



February 2026

Handy Hint: For a better user experience on your phone, try Landscape view.

President's Welcome to 2026

G'day to all NCG Members

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2026. We open this year with another wonderful Edition produced by our Editor, Kaylene. Now that the "Merry, Jolly, Silly Season" is well behind us, we are fully focussed on the year of growing ahead of us.



We are starting 2026 in an enviable position, supported by excellent infrastructure, refined systems, and a wealth of recorded knowledge regarding what thrives (and what doesn't), in our unique subtropical paradise.

On behalf of the entire NCG Committee, We wish You a rewarding year in the Garden alongside friends old and new, as we achieve abundant tasty harvests, plus plenty of fun and exercise. We look forward to your continued and valued Contributions - through shared expertise and a willing hand, as we grow organically together in 2026.

Cheers
Doug Smith
President

New Raised Garden Beds 🌱

We're pleased to announce the arrival of eight new raised garden beds, each 450mm high, to be installed in place of the older metal beds that were previously used for growing Asian vegetables.

This upgrade has been made possible thanks to a **generous grant from Noosa Council**, and represents another important step in improving both our garden infrastructure and the day-to-day experience of our members.

The new beds offer a number of benefits. Their increased height makes gardening tasks such as planting, weeding and harvesting **more ergonomic and accessible**, helping to reduce the amount of bending and strain on backs and knees. I'm sure this aspect will be especially welcomed by our gardeners. These will also prevent the grass from encroaching on the gardens.

Replacing the ageing metal beds also improves durability and safety, while giving the garden area a refreshed and cohesive look. The new beds will support healthy soil management and provide flexible growing spaces for a wide range of crops into the future.

As you can see from the pics below our members are very keen and have been working hard to get them painted, positioned, levelled and have started the task of filling them ready for planting.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Noosa Council** for supporting this project. These new raised beds are another positive step forward in creating a more comfortable, inclusive and productive garden for everyone to enjoy.



We're Now AED Equipped
.....*thanks to Noosa Council*

Noosa Community Gardens is pleased to now have an **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** available on site, adding an important layer of safety for our members, volunteers, and visitors.

Gardening is a wonderfully active pursuit, but working outdoors — especially in warm, humid conditions — can place extra strain on the body. An AED can be life-saving in the event of sudden cardiac arrest, delivering clear voice instructions and only administering a shock if it is needed.



Having an AED at the garden means help is immediately available while emergency services are on their way. It provides reassurance to our garden community, particularly older members and those with underlying health conditions, and reflects our commitment to wellbeing and responsible garden management.

We encourage all members to familiarise themselves with its location and use. It's another step in making Noosa Community Gardens a safe, welcoming space for everyone. This initiative has come to fruition thanks to the support of the **Noosa Council** and their Quick Response Grant program and we cannot thank them enough for their support of this request and their ongoing support of our garden.

February/March Upcoming Events

🥂 **Regular Social Get Together** - Last Friday of the Month from 4 pm - **Relax by the River** - BYO drinks, nibbles to share and your chair. Please remember partners and friends are most welcome to come along and share in our fun. You'll find us in our usual spot on the grassed area between the Boathouse and the boat ramp. ***This month it will be Friday 27 February at 4 pm***



💡 **Trivia Quiz** - Tuesday 17 February, 2026 at Noosa Sports Club, 65 Hilton Tce, Tewantin (formerly Noosa Lawns) - Trivia commences at 6.30 pm, Dinner available from 5.00 pm. Please RSVP to Kaylene by Monday 9 February, 2026 so that we can book table/s if you wish to participate.

🌿 **Mudjimba Community Garden Tour** - Friday 27 February, 2026 8-10 am at 128 Mudjimba Beach Rd, Mudjimba ~ along side the sports fields. Please RSVP your intention to come by mid-February; by email to admin@pomonacomunityhouse.org.au

👉 **NCG Committee Meeting** - the next meeting is being held on 3 March 2026 at 2 pm at 5/28 Lionel Donovan Drive, Noosaville. All members are welcome, please RSVP via email

to noosacommunitygardens@gmail.com if you will be attending, so we can ensure we have enough seating. You are also welcome to submit agenda items by Friday 27 February, 2026 via email please.

