

# PERMANEWS



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

**\$2**

## President's Message

Here's hoping for a good year ahead of us - a new year and a new beginning to work at making it better than before. So what are your aspirations? Is it a more abundant veggie garden or planting more fruit trees? Or learning how to be more productive or gaining new skills? But have you ever thought that you may even become a teacher? A Permaculture teacher?

When you've been at it for awhile, you can't help but gain knowledge and expertise. Now how about sharing your knowledge with others at the meetings? Maybe you devised a new way to house chickens and make use of their other assets besides laying eggs. It could be learning how to save seed and being confident enough to share your knowledge with those that have yet to learn. There is no need to be an expert in any field but the more we gather up the courage to get up and speak to our perma friends at the meetings, the more we can gain from each other. Our meetings from the long distant past usually had three segments per meeting and I would like to see this come back again. A couple of short segments of 10-15 min such as plant profiles and hands on skills and a guest speaker either from our membership or someone from the community.

As life hurls more and more challenges at us with global changes looming before us- we need to get more serious about gaining those necessary life skills to be able to have a better quality of life.

What better way than to share our knowledge and experiences with our Perma friends?

If I don't hear from you, you will hear from me!

President, Elisabeth Fekonia

# JANUARY MEETING

**WAS\* ON THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2014**  
**PERMACULTURE NOOSA**

PRESENTS:

## **Aloe Vera the Healing Plant with Angie Andrews**

Angie completed a diploma at the Australian college of Journalism in Sydney in 1996. She is a distinguished member of the international Poet Society, winning an International award for excellence in poetry in 2008 with her poetry book "Aussie Moments."

In 2012 "Cookin' for Cures" was printed and is also endorsed by Dr H.P. Guerra. IV. MD. MPH. Some local South East Queensland doctors are also recommending this book to their patients as something they can do at home while seeing them.

Angie will be talking about the research she has done on the aloe vera plant over the last fifteen years, and how it can help our health, giving some descriptions of people with poor health that are now well. She will demonstrate how to make aloe vera drinks and give out a small taste for people to get a better understanding of it. This really is a remarkable plant that we need to use more in our daily lives.

[www.angiessmartbooks.com](http://www.angiessmartbooks.com)

## **Keeping Native Bees with Svenning Prytz**

Svenning studied Horticulture and Geology and also studied Beekeeping as another subject at Uni. He has been keeping bees for over 30 years and has kept native stingless bees for around 11 years. With the honey bees dying out, it has become vital that people start keeping native bees for pollination. Svenning will be talking about the joys of keeping native bees and what they can give back to you in the way of pollination, honey, pollen, propolis and wax.

**Permaculture Noosa meetings are FREE and open to the public. Beginning at 7pm with a Marketplace (where members sell their produce or homemade products), the guest speakers start at 7.30pm. Supper (gold coin donation) is served at 9pm.**

For further information email [info@permaculturenoosa.com.au](mailto:info@permaculturenoosa.com.au)

\* **NOTE:** *Apologies for late Newsletter. Some technical hitches popped up and also, I was away for a large part of January. I hope you understand. Cheers, Ulrike*

## **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

We shall never understand the natural environment until we see it as a living organism. Land can be healthy or sick, fertile or barren, rich or poor, lovingly nurtured or bled white. Our present attitudes and laws governing the ownership and use of land represent an abuse of the concept of private property.... Today you can murder land for private profit. You can leave the corpse for all to see and nobody calls the cops.

**Paul Brooks, author of "The Pursuit of Wilderness" (1971)**

## C O U R S E S

As a Permaculture Noosa member you are entitled to have your courses (or a link to your website) in the PermaNews. Space is limited, however.

### PERMACULTURE RESEARCH INSTITUTE – SUNSHINE COAST with Tom Kendall

**PERMACULTURE DESIGN CERTIFICATE Course**  
26 January - 7 February 2014

**8 WEEK LIFE SKILLS INTERNSHIP**  
9 February – 4 April 2014

**3 WEEK URBAN FOCUS INTERNSHIP**  
9 February – 28 February 2014

To book, please email  
[info@permaculturesunshinecoast.org](mailto:info@permaculturesunshinecoast.org), or visit  
[www.permaculturesunshinecoast.org](http://www.permaculturesunshinecoast.org) for more  
information.



