



Community Garden Project

GREEN PZ NEWSLETTER

September 2009/4

"Get Growing in Kawerau"

Hi Friends of Green Pz (Pronounced peas!)

"Can words describe the fragrance of the very breath of spring?" -- **Neltje Blanckan**.

Don't you just love this time of year? I can't help myself but go about sniffing over fences, and front borders and through hedges all round the neighbourhood (feinting that my less than obedient pooch is straying) and be reminded that spring has indeed sprung. The scent of earlicheer jonquils, old-fashioned freesias and the last buds of Daphne must surely be surely one of life's sweetest pleasures. ... Gosh this newsletter sounds almost poetic!

What to sow, plant and do

Sow

Just about all the hardy vegetables and flowers in small quantities, though do try and hold back on the more tender plants like pumpkin, watermelon, cucumber, zucchini, beans, tomatoes, sweet-corn and the like, and remember to stagger your seed sowing with just a few punnets on a sunny window sill at a time because the weather is still very changeable and you have to prick out all those seeds sown in spring time exuberance.

Better to plant a dozen or so a fortnight than the whole packet in one hit and end up with a bunch of seedlings that are competing for space and that you have to spend a huge amount of effort protecting from late frosts or chilly nights. It is, I know, such a temptation to go wild and plant lots of seeds too early and find you are either disappointed or that later sowings do as well or not better than the earlier ones.

Vegetables: Early crop sprouted potatoes ensuring their new leaves never get frosted, onions, peas, parsnip, beetroot/mangelbeet, carrots, rocket, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, silverbeet, celery, cress, lettuces, leeks, spinach, swede, turnips and grains.

Flowers: Alyssum, asters, Californian poppies, carnation, cleome, cosmos, dahlia, dianthus, geraniums, lobelia, marigolds, petunias, nasturtium, sunflower, sweet peas, phacelia.

Plant

Seedlings of spring and summer flowering annuals and vegetables like alyssum, cosmos, calendula, chrysanthemum, delphinium, hollyhock, lobelia, marigold, pansies, salvias, statice, sweet peas, wallflowers and lettuce, leeks, cabbage, broccoli, onions and silver beet and also herbs.



Do

- Focus on preparing the soil. Dig in as much compost as you can beg, borrow or trade. This is the best way to grow your soil so it in turn can grow your plants.
- Make compost frantically like a mad thing.
- Mulch around trees and shrubs in preparation for summer particularly shallow rooted plants like citrus and feijoas.

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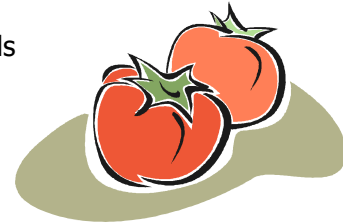
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Do continued...

- Start your weekly or twice a month (before and after the full moon) application of foliar fertilizer or compost tea.
- Protect young seedlings from slugs and snails.
- Prolong the blooming of early spring flowers such as cineraria , pansies, poppies and polyanthus by deadheading and liquid feeding.
- Plant dahlia tubers and gladioli corms.
- Feed spring flowering bulbs and remove spent flower heads before they set seed to build the bulbs for next year.
- Repot and feed houseplants.
- Plant hanging baskets and terracotta pots with hardy annuals
- Spray fruit trees with copper.
- Sow /renovate/feed lawns.



Food Crop of the month

Tomatoes (A fruit or a vegetable?)

Now that we are into September, it is the right time to start thinking about sowing tomatoes for the new season. This fabulous nutritious fruit is more commonly known as a vegetable. It's hard to believe that such a widely used food source was once considered deadly poisonous. French botanist Tournefort provided the Latin botanical name, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, to the tomato. It translates to "wolfpeach" -- peach because it was round and luscious and wolf because it was erroneously considered poisonous.

The French referred to the tomato as *pommes d'amour*, or love apples, as they thought them to have stimulating aphrodisiacal properties. Now that should get some of you borderline gardeners interested!

Growing tomato plants is one of the big items for gardeners, and even non-gardeners will likely have a go at growing a plant or two.

I am sorry to drag you through my phases but I am having a heritage tomatoes phase at the moment, so it is all that I can do to hold back from planting the seeds of a hundred different types; but hold back we should, just even for a little bit longer – check out the moon calendar for seed sowing dates.

Wally Richards a most eminent NZ gardener with his own website www.gardennews.co.nz says this about tomatoes:

"The health benefits from eating tomatoes either raw or cooked are great if you grow your own tomatoes naturally with all the minerals that they would like. You are not going to obtain the same health benefits from tomatoes you buy especially the ones in winter that are picked green and then chemically treated to make them go red. The chemical does not actually ripen the tomato; it just changes them from green to red, so you are then eating a tasteless green tomato that is red in colour. Scientists have discovered that eating five tomatoes a day can help to protect against sunburn and premature aging. Tomatoes are a super food; oozing lycopene, folic compounds, magnesium and potassium.

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Reports suggest that they can help fight Alzheimers and cancer as well as improving your overall health".

Purchase a packet of tomato seeds from your garden centre, and one that I would recommend is Silvery Fir Tree which is a Russian tomato that is a dwarf type, an excellent producer of nice size fruit and its cold tolerant as well. I have grown this tomato for a couple of years and they are perfect in a 20 litre container only growing about half a metre tall and very bushy with lots of small to medium size fruit. It is a plant which you do not remove laterals, you just let it grow.

