



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)

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 7th September 2022

Q & A: David

Club Talk: Favourite seed choices

Guest speaker: Panel discussion on starting seeds, raising and protecting seedlings

Garden visit: Saturday, 24th September, 2 pm, Sophie Barker



September competition:
Any brassica

Winner of Best Winter Produce:
Marion Thomas with Broccoflower

Things to look forward to in August

Garden visit

Hello everyone,

Spring is here with all the fun and agonising decisions about when to sow and plant and how to protect seedlings. Below garden task guide might be of help, with additional handy hints on how to grow potatoes successfully. You can read a report on our garden visit in September. Also on three perennial vegetables that increase our food security, along with a fitting recipe. Growing our soils is key; and it is the topic of a review of one of the newly introduced books into our well stocked DVGC library.

Garden tasks for September - by David

Too late to plant: Asparagus plants and Garlic bulbs but could plant Shallots.

Last chance to plant: Jerusalem artichokes and Shallots.

Time to plant: Asian vegetables, Broad beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Leaf lettuce, Onions Silverbeet and Yams.

Time to sow seeds: Globe artichokes, Asian vegetables, Asparagus, Beetroot, Broad beans (this is the last month), Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery and Celeriac, Courgettes, Kale, Leaf lettuce, Onion, Potatoes, Parsnip, Peas, Pumpkin-Marrow-Squash, Radish, Rhubarb, Salsify, Shallots, Silverbeet. Tomatoes and Turnip.

And after the middle of the month: French, Runner and Butter beans, Capsicum, Corn, Cucumber, Fennel and Spinach.

Too early yet for:

Kohlrabi seeds and setting out Tomato plants – the Star Guide suggests 1st October and NZ spinach after mid October.

Cucumber and Courgette plants and Pumpkin-Marrow-Squash plants - mid October.

Capsicum plants – 1st November.

Brussels Sprouts plants – mid November.

Green Sprouting broccoli plants – December.

Things I learnt this month:

Start solanum seeds (tomato, pepper, eggplant) about six weeks before you want to transplant. Sow tomatoes first, then pepper and eggplant. Once these are growing in a sunny window start the hardiest cucurbits, first the zucchini and squash and after you put the tomatoes outside try cucumbers and melons. Cucurbits take less than two weeks from sowing to transplant in garden. So, to plant in mid October sow seeds at the start of October. Remember that you can buy or order single packets of Kings seeds from Nichols and you can buy smaller quantities of seeds from Taste Nature.

Potato growing hints

Spacing: Since First Early, smaller varieties, have shorter lives, they yield less. Plant them closer together (20 cm apart) than Second Early and Main crop larger potatoes that yield later and more (30 cm apart). When growing in containers, use about 20lt sizes for Earlies and around 45lt sizes for Main crops. Start at a planting depth of 10 cm, rising to between 30-48cm. The more space there is for and between your potatoes, the more nutrients each potato gets. Hilling up from the sides and adding extra compost gives the tubers more space to grow vertically and stops them from greening.

Flowering and swelling: When potatoes flower, it signals that tuber growth is beginning. This is when watering is most important. When blooming stops, no more tubers or top growth occurs. You can harvest small potatoes early, after checking their size by carefully rummaging underneath the plant. Energy goes into the tubers of main crop potatoes until the plant dies when the tuber skins toughen in preparation for Winter.

The 'Complete Know and Grow Vegetables Book' suggests:

- To get the most potatoes/\$ for main crops buy small seeds – store cool until early Spring.
- For early crops that may need extra energy to recover from frosts, buy larger seed potatoes early (March or April) and control the number of sprouts by keeping them warm (18° C) until you see the eyes developing at the rose-end starting to grow – then store at around 7°C until near planting time when you warm them up to develop them a bit before planting.
- Try to avoid rubbing sprouts off the seed potatoes as they have used up some of its energy for continued growth.

