observation, every niche becomes relevant and critical, all being part of a complicated and intriguing balance.

Ref.: H D Klein & A M Wenner: *TINY GAMEHUNTING*; Publ. 1993, Bantam Books.

P Bennet: *ORGANIC GARDENING*; Publ. 1988, Child & Associates.

J. French: *NATURAL CONTROL OF GARDEN PESTS*; Publ. 1990, Aird Books Pty, Ltd.

Delightfully different,
refreshingly pleasant tasting,
delicately spiced, fruity
locally produced
AUSTRALIAN herbal teas



KOALA TEA

Have you tasted a cup yet?
You'll be surprised!

Now on Sale at **Coles & Woolworths**

19

x

A concern with herbal oils

by Patricia K. Reppert

The need for caution

In February of 1989, three people I know from a neighbouring town were hospitalised with botulism. Because of the varying symptoms that botulism can produce, our doctors had a very difficult time diagnosing these three individuals. The two common denominators were that all three exhibited significant neurological problems and all three had shared dinner together seven days before the symptoms appeared. Each had consumed varying amounts of garlic bread which had been made with garlic preserved in soybean oil. This oil had been processed, bottled and distributed by a major manufacturer.

Only one person suffered the full range of debilitating neurological symptoms, including paralysis of the muscles that control breathing. The other two suffered varying degrees of discomfort. All required hospitalisation: the person most severely affected spent 32 days in intensive care, much of that time on a respirator.

Needless to say, there are multi-million dollar lawsuits pending. But beyond that, and more important, the one person most severely affected will be limited in his ability to walk, probably for the rest of his life; and the two individuals who were less severely affected have lost significant strength in their legs.

This unfortunate and tragic incident in my hometown sent a shock wave around our community - and around the world. Before this, it was felt in many circles that the sulfur compounds and other active medicinal components of garlic somehow prevented hatching of the spores, proliferation of the organism, and production of the deadly toxin. Not so. Botulism has occurred more frequently in garlic stored in oil than in any other product, but it also has been reported in onions, mushrooms and other products.

Those of us who process and bottle herbal products and other foods should be well informed about botulism. We should know how the toxin is produced and what conditions favour its production.

My concern is that if *Clostridium botulinum* can produce the deadly toxin in garlic anaerobically stored in oil at pH 4.6 and above, then it can grow in any herially infused oil.

Fresh herbs can be contaminated with botulism spores from the garden, and unless these spores are killed by heat processing (subjecting them to a temperature of 240°F), they can hatch and begin reproducing themselves and producing the deadly botulism toxin.

The *C. botulinum* organism is a natural part of our environment. It is one of many bacterial organisms and spores that are part of the bacterial flora, naturally present in soils. The bacteria themselves usually does not cause problems in food because they are killed by a temperature of 212°F. The spores are the culprits: they can survive boiling, and later hatch and grow in a friendly environment

- alkaline, anaerobic (lacking oxygen), and at or above 40°F room temperature. Oils stored at room temperature provide a perfect environment for this scenario.

I do not want to be an alarmist. I know that Italian grandmothers have been storing basil in oil for years with no repercussions that we know of. However, I know that not many of us in the herb business carry \$100million in liability insurance, and that's what you'll need if a botulism problem occurs with your herbal infused oils.

In concern for the safety of my family and myself, I do not make herbal infused oils for storage beyond two weeks in the refrigerator. It is so easy to make a herbal oil, even in the middle of winter when no fresh herbs are available. During the summer, when the herbs are fresh and full of flavour, simply make purees of various herbs - like basil, rosemary, marjoram and thyme - and freeze the puree in icetrays. Then, to make a delicious herbal infused oil, all you need do is put one cube of frozen "pesto" with 1/3 to 1/2 cup of oil and heat to melt the cube of pesto. Whisk it, and there you have a delicious oil with all the fresh flavours of summer and herbs. If you really like the look of floating herb sprigs (which I do), then by all means add fresh sprigs of rosemary, parsley or whatever. But do not keep it beyond two or three weeks under refrigeration.

In my opinion, it is simply not worth the risks involved.

Pat Reppert owns Shale Hill Farm and Herb Gardens in Saugerties, New York and wrote this article originally for the International Herb Association Newsletter.

Another aspect of botulism

19 Park Avenue dermatologist Patricia Wexler wasn't joking when she said: "Wednesday is botulism day around here". It's no joke: dermatologists actually use the botulism toxin in cosmetic plastic surgery procedures. They inject the toxin into the pair of muscles that pull down the inner edges of the eyebrows, temporarily paralysing the muscles and erasing the forehead furrow that often results from worry, anger or fatigue. The result lasts up to six months.

The treatment has been in use for about a year and is proving safer and more effective than the previous collagen treatment. With collagen, the results were less smooth, and in some cases the blood supply to the forehead was cut off, which caused ulceration and sometimes scarring. As the botulism toxin loses its effectiveness within hours after a container of it has been opened, so patients must line up and receive the injections one after another. That's why Pat Wexler conducts "botulism days".

Beth Landman, New York Times Jan. 15, 1995

It's horses for courses when looking for a tractor driver

"**tractor** /'træktə, n 1. a motor vehicle, usu. fitted with deeply treaded tyres, used to draw farm implements such as the plough, seed-drill etc. and loads, and also as a source of power for agricultural machinery."

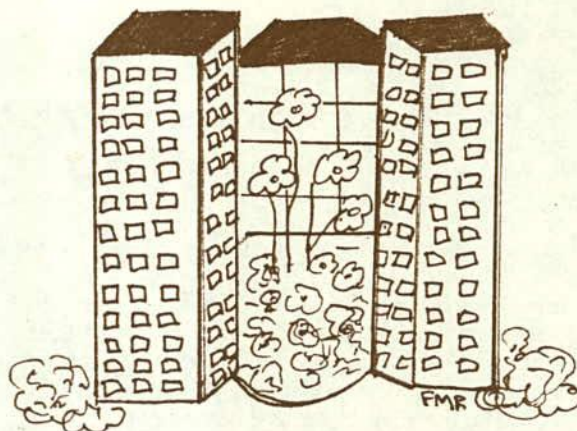
I ORIGINALLY planned to write about the history of horses and their relevance to modern farming. After all, the horse has figured long in history - beast of burden, instrument of war and deity. Ancient pagan horse worship co-existed with Christianity up until the 12th Century. The 120 metre long horse carved out of a chalk hillside at Uffington in Berkshire, England, is an effigy of Epona - a Celtic version of Crete's "white mare" *Leukippe* - who was also known by the ancient Amazonian tribes as *Saranyu* (Hindu) and *Demeter* (Mycenae). *Demeter's* offspring, *Arion*, was also called *Pegasus*, the winged-horse of the priestesses who protected the oldest shrine to Osiris at the sacred spring of Pega. The Amazons of North Africa and Asia were the first to tame horses but, like many good ideas gone wrong, they later used this discovery to invent the cavalry.

Early Morris dancers used a traditional horse-headed stick or "hobby horse" - the same cock-horse ridden to Banbury Cross to see the Goddess make her ritual ride as Lady Godiva. Asian shamans rode a horse-headed stick to fly to the heavens. (Later, the more up-market witches opted for a broom bush - a *plant agenet* as followers of Henry II or modern thoroughbreds will recognise!) Where would Apollo be without his horses? He would have looked a right nong towing the sun along behind a Fergie tractor.

Other deified horses were *Hengist* and *Horsa* (Jutland), *Sleipnir* (Odin's eight-legged horse), *Drasil* (Norse), *Waels* (Welsh - which might have inspired the famous New South Wales "Walers" used in the Light Horse), *Volos* (Russia - later Christianised as St Vlas), *Centaur* (Greek), and the Swedish horse-masked, priestesses of Freya - horse-Valkyries who rode on *Valraven*.

Few of those great names have survived to modern times. Now our steeds are called *John Deere*, *International*, *Valpadana*, *Big Bud*, *Massey Ferguson*, *Deutz*, *Allis Chalmers*, *David Brown*, *Fordson* or *Kubota*. Even *Belarus* doesn't really have that heavenly ring to it. Imagine offering up your fatted calf to *David Brown*?

However, the column on horses must wait till next issue. I changed tack after a recent exposure to tractors. Last week, local operator Ross Ianna brought his iron horse *Caterpillar Deeforay* out to



PADDOCK ON TOP

By KENRICK RILEY

our farm to build a few roads over steep creeks. Ross had a rare affinity with his steed. My image of dozers had been of steel giants driven by cowboys leaving giant scars on the landscape. As a child learning the intricacies of horse-craft, it was a process of beginning bare-back, learning balance without stirrups, and finally mastering the use of one's backside and legs to subtly squeeze a horse into a particular action. Those techniques did not cross over into tractor driving. Ripping through the timber à la Joh Bjelke with a huge anchor chain between two dozers was just not dressage.

