



# COASTLINE

SPRING 2024

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| PG 1  | Bountiful Backyards is Back<br>Dates to Diary                       |
| PG 2  | Editorial<br>Still Completely Compost!                              |
| PG 3  | Nick's Gardening  |
| PG 4  | Fruit Trees<br>Forest Gardens                                       |
| PG 5  | Greenhouse Gardening  |
| PG 6  | Bountiful Backyards<br>programme: Saturday                          |
| PG 7  | Bountiful Backyards<br>programme: Sunday                            |
| PG 8  | Riverton Community Food Co-op<br>Weaving Together<br>Longwood Loop  |
| PG 9  | Southland Seed Savers Update<br>Membership Benefits                 |
| PG 10 | KiwiHarvest<br>Murihiku Kai Collective<br>National Permaculture Hui |
| PG 11 | Robert in Action<br>Peat's Seasonal Musings                         |
| PG 12 | Last Words  |



Following on from the success of our 2023 Bountiful Backyards Workshop Weekend we are back with another great weekend of learning opportunities to support and inspire gardeners, experienced and aspiring, to take their growing to the next level.

Once again you can join in on a range of workshops, from grafting your own apple tree to beginner organic gardening, home-scale biochar and the ever-popular 'make your own stone harvesting knife'. Adults and kids alike will be catered for and we will have a 'lounge' area set up for people who just want to hangout and chat.

We will be hosting the event at Aparima College again, but whereas in 2023 we were in the hall, this year we will be in the classroom block. This means we can use the teaching kitchen as well as benefit from a quieter, less-distracting environment!

Our Education Team is really excited about this great spring event - we look forward to seeing you there! Check out the full programme on pages 6 & 7.



## DATES TO DIARY:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>5th &amp; 6th October</b> | Bountiful Backyards Workshop Weekend! See pages 6 & 7.                               |
| <b>21 October</b>            | Documentary Night at Riverton Environment Centre 7:00 - 9:00pm.                      |
| <b>7 November</b>            | Sushi Workshop Aparima College 4:30 - 6:30pm. Education@sces.org.nz for more info.   |
| <b>11 November</b>           | South Coast Environment Society AGM 7pm at Riverton Environment Centre. All welcome. |

## Feel Invigorated!

It's Spring, the time to feel invigorated and we've got plenty to help you with that in this issue.

Our main seasonal event is the annual Bountiful Backyards. Check out what's on offer, pgs 6 & 7. There's plenty to enhance your skills and for children too, both fun and practical learning to develop life-long skills.

The tutors enjoy sharing their skills and knowledge to encourage and enable you to easily get started or build on your own. Session fees are very reasonable with a 10% reduction for SCES members. So get looking and booking. Numbers are limited.

Composting is another big focus. While we've all known for 'yonks' that it's good for gardens, we've not taken into account the huge costs of transporting and managing waste taken to landfills! It's unnecessary and avoidable and something we can rather simply reduce with a change of mindset. If you need help to get started check out the Completely Compost link, pg 2 or contact Nick at the Riverton Environment Centre.

Buy local seeds from the Centre this year. Check out pg 8 to see how Janice and Rex are actively leading our Southland Seed Savers group to ensure the Seed Bank is flourishing with locally grown seeds.

There's sooo much more – Nick's seasonal gardening pg 3 and greenhouse guidance pg 5, Dylan highlighting are weeds really just weeds on pg 4, the Food Co-op operating within the Environment Centre is now a Trust, you can get weaving and ordering from the Longwood Loop all on pg 8, and Invercargill-based aligned groups updates pg 10. Read on for more!

Wendy Joy, Editor

On behalf of our Coastline Production Team.



**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.**

**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.**



## Still Completely Compost...

You will read in the coming pages Nick's suggestions for improving soil, and may notice that compost is not at the top of the list. This is not to say that composting is not important - far from it! Making compost is an essential activity, just not so much for improving soil, as has been thought by gardeners for some time.

The most important reason to make compost is to keep household organic waste (food scraps, lawn clippings, tree prunings etc.) out of the landfill: up to around 40% of waste sent to landfill could be composted. Considering that a large proportion of this organic waste is actually water, which is heavy, collecting and trucking this to the landfill (and paying a per tonne disposal cost AND landfill levy represents a *massive waste of ratepayers' money*).

This is one of the key reasons we have been going **Completely Compost!** We have recently run several local workshops, our subsidised pest-proof composters have been selling well, and we have donated several larger models to community groups, including Riverton Community Garden and Takitimu School, where we also recently ran two well-received composting lessons for the entire school.

Gardeners already understand the value of good compost - not just as a healthy mulch for soil but also for propagating plants; it's a great component of seed-raising and potting mixes. The Environment Centre will soon be stocking a new certified organic compost to help meet this need, but the hope is that before long we will be making sufficient locally that we will no longer need to buy it in from outside Southland.

