In The Shed With Greg

Summer growing & Successful transplants

Creating a productive garden depends on many things, the quality of your soil, the orientation of your garden beds, the varieties you grow, how and when you water, the time and attention you give and what and when you feed your garden. It may sound complicated but for the most part it comes down to plain old common sense, that's the Organic way.

1) Soil: After all the rain it's a good idea to add Organic matter. It is inexpensive to add a load of Comcast or straight vermicast (from Tryton in Lismore),to boost your gardens life force and get the fungus and bacteria back into balance. Other Organic matter includes a good dressing of cow or chook poo.

2) Orientation: East west is my personal preference as it is easier for shade plantings and structure, also it is inline with the natural course of the sun and easier to make solar adjustments around the beds.

3) Varieties: Most of what we grow comes from Europe. Summer in Europe is often like August in the northern rivers, so shade after 11:00am for all leafy greens from now on. This will yield sweet tasty and tender lettuce, silverbeet, coriander, rocket etc. Simply by banging in a few tomato stakes and using dog clips to attach some shade cloth you can create a completely different micro climate, and when you see the result of growing our fully sun hardened BD/Organic seedlings in a semi shade environment you will be surprised and very pleased. Tomatoes, capsicums, and eggplants in full sun, with zucchini, cucumber and melons planted into mounds of well rotted compost should also be allowed full sun and be well mulched to retain moisture.

4) Watering: "The earlier the better", I have found watering the garden between dawn and sunrise to be of great benefit during hot weather. Deep watering very early in the morning is most beneficial because if the soil and plants are hydrated early both are able to withstand heat stress more comfortably. When morning watering is supplemented with a light late afternoon watering well before sunset you will give your garden a lush well hydrated feel and appearance, and you save water when the garden is well mulched.

Note: *Watering around the roots at the base of the plant is preferred over watering the leaves, and ensure you water at least 2 hours before sunset.*

5) Transplanting: Prepare the well mulched garden beds with a deep watering of seaweed solution (Seasol, Maxicrop etc.) first thing in the morning after watering the rest of the garden, and allowing the beds to stand for the rest of the day. Transplanting can then commence around 3:00pm when the heat has gone out of the day, and please remember to give them a good deep watering to comfort them. Planting late in the afternoon gives baby seedlings time to settle into their new home and their new solar orientation, so the next day they begin in readiness for growing with the sunrise and establish their new growing pattern quickly.

MARKET CALENDAR

SATURDAYS

Blue Knob Farmer's Market (Weekly)

SUNDAYS

Lismore Carboot Market (1st Sunday of the month)
Channon Market (2nd Sunday of the month)
Uki Market (3nd Sunday of the month)
Lismore Carboot Market (3rd Sunday of the month)
Bangalow Market (4nd Sunday of the month)
Brisbane Cleveland Farmer's Market (Each Sunday of the month) - contact Danita on 0450 959 581

TUESDAYS

Lismore Organic Farmer's Market (Weekly)

FRESH SEEDLINGS AVAILABLE @ THESE OUTLETS

Eden @ Byron Garden Centre
Mullumbimby Rural Co-op
Santos, Byron Bay
Lennox Head Garden Centre
Wards Landscape Supplies Mullumbimby
Mullum Herbal, Mullumbimby
Brunswick Health Foods
True Value, Ocean Shores
Fresh Wholefoods Murwillumbah
Wray Organic Palm Beach
Lismore Organic Farmer's Market
Currumbin Valley Harvest, Currumbin
Leaf and Colour Nursery, Lawrence
The Good Bug Nursery, Ballina

Farmer's Choice Organics

ORGANIC SEEDLINGS

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THE GROWER'S GUIDE

December/January Solstice Edition

Farmer's Choice Organics™

SUN HARDENED CERTIFIED ORGANIC SEEDLINGS

PROCESSOR 11060P
AUSTRALIAN CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Our Children, the Solstice and Gardening

Memories of my childhood summer holidays include long days spent at the beach and the aquarium, the ferry ride over to Manly and back to Circular Quay was a great highlight of the day. Holidays included more time in the garden, playing, watering, planting, playing, weeding, feeding and playing; this seemed to be the order of things throughout the six weeks that Mum had us boys home from school, and all our jobs had to be done just so right before Mum got home from work. After all we were responsible for our homes food production. I would graze through the garden while late afternoon watering, getting my fill of silverbeet, lettuce, parsley, tomatoes and basil, I still do much the same to this day. Back then I'd finish the day by climbing to the top of the giant blood plum tree that grew into our yard from Mr Humphries garden next door; there I would fill up on sweet juicy fruit while watching the sun go down. God summer was great, day after day there was so much fun to be had in the garden, never bored, always interested in what nature had to reveal to the curious child.

Mum would always say to friends and relatives "the best place for a child to grow was in their own backyard in their garden". So enjoy the Solstice with your children and allow them to experience becoming a grower this holiday season, fifty years on they will think lovingly and thankfully of you.

