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Page 3

Page 10

Page 13 (update)

HERB GROWER

Page 14/5

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SEED GERMINATION
Tests, hints and methods
PAGE 6

**HERBAL MEDICINE
FROM THE KITCHEN**
Gardeners need suffer
no more
PAGE 9

GINSENG
How to grow this panacea
PAGE 10

**COLOURS AND TEXTURE
IN THE HERB GARDEN**
What to plant to create a
beautiful herb garden
PAGE 18

AGM BUSINESS
PAGE 26



OHGA still #1 Herb Industry Body in Australia

When, at the Tocal Herbs and Essential Oils Conference, which OHGA President Howard attended, there was a call for the Dept of Ag to become involved in setting up a herb industry body, Howard repeatedly said that there already was such a body, namely OHGA. Many participants, however, objected to the word *Organic* in our name! So a steering committee was formed, without OHGA representation, which consisted of a.o. the big commercial boys in herbs, like Master Foods, Waters Trading, the Spice Association of Australasia and Woods & Woods (all importers of herbs into Australia). "The real industry, in terms of growers, was notable by its absence", Kim Fletcher, author and OHGA member, who also attended the Tocal conference, remarked in a letter to Howard.

Their recommendation at the special meeting they held at the end of May at NSW Ag in Rydalmere, was for the Spice Association to become the umbrella organisation for the herb industry in Australia.

Kim reported that at the recent AGM of the Spice Association, however, this proposal was voted on and rejected. It was felt that 1) it was not their role, 2) their administration would be swamped by potential growers, 3) such a move would divert the association from its aims and objectives.

Other OHGA members to attend the Tocal meeting and to express concern at the way the Herb Industry could be hijacked by big business were David and Christina Leese, whose letter will be published in the next issue.

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Paddock on Top, OHGA Financials, Market Report,
President's Report, Gardening by the Moon, Observations,
Organics, Interesting Stories, Bureaucratic Merry-go-round
and much more*

**NO NUCLEAR TESTING
BOYCOTT FRENCH PRODUCTS**

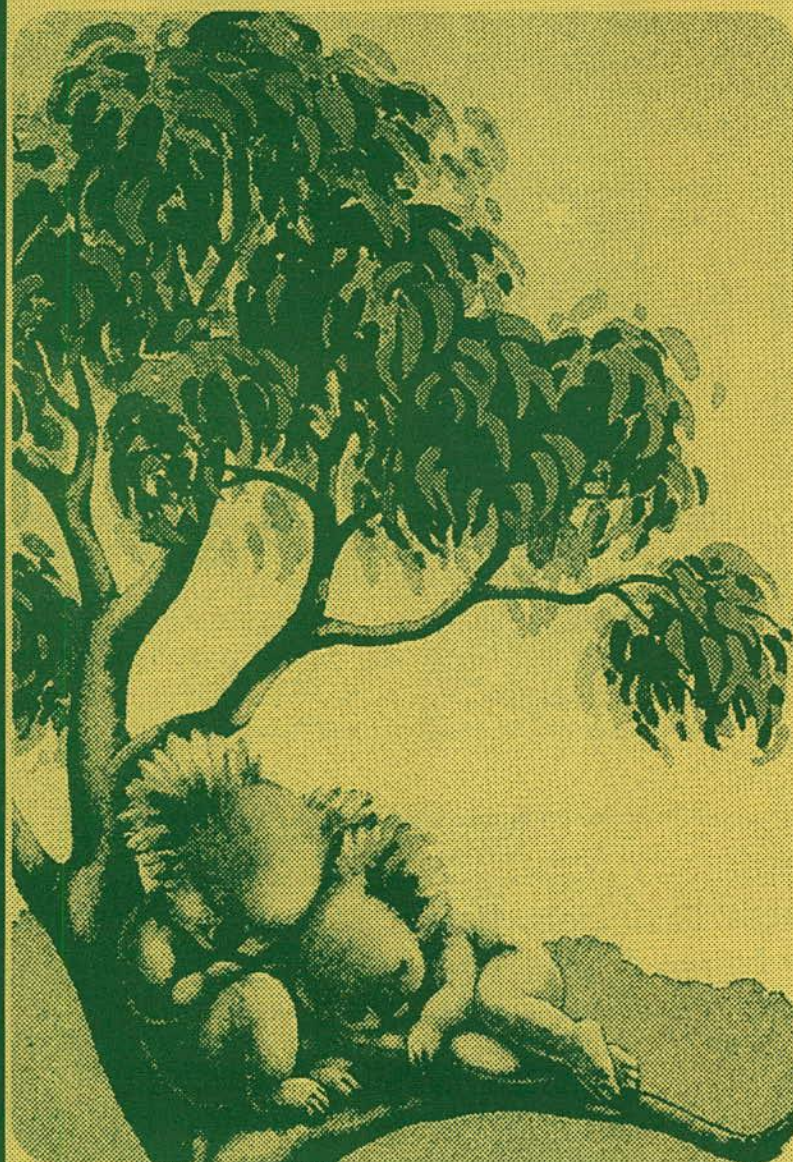


DREAMTIME TEA

When the day is done, snuggle up together and enjoy a quiet cup of our delicious Dreamtime tea.

Only the finest herbs go into making this lovely good night cuppa.

Chamomile, Lemon balm and Passion flowers.



Koala Tea

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in COLES and Woolworths

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range:

Bush Tea
Breakfast Tea
Dreamtime Tea
G'Day Tea
No Worries Tea
Outback Tea



KOALA TEA
Australian Herbal Teas



Howard has just come back from America, where he attended an enormous food show, exhibiting Koala Tea (and stuffing himself with delicious food from all over the world). He told me that organics is big business and very popular over there. Not at all like here, where we are up against an un-cooperative government, public ignorance or indifference and, let's admit it, infighting between groups. No doubt he'll tell you about it in his article. Let's hope that we'll follow America's good example (for a change!) in organics.

I have added four more pages to this issue, as the end of year OTGA business takes up a bit of room, and we're getting more and more advertisers. Hopefully I keep finding enough material to keep the mag at 32 pages. And speaking of material, our next HERB GROWER will be the Christmas issue, where I traditionally fill a few pages with Christmas presents ideas. Do any of you have any hints in that direction? I could sure use your ideas! I think I may have exhausted all of mine, although I can always re-run some for new members. Please, if you have any Christmas specials, send them in before the end of September. So far we have not received any photo's for the competition, but it's early days yet. We may extend the deadline for sending them in.

As soon as this issue is all done, I'm going to start packing for my trip to Holland. I have a few questions for people there, like how can Europeans let the atrocious bloodshed in Bosnia happen. It's Hitler all over again, except this time no-one can excuse themselves by saying they didn't know. I really don't understand what's going on. And why don't they stop Chirac in his megalomaniacal attitude. What use is this European Union if they can't just forbid the French to do the testing at Mururoa. Or don't they care because it's a long way off. I hope to get some answers.

Meanwhile, keep the pressure up on Keating and Gareth Evans. I've been faxing them regularly. And get yourself a list of French products to be boycotted. There are things on it that you don't think off as French, like BIC razors, pens and lighters; Coolabah, Craigmoor, Jacobs Creek, Orlando and Wyndham Estate wines; Ambre Solaire suncare; Damart thermal underwear; Ella Bache beauty products (plus of course all the other French cosmetics and perfumes); Aspro Clear; Rennies; Vibrac and Vetcare products; and National Mutual Life is about to be bought by the French too, so get yourself a new insurance company.

Also, please become a member of Greenpeace, or at least give them some money to keep going. They are doing such a great job.

For the first time in a couple of years, we Rubins are taking a family holiday and we need house and dog minders. We'll be gone for about a month (we hope) from Christmas till the end of January. We have two lovely silky terriers who'll be sad without us, unless we find them nice surrogate parents. You won't have to do anything to the garden, unless you want to. We prefer people without small kids. There'll be two bedrooms and two bathrooms for you and all other mod cons. Give us a ring.

She

And please remember to renew your membership if you haven't done so. This is the last issue you'll receive if you forget. **DO IT NOW!!!!!!**

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Absolute copy deadline (for ads, letters, articles etc)

for the November/December issue is September 20th



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OHGA'S MAIL

Dear OHGA,

We have enclosed a membership application. I believe that you have been informed of the recent founding of the Tasmanian Herb Growers Ass. We are not an accreditation body, but have formed to market and coordinate crops to meet the demand for larger crops on the mainland and overseas.

I have been elected "El Presidente", more by default than any other reason! Things are moving very fast! We have started with a 50 strong membership (very large by Tas standards).

We photocopied and handed out your brochure at the meeting, so no doubt you will get some response. So far I've heard of about 7 of us requiring accreditation, so it looks more financially viable than when I first contacted you.

We, i.e. Gaia's Garden, have full organic accreditation with T.O.P., but realise that it is far more appropriate that we have specialised accreditation.

The Herb Ass. will be applying for membership, so you will have "official" notification etc.

Regards, Heather Thorpe, Gaia's Garden, Huonville, Tas.

No space for other letters that came in. We'll print them in the next issue. -Elle

WHAT YOU WROTE ON THE RENEWAL FORM

So far (beginning August) most have expressed the opinion that OHGA should remain a part of OPAC and the AQIS accreditation program, even though some had a few home truths about bureaucracy to air. In the next issue, when all renewals are in, we will give a summary of what you wrote.

There have been only a few wishes for content of the mag, so we must be doing it right. There have been two offers of "little articles from time to time". Please, send them in! Any stories, experiences etc are welcome. You don't have to be a master writer, I'll clean up any spelling mistakes and set your sentences right, if need be.

Great to hear from you!



A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Another OHGA year draws to a close, and it is time to reflect on the issues of the past year and to look towards the future.

No doubt the NFA and the domestic standards fiasco has to be the number one item for me, as I have pushed OHGA towards recognition and accreditation by AQIS and membership in OPAC. My reasoning was that when, and if, domestic standards are legislated, those organisations which are accredited by AQIS for export would naturally become the certifying bodies for Australia. But bureaucracy doesn't always work according to logic. Here we have a federal body, the National Food Association, stating that they cannot allow another federal body, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, to come between them and their power. This logic is all wrong and is no doubt the result of some other agenda, which we are not privy to. So the fight goes on and we must reassess our involvement with AQIS/OPAC.

