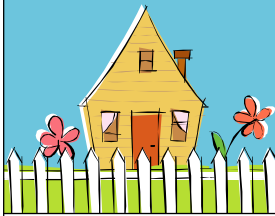


GREEN PZ NEWSLETTER

January 2011 | Issue 11



Hello Friends of the Kawerau Community Gardens Project (KCGP)

Happy New Year to you all. May your gardens be bountiful and your weeds few.

The House of Hope garden is looking abundant as it enters its second year of production, the fifteen months of soil improvement are beginning to show. Many thanks to the groups and individuals that have become part of the garden and brought us this far.

Haven't we been lucky with some lovely rain in recent weeks along with hot sunny days - perfect growing weather. Don't be fooled by an overcast sky, keep a watchful eye on your soil moisture by feeling down into the root zone and take the cloudy days as an opportunity to give everything a good drink when the sun can't burn through the droplets. Water at least every couple of days for veggies, as active uninterrupted growth is the ideal and keeps them lush and sweet. Nutrition becomes available for them with the activity of soil microbes, and that process needs water too.

Last year I attended a three day workshop on BioIntensive food production with Kay Baxter and her team from the Koanga Institute. It was fantastic to learn the modern science of soil micro-organisms. They are growing soil first, with the idea being, when you get that right, the plants can't help but thrive. The beds are double dug with a technique that maintains the layers; ie, the topsoil stays on top. Compost and minerals are added to the surface and lightly mixed and then they plant into the light fluffy soil. By using a diagonal spacing and planting in blocks they can produce four times as many plants as you would get from the same area if they were planted in rows. When the soil has been prepared in this way it can easily support a greater number of plants of more vigorous growth. The beds are made so that the plants in the middle can be reached without standing on and compacting the soil, so the roots easily grow. We now have quite a few of these beds and although our soil is still lacking, the plants are doing well.

Those Koanga people really know their stuff. I recommend you check out their web site.
<http://www.koanga.org.nz/>



The Nursery

Nursery Update

We're full up! I'm looking forward to autumn when many of the natives can be planted into the Monica Lanham Reserve. There are plenty of young ones coming on to take their place, however, and we are still to collect more local seed.

The shade houses are groaning with seedlings at various stages that go out as they are ready and as space becomes available at the garden.

We have replaced a section of fence to keep the place secure. Some kids have been in, pinched a few things, and done some damage. Very boring indeed! On the bright side, it could've been a lot worse...

The nursery garden is filled again with tomatoes, it's an ideal spot for them under the clearlite roofing. I wish it could roll back so they could get the rain too. Ha! Dreams are free.

East Bay Bark kindly gave us a very good deal for potting mix. Many thanks.

CONTENTS

GARDEN UPDATE	2
GARDENING TIPS BY THE MOON	2, 3
SWEETCORN AND TOMATO SALAD	4
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MY PATCH	4
TWILIGHT GARDENING	4

House of Hope Garden Update

As I said last time... it really is worth coming in for a look. The large flat garden has been divided up into many smaller beds in order to protect the soil from compaction by feet. At just over 1m wide the middle of the beds can be reached from the path. It also makes crop rotation much clearer. We have 4 varieties of corn, many varieties of bean, silver beet (of course, such a favourite), capsicum, aubergine, lettuce, parsley, spring onion, shallots, garlic, watermelon, rock melon, LOTS of kamo kamo, pumpkin, carrots, parsnips, turnips, radishes, a patch of spuds, spectacularly huge Russian Giant sunflowers, and tomato varieties.

Many thanks to Jamisons for the box of tomato seedlings. They are doing well and ripening by the day. The strawberries were disappointing. Lots of lovely growth and runners but no strawberries! I've been told to continue to cut the runners, feed for fruit and expect a good three or four year's production to come. Sounds good to me!

Sadly, we continue to have unwelcome visitors at the garden. Our storage shed was broken into and many tools, hoses with fittings, and our lovely lawn mower have gone along with the fuel cans too. We need them.

We've also lost a third of the potato crop before it is ready, to people looking for a feed. This one is hard to watch. Calling it senseless plunder is being too kind... it makes a gal want to put salt in the shotgun and it's discouraging to those trying to support those in need.

