



## The Organics Networker



Field Day Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October 10.30 am

### No 45 Spring 2010

Spring Greetings to you all

Our next field day is at Jose and Rich's place, they welcome you to their property. The day will start at 10.30am with a short meeting and a walk around the property. After a shared lunch there will be a cherimoya pruning demonstration and more!

Directions to **Nature Zone Gardens** at Pukenui. From Kaitaia, go north, then keep going north from Awanui head towards Cape Reinga. Pukenui township, which consists of a 4square shop, cafe and wholesaler, (and Houhora harbour) is about **40km north of Kaitaia**

Go 4.5km north of Pukenui and Turn left up Trig Road off State Highway 1. Drive 3.3km (Rapid No. 330) till you come to two letterboxes at the very end of Trig Road, keep them on your left and drive straight thru, follow bumpy drive for approx 1km which swings up a left hand corner hill - you're there!

Here's a review from Jose and Rich...

Nature Zone Gardens is a 4.5 hectare block and has been certified organic since 1998. Our main cropping is garlic on terraced gardens as the land is steep and sandy and

over the summer we do vegetable cropping. In the valleys we have cherimoya trees which vary in age from 15 years to recent new plantings. We are off-grid and so have solar power thru an Outback inverter. Rich will give a demonstration on pruning techniques for cherimoyas which change over the age of the tree. Interesting to note we last hosted a field day here exactly 10 years ago!! Time certainly has flown ... We look forward to seeing you all here.

Warm regards Rich and Josie,

Field Day Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October  
10.30 am

Nature Zone Gardens

330 Trig Road PUKENUI  
(40km North of Kaitaia)

Come and see this  
inspiring property  
Bring a friend and something to  
share for lunch!

## SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR...

Dear Friends and Organic Producers,

I hope that by now the rain has reduced and the sun has become strong enough to bring up the soil temperature for good growing conditions.

For the people of Canterbury I wish that the quake becomes a bad memory as soon as possible. The shake has brought down a lot of old structures to make place for new growth, which will probably be better adapted to withstand similar shakes in the future. Nature is like that.

Every year the annual plants die to make place for other species throughout the season. Over a longer period the small changes in the sequence of growth takes place and the whole area starts to look completely different.

During the OFNZ AGM in Hamilton I had a small discussion on the re-creation of the natural environment in some locations in and around Hamilton. A notion was that it took a lot of work to re-create the natural native look and keep the creeks free from blockages by fallen trees to prevent the forming of boggy areas. To be honest I always think that nature will manage itself; even without the interference of the human species. This will give us a continuous change in habitats, with some species being dominant for a while. We as humans might not like what nature gives us at a specific moment, but nature by itself has taken care of nature from before the dinosaurs.

Another issue discussed at the dinner table was the use of human waste in the organic production cycle. As we all know it is forbidden to use human waste in food growing/production. It is not even allowed to be put in your hot compost! You can use your compost toilet content as fertilizer for your windbreakers, native forest and timber production. This is a pity as many nutrients and micro nutrients are brought onto the property by way of food and cannot be used

directly into the (closed?) organic production cycle. Nature goes in cycles, and if you are using a septic tank with the necessary drain field, the growth on top of the drain field is always very lush due to the nutrients supplied by the decomposed human waste. Legally you are not allowed to grow food on the drain field. However by using this lush green growth as an input in your compost you are very much able to recover nutrients from the human waste for your food production.

The basic human waste cycle is in three steps, human waste – food – human waste. With the above system this can change to human waste – septic tank digester – drain field growth – compost – food production – human waste.

If you are using a composting toilet you can use the human waste to enrich an area from where you harvest the green material for your compost. The cycle then becomes effectively: human waste – green compost matter – compost – food production.

Personally I do not see any objection against the use of well treated human waste in the food production, but legally it is not allowed, not even in an enclosed organic production system.

Happy growing and see you at the interesting property of Richard and Jose during the next field-day.

Jan Arie Kamsteeg



## WAI WURRI ORGANICS UPDATE SPRING 2010.

Magnolia's, camellias, fruit trees & daffodils flowering, rabbits digging little holes around the place & swooping swallows dropping and catching the goose feathers they collect, (which actually looks like they do it on purpose) our place is enjoying it's "change of life". All our little feathered friends out there seem to be busy doing something.

Three of the geese have chosen to nest under the eucalypts this year, I sure wouldn't, but they have finally "twigged" that it's safer than in the flood zone. A couple of days ago while pushing my granddaughter on the swing there was an almighty crack as one of the botrioides branches came crashing down, fortunately several meters from one of the unsuspecting expecting mums.

With ducks and geese there's always an abundance of feathers lying around, so we watch warblers, sparrows and the like gathering them up & darting off in a round-about covert fashion back to their nest site.

