



## GREENS~LEAVES

Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club Newsletter  
January 2024

**Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
**Venue:** Dunedin Lawn Bowl Stadium,  
 38 Tahuna Rd, Lawyers Head, Dunedin  
**Membership:** Helen Flockton - phone  
 0274222364 [helen.flockton6@gmail.com](mailto:helen.flockton6@gmail.com)  
**Club Email:** [dvgcnz@gmail.com](mailto:dvgcnz@gmail.com)  
**Website:** <http://dvgc.co.nz/>  
**Bank Account #** 03-0905-0515906-000  
 (Please include your name as a reference)


**Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024: PLEASE NOTE LATER DATE**

**Q & A:** David

**Club Talk:** Don Pearson will talk about "Soil Fertility"

**Vegetable competition:** Best summer veg and/or fruit

**Garden visit:** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 1:00pm in Wakari – note the date – details to follow.

	<p><b>January competition:</b> Best summer veg and/or fruit</p> <p><b>December competition winner:</b> Heaviest crop and heaviest single potato Elizabeth Whitcombe won both categories</p>	<p><b>Things to look forward to in January:</b> Talk about Soil Fertility Wakari Open Garden on 13<sup>th</sup> January</p>
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Hello Everyone,

Please note: the **DVGC January club meeting** will be held on **January 10<sup>th</sup>**

In this newsletter we have the monthly growing guide and Robyn Bridges reports on her visit to Diana Noonan's Garden in the Catlins. There is a report about our visit to Emma Brown's Garden and a section on food security. We introduce you to the flowers recommended to brighten up a southern vegetable garden and ask for donations to our sales table. There is a reminder to pay annual subscriptions in 2024, and we wish everyone a Happy New Year.

### Garden tasks for January – by David

**Too late for:** Seeds of beans, beetroot, kale, and parsnip.

**Last chance to sow:** Seeds of carrots and peas by the middle of the month. This is the last month for spinach seeds.

**Last chance to plant:** Seedlings of leeks (by mid-month), and brussels sprouts, cauliflower and heading broccoli and celery before the end of the month.

**Still a bit of time for:** Seeds of radish and turnips. Seedlings of Asian vegetables.

**Plenty of time for:** Seeds of Asian Vegetables, lettuce, and silver beet.  
Seedlings of cabbage, lettuce, and silver beet.

**Too early yet for:** Seeds of broad beans, onions, and peas.

**Tip of the month:** When propagating strawberries use the nearest runner to the main plant.

## A visit to Diana Noonan's Garden in the Catlins. By Robyn Bridges:



Many of you will have heard of Diana Noonan from her children's books, from her articles in columns in the Kiwi Gardener and sometimes in the ODT. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting her lifestyle Catlins block where she lives on a '800 square metre section from which she sources 70% of her food'. I knew it was coastal as I heard her talk about her nearby source of seaweed and the amount she used on her garden. I didn't realise just how close to the coast her garden was. It is located on a coastal raised terrace

overlooking one of the many picturesque river mouths on the Catlin coast.

When I visited, she said it had been a wet and cool spring this year and growth was slow. Her garden is made up of multiple beds and like many, is a keen follower of the permaculture practice of 'chop and drop'. Diana has discovered the benefits of developing good soil mycelia and its role in maintaining good soil moisture and healthy plants. As they are on rain water, maintaining moisture during a hot summer is important.

While we were talking a small tree in one corner of the garden was arousing a lot of interest by a large flock of kereru. It was not a large tree and they were very big birds! Several were competing with each other for flowers, and weighing down the branches of this quite small tree. They looked like flying turkeys. The tree of interest was a Tagasaste (Tree Lucerne) which Diana had grown for her bees because it flowers early when there is little else



about. It explained the full netting I had noticed on her fruit trees. Everything has to be netted and early otherwise there would be no blossom left for the fruit to develop. Rabbits too can be a problem and the perimeter of the garden has a good rabbit proof fence.

A highlight of my visit was her roadside garden which is planted on the berm outside her house and where she was busy planting the last of her zucchinis. Passers by and neighbours are welcome to pick their own. Such a neat idea.

As much as her love of gardening, I think it is Diana's love of sharing. Sharing the fruits of her labour, her vegetables and fruit, and sharing the knowledge and skills she has developed over the years of tending her own garden and which she writes about in her informative and entertaining articles. Diana is definitely a gardener with attitude. I loved it!



### **Share your knowledge about Glasshouses?**

The Dunedin Garden Club have asked us to speak to them on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup>. They meet at the Church of Christ Hall on the corner of Filleul and St Andrew Sts. Meetings start with business at 7:30pm with the speaker at 8:00pm and they would like a 30 or 40-minute talk about "Growing vegetables and flowers in a glasshouse". They can show PowerPoint presentations. If interested please reply to this email.

### **Can you help with our website while Ross is overseas?**

If you are familiar with WordPress or websites please reply to this email.

