



COASTLINE

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SPRING 2023

Bountiful Backyards Workshop Weekend is on!

For some time we have aspired to have a spring counterpart to autumn's well-loved Heritage Harvest Festival; a time to inspire and equip people with the ideas, skills and resources to get their gardens cranking in spring, to then come back together in autumn and celebrate the harvest - and look forward to spring again. To join these two special gardening times together in a cyclical way.

Well, we are giving it a go this year! We thought we'd keep it small and manageable, so are running 48 hours worth of workshops over two days... that's 32 one and a half hour workshops, covering 20 different topics, from beginner organic gardening to making your own stone knife - you know, small and simple...!

There are workshops for adults and kids, and our experienced educators are looking forward to supporting lots of people to have a go at gardening, try something new in their gardens, or take their gardening to the next level.

Bookings are open now - head on over to www.sces.org.nz/bountifulbackyards to find out more and book your tickets. Places are limited and bookings are essential, so get cracking!

Riverton Environment Centre

BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS

Spring home gardening workshop weekend
7th & 8th October 2023



Book your workshops at www.sces.org.nz/bountifulbackyards

DATES TO DIARY:

6-8 October	Bountiful Backyards Weekend, Aparima College Hall
19th October	South Coast Environment Society AGM 7pm, in the Centre. All Welcome
26th October	Riverton Organic Growers Group - Garden Visits meet 7pm sharp at the Centre.

Spring is in the air

This issue of our seasonal Coastline newsletter has certainly been a learning experience! Wendy, our fabulous editor, found her plate rather full recently, so passed on this edition to our office-based team to complete - thankfully Wendy had already undertaken most of the herding-cats-like task of getting everyone's contributions collected.

This issue, with spring teasing us that it is here (and winter reminding us that it has not yet left), we focus on new growth - our inaugural Bountiful Backyards Workshop Weekend being an exciting development for us and our education team - you can find the whole programme in the centre spread on pages six and seven.

We have been experiencing growth in our membership too, as well as interest in the Longwood Loop, which reaches its 100 trip milestone this month. It's very rewarding to see our projects gaining ground. In this vein, we are on the cusp of seeking some new people for paid roles - see page eight for more details.

Nick reminds us in his gardening section that we need to keep a weather eye on the... well, weather, when planting, and makes some suggestions on minimising waste in our gardens, while Dylan fills us in on the work he has been doing in our Community Forest Garden, which is looking great and was the perfect venue for a visit from the tamariki of Riverton Childcare recently.

Our relationship with the learning community continues to blossom, with a recent visit to Thornbury School to drop off some fruit and nut trees for their thriving school gardens.

And just to keep things interesting, we have articles on sex (between plants) and how to be a really fun guy!

All in all, it's a pretty busy time of year. We hope you enjoy this issue of Coastline, and please get in touch with us if there's anything you would like to discuss further.

Nga mihi nui, The Coastline Team

Welcome to new Members!

It's been exciting to see our paid membership increasing over the last few months. The lure of early ordering for our annual Fruit Tree Sale is clearly hard to resist, with many new sign-ups happening in this period!

Membership is very valuable to us - it supports our work and helps to show our funders that we are valued. We believe that our Membership subscription rates are very reasonable, with excellent benefits (such as the early fruit tree ordering, but also including a 10% discount on all our workshops and a FREE PDF download of our Beginner Organic Gardening booklet), so if you aren't a Member already, consider signing up today!

www.sces.org.nz/membership



Membership helps us run community events like the Heritage Harvest Festival

Thank you to our supporters!



ENVIRONMENT
HUBS AOTEAROA
Collaboration for local solutions



Lottery Grants Board
Te Puna Tahua
LOTTO FUNDS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

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

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

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

KOANGA (SPRING) GARDENING WITH NICK

“He kai kei aku ringa”: There is food at the end of my hands*

Although there is a great deal of food to be grown over winter, it is spring and summer that generate the most excitement, partly because of the delicious flavours of foods like tomatoes and peppers, but also because we actually want to be outside in our gardens enjoying the warmer weather!

By the time you read this Coastline you can probably sow just about any summer crops in trays, like tomatoes, peppers, zucchini and pumpkins, but be wary of planting these outside, as we will inevitably get a cold snap that will knock them back or kill them. Even in a tunnel house an unexpected frost can damage sensitive plants. Hold back and plant in November - they will do just as well.

