



# THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

*Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)*  
**Issue 69 – Spring 2019**

Details for the next FNOG Field Day ...

***Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019***  
***Start time 10.30am***  
***(Committee meet 10am)***  
***NatureZone Gardens***  
***Jose and Rich Van Alphen***  
***330 Trig Road***  
***Houhora***

***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***



Directions to NatureZone Gardens at Houhora. From Kaitaia, go north, then keep going north from Awanui head towards Cape Reinga. Pukenui township, which consists of a Four Square 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!

### **About NatureZone**

NatureZone Gardens is 4.5-hectares which has been certified organic since 1998. The property is steep and sandy which has made growing a challenge. We planted cherimoya trees on our valley floors and have terraced the steeper hillsides for cropping purposes. The use of compost and seaweed is a must in the sandy environment. Our spring fed dam is used for gravity irrigation. We are off-grid and have been for 30 years using solar panels and batteries through an inverter which takes care of our power needs. We have 6 free-ranging chickens, some worm farms, and two fine dogs, Ace and Pearl. We are now living in our new home that we built ourselves (hybrid earth-ship) which is rammed earth in tyres and loving it! Our main objective was to become as self-sufficient as possible and we believe to have gone a long way to achieve that goal.

Jose and I feel truly blessed to be living in our piece of paradise that supports us with the west and east coasts close by.

We both look forward to sharing our place with you on the day!

Best regards, and happy growing, Rich and Jose



### **About the speaker**

## **GRANT FALLON**

Biology has always been of intense interest to Grant and he has worked in the agricultural -horticultural industry most of his working life starting with part time work in glass houses growing tomatoes and beans, also fruit orchards in his college years.

Grant and his wife Janice leased a 150 acre dry stock farm at "Little Huia" on the northern heads of the Manukau Harbour for seven years from the Auckland Regional Authority prior to moving to Northland in 1986 when they purchased a 42 ha property at Riponui, 34kms north west of Whangarei.

This property is primarily used for beef and some sheep rearing, although they have planted about 50 mixed type fruit trees in an orchard that the grand children love to visit.

About one third of Grant's family property is covered in mature native bush where Kiwi, kauri snails and gecko also call home, this is adjacent to Department of Conservation controlled kiwi reserves.

"This reinforces my belief in caring for the environment and our native flora and fauna."

In the last 14 years as a biological/organic fertiliser field consultant Grant has attended many instructional seminars in New Zealand and Australia, achieved a level 5 NZQA certificate in organic growing in 2004 and a certificate in small business management 2004.

For several years Grant has been helping private and polytechnic classes with demonstrations in pruning fruit trees, vegetable growing and conducting lessons on soil biology.

As a fifth generation New Zealander, Grant has traced his ancestry back to 1838 in the Hokianga and Kaipara Harbours to some of the earliest pioneers and this has given him an interest in genealogy, in studying and achieving certificates through "Te Wananga o Aotearoa" in Maori (Te Waharoa), Mauri Ora, Tikianga Maori – Graduating in 2013.

Grant's other interests include "te Mahi Whakario" (Maori Carving), in various mediums e.g timber, bone, shell. Also, landscape painting and on the rare occasion (when he has any spare time) enjoys reading a good book.

Bee keeping is a special passion of Grant's and is an essential part of our horticultural/agricultural industry. Grant is D.E.C.A (Disease Elimination Control Authority) accredited and assists other hobbyist beekeepers in the Northland Region

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Grant will be using his well-used flip chart to talk about soil biology.



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## **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)  
Meeting  
Raffle, tickets will still be available at lunch break

Speaker – Grant Fallon

12pm ish Shared lunch

1pm ish Draw raffles, Jose and Rich to take us around their property

Come along to mingle, bring a friend and have an inspiring day!



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## **Chairman's Report**

Greetings members,

*Our last Field Day was held at Cathie and Bruce Jack's property, they opened their home on a cold morning and really welcomed us all, thank you for lighting the fire Bruce. It was a great opportunity to catch up and an interesting talk on solar energy from Steve Sangster, Energy Consultant with Hubands Energy.*

*OFNZ (Organic Farm New Zealand) held their AGM in July, which I attended via Skype. I resigned from my 2-year NCC role and we now have a new NCC rep with John Clarke stepping up for this position, so thank you John! The OFNZ Food Control Plan (S40) has been accepted by MPI. OFNZ members who need to register for NP1 will have the opportunity to do so with a bulk upload of OFNZ producers once MPI have sorted out the final details.*