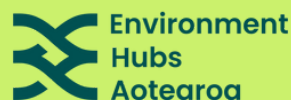
If you like the thought of at least a small part of our rates not increasing constantly, you need to get composting all your household organic waste: lawn clippings can be mulch-mown back onto the lawn (the best way to keep your lawn healthy), prunings can be chipped or just chopped up and put under trees and hedges, and food waste can be mixed with a high-carbon material like sawdust, woodchips or autumn leaves and easily composted. If you want more advice, just get in touch!

[www.sces.org.nz/completely-compost](http://www.sces.org.nz/completely-compost)

completelycompost@gmail.com



**Thank you to our supporters!**



## KŌANGA (SPRING) GARDENING WITH NICK

### It's all about the 'necromass'...

As gardeners we know it is important to protect and enhance soil quality, but there is so much different information, ideas and opinions on this out there, how do we know what is the best thing to do?

Fortunately there are many scientists and science communicators working in this field who are sharing what they are learning, and while much of the research is not home garden-based, there is much we can apply ourselves that will not only improve our soils but also reduce the amount of work we feel we have to do (win!). The following information is summarised from the excellent website **GardenMyths.com**\*, which I highly recommend.

Bottom line: the key to healthy soil is microbes. This is not a new idea, but due to a proliferation of businesses trying to sell us tools and potions for increasing microbes, we need to investigate it a bit further, as it turns out that soil is already full of microbes, and simply adding more won't increase their numbers (you can't put more water in a bucket that is already full of water). If we want to increase microbes, what need to do is increase the available amount of microbe food. Easy, right?

Well, funnily enough there's more to it than that: soil microbes feed on three things: '**shoot organic matter**', **plant exudates** and what is delightfully called '**necromass**'.

Traditionally, compost has been seen as the best way to build soil. Compost is almost exclusively made from '**shoot organic matter**', that is, dead plant material like leaves, stalks, flowers, woodchips and animal manures. These are fine, but they will not build the best soil, as they are not soil microbes' preferred foods. Typically gardeners put a lot of effort into making compost (collecting materials, layering them up etc.) but if the aim is to build healthy soil then this is not an especially efficient use of their energy and time.

More recently, the focus has been on '**plant exudates**' (chemicals excreted from plant roots into the soil). These exudates are mostly made up of easily digested molecules that feed microbes in a very efficient manner, so in theory all we need to do is grow plants and we will be feeding the microbes!

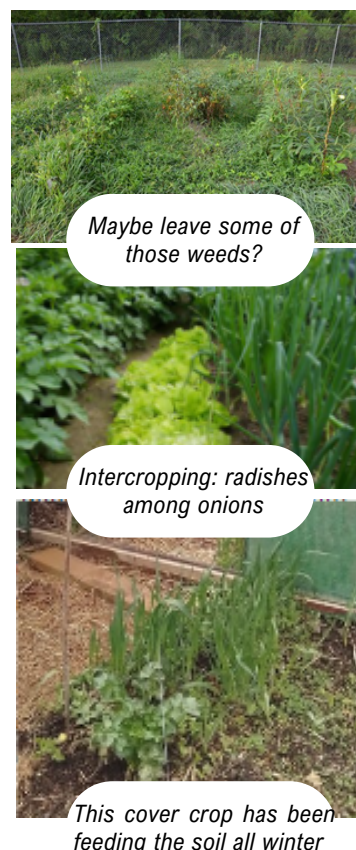
One step on from this, is the more recent understanding that it is actually '**necromass**' that is doing the most work to build healthy soils. Quite simply, necromass is just dead microbes, so if we are growing plants and therefore feeding lots of living microbes, we will also have lots of dead microbes. These dead microbes help create aggregates, sticking clumps of soil, minerals and carbon together. This improves soil drainage and aeration and provides lots of spaces for plant roots. It also improves soil's ability to hold and exchange nutrients. All very good things!

So what does this mean for us as gardeners? Key points:

- Keep the soil covered with living plants, either a harvestable crop or a cover crop / green manure (weeds also count!);
- Interplant some perennial plants into your annual vegetable garden (herbs or flowers are a good choice);
- Make sure you can replant or sow a new crop once you have finished harvesting the existing one;
- Grow a diversity of plants - different plants feed different microbes, so the more diversity the better (this is sometimes called 'intercropping');
- Make sure your plants are well fed - good compost will help with this, as will any form of fertiliser *in the right quantities*;
- Use mulch, as it helps protect soil and plants;
- Dig / till as little as possible - digging destroys aggregates, kills microbes and breaks down necromass.

I am constantly encountering new ideas and suggestions for how to garden better. Usually I will first check if the information is related to someone trying to sell me something - if it is I usually dismiss it; secondly I will look for references that back up a claim, or (more simply) check it out on a forum that I trust - my top reference sites are the aforementioned GardenMyths.com and GardenProfessors.com, both of which take a rigorous science-based approach to evaluating garden-related claims. Of course, I really enjoy gardening, so I don't apply any hard-and-fast rules, especially as I share my garden with my family, and we all have different views, but I am always keen to do less work and achieve more, so anything that helps with that is good with me!

