



Pickled & Pressed Spring 2008

Hi Association Members

'The Spring has sprung, the grass is ris'' and hopefully some blossom will be appearing soon. Lots going on in and around olives and oil that you can read about in this issue.

We welcome Deborah and Kevin Whithear and Charles and Ceilidh Meo on to the GSOGA Committee, and there are some slides from David Arnold's presentation after the AGM.

I have included the full President's Report presented at the AGM.

There are some great articles and photos from members telling us what they've been up to plus an article on pruning by Ian Dwyer.

There is also news of the latest AOA extra virgin brand launch, the Code of Practice and links to the 7.30 report.

I have also reprinted the article from Rob Mitchell from the Summer of 2007 re. Grasshoppers as there are reports of another invasion of grasshoppers and locusts later this year.

Looking forward to seeing some of you on 8th November for our 'Grove Walks and Talks Day'

Thank you again to those who have contributed to this edition – much appreciated by me and other Members.

Irene Laing

Contact Details for Committee members

Andrew Laing	9397 3008	president.GSOGA@mac.com
Rob Mitchell	5778 9564	mandarob1@bigpond.com
Kent Garland	9840 7575	kent@metaval.com.au
Charles & Ceilidh Meo	9489 8986	apulia.grove@gmail.com
Kevin & Deborah Whithear	9645 2463	dwhithear@yahoo.com.au
Irene Laing	9397 3008	irenelaing@mac.com

Deborah Whithear:	Secretary	dwhithear@yahoo.com.au
Irene Laing:	Pickled and Pressed	irenelaing@mac.com

Link to our website: <http://www.goulburnstrathbogieolives.com.au>

President's Report

Dear Members

GSOGA – President's Report – 2007/2008

Here is the main section of the report I made to our AGM; I hope it summarises some of the important ideas for GSOGA as we approach the end of 2008

Progress over the Year

GSOGA has continued over the last year with a program based around what we have called "seminars" – which sound very respectable and academic, but which have had a good dose of fun in them as well – given some well-timed contributions from the back of the room! These seminars build on the work of previous committees and people including Robyn Vroland and Rod Hoare. Rob Mitchell has continued this year in his role as the organiser of the seminars – albeit with some time off in Ireland for inspiration (Something about learning to blend oil with Guinness) And picking up some cues from his surveys of what members were interested in, we moved on from last year's focus on the management of our groves to look this year at how we market and sell our olives and oil.

The first seminar was a visit to Jos Weemaes' grove at Gooramadda which gave us a sense of how high quality product and energetic management can build a good business from only a thousand trees.

And then Jos and Tony Dingle, together with GSOGA members including Susie Moscovitch and Ron Turner, talked at the second seminar about "How to Make Money from a Small Grove"

Susie, in turn, ran an oil tasting as the third seminar – driving home the point that if you know how to taste oils – and your own oils especially – you can take control of what you are producing and aim for the quality you really want. Otherwise, you are just throwing darts at the dartboard while wearing a blindfold.

So these three seminars have given me, and I hope other members, a sense of where to aim in marketing our oils – if we are to succeed in a competitive market where the large groves have a big advantage in cost of production. And this year's seminars have been all the more powerful because they have been built round the experience of real people whom we know well, including many GSOGA members – rather than just on abstract research.

One more interesting innovation this year: Given the effort we all made to make the AGM work well, we thought we would try to give ourselves some immediate reward at the meeting! So, immediately after the AGM, we started the thinking process – with David Arnold's help - about how we manage our groves to make best use of available water, given climate change and the real practical problems we face. [This issue of Pickled and Pressed includes some of the slides David used, and a short summary of what he said.]

Thank You:

We have some big "thank you"s to deliver to people who have helped GSOGA work well over the last year; I won't manage to get them all, but let me try a few:

- Firstly, the active members: People like you, who come to meetings, attend seminars, pay your subscriptions promptly, and respond to the surveys which Rob Mitchell sends out
- Secondly, the members of the Committee, who have worked hard and consistently to "make things work" – often invisibly, by writing the minutes, preparing Pickled and Pressed, organising

the lunches, or standing at the door with a list, the money box and sticky badges. In particular, Kaye, Irene, Allana and now Deborah Whithear have been crucial in “making things work”. And Kent has worked away at bringing us closer to the 21st century – with electronic banking and earning interest on our deposits.

