



## GREENS~LEAVES

Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club Newsletter  
March 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 #** 030905051590600  
 (Please include your name as a reference)

**Next Club Meeting:** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Q & A:** David

**Club Talk:** AGM

**Speakers:** Robyn and Jim Bazsika – Plant Propagation

**Garden visit:** Ann Robinson, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024



### **March competition:**

Three tomatoes: hybrid and/or  
heritage

### **February competition winner:**

Heather Wilson – with three onions:  
Pukekohe Longkeeper

### **Things to look forward to in March:**

DVGC at South Dunedin Street Festival  
Riverton Harvest Festival

Hello Everyone,

Here we have a guide for planting your veggie patch this month, also a report on the latest garden visit. We introduce two easily self seeding and/or perennial types of greens. There are links to useful articles on Landrace Gardening and also to ideas on fermenting summer produce. We invite you to bring plants for the DVGC stall at the South Dunedin Street Festival.

**Garden guide 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.

## Garden visit to Carol Henderson, Waverley, 17<sup>th</sup> February – by Melanie Aicken



On a spectacular summer day in Waverley, with a gentle south-easterly Carol opened her garden up to the DVGC club. About 25-30 of the group attended and it could be heard several of us noting what a glorious day it was.

Carol's garden is tucked down off Dunrobin St, and I would describe her garden as a charming mix of natives & perennials with no lawn, her whole section is home to a plant including the strip of council garden at the front. We started the tour at the front/top of her property with a garden she described as the garden where she plants anything she doesn't have a home for anywhere else. This garden is flanked

by both a well established Hoheria and Totorā. A rowan tree also stands tall out the front - Carol said it reflects something of her Scottish heritage, as rowan trees are purported to ward off evil spirits.

Against the front of the house there is an apple & pear tree with a good amount of fruit coming on and a very healthy young looking fig tree. Carol had numerous potted plants for sale at a great price and many of us took up the opportunity to purchase some.

A narrow path down the side of the house took us to a lovely, sheltered deck and backyard with marvellous views to be had out to sea. This backyard possesses its own little microclimate and was a picture of many thriving, lush plants very much enjoying the spot they occupied. On the descent down all eyes were on a very mature Lancewood that appeared to be coming into flower. The other dominant tree was a Blush Bay apple which was covered in fruit and seemed to very much deserve its place, front & centre of the backyard. The gardens are a mix of ground-level, and some slightly raised beds, with a meandering path which allows you to reach all the plants easily. The rear of the yard is flanked by a strip of natives which upon inspecting further had a very steep path down but none of the members were too keen to venture down. The plants are a mixture of herbs, veggies and cottage style perennials and the effect is wonderful. Many questions were asked of Carol as to what plant was what? Carol was able to provide answers quickly with the aid of her plant identification app.



Carol said she has watered more this year than any other year. Many of us commented that the wind has been a real factor in drying things out. The watering has really paid off as we all commented on how lush all the plants looked, a real stand out was Carol's giant rhubarb, the height and health of her raspberry plants, gooseberry, scarlet runner beans and a Jerusalem artichoke of which there was much debate amongst members as to whether this is the best winter veggie in Dunedin/ or not??

Thank you, Carol, so much for sharing your garden with us.

## From Garden to Table - Fermenting vegetables at home

<https://utopia.org/guide/how-to-ferment-vegetables/>

‘Before the invention of freezers and refrigerated warehouses, summer harvests had to be preserved in such a way that the food was also available all winter long. Fermentation is the perfect solution — fermented foods don’t need to be heated, which has historically helped people get the vitamins they need throughout the year.



Moreover, fermentation produces additional vitamins, such as vitamin C or even B vitamins. So, learning how to ferment vegetables actually makes it possible to have a completely balanced, regional diet without imported fruits and vegetables. Just like in the old days!’

It is quite easy to ferment food yourself to keep it preserved.

