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Oct—Nov. 2008 Newsletter.

Hello Seedsavers.

What time of year do you feel is the most exciting in your garden? I love the spring because I find it is the busiest time, getting the majority of seedlings started, getting the ground ready for planting, as well as watching the blossom on the trees and hoping for a good fruit set.

When spring started this year, the ground was wet and boggy. Vegetables I had put into the ground had to be pulled out as the roots had just rotted away. However some of the fruit trees seem to have more blossoms this year which I attribute to the higher rainfall.

I have the greenhouse full of seedlings and others hardening off outside, most waiting for Labour weekend. Any I do plant out before Labour weekend have a bottle over them to protect them for a couple of weeks. It makes me cross when I go into a garden centre in September and even sometimes in August and find tomatoes, capsicums and courgettes and other warm-weather plants for sale. Nowhere is there a sign to say that at that time they should be in a greenhouse. Traditionally these seedlings were planted out at Labour weekend, when the ground was warm enough and less likely to have the cold wet conditions that encourage disease. However the ground is still moist enough for the plants to establish well and produce reasonably quickly.

I worry that people will try to grow them, and when they do not succeed they get put off gardening. If garden centre staff had any basic knowledge they would not accept tomatoes for sale so early, maybe only a few which would have a big notice, for greenhouses only.

When you are planning your garden remember the benefits of heirloom flowers. Many people are now becoming aware of the benefits of heirloom vegetables but do not know the advantages of heirloom flowers. While modern flowers may be bigger, and have more variety of colours they do not provide food for the beneficial insects. Also I find that the open pollinated flowers are usually healthier.

When you are planning what to grow this year, remember that we are a seed exchange and we depend on members bringing seed back for other people. Unfortunately some people just seem to think that it is a cheap way to get seed. Usually the seed is cheap but it is a lot more than that. By growing out and saving some of the seed you get each year and sharing with others, you have a back up if one of your favourite fails one year, and amongst the group a wider variety of seeds can be saved.

Wishing you all a successful garden this season.



Kathrina Muller....

See page 4 for future 2009 events

The Great New Zealand Bean Hunt For release October 2008

Do you have a climber or a runner hanging around your garden shed? A Wanganui-based charitable trust wants them all!

The Central Tree Crops Research Trust is launching what it calls “**The Great New Zealand Bean Hunt**” for old and rare New Zealand bean varieties.

Director of the trust, Mark Christensen says the Trust’s vision is not just to save heirloom bean varieties but to improve the health of New Zealanders.

“The work we’ve been involved in so far, with apples and tomatoes has shown the nutritional properties of heirloom varieties tend to be greater than modern varieties which are bred for commercial production,” he says. “This programme will endeavour to get these wonderful old varieties out into the community so people can enjoy the diversity of this heirloom material, as well as their superior nutritional value. The Trust aims to find out just what varieties of beans we have in New Zealand, and which beans grow best for our particular climate and conditions. Many beans are also known under more than one name, which can cause confusion. It is hoped to be able to match varieties so that correct names can be determined.”



No bean is a has-been as the Trust is interested in the whole range of varieties including climbing and dwarf beans, runner beans and dry beans as well as Broad beans.

“We are looking for old varieties that people may be saving, or may be sitting in jars in garden sheds, or in old seed packets, never planted. Also if anyone has a special variety of bean that they would like to share, this would be very much appreciated,” says Mark Christensen.

Once gathered, given away. The Regional Primary community. The That’s Right” pro-



the seed will be grown into plants, new seed saved and named before being Central Tree Crops Research Trust works in partnership with the Whanganui Health Organisation (WRPHO) to distribute trees and plants free to the community. The WRPHO project that promotes healthy eating is called the “Grab a Bite programme, and is funded by the Ministry of Health.

“Due to this country’s phytosanitary requirements it is extremely difficult to import beans from overseas,” says Mark Christensen. “Hence the Trust would appreciate receiving seeds or hearing from anyone who may be able to assist with information on old varieties – no bean is too old for this project.”

If anyone would like beans in exchange, the Trust is happy to return beans later in the Autumn.

Notes: Apart from researching heirloom beans, the Trust is the coordinator for the research on the high-health Monty’s Surprise apple. This apple is currently undergoing trials in Strasbourg, France, to test its effectiveness against colon cancer. Other projects in progress involve the research into heirloom tomato varieties and their superior medicinal qualities over hybrid varieties, as well as research on a desert plant from Texas that contains high levels of a natural Trehalose sugar that is being studied for its ability to treat the symptoms of Huntington’s disease.