With pending amalgamation of NASAA and the BFA, the whole OPAC committee and future of the organic industry becomes questionable. We have always stated that we believe the committee should be based upon proportional representation with proportional cost sharing. If due to this amalgamation, our contribution should be increased, we will firmly reject the decision. The current committee is already not fairly proportioned, as we are to pay the same fees as the larger organisations, but have less representatives on the committee. This issue will be dealt with at the next OPAC meeting.

OHGA has taken part in several major fairs, exhibitions, and conferences this year. Good organisation skills were displayed and a lot of fun was had by all who took part. Magda even took our her kitchen stove to cook up a storm at the Dept of Agriculture's 'Taste of the North Coast'.

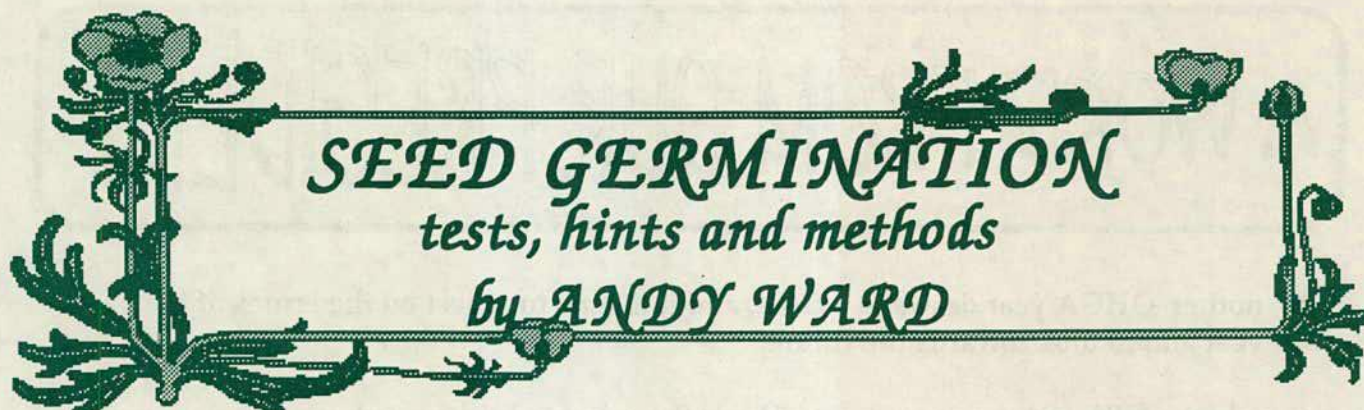
Our magazine HERB GROWER has certainly grown by leaps and bounds, thanks to the new computerization and square eyes of our editor. We are also fortunate to have so many loyal advertisers. Please support them, as they support OHGA. We are now almost ready for a colour front page and national distribution. It'll be good to see those photos as they come in.

The North Coast is fortunate to have a strong government lobby. It appears that a combined effort of the Business Enterprise Centre, and the Amalgamated Unions have successfully applied for a major grant of \$250,000, to undertake feasibilities for a north coast food processing industry. The Organic Herb Growers have been invited to become a part of this exciting project.

As our membership also continues to expand, OHGA's future looks promising.

Howard Rubin





SEED GERMINATION

tests, hints and methods

by ANDY WARD

Seed often does not germinate for cultural reasons, e.g. the soil is not warm enough, there's not enough soil moisture, or the seed is not in firm contact with the soil.

Sometimes the seeds germinate but die before they emerge above the ground. This can happen in dry soils, when the radical, or newly emerging root, dehydrates and withers.

Over-wet soils favour fungal diseases which can attack the radical.

Bearing this in mind, coupled with a bit of observation, these problems can usually be prevented.

There are three parts of a seed which influence viability:

1) **The testa or seed coat.** This may require specific treatment to enable the seed to absorb water, or to break 'built in' dormancy factors, which I'll get to later.

2) **The embryo,** obviously the living bit that grows into something. Sometimes it just fails to develop, but more often it dies as a result of mould, disease, insect attack etc.

3) **The endosperm,** the waxy, starchy 'everything else', which feeds the developing embryo until it develops enough roots and leaves to look after itself. Being very nutritious, it is often attacked by fungi and insects, and its value rapidly diminishes if conditions are poor, or seed is handled or stored badly.

GERMINATION TESTS

If you already have the spare bedroom set up as a horticulture lab, you could use the excised embryo, tetrazolium or x-ray tests.

It is easier to do a trial by sowing a known amount of seed (weight, count or volume). If in ideal conditions, you sow 20 beans and get six emerging, you might have a problem.

Another way is to throw some seed into a bucket of water. If it floats, it supposedly has hollow spaces where the embryo or endosperm

has withered, or been bored into by insects. **Good seed sinks.**

Check the percentage, skim off the chaff and quickly drain and dry the good stuff. I reckon this method of verification might be feasible for larger seed, but can't see myself doing it for carrots or lettuce.

Seed should be stored away from light, in an airtight container. At just above freezing point is optimal, but the bottom of the fridge or a very cool cupboard is OK. Don't put them in the freezer. The actual storage needs differ between species, but the above is average. Seed must also be kept dry enough not to attract mould.

Longevity, or the length of time a seed remains viable, also differs widely between Families, Genus and species. This sort of information is not readily available. I usually keep seed for three years, or less when the variety is known to have a short viability, e.g. parsnip.

GERMINATION DORMANCY FACTORS

These can be as simple as the need for moisture or the correct soil temperature for the seed to germinate.

Proper sowing times and after-care in annual flowers, vegies etc. overcome dormancy without us even remembering its existence in these plants.

Other seeds are much more difficult. For instance: it's believed that some natives e.g. *Eremophila spp*, may need the smoke, not the heat, of bushfires to become viable. Orchid spores need a relationship with certain micro organisms to germinate, and other orchid species may require associations with different micro organism species.

Many seeds that are considered difficult to germinate are not so because dormancy is difficult to overcome, but because we have not yet learned the necessary technique.

Two terms often encountered in relation to



overcoming dormancy are stratification and scarification.

STRATIFICATION

In cold regions it is not advantageous for seeds, dropped in autumn, to germinate if the winter will be freezing and they're going to be covered by snow. These seeds need a cold period, then warmer temperatures to signal spring, before they will germinate. This type of dormancy is overcome by placing the seed in the bottom of the fridge for a length of time, depending on the species.

SCARIFICATION

Some seed, especially in the Proteaceae family, develop extremely hard testa (seed coats). Usually vast amounts of seed are produced annually and lie around for a lot of years waiting for a bushfire. The heat cracks the testa and the seed germinates with the first rain. Competition from other plants was reduced by fire and the species survives, even if the parent plant was lost.

Natural scarification can be simulated in a number of ways:

- * Pour near boiling water over the seeds and leave them for at least 12 hours (no more than 48).

- * Breaking the testa physically, either by nicking it with a sharp knife, or rubbing it between two blocks covered with sand paper. Be careful not to damage the insides of the seed when using this method. Sand paper can cause a lot of damage very quickly. Some laboratories use various dilutions and durations of acid treatments to get through the testa.

- * Still other methods include heating in an oven, or even lighting a fire over the seed. Remember bushfires are high intensity heat but only for a short duration. You only need to crack or char the seed coat, DON'T overdo it.

This article first appeared in Natural Growing, the journal of the HENRY DOUBLEDAY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

HOW TO APPLY THE ABOVE TO HERB SEEDS

As many culinary herb seeds originate from northern or central Europe, the simulated winter treatment, i.e. fridging them for a few days, applies. Mediterraneans such as thyme, rosemary, oregano and marjoram will usually not need it. Parsley seeds will do best if you not only freeze them for a week, but then

afterwards pour near boiling water over them and let them sit overnight.

Check a good herb book (for that you can't do better than Mrs. Grieve's A Modern Herbal) where your seeds originate.

Coriander is one of the seeds that will germinate much faster if the coat is cracked. Often it's enough to rub the seeds between your hands.

Many herb seeds will readily germinate if they've been soaked overnight. The one drawback is that it makes them more difficult to sow evenly as they'll stick together. - Elle



COCONUT POWER

Some years ago, Oliver Kennedy who is a lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at Wollongong Uni, became interested in alternative technology in the Pacific Islands communities. This led him to research the use of coconut oil to fuel diesel engines, and his success enabled him to enter the 1994 'Energy Challenge' with a coconut fuelled van.

It came first in the commercial vehicle class and third overall - quite an achievement. It also achieved three times the greenhouse gas efficiency of its nearest rival, a highlight that impressed both the organisers and the press.

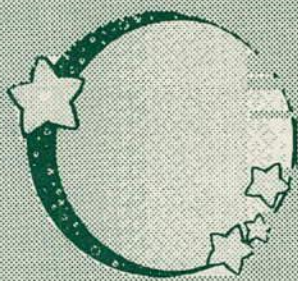
Oliver and his students are aiming for an outright win next time with a semi-trailer which appears to have an advantage when it comes to scoring points for efficiency.

Coconuts, of course, are plentiful all the year round in the Islands, whereas diesel fuel has to be imported and is extremely expensive. Furthermore, extraction of the oil is cheap and simple and it works in engines without modification.

As a footnote, Oliver informed the writer of this article that he had just mowed his lawn, using 25% coconut oil and 75% unleaded petrol in his 2-stroke.

- Subud Australia National Reporter,
April '95, via Nimbin News





GARDENING BY THE MOON

by
Elle Fikke-Rubin



SEPTEMBER

17 Last Quarter.

18-24 Days for planning, not planting. Mark out a new area to cultivate, or clean up an old bed. Checking the pH in your various growing locations is a job that can be done. Adding some dolomite or lime in those beds that are under 6. would be a good idea. If you have a heavy clay soil, get some gypsum in and apply that too.

Fertilising is also a spring job. I usually hoist a bag of Organic Life into the wheelbarrow and roll it around, all the while throwing handfuls of the fertiliser hither and thither.

25 New Moon.

26-30 Days to plant or sow leafy annuals, such as lettuces, chinese cabbage, silver beet, parsley, basil, borage, chervil (at least in cooler climes), japanese greens, cresses, rocket, and others you can think of.

