

# Community Garden Project

## GREEN PZ

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2009/2

#### "Get Growing in Kawerau"

#### Dear Friends of Green Pz (pronounced peas!)

I hate to say it – but July is probably my least favourite month in the garden. It seems to get colder and wetter after the solstice. I have well meaning thoughts of getting out there but would prefer to stay inside cozy and warm rather than venturing out and freezing off my tail feathers. Despite this mindset there is still plenty to do, as midwinter is really (I hate to admit it) the beginning of the gardening year. This being the case it does provide a good opportunity to think long and hard about how to improve our garden soil; for only by having a balanced, highly mineralized soil can we produce really healthy nutrient-dense food.

#### What to sow, plant and do.

1. **Sow:**
  - Broad bean seeds can still go in and will quickly catch up to earlier plantings.
  - Peas and snow peas, silver beet and spinach, pak choy and other Asian greens, cabbage and caulis.
  - Miner's lettuce, corn salad and spinach and other hardy Chinese greens in pots for winter salads.
  - **Under glass** - lobelia, antirrhinum (snapdragon), carnation, calendula, alyssum, nemesia, sweetpeas, viola pansy.
2. **Plant:**
  - Shallots, garlic and onions grown from bulbs. It doesn't just have to be on the longest day.
  - Brassica seedlings, silverbeet, spinach and hardy Asian greens.
  - Asparagus crowns
  - Gladioli corms and dahlia bulbs.
3. **Do**
  - Plant or transplant new deciduous trees now while they're at their most dormant.
  - Shop for fruit trees which are just starting to come into the garden centres.
  - After leaf fall, give other deciduous trees an all-over spray with Lime Sulphur. This will clean up scale and unwanted lichen.
  - Prune peaches, apples and other deciduous summer fruit trees.
  - Spray Conqueror or winter strength Oil to control sap-sucking pests such as aphids, woolly aphids and scale.
  - Prepare beds for new winter plantings by digging in plenty of organic matter (such as compost or manure) and some sheep pellets if you have some on hand. Whether you're planning new vegetable, herb, rose or flower gardens, preparation beforehand will ensure success.
  - Plant up hanging baskets. If short on space, plant your edibles in baskets. Everything from strawberries, herbs, salad greens, even peas, grow well in hanging baskets.
  - Feed cauliflower, cabbage and broccoli plants. Use a general balanced fertiliser or apply regular doses of liquid seaweed or compost tea.
  - Plant new raspberries in a sunny spot where the prickly canes won't catch passers-by.



"Every community has more potential resources than anyone person knows".

# Community Garden Project

## GREEN PZ

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



July 2009/2

- Prune roses. Use sharp secateurs and a good quality saw. Spray bush and soil with Lime Sulphur immediately after pruning. Check roses for suckers coming from below the ground. With a sharp tug, remove these as cleanly as possible.
- Feed citrus towards the end of the month with Citrus Food, sheep pellets and/or good quality compost.
- Tidy dead flowering stems from cymbidium orchids and feed plants with sheep pellets.
- Control snails and slugs which are encouraged by moist weather.

**If you want your vegetable garden soil PH tested now is a great time. Just give me a call.**

#### **Food Crop of the month: Spinach.**

Spinach is good for you – everyone including Popeye knows that - but it has often been seen as a boring and rather unappetizing vegetable. That is, until someone picked a few of the very youngest leaves and tossed them into a salad. There, they taste so good that baby spinach is now considered as essential an ingredient in mixed salads as the lettuce and the dressing. The downside of baby spinach is that it doesn't keep for any length of time and should always be used when it's as fresh as possible.

By growing baby spinach from seed, you can pick a few leaves whenever you need them for a salad. And, by sowing more seed every few weeks, you'll always have a fresh supply coming on.

Sow the seeds direct where they're to grow (pot or garden bed) in a sunny or lightly shaded spot – full sun during the cooler months and some shelter when it's very hot. Add some Blood & Bone to the soil before planting and, after the seedlings have emerged, feed every week with a liquid fertilizer or compost tea. Thin out the overcrowded seedlings and transplant them carefully if they are going into the garden, or use them to add green goodness to soups and stews.

Spinach Baby Leaf tastes best when the leaves are young and tender so pick them (it's easiest to use scissors) as soon as they're big enough to use. This will make room for more leaves to grow.

