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DATE & TIME	VENUE	CONTACT NUMBER
30 June 2017 11 a.m - 4 p.m	J M Education 15-01, Jalan Austin Height 3/1, Taman Mount Austin, 81100 Johor Bahru	017-679 2086
1 July 2017 11 a.m - 4 p.m	Pusat Tuisyen Info Didik 2364 Tingkat 1, Jalan SJ 10/1, Taman Seremban Jaya, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan	010-8012066
1 July 2017 11 a.m - 4 p.m	Pusat Tuisyen Sarjana Unggul 67-69, Jalan Rishah Permai 1, Taman Rishah Permai 30100 Ipoh, Perak	017-534 1834 013-595 8508
2 July 2017 11 a.m - 4 p.m	Pusat Tuisyen Integrasi Q Jalan bukit mewah 9 ,Kajang, Bandar Kajang, 43000 Kajang, Selangor	013-393 7235
4 July 2017 11 a.m - 4 p.m	Ultimatum Consultancy Services 11-2, Jalan Radin Baru, Bandar Baru Sri Petaling, 57000 Kuala Lumpur	016-209 8616 011-3914 3904

OR

Visit MIU Campus Nilai

July 1-2
8-9
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8 Spaces

All questions are answered by Dr Christopher Teh, soil biologist and senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia.



Dear Plant Doctor

Go to questions.eatsshootsandroots.com and fill in the form to have your gardening queries answered by an expert.

Q Plants growing on my balcony on the ninth floor tend to be attacked by aphids. I notice that they are attracted to certain plants only, like roselle. Why is this so, and how can one protect edible plants from aphid invasion in a natural and safe way without using insecticides? – Anonymous

A MOST aphids are host specific, meaning that the aphids feasting on your roselle will not readily attack another plant, even if it is right next to the roselle. This is true not just of aphids but of other plant (as well as animal) pests and diseases. This is because pests and diseases require a certain kind of environment and conditions that are only provided by a narrow range of potential hosts.

To naturally control for aphids, you can buy insecticides made with neem oil, or you can make your own: Mix two teaspoons of neem oil in one litre of water. Spray onto the infected plant parts. Additionally, you can grow garlic plants nearby as they have been known to prevent aphids in some cases.

Q I have two gardening problems and would be grateful if you can help me solve them.

Firstly, my soursop tree produce lots of flowers but hardly any fruit. The petals fall off leaving tiny bud-like fruit, the stems and fruit turn black, dry up, and drop off. The leaves turn yellow with brown patches and fall off. There is also a dieback of some branches. I have tried spraying with enzymes and a mixture of dishwashing liquid, baking soda, oil, and water but nothing works. In all these years, the tree has only produced three small fruits, though it has grown as tall as a two-storey house.

Secondly, my pomelo tree leaves are being attacked by mites, I think. Its bark appears dry and wrinkled, and parts of it look like they have separated from the trunk. The tree bears a few fruit but they are very small and tasteless. – Adeline Lee

A First of all, stop using the home remedies of enzymes, baking soda, oil, etc. They are probably making things worse, not better. It is likely that you have over-watered your trees, causing good tree growth but also causing most flowers, if any form, to drop. You can rely totally on rain for water, but check once in a while whether the soil about 15cm deep is dry, moist, or wet. Water only when the soil is dry.

For mite control, you can use any mite-specific pesticide, but for more natural control, you can try blasting them off the tree with a powerful jet spray of water or spray them with neem oil mixed in water (see proportions above).

Q I have planted a few pomelo seeds, from pomelo imported from China. They are growing upwards only. How to make them grow like a small tree with branches that can bear fruits in the pots? Not to mention, the older leaves tend to grow yellow. Please advise how to prevent older leaves from growing yellow. – Siew Kwan Lee

A You start pruning once the tree reaches the desired height, not before then. Prune the upright branches, so the tree grows laterally. Prune the branches where they meet the main trunk, but cut at a slight angle, not flush at the trunk.

