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End of an Era: change in Tattler Delivery Bags

Once upon a time, those excellent folk who deliver Tattlers would receive their lot in a plastic supermarket bag. Way back in 2007 Heather Peck (then living just out of Tatong) made up a set of reusable bags for Tattler delivery. Many of these same bags have been in use up until this year, being returned after each batch of Tattlers was delivered.

Now the Tattler team have decided to move to paper bags; recyclable, indeed re-usable, and with no need to return or collect.

And the old bags? If you would like to keep yours as a fine memento, get in touch. Heather was ahead of her time in getting us off plastic bags and onto reusable, and we thank her very much.

- Andi Stevenson



Family Life

"So the teenager unplugs the slow cooker in order to charge his phone, then six hours later complains that he can't smell dinner cooking."

- Caryn DeFazio



White Gate



Dates

White Gate Dinner @ The Tatong Tavern is next due on the very first day of September. Spring! The sun will get some warmth, and the grass will grow like Covid in NSW. This is not a good time to leave your gear on the ground, or the next time you find it will be when the slasher grunts and starts throwing things.

There is a new chef at the Tavern! Jeremy presented lovely dishes in August, and most importantly, the chips were excellent. I understand Jeremy has worked in few hotels and Italian restaurants. No need to mourn Lygon St being a bit out of reach at present. Come the spring, will we be locked or unlocked? Will we be doing rain-dances or building an ark? The clairvoyants ought to be making a fortune in these uncertain times. If only they could be proven to know what they're talking about, they'd be very handy for the State Health Officers. And the rest of us.

White Gate Fire Brigade Roster:

Matthew Defazio	5 Sep	Bill Ferguson	3 Oct
Ross Runnalls	12 Sep	Norton Grimwade	10 Oct
David Elford	19 Sep	Terry Ryan	17 Oct
Leigh Humphries	26 Sep	Andrew Marriott	24 Oct

- Andrea Stevenson, 0429 439 336



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To Scrunch, Fold or Wrap

As we step off the Covid 19 lockdown Merry-go-round again for the 5th time in less than 18 months, slightly more mentally and physically ragged and fragile, I realised just how purposely closed off you can become and how irrational people are in times of uncertainty. I have watched with feigned interest Sydney unravelling like a snagged woollen jumper, completely ignored the mayhem caused by the professional protesters, and am only marginally astonished and seriously not surprised at the state's political geniuses clambering for the inaugural gold medal to be the Countries' Biggest Clown. Let's include in the mix the daily vaccine changes, the introduction of the "no jab, no participation in life" rule, the yoyo effect of planning a structured life and the uncertainty of tomorrow blah blah blah (funny enough it has been announced that Victoria is lock down #6)..... Thank goodness for the Olympics and our Olympic heroes to keep us distracted.

With a little bit of time on my hands I reflected on one insane moment in history. It was March 2020, and there was a very strong rumour that Australia was going into lockdown. What exactly did that mean? Nobody knew, but clearly it was serious enough for the words "panic buying" and "no toilet paper" to dominate world news. Now I must be honest, when we lived in Cairns the very mention of a cyclone, evoked panic buying of a different type. The products that became scarce within hours were

- Gas for the stove,
 - Petrol for the generator and Alcohol for the "thank goodness the roof is still on" celebrations.
- Power, water, and transport would be cut for several days, but the good old survival kit of essential foods would see us through. I don't recall a lack of toilet paper.

So how did the humble, discrete, sacrificial toilet paper become the #1 must have household item for 2020?

I have several theories

1. Australians have healthy/unhealthy gastrointestinal systems
2. A rumour to kick off a "Start Up" toilet paper business to boost sales.... Ingenious
3. That the scrunch, fold or wrap method is in fact not very efficient.

I suspect my third theory based on my extensive research to be the most compelling. Prior to the very first lockdown (March 2020, in case you have erased it from your memory) we had 10 people come to visit the farm for the long weekend. I had calculated 10 toilet paper sheets per person with a maximum of 2 visit per day over 72 hours. I was aghast that we had run out of toilet paper early on day 2. So, my question around the campfire that night was:

Based on a standard 2 ply toilet roll, do you scrunch, fold, or wrap and which method would be considered the most efficient?