- Thirdly, the people who have contributed to our seminars – generously providing their time and putting in the effort to think about how to speak effectively and concisely to a GSOGA audience.
- And fourthly – a special thank you to the retiring members of the Committee:

1. Kaye Ashton: She was our secretary “for a long time” – and a strong “force for order” in our meetings as well as a demon provider of things to eat to make sure we did not suffer from night starvation during long meetings.

She has retired, with John, to Mornington where they have lots of good things but no olives! We will miss Kaye; and we wish them both a really happy time in their great new house.

2. Iain Towers: Iain has been part of GSOGA since the very early days; he has helped us build the Association and respond to change at the same time as being a strong source of stability and good sense – and producing some very good oil which has been a source of inspiration to us.

We will miss Iain at the Committee meetings – but look forward to seeing him at the seminars, and tasting his oil.

3. Allana Towers: Allana has been “wisdom in action” in the Committee – in particular if you were eating lunch or having coffee. And a warm hug and a grin when things got a bit difficult.

Our best wishes go to both of them.

And a big thank you of another kind – to Deborah and Kevin Whithear, who came onto the Committee after Kaye retired. Deborah has taken over the secretary role and we thank them both for being ready to help when we needed it.

Issues for the Future:

These are my views:

1. We need some more Whithears to give us more change on the Committee
2. Life is tough for small olive groves; there is a way forward, but only for the “brighter than the average” bear. This implies thinking just as much about how your oil tastes and how you market it and what price you get, as about how you run your grove and how many kg per tree you get. Very difficult to make money out of oil at \$4/litre and so additional yield off the tree is then of doubtful value.
3. Climate change is real, and – with rare exceptions – wherever you get your water from the supply is under threat, so we have to rethink how we get and use water.
4. GSOGA can help you work out solutions to these puzzles, but there is the usual “energy in equals energy out” equation. And quite apart from the usual issues about running out of energy,

people like me get repetitive and boring quite quickly - so we need to be eased out .

5. So, we need some more Whithears (example of getting repetitive and boring!). You don't need experience or knowledge to make a contribution; we do want energy and the willingness to see problems in a new light and look for good solutions, new or old.
6. And so we say an especial thank you to Charles and Ceilidh Meo for volunteering to serve on the committee for the next year.



GSOGA Website and Google hits

We have done a first stage re-vamp and update of the GSOGA website. Glen Moore, who manages the site has given us some tips on how to keep GSOGA 'on the Google Map' – that you can try in your spare time!

'Nothing is guaranteed in Google and as such your website position will fluctuate. DON'T PANIC.. Get ALL your members to do this independently at least a few times each per week. Doing so only costs members their time and will benefit all of them'.

- I just did a search in Google for GSOGA, and you appear on page 1 number 8
- Doing a search for Goulburn Strathbogie Olives has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Oliver Growers Euroa has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Oliver Growers Euroa Victoria has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Goulburn Olive Growers has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Goulburn Olive Growers Euroa has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Goulburn Strathbogie olive growers has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Goulburn Strathbogie olive growers Association has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Goulburn Strathbogie olive growers Euroa has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Olive products Euroa has you on page 1 number 1 & 2
- Doing a search for Olive oil products Euroa has you on page 1 number 8'



David Arnold - water management

After the AGM David Arnold came to talk to us about how to manage the rain that falls on our groves. Below are some slides David produced and pictures of his grove in Violet Town. Limited access to water and very low rainfall make every drop precious so wind sheltering and the need to build up soil carbon was the main focus of his talk.

I will forward an e-mail with attached .pdf files that David sent after his talk.



"Of all the water in your dam, about 1/3 goes into the bank, and about 1/3 is lost to evaporation."

You might get to actually use 1/3 of your total dam storage, depending on how long you leave it in the dam subject to evaporation.

- 100 mm of rain over 1 hectare is 1 MI of rainfall on that land

- A 1000 tree, 4 hectare olive grove receives 500mm of rain in one year, and the 2 MI dam half fills.

How much water is available to that grove?

- 1 MI in the dam, might be able to apply 0.3 MI of irrigation onto the trees

- 500 mm of rain over 4 hectares is 20 MI of water that falls onto that grove

How can we make best use of the rain that falls on our grove?

Catch it

Soak it up / store it in the soil

Balanced soil / healthy trees / high quality oil / healthy people

Manage grass to make it an asset, reduce excessive competition

Prune to reduce leaf area

Shelter the trees from strong wind



Progress Report from Anthony Brown – Gang Gang

This year was our best for oil production yet having yielded 300 litres from our 425 ten year old organic trees. The flavour is great and we are selling it under our Gang Gang label at Mansfield Produce Store and Gary Crowe's Organic shed. It's also on the shelves in Melbourne at Hampton Foodstore, Elwood General Store and Box My Bunch organic store also in Elwood. The oil stayed cloudy this year and we didn't bother filtering it which doesn't seem to worry anyone.

