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| **GREENS~LEAVES**    **Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club Newsletter**  **April 2021** | | **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) helen.flockton6@gmail.com  **Club Email:** [dvgcnz@gmail.com](mailto:dvgcnz@gmail.com)  **Website:** <http://dvgc.co.nz/>  **Bank Account #** 030905051590600  (Please include your name as a reference) | |
| **Next Club Meeting:** Wednesday, 7th April 2021  **Q & A:** David  **Club Talk:** AGM  **Guest speaker:** Lisa Burton, Polytechnic Horticulturalist: *The Importance of Soil*  **Garden visit:** Ruth Gardener, Sunday, 18th April 2021, 2pm, 29 Flagstaff-Whare Flat road, second drive on Flagstaff road just off the tarseal - take the right hand side drive - its the house at the top of the hill. There is parking up the top of the drive. | | | |
|  | **Competition for April**  Personal best Autumn fruit and/or vegetable  Winner for 3 alliums:  Robyn Bazsika | | **Things to look forward to in April**  Garden visit |

Hello Everyone,

Following is a report on the recent garden visit and a reminder about garden tasks in April. There are tips on growing carrots in autumn, the benefits of perennial brassicas and regenerative gardening. Also two recipes for some special Easter treats from the garden.

Spare some thoughts for a garden oddity to bring to our curiosity table.

**Garden visit** – Ray Wade

A stunning warm sunny afternoon in Abbotsford with a good turnout of over 20 members to visit the garden of Pip Weber and David Mackle.

An astonishing selection of veges, soft fruits and fruit trees all on a standard house section.

Marionberries, strawberries, blueberries and migrating raspberries that moved from their poor soil corner to the nearest good soil. David has made frames so that the berries can be netted.

Horseradish, Globe and Jerusalem artichokes. Yams grown in tyres to contain them. A glasshouse with tomatoes and a chest high eggplant which unfortunately had not flowered. Asparagus in a raised bed and a mystery plant turned out to be a very lush crop of yukon.

The whole back fence was covered by espaliered seedling-grown apricot trees from stones that the neighbours had thrown into the compost. These crop well. Also quince, apples, cherry and crab apple trees. Several feijoas and grape vines.

A hot drink afterwards and a chat rounded off a very interesting visit.

Definitely not to be forgotten was the huge man shed which dwarfed the house.

**Garden Tasks for April** – 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)

Still a bit of time to plant: Seeds of Asian Vegetables (until end of May).

Plenty of time left for: Seedlings of Cabbage (until the end of June).

Do you sow carrots in autumn? We would all like to have carrots in the spring when they are expensive and unlike overseas gardeners we do not seem to have access to varieties especially bred for autumn sowing. (The Star Garden Guide suggests the latest time for sowing carrots is mid-January).

Kings Seeds have a variety, Samantha, that is a hybrid cross (Berlicum x Imperator). Popular with our commercial growers, this carrot is long, slender and blunt ended. They can be grown close together, forcing them to grow long, straight and slender. They have their mature orange colour even when tiny, making Samantha a popular choice for a baby carrot. They recommend it be sown from spring to autumn.

Just remember best temperature for carrot germination is 26°C, minimum is 4°C and at 5°C only 48% of seed will germinate normally. If you are sowing carrot seed in autumn you will need a sheltered warm spot and will need to sow the seed more thickly.

**Some thoughts on Regenerative Gardening** – David

Regenerative Farmers grow a variety of seeds in a cover crop to improve soil fertility and grow pasture that includes many different plants.

Regenerative Gardeners following the same principles grow cover crops, rotate crops and use carbon rich compost.

Regenerative Gardening and Agriculture aims to make the soil nutrient rich and so improve our food and our health.

It also aims to improve the soil by adding carbon and in doing so take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Do this in your home vegetable garden by:

Using compost, animal manures, crop management and cover crops to recycle soil nutrients

increases the biodiversity of the soil and crops and the amount of organic matter in the soil.

