



COASTLINE

SPRING 2026

PG 1	30 Years celebrated
PG 2	Editorial Gardening Role Grafting Day
PG 3	Gardening: The Weather! Granddad's Diary
PG 4	Projects: Open Orchards
PG 5	Projects: School Compost Community Forest Garden
PG 6	What Happens on the Longwood Loop?
PG 7	What Happens on the Longwood Loop?
PG 8	Get Hands-On: Use Mulch
PG 9	Trish's Perennial Rocket Workshops Book Review
PG 10	Community: Our Volunteers New Teacher at Aparima
PG 11	Community: Lin Haven Guyton's Forest Garden
PG 12	Seasonal Recipes Waste-Free Tea

30 Years Celebrated

On the 19th July, Riverton Environment Centre had a luncheon to celebrate 30 years of operating seven days a week, with over 40 people attending. Being mainly staffed by volunteers over the years, this is no mean feat. It was lovely to catch up with everyone and reminisce about the many workshops, festivals, events and projects we have held - and most are still going strong.

On display were also the dozens of media articles, 30 years of our Coastline Newsletter and much more.

Want to be part of the next decade? Come into the Centre and find out how you can help with one or some of our exciting projects.

Cutting the cakes are the people involved in the first decade: From left Marijke Aalders, Robert Guyton, Robyn Guyton, Hollie Guyton, Jacqui Anderson, Elizabeth Simonka, Tim Anderson and Peter Aalders (Hollie was a baby when the Centre started but she was always there helping out with her mum 😊).



DATES TO DIARY:

14 October, Tue	SCES Committee Meeting
26 October, Mon	Forest Garden Tours Begin
14 November, Sat (TBC)	Bountiful Backyards Workshop Day

UP FRONT

Editorial

Rain, rain, rain – beautiful rain!

So sang Ladysmith Black Mambazo, delighting in the thing their parched landscape of South Africa was receiving at the time – they might love Southland at the present moment! It's not parched or arid here, to put it mildly; wettest winter since forever, the media tells us and we know, we can see it and feel it down the backs of our necks.

I've washing on the line, continuing the washing process. There are no dusty cars parked on Riverton's main street, nor dusty birds neither. The plants, needless to say, are loving it!

Dry springs worry me, where they look to continue through to summer so I'm carrying no stress of that sort just now. With buds bursting throughout the orchard; quinces and plums in particular, apples and pears following closely behind, it bodes well for the coming season of growth. Who knows though, about fruiting.

Last spring was cold and it seemed obvious that we'd get a poor harvest from our fruit trees, given there was nary a pollinating bee to be seen braving the low temperatures in order to visit the blossom but, low and behold, the harvest in autumn was huge from almost every tree! plums through to peaches, so go figure! I don't know what the rhyme is, nor the reason for fruit-success or otherwise.

In this issue of Coastline there is some weather-related lamentation but mostly celebration - of our tremendous 30 year achievement, of Riverton Environment Centre's welcoming abundance, the exciting next step for the Open Orchard project and our reach into Southland schools.

We also acknowledge another amazing cohort of volunteers and a new environmental teacher at Aparima College and share Dylan and Evita's progress with becoming an Ecosystem Restoration Community - a great achievement.

Robert

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.

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.



Gardener Role

We have an opportunity for a keen community-focused gardener to join our team five hours per week.

The role is based at Aparima College School & Community Garden and would involve organising and working alongside volunteers from the community as well as students from the College.

This role would ideally suit a local person who can work when the weather is good, and someone who has experience managing a large garden organically and organising and enthusing volunteers.

If you think this could suit you please get in touch with Robyn Guyton at Riverton Environment Centre:

(03) 234 8717

robyn@sces.org.nz



Grafting Day in Lumsden

After a 'thunderstormy' night the rain cleared just in time and we had a lovely afternoon outside in the sun at the Lumsden Community Nursery.

A good bunch of ladies came and had fun choosing and grafting their apple varieties.

It was especially wonderful to see their amazingly tidy and organised nursery, raised beds packed with mainly natives. Everything looked so healthy.

Check it out next time you are in Lumsden. They will open up for you to buy plants if you contact them.



