

Party for the planet

from the Djanbung Gardens Team

On January 26th everyone is invited to Djanbung Gardens to celebrate sustainable initiatives and people in action to mark the completion of Robyn Francis 100th PDC (Permaculture Design Course), January 11-25.

This milestone, which many colleagues claim is possibly a world-first, also coincides with a number of significant anniversaries for Robyn: 5 years since permaculture training received national accreditation; 10 years since the permaculture training centre building at Djanbung was completed; 15 years since work first commenced at Djanbung Gardens to transform an empty cowpasture; 21 years since Robyn founded Permaculture International Ltd in Sydney (1987); and 25 years since Robyn did a PDC and commenced her permaculture career.

Over the past 25 years Robyn has worked tirelessly for a sustainable future, empowering thousands of people through courses and training, design and consulting on a diverse projects, facilitating community initiatives and giving endless voluntary hours of work to the national and international permaculture movement. She was formally acknowledged as a leading permaculture pioneer and permie elder at the International Permaculture Conference in Brazil in May 2007.

"This celebration is to acknowledge all the incredible work my former students are doing around the world, transforming the land, empowering communities, establishing community gardens,

designing ecovillages, teaching in schools, TAFE's and universities, establishing ethical enterprises, working in areas of great poverty and need in Asia, Latin America and Africa, and as activists for the environment and social justice" said Robyn.

"We stand at a global threshold, the convergent challenges of climate change, peak oil and ecological collapse must be met in a creative way and with absolute dedication – 2008 is a critical year for the future of all, for future generations and life as we know it on this planet.

"We have the knowledge and skills, what we need is the commitment to make the necessary changes in our personal lives and collectively as communities – we need to rise above our petty concerns and remind ourselves constantly of what is at stake and exercise the will power to do what needs to be done."

The Party for the Planet celebration on the 26th calls for giving and sharing – musicians, dancers, poets, fire-twirlers are invited to share their gifts for the planet, everyone is invited to bring food and drinks to share. Entry will be by donation and some food and drinks available by donation—donations in cash or kind including written promises of donations of time, skills and resources.

The event aims to raise funds for the Cuba Australia Permaculture Exchange, a project based on the 2-way gifting of skills and expertise.

Past course students (there are hundreds in the Rainbow Region) and all who have been involved in Djanbung Gardens over the years are particularly invited, plus friends, colleagues and anyone concerned with



Inspired. Robyn Francis, celebrating the summer solstice at Djanbung Gardens in December.

our collective future – the most important thing this "Invasion Day" is to make a commitment to sustainability and from the lessons of the past look to how we can transform our future – come and help us Party for the Planet!

Vocational Training for Careers in Sustainability

Registrations are now open for 2008 Accredited Permaculture Training (APT) at Djanbung Gardens. Austudy-approved, TAFE equivalent AQF qualifications in Permaculture Certificates III, IV and Diploma commence February 18, 2008.

These courses cover all aspects of sustainable living and design, including community development and facilitation, appropriate technology and organic production. This will be the 4th year of APT at Djanbung Gardens with full-time, part-time and short course options.

The courses are designed to empower people with practical knowledge and skills to be effective agents of change, community leaders and activists, and to establish trades and professions for a low-carbon future.

For further information: www.permaculture.com.au email: admin@permaculture.com.au phone: 6689 1755.



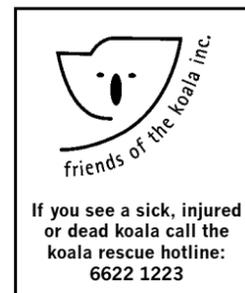
Koala Kolumn

Some koalas and their rescuers are particularly special. Take Alice and her rescuers Bill Jacobi and Jude Mason of Uki.

Alice had been hit by a car on the Pacific Highway between the Byron T/O and Tyagarah. Bill, a muso, was driving home at 2am on a Sunday morning when he saw Alice in the middle of the road.

She was in a bad way and he had no trouble wrapping her in a towel.