In the ground you can be planting peas, lettuces and other greens like spinach or silverbeet, and sowing plenty of mesclun and spring onions, as well as leeks and parsnips if you want them to grow really big by winter. Potatoes, new and main crop should also go in. Get your beds ready by chopping back any annual weed tops (let the roots die in the soil), spreading some compost if you have it and making sure it is well-watered. If you are buying compost, make it go further by making small furrows, filling them with compost and sowing into them, rather than spreading it all over the whole bed.

If you want to avoid plastic, try growing your seedlings in a garden bed and transplanting them out when they're ready - they will need less water this way too, plus they get the benefit of all the lovely microorganisms in your garden soil (see picture below).

* “*This whakatauki signifies resilience, empowerment and hope. It refers to one’s ability to use the skills and resources they have to create success. It’s about being responsible for the resources and capabilities one needs to grow and develop*”: Inspiringcommunities.org.nz



Seedlings growing in a garden bed, to be transplanted when bigger. Cabbages and spring onions bursting forth!

Longwood Loop Project Update

Longwood Loop – passes 100 weeks

Yes a hundred trips around the loop and into our third year! Every week we pick up wonderfully fresh local produce and more, delivering it to up to 15 bases around Western Southland. A big thankyou to all the growers and producers, voluntary drivers, and for all of the customers who regularly support our local food resilience project.

We have had a steady stream of new growers but not enough yet to meet the increasing demand. You have to be in pretty quick on Monday morning to get the full range of fruit and vegetables.

We are excited that the Village Agrarians team are holding another Community Food Series later this year, which will help new growers and those who want to increase their output, and will ultimately enhance the Longwood Loop project!

Robyn

Robyn and Anna on the very first run, out of the back of Robyn’s car.



Lynne and Christine did the Loop run together too, but in the snazzy electric van.



OUR COMMUNITY

Riverton Community Forest Garden stewardship by Dylan

During 2022 we used to come through Riverton most Fridays while we were renovating an old house in Tuatapere. We'd stop in at the Centre for organic foodstuffs and then continue to Invercargill for building supplies, time out, and to play chess. Around Autumn 2022 we were invited to volunteer for the food co-op and through this we discovered the Forest Garden. We saw many apples there on the ground and so each week we'd get some. By Spring they were finishing, but the convolvulus vines were climbing up on to them. I decided to go there each Friday when the weather allowed to cut it off and to prune the trees as a way to give back for their generous fruit.



Creatures like this native leaf-veined slug love the Forest Garden



Stick insect and harakeke cohabiting

I have continued to prune other plants - harakeke harvesting for Evita's weaving, coppicing of hazelnuts, chop and drop of the willows, and pruning of other trees. The aim is to give each tree some space and light, cover the ground with biomass that will decay and feed the soil. I aim to do an hour and a half each week, but with rainy days preventing this, it's usually about 3 hours a month.

It is now easier to move through and around the garden and to plant more species in the gaps. I have enjoyed the abundance of life in the forest when I am there - lots of birds, but also finding small animals such as a native leaf slug and a stick insect. I am also amazed at the number of trees and plants that can fit into a quarter acre and hope that more communities encourage food forests to be planted and nurtured. The Forest Garden is about 10 years old now and is a functioning diverse ecosystem where soil is constantly improving as is the small water cycle. It is reaching a stage of abundance for very low inputs. An example of this besides the obvious apples is pulling out about 15 hazelnut rooted suckers per tree during coppicing. Come and visit soon on a sunny Friday between 12 and 1.30 if you would like a few or if you have any questions about the Forest Garden. Paid tours are also available; book through the Centre.

Repairing is Caring

Neighbours and Repair Cafe enthusiasts Mary and Carolyn recently did a lovely new window display at the Environment Centre promoting the 'Repairing is Caring' message. We are stoked to be able to support the Repair Cafe ethos - head along to the Riverton Senior Citizens hall on 14th October (yes, election day!) to get some support to fix your various items - see the poster below for more details.