OCTOBER

1-2 The First Quarter of the Moon takes up two days this time. So relax.

3-8 Time to plant or sow seedbearing annuals and flowers. Beans, peas, tomatoes, capsicums, cucumbers, egg plant, zucchini's etc. etc. can all go in.

We usually only think of herbs as healing plants, but the vegetable kingdom has many such too. Peas, for instance, can be used both internally and externally for piles and varicose veins. They are rich in Vit E and, mashed, can be used as a poultice for sores and bruises, or as a face mask. The water that both peas and beans have been cooked in is fantastic as a facial wash. The prolific cucumber is used in all sorts of cosmetics and, fresh, it soothes irritated eyes, sun and wind burn. It will bleach freckles and soften hard skin.

9 Full Moon.

10-16 Root crops and perennial time. Most herbs can be planted now. Put in some flowering ones, such as feverfew, particularly useful for migraine sufferers, pyrethrum to make your own pyrethrum dust or spray, and echinacea to make your own tincture.

Lawns can be repaired, bushes planted and trees put in. And root vegetables, like carrots and beetroot, can be sown.

17 Last Quarter.

18-23 Good days to keep busy by making a liquid manure or a garlic spray, collecting snails or preparing a new bed.

24 New Moon (and a total solar eclipse somewhere in the world).

25-30 Time to plant or sow leafy annuals.

There's of course basil, all varieties such as bush, purple, cinnamon, aniseed, holy, lemon, lettuce leaf and I'm sure there's others I don't know about. This is the perfect time to plant them.

Many are the stories about basil. Romans and Greeks thought bush basil was an evil plant which brought misfortune. Maybe they got that idea because they saw Egyptians and Persians plant and scatter it on graves, and they were not entirely comfortable with death. Later, in Italy, Crete and Moldavia it became a token of love.

Sweet basil, on the other hand, is thought to either have been used in some regal ointment (basileus is the greek word for king), or to attract scorpions (basilisk), and looking at a certain future king, I would say these two observations are not entirely contradictory.

In India where you can see basil growing wild in rocky desert places, the plant is cherished in every Hindu home as the protecting spirit of the family. At death, every good Hindu goes to rest with a basil leaf on his breast as his passport to paradise. (Mrs. Grieve)

Arab women often brush powdered basil and lavender mixed through their hair to perfume it.

31 First Quarter.

NOVEMBER

1-6 These days, and particularly Thursday and Friday when the Moon is in Pisces, are the days to sow or plant seedbearing and flowering annuals. Borage, calendula, chamomile, sunflowers, the slow bolt coriander, fennel (seeds will freshen the breath and stop wind), beans, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, egg plant, melons, sweet corn, squash, etc. etc.

7 Full Moon.

8-14 Time to plant perennials and rootcrops. Most herbs, trees, bushes and lots of root vegetables. **HAVE FUN!**



HERBAL MEDICINE FROM THE KITCHEN

by Michael Schubert and Julie Fricker

On June 17, in the Lismore Workers Club, Michael and Julie gave a demonstration of herbal medicine, using everyday kitchen items. As many of you missed this workshop, we will reproduce some of the recipees which are of definite, and probably frequent, use to us herb growers.

POULTICES FOR JOINTS AND INFLAMMATION

As any hard working herb grower knows, our work can give us sore shoulders, elbows, knees, back and neck. These pains can easily be relieved by applying the following poultices:

Chilli and potato poultice - you need:

- * instant mashed potato - one cup
- * hot water - half a cup or less
- * chilli powder - one teaspoon
- * paper towel, plastic wrap and tape.

Shape the mashed potato into a pattie and assemble the poultice: paper towel, then pattie, then chilli. Place over the injury site, wrap with plastic and seal the ends with tape. Leave on for up to one hour. Repeat as required.

Note: If sensitivity to the chilli occurs, rub fresh *Aloe vera* gel from the leaf onto the skin.

Cabbage poultice - you need:

- * cabbage (about one quarter) - bruised
- * thyme - one handful, leaves and flowers
- * tablespoon of fenugreek - powdered
- * chilli powder - one teaspoon
- * slippery elm powder - two tablespoons
- * hot apple cider vinegar - to moisten.

Mix all the dry ingredients and moisten with hot apple cider vinegar. Spread on a cloth and apply warm. Wrap with plastic and tape to retain the heat. Leave on the joint for up to one hour, or when the poultice becomes too hot/uncomfortable. Apply this poultice, as required, up to two times a day, for several days.

Note: If sensitivity to chilli occurs, rub fresh *Aloe vera* gel from a leaf onto the skin.

WASHING SODA BATH

- * 250 grs washing soda, dissolved in a full warm/hot bath.

Soak for twenty minutes, rinse and relax. This bath is guaranteed to relax you to the point of falling asleep, so only use it after the day's work is done. A smaller amount of washing soda used in a warm footbath will have much the same effect, but will of course not be as effective for aches and pains. Epsom salts can be substituted in the bath for relief from arthritis.



WARNING: Not to be used if you have low blood pressure or are prone to fainting.

HOT SALT PACK

Heat 1kg of rock salt in an oven/dry frying pan, put into a pillow case and place over the sore body part. Leave in place until the pack is no longer hot (*take your time, that can be hours! - Elle*) and repeat

daily. You can use essential or infused oils, such as lavender or chamomile oil, under the pack.

INFUSED CHILLI OIL

For chilblains, use 10grs chilli powder in 100 ml of vegetable oil, genly heat in a double boiler for 4 hours and filter. Apply three times daily. Can be combined in a base-cream, e.g. sorbolene. (*or melt beeswax and mix the oil with that - Elle.*)

CHILLI OXYMEL

Going out in the cold of the morning for a harvest is not always fun! The following recipe will increase your bodyheat. You need:

- * 5 grs (or about 2 teasp.) chilli powder
- * 200 grs honey
- * 100 ml apple cider vinegar.

Combine the honey and cider vinegar and gently simmer to a syrup. Add the chilli powder to the warm syrup, mix and allow to cool. Let steep for about 48 hours before using. The dosage is 1/4 - 1 teasp. three times a day to increase internal heat. ***



GINSENG

PANAX QUINQUEFOLIUM

As OHGA has received quite a few enquiries lately, both from members and non-members, about the feasibility of growing Ginseng, we'll make it our herb of the month.

Unfortunately the area in which it can be grown in Australia is decidedly limited. For once you who live in the more extreme climate band are the lucky ones.

GINSENG is a short, perennial plant of the Araliaceae botanical family. The latin name is *Panax quinquefolium*, derived from the Greek *Panagos*, a panacea, in reference to the miraculous virtue ascribed to it by the Chinese, who consider it a sovereign remedy in almost all diseases.

American ginseng is a perennial plant which was at one time found wild in the rich, cool woodlands of eastern North America. Popular demand for the roots, which are the part used, wiped out the wild supply and ginseng is now only found under cultivation in certain parts of the US and Canada.

The plants from both America and Asia have essentially the same constituents.

Ginseng grows naturally on the slopes of ravines and shady, well drained mountainous hard wood forests. It is a deciduous perennial that requires a four-seasons climate in general and a cold winter in particular.

It bears 5 compound leaves on a single stalk at maturity. An insignificant grey flower blooms each spring and by late summer has turned into a cluster of crimson fruit, about the size of redcurrants from each of which two or three seeds are obtained. The plant grows between 20-60 cm. in height when wild. The root is creamy yellow or white, resembling a parsnip with rootlets that branch off, sometimes taking the shape of a human body.

The plant can only be grown from seed. This can be planted in pots or directly into the ground. Keeping in mind that ginseng grows naturally in deciduous forests, it is important to try and reproduce a similar situation by covering the sown seed with a mulch of straw or leaves. The seed must not be allowed to dry out. It is quite normal for the seed to take eighteen months or longer to germinate, although sometimes this will happen more quickly.

The first year of growth will bring a stem with three leaves. In the second year, there will be two shoots or branches from the first stem. The root will be slightly bigger and will develop another bud.

The third year will produce three lots of leaves and so on.

The plant will usually not produce berries until the third year of growth, when there will be six. The year after, there will be twelve etc.

As ginseng originates in deciduous forests, it is necessary to provide shade, when growing them as a crop. This is best achieved by using 80% shade cloth. The plant will tolerate a certain amount of dryness, with more damage done by over-watering than by under-watering.

Rainwater, or filtered water, should be used, as chlorine will kill the plants. Protection from snails should also be provided.

The roots need to be a minimum of four years old before harvesting, but obviously the older the plant, the larger the roots.

There are stories (but they may be just that!) of enormous amounts of money being paid for a well developed root, especially if it has that man-shape. Ginseng is sometimes described as the most lucrative, legal crop in the world. There are now large broadacre farms in the US and Canada.

In Korea, the government licences all ginseng farms and supervises the planting of plots.

The growers are required to sell their entire crop of six-year old roots to the Office of Monopoly, where the roots are sorted according to quality. Roots that do not pass stringent inspections, although they may be of very good quality, are sold back to the growers for use in the manufacture of Korean White Ginseng products.

The chosen roots are cleaned and steamed by a special process and dried in a natural atmosphere. This process changes the colour of the ginseng root to a deep red colour and produces the Korean Red Ginseng herbals.

Fusong County in China, known as the birthplace of ginseng, has a 300 year history of planting the crop. Almost every family grows ginseng in addition to the four state-run plantation farms. In recent years ginseng growers have made great progress in controlling plant diseases and insect pests, increasing the output from 1949's $\frac{1}{2}$ kg/m² to the present 1.25 kg/m².

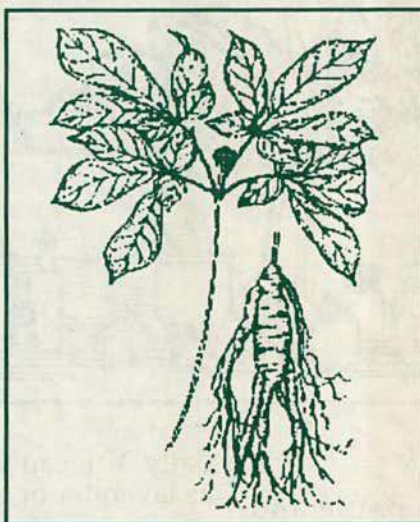
- Elle

Ref: *The Herb Book* - John Lust

A Modern Herbal - Mrs. M Grieve

Mama's Ginseng Garden Ltd - Ontario, Canada

The Herb Age, March 1995



Bureaucratic Merry-go-round....