Hours of debate and at some point, a very strange demonstration (pants on) there was no real conclusion other than the scrunch had a larger surface area but was inefficient because there was no re-scrunch opportunity.

Being that I am no closer to a definitive conclusion to this conundrum, and if the editors have room for an opinion section, it would be great to get the community's thoughts regarding which method you consider to be the most inefficient

- the scrunch
- the fold
- the wrap
- I really don't care and
- Other

Oh and in case you were wondering, I didn't actually do a mathematical algorithm for the use of toilet paper, that would just be weird.

Jenny, Pedr and Madi



Mick Gaudion

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TATONG MEMORIAL HALL

Invitation



*The Tatong Memorial Hall Committee of Management
extends a warm invitation to the
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And store room opening.*

*The celebration will be held at the Tatong Memorial Hall
8 Tiger Hill Road
On Sunday 19th September 2021
Opening at 2.00pm*

Followed by a delicious

High Tea



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and browse the historical display

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PH: 0414 807 392- Jenni



What's happening at Molly Rose?

So, I missed last month's Tattler because, well, I wrote the article on a different pc with no access to email and then forgot to email the article, so what follows is the article I wrote for July in italics with some new additions for August in normal type.

Well, I missed writing an article for the Tattler last the month (read on if you want to find out why) so I've just read through what I wrote in May, and honestly, not a lot has changed, except it's even wetter and I'm thinking of renaming the property to Lake Molly Rose, although Swampy Rose or Molly Marsh are probably more accurate! Not quite so wet at the moment which is lovely, no longer wading through ankle deep water.

If anyone has spoilt hay and straw, please let me know, really, really needing lots and lots of it for all the permanent pens. Plan on contacting the tree removalists as well to see if they can deliver any woodchips. I've done this and am awaiting a delivery of 8m3 – hopefully that will be enough.

I think the moult is over, but the egg laying is still on the low side, got enough for personal use but none for sale. A month later and I have eggs, mostly duck with a sprinkling of chook, and getting them ready for sale. Happy to farm gate, just let me know, otherwise you'll find them Fruits N Fare in the next couple of weeks.

And this year I'll even have goose eggs for sale! These geese only lay one or two times a year so goose eggs are a rarity. As far as I can tell, they don't taste much different to chook or duck eggs. The main difference is size. One goose egg is worth approximately 4 chook eggs, so a four egg cake takes one goose egg!

Speaking of geese, they are now confined to the back part of Molly Rose, as breeding season approaches they tend to get more and more aggressive, and it's getting closer to the day when all the excess males get the chop, and probably some of the females too, although I will keep a few females and maybe hatch out a few goslings for eating next year. I've got a couple of volunteers for the day, hoping to do the excess Muscovy drakes and excess roosters too.

Something I've come to realise (only taken me a few years) is that I really, really struggle when it comes to dispatching my poultry (and sheep), but I'm quite "happy" plucking, gutting and butchering. But the killing, I have a lot of trouble with that, even when it is because I need to put them out of their misery.

Interestingly, the poultry that I didn't think would make it through winter are still alive, while some of the others, who appeared to be doing fine, have not...

And in other news, we now have Pudding, a chocolate Labrador Retriever puppy purpose bred to be an assistance dog by Shadow Spirit Enterprises in Tatong. Pudding is in training to be an assistance dog for Bee and I am in training to train Pudding for Bee! If you want to follow Pudding's training, he has his very own Facebook page!

We've never had a puppy before, so that's been a learning experience in itself! Normally I sport scratches from ducks and chickens, now I've also got puppy teeth marks! The pups came to Molly Rose for an exposure to poultry day, and two puppies were ruled out. One hated it here and the other was a little too interested in the poultry. Unfortunately I missed that experience altogether on the 19th of June as I was lying on an ambulance stretcher with paramedics trying to flush foreign objects out of my eye!

