

Permaculture Cairns

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR 10 YEARS



Care for the Earth, Care for people, Fair share the excess

Permaculture Cairns Incorporated Web Site: www.permaculturecairns.org.au

Contact is via email at info@permaculturecairns.org.au

JULY NEWSLETTER

Hi All

Justin is on holiday so Hello from Carol

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT –

Gardening Workshop

Sunday 10th July 10am – 12.30pm

We will be working on the Kitchen Garden at Endeavour Foundation property at 37 Hoare Street.

There are two raised beds and two garden beds which need rejuvenating with compost, manure, fertiliser and mulching. We will be planting vegetable seedlings, herbs and other edible plants and flowers.

The clients use the garden for educational purposes as well as using the produce for their lunches.

If you would like to come help and learn how to grow food then please join us.

Members Free, Non-Members \$10.

Tea and coffee supplied, please bring a snack

Please RSVP by Friday 8th July to info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Back Story -

Permaculture Cairns has been maintaining the Kitchen Garden for over 10 years and we have been holding meetings and workshops at the Living and Lifestyle Centre for many years. Since the Covid restrictions have been partially lifted we are able to access this facility again. Many thanks to the Endeavour Foundation for this privilege.

Past events

The **Ecofiesta event** went really well, we talked about plants, permaculture practices and lots of other useful topics to lots of lovely people. We all enjoyed ourselves on the day. A big thank you to all involved.

The **Habit Box building** workshop went well although not many people attended. We all should be trying to help our native birds and animals by supplying them houses now all the trees are gone. I ended up with a Micro Bat box, these are very tiny animals who only come out at night to eat and they need a very special box so they remain safe from snake attacks. Denis was very patient with us and we learned how to put together Micro Bat boxes, Pygmy possum boxes which are also suitable for some birds species. If you are interested in having a box we have a few extras and there will be some available for using as a pattern. The ready cut boxes are for sale at \$45. Contact us by email at info@permaculturecairns.org.au if you want to have one at you place. We would like to thank Denis for making this workshop possible.

Permies on tour

Keep an eye on your emails for this one. This will be a members-only event so if you are reading this and haven't joined the club officially, now is the time!

We are heading north to Mossman and surrounds. Date will be late July. There will be a number of stops in the day. The theme that ties all the stops together is that they are all pushing the envelope in fostering a more resilient and sustainable community here in FNQ. It will be a big day and we are looking to hire a bus for everyone. There are a few details to be confirmed before the official times, stops and costs are released, so stay tuned. **More on the tour when Justin gets back.**

The Tropical Veggie Patch This is about growing food on the wet tropical coast.

Just when you thought it was going to fine up, it is now drizzling again but it is Show time so to be expected.

Most plants are now doing well, tomatoes, egg plant, lettuce, bok choy – let some go to flower for the bees and collect the masses of seeds for the next planting, rocket, radish, kale, broccolene, Chinese celery, Beans galore and so delicious, dwf ones in bathtub and Italian and Blue lake on the fence, just beautiful. Certainly, well worth growing the greens now.

Four Pumpkin from the driveway and now they cost \$2.99 a kg to buy!!! Not long ago they were \$2 each. Thai pink tomatoes about to pick, Capsicum about ready to pick, Chilli ready but the Bulgarian carrot chili not ready yet.

Just a small tip when seeding corn, beans and peas, might be a good idea to multi seed into containers(3 - 4 seeds) and not straight into the ground as the midnight raiders are digging up the seeds for supper. Use big pots at least 20ml deep for growing beans, herbs, lettuce, bok choy, basil. Tomatoes will need to be deeper grow the small tomato varieties.

I try new seed varieties each year, this year it is Radish varieties so fast and nutritious also the Popcorn for harvesting the baby corn for stirfrys, which are delicious, definitely worth trying, the other is Snowball Turnip which I saw on You tube from Florida the grower said they were sweet and crunchy eaten raw, and fast growing so putting in another lot as the rain kill the first try. Still trying, didn't like the dull wet weather.

