



THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)

Issue 56 – Autumn 2015

Details for the next FNOG Field Day:

Sunday, 24th May 2015

John Sanderson & Becky Cashman

66 Access Road

Kerikeri

Bring and buy if you have anything to give away or sell

Directions are very easy; turn off SH 10 onto Kerikeri Rd. Access Rd is first on the left just past Pete's Museum as you head towards town. We are at 66, which is .66 of a km on the RHS, first driveway after large trees on a right hand bend. There is probably enough space for 10 or so cars in our driveway, so people can drive in and park where they find space. If that becomes full then people will need to park back down the road as our driveway is on a corner.

If people have collapsible chairs then yes throw them in the boot. That might be handy. Also bring something along for the shared lunch.

We have a 5 acre integrated uncertified property that is not commercial at present. We work with permaculture and biodynamic principles.

Look forward to seeing you here!

Agenda:

10.30am	cuppa
11am	Meeting: Welcome and Introduction from the Chair
11.15am	Short break if required
11.30	Questions and Answers
12 or 12.30	Shared Lunch

Walkabout with John & Becky



Wai Wurri Update – January 2015

Firstly, 20 of us had a very enjoyable AGM at Jan Arie & Ineke's place, and Terry was relieved to be replaced (as Chairman) by Kevin Rasmussen from the Hokianga. Since then, Terry has again been eradicating those beastly European wasps from around here, getting phone calls from a very observant neighbour, thus making the valley more user-friendly for our precious hard-working bees. Despite all their hard efforts of pollinating our fruit trees, we are being hit with codlin moth like never before. I did the pheromone traps, perhaps a bit late, but nevertheless they were full of moths. Lots of apples are only good for chopping up for cooking or dehydrating and the best ones get sent to the children.

As for the grapes, last year they came into ripeness when the Kahikatea berries were feeding all the birds, and we had a wonderful season, but this year, everything with wings has found them.

Smarty me thought I had the (released) feral pigs fooled. Swapped some produce with a farmer for some silage, believing they can't resist the stuff. Unfortunately, in this valley, there are neglected fruit trees, so their range of free tucker is wide and varied, no need to nose into a trap for silage! The pig-hunters dogs couldn't out-run the big one that's hanging around. Before too long, they had their heads in my lap, their eyes saying "sorry, couldn't run any further," and HogSnort went on to root up all around the perimmons, again. This mess I didn't need at the time, as we had unwell oldies staying here for a bit of peace and quiet, something that seems to have gotten to be a luxury, even around here.

The practise of throwing seeding veg plants onto the top of the covered house garden is working miracles, as all I have to do is weed out the ones I don't need & the rest keeps us in greens.

Good news is, had plenty of Long-tailed Tuckers around and we heard a male Kiwi a few nights ago, close and clear, injecting a boost to our enthusiasm for this year's monitoring. All we need is four quiet consecutive nights, without wind or barking dogs and we'll be happy, especially if we record plenty of calls.

Looking forward to our May field day, so see you there! Krissie



Chair Persons Report

Greetings all FNOG members and supporters.

As your newly elected chairperson I thought it appropriate to write you a short introduction to "who I am". Some members had suggested a field day at my place so they could find out a "bit more about me", so lets start with how and where I live, although it's a bit late to find out who I am now after I have the Position of Chairperson don't you think?

I live on a small section of land in Rawene town ship, which I have started to develop into an urban permaculture Paradise for myself. This has had to be done without any capital, and at present is still very rough and unsuitable to host meetings until I can get to plan for such events. I never even thought I would be living there now, that alone putting it under organic certification and hosting groups of people! So please give me time to plan for that maybe next year? Funny how life can take us places we never dreamed of or planned. I live in a house truck, and live very simply, without electricity or mod cons. I have a second house truck as my “office” on my PMP, which appears to cause some humour from my auditor. Perhaps I should change it to “Standing room only”. I guess I could sum up by saying I live in a form of voluntary poverty by most people’s standards, having relied on a low part time income since 2005.

So my background of late (last ten years) has been Tutoring Organic Horticulture, Sustainability, and Permaculture, at an introductory level, within the NZQA framework at Northtec. This coming May I will be ending that job, which will allow me more time to pursue other things, closer to my heart, such as my new land project, and being free to work without hindrance of government funded education systems.