\*The information in this article (and the references it's based on) came from here: [www.gardenmyths.com/latest-science-on-soil-health/](http://www.gardenmyths.com/latest-science-on-soil-health/)





## FRUIT TREES & FOREST GARDENS

### 'Weeds': Highlighting the Edibles, by Passionate Permie Dylan

The diversity of a forest garden includes many so-called weeds. A 'weed' is a human concept of course whereas in nature it's a plant taking advantage of a niche. A niche being a particular place's light, moisture, pH, texture, disturbance, and so on. Disturbances can be natural or human made. Think of a tree falling down in a forest due to old age or a lightning strike or an area of land cultivated with a machine.

I find it very interesting that in many places around the world, the same weeds appear after the same human disturbances. The places of course would have similar climates i.e. cool temperate or desert or tropical. Is it because these recurring weeds have something important to offer humans?

Some examples of weeds found in the forest garden in Riverton are chickweed, plantain, dock, and sow thistle. Some people may call the cow parsley and alexanders weeds too, however in my experience I have not seen these appearing ubiquitously as previously outlined. All these weeds are edible! Chickweed is tasty and can be a base ingredient for a salad or to bulk up pesto. It can be added to soups or smoothies. It is an edge lover and so often found near pathways. It is frost tolerant and often quite abundant in autumn and winter.

Plantain is edible raw or cooked (pick young leaves), but also very useful in making a balm to stop itching from mosquito or sand fly bites. If you have no balm, just crush up a leaf with your fingers and rub on the bite - the itch will be gone in a minute. Seed heads can be added to muesli.

Dock can be eaten when the leaves are really young and added to salads or to any cooked dish. High in minerals and vitamins. Often a result of compacted soil.

Sow Thistle leaves are quite bitter, but then most western diets are too low in bitters and they are good for you. The younger leaves tend to be less bitter. Other possibilities that are easy to find are dandelion and cat's ear; they both also have a deep tap root and so are often decompacting the soil for us.



Interested in foraging? SCES holds foraging workshops and walks a few times a year, usually at the festivals OR email [sceseducation@gmail.com](mailto:sceseducation@gmail.com) for a Riverton foraging guide.

### Annual Fruit Tree Sale 2024

Our annual fundraising Fruit Tree Sale is drawing to a close. Thankfully we have sold nearly all the stonefruit (peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots), as the few remaining are starting to flower or leaf up (especially the plums!). We still have a few apples and pears left - they are still a wee way off budding yet.

We are always chuffed to see how many of our members get in early and order before the general public (a benefit of membership, see below), as well as with how many people we have overall buying trees and supporting our work. So far we have sold around \$14,000 worth of fruit trees and shrubs - an excellent result, particularly when you think about how long all these plants will provide food for their owners (and the carbon they will sequester)!

### Open Orchard Update

We had very wild weather over pruning time but still got to a few community orchards in breaks in the weather. Next year we will have a bit to catch up and hopefully the weather will be more settled in winter 2025.

In mid October hopefully we have a nice weekend so you can meet friends for a picnic in an Orchard Park near you while the apple blossom is at its best.

We are excited to be donating twenty apple trees to Hedgehope school and will be planting them with the students and community on the last day of the term.

These trees are a copy of a collection of a Hedgehope local, Mrs Stratford. Although not purely from Southland's early European settlers, the collection is still significant, as she sourced interesting old fruit trees from around NZ in the early 1900s.

*We did a trial of taking orders to the Southern Farmers Market in Invercargill - it helped sell a few extra trees.*

**WANT FRUIT TREES?**  
Riverton Environment Centre's Annual Fruit Tree Sale is coming to the Southern Farmers market!  
Order online, pick up at the Farmers Market on Sunday 18th August.  
[www.sces.org.nz/fruittreesale](http://www.sces.org.nz/fruittreesale)  
email: [info@sces.org.nz](mailto:info@sces.org.nz) for more info!

# GREENHOUSE GARDENING

## Greenhouses: Completely Unnecessary Yet Totally Awesome, by Nick

How disturbing to read recently a quote from a local greenhouse manufacturer stating “Due to Southland’s climate, it was almost impossible to grow fruit and vegetables without the protection of a tunnel or greenhouse” (<https://digital.southlandexpress.co.nz/html5/default.aspx>)! A bigger load of nonsense I have not seen for a while.

Of course it is quite possible that the seller of greenhouses is merely trying to sell more greenhouses, but the journalist responsible really should have taken them to task for this blatantly inaccurate and misleading statement.

It is, of course, possible to grow a very wide range of fruit and vegetables in every part of Southland without a greenhouse. The selection may be limited in some areas and seasons due to wind, or snow or horizontal hail, but it is still very possible. *A greenhouse is not necessary.*

In saying that, today I am writing about our new greenhouse, given to us by a friend in exchange for some recent design work. We would never have bought one, as they are expensive and, as I already mentioned, actually unnecessary, but it is quite a treat to actually have one! It is a cheap model, and was already second-hand by the time we got hold of it, but we have firmly attached it to the ground in a very sheltered spot, so we feel pretty confident that it will last at least several seasons. We are very excited about our new garden addition, as we know how to make the most of it.

