



COASTLINE

SUMMER 2024/2025

PG 1	Our Valued Volunteers Dates to Diary
PG 2	Winding Down, Winding Up Bountiful Backyards a Blast
PG 3	Nick's Gardening: Companion Planting
PG 4	Longwood Loop Meet & Profiles Local Crafts: Christmassy Cleverness
PG 5	Seed Savers Zooming Our People: Lynne & Steve, Evita
PG 6	Heritage Harvest Festival S.I. Permaculture Hui 2025
PG 7	Heritage Harvest Festival Programme
PG 8	Our Community: Murihiku Kai Collective Partners
PG 9	Our Community: Fiordland Community Garden National Permaculture Hui
PG 10	Our Locals: Robert In Action Peat's Blackbird Saga
PG 11	Our Locals: Dylan's Podcast Review Teoti's Poetry
PG 12	Last Words: Good Local Lads

Our Valued Volunteers

Thursday 5th December was National Volunteer Day, and coincidentally that was the day we got together to celebrate the end of the year and all the wonderful people who give their time to support our various activities.



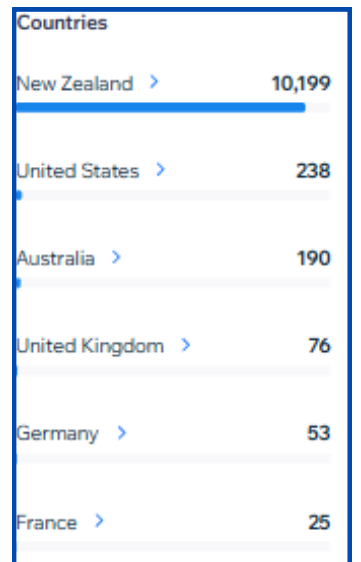
Steve and Lori did a great job arranging food and music, and everyone who came enjoyed chatting with others and learning more about what we do. We had a great turnout! Unfortunately some people were unable to attend on that night.

Part of the reason Steve wanted to get everyone together was that many of our volunteers don't ever get a chance to connect as they work on different days!

Our volunteers are a diverse bunch, ranging in age from seven to seventy-seven - we love and appreciate them all, for all the things they bring to our Centre and projects!

While Our volunteers are the front line in welcoming the public at Riverton Environment Centre, it is our website that is the front line for the rest of the country and the world; you can see (right) that we get online visitors from all over the place.

Many online visitors sign up to receive regular updates from us - we now send Coastline out seasonally to nearly 3,000 people. Through our Facebook page we also have a 'reach' that exceeds 44,000 annually.



DATES TO DIARY:

27 March	Introduction to Permaculture Workshop, Riverton
28 March	Riverton Permaculture Hui
29 & 30 March	16th Heritage Harvest Festival
Ongoing Over Summer	Forest Garden Tours and other workshops - check the website weekly for details

UP FRONT

Editorial: Winding Down, Winding Up

This time of year feels like a dichotomy, with year-end wind down activities going on while winding up for greater summer outdoor living. One involves recognising the significant people of 2024 while for the other, we're looking forward to what summer 2025 has in store for us.

This Coastline is similar. We feature quite a number of people who together have been major contributors to the SCES work of 2024. Each and every person's contribution is valuable! It was great to meet up with several of our volunteers at the recent evening. Thank you to Steve and Lori for organising!

Robyn, Elizabeth, Nick and Dylan - manager, admin education and projects, have had another very busy year doing amazing work ably supported by a team of people each contributing a few hours, to ensure that Riverton Environment Centre is well-organised, open and welcoming.

In 2025, the Longwood Loop producers look forward to filling your orders – see pg 4 for some brief intro's; our Seed Saver gurus are well organised preparing for the new season's harvest, pg 5 – thank you Rex and Janice, and planning is well underway for the 16th annual Heritage Harvest Festival; check out our centre pages for more info.

Plus as always we feature various related community activities along with some good reading and informative material.

On behalf of Hollie, our chairperson who has had an intensive study year, (more from her next year) I thank everyone who has supported the Society during 2024. I dare not to list names or the page would be overfilled!

Enjoy what we hope will be a very warm, not too dry summer.

Season's Greetings,

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.