In 2002 I had a huge life change, after 7 years as a house dad looking after my 3 boys. This is when I took up study of Sustainability, and met these inspirational young vibrant organic campaigners. Namely Kris and Terry on one of my class field trips! Great to know they are still at it, and to see that perseverance has preserved something for the far north for all this time. I know how hard it is to keep organisations running through the ups and downs of different members’ needs and wishes, not to mention lack of interest or attacks from government bureaucracies’. It feels appropriate to now take my turn to contribute energy to the cause. I met many other current members during that journey also, Miriam taught me how to milk a cow by hand on another class trip as a student, and Inge and Helmet braved time with me as a student. Robert was a popular destination to visit with my various classes to see how things can be done (certified) with conviction and stamina. Regardless of the circumstances of my connection I have gained a lot of inspiration from all of you I have met.

I am passionate about sustainability, plants, people and nature, being able to make a difference to the direction of the DSP (dominant social paradigm) which I am sure most of you will admit has a striking similarity to the epic story of the Titanic which could never sink. “Organic “ has its problems as a model, and despite we are bombarded with advertising of irritating terms such as “beyond organics” “Spray free” and “natural” I believe it is still one of the best we can use to promote a better world, especially if people take the time to study the History and philosophy behind the movement, rather than looking for an organic spray to replace a more chemical spray. To be honest I have found this the most frustrating thing over the last ten years. As a Tutor of the subject, I found on the whole (Generalising of course) people don’t really want knowledge. In my experience most are happy to be told how to “do things” rather than learn the theory behind practice and be able to make their own decisions. I think it’s important, looking towards an uncertain future (The ice berg of ecological limits of our planet) to become self-sufficient or communally resilient on our own land. Responding to change with not just knowledge, but wisdom from time tested philosophies, creativity and confidence to work with nature in new ways. The only constant we can rely on looking ahead is change. This is not always easy to accept given we have had a stable climate for the last ten thousand years, which has allowed this amazing growth in human direction. But where are we going? I have 3 sons who frighten me with intellect, skills, and qualifications, yet without a cell

phone, computer or packaged foods are very lost? I believe the huge reliance on “google” is the biggest monoculture experiment unleashed yet. I think Its likely to reveal its faults on our grandchildren one day like an out of control Potato blight once everybody has become totally dependant. With the onset of climate change, bringing extreme weather events, huge pest challenges, I believe it is even more important to have on board a really good ecological understanding (or philosophy) that can help. “Organics” can give us this. We as organic growers and believers can all help to come up with new answers to problems never even dreamed of as yet, by being open to learning new things in each and every day we are blessed with good health. I for one appreciate the excitement of new discoveries, realisations, and solutions especially in the garden. I am happy to hear that there are members who believe this too and want to work towards using our gatherings as a method to exchange information from each other, having respect for each other’s own views and growing our joint knowledge base to pass on.

To offer you more on my past towards FNOG,I served as chief union delegate in my driving job at NZ post for 13 years, which involved representing 3 thousand members. So you cant call me any names I haven’t heard before! My previous private life as I like to refer to it, was in another world! Almost 30 years as a fully-fledged “petrol head” from the age of 15 with the Whangarei Rod and custom club. In 1990 I founded Northern Street Rods, as an incorporated society, which by 2000 grew to almost a hundred members. We staged the national Hot Rod show in Whangarei city in 2002.Biggest event I have ever been involved with, 2 years planning, 120 people and families working unpaid for long hours. Was an amazing success but also my swan song to leaving that world, and part of my life behind. Not surprisingly followed shortly after by the end of my 22-year marriage.

We made 75 k in a weekend, and donated 18k to child cancer. Don’t think we can do that with organic vegetables? Even in a whole year! A coloured history as you can see and now am a total greenie, a Trustee and founder of Rainbow Hills Sustainable Futures Trust (Registered charity), which I intend to promote again this year, along with my new found role here with Far North Organics, and keeping my property up to certified status. I would like to see the FNOG memberships grow, especially younger members, and I don’t mean under 70 something! No disrespect intended. Hopefully I will be able to make amends for all that petrol and rubber I burnt as a younger man totally ignorant to the plight of our ecological predicament, not to mention the health of humans and myself. I am proud to say none of my children has even owned a car! Things are changing so fast it’s hard to comprehend. There is growing environmental awareness in the young and we have to harness that somehow and connect it to organic growing and eating, or just simply to support it will do! The new life is lived on a cell phone, even websites need to be designed to access on a portable device, and Technology is my weak point, which is 50% by choice and 50% ignorance. Despite my own concerns already mentioned, it seems there is a need to move in this direction if we are not to become extinct. Hope that is enough provocation for now?