A keen bunch of grafters enjoying some sun in Lumsden.

Robyn

Riverton Environment Centre is located at 154 Palmerston Street, Riverton. Opening hours are:

Monday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:30pm,

Sunday 1:30 - 4:30pm.



GARDENING

The Weather is... The Weather

We all do it... get excited about the first glimpses of spring and want to start sowing and planting.

But of course every year the same thing happens - the sun comes out, it's lovely and then, all of a sudden it's not. It is the time of year for moderating our enthusiasm!

But actually, it's the time of year for understanding what it is the time of year for: cool-climate vegetables. Chief among these early spring stars is surely peas. Is there anything else (apart from spring lambs perhaps) that holds so much promise on a dreary day as those fresh bright green shoots leaping out of cold wet ground?

Broad beans are if anything, tougher than peas, but perhaps less enthusiastically looked-forward-to. Lettuces, chicories and endives also are quite happy to sprout now and make a good start on your seasonal food production. After a winter of root vegetables and hail-damaged old kale and silverbeet leaves, it is a real treat to have soft greens in a salad again.

If you have a heat pad, by all means start sowing some less hardy veg, like tomatoes and peppers. But if you're limited to outside sowing, just focus on getting peas and broad beans underway. A cheeky row of carrots could work if you have a warmer, more sheltered spot - have a go and see what works for you!

Nick



Broad beans - surely the toughest vegetable you can grow!



Robert's Key Tasks for Spring

Clear your gutters. Clear a friend's gutters. Unblock blocked drains, look for places where water pools and dig a channel for the water to flow away down.

That's pretty much it for this particular spring. You might like to sow seeds of plants that like to get underway at this time of the year but I recommend doing that under-cover; a tunnel house is good, or the kitchen table if you are able to get away with that sort of carry-on. It'll doubtless dry off and warm up soon. We're all waiting...

Editor's note: Apparently Southland has had the wettest winter in 46 years!

Robert



When will it end?

Bruce's Granddad's Garden Diary

It's always a treat to read an historic garden diary. Bruce recently stopped by to show us the one his Granddad started in 1925. Among the treasures within were, of course, recommendations for the use of lead arsenate and lindane as pest control - thank goodness we have moved on from that - as well as a newspaper snippet of a table which 'briefly shows how rich are home-grown vegetables'. We have always known how good vegetables are for us and modern science has clearly shown that the closer to fresh they are the more nutritious they are, hence why we still recommend that you 'grow vitamins in your garden'!

NAME	VIT. A	VIT. B	VIT. C	NAME	VIT. A	VIT. B	VIT. C
Asparagus, in 1 lb. cooked	15 I.U.	22 I.U.	7 Mill.	Celery, Tops, 1 lb. c.p.	320 I.U.	—	2 Mill.
Asparagus, in 1 lb. c.p.	15 I.U.	22 I.U.	7 Mill.	Celery, stalks, 1 lb. c.p.	21 I.U.	6 I.U.	2 Mill.
Beetroot, Green, 1 lb. c.p.	12000 I.U.	15 I.U.	28 Mill.	Corn, Sweet, 1 lb. c.p.	1250 I.U.	22 I.U.	4 Mill.
Broccoli, Red, 1 lb. c.p.	70 I.U.	21 I.U.	10 Mill.	Carrots, 1 lb. c.p.	2700 I.U.	22 I.U.	3 Mill.
Broccoli, Green, 1 lb. c.p.	12000 I.U.	15 I.U.	28 Mill.	Lettuces, Cos, 31 c.p.	8000 I.U.	18 I.U.	4.5 Mill.
Beans, Green, 1 lb. c.p.	600 I.U.	20 I.U.	7 Mill.	Lettuces, Cabbage, 1 head	180 I.U.	20 I.U.	4.5 Mill.
Beans, Wax, 1 lb. c.p.	410 I.U.	25 I.U.	—	Marrow, 1 lb. c.p.	170 I.U.	15 I.U.	3.5 Mill.
Brussels Sprouts, 4 oz. c.p.	1100 I.U.	50 I.U.	30 Mill.	Squash and Pumpkins, 4 oz. c.p.	2900 I.U.	21 I.U.	3.5 Mill.
Cabbage, 1 lb. c.p.	50 I.U.	20 I.U.	25 Mill.	Onion, Green, 1 lb. c.p.	6200 I.U.	—	—
Cauliflower, 1 lb. c.p.	—	35 I.U.	33 Mill.	Onion, Mature, 1 lb. c.p.	12 I.U.	10 I.U.	5 Mill.

