



THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)

Issue 70 – Summer 2020

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

Sunday, 15th March 2020

Start time 10.30am

(Committee meet 10am)

Te Kahu Orchard

Carol & Graeme Smylie

73H Riddell Rd.,

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



Directions ...

Come along Cobham Rd from the roundabout at Countdown in Kerikeri. Shepherd Rd is on your right where there is a sharp bend in the road and it becomes Inlet Road.

Shepherd Rd also has a sharp bend to the right and becomes Riddell Rd. Keep driving until the road splits into 3 and there are several letterboxes ahead of you. Turn left here and drive over a small bridge. We are the driveway on the left immediately after the bridge.

About Te Kahu Orchard

We bought the property almost 3 years ago from Rolf and Inge. It is a small certified organic mandarin orchard with some very old trees which are on their last legs (lots of borer).

We have been trying to rejuvenate the trees in one area with organic fertilizer made up for us as a result of soil testing and a combination of mulch and sheep pellets. We think we will take out the rest of the mandarins and just use the paddock for hay.

Although we are doing the PC course with Klaus Lotz shortly so may be inspired to do something else. The problem is time, we both work as doctors in Kawakawa and despite the help of some wonderful young WWOOFERs this year we are always busy with maintenance. This summer we are clearing out the very overgrown pond and will replant once the rain starts falling again.

We have been living on our yacht in Opuia as there is no house on the property but have had a tiny home on wheels built for nights we want to stay on the orchard. We thoroughly enjoy our Nomadic lifestyle commuting between the two.

Rod Brown who advised Rolf and Inge on the natives along the stream and is involved with Operation Island Song has kindly agreed to talk to us about the project.

It would be great if everyone who has a spare jar of homemade chutney/relish could bring it along with a printout of the recipe. I will provide cheese and crackers and we can have a tasting session after lunch. Any recipes you may like you could take a photograph of it.



Looking forward to greeting you all, regards, Carol and Graeme



About the speaker

Rod Brown

Project Island Song is a wildlife sanctuary. The seven main islands in the eastern Bay of Islands have been pest mammal free since 2009, and the natural eco-systems are being restored bringing back birdsong to the islands, note by note. Thousands of trees have been planted, and so far six rare and endangered species have been reintroduced. It is a unique partnership between community group the Guardians of the Bay of Islands, [Te Rawhiti hapū](#) (Ngati Kuta and Patukeha) and the [Department of Conservation](#). This partnership is dedicated to restoring ecological balance to the islands of the Eastern Bay of Islands (Ipipiri).



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

Speaker – Rod Brown

12pm ish Shared lunch and tasting of chutneys/relish

1pm ish Draw raffles, Carol and Graeme to take us around their property

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



Chairman's Report

Greetings members,

Phew this summer is shaping up to be an absolute cooker! Long balmy days, warm water at the beach, the fish biting, doesn't get better unless you're a grower with a limited water budget. A glance at the mercury today read 28 degrees C in the shade with a now HOT easterly things are really starting to feel this drought.

Firstly, a big thank you to Grant Fallon our guest speaker at the last field day at "our" place. Everyone enjoyed the history past to present with an informative presentation on soil biota.



Jose and I enjoyed hosting the day at NatureZone, meeting new people and sharing our story with you all.



This upcoming field day will be our 31st AGM. I believe the 2020 year will bring some challenges to our organisation in regards to the “New Organic Regime” and what that may mean for FNOG. The OFNZ food control plan and the audit of that. Also, the Society has been actively engaging in the political arena, submitting to the NRC GE Policy for the long-term plan. Water issues and the Zero Carbon Bill to name a few, so plenty to discuss.

I look forward to meeting up with you all at Carol and Graeme’s place on the 15th March.

Cheers for now, Rich.



Wai Wurri Update – Summer 2020 AGM

Well, another year and the dynamics of working this property have changed, considerably.

Seven months ago, it looked as if Terry needed medical intervention with his back, but, after a whole lot of to-ing and fro-ing, and getting his hips x-rayed, we finally hit the nail on the head.