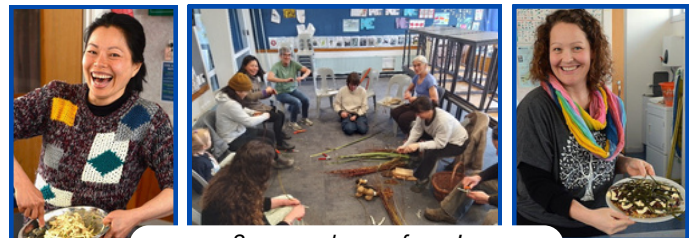
Riverton Environment Centre is a project of the Society. Volunteers open the Centre for the public 40 hours a week. The displays, information and resources are designed to be inspiring and enabling, incorporating a blend of traditional ways and new concepts to give people more earth-friendly options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

Bountiful Backyards A Blast

It's such a buzz for our whole team to have a bunch of enthusiastic folk turn up to share in some experiential, hands-on learning.

This year's Bountiful Backyards saw 115 tickets sold; everyone who attended said they had a great time, particularly the parents of the many young people who attended!

Lots more coming up at next year's Heritage Harvest Festival - see the centre spread for details!



So many happy faces!



What did people say about it?

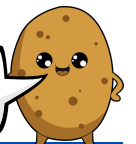
"This was so awesome for kids and adults. So engaging and fun!"

"Lots of knowledge shared and very encouraging to those starting out"

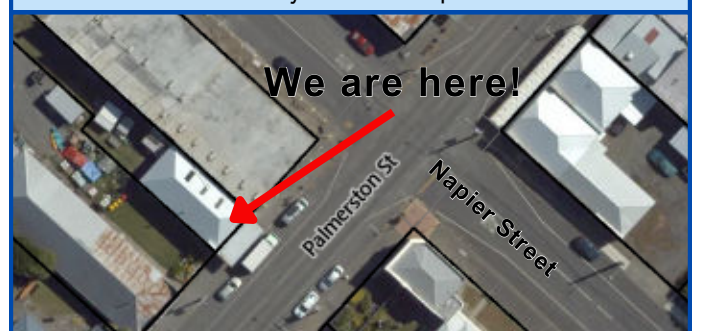
"A very comprehensive, clear and informative talk with fun and compelling practical elements"

"Kids thoroughly enjoyed all the workshops"

Thanks for making it a great weekend!



**Riverton Environment Centre is located at 154 Palmerston Street, Riverton. Opening hours are:
Monday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:30pm,
Sunday 1:30 - 4:30pm.**



SUMMER GARDENING WITH NICK

'Companion plants' are just... other plants

Gardeners are great at sharing advice. Sometimes however, the advice is just something they were told by someone who was told it by someone... you get the picture. 'Companion planting' is a bit like that - I have heard so many suggestions of 'good' or 'bad' companions, but I have very rarely seen any evidence to back them up. In my 25+ years of gardening I can't say that I have ever observed anything that would verify any claims either, other than the very simple planting of flowers to attract beneficial insects to the garden for pest control (if you've been to one of my workshops you'll know that Alyssum is my all-time favourite for this!) - although this is still anecdotal, so can't really be called 'evidence'!

In fact, recent developments in horticultural science tell us that the best 'companion' plants are, in fact, just other plants*. Previously I've written about the importance of exudates (chemical compounds secreted into soil by plant roots) and 'necromass' (dead microbes) - well it turns out that the more diverse the plants growing above the soil, the more diverse the exudates and consequently the more diverse the microbes and necromass and the better quality the soil. So if you're looking for some 'good companions' why not just try some other plants?!



*Some more examples of 'interplanting':
Above: broccoli planted among potato onions;
Below: Dandelion-leaved chicory growing happily
next to garlic.*



*Broad beans and cauliflower.
Above: before cutting;
Below: after cutting.*



In our garden we have been 'interplanting' our crops - that is, planting more than one crop in a garden bed. My favourite combinations this season are cauliflowers with broad beans and cabbages with peas; I sowed the broad bean and pea seeds at the same time as planting the cauliflower and cabbage seedlings - once the broad beans and peas were about 10cm tall we cut them off with scissors, added some to our salads (a quick and delicious crop) and used some as mulch around the brassicas. The legumes quickly grew back, so in another couple of weeks were able to do the same again, effectively getting three crops in the one bed.

The particularly neat thing about this combination of plants is that the bacteria on the roots of the peas and beans are busily 'fixing' nitrogen from the atmosphere, and when cut 'dump' it back into the soil for the brassicas to access. And of course all the exudates from the beans, peas and brassicas are feeding a range of soil microbes, some of which then also die when the plant is cut back - the necromass! All hail the necromass!

**You can of course plant things too densely, which can lead to plants struggling to access sunlight, nutrients or water. It is largely a matter of trial and error, which is really the best way to learn!*

PEOPLE & PROJECTS: Local Treasures

Longwood Loop Producers Meet

The 3rd Longwood Loop Producers meet-up was hosted by Kathryn at her family's **Roundhill Farm** near Colac Bay; we had an extensive tour followed by a discussion and shared lunch.

