



*April 2024
48 Years of Growth
1976 - 2024*



Contact Email: doncastergardenclubinc@gmail.com

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**The next DGC committee meeting will be held on
Wednesday, 3 April 2024 8pm at 11 Inglewood Close Doncaster East**

**The next DGC meeting will be held on Wednesday, 10 April 2024
8pm at the RSL Hall, cnr Doncaster Road and Leeds Street, Doncaster East**

The Speaker for April is Kat Lavers...speaking on Permaculture Kitchen Garden Design

The Speaker for May is Chloe Thompson...speaking on Gardens in Ireland

Committee Members 2024

President:

Pauline Webb

Vice-President & Speaker Bookings:

Gladys Lim

Treasurer:

Dr Margaret Salter

Secretary:

Avril Clark

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doncastergardenclubinc@gmail.com

Fund Raising Co-Ordinator:

Anita Luzza

Newsletter:

Linda Speirs

Kitchen Co-Ordinator:

Ray Brett

Toni Myers

Esther Sim

Past President:

Doug Brewer

Presidents Report

Hello Gardeners All,

Deperately welcome rain: It brings nitrates, bacteria & nutritious dust (usually top soil from somewhere else!). All more beneficial than even tank water which is better

than chlorinated water for plants. Watch your plants pick up & even look happy. Mine have been so sad and sadly, we missed all but a sprinkle or two in March - our driest since 1937.

It is time to prepare beds for winter veggies however, as I write, I am/we are waiting on our Lignite Humate from Clyde Compost which has been delayed due to supply issues of plastic bags and now a truck out of action for close on two weeks. I feel for Vince trying to run his business. Delivery is after Easter now.

I lost my meagre capsicum crop to QFF. It was unexpected as only the stone fruit were affected in January. Next year I net the fruiting veggies.

Thirteen of us met at Pinetree Village on 25th March and had an interesting talk on retirement village lifestyle and reasons to choose it, from Michael Gill of Aveo and Anne, a resident who has been there 5 years and loves it, more each year. I'm looking forward to the next talk which is at Roseville on 18th Arpil, 10.30am till noon.

Did you all notice how the cabbage butterfly plague vanished suddenly with all those hot days? As much as the extreme heat burnt leaves and fruiting bits, there was a hidden blessing re the butterflies - until somewhere in spring!

The plants are confused with the erratic weather. I already have a Sasanqua Camelia in flower many weeks early.

Happy Gardening in the cooler weather,
Pauline

James Wall from Garden World is an entertaining speaker. Tonight, he came to speak to us about Growing Plants in Pots, But he also added in a lot of other hints.

As a home gardener he likes to grow heirloom varieties but also tries new hybrid plants such as the 'burger lettuce' that he brought in as a demonstration...where all the leaves on the plant are just the right size for a burger bun!!!

For our pot growing, remember to start with a good potting mix (maybe even make your own). You should get two crops from new mix. When replenishing it, add new to old at a ratio of three new to four old and mix well.

If your previous plant has suffered from a disease replace all the soil and make sure you wash your pots.

When watering, in hot months don't wait till morning...if your plants are wilting, give them a drink.

When deciding on plants to grow, choose your varieties carefully. Make sure they are suitable to your area.

Read your labels and packets carefully and keep them to refer to. Use your taller plants and trees to provide protection and create a micro-climate. A brick wall can also be used if radiant heat is beneficial.

Extra tips; Don't forget some plants require both a male and female plant to be productive, for example kiwi and mountain pepper.

When pruning your blueberries, cut out the weak twiggy stems.

Kale requires at least 2 frosts to sweeten the leaves.

Between March and September succession plant your Asian greens, coriander and spinach. Make the most of your crops

by preserving; freezing, bottling and dehydrating.

James recommends 'Melba' strawberries.



Plastic bottles refund

If you have plastic bottles with lids on, marked for 10c return and wish the Garden Club to benefit rather than the council bin, please bring them to the meeting.

Gladys has offered to take them to the refund place near her and Bank the directly to the Clubs Bank Account.



DGC Life Members		New Members	April Supper Roster
Gerda van der Peet Doug Brewer Ken Beer Toni Myers Gayle McCann	Ted Page Joanne Driver Elsie Carter Bev Turner Franziska Kung	Ruth Illingworth Josie Blyton	Reinhardt Stratemeyer Virginia Roberts Fay Jones Elsie Carter

All correspondence should be forwarded to Avril Clark - avril@spiritofprogress.com.au
62 Pine Hill Drive Doncaster East 3109

Last Committee Meeting:	03 April	hosted by Pauline Webb, 8pm at 11 Inglewood Close Doncaster East
Next Meeting:	10 April	at the RSL Hall, 8pm at cnr Doncaster Road and Leeds Street Doncaster East
Following Committee Meeting:	01 May	hosted by Pauline Webb, 8pm at 11 Inglewood Close Doncaster East
Following Meeting:	08 May	at the RSL Hall, 8pm at cnr Doncaster Road and Leeds Street Doncaster East

Exhibition Table

We have 2 tables:
one is for anything you wish to bring to show.
The other is for the listed category which for April is 'Autumn Colours / Foliage'

Missed Emailed Newsletters
If anyone does not receive their newsletter by Meeting night
PLEASE CONTACT me as there were a few sent which did not arrive last time. Pauline

7 Reasons to Mulch (article by Angelo Eliades)

Inhibits weed growth.
Prevents soil erosion and compaction by rainfall.
Adds organic matter to improve soil structure.
Creates a habitat for beneficial organisms.
Helps retain soil moisture and reduces evaporative water losses from soil surface.
Reduces soil temperatures in summer.
Reduces the spread of fungal disease spores.