OHGA member Raymond Livett of Homebush, NSW, is one of us to have written to his Federal and State MP's, on May 9, on the question of organic labelling. He sent us the responses he has received to date.

His Federal MP, Mary Easson wrote on his behalf to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Human Services and Health in Canberra, on May 31, as follows:

Dear Parliamentary Secretary,

I have been approached by a constituent of mine, Mr Raymond Livett (address etc.) who raises the important issue about the National Food Authority not yet resolving the very important question of labelling organics in Australia.

Mr Livett makes the point that as a consumer and intending producer of organic foods, it is crucial that organic foods be correctly and clearly labelled so as to avoid any confusion or misconception.

It has been put forward by Mr Livett that produce or food products labelled "organic" should pass through the certification process of at least one of the following organisations.

1. Organic Herb Growers of Australia (OHGA).
2. NASAA.
3. BFA.
4. Bio-Dynamic Research Institute.
5. ORGAV.

On behalf of Mr Livett, your consideration of this matter would be most appreciated.

Raymond also wrote to Andrew Refshauge MP, NSW Health Minister on May 9, urging him to take strong action in supporting the certification groups and the organic industry. As you may remember the State Ministers of Health are the ones that are most important, as they take a direct part in NFA decisions. The replies were as follows:

on 24 May:

Dear Mr Livett,

I refer to your letter to the Minister for Health concerning the labelling of organic foods.

The Minister has asked me to acknowledge your letter and to indicate that a response will be provided as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

L. Watson, Manager Ministerial Correspondence Section.

Then on 25 May:

Dear Mr Livett,

As you are aware, the Minister for Health the Hon Andrew Refshauge MP, has referred your letter to the Department for reply in relation to the labelling of

organic foods.

Your views have been noted and will be taken into account in determining the Department's position on this matter. Your interest and concern in this matter is appreciated.

If you have any further enquiries the Department contact officer will be Mr Bill Porter, Environmental Health, Food and Nutrition Branch, P O Box 798 Gladesville NSW 2111, telephone (02) 816 0599/

Yours sincerely,
John McMahon, Acting Manager Food and Nutrition Section.

Raymond's State MP, Paul Zammit, also wrote to Refshauge on May 17, as follows:

My dear Minister,

I have received representations from Mr R J H Livett (address etc.) regarding his concerns about the labelling of organic foods.

I enclose a copy of a letter received from Mr Livett, together with a copy of the letter he has written to you personally, and would welcome your advice in the matters raised, so that I may respond accordingly. Yours sincerely etc. etc.

On the same day he wrote to Raymond:

Dear Mr Livett,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the labelling of organic foods.

I have read your letter and noted your comments. However, in view of your concern, I have written to the Minister for Health, the Hon A Refshauge, regarding the matters you raise.

Please find a copy of the letter I have written to the Minister, for your information.

I shall contact you again as soon as I have received a response from the Minister.

Yours sincerely etc etc.

There you go, lots of paper being shuffled and lots of promises. Typical, isn't it? Everyone passing the hot potato, and no doubt all very happy that AQIS and OPAC have withdrawn their proposal. This means that, after a new proposal has been formulated, the NFA will have 18 months in which they can let it sit, before having to decide on anything.

So it looks like nothing will happen for at least another two years!! And the Australian organic industry will look really silly to other countries. What is even worse is that without legislation, every shonky operator here and overseas can pass off their produce or product as organic!!

- Elle



HERB BUSINESS GETAWAY CONFERENCE

January 31 - February 4, 1996
at the Albuquerque Hilton in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

This is the first in what the organisers hope will become an annual event: the Herb Business Winter (for USA) Getaway, organised by Maureen Rogers of the Herb Growing and Marketing Network, a US organisation. The first day is especially for beginners in the herb business, with excellent speakers who have the time and patience to deal with those just getting started and their innumerable questions.

The main conference, from Feb. 2 to 4, will offer three tracks of speakers covering medicinal herbs, commercial production and various business aspects.

Pre and post conference tours will be directed at herb businesses in the area, as well as in Santa Fe and Taos with plenty of time for sightseeing and shopping. There will also be evening and early morning activities such as hot air balloon rides, sweat lodges and tram rides to the Sandia Mountains.

A banquet and dance will end the event. Other activities include a herbal food products competition and opportunities for plenty of networking.

The cost of the conference is \$150 with food and board additional.

Limited trade show exhibit space is available.

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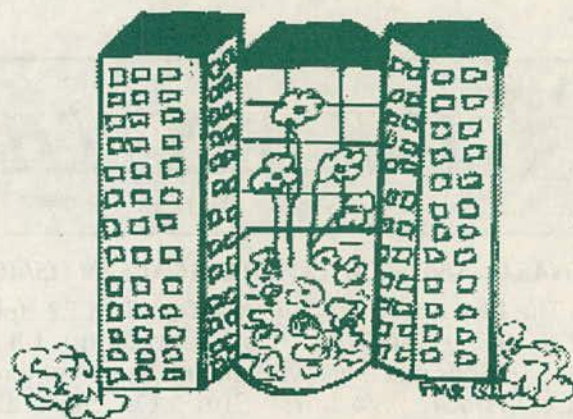
Whips, spurs and new age farming now at University

A NICE thing to do in old age is to dream about enrolling in a University as a mature student. The down-side is finding there are very few courses which would engage the wizened brain for more than a lecture or two. What we really need are a few University courses with real relevance to our established career. Video Recorder Programming is one which springs to mind. Understanding Bureaucracy may be another. But I really believe Southern Cross University should introduce a course of Sustainable Agriculture for Errant Rednecks. I figured the following subject headings would be a good place to start the first semester.

Eco-Doze 101: This will produce the Sensitive New Age Caterpillar driver. It is aimed at the kid who chipped dining table legs with a toy tractor then excavated holes in the front lawn. The one who dug out thousands of ants nests, felled Amazons of imaginary forests and flooded fauna galore with backyard dambuilding projects. The course is mainly beneficial to those who grew up thinking the planet was just as expendable as the flower garden with a dog in it. The student training dozer is fitted with a front-mounted monitor which stalls the motor when a tree comes into view. To counteract the expected withdrawal symptoms, each student plants 10 trees a week for the three-year course and - in 30 years time - is allowed to chop down one a year with an axe.

Chem-Hab 496 (Rehabilitation): This unit is based on a mix of Alcoholics Anonymous and the New Age Men's Movement. (Few women enrol in this stream because they are too busy nursing sick husbands and children who are victims of chemical addiction.) In short, the course involves long sessions of drum beating (any four-gallon poison container) along with deep regression therapy where men "fess up" to the chemicals they have used in the past. They then describe the habit's impact on family, friends, consumers and the environment. This course has extreme withdrawal symptoms - denial, frothing at the mouth and threats of litigation. Addicts are occasionally allowed into a small paddock with the evening cicadas where they can use a spray rig to apply BD500 until the sun sets. Recommended for farmers, council workers and pest exterminators. Women and children swear by it.

Mind Bending 720 (Political Correction): A course specially designed for community leaders which aims to adjust their attitudes to the environment which their community completely relies on. Training is based on the successful



PADDOCK ON TOP

BY KENRICK RILEY

Westminster model using whips, spurs, pantihose and plastic bags. It is seen as a "last-gasp" attempt to reform leaders who agreed to the wholesale destruction of their children's future. An essential element is the confrontation with the victim. Here the leaders come face-to-face with ailing, angry children who are armed with a green education, a need for change and a how-to-vote card.

Regrowth Training 614: An ideal subject for farmers who constantly overgrazed or timber workers who clear-felled trees without need. Based on the Bjelke-Petersen Timber Clearing principal. Each student has their head shaved and stands in front of a mirror for four hours a day to note the rate of regrowth. This is done in the open air without a hat to teach the importance of habitat shelter for animals. Alternatively, a raylamp is trained on the bare scalp. The subsequent loss of surface layers and the appearance of salt indicates the student is coming to grips with land degradation at the psychological level.

Flora/Fauna Appreciation 2010: Not for the faint-hearted. Mainly for those who unashamedly destroyed native animals and plants or gleefully introduced foreign vermin. Alfred Hitchcock can take some credit for the shock therapy design. The student, attached with brain sensors, enters a small, dim room occupied by a cat, a pig, a fox, a rabbit and a toad - all very wary of each other. To one side is a bunk fitted with a lantana mattress and a crofton weed pillow where the student reclines. On the ceiling, groundsel drops feathery flowers through the room. A large, steel tank sits on the floor. Inside, a chainsaw idles. The student concentrates. If the sensors detect the brain relishing its past destructive glories, a remote switch launches the chainsaw into a full-throttled, scream. Panicking, the animals all leap onto the safety of the bunk and fight each other for supremacy. Usually cures the student first time.



THIS AND THAT

NASAA AND BFA TO HOLD AGM'S IN LISMORE

The BFA is to hold their AGM on Sept 22 (ph 08 238 3477) and NASAA on Sept 24 (ph 08 370 8455). Both meetings will take place in Lismore, in the Lismore Workers' Club. On Sept 23, a combined BFA/NASAA seminar, dinner and social evening will be held to which we're all invited. For details phone the above numbers.

FARMARAMA

While we're on dates, the annual Farmarama in Wollongbar takes place this year on September 14-15-16. If you can offer any help with setting up, (wo)manning or stocking OHGA's stall and display, please phone Alister on 066 - 298413. He's in charge of it all.

PRODUCE PROCESSING PLANT NEAR LISMORE

Andrew Tsannis of *Whole in the Wall*, one of Lismore's organic food stores, is part of a crew that received several government grants to look at the feasibility of a food processing plant at the old Tuncester Brewery. If you are interested in being a part of this exciting enterprise, go and talk to Lois Kelly, of the Lismore Enterprise Centre.

HERBAL MEDICINE IN THE 1990's

A public seminar to be held on Saturday Sept 9 at the Senior Citizens Centre, Market Lane, Muswellbrook, ph (02) 211 6437. Organised by the National Herbalists Association, it features some good speakers. Registration fee is \$35 with a concession of \$25. Starts at 10 am.

