



COASTLINE

AUTUMN 2025

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Festival Time, Permaculture Opportunities

As temperatures drop and moisture returns, it's time to celebrate the transition from long summer days to cold winter nights.

With the arrival of autumn comes the main season of harvest. Once again, let's bring people together to celebrate, in a tradition that stretches back countless years across a multitude of cultures.

Our Heritage Harvest Festival, 29th & 30th March, will be jam-packed with learning opportunities, informative stalls and tasty food. Casting a warm glow over the whole weekend will be people making and reaffirming connections with each other.

We aim to ensure that there is plenty to tempt people to visit Riverton on the Festival weekend. This year our focus is on permaculture for the two days prior to the Festival. Thursday 27th Dylan will host an *Introduction to Permaculture* workshop. Participants will take part in an interactive learning experience, introducing them to the ethics, principles, and basic design aspects of Permaculture. Friday 28th Robyn and Robert Guyton will welcome people to their Forest Garden for the *Lower South Island Permaculture Hui*.

Why such a focus on permaculture? Well, in the words of co-founder Bill Mollison "*Permaculture is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless labor; and of looking at plants and animals in all their functions, rather than treating any area as a single product system*". Permaculture has always been a good system, but arguably we need it now more than ever.

If you want to know more, this is a unique opportunity to learn, connect, share and be inspired by what can be achieved, whether you live on a farm, a lifestyle block or a small urban section. Permaculture is about using an ethical lens to look at your place in the world and to design systems that are inherently positive and forward-looking. What's not to like?



DATES TO DIARY:

18 March, Tuesday	SCES Inc. AGM, 7pm at Riverton Environment Centre
27 March, Thursday	Introduction to Permaculture Workshop, Riverton. Pg 6 for more info.
28 March, Friday	Lower South Island Permaculture Hui, Riverton. Pg 6 for more info.
29 & 30 March, Sat & Sun	16th Heritage Harvest Festival at Aparima College, Riverton. Pgs 7, 8, 9.

UP FRONT

Learn, Share and Thank You!

A bonus of editing this Coastline newsletter for several years now is that I learn so much from reading all the articles. There are so many talented and inspirational people in our community with so much to share. Thank you to all contributors!

SCES priorities include sharing knowledge and providing learning opportunities. Both of these are evident in this issue. The centre pages are dedicated to Heritage Harvest Festival tutor profiles and immediately preceding them is the Permaculture Workshop Day and Hui info. Check pgs 6, 7, 8 & 9.

The Society always keeps attendance costs as affordable as possible to minimise barriers to accessibility for everyone.

Another priority is community involvement which again is well demonstrated in this issue. Our local school, growers and what's happening around us are all highlighted on pgs 4 & 5. Plus there's more!

We conclude this issue by paying tribute to a totara of a man who has provided a broad range of support and inspiration to SCES management and members over many years, Malcolm McKenzie. His legacy will live on eternally within our Society. Thank You Malcolm!

Wendy Joy

On behalf of the Coastline Production Team



The SCES has a New Constitution!

The SCES committee has been working on developing a new constitution under the invaluable guidance of the manager of the Southland Community Law Centre. We are pleased to confirm that the new constitution was accepted at a General Meeting of Society members, held 17 February 2025.

Until October 2023, all NZ incorporated societies, have been registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. From that date on societies must register or re-register, under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 which includes providing a constitution document, compliant with the new Act.

The new constitution has been submitted to the Registrar of Incorporated Societies at the Companies Office, for acceptance under the 2022 Act. Once accepted, it will be available on the SCES website.

This change has no impact on the charitable status of the Society. The SCES continues to be a NZ registered Charitable organisation (Registration Number CC41561). Thus all donations made to the Society are tax deductible.



So Much to Appreciate!

What a wonderful time of the year. Generosity abounds. Having a productive garden means plenty to enjoy and to share. And all so fresh and beautiful.

I intensely dislike waste! When possible preserving by whatever means I can. If time is limited then it's freezing. Some vegies maybe not so crunchy when thawed but still great for soups, curries and oven baking.

We've had a surplus of cauliflowers. My husband and I doubled up (to my surprise as what I planted were labeled broccolini, which I was looking forward to!). I've frozen flowerets, soups, and 'riced' some. Now we've got celery to deal to. Great to freeze for winter veg soup - my grandmother's special ingredient. Plus we have cucumbers aplenty - more soups and juicing into ice blocks for drinks and smoothies. We have a few bottles of beetroot sealed away. Chutneys pending and new for 2025 is a jar of sauerkraut I'm trying. Fingers crossed!

The greenhouse is bulging with tomatoes, sharing space with capsicums, basil and tarragon all ready for harvesting. Getting near time to try the corn - Yum!