Summer Vegetable Gardening in Sub-Tropical South East Queensland

Summer in South East Queensland is not for the faint-hearted gardener. Hot days, warm nights, high humidity and sudden downpours can turn a neat veggie patch into a jungle almost overnight. But with the right plant choices and a few climate-smart techniques, summer can be a productive and rewarding growing season.

Choose Crops That Love the Heat

The key to summer success is growing vegetables that thrive in warmth and humidity.

Heat-loving crops such as sweet potatoes, okra, kang kong, pumpkin, zucchini, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, capsicum, chillies



Manage Heavy Rainfall

Raised garden beds improve drainage and compost enriches the soil.



Mulch Is Essential

Mulch conserves moisture and suppresses weeds.



Water Wisely

Water early in the morning to avoid fungal issues.

Embrace the Season

Enjoy the lush bounty of summer harvests.

WHAT TO PLANT NOW

Summer in South East Queensland

Best performers in heat, humidity and summer rain

- Vegetables:** Sweet potato, okra, snake beans, kang kong, pumpkin, zucchini, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, capsicum, chillies
- Greens & Leaves:** Asian greens Ipak choy, choi sum, amaranth, water spinach, Brazilian agriach, kangaroo spinach, New Zealand spinach
- Climbers & Vines:** Snake beans, cucumbers, pumpkins, loofah, choko
- Herbs:** Basil, Vietnamese mint, lemongrass, turmeric, ginger, garlic chives

Tip: Choose disease-resistant varieties and plant with generous spacing to improve airflow in humid conditions.

Source: ChatGPT



Meet Our Trees

This year we will be including a Meet Our Trees segment in the newsletter each month, while some of the trees are very well known, such as the two included below this month, others may not be so familiar, so watch out for the appearance of Strawberry Guava and Pineapple Feijoa in the coming editions of the newsletter.



Dwarf Ducasse Banana

The **Dwarf Ducasse banana** is a popular, hardy variety well suited to home gardens and community gardens, especially in warmer regions. It is a compact form of the well-known Ducasse (also called Pisang Awak), making it easier to manage while still delivering generous bunches of fruit.

Characteristics Dwarf Ducasse plants typically grow to around **2–2.5 metres**, making them more wind-resistant than taller banana varieties. They have strong pseudostems, broad green leaves, and produce medium to large bunches of slightly curved bananas.

The fruit has a **creamy texture with a mild, slightly tangy flavour**, excellent for fresh eating, cooking, and baking. Plants are known for their reliability and good disease tolerance.

Best Climate

This variety thrives in **warm, subtropical to tropical climates**, making it well suited to **South East Queensland and similar regions**. It prefers frost-free conditions, but its sturdy nature allows it to cope better than many bananas with cooler winter temperatures, provided it is protected from cold winds.

Growing Tips

Plant Dwarf Ducasse bananas in a **sunny, sheltered position** with rich, well-drained soil high in organic matter. Regular watering is essential, particularly during hot weather and fruit development, but avoid waterlogging. Mulching helps retain moisture and improves soil health. For best results, feed regularly with compost or a balanced fertiliser, and maintain only one or two healthy suckers per plant to focus energy on fruit production.

A dependable, productive banana, **Dwarf Ducasse** is a great choice for gardeners looking for a compact plant with tasty, versatile fruit.

Lychee

Lychees (*Litchi chinensis*) are prized for their fragrant, juicy fruit and glossy evergreen foliage. Originating in southern China, they are well suited to warm, frost-free regions and make an attractive feature tree in the home garden as well as a productive fruit tree.

Characteristics

Lychee trees are slow growing and long lived, eventually forming a dense, rounded canopy.



They can reach 8–12 metres in the ground, though grafted varieties are often smaller and more manageable. New growth is bronze-red, maturing to deep green leaves. Fruit forms in clusters, with a thin, rough red skin enclosing translucent white flesh that is sweet, floral and refreshing. Popular varieties include 'Bengal', 'Tai So' and 'Kwai Mai Pink'.

Best Climate

Lychees thrive in subtropical climates with warm, humid summers and mild, dry winters. They require a period of cool weather in winter (but not frost) to trigger flowering, followed by warmth and moisture during fruit development. In Australia, they grow best in coastal and near-coastal areas of Queensland and northern New South Wales. Frost, strong winds and prolonged dry conditions can reduce flowering and fruit set.