Potatoes need **phosphorus** for tuber growth. It is difficult to know how much, but studies show that foliar phosphorus increases total tuber numbers if applied just before tuber initiation – so try foliar phosphates just before and during flowering.

Phosphate fertilizer alternatives:

Phosphorus is just one of the nutrients needed by plants to maintain healthy, strong growth. It is also one of the chemicals involved with fertilizers that are found in water runoff that contributes to the pollution of lakes and groundwater. In populated areas, the potential for water pollution is greater than in farming areas, since the streets channel the runoff without filtering it through the soil first. Restrict the use of fertilizers on the lawn and in the garden,

unless nutrients are needed because of poor soil conditions, in which case you can try phosphate fertilizer alternatives.

Animal manures like rabbit, duck and chicken hold nearly as much phosphorous as inorganic fertilizers. The total amount actually depends on the diet of the animals. An animal feed supplemented with phosphorous will increase the content of phosphates in the animal waste. Manures are best when mixed into the soil. This prevents direct runoff, loss of nutrients to the environment and attracting flies. Manures decompose into the soil quickly depending on the temperature, soil moisture and soil acidity.

Bone meal is created by steaming animal bones and then grinding them. It is not a complete fertilizer, but it is high in phosphorus, up to 10 to 13 percent. This benefits the plants by helping with seed production and root growth. Bone meal is considered a slow-release fertilizer, since it takes time to break down the nutrients for use by the plants.

<https://homeguides.sfgate.com/phosphate-fertilizer-alternatives-20465.html>

15 Potato Growing Tips To Significantly Increase Your Harvest – by Elizabeth Waddington <https://www.ruralsprout.com/potato-growing-tips/>

How to grow potatoes without digging? Here is the link to a video of renowned market gardener Charles Dowding on how he grows no dig potatoes:

https://youtu.be/zXO_j0vriwk

Report on the visit to Sue and Brian's garden – by Ray Wade



The weather gods gave us a wonderful sunny and windless afternoon to visit the Tainui garden of Sue Novell and Brian Hyland. Production started outside the front fence with a NZ cranberry hedge. As we entered the sloping quarter acre section we discovered amazing variety.

At last I got to see the spectacular espaliered Winter Nellis pear and Stella cherry trees on the sunny north facing front of the house. Their trained shapes told of 30 years of careful pruning.

They had to share their warm brick wall with grapes, runner beans and tomatoes in Summer. There was a large variety of fruit trees from a couple of original apples and plums to recently planted ones (semi dwarf grafted 106 rootstock trees gives better results than dwarf), new plum trees, a variety of apricots, a blood peach and early peaches, fig trees in pots and a variety of citrus, plus feijoas.

Over their 30 years on the property all lawns have been developed into garden. No green material goes off the property as new gardens are established by laying down cardboard, prunings, hedge clippings and any available greenstuff, manures and compost, then planting amongst it as it rots down, starting with potatoes. Spent vegetables are cut and added to the 3

compost bins providing mulch. Seaweed is liberally spread in this and around the gardens at times of the year when it will not go rock hard. Whenever room is needed for a new planting, Sue clears a space. There is seldom bare soil as the plan is to keep it covered and growing continuously. As it is basically sandy soil, continuous mulch is needed to keep the soil moisture up. Currently there were perennial brassicas and leeks, various sprouting broccoli and Asian Greens, brussell sprouts, cabbages, turnips, celeriacs, silverbeets, miners and cos lettuces, parsley, kales, yacons, yams, potatoes and rhubarb.

There are many berry fruit, from currants and gooseberries under the apple trees, a Logan berry on a trellis to blueberries which were struggling in the dry alongside a hedge (some of which have now been shifted to a damper spot on the helpful suggestion of Ray – the editor). There are also strawberry plants, strawberry guavas, a shatoot mulberry and kiwiberry vines. Back towards the front gate down a bank there is a patch of native trees including a mature southern rata and a healthy kauri tree.