It's certainly a privilege to be able to enjoy such an abundance. If ever tempted to 'waste' anything I think of the images we see of Gaza and I'm immediately reminded of the beauty and plenty we enjoy here in Southland.



Wendy

The South Coast Environment Society Incorporated (SCES or the Society) is a NZ registered Charitable Organisation (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.

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.

Riverton Environment Centre: 154 Palmerston Street.
Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:30pm,
Sunday 1:30 - 4:30pm.



AUTUMN GARDENING

Last Chance To Sow...

It's getting a bit late to be planting winter vegetables now, but there is still time for sowing some greens like silverbeet, rocket, lettuce, mizuna, chicory and spring onions. Slower-growing veges like cabbages or broccoli will more likely be ready in spring if planted now.

Any gardens that won't produce a crop over winter should be immediately sown with a cover crop like lupins, oats, mustard, tic beans, peas or even better a mixture of all of these*. If you're quick, you could also try squeezing in a frost-sensitive cover crop such as buckwheat, which grows very rapidly and then is killed when you get your first frost. You then have a nice bed ready for planting a crop of garlic into soil that has been feeding microorganisms and has been freshly mulched!

Once you have sown your cover crops, give them some mulch - arborist woodchips are great, but you can use straw, autumn leaves or grass clippings - just make sure your mulch isn't too thick.

Now's the time to be cleaning up finished crops and getting them in your compost. If you have been saving seeds you'll have piles of great carbon-rich stalks - these make the best compost. If you're hanging on to tomato plants hoping to get a last few ripe fruit, don't bother - pick them all now (some will ripen on the windowsill), cut down the plants (leave the roots in the soil) and get some winter greens in before it starts getting too cool.

*You can buy all of these at Riverton Environment Centre!



These tic beans (like a smaller version of a broad bean) were sown in early April.

By July they had grown to about 15cm. They coped just fine with the frost!



By November they were over two metres tall and covered in the most beautiful purple flowers.

As a cover crop, they could have been chopped into the soil a month or so earlier, but I was saving seeds from them.

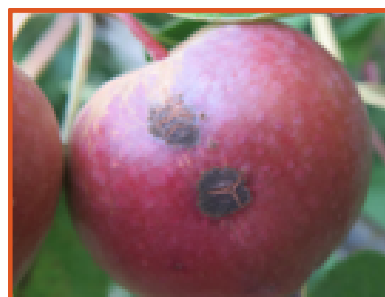
Nick

PROJECT UPDATE

Open Orchards

This has been a very patchy year for fruit in orchards across Southland, with lots of people reporting many fruit trees have little or no fruit. Was it the windy, wet spring, not enough pollinators, or both? Don't be disheartened - next year we will likely have a bumper crop.

The wet cool spring can also cause more blackspot, a fungus that spreads from lower branches up and makes the apples spotty; Eventually the skin becomes tough and misshapen as it stops expanding. If you have blackspot it's important at the end of the season to rake away and compost any fallen fruit and leaves, as if it is wet next spring the fungus will splash back up onto the lower branches and start the cycle again. At the first sign of black spots on leaves you can spray the tree with baking soda dissolved in water to prevent spreading to the fruit.



Blackspot is unsightly and can ruin a good crop.

I notice there is a lot of blackspot in the trees at the Tuatapere Heritage Orchard Park this year, so we will be inviting the community to bring containers and we can juice the affected fruit. Because of this we need to do a quick check of all the Orchard Parks - If you can pop in to the one near you and let me know if they are too spotty, we can plan to bring the press there too!

Make sure you visit your local park over the next three months and gather some fruit to use and share. The fruit is ready when it comes off easily when lifted up - if you have to tug it off it is not ready!

Robyn



The apple press in action at the Heritage Harvest Festival.

Aparima College School & Community Garden Update

It's been a joy to get back into the school garden, especially with all of the beautiful weather that the end of January and early February brought us in Southland. While the garden had gotten a bit wild, it is still growing some beautiful flowers, vegetables, and seeds. The beans in the tunnel house have been growing fabulously and some regular bright yellow zucchinis have been popping up every couple of days. The focus in the garden for me has been to make up a few beds and get some autumn crops planted. So far a bed of carrots, beetroot, and silverbeet/kale have gone in, looking forward to getting in a bed of lettuce and some other tasty treats. Keep an eye out for produce from the gardens at the Environment Centre or on the Longwood Loop, hopefully more will be becoming available regularly over late summer and early autumn.



If you walk by the gardens you'll notice there have been some changes. We've taken down our old trusty pallet compost bays as we have those beautiful, new ones at the end of the garden. We've also received three loads of wood chips from Asplundh (thanks so much to them!) and are using those to mulch paths. If you or anyone you know is interested in having a gardening workshop, or bringing a group out to the garden, it's an amazing resource in this community! Please get in touch, or just come by and say hi!

