



THE POOH BAH

NEWS

Dear Pooh Bah Club subscribers,

With autumn conditions slowly setting in, the new season serves as a great reminder to apply a seasonal application of POPUL8 over the entire garden, paying special attention to areas that are heat-stressed from the hot months just passed.

This also presents a great opportunity to look at your plants and identify those that are underperforming, such as your fruit trees. For those with a tree that is struggling to fruit, Brenton Kortman from the Rare Fruit Society of South Australia has provided an excellent article that delves into the reasons why this could be and how gardeners can navigate the issue.

We also hear about the collection of Sturt's Desert Peas at the Adelaide Botanic Garden, cut flowers at Big Sky Flower Farm, a kitchen garden update with Grow Gather Graze, and much more.

Stay in touch with Neutrog throughout the month via our social media pages. Our community holds a wealth of information, and our team are always happy to answer any product or garden queries you have.

Happy gardening!
The Neutrog Team

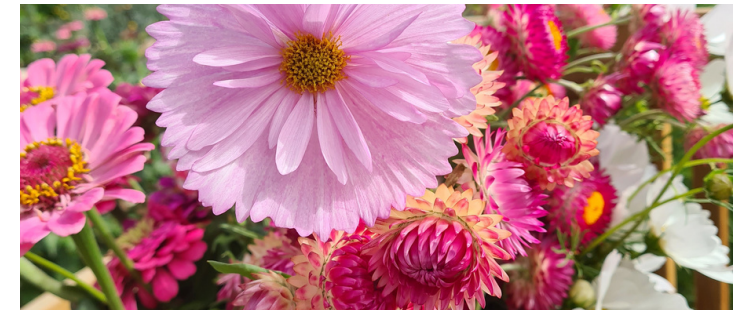


Photo of the Month

Heirloom Tomatoes at Old Post Office Farm



Old Post Office Farm is nestled within the Huon Valley region of Southeast Tasmania; an area known for its abundance of growers, farmers, and producers. In 2015, Roslyn and Anthony Mangold purchased a 16-acre organic orchard with an old post office building on the property destined to become their home, and thus Old Post Office Farm was born.

Apples, apricots, plums, pears, and quinces had already been established at Old Post Office Farm, with more varieties added by Ros and Anthony such as peaches, garlic, ornamental gardens, and some vegetable patches. Today their certified organic orchard boasts some 48 varieties of apples, 10 varieties of apricots, 8 varieties of pears, 4 varieties of quince and 15 varieties of plums – many of which are heritage.

When Ros and Anthony relocated to the Huon Valley from the mid-north coast of NSW, their aim was to develop a vegetable garden to know where their food comes from, to live seasonally, to grow organically, and to preserve their excess.

To this aim, Ros first became interested in heirloom seeds to experiment with different plants and learn about the (vastly different) climate and microclimate in their new home. By creating diversity in what was grown on the farm, it enabled her to figure out which plants were best suited to the region. This initial experimentation, developed into a passion and soon Ros found herself looking for different vegetables that produced well in the cooler climates with short summer seasons. To quote Ros, "I don't grow one type of pumpkin, I grow eight. I don't grow one type of corn, I grow four."

When asked about the unique black tomatoes which you may recognise from a recent post on Neutrog's social media, Ros shared "Tomato growing at the scale I do currently was an accident. Not able to throw out any of my seedlings, the excess ended up at our local Garden Larder and as a result I now grow 'rainbow tomatoes' every year.



This year there are 320 plants and 80 varieties. All except 50 plants are grown outside with the sun on their backs. The 50 plants are my weather insurance policy in a hothouse, 'just in case'. My tomato growing has become an obsession, many may say an addiction."

Ros' other main passion, an essential to supporting all life, is building healthy soil; and this is where Neutrog products are incorporated into the farm's year-round program of preparation and maintenance. Last year, they refined the 'firepit method' of turning farm waste, in the form of prunings, into biochar. The biochar was then activated with homemade compost, worm tea and Seamungus. Water is limited in summer and building organic matter and products rich in kelp into the soil is essential for moisture retention.

The Hügelkultur method of garden bed preparation has also been integral in building up soil depth where the topsoil is thin. Hügelkultur is a horticultural technique whereby no-dig garden beds are built with mounds of organic matter, topped with soil, compost and Whoflungdung, and then planting with vegetables that are slowly decomposing. This creates the perfect conditions for these mounds to develop into rich, diverse, and healthy soil.