NATURAL PREDATORS MARKETING AS NON TOXIC FARM CHEMICALS

The import and sale of "bio-farm chemicals", or in other words, natural predators that exterminate spider mites and white flies, the insects that cause most damage to greenhouse horticulture, have begun recently in Japan. Tomen, one of Japan's largest trading firms, has started to import live insects in containers from the Netherlands. Usual farm chemicals leave toxic residues on plants and when used repeatedly, cause harmful insects to build up resistance. However, the so-called bio-farm chemicals are free from all these problems. A spokesperson from Tomen says that this is the first time that imported natural predators have been registered under the category of agricultural chemicals in Japan.

The natural predators that have been registered as farm chemicals are *Spidex*, containing chilean predatory mites, which are natural predators of spider mites that dwell on strawberries, and *Enstrip*, containing pupae bees of greenhouse whitefly

parasites, which kill greenhouse whiteflies that dwell on tomatoes. The predators are imported from Kopart, a natural predator production and sales company in the Netherlands.

According to Tomen, experiments so far suggest that neither of the natural predators can survive the Japanese winter, so there is no possibility that the insects will propagate and cause harm in Japan. Also, since the insects have little resistance to farm chemicals, their use with chemicals should be limited.

- *Agrinfo Newsletter (Japan)* sent in by Ruth Lovisolo (AQIS).

CHEMICALS REVIEWED

The National Registration Authority sent OHGA a letter which starts like this:

"As one of the major commodity or user groups in Australia (as if!!), I am writing to inform you that the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals has selected five chemicals for review in the first cycle of the Existing Chemicals Review Program from its Priority Candidate Review List."

The chemicals in question are Atrazine, Endosulfan, Mevinphos, Parathion and Parathion methyl. They say that their selection process ranked these chemicals a high priority for review due to certain issues and that the reviews will not be confined only to those issues, but will cover all aspects of the conditions of registration and approval - to demonstrate that the continuing use of the chemical * would not be an undue hazard to the safety of people exposed to it during its handling or people using anything containing its residues; * would not be likely to have an effect that is harmful to human beings; * would not be likely to have an unintended effect that is harmful to animals, plants or things or to the environment; * would not unduly prejudice trade or commerce between Australia and places outside Australia; * that the use of the product in accordance with the recommendations for its use would be effective.

Well, as Atrazine is a herbicide, Endosulfan, Mevinphos, Parathion and Parathion-methyl are all insecticides, I would suggest that we can safely say that none of these killer chemicals fulfill the criteria set above, wouldn't you? Once again the mind boggles!!!

And to think that using *NEEM*, a natural and age-old remedy to inactivate (but not kill) pests is illegal in NSW!

ORGANIC WINE POPULAR IN BRITAIN

Graeme Eggins, once OHGA's editor, writes in *GOING ORGANIC*, that organic wine is a growing



market in Britain, despite strong competition from conventional growers in Europe and elsewhere. Most Welsh and English organic vineyards are small so quality and quantity can vary a lot. Nonetheless, growers made these points:

- * An estimated 40 kg/ha of chemicals are used every year in conventional European vineyards. Chemical pesticides may remain in conventional wines, affecting taste and possibly health.
- * The low levels of sulphur dioxide in organic wines reduce the chances of a hangover or of allergic reaction, particularly for asthmatic or bronchial sufferers.
- * Organic wine is now much more widely available than ever before, so prices cover a wider range.
- * Cheaper organic wines usually cost 10-14% more than the equivalent conventional wines but for champagne and other more expensive wines the price is often the same.
- * The premium for organic wines is due to a more labour intensive method of farming and lower yields. It is also an indication of higher quality grapes.

Australia has some great organic (Botulabar) and preservative-free (Hardy's) wines, to mention a few. I do enjoy a few glasses now and then. Such a difference! You should try them.

- Elle

COWS MAKE THE DESERT BLOOM

Thanks to a unique new breed of Johnny Appleseeds, the desert in southwest New Mexico may once again bloom brightly.

Cattle grazing on the 300sq/mile Jornada Experimental Range are being fed gelatin capsules filled with wildflower seeds. These pass through their digestive system and a few days later end up in their manure, a natural fertiliser. Cattle can graze areas so rough and inaccessible that no conventional seeding equipment or technique could be used to improve the land. If successful, other damaged rangelands across the country will get the same restorative treatment.

- New Age Journal, via Wellbeing.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WANT TO GROW HEMP

Your editor took part in the hemp workshop, held on 14 June in the Lismore Workers Club. Bill Rixon, the National Party MP for Lismore, was one of the main speakers. He saw industrial hemp mainly as a fibre material for a pulp/paper industry and then tried to discourage possible growers by proposing that there is no local market for such a fibre, that the costs would far outweigh the profits, that there is not enough growing area available to justify a local paper mill etc.

Of course I argued that there are many herb farmers who are very interested in growing industrial hemp organically. That we should not be making the mistake of growing it broadacre-style, which would bring the same problems that the cotton industry is faced with, but rather grow it in smaller lots which together would bring in lots of material.

A number of hemp clothing manufacturers and hemp cloth importers also took part. They insisted that there would be a market for the fibre and that they had cloth mills standing by to manufacture the cloth locally. There was also talk of quality long lasting hemp paper for documents and art and lots of 'boutique-items', such as the oil and soap.

After the workshop, however, I approached several of the hemp clothing manufacturers who had been so insistent about the need to grow the hemp in Australia. I asked them what they would do to help the growers. Would they import the right strain of seed for us? Would they guarantee to buy the hemp after harvest, at a pre-determined price? Unfortunately none of them would give me even the vaguest indication of any sort of support they were prepared to give us. Of course there is no reason to go through any sort of licensing application process until we have a guarantee that our crops will be bought at the end of it.

By the way, if you're still interested in growing industrial hemp, it seems to be much less of a problem to get a license now. Applications should go to the Minister for Agriculture and the Secretary for Health NSW (in our state at least). There are three criteria that need to be satisfied:

1. The crop must be guaranteed low T H C.
2. A method must be used to guarantee that the crop will not spread and become an invasive weed.
3. Controls, such as fencing, on the growth and harvest must be organised, similar to the growing of opium poppies in Tasmania.

CROP CHEMICAL DRIFT WARNING

Major spray drift damage has occurred over the past few weeks in the Forbes area, causing total loss of some crops.

Farmers have been warned that if they damage neighbouring crops through spray drift they are liable for major compensation payouts and fines under the Pesticide Act 1978.

Drift from glyphosate and 2,4-D ester have been common, although herbicides can create a potential drift problem.

NSW Agriculture Forbes district agronomist Graham Falconer said fallow spray drift damage with glyphosate has only been showing up in the past few weeks, some three weeks after the drift occurred, although hormone damage generally shows up within a few days on canola.

- NSW Agriculture Today, July 1995

AQIS NEWS

* AQIS has been told that the US has accepted the Riverina and Sunraysia districts as qualifying for area fruit fly freedom status. This acceptance must be confirmed via notice in the US Code of Federal Regulations before new access conditions can be finalised.

* AQIS has finalised conditions for the importation of olive plants from Israel, and expects that the first shipment could arrive in Australia before Christmas. According to a feasibility study sponsored by the



South Australian Dept of Primary Industries, this could lead to the establishment of large-scale olive plantations in Australia.

* The June AQIS Bulletin reports that the minute insect *Western Flower Thrips* (*Frankliniella occidentalis*), first recorded in cut flower crops in WA two years ago, has now spread to Tasmania and other states, and has been recorded for the first time in strawberries in WA.

The thrips is a significant pest of a wide range of flowers, fruits and vegetables and can carry the serious plant virus tomato spotted wilt. It attacks glasshouse and field-grown flowering crops, damaging them by rasping and sucking at the cells of broken flowers and bud tips, and is resistant to a range of insecticides.

Western Flower Thrips is indigenous to North America but has spread to many other parts of the world including New Zealand. The pest-resistant strain appears to have entered Australia and New Zealand at about the same time. About 1980 it began to spread internationally.

SOYBEANS SAFER THAN PREMARIN

Researchers from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, told the American Heart Association annual meeting on March 10 than hormones derived from soybeans show promise as a potentially safer substitute for pharmaceutical oestrogens now used in hormone replacement therapy - including Premarin, the production of which involves untold suffering to mares, and breeding more than 75,000 colts per year, whose only significant market is slaughter to create the oestrogen.

- *Animal People*, April 1995,
via *Nimbin News*.

CONTROL OF CHEMICALS TO EPA PROPOSAL

NSW Minister for the Environment, Pam Allen, has proposed that the control of agricultural chemicals is transferred from NSW Agriculture to the Environmental Protection Authority.

Already the farmers are up in arms. President of the Tweed branch of the Cattleman's Union, Col Brooks, said the transfer had the potential to cause headaches for the agricultural sector, viewed in the light of Ms Allen's well-known past comments on the use of chemicals.

He said that he had no objections if the EPA became stricter in enforcing rules for the proper use of chemicals, adding that he would not be surprised if the first thing the Authority did was insist on primary producers undertaking an accredited

chemical users' course, and impose bans on the sale of farm chemicals to people who had no accreditation from such courses.

Banana Growers' Federation Pres. Trevor Miller, said the move had the potential to cause harm. "We'll lose a lot of expertise, since the Dept of Ag has all the experts in farm chemical use. We're keen for it to stay in the department's hands." Mr Miller said that the NSW Farmers' Association had taken up the issue with the Minister. It was awaiting a reply.

The environmental movement applauds the proposal. For too long chemical users have been able to use farm chemicals indiscriminately, as the state of our land and river system attests to.

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CERTIFIED ORGANIC

by Tony Ullman

I have just finished reading a book which I found to be full of useful information. It is entitled: "Soil Sense, Soil Management for NSW North Coast Farmers".

It is compiled and edited by Rebecca Lines-Kelly, who is a soils media officer with the NSW Dept of Ag. Unfortunately none of the case studies are herb farms; however the issues involved in maintaining soil quality are basically the same whatever the crop being grown.

Similarly, although this book deals specifically with the soil types found on the north coast of NSW, the knowledge to be gained can be applied no matter what type of soil you may have.