Rebecca



Celebrating Our Local Growers

We are extremely fortunate to have people in our community who love growing fresh kai. There are at least a dozen local growers who bring home-grown, spray-free produce to Riverton Environment Centre on a regular basis to be sold on their behalf. Growers sign a Local Supplier's Contract and are paid for their sales at the end of the month. If they prefer they can have a credit at the Centre instead. The return of this money to the local economy is not insignificant.

If you would like to start bringing produce in to the Centre, pop in and have a chat!



The 'local produce' table at Riverton Environment Centre, featuring plums, tomatoes, beans, carrots, cabbages, scallopini, zucchini (and marrows of course!), aronia berries, silverbeet, honey, rhubarb, radishes, beetroot and garlic. A day after the photo was taken it also included cauliflower, potatoes, onions, lettuce and pak choi - from at least ten different growers.

Longwood Loop Online Market

Producer Profile - Heather's Hazelnuts

As part of the Bountiful Lifestyle Block Tours (see pg 5), attendees visited Longwood Loop producer Heather's place near Drummond. Heather has 500 or so Hazelnut trees that produce nuts that she uses for various products. The nuts are picked up by hand or with a little rolling device, naturally dried, and then cracked with a hand powered cracker. The kernels are picked out one by one then sorted depending on which product they are to be used for. "It's a labour of love" says Heather with a chuckle.

We all enjoyed a fabulous potluck lunch together before the tour. Heather sells dukkah, gluten free muesli, granola, shelled, roasted, or in-shell hazelnuts all on the Longwood Loop.

Dylan



Website Change!

The longwoodloop.co.nz website content has been relocated to the SCES website to save on costs. From now on, look for the link on www.sces.org.nz!

COMMUNITY

Bountiful Backyards: Garden and Lifestyle Block Tours

SCES has kicked off a series of "Bountiful Backyards" tours in Southland this Summer. The first, the 'Bountiful Lifestyle Blocks' tour, visited two properties located between Riverton and Invercargill: a two acre (0.8 hectare) and a five acre (two hectare) block. The first has been created by Michelle and Bruce and featured a six-year-old forest garden, where attendees had a superb potluck lunch in a lovely yurt.



Left: The Yurt at Swan Homestead.

Our third event was Invercargill's Bountiful Backyards, where we visited three urban properties and their various bounties. Dave's garden featured herbs at the back door, a small lawn with a pond, natives, and a veg garden featuring compost and a greenhouse - a lot of diversity in a small area. Michelle's garden was full of colourful flowers, with veges mixed in between, as well as chickens, herbs and some fruit trees. A nice sized greenhouse grows tomatoes, cucumbers, and so on.



Left: Dave's compact, diverse, productive space.

Right: One small part of Peter & Marijke's very productive garden.



Right: Michelle's mix of flowers and veges.



Next stop was to see the amazing transformation of a two acre grassy area into a forest, orchard, veg and flower garden over the past 30 years or so by Peter and Marijke Aalders. Both properties grow lots of healthy food for their families and earn some income for the owners through sale of any excess produce. Michele runs her floristry business, Swan Homestead, from her home and Peter sells honey and fine woodworking.

The second tour event featured three Longwood Loop Producers: Dave and Jayne Valli just outside Otautau, then Faime and Mike (Holt Cottage) at a half-acre (0.2 hectares) section in town, followed by Heather's Hazels near Drummond. Of course all these properties are earning their keep from sales through the Loop and all were colourful and alive with birds and insects. A bounty for humans and nature!



Left: Dave & Jayne's impressive set-up.

Rebecca's 'Manor House Garden' includes raised beds, fruit trees around the edges, chickens, and a large diversity of flowering plants. It is impressive how Rebecca is able to make money from her garden by selling salad mix, seeds, plants and even dried rose petals for wedding confetti, as well as saving thousands of dollars by preserving the bounty and not spending so much on groceries.



Left: Rebecca's productive and thrifty garden.



Right: Faimie & Mike are also highly skilled growers.



A huge thanks to all our hosts for sharing their properties, tips, knowledge and offering plenty of inspiration. Look out for more tours in the future!

Dylan

Got a bountiful backyard you'd like to share? We'd love to see it! Get in touch and let us know.

Tickets are selling fast, so make sure you book yours as soon as possible!

www.sces.org.nz

Learn & Connect with PERMACULTURE IN MARCH

THURSDAY 27TH 10AM – 4PM SENIOR CITIZENS ROOM, RIVERTON
INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE WORKSHOP
LEARN WITH PASSIONATE PERMIE DYLAN

Ethics, principles, design basics, soil fertility, tree systems, and much more.