Once home in Uki, Bill and now Jude (pictured right) wondered what to do. The koala's gasping breath and facial injuries were very distressing. They rang the Friends of the Koala Hotline and were amazed when a very sleepy voiced answered.



If you see a sick, injured or dead koala call the koala rescue hotline: 6622 1223



The immediate care of the koala was discussed and Bill and Jude agreed to drive Alice to the Koala Care Centre in Lismore. As soon as she got off the phone, Care Co-ordinator Kay Sherring raced to the Care Centre to make preparations. Around 4am they arrived. Jude and Bill were much relieved and grateful that Alice was checked over, given pain relief and taken home by Kay for what remained of the night.

Facial trauma can be tricky in a koala. As well as the cuts, abrasions and swelling, there was concern that the fine bone inside the nasal area had been broken. As things turned out, ongoing pain relief administered under direct veterinary supervision was required.

Alice spent a month at the Australian Wildlife Hospital at Beerwah before returning to the Care Centre, as good as new. Jude and Bill had been advised of her progress and were invited to participate in her release at Tyagarah a couple of days later. They were



delighted.

Rescuing a koala or indeed any wild animal is a responsibility which involves care and some basic knowledge. Bill had been working and it was 2am when he stopped to investigate the koala sitting in the roadway. Their mercy dash meant the total disruption of the rest of Bill and Jude's night.

Whilst not everyone would be prepared to go to those lengths, there are a couple of simple rules that will help a koala that has been injured. They are, handle it gently. Keep it contained, warm, quiet and isolated from human disturbance. Ring Friends of the Koala immediately. Amazing outcomes can be achieved these days when an injured animal is treated sensitively from the outset.



And what of Alice? She had been a healthy koala to start with: a young adult, about two years of age, weighing over four kilograms and in very good body condition. She is now tagged and roaming in a locality of good habitat far enough away, we hope, from the killer highway, but close enough to where she was found to optimize her chances of survival, and in particular of fulfilling her breeding potential.

To report a sick, injured or dead koala or to find out more about koalas, please phone the Rescue Hotline: 6622 1233 or email us at info@friendsofthekoala.org

Until next time, happy koala spotting!

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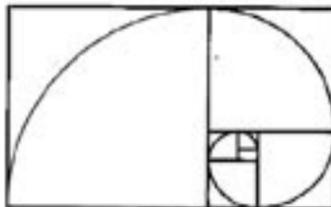
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The Magnificent '07

The top green stories of 2007

by David Roberts and Lisa Hymas

Wow. That was something else. Green has gone from "dead" to ubiquitous in just a few short years, and it peaked with the crazy buzz of 2007, which kept us Gristies busy as bees -- ironically without the actual bees. Here is our selection of the year's top 15 stories, biased toward the U.S. and ranked by a process about as scientific as a James Inhofe press release. Think we missed something? Blew something? Overdid something? Let us know. After all, "interactivity" is so 2007!

Bees buzz off

This year, bees started disappearing, and nobody could figure out why. If so-called "colony collapse disorder" doesn't freak you out, you aren't paying attention: every fruit, nut, and vegetable you've ever eaten traces its origin back to a little bee's tentacles. Is it a coincidence that small-scale, organic-minded beekeepers had better luck? Food writer extraordinaire Michael Pollan doesn't think so. When he Pollanated the story for The New York Times (ha ha! we know!), he pointed out that the bee disappearance is just one manifestation of the increasing industrialization of the food system. There will be others. [Ominous music swells.]

Climate skeptics step on rakes

Believe it or not, the hardy band of climate skeptics -- those who flat-out don't believe anthropogenic climate change is real -- is still out there, showing all the resilience of cockroaches. Led by their congressional champion Jumpin' James Inhofe, they fell on their faces over and over again this year, hyping statistically insignificant changes in temperature records, flogging long-discredited quasi-scientific theories, uncritically accepting random non-peer-reviewed studies from "medical researchers," grossly misrepresenting the ruling of a British judge, falling for painfully obvious hoax studies, demanding debate and then dodging it when it's offered, and on and on (and on). What once seemed such a threat to the republic

now plays more like a Three Stooges routine. (Psst, guys, the new denial is delay, arguing that climate policy is too expensive. Catch up with your ideological buddies!)