We met out the front and then proceeded to explore the greenhouse and garden beds near the house. We also saw the house cows, another greenhouse and herb gardens around the side of the house, followed by an orchard area in a sheltered spot in front of the house and then a forest garden next to a woodlot.

We walked past some friendly self-shedding sheep as well and there were ducks and chickens living in the forest garden. A lot is going on on this 10 acre site, with much biodiversity and substantial tree growth, considering it was mostly a paddock when Kathryn and her family arrived 14 years ago!

It was good to meet more producers, chat about how the Loop can be improved even further, and see first hand a nice example of homesteading in Southland. Kathryn's son Brodie has just won the National YES Company of the year (See the story on the back page).

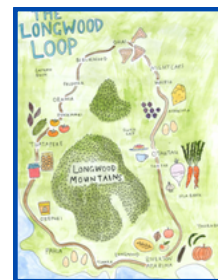
Dylan



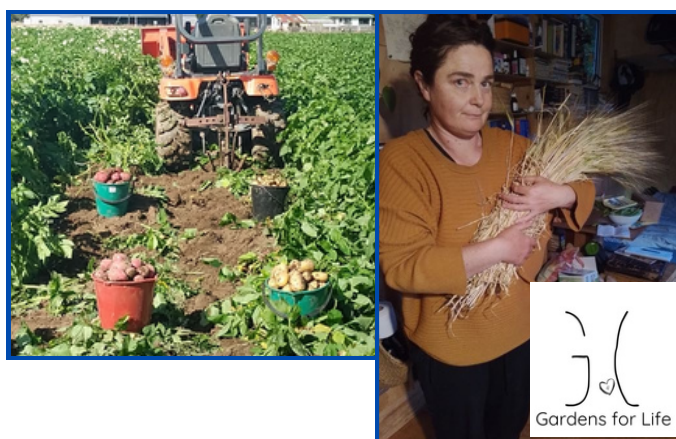
Some of the Loop producers checking out part of Kathryn's garden.

Longwood Loop Producer Profiles

One of our regular Longwood Loop suppliers is Edwin Mabonga of **Imbizi Farms** in Otautau. Edwin and his family have been supplying the Loop with mushrooms and fresh vegetables for a full year now, and loves that he is able to grow fresh food that is accessible to people in his community and the communities visited by the Loop van every Thursday.



Edwin's potatoes are particularly sought after! His Longwood Loop sales make a valuable contribution to his family's income and he has increased his production this year.



Left: Imbizi Farm potatoes, from the Mabonga Family to yours; Right: Trish will try growing anything, including this hulled black barley.

Another dedicated Loop supplier is Trish Burton of **Gardens for Life Aparima Riverton**. Trish has been a grower of plants for many years and really likes providing people with healthy, tough plants that can provide food, medicine and beauty - for people as well as wildlife.

Trish prides herself in only selling plants that have coped with the tough conditions in her Riverton garden - nothing is pampered! Feedback from Loop customers suggests that these plants are doing well in Southland conditions. Trish says "a massive thank you to everyone who has bought plants from us - we really appreciate the community's support for our small growing business".

Both Edwin and Trish (along with other Loop suppliers) also supply Riverton Environment Centre with their products, so if you miss the Longwood Loop you might find what you're looking for at the Centre!

Christmassy Cleverness

One of our longest-serving volunteers, Tanya, is also an extremely talented craftsperson. Featured in the Environment Centre's front window at the moment are some of her felted figures, which are for sale at very reasonable prices. Come in and check them out - they are truly beautiful!

We have other local talent on show too - Peter's wooden creations, and Jude's hand made fabric crafts, as well as lots of locally-grown plants!



You can also find a huge range of other gift ideas for any time of year and occasion, from fancy boxed herbal teas to soaps and seeds. Plus not only do all sales support our work in the community, it all has a minimal environmental footprint.



Southland Seed Savers Network



Janice and Rex have been doing a stellar job keeping our small dedicated group of seed savers supplied with seeds for the coming season; these seeds are a mixture of special heritage varieties (mostly from Henry Harrington's original collection) and some varieties chosen for being just plain old strong, reliable growers that will put food on the table. Rex has been continuing his supply of plants for selling at Riverton Environment Centre as a seed savers fundraiser, and together they have been developing a data management system for keeping track of who has what, how well things have grown and what seeds have been received from seed saver growers - this can be extremely complex, so it is fabulous having 'details people' like Janice and Rex working on it!