So I was surprised that Ross could virtually pick up a blade of grass on the blade of his dozer. He gently peeled back and stock-piled the topsoil. Then he sculpted the subsoil into creek-crossings and finally replaced the topsoil to stop weed growth and erosion. He did it with little noise or fuss and a very gentle touch. He dodged Eucalypt seedlings we wanted to keep. And at lunch, he taught us about the various Northern Rivers soils he had worked (ours were formed from volcanic ash and small basalt rocks blown out of the side of Mount Warning millions of years ago).

This was the first major project undertaken on our new farm. We have spent the last two years mending fences, destocking, and just letting the country have a well-earned rest. So it was with some trepidation that we decided to get a huge machine in to start gouging through the kangaroo grass and disturbing the soil. Sure, we needed a decent access road just to live there, but there was still a niggling doubt about scarring the now gentle countryside. But Ross worked more like a landscape gardener than a dam builder. After a bit of rain we probably won't know the difference.

But back to horses. This weekend I am off to the Heavy Horse Field Day at Gatton to research how tractor work was done prior to the combustion engine. I shall report back next issue.

WHAT EVERY FARMER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HEMP

We may be getting ahead of ourselves here, but this prohibition can't possibly last much longer, as we now have a Labor government which is talking about decriminalising hemp. Already a lot of OHGA members have expressed a strong desire to grow hemp and OHGA will make a submission to the Dept of Health on behalf of the members who want to grow an experimental hemp crop. So I thought I'd reprint this excellent article originating from 'Nimbin Help End Marijuana Prohibition'. Anyone wanting more info from them, phone 066 - 891441, or fax 066 - 891492.

SOIL CONDITIONER

The Hemp plant's root combines a tap root which sends down a 10-12 inch root system in 30 days, and a fibrous root mass. It is a preferred erosion-control crop, holding the soil against flood, fire and landslip. The taproot also assists in breaking up and aerating compacted and overworked soils. Hemp's heavy leaf canopy restricts weed growth and provides an excellent green manure crop. Within two or more seasons hemp can rejuvenate depleted soil and clear noxious weeds.

CLIMATIC DIVERSITY

Hemp can be grown in a broad range of climates and soils, from highlands to sea level, in clay or sand. It is presently grown commercially in China, Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Russia and is experimentally grown in England, Holland, France and Tasmania.

ECONOMY

Prolific growth allows multiple crops in a season. Hemp can yield up to ten tons of dry biomass per acre in 4 months in Australian conditions. Potential value to US agriculture at current costs has been estimated at \$500 billion to \$1 trillion per annum. As there are very few natural predators the grower is able to minimise the use of chemicals (eg herbicides and pesticides) during production and thus decrease production costs.

THE DIVERSITY, RANGE AND USES OF HEMP

Hemp can be grown to meet the preferred end needs of local industries. These include:

Rope, twine and cordage: known as the strongest, most durable rope, it has been used for thousands of years and is still preferred by sailors worldwide.

These products are easily manufactured items, needing minimal mechanical processing before reaching the consumer.

Fabrics, textiles and canvas: (the word "canvas" is originally derived from the word *cannabis*). Hemp has in the past been regarded as the standard for measuring long fibre quality and strength. Given hemp's durable qualities as a cloth (three times the tensile strength of cotton) and the current resurgence of interest in the fashion industry, increased demand is assured.

Paper: Hemp is the perfect combination of long and

short fibre, ideal for good quality paper. Production per ha. is more than four times that of wood pulp. Hemp paper has greater "folding resistance" and durability. Before prohibition it was used for making bank notes, legal documents and bibles. Hemp paper is cheaper to process as it contains only a tenth of the lignin compared with wood pulp paper.

Oilseed: Hemp is second only to soybean in protein content and has the greatest essential fatty acid content of any plant. It is also acknowledged as producing very high grade machine and lamp oils.

Fuel: Hemp is 80% cellulose, cellulose having approx. 20,000 uses, ie. one of the major uses is ethanol (a petrol alternative or extender). One acre of hemp produces approx. 1,000 gallons.

Environmental sustainability: The low chemical load required for hemp production results in less impact on the environment. Currently wood pulp requires ten times the amount of bleaching to remove the high content of lignin compared with hemp. The reduced pressure on the waterways is estimated to be 60-80%.

Drought resistant: Hemp absorbs large amounts of UVB radiation and consequently survives well in arid conditions. Hemp mulch bio-degrades slowly because of its durability and retains water in the soil longer.

History: Woven hemp predates metallurgy and appeared at approx. the same time as pottery, about 10,000 years ago.

Englands First Fleet to Australia survived two famines with the assistance of hemp seed.

In 1845 Dr. Francis Campbell grew hemp in the Hunter Valley, and then up in the Grafton area. He found the loamy soils ideal for commercial cultivation.

In Northern NSW, areas such as Casino were under cultivation until competition with overseas prices in countries such as the Philippines, and the introduction of synthetics, saw its temporary demise.

Source: Nimbin Help End Marijuana Prohibition (H.E.M.P.) ph. 066 - 891441.

Post script: In a desperate bid to uphold and justify their practices, State Forests of NSW put out a statement that hemp is a dismal failure as a source for paper making and as fodder etc. Tell that to the growing number of farmers in eastern and western Europe who are cultivating hemp crops. All I can say is that since the growing of hemp has been prohibited, too many trees have been getting the chop, where before they were felled discriminately, and used what beautiful wood should be used for: homes, furniture and other lasting items that are worthy of trees that are often several hundreds of years old.

And Rusty has been trying to convince everyone that hemp weedmat is the go. He's got me convinced! -Elle

AQIS CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF ORGANIC FOOD INSPECTION

At the end of February we received a letter (see: Letters to OHGA) and a draft contract from AQIS. Part of the contract is the letter here reproduced, addressed to Jim Melville of AQIS, by Andrejs Stipnieks of the Attorney General's Office, who drew up the draft contract. I will summarise this document for you, and our comments/objections to it:

1. Period of the contract. (OK)

2. **Services provided by AQIS:** a) auditing the accreditation system for production of organic food by members. (OK) b) auditing the individual member's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Organisation's accreditation system. (Not OK, is our job, not theirs.) c) certifying whether or not the organisation's accreditation system and a member's compliance with the system is in accordance with the standards set by AQIS for the export of organic food. **3.1 The fees to be paid by the organisation for the services provided are as follows:**

a) share of AQIS overhead costs of \$2,275 p.a.
b) fees of \$55 p.p. per half hour for services provided during normal public service working hours.
c) travel costs and disbursement, such as taxi fares.

3.2 The fees shall be subject to alteration by agreement, having regard to the following factors:

a) Changes in the number of organisations which use AQIS in the organic industry.
b) changes in AQIS overhead costs.
c) any fees agreed for services outside normal public service working hours.

3.3 The fees shall be paid by the organisation as follows:

a) the overhead fees to be paid in advance by two equal payments: (i) the first on 1 Jan each year (ii) second payment on 1 July each year. b) other fees paid monthly within 30 days of invoice.

4. **Administrative arrangements:** 1) by agreement between the parties. 2) the organisation will ensure that each member will give all necessary assistance to AQIS to inspect relevant records, data and operations required for carrying out of the services. (under discussion.)

5. Release and Indemnity

Now pay attention all! This is Pulitzer prize winning stuff! I now quote verbatim:

5.1 The Organisation shall release and indemnify the Commonwealth, its officers, employees and agents (in this clause referred to as "those indemnified") from and against any loss (including legal costs and expenses), or liability reasonably incurred or suffered by any of those indemnified arising from any claim, suit, demand, action or proceeding by any person against those indemnified where such loss or liability is caused by any act or thing

done or not done by those indemnified (whether or not the act or thing is done or omitted to be done negligently) in carrying out the Services. (??????? Sure, we're going to sign this no questions asked. Just show us the dotted line!!) And: 5.2 The Organisation shall, if required by AQIS, take out insurance cover or provide some other acceptable security to cover the Organisation's liability under the indemnity referred to in subclause 5.1. (In other words: they're making us pay for their services but they will take no responsibility whatsoever for their work!)

6. **Termination** This is pretty straight forward, for a change. No objections..

Well, what do you think? Would you sign this contract? See 'Letters' for their reply to our objections. - Elle

HERB GROWER



Australian Government Solicitor
Office of Commercial Law

95013616

9 February 1995

Mr Jim Taylor
Australian Quarantine and
Inspection Service
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Jim

CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF ORGANIC FOOD INSPECTION

I refer to your memorandum and the discussions in this matter today.