Earthworms can Increase your Crop Yields by 25%

Studies show earthworms can increase crop yields by 25% Earthworms are fundamental to the delivery of a range of soil ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling and water management, which in turn affects crop development and yield.

In fact, one study states the presence of earthworms in soils can increase crop yields by an average of 25% and total crop biomass by 21%. Often referred to as “ecosystem engineers”, earthworms stimulate plant growth, predominantly by improving soil structure and enhancing the release of nitrogen locked away in soil organic matter and residues.

Another study in 2023 estimates earthworms annually contribute 6.5% of grain and 2.3% of legume production globally. This is the equivalent to 140m tonnes.



Karl Ritz, emeritus professor of soil ecology at the University of Nottingham, explains how earthworms ingest soil and pass it through their bodies, gaining energy and nutrients from organic matter. “The processed soil excreted from their rear ends is biologically very active and contains many unabsorbed nutrients, which are available for uptake by plants”.

All three earthworm ecological groups – anecic, epigeic and endogeic – have distinct burrowing behaviours. “Under ideal conditions, deep vertically burrowing earthworms [anecic forms] can consume up to 30 times their bodyweight of soil a day,” he says.

It has been estimated that in temperate arable fields earthworms can process about 10t/ha of soil a year, while in pastures it can be at least five times this. A further study has shown that 16 earthworms in a 20x20x20cm spade full of soil is a good indicator of biological health in terms of plant productivity and crop yield, says Karl.

Benefits - A global meta-analysis study, which revealed earthworms increase crop yields by an average of 25%, used data from 58 studies published between 1910 and 2013.



The report, published by Jan Willem van Groenigen and colleagues in 2014, suggested earthworms enhance plant growth.

We had very wet January at 117.6 ml so here is good info in case it occurs again in winter. Pauline

Puddles on the Lawn

Lawns often become compacted, especially those on clay soils. If the water can't drain it can literally drown the grass, allowing weeds to take over. Putting in land drains and soakaways will solve the problem. Hollow tine forking and brushing in sharp sand is effective as well but there may be an easier, natural solution.

Start by deep forking and rocking to open the soil. Allow the grass to grow long until it starts to flower and seed, then mow. As grass gets larger above ground, the roots get larger below. Once cut, those roots die back and become organic matter. This will increase the soil health and opens it up to allow more water to drain and store. Repeat the process as often as you can and in a year you should see a big difference.

Robin Gale-Baker, from Sustainable Macleod, discusses growing peas. This is one of a series of articles she has written about growing various veggies.

This can be found at:-
<https://localfoodconnect.org.au/community-gardening/growing-peas/>



Introducing BAAG Member Special Prices

In addition to your exclusive monthly specials, starting this month our members will also receive special members-only prices on selected items. These member prices do not expire at the end of the month, you can take advantage of these super special prices anytime. Current member priced items will always be listed on our website. You can view both the current monthly specials as well as the member price selected items here: <https://www.baag.com.au/member-specials/>. We have kicked things off with a very special member price on 30 litre BAAG Tub and Terracotta Potting Mix. Non-member price is \$17.95, member can now get a bag for just \$13.95.. Stay tuned, we will be adding more great member prices over the coming weeks.

BAAG
MEMBER
PRICE



30 litre BAAG
Tub & Terracotta
Potting Mix

\$13.95
(non-member price \$17.95)



You are invited to our next *event*

Connecting Roseville Retirement Village with
Doncaster Garden Club!!!

You are cordially invited to a guided tour and morning tea at Roseville Retirement Community. This exclusive opportunity promises to be an unforgettable experience, allowing you to explore the facility and expand your horizons. We look forward to your presence.

When

Where

**Wednesday
18th April
10:30am - 12pm**

**Roseville Retirement Village
110 King Street, Doncaster East,
Vic, 3109**

RSVPs essential

Please RSVP to Pauline or Avril to confirm numbers and dietary requirements.

Phone **0477866352** Email **michael.gill@aveo.com.au**

Terms and conditions:
Events are conducted in accordance with
the established health and safety practices.

aveo

What to Sow Now - Temperate Areas

Occasional winter frosts (pretty much the rest of Australia, most of the inland, some areas of Victoria, most of SA and the southern area of WA)

Still some good planting time left in this part of the world, so pop in some cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli. Peas and broad beans can also go in, as well as radish, turnips, swedes and spinach.