Beans can be sent to the Central Tree Crops Research Trust, PO Box 4088, Wanganui 4541 (phone (06) 347 7734), email beanlovers@xtra.co.nz, website www.trecropsresearch.org

Mark Christensen

I am asking all of you to support Mark Christensen’s Bean hunt. It is difficult to import bean seeds into New Zealand as they need a lot of certificates. Many of the heirloom varieties are not grown commercially in ways that can get the required certificates certifying they are free from the important diseases. I am sure there are many varieties here in NZ already that people have been growing for years. If you or someone you know has beans that you have not seen for sale in New Zealand please send some to Mark. Do read the exciting results of research that Mark has been involved in. You will find proof of how heirloom vegetables are better for you. See the information about the Great New Zealand Bean Hunt in this newsletter.



Kathrina Muller....

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Grow your own veges and save the seeds.

If you are a financial member you are able to receive the newsletter either by email or a traditional hard copy. Please let Robin know which way you prefer to get your newsletter. Even if you prefer hard copy, but have an email you use, do give Robin your email address so that we can try to contact you for reminders of activities or special news.

If you are not a financial member and have email, we can send you notice of meetings and activities but cannot send you the complete newsletter. Please do consider becoming a financial member.

Kathrina....

Our records show that you are on our mailing list as someone interested in seedsaving and growing veges in your own garden.

Subscriptions are now due (they run from 1st August each year) - you will receive full newsletters & have access to our seed bank- \$15 per person or \$20 for couple or family.

If you would like to be a member for the coming year, **please send your details — i.e.:- Your name—postal address —email address — and your phone No. (your phone No. is important as this is the only way for us to check your details & spelling of your email if needed)**

and the appropriate amount to me at:-

Auckland Seedsavers C/o 1A Roberts Rd Te Atatu South Waitakere 0610

If you do not want to become a member at this time but still like to receive brief information by email of activities please send an email to let me know.

If you wish to be removed from our list please let me know.

Robin

Stuff I'm Growing Now.



Well as you can see I'm getting a good range of veges from my new green house, it's a great learning curve for me.



I have planted several types of beetroot, red & white Chioggia, Cylindra, white Belgian.



As well as several tomatoes, on the right is a low acid Oxheart and below is the first seedlings from the pictured tomato and I have Russian Red, Money-maker, Scotland Yellow. At the beginning of October we started picking our own strawberries from about 50 plants.



My 2nd year of seedling pumpkins from the Flower show



Robin....

It's really nice to get some feedback from members from time to time. Thank you Rachel.

Great to read about the latest seedsaving/ers happenings - I am growing some interesting heirloom veg varieties this year, and looking forward to bringing some goodies along to the next seed swap... :-

If there's anything I can do to help the group out in any way, I'd be happy to volunteer some time to maybe do some behind the scenes admin, or anything really! Just let me know - I usually have a bit more time up my sleeve in the school holidays as I do most of my work (enviroed) with schools during the term time. I am hoping to come along to the next meeting - is there a meeting timetable available? When/where does the group usually meet? Have a great day, **Rachel.**

Events for 2009.

Next Seedsavers meeting is

14 February 10am -1pm in the classroom The Botanic Gardens Manurewa,

Bring samples of your harvest for a taste meeting. We hope to have a tasting session so people can compare the taste of various tomatoes beans and other summer vegetables.

Topics covered will be *How to harvest summer seed*, and *What grows well for autumn and winter*.

18 June 2009 10am-1pm in the classroom The Botanic Gardens Manurewa.

Topic will be *How to plan your summer garden*

Bring seeds for the seed bank and spare plants, cuttings etc for the trading table,.

12 September 10am-1pm in the classroom The Botanic Gardens Manurewa

will be the *AGM* and *Seed for the summer garden*

Bring seeds for the seed bank and spare plants, cuttings etc for the trading table,.

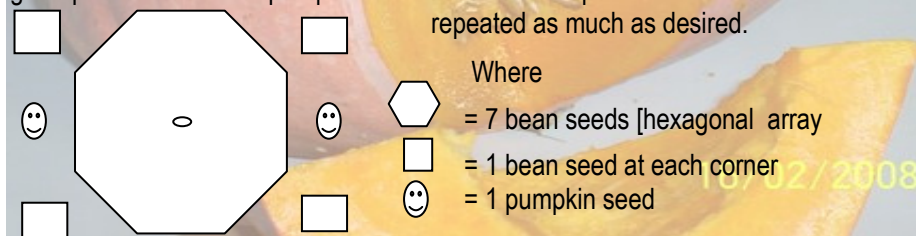
Thanks to NZ Post

Seedsavers want to thank NZ Post for their allocation of 100 freepost envelopes. These will be used to send newsletters to people who have expressed interest to encourage them to grow their own vegetables and save seeds. We can often do this via email, but some people are not up on email and prefer hard copies.

Companion planting – South Auckland. From Heather & David

Broccoli seedlings hidden under eggplant seedlings – cabbage butterflies flew right over them and ignored them. Corn – beans- pumpkin – well, we planted them together and the pumpkin went rampant and smothered the rest. After the pumpkin died down the beans and corn tried again.