2. I attach a fresh draft of the Agreement containing the agreed amendment and the new release and indemnity clause for consideration by you.

3. You will note that I have also provided in subclause 5.2 for a requirement for the Organisation to take out insurance cover or provide some other security to cover the Organisation's liability under the indemnity. This is because the indemnity would be worthless if the Organisation does not have the funds or assets to honour the indemnity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A Stipnieks".
Andrejs Stipnieks
Senior Government Solicitor
for the Australian Government Solicitor

Telephone: (06) 250 6291
Facsimile: (06) 250 5956

Central Office
Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 • Telephone (06) 250 8666 • Fax (06) 250 5910
OFFICES IN CANBERRA, SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, BRISBANE, PERTH, ADELAIDE, HOBART, DARWIN, TOWNSVILLE

THIS AND THAT

ORGANIC MERGER

BFA chairman Arthur Dakin and NASAA president Rod May put out a joint statement announcing that their two bodies will become one. They said that the organisations had agreed in principle to a series of firm proposals which would lead to a merger of the two similar, but differently structured organisations. The directors and committees of both organisations are meeting to work on harmonising standards, aligning constitutions and developing common procedures.

Arthur Dakin, in a telephone conversation with Howard Rubin, said that the merger formation meeting will be held in Lismore in the spring. The meeting will be preceded by a workshop, to which the OHGA executive is also invited.

FARMERS IN CREDIT!

A group of Western Australians is working to establish the Primary Industries Credit Co-operative (PICC) to help farmers beat the banks and get out of debt. 35 Australian farmers leave the land each week. Rural debts have risen from \$265 per farmer in 1960 to \$180,000 per farmer in 1994. In the same period the number of farmers has declined from 290,000 to 100,000.

Something stinks, and according to Everett Ambrose of PICC, it's coming from the bank.

"Unfortunately, I believe this situation will not be remedied by governments or by the banking system itself, because it is not in their interest to do so," says Mr Ambrose.

"The only way out of this problem is for the rural sector to find a solution themselves. I personally feel banking has failed this country."

The alternative finance system for farmers provided by PICC aims to make farming a debt-free

livelihood over time and guarantee a future for the new generation of Australian farmers. The PICC wants to establish a network of branches throughout rural Australia, reducing the level of indebtedness in the rural sector by keeping all the generated wealth in the communities. The co-op will be owned and controlled by member shareholders.

The concept has received the support of the powerful Credit Union Services Corporation.

Mr Ambrose says PICC has established a trust account and is currently soliciting donations to cover start-up costs. A publicity brochure has been produced and public meeting are being held.

For more info contact:

Everett Ambrose, P O Box 915, Kalamunda, WA 6076.

- Permaculture International Journal, #54.

MIGRATING GENES

Scientists have long suspected that the widespread practice of feeding antibiotics to farm animals was encouraging resistance in humans. Now researchers in Illinois, USA, say they have evidence to back this up.

More than half the antibiotics produced in the US end up in feed bins and fish farms to either control disease or to enhance growth. Is this worth the risk to humans?

The question that they are asking is: "If they have bacteria in their intestines, resistant to tetracycline, could the bacterial genes travel to bacteria normally found in the human intestinal tract?" Research is evidently pointing this way.

However, a molecular evolutionist says that there is no real proof that the gene crossings have taken place in the last few decades of the antibiotic era. It could have happened, he says, a million years ago with the genes evolving slowly ever since.



SOLAR ELECTRICS



- * INVERTERS *
- * BATTERIES *
- * GENERATORS *

SYSTEMS DESIGNED AND
INSTALLED

ALL R.A.P.A.S. APPROVED

Over 10 years experience in solar electrics
Australian made products used where possible

Ph. 066 - 832344

License No EC29365 CORAKI ELECTRICAL

HERBAL MEDICINES

Individually tailored

IRIDOLOGY
SKIN CREAMS
BACH FLOWERS
made to order

ALISON MOXOM
DHM, MATMS

Available for consultation by appointment

122 Bridge Street, Coraki
Ph. 83 2344

HERBICIDE TOLERANT CROPS

Herbicide tolerance has a green ban on it worldwide by organic growers and environmentalists. Critics see it as an immediate escalation of the chemical treadmill. 40% of the hundreds of US field trials of engineered organisms of herbicide tolerant crop plants, are developed by the makers of herbicides. Some have already been approved. In Australia, although the neutral (??? - Elle) CSIRO has created a 2,4-D tolerant cotton, the not so neutral Monsanto has chipped in with its Roundup-tolerant cotton! A Basta-tolerant lupin is also on the books at Grains Research & Development Corporation.

Now the DPIE is planning a workshop in March to discuss the whole matter and it looks as if it is trying to keep the general public from knowing too much about it. In fact, Richard Hindmarsh of Griffiths UNI (the good guy - Elle) is boycotting the workshop until it is more widely publicised and speakers against herbicide-tolerance are invited to air their views.

The Gene File Nov '94, via Nimbin News.

I haven't heard about the outcome. Will let you know if and when I do. In the meantime, look forward to many more sprays flying about! -Elle

GREEN = JOBS

From the US: Countering business complaints that 'environmental protection costs jobs', a new study has shown that the States that do the most to protect their natural resources also wind up with the strongest economies and the best jobs for their citizens.

The Big Scrub Newsletter #63.

WHERE'S THE AUSSIE GUM?

Australia may be the home of the gum tree but the world has stolen the lead in growing them for money, a CSIRO scientist has warned.

Dr Ken Eldridge of the CSIRO's division of Forestry, said there were as many as 5million hectares of eucalypt plantations in Brazil, South Africa, Spain and Portugal. But Australia had only 125,000 hectares of plantations. In '92-'93 Australia imported 2.4billion worth of timber products, "most of which we could grow here if we invested a great deal more in plantations".

"South Africa found the fastest growing trees and the most profitable for plantations are eucalypts", Dr Eldridge said. It uses the timber to prop up its goldmines and to sell as sawn timber.

"Brazil grows the flooded gums from northern NSW for pulp and paper, and for charcoal to burn instead of coal in its steel industry."

Spain and Portugal grow Tasmanian blue gums and river red gums to produce quality pulp and paper.

The Big Scrub Newsletter #63

DUTCH DUNG WRONG

In direct contravention of the Basel Convention which forbids OECD countries from dumping toxic waste on developing nations, Dutch companies are planning to dump 7 million tons of cow dung in India.

There is a shortage of manure for fertiliser use in India - many people burn dung for fuel. However, the Dutch dung contains toxic chemicals.

The president of the Save Bombay Committee, Mr Kisan Metha, said: "The port where this stinking dung containing dangerous chemicals, will be unloaded will become the target of pests. It will become impossible to control malaria and prevent other epidemics breaking out there."

New Internationalist Sept 94

GREENPEACE VICTORY ON PVR PATENT

The highest court within the European Patent Office upheld a challenge to a ground-breaking biotechnology patent in February, severely restricting its scope. The EPO's Technical Board of Appeal in Munich approved a final draft of the patent with 6 of the 44 original claims withdrawn. The patent, which applies to plants containing a gene that makes them resistant to a herbicide, will still cover the gene and the techniques needed to insert it into plant cells, but it will not cover the plants or the seeds from which they are grown.

Greenpeace, which challenged the patent, hailed the decision as a victory.

The original patent, which was awarded in 1990, covered the technology for transferring a herbicide-resistant gene into the cells of a range of plants including potatoes, sugar beet and tomatoes. The companies (Plant Genetic Systems of Ghent, Belgium, with Biogen of Cambridge, Massachusetts) also claimed commercial rights over the gene, the altered plants and the seed.

"The company wanted wide protection - from the plant cells, the seeds and the plants to future generations of plants. Now it looks like they can't charge royalties on the plants or the seeds", Anna Brindley, a biologist at Greenpeace's science unit said.

The European Patent Convention, which the EPO administers, does not allow patents on any invention that is "contrary to public morality". It also forbids the patenting of plant or animal varieties. Greenpeace challenged the patent on the grounds that it is immoral to give control over

MEDI HERB

MANUFACTURES

HIGH QUALITY HERBAL EXTRACTS



- 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.

genes and living organisms to a private company. It also argued that herbicide-resistant crops are immoral because because farmers will be tempted to spray much more herbicide than usual, killing all vegetation except their crops. And it complained that "superweeds" might develop if they acquired the herbicide-resistance gene. On technical grounds, Greenpeace claimed that the patent should not stand because PGS was claiming rights over plant varieties, which are not patentable.

