



SOUTHLAND HERB SOCIETY

HERBAL HARVEST

April 2023 Newsletter

EDITORIAL

Another month has rolled around with more memories to share. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this month's newsletter. Lots of lovely pictures, stories and recipes to share.

A big thank you from me to the March team for the organization of our trip to Ettrick. While we left Invercargill, 'bang on' 8am in the rain, by the time we stopped in Gore, the sun was coming out and the weather was perfect for the rest of the day. A special thank you also to Simon, our ever patient bus driver who gave up his Saturday to take us. We had a fabulous day.

Information for the April meeting is on page 15. Please note this next meeting is on **Thursday, 27th April 2023**, not as listed in the calendar.

If you would like to contribute to the May and June newsletter, please email your pieces to the Herb Society email: southlandherbsoc@gmail.com on or before the 10th of the month and Maggie will collect them from there.

Happy reading
Rose



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Julianne Watson

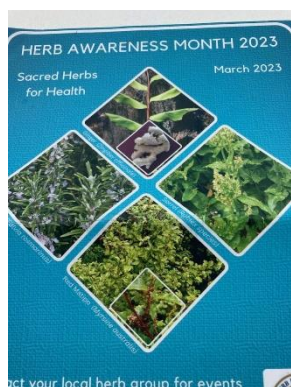
Hello Everyone



The Autumn colours have arrived! The Maples, Ash and the trees in Wachner place are a picture as well as the pumpkins and berries. There are still lots of flowers in the garden too - roses, chrysanthemums, monkshood, asters, sedum, Japanese anemones, hydrangeas and pansies of course. Here is a lovely bowl of Lois Walker and her Mum's hydrangeas.



What a wonderful day on our trip to Ettrick and the Saffron farm. It was fascinating to hear all about the saffron and the garden was a real bonus. A chef and a botanist are obviously a great mixture. Thank you Rose, Jill, Maryann and Chris L for all the planning, treats and Norma for the quiz. There will be a full report on the trip inside but I just want to say I was surprised at all the lovely shops in Roxburgh - the tea shop, art gallery, organic shop and of course the cafe where the tomato, feta, balsamic and basil flan was mouth-watering!



This month we are celebrating Herb Awareness month and Jan and team are going to go into each of the herbs which are sacred herbs for health, sorrel, rosemary, red matipou and ginger which we did in January.

We had our tussie mussie workshop in March with 23 people and a tribute to Olive Dunn for our contribution to Herb Awareness month. It was amazing for those attending to go away with their own tussie mussie at the end.

Remember to collect and dry herbs for our workshop. Parsley, thyme and bay leaves are the most common ingredients for bouquet garni. We are making salts as well at our winter workshop.

Maggie will be editing the newsletter in May and June so please send items to her at email: southlandherbsoc@gmail.com by **10 May and 10 June.**

Julianne

APRIL MEETING REPORT

TRIP TO ETTRICK

WYNYARD ESTATE SAFFRON

Saturday 25 March had finally arrived and after an early start, we boarded the bus en route for the Teviot Valley. After an entertaining ride on the bus we arrived at our first destination at The Wynyard Estate Saffron near Ettrick.

We were greeted by Wendy who is one inspirational, passionate and enthusiastic lady! She explained about their lifestyle and the different stages in the growth cycle of the saffron called *Crocus Sativus* which is a corm. Below are some of the things we learnt.

- *It takes 125.000 —> 150.000 threads = 1 Kg
- *There are three threads or stigmas to each flower
- * Autumn crocus with the white stigmas are poisonous
- *There are 100 Saffron farms in NZ
- * Saffron is a powerful spice and the most expensive in the world
- * It has many healthy properties and is high in anti-oxidants
- * April is usually the month when the harvesting takes place, this is a very labour intensive job as the flowers and threads are hand-picked.
- * The threads are then dried in a dehydrator, then stored to increase the colour.
- *95% of this saffron is manufactured into an eye health product.
- * The saffron is purchased by high end Restaurants in NZ and sold in specialty stores in Dunedin, Wanaka, Clyde and Farmers Markets.