*Recently the FNOG committee unanimously voted to donate \$1000 to GE Free Northland in their appeal to the Environment Court supporting Whangarei District Council and Far North District Council to support the precautionary and prohibitive GE/GMO provisions in the proposed new regional plan for Northland. Don't forget you can also make a personal donation to this very important appeal by contacting GE Free Northland.*

<http://web.gefreenorthland.org.nz/news/northland/00255-ge-free-northland-public-appeal-for-funds-september-october-2019>

*I look forward to seeing you all at the next field day.*

*Best regards, Rich*



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## Wai Wurri Update – September-October 2019

Purple, orange, pink, red, mauve and greens of every shade, aint Spring beautiful. Every year it is a joy to watch the Tuis scudding around, the Kukupa picking at the Magnolia buds and the Kowhai leaves, totally involved without a care in the world, sometimes almost close enough to touch.

The flaxes are budding up, and despite being a flipping pest, the wild onion flowers are covered in bees, in fact, they are buzzing around everything, especially the Bottlebrush, Magnolias and Telopias.

At the moment a Kingfisher is being very vocal, the saturated ground providing wormy all sorts.

So far this year we haven't had the flood waters up around the lower grapes, in fact – we haven't had the regular experience of being flooded in or out. The Council must be thrilled that they are not getting requests to come and repair our flood-damaged road, something that was very regular and getting right up their noses.

We've fed all the fruiting trees, and succeeded in getting some pruning done with outside help, thanks Chris Wilson. Yep, we are on the downhill slope, with age getting in the way of carrying out all the chores, but family is great when they live nearby.

Another difference is we are not getting enough possums to clean up for dog dinners – we are just not getting them in the traps, or hearing them playing on the verandah - like we used to. Obviously, the locals have finally come to terms with the damage being done. Thanks guys, it's only taken you 34 years!! Just hope they are doing rat control as well, as the ones we are getting in the traps are HUGE.

To round off, I had a lovely tete a tete with a Morepork. He hit the glass door, and spent some time cuddled up on my knee. When he got his act together, I took him outside on my hand and he crawled up my arm, snuggled into my neck, then silently disappeared into the night. Adorable.

Happy Spring/Summer everyone, 'tis still a great little country we have chosen to make home.

*Krissie*



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### **"Update from Uenuku from Trish and Gijs"**

Spring is here! At least I think it is – showers on and off all day and some thunder in between at times.

We have only one duck left, Amelie, who is a cross between a Khaki Campbell and Indian Runner. She is 11 years old, absolutely gorgeous, and still lays eggs – if you can find them. I followed her today and found 17 eggs which all seem fine so a treat in store for us. I find it hard to take the eggs away but given they are not fertilised she would be sitting on them until they explode. After taking them away she finds a new pozzie straightaway and another round of laying starts!

The hens are happy. Earlier this year one of our hens, a three-year-old Andalusian named Juanita, still managed to fly out over the 1.8-metre-high fence so I had to resort to a bamboo palisade which stopped her getting out. What is interesting is that she is the one who broke her wing when caught in wire netting just after we got her. I took her to the vet who put a bandage around her for 2 months and we clipped the injured wing. Talk about determination!! Must be the Dutch influence!!

Trish and I are constantly astounded by the bird life – it is increasing all the time and the sounds from early morning all through the day are a great joy. There are also quite a few paradise ducks flying around the land making plenty of noise. I think the sight of ducks or geese flying is something that takes your breath away. I always feel like yelling – “wait for me!!!”

The garden is producing very well. Rich and Jose’s garlic looks great, our shallots are thriving. I bought 10 to 20 shallots from Gail and John Aitken at a field day about 7 years ago and it’s wonderful how they multiply and we can share them with others. I don’t have much luck growing onions so the shallots are a great substitute and delicious as well. Cabbages, broccoli, cauliflowers (forgot about the cauliflowers I planted, until Trish pointed them out to me!), kale, lettuces, broad beans, beetroot, celery. chives are doing really well.

We have met a lovely family of six who live on the land in Kaeo and in exchange for milk and feta we have been sharing our vegetables, fruit and seedlings. We spend time sowing seeds and talking about gardening and it is such a pleasure to share ideas with these like-minded people.

Trish can justifiably be very proud of the planting she has done since we came here 12 years ago – everything is looking marvellous and gives us great joy.

We are very fortunate to live here!



### **Ake Ake Vineyards**

200 years ago the first grapes vines in New Zealand were planted by Rev Marsden in Kerikeri, we know the precise day as he wrote it in his diary, 25th September 1819, and so was born the New Zealand wine industry, well not quite, as goats ate the vines a few weeks later and the Reverend probably didn't drink. But this date is worth a celebration anyway.

