



COASTLINE

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2021

EDUCATION OUTREACH

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The Bountiful Backyard Festival weekend planned for October, which we highlighted in our last Coastline, sadly had to be cancelled due to the unpredictable Covid lockdown level changes.

However our education messages are being shared in other ways whenever possible. In August, Robyn and Robert Guyton were invited to Fairlie for a weekend to lead 7 workshops from our Bountiful Backyard series: e.g. beginner gardening, making your soil fertile, fruits and berries, forest gardening and more.

The workshops were enjoyed by a great group of enthusiastic locals who were inspired, not only to start their own garden, but also to work together in other eco projects within their district area.

Late September Robyn and Robert were away again, this time invited to lead a mix of 6 workshops for the Glenorchy community, including propagating native plants, making seed balls, grafting fruit trees and making your own skin care and home cleaning products.

Travelling to Fairlie and Glenorchy gave the Guytons the chance to visit and appreciate two unique self-sufficiency home projects, one based at the Aroha Eco Retreat and the other on the hillside north of Glenorchy, both designed with permaculture principles.

During the next few weeks, the Environment Centre education team will be running pop-up workshops on various topics at various locations both in Riverton and wider Southland. These will be advertised on our Facebook page and on our website. Team members can organise workshops in your area if you wish.

Simply email education@sces.org.nz for more information.

DATES TO DIARY:

Tuesday 9th November	South Coast Environment Centre committee meeting 7pm in Centre or zoom in. All Welcome.
Keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for pop-up workshops on various self-sufficiency topics. There will be several before Christmas.	

PLENTY ON OFFER

I expect there is a lot of planting going on during this great 'outdoors' weather we're enjoying. As long as you and your garden are well prepared for the chilled night air followed by the beautiful heat of the Spring sunshine, it's great.

Be sure to allow some time to read through all we have on offer in this issue of the Coastline. Nick is highlighting the importance of planning for year-round garden production and diversity of planting to support nature on pg 3 while on pg 5, Hollie is reinforcing the value of nettle as an early season versatile food source and inviting you to share any nettle recipes. And, on pg 5 we are delighted to have reader Dave sharing how he has success growing parsnips.

25 years of experience and learnings are being shared far and wide by Robyn & Robert Guyton as they travel around leading workshops empowering others to live more sustainably, page 1. Robyn is also increasing her participation in Environment Hubs Aotearoa, our national body with a focus on 'collaboration for local solutions', pg 6.

We have our guest writer reinforcing the 'Keep It Local' message on this page and a further update about the Longwood Loop which is all about local producers and consumers getting together, on pg 3.

Robert updates us about our local Community Forest Garden, pg 4.

Plus there's plenty more – volunteer Vanya introduces herself and Julie shares with us what a small Wellington group is doing to enhance sustainability in their special community. Please do take time to enjoy.

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.

GUEST WRITER DAVE KENNEDY

Dave is an experienced urban gardener and has been involved with organising the Invercargill Farmers Market for many years.

The recent report on the impacts of New Zealand's supermarket duopoly should spark a national conversation about our food supply systems.

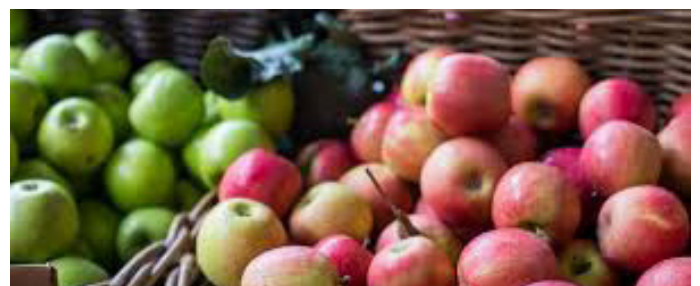
The dominance of our supermarkets was emphasised during the COVID L4 lockdown when farmers' markets were not considered an essential service and many growers who supplied directly to their customers and outlets other than supermarkets were negatively impacted. This resulted in hundreds of tonnes of healthy fresh produce being left rotting in fields.



Supermarkets, by necessity, support quantity over quality and limit diversity. There is little recognition or celebration of regional differences (how often can you buy decent cooking apples or gooseberries?). Consequently, we have lost most of the family horticulture businesses that used to dominate the industry in favour of industrial level production that is reliant on a large immigrant workforce.