I would like to thank the March team for organizing this fantastic day. It was great to catch up with other members at the different locations and learn a lot about saffron and the wool carding.

All 'n all a wonderful day.
Chris Lindsay



MONTHLY MEETING HERB OF THE NIGHT SAFFRON

Saffron is a spice derived from the dried stigmas (or threads as they are called) of the violet coloured crocus flowers of *crocus sativus*. This perennial plant (commonly known as saffron crocus or autumn crocus) is a species of the iris family Iridaceae and grows in the Middle East and parts of Europe. It's most commonly cultivated in Iran, India, Greece and Spain. Saffron is extremely easy to grow and should be planted in late summer for blooms in just weeks - best blooms come in the second year and after. It grows best in full sun in well-drained soil with moderate levels of organic content. The corms will multiply after each year and each corm will last 3 -5 years. Each flower produces 3 dark red stigmas, which are removed carefully by hand and dried. Because it can take thousands of flowers to get just one gram of saffron, it is very expensive, (\$12/g ex Wynyard Estate this season), but a little goes a long way and you often won't need more than a pinch in your recipes. The smell of saffron is unmistakably rich, pungent, musky, floral, honeyed and tenacious. The taste is delicate yet penetrating, warm, earthy, musky, bitter and lingering. The aromatic properties vary slightly depending on the saffron's place of origin.

The best way to draw out the unique flavour is to soak the threads in hot, but not boiling water, and then add the threads and the liquid to your recipe to achieve a deeper, richer flavour. Saffron is readily available at most specialty and spice markets and can be purchased as threads or in powdered form. In tourist markets around the world turmeric, marigold petals and safflower are sometimes passed off as saffron, but none have saffron's penetrating aroma so smell before you buy. It's best to buy the threads if possible, since they can be used in many different ways and are less likely to be adulterated. Threads keep their flavour for 2-3 years if stored in an airtight container in a cool dark place.

Saffron's floral flavour works well in curries, risottos, stews and even sweet buns. It is good with asparagus, carrots, chicken eggs, fish and seafood, leeks, mushrooms, rice, spinach and winter squashes. It combines well with anise, cardamom, cinnamon, fennel, ginger, nutmeg, paprika, pepper, rosebuds and rose water.

Saffron has long been renowned as a dye, whether for the robes of Buddhist monks or for paella and risotto.



HEALTH BENEFITS

- 1) It is rich in plant compounds that act as antioxidants, (such as crocin, crocetin, safranal and kaempferol) which fight inflammation by helping clean up free radicals in the body and reducing oxidative stress. It may help kill cancer cells while leaving healthy cells unharmed.
- 2) It may help treat symptoms of mild to moderate depression by changing the levels of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin in the brain.

- 3) Both eating and smelling saffron appears to help treat PMS symptoms such as irritability, headaches, cravings, pain and anxiety.
- 4) It may have aphrodisiac properties for both men and women improving libido and sexual function.
- 5) It has been shown to reduce snacking and curb your appetite which in turn may help you lose weight.
- 6) It is a strong anti-aging ingredient used in multiple cosmetics. It fights dry skin by giving hydration to the skin cells from within and this in turn makes the skin look fresher and younger turning your age backwards. It also protects against UV radiation and reduces hyperpigmentation.
- 7) It may improve eye health and slow down progression of macular degeneration.
- 8) It can enhance the quality of sleep in adults experiencing poor sleep
- 9) Other potential health benefits that have not been extensively studied are - it may reduce heart disease risk factor - it may lower blood sugar levels

The best way to consume saffron – take 5-7 threads of saffron and soak them in hot water for 10 minutes. Drink this water on an empty stomach every morning regularly for 15 days if you want to see the results.



A MESSAGE FROM WENDY

I just wanted to say thank you to all of your amazing group of ladies and gentlemen who came to visit us. We really enjoyed having you come to the Teviot Valley to explore and hope the whole day was fun and informative.