PGS, meanwhile, says it is happy with the ruling because it voluntarily withdrew the six offending claims in the original patent. It also says that the remaining claims give it strong protection over the hybrid plants. "We have claims to the process for manipulating the plant cells and the inserted genes," says Jan van Rompaey, manager of technology protection for the company. Anyone who wanted to sell plants that were resistant to the herbicide would still have to use the company's gene and its technology for inserting the gene. Selling seed from one year's crop to be sown the next year is not a realistic option because the plants from these second generation seeds are vastly inferior to those sold by PGS, the company says.

Renée Vellvé, programme director of Genetics Resources Action International, a pressure group that lobbies on biodiversity issues, thinks the ruling has serious implications for industry. "If the EPO is finally saying that plants can't be patented because they're varieties, the door is closed to patenting plants," she says.

New Scientist, 4-3-1995

PLANTS' CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Plants don't like being eaten, and many have an impressive array of defence, including highly noxious chemical weapons. The tearing of a caterpillar's jaw or the nibbling of a rabbit's teeth lingers in a plant's "memory", according to Ian Baldwin of the State University of New York at Buffalo. Once bitten, he said, a plant needs little prompting to release its toxins the next time it comes under attack.

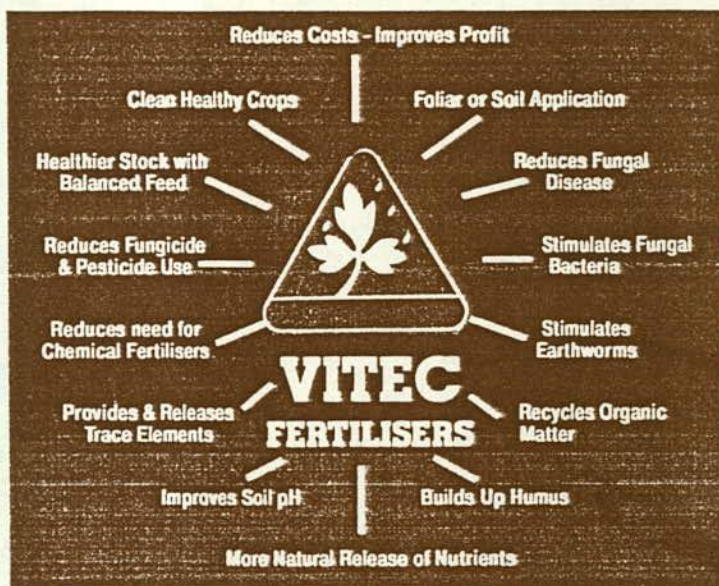
While some plants have visible defences, such as large thorns or hairy surfaces which make it physically difficult for an enemy to feed on them, many resort to chemical weapons to deter would-be consumers. But plants must pay a high price for permanent defences, allocating resources to their armoury that might be better spent on growth and reproduction. So most plants produce chemical deterrents, such as alkaloids, phenols and terpenes, only when they are needed.

Starting up production can take time, leaving plants vulnerable for many hours. But plants that survive an attack speed up the manufacture of defensive chemicals the next time they are threatened, said Baldwin, implying that they are primed by the earlier experience.

New Scientist, 4-3-1995

VITEC FERTILISER

LIQUID FISH AND KELP



*THOROUGHLY PROVEN
IN NEW ZEALAND AND VICTORIA*

For more information contact:

Ivor Kelaart Regional Distributor (NSW)
P.O. Box 532 BUDDINA 4575
Phone: (074) 78 1212

Chris Walsh Northern NSW Agent
2/5 Seaview Street,
East Ballina 2478
Phone: (066) 86 7905

NASAA
4066m

Also available
from your local NORCO store
Depot facilities at Ballina
& Brisbane



B.F.A.
CERTIFIED 'A'



Whole In The Wall Organic - Supply & Exchange



- * Quality Fresh Fruit & Vegetables
- * Dried Lines
- * Demeter Products
- * Bulk Lines

43 Bridge St, North Lismore. Ph 212 661.

CERTIFIED



ORGANIC

by Tony Ullman

Especially in tropical and sub tropical climates, one of the greatest problems for the organic grower is weed control. With this fact in mind I paid a visit to the library at the local office of the Dept of Ag. After having a talk to the librarian about the type of information I was after, it was explained to me that all the best books on weed control were on permanent loan to the department officers for use in the field.

Undeterred, I spent some time looking through the books (those considered by the field staff as not worth taking anywhere) in the relevant section, to discover what information was available. I was, of course, looking for some words of wisdom which would be of practical use to growers who, almost without exception, spend a considerable amount of their time fighting to keep their herb beds free of weeds.

Well, there was no shortage of specific information on weeds, but there was a decided shortage of good news and I did not wish to write an article about how many millions of seeds a mature groundsel bush can produce, or how many failed attempts had been made at biological control.

To put the whole issue into perspective, I would refer you to the dictionary definition of a weed. It is any plant which is growing where it's not wanted; nature can't stand bare soil, and weeds are simply the original pioneer plants. They are nature's first step towards repairing damage.

Philosophy aside, the 9th Edition of The Australian Weed Control Handbook did set out very clearly the four general methods which may be employed to moderate nature's attempts to revegetate your herb beds:

1. Good Management

- Maintaining pasture and crop vigour. Weeds will often take a hold in overgrazed nutrient deficient soils; crop rotation would come under this heading.
- Hygiene procedures for crops, seed, soil, mulch, machinery and stock
- Reduced tillage. Minimise bare soil and destruction of soil structure.

2. Mechanical Controls

- Cultivation. Refer to 1a and 1c above.
- Mowing and slashing.
- Flame and steam weeding. I have come across very few growers who use these methods.
- Mulching, which adds nutrient to the soil.

3. Biological Controls

This is the introduction of parasites, predators or diseases. All introduced species have natural controls in their country of origin. Some attempts at introducing these controls into Australia have been extremely successful, such as

the Cactoblastis moth, introduced in 1925 to control the Prickly Pear, and some, like the cane toad, have been a complete disaster.

In order for this approach to be free of repercussions it is necessary for the biological control mechanism to be totally dependant upon its target for survival, so that once its mission has been accomplished, the control mechanism will also diminish until its host again becomes plentiful.

If successful, however, biological controls can be permanent, cheap, safe and effective in inaccessible areas.

4. Chemical Controls.

Not for us organic farmers, I'm afraid!

(About flame weeding: It's just as well that Tony has not found many herb farmers that use this method. It sounds real good and is increasingly used by Councils, but it is as destructive as burning off to life in the soil like earthworms and helpful bacteria. Not to mention the accidental fires that happen regularly in overzealous hands. -Elle)

If you want to contact Tony on certification matters, you can reach him on 066 - 216397

NOT JUST A Rotary Hoe!

The BCS Multi purpose System

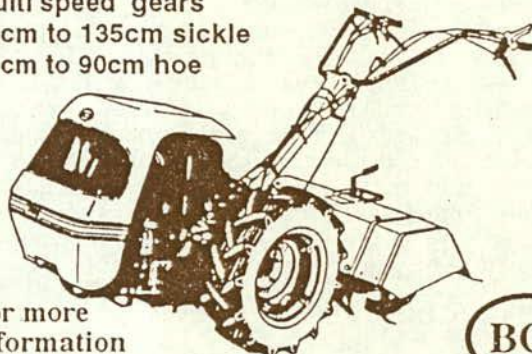
THE BCS RANGE OFFER YOU A PROFESSIONAL, HEAVY DUTY, ALL GEAR DRIVE, MULTI PURPOSE POWER UNIT FOR HOEING, MOWING, TOWING, MULCHING, SPRAYING, PLOUGHING ETC.

Models from 5hp to 12hp Priced From \$1795 Diesel or petrol plus tax

Multi speed gears

80cm to 135cm sickle

40cm to 90cm hoe



For more information contact

BCS

TAVCO AUSTRALIA P/L

Ph.(03)8248011 Fax.(03)8229269

SONIC BLOOM

A REVOLUTION IN FOOD PRODUCTION

A bird's eye view across country south and east of La Belle, USA reveals an ocean of citrus orchards, extending for miles towards the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Any bird overflying this area in the mid-1980's would have been perplexed by the lack of avian fellows among millions of orange trees growing in the confines of Gerber Grove, saturated by a fog of chemicals laid down to ward off swarms of insects, except in Section I. There a multitude of feathered fauna darted among the trees or perched, singing in their branches. To this oasis the birds had been attracted, not by a natural concert of their colleagues, but by a sonic diapason closely resembling birdsong, which to human ears recalls the chirping of a chorus of outsized crickets. This sonic symphony was being emitted from a series of black loudspeaker boxes set atop high poles. Its purpose was not so much to attract birds as to increase the size and total yield of a crop of fruit, hung on trees as if it were a collection of decorative balls at Yuletide. Two young field hands, each with a tractor and a trailer tank of foliar feed, were dousing the trees with an aerosol mist from top to bottom, while a speaker, tuned to maximum volume, emitted a whistling pulse. Pointing to one of his many trees, the owner said:

If SONIC BLOOM takes off, it will end world hunger - and bankrupt the world's agri-chemical companies.