It's time to get happy with herbs, so try some chamomile and lemon grass. You could give mint and lemon balm a go as well, but be careful to contain them as they can take over!

Why not try some lovely flowering stuff in your patch as well, like: cornflower, calendula, dianthus, pansies, viola, snapdragons, stock, ageratum and marigolds. These guys are great at attracting pollinators and beneficial insects to your patch, and the flowers look good as well.

Consider a green manure crop to add some life and love to an overworked patch. At this time of year try faba bean, field pea, oats and wheat. This will improve your soil incredibly, and, for a bit of forward planning, you'll find it well worth the effort! Bare rooted fruit tree time is almost upon us, so start preparing beds for these guys now.

Lots of lovely rich organic matter, a bit of moisture and some mulch will see the soil absolutely gorgeous by the time your trees are ready to go in!"

<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/may-in-your-patch/#::~:~:text=what%20worked%2C%20what,to%20go%20in!>

(<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/>)

As our Club has changed our banking to Bank of Bendigo, please note the new details:

Account Name: **DONCASTER GARDEN CLUB**
BSB: **633 000**

Account Number: **214 287 757**

When you deposit, please put your name and purpose, ie membership fee or whatever.

March Competition Table

**Toni Myers with her
winning Hazelnuts**



Broad bean bonanza!

Robin Gale-Baker, from Sustainable Macleod, discusses growing broad beans. This is one of a series of articles she has written about growing various veggies (see right hand sidebar). She has also written a number of articles about growing various herbs, growing various fruit trees and general growing techniques.

Broad beans are a wonderful crop to grow for four reasons: they are a delicious and nutritious food; they add nitrogen to the soil; they supply great colour; and they attract bees to aid pollination in the garden.

Broad beans can be sown from Autumn to Spring. Winter is a good time to plant them. They are frost tolerant. Whilst Autumn-sown plants are ready for harvest in 25 weeks, spring-sown are ready in 15 weeks.

Broad beans require an open, sunny position, and shelter from wind if possible. They thrive in neutral soil. To prepare your beds, fork over your soil to aerate it and dig in a low nitrogen, well-rotted animal manure such as cow, sheep or horse plus compost to provide organic content, nutrients and good drainage. Sprinkle potash at the rate of 1 tablespoon per square metre to strengthen plant stems and encourage flowering.

Plant spacing depends on the variety and height but is generally 20-30 cm apart (follow the directions on the packet). Double rows close together can be sown so that the rows support each other. **Crimson Flowered** and **Chocolate Flowered** grow to 90 cm, **Coles Early Dwarf**, **Scarlet Cambridge** and **Aquadulce** to 1m and Early Long Pod to 1.5m. The tall ones are divided into long and short pod varieties. Planting depth is recommended between 2-10 cm. I always plant at least 5cm deep to avoid rats eating the seed. Soak your seed in either water or a weak seaweed solution overnight and, once planted, water the seed in and don't water again until the shoots emerge above ground. Once the flowers have opened, water well so that the pods develop properly. Constant picking of pods causes plentiful new growth.

Broad beans don't suffer many pests but snails can be a problem and you may see them at night on the leaves. Black tip and spot is a fungal problem that is caused by poor drainage and black fly can infest tender top shoots, which can be remedied by picking out the tips.

There are various ways of supporting broad beans so that their brittle stems aren't at risk of snapping in the wind. They can be individually staked with bamboo but that is a lot of work; they can be supported by 4 corner stakes surrounded by a cordon of heavy string which can be further criss-crossed in a lattice pattern; you can use last season's corn patch and leave the stripped stalks in place as a support structure and also add a string lattice; or you can use your tomato cages from summer which is a handy way of storing them.

Broad beans convert nitrogen from the air into nitrogen root nodules so, when the crop has finished, slash it and dig in the stalks and roots to add valuable nitrogen to your soil. You can also cut the stalks at their base and leave the roots intact in the soil and dig the shredded stalks into another bed.

Save seed from your crop for next year. The easiest way is to leave pods on the plants until they dry out, then shuck the pods and store the beans in an air tight container.

Good companion plants include sweetcorn, potatoes and lettuce. Avoid fennel.

Broad beans are delicious when young and small but tough when they are older and bigger (which sometimes gives them an undeserved, poor reputation). Young broad beans can be steamed, or eaten pods and all. The plant tips can be stir fried and the flowers can be eaten in salads. Tough older beans can be steamed and double shelled, removing the tough grey outer skin. Mashed broad beans with lemon, dill and creme fraiche make a delicious dip.

Q. What made the sausage roll?

A. He saw the apple turn over.

Q. What type of Chocolate do you get at an airport?

A. Plane Chocolate

A cabbage, a tap and a tomato had a race.

The lettuce was a head, the faucet was still running and the tomato was trying to ketchup.



Eggplant



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RYSET

The Committee each have a Ryset catalogue and an online pricelist to share with members.

(Thousands of products) The Club receives wholesale prices which are usually the retail price discounted by 60-70%. Do ask to borrow the catalogue.



Please support our supporters, let them know you are a member of DGC and appreciate how they help us