The spirit of Old Post Office Farm is rooted in continuous learning and working with nature, guided by the key principles of organic growing, healthy soil, and diversity.

Old Post Office Farm is not open for visitors; however, if you are in Tasmania and would like to try their organic produce for yourself, you can find it available for purchase at Cygnet Garden Larder; Shop 3/16 Mary Street, Cygnet. You can find out more on their Instagram page using the button below.



Site News / What's happening at Neutrog?

Board Appointment, Mark Harvey

The Neutrog Board is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Board member, Mark Harvey.

Mark's career began nearly 50 years ago as part of a fourth-generation farming family in WA. This was the foundation for a career that has evolved with a focus on executive management in agriculture, plant science, agronomy, production and, sales and marketing in Australian, and international markets, with particular focus on grain production and proprietary seed brands.

Mark's experience in the establishment, expansion and sale of Paramount Seed Co to Elders and Seed Genetics International to S&W Seed Co were complemented by a senior management role as National Seed and Grain Manager with Elders Ltd.

Mark is currently a Director and past Chairman of NASDAQ listed company S&W Seed Co and ASX listed Duxton Farms.



Neutrog in Sydney and the Southern Highlands, NSW



Last week Helen Level from Neutrog's Sales team, and Megan Lannan from our Marketing team travelled around Sydney and the Southern Highlands in NSW to meet with garden clubs and retailers and share all things Neutrog.

The trip began with a presentation with the Illawarra Regional Rose Society in Kiama Downs where Helen gave members an insight into soil microbiology, delving into how the products are developed and manufactured and then how they can best be used in the garden. The talk was also joined by the Rose Society of NSW state Secretary, Stefica Bikes and members from the Southern Sydney Region, Upper North Shore and Hills Region and the Kiama Garden Club.

In between work commitments, Helen and Megan also found an opportunity to visit The Garden at Red Cow Farm in Sutton Forest. The garden is split into 20 'garden rooms' including a Monastery garden, cottage garden, an orchard and a lake just to name a few.

Needless to say, if you ever have an opportunity to visit this incredible garden, you won't be disappointed!

Product of the Month

Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8



Think of your lawn as an iceberg - what you can see above the ground doesn't truly represent what is happening below the surface.

Beneath the stretch of rolling green grass is a rhizome and root network that anchors it in the soil and transports nutrients and water. Strong roots are vital for the overall health of your grass, and often when you start to notice a problem, the damage has already been done.

By providing a full range of nutrients and enhancing the good microbiology within the soil, you can reduce the likelihood of disease, and encourage a consistently healthy lawn that can withstand and repair itself after wear and tear.

Sudden Impact for Lawns combines both aspects in a slow-release granule, allowing it to penetrate through the canopy and reach the root zone as it breaks down. It has an organic base which has been boosted with nutrients including iron and magnesium for chlorophyll formation (the substance that makes plants green).

The nutrient rich granules are coated with POPUL8, adding 200+ naturally occurring microbes with an additional 42 that have been specifically selected to promote nutrient cycling, nutrient liberation and growth promotion. They also increase protection and resilience against diseases which are often caused by poor drainage or high humidity.

You can find Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8 in nurseries, garden centres and national retailers including Mitre10, Home Hardware and Bunnings.

Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8 is also suitable for hedges, trees and ALL non-flowering plants.

About Sudden Impact for Lawns

Established Lawns — Apply at 50g per square metre and water in well. Apply every six to eight weeks throughout spring, summer and autumn.

New Lawns — Apply 100g per square metre. If preparing soil prior to seeding or laying of new turf, apply Blade Runner.

Non-Flowering Plants — Apply 50g per square metre and water in well. Apply every six to eight weeks throughout spring, summer and autumn.



Planting Camellias

with Juliet Muras, NSW Camellia Research Society



With autumn here, camellias will soon be in bloom. This season is all about keeping the plants healthy and finishing any trimming, weed control and monitoring for any pests and diseases. Now is also a great time to add new camellias to the garden, and to help get you started, a member of the NSW Camellia Research Society, Juliet Muras has provided some great advice.

