



THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)

Issue 64 – Summer 2018

Details for the next FNOG Field Day and AGM ...

Sunday, 25th February 2018

Ora Ora

28 Landing Road (opposite Kemp Road)

Kerikeri

Please bring a shared lunch

And also something to donate for a raffle

e.g. produce, honey, preserves etc.

And of course some loose coins.

Directions: see: <http://www.oraoretreat.co.nz/location/>

Parking: next door at the Play Centre

(No parking available at Ora Ora, but if you need to drop anyone or anything,
drive in and out again to park at the Play Centre)

There are sufficient chairs, plates, cups, glasses and cutlery available - just bring
your "plates" and drinks.

Ora Ora is a certified organic property of 5,104sqm surrounded by the Kerikeri nature reserve in the Stone Store Basin. The eco-wellness retreat's mainly ornamental gardens have been changed to "edible permaculture gardens" over the years. For some time we sold certified organic fruits and vegetables from Ora Ora and our separate orchard (sold last year) to supermarkets in Auckland - just to experiment whether that works: it does :)

The chalets in the garden are now long-term tenanted like a small eco-village. Our aim is to live comfortably with the smallest possible carbon footprint. Rain water is harvested and filtered for use in the dwellings, solar hot water and a lot of timers provide low-cost hot water, 45 solar panels produce most of the electricity required, the wastewater system provides clean irrigation for the crater garden (excluded from certification), electric bikes and car are providing a clean, cheap and efficient way of getting around. We enjoy sharing our experiences with interested people and Wwoofers and, together with Vision Kerikeri we are working on a "Carbon Neutral Kerikeri" with the aim spreading this to the whole Far North.

If you are interested, you are welcome to join a guided walking tour around the garden after lunch (please respect the privacy of our tenants).

Guest Speaker

Previously, we had introduced New World Remuera and Commonsense Organics in Auckland as keen buyers of certified organic produce. Now we are happy to introduce **Nosh** in Waipapa. Owner/operator David is keen to increase the range of certified organic veggies, fruit eggs on a continuous basis and agreed to introduce himself and the opportunities on a much more local basis. Actually, the shop is open daily from 8am to 6pm - so you can take a look before or after the AGM:

Nosh Foodmarket Kerikeri

1993 State Highway 10

Waipapa 0295

09-4078149

david.whyman@noshfoodmarket.co.nz

Also some other news we just heard: Peter Kraus has bought the Cafe at the junction SH1-Puketona Road with the intention to open a Huckleberry Farms Shop. That'll be another opportunity to sell certified organic produce. You remember that ex-produce manager Abhi is now the produce manager for the Huckleberry Farms Group.

Cheers
Rolf



Agenda for Field Day

Members, your attendance at the meeting is more than appreciated, so please consider a role on the committee to keep this amazing society alive and functioning. Please don't leave it to the few who are doing it all, we need support to carry on. Our secretary is standing down and there are positions to fill on the committee.

10 – 10.30am Meeting (minutes of last fieldday), members are more than welcome to attend.

10.30am – Raffle and cuppa

11 am AGM meeting and election of officers

Introductions (attendance book passed to sign)

Raffle, tickets will still be available at lunch break

11.30ish Guest speaker David from Nosh Foodmarket, Kerikeri, willing to purchase organic produce from our membership.

12pm ish Shared lunch

1pm ish Rolf and Inge will show us their gardens and talk to us about what they are doing with their products.

Come along for an inspiring day.



Chairman's Report

Hi all, well another year or another four seasons or another 13 new moons or 365 days passed, however you measure time it always seems to pass with ever increasing speed. Finding as I get older my priorities change allowing me to express those ideas stored from days gone, brings a sense of peace calmness and joy. All too often we find ourselves on the treadmill of life, work, work, work, not Necessarily enjoying what we do but as a means to the end, often retirement seems far away, with the ever moving finish line always moving further forward people become disillusioned complacent and surrender to the machine of the corporate / government control. So even though our current membership is mainly in the older bracket of the community and have discovered the many serendipities of being a grower of food with integrity, we need to be able to find new ways to pass on this knowledge to the younger generations. The FNOG has a long history, that's been achieved by the dedication of like minded people willing to work with and share ideas, and if that means working alongside other groups such as TTK than why not.

I can say that I have enjoyed my time as chairman and hope I have had a positive impact on FNOG over those 2 years. As we come to our AGM to elect members to office I am happy to stand down as chairman and allow someone else to hold the torch to light the way forward. (However I am happy to continue in this position) I would like to thank the current committee and members for all there efforts making the FNOG an enjoyable and informative group to be part of. Please except my apologies for not attending the AGM, as I will be celebrating my eldest son's wedding. Wishing you all well.