I have now learnt to plant the corn first. When it is 10 cm high plant beans. When they are up, plant a few pumpkin or other cucurbits around the outside. An original Indian method planted corn in units of 7 seeds [about 25 cm apart] shaped like a hexagon with one in the centre. Then 4 bean seeds outside the square went in. These units were repeated as much as desired.



David with his 1st born, he makes a proud Dad.



The backyard garden

Perhaps an idealised version of the vegetable garden of the 1950s, with neat rows of vegetables and vines staked to the back fence.



Vegetables, Secrets From the Past.

Manure or fertilizer? A Kiwi scientist has developed a test to detect foul play in the organic food industry.

An isotope test looks at base elements in vegetables, and shows whether they were raised with organic manure or fertilizer. Organic materials contain isotopes such as carbon and nitrogen. Studying these using mass spectrometers, all sorts of things can be learnt. Unlike tests for pesticide residue, the results cannot be clouded with a bit of soap and water. "This will stop people from being unsure of someone else's half-baked ideas about organic vegetables," says Karyne Rogers from GNS Science, the scientist who developed the test,

As vegetables grow, they take on nitrogen from fertilizer. Most tests for organic vegetables in the past have shown that only organic fertilizer, usually manure, could be used. But the signatures from manure and industrial fertilizer are different. The new testing is expected to be used by organic vegetable suppliers. Dr Rogers says it is cheap, and shows results within 10 days and these tests can be at any stage of the growing cycle. This type of testing could also determine whether vegetables were grown hydroponically or in soil. Another similar test could detect whether they were raised in a greenhouse heated by fossil fuels.

The test works best on fast-growing plants such as vegetables, and not so well on slow-growing ones, such as fruits.

Do not waste water. Instead: incorporate organic matter into the soil to act as a sponge, grow plants close together so that the leaves join in a protective umbrella, and apply a mulch to stop evaporation.

Articles for publication in this newsletter please send to Robin.

Email :- akseedsavers@orcon.net.nz

The Importance of Earthworms

We all like to have nice gardens with healthy plants and the only way to ensure this state is to have a healthy soil-food-web. That means a soil that is teeming with microbes, beneficial fungi along with many soil creatures including big populations of earthworms. The easiest way to determine that you have good healthy soil is by the number of worms you see when the soil is opened up. No worms, in a

and until rectified you will struggle. Note that I say moist soil be- too wet or too cold you will be have good worm populations.

warm or dry, worms know what tunnel deep into the soil before it hardens. They may also coil into a slime-coated ball and go into a sleep-like state called estivation. It's something like a hibernating bear.

Once conditions improve to the worm's liking, up they come to work your gardens for you. There are 3500-4000 species of earthworms around the world and nearly 200 species have been identified in New Zealand. They are full of calcium, protein, fibre and vitamins, making them a valuable food source for many mammals, reptiles and fish. Earthworms vary in size, on average from no more than 1 centimetre to about 3 metres in length. One of the world's largest earthworms, the Giant Gippsland Earthworm (*Megascolides australis*), is found in Australia. It has an average length exceeding 1 metre. However, the longest recorded earthworm was a South African giant specimen (*Microchaetus rappi*), measuring around 7 metres in length. An good site to find out about worms and other aspects of gardening is hosted by Lincoln University.



moist soil, means you have a problem. cause when the soil becomes too dry, lucky to see any worms, even if you do. When temperatures drop or soils get too

to do. If it starts getting chilly, they may

Don't be afraid about not being overly clean and tidy - hedgehogs, beetles and spiders love a pile of rubbish and will help fight pests.

Members Question:- My sweet basil plants are about 10 to 15 inches tall--no flowers yet. Can I cut off the top of the stems to make the plants bushy, or do I have to wait for the first flower ? Also I've planted Thai Basil and Sacred Basil do these need a different treatment to Sweet Basil ?

Members Question:- To save space in my small garden, can I plant corn between my rows of potatoes ?

Quick Tomato Sauce.

Preparation Time: about 15 minutes

Ingredient :

2 tablespoons Extra Virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons chopped garlic
1 klg. of tomatoes chopped and puree
1/2 cup water to rinse out the can
1/4 tsp. dried oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
1/4 teaspoon hot pepper flakes

Directions:

Warm the garlic in the oil to release the aroma (1 minute on low heat, don't brown). Combine all remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer partially covered for 10 minutes--stir occasionally



Please send you answers to:-

Email :- akseedsavers@orcon.net.nz



We have a request from one of our members, can anyone help with seeds or seedlings plants for any of the following items.

