

TOPIC: “WHY DO SOME GARDENERS HAVE GREEN THUMBS AND SOME HAVE BROWN THUMBS – also 5 FACETS FOR HEALTHY SOIL”

GUEST SPEAKER : DES WARNOCK

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 27 MARCH, 2018 UNDER THE OLD WITTA SCHOOL

Des is the principal of BATPHONE AUST P/L – manufacturers and distributors of Plant of Health Fertilisers since 1996. He conducts seminars on soil nutrition and exports his products to three continents. He developed ‘Charlie Carp’ 20 years ago, designed his own garden with edible plants and started research on soil quality and how produce affects our general health. 700,000 hothouses in Japan are renowned for ‘putting back’ nutrition into soil. Composting is a reality for home gardeners. Des gave an example of a ‘brown thumb’ gardener who started using organic fertiliser resulting in the garden exploding into life and colour.

- 5 key factors for eco friendly gardening with fertile soil – 1. Soil texture (clay and volcanic in Maleny) set up a nutrient bank so goodness can’t go straight through. 2. Balance key ratios of soil minerals and trace elements. Use Boron in small amounts which allows transfer of nutrients. 3. Organic matter – carbon in compost, microbe food. 4. Microbes give soil life. 5. Climate.
- Drainage test – dig 300mm deep x 150mm diameter hole, fill with water. If it takes more than 4 hours to drain on second fill, soil is clay. Sand and mulch will break up heavy soil
- Balance of minerals along with trace elements is essential
- Some elements affect the uptake of nutrients
- Ipswich is built on limestone so soil does not need sweetening using dolomite
- General composting is pasteurising – killing pathogens. It needs a core temperature of 55°C for three days and three turnovers of pile
- Animal waste (various manures) needs 55°C for fifteen days and five turnovers
- Organic matter management – high carbon, lime, gypsum, dolomite, rock minerals, trace elements, microbe food, blood and bone, Organic Link Fertiliser
- Microbial activity – fungi breaks down fallen trees – beneficial nematodes and arthropods give balance back to soil. Triple Boost fertiliser also safe for natives
- Healthy soil is composed of 25% air, 25% moisture and 45% composted material
- Climate management for type of plant in local conditions. You can have too much organic matter in soil, too many of one microbe etc. Use Orchid Boost fertiliser weekly
- Why is a plant stressing? Water, fertiliser, sun etc. Slow release fertiliser is essential for healthy soil. Liquid fertiliser is good for insect attack, transplanting new seedlings
- Nutritional needs change as plant develops especially when about to fruit or flower
- Use liquid fertiliser in conjunction with slow release fertiliser
- Neem Oil enhances fertiliser foliar spray or root drench
- 2 litres of Neem in 1000 litres of water is used in hothouse dripper systems in Japan
- Use potash for blooms and fruit. Silica toughens plants to withstand attack
- Trace elements mixture of boron and manganese to correct silica deficiency

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