Lead-tainted toys scare parents

Lead poisoning can damage reproductive and nervous systems, affect blood pressure, and diminish learning ability. In short, it can eff your kids up something fierce. So parents freaked out when millions of lead-tainted playthings were recalled in the fall. Everybody pointed fingers at China. Consumer advocates and the U.S. House pointed fingers at the shoddy safety standards of the U.S. Nobody pointed fingers at parents determined to buy the cheapest possible plastic gee-gaws at Wal-Mart (oops, except us, just then).

Ethanol bubbles with contradictions

On one hand, the ethanol hype ramped up to dizzying new heights this year, driven by subsidy-hungry agribiz, agribiz-friendly Midwest legislators, and, lamentably, credulous environmentalists. It crescendoed with the passage of the energy bill in December, which mandates 36 billion gallons of ethanol by 2022, much like a little boy might close his eyes, furrow his brow, and mandate a rocketship for Christmas. On the other hand, the ethanol backlash gained momentum, as new research and skeptical greens revealed the limitations and unintended consequences of feeding our carbon sinks to our cars. Expect this to be the cat fight of 2008.

Courts thwart Bush

While everyone else stood around checking their watches to see if Bush was gone yet, the U.S. judicial system took to smacking his administration about the head and shoulders, ruling against it on greenhouse gases, power-plant pollution controls, endangered fish, hydroelectric dams [pauses for breath], forest management, "Healthy Forests," and Navy sonar. It's almost like judges believed the Bush administration was doing illegal stuff. Have they told Congress?

CFLs are all the rage

Energy-efficient compact

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fluorescent light bulbs were a big, bright spot in 2007. They've been stuffed onto store shelves, made cheaper, given away for free, and, of course, adopted in homes around the world in place of old-fashioned incandescent bulbs. The CFL has even been proposed as the official light bulb of Texas.

Local food gets hip

Just when you thought you had a handle on the organic thing, along comes local food, the newest savior of our sinning food system. Is it the key to sustainability or just the latest hype? All we know is you can't swing a dead cat in Brooklyn without hitting a new bistro that flaunts its locally grown ingredients -- and likely as not you'll hit a locavore too.

The year of Gore

In February, Al Gore won an Oscar (well, his movie did, anyway). In March, he testified to Congress about climate change. In May, he released a new book that became a New York Times bestseller. In July, he helped organize the biggest benefit concert ever to raise awareness of climate change. In September, he won an Emmy. In October, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. In November, he won another Emmy and joined an esteemed venture-capital firm to advise it on green investments. And in December, he got LEED Gold green-building certification for his Tennessee home and played a key role in reviving international climate talks in Bali. Whew!

Scientists speak loud and clear

Climate scientists stepped out of the ivory tower this year and into the thick of the debate over what to do about global warming. More than 200 top climate scientists from around the world signed a petition demanding swift and decisive action against global warming, warning that "there is no time to lose." Pioneering climate sci-guy James Hansen began formally petitioning world leaders

to place a moratorium on new coal plants. Rajendra Pachauri, head of the Nobel-winning IPCC, stated forthrightly that "I am not going to rest easy until I have articulated in every possible forum the need to bring about major structural changes in economic growth and development." When temperamentally cautious nerdlinger scientists start panicking in public, well, maybe it's time for the rest of us to start paying attention.

Green is the new green

While the coal and nuclear industries spent the year petitioning the government for handouts, people with their own money on the line flocked to the hottest investment since the internet: green tech. Where 2006 saw \$1.2 billion dumped into the clean-tech sector, 2007 saw \$2.6 billion in the first nine months alone. And speaking of the internet, the brains in Silicon Valley often led the way, with Yahoo! going carbon neutral and Google upping the ante by vowing to directly invest in making renewable energy cheaper than coal. You can tell where a culture is going by watching what its best and brightest gravitate toward -- and friends, it ain't coal.