PUMPKIN
Try Crown for early
V. fine flavour.
Matures before Triumbe.
Try Banana Squash.
Similar to pumpkin.
Good flavour dry when
cooked, excellent keeper.

B. Sprouts	J. of A. Jan/4
Broccoli	J. of A. Dec/4
CELERY	J. of A. Nov/4
SWEDS	J. of A. Oct/4
CAPE	J. of A. —
G. BERRIES	J. of A. —
BEANS	J. of A. Sept
PARSNIP	J. of A. 4/13 F
also	J. of A. Aug/4

It's also cool to see what historic gardeners grew - pretty much what we still grow - you just can't beat the old favourites (although I admit I struggle to grow decent Brussels Sprouts!).

And in a nice link to our Southland Seed Savers Network (even though Bruce's Granddad was gardening in Auckland), there is a recommendation to 'try Banana Squash', which is 'similar to pumpkin, good flavour, dry when cooked, excellent keeper'. Our Southland growers have had some success with this giant pink monster of a squash and you can get seeds at Riverton Environment Centre.

Thanks heaps Bruce for sharing your family treasure with us!

Nick

PROJECTS

Open Orchards: Exciting News!

Finally DNA testing of the unknown heritage apples in the Southland collection is going to happen November 2026. My dream is finally coming true!

Over 15 years I have managed to manually, with books and internet resources, identify over 80 varieties but another 100+ varieties I spent hours on each, never getting a match. So when I heard about DNA testing I was super excited as apples have a family tree just like humans and each pip is an offspring of all its ancestors. DNA will show us where it is in the apple family tree and often its name and origins can be automatically known if it's had its DNA tested elsewhere!

I had applied to six different funds over the last 10 years, but the project was never aligned closely enough to any of the funders and they were all declined. "Not enough commercial interest", "Only for museums", "Only for native biodiversity" etc.

It was with much envy I went to see the results of the Coastal Otago branch of the NZ Tree Crop Association's DNA test of 300 trees in autumn this year... if I only could have had 100 of those!

Aaron (the post-grad student who is studying the Otago collection) and I made another application, this time to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga's fund in autumn and once again we were declined: "not closely enough aligned to their aims". I thought 'I need to win Lotto myself to get the money'... sadly I didn't win Lotto either. Aaron was also feeling my pain.

Then last week I got an email from Aaron: Otago University have confirmed that Plant & Food Research will let them have the final 384 apple DNA samples and they need to be collected this year, as Plant and Food's contract with the providers will close.

Aaron says they will only cost \$38 per test and he will come down pro bono and get the samples for me. They have set aside at least 300 tests for our Open Orchard project! He asked am I keen to go ahead?

"Hey Robyn, thanks for the enthusiastic response! I am so happy that this is coming together and is possible!"

So in mid-November Aaron and I will be out there rain, hail or snow gathering all the different varieties that I have been so far unable to identify from my research that are being looked after in our 15 Heritage Orchard Parks. Then in a very short time frame we get the results: EXCITING!

We have some donations for this project held and fundraising from the last couple of years' Fruit tree sales but need to raise \$10,000 in eight weeks to make this a reality.

Please support our PledgeMe campaign: <https://pledgeme.co.nz/projects/9279-southland-open-orchard-project-uncovering-our-apples-heritage-with-dna-tests> There are lots of rewards available for a wide range of donations, including apple trees, fruit tasting boxes, orchard & forest garden tours, home orchard workshops and even getting to give your name to a brand new apple variety! **You can scan the QR code to go straight to the PledgeMe page:**



Above: some yet-to-be-identified apple varieties. Right: A new young tree grafted from one of the old ones in Captain Howell's original orchard (inset).

Thank you to our supporters!