From over 24,000 growers in 1986 we now have around 900. The Groundswell farmers' protest was another symptom of a growing separation between those who grow our food and most consumers. Our food production systems have become so industrialised we no longer see direct connections between local farmers and what we eat. Very little of the food we buy in Invercargill supermarkets comes from local farmers: our milk comes from Christchurch, we nationally import around \$40 million a year of veggies and fruit and three quarters of the grain used to make our bread comes from overseas.

Southland used to grow apples and pears, had flour mills, bakeries and provided the oats and milk for our breakfast, but no longer. Our local farmers cannot currently claim to feed us and the amazing varieties of apples, veggies and grains we used to grow have been largely forgotten. Something needs to change...



GARDENING WITH NICK



Hoverfly on corn marigold;

Is your garden diverse? Do you have flowers and fruits and vegetables? Predatory insects (that help manage aphids and scale insects) especially favour tiny flowers like Queen Anne's lace and alyssum. Pollinators such as bees and hoverflies love daisies and chamomile. By providing these helpful little characters with plenty of food, they will repay us many times over!

Now is the perfect time to think about how much food is currently in your garden. If the answer is 'not much' then you need to read the December / January Coastline! It is summer and autumn planting that will feed you when you need it the most. September and October are not called 'the hungry gap' for nothing...

Planting out of crops such as courgettes, tomatoes and beans can now begin (but keep an eye out for southerly storms and frosts). Salad crops such as lettuces and spinach will do well now, before it gets too hot - and of course you



Tomatoes in buckets (in a sheltered sunny spot they produced really well);

can never have too many spring onions! Potatoes should be chitted and heading for the garden, to be tucked into some lovely compost and mulch. Carrots and parsnips can be sown directly into the garden, while leeks should go into trays to be transplanted later. Check that peas are getting the support they need. Remember to add some compost when you plant, and mulch to retain moisture. If blackbirds (or stray chickens) are an issue, use netting to cover. Above all, take the time to appreciate the beauty of the garden - observe the creatures you share your space with, smell the flowers and get a bit of sun on your face. It'll do you no end of good!

Nick

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Pepper in a bucket.

TE REO MĀORI GARDENING

Raumati: summer | Pī honi: honey bee | Rākau: trees and plants
Ngaro huruhuru: native bee | Te ao tūroa: the natural world

LONGWOOD LOOP UNDERWAY!

When we suddenly went into Level 4 lockdown, our planning for community meetings around Western Southland to launch the Loop trading, had to be put on hold.

We already had the van and thought, well, why not use it to start the trading anyway to ensure the availability of fresh food and to support our western community. It would be a low-key start for us to learn the ropes. So we did just that.

So on 25th August we started with non-contract deliveries in level 4, then 1st September in level 3 and from 8 September on a weekly basis in level 2.

It's been great to have these low-key trial runs in the various lock down conditions. Robert and Robyn, in their household bubble, drove the van for the first few weeks, learning as they went.

Now different drivers are learning the routes and enjoying the experience. Just through word of mouth, the number of producers and purchasers is steadily growing.

Meetings will be planned over the next few weeks with each community to promote the service more and to ensure it is ready to expand. Plan is to get a great physical trading base in each township.

With the \$20,000 grant from the lotteries for set up, basic items have been purchased for each community 'trading post', e.g. a folding trestle table, weighing scales, collapsible chilly bin, chrome book etc.

So now that spring is here, the Longwood Loop is well ready for action. Be part of this unique rural service as a producer, purchaser, volunteer driver or trading station helper. Go to; www.longwoodloop.co.nz

THRIVING COMMUNITY FOREST GARDEN

Spring growth in the Riverton Community Forest Garden behind the fire-station, is well advanced. The pleasing sight of the many fruit trees leafing and blossoming-up and the tips of perennial herbs like elecampane and comfrey pushing up through the soil; it's very satisfying and holds great promise for the summer and autumn, especially with the number of bees there on any warm day.

The challenge of spring though, is the rampant growth of the wild chervil that covers the ground and rapidly grows to chest height in just a few weeks, early in the spring. It's both a blessing and a challenge. If left to grow, flower and seed, the whole garden becomes stalky and difficult to walk through. With most of the plant material high above the surface of the soil, the "mulch-effect" is minor and the sandy soil becomes very dry. The trick is to mow it down when still green and juicy, so that it falls to the ground and adds value to the garden. That's what I've been doing recently, employing a keenly-sharpened hoe to chop the plants both down and up.