Inconveniently, we have been several times to Whangarei, and even though he has been on crutches for months, we are still waiting for a date for him to be given new hips!! With a very broken, under-staffed hospital system, patience is the epitome of all this drama.

But, land wise, the bees are having a grand time, mainly because we're chocka full of flowers most of the time, and, the honey is divine.



Whether I make it to the market this year with the persimmons, feijoas, apples etc will depend on how they succumb to the weather conditions, and my energy levels!!

Personally, after driving Terry to and fro and looking at all the brown paddocks around the north, I am grateful to get home to all the green-ness, the cacophony of birds and the coolness from the tree cover.

A neighbour arrived to put a wood-splitter to good use on the firewood, and family arrived to cut up what was left, so, now that the Swallows have finished with their wood-shed nest, I was able to start stacking it all, a job that I find strangely enjoyable, and visually satisfying. The security of having this wood out of the weather is well worth the perspiration.

All going to plan, I should see you all at the AGM. Please try to encourage your organic friends to sign up, and give this organisation a boost.

Kris Khaine



Life at Uenuku Trish and Gijs Veling 9 February 2020

It was a very exciting moment earlier this week when we harvested the first heritage beans that had been given to us by the Heritage Trust and Mark Christensen in Wanganui. The first to be ready were the Hidatsa Shield bean and they are such attractive looking beans that you feel like framing them. We planted 8 different varieties and they are all looking different and have gorgeous markings. These are mainly dry beans so will be delicious in casseroles, Mexican food etc. If any of our members have recipes, we would love to receive them. Another variety we planted are seeds given to us by Sue called Cherokee – trail of tears. What a powerful name and moving story behind the name!!

We did not start talking about the actual garden as it has been a very challenging time this summer. We wanted to make a salad yesterday for dinner and this would have been the first time we were struggling to get enough to fill the bowl. Most plants have shrivelled up or gone to seed and with temperatures of around 35 it is not surprising. We have water in our tanks but monitor our usage given the uncertainty of how long this drought will continue. All we can do is prioritise and water the vegetables that have a reasonable chance to grow well.

Isn't it amazing how many vegetables self-sow? It seems to us that this is nature's way of spreading her love. Given that she chooses where to sow the seeds, we find that the survival rate is so much higher. We put the compost from the worm bins in the garden and are amazed at how many seeds come up – pumpkins, tomatoes, potatoes, kumara, etc. Wouldn't it be fabulous if we did not have to sow seeds and have enough different vegetables coming up on their own accord to feed us!

In the last Newsletter we attached a photo of a self-sown pumpkin which was enormous. Kings Seeds did not know what it was (strange as they have the seeds in their catalogue) but Graeme Kettle told us it was the squash pink banana jumbo. They have come up again and we will have to build a new shed just to be able to store them!!!



We find out more and more that one of the most important things we can do is mulch, mulch and mulch. Water is going to be such a precious commodity that we have to look at ways to retain moisture. One other option could be the use of hügelkultur. Graeme and Carol have created a bed and we will see this at our next field day. We also visited a delightful young couple living in Honeymoon Valley Road who have created some of these beds and the veges grown in them looked amazingly healthy.

We continue using the biodynamic preparations and are convinced this helps the garden enormously. Most of the grass is still green, our birdlife is forever increasing and an absolute joy to observe. Rabbits have sprung up all over the place and they are so incredibly cute, small and all different colours, especially the black bunny. Must admit it is tempting to do something about them when they frolic in the veg garden and you cannot find where they come in. (We won't mention that Gijs forgets to close the gates!!!)

We trapped two stoats last month and are very happy they will not do any more damage. The possums have been behaving. We are harvesting plenty of plums, nashi pears, apples and blueberries. The figs are slow and the quinces look a picture. We have had less damage from birds this year except for them feasting on some of the early grapes. The blackbird eats the first tomatoes but then moves on to other things. Although the tomatoes look very shitty, they have given us a very good crop. Our shallots' harvest has been outstanding and, given the number, we were for a time left wondering where to store/hang them. The elephant garlic we got from Rich and Jose has been a great success but our other garlic was a failure due to rust.



