



COASTLINE

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2022

MANAGING THROUGH 'COVID RED'

The South Coast Environment Society committee has decided on some changes to help keep staff, volunteers and customers safe as we can, from the spread of Covid19 virus.

The Riverton Environment Centre building has no opening windows making it a higher risk shared space at this time. Therefore the decision has been made to limit the number of both volunteers and staff in the building at any one time, on a roster basis all fully recorded.

If the Centre ever does become a 'place of interest' only a few of our team will be affected and they will be easily identifiable. This should enable the Centre to continue to provide our retail service and keep projects and educational programmes running.

Members of the public are currently not permitted to enter the building. Instead our volunteers and staff are providing friendly service from an alcove at the well ventilated doorway area. Our retail displays have been turned around towards the entrance to readily enable people to be able to see a good selection of what is available.

Our team members are very happy to make up orders, received by phone or email, for picking up. We can also arrange non-contact deliveries if people are self-isolating at home.

We have stocked up on hand sanitiser, lavender and tea tree products, soothing herbal teas and other self-care products that may be appreciated when people get sick.

The Longwood Loop van will continue with the on-line farmers market each week. We were invited to participate in a Civil Defence Covid management planning zoom meeting. Our van was noted as potentially being a valuable means of delivering food and other resources to communities if necessary.

We sincerely appreciate the understanding of all concerned so we can continue to serve our community through this challenging time.

Thank you and take care everyone.

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DATES TO DIARY:

Tuesday 8th March	Committee Meeting: 7pm in the Riverton Environment Centre
Saturday 26th February	Seed Saving Workshop: Turner St, Edendale, 2pm - 4pm. Bookings essential. Ring 03 234 8717, email education@sces.org.nz or see poster on back page.
HERITAGE HARVEST FESTIVAL POSTPONED UNTIL 2023	

A BALANCING ACT

We experience imbalance in life, be it the highs and lows of the summer temperatures we've been enjoying or enduring, depending on personal preference. Or the seasonal abundance of delicious fresh produce while planning for the inevitable leaner colder months ahead. Generally, we need a balance in our lives.

Our South Coast Environment Society endeavours to balance and meet the needs of our community while keeping everyone involved as safe as possible.

Through Coastline content, SCES website, Facebook and our YouTube channel, we aim for balance of content, to inform, educate and inspire.

We hope you find all of these in this Coastline issue; Nick in his gardening article, pg 3, and sharing more about the SCES Strategic Plan on pg 5; Robert enlightening us about his Longwood Loop experiences and inviting you to do your bit en route, this pg, plus telling us about his new Monarch family, pg 4.

Robyn, our nationally recognised heritage apple expert updates us about this seasonal apple production and DNA testing, on pg 3, and gives practical tips for being healthy on pg 7.

Hollie is encouraging us to grow and enjoy bergamot on pg 5 along with guest writer Trish sharing her water saving gardening strategies. It's great to also have guest writer Lynne highlighting the Aparima College garden working bees and our youngest guest, Tito, sharing with us his gardening enthusiasm to inspire readers of all ages!

Good on you Tito!

Wendy Joy, Coastline Co-ordinator

The South Coast Environment Society Incorporated (SCES or the Society) is a NZ registered Charitable Trust (Registration Number CC41561).

The Society vision is of a sustainable, resilient community of good leaders, resources, systems and examples available to assist and support people to adopt sustainable lifestyles and care for and about our environment.

The Riverton Environment Centre is a project of the Society. Volunteers open the Centre for the public 40 hours a week. The displays, information and resources are designed to be inspiring and enabling, incorporating a blend of traditional ways and new concepts to give people more earth-friendly options in their daily lives.

WANT TO LOOP THE LOOP?

I've driven the Longwood Loop 8 or 9 times now, and it just gets better and better!

The electric van is a pleasure to drive, and now that I don't worry that it will run out of power half-way round, it's relaxing and fun! The battery in the van has a 238km capacity and even when it's windy, we arrive back in Riverton with 40 or 50 km in reserve.

The stops along the Loop are always a pleasure: picking up and dropping off goods, to people who appreciate the service and are anyway, lovely folk to talk with, is really enjoyable. It's been encouraging also, to meet new suppliers (and receivers) each week as the popularity of the service increases.



The landscape is nice too: sweeping along the roads between Ohai and Tuatapere, Orepuki and Riverton and much of the rest of the route, is pleasant and gives those of us in the van, a chance to call through to the next pick-up to let them know we are near.