Quite a lot seems to go on nocturnally too, we've discovered...when we read the foot prints in the muddy bits! The ducks go adventuring further than during the day...and not only the ducks, sometimes there's pukeko, kiwi, rabbit, rat, pig and possum prints (the Native Americans would love this). Fortunately the possums generally find the juicy apple in a nearby trap.

One startling thing we've found is that there is more disease in the orchard trees than ever before and we've had to hard prune and burn the branches. Nevertheless, I've planted more trees, disease resistant this time & hope they appreciate living where there used to be a thick flax hedge at the back of the house.

With lupins, garlic, broad beans, greens and weeds growing like crazy now, the old knees are getting a bit of a thrashing, so I've discovered it's easier to bend over & get on with it.

Ain't Spring wonderful.

Krissie

## HERBAL NEWS

Spring is here! Time to wash off those winter blues and get in the garden and look for some wholesome tonics to refresh your bodies!

### Urtica diocia – Stinging Nettle



Now is a perfect time to have nettle tea!

You will notice this European Nettle plant as the soil comes back to life in your garden after winter, if you are lucky, before you touch it! Wear gloves to collect it as it isn't called stinging nettle for nothing!

No, not the NZ Native Urtica – DON'T eat that!

Stinging nettle is collected just prior to, or at flowering, or pick the young shoots in spring for a spring tonic. You can use the herb (that is the part above the ground) or the roots (of course you will have to plant more if you have the roots) they are both very nutritious. Young shoots can be collected in early spring before the silica crystals develop which makes it taste less gritty if using them in a soup.

Nettle is rich in vitamin A, B2, C, E, carotenoids, and K, also fresh extracts contain B1 as well as calcium, potassium, iron, manganese and copper. The

coexistence of vitamin C and iron allows for good absorption of the iron.

Medicinally and internally, *Urtica dioica* – nettle, is used as a blood cleanser, anti hemorrhagic, diuretic, circulatory stimulant, nutritive tonic, lowers blood sugar and improves milk supply for lactating mothers. Nettle also has anti allergic properties and has also been found useful in the treatment of rheumatic and arthritic problems. It is anti fungal and anti bacterial (Fisher and Painter 1996). It is also used for skin conditions such as eczema, stomach hemorrhage, and arthritis.

Historically, the plant was used for arthritis by hitting the skin with the plant to create the stinging sensation. I am not sure which helped the nettle or the fact that you forgot about the pain due to the stinging! Either way it worked!

Externally, nettle is used for nose bleeds, ulcers and wounds. An amazing plant!

For adults you can make an infusion (tea) by pouring 500 ml boiling water over a handful of the herb and leave it to 'draw' for 5 – 10 minutes. Drink 1 – 3 cups a day as a tonic.

Or you can use nettle as a vegetable like spinach, just steam and the sting goes out of it and it becomes an awesome green vegetable. You can use it in soups or to make a delicious pesto.

#### Melissa officinalis – lemon balm



If you are feeling a little frazzled or your mind is racing with what to plant and the list of spring jobs to do then Melissa is here to help!

Lemon balm or *Melissa officinalis* is a calming relaxing herb it will relieve the spasms and aches from the garden or help to bring down your temperature if you get a spring cold or flu. This wonderful herb is specific for a busy mind; so if you wake at 2 or 3 in the morning, worrying about what to plant next, have a cup of Melissa and sleep away the worries!

Medicinally Melissa is used for restlessness, anxiety, excitability and depression. It is also used for herpes simplex and insomnia as well as heart burn, indigestion, and flatulence! Aren't herbs wonderful!

It is a safe herb for pregnancy and can be used for morning sickness and headaches in pregnancy.

Remember to always be sure to identify the herb correctly, if you are not sure, ask someone who knows it well.

If you would like to talk about nutrition, health conditions or herbal medicine for your optimal health



Call Jesse: 09 4055598.

Natural Therapist/Medicinal Herbalist  
[hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com](mailto:hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com)

(Next time: the wonderful Kawakawa – *Macropiper excelsum* and "What is herbal medicine")

As usual the Networker is available for you to pass on info, buy, sell or swap and share your experiences – please send your contribution for the next Networker

Jesse [hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com](mailto:hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com)



## **REPORT ON OFNZ AGM**

On 28th and 29<sup>th</sup> August the OFNZ AGM was held in Hamilton. Rob Downing and myself were there as representatives from Far North organic growers. The AGM on itself was short and to the point. The finances were reviewed and approved. The full minutes of the AGM will be available on the OFNZ website for everybody interested in them. The meetings around the AGM on Saturday morning and late afternoon and again on Sunday morning were in my opinion very useful.