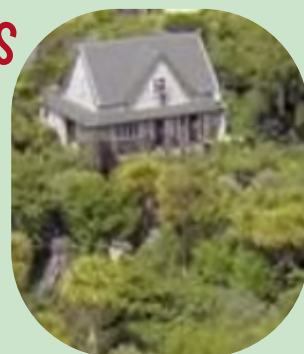
\$50 INC. LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA



FRIDAY 28TH 10AM – 4PM GUYTON'S FOREST GARDEN, RIVERTON
LOWER SOUTH ISLAND PERMACULTURE HUI
GATHER, LEARN, DISCUSS WITH FELLOW PERMIES

Forest Garden Tour, Panel + Speakers, Networking, Foraging delights.

\$40 INC. LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA



BOOKINGS AT
WWW.SCES.ORG.NZ



Heritage Harvest Festival Workshop Programme: Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th March 2025

For more information on each workshop, including which tutor is running the session, please visit the booking page:

WWW.SCES.ORG.NZ

16th Annual Heritage Harvest Festival Workshop Programme 2025					
Saturday 29th March			Sunday 30th March		
Saturday 9.00 to 10.30am	SAT 1A	Simple cheese making 1	Sunday 30 March 9.30 to 11.00am	SUN 1A	No-knead sourdough bread
				SUN 1B	Healing trees
	SAT 1C	Herbal teas		SUN 1C	Greenhouse prep for winter
	SAT 1D	Soil fertility		SUN 1D	Flower arranging
	SAT 1E (children)	Autumn leaf pressing		SUN 1E (children)	Terrariums
break 10.30-11am	cafe	Morning tea	break 11-11.30am	cafe	Morning tea
Saturday 11.00 to 12.30pm	SAT 2A	Simple cheese making 2	Sunday 11.30 to 1.00pm	SUN 2A	Simple ferments
	SAT 2B	Biodiversity by the square metre		SUN 2B	Natural beekeeping
	SAT 2C	Beginners Introduction to Weaving Harakeke		SUN 2C	Microclimates for growing
	music rm	African drumming - A		SUN 2D	Medicinal plant walk
	SAT 2E (children)	Maypole dancing		SUN 2E (children)	Felting
12.30-2pm	hall	Lunch + entertainment	1-2pm	hall	Lunch
Saturday 2.00pm to 3.30pm	SAT 3B	Permaculture Home Orchard design	Sunday 2.00pm to 3.30pm	SUN 3A	Preserving
	SAT 3C	Beginners Introduction to Weaving Harakeke		SUN 3B	Autumn gardening
	SAT 3D	The Open Orchard Project		SUN 3C	Propagating trees
	music rm	African drumming - B		music rm	African drumming & dance
	SAT 3E (children)	Crafty/Natural Jewellery		SUN 3E (children)	Harakeke puti puti (flowers)
break 3.30-4pm	cafe	Afternoon tea	Pack up time!		
Saturday 4.00 to 5.30pm	SAT 4B	Natural fruit tree training	4pm to 5.00pm	FGT	Forest Garden Tour
	SAT 4C	Herbal medicine	4pm to 5.00pm	R-HOP	Riverton Heritage Orchard Tour
	SAT 4D	Seed saving	5.15pm to 6.15pm	FGT	Forest Garden Tour
	SAT 4E (children)	Baked bread mice	5.15pm to 6.15pm	R-HOP	Riverton Heritage Orchard Tour
6.30pm	Dinner	Local Harvest	MONDAY:		
			10.00am to 11.30am	FGT	Forest Garden Tour

Thank you to our supporters!

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MURIHIKU KAI COLLECTIVE

16th Annual Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival: Tutor Profiles

If you are thinking of attending one of the many excellent workshops at this year's Festival, you should get online and book your tickets now, as they are selling fast!

BOOKINGS AT
WWW.SCES.ORG.NZ

Check out some of the amazing tutors we are so lucky to have sharing their knowledge and experience. You can see which workshops each tutor is running on the booking site.

Ruby Bainbridge



Ruby originates from Taranaki and has recently moved to Tuatapere where she has begun her naturopath studies. She is an avid gardener who loves to combine her passion with plants and healthy living.

Jason Ross



Jason has been carrying out trials of fruit varieties and permaculture home food growing techniques in Otago for over two decades. His business, Habitate, propagates heritage fruit trees, provides edible landscape design services and publishes visual guides for home gardeners.

Jason enjoys grazing with his family and some chickens on a densely planted quarter-acre edible scrubland in Waitati.

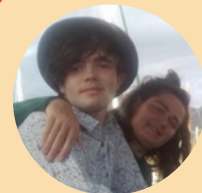
Robert Guyton



Robert is an educator and author known for his work in sustainable agriculture and gardening. He has been involved in promoting ecological practices and teaching others how to grow food sustainably for many years.

