



Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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Think Globally. Act Locally!

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 4 February 2017

Community Forum: “Gardening – the natural, organic way”, Saturday, 18 February 2017

Want to learn how to grow healthy, nutritious food?

If your answer is yes, then you are welcome to come along to “**Gardening – the natural, organic way**” community forum being held on Saturday 18 February, 1pm – 4pm at the Toowoomba City Library (Level 3, Cnr Herries and Victoria Sts, Toowoomba).

The forum hosted by Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. features Mike Wells and Peter Macqueen from TAFE QLD South West (Horticulture) and Colin Johnson from Earthlife Pty Ltd.

The program for the afternoon features 3 speakers, each followed by a Q&A session, and they are:

- Mike Wells will provide “an Introduction to Organic Gardening”
- Peter Macqueen will talk about “Organic Pest Control - Non-toxic preparations for insect & disease control”
- Colin Johnson will talk about “Healthy soils, healthy plants ... it's that simple!”; and provide an overview of Earthlife 's products

Bookings for the community forum are essential. To reserve your seat, please RSVP by 16 February to HOPE office by phone 4639 2135 or email office@hopeaustralia.org.au .

Event: Community Forum: “Gardening – the natural, organic way”

Date: Saturday 18 February, 1pm – 4pm

Venue: Toowoomba City Library (Level 3, Cnr Herries and Victoria Sts, Toowoomba).

Cost: Entry by gold coin donation

Frank Ondrus, President – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

Media enquiries:

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Peter Macqueen, TAFE Qld South West, ph: 07 4694 1561, mob: 0438 863 645

Colin Johnson, Earthlife Pty Ltd, mob: 0456 003 625

Background information



Bio for Mike Wells

Mike Wells has turned a lifelong passion for all things plants into a 17year career as a horticulture teacher in Toowoomba for TAFE QLD Southwest. Since 2013, he has also found time to write the weekly gardening page for the Toowoomba Chronicle. His other horticultural exploits include various gardening segments on local radio, garden judging for the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, and many garden club talks, where meeting with other gardeners is his greatest joy.

Mike is passionate about creating living soils, plant selection and garden design, and has particular interest in turning suburban backyards into productive areas to supplement a family's food requirements. In his spare time, Mike gardens at home (what else?) and sings tenor in his A Cappella quartet, "Left Field".



Bio for Peter Macqueen

Peter is a horticulture teacher at TAFE Queensland South West, teaching in areas of plant protection, plant identification, gardening and nursery production. He has a keen interest in all plants, whether native, exotic or weedy and sharing their identity, cultivation or control. As plant / animal relationships are critical, and sometimes problematic, he has a passion for identifying and sharing invertebrate knowledge. He is involved in a number of environmental projects, and is keen to promote the adoption of a Tree Protection Policy for the Toowoomba Region.



Bio for Colin Johnson

Colin Johnson is the Sales Representative for Earthlife Pty Ltd. He studied Cert III as well as a Diploma in Horticulture and has been actively working as a Horticultural Professional in the Nursery and Garden Industry in Queensland for the past 16 years. He has spent 12 of those years working in and managing Retail Garden Centres, and the other 4 years representing 2 major allied product suppliers to the horticultural industry. He was given the opportunity to represent Earthlife in August 2016 and took the position with alacrity. He is also a fanatical plant collector and passionate gardener, with 6 acres of Land for Wildlife property in the Gold Coast Hinterland, he has a strong belief that there has always been far too much over-thinking

regarding the growing and raising of healthy plants.

TITLE – Healthy Soils, Healthy Plants – It's That Easy!

EXTRACT The challenge we all face as gardeners is to grow what we want, or can, in the lifeless compacted soils that appear to be the norm. Nature has provided a perfect example of what we need with the healthiest and most fertile soils being both volcanic mineral based and humus rich soils. As gardeners, this is not what we are generally advised to achieve with our own soils. We are encouraged to add animal waste and/or chemical fertilisers. Nowhere in nature do plants grow naturally in concentrated manures, nor on the synthetic chemical compounds we commonly label as fertiliser. The challenge is to recreate a healthy volcanic-type, humus-rich soil for ourselves without trucking in loads of imported soils. This can be accomplished with the use of biologically enhanced volcanic-based rock minerals and biologically enhanced composted humates, improving soil structure, drainage, water-holding and creating a pool of nutrients for plants to take what they need to grow strong and healthy.

Humates, which are composed of various forms of carbon, are naturally occurring material that is very rich in humified organic matter and humic substances.

Humates are now recognized as the single most productive input in sustainable agriculture.

Bio for Colin Purnell

Colin Purnell is part owner and General Manager of Earthlife Pty Ltd. He grew up in Chinchilla, where they have poor, depleted soils. As a result of this he became passionate about improving soil health through remineralisation and subsequently improving food quality for people and livestock.

Bio for Earthlife

Earthlife started manufacturing microbial and rock mineral based products in 1996, after doing research into problems with poor quality soils and poor plant growth. The research indicated that Australian soils are very mineral depleted and also biological depleted. (Re: document 264. & Earth summit report 1992) "Rock minerals" is a generic term and in themselves are not water soluble, so it may take quite some time before you see soil or plant responses. Earthlife has developed technology and incorporated it with the combination of rock minerals and rare earths to remineralise soil structure and improve moisture and nutrient cycling systems. Earthlife rock minerals are suitable for all soil types and potting mediums.