I have attached the group photo that I took, also the cake recipe and the fertilizer that is similar to what we use but in a easier to use size bottle. Plus an image of the other one that we use too, just in case someone would like to try that also.

If there are any questions please just email, I am happy to help.

Warm regards,

Wendy



TALLYHO WOOL CARDING



Wow! What an adventure. As we headed towards home, loaded with fruit and pumpkins, we stopped in to Tallyho at Raes Junction, as planned. We were warmly greeted by Barb and Stuart who regaled us with many tales even before we got inside. The group was split in two and off we went to find out more about the wool carding machines, its history and its capabilities. We were told stories of the processes, the staff and the 'runnings' of the farm. Barb's love of different fibres: wool, possum and silk, combine to make interesting projects which she is continually experimenting with.

I was very impressed by the generosity of these people and their commitment to making our world a better place. When asked about 'opening hours' Barb told us "We are never closed. If you are driving by, call in and if there is no-one around, turn the lights on in the shop, get what you need and internet bank when you get home. Oh, and turn off the lights when you leave." Such a trusting attitude.

It was all too soon to leave – we would have loved to collect the hazelnuts and heritage apples on offer, as we left, but time had run out!

If you missed out on this great place you can read more on their website: <https://tallyhowoolcarding.webs.com/> or search the Country Calendar programme on TV1 in February. Or pop in when you are passing!!

Rose



BOOK REVIEW

CHRISTINE LINDSAY

Saffron Swirls

By Ashia Ismail- Singer \$49.99

This book is a wonderful book, there is an excellent layout throughout the book and it's photos are beautiful with recipes which are easy to follow.

The author tells us that the recipes all tell a story, of which she loves sharing.

Ashia's life story is fascinating and in brief, this is how it panned out and where the love of food and recipes have come from.

Of Indian heritage, she was born and brought up in Malawi, Africa. In the 1980's, the political instability caused her family to move to Great Britain in search of a better life and education. The culture was a big shock, after growing up in Malawi and she says that she never felt that she belonged there, even though her family lived in the country. She sensed a current of racism which didn't sit well with her.

After leaving school she studied Fashion and Design but later trained as a Nurse.

Ashia then travelled to the USA to work as a Nurse but things didn't go quite to plan....fast forward to 1997 when she arrived in New Zealand.

Soon after her arrival, she met a Kiwi guy and has been married ever since, living in Auckland.

In the book, the Contents are as follows.

- * Introduction
- * Summer
- * Autumn
- * Winter
- * Spring
- * Celebrations

Using spice in sweets and desserts has been used for centuries in the East, some of the common spices for this purpose are- Saffron, Cardamon, Cinnamon, Star Anise and Nutmeg.

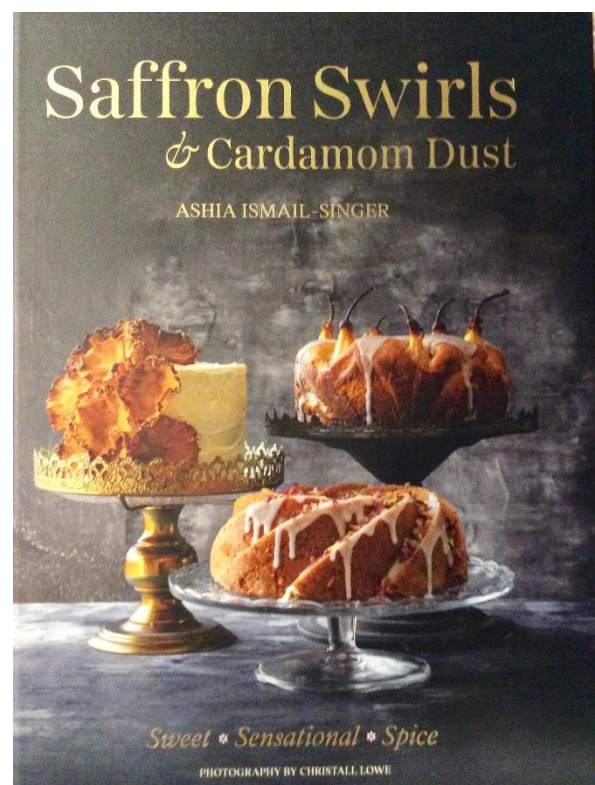
SUMMER

Using fruits which are readily available.

