



## GREENS~LEAVES

Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club  
December 2022

**Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:helen.flockton6@gmail.com)

**Club Email:** [dvgenz@gmail.com](mailto:dvgenz@gmail.com)

**Website:** <http://dvgc.co.nz/>

**Bank Account #** 03-0905-0515906-000  
(Please include your name as a reference)

**Next Club Meeting:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Note: club meetings will resume from February 2023 as usual

**Q & A:** David

**Club Talk:** How we protect our vegetable and fruit crops

**End of Year Festive Xmas Supper**



**December competition:**

Silverbeet in a bucket

**November competition winner:**

Salad bowl for one: Ross Gilbertson

**Things to look forward to in December:**

Xmas Supper

Hello everyone,

In this newsletter we have a garden task guide for December and the report on the latest garden visit. Also, an introduction to the local Caversham Community Hub.

We continue presenting perennial and easy self seeding food plants, together with a handy plant list and some recommended links. The committee thanks helpers, invites more to join us and to come along and enjoy our special Xmas supper.

### **Garden tasks for December** - by David

This is the time of year when you can save money by sowing seeds for your "Winter greens". If you grow seeds in planting modules, they can be a good size to put in position as you clear away the peas and broad beans. Having these brassicas follow the legumes gives them a chance to benefit from the nitrogen the legumes will have added to the soil.

Time to sow: Asian vegetables, carrot, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, peas, radish, silverbeet and turnip.

Last chance to sow: Beans (butter, French or runner), beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, capsicum, NZ spinach and swedes.

Time to plant: Asian vegetables, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, celeriac, leek and silverbeet.

Last chance to plant: Capsicum, courgette, cucumber, pumpkin-marrow-squash and tomatoes.

Too late for: Seeds or plants of corn, potatoes, rhubarb or yams.

## Report on the visit to Ross Gilbertson's garden – by Sue

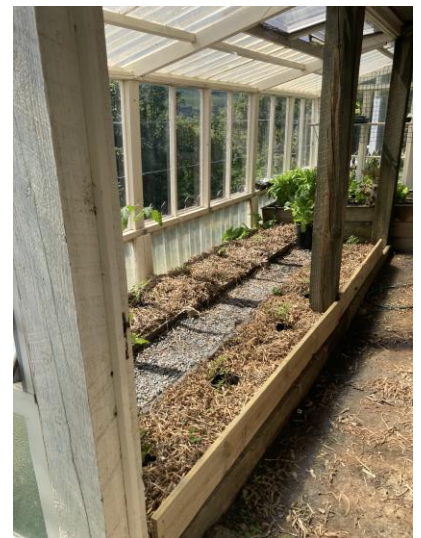
A gap in the rain was all we needed to fit in an informative afternoon, wandering through Ross's well constructed garden on three levels. Ross manages to grow more food than he needs, in beds on a rather steep slope, through clever terracing. He donates his surplus to colleagues, or the local Food Pantry in North East Valley. The middle garden is at the level of the house, with climbing beans, potatoes and young fruit trees lining the long, sunny driveway up to it. For the codling moth that attacks his apple tree, Ross has hung a pheromone trap. We discussed the life cycle of codling moths, the merits of wrapping corrugated cardboard around the trunk to catch the grubs or enticing birds with sugar water feeders in Winter, so they pick over the trunks in search for the grubs hiding in the bark. Ross has pruned a Stella cherry tree to the parameters of a clothes line, over which he will soon drape bird netting to stop feathered and other intruders. We climbed up some steps to reach the top-level area. There, basking in all day sun with a view over the valley, thrives a row of fruitful feijoa and black currant berry bushes.



Ross recently constructed a large, sturdy, netted berry cage, housing strawberry plants, blueberry and gooseberry bushes and some stonefruit trees. In front of the cage are beds of early potatoes, beetroot, onion, garlic and yams.

On the bank and under his trees, he grows a thicket of flowering creeping comfrey, humming with bees.

Built out from under the deck on the lower level is a glasshouse full of young tomato plants and lettuces. A 'wild' pumpkin seedling is given some space. More black currants, NZ cranberries and fruit trees (pear, apple, plum trees) and we



completed the circuit around the house. I forgot to mention the compost bins that are tucked away in corners and provide regular soil replenishment. It was interesting to have a look at Ross's favourite gardening tools and his handy kneeling pad (picture above). It is a tribute to him that he has built the timber and stone structures himself, mostly from found and second-hand materials, such as a neighbour's old decking.

It was great to experience what you have achieved, Ross, on a steep section through terracing. Thank you very much for the inspiring tour.



## **Caversham Community Hub – by Tony Culling**

The Caversham Community Group feels lucky to have the Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club meeting in our suburb.