For this basic method (adapted to NZ conditions) you’ll need:

- Vegetables of your choice — feel free to mix and match
  - 2 cups water
  - 1 ½ tbsp sea salt (coarse is best)
  - 1 qt. wide mouth, sealable glass jar
  - Herbs and spices (optional)
1. Chop up the vegetables you want to ferment. (Depending on the vegetable, you can also leave them whole).
  2. Fill a sealable glass jar with your vegetables, along with any herbs and spices you want to use. Fill the jar to the top of the neck, leaving about one inch of space at the top.
  3. Stir together your water and salt until the salt is dissolved, then pour over the vegetables until the jar is almost full (leave about ½ inch of space). Make sure the vegetables are completely covered.
  4. Place the lid on the jar and make sure it is closed tightly! Store it in your pantry or anywhere else in your house that’s about 20°C for 5-7 days. You should see bubbles in the liquid as the lactic acid bacteria start to work.
  5. After about a week, move the jar to the refrigerator to ferment for at least another two weeks.
  6. Open the jar and do a taste test to see if you’re satisfied or if you want to let the fermentation continue for longer. It should take somewhere between 2 and 4 weeks for the fermentation to be finished, depending on the vegetables you’re using and the size of the pieces.

## Food Security with Easily Self-seeding and 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 March meeting or at appropriate times in the growing cycle.

If you 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.

### Lambs Quarters Magenta



is a version of the wild plant, but all new growth is a brilliant magenta red. It can quickly grow to a 1.5m tall bush, producing side shoots with soft textured leaves that can be used in smoothies, like spinach or silverbeet or in patties. The tender young pink shoots look great in a salad. It is a very nutritious summer spinach, containing the highest vegetable levels of beta carotene, the precursor to vitamin A, also calcium and protein. Grown in full sun, it is drought hardy, much easier to grow than ordinary spinach and more productive. Just one plant can produce a huge amount of food.

It can be continually picked for a long harvest and self seeds easily.

### Seabeet



is the wild ancestor of common vegetables like sugar beet, beetroot, silverbeet and swiss chard. It has been eaten by humans for a very long time.

Its glossy leaves taste like spinach, are kind of a silverbeet without the wide stems and can be enjoyed raw in salads or cooked, steamed or boiled. They are rich in vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre.

Native to European and Mediterranean coastlines, this perennial plant prefers to grow in full sun, in well drained soil, with plenty of organic matter added to it. Watered regularly, it will grow bigger next year. Collect the clusters of seeds from the plants in late summer, share or let them self seed.

### **Landrace gardening – useful links**

*‘Landrace gardening is a gardening method that uses locally adapted, diverse crops that are suited to their environment. Basically, it means saving seeds from the previous season’s strongest crops to grow strong and genetically diverse plants that can withstand your area’s unique climate’.* Cited from:

[How to start a Landrace Garden’](#) – by Laura Elsner

[Landrace Gardening – Survival of the Fittest](#) – by Josef Lofthouse

In the above article Josef tells the story of his experiences in developing landraces

[‘The Future Is Feral – and Climate Resilient’](#) - by Irene Lyla Lee

## **Our Food Network**

is compiling a database of all things connected to building food resilience in Dunedin. Please let the organisation know of any ventures, businesses or experiences you have in this regard.

Contact: [ourfoodnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:ourfoodnetwork@gmail.com) Website: <https://www.ourfoodnetwork.org.nz/>

## **DVGC stall at the South Dunedin Street Festival 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

We plan to sell plants and produce and to generally promote home food growing and our club to the public. Proceeds will go towards the running of the club this time. Get propagating and sowing for our stall at the festival!

You can bring seedlings to the March club meeting. Don will look after them and take them to the market. Alternatively take them straight to the stall on the day. We will let you know where it is placed closer to the time.

## **Trading Table**

We love the variety of plants, cuttings, seedlings and seeds you bring to the trading table. Thanks to all who contribute, very much appreciated.

## **2024 subscription \$15 payable now – most convenient online**

If not paid by March, the newsletter will be suspended. Please advise of email address (new members) or any change of it at welcome desk or by email to Helen Flockton (see header).

## **Committee members and helpers**

Please consider becoming a member of the DVGC committee that meets once a month to organise the program for the club. If you want to help out casually or occasionally, let a committee member know. There are plenty of jobs to do that make the club events run smoothly. For instance, we need a couple of volunteers to help set up and take down the chairs at the club meeting.

## **Supper**

Thanks to all who bring along a plate to share.

March helpers:

## **Riverton Harvest Festival 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

<https://www.sces.org.nz/heritage-harvest-festival-2024>

## **Heritage Orchard Open Day 24 March 2024**

There will be a public open day at the Heritage Orchard on the 24th March from 10am to 4pm. They will be showing people round, talking about the genome project and generally informing the public about Tree Crops Association, especially Coastal Otago.

Instruction on how to find the orchard will be sent closer to the time.