As soon as an area is felled, I plant it out with whatever suitable plants are in my nursery, or from commercial nurseries; especially suitable for the sandy soil, or ones I can't easily propagate.



Robyn and I recently did the rounds of the town nurseries selecting trees, shrubs and herbs we believe will be a great addition to the food-producing plants that grow already in the community garden. It was great fun choosing them and will be fun planting them when I get a spare hour or two.

The forest garden is becoming more and more thickly planted with fruiting plants. It's a great pleasure to be part of its on-going development.

Robert

ROBERT'S SPECIAL CREATURES



The axolotl saga continues...and takes something of a nose-dive.

The exciting news is the birth of a score of tiny axolotyls. They appeared in their parent's tank as jelly-eggs, hatched after some time of seeming inactivity, then began to swim about their new home, waving

their frilly-gills and looking like fancy tadpoles. The advice to feed them Daphnia – water-fles, was sound and they gobbled them up with great vigour, growing by the day.

All was going swimmingly, until the visit by my grandchildren, one 8, the other 4. The older grandchild

has learned to act wisely around vulnerable creatures, the wee girl, not so much. Somehow, she was drawn to the idea and act of adding pepper to the water in the axolotyl tank, and the baby axolotyls weren't impressed to the extent that 14 of the 18 died.

Seeing them floating, belly-up on the surface was disappointing, but not devastating; the remaining 4 are still requiring feeding and admiring, so life goes on – for the 4 of them at least, and the amount of work I had to do supplying the gaggle of axolotyls with water-fleas is certainly less than it was. So, more leisure time for me, more room in the tank for the axolotyls. End of up-date.

Robert

HERB OF THE MONTH



The Herb of this season is Nettle, for it is spring when the new bright heads of the nettle burst through the mulch of winter, bringing with them all we need to make it through the last of the winter chills.

Nettle is well known for its bitter taste as a tea, as a rich source of iron, and for its stings which can be an aid to prevent arthritis, but

what is known by only a few, is that nettle is really quite delicious! Nettle is best to be harvested when the tips are young and bright green, and while wearing thick gloves.

Pick the leaves from the stems, and drop them into boiled water for a few moments - this will take away the stinging part of the nettle. Then dip them in cold water to stop them from cooking and to keep their colour. From there you can use the nettle with ease to make a great number of dishes.

You can use nettle where you would usually use greens like spinach or silverbeet, but especially delicious is Nettle Soup, Nettle Pesto, and Nettle Ravioli.

If you have any favourite nettle recipes, send them in to Coastline; we'd love to try them and perhaps share in a future issue!

Hollie

HOW TO BE BEE-FRIENDLY

Honey bees and bumblebees are great to have around, plus there are 28 species of native bees that need help. To really support these insects (and a host of others) we need to grow our lawns longer, stop spraying 'weeds' and plant a variety of appropriate trees, shrubs, herbs and other plants (both native and exotic) in our home gardens (and public parks and roadsides!).

Bees also need water, so make sure you have a clean source that they can drink from without falling in. If you have any type of pool of water, consider placing some stones in it with the tops exposed as safe landing pads from which bees can safely access the water.

Top bee plants for smaller, urban gardens (by botanical name - look them up to find their common names!):

Smaller Trees:

Cordyline, Leptospermum, Melicytus, Olearia, Pittosporum, Sophora (all natives), Salix, Prunus (plums), Pyrus (pears), Malus (apples), Amelanchier, Cornus;

Shrubs:

Coprosma, Hebe, Corokia, Phormium, Pseudopanax (all natives), Chaenomeles, Aronia, Rosmarinus, Ceanothus, Rubus (berries!), Rosa;

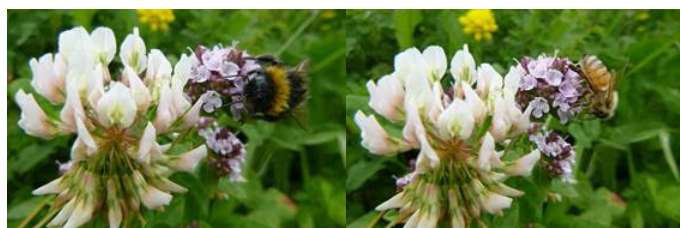
Herbs:

Origanum, Thymus, Agastache, Monarda, Melissa, Taraxacum, Trifolium.

