NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH COAST ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY INC

COASTLINE

SUMMER 2025

2026 - Celebration & Challenge!

2026 will be celebration time for the South Coast Environment Society; our 30th year as a registered charity.

Looking back over that time, I am amazed by what our society and community have accomplished - held more than 20 seasonal festivals and hundreds of workshops; established an urban community forest garden and more than 15 community heritage orchard parks; supplied thousands of heritage fruit trees to homes and schools across the region, and in just the last year, we have seen more than $50,000 go back into our community through local supplier sales and our Longwood Loop project. We have a wonderful team of generous and skilled volunteers, knowledgeable and passionate part-time staff, and a strong committee.

Over the past several years, our leadership has had a focus of making our projects financially self-sustaining. Making our activities affordable for our community has always been central to our work - this means that our society has also relied on funding from local and national organisations to support some of the work that we do.

In 2024, we lost a major funding source, with the sudden closure of the MFE Community Environment Fund. This funding made up about half of our operational funding, and has been a regular source of funding for us since 2002. This funding loss comes at a time when the demand for our services is higher than ever. Consequently, we now need to fill this gap to ensure that our services can continue. While we continue to seek funding, we are looking at further ways that we can diversify our sources of income, and in this Coastline, you will see some ways that you contribute toward this goal and support SCES now, and into the future.

Wishing you all a happy summer season and roll-on 2026, our 30th year as a registered charity!

Hollie, Chairperson

DATES TO DIARY:

28 & 29 March, Sat & Sun	17th Heritage Harvest Festival
Weekly until mid-April	Forest Garden Tours
3rd Tuesday of each month	SCES committee meeting

Editorial

I was privileged to be away last issue (thanks Nick for guest editing) enjoying an amazing cruise from Vancouver to Tokyo, via Alaska. Of note was the monstrous Alaskan tidewater Hubbard Glacier, 122 kms long, 11 Kms wide and 120m high where it meets the sea. Impressive! Despite the biting wind and heavy rain, I was determined to enjoy the experience and I did.

In Tokyo we noted (apart from the 1000's of people everywhere!) unmown grassed areas around the city, apparently for environmental benefit. Impressive too. So too was looking out from the 45th floor of the Metropolitan Building. The people looks liked insects!

Back to reality this issue where we have lots to share with you.

Our Society is beginning to think about celebrating 30 years as a registered charity next year. At the same time, we are needing to explore new ways of fundraising due to reduced regular funding sources. Our aim is to continue to support, educate, and advise on resilience and connection wherever possible. We all know there are costs to do so thus we welcome your ideas, contributions or thoughts about future fundraising. See pg 6 for a review of our year's work and pg 7 for some ideas of how you could support this.

Riverton Organic Food Coop and the nascent Murihiku Community Garden Network update us on their activities on pg 9 and our lovely local contributors fill us in on their seasonal activities on pg 11.

If you're looking for some recipe inspiration, see what Evita and Nick have to offer on pg 12.

There's plenty else to read and to learn from. And keep in mind that the Environment Centre has a great stock of potential health-giving gifts. Call in to check them out!

Seasons greetings to you all and big thanks for all your support throughout 2025!

Wendy, Editor

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

The Society's vision is a connected and flourishing Southland where there are leaders, resources, systems and examples available to assist and support people and communities to adopt resilient lifestyles and care for and about their environment.

The Riverton Environment Centre, 154 Palmerston Street, is open 10am - 4.30pm 6 days, and 1.30pm - 4.30pm Sundays.

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.

The Shelves of Rex

The Environment Centre shelving was past its 'used by' date; old, ad hoc, and mis-matched.

Volunteer Rex readily stepped up. He had a vision which he set-about making a reality. He also had pallets that he knew he could dissemble and re-assemble into two elegant, free-standing, multi-levelled shelves. He sawed and screwed. The shelves became actual, rather than virtual.

Then Rex was faced with a problem; how to get the new shelves from his Gore workshop to Riverton. They were too big to fit in the back of his vehicle. Answer, he kit-setted them, unscrewing them for the journey then refitting them in Riverton.

One of Rex's superbly finished shelves. A delight to behold!

They are better than any of us had hoped for – sizeable, sturdy and way better than anything you'd find at Ikea. Keen Centre staff soon filled the shelves with Christmas goodies; you can visit and see the fabulous selection anytime. It all looks rather special, thanks to our rather special volunteer cabinet-maker, Rex.

Robert

Thank you to our supporters!

Community Trust South
TE POU ARATAKI POUNAMU O MURIHIKU

Supported by Lotto New Zealand
Funded by NZ Lottery Grants Board

Environment Hubs Aotearoa

wastenet southland

SOUTHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

MURIHIKU KAI COLLECTIVE

Full Crunch

Salads should be in full swing now, featuring such delights as colourful lettuces, tasty chicories and crunchy pea shoots. You may be lucky enough to be picking asparagus - which is unrivalled when eaten fresh and raw - or even the tender new growths of hostas and Miyoga ginger.