Weather gets wacky

Who got hit with the worst weather of 2007? It's a tough contest. The Southeast, with its crippling drought? Southern California, with its wildfires? The Northwest, with its floods? The plains states, with their ice storms? Wow, when it rains it pours. It's almost like there's something shifting in the background, making extreme weather events more frequent

Media goes green

Green was the Britney Spears of the media universe in 2007: ubiquitous, occasionally ridiculous. Reams of glossy magazines did "green issues." NPR launched an in-depth, ongoing climate series. CNN did a big green documentary. NBC did a green week. Fox went green (really!).

Sundance launched a green channel and so did Discovery, which also bought the green blog Treehugger for an estimated \$10 million.

A gazillion other eco-focused blogs and websites -- "newbies," as we call them -- came online, all seemingly offering the same Top Ten Tips for Greening Your Life With No Effort or Guilt At All, We Promise. Even Grist, laboring away in this space since 1999, got its moment in the sun, with features in Time, Newsweek, and on the Today show. Hell, we even wrote a book. Thanks for catching up, y'all!

A movement gets moving

This year, allegedly dead environmentalism rose like a phoenix from the ashes -- broader, more diverse, more entrepreneurial, more savvy, more passionate. Step It Up inspired more than 1,500 citizen climate protests all across the U.S. The Power Shift conference brought together and riled up more than 5,500 youth climate activists. Leaders like Van Jones and Majora Carter brought poverty, jobs, and justice groups into the clean-energy fold. Business and religious constituencies joined in. A new coalition called the Climate Action Network was formed to synchronize NGO lobbying and another called 1Sky sought to aggregate hundreds of voices and ideas into one coherent platform of solutions. For the first time, if you squinted just right, you saw not just a special-interest group but a bona fide movement -- a generation awakened.

U.S. politicians wake up

All of the major Democratic presidential candidates have hatched bold plans for

fighting climate change -- Hillary Clinton and John Edwards even appeared at the first-ever forum entirely focused on the issue.

Republican presidential contenders Mike Huckabee and John McCain emphasize the need to cut planet-warming emissions, while Republican governors Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and Charlie Crist of Florida are taking aggressive action to do just that. In the U.S. Senate, a climate bill sponsored by a Republican and an independent is moving forward, and Congress and President Bush just OK'd a law that will mandate higher efficiency in vehicles and buildings. The train is just barely nosing its way out of the station, but it appears that the American political class is finally on board.

A backlash against coal

Even as the power industry ramped up its lobbying efforts -- even deploying a squadron of Santas -- the tide began turning against coal. In February, the energy world was stunned by the massive leveraged buyout of TXU Corp. by a group of investors that pledged to scrap eight of 11 proposed coal-fired power plants in Texas. In October, the Kansas state government denied permits to two proposed coal plants, explicitly on the basis of their CO2 emissions -- a first. High-profile coal plants were also rejected in Florida, Washington, and at least eight other states. California told its utilities they can no longer sign or renew contracts for dirty coal power. Power giant PacifiCorp threw up its hands and said it was giving up on coal entirely. Guess word is spreading that coal is the enemy of the human race.

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Homeopathics etc

by Tarang Bates

Looking out over the wild west coast of the North Island, you can see for miles and miles. Rocky outcrops, headland upon headland into the distance. Black volcanic sand, caves overhung with gnarly Pohutakawa trees, crimson in blossom.

Out of my window, the white blossoms of the tortured tea trees, bent over by the wild winds. All the trees on this cliff top lean away from the sea, which is the direction of the most prevalent wind.

Today is still, blue sky and glassy ocean, full moon. The spirit of the land is so different from the Nimbin valley and yet they are both so strong and beautiful, wild and untamed.