The book is divided into three sections. The first covers each of the ten catchment areas found on the north coast. Although this information is very specific, I found it interesting to learn the manner in which the individual soils originated from the weathering of different types of rock.

The second section of the book is called: "Managing the Soil", and is a description of how plants obtain their required nutrients from the soil. It also covers soil management techniques for seven farming systems most commonly found in the north coast region of NSW.

The last section, entitled "The farmer's A-Z of Soils" is an alphabetical guide to soil science and management terms.

For all of the farming systems covered in section two of the book, the issues involved in soil maintenance are much the same. These come under eight main headings:

1) Maintain nutrient levels.

With any farming operation, every time produce passes the farm gate, some of the soil nutrients go too. At some stage those lost nutrients are going to have to be replaced.

2) Control acidity.

As soil becomes more acid, nutrients become less available to the plants. Increased soil acidity may be caused by the use of chemical fertilisers; leaching of nitrogen not taken up by crops; removal of nutrients along with farm produce; and organic matter in the soil producing organic acids. The addition of lime and replacement of nutrients are used to combat this problem.

3) Reduce compaction.

Compact soil makes it very difficult for roots to

penetrate in their search for nutrients. Stock and farm machinery are the main culprits here. Reducing stocking rates and growing of deeprooted plants, or if all else fails, deep ripping, may be required.

4) Improve structure.

Poor structure makes it difficult for water, air and seedling to penetrate the soil. The incorporation of organic matter into the soil will help to improve its structure, as well as replace lost nutrients.

5) Prevent erosion.

Mainly caused by water in this climate, minimise erosion by not cultivating steep slopes, cultivating gentle slopes along the contours, and managing runoff if required.

6) Improve drainage.

If soil becomes water logged, the roots of most plants will become starved of oxygen and the plant will suffer. Raised beds will prevent most problems, but if the situation is severe, a system of drains may be required to assist the drainage.

7) Reduce cultivation.

Every time the soil is cultivated, aggregates are broken down and organic matter is exposed to the air and then deteriorates more quickly. Ploughing land which is too wet, will smear the soil and form plough pans. The use of a rotary hoe will pulverise the soil. Less cultivation means less damage to the soil structure.

8) Prevent salinity.

Cut down too many trees and the water table may rise, bringing the salt with it and making the land virtually useless.

Serves you right for cutting down the trees!

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COLOURS AND TEXTURE IN THE HERB GARDEN

by Theresa Mieseler

Leaf textures and colours are an important aspect of landscape design in herb gardens.

Many people think of colour in the garden only as flower colour, but leaf textures can be used very effectively to tie a garden design together. When designing for colour, use green to separate masses of gray and add contrast to the garden. The many herbs with golden foliage should be used in shady areas, because they will burn in the hot summer sun.

Consider unusual colour and texture combinations, such as dwarf rue, planted next to woolly thyme.

It is best not to overcrowd plants, as this can mask their individual characteristics, and plants such as lovage, tarragon, angelica and lemonbalm can grow quite large. Avoid using mints, artemisias or other plants that spread by runners in the centre of the garden, because they will soon take over other plants.

Many of the plants listed below are perennial by nature, but in some areas are grown as annuals.

BASIL (*Ocimum* spp) annual

Cinnamon basil is a compact, low growing variety with foliage of dark green, turning to light brown, and pink-purple flowers.

East Indian basil is tall, up to 1 m., with large leaves similar to cloves.

Rubin basil, a recent introduction, is an improved variety over opal basil with consistent purple leaves. Rubin basil is especially attractive against silver foliage.

CURRY PLANT (*Helichrysum angustifolium*) perennial

This small plant is grown in the ground or in containers; its foliage is gray and needle-like. It prefers sun and a sandy or alkaline soil that

remains dry. Its habit adds informality with *Santolina* species, and it can be trimmed into small mounds. Grow curry plant in containers with parsley and lemon verbena.

DITTANY OF CRETE (*Origanum dictamnus*) perennial

The gray, fuzzy leaves of Dittany make it a nice addition among bold low-growing herbs in an informal border. The bright pink flowers, which may be dried, hang above the foliage. The Dittany forms a compact 40 cm high plant. Use it in a rock garden, or in containers with thyme, and keep it on the dry side: damp conditions can destroy the foliage.

BRONZE FENNEL (*Foeniculum vulgare* *'Purpurascens'*) annual

A purplish or reddish-brown hue of this coloured variety of fennel is set off well against a white fence backdrop. This graceful plant is useful for bold and colourful balance in an informal landscape. Grow in full sun in a rich soil for best colour development. Flowers are yellow on this slender plant, and are useful in fresh arrangements.

LADY'S MANTLE (*Alchemilla vulgaris*) perennial

Lady's mantle grows in full sun or partial shade with decorative pleated leaves. The foliage is lime-green, and the plant grows compactly. Commonly used as a border or edging plant, it produces small yellow flowers and will re-seed, once established.

In the morning, look for dew that collects on the pleated edges of the leaves.

LAMB'S-EARS (*Stachys Byzantina*) perennial

Soft, furry leaves of lamb's-ears form low clumps. The plant must be grown in full sun; in the shade, it is more likely to be plagued by a



fungus in the centre of the plant. Tall silverwhite flower stalks rise out of the centre of the plant in late summer and produce small, intensely purple flowers. Lamb's-ears is easy to grow from seed or division and is adaptable and winter hardy. The soft, attractive leaves are 10 cm long and about 3 cm wide.

GOLDEN MARJORAM
(*Origanum vulgare*
Dr Ietswaart')
perennial

The low growing golden marjoram acts as a groundcover in partial shade - it will scorch in the full sun. Its small, rounded leaves are yellow green and crinkled. Propagate by cuttings or root division in early spring. Golden marjoram is attractive at the base of tall plants, such as angelica, lovage and comfrey.

ORNAMENTAL ONION (*Allium senescens*
'Glaucum')
perennial

Its twisted gray-green leaves make this a most interesting ornamental. At our farm it is planted along the walkway to the gift shop. It blooms from late August well into September which makes it one of our few late-blooming herbs. Flowers dry well for use in arrangements. It is an interesting plant even when it's not in bloom.

RUSSIAN SAGE (*Perovskia Atriplicifolia*)
perennial

Until recently, this plant was seldom seen, but it was the 1995 "Perennial Plant of the Year". It is planted for tall accents in herb gardens. These open-air, graceful gray plants grow to a height of three feet. Small sprays of lavender-blue blossoms appear in July and bloom for several weeks. Use it as a filler in gardens for both foliage and blooms.

BERGGARTEN SAGE (*Salvia Officinalis*
Berggarten')
perennial

This rounded compact plant with rounded gray leaves, grows to a height of 50-60 cm. Leaves are large and the form is attractive. Berggarten is a newer variety of the culinary standby sage, and it's well worth growing.

SOCIETY GARLIC
(*Tulbaghia violacea*
'variegata')
perennial

Society garlic is a small plant with striped foliage and lavender flowers. The flat, slender leaves grow in a clump similar to the form of garlic chives. In the upper Midwest, it is treated as a tender perennial.

Reprinted with permission from the newsletter of the International Herb Association, (USA), April 1995.

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Organic Herb Growers of Australia Inc.

Profit & Loss Statement for year ended 30 June 1995

	\$	\$
INCOME		
GENERAL INCOME		
Joining & membership fees	12957	
Magazine sales	1071	
Magazine advertising	3499	
Other sales	482	
Credit Union interest	459	
Donations	750	\$19218
CERTIFICATION INCOME		
Application & certification fees	9105	
Farm inspection travel	3508	
Soil test fees	4675	
Label & booklet sales	303	
Other certification income	65	\$17656
Total income		<u>\$36874</u>
EXPENSES		
GENERAL EXPENSES		
General office expenses	9079	
Equipment expenses	3512	
Charges & fees	823	
Miscellaneous expenses	2024	\$15438
CERTIFICATION EXPENSES		
Certification office expenses	2080	
Farm inspections	4800	
Farm travel	4589	
Soil tests	5505	\$16974
Total expenses		<u>\$32412</u>
Current year earnings		<u>\$4462</u>

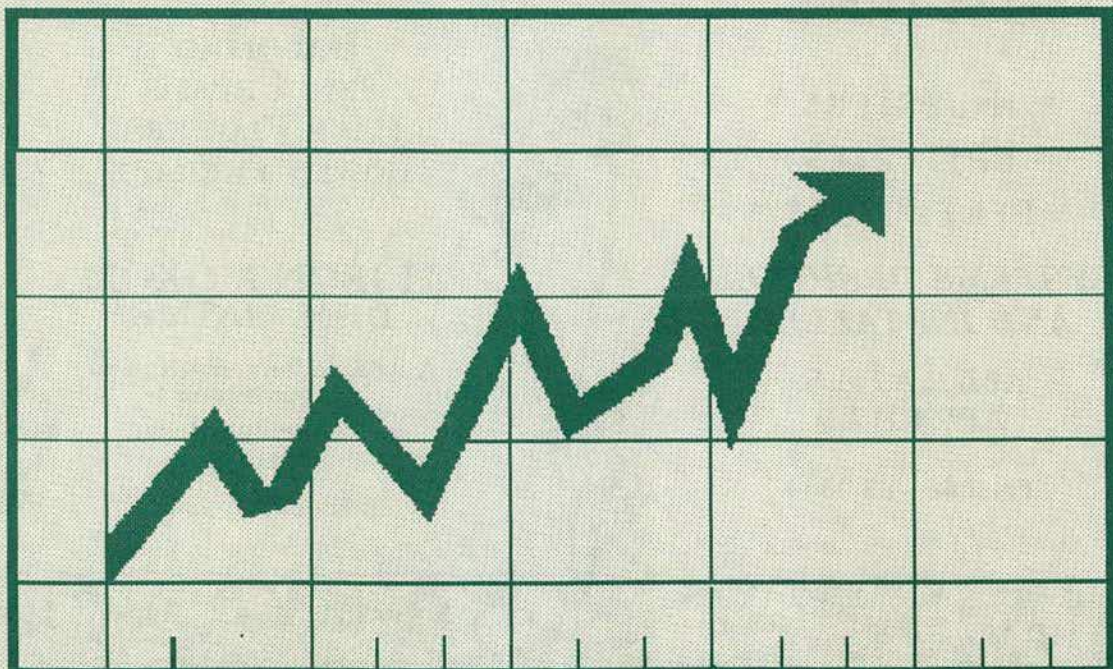


Organic Herb Growers of Australia Inc.

