Rawhiti Primary school students enjoy the fruits of their labour

AUGUST AAG
Monday 7th 7pm & Tuesday 8th 9.45am
Arrival Cuppa - self serve tea and coffee available for members from 30 minutes prior to the meeting.
Main speaker: Gwen Grelet, Soil Biologist/ Ecologist, Landcare Research.
Topic: Healthy soils in Canterbury
Minor speaker: Terry Windle
Topic: Green manure, compost & fertilizers
Also in the programme, From Your Gardens and this month’s Tips and Tasks with Michael, Dave and Alan.
Christchurch Bridge Club, 21 Nova Place
Free to CHS Members, $5 non-members, includes tea, coffee and refreshments.
There will be no sales table until further notice.

WHAT’S ON NEXT MONTH

ORCHARDS IN SCHOOLS
Progress report from Mary Tingey

In 2015 and 2016 we planted orchards in 11 schools. This year we are well advanced in our planning to plant orchards in another 5 schools, including Haeata, Islworth School, Fendalton School and Elmwood School.

Schools which planted in 2015

Northcote School
Since joining the programme Northcote, with the aid of Rotary, have added substantially to their fruit trees. They have burst out of the allotted orchard space and now carry on along a whole fence line. The orchard has also been a stimulus to renew and enlarge their vegetable gardens to six garden boxes; one per class. For their next project they are looking at developing the space under the fruit trees into a community garden. The children say they love going outside and getting dirty with nature all around. Their favourite pickings are nectarines, strawberries, carrots and beetroot.

Oaklands School
Oakland’s orchard is a beautiful, peaceful place with well grown trees, chickens and abundant wildflowers. Most of their trees are growing prolifically. Unfortunately two trees died but teacher Paul Mc Aven has planted replacements. Nearby there are a number of vegetable gardens, the harvest is used in the school cooking programme.

St Martins School
One day Howard Keene, garden coordinator, found children writing poetry about the beautiful flowers in the orchards. He thought that this was one of the highlights of the orchard this year. The feijoas, currants, nectarines and plums were doing well. Two of the peaches had curly leaf and will be replaced by apples or pears. The orchard is part of a luxuriant veggie garden.

FUNDAMENTALS OF HORTICULTURE COURSE

Designed for home gardeners or those in the trade needing to up-skill their knowledge.
Where: CHS Office, 2/153 Lichfield St
When: 5.30 – 7.30pm, Thursdays 20 July - 17 August, inclusive, 9am – 1pm Saturday 5th August (venue to be advised).
Cost: $130 per person
Book now via the office tel 366 6937 or online
supported by two big compost heaps. The food from the gardens is used for the garden to table programme.

Addington School Teacher Lyn Petch says, “We can never undervalue the learning that surrounds cultivating and growing our own produce. It is never a simple undertaking that fits with knowledge, experience, trial and error. There are also many skills and qualities of a gardener that are practised by our tamariki. Qualities like patience, persistence, perseverance, teamwork, decision making and initiative. Some of our trees are young and still not producing fruit. Our blackcurrant bushes produced fruit, and jam was made by one of our teachers.”

Gilberthorpe School Pride of place in this orchard is the apricot tree which fruited very well. The currant bushes are strong and healthy and the pears have grown well too. Teacher Jess Hey is keen to include children’s art in the orchard. She is considering many options to make the orchard space more enticing. The green team are called the Gilby Garden Club.

CHRSANTHEMUM CIRCLE
Monday 17 July 7.30pm
CHS Office: 2/153 Lichfield Street

FRUIT & VEGETABLE CIRCLE
Next Meeting Wednesday 30 August 7.30pm
St Martins Community Centre 122 Wilsons Road

FLORAL DESIGN GROUP
Wednesday 19 July 3pm
CHS Office: 2/153 Lichfield Street
- Making bows
- Adding candles to arrangements
- Making a Simple posy
- Winter Themed: Any colour of Flowers

JULY AAG
Monday 3rd 7pm & Tuesday 4th 9.45am
Main speaker: David Barwick, Botanic Gardens Collection Curators, “Year Round Colour for your Garden”
Minor speaker: Catherine Parkees, Wairakei School, “Incredible Edible and Sensory Gardens.