Looking forward to working with you all for the greater good of FNOG and Planet Earth. Thanks for all your support and patience while I get familiar with the job. Thanks to Terry for the great job you have done and offering help, (and don’t forget you have to write the book now) to Jan Arie for his great work in continuing to count the beans and also to Krissie, for fighting off all the others wanting to do the secretary’s role, which is so very important for communication and coordination. Most important job of all in my view as the disseminator of policy and records.

I am big on democracy; a meetings purpose is for “the minority to have its expression and the majority to have its will”. Also keen for the business part of meetings to be short and to the point Nothing worse to reduce attendance and interest, long drawn out meetings with emotional venting overriding objective and considerate debate. Its great there is a social part to every meeting, which allows for random discussion and exchange of ideas. Let’s build on this part, and leave the guest speaking to members with something to share. A new discovery, a new pest control, a new saving, a new food to eat? I enjoyed all the ideas at the last meeting, really awesome! Thank you all. Please contact me any time if you wish to discuss anything of concern, or sound out ideas. You can get me at krasmussen@northtec.ac.nz kevinrasmussen4@hotmail.com

Or phone 09 405 7659 work (Rawene Northtec) and ask for me or leave a message.

Or you can ring 0800 808 856 and ask to be put through to me.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

Kind regards Kevin Rasmussen



The problem with Dogs in Urban Sustainable/Organic Living

Recently I have just had my 2 chickens and a rooster, killed by a locals Dog. Enclosures ripped open. These were pure bred Bantams (now organic) which I intended to breed from this spring. I also lost 3 of my pure bred NZ white rabbits (now organic) which I was also in the process of breeding from; in fact one was pregnant at the time. Same thing wire netting and wooden cages ripped open. Its very hard to breed rabbits organically these days because of the genetic weakness that has arrived over time since the introduction of viruses etc. designed to kill them. Most, if not all conventional breeders use food, which is laced with antibiotics to protect, or get vaccination from the vet at huge costs. These ones I had just spent 3 years trying to get a strong line, and suffered many losses over that time. In fact 3 years ago I suffered a dog attack on my very first rabbit pair. Hard to remember how many I went through to get these ones which I hoped would bring good stock.

It’s a travesty to go out to feed your animals to find they have been attacked and left in various bloody states around the grounds, but when you are intending to both provide your sustenance and to breed from makes it even worse. No wonder so many people give up and just buy things, as it’s easier? Of course many in an urban environment who choose to make other things more important in life can’t understand the gravity of this type of loss to an organic grower. Most things they need they can get a replacement from at the warehouse with a short drive and some cash.

I am a dog lover myself, so I understand how dogs can and will kill things, even lovely pet dogs that sit on the back door step most of the time. Rabbits are a pest to most as well, which dogs are usually encouraged to kill. I don't have any grudge against the dog involved here; the lady said she was going to have it put down, which I hope she did.

But what else can you do? Not much chance of bringing in a law to get bad owners put down so you just start again and build better defences, stronger cages, better fencing, or maybe the biological approach a bigger more viscous dog? But then that creates other problems.

If anybody has a couple of "Organic" laying hens spare I would like to buy some so I can have eggs for breakfast at least till I get myself organised again.

Keep your dog's safe everybody and remind those you know how easy it is for them to become something else than they know them as.

Kevin Rasmussen.



Recommended listening

From Kim Hill show sat mornings, can be accessed by pod cast off the national radio website, and often most popular interviews are replayed on national radio at some stage.

This is more good news for organic producers, and more incentive of why organic producers are going the right direction.
From Kevin

9:05 Jim Kebbell: organics and retail

Jim Kebbell started **Commonsense Organics** with his wife Marion Wood in the early 1990s. They now have five stores in the Wellington region, and open their first store in Auckland next week.