REPAIR CAFE
SATURDAY 14 OCT 2023
Senior Citizens Hall 10am - 12.00
Let's Repair Together

- Small household appliances
- Simple jewellery fixes
- Zip replacement, hemming, darning



For more information about Repair Cafes, check out www.repaircafeaotearoa.co.nz

EDUCATION

Our Valuable School Connections

It's really special for us to be connected with Thornbury Primary School's environmental and gardening programme. For the Heritage Harvest Festival their pupils (every one of them!) wrote fabulous letters to us explaining why they loved their school garden so much and why they would love some fruit trees. They all enthused over their strawberries ("super duper sweet and yummy", "delicious", and "never yuk"), shared how productive, their tunnel house is ("like a jungle because it has so much food in it") and told us what they would like ("100 fruit trees, 90 bushes hanging heavy with every berry in the world"). Well, needless to say we were pretty impressed with their efforts (the writing and the gardening!) so we made sure to put aside a handful of heritage apples from this year's Fruit Tree Sale to give to them (unfortunately we don't yet have every berry in the world, but I'm pretty sure our local nursery growers are working on it...). I popped out to Thornbury a few weeks ago to drop off the trees (plus some hazelnut trees from Gardens for Life nursery) and met their Enviro Leaders. They showed me around and I was very impressed with how connected to their environment they are and just how much they value it. I also dropped off a handful of heritage riwai (Māori potatoes) that we were recently given - I get the feeling they will cherish and care for them - they take kaitiakitanga seriously there.



Nick and the Thornbury School Enviro Team

We look forward to maintaining this wonderful relationship - there are few things as uplifting as seeing young people cultivating a love for the natural world - great work Thornbury School!

Nick Kiddey, Education and Projects Facilitator, Riverton Environment Centre

Riverton Organic Food Co-op News

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who come in help us in all sort of ways.

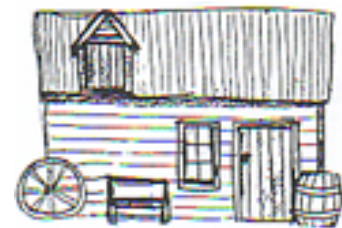
- Serving customers and meeting both locals and travelers.
- Bagging up bulk goods into paper or cello bags (so we can all get the cheaper price)
- Ordering and managing stock
- Unpacking and pricing items
- Stocking shelves

This means that our prices for an organic food shop are the cheapest in NZ according to many travelling visitors to the Centre.

**What area would you like to help with?
(2 hours a week / fortnight or month)**

We have a flexible roster in the office so when you are free put you name down.

You will enjoy being part of our friendly team 😊



Est. 1991

Support the South Coast Environment Society

Community support enables the South Coast Environment Society to continue to operate the Riverton Environment Centre and manage several successful projects throughout Southland. If you like what we do, and want to help us to do more, please consider; donating money, volunteering time, becoming a member, and / or sponsoring a project.

www.sces.org.nz/about/donate

Ph 03 234 8717

BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS PROGRAMME Friday 6th, Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th October 2023

FRIDAY SESSIONS 10am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm	Foraging Walk: Go for a walk around Taramea Bay, learning about what's growing wild that you can eat and use. With Dylan Graves. \$20 each session.
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BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SATURDAY 9:30am - 1:30pm

Session One: 9:30 - 11:00am	Kids: Seed balls \$5	Make seed balls that you can take home and throw around your garden and neighbourhood to grow beautiful flowers that support bees, bugs and butterflies! With Robert Guyton.
	Soil fertility \$15	Learn about the range of approaches you can use at home to manage your soil's fertility, including compost, worms, biochar and more. Price includes a free packet of 'green manure' seeds. With Dylan Graves.
	Apple Grafting \$15	Learn how to graft your very own apple tree. Price includes one tree to take home. Extra trees can be grafted for \$6 each - cash only! With Robyn Guyton.
	Plant guilds: apple \$100	Learn about planting an apple 'guild': a collection of plants that will support your tree's health. Price includes one heritage apple tree, one currant plant and a selection of perennial herbs to take home. With Nick Kiddey.
Session Two: 11:15am - 12:45pm	Kids: Bucket gardens	Learn how to make a bucket garden with Robyn Guyton. You will take your planted bucket home with you!
	Beginner Organic Gardening \$15	An introduction to organic gardening, including managing diversity, attracting beneficial creatures and a general discussion. Attendees will get a free copy of our Beginner Organic Gardening Guide. With Nick Kiddey.
	Poultry keeping \$15	Learn about keeping poultry (ducks, chickens etc.) at home. With Dylan Graves.
	Activated Foods \$15	Learn about making 'activated' foods like sprouts and soaked nuts at home, for increased nutrition. Attendees will get a free pack of sprouting seeds to take home. With Evita Shen.

