

# PERMANEWS



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's not often that there is a restful period in our very hectic and busy schedules to reflect upon greater things outside the demands of everyday life. Usually it's only when we are forced to stand still due to illness or some other major life changing event that we may take the time to reflect outside of our everyday concerns. As most of you know I have had a leg injury over these past five years and been limping through life but this is about to be rectified by hip replacement surgery. In the weeks leading up to the op I have been physically forced to come to a standstill but I have to say that it hasn't been such a bad thing after all!

To be able to come to this rest time of having to earn a living and oversee the farm and with all the home food production activities that come with it, a rest can be a very positive time of reflection, as now I have a free mind to think more on the greater issues that confront us all.

Climate change, peak oil, peak minerals, soil degradation and global economic collapse- yes we are all aware of these things but somehow we must plod on and concentrate on the immediate efforts at hand- that of paying the bills!

In many ways it is business as usual despite our awareness of the global implications of our heavy footprints here on planet earth. It's virtually impossible to stop driving our cars, turn on the switches for electricity, buying new gadgets etc because life demands it of us. We are so caught up in it all that it's hard to get off the merry go round. But if people like us Permies don't set some kind of an example to try to adhere to the three R's, reduce, re use and recycle then what hope is there of some kind of soft landing when the proverbial hits the fan?

I am picking up books now and reading them again to see so clearly how we are facing an uphill battle with our collective future as our primary resources are on a downhill slide. There are so many reasons not to wait until you fall and break a leg to reflect on what we are facing in the next decade and more if we don't take some drastic actions for ourselves. I urge you to pause and think of how you can reduce your own foot print as many drops of water an ocean doth make.

Elisabeth Fekonia, President

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

**PLANT PROFILE – Elderflower (Elderberry or Elder)**

There are some Permaculture Noosa members and supporters who plant and use Elder trees. It is, however, listed as one of Green Harvests “Garden Thugs” © Frances Michaels. In our region it appears that our warm winters prevent the berries from developing, thus limiting the problem of birds dispersing the plants, however, if you intend to grow it, please make sure you know the conditions that cause this plant to be labelled a ‘weed’ and care for it responsibly.

Elderflower, *Sambuccus canadensis* is also known as the North American elder and has been reclassified to a subspecies of *S. nigra*, along with the European or black elder. *S. nigra* is popularly cultivated in Europe and because the two varieties are so similar, the American elder is not cultivated commercially. It can be found growing naturally in wet, swampy areas across much of eastern and central North America and Canada.

As well as forming part of the edible garden, it can also be used as a feature plant in the garden. The dark green, compound leaves are pinnate or bipinnate with leaflets arranged oppositely around the stem, creating an overall length of up to 30 cm or more. Each leaflet has serrate edges, is quite large and may measure 3-12cm long by 2-6cm wide. The fragrant white flowers are large and bloom in inflorescences or clusters, about 30 cm in width. These are followed by the blue berry like fruits, but the plant may have both flowers and fruit for several weeks.

There are many uses for the fruit of the elderflower plant, as both a food and a health supplement. The many varieties of elder have been used all over the world for many centuries. Native Americans valued elderberry as a medicinal herb and used it to treat many conditions. Other uses included repelling insects and creation of a black dye from the bark.

**Growing Conditions**

Elderflower is a vigorous, soft leaved deciduous shrub that can grow from 3-4 meters. The plant is quite adaptable to Australian conditions and will grow in most soil types, including wet soils. This plant likes full sun, but is happy to grow in part shade as well. After flowering, the fruit appears in late summer and the stems may droop under the weight of hundreds of small berries. Choose your position carefully, as this multi-stemmed plant suckers upwards and spreads. You may choose to grow it in a pot for this reason, or use a root barrier in the garden.

**Medicinal Uses**

Elderflower has a long history of medicinal use and although the American elderberry plant is not widely cultivated, research has indicated that there is great potential in its general health benefits. Elderberries have been found to have a high concentration of compounds known for their antioxidant activity and have greater potential health benefits than blueberries and cranberries. In addition, they have a much higher content of Vitamins A, C and B6 than other berries.