#### **July Moon Calendar 2009 Copied and Pasted From "2 Women on 2 Acres" website**

**Well this section has created some interest. I can tell by the number of people who stopped me in the supermarket and discussed the planting of their garlic!**

#### ***Moon Phases and Best Planting Days***

- **Full Moon:** - Commences cycle on the 7<sup>th</sup> at 21.23. **No Sowing on the 7<sup>th</sup>.**  
**Best Sowing and Pruning Days** - From 09.25 on the 8<sup>th</sup>, from 15.45 on the 11<sup>th</sup>, all day 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>.  
**Best Harvest Days** - All day 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, until 15.45 on the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Last Quarter:** - Commences Cycle on 15<sup>th</sup> at 21.54. **No Sowing between the 15<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>.**  
**Best Weeding Days** - All day 15<sup>th</sup>, from 14.45 on the 18<sup>th</sup>, all day 19<sup>th</sup>, until 15.50 on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- **New Moon:** - Commences Cycle on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 02.36. **No Sowing on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.**  
**Best Sowing/Planting Days** - From 17.30 on the 26<sup>th</sup>, All day on the 27<sup>th</sup> & the 28<sup>th</sup>.
- **First Quarter:** - Commences Cycle on 29<sup>th</sup>. **No sowing on the 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**Best Sowing/Pruning Days** - All day on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

"Every community has more potential resources than anyone person knows".



# Community Garden Project

## GREEN PZ

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2009/2

#### What's happening in my patch?

Well winter may not seem like the right time to be thinking of new potatoes. However, if you are looking to grow your own this year, then you need to put aside a little time now to go and get your seed potatoes from the garden centre or other supplier.

The first thing to do is get some quality seed potatoes. Experts don't recommend going to the pantry and pulling out those long lost spuds that have started growing in the depths of the vegetable basket. They say you should get the certified ones because potatoes are prone to viruses and other diseases so, it is very important that only "certified virus free" potatoes are planted to ensure a successful crop.

As is probably typical for me, I suggest you do as the experts say rather than do as I do. What I have actually been doing is to scouring the supermarkets for organic potatoes of different varieties. Because I am in my organic phase, I am trying to stick to organic seed wherever possible. I have a particular interest in the old heritage varieties so am pleased to get hold of whatever seed I can, certified or most often not.

Once you have your seed potatoes, you need to sprout them before you plant them. You do this by laying them out in a single layer on a seed tray or box in a warm, dry and airy place. Once the first sprouts appear place the potatoes outside in a sunny, sheltered frost situation, to 'green up' the sprouts and harden them up.

Sprouts appear from the "eyes", which are small buds. The "eyes" grow into shoots. Remove all but three or so of the strongest shoots for planting. Sprouting usually takes 4-6 weeks. I am doing mine under a covered deck, but out in the woodshed or garage, are all good spots. I like looking out at them each day to see who is sprouting what! Once your potatoes have sprouted and the threat of frosts has passed, you can plant out your crop into beds, which have been double dug, but more on this later.

Growing potatoes in buckets is a fun and good way to obtain an early crop. Plastic buckets are reasonably cheap so plant one seed potato in each bucket. Dark coloured buckets or black buckets are best as they attract more heat. Carefully drill 3 or 4 holes in the base of each bucket. Place about 40mm of good compost over the bottom of the bucket and then a small handful of sheep manure pellets, a tablespoon of gypsum if you have it, a level teaspoon of a general fertilizer and a couple of teaspoons of Neem tree granules if you have them. If not, no worries. Sprinkle more compost over this to cover and then place one sprouted potato on top with most of the shoots pointing upwards. Cover to half fill the bucket with more compost. Place in full winter sun. You don't need to worry about frosts when no foliage is showing.

When the first foliage pokes through, lightly cover with some more compost. Keep on repeating this until the bucket is full to within about 20mm of the top. Once the foliage breaks through this top layer, sprinkle a little potash or similar natural alternative, and some more Neem Tree Granules if you have them. Move the bucket to a sunny spot where it is sheltered from frosts such as under an eave or on a covered deck. If you have a tunnel house, glasshouse or conservatory you can put it in there.

Watering should be kept to a minimum in the winter, just sufficient to wet down the mix without getting it too wet. Try and keep it off the foliage if possible. Depending upon the variety chosen, you will harvest new potatoes in about 2 to 4 months from sowing. Hopefully, you will have just about a bucket full of new potatoes. Well worth a try anyway.

*"Every community has more potential resources than anyone person knows".*



# Community Garden Project

## GREEN PZ

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2009/2

#### Kawerau Garden Club News

##### ➤ **Leaf Mould Foray**

Well it was with pleasure and much enthusiasm that some hardy garden club members and I ventured out on a foray to collect leaves to make Leaf Mould. The site chosen on the dump road proved to be very suitable for collecting bags of semi decomposing leaves.