Half an hour earlier I'd been moving the chook run and in the process had a leaf (more like a pine needle but from a bull oak) slip up under my glasses and stab me in the eye when I turned my head.

Let's just say the pain was incredible! Those pain numbing drops they stick in your eyes are amazing! I did learn that the reason eyes hurt so much when you damage them is because they have thousands of nerve endings in them, and because I had damaged a large number of them, my eye was screaming at me! Fortunately no permanent damage, although I need to use eye drops and some kind of greasy ointment to keep my eye moist until the end of September. Needless to say, I'm wearing protective eye gear outside a lot more, especially around trees!

So that about wraps up what's been happening at Molly Rose over the last couple of months. The sheep still exist. I'll tell you about their adventures next month. As usual I'm still writing stories – it helps keep the madness at bay.

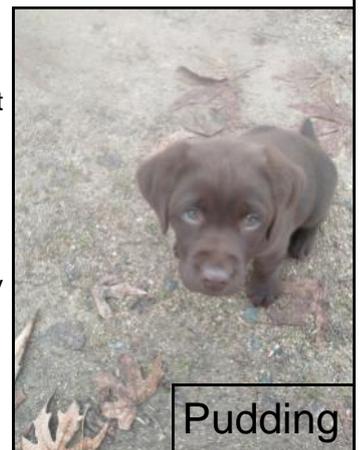
And there's that little side project of ours, a little boardgames group we started in June 2016, finally had an online Grand Opening at the end of July. I'm still gobsmacked at what our little group has become, and how we are helping people by having a whole heap of fun playing boardgames, running role playing games, trading card games and costume creation & social sewing.

We livestreamed on our Room at the Table Inc Twitch.tv channel where we played digital versions of boardgames, held a costuming workshop, played digital party games, I ran, and was in two separate dungeons & dragons short one shot adventures, and I played Quacks of Quedlinberg in real time with Caroline in Wangaratta and Beau in Tasmania!

With the current restrictions of 4m2 per person we're only able to run small group events with a maximum of ten, but running we are! If you want to find out more about what RATT is doing you can find Room at the Table Inc on Facebook, email us at benalla@ratt.org.au, or contact me.

I'll write you again next month and in the meantime I'll dream of rainbow eggs and the next d&d adventure to create for my unsuspecting players and their characters!

Carla



Pudding

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KEEPING US SAFE, SELECTIVELY

While reading the book Anne of Ingleside, part of the Green Gables series, the author Maud Montgomery fortold, during her era in the early 1900's, of the coming 1914 – 18 war where her own sons could be sent to fight. It seems inevitable that humanity must go through periodic upheavals in a usually vain attempt to rejuvenate or renew itself. Montgomery died in the middle of the 2nd world war and I was born at the end of it two years later. She is my 'go-to' author during this time of uncertainty due to her brilliant character observations, love and vivid descriptions of nature and her reassuring optimism even while describing the often pathetic foibles of humanity.

One aspect of the current social 'climate' is the reduction in community social events and group memberships. These activities and community building activities are being traded for what is touted to be the paramount need for keeping us safe. Ironically, this means that the health priorities are shifted from some health categories to others. Many people, especially those without occupations and regular contacts, are excluded from the very things that promote good mental health such as home get-togethers, sport and many other community activities.

In the Age Newspaper of August the 19th was an article about the importance of "a third space" which is where we go away from home, work or school for vital community and social interactions. "If you take away those opportunities for incidental interaction ... it is enormously harmful to the social cohesion of a neighbourhood, or potentially even a whole society." Spoken by Tony Mathews senior lecturer Urban and Environmental Planning Griffith University.

With regard to my community this is a time of anguish because the gulf is widening between those in alignment with the prevailing health policies and those opposed. The worst part is that we are forced apart in ways not fully of our own choosing. I have become disconnected, partly or fully, from several local organisations either by my own volition or because of the ever increasing restrictions upon freedom.