After the harvest weekend back in mid June, there were still 80 trees fully laden with fruit which we decided not to pick and press. It became rather annoying as we had to remove the fruit to enable flowering for this season so each weekend we picked a few more until during a weekend in mid July we discovered that someone had done it for us! Whilst the fruit had been stolen, the individuals concerned actually did us a great favour although it's very disappointing that thieves are willing to steal a primary product.

Thanks to Les and Margaret Ridd for the use of their catcher and to James Macaulay for doing a great job of the processing.

Rain for Mansfield in about 100mm below average for the year so far and watering has just started.

We are looking for someone to help manage our grove and potentially to lease the trees. If you are interested please contact Anthony on: 0417 882223.

=====

Australian Extra Virgin – Brand Launch and Code of Practice

> Hopefully you saw the segment about the AOA on the ABC 7.30 Report early in October.

http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/200810/r300871_1304864.asx

> This segment presented a strong case for buying Australian extra virgin olive oil in preference to lower quality oils from other countries.

> The AOA website is at: <http://www.australianolives.com.au/news.php>

> The AOA has just launched its new 'Australian Extra Virgin' campaign underpinned by a new industry's Code of Practice. The Code of Practice guarantees the authenticity and quality of certified products and distinguishes them from imported ones. To be certified as Extra Virgin, products must have undergone organoleptic and chemical testing at either Wagga Wagga or Modern Olives (fees are on their websites) and be Australian. Code of Practice stickers and neck tags are available only to AOA financial members who are subscribe to the Code. The AOA will produce a guide and hold workshops to brief and educate growers.

<http://www.australianextravirgin.com.au/>

Please have a look at the ABC segment - if you did not see it at the time. And look seriously at the value to you of using the subscribing to the AOA and the Code of Practice. This is a real and powerful example of the AOA taking a significant step to help the Australian Industry in a way which benefits all growers.

=====

Royal Melbourne Show – Susie Moscovitch

Here we are at the Royal Melb Show where Gwynned and I did a short introduction to Australian Extra Virgin for the public, with help from Rod Hoare and members of our VOC Sensory Panel. We also talked about the launch of the AOA Code of Practice.

Several small growers also sold their oil on different days, while Cobram Estate was there everyday. The stand was awarded second prize in the “Best Commercial Display” in the Grand Pavilion! Our helpers included Sue & Clive Ogilvy.

The photos were taken by Ashley Read who works for Cobram Estate.



Progress Report from Andrew and Allison White – Crackerjack Farm

Allison and I are at Taggerty and have 400 of the buggers with 3 varieties at 5 years old. We pressed a small amount of oil last year and were pleased with what turned out to be a high quality dense oil with a peppery finish that we gave to friends and pickers.

At present I have just sprayed for the dreaded black scale and the trees are going gangbusters. Our major problem at present is a very large hare that has ringbarked 4 trees and chewed at least 15. The problem is I think it not only is super smart eg waits until 2 cars leave before sitting in the middle of the trees in the day but I think its a new breed with a bullet proof skin If anyone has any suggestions apart from poison let me know. Hope all is well with other members.

ps the wombats, rabbits[a few] deer, cockies, kangaroos are so far tolerable All the best.

Repeat of 2006 article - Ahhhh Grasshopper..... - Rob Mitchell

No, not the Karate Kid “Grasshopper” but the little monsters that have a “penchant” for Olive leaves and the bark of very young Olive trees.

In January 2006 about 5 months after we had planted 750 young Olive trees, the conditions became favorable to the hatching of literally thousands of hoppers – these guys polished off the grass in no time and then turned their attention to the newly planted Olives. Firstly they ate the leaves then much to our horror began to eat the bark from the trees.

Stomping on them was not a viable option and the use of some toxic insecticide was something we did not want to do to our environment. We discovered (from a radio program) that the CSIRO had a new product on the market that attacks grasshoppers in an environmentally friendly way.

Essentially the product, “**Green Guard®**”, is part of CSIRO’s Biocontrol program and is based on the naturally occurring fungus *Metarhizium*. It is a biological pesticide which is primarily effective against locust and grasshopper. Spores of the fungus are suspended in oil, then after being mixed with several hundred litres of water, the suspension is applied as an aerial spray to locust bands and swarms.