The traditional uses of elderflower plants involved the whole plant, with teas and tinctures made from the bark and fruit used for many ailments. Caution is advised using the raw plant products due to potential toxicity. However, elderflower has been used for a wide array of complaints such as stomach ache, constipation, diarrhoea and acts as a laxative and diuretic. However, most commonly the plant has been used as a topical application to treat fungal and bacterial infections, bruises, skin conditions, and as an anti-inflammatory application for wounds. Traditional uses also include for sore throats, coughs and respiratory infections, where it is thought to reduce swelling of mucous membranes. A tea to assist with cold and flu can be made by steeping 3-5 grams of dried elder flower in one cup of boiling water for 10-15 minutes. Strain the flowers off and then drink three times daily. It also combines well with peppermint and yarrow to make the popular blend YEP tea for colds and flu.

**Culinary Uses**

Elderflower has a bitter taste when uncooked and **MUST NOT** be used in its raw state.

***Uncooked berries and other parts of the elder family of plants contain cyanide inducing glycosides and can be extremely toxic.*** Caution is advised before using raw or dried fruits.

However, both the flowers and berries have a wide array of culinary uses. The flowers can be covered in batter and made into fritters, soaked in water to make a drink or dried flowers can be used to make a pleasant tea. The fruits are popularly cooked or made into syrups for pies, jams, jellies, sauces and other desserts. They can also be added to other food, such as bread rolls once made into syrup. Wine, beer and other drinks may also be made from the berries and the flowers used as decoration in desserts.

Elderflower syrup can be made from your own fruit and used on pancakes or added to water for a nice summer drink. Try this recipe: Take 1 cup each of water, fresh elderberries and granulated sugar and combine with ½ teaspoon each of ground cinnamon and nutmeg in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally and then let simmer for 20 minutes, with occasional stirring. You can also try variations by adding honey or cloves to your taste.

From Mudbrick Cottage Herb Farm, <http://www.herbcottage.com.au/elder-flower.html> located at Mudgeeraba, Qld **Phone:** (07) 55 303 253

**NOTE: All information provided on this website is for informational purposes only. Please seek professional advice before commencing any treatment.**

**ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL**

**20-30 freshly picked heads of elderflower**

**Zest of 2 lemons and 1 orange**

**Up to 1.5 kg of granulated sugar**

**Up to 200ml freshly squeezed lemon juice**

**Shake insects off flowers, but don't wash them - it ruins the flavour, then place them in a large bowl with the lemon and orange zest. Pour over just enough boiled water to cover them completely (approx 1.5 - 2 litres).**

**Cover and leave for at least 4 hours, overnight, until cold.**

**Strain the liquid through muslin or a jelly bag, gently squeezing to extract all the juice. Measure the amount of liquid and pour it into a saucepan. To every 500ml liquid add 350g sugar and 50ml lemon juice. Heat gently to dissolve all the sugar, stirring occasionally. Bring to a gentle simmer and skim off any scum. Let the cordial cool, then strain it again through muslin or a jelly bag.**

**Funnel the cordial into glass bottles and store in the fridge - will keep for 2-3 weeks.**

### **Welcome to the new management committee!**

The AGM held last meeting 16 October went smoothly under Doug Mahony's experienced chairmanship, and a new management committee formed quite painlessly. We welcome the following people who will be steering the good ship PN for the next 12 months:

President - Elisabeth Fekonia (re-elected)

Vice-president - Mark Fry

Treasurer - Ruth Sparrow (re-elected)

Secretary - oh dear, no-one – CAN YOU HELP?

Committee members: Bronwyn McIntyre and Tom Kendall (both re-elected), and new members Carolyn Walker, Wayne Oldham, and Ian Trew (Ian is also our Open Gardens co-ordinator).

It was wonderful to see the new faces to inject fresh ideas and energy, and reassuring to see the others serving a second term to provide stability and background. We are fortunate to have such a well-balanced and knowledgeable committee. Lorraine will continue to act as secretary until the end of the year, so between now and then we need someone to decide they will take on the role in 2015. The secretary is essential to any organisation and in fact, by law, the position must be filled within one month of becoming vacant.

President Elisabeth underwent hip replacement surgery in early November and vice-president Mark Fry has stepped up to assume the presidential duties while Elisabeth is taking it easy for a while. Thank you Mark for being able and willing to be thrown in the deep end.