Also in the programme, From Your Gardens and this month’s Tips and Tasks with Michael, Dave and Alan Christchurch Bridge Club, 21 Nova Place
Plenty of Parking available

Schools which planted in 2016
Waitakiri School When I first went to visit this school building was in full swing, making it hard to visualise an orchard amongst all the rubble. By planting day in August 2016, raised beds, made by the caretaker Ian Woodward (Woody) were awaiting each tree as the school intended to grow vegetables around the trees. Waitakiri’s team of children are called FERNS. Friends of the Environment who show Respect for Nature and Sustainability. All the trees are growing strongly, many looking splendid with vegetables growing underneath.

Teacher Glennys Hill says, “We would like to thank Mary for the wonderful help you gave us in establishing our Orchard and the continuing support you are giving us. We would also like to thank the Canterbury Horticultural Society for the fruit trees we received.”

Rawhiti School When I first saw this orchard site it was a combination of sand, weeds, scrub and a huge pile of prunings. The task looked daunting. By planting day last August caretaker Georgina Lloyd had reduced the scrub and prunings to a layer of mulch all over the site. All the trees have grown and with them a vegetable garden. By Autumn pumpkins were rambling around the trees and a green house was in operation. Teacher Vicki Stevenson reports, “Rawhiti’s team of children are called the Enviro group. We are growing seedlings in the greenhouse ready for planting. We have a large group working every Friday and the kids are thrilled to have had feijoas growing and have collected some for seeds.”

Casebrook Intermediate The students designed their orchard as part of their Hard Material classes. When I visited in May this year all the trees had grown strongly. In fact some had borne their first fruit to the delight of the students. The trees are going to be numbered and each tree will have a group who are responsible for it. Casebrook has a thriving vegetable garden, the produce of which is used in the Food Technology class, seedlings and produce are also sent home with the Friday Garden Group.

Cobham Intermediate The Year 8 SPEC group at Cobham Intermediate, along with community worker Lyndon Rogers from 24/7 Your Workers and teacher aide Tracey, designed and planted their orchard. The students maintain the orchard. Over summer they watered the trees and fed them worm tea. Each tree has been mulched twice to maintain moisture and soil fertility. By May all the trees were thriving. They are already talking about their gardening plan for next term.

Riccarton School Caretaker Colin Renouf has extended the schools thriving gardens to under the classroom windows where the children enjoy luxuriant crops of spring onions, pak choi cabbages and silverbeet. The trees were planted in and around the main gardens and compliment each other beautifully. The day I was there children were busy weeding and we also pruned a hydrangea. Once a week they work in the garden as part of their Garden to Table programme. One tree had damage from vandalism during the holidays but will live to tell the tale. One peach tree did not make the grade. The rest of the trees are growing well. The children told me, “The trees give us fruit and clean our air.”
MONTHLY TIPS & TASKS with Michael Coulter

Winter has arrived and the weather is its usual mixture of wet, cold and windy. The sunshine hours are below the average for this time of the year too, making it feel much colder and wetter than it really is.

Strong winds have caused damage to the trees and other plants in the garden. Its important to repair this damage as soon as possible, do this by pruning out the broken branches to healthy wood.

As March and April were very wet the soil has gone into Winter very wet too, take care when working the ground so as not to cause any damage to its structure.

July and August are the traditional months for pruning many plants such as roses, apples, pears and other deciduous varieties. I recommend pruning on fine sunny days, with a follow up copper spray as a protection from any disease infection.

We can do some planting when the weather is fine enough such as fruit trees, strawberries, berry fruits and garlic. Lily bulbs need to be planted now too, remember to provide good drainage (such as sand) at the base of the bulb when planting.