Robert is also known for his contributions to community projects and his emphasis on local and organic food systems.

Trish Burton & Peat Kidney



Trish has been gardening for many years and since moving to Riverton has started a small nursery growing perennial herbs and vegetables, trees and shrubs. She grows great veges for her family.

Peat has been in the garden since day one. He is a self-led learner who is into reading, writing, drawing, gaming and being in nature. He has an eye for tiny details and loves making terrariums!

Dylan Graves



Dylan originates from South Africa and emigrated to New Zealand in 1994. He became a secondary school teacher after finishing high school and after an initial two years on the Kapiti Coast, taught in 4 more countries before returning to New Zealand in 2021.

He discovered permaculture in the late 2000s while in Taiwan and now facilitates workshops whenever he can. He has over 10 years of full time homesteading and practical permaculture experience and has studied permaculture intensely over this time.

Lynne Brodie



Lynne was born near Manchester in the UK. She was a teacher of outdoor education and environmental studies. She and her family moved out to NZ in 2002 with two children and lived and worked in Hanmer Springs for 10 years before heading South.

Lynne is a keen walker and enjoys art and crafts. She has been a sourdough baker for many years, and it has been a passion and slight obsession of hers to produce the best tasting and most nutritious bread possible. Lynne loves to share her knowledge and passion for bread and set people off on their own journey to healthier bread.

Ra McRostie



Ra has been facilitating drum and dance classes for 19 years. She has trained in West Africa, Hawai'i and Australia and toured with her primary teachers, Epizo Bangoura, Mohammed Bangoura and Chris Berry as a drummer and dancer.

No experience is necessary for Ra's classes, just a willingness to have fun and give it a go! Booking a spot in her workshops is essential as there are limited instruments.

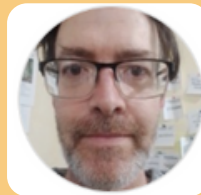
16th Annual Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival: Tutor Profiles

Evita Shen



Evita originates from Taiwan and has embraced the permaculture and homesteading life since the early 2010's. She loves to share her craft and cooking skills. She facilitates workshops using techniques and thinking from Robyn Clayfield's dynamic groups week long workshop. Evita is also a qualified secondary school teacher.

Nick Kiddey



Nick has been gardening using organic methods for nearly 30 years. He has qualifications in environmental science, landscape design, horticulture, permaculture and arboriculture and is a registered primary teacher.

He and his wife Trish and son Peat run their small business 'Gardens for Life' while developing their large urban section in Riverton. Nick is also Education and Projects Facilitator at Riverton Environment Centre.

Michele Horwood



Michele from Swan Homestead Flowers is a multidisciplinary artist and qualified florist, yoga teacher and chef based in Southland. She lives with her family on a five acre budding food forest on the outskirts of Riverton.

She and her husband Bruce are passionate about spray free land restoration and creating beautiful spaces for people, plants and creatures.

Robyn Guyton



Robyn has passion, energy, knowledge, experience and enthusiasm in and for all aspects of eco living, community building, resilient skill acquisition and environmental care.

Besides being the Environment Centre manager, Robyn is also the music teacher at Aparima College. She has a long history of sharing her knowledge in a multitude of workshops for SCES.

Des Cooper



Kairaranga Des Cooper is of Ngati Kahungunu and Waikato, Scottish, Ukrainian, and German Heritage, adopted into a First and Sixth Generation English New Zealand Family.

Des is an experienced weaver who shares his knowledge about Tikanga (Traditional protocols and Customary practices) specific to Raranga Harakeke (Weaving Harakeke) and participants will be welcomed into a safe learning environment.

Stephen Parker



Steve has a diverse range of skills, is a father, a surfer, a backcountry guide, teacher of Avalanche detection skills, has a PhD in male health and wellness in NZ, is a gardener, a Bioregional Herbalist and has an incisive and creative eye in his interaction with the plant world. His workshops are interactive and well planned.

Sophia Leon de la Barra



Sophia is a homesteader and ecovillager who resides in Ōamaru and enjoys practicing permaculture, whakairo rākau and building. She co-facilitates an after-school programme for kids and youth called Guardians of the Gardens which teaches sustainable living skills at the Waitaki Community Gardens.

Thank you to our supporters!



COMMUNITY: Murihiku Kai Collective (MKC) Partners

Southland's New 'Kai Guy'

Inspired by the great work of the Murihiku Kai Collective following the release of the Good Food Road Map last year, Steve Broad has moved into a pilot role as the region's first Murihiku Kai Coordinator, based in the Healthy Families Invercargill team.

As part of the new role, Steve will be helping support the work of the local kai community, supporting their strategy and vision of a secure and resilient local food system. The vision aims to empower the availability, access and affordability of good food in Murihiku.