A small group of seed savers met online (via Zoom, from Greymouth, Gore, Clinton, Tuatapere, Lora River and Riverton) to talk about some of the more technical aspects of saving seeds - minimum numbers of plants for maximum genetic diversity; prevention of cross-pollination by plants of the same species; 'rogueing' crops by getting rid of the least healthy plants, etc.). It was noted that soils and weather conditions are very variable in everyone's gardens, so the focus will be purely on healthy plants and bulking up our supplies of seeds.



Janice and Rex checking out some seed savers plants.

Evita's Workshops

Evita, one half of Passionate Permies, has recently been running several of her high-quality workshops around the community: tofu-making, DIY hand creams, and making fresh soft cheeses are some of the skills she has shared with lucky Western Southlanders.

Attendees always sing Evita's praises, both as a tutor and cook - she is certainly highly skilled at both! We are very fortunate to have someone with her range of skills in our Education team - look out for more of her workshops at next year's Heritage Harvest Festival!



The group at Evita's Bountiful Backyards dumpling workshop - Dean's been making dumplings ever since!

Evita says "the reason I am doing these food workshops is because I think it's important for people to really get to know what they eat through cooking it!"

Our People: Lynne & Steve



Lynne and I moved over from the UK in 2002. Yes we are poms but we do have Kiwi passports now, if that helps! Lynne is from Manchester and I am a proud Geordie from North Shields on the mouth of the River Tyne.

Our two kids are proud Kiwis now, however our daughter Beth married a Frenchman and lives in Chamonix and our son Ben married an American and is living in Maui with two children. Yes, family get-togethers are a bit problematic!

We are both now retired but we have spent all of our working lives in the outdoors teaching children and adults. Our work enabled us to live in a variety of National Parks in the UK. When we initially came to NZ we ran a company based in Hanmer Springs mainly providing outdoor education programs for visiting Primary Schools. We did this for 12 years.

We first discovered Riverton back in early 2013 when we were on the final few days of an epic walk. We had started the Te Araroa Trail back in September 2012 at Cape Reinga and in April 2013 we were almost there!! However the weather packed up for us so we stayed at the Riverton holiday park for a few days before completing the walk in Bluff. This was fate. We had seen so many beautiful places in NZ but we both fell in love with Riverton, the coastline, the climate and decided to settle here.

One of the main drawcards for settling in Riverton was the Environment Centre. We love what it stands for and we really wanted to meet like-minded people and be part of a community that really cares for the environment. Volunteering at the centre not only allows you to really feel good about volunteering but you meet some amazing people and characters. You also learn so much from some very knowledgeable people.

We are very grateful to live in such a wonderful part of the world.

16th Annual Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival: March 29th & 30th 2025


A lot of work has gone into getting the Harvest Festival workshop programme organised nice and early this year, and we are also chuffed to have a couple of exciting pre-festival activities happening!

On Thursday 27th March experienced permaculturist and 'Passionate Permie' Dylan is running a full-day Introduction to Permaculture and on Friday 28th Robyn & Robert will host a Lower South Island Permaculture Hui in their big yurt (see the posters below for more information). We hope that combining these activities with the Harvest Festival will encourage people to take some extra time to enjoy Riverton and the fun-filled Festival weekend.

As always, we have a fantastic selection of workshops at the Festival, with lots of fresh offerings available, including cheese making, African drumming and greenhouse gardening, as well as tried and true favourites like harakeke weaving, orchard design, preserving and much much more! Check out the full programme on the next page.



THE ESSENTIAL FOREST GARDENER



During the Festival there will be several opportunities to visit Robyn's and Robert's Forest Garden; and now you can also buy Robert's book: 'The Essential Forest Gardener' - a delve into the history and development of the Forest Garden, with stories and ideas all told in Robert's unique, entertaining style.

For sale at Riverton Environment Centre and on our website, with a generous portion of the proceeds going towards the Society's work.

ROBERT GUYTON

PERMACULTURE
Introduction to



RIVERTON THU. MAR 27 10AM-4PM

\$50
INC. LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA

AT FLECKS HALL

LEARN WITH PASSIONATE PERMIE DYLAN

Ethics, principles, design basics, soil fertility, tree systems, and much more..



events.humanitix.com/intro2permaculture



PERMACULTURE
Lower South Island



HUI
GATHER • LEARN • DISCUSS

RIVERTON FRI. MAR 28 10AM-4PM

\$40
INC. LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA

ENJOY

- Networking Panel + Speakers
- Foraging delights
- Forest Garden Tour

AT GUYTON'S FOREST GARDEN

events.humanitix.com/permaculture-hui



Thank you to our supporters!