PROJECTS

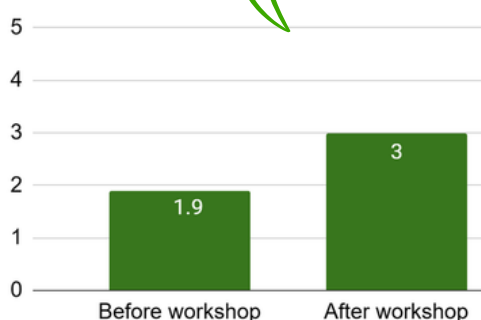
School Compost

We have reached the end of the main part of our school compost workshop collaboration with WasteNet Southland and Enviroschools. Next term we'll be popping back to the schools we visited in Term 3 for a quick check-in, to see how they are getting on and provide any tips or tweaks that may be required. We've been very impressed by the enthusiasm shown by the young people we've been working with - without exception they see the landfilling of food waste for what it really is - a massive waste of ratepayers' money!

It was great having Nick out here yesterday as it reminded us what we have to do. This is good for our school!

The composting workshops were run by knowledgeable, skilled facilitators who are very good with students.

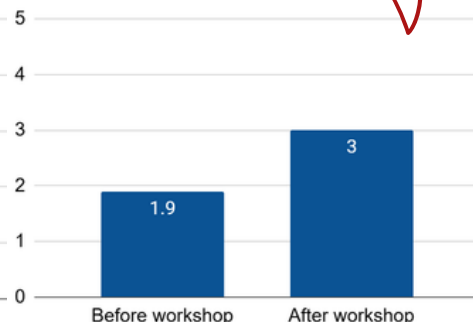
The composting workshop was a great success, and it was wonderful to see everyone so involved and enthusiastic.



On a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 is 'non-existent' and 5 is 'totally awesome', how would you rate your school's current composting system?



On a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 is 'non-existent' and 5 is 'totally awesome', how would you rate your staff's current knowledge of composting?



On a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 is 'non-existent' and 5 is 'totally awesome', how would you rate your students' / Envirogroup's current knowledge of composting?



Looks like we're doing pretty well! Nick

Does this worm farm contain Southland's most well-travelled worms?

Community Forest Garden

Peter Aalders has been doing such a great job maintaining the Community Forest Garden in the past few months. Since he and Marijke moved across the road Peter has been there nearly every day, trimming plants off the paths, pruning the fruit trees and generally making sure the place is easy to access and appreciate.

Peter has enlisted the extra help of two friendly hens who are working hard to convert some of the many insects present in the forest garden into eggs. They have made themselves comfortable in the teepee and are great at keeping the paths short.

If you haven't been for a wander in the Community Forest Garden recently, it's worth a visit - at the moment you can see the cow parsley and Alexanders growing strongly, which is how they can successfully outcompete annoying grasses. They have also started flowering, providing a very early source of nectar for the many beneficial insects that help control any potential orchard pests.



Community Forest Garden: a diverse, beautiful, productive community asset.

LONGWOOD LOOP: WEEKLY TIMELINE

What happens on

THE LONGWOOD LOOP

each week...?

1

Sunday by 4pm



Producers list their products on the Open Food Network.

2

Monday 10am



The online shop opens - a customer makes an order on her phone...*

*Customers who get in early get the pick of the bunch!

8

Thursday 12:30pm

Robert and volunteer load up the van* in Riverton and head off...



*The van is fully electric!



7

Thursday 12pm
Tuatapere producers get stuff ready for pickup.



BEAKS & BOULDERS
SOUTHLAND GROWN PASTURE RAISED



9

Thursday afternoon



The van picks up and drops off orders at the hubs.



Thursday afternoon

10



Happy customers start collecting orders from local hubs*.

*No customer needs to travel far to pick up at a hub!

3

Wednesday 4pm



The online shop closes - producers find out what they've sold!*

**Producers only need to pick or make what they have already sold!*

4

Thursday 10am



Local producers drop off at Riverton Environment Centre



Thursday 11am

6



Robyn & Trish work out the itinerary for this week's Loop

Thursday 11am

5



Otautau producers get stuff ready for pickup*.