Eg. Apricots, peaches, cherries, berries and plums.

Mixed with spices to intensify the tarts and cakes.

My favourite recipe here is Apricot, peach, honey and saffron pie.

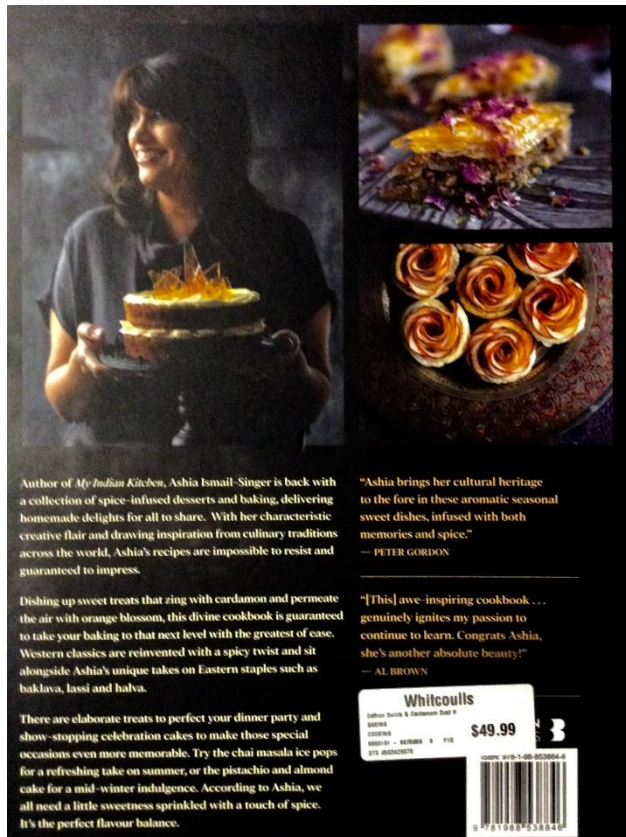


AUTUMN

Make the most of this season using tasty apples, pears and feijoas.

Hot cinnamon pears encrusted in flaky pastry fill the air with the aroma of chai spices.

The recipe in autumn would have to be Coconut, lime and saffron cakes.



Author of *My Indian Kitchen*, Ashia Ismail-Singer is back with a collection of spice-infused desserts and baking, delivering homemade delights for all to share. With her characteristic creative flair and drawing inspiration from culinary traditions across the world, Ashia's recipes are impossible to resist and guaranteed to impress.

Dishing up sweet treats that zing with cardamom and permeate the air with orange blossom, this divine cookbook is guaranteed to take your baking to that next level with the greatest of ease. Western classics are reinvented with a spicy twist and sit alongside Ashia's unique takes on Eastern staples such as baklava, lassi and halva.

There are elaborate treats to perfect your dinner party and show-stopping celebration cakes to make those special occasions even more memorable. Try the chai masala ice pops for a refreshing take on summer, or the pistachio and almond cake for a mid-winter indulgence. According to Ashia, we all need a little sweetness sprinkled with a touch of spice. It's the perfect flavour balance.

"Ashia brings her cultural heritage to the fore in these aromatic seasonal sweet dishes, infused with both memories and spice."
— PETER GORDON

"[This] awe-inspiring cookbook... genuinely ignites my passion to continue to learn. Congrats Ashia, she's another absolute beauty!"
— AL BROWN



WINTER

In this section, the author shares desserts and baked treats that will bring you joy, comfort and nostalgia, along with a touch of the exotic in the form of warming spices such as star anise, ginger and cinnamon.

My pick of the recipes for this season would be Spicy hot chocolate which sounds delicious.

SPRING

This section is dedicated to helping you discover how spices can magically transform your baking and desserts into something quite beautiful.