These compliance demands of the 'nanny state' are patronising and demeaning with their implied message that I, with my long-lived experience cannot be trusted to take responsibility for both my own life and my participation in society, and so I must be coerced and hovered over like a toddler.

At the moment it would have to be, God only, who knows who or what is right or wrong in regard to the safety measures being enforced upon us. The closure of children's playgrounds is an example of the extremes that this "keeping you safe" mentality has reached. Lastly, I won't be writing about this somewhat depressing subject too often because there is more to life than politics, and I want to stay in the good books with the Tattler committee! For me though it is more than just politics because of the profound issues we are facing, but for now, enough said.

Mike Larkin



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CFA ELECTION

To be held at the Tatong Recreation Reserve
On Tuesday 14th September
at 7pm
All members of the brigade are invited to attend.

Dog

Tails

As visitors know - we have dogs! This story comes from a few years back when our dog population was:

Rex a.k.a Wrecks, a Lab cross Staffy with rather short legs, Lizzy - very long legs, delicate, with Greyhound way back in her ancestry and "Foxie-size", Dino the Diminutive Doggie Dynamo - a Chihuahua whose picture looks out from the Masthead of GardenDaze each month. This story however, features Indi, a Jack Russell cross Cavalier King Charles, who finally passed away a few years back at the age of 15. The Cavi part made him a very pretty dog, the Jack Russell - well need I say more?

Some years ago, when we were returning from our regular early morning "dog" walk. . .

Ever the hunters - Wrecks and Indi had gone on ahead. As we got closer to home, we could hear Indi barking a sort of distant and muffled barking which as we crossed over the track, found was coming *from beneath our feet!*

"Oh No!" He's inside *and it would appear - stuck* in a drain pipe under the track!

Wrecks was also enthusiastically endeavouring to get into the drain pipe, but fortunately - apart from his head - he was too big. While Dino although anxious to join Indi, was prevented from doing so by Wrecks' acting as a canine stopper.

It was on to the house for digging implements, a torch and dog leads. Removing the wannabee participant Wrecks was difficult -- ditto the two other dogs but fortunately they are not so big or nearly as determined as Wrecks. Wrecks was *NOT COMING OUT* of his end of the pipe and required removal via grasping the part of him that was available and pulling with a strong pair of hands (Wrecks definitely *NOT* amused)! Wrecks - well we know his feelings, Dino - happy to join in and would fit into the pipe (Oh No not two in there!!) if allowed, and Lizzy - happier to watch and shout encouragement thank you, were put onto leads and taken, most unwillingly, from the scene of all the excitement, and put into the house.

Back to how to get Indi out when - before long Wrecks reappeared and pushed his way into the end of the pipe - again!

How had he managed to get out of the house?? - Did he jump at the wire door - which opens *inwards!* - until it came off its catch? Whatever method it worked *AND* the other two were quick to follow through the opened door before it swung shut again.

So another trip for me, back to the house for the dog leads, after being asked "Why did you let the dogs out again?" (Me?? Talk to the big black fella with the short legs!)

Once again dogs were collected - only to discover when back at the house that a Dino size choker had been put around Wreck's neck that will require either removal of Wreck's ears or bolt cutters to get it off again.

Meanwhile - back at the pipe - dog treats were being offered and much calling at the "other" (in) end of the drainpipe.

This was a bit of a long shot as Indi was barking non stop and also deaf - tapping of treat on outside of drain pipe rather a silly and futile idea - but it wouldn't be the first time that an hour or so had been spend trying to rescue same dog "stuck" under a neighbour's house only to discover that going around the other side and calling, had him at our side in a matter of seconds!! However, Indi was not deaf in those days.

At this stage by laying full length in the gutter and using the torch, it was discovered that a rabbit was jammed somewhere between the wall of mud and probably almost grabbing distance from the still barking Indi. With temptation like this in front of his nose - it was no wonder the dog biscuit got short shrift.

