

# PERMANEWS



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The end of the year is always a good time to reflect on the achievements of the past year and this is also a good time to reflect on our permaculture group. In the past 15 months since I've been president it's been a pleasure to be able to contribute to the group in the way of interesting and noteworthy speakers. The aim is always to help educate and inspire perma people to help us to get ahead with our own piece of paradise and grow more food successfully with the help of permaculture principles and ethics.

The most challenging aspect of being president has been to keep all the plates juggled in the air at the same time to keep everything running like a well oiled machine. Unfortunately plates keep falling off sticks as volunteers keep dropping out of their roles and it's my job to see that the many jobs that make permaculture Noosa stay afloat are filled with good people that do their best to make a go of it.

This is the main stress factor that presidents can carry on their backs but up to date whenever a role has been made vacant, someone else steps up to fill the void. So yet again I have to put out a call for two very important vacant positions: we need a new secretary by January or we will need to unincorporate ourselves and just be a group of people that meet up every month without being a formal organisation. This means we aren't eligible for funding for future projects and also we stand to lose some of our credibility as an organisation. We also need a new sound person to man/woman the sound equipment at meetings so that is also a very important role to fill as Brian Rasmussen can't keep up his commitment anymore as sound person.

Please consider these two vacant roles so our organisation can run like it's supposed to.

The end of year celebration is coming up next week Thursday the 18th of December. You are all encouraged to bring some food to share and if you are bring in a curry please let me know so I will make sure we will have enough rice and rice cookers and hotplates to serve the curries warm. Please feel free to bring along any home made and grown food, and ok, if you are strapped for time something from the shop! Bring your own crockery and plates and we will also need some colourful tablecloths and some Christmas decorations to make it all a bit more festive. We have planned to have several tables in the middle of the hall with lots of chairs in a great big circle so we are all encouraged to eat and mingle at the same time. We also have some perma music for entertainment and open gardens photos from Ian Trew to show as a backdrop. If anyone else has any other ideas, photos, music etc to add to a wonderful permie night of celebration please let me know so it can all be incorporated into a night of fun and festivities!

Elisabeth Fekonia, president, still on crutches but getting better by the day.

**This newsletter is  
emailed to members free  
or can be purchased at  
the meeting for  
\$2**

## Plant Profile – BUCKWHEAT



Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) is not actually related to wheat and is classed as a pseudocereal (along with amaranth and quinoa), that is, plants that are not related to grasses but produce grain-like seeds, many of which are rich in protein compared with true grains.

Buckwheat is a flowering plant, a relative of sorrel, dock and rhubarb, and while being cultivated as a major crop throughout the world for centuries, it is often also planted as: a weed control cover crop, a green manure to be cut and either tilled or left on the soil as organic matter, or as a honey crop for bees.

### **GROWING**

Buckwheat is an ancient food plant that has been in use for over 9,000 years; it gives a whole new meaning to the word 'heirloom'. It is an annual warm season crop to 50 cm high. It has some drought tolerance and is frost tender. It germinates in 3 - 4 days, with a soil temperature of 20°C. Sow it 2.5 - 3.5 cm deep. The soil should be moist before sowing but do not over-water, buckwheat doesn't tolerate being waterlogged at any stage of growth. It will grow in a wide range of soils, including infertile ones, with a preferred pH range of 6 - 7. Buckwheat is tolerant of acidic conditions — so there's little to be gained by adding lime to the soil. Soluble nitrogen fertilizer is definitely not recommended for buckwheat, because it can cause the plant to favour vegetative, rather than seed, growth.

A buckwheat grain crop requires a temperature during the growing season of between 13°C - 26°C. It takes 8 - 12 weeks from sowing to finished grain. Suitable areas are the cool highlands during summer and autumn to winter in southern Qld.

### **SOWING**

In most areas, the best time to sow buckwheat is about three months before the first expected killing frost, with the idea to plant as late as possible to avoid high temperatures during much of the period of seed formation.

### **HARVESTING**

When about three-quarters of the seeds have become dark brown, cut the stems near the ground with grass shears. Always harvest before the first killing frost; otherwise the foliage will collapse in a tangled mass and many of the seeds will "shatter" (fall off the plant). Even before frost, the most mature seeds shatter easily, so we try to be gentle when harvesting.