So far, we've had very few snarl-ups and those we have had can mostly be attributed to me. At this time of the year, there is a lot of produce available from growers all along the Loop, so customers are spoiled for choice when it comes to fresh vegetables, fruits and so on.

I've been accompanied by a mix of passenger/navigators on the various trips I've made and it's always been fun, chatting as we go. If you think you'd enjoy a loop around the Loop and know how to work a cellphone, get in touch with the Centre and book a passage!

Robert

TE REO MĀORI GARDENING

Ngāhuru: Autumn Hauhake: Harvest

Māra hāpori: Community Garden

Ngā koiora pai: Beneficial organisms

Mate hukahuka: Frost Injury

NICK'S SEASONAL GARDENING

Now is the time to plant winter brassica seedlings: kale, cabbage and broccoli are always good choices, which if planted now should be mature enough to sit in the winter garden, ready to harvest. Purple sprouting broccoli is an absolute star which will actively grow all winter, rewarding you with delicious kai when there is little else around. Of course, plant more spring onions!

You can also still sow lettuces and other hardy greens like mizuna, endive and rocket. Many 'mesclun' mixes contain hardy greens - if you sow these now you can get several cuts from them by winter. Corn salad and miner's lettuce will both happily self-seed in your garden, providing nourishing and tasty salads right into the coldest part of the winter. Sow a 'green manure' crop anywhere that will be vacant over winter. The Environment Centre has many of these seeds available for purchase.

If you are growing tomatoes outdoors, pinch out all the growing tips once you have three or four trusses of flowers. This encourages the plant to put more energy into ripening the fruit, rather than putting on more (unnecessary) growth. Container-grown plants will need constant checking for moisture levels - and the garden may too, but if you use compost and mulch you are already conserving moisture, so recent rain may have been sufficient.

Consider whether or not it is worth keeping zucchini growing, or if you would be better off pulling them out and planting or sowing winter crops instead. They may be yummy, but everyone has them now, and they're cheap to buy, so it might make more sense to prepare for winter, when fresh food isn't as easy (or cheap) to come by!



Happy little broccoli mulched with alpaca wool and netted against the butterflies!

THE YEAR OF THE APPLE!



There has been a bumper crop of apples this year. Some Heritage Orchard Parks are in need of more community members harvesting a few handfuls every couple of weeks from

now until the end of April. When the fruit is naturally falling to the ground, getting nibbled on by birds, or can be gently picked without tugging them, it is ready for picking.

We have developed a system and thorough manual designed for the 'friends' of each orchard park to manage their orchard. As yet we have not had time to implement all of the systems. If you are able to help out with this, please email openorchard@sces.org.nz. We will appreciate your input!

We will take the Apple Press around the orchards in April to press any apples left and invite the community to bring their apples along to be pressed also.

We have received a donation of \$500 and have raised another \$500 so we can get the first 10 of our special and unknown apples to be DNA tested this summer. This will give us the varieties' ancestry and for many, will unlock all the research of their health properties through the international Fruit ID project that we are part of. www.fruitid.com

If you are interested in helping to grow this valuable research project, by way of donating time or money, please check out our website, www.sces.org.nz/product-page/dna-test-and-baby-grafted-tree or email us openorchard@sces.org.nz. Smaller donations also welcomed, email for bank account details. Again, we will be very grateful for your support.

EV ALL SIGNED OFF!

The Longwood loop has had been operational for a few months now in a low key kind of way while awaiting the paper work for registering the van with Southland District Council in accordance with MPI requirements, and then getting verified by a Invercargill City Council food safety inspector. This was all completed on the 10 February. So now we are all set to grow the Loop!

There are 245 people on our data base for weekly updates and 25 suppliers around the Loop. Trading is well underway with over \$1,000 traded between Western Southlanders each week and we have only started!

HOW TO CONSERVE WATER IN YOUR GARDEN

By Trish Burton of *Hortus vitae: Gardens for Life, Riverton*

The two most important things we do to conserve water in our garden are:

Plant to reduce water loss

- Improve soil structure by adding organic matter, make compost, practise no-dig techniques and use mulch on soil surfaces: better structure holds more water
- Provide both wind and sun shelter for plants: this reduces evaporation;
- Plant seedlings in a dip/bowl-shaped way: this directs water to the roots and prevents run off;
- Water in the evening: for better absorption while it's cool;
- Water when plants most need it: keep seeds moist, water seedlings until established and research when are the other critical watering times during a plant's life cycle e.g. beans need plenty as they begin flowering.