LUNCH BREAK 12:45 - 1:30PM

BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SATURDAY 1:30 - 4:45pm

Session Three: 1:30 - 3:00pm	Kids: Brilliant and beastly bugs \$5	Learn about different small creatures, what they do in the garden and how to attract more of the good ones! Price includes a packet of insect-attracting seeds to sow at home. With Nick Kiddey.
	Asian Kimchi \$15	Learn how to make delicious Asian Kimchi with expert fermenter Evita Shen.
	Biochar \$15	Learn how and why it's a great idea to make biochar at home on a small scale. With Dylan Graves.
	Apple Grafting \$15	Learn how to graft your very own apple tree with Robyn Guyton. Price includes one tree to take home. Extra trees can be grafted for \$6 each - cash only!
Session Four: 3:15 - 4:45pm	Kids: Make a primitive harvesting knife \$5	Workshop for adults & their children: Learn how to make your own primitive harvesting knife from natural materials. With Sandra Wundsam and family.
	Apple Grafting \$15	Learn how to graft your very own apple tree with Robyn Guyton. Price includes one tree to take home. Extra trees can be grafted for \$6 each - cash only!
	Microgreens \$Free	Learn how and why it's a great idea to grow microgreens for supercharged nutrition in a very small space! With Dee Wainui from Para Kore. This is a free workshop thanks to Para Kore.
	Seed sowing & propagation \$15	Learn about the basics of seed sowing and simple plant propagation, like root division and cuttings. With Nick Kiddey.

See you tomorrow!

BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SUNDAY 9:30am - 1:30pm		
Session One: 9:30 - 11:00am	Kids: Bucket gardens \$5	Learn how to make a bucket garden with Robyn Guyton. You will take your planted bucket home with you!
	Seed sowing & propagation \$15	Learn about the basics of seed sowing and simple plant propagation, like root division and cuttings. With Nick Kiddey.
	Poultry keeping \$15	Learn about keeping poultry (ducks, chickens etc.) at home. With Dylan Graves.
	Gardening as Medicine \$15	In this workshop, Magali Steffens will demonstrate how the oldest job in the world (gardening) provides many health benefits, some quite obvious, others less expected.
Session Two: 11:15am - 12:45pm	Kids: Garden Art \$5	Get hands-on and creative with a range of garden-related art activities. With Stu Guyton.
	Apple Grafting \$15	Learn how to graft your very own apple tree with Robyn Guyton. Price includes one tree to take home. Extra trees can be grafted for \$6 each - cash only!
	Biochar \$15	Learn how and why it's a great idea to make biochar at home on a small scale. With Dylan Graves.
LUNCH BREAK 12:45 - 1:30PM		
BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SUNDAY 1:30 - 4:45pm		
Session Three: 1:30 - 3:00pm	Kids: Seed balls	Make seed balls that you can take home and throw around your garden and neighbourhood to grow beautiful flowers that support bees, bugs and butterflies! With Robert Guyton.
	Planning for seed saving	Learn about what you need to think of when planning to save seeds in your garden this spring. You will get some heritage seeds to take home. With Nick Kiddey.
	Asian Kimchi	Learn how to make Asian Kimchi with expert fermenter Evita Shen.
	Soil fertility	Learn about the range of approaches you can use at home to manage your soil's fertility, including compost, worms, biochar and more. Price includes a free packet of 'green manure' seeds. With Dylan Graves.
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	Activated Foods	Learn about making 'activated' foods like sprouts and soaked nuts at home, for increased nutrition. With Evita Shen. Attendees will get a free pack of sprouting seeds to take home.
	Beneficial Bugs	Learn about a range of beneficial creatures and how to bring them to your garden. Price includes a packet of insect-attracting seeds to sow at home. With Nick Kiddey.
Thanks for coming!		

Community Forest Garden gets more love

Nick had the pleasure of taking a wonderful group of tamariki (and their Kaiako) from Riverton Childcare for a walk in the Community Forest Garden this morning (end of September).