Yellow old leaves are usually indicative of a lack of nitrogen fertiliser.

Q If we over-fertilise a field, I've been told we would have to flood it to attempt to remove the excess fertiliser. What if we just add more organic matter/compost on top? But it seems that mulching makes it worse – why is that? I thought the further decomposition could mix in with the fertiliser? – Lamis Jamil

A An over-fertilised field does not always mean that the plants in it will be damaged by the toxicity. This is because the plant may not take up the excessive nutrients. If the plants do show signs of toxicity, they can recover on their own. Some plants, especially trees, can be quite hardy and withstand toxicity, and can eventually, on their own and without our help, recover from excessive fertilisation. Depending on the severity of the toxicity and plant type, this recovery process can take a few weeks to a few months.

If the plants show signs of toxicity, do not compound the problem by adding more nutrients, either by composting or mulching, because they will simply add more nutrients to an already overloaded plant!

Ready, set, grow

By Eats, Shoots & Roots

WHEN Su Yen Pang tried her hand at growing orchids, it didn't go well after the first round of beautiful flowers, she couldn't revive the plants.

But the disappointing experience didn't stop her when she decided to begin an edible garden. Pang, a finance manager at an oil palm management company was determined to feed her three young daughters, Emma, and Isla, aged seven, and two respectively – as healthily as possible.

She began working with urban gardening social enterprise Eat & Shoots in June last year and is thriving in her garden. Here, she shares a bit of her gardening journey.

What inspired you to start your garden?

I started with wanting to raise chickens for our own consumption but I was worried that the chickens in supermarkets could have been fed with hormones and antibiotics. I wanted a better option for my kids.

I wanted to have my own chicken coop at home but my husband said the house would be "drove" by the smell of chicken manure!

From there, I moved to the idea of having my own organic vegetable patch. And when I came across Eat & Shoots in a magazine, I explored the idea of consuming food from my own garden.

What is the main objective of having an edible garden?

For my kids to eat clean and healthy vegetables, and also to educate them about the importance of knowing where their food comes from. If our vegetables are organic and free of pesticides because my children have eczema and it's important they eat clean as they can.

Tell us a little bit about your garden.

The garden grows all sorts of vegetables and herbs. Some I've never seen before! When I look at it from a distance (before it was established) it is now, I can take pride in it. I've done because the garden is thriving.

I'm happy with the result of my garden, which turned out way better than my orchids!

What has it been like taking care of the garden?

I send the kids to school in the morning, then I go into the office. So I have time when I come back to work. But I don't find it difficult. It grows so well. It's thriving.

I try to spend about an hour a day in the garden. When I am busy, I try to visit the garden for a day or two. It's at the stage now when it is growing well. I try my best to go to the garden because I enjoy watching my plants growing around – it's an outdoor activity for us, so we're not just sitting indoors all day.

Has starting the garden changed your lifestyle?

No, not really. Well, the only thing that has changed is that I now have something to look forward to when I come home from work because I can eat the greens after a long day in the office.

What challenges have you faced taking care of the garden?

When it first started growing, I panicked. Everything was not at the same time – it was like a mix of things. Oh my god, what's this?

set,
NT!
Roots

Garden time with the kids

A mother gives her children her best present: the skills to be independent and self-sustaining when it comes to what they eat.

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Pang with her three daughters (from left) Emma, Isla, and Mya. — Photos: JAVAD TIZMAGHZ/Eats, Shoots & Roots

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Pang’s is a ‘no dig’ garden using containers to form raised beds.

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you faced in n? owing out a s was growing like a forest! I at’s happened

to my garden?” We couldn’t consume the vegetables, especially the kangkung, fast enough!

It’s fortunate that I had my gardener, Mr Rene. I spoke to him and he told me, “It’s OK, don’t panic, you just need to trim them (the plants).”

I also received great advice from the Eats, Shoots & Roots team that gave me assurance.

You can get a little lost not knowing what to do....