Some further digging (or should that be scraping) made enough of a hole for the rabbit to get past the blockage, however upon seeing *a human face*, at the exit, came to a screeching halt and then back up the drain pipe. Diggers decided that moving back somewhat to allow the very muddy ricochet rabbit to remove itself from pipe (and the face of the digger) is necessary.

Another trip back to the house and garden shed for a couple of hoes with rather long handles.

Turns are now taken to lay in the ditch and dig/scrape - we can just see the dog's face.

Digging becomes difficult when fit of laughing at silly situation overcomes diggers.

Encouragement given to dog to "come on you can do it" and more scraping on our end and finally "Oowww - here he is" as one very muddy dog shaped blob, suddenly emerges from pipe during one "dig change over" - dog has probably been waiting his chance to get out of the pipe without getting a hoe in the eye.

Cuppa, a piece of toast and dog biscuits where appropriate, required by all concerned. (after the dog bath).

Oh yes - it was bolt cutters - it was decided that Wrecks has enough body image problems without being earless to boot.

The Kitchen floor looked interesting as all participants had very muddy feet.

The players in this Tail...



Peter Z
(main dig person)
& Kathy Z
(assistant dig &
Runner for things)



SUCK it UP

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The waste will then flow directly on to the next part of the system untreated. If this situation persists, the scum and sludge will flow through to the distribution field, eventually causing blockages and malfunction - a messy, smelly and costly exercise to repair.

It is recommended that septic tanks are pumped out every 3 - 5 years



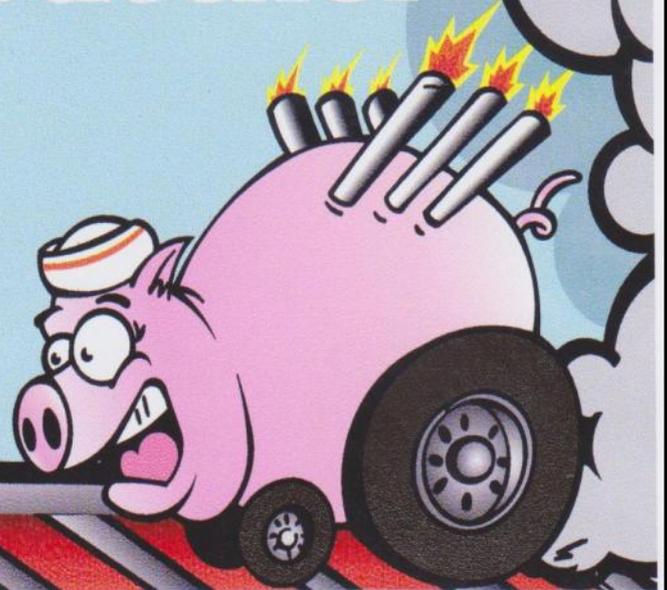
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Gawn to Town

Living on the edge of town has the advantage of a nice short bike-ride to the shops. And on sealed roads - flat sealed roads, in this town. So flat, that before the freeway or railway overpasses, there was nowhere for learner drivers to practise handbrake starts.

As a child in suburban Melbourne, I cycled round the streets on a small 3rd-hand bike, with no gears. After that I didn't look at a bike until I had to give up horse-riding. Living 5km from a sealed road, a mountain-bike became my steed. The tyres were full of puncture-proof goo on the inside, and studded with bindiis on the outside. And it had gears! I remember deploying them when going up a very slight slope, of red sand, into a headwind.

Once we moved to the more civilized location of White Gate, we had only 500 metres to get to the bitumen. We could cycle to Benalla! (It took me half a day). We could do the Lurg Loop! (I did it once.) The only deterrent was the log trucks; not so much getting run over by them, as getting sucked into their slipstream.

I struggled to keep up with my cycling friends until I traded the mountain bike for a hybrid. If you really want good exercise, go cycling on a Mountain Bike.

The bicycle has a fascinating history, starting as a device designed purely to assist someone walking, by taking some of their weight. It was observed that on a downhill slope, one could briefly lift one's feet off the ground, and coast. Once riders got carried away with that idea, adding brakes was an advance. Eventually technology allowed cogs, and the tricky penny-farthing made way for the more egalitarian bicycle.