The first wine was made by James Busby, the governments representative, from his vineyard at what is now the Waitangi Treaty grounds. All these vines were of course grown Organically, and of course without the use of Round Up.

In 2011 New Zealand Organic Wine growers set a target of achieving 20% of New Zealand vineyards as being Organic by the year 2020. With three months to go there only 7% that has been achieved. The two main reasons are expense of controlling weeds which can greatly affect the yield and performance of the vines, particularly New Zealand most important variety, Sauvignon Blanc, (over 80% of New Zealand's exported wine) and the fact that the consumer won't pay extra for their Sauvignon Blanc to compensate for the loss of yield. Some of the largest companies have converted to Organics but have had to go back to Round Up as the yield has fallen.

Here at Ake Ake Vineyard we started our conversion to organics in 2012, and while our control of mildew has been successful, controlling weeds has been somewhat harder. We have 4.5km of vines so weed eating along the rows is quite a task for which enthusiasm has waned. The competition from the grass/weeds near the vines has lowered the yield and vigour in some areas so we recently purchased a rotary side hoe from Poland. There are many similar machines on the market but they are way beyond a Northland wine growers' budget, plus I would probably need to purchase a new tractor to power it. After a lot of tinkering it's worked very well. It hoes down approx 10 ml removing most weeds which it mulches in with soil. Looking at this mulched soil a few days later I found lots of very healthy worms busy hard at work. Will hoe again at flowering in November and by Christmas will just let the weeds grow as the canes should have hit the top wire and the vines job will then be to ripen the grapes for me.





The second New Zealand Organic Wine Week has just finished in which we noticed an increase in sales of our organic wines, particularly our 2019 Chambourcin red which we have bottled without any added preservative/sulphur. Let's hope for another great vintage like 2019.

Cheers John





Kia Ora from Rolf and Inge, Ora Ora,

We are reading and hearing so much about individual helplessness vis-a-vis Climate Change, Climate Crisis, Climate Emergency and beg to differ.

While a strongest possible Zero Carbon Bill is required urgently to avoid losing time, it is aiming at the “big boys”. Individuals often just shrug or despair or demand or protest, but actually they can do much more.

With the free and easy carbon calculator the charitable Carbon Neutral NZ Trust <https://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz> aims to raise awareness of personal effect and to provide an empowerment for personal action. The calculator shows how much CO<sub>2</sub> a household emits in the sectors energy, transport, travel, waste, and food as well as how much CO<sub>2</sub> it sequesters with trees and composting in the garden. The website provides a variety of ideas to reduce the net carbon footprint. Everybody can then choose the most suitable solutions for themselves - or even make an off-set donation to enable others to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on their behalf.

An often-heard argument is that a person's eating more locally produced vegetables or flying less often has a minimal effect. This is not important. It is the sum of many people's action that does make an important difference.

The Carbon Neutral NZ Trust was founded by its trustees in Kerikeri and Waiheke Island two years ago aiming to declare the small town and island the first to be carbon neutral upon analysis of users input based on postal codes. However, all households and communities are most welcome to join in and compete. The organisation is run and the calculator and website are operated by volunteering retirees. An educational Kaitiaki video is available on the website, and more are planned. Schools, households, retirement villages, clubs and businesses are targeted to spread the message: **everyone can do something!**

**Please complete the Carbon Calculator:** <https://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz>

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## Here is what you can do!

### Our Great Kiwi Carbon Challenge

- ✓ Make your household Carbon Neutral
- ✓ Help make our town Carbon Neutral
- ✓ Help avoid a catastrophic future. It may come sooner than we think
- ✓ Pass this onto friends and family



### THE ACTION PLAN

#### 1. Determine your household emissions

- ✓ Once you know your emission & sequestration you can start to do something about changing them.
- ✓ Use our **Carbon Calculator** to determine your carbon footprint.

#### 2. Create a plan to reduce them

What can you achieve each year?

- ✓ More sequestration
- ✓ More sustainable consumption choices
- ✓ Less waste with energy, food & transport

### Get started today!

Visit our website and determine your carbon footprint.  
[www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz](http://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz)



Carbon Neutral NZ Trust

Also ...