Hi my name is Charlie and I live in Wellington, I am looking for any or all of the following viable seeds or plants:

Cocoa (chocolate) (*Theobroma cacao*) — Carob — Vanilla — Tea — Salba (chia) — Peppercorn — Saffron — Paprika — Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) — Blueberries — Cranberries — Nutmeg Pomegranate — Walnut — Hazelnut — Hops — Rice

And also hardware seedlings:- Maple — Oak — Teak (*Tectona grandis*)

plus: any native New Zealand hardwood trees (I can't remember the name of the one that I want !! - Kauri ?)

European Ash — English Elm — English Oak — Spanish Chestnut — American Black Walnut — Red Oak — Pin Oak — Poplar — Cypress — Cedar — Eucalyptus — Himalayan Cedar — Pepper Tree — Mexican Cypress — Japanese Cedar and Cherry.

If you know where and how I may find any of these I can be contacted by phone 021 02 551 120. or email to :- bluehawk@farstar-company.com

Charlie Bluehawk....

Pest Control the Eco-friendly Way

We all have our share of pests at home. And I do mean the real pests like rodents, cockroaches and mosquitoes. Normally, we would have our homes fumigated but the issue of how the chemicals could affect our health due to possible inhaling, this leaves a lot to be considered. With that in mind, you have to wonder what you should use, either water-based or eco-friendly ways to control these pests.

What Do You Use To Be Eco-friendly. Send feedback to:-

Email :- akseedsavers@orcon.net.nz



The Ultimate Potato Gratin. Please note:- This is not an "Aunt Daisy" recipe.

1 head Savoy cabbage, cored, cleaned, and shredded
 1 pkt thinly sliced bacon,
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
 1/2 bunch fresh chives, finely chopped to 1/4 cup
 1 klg baking potatoes, unpeeled and thinly sliced (about 1/8-inch), see Cook's note*
 2 & 1/2 cups heavy cream
 2 cups grated Parmesan



Preheat the oven to 190 C'. Finely shred the cabbage. Place a small skillet over medium-low heat and fry the bacon, until crisp. Remove from pan with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels when cool break into smaller pieces. Set aside. Add 1 table-spoon butter to bacon fat in frying pan. When it has melted add 1/2 the garlic and give it a quick stir with a wooden spoon to soften.

Add the cabbage and coat it with the butter. Slowly let it wilt. Add the bacon. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Remove from heat and add most of the chives, reserving a little for the garnish. Generously butter the bottom and sides of a 9 by 13-inch ovenproof casserole dish. In a large bowl, combine the potatoes, 1 & 1/2 cups of cream, 1 cup of Parmesan, and the remaining garlic. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Using your hands, place a layer of potatoes in the casserole dish. Sprinkle with Parmesan and repeat with 2 more layers. Spoon the cabbage mixture on top and spread it out evenly over the potatoes. Top it off with 2 more layers of potato and Parmesan. Pour the remaining 1 cup cream over the dish. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan.

Cover dish with aluminum foil. Bake for 1 hour. Remove foil and bake for 30 minutes until golden brown. Leave for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh chives. *Cook's Note: Slice the potatoes immediately before using so they don't turn brown.

Aunt Daisy's Recipes. Putting some magic in.

Maud Ruby Basham, always known as Daisy, was born in London but educated at New Plymouth Girls' High School after her family migrated to New Zealand. From childhood she entered into everything - singing, acting, debating - with verve and enthusiasm, and with determination to strive for excellence. She trained as a teacher, winning the top marks in science.



In 1904 she married, and while bringing up her children, taught singing and performed in many towns. In the early 1920s she took part in a broadcasting experiment, and by the end of the decade started writing and broadcasting programmes on the lives of composers, illustrated with songs.

During the Depression the family faced tough times when regular work became scarce, but Daisy continued to present musical and children's sessions, and later developed her memorable daily morning broadcast, opening with the theme song of "**Daisy, Daisy**" and her hearty "**Good morning, everybody**". A committed optimist, she talked - fast and positively and remarkably clearly - about household management, recipes, uplifting thoughts, economical shopping, and current concerns or events. Her books of recipes and of handy hints became essential references. During the war she visited military bases to report on how the women of the forces lived, and she helped with campaigns to bolster morale and the war effort. Aunt Daisy's curiosity was underpinned by high intelligence, an excellent memory, and sound judgment. She conveyed values of honesty and integrity, and was a trusted daily guest in thousands of New Zealand homes. In 1956 Aunt Daisy was awarded an MBE in recognition of her services to the Country. Aunt Daisy died at the age of 84 years in 1963. She was still broadcasting up to a few days beforehand. Aunt Daisy is fondly remembered as someone who was practical, candid and amiable - someone who was almost part of the family. She used her radio show to get behind the war effort to get NZ'er to grow food in their own gardens during World War 2.

If anyone has a favourite Aunt Daisy recipe, you may like to share it with us in the next newsletter

Email :- akseedsavers@orcon.net.nz