Many salad vegetables don't really appreciate the hotter months, so if you have a cooler spot in your garden that gets some afternoon shade, pop some seedlings or sow some seeds in here - save the sunniest spots for the heat lovers - tomatoes, basil, zucchini and their relatives.

Check any early potatoes for harvestable tubers by having a tickle around under the soil - you may be surprised. Some varieties (like Rocket and Swift) produce a harvestable crop in only two months, so if you were onto it in October (or earlier) there should be some of these most delectable treats ready for you!

If you're having a go at saving seeds from autumn-sown winter vegetables like purple sprouting broccoli, kale, mizuna or silverbeet, they will have big stalks and lots of flowers by now - keep an eye out for hungry finches, as they seem to love a nice snack of immature seeds and make sure your plants are staked to protect them from the wind.

I was asked recently how we manage the fertility in our home garden. As regular readers will know, we use some compost and, increasingly, cover crops (as we should really be able to almost replace compost with these), but with the arrival of our electric mower (and the increased growth of the grass) we have been focusing more on using fresh grass clippings as mulch.

The beauty of this is that the fresh grass (and the clover and other broadleaf 'weeds') are very high in nitrogen, which is exactly what our rapidly-growing vegetables need. Rather than mow, then take the grass clippings to the compost, then bring the compost back in six months, we simply mow and mulch straight away. The mulch provides nutrients but also organic matter, plus it helps keep moisture in the soil. Wonderful!

Nick

A garden that needs mulching and a path that needs mowing.

Mowed path, mulched garden!

Saving Seed at the Aparima College School & Community Garden

In spring some of the plants that had made it through winter, providing greens through the cold season, decided that they had done their dash and it was time to reproduce. The purple sprouting broccoli, kale, and silverbeet all started sending out those longer shoots, the leaves getting smaller, and little yellow flowers started to appear.

I was at first, ever so diligent in, snapping those off as soon as they appeared, but after doing some research in my trusty seed saving book, I decided that we would have a go at saving seed from these wonderful plants. Luckily for us, Russian Kales and Purple Sprouting Broccoli are not, in fact, the same species, so both can go to seed at the same time with no risk of crossing. If they were the same species we would have had to quickly choose one and pull out the other.

The absolute best thing about keeping plants around to save seed is all of the flowers. For weeks we have enjoyed the waving yellow brassica flowers, adding colour, and for some, food. Many pollinators have visited these flowers, helping to ensure that we will get a good seed set, and getting well earned nectar for their hard work. There have been bumble bees, honey bees, and all manner of other insects that I do not have the skills to identify.

It has been such a pleasure to hear the happy insects buzzing around and to see seed pods starting to ripen as evidence of all of the pollination going on. Soon we will have hundreds, if not thousands, of sprouting broccoli, kale, silverbeet, and broad bean seeds to share through the Southland Seed Savers.

Besides the seed crops, the garden is going gangbusters; lettuces and radishes are growing out of our ears, zucchini just starting to produce in the tunnel house, while the outdoor plants are putting on their first flowers. Come on by the garden or Riverton Environment Centre to see what's growing!

Rebecca

Left to right: Many different insects - hoverflies, bumblebees and... what is this one?

Exciting Heritage Orchard Update

Funding Application

For many years I have been dreaming about getting our heritage apple collection DNA tested to hopefully reveal the many varieties that I've been unable to manually identify. Previous funding applications have been turned down due to 'no commercial interest", or 'Diversity' only applying to native plants.

This year our Open Orchard Team has been working on applying to the National Lotteries Heritage and Culture Fund (seemed a good fit). Problem was we lacked all-important information about testing costing and how to get our samples to the Northern Hemisphere. Time was running out for us to meet the 3 December deadline.

Then SCES supporter Chris Wells from Palmerston, came down for our Bountiful Backyards event and attended our AGM. He shared some good ideas and then 'IT' happened. He knew the right people, i.e. the father of Aaron, the Otago University student who had just carried out a research project including DNA testing of 96 of the Otago Tree Crops heritage apple collection to identify the varieties.

How exciting! Before long Aaron and I were enthusiastically talking. We share a passion for identifying the mysterious old apple varieties that arrived into southern NZ with the first European settlers. Aaron had everything we needed to complete our funding application, i.e. a DNA testing quote and timeline information. Plus, he was able to get the approval from Plant Food Research NZ for our project to go through the same channels that he had used to get the Otago samples to France for the 'SNP" (DNA) analysis.

We were thrilled. With Aaron's support we met the application deadline. Now we are awaiting the response!