I am often telling people ‘a greenhouse won’t make you a good gardener’. I stand by this. So often I speak with and read about people who have spent thousands of dollars on a greenhouse and yet still have ‘problems’ growing plants: “my tomatoes have stopped growing” (it’s probably too hot for them); “everything is covered in aphids” (there are probably no flowers and insufficient access to encourage beneficial insects); “my tamarillo got frosted” (greenhouses can still get extremely cold at night)... and there’s more.

The other thing that really bugs me is greenhouses that are empty over the winter. Really? This is the most important time of year for your greenhouse! Your expensive investment should either be producing lots of valuable food for you (endless salads, brassicas and spring onions at the very least), and / or making sure the soil is alive and well for your summer growing: if there are no plants, you are not feeding the soil. Adding compost in spring is fine, but living plants are the key to healthy productive soil. If you can’t be bothered growing food in winter, I implore you - plant a cover crop! Your soil and summer crops will be the better for it.



*Clockwise from top: Our new greenhouse; Early spring sowing under cover; The greenhouse even improves conditions outside - an early sowing of carrots and mizuna in a warm sheltered spot; Delicate loquat seedlings get extra protection while a cover crop feeds the soil.*

### My key recommendations for a successful greenhouse:

- Grow a **variety of flowers** around the inside and outside of entrances and around vegetable plants, and make sure insects can get in (Alyssum is my number one top recommendation!). This attracts predatory insects as well as pollinators;
- Use **compost and mulch** made from a range of materials to feed and shelter a range of soil organisms. This way you will be encouraging predatory insects (such as beetles, which eat slugs) and soil makers (fungi, bacteria, macroinvertebrates like hoppers and slaters). Any mulch is better than no mulch!;
- Provide **extra protection** (such as frost cloth) for tender plants like peppers in early spring and late autumn in case of frost;
- Make sure you have **plenty of ventilation** and some afternoon shade over summer or it can get way too hot - over 40 degrees Celsius most vegetable plants will slow right down and many will die;
- Grow valuable **salads over winter** (‘mesclun’ usually contains a range of winter hardy, delicious and nutritious vegetables) - these will help ‘pay off’ your investment quicker as well as feed you when you need it most and when fresh vegetables are usually quite expensive;
- Grow **cover crops** if you don’t want to eat fresh veges in the winter (are you crazy?). Lupins, oats, broad beans and peas are great.

I am running a workshop at Bountiful Backyards on ‘Beginner Organic Gardening’. This will also include greenhouse growing, so make sure you book if you want to take your growing to the next level!

# BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND, October 2024

## BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS PROGRAMME SATURDAY 5TH OCTOBER

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|---|--|
| <b>FRIDAY SESSIONS</b><br>11am - 12:30pm,<br>1pm - 2:30pm | Forest Garden Tours: Celebrate the start of the Forest Garden Tour season with a 1.5 hour guided, informative walk around Robyn and Robert Guyton's 28 year old Forest Garden. You'll leave refreshed and inspired!<br>\$15 - 1.5hrs |
|---|--|

### BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SATURDAY 9:30am - 1:30pm

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Saturday Session One: 9:30 - 11:00am</b>    | Kids: Seed balls<br>\$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!<br>With Robert Guyton. |
| <b>Saturday Session One: 9:30 - 11:00am</b>    | Beginner Organic Gardening<br>\$15             | An introduction to organic gardening, including feeding soil & plants, managing pests and attracting beneficial creatures.<br>With Nick Kiddey.                                 |
| <b>Saturday Session One: 9:30 - 11:00am</b>    | Apple Grafting 1<br>\$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!<br>With Robyn Guyton.                   |
| <b>Saturday Session Two: 11:15am - 12:45pm</b> | Kids: Make a primitive harvesting knife<br>\$5 | Workshop for adults & their children: Learn how to make your own primitive harvesting knife from natural materials.<br>With Sandra Wundsam and family.                          |
| <b>Saturday Session Two: 11:15am - 12:45pm</b> | Spring Recipes<br>\$15                         | Learn how to make tasty dumplings with fresh spring ingredients.<br>With Evita Shen.  |
| <b>Saturday Session Two: 11:15am - 12:45pm</b> | Basic Home Biochar<br>\$15                     | Learn how and why it's a great idea to make biochar at home on a small scale to improve your soil.<br>With Dylan Graves.  |