Bicycles have an ideological bent. An older resident of Swan Hill told of back when the shearers all got about on bicycles. (Crikey, imagine cycling down dirt tracks before starting a day's shearing.) The shearers being strong on Unionism, they were naturally seen as Communists. Therefore, bicycles were seen as vehicles ridden by Communists, so people would throw bottles at anyone on a bike... go figure.

These days bicycles have a different ideology. The modern cyclist dresses in tight-fitting Lycra, removes any extraneous fittings that might cause drag (like mirrors); and rides bum-up, head-down in the middle of the lane, striking terror in the hearts of motorists.

Maybe the bike will go the way of the horse, for the younger generation rejoice in all things powered - scooters, bikes, and even powered skateboards. But then, the horse is a powered vehicle, and still very fashionable, in some circles. - Andi Stevenson



25 YEARS AGO AT TATONG – Saturday 7th September 1996

Tatong had both Seniors and Reserves Football teams and A Grade and B Grade Netball teams in the Grand Final of the Benalla & District Football League at the Benalla Showgrounds in front of an estimated 2000 spectators.

Tatong became only the second side in the Benalla & District Football League history to win 3 consecutive premierships on Saturday, defeating Swanpool by 46 points, under Coach Anthony Putt. Tatong 24 -10 (154) to Swanpool 16 - 12 (108) This was Anthony's 3rd consecutive year as coach of the senior side. Geoff Hill booted 11 goals for Tatong, playing with a broken arm which he broke in the first quarter. He went to Hospital after the game for X-Rays on his wrist to confirm this. Geoff was best on ground.

The Reserves defeated Goorambat by 31 points under Coach Brian Judd. Tatong 9 – 11 (65) to Goorambat 8 – 6 (54). Darren McLean was best on ground for Tatong. This was Matt Glynn's 100th game for Tatong.

A Grade Netball defeated Longwood in a close game. Tatong held off Longwood to win by 5 goals. Final score Tatong 36 goals to Longwood 31 goals. Tatong goal keeper Bronwyn Hevey was awarded best on Court.

B Grade couldn't stop the attack by Longwood and went down by 13 goals. Final score Longwood 39 goals to Tatong 26 goals. Leanne Evans was awarded best on Court.

All players and supporters went back to Tatong to commence celebrations at the Tatong Hall with a dinner and presentation of trophies. Celebrations continued for several days.

Joan Lewis



Influenza masks in Sydney, 1919



Garden Daze

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago - the next best time is now



Looking forward to a couple of months of mild (mostly) sunny weather.

After a rather wet cloudy winter - it is good to be able to look forward to some sunny days, just right for getting out in the garden.

Out in the vegie garden it is possible to start planting leeks, onions, parsley, parsnips, cauliflower, peas, radish, silverbeet, lettuce, swedes and turnips.

It is too early for tomatoes, eggplant, basil and capsicums just yet. However, if you have a hot box or heated growing pad in a protected place - this is a good way to grow your own favourites from seed.

Spring is finally here.
... I think ... Maybe
... Hopefully.



I have written before about the value of a hot box in the garden.

Start off by making the frame - screwing together some pieces of external plywood. The dimensions for the box will be based on the glass that you will have available for the lid - a salvaged window frame is good for this.

A generous coat of linseed oil will help preserve the plywood.

Next dig a hole slightly larger than the hot box and roughly 18 inches (45 cm) deep. Fill this with fresh grass clippings and any animal manure you have to hand. Or if you are the owner of a horse - skip the grass bit and just use "horse". Pack it all down - cover with a layer of sawdust or fine mulch - weed matting will also make a snug base and the hot box is ready to go.

Sowing in the Hot Box



It is best to use a proper seed raising mix as this is finer than regular potting mix and allows closer contact between the soil and the seed thus improving the chance of germination.

The lid goes back on top, but once the seedlings have appeared, on sunny days, open the lid to allow some ventilation and prevent "cooking" the new little plants.

