



Meetings: 1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm
Venue: Caversham Baptist Church,
 239 South Road, Caversham
 (Corner of Surrey St. and South Rd)
Membership: Helen Flockton (455 1816)
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Club Email: dvgenz@gmail.com
Website: <http://dvgc.co.nz/>
Bank Account # 030905051590600
 (Please include your name as a reference)

The April club meeting is cancelled.

Garden visit: Marion and Joe Thomas, Green Island Community Garden, Saturday 23rd April 2022, 11 am.

Parking is available at Peter Chanel School off Main South Rd, via Brighton motorway turnoff (turn left at roundabout, then left again, into school driveway on right). Walk along front of the school building then take steps between school and hall to back entrance of the community garden. Please wear a mask when in the garden with the group, thanks.



We are all champions working in our gardens growing food for ourselves and others

Things to look forward to in April

Garden visit

Hello everyone,

In this newsletter we have the April growing guide and an article on Winter greens. You find a report on the March garden visit. Some tips and tricks, lesser known beetroot recipes and how to use your fruit harvest by drying, baking and donating. We call for help organising supper at our future meetings.

Garden tasks for April - by David

Last chance to sow:

Lettuce seed – should be in by mid-April

Last chance to plant:

Seedlings of kale and silver beet

Still a bit of time to sow:

Pea seeds until the middle of May.

Broad bean seeds until the end of May – plant by Anzac Day for Christmas

Asian Vegetable seeds (until end of May)

Plenty of time left to plant:

Seedlings of Cabbage (until the end of June).

Report on our visit to Tane's Patu Garden – by Sue

On a windy late Summer afternoon, around thirty DVGC members and friends were greeted by a friendly foxterrier and his owner Warren Cullen high above the Tomahawk Lagoon on Shiel Hill. The valley leading up from the lagoon used to be rich in podocarps. According to an historical account there were matai trees three metres in diameter, cut down labouriously over many years by families to make way for dairy cows that supplied butter for the town. Several generations of small holders followed, until farming became unviable and the land more or less neglected.

Warren and his family took on one such piece of land 12 years ago. It consists of a flatter section at the top and a partially gorse covered slope down to a native tree filled gully above the lagoon.

Warren's vision is for it to become a market garden destination for the local community, a food and native forest, purifying the waterways and sequestering carbon into the soil. With his newly acquired knowledge and enthusiasm for composting, also his skills in the use of heavy machinery, he has transformed parts of the land into productive vegetable gardens.



His secret is hot compost made from gorse and green waste, the recipe thereof:

Wet a pile of organic matter to reach 50% moisture content. Let the bacteria heat it up to between 55-65 degC. If it stays too cool, add more green matter. If it heats up too much, poke holes to vent the heat. Control the temperature by covering and uncovering holes. After three days turn the pile. Warren follows Elaine Inghams teachings who states that all plants thrive when they have the right fungi working for them. The fungi function as extensions of

the roots and scout out and feed the plant what it needs from the environment. To make sure the plants have the right fungi, Warren inoculates his composts with a diverse collection of them, collected from old growth forests. He buries stockings filled with rice in the forest soil for three weeks, then sprinkles the colonized grains onto the cooling compost pile. Subsequently he only transfers small amounts of old compost onto the new piles to carry on the process.

This compost is laid thickly on top of the ground, or on cardboard over grass, to create new beds into which he plants his seedlings. These grew vigorously in this, his first, year but then the slugs came with the wet weather...and many hours picking them off...

Because the vegetable garden is large, he cannot do all the work by himself. He invites his neighbours to come on foot to buy vegetables at a price that depends on the amount of work they contribute at the time e.g. pulling a bucket of weeds, planting seedlings etc.

An arborist drops off green waste in exchange for produce from the farm. Warren also does composting for other properties. He holds workshops for the community. He advocates for a policy change to incentivise all green and food waste to be hot composted in local neighbourhoods, for use on roadsides, berms, waste land and urban farms – available for all communities to grow more food and resilience.

Thanks Warren, for a very enjoyable and inspiring tour!