Towards the end of the month you can sow in a green house some of the hardy vegetables like brassicas, lettuce and silverbeet. If you have some bottom heat, try tomatoes so that by the end of August/early September you will have seedlings ready for planting. Early potatoes may also be chitted, ready for planting in August. Repairs to green houses should be completed by the end of the month so that they can be ready for the early Spring plantings.

The lawns always look their worst at this time of the year, often appearing yellow/brown with grass grub infestation also becoming visible. There is not much that can be done until the ground begins to warm up and the grass begins to grow again. Try to keep off the grass as much as possible, especially when there is a frost, to avoid any more damage to the lawn.

When buying new plants always get the strongest healthy plants of the best quality, even if they cost a little bit more as they are more likely to be a success. Stay warm and enjoy your garden.
Tips # 3 from Kowhai Thompson

**Permaculture – Be Prepared, the Survival Garden Trend**

Permaculture gardening attracts all types. City people who want to have their hands in the soil and some fresh herbs for a meal. Lifestylers who want to be more self-sufficient, and survival types who want to be prepared should bad times come.

Over the last few decades there has been a trend for ‘prepping’ developing in many western countries.

Preppers are those who are very well prepared for financial hard times or natural disasters. Often this means cupboards packed with tinned food, gas canisters and water. This is not a completely new idea. Vegetable gardening was particularly important during the depression and during the wars of the 20th Century. In countries such as the US which felt the brunt of the financial shock of 2008, there is a growing awareness of the benefits of being prepared for financial shocks too. In New Zealand it is more likely to be natural disasters that could cause us to be without food for a few days or possibly a week or more. A home garden that is stocked with some good food sources could be a saviour during unexpected events. There are a few key crops which provide valuable nutrition if required.

**Potatoes** are great survival garden crop, can be planted in many different types of soils and provide valuable carbohydrates. They also store well over Winter. **Pumpkins** are a great crop to grow for calories and store well also. **Hazelnuts & Almonds** provide valuable fats and protein. **Parsnips** are flavourful and have lots of nutrients, they store well in the ground with a thick layer of mulch on top. **Sunflowers** provide vitamin E and trace minerals. A bit of work to peel but a good store of nutrients. **Apples & Pears** are a great source of vitamins and minerals, preserve well for Winter storage. **Scarlet Runner Beans** can be dried completely and stored in jars, an excellent source of protein.

With these key crops you'll have a basic survival garden, or if you’re running late home, skip the supermarket and head to the garden instead!

**FLOWERWORKS**

Margaret Watling Floral Demonstration
Thursday 9 November 7.30pm
Main Auditorium, The Piano
156 Armagh Street

Please make a diary note now for this feature event. We are delighted to confirm floral artists Shirley Russ and Annette Waller.

$40 per person
Tickets on sale next month

**FROM THE PRESIDENT Alan Jolliffe**

Mid Winter 2017 and there is still plenty to do in the garden and the CHS is getting into practical workshops for pruning, Winter Speaker Series and other gardening activities.

Great Mid Winter lunch last weekend with friends from CHS and Garden Clubs. Thanks for organising it Elizabeth Peacock and friends.

Don't forget to come to the following activities advertised in the newsletter, Pruning Hydrangeas, Camellias & Roses and Pruning Fruit Trees, free to members.

Winter Speaker Series. Bring your friends and family as well. Like us on Facebook to get early notification of all our activities including All About Gardening.

It is time to think about changes in your garden and plan to put them into action. At this time of year you can dig up and shift shrubs and plant in new positions, lift and divide perennials and plant new plants.

Most of all keep learning new things through your membership of the CHS and encourage others to join us and participate in our many activities.

Alan Jolliffe, CHS President
Our first “Spring” day tour is to the Hurunui district on Friday 27th October 2017

One of the four gardens which we will visit is “Monte Alto”. The property was originally a dead-end, undeveloped and surveyed off part of the “Caithness” farm which was retained by Margot and Mac Rutherford.