"This is the typical fruit I'm getting with this brand-new method called SONIC BLOOM. With this process I've been able for the first time to get fruit all over the inner branches of my orange trees, greatly adding to the 'umbrella'-type set which is the norm".

A dairy farmer, milking a 200-head herd of Holsteins in Pennsylvania, was equally happily applying the Sonic Bloom method to a 100 acre field of alfalfa, nor did his animals have any difficulty distinguishing the high-quality fodder sprayed with Sonic Bloom. After harvesting his fodder crop, the farmer won the Pennsylvania State 5 acre alfalfa growing contest over 93 other contestants by producing an unheard of 7.6 tons per acre, as against a state average of 3.3 tons.

Across the US, near the Tiwa Indian pueblo of San Juan, New Mexico, in the highly alkaline desert soils, composed of playa clay called adobe, which is best suited to making cheap building blocks, alongside more than 50 kinds of herbs, vegetables were flourishing, including tomatoes and carrots, which were never before able to be grown in that arid region. To Gabriel Howearth, a bearded, pony-tailed master gardener employed by the Indian tribe, Sonic Bloom was as miraculous in its results as was the Mayas' ability to grow crops with no chemical additives by simply mentally communicating with them in some mysterious hermetic way. "As you can see", said Gabriel, parting the leaves of a German beet to cup his hands around the top hemisphere of a swollen mauve-maroon root much larger than a softball, "I can't get my hands completely around it. All these beets, which normally scale off at no more than four pounds, will weigh at least nine, possibly ten."

THE ORIGINS OF SONIC BLOOM

After witnessing a distressing event in Korea where a mother deliberately broke the legs of her four-year old so that she would be able to beg enough food to feed her family, Dan Carlson, a young Minnesota soldier decided he would devote the rest of his life to finding a cheap way to grow food for anyone with even the smallest and poorest plot of land. After enrolling in university where he was allowed to design his own

curriculum in horticulture and agriculture, he soon concluded that in poor soils, if plants could be appropriately fed, not through their roots but through the stomata in their leaves, they might flourish and even grow rapidly in soils that were acid, alkaline, salty, desert or otherwise deprived of balanced nutrients.

But some motive force, he soon realised, was needed to awaken the stomata to action. Puzzling as to what this might be, Carlson stumbled on a record called *Growing Plants Successfully in the Home*, devised by George Milstein, a retired dentist who had won prizes for growing colourful bromeliads. Milstein innovative idea had been to get a recording company to amalgamate into a popular tune the pure sound frequencies broadcast by University of Ottawa researchers to increase wheat yields. Picking up where Milstein left off, Carlson focussed on finding frequencies that would motivate the stomata to open. Though he did not at first suspect a tie with the sound that caused the birds to flock to the orange grove, he managed through a stroke of spiritual insight to hit upon a combination of frequencies and harmonics exactly accordant with the pre-dawn bird concerts that continue past sun-up into morning. Carlson

enlisted the expertise of a Minneapolis music teacher, Michael Holtz. His first cassette, using Hindu melodies called ragas, apparently delightful to both bird and plant, induced stomata to imbibe more than seven times the amount of foliar-fed nutrients, and even to absorb invisible water vapour in the atmosphere that exists in the driest of climatic conditions. But the sound proved irritating to American farmers.

He next looked into western music. Vivaldi's *The Seasons* and Bach's *E-Major Concerto for Violin*, were included in the tapes. Soon Holtz came to see where the various predominating pitches in birdsongs could be calibrated by reference points on the musical scale and their harmonics. Don Carlson had instinctively hit upon frequencies that were the ideal electronic analogues for a bird choir. "It was thrilling," said Holtz, "to make that connection. I began to feel that God had created the birds for more than just freely flying about and warbling. Their very singing must somehow be intimately linked to the mysteries of seed germination and plant growth."

SONIC BLOOM TODAY

Today Sonic Bloom is a patented system, which involves two components - those of sound and nutrient. The sound is generated by 12 Volt, all-weather sound units which are pole mounted in growing areas. A single generator can cover from one to sixty acres. The sound stimulation can increase the uptake of nutrient by up to 700% and thus foliar feeding becomes the most effective source of plant nutrition. Sonic Bloom has produced record crops in semi-arid soils in areas as large as 2000 acres.

The nutrient proved the hard part of the equation. Dan Carlson laboured for many years to achieve a balanced formula. He found that the increased uptake due to the sound stimulation tended to magnify any imbalance in the foliar spray composition. His eventual solution is a completely organic nutrient containing some 100 trace elements, complex amino acids, vitamins, minerals and natural growth promoting substances derived from various plant extracts, including seaweed. Sonic Bloom, at first regarded with

disbelief and scepticism, is now being taken very seriously by an agricultural world hungry for viable organic alternatives. Sonic Bloom has been certified by several organic groups in the US, and is in the process of gaining certification by the BFA here in Australia.

It is early days in Australia, but exciting news has become available regarding the increased potency of Sonic Bloom treated herbs. Nutrient analysis has recently been conducted in SA. A Dr. Siow, who has worked on micro nutrients with several Nobel Prize winners, tested herbs grown by a patient friend who is a Sonic Bloom user. Dr. Siow operates a very successful cancer clinic. The essence of his treatment program is a combination of medicinal herbs and high quality food. He conducted tests on a variety of medicinal herbs and has reported potency increases of **up to 400%**.

In the US it is becoming a popular practice for hospitals and treatment centres to grow their own vegetables and herbs, and Sonic Bloom is an important feature in this trend. There are now several lab reports available documenting nutrient increases as a result of treatment. Sonic Bloom treated oranges, for example, contain 121% more Vitamin C than normal!

In Australia there are already quite a few growers who have discovered Sonic Bloom. Evelyn Green, from Mt Tamborine, grows vegetables and herbs using Sonic Bloom. She supplies a neighbouring restaurant called "Bellbirds" with fresh produce. The restaurant not only gets constant compliments regarding the taste and texture of the food, but recently also won a major award for which considerable credit must go to the Sonic Bloom produce.

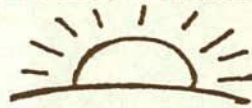
Another grower who is delighted with Sonic Bloom is Lesley McDonald, formerly of Wappa Ponds Herbs at Yandina, Q. Lesley reports "the best quality basil plants we have ever produced", but she was also very impressed with the Sonic Bloom seed treatment technique. This involves a combination of sound stimulation and soaking the seeds for 8 hours in a 500:1 nutrient solution. Lesley reports "seeds began sprouting inside three days" and the germination rate was virtually 100%. All herb growers will know that that is quite remarkable.

Other growers have reported a quicker turnaround with seedlings and balanced rapid growth. SONIC BLOOM is proving itself to be an indispensable organic growing aid which should have enormous potential for the herb industry.

If SONIC BLOOM takes off, it will end world hunger - and bankrupt the world's agri-chemical companies.

- Elle

From Breakfast Tea



To Dreamtime Tea



Locally Produced

KOALA TEA

Now on sale at **Coles & Woolworths**

Ref.: - *Secrets Of The Soil*, by Peter Tompkins & Christopher Bird
- NEXUS Vol.2, No.17

Flower Power Recipe

Dill Flower Mayonnaise

- 1 cup good oil, such as wheat germ, apricot or nut oil
- 2 cup good yoghurt
- 2 cup water
- 2 lime, juiced
- 2 peeled avocado
- 2 cup toasted sunflower seeds
- 4 cup dill flowers
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- pinch cayenne pepper

Place all ingredients in a kitchen blender and blend until smooth. The nut, apricot or wheat germ oil will provide enough anti-oxidants for the mayonnaise to keep for at least a week in the fridge.

ORDER FORM FOR OHGA STICKERS

I'VE BEEN CERTIFIED

BY

THE ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA

A

Gold background, green text, with 'organic' in white printed in the background.

THE ONLY SPRAY WE USE IS WATER

THE ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA

B

Gold background, green text with a white water rose in the centre.

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR PARSLEY TODAY?

THE ORGANIC HERB GROWERS OF AUSTRALIA

C

Gold background, green text and life-like green bunch of parsley on the left side.

