



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: dvgenz@gmail.com
Website: <http://dvgc.co.nz/>
Bank Account # 030905051590600
 (Please include your name as a reference)

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2023

Q & A: David

Club Talk: AGM

Guest speaker: Jim Bazsika - 'Is growing your own fruit and veggie good value?'

Garden visit: Margaret Scott, Sunday, 26th March, 2 pm



March competition:

3 Tomatoes, heritage and/or hybrid

February competition winner:

Constance Nutsford with 3 alliums

Things to look forward to in March:

Garden visit

Hello everyone,

A guide for this month's garden tasks is here, along with reports from visits to three gardens. Harvest cake recipes are included. We introduce more perennial or easily self seeding plants and a link to an article on growing vegetables in small spaces. We encourage members to give talks on topics of interest to the club and to bring along items to liven up the trading table.

Garden tasks for March – by David

Too late for: Any seeds, except:

Last chance to sow: Seeds of silverbeet, lettuce and onion by middle of March (St.Patrick's)

Plenty of time for: Seedlings of kale and silverbeet

Last chance to plant: Seedlings of lettuce by end of month

Still a bit of time to plant: Seedlings of cabbage, silverbeet, Asian Greens

Plenty of time for: Seeds of Broad beans - though these can go in from the beginning of March until end of May and Peas usually from April. Sowing these depends on how much space you have in the garden and how it fits in with your crops.

Do you grow raspberries?

An English gardening book makes good arguments for growing Autumn fruiting raspberries - they grow and fruit in a single season – you can pick the last of them in late April, cut the canes and throw them away – autumn fruiting varieties are relatively disease free since there is a longer time with no canes. Autumn fruiting varieties in NZ include ‘Heritage’, ‘Ivory’ and ‘Autumn Bliss’ (this may be the same as a favourite variety from Scotland with the same name).

Tip: If you are growing Autumn fruiting raspberries and are thinning and finding ‘wandering’ canes in early Spring, create an additional patch or spread the surplus plants to friends and family, so they can grow them too.

Garden visit at Bazsika’s in January – by Sue

Glorious bright pink and red petunia tubs greeted us in front of Robyn and Jim Bazsika’s house, where we were treated to an impromptu propagation workshop by Robyn: “How to take cuttings: just take cutting off and any big leaves on it, dip end in rooting hormone, stick into soil in shade, keep moist under cover and you have lots of new plants...” sooo easy...

We all wandered over to a grove of deciduous trees that colour up beautifully in Autumn, liquid amber trees amongst them. There are Tagasaste on the boundary edge – valued for the bees and also as nitrogen fixers (when you cut the branches back often). Instead of the rhododendron that previously languished in this dry area, native trees are now thriving. Pear trees had been shifted as well, kept small for ease of picking, with a variety of beneficial plants underneath: lemon balm, fever few, tansy, Nasturtiums, Comfrey, and berry bushes. Covering the berry cage is on the to-do list and will provide a harvest of raspberries, currants and strawberries.

Hazel nut bushes, mulberry and medlar tree, cherry plum and apricot, also a Grapevine grow in this area. Two green houses are full of rows of tomato plants.



Horse and chicken manure has been the secret of the excellent growth of the vegetables. There is now the worry of contaminated horse manure, so the suggestion was made to get horse manure directly from paddocks in Summer, to avoid picking up dung from horses fed with sprayed

The 4-quadrant garden, with chicken house in the midst, has its Summer patch in full production with towering sunflowers and sweetcorn, beans, beetroot etc. Also a large potato growing bed that is rotated every year (3 kg of Agria seed potatoes were chitted, cut in pieces, dried and planted over bull kelp in trenches).



hay. If in doubt, do not use horse manure. Replace instead with comfrey and seaweed, worm juice and/or diluted urine.

The orchard, consisting of a wide variety of fruit trees harvested from early to late in the seasons, is planted along contour swales, as the ground is rather wet there. The trees are all pruned in early Summer to keep them in small shape. This allows for ease of netting and harvesting. The Coes golden drop plums are especially treasured, also the sweet cherries, the bounty easily protected with netting. A newly planted blood peach has replaced a sour cherry tree, the fruit of which had only been for the birds. The 'Meyer lemon' bush is basking in the sunny corner by the deck and gets a good soak once a week. This is also where we sat and had a cool drink and enjoyed a chat. Thanks Robyn and Jim!