With a little forward planning we can all do our bit to create bee-friendly gardens.

Check out www.treesforbeesnz.org and www.fortheloveofbees.co.nz

Nick



Bumblebees and honeybees both love clover and oregano!

ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Networks and Partnerships



This is the first section of our Strategic Plan, and arguably the most important. Connecting and working well with others is a key to unlocking our communities' willingness and ability to live more sustainably. In order to move our projects forward we need to know we are working alongside like-minded people and groups, maximising everyone's potential and avoiding duplication and inefficiency.

We have made a real focus of furthering our connections with other organisations over the last year. Our involvement with the Murihiku Kai Collective sees us networking regularly with many groups focusing on kai sovereignty and our work with Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu as part of their Kōanga Kai project is enabling us to build more meaningful relationships with mana whenua in Ōraka Aparima, Waihōpai and Hokonui. This is an exciting development for us.

We continue to be a voice within Environment Hubs Aotearoa, through hosting the South Island hui earlier in the year and regularly taking part in online events, such as the recent Strengthening Communities hui. Robyn contributes as a member of the Finance steering group - ensuring the voice of the smaller hubs is heard..

Nick

READER CONTRIBUTION FROM DAVE VALLI

Germinating Parsnip Seeds

I have found this method to be successful; take a two litre ice cream container, line the bottom with paper towel doubled over or loo paper, add just enough water to make the paper quite wet, sprinkle seeds on paper, put lid on, then put in a warm place. I put mine on top of the hot water cylinder.

The seeds should start to sprout in about six days though some will be slower, up to around twenty days. Don't let them get dry. As the seeds sprout I take them out to the garden to plant about every two or three days.

I put a wee hole in the ground two fingers wide and up to the first knuckle, put some seed raising mix in, make a small indent then place the seed in and cover.

I use tweezers to handle the seeds.

Happy Gardening, Woody.



OUR COMMITTEE



Environment Hubs Aotearoa (EHA) manages the NZ Government funding to support Environment Centres throughout NZ. www.environmenthubs.nz

From 2016, with the EHA managing funding, there has been greater funding security along with development of some other operational support within the national collective. Prior to the establishment of the EHA, between 2002 – 2015, we received funding, intermittently, directly from the Ministry for the Environment.

At first it was difficult for us to be part of the EHA governance groups. Meetings were always in the north of the country. We felt our rural South Island voice was far away from the decision making centre. However since Covid19 with meetings being by zoom, our committee decided it was time to step-up and be a positive contributor to NZ Environment Centres governance to help ensure rurally based centres are at the decision making table. Hence last year I became part of the EHA Funding Steering Sub-committee; the monthly zoom meetings are effective thus our voice is heard and valued.

The EHA main governance board currently has only North Island based members. The 2 spaces kept open for South Island representative are vacant. In the SI, only the Nelson and Riverton centres are well established and developed. Blenheim, Timaru, and Christchurch have been operational for only a couple of years or are just starting out. There is no centre in Dunedin.

At our last Riverton Committee meeting, I was encouraged, as a co-founder of the longest consecutively running NZ Centre (25 years) to step-up and accept nomination onto the national EHA governance board, to share my experiences and skills at the national level.

I have now agreed, believing that it is important in these pivotal times, for all Centres to be as effective as possible, educating and enabling our communities to make good choices in their homes, life styles, land care there by increasing their sustainability.

I believe the EHA is in a very good position, with a very proactive governance team, skilled national support staff and a good spread of Environment Centres throughout NZ. We have a huge potential to effect changes. Check out the EHA website and watch our future achievements.

Robyn

OUR PEOPLE

Volunteer, Vanya



I joined the Environment Centre about six months ago, and I'm enjoying being in the Herbs and Spices Department.

With no chance of overseas travel, it's great to be able to smell the cinnamon and nutmeg and ginger, which are sourced from all sorts of fabulous countries around the world.

My professional background is in the media, both in New Zealand and the UK, so it's an interesting contrast.