A big part of his initial work will be ensuring that there are systems in place for effective communication, connection and collaboration across community groups, whānau, growers, producers, entrepreneurs, key decisions makers, funders, educators, health and social service agencies.

A great example of this is already underway though a 'Maara Starts', home education program. The Murihiku Kai Collective, South Coast Environment Society and Healthy Families, with the help of Rio Tinto, NZAS and Murihiku Rūnaka funding, are teaming up with social agencies, taking experienced tutors across Southland to help support whānau who have a desire to grow their own kai at home.

Broad admits, there's lots to do, and it will take time, but hopes to eventually see kai celebrated as a key part of who we are as a region, within the community, but also nationally and internationally. To be a core part of how we support each other, and how we tell our story.

Steve meeting
with Gerry
Forde of the
Spirit Army.



MKC: NZAS-funded learning

The first of several 'Maara Starts' workshops was hosted in Bluff recently with Awarua Whānau Services, thanks to funding from Rio Tinto and support from Healthy Families Invercargill.

About a dozen locals got together at the Senior Citizens Hall to share kai and get stuck into making a salad garden in a bucket. Lots of great questions arose and local knowledge was shared.

The session was facilitated by Nick Kiddey from the South Coast Environment Society. Nick brought along a whole lot of watercress plants for people to take home - they were popular, with one going home for a trial in a fish tank!

Lots of hands-on collaborative learning taking place!



More of these sessions will be taking place around Southland, focusing on supporting whānau to create their own kai patch, but also establish localised maara communities.

Local Podcast: Char Chit Chat

A plug for self on this one. As many may know by now, I am Passionate about Permaculture, but also biochar. I have seen the benefits personally as well as read the academic research showing the many positives. I teach workshops, advocate to councils, and give talks on biochar wherever I can. In an effort to fill a void I see, I have started a podcast dedicated to biochar in New Zealand.

I will seek out anyone I can who is making or using char, ranging from the Biochar Granny (<https://youtu.be/Ui5uu8YNPts>) in Manawatu to commercial producers in Pukerau (Southland Carbon) and everyone else in between! Find it on your favourite podcast platform by searching for Char Chit Chat.



Dylan

SEASONAL RECIPE

Evita's Fool-Proof Taiwanese Pao Cai (Pickled Cabbage)

This easy recipe is a common way of pickling cabbage in Taiwan. It is enjoyed as a side dish with deep-fried tofu or any kind of meat.

Ingredients:

1 cabbage (about 1 kilo)
15g fine salt (1.5% of the cabbage weight)
1 carrot (optional)

Pickling liquid:

200 ml filtered water
200 ml sugar
200 ml vinegar
5 cloves of crushed garlic (optional)
2 sliced chillis (optional)

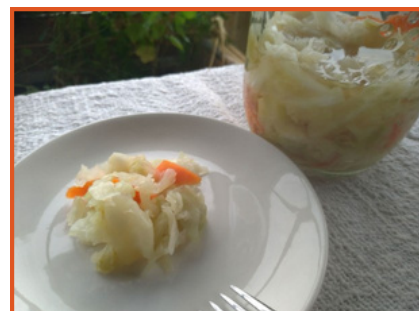
Method:

Chop the cabbage into chunks (3x3 cm minimum) and slice the carrot if using; then place in a large bowl and massage with the salt for about 5 minutes. Let sit and sweat for at least 2 hours.

While waiting, put the filtered water, sugar, vinegar, garlic and chillis (if using) in a pot over a stove, bring it to boiling then set aside to cool (this is the pickling liquid).

After salting, rinse the cabbage slightly with filtered water. Drain, then place the rinsed cabbage and pickling liquid in a glass container, and put it in the fridge for at least 6 hours or overnight to pickle. Enjoy it as a side dish :-)

(Note, cabbage can be replaced with beans or radishes, and the sugar ratio in the pickling liquid can be reduced if sour flavour is preferred or pickled for more than a day.)



Evita

Evita is a Tuatapere local who volunteers regularly at Riverton Environment Centre.

New Products at Riverton Environment Centre: Focus on Soil Health

For many years Riverton Environment Centre has championed the health of the soil by stocking various products for home gardeners, including Southland-produced BioFeed Plant Food, Bokashi NZ's EarthZing and various bagged composts.

Kings Seeds have also long featured on the shelves. Alongside the flowers, vegetables, herbs, trees, sprouts and microgreens are the darlings of soil health, the 'green crops'.

More recently the range has increased with the addition of biochar and 'Envigorate' from Southland Carbon; Biochar is considered to be beneficial for the health of soil by sheltering microbes, preventing leaching of nutrients and improving soil 'sponginess'. 'Envigorate' is a by-product of biochar production (it is also known as 'wood vinegar') and can act as a growth stimulant, pest repellent and general soil health booster.