The biggest bonus for us was the absence of environmental effects especially on aquatic organisms and birds. It leaves no residues in meat or crops and it can be used in organic stock and horticultural areas where the use of chemical pesticides is undesirable.

Once applied the fungus takes 10-14 days to kill a locust and thus is used more for preventative control on organic properties and in environmentally sensitive areas rather than for prevention of crop damage. Its cost is comparable with that of chemical insecticides.

As we are approaching a very dry summer we could be in for another plague of these pests and timely spraying with this product will save damage to our Olive trees.

We found “**Green Guard®**” was available from [E.E. Muir & Sons Pty Ltd](#) agricultural suppliers (web address - <http://www.eem.com.au>) though it is also available from local agricultural suppliers or ask your agronomist.

TAGGERTY PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & CONTRACTING

PRUNING

It has come to the time of year when growers are preparing to prune their trees and the following article may be of help to you.

In general terms there are a few points to consider.

For young trees (2 year old), the removal of lower branches up to a height of 50cm is usually all that is needed for the first prune. It is extremely important to define the central leader at this early stage and secure it firmly to the stake. By doing this it will ensure a more symmetrical shape and help promote the scaffold branches that will be the main support structure of the tree for most of its life. It is much harder to shape trees that have had the central leader removed too early.

The central leader can be defined as the strongest vertical branch. It can easily be missed as trees that have not been tied correctly will have the central leader in most cases growing out to one side. This should be retied to the stake as the removal of mistaken branches will have an adverse effect on the future shape of the tree and reduce the amount of fruit that can be removed by shaking in the early years.

By the time the trees have reached 4 years and are 4 to 5 meters in height and have a width of 3 meters, the lower 1 meter of trunk should be clear of all lower branches and suckers. Mechanical skirt pruning to raise the skirts to 1 meter is a fast and effective way of removing the unwanted growth. This can be undertaken now and again in January if needed.

So far as canopy pruning, 2 or 3 cuts per tree is enough to ensure the desired shape providing the earlier pruning has been carried out correctly. Three or four scaffold branches will be come apparent by this stage.

Removal of the central leader is a gradual process and in some varieties the trees will not need the whole center removed. Any branches that are competing with the scaffold branches could be reduced by 1/3, cutting back to a lower branch that is growing towards the outside of the canopy. Any vertical uprights and cross-over branches can also be removed. Long braches that are growing towards the out side of the canopy that have only a few shoots on the very ends should be removed or reduced to allow light penetration into the rest of the canopy as the bare branch is spent wood (will not produce fruit) and creates problems when harvesting.

The method I teach clients, is what I call the four story building method, dividing the tree into four so called floors.

1. First floor .. Remove all lower growth to a height of 1 meter.
2. Second floor .. Remove any cross over branches and vertical up rights.
3. Third floor .. Remove or reduce branches competing with the central leader or scaffold branches.
4. Fourth floor .. Remove or reduce shoots that are growing towards the inside of the canopy.

The trick is to remove the right foliage with the least number of cuts and maintain the required shape.

If you need assistance with your pruning or have other management issues that may be of concern, I am contactable on 0421 404 452.

All the best for this coming season. Lets all hope we get some good rain prior flowering.

Regards
Ian Dwyer
Taggerty Property

TAGGERTY PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & CONTRACTING

OLIVE GROVE SERVICES

PH IAN DWYER 0421 404 452

GROVE MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTANCY
FROM SITE SELECTION THROUGH TO OLIVE PRESS

Mechanical & Hand Pruning of all trees a specialty.

Agronomy service available.

Trunk Shaker 80 to 120 trees per hour.

LICENCED COMMERCIAL OPERATORS FOR ALL SPRAYING.



8th November
End of 2008 Celebration and Grove Walk
Ian Dwyer “walks and talks” us through Two GSOGA Groves – and then
Lunch at Ghin Ghin

- Meet - 9.30 a.m. Taggerty Store for coffee
- 9.45 drive to Tom Stianos' grove off Glendale Lane, Taggerty
- Then Scott Lawrence and Frank Schoenemann's Ghin Ghin Grove
- And lunch at their Ghin Ghin Farmstore and Café – check out their new website www.ghinghin.com.au

Cost \$10: includes lunch – with a Christmas contribution from GSOGA
We have to let Scott and Frank know numbers a week before so please
RSVP to Irene Laing : by Thursday 30th October.
e-mail: irenelaing@mac.com Tel: 9397 3008