I am a Southlander, born and bred in Winton. My first paid job was actually in retail. My Uncle John Clark had the Big White Shop and I was employed after school to check the invoices against the incoming stock.

That year, Bill May and I shared Dux honours at the Winton School and Uncle John said I could choose a gift from the shop. A great reader, I was possibly influenced by a Biggles book. He was probably rescuing Ginger from some desert island. So I chose a coconut! Uncle John loved to retell that story.

The Environment Centre is a good fit for me in other ways. I truly believe the right food is a great healer, and that growing our own fruit and vegetables is important for our health, our community and our world.

Vanya

OUR COMMUNITY

Gifting Beginner Garden Seed Packs to Schools



Seed packs contain four packets of seeds (peas, carrots & radishes, mixed leafy beets and mixed lettuces), instructions & further ideas and a wee garden diary.

The Aotearoa Home Vegetable Growers beginner garden seed packs made up during Lockdown 2020 proved popular. Recently we have put together hundreds more. The intention is to gift these to Western Southland schools this month, so all students can take one home and families can have a go at starting a one square metre garden bed.

We have also made up individual packets of the seeds and are selling them at the Environment Centre as a way of generating some ongoing funding to support the AHVG project. The packets are smaller than what you might otherwise buy but only \$1.50 each. They contain enough seed for your garden this year - no leftover seed going stale and not germinating well next year!

Call into the Riverton Centre to buy your supplies.

Nick

WELLINGTON - OUR URBAN SUSTIES GROUP

By SCES Committee Member Julie Moynihan

At present I am living in Wellington in a suburb called Thorndon which is about 2 blocks from the botanical gardens near central Wellington. Glenbervie Terrace is a delightful historic alleyway of houses that zig zags up the small hill on the city side of Tinakori Road village then ends up joining it again a little further down the street. Most of the alleyway is pedestrian only



but the north zig zag becomes a single lane, just wide enough for a car. This was the original workers cottages area of Wellington city. Imagine patches of bush forest with lots of jasmine, kowhai, camellias bushes, lemon trees, old roses. We have a communal area which is paved with red bricks and has three old bench seats for enjoying the sun.

Three of us are working on a sustainable project designed by my neighbour Rachel, each bringing different strengths. The project is designed to

empower neighbours to form an urban susties group to become more sustainable and resilient. There is already man old disaster recovery plan for our lane which is being updated so we had the contact details and some connections already in place. The idea is based around shared resources, shared compost, shared gardens – community gardens, redistribution of surplus food, repurposing, seasonal celebrations, and education.

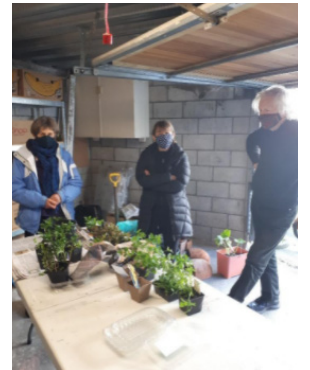


It has been fun meeting weekly on a Sunday to brainstorm. It started with a communal weeding of the laneway as it is owned as a body corporate, commencing with scones and tea in our garage several months ago to build community. Then recently we invited people to undertake a shared plant up morning one weekend. The community compost bin produced lots of good compost which we mixed with old potting mix, mostly rescued from near the Grant Road access to the Tinakori Hill tracks where someone had (kindly) emptied some large pots! Picture two of us walking down the road many times in the winds with buckets and trowels.



The lane now has a small potato patch, a new communal compost bin, some leafy greens on a patch with some herb pots and access to a bank with parsley that has gone wild. There was donated pots, a bag of dirt, and donated plants. One landlord who received the invite said “That is what we miss from Glenbervie Terrace Lane’. Community and belonging matters to people and it was heart-warming to see the chit chat and exchange between the residents.

The project transforms as we learn and experiment. The idea of urban neighbourhood hubs resourcing themselves has a lot of appeal in these uncertain times. It is a humble beginning and simply replicating what would have been in place amongst the workers who originally lived in the cottages. I’m enjoying being part of this old-Wellington city experience.



Julie

DONATED TREES

We have donated 19 eight year old heritage apple trees to Aparima College.

They were destined for the Browns area but no home could be found for them in Browns and they needed a long-term home. Eventually we will take cuttings and re-graft to grow new young trees for a Browns Orchard park in the future. When suitable land becomes available.