### LUNCH BREAK 12:45 - 1:30PM

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

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Saturday Session Three: 1:30 - 3:00pm</b> | Kids: Bucket Gardens<br>\$5             | Learn how to make a bucket garden. You will take your planted bucket home with you!<br>With Robyn Guyton   |
| <b>Saturday Session Three: 1:30 - 3:00pm</b> | Willow Weaving<br>\$15                  | Learn how to weave a small but beautiful and practical item with willow.<br>With Sandra Wundsam and family.  |
| <b>Saturday Session Three: 1:30 - 3:00pm</b> | Apple Grafting<br>\$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!<br>With Robert Guyton. |
| <b>Saturday Session Four: 3:15 - 4:45pm</b>  | Kids: Brilliant and beastly bugs<br>\$5 | Learn about different small creatures, what they do in the garden and how to attract more of the good ones!<br>With Nick Kiddey.                               |
| <b>Saturday Session Four: 3:15 - 4:45pm</b>  | Seed sowing & Garden planning<br>\$15   | Learn about basic seed sowing and garden planning.<br>With Robyn Guyton.   |
| <b>Saturday Session Four: 3:15 - 4:45pm</b>  | Sprouts & Microgreens<br>\$15           | Learn how and why it's a great idea to grow sprouts and microgreens for supercharged nutrition in a very small space!<br>With Lynne Brodie.                    |

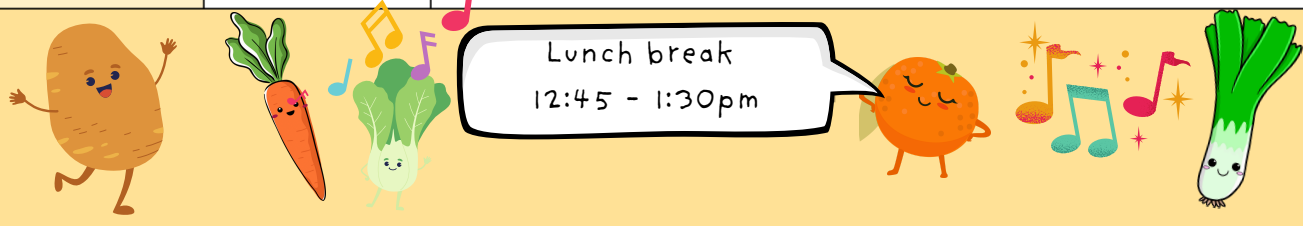
See you on  
Sunday 6th!



**BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS PROGRAMME SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER**

**BOUNTIFUL BACKYARDS WORKSHOP WEEKEND PROGRAMME: SUNDAY 9:30am - 1:30pm**

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| <b>Sunday Session One:</b><br>9:30 - 11:00am    | Kids: Wheat Heads!<br>\$5   | Make a fun wheat head - take it home, water it and watch its hair grow!<br>With Robyn Guyton  |
| <b>Sunday Session One:</b><br>9:30 - 11:00am    | No-dig gardening<br>\$15    | Learn how to start a quick and easy no-dig garden, plus how to maintain a vegetable garden without digging.<br>With Nick Kiddey.  |
| <b>Sunday Session One:</b><br>9:30 - 11:00am    | Poultry Keeping<br>\$15     | Learn about keeping poultry (ducks, chickens, etc.) at home.<br>With Dylan Graves.  |
| <b>Sunday Session Two:</b><br>11:15am - 12:45pm | Kids: Bucket Gardens<br>\$5 | Learn how to make a bucket garden. You will take your planted bucket home with you!<br>With Robyn Guyton  |
| <b>Sunday Session Two:</b><br>11:15am - 12:45pm | Spring Recipes<br>\$15      | Learn how to make some tasty silverbeet okonomiyaki dishes with fresh spring ingredients.<br>With Evita Shen.   |
| <b>Sunday Session Two:</b><br>11:15am - 12:45pm | Beginner Composting<br>\$5  | Get Completely Compost - everything you need to know for easy, successful home composting. This workshop is only \$5 thanks to funding from WasteNet Southland.<br>With Nick Kiddey |



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

|   |                            |   |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Sunday Session Three:</b><br>1:30 - 3:00pm | Kids: Seed balls<br>\$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!<br>With Robert Guyton.   |
| <b>Sunday Session Three:</b><br>1:30 - 3:00pm | Advanced Composting<br>\$5 | Get Completely Compost - a more technical, in-depth look at how to make great compost for growing great vegetables. This workshop is only \$5 thanks to funding from WasteNet Southland.<br>With Nick Kiddey                                |
| <b>Sunday Session Four:</b><br>3:15 - 4:45pm  | Gardening Games<br>\$5     | Join our Education team for some fun gardening games!   |
| <b>Sunday Bonus session</b><br>1:30 - 4:30pm  | Forest Garden Design       | Forest Gardening - find out what it is and get some ideas for designing one at home, converting an orchard to one, and how to improve and maintain it. Includes a walk and tour of Riverton's Community Forest Garden.<br>With Dylan Graves |



## COMMUNITY

### Riverton Community Food Co-op Charitable Trust

#### Riverton Organic Food Co-op is now Riverton Community Food Co-op Charitable Trust

The Riverton Organic Food Co-op started in 1991 as an offshoot of the Riverton Organic Growers Group. It has been operating as an informal group ever since; a not-for-profit shop run by volunteers within Riverton Environment Centre, but as a separate entity.