“When planting your camellias out in the garden, make sure you prepare a good size hole. Use plenty of compost and make sure you keep the soil level the same as in the pot,” says Juliet.

Sprinkle Seamungus pellets into the soil and mix well and water in with GOGO Juice. This will prepare the soil with organic matter and diverse bacteria to aid the plants root development. As they aren't fertilisers, they won't burn the roots of the plant, and therefore it is safe to do this directly before planting.

Once the plants are established, you will need to feed with a fertiliser that has been specifically developed for plants that prefer to grow in acidic soils. Kahoona is ideal for acid-loving plants, containing the ideal balance of nutrients for your camellias to thrive. The higher potassium to nitrogen ratio within Kahoona plays a crucial role in enhancing flower development, strengthening the bond between the plant and its flowers.

As Graham Ross mentioned on The Garden Clinic on Radio 2GB, now is the ideal time to feed your camellias if you haven't already done so.



The shallow roots of camellia trees also benefit from mulching with Whoflungdung as water stress can cause developing buds to drop. Mulching ahead of winter will provide a protective blanket that will protect the roots and add plenty of good bacteria into the soil.

About Kahoona

Apply Kahoona evenly to pre-soaked soil around the drip line of the plant, avoiding contact with foliage or flowers.

Apply after signs of new season growth and thereafter every eight to ten weeks throughout the growing season.

Established Plants — 100g per plant

Established Potted Plants — 15g per 150mm size pot, then at 5g per 25mm pot size increase.



R&D Partner

Sturt's Desert Pea Collection at the Adelaide Botanic Garden



Adelaide Botanic Gardens is looking incredible this month with some of Australia's most iconic native plants providing vibrant displays of colour, including Swainsona Formosa, commonly known as Sturt's Desert Pea.

You may recognise these beauties as the floral emblem of South Australia, known for the red pea-shaped flower with a black eye. They are low growing annuals or semi-perennials that are widespread in arid regions, growing naturally in red sandy or loamy soils, along creek beds and open plains.

In a display located by the old tram building in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Sturt's Desert Peas are now blooming making it an ideal time to visit over the next month or two.

Steve, the curator of this display, tells us that the beds were prepared by incorporating Bush Tucker throughout the soil before planting, to ensure the plants receive all the nutrients they need to flourish.

Interestingly, Sturt's Desert Peas are available in a variety of shades of white and pink, and once the temperatures are right, will be added to the Australian Native Arboretum at Neutrog with help from the Australian Plant Society of South Australia.

Interested in growing Sturt's Desert Peas at home? They are notoriously difficult to grow, but below are some of our best tips to help you get started.

- Start by boiling some water and let it cool for ten minutes before placing the seeds in to soak for at least five hours. Any seeds that do not float, lack the embryo required for germination and should be discarded.
- Viable seeds can be planted in spring. Plant in the exact position you'd like them to be, as once the roots have broken through, they cannot be moved. Note, they will not germinate until conditions are perfect.
- Once established and at least 10cm high, it can be fertilised with Bush Tucker pellets or Advanced Biological Formula. Be sure to water in well, but don't drown them – they love the heat and loathe water!





Neutrog have commenced a new project with a commercial almond grower, who is an existing R&D partner, in response to an issue they are experiencing with Foamy Canker (reference images above).

Foamy Canker, is a bacterial disease, that affects almond trees, typically in the first four years of life, with symptoms usually appearing in the summer after period of hot weather. Visually distinctive, affected trees display a red gum which flows from irregular shaped cankers on the trunk and in the crotch of the tree. Symptoms are most pronounced when a white froth forms from the cankers emitting a fermented-alcohol like smell. Foamy Canker is often associated with previous diseases or problems.

The foaming associated with the disease is caused by a fermentative bacterium which gets into the vascular system, known as *Zymomonas*. This bacteria more or less 'ferments' the sugars and other nutrients in the tree (hence the smell). This leads to a build-up of gasses and fluids that erupt when the pressure is great enough to break through the bark and eventually the tree splits and the foam oozes out. This is known as alcoholic flux. Once discovered the tree is beyond saving.

The R&D project will look at whether Neutrog's microbe inhibitors can kill/inhibit the pathogen responsible for the canker. Although we aren't able to save trees that are already infected, we are hopeful of coming up with a potential preventative biological formula.