WE NEED YOU!

Volunteer Vacancies: Suitable for adults of all ages, high school students, an adult with a primary aged helper.

Want to get work experience, meet new people and/or learn new skills? Come and join the friendly team at the Environment Centre. Flexible hours, and can be once a week, fortnightly or monthly.

You can help behind the scenes bagging up etc. and / or staffing the front counter. We provide training and support and, after you have been with us for a while, we can provide a reference for a job.

So don't be stuck at home with nothing to do, we need you!

Text Robyn 0273683831 or phone or call into the Centre during opening hours.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR PLANTS,

we have got lots!

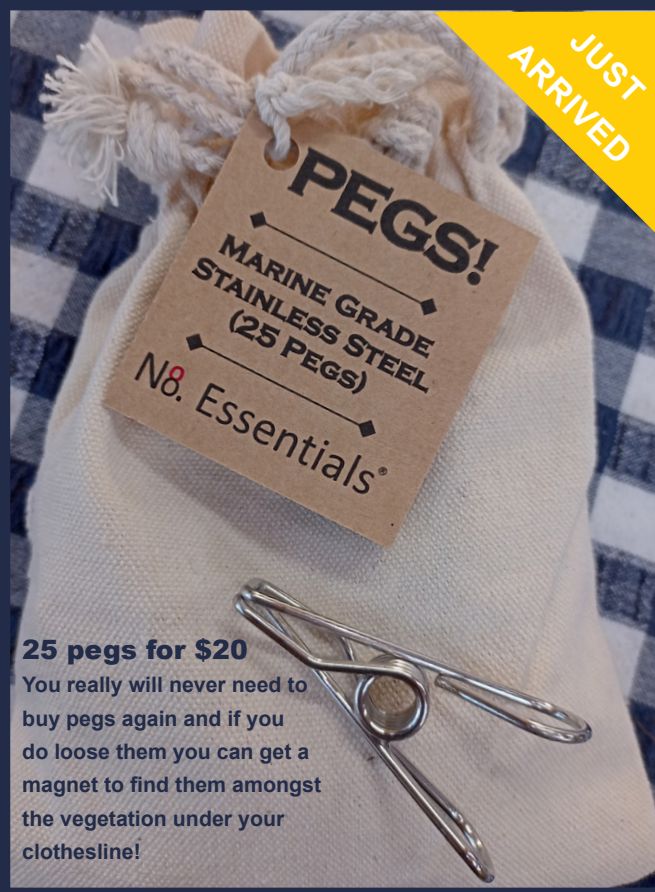
A selection of herbs, vegetables, trees and shrubs awaits you at the Environment Centre.

PRICED TO SELL FROM \$2 TO \$10.

Come in and have a look!

STAINLESS STEEL PEGS

Excellent quality marine grade stainless steel.



25 pegs for \$20

You really will never need to buy pegs again and if you do lose them you can get a magnet to find them amongst the vegetation under your clothesline!

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

Support the South Coast Environment Society

Community support enables the South Coast Environment Society to continue to operate the Riverton Environment Centre and manage several successful projects throughout Southland.

If you like what we do, and want to help us to do more, please consider; donating money, volunteering time, becoming a member, and / or sponsoring a project. www.sces.org.nz/about/donate

Ph 03 234 8717

VISIT THE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

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

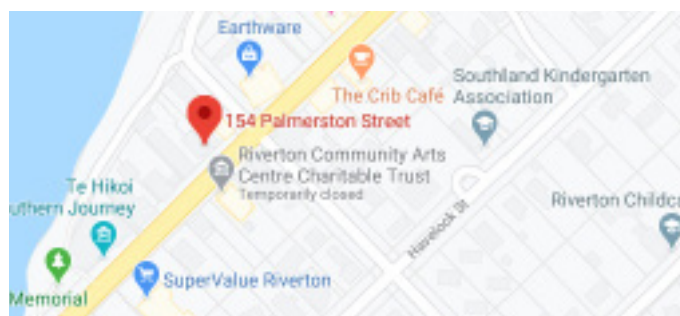
Phone: 03 234 8717, **Email:** office@sces.org.nz

Opening hours are:

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

Saturday: 10:30am - 4:30pm

Sunday: 1:30pm - 4:30pm



www.sces.org.nz



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