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 1995

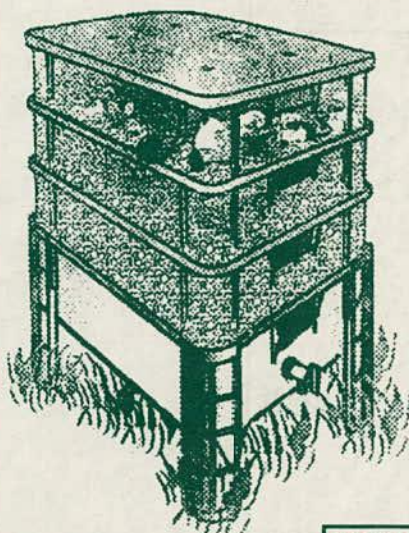
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
OHGA cheque account	9419	
Petty cash	50	
Summerland term deposit	5000	
Interest receivable	110	
Shares-Summerland Credit Union	10	
Office equipment (net)	1347	
Total assets		<u>\$15936</u>
LIABILITIES		
Sundry creditors	1708	
Membership in advance	230	\$1938
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	9536	
Current year earnings	4462	\$13998
Total liabilities & equity		<u>\$15936</u>

Note: OHGA also has a contingent liability of approximately \$5000 payable to AQIS if and when a contract is signed. This has been provided for by setting funds aside in a term deposit.



MAIL ORDER WORMS
THE AMAZING WORM FACTORY!

Let the Worms do the work and
 recycle your kitchen waste.



Factory:
 \$90

**Bulk
 worms:**
 1000+ / \$20

**Worm
 Castings:**
 \$2 / kg.

We stock:

- * Worm factories from ReIn
- * Red Worms
- * Tiger Worms
- * Blue Worms
- * Earth Worm Castings
- * Information Bulletins
- * Worm Farm Starter Kits
- * Wholesale Bulk Worms
- * All Worms are Healthy and Guaranteed Live, or Free Replacement

**RICHMOND VALLEY
 WORM GROWERS**
 Phone (066) 62 6791
 820 SPRING GROVE
 via Casino NSW 2470
BARTERCARD

Flower Power Recipe
Clover Salad

Clover leaves and blossoms
4 teaspoons finely chopped mint
1 cup hot cooked rice
4 tbl sp fresh orange juice
3 tbl sp olive oil

*Mix the rice, while hot, with the
 orange juice and olive oil.
 Wash and strip the clover leaves.
 Stir, with the mint, into the rice
 Split the blossoms into florets and
 garnish.*

*Serves 2 as a main dish,
 or 4 as a side dish.*

**SOLAR
 ELECTRICS**

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- * BATTERIES *
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**ALISON MOXOM
 DHM, MATMS**

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 CORAKI

Ph. 066 - 83 2344



MARKET REPORT

compiled
by



HERB FARMS AUSTRALIA

These winter months have seen a bigger than ever shortage of herbs. And it wasn't just in basil, although for a while there the price of a bunch of basil went sky high, due to a crop failure in northern Queensland (a lot of farmers have fusarium wilt problems). The new crop in the Atherton tablelands is also not very large and there are currently shortfalls again in basil. One Bundaberg grower attempting to corner the winter market has been hit with unexpected frost. So managing to grow basil in the winter months is still the major task at hand. Let's hope that the importers don't attempt to import from our neighbours in Fiji. My guess is that basil will continue to be the number one crop for some time to come.

While on a recent trip to the USA, I had the opportunity to visit and discuss the situation with several major buyers. We have a very good opportunity to export our basil during their winter months (our summer, when we can't even give the stuff away). But we will need a coordinated effort of the highest quality, and it must be certified organic.

The American marketplace is slightly different from ours. I observed large 3 & 5 kg baskets of unbunched small leaves being sold. This was the "in" way to do things this year. Trading was very brisk and fast in rocket, chicory, purslane, squash flowers, endive, and other greens. Every restaurant serves up a plate of these greens.

Looking back over the past years trading there were a few surprises. Of course basil was the number one traded herb, but surprisingly rosemary came in second, followed by chives, thyme, oregano. The next grouping were marjoram, sage, tarragon, while red basil was not a big success.

If we want to stay in the game, we must plant more of the Mediterraneans. Where in the past couple of years we were just about able to keep up, this year the orders have far exceeded the supply. That could be due to the very unseasonal weather patterns. Unusual wet conditions combined with prolonged drought saw our mediterraneans deteriorate very quickly, with not much regrowth in the winter.

There was also demand for chervil, which nobody grew this year.

Several markets asked for Russian garlic, which we were able to supply last year, but this year nobody seems to have grown it.

All in all we've been short of almost everything this winter. Again, this could be because of all that rain, which definitely didn't inspire anyone to plant much, or so it seems.

As far as the medicinals go: there have been several enquiries about scullcap, that is the *SCUTELLARIA LATERIFOLIA*. No-one is interested in the other varieties. Let us know if you have any.

Herb Farms Australia get lots of enquiries from people who have followed the echinacea harvesting of last year and who also want to grow it. We're sorry to disappoint you all, but there is now plenty of it about and we won't be planting any new crop this year.

Echinacea is fast becoming an oversupplied crop in Australia. The market is not that large and quite a few people, apart from us, have put it in. The price, consequently, is also falling. A couple of quick phone calls indicate that a grower would be hard to find a buyer for the fresh plant. Most are now chasing dried root only.

It has also become clear after the last harvest, that we growers have to do a lot more to clean the crop. Manufacturers have always bought imported herbs, which have undergone several sterilisation programs (we can argue about the effect on the medicinal value of such treatments). Our organically grown and hand harvested herbs are a different kettle of fish altogether and very high bacterial counts were registered, which presented the manufacturers with quite a problem.

It is possible that the herbs have to be washed with soapy water, which does remove the bug faeces quite easily, and then rinsed or hosed clean. A lot more work, but if we want to keep growing and supplying the medicinals, that may be necessary. The medicinal marketplace is still very much pioneer country. A lot of cowboys are going to take the plunge, so let's hope that our infant industry will be able to withstand their attempts.

By now most of you should have a healthy winter green manure crop growing on your paddocks. As well, the new seed catalogues are arriving with all the new varieties. Enjoy your reading but remember that most chefs are a conservative bunch, and unless everyone uses that new variety it will take a couple of years to have a success with a new unheard of species. Stick to the tried and true and you won't be disappointed.

Seeds should be germinated by mid August and looking for a transplanting time (depending upon your area) around mid September after the chance of any last frost.

For the Koala Tea Company we're in the market for Lemon Tea tree leaves, if anybody has some. The best way of harvesting and drying them, is to hang the cuttings up in a feed or jute bag for drying. After they have dried (a week or so in a warm place), beat the bag up and the leaves will fall off the twigs. Then it's a matter of picking the leaves out.

We also need other herbs (see ad in the back), but you will need professional dehydration and milling facilities, and be certified organic, if you want to supply. If you think you can manage that, give Howard a ring on 066 - 291057.





OBSERVATIONS

by Magda Verbeek

I read somewhere that it takes five years for a balanced eco-system to establish itself in an organic garden.

My herb patch is now four years old and the magic is starting to happen. Let me tell you what happened to make me believe this is true.

I had collected a considerable amount of very healthy lemonbalm, with the intention of spreading it out to dry. Whilst harvesting, I noticed a lot of whiteflies and didn't think much of it, because they are everywhere most of the time! However, when the lemonbalm was dumped onto shelves for drying, it was amazing how many more insects I noticed. Because this interests me, I recorded what I saw.

There were: some tiny snails, plenty of aphids, a ladybird, a moth with gold on its wings, two types of looper caterpillars, some juvenile vege bugs, numerous fast moving tiny bright orange spiders, two wolf spiders, juvenile leaf hoppers, lacewings and lacewing larvae, tiny black wasps and plenty of whiteflies and their eggs.

What struck me immediately was the balance of pest and predator. Remember, this was healthy lemonbalm, with no sign of stress from insect attack. The spiders, wasps, lacewings and ladybird were there primarily to deal with the aphids and whitefly and their eggs and larvae. Other insects were either leaf eaters, or just passing through.

As I watched, I wondered why there were so many more lacewings than ladybirds, which are obvious feeders of aphids in summer. What I found out, is that lacewings have a similar temperature development threshold as aphids, and that ladybirds need a higher temperature to become active. Given that it is now winter, it makes sense that if there are aphid or whitefly it is more likely to see them predated by lacewings. Also, lacewings remain active all year, whereas ladybirds have resting stages, when they remove themselves from crops to rest on old logs or fence posts etc. Interestingly, ladybirds' larvae can be parasitised up to 90% of their populations compared to lacewings, which lose up to 29%. (Chapman et al, pp 34).

References:

Rob and Steve Davidson: *Bushland on Farms*, AGPS Press, 1992

Chapman, Penman, Hick: *Natural Pest Control*, Nelson Publishers, 1987

Bennett, *Organic Gardening*, Child & Ass. Publishers, 1988

FARMARAMA 14-15-16 September

Anyone willing to donate time to help (wo)man the OHGA stand during these days (even for just a few hours), please ring Alister on 29 8413.

COMMERCIAL ORGANIC HERB GROWING SEMINARS with Howard Rubin

at Edenhope, Vic.
on September 16 and 17.

For info and booking phone (053) 911866
or mobile 015 564174.

at Clunes, near Lismore NSW
on October 9-10-11

for info and booking phone (066) 291057

at Bega, NSW
on October 14 and 15

for info and booking phone (064) 949102

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ORGANIC LIFE

4 : 3 : 2

A RICH BLEND OF COMPOSTED
POULTRY MANURE,
BLOOD & BONE, FISH MEAL
AND SEAWEED



PHONE (075) 41 2322
FOR YOUR LOCAL DEALER



AGM 1995

This year's AGM will take place on October 1,
at The Channon Tea House in The Channon.