We went out deep into a sea with no waves, you could see the bottom, hundreds of star fish, huge kelp colonies floating in the glassy water, seals lounging around on the rocks.

Two days later, the sea has turned into a cauldron, this place is totally wild with huge waves and howling winds lashing the cliffs. (visualise the movie "The Piano".....this is the place). You can certainly feel that you are living on a narrow landmass in the middle of the ocean.

There have been a number of earthquakes while I have been here. The land rules, basically.... wherever we are.

Makes me aware of how vulnerable we are as humans, perched on the earth as it heaves and sighs, churns and wails.

The Homeopathics for January are Ferrum Phos, Hydrastis and Hepar Sulph.

FERRUM PHOS used at the first sign of acute infections, sore throats, fevers, colds and flu. Ear infections with heat and pain and conjunctivitis without gummy eyes.



HYDRASTIS

a mucous remedy, post nasal drip, with mucous that is thick and ropy and might make you wake suddenly from sleep. Dry harsh cough, bronchial catarrh with thick, tough mucous.

HEPAR SULPH

use for infected sinus with pus forming. Conjunctivitis with discharge. Sore ulcerated nose, with sneezing in the cold wind. Dry hoarse, choking cough, worse when getting cold. Wheezing and croup with a loose rattling cough. Skin is prone to infections and very sensitive as are the glands which may be swollen.

These remedies are indications toward what may be used for these problems. For more information, ring Tarang @ Nimbin Homeopathics on 02 6689-1452. email tarangbates@yahoo.com.au.

I am out of the country at present. Nimbin Homeopathics will re-open on the 8th January and I will be at the market on 12th January.



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Aquarius Awards

— about Success and Succession

Celebrations of the 35th anniversary of Nimbin's Aquarius Festival this year will feature the presentation of the inaugural Aquarius Awards. Members of the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc see the creation of the Aquarius Awards as a way to consolidate the "spirit of Aquarius" and make a contribution to the future growth and promotion of our region.

Recently elected president of the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation and an original Aquarian, Paul Joseph, said that the anniversary celebrations this year will have a focus on the future rather than nostalgia.

"The Aquarius Awards will recognise outstanding achievements in the arts, healing and earth repair," said Paul Joseph. "These activities have prospered in the Rainbow Region due to the migration here since the

Aquarius Festival in 1973, and now constitute major contributions to our local economy and culture. Indeed, arts, healing and earth repair are local industries and cultural threads that form the weave of our communities in both shared attitudes and occupation."

"The Rainbow Region has led the world in developing sustainable communities and in collective action to protect and enhance the environment. Our 35 years experience is an invaluable help to the many people now realising the urgency of global warming," said Paul. "We believe by highlighting the successes in our region in arts, healing and earth repair, we will reveal our inner strengths and present an attractive and relevant image to the world."

The Aquarius Awards will be open to individuals and businesses throughout the region. Entries will be able to



Originals. Director and Songman of the 1973 Aquarius Festival, Graham Dunstan (left) and Paul Joseph.

be lodged online at <www.aquarius.rainbowregion.com> from March 1 to April 15. The winners' presentations will form an exciting exhibition which we are negotiating to host at Lismore's Regional Gallery and then tour to Nimbin's official sister community, Woodstock.

"Our intention is to use the Aquarius Awards celebrations to help co-ordinate and promote enterprise that enhances our culture and increases sustainable livelihood," explained Paul. "The Nimbin Aquarius

Foundation's goal for the 35th Aquarius anniversary can be expressed simply as 'success and succession'. It's time to evaluate the great achievements people have made and recognise our successes, both individually and as a community."

"After 35 years we also need to be planning for succession," said Paul. "We can take this opportunity and help young people gain from our knowledge and experience and support small businesses that will sustain our community into the future."

"We are calling for help to develop and promote the Aquarius Awards and other events to make the 35th Aquarius Anniversary a true expression of our community," said Paul Joseph.