Plant appropriately

- Choose plants which enjoy the particular drainage dynamics in your garden e.g. mints in wet areas, sages in dry areas;
- Plant in the off-seasons if you go away over summer or it is just too hot/dry: most salad greens will grow in spring, autumn or winter, when water is typically more available. Grow peas July to December, then brassicas February to September;
- In the hottest months grow a non-watered green crop (e.g. buckwheat or phacelia), use this as a 'chop and drop' mulch for your next planting;
- Grow more perennial vegetables: they tend to have better ability to cope with the 'ups and downs' as their roots are more established, e.g. asparagus, perennial leeks, bunching onions, sea beet, perennial kale, globe artichokes etc.

Don't plant next to big trees/hedges: their roots will outcompete most annual vegetables for water;

Use vigorous root crops like daikon to create water channels into compacted soil.



Moisture saving gardening ideas

ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Resource Development and Information Distribution

An essential part of our activities is the provision of education and associated resources to support people to live more sustainable lifestyles.



Recently we completed the task of putting all our gardening resources together into our brand new "*Riverton Organic Growers Guide to Beginner Organic Gardening*" booklet. This was launched at a recent workshop, which saw 15 people gather at the Aparima College School and Community Garden to learn how to use organic practises to produce good food (and, as it turns out, support biodiversity and make our homes more beautiful!).

An All Things Compost workshop was held at the gardens on 12th February, with more keen learners helping to make some good compost for the students to use.

Towards the end of last year we managed to get about 500 of our Aotearoa Home Vegetable Garden seed packs out to low decile schools in Southland. These packs include four different kinds of seeds (enough to grow a one square metre garden), instructions for growing them and a little garden diary. We hope that all students who get one will take them home and start (or continue) gardening.

Thanks to funding from Te Pūtahitanga o te Waipounamu, we were recently able to provide Koha Kai in Invercargill with raised garden boards, information sheets and other resources for use with whānau at the local

Kura. This is a great partnership for us and helps us to support a wider net of new gardeners. We work closely with Koha Kai (and many others) through our involvement with the Murihiku Kai Collective.

As always, our Moon Calendars (30 years old now!), Cleaners Charts and Heritage Orchard Handbooks are very popular. Since making these available to buy via our website they have been flying out the door!

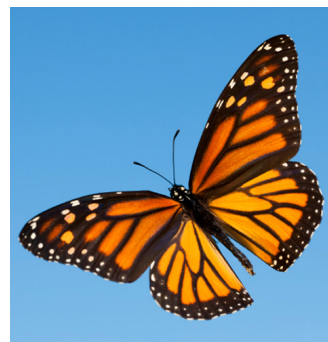
Nick

MONARCHS IN WAITING

Last night, a delivery was made to my tunnel house that will solve the over-growth problem being experienced by my swan plants: caterpillars - tiny, black, yellow and white Monarch butterfly "babies", hungry-as and raring to go!

Kindly folk from Winton had a surfeit of caterpillars and were delighted that I had the same of swan plant leaves, so a coming-together solved both our issues.

The tiny caterpillars will, I'm assured, make short work of the plants, but there should be just enough to get them through to the pupating stage. Beyond that, it's just a matter of patience and observation, with the reward of a mass-hatching of brilliantly-coloured (and quite large)



perhaps some will find a warm nook somewhere in my forest garden and reappear in the springtime to lay eggs on the refreshed swan plants, but who knows.....only time will tell!

Monarch butterflies, emerging into what will be by then, the less intense heat of an autumn day.

Beyond that, I don't really know: Monarch butterflies are not able to withstand our cold southern winters, and will perish, but

Robert

HOLLIE'S HERB: BERGAMOT



Two years ago in late spring, I grew ten beautiful Bergamot plants. I had not seen a bergamot flower before, and waited anxiously to see what would burst forth from the large mint-like plants.

Finally, after more than a year of waiting, this summer a glorious crown of purple flowers appeared, followed by many more across the Bergamot patch.

I planted this lovely herb which is native to North America, thinking it was used to flavour earl grey tea. But I learned

(as I searched online for a recipe to do so) that it is a citrus fruit named Bergamot that is used for that purpose!

My disappointment was needless, as I have since discovered that my herb Bergamot was used widely in North America as a tea, and the fresh or dried leaves have a beautiful flavour. It can also be used as a flavouring in summer drinks, and looks wonderful floating around in them.