They have previously, in more fruitful seasons, enjoyed collecting (and, obviously, eating) fruit from there and were keen to 'give back' somehow.

Each child was given a small handful of seeds (calendula, borage, dandelion and red clover) which they all held with great care and dutifully sprinkled throughout as they wandered the paths.

A golden raspberry was planted, to everyone's delight, and more seeds liberally flung.

Everyone is excited to see what comes up, and to be able to be more connected with this vibrant and productive community resource going forward - some small signage will be made to show their involvement and so they can come back and see how things have grown.

The delight on the children's faces as they walked through the 'jungle', and how happy they were to be able to help feed the bees, butterflies and other creatures with the flowers was fabulous!



A trail of small (and some larger) people amongst the lush growth in the Community Forest Garden: Seeds sown, smiles shared.

OUR PEOPLE

Introducing Dylan:

I am a naturalised kiwi from South Africa originally and have returned to New Zealand almost two years ago from living in various places overseas. I brought my partner Evita with who is from Taiwan and we were last permaculture homesteading in Stanthorpe, SE Queensland. Warm you are probably thinking, but no, it's the coldest part of Queensland and so we feel comfortable enough being this far south in kiwiland! We are loving the coastlines, mountains, and bush here in Southland as well as the communities of Western Southland.

I found Permaculture in around 2009 and it gave me hope and direction. I saved hard while living my last few years in Taiwan and learnt as much as I could in that time too. I had a permaculture balcony, was doing courses with a local permaculture teacher, and promoted environmental education and action in the school I was teaching at. My proudest achievement there was probably getting our form group of 3 classes to make worm farms in groups and having students take them home!

We spent 8 years in Australia implementing permaculture "on the ground", learning much more, and educating and sharing with others. Unfortunately we had to sell and leave due to immigration issues that made us realise we had no long term security in Australia. It was a great experience there and we were sad to leave.

Another exciting journey has unfolded since we chose to explore the South Island and seek out a home place. We think we have found the location we want to be, but now wait to find the right rural property for us to homestead on again. I am happy to be on the SCES committee since early July, facilitating some workshops, and helping Robyn with the Heritage Orchard project.

Dylan Graves

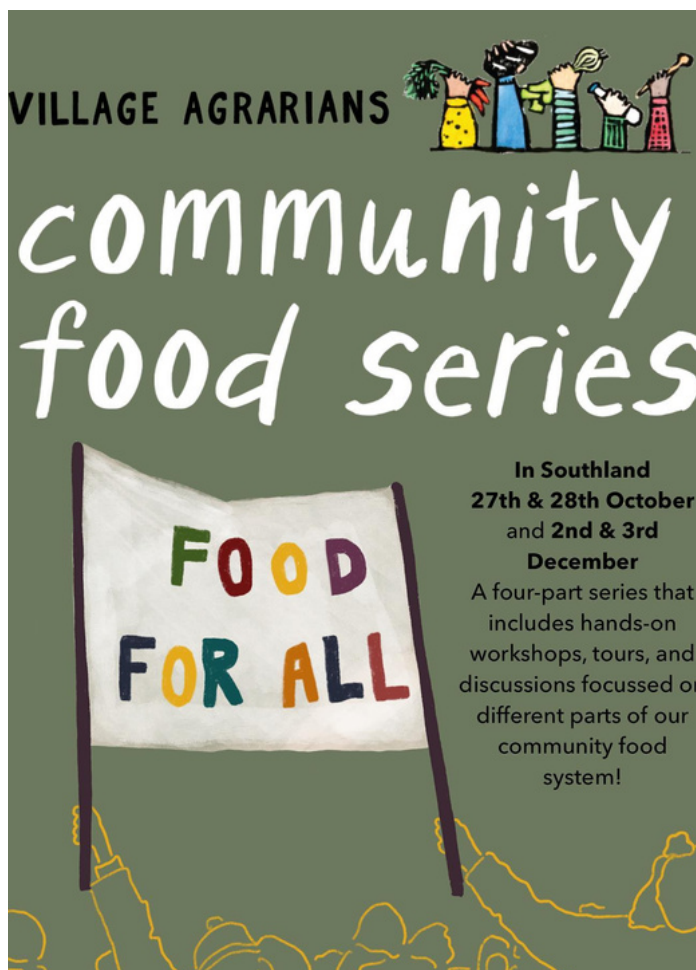


Part time paid roles

We have opportunities for one or more people to join our team: A mix of project management, garden management, community outreach, and staff relief, to suit the successful applicant/s.