**No producer needs to travel far to drop off at a hub!*

11

Monday 11am



Eliz at the Environment Centre gets customer payments to producers!*

**Your money circulates in the local economy!*

Congratulations!
You supported your community's resilience and wellbeing!



GET HANDS-ON!

How-to: Use mulch to build healthy soil and grow great vegetables

Mulch is a protective cover spread over exposed soil. Mulches can enhance conditions for root growth and the activity of soil organisms, which incorporate organic material into the soil to provide nutrients for plants.

Why use mulch?

Mulching can serve several purposes:

- Protecting soil
- Feeding plants
- Building soil
- Reducing weeds
- Improving growing conditions



Straw makes a great mulch for vegetable gardens.



Potatoes growing through sheet mulch (see below).

Protecting Soil

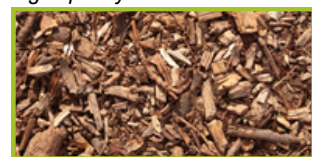
Soil can be damaged by excessive rain, wind or sun. It can dry out and blow away or be washed away. Mulch can cover the soil and reduce the impact of the elements. Any mulch will help protect soil, but light mulches such as straw can be blown away in strong winds. Plastic mulches also need to be secured firmly to the ground to prevent being blown away (plastic and cardboard mulches can also starve the soil of oxygen, so need to be used with caution).

Feeding Plants, Building Soil

Organic mulches like wood chips, straw or seaweed provide a wide range of nutrients to plants and food to soil organisms. As they break down, the nutrients are released and are available to the plants and the organic matter greatly improves the structure and quality of soil. An unmulched garden is unlikely to have significant numbers of soil building organisms in it - this is key to a healthy, productive soil. Plants like comfrey can be grown to be cut many times and used as nutritious mulch, while legumes like clover can be grown as a 'living mulch', to provide nitrogen to surrounding plants. Many people are now promoting the use of 'ramial wood chip', which is made from fresh branches of deciduous trees that are less than 7cm diameter. These branches are very high in enzymes, minerals and amino acids that soil fungi adore. These fungi rapidly break down the wood chip and turn it into high quality soil.



Arborist woodchips make a high-quality mulch material.



Reducing Weeds

Mulches used to suppress weeds typically need to block light. Heavy black plastic is an excellent choice for smothering existing weeds; Clear plastic can be used over summer, when the plastic intensifies the sun's heat, further inhibiting weed survival - this is called 'solarisation'. Cardboard is another easy-to-find biodegradable material for suppressing weeds (although it may contain small amounts of toxic chemicals so should not be used repeatedly). Most old woollen carpets in New Zealand have been treated with persistent toxic pesticides like DDT and Lindane, and plastic carpets will leave microplastics in the soil, so *do not use carpet as a mulch*!

Best Free Mulches

- **Autumn Leaves:** These make a wonderful mulch, especially for trees and shrubs. Tree leaves contain a good range of nutrients and minerals.
- **Wood chips:** Tree chippings can be excellent mulch, but will need to be left for about six months to a year to heat up and break down before use. Ramial wood chips are made from freshly cut and chipped small deciduous branches cut when trees have no leaves. It can be used immediately after chipping.
- **Seaweed:** Can be used fresh from the beach. If left over winter, it will rot down beautifully, providing a mineral-rich soil for spring planting.
- **Grass clippings and weeds:** Provide a nitrogen-rich mulch that will break down rapidly. Don't use perennial weeds that might regrow and cause more problems! Don't spread too thickly, as they may get smelly and slimy. Avoid grass clippings from sprayed lawns.

Sheet Mulch

Soil can also be created by 'sheet mulching', where lots of different organic materials are laid on the ground to break down over a period of time, like a spread-out compost heap. This method can be used to create a no-dig garden from scratch. Potatoes can also be grown very well in a sheet mulch, so that when they are harvested, the garden is ready for planting a new crop in the rich soil.

Instant no-dig garden beds

Available at
Riverton Environment Centre

Hammer in the nails...
Put it on the ground...
Fill it with compost...

And you're ready to grow!