The Food Co-op team decided it was high time to formalise the group and make it into a Charitable Trust. This was a very smooth process with the help of Denise from Southland Community Law.



The Riverton Community Food Co-op aims are: to support local growers; bulk buy organic goods and produce; provide opportunities for volunteer work and to support and train volunteers. This will be achieved by continuing running the not-for-profit shop based at the Environment Centre.

The Co-op will continue as it always has, but as a separate legal entity is now also able to apply for funds to upgrade equipment and maybe create a paid volunteer support role.

The Co-op's six initial trustees vary in ages from 30 to 65 and will meet twice a year as a Governance group to ensure the Co-op continues to operate as a not-for-profit, ethical entity into the future. Get in touch with Robyn Guyton if you would like to be considered as a trustee in the future as other folk move on: [organicfood@sces.org.nz](mailto:organicfood@sces.org.nz)

### Let's Weave Together



Evita is loving sharing her passion for weaving with whoever turns up on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Environment Centre. So much weaving, connecting and sharing has been happening - you are welcome to join in this great social activity, and can be a complete beginner or more advanced. You will be warmly welcomed! A koha for weaving materials is appreciated.



### Longwood Loop Update



*Slinky's Sourdough*

Spring is here and our online farmers market has seeds and vegetable seedlings, herbs and perennial plants available now.

It is great to welcome some new producers in the last quarter; Slinky's Sourdough is creating Ukrainian-style sourdough loaves with organic unbleached flour and Rose Cottage Perennials is offering a large range of perennial plants sure to enliven your garden with their foliage and flowers. Wendy at Boundary Creek will soon be selling her delicious cranberry seed bars and some oat cookies.

It's great to have new Producers joining and the huge variety of products - now around 780 product variants - on offer is astounding! Very soon new spring vegetables will be starting and fresh berries and fruit starting from mid-December.

When you buy through the Longwood Loop the money stays in our region: 90% of the sale goes back to the growers and producers and 10% contributes to the Loop administration.

We look forward to more folk becoming involved and helping to build the Longwood Loop into a significant project that adds to our local economy, while also building food resilience.

The Longwood Loop shop is hosted on The Open Food Network. You can use the filters on the shop to narrow down what you are interested in, as every week more and more items are coming on line.

Check the website for more: [www.longwoodloop.co.nz](http://www.longwoodloop.co.nz)



*Rose Cottage Perennials*



### Janice Updates Progress on Southland Seed Savers Network

Feedback from our dedicated seed-saving team is that they have enjoyed meeting each other at our recent joint lunches, hosted in Riverton by the Guytons (a big thank you for making that possible Robert) and by Rex and I subsequently in Dunedin and Central Otago for our teams there. They feel like one big team and are excited about working collaboratively to grow good-quality seeds for Southland Seed Savers Network.

With that in mind, we have now received most of the last season's seed. We have prepared the new packs, and are now sending them out to our trusty savers complete with their diaries, which we need to be filled in wherever possible with weather details, planting and harvesting dates, and general notes about successes and failures.

We need this more so now than ever, as our climate changes, and that will necessitate revisiting what we grow and how, in many cases.

Times are changing and we need to be vigilant if we are to keep the seed bank flourishing and keen gardeners feeding their families all the good veges and fruit. Rex and I need that statistical data to build a picture going forward. Gardenwise, it is worth doing the preparation well and getting the timing right for planting and we have great people in our Education team to teach us that.

Robyn and I are working on the heritage varieties aspect and Nick and Rex more on sturdy plants producing good quantities of food.

Last year saw us begin to have our own labelled seeds, with the Society's logo, on our display stand at Riverton Environment Centre and Nick produced a sign, 'grown by our seed savers', a great circle of endeavour. This year we will continue that and continue to collect good fresh seed for next year for the seed bank and the Centre.

Rex is hard at work producing seedlings for the Centre to raise the funds we require to run the seed bank operation and get people coming in for plants. We started to produce flower plants last year and will increase those this year and have asked one of our seed savers to focus on herb plants for us for seed and plants for the centre, as she enjoys that project. I would like to thank Elizabeth for helping with many admin things and Lenore for looking after our retail seeds project. Also Robyn and Robert for their guidance, support and enthusiasm for what we are doing and for taking on the job of hardening off our seedlings for the shop. This allows an even flow of plants to the centre and more room to produce. We are aiming to produce 4000 plants again this year for sale.

We are pleased to be able to keep this programme going and look forward to seeing all our team over the season. We have some more newbies in our team this year so welcome to all of you. We currently have 15 seed savers to care for with a couple more taking a break till next season and our centre team of 5.

This year we also start our first satellite team lead role with Roy supervising the Central Otago team for us because of distance and our workload and his skill set.

Exciting times, as Robyn would say.