TE POU ARATAKI POUNAMU O MURIHIKU



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EDUCATION

16th Annual Riverton Heritage Harvest Festival: March 29th & 30th 2025

Ticket sales for Festival workshops will be opening on the 20th January, however paid Members of the South Coast Environment Society will be able to buy them from the 10th; as our workshops tend to be very popular and many can sell out quickly, this is our way of saying thanks to those who support the Society's work by joining as Members. Of course, Members also get a 10% discount on tickets, so it's a double win!

Annual Membership currently costs only \$20.00 for an Individual, \$25.00 for a family and \$30.00 for businesses. As well as advance workshop ticket sales, discounts on tickets and a general all-round good feeling, you also get advance ordering in our Annual Fruit Tree Sale **and** a free PDF of our Beginner Organic Gardening booklet! To join now, simply go to our website www.sces.org.nz/membership.

Pre- and Post-Festival Activities			
Thursday 27 March 10.00am to 4.30pm		Intro to Permaculture workshop @Flecks Hall	
Friday 28 March 10.00am to 6.00pm		Permaculture Convergence/Hui @ Guyton's	
Friday 28 March Friday 7.00pm		Potluck dinner @ Flecks Hall	
Monday 1 April 10.00am - 11.30am		Forest Garden Tour	
Heritage Harvest Festival @ Aparima College			
Saturday 29 March		Sunday 30 March	
Saturday 9.00 to 10.30am	Simple cheese making 1	Sunday 9.30 to 11.00am	No-knead sourdough
	Malvas		Healing trees
	Herbal teas		Greenhouse prep for winter
	Soil fertility		Flower arranging
	Autumn leaf pressing (children)		Terrariums (children)
Morning tea break 10.30 - 11.00am		Morning tea break 10.30 - 11.00am	
Saturday 11.00 to 12.30pm	Simple cheese making 2	Sunday 11.30 to 1.00pm	Simple ferments
	Biodiversity by the square metre		Natural bee keeping
	Beginners Introduction to Weaving Harakeke		Microclimates for growing
	African drumming		Medicinal plant walk
	Maypole dancing (children)		Felting (adults + children)
Lunch + entertainment 12.30 - 2.00pm		Lunch 1.00 - 2.00pm	
Saturday 2.00pm to 3.30pm	Grass weaving 1	Sunday 2.00pm to 3.30pm	Preserving
	Orchard design		Autumn gardening
	Beginners Introduction to Weaving Harakeke		Propagating trees
	African drumming		African drumming & dance
	Fishing (adults + children)		Harakeke puti puti (flowers) (adults + children)
Afternoon tea break 3.30 - 4.00pm		Pack Down, Clean Up	
Saturday 4.00 to 5.30pm	Natural fruit tree training	Tours	
	Grass weaving 2		
	Herbal medicine	Sunday 4.00pm to 5.00pm	Forest Garden Tour
	Seed saving		Riverton Heritage Orchard Tour
	Baked bread mice (children)	Sunday 5.15pm to 6.15pm	Forest Garden Tour
Dinner - Local Harvest	Riverton Heritage Orchard Tour		

COMMUNITY: Murihiku Kai Collective (MKC) Partners

Venison for Good



KiwiHarvest Invercargill is teaming up with We Hunt Food (a project supported by the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation) to distribute culled and processed venison to Southland communities in need.

The initiative sees hunters donating their kills to We Hunt Food who arranges for the meat to be processed by local butchers at a cost of \$3.50 per kilo. The venison is then handed over to KiwiHarvest, which distributes it to 32 charitable organisations across the region.

The Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) has highlighted venison as a healthy protein choice. Naturally lean and low in fat, venison offers a nutritious and sustainable food source. “This partnership is a win-win,” says Jennifer Stephens, Relationship Manager for KiwiHarvest Invercargill. “It tackles the issue of deer overpopulation, while providing high-quality protein to those who need it most.”



Photo: (L) Roy Sloan (We Hunt Food) and Dwight Gray (KiwiHarvest)

KiwiHarvest expressed gratitude to We Hunt Food and the Wapiti Foundation for supporting the initiative, which has already made a tangible difference in the community. However, to keep the project sustainable, the organisation is seeking funding to cover processing costs and is calling on local butchers to partner with them to make this an affordable, long-term solution.

“We believe Southlanders have the community spirit to help us grow this initiative,” Stephens said. “With your backing, we can continue to put this healthy, locally-sourced protein to good use.”

KiwiHarvest Invercargill thanks the Murihiku Kai Collective for aligning this initiative and hopes the Southland community will rally behind the cause, ensuring this innovative partnership continues to thrive.

MKC: NZAS-funded learning

Pou 3, 4 & 5 of the Murihiku Kai Collective’s Good Food Road Map research identified that education and self-determination around growing kai has become a challenge for many whānau around Murihiku.