Threshing buckwheat is fun, simply lay some plants on a sheet and beat them several times with a clean broom, turning the stalks over frequently. The unripe green seeds remain attached to the stalks, while the ripe ones fall onto the sheet. To clean the seed simply pour it slowly in front of a pedestal fan that's running at high speed. This must be repeated several times.

### **USES**

Buckwheat makes a useful, fast growing, warm season, green manure that accumulates phosphorus and builds organic matter quickly. Use it as a fill-in between other crops.

The young sprouts can be harvested for salad and the high protein leaves can be used like spinach. The seeds are ground for a high-protein, gluten-free flour and the white flowers attract beneficial insects including hoverflies, lacewings and bees.

## BENEFITS

Buckwheat is a popular crop in permaculture circles as there are some powerful benefits offered by buckwheat in the garden and in the diet, not the least of which is its ease of growing and ability to thrive without fertilizers or pesticides.

1. Buckwheat is a source of high quality protein, it contains all eight essential amino acids. Use it to make pancakes, porridge, as a substitute for rice and is a great gluten free grain substitute.
2. Research has shown that sprouting buckwheat changes its nutrient profile and provides a super antioxidant boost, just add the sprouts to salads and sandwiches. To super enhance that antioxidant boost, add trace minerals to the sprouting water.
3. In populations where buckwheat is a staple in the diet, it has been shown to lower serum cholesterol and particularly to lower LDL cholesterol, earning it a reputation as a heart healthy grain substitute.
4. Studies have shown that various parts of the buckwheat seed inhibit tumour growth and slow cancer cell growth in a variety of different types of cancer.
5. Common buckwheat is one of the traditional ancient foods of people around the world. It has never been engineered, gone through breeding programs or modified, so you don't have to worry if it's safe.
6. Buckwheat may even reduce your appetite and help you lose weight. In studies of grain substitutes, buckwheat was found to provide a higher sense of satiety than staple western grains such as rice and wheat.
7. Bees adore it. It blooms later than most spring pollen producers and can be a very important food source for bees. Like borage, it will continue blooming and producing new flower clusters and seed heads all season right up to the first frost, providing a major food source for the honey bee.
8. If you want to help bees, planting common buckwheat is a must-do because buckwheat flowers are the source of buckwheat honey, which has proven antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Not only does the buckwheat flower sustain the bees during the mid and late season when traditional pollen sources are low; the honey it produces is medicinal.
9. No matter where it is planted in the garden, it adds flowering beauty and a pleasing scent. It can go in the vegetable gardens, herb gardens or along borders and edges. It can be broadcast seeded in meadows. Plant it around the main vegetable and fruit gardens to attract pollinators.
10. Buckwheat can crowd out some of the toughest spring weeds. While it's growing it is adding phosphorous to the soil for any vegetable crops which can be inter-planted later in the season once the buckwheat has been established. In polyculture gardens it is left to continue blooming and plants are planted in among the stalks.
11. Buckwheat can be used as a replacement for barley to make a gluten free beer.

## TAKE CARE

Buckwheat cause an allergic reaction (anaphalaxis) in some sensitive people and some people who eat large amounts of buckwheat sprouts, or drink buckwheat-sprout juice can be affected by sunlight sensitivity resulting in a rash (fagopyrism).

Sources: Wikipedia, Mother Earth News, [www.BeckyMundt.com](http://www.BeckyMundt.com) , [www.greenharvest.com.au](http://www.greenharvest.com.au)

**We need your support please put your hand up if you can take on the role of Secretary extraordinaire or AV specialist. If you're not sure what these entail please speak to Elizabeth or another committee member and ask all the questions you like.**

**RECIPES****BUCKWEAT AND SWEET POTATO PATTIES**

These patties are an excellent source of slow release energy, both the buckwheat and the sweet potatoes are sustaining and delicious, gluten free and packed with fiber and nutrients.

The patties are moist and come together easily, and are pretty flexible, add whatever you like! You could also skip the last step and eat the mixture as a side dish or with a simple salad.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 c buckwheat
- 1 tbsp butter, olive or coconut oil
- 1 large pinch salt
- 2 c Boiling Water
- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 t ground cumin
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- 1 t garam masala
- juice of small lime
- Black Pepper

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Slice the sweet potatoes length ways in half, and place in an oven dish. Rub a small amount of oil on the cut surfaces, then place in the oven, 200°C.

In a pot with a lid that can be placed in the oven, toast the buckwheat over a low heat with the tablespoon of butter or oil. Stir constantly to toast the buckwheat evenly, for about 5 minutes. Add the boiling water, stir quickly then put the lid on and place in the oven for about 20 minutes, or until the water has been absorbed.