Food Security with Perennial Plants – by Sue

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 March meeting.

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

Rosemary



is a fragrant, evergreen plant native to the Mediterranean. It is very drought resistant and loves growing in a sunny spot of the garden, in well-draining sandy or loamy soil. There are many different types of Rosemary: hanging, vigorous upright and the low bushy types. The blue flowers attract lots of bees and pollinators, so any type of Rosemary is good for planting on a dry bank adjacent to fruit trees. You can use the fine, needle like leaves either fresh or dried in cooking, whether in Italian Cuisine or added to your stuffing, roasting potatoes or chicken. Use it to make a tea. To flavour foods and use in salad dressings, infuse it in olive oil first.

Propagating rosemary, using cuttings sitting in a glass of water, is an easy method:

Take a 15-20cm cutting from a healthy mother plant using a sharp and clean pair of scissors/gardening shears. Tip: Make sure the cutting is taken from the soft green/purple stem as opposed to the woody part. Remove the leaves from the bottom part of the cutting by scraping them off with your fingernail. Place the cuttings in water in a glass jar. Make sure none of your leaves are sitting in the water. Leave the glass jar on a sunny countertop, changing the water every few days until you start to see roots growing. Plant the rooted stalks in well-

draining soil and keep an eye on the moisture levels for the first month. Once it has established, you don't need to be as careful.

Horseradish



is native to Russia and Hungary and from the same brassica family as Wasabi, Mustard and Broccoli etc. Grown for the white roots, it is most widely used as an ingredient in sauces and dressings. To produce a milder flavour add vinegar immediately after grating. Horse radish likes a sunny to part shade aspect, grows easily in loamy soil and **is best kept in a deep pot** (at least 60cm deep), so it does not take over the garden. To get a single strong root, weed out the side shoots.

Dig up the whole plant before the first frost, compost the leaves and grate the root (can be stored in the fridge for a few days or in the freezer for six months). It grows from root pieces, so don't forget to put a piece back in the soil for the next plant to grow from.

Recommended link: <https://www.installitdirect.com/learn/growing-horseradish/>

Red Russian Kale



is a heirloom, sweet and tender type of kale, that can be eaten raw or cooked. The fantastic quality of this variety is that it always seeds true to type, unlike other brassicas. It is cold hardy, grows best in cooler conditions and tastes sweeter after some frost. It thrives in a sunny situation, in fertile soil. Pick the outer leaves, so the plant keeps growing until it flowers. These are loved by bees. Leave a plant to set seed and dry, pick off some of the seeds to sow later and shake, trample and water the rest of the stalk over a patch of bare soil. You will find many new kale seedlings in no time at all. These can be transplanted or eaten as baby greens in salads. When harvesting,

the leaves tend to wilt quickly, so take out of the sun and eat, or dunk in cold water until processed.

Recommended reading:

How to grow vegetables in small spaces

You can grow vegetables at home no matter how tiny your place - by Amy McNab

Click on this [Link](#)

Club talks

We welcome club talks given by members: Feel free to offer a five minute talk about, or introduce, something gardening related to the club at one of our meetings.

Visits to Greta's, Ruth and Warren's gardens in February - by Sue

At the start of the two Saturday morning garden visits to different Ravensbourne properties, a sizeable group of DVGC members and visitors gathered on Greta's patio, with sweeping views out onto the sparkling harbour. Greta explained how she and various helpers had changed the sloping quarter acre section from a bare paddock with a garage to a landscaped garden with a house. The windswept, but sunny site became much more sheltered by adding structures to the existing sheds, paths, steps and platforms:



Climbing up the steps from the patio, a homely glasshouse with waist high beds now displays many warmth loving edible plants. More high, narrow wooden boxes have been added for vegetables to be grown outside. To keep the plants from blowing away in the wind, Greta uses stretchy bungy cords to tie them to the trellises. A large fruit cage protects fruit trees, espaliered along its sides, various berry bushes in the middle and a composting bin. A chicken coop houses a pet chicken and tools under its eaves.