We are therefore super excited that the MKC has received funding (umbrellaed by SCES) from NZAS’ Sponsorships and Donations Programme to develop and run a series of workshops to support people in need to build these vital skills. The details are being worked out now, so look out for a progress update soon!



Healthy Families Is 10 Years Old!



November saw Active Southland’s Healthy Families Invercargill team mark its 10th anniversary with a special celebration alongside many of the community stakeholders who have been involved in the initiative, including the South Coast Environment Society.

Healthy Families Invercargill is part of a larger movement which is spread across 11 sites nationally with a focus on making it easier for everyone in Aotearoa to choose healthy foods, stay physically active, live smokefree, minimise the harm from alcohol and boost mental health, resilience and wellbeing.

Funded by Healthy NZ, Healthy Families is an innovative and proven prevention initiative which is community-led, systems-focused and grounded in mātauranga Māori. The approach recognises that communities are best placed to understand and prioritise their own health.

This kaupapa has included supporting the creation of the Murihiku Kai Collective and the development and implementation of the Good Food Road Map.

Healthy Families Invercargill systems innovator Rachel Robertson said: “Together these have been vital pieces of work which would not have progressed in the way they have without the passion and knowledge of the South Coast Environment Society.”

Active Southland chief executive Vanessa Hughey-Pol and Healthy Families Invercargill strategic leadership group chair Darren Ludlow cut a celebratory cake at the recent event at Murihiku Marae.



Fiordland Community Garden

The Fiordland Community Garden Charitable Trust has been going since 2019 and recently celebrated its fifth birthday!



Our Trustees and Management Committee volunteers meet approximately every 4-6 weeks to plan and make decisions on the running of the garden, including financials, strategy, grants and funding, events, workshops, projects and building work and much more.

These dedicated volunteers are the driving force behind the garden, donating their time and expertise to help keep the garden running. We currently have six Trustees as well as two people on our Management Committee, all with different life experiences, skills and gardening knowledge.

We are pleased to announce we have further funding from Aotearoa Gaming Trust and Lotteries Community Fund for our Garden Coordinator. Thank-you!

We would like to extend a huge thanks to Te Hau Toka Southern Lakes Wellbeing Fund, who, in 2023-2024 provided funding for our Garden Coordinator, our open sessions/working bees, as well as supporting our outreach to schools, families and older people in our community.

Thank you to the following funders for providing funding for our wheelchair access pathway and shelter: Meridian Power Up Community Fund, Pub Charity, SDC Community Partnership Fund, Kepler Challenge Fund and the Erewhon Fund, and thank-you to the Syd Slee Charitable Trust for funding our workshops in 2023-24.

Thanks also to all those who have made donations to the Community Garden. We really appreciate your support.

Ngā mihi!

Hannah, Community Garden Coordinator



National Permaculture Hui



There has recently been a hui; a conference, a gathering of like-minded folk, in Taranaki. To be more specific, the hui was in Ōakura, nearby to New Plymouth.

The Green School was the venue and much anguished thought resulted from the curious fact that the school is a chartered one, financed by a wealthy benefactor, which seems at odds with most, if not all, permaculture principles, but it was lovely there: the architecture was sympathetic; each classroom looked like an up-turned ark, and the plantings were extensive; puka (*Meryta sinclairii*)-dominated and I wondered why a student might go off-path to explore, but there wasn't enough time to investigate.

The central focus was permaculture and it attracted over 100 permaculturalists, so that's a win! I was determined to talk with every attendee, whether they liked it or not! I think I cornered them all. There's a lot of creative power in that community. I learned a great deal. We each attended talks that featured projects from all over the motu. They all sounded exciting. Lots of community garden projects doing well and some surprisingly large-scale endeavours looking and sounding exciting.

I spoke about our Riverton forest garden and my rambling dialogue seemed to be entertaining enough to ensure no-one left the room; I'd have called them out if they'd tried. There were a greater proportion of Māori at the hui than I've seen on previous occasions; that's a good thing, to my mind. Most of those folk were interested in innovative revegetation methods and there were plenty of seasoned permaculturalists willing to share their experience with them.

It's worth noting, I think, that it rained a lot! Great for plants, but not so comfortable for anyone wishing to visit the gardens of the region. The hui coincided with the Taranaki Garden Festival and the Sustainable Backyards Festival and trying to visit all of those wonderful gardens was an impossible ask. I made it to 2. They were both fabulous.

I've written about my time in Taranaki in the New Zealand Gardener where the articles will be published over the Christmas period. If you are keen to read them, keep an eye on the magazines your dentist or doctor leaves on the waiting-room table.