Working Together

This season, as well as checking which of our orchard parks trees are 'doubles', we will go to Otago in autumn and check through their information about their 96 trees that Aaron has already had DNA-identified to minimise the chances of doubling up. He will come and work with me summer 26/27 to help gather and prepare for sending away our first 96 (a batch size) unique samples. Then in July 2027 will be time to get the results. Exciting! More identification means more apple stories and history for us to research and share.

Proposed Southland Heritage Orchard Trail

In the application we also applied for funding to undertake research about the early European settlers, with the goal of establishing a Southland Heritage Orchard Trail around the 15 Orchard Parks, telling the stories of settlers and the history and diverse origins of the trees they planted.

We are very grateful to Chris for coming south and sharing the very valuable connection that has enabled us to submit the funding application.

We Need You!

Become a friend of your local Orchard Park and to help support the launch of the Heritage Orchard Trail in the summer of 27/28.

Having more local people being Friends of their Heritage Orchard Park means greater local ownership of the Parks. Friends can help when they can at a two - three hour seasonal working bee four times a year. One or two local people are needed to coordinate the gatherings. Our SCES Open Orchard Team can be there to teach and support where needed, with each park having its own information folder for reference.

Your community can add value to their local park by caring for the trees, planting herbs and wildflowers, adding a picnic table, organising local events like a Teddy Bear's picnic etc.

Perhaps a local café could sell heritage apple juice and apple cake promoted on the Southland Heritage Orchard Trail, which could include opportunities for local crafts people to sell orchard-themed products.

This will be an internationally unique experience. Let's work together to make it special.

Robyn

To get involved, email: openorchard@sces.org.nz
You can donate to support this great project here: www.sces.org.nz/fruittreesale

Longwood Loop Update

The Longwood Loop on-line farmers market (started Aug 2021) has just completed another successful year! We've seen some amazing produce and products in the van, from huge onions to shiny yams, beautiful plants to delicious baking.
We have welcomed six new producers; we now have over 30.

· Five Bakers and four Market Gardeners
· 10 home gardens / orchards growing a bit extra to sell or just selling their excess
· Hazel nut and mushroom products, jams, chutneys, eggs including duck and geese!
· Homemade soap, herbal skin items, honey, plants, seeds and seedlings

In the early years you had to shop early Monday mornings to get bunches of carrots or eggs, but now with extra capacity most items are still available when the shop closes at 4pm on Wednesdays. We are ready now to advertise for more customers to take advantage of all that is being offered.






In the last year we facilitated trading of nearly $30,000 of goods from local suppliers to customers with the van delivering to 12 communities. Another $25,000 from the Loop was sold through the Riverton Environment Centre, our 'not for profit' retail base for our Western Southland producers.

All this helps build local enterprises and community resilience. If we get a bunch of new regular customers and suppliers, we will pass the break-even point and make the whole trading system totally self-sustaining into the future.

Please spread the word to others who could join this already nationally admired community project. In the last year Robyn presented at the NZ Farmers Market Conference and talked to communities in Raglan and Wellington about what we do. They were very impressed and inspired to look into replicating the project in their areas.

With Road User Charges now being applied to electric vehicles, we pay these charges. The van is also now requiring annual servicing, costing around $250 each year ($244 this year). We have reduced the growers' payment by 1% (they now get 89% of the sale proceeds.) to help cover part of the costs incurred by the van. Customers can make a donation towards the van costs, which is always appreciated; there is a 'special' tab on the Longwood Loop shopping platform.

We now have online Stripe payments to Open Food Network which accepts both debit and credit cards. Customers can pay as they check out which removes a lot of admin time that has been spent matching payments in the bank account with orders, and reminding people who forget to pay, or refunding people who pay but do not 'complete' their order. The Loop pays the first 1% of the Stripe fees to ease this extra cost for customers, plus the checkout is way simpler now and exact. If using Stripe is a barrier for you to buy from the Loop let us know and we will put in another option.

There's a lot of interest building in starting a second Loop using our van, this time in inland Southland. Once we have a cluster of producers/ growers and a list of potential customers, we can explore this further. Contact us if you are interested and I will pass your details on to Rebecca in Edendale who is co-ordinating this second Loop proposal.
Thank you everyone for your support and interest and a special big thank you to our volunteer team members who make it all work! We look forward to continuing growth of the Longwood Loop, and may the concept inspire other rural communities to move towards localised food systems.
Shop here: www.sces.org.nz/longwood-loop
Get in touch: thelongwoodloop@gmail.com

Robyn

Bountiful Backyards 2025

October 4th & 5th saw another wonderful weekend of learning, connection and fun. Although numbers were lower than we would have liked, everyone who came along said they had a great time and really appreciated the knowledge, ideas and inspiration shared.