### ELISABETH FEKONIA WORKSHOPS

#### SEED SAVING, SEEDLING RAISING, PROPAGATION, NURSERY SKILLS

If you would like to learn about seed saving, seedling raising, propagation and nursery skills, there will be a course commencing on 5th of February, 2014. This will be held every Tuesday from 9.30-2.30 and costs \$180 for 7 weeks at Black Mountain, Cooroy. This course consists of two units from a certificate II in Horticulture.

#### GROWING AND COOKING WITH TROPICAL VEGETABLES

Would you like to learn about growing and cooking with tropical vegetables? These easy to grow plants are so suitable to grow here in our climate that we can easily expand our food production with very little effort. This 10 week course held every Wednesday from the 5th of February till the 9th of April, 2014. Cost is \$260. Payment can be made in instalments, Times are from 9.30- 2.30 and the course will be held at Black Mountain, Cooroy.

For a course overview and enrolment forms, contact Elisabeth Fekonia on 0432 180523 or email [info@permacultureproduce.com.au](mailto:info@permacultureproduce.com.au)

[www.permacultureproduce.com.au](http://www.permacultureproduce.com.au)



### CRYSTAL WATERS - PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE

**Permaculture Design Certificate PLUS** course at Crystal Waters from April 20th – May 2nd 2014. (This is a full PD certificate course, where successful graduates become qualified to work as Permaculture Designers around the world).

This programme will be led by Max O Lindegger, who has been teaching and consulting in Ecovillage design, ecology and permaculture for over 35 years. Max will be supported by guest teachers, Robin Clayfield and Morag Gamble: both highly respected and experienced consultants, designers and teachers in permaculture and ecological development in their own right, and a pool of talented local guest practitioners,

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN:

The full PDC course fee is \$2,100 or \$ 1,800 EARLY BIRD special, if booked and paid for in full by 31st January 2014.

Course fees include:

- Camping at the Crystal Waters Eco Caravan Park. Other accommodation options are also available on request at your own cost.
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner, morning & afternoon teas.
- 72 hours teaching time
- Extensive course notes
- PDC certificate
- Social & sightseeing events
- Crystal Waters Monthly Market
- Permaculture Design Certification as approved by Bill Mollison
- Eco Village living experience in the award winning Crystal Waters Permaculture Village
- Visits to eco homes and gardens to experience, learn & share Permaculture practices with community members.

For full details, please visit the website at <http://crystalwaters.org.au/permaculture-design-course-april-2014/>

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## Seed Savers Group - February Meeting

**DAY:** Thursday, 13th February 2014 (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.  
**TOPIC:** A General Discussion

Permaculture Noosa's Seed Savers Group saves and distributes seeds from crops that have proved successful in this region, so that they can be kept in circulation from one year to the next. We meet every month on the morning of the second Thursday. Next month's meeting will be held on 13th February. Come and join us 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. The processing and packaging tasks are very simple and require no previous experience. 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. While we work we also exchange information on seed saving and discuss what is happening in our gardens.

The seed savers group would appreciate any spare seed that you have collected from successful crops. Just make sure that you include a record of the name of the plant, who harvested it — and where and when —, when it should be sown, and any other relevant information. If you have any excess seedlings or cuttings you may wish to bring them along to the meeting, too, rather than see them go to waste. Others are generally only too willing to try out new crops.



## BAKING SODA OR BAKING POWDER??

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BAKING SODA & BAKING POWDER?**

#### **Answer:**

Both baking soda and baking powder are leavening agents, which means they are added to baked goods before cooking to produce carbon dioxide and cause them to 'rise'. Baking powder contains baking soda, but the two substances are used under different conditions.

#### **Baking Soda**

Baking soda is pure sodium bicarbonate. When baking soda is combined with moisture and an acidic ingredient (e.g., yogurt, chocolate, buttermilk, honey), the resulting chemical reaction produces bubbles of carbon dioxide that expand under oven temperatures, causing baked goods to rise. The reaction begins immediately upon mixing the ingredients, so you need to bake recipes which call for baking soda immediately, or else they will fall flat!

#### **Baking Powder**

Baking powder contains sodium bicarbonate, but it includes the acidifying agent already (cream of tartar), and also a drying agent (usually starch). Baking powder is available as single-acting baking powder and as double-acting baking powder. Single-acting powders are activated by moisture, so you must bake recipes which include this product immediately after mixing. Double-acting powders react in two phases and can stand for a while before baking. With double-acting powder, some gas is released at room temperature when the powder is added to dough, but the majority of the gas is released after the temperature of the dough increases in the oven.