Robert

LOCALS

Robert In Action

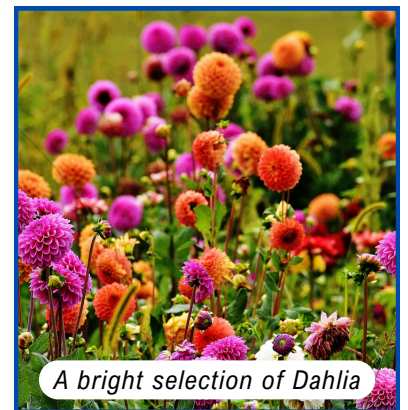
As previously mentioned, I went to Taranaki and successfully returned with little wear and tear, thanks to my brother's chauffeuring skills, and lots of plants, thanks to the proportions of my brother's car. He and I were serial roadside stall stoppers, so long as plants were on the stands, and we found treasures and by the time we arrived home, the back seats and boot of his blue VW were packed with coral trees, mimosa, banana, brugmansia, echium and dozens of perennial plants whose names I don't remember, all aching to secure their roots into Southland soil. I've planted about half of what I bought and plan to get the rest in the ground promptly.



A colourful character

Bringing wonderful plants across the Cook Strait in my hand-luggage meant collecting seeds and tubers, rather than potted plants, but I made a good fist of it. The somewhat warmer north provided opportunities to return with and try some quite odd plants, but I'm forever hopeful. The whau seeds I gathered under the watchful eyes of two neighbourhood watch wardens in Ōakura should love it down here, even if that means starting off in my tunnel house before taking their place out in the wider, cooler garden. I visited gardens on show in the Taranaki Garden Festival and they were wondrous indeed! Of the scores on offer, I could only take in two! I came away with loquat seeds and sugar cane stalks, all of which are in Riverton soil now. New Plymouth is a wonderful city in which to garden. I wish I could have seen more of them.

I'm becoming fixated on dahlia. It's important to me though, to pronounce the name correctly: there seem to be three options. The plant is Mexican, so I should take pronunciation advice from a native of Mexico, but instead I'm going by what I've heard so far from New Zealand gardeners, what I hear from my soon-to-be-daughter-in-law from Portland Oregon, and what the American dahlia expert I watched on Youtube last night, says. I'm going with the latter; she says dahlia as if it was dally-ah, rather than Dah-lia or dail-e-a. In any case, I'm growing as many of them as I can, in order to create a flower-fest in March. Mostly, I have two colours: peachy-apricot and volcano-red. I've no idea if they go together; that's the least of my concerns. I've sown dahlia seeds as well and who knows what colours will result. Dahlia are fun. We shall see.



A bright selection of Dahlia

Peat's ongoing blackbird saga

Blackbirds are a menace - this is something most gardeners will know. Many a morning can be spent lamenting the damage caused by those beady-eyed little bulldozers. I was lucky to be able to watch one grow from a chick - I have been able to see things like this often and the wonder never goes away.

Recently I planted a garden, which I fear will be a juicy target for the shoals of blackbirds that stalk the lawn. It's a rather small garden, but I made sure to pick my plants wisely. I chose the seasonal - and personal - favourites such as carrots, lettuces, dill and tomatoes.

I've always loved having carrots as a snack and I know that they will only taste better when I grow them for myself. Lettuces are a delicious summer treat and I'm looking forward to enjoying mine. Dill is an amazing herb for any occasion - one of my favourites. Tomatoes always scream of hot summer days - if we get any down here in Riverton - and toast. I'm yet to plant basil but it won't be long, it's the best food combo I know.

I'm out of space, so I'll finish by asking everyone who has the time, to plant some tomatoes and basil - you won't regret it!

Peat Kidney



Podcast review by Passionate Permie Dylan



Zero Input Agriculture is a new podcast created by Shane in Australia. It is closely linked to his blog writings on the same topic over the past four years. The theme is about "Trialling and breeding crops and livestock that can produce without irrigation, fertiliser and imported nutrients", hence the zero-input agriculture title.

At the time of writing this there are three episodes to listen to, and four episodes making up an eBook called "Taming the Apocalypse" which explores the long rise of humanity and agriculture, and suggests practical approaches that people everywhere can use to create new symbiotic relationships with organisms across the entire tree of life.

I particularly enjoyed the episode about daylilies, where a guy from North America breeds the *Hemerocallis* genus towards large, robust, tasty, and beautiful plants. His philosophy of 'plant them, weed once, and then see what happens' fits into the zero-input theme very well.

He mentions that daylilies fit into permaculture systems as a perennial plant with culinary uses (and many other benefits such as erosion control) with very little inputs. Read more at www.sundragondaylilies.com/permaculture.