Apart from a few old willows and kowhai it was a treeless area full of gorse, native grasses, broom and weeds. Development of the property started in 1976 with the planting of shelter belts and fencing, but the projects were severely disrupted while the Hurunui irrigation canals were constructed. The irrigation scheme was opened four years later in 1980.

The house was built on a pile of shingle and boulders, the gardens and lakes were started in 1983 and were slowly developed from then. It took a great deal of physical effort in bringing in mulch and silt to overlay the stony ground to allow the plants to survive on the windswept land.

Landscape Architect Norman Avis developed much of the area using local stone while most of the wood carvings were designed and created by Mac, including a rustic table and chairs which he made from a tree felled on the family farm of Leslie Hills.

The 2016 Kaikoura earthquake did some damage to the house, however despite this Mac and Margo (both 90+ year olds) still maintain the sloped gardens and walkways - truly a gardeners’ garden.

We will enjoy a picnic lunch in a picturesque setting beside the lake in the lower garden among the many trees and shrubs. The participants of our 2016 tour to Culverden Fete & Amuri Gardens voted “Monte Alto” as the people’s choice garden.

Bookings now open, $130 per person, includes coach travel, morning tea and a gourmet boxed lunch.
Where were you born and where did you spend most of your childhood?
I was born and raised in Geraldine, the eldest of five siblings. Schooling was in Geraldine at the district primary school and high school. Not being a great scholar I only completed two years at secondary school. My first years after school, I completed an automotive apprenticeship in Geraldine before moving to Christchurch. I took on the vegetable garden where I was boarding when I first came to the city, this was much appreciated by my landlady as there was a supply of fresh produce.

Where do you live now?
I live in Spreydon with my wife Marilyn where we raised our family. Marilyn also shares my interest in gardening with great displays in the flower gardens suitable for cutting.

What aroused your interest in gardening or horticulture?
My interest in gardening started at a young age as my grandparents had big sections and huge vegetable gardens that were always being tended with all the grandchildren encouraged to help with planting or harvesting. All my uncles and aunts were very involved and competitive in both vegetables and flowers, showing off the spoils with pride. A school home garden was of fascination in my early life, watching for sown seeds to appear, keeping them weed free and watered. I also helped an uncle in his market garden with soil preparation, planting and harvesting tomato, potato, brassicas during my tween and teen years. I gained knowledge of soil conditions, seasonal plantings and best varieties to plant in the late 50's and early 60's, knowledge I still draw on now. Drum Head Savoy cabbages the size of a large drum appeared often back then. Also very large cauliflower were produced when compared to today’s produce. I learnt to save seeds and growing plants from seeds or cuttings have been of great interest over the years with many failures and success'.

I operated a mowing franchise for a number of years and enjoyed getting to work in other people’s gardens where I learned new skills from elderly gardeners willing to pass on their knowledge. Many cuttings were acquired and swapped during that time. Now that I’m adjusting to retirement, our garden has become a place for some quiet time or pottering about in. My younger brother has spent his working life with the Christchurch City Council starting out as an apprentice at the Botanic Gardens, Woodham Park and Mona Vale. I think gardening has been part of my DNA.

What's your favourite plant and why?
I do not have a favourite plant as such. I'm amazed how plants battle with the elements to give the rewards we get from colours and textures as the plants go through the seasons. I enjoy all the visual panorama of colour and textures we observe along with the harvest of fruit and vegetables as the seasons change.

What's been your most challenging and/or rewarding gardening project?
My most challenging and rewarding garden projects have been putting new life into old landscapes and seeing the smiles on faces when finished. Beating annual weeds without the use of chemicals and building up the soil structure have also had their challenges and rewards.

When did you join the CHS and why?
After one of the Ellerslie Flower Shows Marilyn and I joined the CHS to keep learning about plants and gardens.

What is your passion for the future of the CHS?
I believe the Society is in a good space as it starts a new challenging phase in different locations while providing inspiration and support to gardeners from all ranges and abilities. Attracting younger members will be necessary for the future of the CHS.