Contains:
4 untreated boards
8 nails
2 sacks of organic
compost

\$50.00

Me and my Perennial Rocket Plant

Sitting down next to my perennial rocket plant and munching its spicy leaves is a real treat. It truly boosts my wellbeing in ways I can't scientifically verify.

I crave the nutritious raw leaves when they are too far away to pick and start daydreaming about when I can eat them again. As a permanent perennial member of my vegetable garden its needs are met every season and it grows lush new leaves in response.

We have been together for 6 years now, I am growing older with my perennial rocket plant. Since we have been together I have grown wrinkles on my neck and it has developed a strong thick trunk. The rocket plant continues to grow year after year and I continue to eat from it, over the years I have also begun to admire it.

It developed these very deep taproots from a young age. It can reach water deep in the soil and find nutrients where the other annual rocket plants fail. It's pretty independent, able to live without me but I think it appreciates a trim, so I give it one. Cutting off all its scraggly growth, collecting seeds and giving it time to grow enough leaves to support itself before I begin snacking on it again.

I think I love my perennial rocket plant - not quite as much as I love my dog but it is very special to me, like my old sourdough starter.



A much-beloved companion!

Trish

Workshops - What Do You Want To Learn?

Five years ago in our 2021 Strategic plan, we had envisioned a workshop festival each season in Riverton, but at our SCES committees 'strategic planning meeting' this month we have decided only to have the iconic Autumn Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival in Riverton.

The reason is that it makes more sense for a carload of tutors to travel, so the locals don't need to. Also when locals have a course in their area they meet other locals and start to build their own community and hopefully, request more courses that we can hold for them or they learn of local tutors who can fill that role.

For all seasons we hope to send our tutors out, like we did for many years pre-Covid, out and about around Southern New Zealand running workshops meeting the interest of the communities.

Thanks Josie from Lumsden for arranging a grafting workshop (see page 2). This is exactly what we want to return to doing. Check out our many workshops we offer on our website and let us know which ones you would like to have in your area (see the examples below). We can make you a poster to advertise it and share it with our networks. We are currently in discussion with South Alive about running a Bountiful Backyards Workshop day in collaboration with them this year. Watch this space!

Robyn

Appropriate Technology

Making your own solar dehydrator, rocket stove, cob oven and other low-tech, off-grid projects.



Bountiful Backyards

Beginning a vege garden, sowing seeds and making compost. Keeping hens or bees in home backyards.



Earth Crafts

Working with natural materials like wool, beeswax, wood or flax to make your own useful items or gifts.



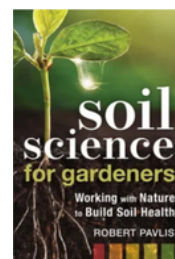
Book Review: Soil Science for Gardeners by Robert Pavlis

I've just finished rereading this excellent book, subtitled 'Working with Nature to Build Soil Health' (available from Invercargill Public Library) and felt I should share my thoughts on it. Not only is it packed with up-to-date evidence-based information but it is also extremely readable and expresses some very technical concepts in plain language.

Author Robert Pavlis covers everything you need to know to manage your garden without resorting to expensive (often unnecessary) inputs, how to maximise your soil's health by supporting all the multitudes of microorganisms that do the heavy lifting and busts some classic gardening myths along the way.

If you are into having a naturally healthy and productive garden, this is a must-read!

Nick



Our Volunteers: Violet

Hi I'm Violet. I'm originally from Tasman at the top of the South and made the move south three years ago with my partner who is a commercial kina diver.

I currently work as a barista and have always loved being outdoors, gardening, crafting and filling my home with indoor plants.



We only moved to Riverton a few months ago, though it's always been where we hoped to settle when we moved to Southland. I've really fallen in love with Riverton's beautiful scenery, sense of community and relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

I'm really enjoying volunteering at the Environment Centre, getting involved, meeting people and just being a part of the wonderful work happening here.

Our Volunteers: Kiri, Manu & Tui



Kiri, Manu and Tui's smiling faces on Wednesday afternoons.

We have had a whole new burst of energy at Riverton Environment Centre with Kiri, Manu and Tui coming in on a Wednesday for the last few weeks.