Here is an excerpt that now ethuses me to hunt out every daylily plant I can find:

"In experimenting with the flowers of the hybrid cultivars, I have found that some of them are good to eat, while others have odd, sedative effects, and others are almost laxative in nature. I don't think anyone should ever assume that just any daylily is perfectly edible. The genus has a lot going on chemically, and the hybrids are a mish-mash of the genes for those traits, all randomly assorted due to never having been selected for. However, as I have very carefully experimented with the hybrids, I have been able to make some selections for both attractive modern traits and palatability. I suspect by blending those with my species-like base plants, that the selection for the most palatable flowers may also open the door for some exciting flowers as well. Nothing ever has to be just one thing."

Shane's style of speaking (and writing) is gentle, informative, and non-egocentric. Well worth a listen (or read).



Daylilies: *Hemerocallis*

Poetry: Now We Reap

Before the industrial revolution, a stream turned the waterwheel that turned
the stones that ground the wheat that supplied the village with flour.

After the industrial revolution there was the equivalent of 10,000 waterwheels in a factory,
requiring 10,000 acres of wheat to grind to cover costs and make a profit.

Tear down the hedgerows. Make room for the harvesters. Here's some artificial
fertilizer to make your wheat grow faster. Here's some spray to kill the weeds.

Oh no, we have too much wheat. Store it up until the price rises. Give it to the starving.

Give it, yeah right. We'll flick some through to UNICEF, a tax-deductible donation.

Oh no, the soil has turned to dust. I know, we'll tear down the jungle. That soil, untouched for
thousands of years. We'll soon teach it what its good for. Good for us, that's for sure.

And now the storms arrive. The temperatures around the world are on the increase. The seas
are rising. Symptoms from the way industrialization has taught us to abuse our planet.

My long grass lawn, and No Spray Zone footpath, receives scowls. You make the place look so
untidy. There was a time when I was taught to think like that too.

How well these attitudes have been embedded in us. As we hear the cries from our planet
to save her, we still hold on to them, even as we reap, what we've sown.

Teoti Jardine, Aparima Riverton

LAST WORDS

Young Enterprise success also a win for sustainability

If you harbour any doubts about our local youth commitment to environment and sustainability, look no further than the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) at Aparima College. Sustainability is the bottom-line value for YES companies – environmental, social, cultural and economic – with an emphasis on seeking sustainable solutions to problems above making a profit.



In the past 13 years that Aparima College has participated in the scheme, environment and community have always topped the agenda, with products ranging from woollen beanies knitted by local grannies to seaweed-based bio-feed.



Treet Yourself

In 2024 Aparima College ran four YES companies, three of which won regional excellence prizes. Treet Yourself won the Southland/Central Lakes final and went on to represent the region in the national final on Thursday 5th December in Wellington.

You may remember Treet Yourself from 2023's Harvest Festival. The company was formed with a focus on planting native trees for people who lacked time and resources to plant in their gardens, lifestyle blocks and community areas. SCES members were amongst their first customers. The team learned many lessons about ground preparation, tree survival, and managing labour and tools, plus recognised the massive demand for planting natives around Southland.



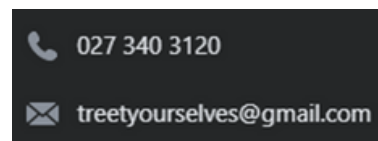
Brodie Murdoch and Caleb Diprose continued in 2024, rebranding the company as Treet Yourself Contracting, with a focus on seeking native planting solutions for Southland's farmers and employing contractors to do quality planting in return for good wages and conditions.

Planet and People are their twin foci. Plus, technology: they started integrating AI and drone technology into their initial farm visit, and for collecting useful data on tree survival that could be utilised by farmers for future planning. They prepare the ground in a timely fashion, contract trained planters on a suitable day, and then follow-up with a quality-check several months later. They enjoyed significant support from Aparima College staff, Western Southland locals, Thriving Southland, the Southland Chamber of Commerce and many other community groups, not least SCES.

The boys ran a stall at the Field Days and spoke at many community meetings, culminating in a second win at the regional finals and another chance to pitch in Wellington at the national competition. And they won! Treet Yourself Contracting was crowned 2024 Company of the Year, from 1270 YES teams comprising 5000 students across Aotearoa, and the first time Southland has taken out the top prize since 1997.



Brodie and Caleb are well aware that 'it takes a village' to make something like this happen, and they are extremely grateful for all the support from the Southland community and everyone who believed they could. You can find them on Facebook (Treet Yourself) or contact them on...



Lynne



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