



## Southland Herb Society's *Herbal Harvest*

### This Month

Thursday 29 April  
7pm

Workshops: crafts for the  
Spring Festival

See notice board on page 15  
for further details



*Our three life members cutting the 40th anniversary cake.*

### This Month's Highlights

- **President's report**
- **40th Anniversary celebrations**
- **Our history**
- **Herb of the Night - lichen**
- **Stella, Stanley and Monty**
- **Oatmilk**

### Quote for the month

**Four things you can't get back:**

The stone after it's thrown

The word after it's said

The occasion after its missed

The time after it's gone.

*A message from your editor*

*What a wonderful event was had on the 13th March. My only regret is that I wasn't there to be part of it. Reading this newsletter will certainly give those who weren't able to attend a good feel for all that happened. There is an excellent photo gallery and a detailed report about what our guest speaker Jane Wrigglesworth spoke on.*

*Our history makes interesting reading and I have reprinted the talk Adair gave to us at our 30th anniversary. It doesn't seem that long ago and before we know it we will be like Auckland celebrating 50 years!*

*This month we have a wonderful display at the Invercargill Public Library, which we encourage you all to have a look at. There are photos and an article about this on page 10.*

*Lichen, one of the four HFNZ Herb of the Month herbs is profiled on pages 11/12 as it is the only herb that hasn't a space in our own programme this year.*

*The final two articles I have put together. The first is about my amazing harvest of fruit in Clyde this year. I could have also mentioned the huge grape harvest we have had. One vine (Albany Surprise I think) has produced, I estimated, around 40kg. A lot of friends and family have benefited.*

*And lastly there is an article about oatmilk on page 14.*

*The notice board has several important notices that need your attention too.*

*Happy reading*

*Yours in herbs*

**Maggie**

## President's Report

Hello Everyone

Well it has been a busy and productive month for Herb Society! We have had our 40th anniversary, the horticultural workshop, a clean up of the cupboard at the Blind Centre, the display at the library and a meeting with the Parks and Reserves so I will talk about each in order.

Firstly it was wonderful to see current and previous members at our dinner and it was a special night thanks to everyone's help. Thank you to the group that came and helped set up the hall, contributed tussie mussies, spoke on the night, took photos, helped clean up, contacted members, paid the bills, our life members, to Adair and Geoff for their garden visit and to Christine for her organisation and looking after Jane Wrigglesworth so well. I thought it was a great night. Our hospitality was returned when Jane and I were on the same flight to Auckland and she took me to Devonport on her way home from the airport. Jane loved her time here.

Jane Jones and I ran a workshop for the Horticultural Society on herbs concentrating on the Herb Awareness herbs of wine berry, lichen, pennyroyal mint and parsley. We also talked about heartsease and bergamot and the herbs Beatrix Potter used in her stories. Lorraine was there and helped us with all the props. Thanks for the lilac for the garden too.



Jude, Jackie and I cleaned out the cupboard at the Blind Centre. It was a big job and only half finished as the other cupboard and boxes need sorting too! We have kept one copy of Dittany and Herb News for reference and materials for the festival. Thank you to this team.

The display at the library has been set up and can be viewed at the car park entrance to the library from the 12 April to the 26th. Thanks to The four J's, Jane, Jude, Jackie and Julianne.

I met with Leigh and Heather from Parks and Reserves about the Blind Centre garden. There is a lot of work to do before the festival. Have any of you got any old smelly roses you know the name of? Most of the herbs and plants in the beds will have to be removed as they have multiplied to the extent it is a thick mat. The shrubs and trees can mostly be saved. The team from Parks and Reserves have cut everything back as a start but we need to help out when asked.

Our next meeting on the 29th April is our workshop and it will be fun to start making things for the festival. Keep your coloured egg cartons pink or blue look great! We are having four groups Roses, Rabbits, Candles and Potpourri.

Enjoy the autumn colours, the neurones and chrysanthemum coming out along with spring flowers of rhododendrons, jonquils and hellebores!

Julianne

40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Celebrations*Reported by Jane Jones*

The Saturday, 13th March 2021 dawned bright and sunny, and the day proceeded to become very hot. Several Southland Herb Society members began to scurry around their gardens, gathering herbs, flowers and leaves to place into tussie mussie bunches; those growing bright hydrangeas cut long branches.