Email robyn@sces.org.nz for further details.

Workshops coming up



VILLAGE AGRARIANS

community food series

FOOD FOR ALL

**In Southland
27th & 28th October
and 2nd & 3rd
December**

A four-part series that includes hands-on workshops, tours, and discussions focussed on different parts of our community food system!

Mother Mushroom??

Seems plants and animals, flora and fauna, both sprang from fungi, back, back, back in the day, making mushrooms our mother, I guess. Fungi are still here, after all those years, keeping an eye on her children, perhaps and continuing to provide nourishment to them, one way or another, "another" being the vital support they give forests in making the oxygen we breathe; without that, we'd be going nowhere. More and more research and thinking about fungi is uncovering just how extraordinary (or maybe, ordinary) fungi are.

They connect individual plants with the wood-wide web; in fact, they are the web. Fungi live everywhere imaginable, including inside of our bodies. I shudder when I think of fungicides being applied here and there and everywhere. That seems to me an act of self-destruction, given we need fungi for our very existence.



Robert: also a fun guy.

Baked Cauliflower & Cashews

Easy to prepare vegetarian dish.

We made this for a shared meal realising at the last minute we hadn't made a main dish for the vegetarians.

However it was so popular with all the adults and children, that when the vegetarians got up later to have seconds it was all gone!!



1 head cauliflower (about 4 cups chopped)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup raw cashews

$\frac{1}{4}$ olive oil

Salt, pepper and paprika to taste

1. Set your oven rack on the bottom of the oven and preheat to 200 C
2. Break the cauliflower into florets and cut into bite size pieces.
3. Add the chopped cauliflower and cashews to a mixing bowl and then toss with the oil.
4. Season to taste with salt, pepper.
5. Now pour everything onto a large oven tray. Flip as many of the cauliflower pieces onto their flat, cut side as possible and then push everything together but still flat in the middle so there is little space between. This will prevent the cashews from burning.
6. Sprinkle with paprika
7. Place into the oven and roast for 15 – 20 minutes, flipping everything about halfway through or once the cauliflower is nicely browned on one side and continue until browned all over.
8. Remove from the oven and serve hot, warm or cold.

Plant sex for a resilient future! Nick Kiddey, Gardens for Life Nursery

We are very fortunate to have a fabulous array of heritage apples available to us here in Southland, particularly those extra special collections that constitute our Community Heritage Orchard Parks. Since moving to Riverton nearly six years ago, my family and I have enjoyed eating from this diverse apple-scape and of course we compost all our food scraps (in a very slap-dash kind of way), so it is kind of inevitable that we would get things sprouting in our various heaps...



Seeing weeds, vegetables (tomatoes, pumpkins!) and even fruit trees popping up where we had put our own compost got us thinking about seeds, seed saving and evolution. We have a small nursery, and love to grow anything edible and useful (not just useful to us - we grow plants that support all forms of life, hence the name of our business: Gardens for Life), so, we thought, why not grow some fruit trees via sexual reproduction (i.e. from seed!)?



Of course, all the stuff you read tells you that if you grow an apple tree from seed it will be genetically distinct from its parents (true), and that you would have to grow hundreds of trees to find one that is good (not necessarily true). We are also told that stone fruit (peaches, apricots etc.) grow 'true' from seed, meaning that the offspring will be like the parents (kind of true) and that, generally, it will take ten years before a seed-grown fruit tree will produce fruit (not true).

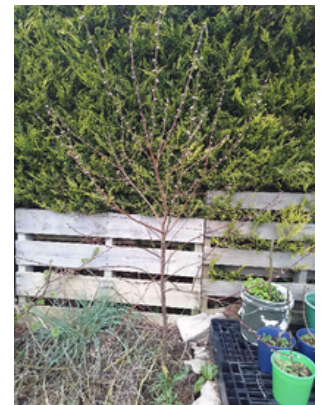


With all these amazing heritage apples around us, you may wonder why there is any need to grow new ones from seed. Well, maybe there isn't, but the way we at Gardens for Life see it, these heritage varieties have been 'asexually' propagated for centuries, meaning that they are genetically identical to the first tree that had scion wood taken from it for grafting. That's pretty neat, to think that you are eating an apple from (more or less) exactly the same tree that someone picked from 500 years ago and thought was worthy of propagating. But on the flipside, that tree hasn't had any opportunities to exchange genetic material with other trees over that whole time, so if, for example, new diseases have turned up, or new climate conditions have developed, that tree hasn't evolved to 'learn' what might be required to thrive under those conditions.