I would like to order:

(quantity of sticker A
..... of sticker B
..... of sticker C)

at \$1 each (incl. p. \$ p.)
(Cheques payable to OHGA)

Name

Address

.....

..... Postcode.....

THE AUSTRALIAN ORGANICS INDUSTRY PRODUCTION CENSUS AND MARKET RESEARCH

January 1995

OHGA membership data compiled by Elle Fikke-Rubin

Of the 150 forms we received from HASSEL & Ass. to send out to members (all the 70-odd certified members and the rest at random) we received 61 forms back. I have faithfully recorded everything for us all with the following result. The questions are in bold and the numbers behind the answer indicates the number of people that gave that answer or made those comments.

Area of property in ha.: this varied from 2,500 to .10.

There was absolutely no average.

% devoted to organics: Again, this varied from 100% to 0.6, although there are a heartening 14 100%-ers.

Age of main farmer:

less than 30: NIL

between 30 and 40: 18

over 40: 43

Highest education attained:

part high school: 16

finished high school: 24

diploma/certificate: 22

bachelors degree: 9

post graduate studies: 12

How long an organic farmer:

less than 5 yrs: 40

5-10 yrs: 11

more than 10 yrs: 5

How long have you been a certified farmer:

less than 5 yrs: 40

5-10 yrs: 8

more than 10 yrs: - (no schemes existed then)

Have you always been an organic farmer?

Yes: 38 No: 20

Are you certified by an approved body:

Yes: 36 No: 20

Which body:

BFA: 1 BD: - NASAA: - OHGA: 47

Other: -

Are you currently seeking certification from an approved body?

Yes: 18 No: 6

From which body:

BFA: 1 BD: - NASAA: - OHGA: 16

Other: T O P Tasmania 1 (although this is not a government recognised body -Elle)

Why did you become an organic grower:

3 main reasons:

Concern for environment: 45

Wanting to secure long term viability for property: 34

Concern for own and family's health: 33

Conventional farming system not working: 7

Decrease in input prices: 4

Possibility of price premiums: 12

Lifestyle reasons: 27

Other: Better taste: 1

I have been chemically poisoned: 1

Market demand: 1

For spiritual reasons: 1

Because of the avalanche effect of chemicals, i.e. cotton: 2

To reduce imports: 1

What product groups and products are you currently producing organically:

meat: 6	vegetables: 23	herbs: 45
macademias: 3	angora: 1	tropical fruit: 8
mango: 5	lychee: 2	salad mixes: 1

chooks /eggs: 3

lemongrass: 4

fruit: 3

tea tree: 1

flowers: 1

nuts/seeds: 1

avocados: 1

citrus: 5

grapes: 2

bay: 1

trees: 1

persimmons: 1

stonefruit: 3

chestnuts: 1

berries: 1

chillies: 1

Where do you get your info regarding organic farming:

Certification body: 33

Dept of Ag: 7

Organic farming books and magazines: 51

General farming books and farming magazines: 4

Local organics body: 19

Other organic producers: 29

Consultant: 6

Use own knowledge (only): 15

Field days/seminars/conferences: 22

Other: BDFGAA 2

By checking what was done before chemical days: 1

Library: 1

Experience: 1

Common sense, work with nature: 1

Easy = 1 Difficult = 5

How difficult did you find it to convert to organics:

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
26	12	12	4	1

How difficult to obtain certification:

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
19	11	5	4	7

How difficult to get info on organic farming:

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
18	16	12	9	4

How difficult to continue to farm organically:

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
18	11	14	8	4

How difficult to retain certification:

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
20	9	4	2	-

How difficult to market organics compared to conventional produce?

1:	2:	3:	4:	5:
9	13	11	5	5

Did your yields change during the process of conversion to organics?

Yes: 4 Increase: 2 Decrease: 4 No: 23 n/a: 3

How many years did it take for yields to reach their potential under organic management:

first planting: 3	one year: 3
two years: 2	three years: 1 n/a: 8

What is the value of annual increase/decrease in income during the conversion process?

increase: \$500 - 1 decrease: \$1,000 - 1 n/a: most

Did you incur extra labour costs during the conversion period?

Yes: 14 No: 25 n/a: 9
What would you estimate the extra labour costs to be?

\$1000: 3 \$2000: 2 \$5000: 1
\$10,000: 1 \$15,000: 1 n/a: 9

Any other costs during conversion?

Yes: 12 No: 22

What were these costs:

Compost ingredients (seaweed etc), cover crops, fertilisers, mulch:

\$2000: 1 \$1000: 1 \$600: 1 \$700: 1
\$500: 1 \$300: 3 \$200: 2

Farm equipment: \$7000: 1 Mulcher: \$4000: 1

Irrigation systems: 3 Cost: \$300 - 1 n/a: 12

Your main organic product:

beef: 3 culinary herbs: 32

medicinal herbs: 5 avocados: 2

vegetables: 9 berries: 1

flowers: 3 grapes: 1

fruit: 5 garlic: 1

macadamias: 1 chillies: 1

mulch: 1

For that product, which statement best describes your use of labour:

Less than conventional: 4

Same as conventional: 12

More than conventional: 34

How much higher/lower do you estimate your yearly labour costs to be if you have labourers:

Lower: \$35,000 - 1 50% - 1

Higher: \$25,000 - 1 \$3000 - 1 \$1000 - 1

n/a: 20

For your main organic product, how would you

describe your yearly input costs:

Organics has lower inputs than conventional: 19

It has the same inputs: 20

Higher inputs: 5

How much higher: \$2000 - 2 \$150 - 1

How much lower: \$2500 - 1\$ 1500 - 2

\$1000 - 2 \$100 - 1 n/a - 15

millions as no chemicals used to degrade land and life: 1

For marketing:

Organics cost less to market: 4

Cost the same: 25 Cost more: 5

Do you believe organics should sell for higher prices than conventionally grown products:

Yes: 34

No: 8

What premium price do you need in order to have a similar income as under conventional management:

0%, same price: 8 10-20% more: 20

20-50% more: 12 50-100% more: 1

over 100%: - don't know: 3

What premiums are you currently achieving?

0%: 19 10-20%: 16 20-50%: 2

50-100%: - over 100%: 1 don't know: 4

Any comments?:

* Education of the public is required: 2

* More consumer awareness required: 5

* Too much hype surrounds organics. It would be more acceptable if marketed as "alternative" than "the best": 1

* Market is too small, due to lack of consumer awareness. If people knew all the chemicals involved in conventional farming, they'd rush



Northern Rivers Rural Buying Service Pty Ltd

STOCKING A LARGE RANGE OF GOODS SUITABLE FOR THE ORGANIC FARMER

White oil

Dipel

Derris Dust

Pyrethrum

Garlic Spray

Soap Spray

Sulphur

Protein Hydrolysate

Yeast Autolysate

Codacide Oil

Symbex microbial spray

KDL potassium spray

Blood & Bone

Dynamic Lifter

Quinphos

Reactive rock phosphate

Maxi Crop

Seasol

Fish Emulsion

Trace Elements

Work Clothes

Soil pH kits

Full soil & plant tissue

analysis kits

Grafting & pruning equipment

Fruit picking sticks and bags

Crates & cartons

Brush Cutters

Chipping Hoes

Windbreak & Weedmat

Seeds

Shadecloth & Greenhouse film

Nursery Equipment

Pumps & irrigation

Poly pipe & fittings

PVC pipe & Drain Coil

Irrigation Designs

Water Filters

Work Boots

For a great deal see the EXPERTS at the RURAL BUYING SERVICE WHERE IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER. Over 40 stores in Lismore discounting to our members which costs only \$25 annually

**145 CASINO STREET
SOUTH LISMORE**

- to buy organic: 2
 - * It's labour intensive, but doesn't pay more: 4
 - * I have good looking produce, but get hardly any money: 2
 - * The Sydney organic agents rip you off: 1
 - * NFA proposal for organics stinks of corruption: 2
 - * All food should be organic, certification 75% cheaper and done by the Dept of Ag: 1
- (We have a dreamer here. I like that. -Elle)*

What's your main market for your organic produce?

- to processor/wholesaler: 28
- thru co-op or organic association: 14
- sell directly to retailer: 12
- directly to consumer: 11
- process or value add to your own product: 6
- other: agent: 2 family: 1

How did you develop your market:

- developed own contacts: 27
- assisted by certifying body: 16
- assisted by other organic producer: 4
- assisted by Dept of Ag: 3
- assisted by consultant: 7

- other: co-op: 2 marketing agent: 1

Do you believe enough assistance is available to organic producers to market their product?