The Gardens were planted to help people in our Community to support people from time to time. They are not there for people to help themselves, steal, damage etc. The land is private and helpers are encouraged, trespasses are not welcome.



Aside from those negatives, it's a lovely place to spend time, especially in the evenings. The birdsong is fabulous and the garden seems to glow in the evening light. Certainly, it's easier to work then as opposed to the heat of the day.

The riverbank planting of canna lilies, kamokamo, comfrey, crimson and red clover, rye, and a few flowers that attract beneficial insects is doing well. There are lots of self-sown plants there too.

The watercress bed banks have revegetated rather well, more spuds, cannas, a couple of lovely dahlias, but the area for growing the cress is nonproductive. We thought we might get away with a back eddy being able to keep the water moving but it has silted up and it looks like we need to somehow get a pipe through the bank to allow for flowing water. Is there anybody out there who has the know-how, skills and equipment to insert a pipe without digging a trench? Are there any other bright ideas that could help us get it working? We can't eat mosquitos, and they do put a blot on the end of the day. If you have some bright ideas, please call Kelly 323 7377.

Gardening Tips by the Moon

Last Quarter – 27 January

Garden:

- Prepare beds, transplant and prick out for late and autumn crops
- Transplant lettuces and plant rocket under shade cloth
- Continue watering
- Liquid feed tomato, pepper and egg plants with comfrey

Community Gardens

c/o Kawerau Enterprise Agency
P.O. Box 119, 60 Onslow Street, Kawerau
Phone: 07 323 7377
Email: kelly@kea.org.nz

We're on the Web!
See us at: www.kea.org.nz

- Weed and aerate the surface of newly planted beds on a weekly basis while the weeds are all very small
- Prepare ground for autumn flowering annuals and biennials

Orchard:

- Summer prune stone fruit
- Watch for branches breaking under the weight of a heavy crop, you may need to thin or stake.

NEW MOON – 3 February**Garden:**

- Plant cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, brussels sprouts, lettuce, peas, mizuna, rocket in shade, celery, coriander and parsley. This planting is really important to avoid big gaps in May and June
- Weeding
- Plant empty beds with fast growing green manure crops such as mustard, buckwheat and phacelia
- Plant a wide range of flowers for Autumn and Spring flowering such as calendula, chamomile, stocks, hollyhocks, Sweet William, Chinese forget me nots, columbine and verbasicum

Orchard:

- Bird protection on trees with ripe fruit
- Summer prune all stone fruit and young fruit trees after picking their fruit
- Watch moisture levels in the soil carefully especially under young fruit trees and citrus, feijoas and kiwifruit which all have very shallow feeder roots. Water stress now could mean bad cicada damage and pear slug damage.

**FIRST QUARTER - 11 February****Garden:**

- Plant empty beds in green manure crops such as mustard, buckwheat and lupin.
- Foliar feed three days before the full moon
- Plant empty beds with plants such as buckwheat, phacelia and mustard to attract beneficial insects

Orchard:

- Irrigation of subtropicals may be essential for fruit set now

FULL MOON -18 February**Garden:**

- Plant root vegetables such as carrots, beetroot, parsnips, turnips and swedes
- Continue making liquid comfrey to feed tomatoes, eggplants and peppers
- Foliar feed three days after the full moon
- spray any tomatoes or potatoes with signs of blight or pumpkins showing signs of powdery mildew with raw milk (1 litre to 10 litres) and compost tea. Raw milk takes out the bad guys (has antifungal properties), compost tea replaces with a strong healthy collection of micro organisms

Orchard:

- Plant spring bulbs in orchard herbal ley
- Watch for water stress

LAST QUARTER - 25 February**Garden:**

- Prick out seedlings, transplant and weed
- Harvest, dry and store seeds from your favourite veges and flowers.
- Collect and kill shield bugs in the morning when they're wet, cold and can't fly
- Harvest shellout or dried beans and peas
- Make sure all onions, garlic and shallots are harvested and stored in a dry place.
- Plan Winter garden and make sure you know which beds your strawberries, garlic and early peas and broad beans will be in. As Summer crops come off these beds you could plant green manure crops to dig in three weeks before planting the crop
- Spray roses with seaweed, water roots well and liquid feed
- Sow anemones and ranunculi for Winter flowering
- Finish planting all daffodils and flowering bulbs
- Lift gladioli when foliage turns yellow
- Water and feed dahlias for long, strong flowering
- Take geranium cuttings
- Layer carnations
- Prepare beds for planting Autumn/Winter flowers