Alan Rockell

Fruits of our efforts





Some of our smoked capsicums



Wild flowers for the bees and butterflies



Wai Wurri Update – February 2018

At the time of writing this, it is raining, seemingly a relentless activity this year so far, with high humidity and the potential to find we are flooded in.

On a visit to Kerikeri I was given some “Butterkin” seed, a cross between pumpkin and butternut. As our Whangaroa Crown pumpkins succumbed to weakening of the strain, and we are no longer planting big crops of vegetables for the markets, I thought I’d give them a try. So far they are looking as if they are loving this silly weather, so am curious what they’ll be like. Mulched with Kamsteeg’s hay, they gotta be good. I was told they keep better than the afore-mentioned variety, so watch this space.

In the past we have been concerned about the influx of rabbits impacting on our crops – this year it is “live and let live” much to the delight of my grand daughters. One of them set up her “tablet” in front of a burrow and video’ed their antics with celery stalks and bits of carrot. Fortunately for bunnies, the slugs have ruined some of the outer celery stalks. Now, they realise that we are no threat, but being surrounded with neighbours who insist on keeping cats in a significant natural area, they are being wiped out, especially the friendly babies. Oh well, perhaps the locals don’t listen to Gareth Morgan !

The geese had a poor season, I kept stealing their eggs and most of the goslings that they did raise, died, I guess from exposure to continual wetness. So, we have two new girls, one here only because I brought her inside to warm up. We don’t want too many anyway, but I don’t think they like this hot exhausting summer.

One thing that we are glad about is that because our beehive is registered, we were notified about foulbrood being 3km away, so Terry is more vigilant with his “stingbugs” who all seem very happy.

Despite an expensive outlay toward pheromone traps for guava moth and the dreaded codlin moth, we haven’t succeeded with a bigger percentage of good apples – which is a terrible thing because we have invested in quite a lot of apple trees. We won’t give up, perhaps the birds will make more effort to help us out. Just means apples will be off the market list if not sellable.

Despite hiccups with our food production, we will learn to work around it, maybe changing some things that we do – and continue to be grateful for where we live, even if it feels like we are in the middle of a cattery !!!



Krissie



Rich with news from NatureZone

It sure has been an interesting summer season this year! All the indications pointed to an extreme drought in the very Far North. It was incredibly hot with the hills browning off with little or no rain in late spring. Then tropical weather hit intense humidity and rain! We have never had to mow grass so much this year, great for mulch though.

The cherimoya trees never had a dormant period this season, the first I've experienced in 20 years or so of growing them. We had flowers opening at the tops of the trees while still picking, which made for pruning extremely difficult. Could this be an indication of climate change one wonders? We managed to get our kumara and butternuts in on time and have had abundance of delicious potatoes, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Jose has been making tomato relish with the addition of habanero chilli much to my delight! I think the good old Edmonds Cookbook tomato relish recipe is a winner ☺



"Life in the chicken coop at Uenuku"

We are blessed with 17 chickens and yes, they all have names! No, we do not eat our own chickens but buy certified organic from Bostock in Hawkes Bay

3 brown leghorns - Chumani, Shakti and Vandana - Indian looking?
3 barred plymouth rocks - Hanna, Matilda and Lottie - American looking?
2 New Hampshire reds - Bellarosa and Elisabeth - English looking?
3 andalusians - Margarita, Juanita and Paquita - Spanish breed
2 anconas - Catarina and Antoinetta - Italian breed
4 hyliners - Minnie, Mollie, Maude and Martha

We have had white leghorns (as they look like nuns they were called Hildegard, Magdalena and Bernadette), white Sussex (Sebastian) and barnevelders (Piet Hein, Beatrix and Wilhelmina of course!) but they have moved to chook heaven. It is quite fun to come up with names but I cannot say they listen to them!



The oldest are 7+ years old, the youngest 1-year; they are spoilt absolutely rotten and why not, they lay such delicious eggs. We feed them certified organic layer pellets, maize, sprouting wheat and blackstrap molasses, cider vinegar and garlic in their water. We also sprout wheat in large trays so that they have extra greens. They also get veges from the garden which we hang up so that it bounces up and down and they look as if they are playing yo-yo or ping pong!

They used to free range but did so much damage to the garden, laid eggs that could not be found and were not safe from the wild cats/hawks, so we put them in a very large enclosure with 4 houses and plenty of room to play.

One disadvantage of certified organic food is the price - layer pellets, maize and wheat cost around \$50 for 20 kg bags so a lot more expensive than the conventional food and also quite hard to get. But the big advantage is that you know what they eat and the people who buy our eggs swear they are the best they ever tasted. They lay approx 6-10 eggs a day when not moulting and can live in the deluxe retirement home when the laying stops because of old age.

