



THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)
Issue 66 – Spring 2018

Details for the next FNOG Field Day ...

Sunday, 28th October 2018
Alan and Fiona Rockell
72B Ironbark Road
Waipapa
Kerikeri

***Please bring a chair and a shared lunch, your own cup, plate,
knife and fork so we can have zero waste!***
Also something to donate for a raffle
e.g. produce, honey, preserves etc.
And of course some loose coins 1 ticket \$2 or 3 tickets for \$5



Here's how to find us at the next Field Day. Turn off SH10 into Pungaere Road travel up road turn into Ironbark Rd second on the right go to the very end turn right and follow gravel driveway. We live at 72B Ironbark Rd Waipapa.

Now let me share what's happening on our place, Fiona and I brought this 7ha block 6 years ago it was run down with scrub and overgrown trees with an old relocated house placed there.

We try to produce all our food onsite, milk beef, pork, chicken, duck, turkey, veggies and fruit with organic principles. We now have our daughter and her husband and 4 children living on the property and now our son and wife are setting up to grow organic veggies for the market, also with the intention of living onsite. Our place is a work in progress with more to happen, you are most welcome to come see and ask questions.

Cheers Alan & Fiona Rockell.



Agenda for Field Day

10 – 10.30am Committee Meeting (minutes of last meeting etc) members are more than welcome to attend.

10.30am – Raffle and cuppa

11 am Introductions (attendance book passed to sign)
Raffle, tickets will still be available at lunch break

Speakers – Inge Bremer on Carbon Sequestering
Alan Rockell on Bio-char

12pm ish Shared lunch

1pm ish Draw raffles, Alan and Fiona to take us around their property

Come along for an inspiring day.



Short Run Down from one of our Speakers Inge Bremer

We have started a new initiative: The Carbon Neutral Kerikeri project, based on the Ashton Hayes project in the UK (2007-2017). We have developed a carbon calculator specifically for New Zealand, which counts not only the carbon dioxide emitted, but also the CO2 sequestered by trees, land, and compost. This way families can see whether their entire carbon bill is positive, negative, or neutral.

We have developed a website and Facebook site with it, which gives information on how to improve your carbon balance sheet, and how to save money while doing it.

We are aiming at asking the 11,300 people of greater Kerikeri to participate, with the goal of getting about 2000 responses, to make the data base relevant. - The NZ government does not have this town or region-specific data at present, so we would be the first town to be able to supply such.

Would FNOG members like to participate in this exercise? It could result in them having a very good understanding of carbon emissions and sequestering in this time of climate change. The participation would consist of using the calculator to establish their family's carbon footprint.

The data would be stored anonymously per person/family and postal code. The website will have a summarizing function. The individual entries can be updated with the use of an ID number. - As step two we will publish an advanced calculator for offices and companies, which is being developed now.

Kind regards

Inge Bremer

Treasurer of Vision Kerikeri and Project Manager of Carbon Neutral NZ Trust

Web Site: www.visionkerikeri.org.nz

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Chairman's Report

Thank you, Az and Tina, for hosting the last Field Day. You guys have done so much in the past 12 months. It's a real credit to you both. For those that missed this day it was an absolute pleasure to present Krissie and Terry life-time membership with FNOG on behalf of the Group in recognition of all the hard work and dedication that these guys have contributed (and still do) to the organic movement for many years in the Far North. I hope you had a relaxing sip of the organic wine and reflected with the satisfaction the positive influence you have both sown within the FNOG network. Well done to you both!



Jose and I attended the OFNZ AGM in Auckland recently as part of my NCC duties. It was interesting to work with the committee on upcoming projects such as reviewing the PMP, the Food Act, organic regulation by MPI and a future training/upskilling of Auditors and Certification Managers next year.

As spring starts to fill in and daylight saving returns I spied my first garlic flower, another cycle nearly complete. I look forward to seeing you all at Alan and Fiona's place.