Plus the team at the Centre has decided to increase the availability of green crops (more often called 'cover crops' these days) by buying larger bags and rebagging into sizes more appropriate for the home gardener. Available are: lupins, mustard, phacelia, tic beans and the traditional mix of oats, peas and lupins.

If you are keen to get the most out of your soil, now is the time to make sure you are doing everything to increase its wellbeing - sow cover crops in bare areas, use organic mulches, minimise digging and keep the soil covered with living plants as much as possible.



*Clockwise from above:
BioFeed, EarthZing,
Compost, Southland
Carbon products, the
new range of Cover
Crop seeds.*

LOCALS

Robert: 'Medal To The Petal'

March? Already?? Goodness, the summer season passed quickly! Perhaps we've still got hot weather for a while yet – it's warm and wet in my garden and everything's growing apace.

I'm all about flowers this season: my daughter's getting married in the garden and everything has to be just so; at least, I feel it has to be. I've expanded my gardening interests way out to encompass flowers of the kind I thought I'd never grow, but grow them I am and willingly: dahlia, cosmos, zinnia, nasturtium, daisy – even alyssum, the most innocuous flower ever, in my pre-wedding-preparation mind!

I've sown them though, on the good advice of flower-growers and they're doing very well. At the same time, I'm trying to rein-in the rampant growth in my forest: hops are hoppin', cannas are reaching for the sky and everything else is bursting out in their special vegetative way, closing down paths, smothering delicate plant-treasures and otherwise jangling my forest.

I'll get on top of it soon. In the meantime, I'm building a cob-oven, scrubbing up the yurt, helping with the tiling and all of the other tasks that have to be done before the big day.

Beauties like this dahlia are popping up all over the place.

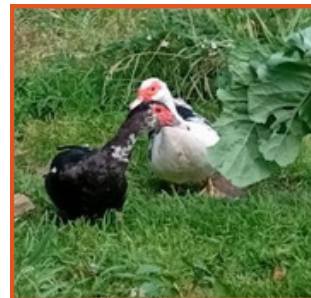


Robert

Peat's Duck Dramas

As per most years spring and summer was a busy time of picking greens and smelling flowers.

The joy of the harvest truly begins in Autumn though. My carrots - which I planted in Spring and successfully ignored throughout summer - have finally become ready for harvest. Yesterday - as of writing this - I picked a bowl of perfect veggies which were added into a delicious curry for dinner. There's nothing better than a tasty meal made with home-grown food!



Peat's quality carrots aren't on the menu for these beady-eyed characters.

Autumn is a wonderful time of year, the smell of dead leaves in the air, the cold, crisp weather and the mulch to be collected.

It has a more irritating side though. During this time the ducks and the chickens fight their hardest to hide clutches of eggs under logs, in holes and - against all logic - in plain view. My unending battle to stop myself one day finding a small group of awkward, yellow-footed peepers appearing amongst our flock is exacerbated by the abundance of hiding places in the leaves. Only yesterday I had to go collect a clutch of thirteen eggs from beneath one of our more stealthy ducks, she was extremely annoyed but - luckily for the health of my hands - did not decide to make use of her rough beak and sharp claws.

In the end it's all worthwhile as I walk back through the lush garden carrying a bucket filled with eggs and thinking about what may be for dinner, the Autumnal feeling in the air is wonderful.

Take this chance to gather leaves and enjoy the last bit of warmth before winter!

Peat Kiddey

Peat is a young Riverton local who volunteers regularly at Riverton Environment Centre.

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

Ph 03 234 8717

LOCALS

Lori's Diary: The War On Weeds

September

Spring at last! It's been a long, hard winter, months of looking at an alternately frost-white and mud-brown moonscape of a garden. But today I spotted a few delicate little weeds in the garden. New life is starting to pop out of the frost. This is the magic of growing things: all winter we wait while the ground and all the life within it takes a rest. Nothing much happens. The ground is bare. Above ground the surviving greenery looks sad, drooping under the weight of frost and icy south-westerlies. So, we wait, because we know that below ground there is magic ready to happen. Today it did! My first gentle little weeds of the season emerged into the weak Spring sunlight to signal the beginning of another growing season.

October

Busy busy. Weeds are competing for room with the spring plantings, so I'm here pulling them out by their little roots and taking handfuls to the compost bins. This is the cycle of life – nature gives us weeds so we can turn them into fertile nourishment for the food we grow. Magic.

November

Still pulling weeds. By now they're stronger, quite robust and getting rather too assertive in the garden beds. Handfuls have turned into buckets full. Every time it rains more pop up and the weeds still in the ground double in size and start eying off the rest of the garden, preparing for a mass invasion. I need to start knocking them off with boiling water.

