

# APRIL

## AT BOOYONG

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Things are beginning to slow down in the garden at Booyong as the weather cools and we are busy cutting firewood and preparing for winter. The weather has been dry and the grounds have almost dried up following the floods.



Our new tenants have settled in well and Brett has managed to visit and spend some time slashing at Booyong and setting up the washing machine in the shed. We continue to do up the old shack for when we visit and we are very excited that we now have a working vanity sink in the bathroom. We have also added a water filter to the kitchen sink and I've been busy staining some old tired furniture - it has come up great!

The garden bed and side entrance have been gravelled and they look fantastic, I was getting sick of weeding this patch every time we visited and we now have clear access down the side of the shack.

I've been busy making recycled gift tags from food boxes in my quest to be creative and reuse and recycle household waste.

The Herb Spiral has been tidied up and the tansy, thymes and mints have all been cut back. They were going a little crazy after the rains. It will be interesting to see if the Lemon Bergamot, fennel and calendula come back to life this Spring. The Pineapple sage is going fabulously and has the most beautiful red flowers and fragrant leaves. I can't wait to make a sugar scrub out of the flowers.





The salvia's are flowering beautifully in the food forest and the bees and nectar loving birds are enjoying their velvety blooms. They will need to be pruned soon.

Aged Chook manure has been added to the veggie patch, tomatoes have been removed and brassica's have been planted. We've harvested eggplants a plenty and they have been delicious. Our new tenants and their friends have harvested all of the Macadamia's and we continue to get flourishes of Rosella's which we have made into sugar syrup and glaze.

I have finally decided to turn the gardens around the chook pen into a succulent garden, the hanging pots are doing well there, and we have discovered some succulents are edible. We're very excited to explore these further over time.

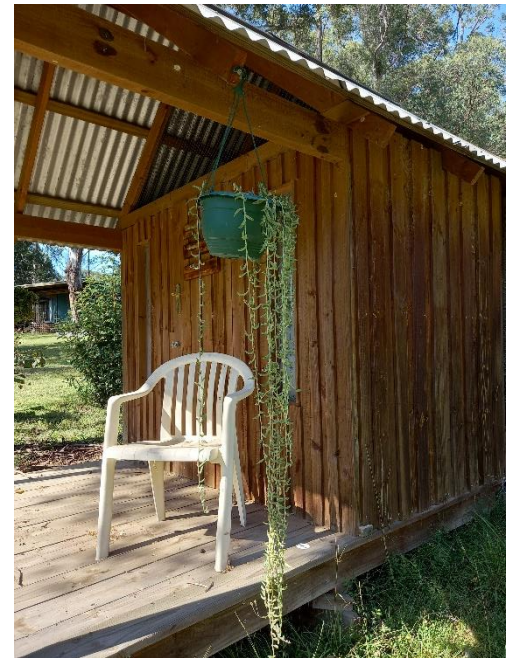
Jack has been busy digging a clear causeway by the Food forest dam as the overflow during the floods didn't quite go where we had planned.

Magnificent Fungi has emerged in the conservation



area and the dams are all full, it's amazing to see the lower shrubs grow again after the rains. The bush

was looking very bare during the drought and it is rejuvenating and flourishing again. We had only a little damage to the bridge, so have been very fortunate following the floods.



### **PREPARATION**

- Dig in green manure sown in late summer and sow green manure for over wintering.
- [Blueberries](#) - Add aluminium sulphate or sulphur which creates acidity in the soil as soon as it dissolves. At Booyong our soil is heavy clay, so we need to add plenty of good quality compost or peat moss. Azalea potting mix is also perfect for them. We add our coffee grounds as they are used (1-part coffee to 10 parts soil), chicken manure and pine needles.



- [Grapefruit](#) - Improve heavy soils by incorporating large amounts of compost and a few buckets of gypsum into a planting area at least 2m wide. If your soil is acid, add lime when preparing the soil to bring it up to the preferred pH.

### **SEWING SEEDS**

- Plant seed or seedlings of Beetroot, Broad beans, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Celery Endive, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks and Mizuna, Mustard Greens, Onion, Peas, Radish, Rocket, Shallots, Silver beet, Snow Peas, Spinach, Spring onions, Tatsoi. Sow Carrots, Parsnips, and Turnips from seed only and Broad beans can be sown until May.
- Plant Legumes - Crimson Clover in late March to April for nitrogen under pecan trees and Red Clover in March-June



- In the Herb garden plant Coriander, Fennel, Feverfew, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary and Thyme.
- Some great pollinators and flowers to attract beneficial insects to the garden this month include Calendula, Camomile, Cornflower, Daisies, Viola, Marigolds, Nasturtium and Yarrow.