Wai Wurri Update – Spring 2018

I used to think I was working on energy levels, getting out there and working like crazy when my body switched on. One could get lots done in a short period of time.

Then along came the 70's - no, not the 1970's, the actual ageing process. Good grief. The energy will kick in, but, it doesn't last long! The bit I find hard, is getting the brain to accept it.

Despite all that, we are still maintaining the property, and the great thing about having so much covenant area is that it takes care of itself with the assistance of trapping. But, the one thing that won't be trapped is released pigs, one recently, about 50lb, having met its fate at the hands of a reliable pig hunter, not far from our house.

The garlic is looking healthy, mainly because it is protected from the scavenging birds, so there will be enough for us, bartering and the family. I am spraying it with Organic 100, or compost tea + vermicast. A small bed of the elephant garlic isn't growing at such a rate, but is just there as an added extra.

At present I am pondering the elimination of our macadamia trees, as we don't get up the hill to attend to them, let alone gather the nuts now, which are just feeding the vermin., so, that will be a day's work at some stage.

Despite the fact that we have adopted an 8-year-old dog, the mallard ducks have decided to join our last two remaining free-range ducks, and are now cheeky enough to hop on to the veranda and ask for food. I call them Fido, as they have the range of the whole valley, and just "fly in fly out." Up close they are very beautiful, but bossy if our girls hang around., and not the least bit daunted by Bonnie dog. And as for our geese, we stole their eggs this year, which a few of us have enjoyed, and hopefully now we won't be inundated with goslings.

After years of heavy frosts and trying to get bananas to grow here, I think we might have nailed it with one in front of our tank, so, watch this space, I would be so proud to have our own at long last.

See you all at the field day - and enjoy living in the Far North, oh, and P.S. I just heard something and Fido was standing behind me, inside!!!

Krissie



Here is a write up from Carol and Graeme Smylie

Graeme and I returned to New Zealand last year after working as doctors in Dubai. I was looking forward to greenery and trees again after living in a sandpit for ten years.

We'd been GPs on Waiheke before going to The Middle East and I'd been a keen organic gardener on the Island.

We were looking for 1-2 acres of preferably organic land when we spotted Rolf and Inge's orchard for sale. So, we bought it and although bigger than we'd originally wanted we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves looking after the 6-acre organic mandarin orchard.

We are sharing one position between us at the Ngati Hine Medical Centre in Kawakawa and live on our small yacht in Opua Marina as there is no house on the orchard and we are keen sailors.

Whichever one of us is not working in Kawakawa is working on the orchard. So, we feel that at long last we have a good work/ life balance.

We're currently planting a selection of trees to try to interrupt the mandarin monoculture and are also putting in lots of bee friendly plants. We've joined the Kerikeri Bee Society and would like to get a couple of hives next year.

We're also trying to make lots of compost but I suspect our compost making will never keep up with our need for it.

I think I have bought a packet of each organic vegetable seed from the King's catalogue and we're now eating something from our own vegetable beds every day.

When we bought the orchard and told our four adult children the response was along the lines of 'oh no, what have Mum and Dad done now!'

Three of them live overseas but they are interested in what we're doing and are all coming to see us this Christmas. They've even agreed to have a working bee to help us rid the native bush area of tobacco and wild ginger. However, they might be slightly unimpressed when Santa gives them each a pair of gardening gloves this year.

Best wishes,
Carol

Here's an amusing little prayer I read in a gardening book.

THE GARDENER'S PRAYER

Lord, grant in some way it may rain every day, say from about midnight until three o'clock in the morning, but you see, it must be gentle and warm so it can soak in ... Grant at the same time it would not rain on the campion, alyssum, helianthemum, lavender, and others which You in Your infinite wisdom know are drought-loving plants – I will write their names on a bit of paper for you if you like ...

And grant that the sun may shine the whole day through, but not everywhere (not, for instance, on the spiraea or gentian, plantain lily and rhododendron) and not too much ...