Growing Tips

- **Position:** Plant in a sunny, sheltered location protected from wind.
- **Soil:** Well-drained, slightly acidic soil rich in organic matter is ideal. Avoid waterlogged sites.
- **Water:** Keep trees well watered during flowering and fruiting, especially in dry periods, but reduce watering in winter.

- **Mulch:** Apply a thick organic mulch to keep roots cool and moist and to improve soil health.
- **Feeding:** Use a balanced fertiliser with added trace elements, especially during active growth. Avoid high nitrogen once trees are established, as this encourages leaves at the expense of flowers.
- **Patience:** Lychees can take several years to fruit, but once established they reward gardeners with abundant summer harvests.

With the right conditions and a little patience, lychees can be a highly rewarding tree, offering both ornamental appeal and delicious home-grown fruit.



This month we welcome the following new member/s to our group. We hope that you find your time spent in the garden productive and that in addition to growing some wonderful produce you also develop many new friendships.

Selena Wu

Thank You to Our Supporters & Sponsors



*For their generous grants
used to update garden bed
infrastructure and provide an
AED at the Garden*

*A big shout out this month
goes to Lucas at
Frank's Garden Beds
Sunshine Coast*

"Love Your Work"

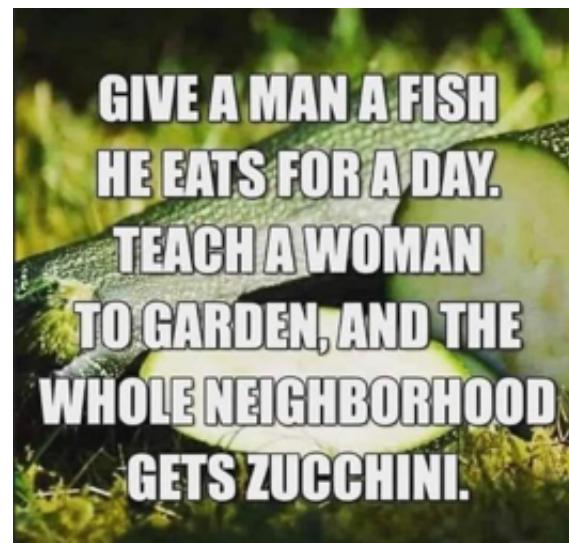
FRANK'S



GARDEN BEDS

Our appreciation also to those members who work hard to maintain the garden grounds, the ongoing mowing, snipping and hedging required at this time of year is endless

A Little Bit of Fun



Spicy
Eggplant
Chutney



Ingredients

- 900g (approx. 2 medium) eggplant, finely diced (*note: you may need to cover with water to prevent it oxidising*)
- 3 teaspoons fine sea salt
- 60ml (1/4 cup) olive or peanut oil
- 2 teaspoons yellow or black mustard seeds
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 long red chillies, 1 deseeded, both finely chopped
- 450ml apple cider vinegar
- 220g (1 cup) raw sugar
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 120 deg C,
2. Clean 5 medium-sized, lidded glass jars in hot soapy water, rinse then place the jars into the oven to sterilise for 30 minutes. Place lids in a heatproof bowl, pour over boiling water and set aside for 5 minutes,
3. Heat the oil in a large, wide saucepan over a medium heat, add the mustard, cumin and fenugreek seeds and cook, stirring often, until the mustard seeds start to pop,
4. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, turmeric and chilli and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often until soft,
5. Add the remaining ingredients including the drained eggplant (squeeze handfuls of the eggplant to release as much of the liquid as possible before adding to the pan), stir well, bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 40-50 minutes or until reduced and thick,
6. Remove the jars from the oven and carefully ladle in the chutney, allowing 1cm of space at the top of each jar,
7. Screw on the lids immediately and set aside to cool,
8. Store unopened chutney in a dark pantry for up to 12 months. Once open, store in the fridge and use within a month.

Note: The lids will suck down as the chutney cools; store any that don't in the fridge and use within a month.

Serving Suggestion

This chutney goes well with a sharp cheese such as aged gouda and crackers, but is also just the thing to dollop into your next bowl of curry and rice to add a little excitement.

Links to other Newsletters & Community Information



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