The Caversham Community Group has a commitment to establish 100 fruit trees in our area in public locations to be harvested by the residents. At this stage we have over 40 apple, pear, plum, lemon and feijoa trees in various locations. We have silver beet plants in some locations for residents to pick.

The group is aware more than ever of the need to have your own vege patch. How satisfying it is to have your own salad vegetables, at a minimum.

If we hear of families who would like some support to set up the simplest of garden plots, maybe the Club and the Community Group could facilitate that in some way.

In the meantime, we will encourage residents to join the monthly meeting for great gardening tips and chats.

The group can be reached on [caversham9012@gmail.com](mailto:caversham9012@gmail.com)

## **Food Security with Perennial Vegetables – by Sue and Tim**

Try growing these easy care, easy to propagate vegetables and herbs 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 plants and/or seeds will be available at our December meeting.

If you already have surplus seedlings, cuttings or seeds of the plants we are introducing, we greatly appreciate you bringing some along for sharing.

### **Mint**



grows easily anywhere, in sun or shade, so long as it has free draining, moist soil, rich in organic matter. Its shallow roots creep along and can quickly fill a bare patch under fruit trees with vibrant green and a lovely fresh smell. It is great for attracting beneficial insects like hoverflies that eat aphids. Prune it regularly to keep it contained, or plant it in a pot, hanging basket or window box, by your back door or on the deck for easy access. Pruning stimulates new leaves. When plants have finished flowering, cut back the flowered shoots to 5cm from the base.

The quickest way to grow mint is from cuttings. These root easily in water and within a matter of weeks they are ready to be transplanted directly into the garden or pots, early in the morning or late in the day.

There are many varieties to choose from with different tastes and uses: Apple (woolly) mint, Chocolate mint, Common mint, Corsican mint, Pennyroyal mint, Peppermint and Spearmint and many more. Vietnamese mint is tasty and popular in Asian cuisine. Being a subtropical plant, this mint does not become invasive in our climate.



Mint helps with both human and animal digestion, either fresh or as a tea.

Cooks love it to make refreshing, cooling Summer salads (add walnuts and parmesan or in cucumber salads with onions and vinegar). Add it to pesto. Make a yogurt mint sauce to serve alongside fresh garden vegies or grilled meats:

### From garden to table:

**Yogurt mint sauce** – 1 cup yogurt, ½ cup fresh mint leaves, finely chopped, 1 garlic clove, minced, 1 Tbs lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste, cayenne pepper, just a dash, optional.

Goes great with spicy dishes.

### Lemon Balm



belongs to the mint family also, but is not as invasive as mint. It grows easily in semi shade or sun, in moist or dry soil. Its shallow roots spread slowly and the bushy plant is a lovely fresh green all Summer, with a lemony scent. Great for growing beside other herbs, under fruit trees and berry bushes. Best to snip the flowering stems early before setting seed (bees love them), if you do not want plants spreading. Harvest often and cut the plant down when it gets sraggly. It will grow back lush. Propagate it like mint, from a cutting or root. It can be used as a calming

tea, in pestos with mint and garlic chives, for citrus flavour in baking and salads, etc.

For its special uses see: <https://www.ruralsprout.com/lemon-balm-uses>

### More on Orach

We have introduced you to Orach in our October newsletter and have been able to offer seeds for sharing. We are now very lucky to have been donated some Orach seedlings by Barbara Davies and hope to have these, plus some from my garden, available at our December meeting, to grow, enjoy, and share with friends.





Also known as mountain spinach, this annual vegetable tastes a lot like spinach, and cooks like spinach, but is much less likely to bolt and easier to grow. It can grow to 2m tall – but is best harvested when leaves are small – do not plant it where it might shade other crops that need sun. Will grow in any soil, but tolerates dryness and heat better than spinach.

Can be eaten raw or cooked; and since it is self-seeding, once you start growing it, you will have it for years to come.

The leaves and young stems are the main edible parts. Younger leaves can be eaten raw, older

ones — a bit tougher — are best cooked. You can substitute orach in any recipe calling for spinach or Swiss chard: soups, salads, quiches, lasagnas, etc. The red color of the foliage disappears during cooking, leaving you with a green vegetable ... but stains the water in which you cook it red. In Italy, Orach is often cooked with pasta and rice (in a risotto, for example), giving them an attractive pink coloration.