**Happy seeding!**  
**Janice and Rex.**



### Join the Club - the South Coast Environment Society!

With our Bountiful Backyards Workshop Weekend imminent, it's a timely reminder that paid Members get a 10% discount on workshop tickets and of course as an extra special sweetener, you can download a free digital copy of our Southland-specific Beginner Organic Gardening Guide (which retails for \$5 on our website).

Remember that, as always, paid up Members got to see and buy from the annual Fruit Tree Sale List one week before the public. If you want to get this benefit in 2025, sign up now - your membership will still be active when we send out the early bird list.

Of course, beyond all these perks is just knowing that you are supporting us in everything we do - we really value that!

Annual membership costs only \$20 for an Individual, \$25 for a Family and \$30 for a Business or Group.

To join now simply go to our website [www.sces.org.nz/membership](http://www.sces.org.nz/membership), scan the QR code or email [office@sces.org.nz](mailto:office@sces.org.nz)!



SCAN ME

## COMMUNITY

### KiwiHarvest Southland

KiwiHarvest works with food businesses, including supermarkets, wholesalers, producers, cafes, restaurants, and hotels, to rescue the good food that they are not able to sell and to redirect it to those who need it.

New Zealand faces a food waste crisis, with 103 million kilograms of food going to landfill each year, 60% of it still edible.

KiwiHarvest Southland is tackling this problem by rescuing 223,000 kilograms of food annually—equivalent to 450,000 meals valued at \$1.5 million. This effort not only feeds people in need but also prevents 600,000 kilograms of CO2 emissions.

Since launching in Southland, KiwiHarvest has become an essential part of the community. They support a wide range of people, from those in refuge or emergency shelters to pensioners and marae, ensuring that good food doesn't go to waste.

KiwiHarvest Southland recently celebrated its third anniversary and the arrival of its first refrigerated truck, generously sponsored by Rio Tinto and Te Rūnaka o Awarua. This truck helps the organisation operate more efficiently and safely, collecting and distributing food across the region.

To continue their mission, KiwiHarvest Southland needs more local support. Whether through food donations, volunteering, or financial contributions, every bit helps feed the community and reduce waste.

For more information or to get involved, contact Jennifer Stephens at [jennifer.stephens@kiwiharvest.org.nz](mailto:jennifer.stephens@kiwiharvest.org.nz) or visit [www.kiwiharvest.org.nz](http://www.kiwiharvest.org.nz).



*KiwiHarvest's beautiful new truck.*

### Murihiku Kai Collective

In some very exciting recent news, Healthy Families Invercargill has managed to allocate funding for the creation of a new role in Murihiku Southland's food space.

The search is now on for a dynamic individual to be the face of the Murihiku Kai Collective, leading the coordination and implementation of initiatives that align with the Murihiku Good Food Roadmap - building food resilience and connecting communities.

The role will involve managing relationships, identifying opportunities to increase sector capability, and championing collaborative efforts across Murihiku's food landscape.

It will seek to support community maara, engage with volunteers, agencies, and councils, and execute impactful marketing and promotional activities. This development will be transformational for the community-focused mahi of the Murihiku Kai Collective.

For more info on the role:

[www.activesouthland.co.nz/Who-we-are/Vacancies-2](http://www.activesouthland.co.nz/Who-we-are/Vacancies-2)

### National Permaculture Hui

In November, I'm travelling to Taranaki for the permaculture hui where I'll speak about forest gardening. The hui is based at the Green School, famous for its eco-inspired architecture and kaupapa.

I'm looking forward to hearing from other permaculturalists, organic growers, syntropic agroforesters and whoever else has something interesting to present on the subject of sympathetic horticulture.

The hui coincides with the famous Taranaki Garden Festival and the opportunity to visit any number of "open gardens", which I will do, as time allows. It's also the venue for the celebrations of the New Zealand Gardener magazine's 80 birthday, so perhaps I'll meet up with some a' me ol' columnist mates there.

In any case, I'll be seeking out and clutching to my bosom, plants: plants that I don't have but yearn to grow in Riverton.

I shall report back upon my return.

**Robert**

(More info on the Hui: [www.permaculture-hui.org/](http://www.permaculture-hui.org/) )



*The fabulous Green School, venue for the 2024 National Permaculture Hui.*



## LOCALS

### Robert In Action



*Canna in bloom.*

There's no connection between canna lilies and cannabis. With that potential confusion out of the way I can say that I'm growing canna lilies.

The flamboyantly-flowering varieties I have growing in my tunnel house were purchased from nurseries and roadside stalls all around the South Island and I've divided them as they grew, replanting off-shoot rhizomes throughout my forest garden, but my latest and most elegant variety is the result of sowing the canna seed I gathered on a recent visit to Elizabeth Street, Richmond, Tasman, the street of my childhood.

The vigorous clump of slender-flowered canna were growing in the front yard of some folk I hadn't yet met and they were more than happy for me to harvest seeds from the dried pods; I filled my boots, so to speak; pockets in reality, with the "Indian shot" as canna seeds are sometimes known, due to their use as replacement lead-shot sometime in India's history; canna seeds are hard and dense!