A short list of my favourite Tropic Veggie plants include, Ofenga, Okinawa and Sambung the Longivity plant for salads and stirfrys. Kang Kong for stirfry, Ceylon Spinach for sandwiches. Amaranth and Brazilian Spinach for cooking. All so easy to grow in your landscaping and always there for you.

I have been growing and selling Tropical Vegetable plants, herbs, trees, spices and flowers for over 12 years. Message me on Facebook if you need advice/plants. Carol Laing

Recently I was asked for more information on one of the tropical perennial plants that I grow. Here is some information I am able to copy and paste.

OFENGA

Botanical name: *Pseuderanthemum whartonianum*; *P. carruthersii* (Acanthaceae)

Ofenga, which originates from North Vietnam, is a tall shrub, growing up to 6m high. The leaves have prominent veins and are oval-shaped, narrowing to a point at both ends. Both species are similarly nutritious. The flowers are purple and white

Uses: Young leaves can be eaten fresh, but any leaves can be cooked in soups, stews and curries, ideally with coconut cream to increase carotenoid availability and conversion to vitamin A. Some people consider this plant to have the best flavour of all of the recommended leafy vegetables.

Medicinal: Ofenga is used, particularly in Vietnam and Thailand, to treat high blood pressure, diarrhoea, wounds, arthritis, tumours and diabetes. The study of Padee et al (2010) see Factsheet 1) supports the use of *P. palatiferum* (a close relative of *P. whartonianum* and *P. carruthersii*) to combat diabetes. Availability: Ofenga grows all year in the tropics and is widespread in the Pacific, especially in Solomon Islands (particularly Malaita) and Vanuatu, near the coast in gardens and as hedges, and wild in rainforest. Both species are common on South Tarawa and Funafuti and less so on outer islands. Like chaya and drumstick, it is often found in ALD nurseries in Kiribati.

Propagation methods: Like hedge panax, ofenga is usually grown from stem cuttings around 2cm thick and 40cm long, but can also be grown from seed. The area around the cuttings should be mulched and watered for the first 3 months to help establishment.

Project findings/nutritional value: : Samples were collected in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands. Ofenga is an outstanding accumulator of magnesium, second only to purslane in our samples, and is also usually high in calcium and carotenoids, especially lutein (Solomon Islands samples analysed). About two handfuls (100 grams) per person for a meal serving will provide useful nutrition. Magnesium: This mineral is important in bone formation, energy production, and nerve and muscle function. Furthermore, it has anti-inflammatory effects, and magnesium deficiency is a risk factor for obesity, metabolic syndrome and diabetes. Calcium: The most important mineral for the growth and maintenance of bones and teeth. Calcium is also important for cellular physiology

The following is a photo of Ofenga growing in my garden, the surrounding purple leaf plant is also edible, but you can only eat so much. I will do some research for nutritional value and medicinal uses. I have seen the leaf growing all over the top end of Australia one of the *Pseuderanthums* me thinks.

Carol Laing June 30th 2022.

PS excuse typing mistakes etc been in a rush to get this out. Carol

OFENGA



Please PRINT – SIGN – SCAN and RETURN by email to
info@permaculturecairns.org.au.

Permaculture Cairns

Membership Form 2022

One year's membership fee - 1 Jan – 31 Dec:

☐ Household membership \$30 ☐ Renewing Member ☐

Individual membership \$20 ☐ New Member ☐



Name(s) of all applicant(s) & DOB if under 18yrs:

.....

.....

Postal Address:

..... Postcode:

Phone(s):

Email:

Signature:

Payment may be made at Meetings, at Cairns Penny or Online Direct Deposit to Permaculture Cairns A/c at Cairns Penny in Grafton Street. BSB704-966 A/c No. 100009440 please include your Surname as reference.

If you have a Permaculture Design Certificate could you please complete the following survey.

YOUR NAME:

President: Justin Brennan info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Secretary: Craig Phillipson info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Treasurer: Carol Laing info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Website: www.permaculturecairns.org.au

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