### **Permaculture Noosa Meeting ~ 20th November, 2014**

**Permaculture Noosa meetings are FREE and open to the public and we have scooped a most distinguished guest speaker for our next meeting!**

**Beginning at 7pm with aMarketplace where members share their surplus home grown produce by giving, exchanging or selling it.**

**Graeme Sait will start shortly after 7.30pm and supper for a goldcoin donation will be served at 9pm. Cooroy Memorial Hall, Cooroy and is next to the RSL.**

**[How Humus can Save the World](#)**



Graeme Sait is the CEO and co-founder of Nutri-Tech Solutions (NTS), a world leader in biological agriculture. He is also an author/educator responsible for over 300 published articles and a popular book, "Nutrition Rules". He created the internationally acclaimed, four day, Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture and authored the associated, 300+ page training manual. Graeme is a sought-after speaker, specialising in soil health, plant health and animal health. He is also an expert in human nutrition and his fascinating presentations cover every aspect of wellness. These seminars are often described as "life changing" and "inspirational".

Graeme has spent most of this year abroad and visited over thirty countries to date in the last 12 months. He has just returned from a very successful US tour, where he had long meetings with Bobby Kennedy, Ted Turner, Jeremy Granger and several billionaires who are concerned about the environment. Graeme also addressed the full Board of the Nature Conservancy. The 4 day course in LA was attended by key scientists and several celebrities. The urban agriculture group in LA, "Kiss the Ground" organised meetings for him with the LA mayor and the head of waste management. They are co-operatively working on making LA a zero waste city by 2015. He will leave for his European seminar tour in two days but will return on November 18 just in time for the 4 day Nutri-Tech course in Yandina, HQ. For our meeting, Graeme would like to deliver a new version of his TED talk, "Humus Saves The World" and he will also cover the basics and purpose of Brix monitoring at the Permaculture Noosa meeting on the 20th of November.

This is one meeting not to miss if you are serious about our sustainable future

### **A LOOK AT PERMACULTURE NOOSA**

A shorter version of this article was included as an appendix with the Community Projects Grant application in which we applied for funding to help with our 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday festival

Permaculture Noosa began by promoting and putting into practice the natural design theories of permaculture founders Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. They placed Permaculture design squarely on the shoulders of ecology – the study of inter-relationships and interdependence of living things and their environment. Geoff Lawton, a student of Bill Mollison founded Permaculture Noosa with other Sunshine Coast enthusiasts. They learned to work and design with nature as they established their sub-tropical gardens and properties. They held monthly meetings with speakers on many relevant topics on sustainable living. There was also much sharing of practical experience and exploring techniques that worked. 'Question and Answer' sections – 'Show and Tell' stories of failure and successes were a regular feature at meetings and in the monthly Newsletter. In those days members were very open with each other about their limitations and successes. Where has this type of sharing gone today? There were also reciprocal working bees - known as PET Days (Permaculture Energy Transfers). Over the years many members found these an important experience of the working bee model of sharing interest in each others' properties, lending a hand and learning Permaculture design skills,

whilst they cemented lasting friendships. By sharing their time and labour they grew in their understanding of Permaculture; its ethical basis and principles. There is still strong support for the knowledge base, ethics and principles of permaculture underlying our main activities. We still care about Permaculture Noosa's main motto of "**Care of the Earth, Care of People, and A Fair Share.**" How do we express this vision today?

### CARE OF THE EARTH

Permaculture Noosa sees care of the soil and the biosphere as relevant to all sustainable food production - from balcony gardens and suburban back yards to small and large scale acreage. Organic gardening techniques promote soil enrichment, for example mineral supplements, composting, and worm farms. We are interested in humane animal care, food forests, garden bed design and water-wise practice, (enhanced water-storage capacity, reduction of evaporation, tanks and underground storage). Beyond the above concerns design factors take into account interpreting the stable and random local conditions, for example the topography of properties, their soil conditions (whether stony, volcanic, sandy or clay), weather analysis (movement of the sun, rainfall and wind patterns), water movement and retention by landscaping with swales and other built interventions. Today we have serious handouts on our accumulated permaculture knowledge and techniques. These are offered to interested members and the public at our meetings, on our website, and at local expos, festivals and shows. We aim to educate both our members and the wider public on the importance of caring for the earth and the practical ways they can do this where they live. A recent innovation is a lively seed savers group which is attending to the serious business of preserving our seed heritage for future generations. Some members of our thriving seed-saving group do not take up full membership but actively support our seed-saving practical activities.