Bergamot seeds can be sown in spring, and planted out when the frost danger has passed. Bergamot can get quite large, so choose a spot with lots of space, and where you can admire the summer flowers from your window. **Hollie**

OUR COMMUNITY

Aparima College Garden Working Bees By Lynne Grove



If you cross the school playing fields on a Saturday morning between 10am and 12 noon, you might see a bunch of teenagers playing sport, but you are much more likely to see a friendly group of volunteers weeding, planting, and harvesting amongst the parallel beds of

the School Garden. Vegetables of all kinds, edible and decorative flowers, and 'green compost' crops are sown in rotation. Gardening tips and tricks are shared, and there is always time to catch up on the latest news, both local and personal.

What happens to all this produce? Some of it is foraged by the school students, who are particularly keen to munch on a fresh carrot, radish, lettuce leaf and pea pods. The more adventurous students might try the more unusual vegetables, perhaps a globe artichoke or a sprig of purple sage leaves. Other produce supplies customers on the Longwood Loop, and some is sold via the Environment Centre or purchased by locals who come by with requests for 'something in season'.



Most recently, the Aparima College teachers included fresh produce in their culinary creations for a Staff Masterchef competition. So come on down on a Saturday morning. You may bring your own garden tools if you have a favourite or use gloves and tools onsite. All are welcome.



OUR PEOPLE

A Local Young Gardener Speaks



Nick recently talked with Tito McCabe, aged seven, about his gardening exploits.

When did you start gardening?

I started when I was six years old. I used to go to the garden across from my school.

Why do you like gardening?

I like it because I can dig up the dirt, put seeds in, cover them and then they grow.

Do you have a favourite fruit or vegetable?

I like strawberries the best, because they're juicy and good. Potatoes are my favourite vegetable.

Do you have a garden at home?

Yes.

Does anyone help you in your garden?

Yes, my mum and my grandma too.

What have you harvested from your garden?

I grew potatoes in the compost heap and broccoli which my mum cooked for our dinner.

What else do you have growing at home?

There are lots of flowers in the garden - blue ones (borage) and I have a kowhai tree too.

What would you like to do when you're older?

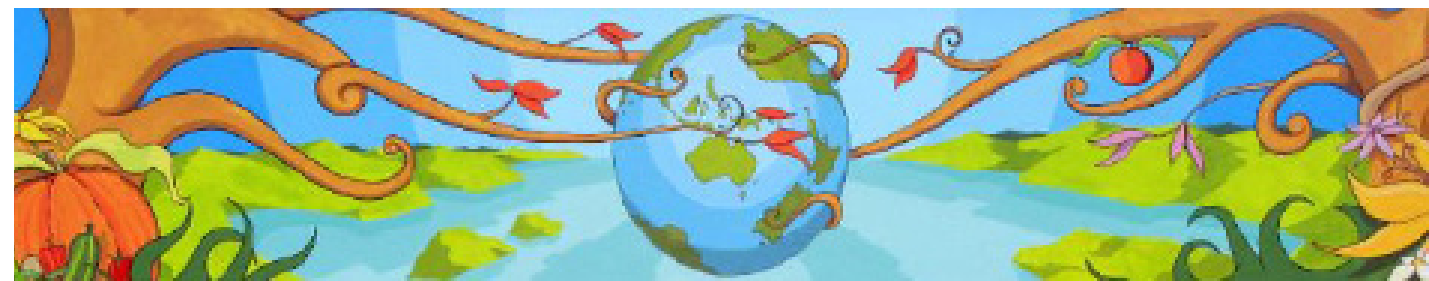
I want to be a gardening pro!

Thanks Tito - keep up the great work!

WESTERN SOUTHLANDERS GROW YOUR GARDENING KNOW-HOW

We have funds available for free training and resources for anyone in Western Southland who is keen to start a home vegetable garden or to expand their garden to have more veges year round with spares for the Loop, and even free market gardening training and support.

Please contact education@sces.org.nz if you are interested in any of these opportunities in 2022



HOW TO BE HEALTHY AND STAY HEALTHY

When you are healthy, your 'immune system' is strong; you are less likely to get sick. If you do get sick, you will have a milder form of the illness.

Here are some age old tips, that cost little to implement, and do make a difference.



BE POSITIVE: Each day remember all the things that are good in your life. Spend some good times with your family and friends. 'Laughter is the best medicine'. (Don't worry about things that might never happen or things that you cannot change).