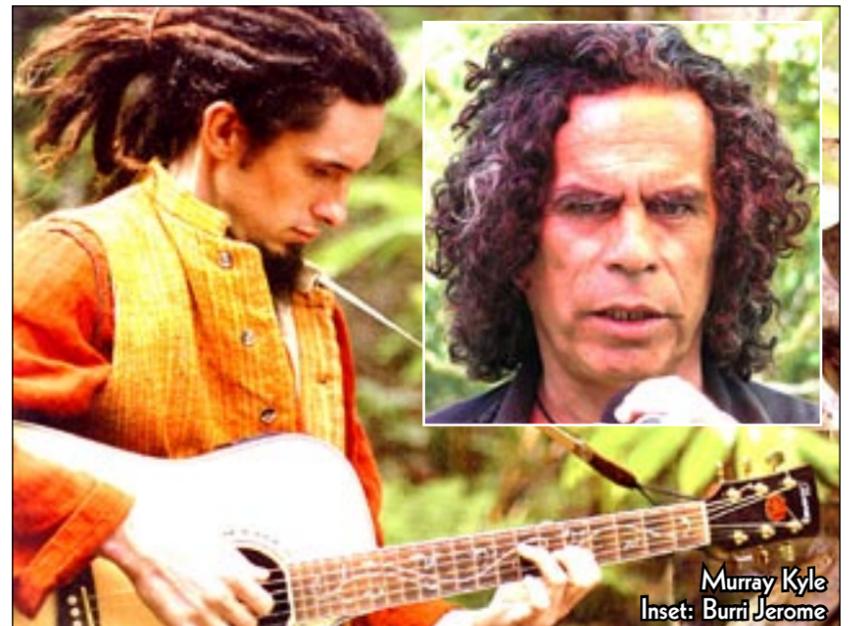
Join up online at <www.aquarius.rainbowregion.com> or call into the Nimbin Aquarius Foundation Inc office in the Nimbin Community Centre. Most importantly, prepare your entry into the Aquarius Awards.

Celebrate Butherum @ Sphinx Rock Cafe

If you wish to know more of the spirituality of this land, come to the Sphinx Rock Café on Saturday 19th January and be a part of the Dreamtime Dreaming night with stories around the fire from Burri Jerome and music by Murray Kyle. Entry is \$10 donation.

- We sense that we are reconnecting with the spirit of the Earth.
- We are still discovering what that actually means.
- We investigated Eastern religions. The question is: have we investigated the spirituality of this land, our relatively new home in this Rainbow Region of what we call Australia?
- The first nation, original inhabitants of this land have intimate knowledge of the spirituality of this land.
- More and more white Australians are realising that as when we arrived, we judged the Aboriginals as having nothing to offer us. We have a lot to learn.

The evening being held on 19th January is the second gathering focused on further investigating the Australian Aboriginal version of spirituality,



Murray Kyle
Inset: Burri Jerome

which is believed to emanate from and permeate the land around us.

These evenings will attempt to particularly focus on the dreaming stories of this region.

The night will be guided by Burri Jerome and hosted by Binnah Pownall, and the mood of the night will be enhanced by the dulcet tones of visionary music-smith Murray Kyle.

Sphinx Rock Cafe

January:

- 6th - Channelfree
- 13th - Neon Tree-house + Many Hands
- 20th - The Optimystics
- 27th - Emerging Artists: Ariel + Kyle Leniart + Talia & Tahnee + Jonathan Harvey

Saturday 19th - Dreamtime Dreaming with Burri Jerome, Murray Kyle and amazing visuals from 6pm

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Queensland Arrowroot



An easy vegetable to grow

by David McMinn

With food prices rising rapidly, it would be helpful to find vegetables that people may easily harvest on their blocks of land.

One such plant is the Queensland Arrowroot (*Canna edulis*). It is rapid growing and pest free, with its only requirements being a sunny site, plenty of moisture and some fertilising. It will be killed back by frost in winter, but quickly re-sprouts in spring. Once established, the tubers are available year round and there is no great effort required to grow a plot of Arrowroot.