The presentation from the commerce commission made clear that we have no chance of reserving the term organic for the certified organic products only without a change in legislation. The advice on how to get a change in legislation, was to go through your local MP's. If we keep on knocking on their doors they will in the end take notice and hopefully take action. So feel free to keep on pushing the MP's for a change in legislation to protect consumers, as well as producers, from falsely labeled produce. If there is false labeling with regards to certified organic produce you can contact the commerce commission with a request to take action.

The presentation on the farmer's market was interesting on its own and it is clearly a good platform to buy and sell locally grown organic produce but I trust you are all aware of that. However, you do not need a specific farmers market to sell locally. On the weekly market in Kaitia there are a number of organic growers selling their produce to the local public.

The presentation by Michelle, the Chairperson of Bio grow, was on the changes and co-operation between the different certifying bodies. We are in agreement that OFNZ and BIO-Grow are certifying against the same organic standards. OFNZ certification is done by the regional bodies for small producers at a very low cost basis. The target market for the product is the domestic New Zealand market. Bio-Grow will certify the producers

for the international market as well as the larger producers for the domestic market. There is a good co-operation between our organizations and we will keep on working closely together.

The discussion within OFNZ was mainly on maintaining high organic production standards. We do see the necessity of working as uniformly as possible over the whole country. Auditors and Certification Managers need to work in the same way, whether they are living in the Far North or in Canterbury. The proposed centralized annual training days were rejected as too expensive for our low costs organizations. (It would bring up the costs for audits by hundreds of dollars per year.) Instead we have chosen to support an apprenticeship to train new auditors and certification managers. A special web site will be set-up for Auditors and Certification Managers to consult in case questions. That web site will also maintain a database with historic decisions.

To make the organization more robust, we have also adopted the possibility of remote Certification Managers to back up local organizations, which are usually depending on only one Accredited Certification Manager. A central database will be maintained on the Accredited Auditors and their experience to help out local organisations in difficult organizational periods.

Jan Arie Kamsteeg

## **CERTIFICATION MANAGER'S REPORT 2010**

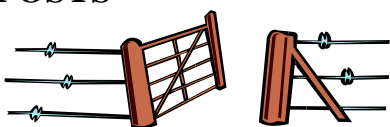
With 19 Far North OFNZ certified members and 5 FNOG certifications, we are still managing to keep that certified organic produce flowing out into the communities. We have one member wanting to return to OFNZ certification and a new one coming into FNOG certification to get a handle on the system.

Everyone is doing a grand job of working to the BioGro Standards, using certified

organic inputs and making my job & the auditors jobs easier by doing so. Hopefully one day more folk will realise the benefits of having certification to sell their products. The benefits to the public, knowing their food is grown to a standard, audited annually and that it is produced without artificial chemicals, surely makes sense .

Good health everyone.  
Kris

## ALTERNATIVES TO TREATED POSTS



At the recent FNOG Committee Meeting the issue of chemically treated fence posts was raised. The American market is concerned about leaching chemicals contaminating organic produce and has requested they are no longer used! FNOG produce will probably not reach the American market but the issue needs addressing.

Treated posts are CCA pressure treated with copper chrome arsenic, the copper and chromium are preservative and could be heavy metal contaminants. Arsenic is an insecticide and can be detected in soil tests and probably taken up by plants. Frogs and other wildlife are also sensitive to it!

Timber used in raised bed gardens is more of a concern as vegetable plants are very close. If the post is dry when put in the ground it must be less of a concern than when dripping wet freshly treated. Boric acid treatment also leaches toxic salts & should not be used (boric is an insecticide and mild fungicide – not a preservative.)

Alternatives to treated pine were discussed at the meeting. Concrete posts are no longer sold. Eucalyptus posts from forestry thinning can have a very thick sapwood layer below the bark and this will rot but they can last a few years as temporary posts. The stringy bark varieties of Eucalyptus have a thinner sapwood layer and are

ground durable for permanent fences. Catalpa is a very good fence post tree, cut at ground level for coppicing, the regrowth grows straight with very thin sapwood, cutting for posts on an 8 year rotation is expected, air dry (off the ground) before use.

My Eucalyptus & Catalpa were grown by Dean Satchell a nurseryman Kerikeri (09 407 5525) he will grow trees to order if you get your orders in on time and recommend varieties for your soil type. Dean told me of a miller in Kerikeri, Li Legler (09 407 4991) milling grade one ground durable Eucalyptus is comparable to Puriri for fence posts. These will be 30 yr old trees at least and will outlast any young round wood.

I have also used galvanised waratahs, put in with a driver for internal fences but they are now too expensive. I like the idea of living fences, combining a fence and a shelter belt, putting in Poplar poles in line for a fence, when they are big enough, staple the wire on as you would to a post. The tree grows around the wire without harm and when it's big enough for more posts, or to mill for timber, simply cut off above the top wire and it will grow back. I've used Kara Poplar as well; possums don't eat it and it's disease resistant.

