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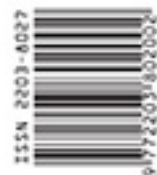


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Phil Dudman

the organic gardening evangelist

Phil Dudman travels Australia preaching his organic gospel and says the world would be a better place if we all avoided food grown with chemicals.

By Kimberley Nicoll

I first meet Phil Dudman as he's standing on his back deck proudly surveying his organic farm, or rather, vegetable patch.

His eyes have zeroed in on a white butterfly hanging around his broccoli patch.

"It's probably just landed some eggs over

there," he says, alert, but not alarmed by the fluttering intruder.

"I can just pull them off when I water the plants tomorrow," he explains.

The organic gardener reckons controlling pests and diseases naturally is actually very easy. Providing good conditions, he says, is the key.

"Just start by providing regular applications of compost and moisture. The plants will be happier and less susceptible to being attacked by insects."

Organic gardening has been coined a revolution but it wasn't so long ago that everything eaten was organic.

The world's descent into over-reliance on chemicals in agriculture began only in the last 60 years when farming became more of a mass-scale operation.

"They required a quick fix to maximise crops, which is when intensive chemical farming methods were introduced.

"There is no comparison between a backyard garden and monoculture."

Dudman is the gardening half of the live duo performance garden2kitchen, horticultural editor of Gardening Australia and a radio talk back host. He has the luxury of dedicating his career to his lifestyle.

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"I love all forms of gardening," he says. "To put a seed in the ground, nurture the plant, watch it grow and harvest it." He discovered this way of life when he first moved out of the family home. Then came a move to Sydney with a band and after growing some tomatoes and potatoes in the backyard, the 25-year-old fledgling rock star turned horticulturalist. He's grateful to some wonderful mentors who influenced him, particularly Bill Mollison, the co-founder of permaculture, and Peter Cundall, former host of the ABC's Gardening Australia program. As he didn't grow up in a gardening family, he's proud of being able to give it to his own two children. "We're very lucky to live in Lismore where there's an organic farmers market every Tuesday," he says. "Whatever I don't grow, I

supplement from there" Dudman's latest project is garden2kitchen which he says is about spreading the message of "grow your food, know your food, love your food". His other professional half, Julie Ray, concocts the recipes while he provides the gardening expertise. They present radio, appear in magazine articles and go from event to event together. He believes organic living is so essential to life people should encourage the lifestyle through their wallet. "Pay it now and enjoy better health, which in turn encourages better health for the planet." "Synthetic or chemical based herbicides, pesticides or fungicides are harmful to the environment. They can drift into the air and leech into waterways, so environmentally it's the way to go." 🌱



Meet Phil at the Griffith NSW Spring Fest where he'll be conducting workshops and informal talks in the many open gardens October 13-15. visitgriffith.com.au

Hinterland Byron Bay
Destination NSW

OUR TOP FIVE

Phil Dudman & Julie Ray

1 Bryon Bay, NSW

"It's our home turf, so we're a little biased, but along with the beaches, music scene and food festivals, Byron has a fabulous farmer's market showcasing the incredible range of fresh produce available in the Northern Rivers. Thursday mornings offer the perfect opportunity to catch up with local producers and feed off their enthusiasm for what they do – providing the best quality produce to their local community."



2 Sydney, NSW

"This is Julie's home town and I spent years here in the late 1980s playing in rock bands. We love going back for a visit, catching up with friends and family and checking out the ever-changing food scene. Then there's that harbour..."



Brooms Head
Destination NSW



4 Brooms Head, NSW

"If you want an old-fashioned holiday in a beach side village then this is it. It's a great place for surfing, fishing and really lazing about. It takes you no time to wind down."



Tasmania
Daniel Tran

3 Tasmania

"It's hard to pick one place in this foodie haven. Everywhere you go, there is amazing produce to choose from: berries, apples, seafood, beer, cider, wine... the air is clean and crisp and the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed."

5 Noosa Heads, QLD

"Noosa is a great place to hang out on the beach and indulge in good food. It's the perfect base for exploring the wonderful Sunshine Coast hinterland such as Maleny and Montville and the famous Eumundi markets are just up the road."



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