8:15 Tim Naish: Antarctic ice shelves

Professor Timothy Naish is the **Director of the Antarctic Research Centre** at Victoria University of Wellington. He will discuss the new findings this week on the thinning of the Antarctic ice shelves.



At our AGM I talked about the heritage tomatoes which are yellow/orange and have very good health benefits; I attach the 2 articles in the Organic magazine as people were interested in them; I suggest people write direct to the address provided and I am also saving seeds of 2 varieties - Moonglow and Tangella which I'm happy to make available to others. Take care.
Gijs

Your letters

Email: editor@organicnz.org.nz Post: PO Box 340002, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746.

WINNING LETTER HERITAGE TOMATOES

I sent away for some of the tomato seeds offered last year in *Organic NZ*. You might remember there was a piece about a heritage strain that had been identified that has the lycopene available without cooking.

We are really pleased with the tomatoes. Two varieties were received. Golden Grape is a tasty Roma-shaped, cherry-type variety that changes to orange all over when ripe. It's good to fully ripen the fruit on the vine. Moonglow is a large variety that is yellow through to orange when ripe, but in most other ways resembles Beefsteak.

I have attached some photos for your interest. (The red tomatoes in the photo are Early Girl hybrids – only there to show the colour difference). The slices on toast are Moonglow. Thanks for the opportunity to obtain some of these seeds. I hope plenty of people took up the offer (and that there will be more such offers in the future).

Gillian Woods
Auckland

Mark Christensen of the Heritage Food Crops Research Trust responds:

We were delighted and impressed with the response from *Organic NZ* readers. It was a wonderful opportunity to get these special seeds out to such good gardeners. Yes we would be very willing to repeat the offer of free tomato seeds, of varieties that contain tetra-cis-lycopene. This lycopene is easily absorbed by the human body and you don't need to cook the tomatoes to improve absorption.

We believe that this was the original strain of lycopene in the original golden tomatoes introduced into Europe, and was only altered when breeding began. We are continuing to grow more golden/orange varieties and getting them tested to see which form of lycopene they contain. So as new varieties are identified, we will send those seeds as well. We will look to send out seeds of one of our best larger tomatoes as well as a good cherry tomato.

Once your readers have grown the tomatoes, we would love for them to share seeds with others and spread the word about these varieties, because they will be better for health and should reduce the incidence of heart disease and certain cancers.

For more about the enhanced bioavailability of lycopene from orange tomatoes, read this study: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25620547



FREE SEEDS!

To receive some heritage tomato seeds, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Heritage Food Crops Research Trust, 126A Springvale Road, Wanganui 4501. For more information about the research, see heritagefoodcrops.org.nz/heirloom-tomatoes

Congratulations to this month's winning letter writer, **Gillian Woods** who receives a gift pack of Baron Hasselhoff's delicious organic, gluten-free and vegan cookies valued at over \$50. www.baronhasselhoffs.co.nz



Get in touch

We love to receive your letters, tips, questions and feedback, plus any photos of your farms and gardens. We enjoy learning from you and sharing this knowledge with readers.

Please send letters by **31 March** for the May/June 2015 issue and include your name, address and phone number. Maximum length 300 words. Letters may be abridged.

Email: editor@organicnz.org.nz

Post: PO Box 340002, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746.



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Things we like



GreenSmart self-watering pots

Here's a simple way to start an organic garden. These tubs are ideal if you have limited space, or want low-maintenance veges and herbs – you can go away for a few days and not worry about watering. GreenSmart pots are suitable for indoors or outdoors. The water reservoir at the bottom allows water to wick up, but plants never get waterlogged. Overflow holes prevent flooding after rain, and an indicator shows the water level. The pots come in two sizes: large (40 litres for soil or potting mix, plus 12-litre reservoir) and small (20 litres plus 8-litre reservoir). They're made of plastic which contains a UV retardant and is suitable for food contact. Available online or from selected gardening stores.