Left: Plants and conversations galore; Right: The kids thought Evita's bliss ball workshop was a real treat!

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Having just finished putting together our end-of-financial year Performance Report to the Charities Commission (an annual requirement of being a registered charity) it is a good time to share some of our achievements! Note: this information is for the financial year ending June 2025.

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS SAY?

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE SAY?

STEVE BROAD, MURIHIKU KAI COLLECTIVE

(SCES') work reinforces the culturally significant role of kai in supporting sustainable long-term wellbeing, connection, and community capability. Their commitment to these outcomes benefits not only Western Southland but the wider Murihiku region.

What a treasure we have here in the people with knowledge, willing to share. Thank you all.

ELLEN F, BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS ATTENDEE

JANICE LEE, KOHA KAI

In my view, investing in and supporting SCES will be a value proposition for the Hapori o Murihiku.

Was such a good weekend enjoyed by our family. Thanks so much, look forward to future events!

REBECCA H, HARVEST FESTIVAL ATTENDEE

SUZIE BEST, SOUTHLAND HISTORIAN

Important work that's helping to preserve aspects of the area's diverse heritage.

Local food security is an imperative element of building resilience and well-being across Southland and the education provided by (SCES) is already a key player in this arena...

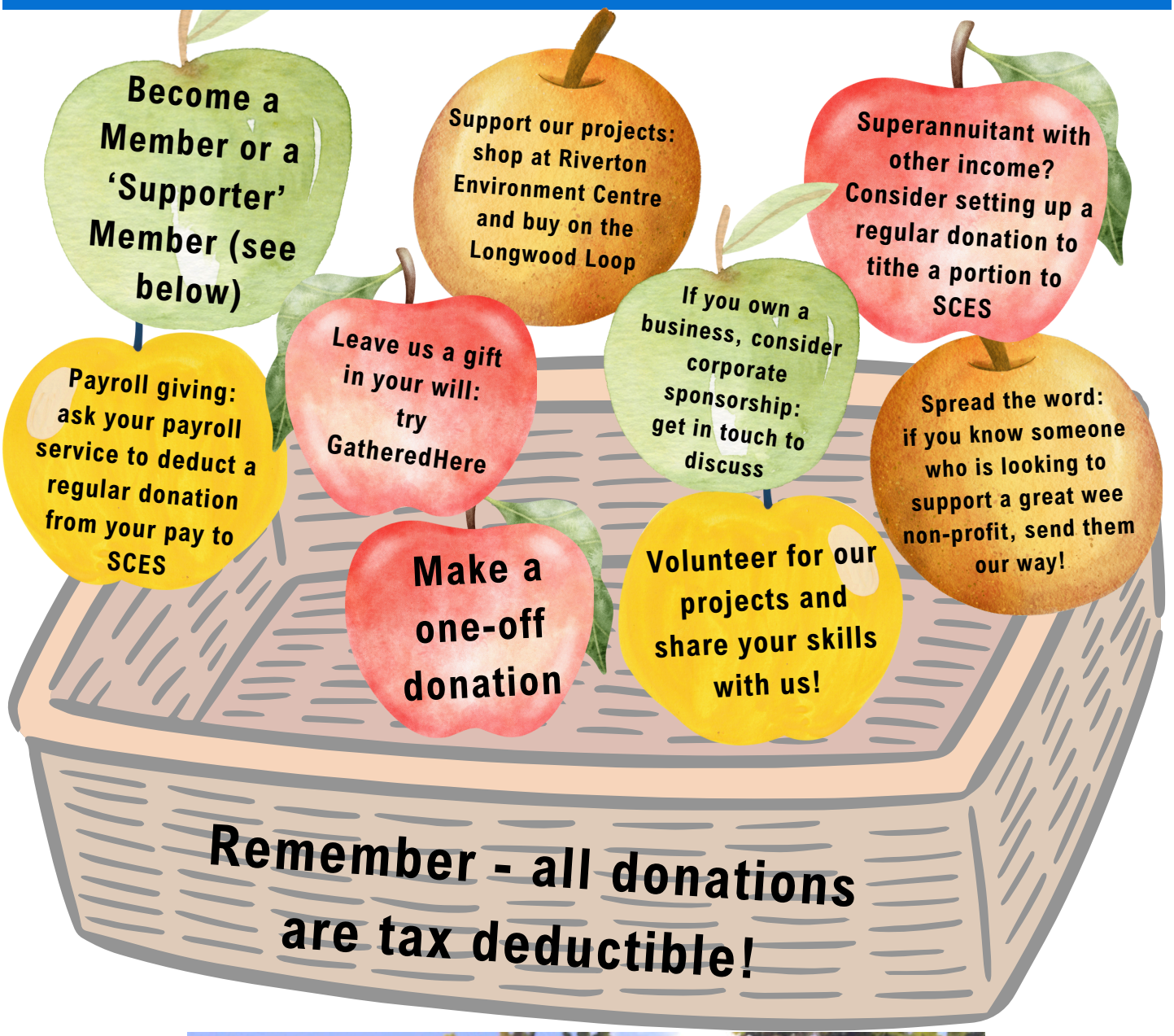
DR. ANNA PALLISER, SOUTHERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

LAUREN RICHARDSON, HEALTHY FAMILIES INVERCARGILL

(SCES is) a stellar example of an organisation working with the community and for the community.