#### **How Are Recipes Determined?**

Some recipes call for baking soda, while others call for baking powder. Which ingredient is used depends on the other ingredients in the recipe. The ultimate goal is to produce a tasty product with a pleasing texture. Baking soda is basic and will yield a bitter taste unless countered by the acidity of another ingredient, such as buttermilk. You'll find baking soda in pancake recipes. Baking powder contains both an acid and a base and has an overall neutral effect in terms of taste. Recipes that call for baking powder often call for other neutral-tasting ingredients, such as milk. Baking powder is a common ingredient in cakes and biscuits.

#### **Substituting in Recipes**

You can substitute baking powder in place of baking soda (you'll need more baking powder and it may affect the taste), but you can't use baking soda when a recipe calls for baking powder. Baking soda by itself lacks the acidity to make a cake rise. However, you can make your own baking powder if you have baking soda and cream of tartar. Simply mix two parts cream of tartar with one part baking soda.

From <http://chemistry.about.com>

# THE BENEFITS OF WORM CASTINGS

PART 3

*Continuing our story of Worm Castings*, here are a few of their many uses.

## USES FOR WORM CASTINGS

### In the Garden:

\* When planting new seedlings, dig a handful of castings into the surrounding soil or add castings to the bottom of the planting hole when setting out transplants, or worked into the soil surrounding established flowers and vegetables. This supplies nutrients and holds moisture around the developing roots. Worm castings will not burn your plants if it touches them.

\* Spread worm castings and incorporate them into the surface soil levels of your raised beds. Use anywhere from 1 to 4 inches of castings.

### As a Soil Conditioner:

\* If you hoe a layer of barren soil, add a layer of Worm Castings and give it some water, you will be surprised at the growth of your first season's plants.

### For Germination:

\* Use 20 to 30% Worm Castings with sand as an excellent germination mixture. It will also ensure continuous and lush growth for about three months, without you having to add any other plant food.

\* When planting seeds, put a handful of worm castings in each hole and plant your seed. Side dress with castings during the growing season at a rate of 1/2 cup per plant every 2 months. Worm castings are gentle enough not to burn your seeds or the roots of your plants.

### As a Fertilizer:

\* Sprinkle Worm Castings around the base of plants or lightly dig it in, and then add water. They can also be sprinkled on a large scale with a spreader. Remember: you cannot use too much Worm Castings, they cannot damage your plants.

### Compost Pile:

\* Spread a thin layer of Worm Castings in between every new layer of compost. The worm castings help to start the composting action going.

### Perennials:

\* Work in 1 cup of worm castings into the soil above the roots, taking care not to damage them. Apply in Spring, early Summer and early Autumn, and you can also top dress.

### Trees, Shrubs and Berries:

\* Mix 1 part worm castings to 3 parts soil. Dig your hole and surround the hole with the mixture. Make a mound of the mixture in the centre of the hole and spread the plants roots over the mound. Then fill the rest of the hole with topsoil.

### Indoors:

\* Worm Castings can be used when starting your seeds indoors. The size and growth of vegetable seedlings and transplants will be noticeable improved with the use of Worm Castings. Mix 1 part Worm Casting to 3 part soil or seed starting mix.

\* Worm Castings can be added to potting soil or mixed into the soil of house plants or top dressed on indoor plants and the nutrients will soak down thru the soil each time they get watered. Repeat every 2 - 3 months as the plants use up the nutrients.

**Worm Castings Tea** (see next month's issue of PermaNews)

Worm Castings can be used as an ingredient of potting soil (as plant nutrients) for plants in and around the house. It can also be used as a planting additive for trees, vegetables, shrubs and flowers. When used as mulching material, Worm Castings will ensure that the minerals are absorbed directly into the soil when it is watered.

Kelly Slocum at BonTerra  
The Tasteful Garden ([www.tastefulgarden.com](http://www.tastefulgarden.com))  
St. Clare Heirloom Seeds ([www.stclareseeds.com](http://www.stclareseeds.com))

\* \* \*

**BELLBUNYA  
ORGANIC SWAP-MEET CAFE AND HEALING DAY**

**!!! 21st January 2014 !!!**  
**(every 3rd Tuesday of the month)**  
**Swap – Buy – Sell – Share – Meet - Network**

Bellbunya's first monthly organic swap-meet cafe and healing day in Belli Park starting **Tuesday, 21st January, from 9am to noon.**

There will be live acoustic music in the Sustainable Kitchen Cafe, together with a range of delicious organic, vegan and gluten-free cakes, kombucha and chai, and our own Chef Mana's home-made organic sushi.