That there may be plenty of dew and very little wind, enough worms, no mealy bugs, slugs and snails, no mildew or fungus, and that once a week thin liquid manure may fall from heaven. Amen.

Karel Capek, *The Gardener's Year*, 1929



SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT UENUKU

Although it has been very wet, the soil in the vegetable garden has been magnificent – I think the best it has been. No doubt that is thanks to the regular layers of grass clippings which I'm very lucky to get as Trish has her beady eyes on them as well! Together with Natures Organic Fertiliser from Environmental Fertilisers mixed after soil testing by Alan, regular spraying of fish fertiliser and comfrey and regular applications of Biodynamic compost preparations, applying 500 and 501 and emptying the vermiculture from the worm bin, the soil is lovely and dark and the worms are happy.

One of the most time-consuming things is sowing the seedlings, pricking them out into pots and planting them out. About four months ago I planted out close to 100 lettuces and put netting over it – two days later the whole lot had disappeared. The only way to protect them from slugs and sparrows is by putting plastic bottles over each seedling; once they push against the open top I remove the bottles and all is well.



The shallots and garlic are doing well – the elephant garlic from Rich and Jose looks strong and the other garlic looks good as well. Lettuces, broccoli, cabbage, kale, cavolo nero, celery, beetroot, parsnips, pak choy, broad beans are thriving. It is satisfying sharing these with friends and Trish and I and the chooks get our fill every day. The calendula flowers which are self-sown are stunning – orange – good Dutch colour!

The chooks have been off the lay for about three months but are back in full swing. Four of them continue to fly out over the two-metre-high netting but we are reluctant to clip their wings. Besides it's good exercise rounding them up and walking them back to their surroundings. As long as they stay out of vegetable garden we can accommodate their temporary adventures outside the hen camp. Out of all the pure breeds it is interesting that only Juanita, the Andalusian who, two years ago broke her wing and had it bandaged up for three months, manages to fly out! She's definitely got spirit!!

The bird life is phenomenal – at present the dawn chorus starts just after 6am and we start our day by rejoicing with this glorious offering from our feathered friends. All the trees and shrubs Trish has planted over the last 10 years contribute to our healthy and energised environment with its ever-increasing bird and insect life. After all the work that has lovingly gone into creating Uenuku, since arriving here eleven years ago, we feel so blessed to be living in this abundant paradise and to receive all the gifts that nature provides.



Trouble with Gorse? - Introducing the Gorse Extractigator tool

By Margrit from Gamma Oliveto

The best nontoxic solution to pull out Gorse and other invasive woody weeds such as Woolly Nightshade, Broom, Barberry etc. The Extractigator can grab stems up to 5cm diameter, you simply use your body weight to push down the handle and uplift the unwanted plants. It has a unique leverage system which makes it easy and does not require a lot of strength to pull out these long-rooted plants. I find it very satisfying to work with the Extractigator, when you push down slowly you feel and hear it crack and then.... the long roots just come out of the ground, with very minimal soil disturbance.

The Extractigator is originally from Canada. A couple from Thames is importing and distributing 3 different sizes in NZ. There is a "Big Foot" attachment to prevent it from sinking in, when the ground is wet.

<https://www.ecwid.com/store/extractigator/>



LAVENDER BISCUITS

These delicious, buttery biscuits are not limited to lavender flowers. Try variations such as rosemary, lemon thyme, or use your own imagination.

125g butter

100g castor sugar

1 egg

1 cup flour

1 tbsp lavender flowers

Cream butter & sugar, add egg and beat well.

Add lavender flowers and mix well.

Add sifted flour and mix through.

Place teaspoonfuls onto greased baking tray. Bake in preheated oven 180deg C for around 15 mins or until golden brown. Makes about 36 biscuits.

Krissie with thanks to one of our past members Julia Geljon.



MISSION STATEMENT OF FAR NORTH ORGANICS & PRODUCERS

- To gather and seek information pertinent to the organic's 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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