$172,740 **$220,880**

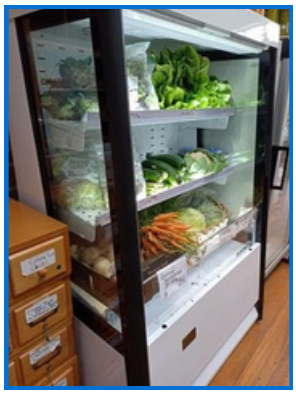
$48,140 shortfall!


Become a Member or a 'Supporter' Member (see below)
Support our projects: shop at Riverton Environment Centre and buy on the Longwood Loop
Superannuitant with other income? Consider setting up a regular donation to tithe a portion to SCES
Payroll giving: ask your payroll service to deduct a regular donation from your pay to SCES
Leave us a gift in your will: try GatheredHere
If you own a business, consider corporate sponsorship: get in touch to discuss
Spread the word: if you know someone who is looking to support a great wee non-profit, send them our way!
Make a one-off donation
Volunteer for our projects and share your skills with us!
Remember - all donations are tax deductible!


WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT
Become a 'Supporter' Member
We have a new membership category for those who can contribute more than the standard membership donation.
It's a way that you can help SCES maintain a strong base, from which we can grow our projects and deliver our services within our community.
$200 per year ($16.60 per month)
Annual Supporter Perks include:
- 50% off SCES workshops
- A Forest Garden Tour for up to 6 people
- Advance fruit tree and festival tickets ordering
- Your name listed on our website as a key supporter (optional)
Please go to www.sces.org.nz/membership to learn more and to become a Supporter Member!

Riverton Organic Food Co-op News

New Chiller Just Arrived!



Chilling.

We have needed a fresh produce chiller for so very long; essential for maintaining produce in its best condition for sale and avoiding wastage.

Last month we found a smaller one at a good price. We had not bought any expensive items or needed to spend our small regular savings for unexpected expenses, for the last few years, so our reserves were hovering around $5,000.

Being a not-for-profit volunteer group we didn't want to put the price up on already expensive organic food, as we are here to make healthy and local food affordable. Previously chillers have been too big and expensive for the Environment Centre (way over $10,000).

The chiller we've now bought cost $7,000 – it is a lot, but in the long term the savings on lost produce will pay for it. Hopefully we will have a good busy summer.

Come in and check it out. See all the fresh local produce looking at their tempting best.
No more limp lettuces for us!

Robyn

More Volunteers Welcome!

We welcome volunteers from all walks of life. There is literally something for everyone to do; young to mature aged, able bodied and restricted, parent with preschooler, school age students, employed with a few spare hours, unemployed, retired, new to town, learning English, working from home and everyone else. We are a team of friendly, welcoming people. If you or someone you know has time to contribute, we offer a lot of opportunities to learn new skills, meet new people, get a reference for your CV and more.

We have a range of tasks including pricing, bagging up produce, serving customers, filling shelves, cleaning, etc. We endeavour to match tasks with what our volunteers like to do. It is a supportive, fun environment. Volunteers can do as many hours as they wish, e.g. 1-2 hours a week, or once a month, on a casual basis or regular slots with cover if you cannot make it sometimes.

Just call in or email us organicfood@sces.org.nz

Murihiku Community Garden Network – Growing Together

Right across Southland, community gardens are becoming hubs of connection, resilience and education, and a new Murihiku Community Garden Network is forming to help amplify that work.

It's already bringing together gardens from across the region, including Riverton, Invercargill, Fiordland, Riversdale, Gore, Mataura, and Bluff, as well as groups such as marae, Pasifika and migrant communities, Age Concern, Plunket, Koha Kai, Spirit Army, schools, and local kindergartens. The network is open to anyone, with a focus on sharing, collaboration, and action. The goal is simple, to strengthen the great work already being done while encouraging more community-led garden spaces.

What's already happening shows how powerful collaboration and community-led solutions can be. The South Coast Environment Society is a key player, supporting the Congolese and Glengarry gardens with knowledge and resources. Bainfield Gardens is supporting groups including South Alive with volunteers and working bees. Groups are sharing ideas, trialling new ways of distributing kai, and benefiting from seedlings grown at Invercargill Prison.