Orchard:

- Summer prune apricots, peaches and plums after the fruit have been picked. This makes Winter pruning easier and there is less chance of disease
- De-sucker bananas
- Plant subtropicals

Community Gardens

c/o Kawerau Enterprise Agency
 P.O. Box 119, 60 Onslow Street, Kawerau
 Phone: 07 323 7377
 Email: kelly@kea.org.nz

We're on the Web!
 See us at: www.kea.org.nz

Recipe of the Month

Sweet Corn and Tomato Salad



6 ears fresh sweet corn, shucked
 4 medium tomatoes, as ripe as possible
 small handful fresh mint leaves
 small handful fresh mixed herbs — like Italian parsley, basil, rosemary, sage
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 Kosher salt and fresh black pepper, to taste
 3 ounces soft goat cheese, chilled and crumbled

1. Boil corn 5 min. drain and cool.
2. Quarter tomatoes and scrape out juices and seeds. Dice quarters. Pat dry with a paper towel to remove any extra moisture.
3. When the corn has cooled, slice the corn kernels off. Toss the corn with the tomatoes.
4. Finely mince herbs, toss with vegetables and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then crumble in the goat cheese and toss gently. Serve and enjoy!
 Serves 6.

This is just a rough recipe, of course; this kind of summer salad is practically a genre all its own. Take whatever you have on hand and just mix it up into something that tastes good to you.

What's Happening in my Patch

Luckily the distraction of working for the community project was largely through winter, so the jungle was easy enough to reclaim. That, plus I'd thrown blue lupin around which took care of bald spots and kept the weeds down too. It was interesting to note that the grapefruit had healthy bright green new growth after being completely engulfed by lupin for months and the two lemons with weeds (and the odd vegie remnant) were

weak and yellow even after a dusting of blood and bone. The red Tamarillos were fantastic. Very large and tasty too, though not so many. To keep the plants manageable I pruned them low but they have put on good growth and to my surprise both the yellow and red are flowering and fruiting already! The apple has been stripped back to two fruit after being covered and is shaping up to be a good looking tree. The guava dropped its leaves and despite looking dreadful for ages, is covered in pink and purple growth and seems fine. I'm very happy that the slow growing mulberry has grown nearly 15cm on the leading branches. After the first year of almost no growth it's pretty exciting... sigh. I need to get out more...

Apologies to anyone who bought cuttings of my 'Berry Delight' from the Garden Club stall at Woodskills Fest. Rampant growth, very few berries and an unremarkable taste. Looks like this hybrid is a bit of a flop. It has till the end of summer to redeem itself... In comparison, the thornless blackberry is well behaved and covered in ripening fruit.

The olives have bunched up amazingly well and as much as I love the natives I've found it hard to find space for them among the food so I've moved some of them next door. Thankfully my neighbour has a lot of space and doesn't mind me transplanting the odd thing here and there so I am still lucky enough to have the natives around, just not on my side of the fence. Perfect!

My new garden edges are holding well, as long as I keep some soil on top to prevent them drying and flying. I have yet to complete all beds but now the self-sown pumpkins are doing their thing so the edges will just have to wait.

Lastly the lawn. It is still relatively prickle free without toxic spray, just by keeping the water up to it. Even weeding the dandelions has been successful enough for me to think about tackling the front lawn... maybe next year... don't want to rush things.

Twilight Gardening

Starting Wed 26 January, we're starting up a new session for the cooler hours of the day. 6pm – 8pm Wednesdays. We would love to see you. Bring your favourite tools if you have them. There's tomatoes to 'de lateral' and tie up, weeding (of course), compost spreading, paths to clear... or just come and enjoy the space, have a walk around and sit in the shade. We would love to see you!