### CARE OF PEOPLE

Regular opportunities to meet have built up a support network for members and interested participants. At the monthly meetings there is a members' market where surplus produce is sold. A social supper is a regular feature. Twice yearly we have an informal dinner with shared food to promote a sense of inclusiveness. All regular activities rely on the goodwill and generosity of our volunteers. There is a monthly newsletter Permanews, an Open Garden Scheme to share our challenges and successes with each other. Our members volunteer to participate in the events of many other local activities, for example the Lions club Australia Day event, The Nambour Garden Expo, and World environment Day. When Permaculture Noosa commenced in 1994, it was the only organisation promoting the principles and practice of permaculture design. Over the years, influential members have been involved in establishing many Sunshine Coast school and community gardens at Cooroy, Caloundra, Noosa, Yandina, Chevallum, Gympie and Peregian (Vegie Village). Each one involves more local activities and attracts a different membership. There is much goodwill and interaction between these groups. Due to a change in members' interests we no longer hold the PET days, however we will offer promotional support to any member who would like to hold a Permablitz or Permaculture Energy Transfer Day

### A FAIR SHARE

Members are mindful of sharing and giving away surplus, whether that be produce, resources, time or knowledge. We support the distribution of locally grown organic food; this started in a small way in our own organisation and now we celebrate the popularity of farmers' markets and farmer's gate contracted food schemes. On a broader scale we are a catalyst for spreading permaculture know-how in the Sunshine Coast region, and willingly share the wealth of knowledge and expertise we have built up over twenty-one years. When we started in 1994

there was no similar organisation until over the years we promoted and supported local school and community garden projects. Many Permaculture Noosa veterans were the initiators of these projects and they continue to teach the hands on work which we originated. Other members have become teachers of accredited courses or paid consultants in property design. Permaculture Noosa offers access to these opportunities through its website and meetings. While we rejoice in this wide distribution of Permaculture know-how we now have a more transient membership as we encourage people to be actively engaged in projects close to where they live. This helps to build stronger small localities and saves high transport costs. Permaculture Noosa does not have the expense of maintaining land or buildings and we can therefore afford to hold periodic major events with a rich educational and social focus. In 2008 we held a Permaculture EXPO at Kawana; in 2013 we offered a Permaculture Design Course as a raffle prize to promote serious learning; in July this year we auspiced an event in Nambour with international speakers David Holmgren (co-founder of permaculture) and Nicole Foss (system analyst) on the wider implications of a growing energy crisis and strategies to adapt and build a new future. Support from the Sunshine Coast Council, Landcare, and other local organisations gave us the confidence to undertake the risk of not recouping all costs. Similarly, we see the twenty-first birthday celebration we plan in August 2015 as a promotional activity and a celebration of how Permaculture Noosa has evolved from the child it was into a parent that continues to 'seed' new projects. It is not intended to be a fundraising project but in attracting new members we will be able to continue our educational role while acting as a springboard for local permaculture projects on the Sunshine Coast.

Tania Coppel



**NEW MEMBER - Annette Owen from Tinbeerwah**

### **MUDBRICKS FOR SALE**

Approx 400 rustic mud bricks - approx 354 @ 300x200x100, 17 @ 400x200x100 & 39 @ 200x200x100. These bricks are easy to cut with a hand saw for going around timber etc.

Also 6 glass brick tiles for setting into the brickwork and a mould for making more mud bricks. See photos on Gumtree ad under mud bricks.

**Ring Wayne or Lin on 5447 9115 or 0400 702 665**



**Seed Savers Group  
November Meeting**

**DAY:** Thursday, 11 December 2014 (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.

**DECEMBER'S MEETING TOPIC: JOBS IN THE GARDEN FOR DECEMBER**

In December we will be discussing what kind of projects gardeners could usefully embark on in-between seasons, when it's too late for spring crops but the rains may not have come for summer crops.

Why don't you come and join us for a cuppa and a chat at 'A Touch of the Past' coffee shop in Pomona?

During the meeting we process and package seeds that have been saved by local gardeners. Once in small packets, the seeds are distributed 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.

While we work we also exchange information on seed saving and more generally on recent successes and failures in our gardens.

Permaculture Noosa's Seed Savers Group meets on the second Thursday of the month. It doesn't matter whether you have been saving your own seeds for years, or are just starting out and hope to learn from the experience of others.

Hope to see you there – everyone is welcome.

**OPEN GARDEN COORAN PHOTOS**



**How to Control Pawpaw Fruit Rot - Organically**

from PHIL DUDMAN (Organic Gardener Magazine)

Fruit rots in pawpaws are caused by a fungus. It can infect the fruit when it is still green. Don't confuse it with the tiny black spots you often see; these are fungal too, but generally cause no damage to the quality of the fruit. You won't notice the fruit rotting fungi while the fruit are green. They kick into action when the fruit starts to ripen, and when the fruit is fully ripe and ready to eat there is little edible flesh left to save.