On a sunny day with ripe mandarins and lemons on the trees, it was hard to visualise raging southerly winds laying waste to the garden. A careful planting of both tall and low windbrakes have created the warm, localised pockets to enable such a wide variety to be planted.

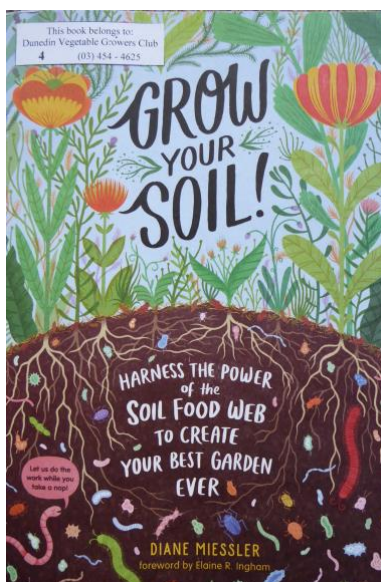
A big thank-you for allowing us to wander your inspirational garden and to hear your stories.

We welcome more offers to hold open food gardens this year, any size or type, be they smaller kitchen/container gardens, suburban plots, food forests or lifestyle blocks. Putting on afternoon tea is not at all required and necessary for a successful visit. Just tell your story. It is a great way to see and learn different ways of operating and also give the host the opportunity to get ideas and tips from experienced members. We will be passing the clipboard around again at the next meeting, where you can put your name down. Just choose a month that suits you best.

DVGC Library - Book Review – by David

Grow your soil – Diane Miessler

(About NZ\$27 softcover with free shipping from Book Depository or NZ\$14 as an Amazon Kindle).



If you are thinking about buying a rotary hoe read this book first! Diane Miessler is a certified permaculture designer who certainly favours the “back to nature” philosophy of gardening with emphasis on getting the garden to heal itself through mulches, cover crops, feeding the soil food web and compost tea. There is a great section on minerals and soil testing (when to do it), macronutrients and micronutrients. When to use dolomite lime rather than standard lime, for instance. There are tips on how to make biochar, the best way to dig a hole for a tree and the best time to apply a compost tea. The style is conversational and slightly repetitive rather than text book, but you may enjoy the authors sense of humour and agree with her belief that gardening is the closest thing to magic that she knows. Borrow it from our library and join in the magic.

Food Security with Perennial Vegetables – Sue and Tim

Try growing these easy care, easy to propagate vegetables that come year after year without much fuss in your garden or in pots. No annual sowing or buying of seedlings needed. For those who are interested in the idea of continued sharing by planting, dividing and giving surplus plants to neighbours, friends and family, free cuttings will be available at our September meeting.

Chives



Chives are a small forming perennial herb that has a mild onion-like flavour, originally from the Siberian highlands. The leaves are used in cooking or, along with the flowers, added to salads, sandwiches and garnishes. They are packed full of anti-oxidants, fiber, minerals and vitamins (Vitamin A, K, Folate, Iron etc.) that have proven benefits. In our temperate climate chives die down in Winter. Each Spring, they come back up as good as new in a sunny or part shady, well composted, not too dry spot. With pest-repelling qualities, as well as attracting

pollinators, chives are a popular companion herb under apple trees and alongside tomatoes. Harvest chives from the outside in and only take around a third of the plant at a time. In Summer they bear small clusters of mauve flowers. Cut off the flower stalks to prolong harvest of the leaves.

Chives can be propagated by seed or division. Dividing can be done in early Spring once the plant is actively growing, ideally every 2-3 years to keep the the plants productive and to prevent overcrowding. Simply dig up the entire clump and cut in pieces or make divisions of 2-3 bulbs, depending on the size of the clump. Replant some and give others away to friends and family.