### **The Taieri A&P Show deserves our support:**

It is being held on the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January and entries close on Monday 15<sup>th</sup>.

See: <https://www.ras.org.nz/event/otago-taieri-agricultural-pastoral-society-2024/> for information and entry forms.

### **Advance Notice of Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival:**

The 15th Annual Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival will be held in Riverton and surrounds on the weekend of the **23rd and 24th March 2024**.

At the end of January check in at <https://www.sces.org.nz/heritage-harvest-festival-2024> for their 2024 workshop list and offerings! Or look now at their videos of previous events.

### **Flowers recommended to brighten up a southern vegetable garden:**

At Robyn Bridges' Garden bees smothered the poached egg plant. (Meadowfoam)  
Other low-growing, easily controlled; annual flowers that attract beneficial insects include: Alyssum Carpet of Snow. Cosmos Brightness Mix. Cupid Pink Sweet Peas.  
These four are available from Kings Seeds and are relatively easy to grow.

Alyssum



Cosmos



Sweet Peas



Meadowfoam



### **Trading Table**

Thanks to all who contribute to the interesting variety of plants, cuttings, seedlings, seeds, and materials on the trading table, very much appreciated.

### **Annual Subscriptions are due in 2024.**

Only \$15 for our meetings and newsletter. \$20 if you receive the newsletter by post.  
Please pay in 2024 for the new year.

Pay online, our Bank Account is 03-0905-0515906-000, with your name as a reference.  
Or at our club meeting – do not forget to give us your email address for the newsletter.

### **Supper**

Volunteers this month are Lorraine Faris and Helen Flockton

## **Report on the visit to Emma Brown's Garden at South Taieri – by Sue**

A small side valley in South Taieri hides a sheltered property with a carefully landscaped garden, created over the last fifteen years. Board walks, decks, raised beds and gravelled areas surround the home, an originally remodelled scout hall. Beside the banks of a creek, flanked by native grasses, flaxes and native trees, stands a large berry cage that keeps out most birds from the raspberries, high bush blueberries, the 10 year old, still highly productive currant bushes, NZ cranberries and strawberries etc. Emma feeds wood ash to them all. She grows small cherry trees in pots, also chamomile for dyeing fabric and borage flowers for the bees. Rainwater is collected and stored in tanks. Some of which, enriched with seaweed, banana skins and molasses, along with handfuls of manure and lots of comfrey, soaked in a barrel with a tap on its side, ends up as liquid fertilizer on the many edible plants. It clearly benefits them, including the prolific grapevine, which is densely loaded with grapes. A row of fruit trees in the sheep paddock leads up to the chook house: there is a Liberty and a Russet apple tree, a healthy walnut tree grown from seed, Williams Bon Chretien, and Conference pear trees. The double plum tree (Coes Golden Drop/Greengage) has suffered though, after one of the variety's branches were accidentally pruned off. Six-year-old Feijoa trees, of the variety Unique, yield heavily and double as a wind break.

Beside the house, on a northwest facing bank, sit rows of potatoes in tyres, each with some comfrey underneath. The yams love it there too. High raised beds are filled with many different vegetables, dwarf pea plants draping off the sides. The glass houses hold heat loving and exotic plants, like tomatoes and cucumbers, a tamarillo, with citrus in pots in the shelter between them.

Thank you, Emma, for your time in showing us the fruits of your labour!

## **Food Security with Perennial Plants – by Sue**

Try growing these easy-care, easy to propagate vegetables, herbs and fruits that come year after year without much fuss in your garden or in pots. No annual sowing or buying of seedlings is 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 January 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.

### **Thyme**



is a Mediterranean herb that loves growing in dry sunny, well drained sites - the less fertile the soil, the stronger the flavour. It hates being waterlogged. Best picked before flowering, the fragrant leaves are great fresh or dried in cooking. The flowers can be picked for use in teas and salads. There are many varieties of thyme, with different scents, growing habits and coloured flowers. They are all worth growing, especially as ground covers loved by bees. The plants can easily be propagated by transplanting pieces with roots.

## Lemon Balm



Belongs to the mint family, but is not as invasive as mint. It grows easily in semi shade or sun, in moist or dry soils. 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 (the bees love them), if you do not want plants spreading. Harvest often and cut back when the plants get scraggly. It will grow back lush. Propagate 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 more uses see: <https://thenerdyfarmwife.com/12-things-to-do-with-lemon-balm>

### **Please consider becoming a member of the committee:**

Committee members meet once a month to plan our club meetings and open gardens.

This ensures that we do not have to conduct business during the club meetings.

If you can help, please fill out a nomination form and hand it in before the AGM in March.

## DVGC Committee Nomination Form

I hereby nominate

\_\_\_\_\_

for the position of general member on the 2024 DVGC Committee.

(Nominators name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Nominators signature) \_\_\_\_\_

I second the nomination

(Seconders name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Seconders signature) \_\_\_\_\_

I accept the nomination

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Forms can be filled in and submitted at February 7th meeting and at the open garden after that.