Kamokamo pumpkin

Kamokamo is a treasured squash variety, with a delicious nutty flavour. The speckled green fruit has distinctive ribs, and if harvested young can be used like a courgette. Larger mature fruit are best cooked like a pumpkin. Delicious panfried, roasted, mashed with butter, boiled or in fritters (Yates seed).

Grown in New Zealand, it is thought to have been introduced during early European settlement, around the late 1800s to early 1900. Kamokamo is a variety of *Curcubita pepo*, related to the Mexican form of the plant. It is also known as *kumikumi*. The name comes from the Maori language. It is a staple food source for Maori people and was spread around Aotearoa by trade. Mature fruit can make a storage vessel.

Warren Cullen in his kamokamo and strawberry patch

Fresh Winter Greens – by Ruth

It is the height of the autumn harvest season and crops being harvested now will form the bulk of our winter vegetable eating. Carrots, parsnip, winter radish, and beetroot will all hold in the ground to be picked when wanted, while potatoes and ripening pumpkins are being stored in the cool dark of our garage. However delicious as these roots and tubers are, sometimes in the depth of winter I just crave something fresh and green.

The days are so short in winter we often go to work in the dark and come home in the dark again and we cannot be bothered trudging up the hill to the main garden in the wet and cold with a torch to try and find something. Instead, I plant green crops in the same pots and containers that we grew our summer squash and outdoor tomatoes in, just in the same compost mix and close under the protection of the house eaves from wilder weather.

Here are greens that grow on slowly for us through the cold months and often burst into plenty in the late winter very early spring.



Parsley

We leave flat leaved parsley to go to seed and let seedlings fill in the gaps as other plants are harvested. This method has given us a generous crop each year for the last 30 years from the one original plant – the ultimate in budget gardening.



Kale

Red Russian kale seedlings popped up amongst the dying pumpkin vines and have been left to grow for our winter kale crop. Kale enjoys similar growing conditions to parsley, cooler weather with generous water from winter rains.



Mustard Greens

Mustards are a coarser green with a strong flavour well suited to wilting and braising to serve with pork or make into kimchi.



Mizuna

This is another winter brassica with a mild sweet flavour, fresh and crunchy it is lovely in winter salads



Mibuna

This cut and come again winter brassica is soft with crisp stalks and a strong mustardy flavour. Delicious in spicy noodle soups.



Rocket

Peppery rocket is perfect for a pear and walnut salad or served with pizza.



Coriander

Will grow well in the shoulder seasons, autumn and spring. Sowings made in a glasshouse should come away in the very early spring.



Winter lettuce

Green oak leaf and the red heirloom 'Devil's ear' both grow steadily through winter



Basil

Of course if you have an indoor growing environment with lighting and heat you can try for the challenge of having sweet basil all year round.

Some other fresh options close to the kitchen in winter include microgreens and sprouts also.

Sun - and airdrying of fruit – by Tim

Fruits are ideal for sun drying as they have high sugar and acid content. Sun drying is a great way to preserve fruit as it costs nothing (vs dehydrators, ovens).

Slice larger fruit thinly and evenly. Small berries and fruits can be dried whole.

Hot, dry, windy days are best, with humidity below 60% and full sun.

Put fruit in a sunny conservatory, windowsill, or outside in a sunny, warm, breezy place. Because it takes several days to dry, if you dry them outside, you need to take them inside if it is likely to rain, and take them in overnight to prevent overnight dampness slowing down the process. Or you can leave them in the hot water cylinder cupboard. Turn and shake them during the process to let them dry evenly.

Spread fruit on racks or screens placed up on blocks to allow good air flow, on a dry ground surface. Concrete or a metal tray or aluminium sheet on the ground underneath will speed up drying.

Racks or screens that contact food should be stainless steel or plastic. Avoid copper (destroys Vit C and increases oxidation), aluminium (tends to discolour and corrode), or galvanised metal cloth ("hardware cloth") which can leave harmful residues on the food.

Food left to dry outside should have a protective rack/screen on top to protect it from birds.