NZ Yams/Oca



is a small, yellow, red or pink tuber that is as popular as the potato in the high altitude Andes, where it is know as ‘oca’, cultivated over many centuries. It does not suffer blight, even when grown in the same spot over years. It grows well in cool temperate climates like ours,

Being a season extending crop that can withstand poor soil conditions and changing climates, it is great for food resilience. Use as a starchy root vegetable similar to potato, for steaming, boiling, mashing, frying and roasting with other vegetables. Pop a couple in the microwave for a quick treat. Fresh, it has a crunchy, slightly lemony flavour, good for cutting

or grating into salads, like radish. Not only is it a carbohydrate, but a good source of potassium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, essential amino acids, Vitamin A from beta-carotene, Vitamin C and Vitamin B6 and fibre.

Oca, like potatoes, are propagated from tubers. The small seed tubers are best grown in designated, contained beds or containers. Plant them as soon as the ground warms up, about 5cm deep, covered with soil, 40cm apart. They prefer humus rich, fertile, well draining sandy loam soil, partial shade, and cool, damp weather. Add good compost and mulch really well to retain moisture in Summer. They need a long growing season (around 10 months or more) and consistent moisture for tubers to reach maximum size. Earthing up around the cloverlike foliage that gets bushy, up to 50cm high, will increase production. Leave plants in the ground until at least 4 weeks after the foliage has completely died down, preferably after some frosts. Mark the position of each plant so you know where to dig once they are dormant. After digging or rummaging out all of the various sized tubers, lay them out in the sun for a few days. This decreases the oxalic acid present and increases the sugars, giving them sweetness. Store tubers in a cool dry position. Unlike potatoes they do not need to be a dark place. Set some small tubers aside for planting and to give away next year. They are ready to be returned to the soil when they start shooting out little sprouts from their eyes.

Yacon



is a form of perennial daisy traditionally grown in the Andes for its sweet-tasting, tuberous roots. It grows into a large 2m high plant with flowers like a sunflower and Jerusalem Artichoke, but is not invasive. It is beneficial for the digestive and immune system and has a lovely sweet crunchy taste, not unlike a crispy pear/carrot. Eat raw, peel and chop into salads, sprinkled with lemon juice, to prevent browning. Yacon can be juiced for a refreshing drink, boiled down to make a sugary syrup or dried for sweet snacks.

Best planted when soil has warmed up to between 10 – 25°C. In our climate treat it as an annual. Plant the saved sprouting root/tuber from last year with the new buds to a depth of about 4cm and mulch to cover. The plants die down after frost but the roots are sweeter when left in the ground longer. A great Winter treat! To store, dig and dry out in the sun for a couple of days before putting in a cool place. Or use them like in South America where they are left in the sun to dry until they go wrinkly and used as a sweet fruit.

More information:

<https://www.fairharvest.com.au/growing-and-eating-yacon-peruvian-ground-apple/>

Please bring a small rigid container with some soft tissue paper inside to the meeting, for picking up and transporting your tubers and cuttings safely.

From garden to table – courtesy of Joanna Frankham

Orange and Honey glazed New Zealand Yams

Ingredients:

450g NZ yams/oca
2 tablespoons fat/oil
Zest and juice of one orange
1 tablespoon honey
Salt

Method:

- Heat your oven to 200 degrees Celsius
- Pop the yams in a baking dish, spreading them out to a single layer. Drizzle fat/oil over the top, along with the zest of orange. Sprinkle over a pinch of salt. Toss together. Pour over the orange juice. Cover with lid or foil.
- Roast for 30-40 minutes, turning once or twice.
- Remove lid or foil. Drizzle with honey over the yams. Roast uncovered for a couple of minutes.

<https://joannafrankham.com/o-is-for-oca-orange-and-honey-glazed-new-zealand-yams/>

We welcome all supper contributions:

If you happen to have some spare fruit, vegetables and a dip, nuts etc. or bake some sweet or savoury treats before the club meeting, pop some on a plate and bring it along to our shared supper table – it will be very much appreciated!

Jason Ross is holding a Grafting and Propagation Workshop on Sun 11th Sep 2022, 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm, contact: jason@habitate.co.nz