When the sweet potato is soft, remove from oven and mash into the buckwheat. Add the spices, lime juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.

When the mixture is cool, form into patties with wet hands, and pan fry with coconut oil for a few minutes on each side, until browned and heated through. Keep warm in oven while you finish cooking the patties, and serve with tomato chutney and salad, or with flatbreads as wraps.

**BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES**

Buckwheat gives these pancakes incredible flavour. These pancakes are light and thin rather than heavy and cakey. For pancakes that are even lighter in texture and flavour, use half plain flour or whole wheat pastry flour.

**INGREDIENTS**

Pancakes

- 1 cup buckwheat flour (or 1/2 buckwheat and 1/2 flour of choice)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk, shaken\*
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Butter, for the skillet
- Roasted Strawberries
- 1 pint strawberries, hulled and sliced into bite-sized quarters or halves
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Roast the strawberries: preheat oven to 200 degs C. Line a rimmed baking tray with baking paper. In a medium bowl, gently toss berries with the sugar and maple syrup/honey. Arrange the strawberries in a single layer on the baking tray. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring halfway, or long enough for the berry juices to thicken but not burn (watch the edges in particular).

Preheat your skillet over medium-low heat and brush with 1 1/2 teaspoons of butter.

Make the pancakes: in a medium mixing bowl, mix together the flour(s), sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a liquid measuring cup, measure out the buttermilk. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract.

All at once, add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. The batter should have some small to medium lumps.

Give the batter a light swirl with a spoon in case the buckwheat is starting to separate from the liquid. Using a ¼-cup measure, scoop the batter onto the warm skillet. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until small bubbles form on the surface of the pancakes (you'll know it's ready to flip when about 1 inch of the perimeter is matte instead of glossy), and flip. Cook on the opposite sides for 1 to 2 minutes, or until golden brown. Transfer the cooked pancakes to a baking sheet and place in a preheated 200 degree Fahrenheit oven to keep warm. Repeat the process with the remaining batter, adding more butter when needed. Serve immediately.

## NOTES

Recipe adapted from Pancakes by Adrianna Adarme of "A Cozy Kitchen" (blog). Yields 8 pancakes (plenty for 2 people).

\*Make your own buttermilk with dairy-free option: combine 1¼ cups low fat milk (any variety of low fat milk should do—almond, soy, rice, low fat coconut) with 1 tablespoon + ¾ teaspoon lemon juice or vinegar and let it sit for 5 minutes before using. If you love these pancakes, you'll also enjoy my buckwheat crepes recipe.

A note on fluffiness: I tried forcing some extra height into these pancakes by using half whole wheat pastry flour and even folded in whipped egg whites, but neither made a significant difference. Then I took another bite and wondered why I was trying to make these marvellous pancakes something they're not. They're perfect just the way they are.

## SPRING SALAD

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups green leaves, roughly chopped e.g., silver beet sorrel, cos lettuce, ramone lettuce, NZ spinach, English spinach, kang kong, etc.

2 cups mixed herbs, roughly chopped, like water cress, parsley, dandelion, chicory, plantain, salad burnet, chives etc.

2 carrots, grated

1 cup yellow cherry tomatoes

1 handful nasturtium leaves

1 handful nasturtium flowers

3 calendula flowers

2 tbs cold pressed macadamia oil

4 tbs lemon juice

1 tsp French mustard

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

Combine all the clean, prepared greens and herbs into a bowl.

Add the grated carrot and the tomatoes, along with calendula petals and nasturtium leaves and most of the nasturtium flowers.

Mix together oil, lemon juice, black pepper and mustard into a dressing and pour over the salad.

Toss all ingredients and garnish with the remainder of the nasturtium flowers.

Reprinted with kind permission from 'You can have your Permaculture and Eat It Too' by

Robin Clayfield [www.dynamicgroups.com.au](http://www.dynamicgroups.com.au)



**WE looking for a couple of Superstars  
Secretary extraordinaire and an AV happy, savvy person**



**Permaculture Noosa MEETING – Thursday 18th December  
2014 AT COOROY MEMORIAL HALL,  
7:00 pm for a 7:30 pm start.**

**Permaculture Noosa is having an end of year celebration on the  
18th of December.**

**What a great time to show off your gardening and cooking  
skills.**

**Please bring along whatever you have grown or/ and made  
yourself to share with the others so we can enjoy a very  
festive breakup party.**

**Bring your own cutlery and crockery please.  
Looking forward to a great evening!**

**RAFFLE: THANKS TO STALL HOLDERS...**

A huge thank you to the stall holders who donated prizes for the raffle at the last Permaculture Noosa meeting on 20 November.