Leaf mould is simple to make and an excellent soil conditioner. It makes the soil slightly more acid and is an ideal mulch and compost component. Members filled large plastic bags with leaves, to which was added a handful of blood and bone and some garden compost. The bags were then tied and some holes were put in the top and base of each bag. The leaves will biodegrade in the bags over a period of about a year. We are storing the bags down at the KEA nursery site and will monitor the progress throughout the year.

After members completed their leaf mould foray they were treated to a tour of the Kawerau Pure Foods Olive Grove, above the Kawerau Dump site, by Director Stan Tew. It was a surprise to know many locals are still not aware of this fabulous food forest growing above the dump, on land leased from the Council. The latest batch of new season's olive oil (Putauaki Pressed) is currently being bottled and is now available for sale. Indications are that this years oil is once again of highest extra virgin quality. Aren't we so fortunate to have our own locally grown olive oil available? Consider serving with dukkah and our own local Mata beer. Now that's a guilt free treat to consider with few or no carbon miles.

Shirley Stimpson the Kawerau Garden Club Secretary can be contacted by telephone 323 9069 or by email on [s.stimpson@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:s.stimpson@slingshot.co.nz). New members are most welcome.

Thanks to

- Kawerau District Council for Earth maker compost bin
- Helen Stewart for supply of surplus garden supplies and ingredients for compost heap.
- Boxes from SKF Bearings
- Timber from Carter Holt Harvey WoodProducts
- Many others who have donated items, including Clara Maru and support from Chris Caillard.

**Please consider adding something for the August calendar. Your feedback and contributions are encouraged and welcomed. Remember this is a Community inspired project and your input makes "it" happen.**



“Every community has more potential resources than anyone person knows”.

# Community Garden Project GREEN PZ MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2009/2



## What's happening In July?

- **Saturday 18 July 1.30pm - Seed sowing demonstration:**

Head down to the nursery behind KEA, (accessed from Gordon St) for hands on lessons in seed sowing. Please bring a packet of seeds suitable for spring planting e. g. silverbeet, cabbage, alyssum, sweetpeas etc. If you have any spare seed trays please bring these along as well. All welcome.

## **Up and coming events to look forward to:**

You may have heard of the fabulous Kay Baxter and Koanga Institute now relocated to Torere just out of Opotiki. Her training is inspirational to say the least.

### **1. Beginner Gardener - Saturday 15th August 2009 at the Koanga Institute, Torere 9am – 4pm with Kay Baxter. INVESTMENT: \$90**

**Learn:-** how big to make your garden, where to place it, preparing the beds, growing soil, making compost, growing seedlings, pest and disease control, and companion planting. A mix of theory and practical demonstration. See Koanga Garden Institute website [www.koanga.org.nz](http://www.koanga.org.nz).

### **2. How to Grow Nutrient Dense Food - Saturday 29th August 2009, at the Koanga Institute, Torere 9am-4pm with Kay Baxter. INVESTMENT: \$95 .00.**

For our food plants to fully nourish us, they must be grown in highly mineralised soils, with the right minerals available in the right ratios. This workshop will show you how to take care of your soil so that you will be able to grow nutrient dense vegetables, fruit, and all other produce (milk eggs etc) that you produce on your land. We will cover many ways of achieving this using both bought and local inputs. Kay believes this is one of the most critical areas of learning for us all at this point in time. Our research and learning is based on the wonderful work of Dr Carey Reams, Dr Ardern Anderson, and Dr A F Beddoe, as well as Grant Paton. All of these men are scientists whose amazing work Kay is studying so that it can be put into "home gardeners' language and practice, and be more accessible for all of us. You will gain a clear understanding of how to grow nutrient dense food as the best basis for a healthy body. Our "Beginner Gardener" workshop, or an "Introduction to Bio Intensive Gardening" with any of the current teachers in NZ, is a preferred prerequisite to this workshop. We will cover:-

- a basic understanding of the Biological Ionisation theory
- what minerals and other things our soil needs to grow high Brix plants
- how to use a refractometer to measure the Brix (nutrient density) of your plants
- Where to source what you might need from both commercial and local home made sources
- how to apply minerals
- how to make Biochar, crush and burn bones for their use as soil amendments
- how to make and use foliar sprays and compost teas
- and more

**This newsletter is available from KEA at 60 Onslow Street, Kawerau and via email.**

"Every community has more potential resources than anyone person knows".