- Yes: 16 No: 39

What additional assistance would you like to see:

- * A national body and campaign promoting organic produce: 10
- * Better awareness of organic produce by wholesalers and retailers: 2
- * More advertising of the benefits of "food" in its pure state rather than chemical poisons and sprays: 5
- * Market reports comparing conventional and organic prices: 1
- * A listing of organic wholesalers: 3
- * Uncertified food should not be allowed in the market place: 1
- * Central info body/networking: 2
- * Uniform label: 1
- * Commitment and better knowledge from Dept of Ag: 5
- * Higher import tariffs: 4
- * Levy towards promotion: 1
- * Guidelines for interstate trading of organic produce: 1
- * More communication between growers and marketers: 1
- * Government assistance and support for advertising: 3
- * More organic agents with ethics: 3
- * Recognition by the NFA: 4
- * Assistance in drying, chafing, storage on a co-op basis: 3
- * Labeling of conventional produce with chemical inputs: 2

Are you involved in value adding or further processing your organic produce?

- Yes: 15 No: 28

Which of the following statement best applies to your further processing or value-adding enterprise:

- Value adding part is more profitable than the farming business: 5
- Value adding part is as profitable: 6
- Value adding part is less profitable: 4

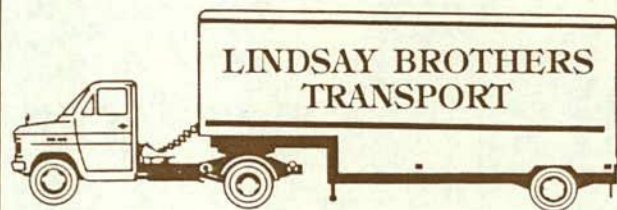
What do you consider the largest challenges/problems facing Australia's organic industry?

- * Lack of unity and cohesion: 10
- * Too many certifying bodies: 2

- * Lack of a national organisation: 1
 - * High cost of (continuing) certification: 4
 - * Clarification of organic guidelines both as growers and marketers: 2
 - * Public education of the common sense of organic farming: 8
 - * Consumer awareness/ignorance: 25
 - * Highlighting what a dead end conventional practices are: 1
 - * Lack of public support: 3
 - * Lack of government support: 10
 - * Good quality: 5
 - * Continuous supply: 4
 - * Secure markets through pooling: 3
 - * Gluts: 1
 - * Competition from chain stores where customers buy on price and not on quality and having to compete with conventional produce: 4
 - * Convincing the public that a few spots on the skin is OK and that blemish free produce is generally chemically treated: 3
 - * Obtaining premium prices: 5
 - * Expectation that higher prices will be paid: 2
 - * High cost of labour: 2
 - * Government bureaucracy and regulation: 2
 - * The weather: 1
 - * Government policy re import replacement, level playing field etc: 6
 - * Overseas attitude towards Australia: 1
 - * Misuse of organic label: 7
 - * Credibility: 3
 - * Marketing: 7
 - * More info wanted on pests and diseases; lack of scientific education: 7
 - * Overcoming isolation: 1
 - * Lack of advertising funds for promotion: 6
 - * Retailer attitude: 3
 - * Dept of Ag assistance for research and trials; ignorance by Dept of Ag: 2
 - * Import replacement and export enhancement: 1
 - * Monopolies of conventional growers: 1
 - * Recognition as an industry working for the Nation's health: 5
 - * Australia is too involved in international treaties such as UN and GATT: 1
 - * Bombard the media with results of trials, health improvements, environmental recoveries etc.: 2
 - * Multinational industrial sabotage: 2
 - * Greedy manufacturers who charge too much and pay too little: 1
 - * Finding and keeping clean land, and water: 2
 - * Chemical and political links: 4
 - * Chemical companies and their big budgets: 1
 - * NFA's treatment of organics: 5
 - * PVR (Plant Variety Rights): 2
- Any further comments?**
- * Because of the diversified produce of organic /biodynamic farms they do not receive the same recognition by local, state and federal governments as conventional producers, who use intensive farming for a single crop: 1
 - * As more people make the transition to organics, more assistance must come from the Dept of Ag: 3
 - * It's hard work. There should be emphasis on backyard production rather than broadacre: 1
 - * The government should help more: 3
 - * The government should:
 - 1) support organics as healthy for land and people

- 2) subsidise conversion like European governments do: 1
- 3) require conventional food to be labeled with chemicals used in production: 1 (right on!)
- 4) help with consumer education : 1 (my sentiments entirely)
- * Organic fertilizers and sprays should be as freely available as conventional ones: 1
- * We're too involved in "them or us". Our produce should look good when placed next to conventional: 1
- * The government seems uninterested in healthy people, as there are not enough tax dollars in health: 1
- * Groups such as farmer organisations and Greening Australia etc. need to get together and promote more sustainable farming methods to conventional farmers urgently: 1
- * More assistance and info regarding organics required: 1
- * Insufficient lending by banks, so too many cottage industries are unable to expand.

Well, there you go! Many, many thanks to the members who helped us with this. Your comments in particular are really interesting. I heard from Tony who, on his certification rounds, received complaints from some members who thought this survey was an imposition and who refused to return their forms. That is also understandable. But after the exec decision to take part in it, I have dutifully filled out the papers myself, even though I didn't agree with it. I must admit it was worth it, just to find out about you, our OHGA members, and what your thoughts on the organic industry are. Thanks again. -Elle



LINDSAY BROTHERS TRANSPORT

CARRYING YOUR FRESH HERBS
AND OTHER PRODUCE
DAILY
TO CAPITAL CITY MARKETS

Refrigerated, reliable, dependable
Depots at:

Alstonville, Brisbane, Bundaberg,
Childers, Coffs Harbour, Cudgen,
Gatton, Melbourne, Munduberra,
Stanthorpe, Sydney.

Ph. 066 28 3990
(Alstonville Depot)

Natural Herbal Tonic!



Herbal A.O.

(Antioxidant Tonic Formula)

Lost the Spring in your Step?
Get back on top with a good herbal
Antioxidant Tonic.

Greenridge's Herbal A.O. with herbs like Ginkgo, Bilberry and Siberian Ginseng, helps improve stamina and endurance while exerting an antioxidant effect over your whole body.

Available at quality Health supplement retailers



*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 of fertilisers.

Double strength blended SM6 liquid seaweed with a 4.6 pH and containing 30% weight to volume of soluble seaweed solids is incredibly rich in all the minerals from the sea.

for more specific information contact:

The well known results from SM6 spray that mixes with all other sprays, are:

- ✿ earlier flowering and over a longer period
- ✿ brighter colours and stronger scent
- ✿ herbs will have slightly larger leaves

**ARTHUR RILEY
151 EDINBURGH STREET
COFFS HARBOUR 2450
or phone (reverse charge)
066 - 52 2656**



BOOK REVIEW

AUSTRALIAN HERB INDUSTRY RESOURCE GUIDE second edition

by Kim Fletcher, Focus on Herbs
Consultancy & Information Service,
PO Box 203, Launceston 7250
105 pages, \$18 plus \$2 p&p

It's very difficult to put together a resource guide of any sort, but Kim Fletcher managed to capture the Australian herb industry in this one.

Categories listed are:

- * consultants
- * courses
- * display gardens
- * equipment
- * essential oils
- * fresh-cut and dried herbs
- * general
- * herbal events
- * importers/manufacturers
- * medicinal
- * nurseries
- * publications

- * seeds
- * societies/organisations
- * overseas contacts

The book closes with a questionnaire which you're asked to complete if you want to be included in future editions of this resource guide.

As you can see from the list of categories, you will be able to find contact addresses and phone nrs. of people and businesses in every aspect of herbs in the book. I have already found several that I've been looking for for a while.

Of course, a directory of this kind is only as good as its entries, and I have spotted a few that are already out of date or slightly exaggerated, but that is to be expected. Verification of all the entries would be nigh impossible and so time-consuming that by the time all the research were done, a guide like this would be completely outdated.

The cost of the Herb Industry Resource Guide is \$18 plus \$2 postage and is available directly from Kim Fletcher. Discounts are available for bulk purchases of five or more copies.

A recommended book for all those interested in the Australian herb industry.

- Elle

Continued from front page.

The only thing we can do now is to send them an avalanche of letters, demanding that they decide in favour of domestic organic controls.

We considered a form letter that would make it easy for you, and Tony Ullman enquired about postcards that we could print and send, but we heard from several knowledgeable sources that the only submissions that really make an impact are handwritten letters. So we hope that all our members will participate and write to their respective Ministers of Health.

We have only been able to get the address of the NSW Minister of Health from our Federal MP's office. You, who are in Vic, Tas, SA, Q, WA, NT and Canberra could find the address in Telecom's white pages, or if you have any problems call your local State MP. It's the least (s)he can do for you.