It is a real pleasure to spend time in the chicken yard, feed them some worms, watch them scratch and having them let you know when an egg has been laid.

Gijs and Trish



P.S. You will probably remember that in 2013 I arranged certified organic chicken food through Farmlands Waipapa but that was stopped due to an increase in price and subsequent loss of interest by buyers.

I spoke with Jody at Farmlands yesterday and she has agreed to get chicken pellets in at \$48.70 a bag of 20 kgs. Jody would like to know who is interested in a standing monthly order - I agreed to 3 bags, Tony to 2 and there is another woman interested in 1 bag a month.



Do you like what you wear?

Do you like to buy working clothes at one of the op-shops in town? I guess a lot of growers do. They do not always fit well, but who cares? I didn't care, until a few years ago. I started to alter them. It is easy peasy and one only needs scissors, a measuring tape, some pins and a needle and thread.

Here some ideas:

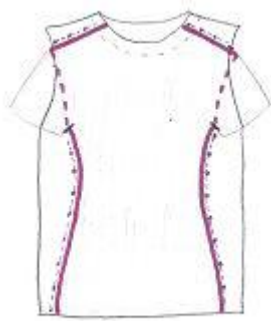
You can reposition a breast pocket downwards by carefully cutting the sown thread, putting the pocket where you actually want it, pin it and then sew it there. Cut off a collar if you like, but be careful to cut along the seam on the collar side.

Long sleeves can be cut to a desired length for summer, folded to the inside about 3 centimeters from the cut and sewn all around the sleeve.

If you are a woman and you have bought a men's shirt, just try to form it to your body (not tight though, it is still a working shirt!). Make some darts where you would like them. Fold them towards the inside and sew to fasten them.

If you want to make a skirt shorter, measure and pin the desired length from the bottom seam up, taking 3 centimeters down extra for the hem. Cut the fabric, fold to the inside 3 centimeters from the cut – pinning while you go – and fasten the hem with needle and thread.

I have given you some ideas, but my instructions are very basic. As with everything, one can make it easy or more refined. Just try and see if you like it.



Happy altering!
Ineke Post



Briar's Bliss Balls

This recipe comes from my son's girlfriend and they are yummy. Use all organic ingredients for best results.

¼ cup sunflower seeds
½ cup almonds
½ cup cashews
1-cup cranberries dried
1-cup apricots dried
2 cups dates pitted and dried
1 heaped Tbsp of cocoa powder
Splash of water if needed
Desiccated coconut

Chop all ingredients into fine pieces, place into a bowl with cocoa powder and splash of water. Mix in blender until crunchy paste. Roll into balls then dip into bowl of desiccated coconut. Refrigerate 2 hours.



Thoughts about the Future

2 meetings ago some members including myself questioned the sustainability of FNOG&PS as there were 2 years in a row where the expenses were higher than the takings from the membership.

Mostly responsible for this was the decline of members. Following an old list, FNOG had close to 70 members. This number has been reduced to 31 members at the last AGM. A number which is clearly below the number needed to break even.

The positive News are we are now back up to 56 members with a high number of certified members which contribute significant more to the income of FNOG.

I assume Inge will have the real figures handy at the AGM, but I estimate a nice surplus from the last year.

Said this I would put a few questions to our members:

Are you satisfied what the organisation does? If yes – fine, perfect. If no - what would you like to change, add or let go?

Can you afford a higher membership fee? Say \$10 per year?

The reason for these questions would be to allow the incoming committee to plan for future activities.

More capital would, for example, allow FNOG to invite guests, pay for their travel and accommodation. Or we could invest in Ideas such a community garden, simple training days about planting and gardening, compost making and worm farming. All those are just ideas to find new members and allow the group to grow.

A bigger group would as well have a louder voice when it comes to deal with authorities such as councils.

I came today back from a club meeting where a club grow out of a few people who meet monthly on a deck or in the shed to an over 300 member strong club which fills every month a whole hall and has guest speakers from all over the country. It is possible – can we do this as well? Do we want to do this?

I think it is time to have a open and unprejudiced discussion about this between all members

Happy growing
Erwin



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

FNOG COMMITTEE 2018

Chairman

Alan Rockell

Vice Chair

Richard Van Alphen

Secretary

Kris Khaine

Minutes Secretary

Kris / or if needed Wendy MacPherson

Treasurer

Inge Bremer

Financial Auditor

Michele Twigden

Networker Publisher

Jose Van Alphen

Committee Members

Alan Rockell, Jan Arie, Gijs and Trish Veling, Inge and Rolf, Terry, Kris, Erwin Czutta, Rob Downing, Jose and Rich Van Alphen

Certification Manager

Kris

Certification Auditors

Terry & Jan Arie & Rich Van Alphen

Certification Committee

Jan Arie, Terry, Kris, Rich Van Alphen