Store in glass jars with firmly screwed on lid to keep the moisture out. Keeps for a season. Great as a snack or in scroggin, or you can soak to rehydrate.

Gardening Tips and Tricks – by Ruth

Build your own small vege plot in tea chests or wooden boxes - put in all your kitchen scraps and lawn clippings and every day for 3 weeks water and turn the contents - then plant potatoes.

For hastening the ripening of tomatoes - give plants a one off watering with either sea water or a tsp salt in 1 1/2 litres of water.

From Garden to Table – Beetroot recipes

Raw Beetroot Salad

3-4 small/medium beetroot
½ large apple
10 mint leaves
3 stalks parsley
2 Tbsp olive oil
Juice of half a lemon
Salt and freshly ground pepper

You can add grated carrot in the mix, as well as chopped nuts on top.
Mix together and leave for 30 minutes to allow the flavours to develop.

Greek Beetroot Salad - supplied by Ray

This is an excellent way of getting more from your beetroot, as it uses the whole vegetable:

Separate the beet tops from the beetroot.

Boil the beets in the usual way until tender, drain, skin and slice up. Dress them with olive oil, chopped raw garlic, wine vinegar and salt and pepper.

Clean the tops, chop coarsely and boil until tender then drain. Put into a bowl and dress with olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper to your taste.

Serve together on a platter, warm or from the fridge.

Fermented Beetroot

Try fermenting beetroot to add to your next burger or salad rather than pickling or opening a can of the sliced stuff. In traditional Eastern European cuisines, pickled beetroot were not seasoned with vinegar and sugar, but acquired their sour flavour through fermentation. As an

adjunct benefit, those same bacteria also produce vitamins, particularly folate and vitamin K2, and help to populate the gut with microbes that can boost the immune system.

Ingredients:

12 medium beetroot
Seeds from 2 cardamom pods (optional)
1 piece ginger (optional)
2 tbsp salt
1 cup water

Method:

Prick the beetroot in several places and then place on an oven tray and bake at 150°C for about 2-3 hours (or until soft).

Peel the beetroot and cut them into thin slices or julienne them.

Don't grate them or use a food processor as this will create too much juice and speed up the fermentation process to create an alcoholic drink (a beetroot 'beer' called kvass in Eastern Europe).

Put the beetroot pieces into a wide-mouthed jar or a container and press down lightly. Mix the remaining ingredients and pour over the beetroot, adding more water if necessary to cover the beetroot by about 2cm.

Cover tightly and keep at room temperature for 3-4 days to ferment, before transferring to a cooler space for storage.

We need help with our supper

Joy Tapp, who for many years has done a great job coordinating our supper, is unwell. She is in hospital and we wish her a full and fast recovery.

We urgently need some people to take her place, so that we can have suppers again, when we resume meeting in person.

It would be great if one person, or perhaps two friends, were willing to take up the responsibility of running the supper roster:

- Keep a list of members who have volunteered to help
- Remind those who have volunteered to bring a plate, to do so
- Arrive early enough to help them set out the cups
- Turn on the dishwasher and the zip
- Bring milk, tea and coffee to the meeting – reimbursed by the club

If you can be a coordinator, or wish to do this with a friend, please reply to the newsletter email.

You can donate surplus harvest produce to the community

Our Food Network offers to pick fruit off trees in and for the community (contact ourfoodnetwork@gmail.com), phone: +64 21 254 892



Plum cake – by Ruth

This is a general purpose cake that can be used with any fruit – plums, apple, rhubarb. It is most delicious warm, served with a spoonful of cream or yoghurt. At this time of year we have lots of plums and they make a very flavoursome cake.

Ingredients:

150g butter

$\frac{3}{4}$ C sugar

3 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ C flour

2tsp BP

$\frac{1}{4}$ C milk

Cream butter and sugar, add eggs one at a time, add milk, then stir in dry ingredients.

Spoon the mixture into a greased, lined tin. Press uncooked fruit into the top.

Bake 190 deg C for 40-45 minutes