Our chooks are very happy and do not seem to suffer from the heat; it is essential to make sure they have plenty of cool water. Our one remaining duck, Amelie, is still dreaming of little ducklings sitting on eggs in a very hard to find nest!

We are extremely blessed living in this paradise.



From Crest Lane Orchard

For all organic growers in the Far north I hope that we all received a good amount of rain by the time you read this. Last winter was good for us with not too much rain. Spring started off nice and we were able to get 500 bales of hay from our paddocks to feed the trees in the orchard at the end of November, which was over a month earlier than last season. Our contract bailer was surprised with the improvement in quality of the hay. Hardly any carrot weed anymore and a reduction in Kikuyu grass. This improvement was also noticeable when I distributed the bales around the fruit trees. The hay bales came easier apart without the tuff carrot weed and stringy Kikuyu.

To improve the nutritional value of the hay I started to feed the paddock with Guano, organic Potash, sulphur and some micro nutrients. As these fertilisers are slow release it took about two years to give the noticeable improvement. I have not supplied any Lime or magnesium, as the soil analysis showed both to be too high and the Guano and Potash do already contain some Calcium.

The planning is to do another hay cut early March to feed the remainder of the trees their ration of half a bale. Remarkable our grass is still green and to a certain extent growing. The orchard trees are hanging in but not growing much without irrigation. The heavy clay is able to pull some water from deep and keep the trees from wilting. We could do with a 100mm of rain if only to fill the deep cracks in the heavy clay soil.

When you look under the hay mulch in many places the bottom is wet from the microbial activity rotting down the bottom layer of the hay. I am hoping for a humid autumn to stimulate the growth of edible mushrooms on the hay again. They will go well on a pizza with the sun-dried tomatoes from this summer. Regards, Jan Arie



Some interesting information from Rolf and Inge ...

Water emergency for Northland

While Southland is flooded, water is getting very scarce in Northland. Council is requesting everyone to reduce their usage to avoid running out completely. It's a clear message to value our water resources.

Vision Kerikeri has been submitting repeatedly to Council to make the installation of rainwater tanks mandatory for new buildings. Catch and store the water when it is available in abundance. With good filtration, the quality might even be better than town water.

Farmers can also catch and store water in ponds and lakes. For large hilly farms "Keyline farm planning is a management tool that uses natural landscape contours and farming techniques to **slow, sink, spread** and **store** rainwater as well as **build soil fertility**. With a detailed contour map of your farm, keyline planning can help determine the optimal placement for farm elements such as: irrigation ponds, cropping & orchard rows, structures, roads/tracks, fences, livestock rotation, subsoil rip lines, and more. ” (See <http://crkeyline.ca>)

Our Council is working a strategic plan to reach the year 2100 safely and comfortably. The population is going to grow considerably, not even considering climate refugees, and horticulture wants to expand evermore. Farmers, horticulturists, industries and households require reliable water supplies without causing ecological harm for aquifers.

Northland is surrounded on three sides by an unlimited resource: water in the oceans. A practicable solution might be the installation of desalination plants, which could provide potable water and a considerable amount of salt to be used for other purposes (e.g. preserve fish, olives, and cabbage).

Desalination has been done in Singapore and Israel on a large scale since many years. The plants function is proven and by now very cost and energy effective, especially with solar energy: 1 cubic meter of seawater needs 2 kWh of power to turn it into potable water. The Singaporean water demand for almost 6 million inhabitants is met to almost 60% with the reverse osmosis process without the ecological problems experienced elsewhere: excess salt is returned to the bottom of the far out sea to avoid silting and harm to marine life. Singapore is operating six plants operating by now and has been receiving global awards: <https://globalwaterawards.com/2019-desalination-plant-of-the-year/>. Here are more details: <https://www.water-technology.net/projects/tuas-seawater-desalination/>

A desalination plant in Northland could ensure the supply of potable water during dry periods, but also consistently relieve wells, aquifers and rivers from being overused. The environment with fauna and flora would recover and benefit.