## Perennial Plant List – by Tim and Sue

Plant	Sun	P. shade	Shade	Moist	Dry	Fertile	Infertile
Perennial leeks	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Cape gooseberry	✓				✓		✓
Wild rocket	✓				✓		✓
Italian parsley	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Currant bushes	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Raspberry bushes	✓			✓		✓	
Rhubarb	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Marjoram	✓				✓		✓
Miners lettuce			✓	✓		✓	
Russian Kale	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Wild Strawberry		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Silverbeet	✓			✓		✓	
Perennial brassica	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Yams	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Runner beans	✓			✓			✓
Lambs lettuce	✓			✓		✓	
Mizuna	✓			✓		✓	
Chives		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Lovage	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Pepino	✓			✓		✓	
Egyptian Walking onions	✓			✓		✓	
Garlic chives	✓			✓		✓	
Oregano	✓				✓		✓
Potato	✓			✓		✓	
Gooseberry	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Yakon	✓			✓		✓	
Orach	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Mustard	✓			✓	✓?	✓	

Sorrel	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Skirret	✓			✓		✓	
Rosemary	✓				✓		✓
Wasabi			✓	✓		✓	
Bee balm/Bergamot	✓			✓		✓	
Chamomile	✓				✓	✓	
Mint		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Thyme	✓				✓		✓
Lovage	✓			✓		✓	
Lemon Balm	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

## Recommended links to sites about self-seeding crops and perennial plants:

Self-Seeding Crops You'll Never Need to Replant – by Barbara Pleasant

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/self-seeding-zmaz10aszraw/>

Food Forest Plants NZ

<https://foodforestplants.co.nz/nz-food-forest-resources/>

## We welcome tips about food growing links and podcasts that you have found inspiring:

This month's suggestion: "Agroecology and The Great Simplification"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0JBnZJPSeo> (1 hour)

An interview with Vandana Shiva who has a PhD in Physics, but chose to work with Indian peasant farmers to protect biodiversity, save seeds through organic agriculture/agroecology.

## Help for the committee

We are very grateful to Ray Wade and Bev Livingstone, who are doing a wonderful job looking after the Trading table and Supper times. We also heartily thank Jo and Marion Thomas who so kindly offered a helping hand when they are able.

These are the specific jobs and tasks that the committee welcomes some help with:

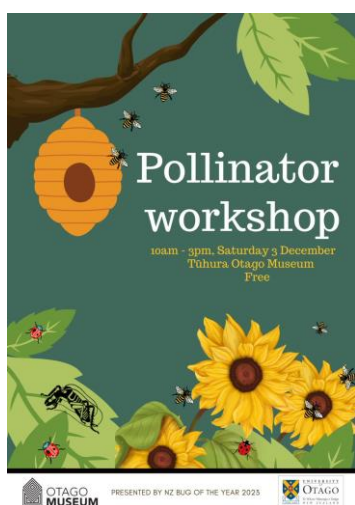
- writing a garden visit report for newsletter (make notes on day, write up and send to editor)
- helping with garden visits (attend, put flag up and down)
- writing relevant articles for the newsletter with links to resources
- helping with library books (display, write book reviews, keep tabs on lending)
- organising speakers and garden hosts (liaise with a speaker/host the committee agreed on)
- helping with competitions and plant growing initiatives (display, grow and pack)
- looking after membership (take new members details at the front desk, keep records)
- keeping the website updated

If some of these tasks appeal to you, and you can help us out by giving some of your skills and time to the club - become part of our supportive committee. Please contact DVGC by return email or talk with a committee member at the next meeting.

**Library Books** – if you come across an especially resourceful gardening book, let us know, and we can see if we can purchase it for our expanding library.

**PA system** – DVGC has purchased a new PA system (with two microphones, also for the audience). This should make for a much improved meeting experience. We welcome all feedback, so we can get it adjusted optimally.

**Christmas supper** – for our festive December Xmas supper, please bring along a plate with finger food to share. The supper doubles as our end of year function, as the lunch was cancelled due to low interest.



**Bug of the Year:** Are you looking to get more info on your Bug of the Year nominees, get some tasty kai from the hard work of our pollinator friends, take home some wildflower seed bombs to bring colour to your yard, or learn more about the brilliant insect and pollinator biodiversity in Aotearoa? Join researchers from the University of Otago, Entomological Society of New Zealand, and around the world on Saturday, December 3rd from 10am-3pm at the Otago Museum for another awesome Pollinator Workshop! This workshop kicks off the Summer of Bugs, which will feature interactive fun for all with events at the Museum, University, and around Otago and New Zealand- stay tuned for more events to come!

<https://bugoftheyear.ento.org.nz/2022/10/28/pollinator-workshop/>

## **Bokashi and Worm Farming**

Turn your food waste into amazing compost:

Join Michelle Cox from Organics Unearthed, for a fun and inspiring workshop and learn how easy it is to turn your food wastes into gardener's gold!

### *Workshop*

Using a Worm Farm or Bokashi CompostZing system learn about easy, space saving methods which turn food wastes into nutrient and microbe-rich compost. Nourish your soil and plants, save money, and help the environment, all at the same time!

Location: Macandrew Bay | Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 1 – 5pm

FREE | Afternoon tea provided

Registrations essential: Michelle Cox

029 771 0212 | [organicsunearthed@gmail.com](mailto:organicsunearthed@gmail.com)

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