Well doesn't that make you want to grow your own tomatoes! I am getting a bit of a collection of tomato seeds going now and I do believe I have silvery fir tree amongst other heritage varieties so if anyone wants to meet up for a tomato seed planting/exchange session just let me know and we will get this tomato thing growing!

September Moon Calendar 2009



This month the full moon is on September 5th and the new moon is on 19 September.

As a general rule, seeds sown just before or around the full moon germinate better and faster than those sown at the new moon. Don't plant or sow in the days leading up to the new moon as they can bolt quickly to seed.

September 8th is the earliest you should start sowing. Prior to this concentrate on weeding. Liquid feed or foliar spray all plants on September 8-9 for good growth. Sow seeds of root vegetables like parsnips and turnips and also potatoes.

- 9-10th Best pruning days
- 10-14th Weeding and other tasks like making compost, digging.
- 15-16th Sow root crops and lawns if required.
- 17-21st New moon period grow grains and grasses in particular
- 22-29th Plant all seeds and plants that produce above the ground such as peas, beans cauliflowers and cabbages.
- 29-30th Apply fertilizer and manure.

What's happening in my patch?

I am just soooo totally, absolutely excited. In honor of Woodfest, the Buildtech students have made a chicken tractor e.g. a chicken house on wheels (amongst other things) to display their skills and yes you guessed it, lucky me gets to have my wicked way after the event and come another step closer to the good life. Yes!!! Having a chicken house is a true symbol of having arrived at a new level of back yard self sufficiency and I am soon to reach those dizzy heights. A successful trade me search has sourced a local chicken supplier prepared to part with some purebred chicks and, all going well and the stars aligning, I will, by the end of September, be the very proud owner of some real life chickens in a real life chicken tractor. In preparation for their arrival I have been practicing how to sprout organic wheat grains to ensure optimal nutrition. It is indeed a totally invigorating thought is it not!

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On a more frustrating note I am counting with some dismay, the amount of times a shallot bulb can be wrenched from the garden and stuck back in and it still keeps trying to grow. I am currently up to 5 times. If its not the birds, it's the cats and if not the cats it the wild rabbit, I can only imagine comes from the reserve, and if its not that, its the pesky pooch whose only redeeming feature is providing a foil for my neighborhood sniffing and wanderings coveting what is smelling divine in unsuspecting neighbours gardens.

In addition to replanting the shallot bulbs with as much enthusiasm as I can muster, I have been busy flailing my arms about trying to shoo the precious local bees that are insisting on pollinating every flower on my rosemary bush what seems multiple times over to my Luiisa plum, which is flowering very nicely and for which I have high hopes.

The green crops were successfully dug in (successful for the Physiotherapist) and double dug I might just add to try and impress you and distract any questions about weeds of trifid proportions. I am trying to power produce compost from my Council purchased and subsidized Earthmaker bins to cover these raised vegetable beds. I am sprinkling and pouring every additive known to organic gardening to get those bins fair pumping. I cannot divulge what they all are publicly, as my daughter will never live down the humiliation of her mother's confession, however, most are readily available, and for one in particular, men have a distinct and natural advantage over women.

It is taking a super human effort not to rush out and just buy some seedlings to put in the bare spaces; but I am really trying hard not to succumb so as to prepare the soil properly through the addition of compost and other conditioners to produce the most nutrient dense vegetables as possible.



Kawerau Garden Club News

Well the ladies at the garden club have been very busy indeed planting and sowing and pricking out so as to have a nice selection of plants and seedlings for sale at Woodfest. Look out for them on the Council front steps. They had a lovely outing to Palmers Garden Centre and have a fully booked calendar from now until Christmas. They welcome new members so if you get struck by spring fever and have a green fingered thought or two contact Shirley who will be pleased to let you in on the next club activities. Her contact details are: Shirley Stimpson s.stimpson@slingshot.co.nz; Tel: 323 9069.

Garden Club tip for the month: is to keep sprouting those potato tubers for planting out soon. Ensure you have at least 2 nice healthy shoots showing before planting and protecting from the frost, it usually takes about a month and it is good to start some every month until about January.

What's happening in September?

- **4, 5, 6th Beacon Business & Leisure Show Whakatane**
- **10,11,12th Woodfest and the National Woodskills festival**



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Home Grown Market

Now has a [Twitter profile](#). They are looking at adding a new section to the website to include more content about homegrown produce, recipes, health tips etc. They would love your ideas and thoughts on this. If you are interested in contributing contact, [Home Grown Market](#).

In the spirit of community building, Home Grown Market is now thinking about allowing local businesses to list their services on the website. Please contact [Home Grown Market](#) if you'd be interested in creating a full one page (100% Free) business profile. 'The rules we're considering to guide this, would be that your business needs to be local and not part of a national franchise.'

What do we need?

- Any Heritage seeds
- tools for establishing the community gardens – especially a rake, trowels, spade
- hoses and hose fittings
- top soil, any spare compost, chicken or horse manure
- fertilizer

Thank you to

- Carter Holt Harvey Wood Products for timber
- Elaine Brown and others who have donated seeds and given tools and other items already
- Trevor Dean – Dean Gardens Services

This is a Community inspired project and your input is making "it" happen. This Newsletter is available on the KEA website www.kea.org.nz. If you want to subscribe, phone 323 7377.



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