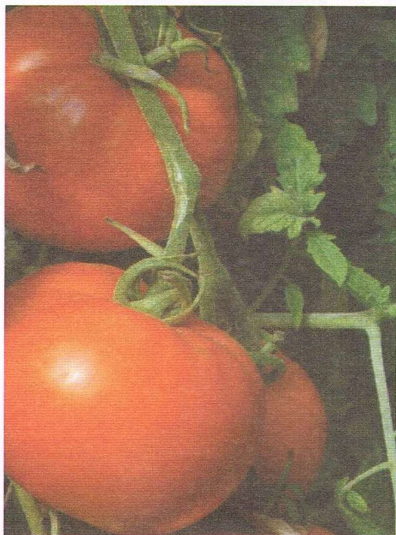
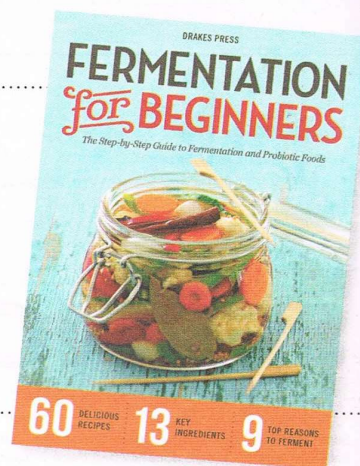
growgoodnz.co.nz

Fermentation for Beginners

This handy little book is just the ticket to get all you budding kitchen microbiologists going! It explains why fermented foods are so good for us and are traditional foods for most cultures around the world (see also the article on page 40 of this issue).

There are 60 recipes in here: everything from the more well-known fermented or cultured foods like yoghurt, sourdough bread, ginger ale, beer, wine and vinegar, to sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi, kombucha, tempeh, pickled eggs and dosas (fermented lentil pancakes). Did you know that 'soby' (which you need to make kombucha) stands for symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast? Available from good bookshops nationwide for \$19.99.

exislepublishing.co.nz



Go for gold!

Some rare heritage tomatoes have been identified that you don't need to cook to increase your intake of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant. Mark Christensen from Central Tree Crops Research Trust has identified golden tomatoes with high levels of tetra-cis-lycopene, a form much more readily absorbed, even when eaten raw.

This has been proven by a human trial just completed by Plant & Food Research, which compared absorption over time of lycopene in two heritage tomatoes, one red and one golden.

Not all golden or orange tomatoes are high in tetra-cis-lycopene; scientists working for the Trust have identified 15 so far. Among the best is a variety called Moonglow. If you want to enjoy its flavourful, low-acid taste and health benefits, you'll probably have to grow it yourself.

FREE SEEDS!

To receive five Moonglow seeds, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Central Tree Crops Research Trust, PO Box 4088, Wanganui 4541. For more information about the research, see bit.ly/1qlaxju.

Do you have a product or a service to recommend? We'd love to hear about it. Or if you have a product, send us a sample and we'll try it. Contact the editor at editor@organicnz.org.nz, phone 03 473 9293.



FOR SALE

Some of my German books:

"Lexikon der Küchen- und Gewürzkräuter" (264 S., 104 Farbtafel) \$8

D. Hollhuber, W. Kaul: "Die Biere Deutschlands" (354 S.) \$5

J. Ilmberger: "Die bairische Fibel" (223 S.) \$5

L. Bechstein: "Märchen und Sagen" (425 S.) \$5

Duden Lexikon 1963 (alle 5 Teile) \$5 each

Please contact me if you are interested to buy one or more books. I can bring them next field day or you can visit me to have a look.

Ph. 09 408 0448

Email: inekepost@xtra.co.nz



I have quite a few kgs of shallots for sale suitable eating or seed, they were from good seed stock but weren't looked after so are smaller than they could have been. Organically grown but un-certified, basically open to offers. Cheers Jo. Please contact me at thewoodenrainbow@hotmail.com



Kia Ora all!

Just to let you know there is now a "Seed Swap" Stand at the Far North Environment Centre at 8 South Road, Kaitaia (across from Te Ahu)

It works by depositing Koha in the Koha box or seeds on the stand and getting the ones you want to swap! Just make sure there is a description of what seeds they are and month/year date it- also that it's properly sealed.

Flowers, Fruit, Vegetables and Herb Seeds! The more people that know the better it works and there will be a wider range of seeds then.

Thanks!!! All Welcome, Please pass this on to whoever you know is a seed collector & planter.

Regards,
Michelle de Sousa
On behalf of
John Kenderdine at FNEC



MISSION STATEMENT OF FAR NORTH ORGANICS & PRODUCERS

- 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

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