After around 4 weeks the seedlings will be strong enough to be planted out.

A large plastic storage box with lid can also be used - this can be put out in the sun and even brought indoors on frosty nights if you wish.

Some bottles of water around the outside of the storage box, will provide some thermal mass which will help stabilise the temperature.



In the herb garden plant these after the frost risk has passed.

Chamomile, dill, coriander, Echinacea, parsley, catnip and thyme. Also try lemon balm but keep it in a pot, as it has a tendency to take over!

Green manure crops: broad beans, barley, lupin, wheat or field peas are good to go now. When around 1 foot (30 cm) high, these are dug in to improve the soil.

Crop Rotation something to consider when getting ready to plant out the Vegie garden for Summer.

Why rotate? Well different vegetables prefer different soil conditions. The soil needs to be treated to suit the new vegetable and this is much easier to achieve if the recommended rotation is followed. A four crop rotation works well but six is even better: For example, onions like alkaline soil, whereas tomatoes like it acidic.



Year 1



Year 2



Year 3



Year 4

Therefore, when planting onions in a bed that was previously occupied by tomatoes, the soil needs to be limed. The old onion bed will be occupied by legumes (peas and beans) next year, because they also love sweet soil. The legumes will fill the soil with nitrogen so they can be followed by leaf vegies such as cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, lettuces and silver beet. Following that will be the root crops (carrots, parsnips and beetroot) that don't need much manure.

In the following season the bed will be planted with tender vegies such as sweet corn, pumpkin, cucumber and zucchini, which live happily together in one bed. After these have had their turn, the soil will have started to turn acidic again so it will be back to the tomatoes and capsicums again.

Happy Gardening



Kathy Z

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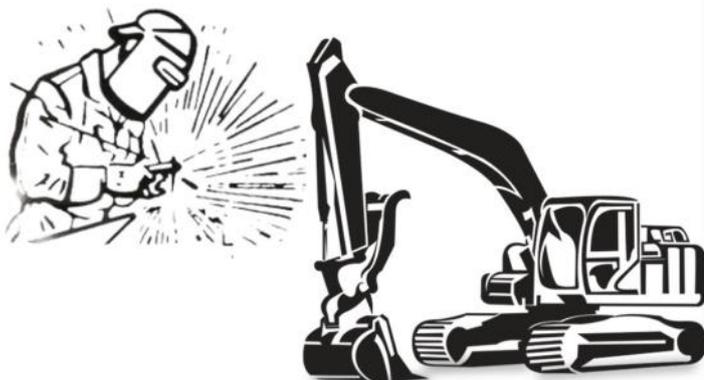
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WELL DONE TATTLER!!!

Just in case there was any doubt about why junk mail is so called, I have recently been reminded.

Somebody deposited in my letterbox what can only be described as absolute junk. It was an incoherent rant about covid-19. It contained much misinformation and misguided thoughts.

The author complained that the Tattler had refused to print this piece of rubbish and that this was censorship and an abuse of civil liberties.

I say "well done Tattler". Where other local publications print this sort of rubbish, you have shown that you have higher standards.

Brandon Flint

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2011	107	177.3	65.0	36.1	62.9	47.1	84.5	81.0	67.3	32.0	88.3	46.3	894.7
2012	82.5	94.0	184.9	18.1	35	57.6	115.8	92.1	35.5	34	28	30.1	773.6
2013	1.8	52.4	85.5	8.4	43.0	60.1	112.1	141.1	61.2	27.5	26.2	65.3	684.6
2014	33.9	16.4	86.4	89.6	82.8	146.5	98.8	9.8	68.5	20.4	58.5	64.2	775.8
2015	44.7	29.1	5.7	87.4	70	33.7	97.3	69.4	25.7	13.7	55.5	81.7	613.9
2016	69.7	11.9	36.9	38.5	117.2	110.5	142.8	108.4	172.1	91.4	50.1	101.3	1050.8
2017	67.6	36.2	49.1	61.7	52.5	6.5	92.1	112.4	23.9	100.1	29.3	118.9	760.3
2018	34.3	6.4	24.9	13.7	49.8	67.2	52.8	81.2	25.1	22.3	75	73.1	525.8
2019	27.7	13.2	23.8	22.7	105	72.9	83.7	49.4	51.3	34.9	37.9	40.8	563.3
2020	63.6	35.6	88.4	207.2	53	77	43.5	66.8	49.4	132	34.1	40.7	891.3
2021	76.6	47.8	39.6	8.2	66.5	99.3	154.9						492.9