In our very human desire for stability and predictability, we understandably will choose fruit varieties that we have seen, tasted, known and liked. But in this lies the danger that as the stable conditions we have relied on for so long begin to change, many of our tried and true, known and loved heritage varieties may no longer be fit for purpose.

Keen readers may have noticed that the SCES fruit tree sale list has for many years now featured some 'Southland originals', such as Dipton Redburst, Holts Chance and Hollie's Wild Pippin. These are seedling trees that have appeared, often by old railway lines, and been tasted and liked well enough to be propagated from - these are the 'future heritage' varieties! Perhaps the most well-known of these in New Zealand these days is Monty's Surprise, found in the Whanganui area. Another very well-known variety that has had a massive impact in New Zealand is the Braeburn, discovered as a seedling in a hedge in the Moutere area of Tasman in the 1950s and subsequently grown in vast quantities all over the world.



In the meantime, our seed-grown peaches fruited heavily in their third year from seed and the plums are gearing up to go crazy in their third year... We also have a seedling chestnut that flowered and fruited in its first year! The apples and pears are reaching for the sky but are yet to show signs of fruiting - it may be some years - we'll keep you posted!

Top to Bottom: Dipton Redburst apple, Hollie's Wild Pippin apple, Seedling plum, Seedling plum, Seedling Black peach

Robert's Baked Apple Recipe (first published 2010 Coastline)

Today I baked an apple ... tree.

I hadn't meant to and should have been more careful but up it went, the tree, in flames. It was an Alfriston, a rare heritage apple tree (of course) about 5 years old, recently pruned to about my height. It was the prunings I was burning nearby, all carefully controlled and watched over. I even draped some burlap over the tree to protect the new leaves from the heat of the fire. The phone rang (thanks Bob!) and I went up to the house to take the call. While I was there, the burlap caught fire and the tree followed soon after.

I've not told Robyn.....She'll not be pleased. I've pruned the tree again, down to knee height and it'll be alright, as I hope I will be too.

(from robertguytonblogspot.com)

P.S. from Robyn: Only the rootstock survived... I will luckily be able to graft it again next year and Robert has been banned from starting any more 'food forest fires!' **Editor's Note -we have it on good authority the ban may need to be renewed ;-)**

SEASONAL HERBS WITH HOLLIE

Sweet violet is our herb of the season. This wee plant is certainly one of the sweetest around, with tiny purple heart-shaped petals, and slender stems like a tiny shepherd's crook. They appear politely in unused and shady spots around the garden, along garden edges, amongst a brick path, at the crease of your garden steps. Violets offer a lot to human kind. Their leaves are high in flavonoids and vitamins, and fight free radicals in the body when eaten. Include violet leaves in your next salad! Violets are also used to treat coughs & bronchitis, fresh or fried flowers can be brewed in a tea, and the flowers are used as a poultice for bruises. Violet leaves also look lovely when candied on cakes! They are also loved for their scent, and violets have traditionally been used to make a lovely perfume, from the times of the ancient Greeks, to today. Violets grow well from seed in Spring, and runners can be collected in autumn. They love sun in spring and winter, but shade in mid summer, so plant violets under deciduous trees and they will thrive.

Hollie



ROBERT'S PLUM FAMILY

Plum blossom is everywhere at the moment; well, not everywhere, but certainly on the plum trees. I hope it doesn't all end up on the ground, in one fell swoop, because of an extra-strong wind event. It will end up there anyway, thanks to natural processes, but before it falls, insects and birds of all sorts will visit the blossom and in doing so, spread pollen from flower to flower, tree to tree. The worst potential interloper though, is frost; worse even than kereru, those new-leaf and tender-blossom-eating birds that look as though they are destroying the crop, but never seem to make much of an impression, at least in our large orchard. Frost's the crop-destroyer and many would-be growers of plums have experienced the loss of entire plum harvests which failed at the first hurdle; that is, successful pollination. Frost can also cause recently-set plums to fall uselessly to the ground, so as the season progresses, growers are watching the weather reports anxiously, if they are aware of the effects of a late frost on their plum-expectations. While honey bees are credited with pollinating plum blossom, I've noticed that a good deal of the work is handled by wax-eyes, the tiny, busy now-a-native, bird. Small flocks swarm over our trees on a regular basis, each bird sampling the nectar from the delicate flowers, day in, day out, until the petals fall.