The use of scented rose and Cardamom madeleines, glazed lemon, poppy seed cake and pistachio and lavender eclairs.

The chosen recipe would be Berry, basil seed and lemon sorbet.

CELEBRATIONS

Aisha has chosen these recipes with the aim of providing a selection of sublime desserts and cakes that have an extra wow factor. They look amazing

The cardamom and chocolate Choux buns with saffron cream are my pick for this section.

I was impressed with this cookery book, although saffron only features in a few recipes, it is an important spice and with the other main spices, encourages one to just have a go at making some of these creations.

She concludes with gratitude and thanks to the people close to her that have made this book happen and to share her love of food and cooking.

For a classy cookbook with much meaning, this is amazing with lots of new recipes using Saffron and other spices.

This is a lovely Cookbook for personal use or for a gift.

Chris Lindsay

PROFILE JANETTE GELLATLY

It was the memories of the people I had met, the fun, places visited, teachings, kindness and generosity of many who shared their time and knowledge which drew me back to the Southland Herb Society.

Drawn by my daughter Kara (Kynn) Donaghy.

As with many, it was wanting to know more about the mystery of herbs, and at times the magic and wonder of these plants which first drew me to the society about a quarter of a century ago.

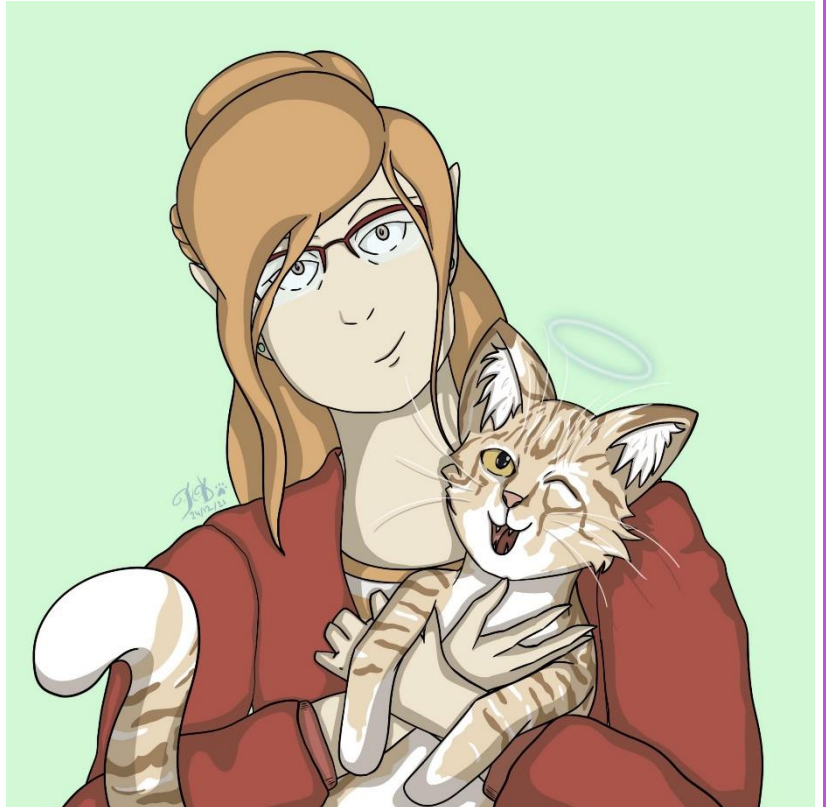
I had recently returned to Invercargill, after a decade away, and decided it was time to fellowship with others who were also of like-mind.

At that time, the society met at the James Hargest High School senior campus. People filled the upstairs at the gym and I remember it was always a friendly, joyous time.

One of the highlights I remember was a wonderful bus trip we took to Tapanui, to visit the Blue Mountains Nursery and a few other gardens in the area, as well as a converted church in the countryside on the return journey which sold homewares and things of interest.

During my time with the society, I organised the newsletter for about a year - although I call it a newsletter, it was 12 (A5) pages of information gathered, then 'cutting and pasting', before being sent to be photocopied, then distributed to members.