◀ Example of tree with foamy canker.

Big Sky Flower Farm

Blooming into Business in Brukunga, SA



It's difficult to imagine that a business based around nature's beauty could have been established as a result of devastating circumstances, but as Big Sky Flower Farm demonstrates, life's toughest challenges really can be a blessing in disguise.

In 2019, around 80% of Jane Somers' 10-acre Brukunga property was burnt by the Black Summer bushfires that tore through Cuddlee Creek in South Australia. Not long after this, the covid pandemic struck the world and brought Jane's 14-year career in the travel industry to a halt.

In the aftermath of the bushfires, Jane would wonder around the property with her little one in a baby carrier, unable to attend mother's groups or kindergym due to the pandemic.

"I started picking up all of the burnt debris, adding compost and soil conditioners (Seamungus) to try and get nutrients and microbes back into the soil, and planting plants that were donated from local gardening club 'Hills Green Thumb Garden Club'. Around our house we also used whoflungdung to help suppress the weeds whilst adding nutrients back into the soil," says Jane.

The generous donation of plants and the gradual effort to rejuvenate the soil consequently sparked a new passion for Jane. "I fell in love with being outside, building up our soil and watching plants thrive in what was such a burnt and sad area."

"I remember taking a little bunch of flowers to my GP who was a great support during that time, and she said 'you should sell these!' I wondered if I could grow flowers on a commercial level, and that's what I did. Almost four years later and we are now cutting approximately 9000 stems a week from our paddocks."



Although Jane is known for her vibrant collection of dahlias, the garden has plenty of variety including roses, cosmos, celosia, snapdragons, chrysanthemums, delphiniums, scabiosa, Queen Anne's lace, gerberas, rice flower, gypsophila and many more. We asked Jane if she had a favourite, which she answered Matricaria, known as Feverfew as "they have the happiest little faces."

Seamungus continues to form a part of the year round feeding program at Big Sky Flower Farm, particularly when planting the dahlias. "We add some to the bottom of each hole, cover with a bit of soil then place the tuber. We also use GOGO Juice every now and again to boost our crops, as well as Sudden Impact for Roses on our dahlias."

Locals can get their hands on these incredible blooms from their roadside stall in Brukunga or from retailers such as Rosalyn and Rae in Mount Barker, Greenvalley Strawberries in Hay Valley, and Barrow and Bench Mitre10 in Malvern. More details can be found on their website.



Grow, Gather, Graze!

Patch to Plate Learning



Schools and kitchen gardens make the perfect pair when it comes to educating our future generations about the process of growing fresh and healthy produce and instilling habits to last a lifetime.

Laurie Green from Grow Gather Graze is a qualified permaculture and sustainable landscape designer who works closely with schools and community groups to establish seasonal vegetable gardens, food forests, herb gardens, sensory gardens, composting and worm farm systems, and chicken coops.

One of her recent projects is with a primary school in Belrose, NSW, who have been working hard since July 2023 to create a productive garden and immersive learning tool for 300 students.

Ten annual garden beds and a food forest have been added to the school grounds, and since December has provided over 50kg of organic produce. This produce contributes to the school canteen to provide lunch for staff and students each day. They also process approximately 50kg of food waste each week, saving it from landfill.

“Eighty students participate in sustainability classes in the kitchen garden each week. This is an opportunity for them to discover where their food comes from, empowers them to take responsibility for the waste created by their lunch, and then use that to grow more of the food that they eat each day. We believe that this is a valuable life lesson, particularly in an urban setting,” says Laurie.

Whoflungdung, Human Beans and GOGO Juice have been used throughout the garden to produce a nutrient and microbiologically rich soil for the plants to thrive and contribute to the closed loop nature of the garden.

About Whoflungdung

Whoflungdung is a biologically activated, nutrient rich, weed free, absorbant, super mulch!

Whoflungdung is absorbent, as it helps retain moisture and warmth in the garden, which improves nutrient uptake. It adds nutrients to the soil for both the beneficial bacteria and plants to feed on – significantly reducing, if not eliminating, the nitrogen draw-down issues that are associated with most other mulches.



Why isn't my tree fruiting?