### **PLANT**

- Plant our garlic on Anzac Day
- Divide [Rhubarb](#) crowns and plant new sets
- Plant Potatoes into well-mulched beds in warmer areas; only use certified seed potatoes to avoid introducing damaging virus diseases to your garden.
- Microgreens and sprouts to sow now include: Alfalfa, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Fenugreek, Oats, Pea, Radish and Wheat.
- In frost-free areas of northern NSW beans, Capsicum, Cape gooseberries, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Melon, Pumpkin, Okra, Zucchini and Tomatoes can be planted until the end of April.

## ROUTINE CARE

- Clean up any plants that have finished cropping and take down canes and supports. Pull out old beans, zucchini and tomato plants.
- Prune Yellow foliage on asparagus back to the ground and mulch crowns with cow manure
- Apply seaweed to [Tropical peach tree](#)
- Citrus is ever-green so balancing and pruning your tree applies all throughout the year.
- After harvest internal branches of the [Macadamia nut tree](#) should be removed to open up the trees and allow air circulation.
- Shape [Persimmon tree](#)
- Blueberries - while fruiting it doesn't hurt to feed every couple of weeks with seasoil or liquid fish.
- [Avocado's](#), Malabar Chestnuts, Figs and [Mangoes](#) – provide protective covering to protect from frost.
- [Mangoes](#) - Withhold water for the three months prior to flowering



- [Chickens](#) – Scrub water containers daily to prevent algae, check net litter weekly and replace if soiled. Add crushed garlic to drinking water monthly to reduce internal parasite (1 clove per 2-3 hens)
- [Figs](#) and Frangipani – Protect from frost
- Fertilize Lemon and Lemonade tree with Cow poo, Blood and bone and Citrus fertilizer.
- Prune Comfrey and add to mulch

## HARVESTING

- Harvest tomatoes, cucumbers, corn, beans, eggplants, peppers, chillies and sweet potatoes
- Continue to pick zucchinis and summer squashes
- Continue picking spinach, leeks and lettuces
- Harvest mature pumpkins and melons
- Harvest Pineapple sage flowers and leaves to make scrubs and sugar syrup



- Harvest Comfrey leaves and make salve and cream
- Harvest [Pomegranate](#) - Fruit can be picked prior to maturity and will ripen in storage and can be stored for several months if hung in a cool aired place
- The last of the [Persimmons](#) are being harvested
- Harvest Finger limes
- Harvest [Macadamia nuts](#)
- Harvest Pumpkins leaving 4-6 cm of stalk at the top and avoid lifting the pumpkins by the stalk.
- Harvest [Tamarind Indica Tree](#)
- Harvest Rosella
- Harvest [Passionfruits](#)
- Harvest Chilli



### **HERB SPIRAL**

- Propagate [Borage](#) and [Marigold](#) by seed
- Harvest [Watercress](#)
- Harvest Lemongrass as required
- Harvest perennial [White](#) and [Blue basil](#), hang to dry and place in cooking herb jars and make pesto
- Harvest [Calendula](#) flowers, dry to make oil or add to salads and meals.

### **OTHER TASKS IN THE GARDEN**

The floating pots are doing really well and need to be separated and swapped for other aquatic varieties.

[Lantana](#) is in flower and has been removed from the roadside edges of the property. This will be a never-ending task but one worthy of our time and attention.

[Fireweed](#) has been removed around the main dam, once again a regular task to avoid it spreading. We are getting allot less this year, all of the consistent weeding is taking affect.

[Potash](#) – has been added to the [Apples](#), [Peaches](#) and [Apricots](#).



### **NORMAL FARM AND CABIN MAINTANENCE**

The front paddocks have been slashed in preparation for Winter.

Gas bottles for the shower were filled and changed.

There has been a Mice plague and we have had some appear in the shack. This happens every year when the weather cools and is being managed appropriately.

### **GARDEN BEDS AROUND THE CABIN**

We are currently relying upon our tenants to look after this area and they appear to be doing so beautifully. We are very grateful. In the past the yellow hibiscus is flourishing and flowering beautifully in the cabin garden bed.