There are always different seasons in our lives, so when it was time to raise a family, combined with full-time work, my season at the society came to a close. Now the children are grown and live independent lives, so I have more time to do what I prefer to do, including a return to the fellowship of the society.



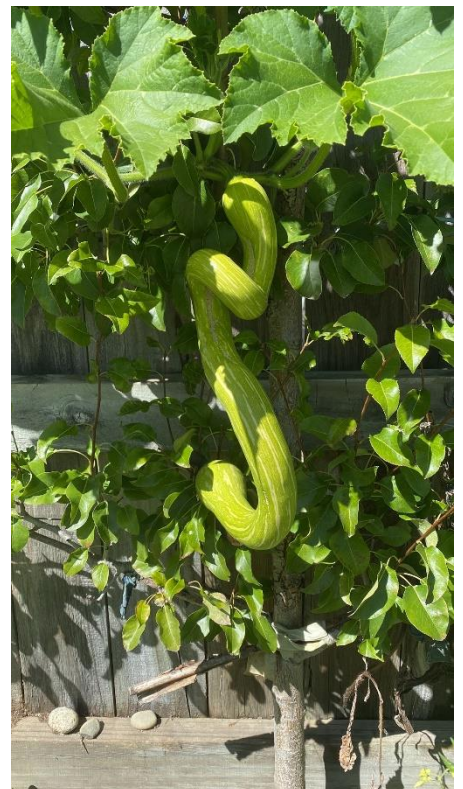
RECIPES ZUCCHINI RAMPICANTE

This year I have grown this interesting zucchini from “Kings Seeds”. My friend Chris grew it last year and I thought it would be good to have a go.

Kings list it as *“A summer and winter squash that goes by many names in Italy but commonly called a climbing zucchini, little trombone squash or an Albenga pumpkin. Popular as a young summer squash but also left to mature and used in innumerable pumpkin dishes based around pasta especially stuffing in gnocchi and ravioli. Cooked with yellow tomatoes, the dark yellow flesh makes a delicious soup. The large male flowers are perfect for stuffing or frying”*.

Mine grew up the support I provided and then along the espaliered pear tree. Most grow long and straight and can be up to a metre long. This interesting one looks like some ‘musical instrument’!!!!

As Kings Seeds says, it can be used more like a squash and has a denser texture than your standard zucchini. I am still experimenting with recipes but like to use it with pasta as well as roasted. Maggie



RECIPES

WENDY @ THE SAFFRON FARM

LEMON AND SAFFRON DRIZZLE CAKE

For the cake:

- ½ cup plain yogurt or Greek yogurt
- 8-10 threads of Wynyard Estate Saffron

(Prepare these first two ingredients together the day before and refrigerate)

- 1 cup castor sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

- ½ teaspoon salt
- grated lemon zest *from 1 medium-size lemon (if using)*
- ½ cup sunflower *grape seed or canola oil*

You can also remove the lemon and use instead:

Grated apple or grated pear in the mix (I use 2 med)

Or place plums or nectarines or peaches halved on the top of the mix and bake. Delicious!

For the glaze:

- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 more Saffron threads, lightly crushed
- ¾ cup of powdered sugar

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to (175°C). (My oven runs hot and 150C seems to work best) Spray an 8-inch round cake pan with baking spray, rub inside surface of pan with a paper towel to cover evenly with the spray. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper and spray parchment paper lightly. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine the Saffron yoghurt mix, sugar, and eggs – stir with a whisk until well blended.
3. Add the flour, baking powder, salt, and zest, mixing to just combine – I sift mine in.
4. Add the oil and mix in. Do not worry, at first it will seem to separate, but keep stirring till smooth.
5. Pour the mix into prepared pan.
6. Bake for 30-40 minutes or until the cake feels springy to the touch and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean (every oven is different, so check with the toothpick test rather than the time). Be careful not to overbake though.
7. Cool cake on a wire rack for 10 minutes; then turn it out of the pan onto the rack.
8. Combine the lemon juice and powdered sugar in a small bowl and stir until smooth. With a pastry brush, gently pat the glaze all over the cake. Just keep going over the cake till the glaze is gone. Allow cake to cool completely. Sprinkle with powdered sugar if desired and serve.