Manu (15) has been working through the criteria for the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which includes regular community volunteering. Being a super close family, Mum Kiri and sister Tui have also been pitching in.

It's so nice that young people (and their families) see Riverton Environment Centre as a warm, welcoming place to volunteer and gain valuable experience within a well-supported, low-pressure retail setting.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering at Riverton Environment Centre, get in touch!

Bronwyn Graham, Aparima College

Tēnā koutou katoa (Greetings to you all)

Ko Timaru te whenua tupu (Timaru is where I grew up)

Kei Waihōpai ahau e noho ana (I am living in Invercargill)

He kaiako pūtaiao, he kaiako mātai taiao hoki ahau ki te Kāreti o Aparima. (I am a science teacher and an environmental studies teacher as well at Aparima College.)

Ko Bronwyn Graham tōku ingoa (My name is Bronwyn Graham)

I have joined Aparima College after years of environmental education across Southland with the Southland Community Nursery, Environment Southland and Sustainable Coastlines, teaching at Otatara Primary School in Invercargill, and roles in resource management at the Department of Conservation and Environment Southland.

At Aparima College I am teaching Environmental Studies for Years 7–10s (a 1 term / 3 days a week programme) and Science for Years 7–9s. I have a passion for the environment and I hope to ignite this in the students at Aparima.



My vision for Environmental Studies is to use the stories of this place, and make connections with te taiao (the environment):

Whakapapa of Place – Our Local Taiao and Our Connection to it - Ki uta ki tai / from mountain to the sea Biodiversity and treasures/taonga of our place

Learning in the gardens and orchard, noticing the seasonal nature of what is happening in our environment Linking with the Aparima Pestbusters (with an intention to continue to link to other local community groups - please get in contact with me...)

Looking at human impact and how we can be involved, taking action for and showing kaitiakitanga.

I am enjoying getting to know the students and Aparima the place.

Bronwyn

bgraham@aparima.school.nz



Did you know that people who volunteer rate life as “more worthwhile” than people who don't volunteer?*

***<https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/research/volunteering-statistics>**

Lin Haven becomes an Ecosystem Restoration Community

'Ecosystem Restoration Communities' is a global movement healing damaged landscapes and building resilient ecosystems, one community at a time. Dylan and Evita are excited to announce that they have become part of this global network of 45000 people in 40 countries, from Brazilian rainforest to Moroccan desert and now including 'temperate broadleaf and mixed forest' in Southern NZ.

Dylan and Evita have been stewarding this land just out of Tūātapere, named 'Lin Haven', since 2023 when Passionate Permies Ltd bought the 81 hectare degraded sheep farm, 35 hectares of which was recently logged pine forest. Some of the first actions they undertook were establishing tracks across the property, setting up trap lines for possums and ensuring livestock couldn't access the areas to be revegetated. While low numbers of stock are still present on the land, the focus is currently on managing predators and browsing animals and allowing the soil to regenerate.

An extensive tree planting programme has seen many hundreds of native and non-native trees established, all of which will provide food and habitat for a wide range of creatures as well as windbreak, stock fodder, coppice, forest garden, and orchards for Dylan and Evita themselves. There are a few small patches of existing native forest on the site - these will be protected and seeds used to propagate more for planting. Bird life is already noticeably increasing, particularly with over 130 possums already culled, and these birds will transfer more seeds from further afield.



Two views of the aftermath of forestry logging - life is returning!



Dylan and Evita welcome volunteers to help with track creation and maintenance so that trap lines can be checked regularly. Regenerating forest at Lin Haven is predated on by possums, deer, hares and birds are harmed by mustelids, rats, and possums - all non-native introduced animals.



Lin Haven is setting up a permaculture homestead where there was just a paddock of grass. They have comfortable living quarters, harvest rainwater, solar energy to heat water and charge batteries, and grow much of their own food. They also have somewhere for guests to stay when they come to learn with them.

You can find out more about Passionate Permies and Lin Haven here:

<https://passionatepermies.wordpress.com/> www.instagram.com/lin_haven_nz/

This article was summarised from:

<https://ecosystemrestorationcommunities.org/community/lin-haven-new-zealand/>



Chilling in the Forest Garden

My unbridled enthusiasm for growing sub-tropical plants here in my Riverton garden has taken a hit over the winter. So have the plants I've been trialling here; the bananas, cannas, gingers and so on but in particular, the many kawakawa I'd managed to establish under the shelter of the native trees. Seems that shelter was not shelter enough!