Managing the crops so that nutrients are not removed once crops are harvested and ensuring that nutrients are returned to the soil through composting waste from the garden and kitchen.

In summary - Compost your food waste – keep the soil covered with mulches and compost – preserve the soil structure by not digging – keep your garden bug and bird friendly – rotate your crops.

Signs that your vegetable garden is regenerative:

There should be lots of bugs and worms in the soil. Lots of birds searching for bugs amongst the plants and mulches.

The soil should retain moisture and look dark.

Plants should have only minimal insect damage.

**Pride of Madeira – Elizabeth Whitcombe**

Member Elizabeth Whitcombe has forwarded a link to a YouTube video about an interesting tall perennial plant (The Pride of Madeira – Echium candicans) that attracts bees: <https://youtube/NOI-6DvqCYg> - Thank you Elizabeth for this contribution. There will be seedlings at the meeting.

**Perennial brassicas** – Tim Hyland

Examples are Daubenton's kale (Brassica oleracea var. ramosa), walking stick kale (Brassica oleracea var. longata), nine-star broccoli.

These are ancestors of modern annual brassicas, live for up to 5 years or more and can get metres high (especially walking stick kale, which can require staking).

Propagate by cuttings of young shoots (15-20cm long), remove all but top two or three leaves, these root easily in soil. They do flower and seed but not always and will cross with other brassicas.

They are much hardier than annual brassicas, resistant to pests and diseases (aphids prefer faster growing, high-nitrogen plants), and drier conditions (though better results if moist). They grow best in fertile, loamy soil, in full sun or light shade. Replace with new plants from cuttings as older plants will slow down and produce less after a few years, but be sure to shift the location periodically to avoid clubroot.

Uses - Eating - smaller young leaves are tender and can be eaten raw or cooked; flower heads can be eaten as per sprouting broccoli. Useful filler crop in periods in between other crops, or backup if other crops fail. Can be a bit more fibrous than annual brassicas. Older leaves are excellent fodder for chickens or stock, and for composting. Plant provides shelter for other crops.

**AGM**

This year’s AGM will be short, confirming minutes of last AGM and the reports from acting President Jim and Treasurer Ruth, see attachments to this newsletter.

The committee welcomes Juliet Wardell to the committee. The number of nominations did not exceed the number of vacancies so there is no need for an election.

**Supper**

This month’s supper helpers are: Robyn Boyd, Family Rosenberg. Please bring a plate.

If you are unable to attend please ring Joy - 03 455 7997

Donations of additional supper food will be gratefully received, thanks very much.

**‘From Garden to Table’**

These recipes use produce from the garden to make great Easter treats.

*Ginger, pear, date and coconut truffles*

1 ½ cups raw almonds, blended

20 dates

50 gr. crystallised ginger

100 gr dried pears (or apples, apricots)

2-3 Tbsp coconut oil or butter

½ cup cocoa

½ cup desiccated coconut for coating

I like to add some frozen blackcurrants or other berries

Mix all indredients in blender, squash the mixture into balls, roll in coconut and refrigerate until use.

*Rhubarb Cream Flan (Alison Holst)*

Flakey pastry

3-4 cups thinly sliced rhubarb

3 eggs

½ cup sugar

½ cup sour cream

Line 20cm pie plate with thinly rolled flaky pastry

Arrange rhubarb on uncooked pastry

Combine eggs sour cream and sugar until well mixed

Pour over fruit

Bake at 220oC for 20 mins then 180oC till filling set in middle

Serve warm

It’s quite delicious.

Seasonal recipes from members to put in the newsletter would be gratefully received. Send to club email address, thanks.

**Gardener’s Curiosity Table**

At our meetings we will set up a table for items of interest. Bring along your strange, wonderful, good or bad produce – things you want answers to or just show off.

**Trading Table**

Our trading table is as good as its contributions. So please bring your spare seedlings, plants, seeds, cuttings, produce, materials etc. Thanks!

**Gardening books**

If members can recommend any good gardening books for our club library, that will be much appreciated. Please let David know.