We are providing a free platform where people who are growing organically can support each other by local purchasing, swapping and networking. People are invited to bring any excess produce, home-made preserves or plants for sale - there is no cost for participation.

At the same time, a healing day will be operating in the hall where people can bring their therapy/healing modality to share, or receive a treatment for \$10.

Come and be pampered and revitalise after the hectic Christmas rush. Amongst the offerings will be acupuncture and oriental medicine, ZenThai Shiatsu massage therapy and esoteric healing.

This can be an opportunity for people to become known and network with other people in the area, and to share their modality. Givers are asked to come 8-8:30am and bring their specialised equipment, such as massage tables. All givers are welcome to a free cuppa, cake and networking.

A localisation initiative for a sustaining future....

Contact Kestrel at Bellbunya for more information on 07 54470181 or email [kestrel \(at\) Bellbunya.org.au](mailto:kestrel@bellbunya.org.au)

BELLBUNYA Sustainable community  
114 Browns Rd, Belli Park

# PLANT PROFILE

## CHICKWEED

*Stellaria media* - Caryophyllaceae family

Chickweed, is a cool-season annual plant native to Europe, which is often eaten by chickens, but is edible for humans and has many medicinal uses as well.

### Propagation

By seed. While it may be a rather weak weed in structure, Chickweed counters this in other ways to ensure it's survival. While it is an Annual, it can mature and start re-seeding a new generation of weeds in around 6 weeks. It's other great survival mechanism lies in the Chickweed seed being able to last up to FORTY YEARS and to still be able to germinate when conditions improve for it's survival.

### Cultivation

Chickweed grows in many areas in a wide variety of habitats and soil textures. It is one of the most common weeds founds in lawns but it also grows well in cultivated fields, pastures, waste areas and even under deciduous forests.

Chickweed loves moist soils and numerous sites, happily growing up to elevations of 900 metres. It has very slender, but tenacious roots. The somewhat brittle, round stems, can sometimes be red-tinged and are usually covered in small fine hairs. The growing stems quickly branch and spread, enabling the plant to form distinctive bright mounds of new growth almost anywhere, if conditions are favourable. In flower, this plant grows to around 30-40 cm high.

### Harvest

Available to harvest most of the year, although sometimes difficult to find in hot summers. When large or plentiful, harvest just the tops.

### Culinary

Chickweed leaves are used as a leaf vegetable and by adding them raw to salads and sandwiches. They can be tossed into soups and stews as well. When adding to a cooked dish, the stems and flowers can be used also.

### Medicinal attributes

Chickweed, in alternative medicine, is used primarily as a topical cream or ointment. The plant has a lot of health benefits and is full of vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients, e.g. mucilage, minerals (magnesium, phosphorus, copper), flavonoid (rutin), vitamins C, B6, B12, D and A.

### Medicinal Uses

As well as being a herb used for cooking, Chickweed is commonly used in alternative medicines and made into balms to counteract inflammation and skin disorders.

It has a long history of traditional uses as an emollient for the skin, helping cases of eczema, psoriasis, ulcers, boils, and abscesses. Very useful in the maintenance of clear complexion and the management of skin cancers. It can be administered through poultices, compresses, baths and through its consumption. Internally chickweed can be used for rheumatic and respiratory conditions, especially where excessive mucous is present.

If eaten daily will apparently assist in weight reduction programs.

**In the Garden**

Chickweed is multi-functional because its presence decreases insect damage to other plants. It is also used as a nutritious and favourite feed for chickens.

**Side Effects and Safety**

Side effects may include contact dermatitis after skin contact with the herb. People with allergies to the daisy plant family may also react to chickweed. Chickweed should not be used internally by pregnant or nursing women or children.

Chickweed contains nitrate. If you experience symptoms of nitrate poisoning after taking chickweed, call your health care practitioner. Symptoms may include weakness, headache, fainting, bluish fingers and lips and dizziness.



**PERMACULTURE NOOSA  
SUNSHINE COAST PLANTING GUIDE FOR JANUARY**

Amaranth	Kang Kong*	Pumpkin
Cape Gooseberry	Leeks	Sunflower
Ceylon Spinach*	Maize	Sweet Corn
Eggplant	Okra #	Sweet Potato
Ginger*	Peanuts	Taro & Tumeric

**Notes:**

1. Plants may be potted up to 4 weeks prior if kept in a shade house
2. # indicates plants are frost sensitive
3. \* indicates plants will respond better in the shade
4. Seasonal variations may occur between coastal and hinterland areas.