Canna edulis was one of the first crops to be cultivated in the Andes of Peru and it



is still widely grown in that region. It is closely related to the common garden Canna Lilly. The cultivar in our garden has never flowered, even though we have been growing it for 20 years.

This is very desirable as all the plant's effort goes into rapid growth and yielding edible tubers. The plants do not waste energy producing flowers and seed.

It also means that the plant could never become a weed. Where you plant it, that is where it stays. This is important as Arrowroot's close relative, *Canna indica* has the potential to become

weedy. It was spreading through our farm until the bush turkeys discovered that it was edible. One rarely sees it any more, so that is one less weed we have to worry about.

The species is prolific and capable of yielding 22 to 50 tonnes of tubers per hectare in the Andes. Use the younger tubers, as they have less fibre and are thus more suitable. These

tubers contain 3% protein, which compares quite favourably with potatoes. I use them in cooking as an alternative to potatoes in casseroles and so forth.

You can also mash them in a blender with water

and the resultant mixture used as a thickener in various dishes. They could also be tried roasted. The new shoots are nutritious with a protein content of 10% and could also be used in cooking.

We also have plants of another Arrowroot species (*Maranta arundinacea*), but they have never done very well in our garden. This species does not appear to be a viable alternative crop in our region. So try Queensland Arrowroot, if you want an easy to grow vegetable that is a bountiful producer of edible tubers.

Ten Natural Ways to Care for Baby's Skin

by Cheryl Beasley

The skin on your baby is very fragile, delicate and thin. This means the skin is very sensitive and can react easily to weather temperatures and also irritants. Irritants can come from a variety of substances but mainly through the chemicals contained in the products you use on baby. Avoiding these chemicals can be as easy as purchasing organic products but here are 10 other alternatives for you to try.



water that contains healing and soothing aromatic rose extracts suitable for the most sensitive of skin types and is very economical as you only use a small amount.

Older babies should be washed with organic baby washes as adult products tend to have harsher ingredients that can irritate baby's skin. Use baby washes sparingly.

6. Washing baby's clothes and Manchester

Always wash baby's clothes and Manchester before using, and wash in pure soap flakes or a gentle skin sensitive washing solution. Do not add water softeners or conditioners as these can cause skin irritation. Dissolve the flakes in a little warm water before adding to the washing cycle. Baby's clothes and sheets etc do not need to be disinfected, just dry in the sun.

7. Using organic baby lotion

Organic baby lotions can be used as an alternative to massage oils and help keep baby's skin from drying out. However baby's skin is sensitive so monitor the results carefully and discontinue use if any sign of redness or irritation occurs.

8. Sanitising cloth nappies

Washing cloth nappies at a temperature of 65 °C or hotter and then drying them in direct sunlight should eliminate any harmful germs as the ultraviolet light has a sterilising effect and a natural bleaching ability.

Natural Nappy Soak: Half fill a nappy bucket, then add a quarter of a cup of

bicarbonate of soda and swish to dissolve, add 3 drops of lavender essential oil and 3 drops of tea tree essential oil. Soak nappies in this overnight then wash as per normal. Add half a cup of white vinegar to the final rinse for softer nappies.

Always make sure the nappy bucket lid is firmly in place, and always out of reach of children.

9. Umbilical stump tips

The umbilical stump must be kept clean and dry until it falls off naturally. Fold baby's nappy below the stump so it's exposed to the air and not to urine. Avoid bathing your baby in a bath tub until the stump falls off. Try using the hydrosol wash mentioned above. Studies have shown that leaving the stump to dry out naturally is the quickest method. Do not apply any drying agents as they can cause irritations.

