

MORE THAI

new shapes, you dare not take your eyes off him lest he make your shape again. Often you played your note for only a second or two. It was surprisingly easy to do and the resulting melody and depth of sound was impressive. Again, we were fed and feted as celebrities.

Let me finish up by telling you about the Loy Krathong festival. It is held at night and is a visually beautiful and emotionally moving festival involving whole families, where a prayer is said before a little boat made of flowers and a lighted candle is placed in the lake and pushed away — thousands of them bobbing around. Another important aspect of the festival is the release of sky lanterns. The cylindrical lanterns are more than a metre high and half metre in diameter and when the air inside is heated, they rise gracefully into the sky in their hundreds from different points all along the lake for hour after hour for two nights in a row.

They take with them either the problems and worries, or the hopes and aspirations, of the people who launch them. The magical effect of seeing hundreds of golden lanterns rising and floating silently in front of a full moon, is difficult to explain.

And finally — our apartment overlooked one of Phayao's best restaurants called So Good. There were two house bands that played there every night and we two groupies watched them play a couple of dozen times.

The first band was a trio who did songs in English from the 'Hang Down Your Head Tom Dooley' era. Even stranger was that no one in the band could speak a word of English. They didn't know what they were singing about the whole time they were on stage and they mispronounced many, if not most, of the words. This rather incongruous performance was offset by the fact that they were excellent musicians with fine voices.

The second band was a very talented and professional six-piece outfit who sang mostly in Thai although towards the end of the evening, did a few songs in English. They did a very good version of Hotel California which Merrie requested several times. They had the guitar solos at the end down pat. Before we left we bought them all a lottery ticket. Oh, and I fell in love with the female lead singer.

Now we're off to Chiang Rai and we're already missing Phayao. We have stayed in Chiang Rai twice before. Sometimes it is a mistake to go back but we'll see. ■

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS



Something for every body

Cecile Galiazzo

In a world that sometimes appears bleak and the 6 o'clock news bombards us with horror and grief, it can be a relief to focus on the humour and fun in life. Thinking about how we age, and the mental health of our elders, is best seen in the context of how we are when we are young.

Remember what you loved as a child — what was your favourite game, where did your imagination run to? Mine was climbing trees. Continuing to follow our passions and interests as we age is a vital key of ageing well.

Babies and children learn about their world through their ability to connect through the senses, movement, object and imaginative play, and stories. We are born in a state of wonderment, and learning develops through play and creativity at every stage of life.

Creativity and health are not mutually exclusive. Studies into the beneficial effect of the arts, music, dance etc, on the state of mental and physical health are well documented. For example: Painting with Parkinson's, Dancing For Life, Music and Memory. Indeed it is through the act of being creative,

that we 'connect' to ourselves and others. This connection becomes our narrative and story of who we are and reflects the talents and strengths we are born with.

We are all innately creative — and can express ourselves through the creative acts of gardening, cooking, playing, singing, writing, painting, crafting ... and the list goes on. A sense of satisfaction and completion through that which we make and create, brings a sense of wellbeing that impacts on all facets of health — emotional, physical and mental.

Play, learn, laugh, create and connect through all the years — your health will benefit and you'll have fun along the way! ■

Cecile Galiazzo is an artist, yoga teacher and nurse with a lifelong interest in both art making and living well. She can be contacted regarding: arts health education, consultation and engagement; field study art excursions; creative ageing workshops; personal yoga programs and classes; kids art sessions; disability and aged care support choices at info@artsandwellbeing.com.au

It's December. Let's hope we have planted enough Christmas vegetables and are ready for the silly season's most amazing day of sharing our beautifully grown produce and fun times with family and friends. Christmas day and the January holiday generally means delicious salads of lettuce, endive, radicchio, celeriac and cabbage slaws; red onions, spring onions, to name just a few. These you will have planted in mid spring or late winter depending on the vegetable. You might also have some early tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers, planted in early October under cover if you are lucky. So it's time to plant for your



autumn harvest. Bush pumpkin and corn seedlings, beans and potatoes can still be planted in late December in anticipation of a warm and mild autumn which will extend our growing season by that critical few weeks. This has been a feature of the last two autumn seasons and is expected to continue however, there is no betting on the weather so don't think too much just plant.

You can keep planting your beetroot seedlings. There is time for them to develop and for you to enjoy juicy beets in your roast meals in March and April. Leave a few entirely to the last minute in late autumn to harvest so they are big enough for pickling. I have a fantastic sophisticated pickling recipe for beetroot — spicy and full of flavour, ready for the next. Keep planting fennel seedlings, lettuce and silver-beet. These will still be producing well into late autumn. You can plant asian greens but they may go to seed in the

HO, HO, HOME GROWN

January heat before fully maturing so best leave them until later in the season. Don't forget that shade cloth can be very useful at this time year. January is when you need to be planting out some of the slow growing brassica seedlings we want to eat over winter, particularly Brussel sprouts and cauliflower.

Keep feeding your garden beds when you replant your beds, using the formulae provided in the Autumn BWD issue. Manure and compost amendments are top priority with blood and bone for nitrogen and phosphorus. The use of complete sea weed based liquid fertiliser at 4 week intervals will ensure your veggies have top up nutrients to reach full harvest maturity.

Remember, happy vegetables make happy humans. ■



Wynlen House Village Farm is sharing the secrets of their 12 year success as market gardeners and micro farmers. Learn from the people who know how to grow and how to teach. These three on-farm workshops will help you become self sufficient or commercially viable growers in cool climate Australia. Courses are created & taught by Helen Lynch and Bronwyn Richards. Helen is a qualified & experienced adult educator, Bronwyn is an experienced small farmer and principal gardener at Wynlen House.



Wynlen House

Growing Garlic in Cool Climate Australia, Sunday 11th February, 2018

Garlic is well suited to growing as a backyard or micro commercial crop. Discover selecting and sourcing varieties, soil husbandry and preparation, planting techniques, nurturing your crop, pests and diseases, harvest and drying.

All Season Cool Climate Vegetable Growing, Sunday 11th March 2018.

Focuses on successful organic vegetable production based on high yielding intensive polyculture in areas where overnight winter temperatures are often below zero.

Small Farm Animal Husbandry, Sunday, 18th March, 2018.

Learn to apply organic principles to raising poultry, sheep or pigs so you and your family can raise delicious meat and eggs with a basic understanding of animal welfare, nutrition, animal behaviour, humane handling and basic health care.

All workshops are on a Sunday from 9.30am to 3.30pm and cost \$175 per person GST inclusive. Couples discounts are available.

Call **02 48421127** or visit <https://www.wynlenhouse.com/growing-in-a-cool-climate.html> for on-farm and online workshops.