With Love to Your Garden
Ness & Greg

The new Grower's Calendar: The Grower's Guide has altered in format for the spring 2010 calendar; this is so as to stay in step with the planting season rather than the Financial/Tax calendar. We will instead run by the moon/zodiac cycle from month to month, this helps bring an ease to planning garden activities. To help you to focus in your garden and bring more grace to your activities, we have included the daily intentions from the Mayan calendar, all of which fit more closely with the natural cycles experienced in the garden than the 500 year old Gregorian tax calendar. The fully detailed and easy to use Mayan calendar is available at *www.mayanmajix.com.*

EXCITING! News

Now all you fun gardeners can post your photos, comments and ideas on our very own BLOG. We've created it by special request from many of our gardening friends who want a way of showing off their skill in both growing good food and taking images of the beauty they create. We are also very excited to have the new blog forum to share our news. All the articles in our Grower's Guides will be posted along with invitations for open comments. **www.farmerschoiceorganics.com.au**

Updates: Deliveries for December and January: Retail deliveries between December 20th and January 10th will be reduced to these major outlets only: - Eden @ Byron Nursery, Mullumbimby Rural Co-op, True Value Hardware Ocean Shores, Bug Nursery Ballina, Brisbane Cleveland Farmers Market. All Markets Stalls will continue to operate at Uki, Lismore, Bangalow and the Channon over this period.

In The Garden With Carla

So the festive season is once again upon us and it can be a very busy time with all the festivities with family and friends. Whether you celebrate Christmas or Solstice, the most important part is the fact that it brings us all together. And one of the most important rituals is the sharing of the feast.

If you have managed to get your garden in early this year, maybe you have some fresh organic produce to share at your festive table. Traditionally, the sharing of the harvest comes from the pagan tradition and is also a custom at Christmas.

Solstice is held on the 21st of December and is becoming more popular each year as another option for people who are non- Christian. There is the giving of the gifts (traditionally handmade), a decorated tree (which is planted afterwards) and of course a feast which is made up of fresh seasonal produce.

For my family, we celebrate Solstice and look forward to harvesting our produce to make treats for our family and friends. We also make gifts from our garden such as jams, pickles, relishes, cookies and cakes as well as pots of herbs and salad bowls. One of my favourites is the “spaghetti sauce pot”. It has a bay tree in the middle, surrounded with basil, parsley, oregano and chives. Another pot is a “herbal tea pot” with lemongrass, chamomile, lemon balm and peppermint. A “medicinal pot”, with a lemon myrtle (helps with colds, flus and sore throats), aloe vera (skin healing-sunburn, rashes, bites)) and lemon balm (relieves insect bites).

Oils and vinaigrettes made with herbs and garlic are another winner. Firstly we wash and sterilize our bottles before use. We put fresh or dried herbs into the bottles, some with garlic and/or chilies and fill with a good quality local olive oil or apple cider vinegar. We usually make these about 6 weeks before Solstice and store in a cool dark place.

For our tree, we use a fruit tree or native tree that can be planted later and is decorated with enthusiasm from a ray of different things that the kids make.

For wrapping our gifts we use bits of fabric, old pillow cases and scarves and ribbons that we either don’t wear anymore or have picked up from the op shop.

Maybe some of these suggestions will help you be more sustainable this festive season. Just look at your garden as a shop filled with things to make and share, no matter how big or small. But don’t forget to also look after it this festive season, as this is the time that it suffers most from weather extremes. Just a few days of neglect can set your garden back weeks. So be good to her, and your family and friends will not only be able to enjoy the fruits of your labor but get to admire it as well.

Happy Solstice from my family to you all.

Regards Carla

Horticulturist, accredited Permaculture teacher

Owner- The Good Bug Nursery Ballina

DECEMBER/JANUARY SOLSTICE GROWER'S CALENDAR

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
					14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20						

Lunar Eclipse 21st 7.15pm

It is the most easterly part of Australia that will get the best view of this special lunar eclipse, so look up this summer solstice and you will see the Universe winking back at you, Happy Solstice.

Mayan Calendar Daily Intentions December-January 2010-11

(The numbers are the dates.)

Today is a good day to: **14** Send Communications of all kinds **15.**Spend some time contemplating the stars **16.**Plant, make new contacts and re-connect with others **17.**Ask for flexibility and fluidity **18.**Tie all loose ends **19.**Be of service to others **20.**Ask for abundance in all relations **21.**Offer appreciation for all creation **22.**Enjoy family and friends **23.**Begin anything new in your life **24.**Do some community service **25.**Bless or repair your house **26.**Commune and give thanks to Mother Nature **27.**Ascend to a higher perspective **28.**Sit on a rock **29.**Give thanks to Mother Earth for all her gifts **30.**Spend some time in reflection and introspection **31.**Count your lessons as blessings and your enemies as angels **1.**Ask for the wisdom and continued honoured memory of our ancestors **2.**Open to new beginnings **3.**Send Communications of all kinds **4.**Spend some time contemplating the stars **5.**Plant, make new contacts and re-connect with others **6** Ask for flexibility and fluidity **7.**Tie all loose ends **8.**Be of service to others **9.**Ask for abundance in all relations **10.**Offer appreciation for all creation **11.**Enjoy family and friends **12.**Begin anything new in your life **13.**Do some community service **14.**Bless or repair your house **15.**Commune and give thanks to Mother Nature **16.**Ascend to a higher perspective **17.**Sit on a rock **18.**Give thanks to Mother Earth for all her gifts **19.**Spend some time in reflection and introspection **20.**Count your lessons as blessings and your enemies as angels

PLANTING LEGEND:

- Planting Days
- Fertilising Foliar Spray
- Weeding
- Solids
- Summer Solstice 21st 4.31pm
- Lunar Eclipse 21st 7.15pm