Thanks to Jason, Peter, Dee, Leonie, and Lesley (Seed Savers), if I have forgotten that you donated, please let me know at the next meeting.

We had such a great response (no. of tickets sold) that I once again ask stall holders to give something towards the raffle prizes, if possible.

Thanks and regards, Judith

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

“The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.”

— Wendell Berry [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendell\\_Berry](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendell_Berry) - Activism

## SHOULD YOU BUY ORGANICS?

Michael Pollan, author, activist, and Professor at the University of California Berkeley offers common-sense answers to some frequently asked questions about local foods, organics, labelling and ethics.

### **Should I buy local foods or stick to organic?**

It depends on what you value most. If keeping pesticides out of your food is your highest value, then buy organic. If you care most about freshness and quality or keeping local farms in business and circulating money in your community, buy local. But very often you can do both. Some local farmers are organic in everything but name, so before you decide to pass them up, ask them not "Are you organic" – to which the answer must be no if they haven't been certified - but rather, how do you deal with fertility and pests? That starts a more nuanced conversation that may convince you to buy their produce.

### **We can't afford to buy all our produce organic, so where should we direct our money to get the most benefit?**

On produce, some items, when grown conventionally, have more pesticide residue than others, so when buying these, it pays to buy organic. According to the Environmental Working Group, the "dirty dozen" most pesticide-laden fruits and vegetables are: apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, imported nectarines imported grapes, sweet bell peppers, potatoes, blueberries, lettuce and kale/collards. The "clean 15" are onions, sweet corn, pineapples, avocado, asparagus, sweet peas, mangoes, eggplant, cantaloupe, kiwi, cabbage, watermelon, sweet potatoes, grapefruit and mushrooms. So if you've only got a little money to devote to organic, buy the organic apples and skip the organic onions. But do keep in mind that it's important to eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables regardless of how they're grown.

### **Why are vegetables and meat labelled "organic" so much more expensive than similar items without the "organic" label?**

There are several reasons organic food costs more than conventional food. First, the demand for it exceeds the supply, and presumably, as more farmers transition to organic, the price will fall, though it will never match conventional prices. For one thing, organic farmers receive virtually no subsidies from the government. (European governments significantly subsidize the transition to organic; ours doesn't.) But even on a level playing field, farming organically would probably remain more expensive. Farming without chemicals is inherently more labour-intensive, especially when it comes to weeding. In animal agriculture, raising animals less intensively is always going to cost more. Think about it this way: The "high" price of organic food comes a lot closer to the true price of producing that food - a price we seldom pay at the checkout. It's important to remember that when you buy conventional food, many costs have been shifted - to the taxpayer in the form of crop subsidies, to the farm worker in the form of health problems and to the environment in the form of water and air pollution.

### **Apart from a clearer conscience, what does the premium paid for organic food get you as a consumer?**

Organic food has little or no pesticide residues, and especially for parents of young children, this is a big deal. There is also a body of evidence that produce grown in organic soils often has higher levels of various nutrients. (But whether these are enough to justify the higher price is questionable.) Probably for the same reason, organic produce often tastes better than conventional (though a cross-country truck ride can obviate this edge). So it's possible to make a case to the consumer for the superiority of organic food - but the stronger case is to the citizen. Farming without synthetic pesticides is better for the soil, for the water and for the air - which is to say, for the commons. It is also better for the people who grow and harvest our food, who would much rather not breathe pesticides. Producing meat without antibiotics will also help stave off antibiotic- resistance. If you care about these things, then the premium paid for organic food is money well spent.