This cake keeps very well and makes an excellent dessert and muffins also.

MORE RECIPES

SAFFRON CREAM SAUCE:- Norma

2 tablespoons butter

1 shallot finely diced

½ cup dry white wine

500ml cream

2 pinches saffron threads

1-2 tablespoons olive oil

A small pinch cayenne pepper

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Serve the sauce with pan-fried fish on top, garnished with lemon wedges and herbs.

This recipe is from the book “A Table at Tangleby” by Sue Heazlewood.

TRUFFLES:- Martha

2 pkts Chocolate Wheaten biscuits

1 pkt of Licorice Allsorts

1 tin of condensed milk.

Crush the biscuits and the allsorts (I had trouble using my whizz for this so just cut them up small).

Pour over the condensed milk and mix. Roll into balls and then in coconut. Refrigerate in a covered container so they can't be seen and last longer!!!



BIRDSEED BAR:- Jill W

½ cup nuts, oat bran and sesame seeds.

1 cup rolled oats, coconut and sunflower seeds.

Brown in a pan in the oven. Watch closely and stir occasionally.

Add 1 cup sultanas or dried fruit.

In a pot: 100g butter, ¼ cup honey and ½ brown sugar heat gently for 5 minutes.

Pour this liquid into the dry ingredients and mix.

Press into a tin and cool.

Cut and enjoy a healthy snack!



HANDY HINTS

For those who bought pumpkins at Roxburgh and want to store them for a while it would be wise to rub the stem of the pumpkin with Vaseline which should cut off any air getting in via the stem and thereby causing rot to get established.

Avis

Bread tags, Spectacles and hearing aides,
Wine & spirit tops & tear tabs & beer tops
and foreign currency.
Please pass these onto Norma.

FROM THE HERB SOCIETY LIBRARY

A big thank you to those members who have donated/gifted books to our Herb Society Library. The cupboard is now bursting at the seams. We would love members to get borrowing and enjoy these great books. Lois and Jude



COMING UP

WORKING BEE

The Blind and Low Vision Centre
Fragrant Garden Invercargill
Saturday 22nd April 10 am
Please come and help
Julianne

APRIL MEETING

27 April 2023
The Blind and Low Vision Centre
Invercargill @ 7pm.
HFNZ Herb Awareness Month
Team: Jan, Jude, Diane Maggie, Jenne.

WINTER WORKSHOPS

For our workshop in *July* we would appreciate members who grow herbs to start gathering and drying these.
Along with this, please keep/collect any chipped, cracked or broken, nicely patterned china to bring along.
This will be used for mosaic project.
Many thanks
Christine

*Subs are due by the end of November
each year.*

\$35 single or \$50 family

Payment by direct banking
03 1746 0002322 00

Please include your name as the
reference.
or with cash to Gillian Knarston

HERB EMBROIDERY GROUP

Annette McDonald's
90 Taiepa Road
Otatara
Wednesday 26th April

Lorraine Ker's
97 Joseph Street
Invercargill
Wednesday 24th May



President: Julianne Watson, Ph: 03 2358020

Email: julianne.watson50@gmail.com

Secretary: Jane Jones, Ph: 0272459656

Email: hobbiton@kinect.co.nz

Treasurer: Gillian Knarston, Ph 0277276118

Email: gillianknarston@hotmail.com

Editor: Rose Buxton, Ph: 02102387312

Email: roseannebuxton@gmail.com

Postal Address: c/-1 Flora Road West, Makarewa, RD6, Invercargill 9876

Email: southlandherbsoc@gmail.com

Contributions for inclusion in the newsletter, need to be with the editor by the 10th of the month. Please send your May and June contributions to Maggie via the Herb Society email: southlandherbsoc@gmail.com
Thank you for your co-operation with this.



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