WEATHER IN THE TATONG TOWNSHIP

There has been 25.3mm of rain up until the 15th of August and a huge 154.9mm for the whole of July. It is such a joy to be getting sunshiny days again after the long period of rain and grey skies. July had 17 days with some rainfall. This is not to deny the value of rainfall because so many times I have wished, during a long hot summer, for lots of rain both for the world of nature and hearing it on the roof at night.

Mike Larkin

Prickly Pear – pest plant still?

Prickly Pear arrived in Australia in 1788 with the First Fleet. Captain Arthur Phillip had been charged with creating a source for the blood red dye used for the coats of British soldiers. Back then, the colour could only be made from macerated cochineal bugs. These bugs lived on Opuntia cacti. Prickly Pear is one of this genus.

Prickly Pear was used to establish this dye industry in Australia. But, chemical dyes soon replaced insect sourced pigment. There was now no need for Prickly Pear.

Remnant cactus hung around. Initially it spread slowly, fanning out from Sydney. Removal often proved more expensive than the value of the infested land, so farmers opted to abandon properties where it was a problem. The problem grew and grew.



The situation worsened during a drought in 1901-1902. Desperate farmers began to use juicy cactus pads to supplement cattle feed, thereby spreading seed. By 1907, the government was offering the equivalent of \$1.3 million to anyone who could solve the problem. Nobody claimed it.

By 1920, 60 million acres were infested. That's over 240,000 square kms. That's an area the size of the UK. The infested land was rendered unproductive.

In 1925, the moth, *Cactoblastis cactorum* was brought in from South America. Its larvae eat prickly pear.

By 1932, the Prickly Pear was pretty well gone. Reclaimed land was allocated to the 'Soldier Settler' scheme, setting World War 1 veterans up as small farmers.

Cacti are easily propagated from seed and cuttings. Cuttings is really very loose terminology as any piece broken off and left on the ground will grow. Seeds are spread by birds and animals. For this reason all cacti are always po-

tential invasive weeds.

So, by 1932, Prickly Pear was no longer an environmental disaster, but, it is still classified as a weed of national significance.

At least 27 species of opuntoid cacti are now established weeds.

Invasive cacti are a grave threat to our grazing industries.

Invasive cacti are also a threat to our native wildlife.

Would you like to see an example of this weed, Prickly Pear?

If you said "yes", drive from Wangaratta to Benalla down the Hume Highway. Take particular notice as you drive through Glenrowan, particularly at the Glenrowan exit. The photos in this piece were taken there on the 13th July 2021.

They show Prickly Pear growing by the Highway. There are tens, maybe hundreds, of them. I can only think, "How many are there where we can't see them, worse still, in bushland?"

Unfortunately, nothing seems to be being done ???

John Knapper.

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Enquires :Darcy Hogan, 0409167908 or email darcyhogan@bigpond.com

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Format for Tattler Submissions

The Tatong Tattler is set up in Microsoft Publisher.

Text can be submitted in the body of an email; or in file formats such as .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .txt.

Photos (as jpgs) can be attached, to be laid out by editor.

If your layout is important, submitting your work in MS Publisher is ideal. (*The Editor may need to adjust your layout.*) If laid out in a **Word** document, the text & photos will need to be copied into Publisher; however the Editor will have an idea of your preferred layout.

The content of a PDF file can be difficult to extract.

If you require help, contact one of the Tattler committee.

DEADLINE

The Tattler Deadline is end of the **20th of the month.**

Submit via e-mail to tatongtattler@yahoo.com.au

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