The ones I sowed here some months back are no longer hard. In fact, they've softened and sprouted, en masse, and are calling out to be potted-up into soil through which they can extend their already-impressive roots. So far, 50 or so have struck, so I expect there'll be quite a show down the line; next year perhaps, once the lilies have grown to a size where they'll flower.



*Seed pods forming*



*Canna seeds: 'Indian shot'*

### A Bird In The Hand Is Worth...

In the past few weeks there has been a lot of rain. I have always loved the rain, the way it makes grass greener, leaves brighter and any day cosier. For some reason the sight of rain running down my windows is the perfect catalyst to a day of relaxation - either that or a day of getting drenched while trying to accomplish anything whatsoever.

A good example of making the most of a clear day was my family and I raiding our duck and chicken runs for eggs - a nightmare at the best of times. Fortunately I - the hapless stooge - decided to have a thorough look around as we don't want any extra 'surprise' ducks. Within minutes I had found about sixteen eggs, all of which we removed for 'examination' later.

Our ducks are shockingly intelligent which has caused problems, such as them placing a single egg on plain view as a sort of blood sacrifice and putting twenty eggs under a bush somewhere. Fortunately our chickens do not cause such issues, they place their eggs politely in a nesting box for us to collect at our leisure - or at least not by crawling around knee deep in duck poo trying to find where they hid the blasted eggs - and convenience.

A different egg-based incident was a thrush building a nest in our dead hedge - we have no intention of taking those eggs - it was apparently up to the thrush's standards as it has shown no intention of leaving and has laid three beautiful blue eggs. We regularly get the pleasure of watching the thrush and it's mate flying across the lawn or chirping death threats at the thrush living on our neighbour's land - as any polite thrush would do.

The 'thrush hedge' is a masterclass in that rarest art 'hodgepodgery' as it is basically a metre-tall pile of dead branches held together with other less rotten pieces of wood and our hopes and dreams. It is, admittedly, a good hedge as it can, by some miracle, hold chickens which - as any chicken owner would agree - proves that it is a bloody good hedge, albeit a dead one.

In the past I have asked those who read to the end to plant peas, collect leaves and stay warm, now I ask you to build a dead hedge or a bird roost as it can bring life into your garden and, with luck, the fascinating comedy of blackbirds fighting on the lawns like gladiators in the arena.



*Top to bottom: Hodgepodger at its finest; The dead hedge is beautiful as well as practical; The thrush shows its approval.*

### Peat Kidney



## LAST WORDS

### Did you know...

You can bring your CLEAN and DRY **tetrapak cartons** (cut and flattened) and **soft plastics** to the Environment Centre. Once we have a decent quantity, one of our team takes them in to Invercargill - the Tetrapaks go to The Batch cafe, who store them until they have a full pallet (that's a LOT of cartons!). They then get taken to Gore where the local Pakeke Lions Club send them off to Saveboard, who turn them into a wide range of building materials ([www.saveboard.nz/](http://www.saveboard.nz/)).

The soft plastics are taken to a soft plastics drop off point at The Warehouse or Woolworths.

If you have **kitchen waste** you can't compost at home, you can also arrange to bring that in and we will make sure it gets properly composted.

## SCES Annual General Meeting

**Monday 11th in November, 7pm**  
**Riverton Environment Centre**

We need you! We are looking for motivated people to come and join our governance committee to keep our Society focused and vibrant. We have short friendly meetings 1-2 hours once a month which you can join in person or on zoom.



Items made from (left) tetrapak cartons and (right) soft plastics

## Seeds available

We stock a huge range of seeds at Riverton Environment Centre. For many years we have stocked Kings Seeds, which are always popular, and for several years we have stocked exclusively NZ-grown, heritage Seta's Seeds. Last year saw us selling Southland Seed Savers seeds to the public for the first time and now we also have seeds from Riverton's own Gardens For Life!



## Resources to help

As part of our support for community food resilience, we stock some excellent resources specific to Coastal Otago & Southland: Our own in-house 'Heritage Orchard Handbook' and 'Beginner Organic Gardening' booklet, as well as 'Edible & Useful Trees & Shrubs', the 'Vegetable Growing Calendar' and the 'Orchard Planner for Coastal Otago & Southland' from Habitate in Waitati.

## Compost: make it!

Our pest-proof compost bins are available from Riverton Environment Centre. Thanks to the funding from WasteNet Southland, the Society is able to sell these for only \$20 (without the subsidy they would cost \$47, without the wire netting base). If you are keen on one, get in touch: [completelycompost@gmail.com](mailto:completelycompost@gmail.com)



## Compost: buy it!

Daltons having sadly stopped producing their entire certified organic media line (compost, seed-raising mix & potting mix), we've finally managed to track down a new supplier: Intelligro. Their 35 litre certified organic compost will soon be available at Riverton Environment Centre. Prices yet to be determined as we are awaiting the freight cost.

## 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](http://www.sces.org.nz/about/donate)

Ph 03 234 8717