What do you do with the produce?

We mostly harvest the leafy veggies and cook them up in dishes. Some of

the plants, we didn’t know how to put them to good use. For example, we didn’t know what to do with the Indian borage. We did a lot of Googling and found out that it’s good for coughs.

Also, I never knew that one can just pluck the fruit of the roselle plant and consume the petals just like that. I boil the roselle with pandan leaves from my garden to make a drink, and my kids love it. They call it Ribena!

What is your go-to pesticides or pest control method?

We do not use any pesticides at all. So we just leave it as it is. Right now we



Hardy perennial leafy greens, Brazilian spinach, growing easily in Pang’s garden.



Healthy mint leaves.

don’t really have any issues, so there’s no need for any pest repellent.

What do you enjoy most about gardening or growing your own food?

I eat what I grow, and I know that it is all safe and clean to eat, and at the same time, I get to spend time with my kids in the garden.

It’s not just about work, work, work anymore – you come back home and there’s something that you can look forward to after a stressful day in the office.

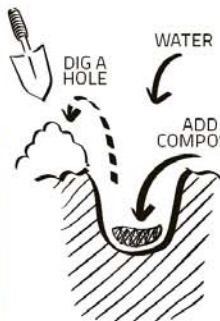
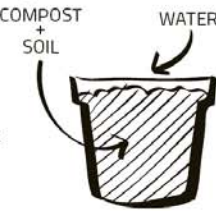
> TURN TO PAGE 10



- INGREDIENTS**
- > Pots/containers with holes
 - > Water
 - > Compost
 - > Soil
 - > Spade (optional)

- METHOD**
- 1** Allocate your growing space. Will your fully mature plant fit into a pot or does it have to be planted into the ground?

A If using contain- ers/pots: Fill your container/pot with soil mixed with compost. Pat it down (not too tightly!) and water it.



B If planting in the ground: Dig a hole and fill it with some compost. Water it.

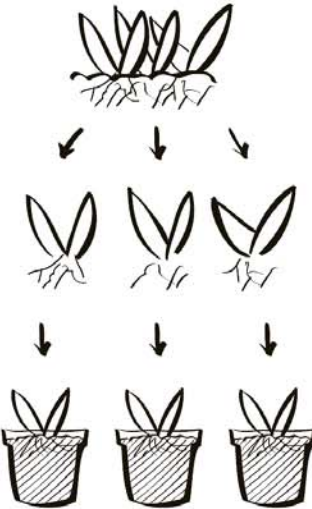
- 2** Water the plant you want to propagate so it will stay well hydrated during the process.



- 3** Loosen the soil and dig around and under the plant carefully; gently pull it out roots and all – be careful not to damage the roots or stems.



- 4** Divide the plant, following the natural points of the plant – ie at nodes, between leaves – making sure each division has a portion of roots and shoots.



- 5** Replant each division immediately into your containers/pots/ground space prepared with rich soil and compost. Keep well watered.

Plants that are easy to propagate via division: Aloe vera, cekur, ginger, lemongrass, pandan, and turmeric.

Take that first step

> FROM PAGE 9

Why do you think urban gardening is important?

I think it's really important because in cities like Kuala Lumpur, you don't get much space. More people live in high-rise buildings, in condominiums, and apartments where there isn't a lot of space to plant and grow their own vegetables.

We're very lucky to have a big garden space. I appreciate the space I have for my own garden because in KL it's considered a luxury. In Kota Kinabalu, where my husband is from, it's more laidback and not as congested, so I still see lots of greens.

Back there, I enjoyed being in nature – I enjoyed being in the forests. So having my own garden is ideal. I feel very calm and peaceful near nature. I feel

blessed to have a garden on my doorstep that I can go to for a little retreat.

Do you have any advice for someone who's just getting started with gardening?

Don't be afraid to try. I had zero knowledge about starting my own edible garden, and I contacted Eats, Shoots & Roots to guide me.