The meeting to elect the new committee will start at 12:00, with a lunch to follow at 1:00 at \$15.00 p.p. You will need to book for lunch by Sept 25, by ringing Alister in the evenings on 29 8413. There will be food for both vegetarians and meat-eaters. OHGA will supply the grog.

Soft drinks and fruit juices will be available at the restaurant.

Although the present committee members have indicated their willingness to renominate, we could extend the committee by two members, so if you think you can contribute to the further success of OHGA, please do not hesitate to nominate for a position.

It should be a good social occasion and your chance to meet the committee members on this long weekend.

NOMINATION FORM for a committee position with The Organic Herb Growers of Australia Inc. (OHGA)

I (name) of being
a financial member of OHGA, hereby **nominate**, being a financial member of
OHGA, for the position of

This nomination is to be tabled at the annual general meeting of the association on Oct. 1, 1995.

SECONDER TO THE NOMINATION

I, of
being a financial member of OHGA, hereby **second** the nomination of

SUPPORTER TO THE NOMINATION

I, of
being a financial member of OHGA, also **second** the nomination of

CONSENT TO THE NOMINATION

I, of, being a
financial member of OHGA, hereby **accept** the nomination for the position of

Signed Dated .. / .. / 1995

APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

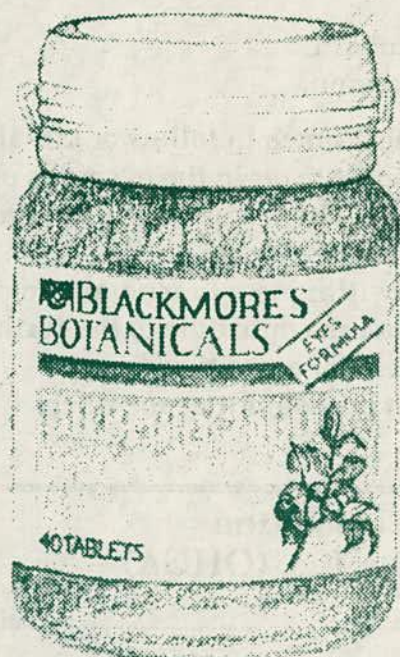
I,, of, being a
financial member of OHGA, hereby appoint (full name of proxy) being a
financial member of OHGA, as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the annual general meeting of the
association to be held on October 1, 1995 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

Signed Dated .. / .. / 1995

ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE SECRETARY BEFORE SEPTEMBER 24.

PLEASE NOTE: this is the last issue of "HERB GROWER" you will receive if you have not renewed your membership. (see renewal form in last issue)





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.



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Ballina
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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 prices for quality produce.

WHOLESALE OF QUALITY PRODUCE
ENQUIRIES: PHONE TONY AT LISMORE (066) 222 199



MEDICINAL HERB GROWING NOTES

**NOW
AVAILABLE**

\$40.00

Includes postage

- How to cultivate, dry and care for the most wanted medicinal herbs in Australia.
- Includes:
 - soil types
 - companion plants
 - yields
 - financial planning
 - seed suppliers
- This booklet is updated regularly with new trial crops being grown now!



Send your cheque to:
THE PHARMACEUTICAL PLANT COMPANY
2/24 LONDON DRIVE, BAYSWATER, VICTORIA 3153
TEL: (03) 97623777 FAX: (03) 9 762 9992

Get **RELIEF** from your cold and 'flu symptoms with Australian-grown *Echinacea purpurea*

The Greenridge **RELIEF** Range contains the powerful cold
and 'flu fighting herb

- *Echinacea purpurea* -

to relieve those unpleasant symptoms and reduce recovery time

The **RELIEF** Range is available from your health food store
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- Adult Formula
- Cough Syrup
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REACTIVE ROCK PHOSPHATE

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SEASOL

FISH EMULSION

TRACE ELEMENTS

WORK CLOTHES

SOIL pH KITS

FULL SOIL & PLANT TISSUE

ANALYSIS KITS

GRAFTING & PRUNING EQUIPMENT

FRUIT PICKING STICKS & 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 are discounting to our members.

Membership costs only \$25 per year.

**145 CASINO STREET
SOUTH LISMORE**
and
**RUSSELLTON IND. EST.
ALSTONVILLE**

HERBS WANTED



• PLANT COMPANY PTY LTD •

T.G.A. LICENCE No. 50725

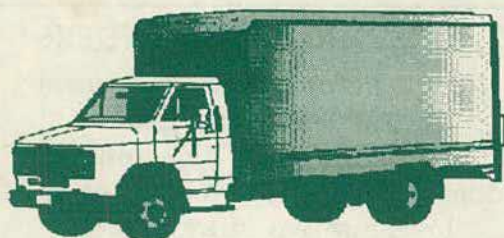
- ORGANIC HERBS NEEDED FOR MEDICINES, TEAS ETC.
- TOP PRICES PAID FOR CERTIFIED ORGANIC HERBS OF EXPORT QUALITY

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PH: (03) 9 762 3777 OR FAX: (03) 9 762 9992

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

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Depots at:

**Alstonville, Brisbane, Bundaberg,
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Melbourne, Munduberra, Stanthorpe and
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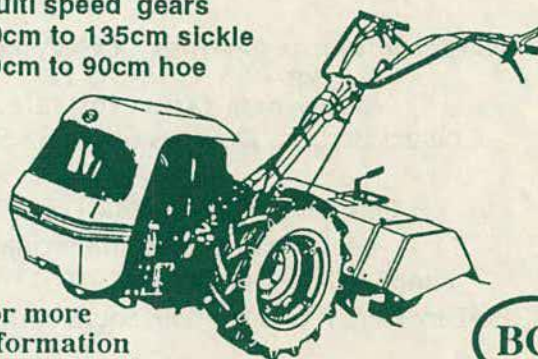
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DRIVE, MULTI PURPOSE POWER UNIT
FOR HOEING, MOWING, TOWING,
MULCHING, SPRAYING, PLOUGHING ETC.**

Models from 5hp to 12hp Priced From \$1795
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Multi speed gears
80cm to 135cm sickle
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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 (<i>once only payable</i>) | \$ 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Australian membership | \$ 40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Concession membership | \$ 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Business membership | \$ 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Overseas membership | \$ 65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Application for certification | \$ 10 |

total \$ _____

**Please note: OHGA membership expires
on 31 August of each year.**

FOR SALE

Organic worm castings, OHGA certified.
1 kg - \$3, 5 kg - \$12.

Also worm farms for sale.

Contact Barbara Downes on 075 - 909762.

**ORGANIC NON-HYBRID SEEDS,
all culinaries, some medicinals.**

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

SM 6 SEAWEED FERTILISER, available from OHGA

\$11/liter (bring your own container)

Contact Elle on 066 - 291057

HERB GROWER ADVERTISING RATES from January 1995

Full Page	½ Page	¼ Page
-----------	--------	--------

casual

\$75	\$55	\$35
------	------	------

regular (3 or more consecutive issues)

\$60	\$45	\$25
------	------	------

Backpage:

Casual B/W \$100 *Colour* n/a

Regular B/W \$ 80 *Colour* \$175

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, and changes to, all ads must be
in by the 1st of the month prior to
publication.**

WANTED

HOUSE AND DOG MINDERS

for the Rubins' house in Clunes,
during X-mas and January.

Preferably no small kids; must like dogs and be able to look after, and love, our two silky terriers.

Clunes is 16 km from Lismore and 30 km from Byron Bay. Your chance to have a cheap holiday!

Speak to Howard, Elle or Freya
on 066 - 291057

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.

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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.

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☐ 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:

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Noosa Heads, Qld, 4567

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Australia's original Herbal and Flower Medicines treating 28 common health problems by feeding the body the concentrated nutrition required to relieve the symptoms of disease while assisting to balance the associated mental and emotional states.

The Formulas are listed below:—

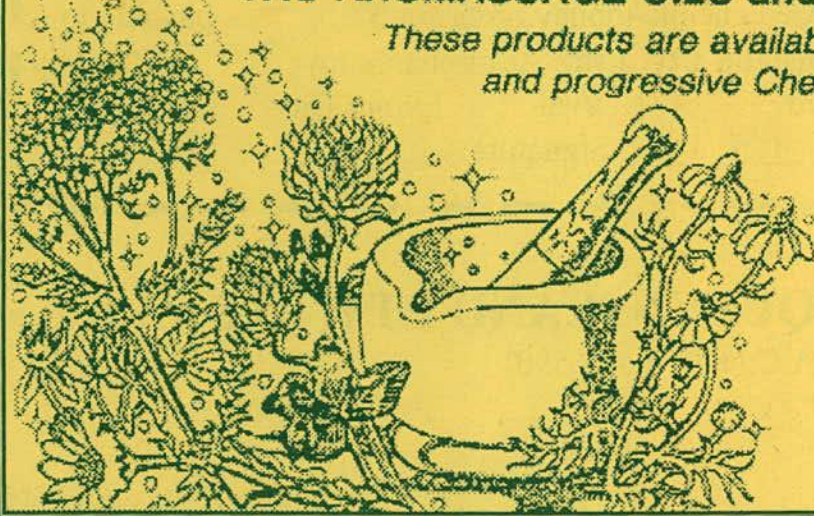
ALLERGY PRONE REMEDY
ANTIBILIOUS MIXTURE
B MINUS SINUS FORMULA
BABY SOOTHING SYRUP
BETTER BREATH MOUTHWASH
BLOOD TONIC
BODY CLEANSE
GINGKO B-CLEAR
COLD AND FLU REMEDY
DIARRHOEA RELIEF REMEDY
DIGESTIVE TONIC
EARDROPS
EYES-BRIGHT REMEDY
GENERAL TONIC

ECHINACEA BODYSHIELD
CYSTITIS SYMPTOM RELIEF
ARTHRITIS PAIN RELIEF
MONTHLY PMT MIXTURE
NASAL DROPS
NERVE EASE FORMULA
NO COUGHIN' FORMULA
PAIN RELIEF REMEDY
PREGNANCY TONIC
RESTFUL SLEEP REMEDY
S.O.S. REMEDY
THROAT GARGLE
TOBACCO CLEANSE
WORMING MIXTURE



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(opposite Lismore Workers Club)

Phone (066) 21 5121

Fax (066) 22 2698

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