For NSW:

The Honourable Andrew Refshauge, MP
Parliament House,
Macquarie St,
Sydney 2000

The letter itself can read something like this:

Dear Sir (or Madam),

Re: AOIS application A214, labelling of organic foods on the domestic market.

As an organic grower (or consumer of organic foods) I am greatly concerned that the National Food Authority has still not resolved the question of labelling organics in Australia.

You represent our state on the NFA panel, and I strongly urge you to decide in favour of strict organic food controls. That means that the produce, or food product, which is labelled "organic" should have gone through the certification process by one of the following organisations:

- * Organic Herb Growers of Australia (OHGA)
- * NASAA
- * BFA
- * Bio-Dynamic Research Institute (Demeter)
- * ORGAV

Yours sincerely,
.....

Let's do it! If we don't try we have only ourselves to blame if they make the wrong decision!
- Elle



Fundamental Foods

MAIN OFFICE
Lismore
Ph 066 222 199

NONI'S
Byron Bay
Ph 066 856 429

BALLINA FAIR
Ballina
Ph 066 868 252

We supply the freshest products at the cheapest prices

- * Extensive range of health foods and supplements
- * Organic fruit and veg's, also non-hybrid seeds and seedlings.
We also stock environmentally safe insect sprays for the house, garden and pets

- * Discounts for bulk buys

We need growers of organic produce. We pay best market price for quality produce

WHOLESALE OF QUALITY PRODUCE
Enquiries : Phone Tony at Lismore [066] 222 199

O.H.G.A. & HERB GROWER

**YES! I would like to become a member
of OHGA and receive the HERB GROWER.**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ P.code _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Please find enclosed payment for:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Joining fee	\$ 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Australian membership	\$ 40
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concession membership	\$ 30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business membership	\$ 50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Overseas membership	\$ 55
<input type="checkbox"/>	Application for certification	\$ 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certification fee	<u>\$125</u>
total		\$ _____

FOR SALE:

Valpadana rotary hoe, (2 wheel -drive tractor), heavy duty walk-behind, vgc. \$1100.00 ono. Ph. 066-840230.

ORGANIC NON-HYBRID SEEDS, all culinaries and some medicinals (echinacea purp, agrimony, grindelia, valerian, feverfew, burdock).

Phone or fax Elle on 066-291057 or send SAE to HFA, P O Box 6099, South Lismore 2480.

DO YOU WANT WORK EXPERIENCE?

Give me a ring if you want to help me set up a new medicinal herb plot. We'll give you lunch and herb cuttings to take home.
-Elle, 291057

HERB GROWER ADVERTISING RATES

from January 1995

<u>Full Page</u> <i>casual</i>	<u>1/2 Page</u>	<u>1/4 Page</u>
\$75	\$55	\$35
<i>regular (3 or more consecutive issues)</i>		
\$60	\$45	\$25

<u>Backpage: Casual</u>	B/W \$100
	Colour n/a
<u>Regular</u>	B/W \$80
	Colour \$250

CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads of up to 4 lines are free to members of OHGA.

Others pay \$2.50 per line payable when placing the ad.

(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.**

WANTED:

Mulch materials and manures from organically certified properties.
Call any committee member.
(see backpage for phone nrs.)

FOR SALE:

Organic worm castings, OHGA certified.

1 kg - \$3, 5 kg - \$12.

Also worm farms for sale.

Contact Barbara Downes on 075-909762.

GROWERS WANTED TO GROW HERBS for the KOALA TEA CO.

Must be certified organic and on large acreage.

If you can grow good mint, lemongrass, chamomile, rosehips or rosellas, chicory root, lemonbalm or passion flower, and you have proper drying facilities, please contact Howard on 066 - 291057.

He will ask you to send him a dried sample for evaluation.

MIRACLE PLANT GROWTH FROM SOUND WAVES



SONIC BLOOM



The revolutionary new growing technique which involves an organic foliar spray applied with sound stimulation. For commercial and home garden use.

Small acreage and large commercial sound generators are available.

The organic solution for dramatic yield increases in medicinal and culinary herbs. Recent lab research reports potency increases of up to 400 % in Sonic Bloom treated herbs!

To find out about Sonic Bloom success for yourself, fill out the form below.

ORDER FORM

☐ Please send me my **FREE** Sonic Bloom info-pack

☐ Please send me the **Sonic Bloom Video** for \$ 25.00 (+ \$ 5.00 postage) which includes 2 hours of fascinating footage from avocados to zucchinis.

☐ Please send me the **Home and Garden Kit** for \$ 135.00 (+ \$ 5.00 postage)

☐ Please contact me for commercial package details.

PAYMENT DETAILS: I enclosed cheque/money order for \$ payable to

Sonic Bloom Queensland Pty. Ltd. or charge my

☐ Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Expiry Date:

No. 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 Signature:

SONIC BLOOM QUEENSLAND PTY. LTD.

A.C.N. 010 472 590

Bryan Sait:

Lot 1, Tavern Road
Agnes Water, Q, 4677
Ph.: (079) 74 9500
Fax: (079) 74 9476

Graeme Sait:

P.O. Box 430
Noosa Heads, Qld, 4567
Ph.: (074) 49 1837
Fax: (074) 49 1837

015 741 815
123

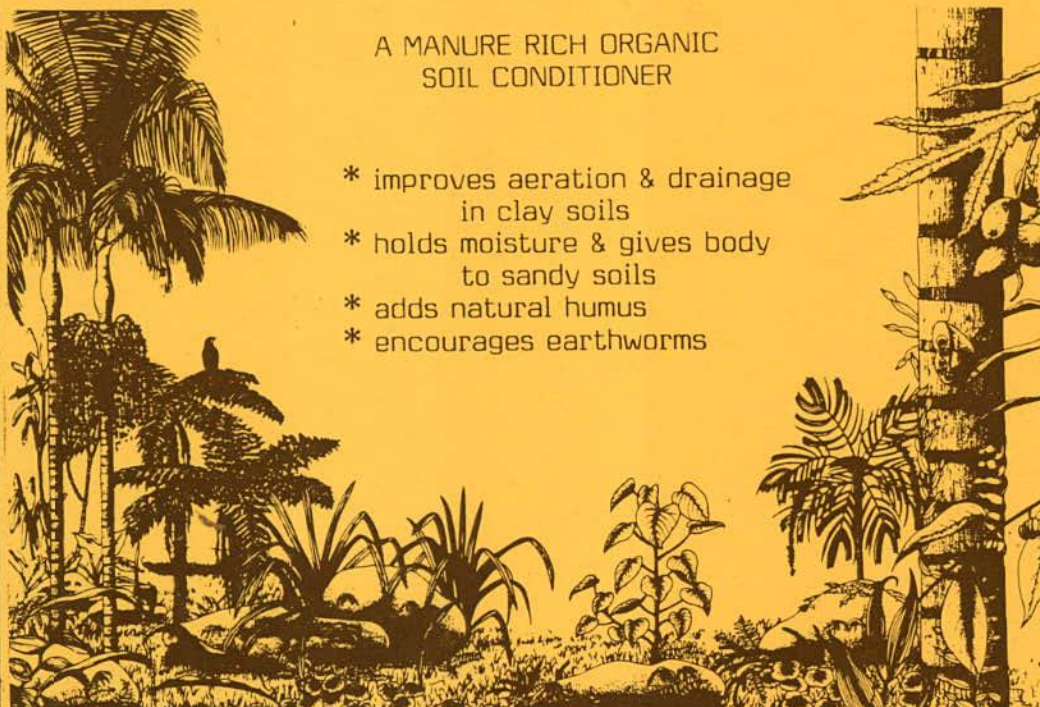
phoned - re adv - bfr message on machine

TRUE COMPOST

THE NATURAL ALTERNATIVE

A MANURE RICH ORGANIC
SOIL CONDITIONER

- * improves aeration & drainage
in clay soils
- * holds moisture & gives body
to sandy soils
- * adds natural humus
- * encourages earthworms



another professional quality product from

Teven Road Ballina, NSW
(066) 864674

GO GROW

HERBS WANTED



• PLANT COMPANY PTY LTD. •

T.G.A. LICENCE No. 50725

- ORGANIC HERBS NEEDED FOR MEDICINES, TEAS ETC.
- TOP PRICES PAID FOR CERTIFIED ORGANIC HERBS OF EXPORT QUALITY

CONTACT RAW MATERIALS MANAGER FOR MORE DETAILS

PH: 03 762 3777 OR FAX: 03 762 9992

OR write to, or send a sample and we will offer you a firm price

P.P.C. 2/24 LONDON DRIVE BAYSWATER VICTORIA 3153