Recently, an old school-friend visited from Nelson. He, or more accurately, his wife, who accompanied him, was a gardener, growing mainly edibles, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and so on. After wandering about the forest garden here, and talking a look at the tunnel house as well, he asked, using a some-what-puzzled voice, "Do you have ants? Shield beetles? guava moth? – he went on to list a range of pest insects that heavily damage the vegetables and fruits they grow at the top of the South, pests he could see no evidence of in my garden. I answered, no, not really, at least to any concerning degree. He was greatly interested to learn that those Nelsonian problems are not Rivertonian issues and I could see he was perplexed. I cited cooler-for-the-moment temperatures, but added that I expected that to change as the atmosphere warmed with the changing climate. He wasn't an acceptor of the climate science that I subscribe to, and so remained envious of our situation here in the South. We didn't get to talk about the moulds, fungi, blights, rusts etc. that I expect will become more prevalent here, as the band of warm, wet climate moves our way, but did wonder out loud why they were all increasing in his home town. Takes a while for realization to set in, I reckon.

Robert

Henry was a dedicated, long-time seed-saving master who retired to Ohai. Before Henry passed away in 2010 he recorded his experiences of living through the Depression Years, when recycling was simply the way of life. We are sharing sections of his writings over several Coastline issues. Thank you Henry Harrington. (Full Intro in June/July 2022 Coastline).

I often think of the old saying a woman's work is never done; how true in those days. They darned socks and holes in jerseys, took collars off shirts when they showed signs of wear and turned them over, turned the legs of working trousers around when the knees got worn out, sewed soft leather patches to the elbows of jackets to stop the wear, saved all buttons, hooks and eyes, domes off worn out clothes to use again when they made new clothes. Trousers in those days had buttons, but since then zips have taken over. They knitted for their families and sewed clothes for them and more often than not, handed down their old clothes to the children, or grandchildren. It was often common to have mum's dress cut down for you, or granddad's suit turned into a pair of trousers for boys.

Knitting wool was often bought in large enough quantities for a cardigan or jersey to be made for both parents and some left over to reknit the sleeves from between the elbow and the wrist when they showed signs of wear.

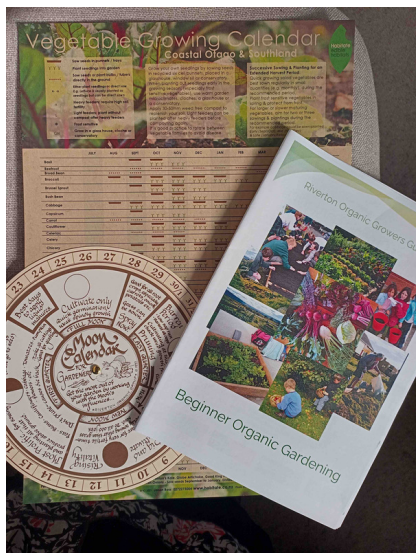
This gave the garment a second life, and then when it reached the stage of having seen better days, it was all unpicked. The good wool skeined up, washed and stretched out to dry so it got rid of the wrinkles, then it was wound up in to balls ready to knit something for the next generation.

The thinner worn wool got the same treatment but was wound up two strands together, and also reknitted for children to wear. All unusable wool and off cuts of material were composted and returned to the soil. As everything in those days was wool, cotton, linen silk, it all composted easily compared to the synthetics of today.



Attention all gardeners!

We have great gardening resources in the Environment Centre, Kings and Setha's seeds, bags of Daltons organic growing media, vegetable seedlings, Niwashi hoes, gardening calendars and our beginner gardeners handbook. Most of our staff and volunteers are experienced gardeners so feel free to ask for advice.



VISIT THE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

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

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

Opening hours are:

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

Saturday: 10:30am - 4:30pm

Sunday: 1:30pm - 4:30pm