GET OUTSIDE: Once each day spend time outside deeply breathing in the fresh air. Wrap up warmly if it is cold, or enjoy the sunshine and soak up that vitamin D.



LET FRESH AIR IN: Have a window open in each room on sunny days. In the middle of a cold day, open all the windows and doors for 10 minutes. This sends out the old damp stale air and brings in new fresh oxygenated air.



SLEEP WELL: Have at least 30 minutes off screens before going to bed. Aim for a 7-9 hour sleep most nights. Make sure your bed is comfy and warm and the room is dark. When you wake up open the window wide, also pull back the top covers to 'air' the sheets.



RELAX: Take 30 minutes out of every day to relax, read a book, do a jigsaw, or anything that helps your brain 'have a holiday' from your daily life.



DRINK WATER: Your body is 70% water. Drink around 2 litres per day, 15 minutes before meals and not for 2 hours after. A dash of lemon juice in a big glass of warmed water is a great cleansing start to the day.



HEALTHY EATING: Choose real whole foods grown naturally in gardens, orchards and farms. Processed foods are 'food-like products', made in factories with additives (numbers) to make them seem like real food. Check the labels! Sugary food and takeaways should be an occasional treat, not everyday food. Use coconut, olive or rice oil for cooking, other oils turn toxic when heated.



CUT DOWN ON CHEMICALS: Replace household chemicals with natural alternatives. If you get sick consider trying natural cures first. Wear, use and live in natural (untreated) materials - wool, cotton, wood etc.



EXERCISE: Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes 4-5 times a week; a fast walk is best of all.

Choosing a healthy lifestyle is a cheap lifestyle!

INSPIRATIONAL!

The Otago Daily Times had a lengthy, informative article in their 16 December 2021 issue about the Longwood Loop - www.odt.co.nz/rural-life/rural-people/southland-foodies-battle-reconnect-community.

It was a stimulus for a group in South Otago; Clinton. Owaka and Balclutha, where they have their old 'pre supermarket trading loop' just waiting to be activated with the possibility of replicating our Longwood Loop project.

Robyn Guyton was invited to speak to the group on 18 January in the covered sheep yards of a farm at Benhar. To Robyn's astonishment over 80 people came from far and wide to hear about our Western Southland project, even bringing with them their own chairs!

Robyn's talk was really well received with lots of discussion afterwards, continuing well after Robyn left. Consequently a small representative group is visiting Riverton the week of our February Coastline publication, to see the Loop in action and enhance the plan for their area.



Riverton Environment Centre presents

FREE! SEED SAVING WORKSHOP

- Learn some of the basics of saving your own seeds;
- Learn some of the science behind successful seed saving;
- Have a go at processing some seeds;
- Take home some free heritage seeds!

Turner Street, Edendale
Saturday 26th February, 2:00 - 4:00pm
Free, but registrations essential - limit 15!

For more information please contact
Riverton Environment Centre: 03) 234 8717 or
education@scs.org.nz
To register: www.trybooking.co.nz/JNW or scan the QR code



STAY HEALTHY

Riverton Environment Centre stocks a range of sanitisers, oils and soaps. As well as instant miso soup, herbal teas and prebiotic/probiotic immunity fuel powder.



Please send in your Readers Patch contributions by the first Monday of each month to: coastline@scs.org.nz

VISIT THE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

The South Coast Environment Centre is situated on the main street of Riverton on the Southern Scenic Route.

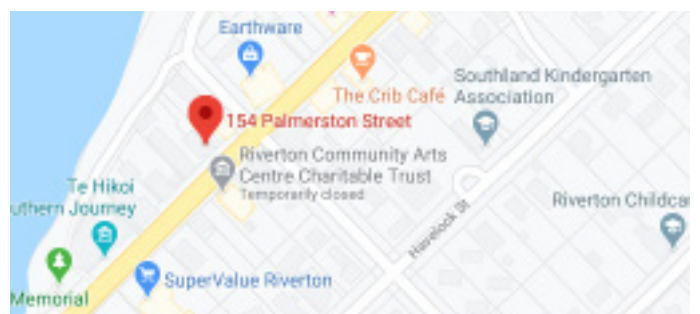
Phone: 03 234 8717, **Email:** office@scs.org.nz

Opening hours are:

Monday - Friday: 10:00am - 4:30pm

Saturday: 10:30am - 4:30pm

Sunday: 1:30pm - 4:30pm



www.scs.org.nz



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