One trick Greta employs to get plants off to an early start, is to use stiff, rolled up corrugated plastic sheets, reinforced with the cut-off top and bottom of plastic buckets, as a shield to protect them from the cold and wind. Further up the section, extensive native plantings of grasses and trees, with a hidden hut under the canopy, offer a restful place to enjoy the views.



Upon entering the second garden, Ruth and Warren's 1/2 acre, less windswept, but generally shadier property lower down the hill, we admired the big fat pumpkins hiding in the lush foliage in a sunny bed. Ruth had planted the seedlings in early November, in soil newly enriched with sheep pellets, and with borage as companions (to attract bees for pollination). After the harvest, self sown parsley and Russian kale is going to take up the space.



Numerous tubs of tumbling tomatoes, zucchini and other heat loving plants, like chilli peppers, thrive in the shelter on the patios adjacent to the buildings. Their own four chickens supplied the manure that was mixed in with compost to fill these. Further up the hill, as we enter the orchard area, a trellis full of Cannellini beans are fattening and drying on the bush for Winter eating. Here are hazelnut bushes, several pear, plum, Blood peaches and a Stella cherry tree. Making use of the very top garden space in the Summer sun, more

raised vegetable garden beds have recently been constructed from wooden pallets and non treated wood. These are filled with fine, dark compost made in adjacent heaps from copious amounts of chipped hedge cuttings, grass clippings, manure and seaweed. Brassicas, varieties of radish and main crop Agria potatoes etc. now thrive in them. Red Rascals have already been taken out and stored in Banana boxes. To help keep the year round potato harvest continuous, Early Lisetta potatoes will be grown in the glass house in Winter after the bounty of cherry tomatoes has finished, ready in Spring. Currant and gooseberry bushes, a grapevine and beds of carrots, strawberries and lettuce fill the terraced areas and beds of the earlier established garden. More space is filled to the brim with flowers, herbs and bushes with food for the birds.



Many thanks, Greta, Ruth and Warren, for your hospitality in showing us how you have built these very productive gardens on steep sections above the Otago harbour.

Fruit Harvest Cake Recipes – by Ruth

Now the main Autumn harvest is beginning, I am starting to have some big amounts of fruit to process or preserve in some way for use later. Red currants are easily stored by stripping them from their stalks and bagging them up to go in the freezer. Pears I will poach in a light syrup and bottle in old fashioned Agee jars for winter eating.

Here are two easy cake recipes that make use of these commonly grown household fruits in a delicious way. Warren made both of these to serve to club members who came to the garden visits last weekend.

Redcurrant cake

Ingredients:

150g butter

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

3 eggs

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

2 tsp BP

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

500 g red currants (or any other fruit of your choice)

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

Bake 180 C for 40 mins approx.

Pear Gingerbread Upside-down cake

Topping:

Arrange cooked pears (quartered) in bottom of cake tin. We used last years bottled pears.

45 gms butter

1/3 C brown sugar

Melt together butter and sugar and spoon over the pears

Ingredients:

½ C milk, soured with 1 Tbsp cider vinegar

1 egg

½ brown sugar

1/3 C treacle (grease the measuring cup first to make it easier to scoop out)

60 g butter melted

1 ¼ C flour

2 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp BS

1 tsp ground ginger

¼ tsp cloves

Combine wet ingredients

Combine dry ingredients

Add dry to wet ingredients

Spoon over pears

Bake 180 C 25-30 mins

Trading Table

We would love to have this month's trading table full of interesting plants, seedlings, seeds, cuttings, produce, gardening items of interest etc. Please everyone, bring something along!

DVGC 2023 Subscriptions

Note that subscriptions of \$15.- are now due for 2023. If not already done, please pay into above DVGC bank account with your name, or at the welcome desk at the DVGC meeting.