There is a simple solution.

All you need to do is submerge the fruit in warm water at 45°C for 20 minutes. I have tried it and it works. The heat kills the fungal spores and stops the lesions in their tracks. After a 20 minute soak, I remove the fruit and leave it on the kitchen bench to continue ripening. Many of the lesions, which would normally grow at an alarming rate simply shrink and came away from the rest of the fruit.

**HELP WITH RAFFLE PRIZES**

If you have something at home that you think might be an appropriate prize for the monthly Raffle, bring it along to the monthly meeting and see Judith, Raffle Co-ordinator. Ideas however small (e.g. bunches of herbs or silverbeet), seedlings, plants, produce, books, home made products or anything you think your fellow permies would like to win.

Thanks for your help and support of the raffle, which is a great fund-raiser for Permaculture Noosa.

**WANTED – MORE STALLHOLDERS**

Are you growing your own food and have a surplus? Do you make your own preserves and have a few extra bottles that don't get used at home? Are you clever at making items like woven hats and bags, microbat houses or crocheted handtowels, for example?

Permaculture Noosa is looking for stallholders who either "make it, bake it, grow it or sew it" (to 'borrow' the Original Eumundi Markets slogan). You can bring lots, or just a few items, to either share or sell.

Stalls are free and available for members to use at the monthly general meeting on the third Thursday of the month. Items purchased elsewhere are not permitted.

Come along a bit early to set up by 7pm and become a part of the Permaculture Ethic "Share the Surplus".

**September Raffle Results**

We just wanted to make sure all our members and supporters know the results for Permaculture Noosa's Great Garden Raffle, which was drawn at our meeting on Thursday 18 September.

**1st prize:** Garden cart plus lots of gardening goodies

Ticket Green B76 - **Annette from Tinbeerwah**

**2nd prize:** Property consultation with Cath Manual from Soil to Supper

Ticket Green B35 - **Bob from Crystal Waters**, Conondale

**3rd prize:** Permaculture realfood course with Elisabeth Fekonia

Ticket Orange A27 - **Morgan from Maleny**

**Congratulations to the lucky winners.** Thank you to everyone who supported our raffle by buying tickets. We all wanted to win!

**A VERY big thank you to people who generously donated prizes:**

Cath Manual (Soil to Supper)

Elisabeth Fekonia (Permaculture Realfood)

Peter Taylor (Biota Booster)

Leonie Shanahan (Edible School Gardens)

**We also appreciated the support we received from;**

**Cooroy Mitre-10, The Hemp Hut and Yandina Community Gardens.**

**LINKS**

GREEN HARVEST – GARDEN THUGS

Comments and list from Frances Michaels.

<https://www.greenharvest.com.au/SeedOrganic/GardenThugs.html>

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:			
PRESIDENT	Elisabeth Fekonia	0432 180 523	president@permaculturenoosa.com.au
VICE PRESIDENT	Mark Fry	5447 7642 0422 738 458	<a href="mailto:mfry@southernphone.com.au">mfry@southernphone.com.au</a>
SECRETARY	<b>CAN YOU HELP</b>		
TREASURER	Ruth Sparrow	5447 9130	treasurer@permaculturenoosa.com.au.
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</b> Bronwyn McIntyre, Wayne Oldham, Carolyn Walker, Tom Kendall, Ian Trew			
<b>OTHER SUPPORTERS:</b>			
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Janine Stoner	5474 1731	membership@permaculturenoosa.com.au
PUBLICITY OFFICER & NEWSLETTER	Bill Berry	5474 5192	wberryarch@icloud.com
AUDIO VISUAL TECHNICIANS	Brian & Donna Rasmussen	5488 4956	rasmussenranch@hotmail.com
RAFFLE	Judith Anderson	5471 1892	permanews@permaculturenoosa.com.au
SEED SAVING	Lesley Mearns	5442 7071	seedsavers@permaculturenoosa.com.au
SUPPER ROSTER	Bronwyn McIntyre	0416 348 939	broni-mac@hotmail.com
OPEN GARDENS	Ian Trew	0400 80 33 93 or 54097508	trueorganics@hotmail.com
LIBRARY	Penny Foster	0408 744 702	penfoster@westnet.com.au
WEBSITE	Jane Gapinski		info@permaculturenoosa.com.au

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