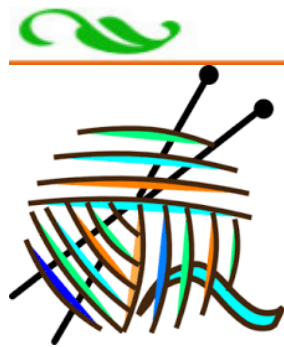
Last evening (Sept.26) we attended MfE's info meeting in Tikipunga about <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/consultation/action-for-healthy-waterways>: about 300 mostly farmers, strongly supported by Fed Farmers and other farming groups, complained to Damien O'Connor (Minister of Agriculture and a West Coast farmer) and his team that basically they don't want changes and more compliance but want appreciation. (Well, one of the farmers there was Roger from the well-reputed Lodore Farm was not one of the complainers. He agreed to test the new business model of our carbon calculator together with us next week. Lodore Farm has won quite a lot of prizes for sustainability. We are looking forward to hear his views about the paper then.)

The overarching motto of MfE was: we all want cleaner water within one generation. The answer was: yes, but we can't make submissions within the next 6 weeks (too busy now), and if we can't use so much fertiliser we can't grow veggies, and if we can't sell our land to dairy outfits we will lose out, and if we have to pay for all the fencing and planting along rivers (which is not true NRC pays for the material is you apply for it) we can't do it...! "The whole class has to sit in detention" (being penalised by restrictions) "because of one or two culprits" (misbehaving farmers). Pretty rough language in parts and impolite behaviour. One farmer even sang a pretty lengthy song about his woes! Damien O'Connor came out very well: balanced smart responses and refusing "obvious bullshit" from anyone in the audience. He explained very clearly and repeatedly, that the consultation paper invites comments and opinions, and that the proposed limits and restrictions will have to be applied differently and flexibly in different areas, depending on local soil and river conditions.

By the way, Matt King was there yesterday too and he excelled with the question: have you modelled the situation (a farmer making changes) to check whether you can reach the outcome (get the water cleaner)? When the answer was: look at the science: the situation in the various areas of New Zealand is very different...etc. (There was a very easy to understand scientist present) someone else said: this means you have modelled inaccurately! Sigh. I am glad that Far North Organic Growers have understood and ingrained in them that you need to treat the land, the water, and the people respectfully.

Rolf already read 70% of the paper with about 50 questions for submitters: fortunately, it was explained by the Minister that submissions can be brief and don't need to include response to all the questions, which indicate only what the Ministry is interested to get opinions about. Thus, a generally supportive submission with some comments would be helpful - also from FNOG.

Kia Kaha!  
Inge



Yearning to take up the old-fashioned fibre crafts again?

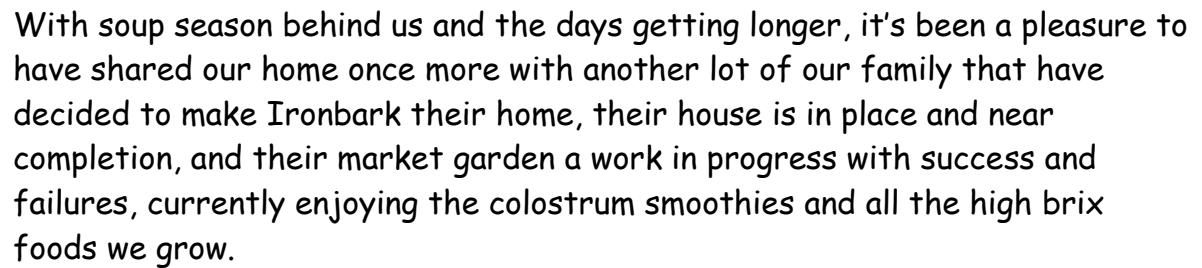
Not so old fashioned as you'd think. Just google Knitting, Spinning, Weaving, Felting and you will find these are alive and kicking!

Far North Spinners and Weavers come together every second and fourth Saturday of the month. Activities have all to do with animal and plant fibre: spinning, weaving, knitting, crochet, dyeing, felting, carding etcetera. It is for all ages – at the moment ranging from 3 to 87 years old. Our general meetings are very short so we can do what we love most.

You are very welcome to get a peek and a taste. We are at Kaingaroa Hall between 10am and 2pm, having a shared lunch halfway.



Ineke Post

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## 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

## FNOG COMMITTEE 2018

### **Chairman**

Rich Van Alphen

### **Vice Chair**

Jan Arie Kamsteeg

### **Secretary**

Kris Khaine

### **Minutes Secretary**

Krissie

### **Treasurer**

Inge Bremer

### **Financial Auditor**

Michele Twigden

### **Networker Publisher**

Jose Van Alphen

### **Committee Members**

Rich, Jan Arie, Gijs Veling, Inge, Terry, Krissie, Jose Van Alphen, Alan Rockell, Carol Smylie

### **Certification Manager**

Jose

### **Certification Auditors**

Terry & Jan Arie & Rich

### **Certification Committee**

Jan Arie, Terry, Rich, Jose