**Your feedback would be welcome.**

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## RECIPES USING CHICKWEED

### CHICKWEED SALAD

#### Ingredients

1 cup chickweed leaves  
1 bunch green onions  
1 beetroot  
pinch of sea salt  
3 tbsp. organic coconut oil  
2 tbsp. wine vinegar  
1/2 tsps. mustard of choice

#### Directions

Rinse and drain chickweed. Thinly cut green onions. Grate a raw beetroot. Place in bowl.

Combine the coconut oil, wine vinegar and mustard well then toss through salad. Sprinkle a pinch of salt over salt and enjoy.

Serves one.

### BUTTERED CHICKWEED RECIPE

#### Ingredients

500 ml (2 cups) chickweed  
leaves  
one small onion chopped very  
fine  
butter  
salt  
pepper

#### Directions

Wash chickweed thoroughly. Place in boiling salted water. Cook only for a couple minutes, drain well. Melt a small amount of butter in a frying pan. Briefly sauté the onion then add chickweed.

Sauté one minute.

Add salt and pepper to taste.



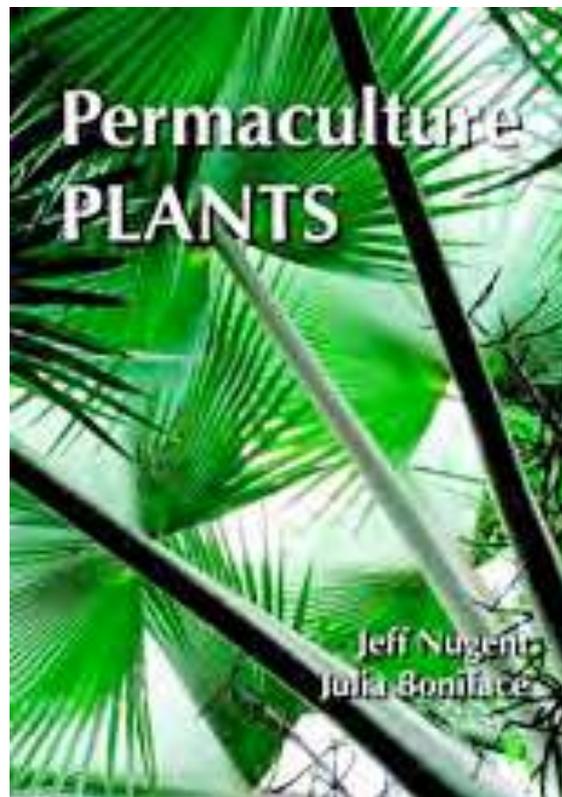
## **BOOK REVIEW**

***Permaculture Plants: A Selection*** by Jeff Nugent and Julia Boniface.

This book is an absolutely massive list of plants to use in permaculture farms and gardens. There are only a few pictures (as colour plates in the middle of the book) but there is a huge amount of information here. There are descriptions and information about most of the plants. To give you some idea of how many plants are in this book, the index goes for 21 pages out of the book's 160 pages.

It includes traditional western fruit and nut plants and also plants such as Acacias that are not found in most non-permaculture-oriented books about fruit and vegetable gardening.

The focus is on tropical and subtropical areas, there are also some plants for cooler areas, but there are less of these.



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To contribute to **newsletter, send items to [permanews@permaculturenoosa.com.au](mailto:permanews@permaculturenoosa.com.au)**

**LINKS TO SOME INTERESTING WEBSITES:**

A reminder that there are useful workshops each Saturday morning at Yandina Community Gardens. <http://yandinacommunitygardens.com.au>

Have you seen the film "In Grave Danger of Falling Food"? This 1989 film is 51 minutes long, but well worth watching. It outlines Bill Mollison's philosophy clearly and with humour (and gives some inspiring tips for small gardens!). <http://youtu.be/CjWaP0iQmWw>

***If you have any sites or links you'd like to share send them to [permanews@permaculturenoosa.com.au](mailto:permanews@permaculturenoosa.com.au)***

**Entries for the newsletter are welcomed and can be sent by email or post .**

**Deadline for newsletter contributions is 1st day of each month.**

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