December

My power company kindly gives me an hour of free power every day, so that's an hour of boiling jugs and rushing them out to the garden, over and over until my hour is up. Actually, I'm quite enjoying the smell of cooking weeds and seeing them instantly wither and die. Also, I'm still pulling weeds, because an hour a day of boiling them isn't going to cut it. Now pulling them out in great big armfuls and the compost bins are getting full.

January

There seems no end to this. My back hurts. The weeds are clearly winning. They got the upper hand while I was away over Christmas and New Year. Big mistake. This is war. Time to bring out the Big Guns – grandma's weed-killing recipe of vinegar and salt. Just need to wait for a non-windy day to spray it.

February

Still waiting. Meanwhile I continue to waste an hour a day of my life boiling water and pouring it on as many noxious, invasive little suckers as possible. Not enough. I resort to whipper-snipping the worst of them although I know from experience it just encourages them. And so, the war drags on. Finally, the wind drops enough to enable spraying Grandma's fail-safe weed-killer.

It failed. I can hear the weeds snickering to themselves as they regenerate and spread their smothering, cancerous growth. My ammunition is running low along with any energy I might have left. The weeds are metastasizing all over the garden, the paths, the driveway and heading for the front door. I'm having Triffid nightmares.

March

I'm done. I fear the weeds have won. I continue to pull them out by their evil little roots and cook them with boiling water every morning between nine and ten, and they continue to grow, and grow, and grow. There is only one option left – the Nuclear Option. I noticed this morning a slight autumnal chill in the air - Nature is getting ready to drop the Nuke of Winter on them, and I am so ready for it. Not long until the first frost descends and chills their conniving, noxious little hearts, making them wither and die off. I'm ready! Bring. It. On.

Lori Johnston

Lori is a Riverton local who volunteers regularly at Riverton Environment Centre.



LAST WORDS

Malcolm David McKenzie 10th December 1935 - 14th January 2025

Malcolm grew up on 'Heatherlea', the family farm in Limehills - he was the fifth generation to live and work there. Malcolm was heavily involved in the rural community his whole life. He was passionate about farming and caring for the natural world. Malcolm was a member of Federated Farmers, the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and on the committee of the Forest Hill Foundation Trust. He chaired the Wastebusters Trust and served on the Southland Conservation Board. Malcolm became a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2006 for his services to conservation.

Malcolm was invited to speak at the 2007 AGM of the South Coast Environment Society and consequently was asked if he would be Patron of SCES, a role he held from 2008 until 2021.

Malcolm was passionate about apples, grafting and planting many and filling the farm's roadside with heritage varieties. He was a big fan of SCES's Open Orchard project and even appeared on Country Calendar talking about it and the Heritage Harvest Festival.

On announcing his intention to step down as Patron in 2021, Hollie, the SCES Chair, wrote him the following letter.

Dear Malcolm,

Our committee has learned of your desire to step down from your role as patron for the Society and while we respect and accept your request, we are greatly saddened to do so; you've been a wonderful patron for us, representing and supporting us at a personal and community level in a way no one else could do.

Your history in environmental care; with your beautiful family farm, your work with waste-busters for our region, your involvement with the Conservation Board and a raft of other activities has meant that you also raised our profile greatly when you first agreed to assume the role as our patron and we've continued to benefit from that as the years have gone by.

We do still have, however, your wise words affixed to a beam in our building and so we can quote you whenever we need to; in fact, we've more than just that beam, thanks in part to your generous donation given at the time, we were able to buy the building; we've been enabled by your generosity in many, many ways.

The 5,000 or so apple trees you grafted as part of the Open Orchard project will stand (and grow) as further testimony to your dedication to a better, more fruitful Southland. The project, and Robyn in particular, have thrived as a result of your involvement and we are very grateful for that.

If there was, however, one particular "icon" we could attribute to you and say is typical of your generosity and thoughtfulness, it would have to be the apple-press. We know you dug deep to make the romantic concept a reality; securing, importing, finishing and assembling the lovely thing, then making it available to so many people for years and years and giving the Heritage Harvest Festival a heart.

Thank you so much for donating the apple-press to the Society, (with highly-trained operator attached) so that we can continue the tradition you established.

"Malcolm's press" is a sturdy device representing a substantial idea that was hatched by you and will serve our "apple-loving" community for decades to come.

On behalf of the Society I would like to express our deep gratitude for all your time and support over the years, you have been a wonderful patron.



Malcolm loved using the press alongside others.

"A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is drudgery. A vision and a task are the hope for the world"

Inscription on a church wall in Sussex, England, ca. 1730 and at Malcolm's request inscribed on a beam at Riverton Environment Centre.

The juice flowed freely under his supervision.