Engaging schools is also becoming part of the vision, supporting learning in the gardens, helping disperse kai to families, and giving tamariki first-hand experience of local food systems. More shared initiatives are on the way in 2026, from coordinated garden tours and open days to programmes teaching whānau how to cook with what's grown

A strong network will support solutions around volunteers, health and safety, infrastructure, landowner agreements, and funding. It also strengthens the fabric outlined in Feeding Murihiku: Good Food Road Map, communities working together to build a more resilient, connected food system grounded in partnership and community-led action.

Together, these volunteers are growing more than gardens. They're growing a stronger Southland.

Steve, the Kai Guy

For a Forest Garden Tour

Visitors to our forest garden reflect upon their experience with words that express ... joy!

Whether it's the encouraging storytelling of Robert & Robyn, or the dialogue that forms with the garden herself as the tour unfolds, nobody really knows, but what ever the process, the result seems to be inspiration and an encouragement to return to whatever place and space the visitors come from, and add what they've seen and learned into their own activities.

New plants, a diversity of plants, a plethora of plants seems to be an encouragement to try some or many of the approaches observed here, to the "home paddock". Follow-ups, of course, will prove the theory right or wrong and many of those are calendared.

Garden tours at our Thames Street address feel good and worthwhile; birds chirp and coo, the sun beams (usually), the pace slows and ideas coalesce.

If you harbour a desire, please get in touch with the Centre, through its website (sces.org.nz) or ring (032348717) and book a walkabout in the forest garden.

We'd love to meet you and walk you through the garden.

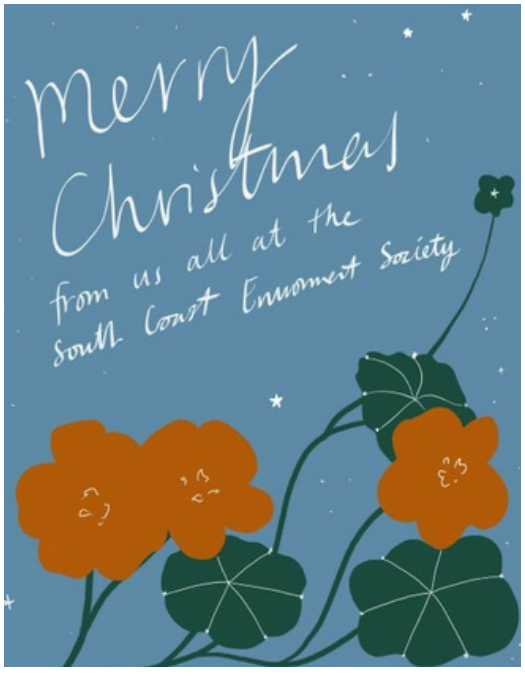
Robert

For some Great Gift Ideas from Riverton Environment Centre

The Environment Centre stocks lots of lovely goodies to give to your loved ones, at Christmas or any time! By buying from a local producer or craftsperson you know your money will circulate further in our local economy.

There are also many other items sourced from around New Zealand and the world including perfect gifts for gardeners, foodies and those seeking to reduce their waste by using well-made, long-lasting household items. You can also find vouchers for in-store or for Forest Garden Tours (see below).

Above left: There are some very clever craftspeople in our community;
Above right: A great selection for the gardener in your life.



Local Shop Supplier Highlight - Southland Mushrooms

Based in Invercargill, Southland Mushrooms have been growing and selling mushrooms since April of 2023 at the Southern Farmers Market. Gustavo Ferreira is the mushroom entrepreneur. Gustavo found that the encouraging early demand meant he had to quite quickly shift his growing operation from his laundry to a building he leases at the racecourse.

The farm produces a range of fresh mushrooms, 'mushroom jerky' (dehydrated mushrooms with a range of flavourings), grow kits, and several fermented umami sauces (called 'mushroom Shoyu') made from "offcuts". There is therefore no waste produced and Gustavo says "I'm definitely the first one making a commercial mushroom soy sauce-like product in NZ". The jerky and sauce are available at the Environment Centre and on the Longwood Loop and a lovely gift box is available at the Centre in time for Christmas gift giving.

Umami (one of the 5 basic tastes) is what people taste through taste receptors that typically respond to glutamates and nucleotides, which are widely present in meat broths and fermented products. Here are some ideas from Evita on how to use the Shoyu sauces.

The sweet version can be used to make a tasty salad dressing: use 1 tablespoon of marmalade, 1 ½ tablespoons of shoyu, and 1 tablespoon of water (with ½ tablespoon olive oil optional) and mix well before drizzling. The smokey flavoured shoyu can be used for marinading any meat: 30 minutes for chicken, 1 hour for other meat. Simply combine shoyu and sesame oil in the ratio 1 tablespoon shoyu to 1 teaspoon of oil with crushed garlic cloves to taste (2 or more depending on how much meat you are preparing). The liquid umami, or 'original' flavour can be used as flavouring in place of soy sauce for any dishes such as stir fry, risotto, sushi, vegetable frittatas, asian noodles and so on.