If you don't take the first step, it will forever be "I will never make it", "It will never happen", "it's really tough/difficult", "it's not that easy".

I took that first step, I reached out, and to be honest, it's not really that hard once you get going!

All you need is some initiative and passion. I had no knowledge and yet my garden is thriving now, so I'm sure anyone can do it. I don't consider myself as a

person with green hands but I learn new things all the time.

Anything else you'd like to add?

In my humble opinion, it's very important to educate people about eating healthy, organic vegetables and growing them yourself.

There's a food shortage in the world what with the growing global population, and I think people living in cities are pampered with convenience. They go to the supermarket if they want vegetables and ingredients to cook, everything is within arm's reach.

In this modern world, and for the next generation, the problem of food shortage will only intensify. Therefore it's very important to equip people with the knowledge of how to plant and grow their own food, and for the



Pang boils roselle with pandan leaves to make a drink her kids love.

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working class like us, it's good to learn.

You never know when that day will come when there's a catastrophe and food is scarce. You can't go out to buy it when it's simply unavailable. Then the skill and knowledge of planting will come in handy.

When I go back to Sabah on holiday, life is very simple there. A lot of people grow their own food. It's a skill which is essential today. That's why I want to teach my kids to know how to plant and grow their own food, to be independent, and not just buy

everything from the supermarket when they want to cook.

Every family should encourage their children to do this – to be self-sustainable should anything happen.

For all I know, it could be the best present I could give to my children.

Eats, Shoots & Roots is a social enterprise that champions urban edible gardening. For more information, go to eatsshootsandroots.com or [facebook.com/eatsshootsandroots](https://www.facebook.com/eatsshootsandroots) or e-mail hello@eatsshootsandroots.com.

Green events

FRIDAY RAYA LUNCH @ EATS, SHOOTS & ROOTS

A HARI Raya-inspired lunch session with delicious food prepared by home cooks who are passionate about cooking with fresh ingredients.

If you are curious to experience what lunch is like in the midst of a lush edible garden, join the Eats, Shoots & Roots team for a wholesome meal cooked with vegetables harvested minutes from the garden before cooking. Set as a communal dinner, meals will be served family-style, follow-

ing a garden tour. There is also no price tag for the meal – pay-as-you-wish!

Date: Friday, July 7
Time: Noon-2pm
Location: Eats, Shoots & Roots HQ, Bukit Gasing, Petaling Jaya (full address disclosed upon registration)
Registration is required (space is limited to 10): Go to workshops. eatsshootsandroots.com.
Inquiries: E-mail clarice@eatsshootsandroots.com.

CAPTAIN ZAKARIA: MANAGING A SMALL SCALE ORGANIC FARM

A SHARING session with Captain Zakaria from Sri Lovely Organic Rice Farm on his experiences of running a small scale organic farm growing Malaysia's favourite staple food.

He will talk about his life and farming experiences – the challenges, considerations, and lessons he has learnt over the years as he set up a successful organic farm. If you want to understand more about organic farming in Malaysia or are thinking of organic farming as a career, this is a taster session in farm management. There will be a Q&A session with Captain Zakaria at the end of his talk.

Zakaria Kamantasha (or Captain, as everybody calls him) is a retired military man who started the award-winning, certified organic padi field in Kedah, Sri Lovely,

over seven years ago. The way he farms and his approach to nature has a lot to do with his past experiences in the jungle. Currently, Sri Lovely is a padi cultivation site that plays a major role in the socioeconomic life of the rural people in that part of Kedah.

For more information, go to [Facebook.com/lovelyorganicfarm](https://www.facebook.com/lovelyorganicfarm).

Date: Saturday, July 29
Time: 9am-noon
Location: Eats, Shoots & Roots HQ, Bukit Gasing, Petaling Jaya (address upon registration)
Price: RM85 / RM65 early bird price if you register by July 16; light refreshments are included in the price
To register: Go to workshops. eatsshootsandroots.com.
Inquiries: E-mail clarice@eatsshootsandroots.com.