Written by Brenton Kortman, President of the Rare Fruit Society of SA



This season has been a 'fruitful' one in the Rare Fruit Arboretum in Kanmantoo, but every now and again we come across trees that have an absence of fruit. It is a common problem within the gardening community, and while it can be concerning, there are a few things that gardeners can look out to determine the cause.

Brenton Kortman, President of the Rare Fruit Society of South Australia has prepared the article below to inform and help gardeners navigate this issue. We'd like to thank Brenton for allowing us to share this article, which was originally published in the Rare Fruit Society of South Australia newsletter.

"This article will review the reasons why a tree does not fruit and what you can do about it. The topic is best approached by a series of questions to narrow down the cause:

Do you get flowers on your tree?

If the answer is no, then that is the simple reason why you have no fruit. Take note of how old the tree is. Most trees take at least three to five years to bear fruit.

Does the tree have a compatible pollinator close by?

Check your specific tree or variety to see if it is self-fertile. Mulberries, babacos, bananas, nearly all apricots, berries, quinces, jujubes, mangos, peaches, some cherries, and Japanese plums are all self-fertile, however apples, pears and European plums need a pollinator.

Is the growth less than 20cm per year?

Generally, most trees in reasonable growing conditions should get more than this. The issue is likely to be either too little water or not enough nitrogen. As a starting point, check how much water the tree is getting. Dig a small hole with a screwdriver around 10cm deep - the soil should be moist. If you are sure about the water levels, then increase the nitrogen fertiliser application by 25% and possibly try giving a small regular amount monthly during the growing season rather than one to two larger applications per year.

Is the new growth more than 50cm per year?

If a tree is putting that much growth on, it tends to inhibit flowering. These trees are likely to be over-fertilised or over pruned in winter. Try pruning in summer as this generally slows growth and stimulates flower buds. This also works for those varieties that are just naturally vigorous growers such as Ellinson's Orange apple and most plums.



Another strategy is to slow down the sap flow on fruit forming branches by bending to a horizontal position (about 30 degrees at least). This can be achieved by tying down the branch in winter using twine and attaching it to a rock, brick, or post.

Are bees active in your garden?

Almost all fruit trees are pollinated by honeybees, although some sub-tropical varieties are the exception. If you don't see many bees on your blossom your options are: a) install a hive, b) hand pollinate with a brush or c) use strategies to build habitat for native bees, which can do the job but not in the same numbers as a honeybee hive.

Were there adverse weather conditions when the blossom was out, or is the tree located in a challenging climate?

Storms, windy, cold, hot, rainy and hail conditions limit the ability of bees to get out of their hives, plus it can damage the blossom or prevent the transmission of pollen. Optimally you need three dry days above 13C for bees to effectively pollinate trees.

Frost will damage buds even if they are not open and flowering - from the moment fruiting buds swell they are susceptible. Using late flowering varieties and measures to control the impact of frost may be effective.

Many fruiting trees require certain temperatures to develop fruit buds or to pollinate. Cherries, pome fruits and European plums mostly require several chill hours (the amount of time the tree is exposed to cold winter conditions).

Does the tree look unhealthy or stressed?

The last consideration is whether the tree is healthy - unhealthy trees may not be able to bear fruit. Signals to look for are yellowed, dried, disfigured, or discoloured leaves or stunted growth. This is a whole topic by itself, but the key points are water (too much or too little), adequate fertilising, trace element deficiencies and disease. Stressed trees often drop their fruit early, even if pollination has occurred. So, if your tree does not look well, it is time to investigate what is happening



Next Month / Keep In Touch Until April!



Year round fertilising for year round health



We hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you'd like to stay in touch with Neutrog, we encourage you to like and follow our Facebook and Instagram pages using the links below, and tune into Neutrog TV (hosted by YouTube) where you can find a range of videos as well as copies of Dr Uwe's weekly chats with Graham Ross.

See you in April!
The Neutrog Team

Our Partners

Over the years Neutrog has collaborated with many plant societies that have trialled and subsequently endorsed some of our products. These product endorsements provide retail staff and home gardeners with the confidence to use and recommend Neutrog products.

With a combined membership base of over 10,000, some of these endorsing societies include:



We never have enough room in our newsletters to share all of our inspirational stories and tips from our gardening community, but they do appear on our Facebook and Instagram pages regularly...why not join us there?