Boundary fences are often separated by a buffer zone from crops and built by a neighbour so out of our control and less of a concern.

Also mentioned at the meeting there are a range of fibreglass posts; a new option for the future. You can also try making your own concrete posts with N°8 or barbed wire in the mould for reinforcing. If someone develops a good way to make concrete posts we could have a field day there and all learn how to do it!

Surely anything would be better than treated pine and it would be a good move for organics to use a chemical free alternative!

Jim Valley



## SEED BANK

Michelle Mitcalfe will make these available on the field days. So, plant more seeds now! They will stay viable only if we continue to plant and re-seed them. Even if you don't want the produce from these seeds, would you be prepared to set aside a small plot (free from contamination of other like species) to germinate some of what we have and let it go to seed again? Maybe you might like a small plot that would cross contaminate with any of your species to produce a new stronger seed for yourself?

Here is the current list of seeds that are available in our seed bank from Michelle

Oats  
Jarrandale Pumpkin, Butternut, Kamo  
Kamo,  
Coriander  
Yellow watermelon, Oak Leaf Lettuce  
Black boy Peach,  
Kakano,  
Corn,  
Kowhai  
Borlotti Bean, Merlins Runner Beans, Red  
Kidney Beans,  
Fennel, Clary Sage, Curly Parsley,  
Woad Seeds,  
Multiplying Silverbeet,  
Multiplying Onion  
Yarrow,  
Rocket,  
Red Mustard, Sunflower'  
Zambo Seed, Zucchini,  
Port Albert Cucumber,  
Amaranth,  
Chinese cabbage,  
Parsnip.

These are all of the seed savers seeds. Michelle also stocks Kings Seeds of Organic and Heirloom origins and can order any seeds in as requested from Kings Catalogue they pay the freight, which makes them a better buy for our customers.

Regards, Michele Mitcalfe  
Ph: 09 4082937  
021 1652130

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organically grown, not certified.

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We produce an organic certified Soil Enhancer and General Fertilizer. These products come in retail bags (2kg and 4kg). We can also blend larger orders from 25kg to 1ton or more if required. We also have 25kg bags of ROK Solid and 25kg bags of calcium carbonates.

Size: 4kg General Fertiliser is \$16.50 incl GST  
25kg bags are \$40.50 incl GST. The larger quantities we will advise on price. The products are a mix of organic cert (Fair Trade) coffee Grounds, charcoal, sawdust, marine products & phosphate rock.

Delivery, \$8 - Up to 10 Bags  
Andreas or Dianne

**Tuturu Products Ltd Kerikeri**

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## OANZ NEWSLETTERS

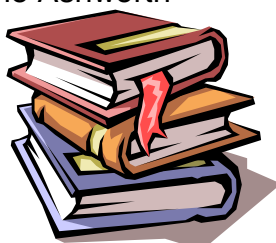
These are sent out every two weeks. It contains the latest news and information about what is happening in the organics sector in NZ and overseas. You can subscribe free on-line by contacting [gavin.middleton@oanz.org.nz](mailto:gavin.middleton@oanz.org.nz) .

## LIBRARY

We have a small but good library which is now located at the accountant's office of Peter Brake along Highway 1 in Awanui. These books are available at any time, or at field days. Please contact Peter Brake on (09) 408 7979 if you would like to borrow any of the following books.

### LIBRARY BOOKS

- Organic Gardening, A guide by Organic NZ
- Resource Guide S & H Assn
- Wetland Restoration, A beginner's guide NRC
- Trees For the Land, Trees for Northland NRC
- Plastics are Fantastic, Using Plastic bottles for a Greenhouse, Sustainable Communities Initiative Scotland
- Seed to Seed, Suzanne Ashworth
- Organic Avocado
- Organic Pastoral
- Organic Citrus
- Organic Summerfruit
- Animal Health
- The Environment
- Natural Farming
- Practical Organic for NZ farms
- Organic Futures



#### Library rules:

Books can be collected and returned on Field-days or the AGM. Books can be sent after payment for the cost of mailing and have to be returned within 6 months, either at a field-day or by mail to the FNOG postal address.

In case of loss the borrower will either replace the book or pay FNOG for the book.

Contact Peter Brake or see him at the field day

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## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

To gather and seek information pertinent to the organics movement

To publish this information for the benefit of growers and producers of organic food and related products

To be a forum, a community and a marketplace for organic growers and producers and their supporters

To present this knowledge and information in a professional and impartial manner

The Organics Networker is usually published four times a year.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information, neither The *Organics Networker* nor the Far North Organic Growers and Producers Association accepts any responsibility for errors or omissions or for any consequences arising from reliance on information published. The opinions expressed in The Organics Networker are not necessarily the opinions of, or endorsed by, the editor or the publisher unless otherwise specified. The author(s) of articles hold the copyright for their articles and should be approached for any other intended publishing.



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