Shane Jones' Regional Growth Fund might be able to provide the required financial support for the project to provide Northlanders a very welcome and sustainable asset, which could be copied by other regions, which also lack sufficient water at times and overuse their existing resources.

Transition Engineering, as taught and practiced at Canterbury University by professor Susan Krumdieck, could be the tool to help us with a strategy to safeguard the next 80 years.

Found this article about Pamu's extended conversion to organic farming, which might be interesting for the Networker readers: <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2019/07/11/673094/when-less-is-better>

Cheers, Rolf

And also for your information from Rolf ...

Dear all,

on 16th of January, the European Parliament passed a resolution on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (**COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity** ([2019/2824\(RSP\)](#)).

An alliance of 50 European NGOs, foundations and experts successfully pushed for the adoption of **important amendments**, amongst others a **call for a global gene drive moratorium!**

These are the adopted amendments:

- (AM 21) à 12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for the COP15 to adopt provisions on horizon scanning, technology assessment and the monitoring of new technological developments, including those emerging from synthetic biology;
- (AM 22) à 13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for a global moratorium at the COP15 on releases of gene drive organisms into nature, including field trials, in order to prevent these new technologies from being released prematurely and to uphold the precautionary principle, which is enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as well as the CBD;
- (AM 23) à 19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to push for the COP15 to ensure that free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples and local communities is sought and obtained prior to the release of any technologies which may impact on their traditional knowledge, innovation, practices, livelihoods and use of land, resources and water; stresses that this must be done in a participatory manner involving all potentially affected communities prior to any deployment;
- (AM 24) à 27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to call for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to enshrine, as key pillars, the precautionary principle, a rights-based approach and horizon scanning, technology assessment and monitoring with regard to the adoption of new technologies;

This is the final version of the resolution:

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0015_EN.html



Greetings and salutations everyone

Thought I would get some of my thoughts down to share....

We have the orchard near Jan Arie and Ineke along SH1. Tina and I have learned a lot in the three years we have been working the land.

After the first year we were really wondering if we had made the right decision to get involved in Organic farming... We persevered and gradually learnt what to grow and what not to.... The physical therapy and communing with nature turned our unfit bodies into much better ones... ha ha The first two months we came in with aching muscles.... but we slept well.

The mind, body and spirit connections really started happening....

About 18 months ago we went primarily over to a vegetarian diet. The change in my blood results were amazing and after having high cholesterol and sugar levels for many years they went into the normal range.... Yahoo.. Eating organic fruit and vegetables we noticed the difference in the taste immediately.

The gradual change in our fitness and health meant that we had no need for any medication or supplements other than b12 for Az until he started fish and fermented foods,.... now all good.

During the second and third year we started to really appreciate how to work the land and make it more enjoyable..... ha ha even weeding.....!!

So even though we started to really enjoy the whole organic growing process which developed into then making the jams and chutneys which we have been selling at the Kaitia market,..... We both missed being close to the sea.

So, about a year ago we decided to sell up and move closer to the sea. Which has now happened. A lady called Frida will be taking over the orchard from mid-March.

We will remain part of the Far North Organic community and make the 1.5 acres that we have bought into an organic property at Bland bay. So not too far away.

It is hard to put down into words the amazing journey we have had that has challenged and changed us in a profound way.

We hope to be able to catch up with all of you at the meetings.

Love and hugs from Az and Tina



Property for sale: Manna Orchard Kerikeri

Due to age and health we are selling our orange orchard.

We have been here for 6 years and our son had the property for 4 years before us.

The house has 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms and the cottage is 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom

Our orchard is in C2 conversion. There are 40 mature olive trees, and a variety of lemons, apples, persimmons, kiwi fruit etc

There is one fenced paddock which once had a few sheep roaming around in it.

An old chicken coop which needs repair.

An extensive area waiting to be used for lemon trees or any other crop.

Please contact Pete Gentil of Real estate agents 0274977004



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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