### **Are there real opportunities for consumers to make an impact on factory farming, unsustainable agriculture and animal cruelty?**

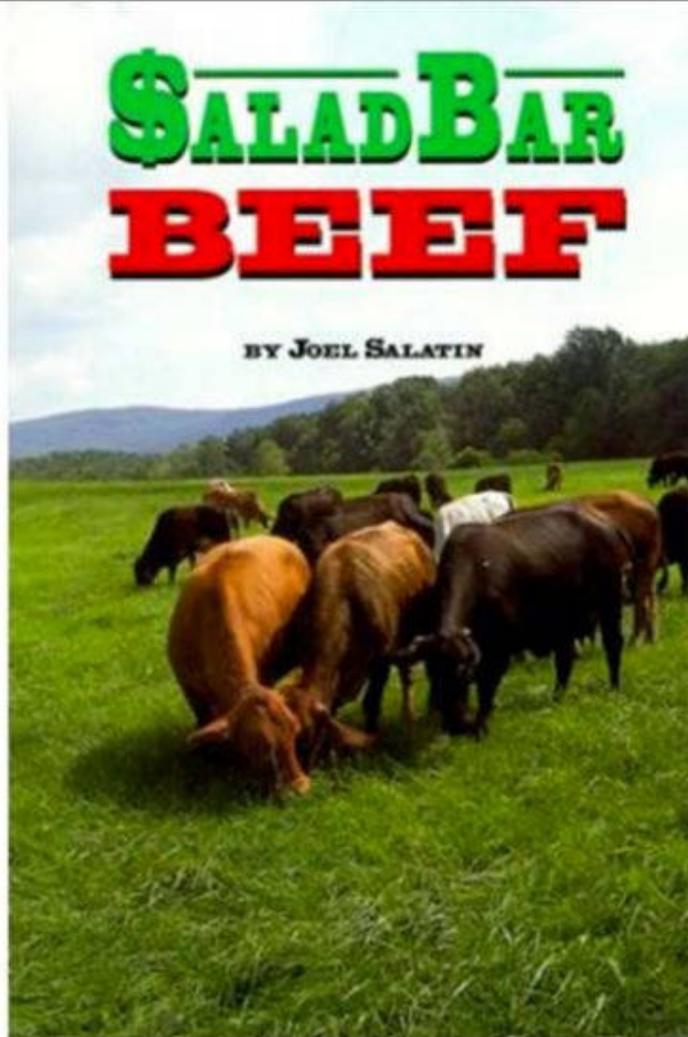
Absolutely. As the market for humanely raised meat grew in recent years, the industry responded. The egg industry recently committed to an effort to phase out tightly confining cages for laying hens; some pork producers are phasing out gestation crates; McDonald's has taken steps to ensure that the meat it buys is slaughtered more humanely; Chipotle now buys only humanely raised pork. There is no question that agribusiness responds to the "votes" of consumers on these issues. The food industry is terrified of you. And PETA!

Source: <http://foodmatters.tv/articles-1/to-buy-or-not-to-buy-organic>

**Salad Bar Beef \***

In a day when beef is assailed by many environmental organisations and lauded by fast-food chains, a new paradigm to bring reason to this confusion is in order. With farmers leaving the land in droves and plows poised to "reclaim" set-aside acres, it is time to offer an alternative that is both land and farmer friendly. Beyond that, the salad bar beef production model offers hope to rural communities, to struggling row-crop farmers, and to frustrated beef eaters who do not want to encourage desertification, air and water pollution, environmental degradation and inhumane animal treatment. Because this is a program weighted toward creativity, management, entrepreneurship and observation, it breathes fresh air into farm economics.

<http://www.goodreads.com>



\* "Salad Bar Beef" is available from the PN Library)

**ROBIN CLAYFIELD'S COURSES & TOURS**

Ongoing Social Permaculture courses and tours of Crystal Waters Permaculture Village.

Next 'Dynamic Groups, Dynamic Learning' Training in Australia  
will be November 2015 [www.dynamicgroups.com.au](http://www.dynamicgroups.com.au)

### Seed Savers Group January 2015 Meeting

**DAY:** Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (we meet the second Thursday of every month)

**TIME:** 9.30 am to 11.30 am

**PLACE:** 'A Touch of the Past' Coffee Shop, 18 Reserve St, Pomona.

**JANUARY'S MEETING TOPIC:**

Jobs in the garden in January.

Want to know more about what grows best at this time of year? How to collect and save seeds from plants growing in this area and how best to deal with this sub tropical climate?

Permaculture Noosa's Seed Savers Group meets on the second Thursday of every month at 'A Touch of the Past' coffee shop in Pomona. While we work we exchange information on seed saving and more generally on recent successes and failures in our gardens.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a cuppa and a chat. In January when we meet on 8th.