10. Cradle cap care

Cradle cap is the result of overactive glands in your baby's scalp and is not dangerous. It looks like a crusty patch of skin. This drying has been attributed to the hormones the mother passes to her child at birth and can continue for several months. The gentlest and safest way to cure cradle cap is to wipe the area with sweet almond oil, leave it on for about five-ten minutes then wash baby's scalp with an organic baby wash or shampoo. Do not leave the oil on the scalp as this will cause further dryness as the glands become 'confused'.

Organic baby products that are totally safe to use on your baby are readily available online and through chemists. There really is no excuse to be using chemicals on your baby any more!

1. Unbleached disposable nappies

The Choice website states: "As far as dioxins are concerned, they're a family of organochlorins that includes one of the most toxic chemicals yet made. In the past, dioxin traces were found in chlorine-bleached white paper and pulp products, including disposable nappies. However, nowadays nappies are usually oxygen-bleached (using hydrogen peroxide), which forms no dioxin."

However do we know what consequences hydrogen peroxide will bring? There are totally unbleached disposable nappies on the market that ensures your baby does not come into contact with any bleach.

2. Never use talc on baby

Why? Contamination of wounds or body cavities with talc is liable to cause granulomas. Inhalation of talc can cause respiratory irritation. Prolonged exposure to talc may produce pneumococcosis. Talc is liable to be heavily contaminated with bacteria including *Clostridium tetani*, *CL welchii* and *Bacillus anthracis*, hence it must be sterilised.

Organic talcs are usually made with cornflour, arrowroot and white clay and are wonderfully safe and very effective for keeping baby's skin dry.

3. Massage oils after bathing

Avoid mineral based oils as they contribute to the drying of the skin when absorbed. Instead use natural and organic oils that continue to soothe and moisturise baby's skin. Try products that contain sweet almond oil, coconut oil, sunflower oil and chamomile, rose, lavender and mandarin essential oils. But remember to always do a test patch first and watch for any redness or irritation. Do not use if this occurs! You only need the tiniest amount of oil to massage into your baby's skin, less than a teaspoon.

4. Natural bottom wipes

Homemade bottom wipes can be made easily. Cut a roll of strong paper towel (Viva are great) in half. Take out the cardboard inner roll.

Mix two cups of water with ½ cup sweet almond oil and ½ cup of organic baby wash.

Place one half of the roll into a container and pour over ½ of the solution. Store in container.

Or for just a wiping solution try a cup of cool chamomile tea and a teaspoon of honey mixed well. Honey is a natural antiseptic so it is great for keeping baby's bottom germ free and will help treat existing nappy rash.

5. Soap free washing/bathing

Newborns can be gently and easily wiped down with rose hydrosol. This is distilled



Cook's corner

by Carolyne

Recipe of the Month

Fresh Date and Two Cheese Tart

Ingredients

- 2 heaped tblsp ground almonds
- 1½ cups plain flour
- 125g butter, chilled and cut into cubes
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tblsp chilled water

Filling

- ½ cup thickened cream
- 12 fresh dates, pitted and halved
- 150g Philly cheese, softened
- 25g Blue Castello cheese, softened
- 2 eggs lightly beaten
- 2 tblsp caster sugar
- 1 tblsp cornflower
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tblsp finely chopped almonds



Pastry method

Preheat oven to 200° Place flour and butter cubes in food processor, and process until mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add almond meal, blend for a couple of seconds, add egg yolks and water, process till dough comes together.

Place on floured board, kneed til smooth, wrap in plastic and refrigerate 30 min.

Roll pastry between two

sheets baking paper, line 23cm pie plate with pastry. Place baking paper in pie shell on top of pastry and fill with rice or dry beans and bake 10 min.

Remove pastry weights and baking paper, return to oven for further 10 to 15 mins till light golden brown. Set aside to cool.

Filling

Place dates in bottom of pastry shell, combine all other ingredients and whisk together well until smooth. Gently pour custard mixture over dates. Bake at 200° for 30 to 40 mins until just set. Cool and refrigerate. Serve with cream or icecream.

For information, call Carolyne at The Coffee House Nimbin.

Til next month, happy cooking!




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