Free talk and demonstration on soil health – by Michele Cox ***‘Soil Your Undies and Grow Better Gardens’***

If you would like a lighthearted play with soil and science, come along to a FREE talk and demonstration I'm offering as part of the Community Classroom Program at NEV, Dunedin.

When: Saturday March 4th 10.30-11.30am.

Soil Your Undies and Grow Better Gardens Learn about a scientific (and slightly quirky!) way to measure soil health in your garden.

We'll start with a quick introduction to healthy soils and the organisms you need to support in order to grow great gardens. You'll learn how and why we bury cotton undies to measure soil health, then we'll step outdoors and get hands-on. Use the right technique to bury your undies; learn how and when to dig them up; and what to look for to inform you about the state of your soil health. Easy!

This is suitable for all ages 7-97, so just email me to book & receive venue details:)

Michelle Cox, www.organicsunearthed.co.nz

Organics Unearthed - Workshops. Garden Coaching. Permaculture Solutions.

Do you have surplus backyard fruit? We'll pick it and get it out to the community.



How it works:

- Just before your fruit is ripe (ideally!), contact our coordinator on **021-0273-1251** (or email **communityfruitotepoti@gmail.com**).
- We'll contact volunteer pickers near you and organise a good day & time to pick.
- Fruit will be given to Food Banks, street pātaka / pantries, or to organisations who process it into yummy baking and other goods which are then given away freely.

Please note we won't take damaged, rotting, or very small amounts of fruit. We can't pick fruit that is not reasonably safe to reach. We don't offer pruning.

**Want to help pick/preserve?
Contact us: 021-0273-1251**

Supported in NEV by the Valley Project



Community Fruit Harvest: redistributing abundance in our communities.

Come on down to the commercial kitchen at the Valley Baptist Community Centre (270 North Road) on Saturdays March 4th and 25th to get elbow-deep in apples, learn about different preserving methods, meet some neighbours, and take some jars of yumminess home.

The day will be split into two "shifts": 10am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4pm with a lunchtime barbeque for participants in the middle (12.30pm-1.30pm). You can come to either or both shifts, but we ask that you arrive at the beginnings of shifts if you can. All are heartily invited to the lunchtime barbeque, with kai supplied (and masterfully barbequed no doubt) by Valley Project staff.

Depending on what fruit and veg we have, we might make:

- jam
- chutneys
- fruit leather
- bottled fruit
- pickles
- and anything else we think is a good idea!

We will need lots of hands for chopping and peeling and lots of mouths for tasting, banter, and arguing about recipes ("my nana did THIS.." "Well MY nana did THAT" etc etc).

Please RSVP to our Community Fruit Harvest coordinator at communityfruitotepoti@gmail.com // 021-0273-1251 so that we can get a picture of numbers for barbeque catering.

Please bring:

- an apron if you have one
- your own knife and chopping board, in case we get short
- any extra large pots / preserving pans we could use
- jars with fitting metal lids
- any surplus fruit or veg from your garden or someone else's (ask first!)
- friends, family, neighbours etc.

We will donate what we make (except for what participants take home) to food banks, street pātaka, schools, or any kaupapa that that could use it.

If anyone is keen to help do some picking for these events in the week/s prior, please get in touch.

Looking forward to getting fruity with you all!!

Also save the date for our Harvest Festival at the Valley Project (262 North Road) 1pm-6pm on Sunday April 30th (which coincides with Southern Hemisphere Halloween - traditionally a festival that celebrates the final harvest of the year). Join us for an afternoon of local food workshops and activities, such as a fermenting workshop, heritage apple variety tastings, seed and plant swap... and much more! We will also be pressing fresh apple juice all afternoon: make sure you bring some plastic bottles to fill up. If you'd like to offer a workshop or host a stall or demonstration at this event, please get in touch with our coordinator via communityfruitotepoti@gmail.com // 021-0273-1251. Anything goes - as long as it's local-food-harvest oriented! We will publish the event schedule in the April Valley Voice, so make sure you get in touch before March 8th.

Saturdays March 4th and 25th, 10am-4pm: Preserving Days at Valley Baptist

Sunday April 30th, 1pm-6pm: Harvest Festival at Valley Project