During the meeting we process and package seeds that have been saved by local gardeners. Once in small packets, our aim is to distribute the seeds through various means to gardeners on the Sunshine Coast, so that crops that have proved successful in this region can be kept in circulation from one year to the next. The processing and packaging tasks are very simple and require no previous experience.

Hope to see you there.



Photo second gen Hungarian Heart tomato seedlings- photo by Valerie Wilson

**QUICK GARDENING TIPS**by **Leonie Shanahan****SUMMER IS HERE**

- Now is a great opportunity to get your green manure crop in such as Cow pea and Millet with inoculants.
- On scorching days, cover sensitive or precious plants with 40% white shade cloth or sheets etc – do this only in the heat of the day then remove. Also cover if hail is forecast.
- Keep worm farm in the shade and cool, you can cover them with wet hessian to lower heat.
- Be vigilant with cane toads and get out there and catch them, freeze them then put them in a hole before you plant a tree or passionfruit vine, or put into your compost. Keep an eye out for their eggs in waterways, they lay in strands like spaghetti, not clumps, remove them before they hatch.
- It's heavenly to have the storms and a ideal time to observe what is happening on your property. Watch where your precious rainwater is going and ask yourself "Can I slow this down, or Can I store this" Water is our most precious resource, so catch and store it.
- With the ground softer with the rain, it's an ideal time to pull out unwanted weeds. Get to know your weeds as some are an ideal mineral source for the compost or around plants, but others like Desmodium need to be put into a black plastic bag in the sun (solarise) and then put into the garbage bin. This terrible plant is known as the Velcro plant as little green tree frogs will get stuck on it and the frogs have a dreadful death. It also kills other plants by wrapping themselves around them, so please take time to remove Desmodium from your home and anywhere else you see it in parklands etc. It is much easier to be pulling weeds out when they are only small then addressing the problem when it has fully embedded itself.



- On hot days consider the water needs of birds and wildlife, keep birdbaths and water sources filled, and refill with cold water during the day, when we had the 40 deg days, I had to refill the birdbath 3 times as a variety of birds just stayed in it all day – it was a treat to watch them all enjoying the water.

**REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Permaculture Noosa will be manning an information stand at the Australia Day celebrations being held at the Noosaville Lions Park on **Monday 26 January 2015**.

Tania Coppel and Kerry Nagle have both volunteered (as it really is a fun day), however, more volunteers are needed because the Permaculture Noosa stand is very popular. All you have to do is hand out brochures and talk about Permaculture Noosa (meeting dates, etc). It also helps other volunteers to have a break during the day and a look around themselves.

If you are interested in helping out please email the organiser Tania Coppel at [tcoppel2@bigpond.com](mailto:tcoppel2@bigpond.com)

## LINKS

The internet is a great way to access information about Permaculture. Here are some you will find of interest:

Permaculture Noosa

<http://permaculturenoosa.com.au>

Permaculture Noosa has its own site. There you'll find details of the next meeting, gardening tips, courses on such pursuits as Home cheese making, Seed saving, nursery skills, Growing and Cooking Tropical Vegetables with Elisabeth Fekonia; links to other permaculture and like minded groups as well as a wealth of information on many other related topics.

The Permaculture Research Institute Sunshine Coast

<http://permaculturesunshinecoast.org>

The PRI Sunshine Coast, run by Tom Kendall and his partner Zaia has a website. It is packed with information on the Certificate and Diploma programs offered by the Institute, as well as offering numerous photos, videos and recipes. Aussie Organic Gardening

<http://aussieorganicgardening.com>

An excellent organic gardening blog by Lyn Bagnall, the author of "Easy Organic Gardening and Moon Planting".

## **PermaNews changes...**

Judith is no longer the PermaNews editor. After nearly 5 years in this role, she has decided to move on to something else (Raffles). Bill Berry has volunteered to take over the Newsletter Editor role, on top of his work sending out the Info Email, as the two roles are similar but different.

If you have any interesting articles or ideas for the PermaNews, including adverts and information about upcoming courses, workshops or events, please send them to Bill at

[wberrych@icloud.com](mailto:wberrych@icloud.com)

## **MUSCOVY DUCKLINGS FOR SALE**

7 weeks old (big for their age!) (See picture below)

9 available - \$15 each or \$125 the lot.

Call Dee Humphreys 54854462 or email on [deeianh@gmail.com](mailto:deeianh@gmail.com)



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Thank you for reading.

**Thank you for reading.**



**Christmas list:**  
 1 - PN Secretary  
 2 - AV person