Left: Tahini noodle dish from Evita's workshop at Bountiful Backyards - an example dish that could use umami shoyu (Sauce is made by combining 2 tablespoons of tahini, 1 tablespoon of shoyu, 1 tablespoon of any vinegar, ½ tablespoon of sugar, stirred well with 2 tablespoons of hat water; garlic or chilli optional).

Dylan and Evita

Workshops

Dylan, Evita and Nick ran some workshops in November and December sharing their knowledge about water harvesting, solar energy, ointment making, harakeke weaving and developing shelter. All attendees had a blast, but attendance was lower than hoped. For us to feel confident about offering workshops we need people to come along - keep an eye on our website for upcoming offerings.

Evita says to plant Wombok (Chinese Cabbage) NOW (Kings Seeds available at the Centre) if you want to make kimchi in March - she will be offering a kimchi making workshop at the Harvest Festival. They should be grown close together, about 10-15cm apart so they touch each other as they grow bigger in order to form upright heads.

Podcast: Bioneers

BIONEERS

"Bioneers is inspiring and realizing a shift to live on Earth in ways that honor the web of life, each other and future generations." This American podcast covers biomimicry, ecological design, social and racial justice, women's leadership, ecological medicine, indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and psychology. Find an episode on your podcast app you like the sound of and have a listen.

Dylan

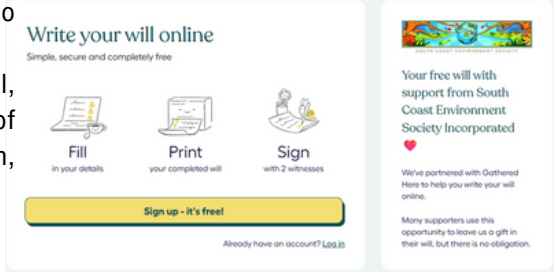
GatheredHere Reminder: The opportunity to create a life-changing legacy

If you haven't had a chance to write your online will yet, there's still time to get involved.

You don't have to pledge a gift to SCES in order to claim the free online will, but we'd be incredibly grateful if you were able to include us; even a gift of just 1% of your estate could help us continue and expand our outreach, while still allowing you to make financial provisions for your family.

Write your will with this link: https://wills.gatheredhere.com/nz/c/sces

More info: https://www.sces.org.nz/leave-us-a-gift



Trish Picks Perennial Plants

Are all your leafy greens going to seed right now? Ours aren't and that's because we grow a 'forever kale', in fact we grow a small hedge of it. D'Aubenton perennial kale is as nutritious as annual kale and far less work.

In a busy year or in a small low maintenance garden perennial kale can form a lovely small bush and will keep growing food without needing much attention. This kale grows to about a metre by a metre (but can go bigger if you don't pick it!); it is the nicest perennial kale for the home garden. Some varieties have very large leaves and flop about. Some don't cope as well with cold damp winters and some are better established as a wonderful low maintenance fodder for poultry.

D'Aubenton Kale seems to cope well with both damp and dry conditions and keeps growing well in our cool temperate winters. Perennial kales are very easy to propagate by cutting, just cut a small branch and put it in the soil.

It has higher ecological value than annual kale because it requires fewer inputs than annual kale. Available all year round therefore enables resiliency in human high nutrient food access. Perennial nutrient dense food for poultry and humans. Soil remains undisturbed therefore creating healthy habitat for soil micro organisms. What is not to like?

For the plant to thrive it needs moist soil, full sun. Add compost every couple of years. As branches droop down you can pin them into the soil and they will form new roots and renew plant vigour.

Easy Meal Idea

Chop up finely (remove the stalks as they can be tough). Put chopped up leaves in a pot with water (up to your knuckle) and boil until tender. Drain off the liquid (quite tasty if you want to drink it). Add a simple dressing of a nice tasting oil - we use a New Zealand rapeseed oil, cider vinegar and a dash of Tamari (a fermented soy sauce). Check for the taste and mix in the cooked Kale leaves.

Trish,
Gardens for Life

Peat Picks Peak Perfection

As Christmas grows nearer and the summer heat begins to melt me like a snowflake in a bloomery, I start to question why I didn't appreciate the winter more.

On the other hand, summer has its positives: the blueberries, strawberries and any type of berry I can think of are growing ripe on their bushes, fruit are appearing on the trees and - possibly the most exiting thing of all - elderflower trees are in full bloom with their sweet smelling clusters of tiny flowers ready for harvest!