The combination of cold conditions and wet weather that was the signature for the just-passed winter and spring did them in, knocked them down, turned their leaves to mush and extinguished my hopes for new crops for Southland.

The bananas, I know, will bounce back; already their central leaf is pushing its way up through the blackened and sagging mess that once looked so good against the southern sky, and the stripped-bare-by-the-cold tamarillos in the big tunnel house are pushing out fresh leaflets from the nodes of the previously-spectacular leaves but the kawakawa looks lost. Even the branches are black. I was surprised by this; the oldest plant had survived 8 years outside here, growing under a big native beech tree and though it suffered a bit of burn-back each winter, never collapsed completely like it seems to have done this time. It had grown to a height of over 3 metres and was seemingly beyond vulnerable, but not so. I've not given up on them entirely, but I'm not filled with uber-confidence either.

In autumn I was gifted a rare and interesting kawakawa that grows in Papua New Guinea; its leaves were slightly tougher to the touch than the Aotearoan version, but it too was too delicate for conditions this winter. I really hope something sprouts out of the pulp that the cold made of this special plant.



A sad blackened mess...

Robert

LOCALS

Local Seasonal Recipe

Traditional Taiwanese Egg Pancake

A fermented sourdough mother, mixed with equal proportions of corn starch and water, becomes the traditional Taiwanese batter for egg pancakes! Traditional Taiwanese egg pancakes, served with a variety of sauces, are a favourite among foreign friends.

Ingredients (serves 4 people):

100 g plain flour

120 ml water

1 tablespoon of corn starch (optional)

1 spring onion or chives, chopped (optional)

veggies (cabbage, corn, bok choy, silverbeet, etc)

4 eggs

Mix the flour, water and corn starch well, set aside for 30 minutes to rest, best overnight. If you have a sourdough mother, you can use a 1:1:1 ratio of sourdough mother, flour, and water to ferment overnight.

Method: Add chopped spring onions to the batter. In a frying pan, add oil, a handful of shredded cabbage, a handful of corn (or choices of your own veggies), and eggs.

Cook a little or until the egg is slightly cooked, and then add the batter, gently swirling the frying pan to evenly distribute the batter. Fry until the edges of the batter are slightly browned, then flip quickly to cook the other side until done.

After frying, you can add cheese or various sauces as desired. I specially made a soy sauce and garlic sauce so my New Zealand friends could taste authentic Taiwanese flavour!



Evita

Tree Planting Stakes

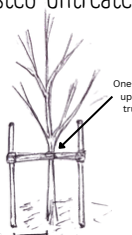
Sustainably-harvested untreated beech wood.

10 pack

\$25.00

Hammer in the ground about 20cm away from the tree - avoid the tree's roots!

Your tree should not require staking any longer than two years!



Tie with Fabric (torn bedsheet is good) about one third up the trunk.

Available at Riverton Environment Centre

Waste-free, Plastic-free tea at REC

While running composting workshops at Southland schools, many many teabags have been discovered in staffroom rubbish bins!

It has been a great pleasure to be able to promote the various systems available for making delicious cups of tea without teabags. The first, almost unheard of amongst Southland's children is... the teapot!



Just like Nana used to make.



Perhaps more convenient for the single cup brew however is the individual tea strainer, which the kids are always mesmerised by. The variety on the left works well, but the new models we sell at the Environment Centre (below) promise to have a longer working life due to having fewer moving parts.



No need to strain yourself.

Making tea with tea leaves need not be a lost art - there are some lovely loose-leaf tea varieties out there (the Environment Centre sells Trade Aid green and black teas as well as several herbal blends). In fact if you like a good cup you'll usually find the flavour of loose-leaf far surpasses that of teabags and as teabags usually contain polypropylene plastic you also avoid ingesting microplastics and you can compost the leftovers! Plus it's usually cheaper per cup than teabags.

Nick

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/donate

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