This is the perfect time to indulge in that age-old tradition which my family love so much, the making of elderflower champagne, syrup and dried elderflower tea.

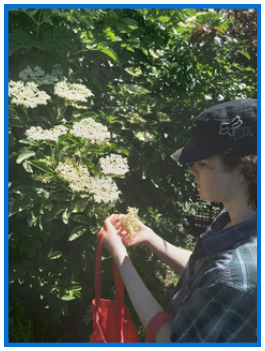
I imagine many families have done this and will do this in the future, but for those who haven't, I reccomend trying it out!

You're almost guaranteed to enjoy the sweet, fizzy soft drink that you get as a result, just be sure to use strong bottles...

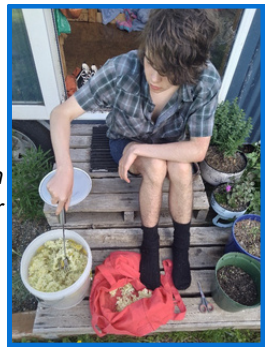
Otherwise you'd better be ready to clean up the mess!

[Recipe on Page 12]

Peat



Another summer, another batch of elderflower 'champagne'.



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

Robert Picks Prolonged Production

Summer, it's claimed, has arrived. We shall see. A combination of heat and rain is a good one, if you're a relaxed gardener. There is much growth.

I'm planting-out like crazy, hoping to get as many of my nursery-grown trees, shrubs and others, into the soil of the wild, open garden, before any dry-time arrives, This means activity and focus, rather than wind-down and easing-up, as suggested by the nearness of Christmas and all that asks for.

Is this a time for setting-aside garden requirements? No, my vegetative mind says, resist the temptation to ease off, delay and put on the back-burner plant-related activities; perhaps in the Northern Hemisphere and the White Christmas lauded there, but not here, where growth is rampant, snow comes out of a pressured can.

Keep focused on the garden, don't be allured by the jingle-jangle of Christmas and invest now in the produce and beauty that can be yours through the December/January/February months, if you so choose.

Robert

Seasonal Recipes

Quick Summer Vege Pickle

This is a simple short-pickling recipe that's common in Taiwan. You can swap cucumbers with courgettes, onions, cabbages or even pre-boiled wood-ear mushrooms. You can also add extra garlic, ginger or chilli in the sauce for your liking. I sometimes use the spiced apple shrub sold at Riverton Environment Centre for different tastes, it's a great summer dish.

Ingredients

- 2 cucumbers
- 1 Tsp salt
- 2 Tblsp apple cider vinegar
- 1.5 Tblsp sugar or honey
- 1 Tsp sesame oil (optional)
- ½ Tblsp soy sauce / tamari / liquid umami
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed

Top: a bowl of crushed cucumber and sliced courgette each after salting.
Bottom: salted cucumber and courgette with some sauces that can be purchased at the centre.

Method

Use a wide-blade knife to crush the cucumbers. Or you can slice them, but the crushing creates more surface area to absorb the sauce in a short period of time.
Put the crushed cucumbers into a bowl with the salt, massage in slowly to release the moisture from the cucumbers. Let sit for half an hour.

Meanwhile, mix the apple cider vinegar, sugar or honey, sesame oil, soy sauce and garlic together in another bowl.
After 30 minutes, drain the cucumber and rinse once with filtered water, then pour the sauce in with the cucumbers.

Mix well and leave it for an hour at room temperature before enjoying it or place in the fridge for up to 6 hours to absorb the flavour fully.

Evita

Elderflower 'Champagne'

This is such a simple brew and produces the most amazing fizzy beverage. It is all 'to taste' so if you like sweetness, add more sugar; if you prefer a 'dry' drink, add less. It will be less sweet when it's ready as the wild yeast turns the sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. The exact amount of alcohol is difficult to determine but it is likely to be very low (around 1%). There are so many variations of this recipe, so experiment away!

Ingredients (makes about ten litres)

- 10 - 20 elderflower heads (well shaken to dislodge any tiny insects)
- 1.5 - 2.5kg sugar
- 1 - 2 lemons
- Splash of cider vinegar
- Filtered water

Left: Elderflowers are distinctive and have a beautiful perfume.
Right: Summer is for bare feet and elderflowers!

Dissolve the sugar in the water in a ten litre food-grade bucket (have a taste to see if you want to add more).
Thinly slice the lemons and chuck them in.
Pour in a splash of cider vinegar.
Flamboyantly add the flowers.
Mix and leave covered for a few days.

After the brew has sat for a few days, srain and pour through a funnel into clean bottles that can handle some pressure (fizzy drink bottles are good). Leave it for a couple of weeks, releasing some gas from the bottles every few days.
Do not shake! Enjoy chilled.

Nick