At mid-day these members were joined by others at The Cabbage Tree Restaurant, Otatara to decorate the room where later our 40th Anniversary Dinner would be held. After an hour or so, large round tables sporting black cloths looked resplendent with each one holding several vases of tussie mussie, seed lights and large individual place mates that had been compiled by Betty Snell's husband, showing photos of some preceding 10 year events (see page 9). The hydrangeas decorated tables around the walls and at the bar; Lyn displayed some of her great herb paintings.



By 6.00pm the restaurant was crowded with 45 present and past members, chatting and enjoying a pre-dinner drink. Julianne welcomed us all to the celebration, several toasts were made and a grace given before we tucked into our buffet meal. Jane Wrigglesworth then made her very informative presentation, highlighting the use of herbs to help sleep.



When Jane was finished our three Life Members, Adair, Betty and Christine cut a birthday cake, resplendent in candles; we chatted happily over our dessert, and were all very loath to be told a little later it was time to leave!!

A great celebration! Thank you Christine for your stoic effort in organising this very memorable event; to Jane W and Julianne. Also, to all members past and present for continuing to support and enjoy the Society, making it the successful group it is today.



**Happy 40th Southland Herb Society.**



40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Speaker  
*Presented by Rose Buxton*

Our guest speaker, Jane Wigglesworth, shared her knowledge of the most helpful herbs we can grow and use. After experiencing sleepless nights, herself, she began to investigate natural ways to assist a good night's sleep. This "rang bells" for many of our members who found this information interesting.

Some of the herbs I took note of:

**Parsley** helps to reduce inflammation. Inflammation is known to inhibit sleep, so eating plenty of fibre and vegetables, including parsley, will support a better night's sleep.

Parsley also works well as a breath freshener especially after eating garlic.

**Holy Basil** is the "Queen of Herbs" and is used in many herbal medicines to help balance hormones. It is also said to aid sleep.

**Gotu Kola** supports a broad range of ailments but is best known for its ability to improve memory and cognitive functioning.

**Californian poppy** is used to promote relaxation.

**Valerian** may help improve sleep, promote relaxation and reduce anxiety and also believed to support this.

**The Mint family** is understood to have calming benefits.

Jane passed around a cutting of **Lemon Myrtle** which as well as having a beautiful fragrance, it also makes a delicious tea. I'm not sure whether this will grow well in Southland.

While reading other articles in writing this, I notice there are multiple benefits when using these herbs but caution is recommended when using all herbs.

Jane's inspiring talk has given me the impetus to find out more about these herbs and know how they can be more effective in supporting my health.

At the end of her talk, Jane was happy to open the floor to questions of which there were many. If you have further questions and would like more information, Jane is happy to be contacted. She has a blog called "[Sweet Living](http://www.sweetlivingmagazine.co.nz)" with more information: [www.sweetlivingmagazine.co.nz](http://www.sweetlivingmagazine.co.nz)



40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Photo Gallery







## History of the Southland Herb Society

The Southland Herb Society started on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1981 with a meeting of 25 interested people some of whom are still members today. The purpose remains the same to educate the members and community on how to use herbs. Even then there was a display of herbal books, pot pourri, plants and items in theme arranged by Olive Dunn and Alan Mc Kinnon. Olive Dunn became the first life member fittingly in 1988 for all the workshops, talks, displays and knowledge she shared with members. She was followed by Jean young who did so much to establish the fragrant garden at the Blind Centre from 1967 with the help of Invercargill Rotary for the concrete beds.



The following article was our 2011 March Newsletter as a summary of Adair's talk to us as at our 30th Anniversary:

*"Pre-1981, Jean Young ran WEA classes about growing herbs and the idea of a Herb Society in Southland came from here. Many of her pupils came on to be first members of the Society. Already around New Zealand there were long established groups such as those in Otago, Canterbury and Auckland. In February 1981 a public meeting was called in the hope of forming a Herb Society in Southland. This first meeting was held in the Craft Centre building in Victoria Avenue, no longer there, where the Jessie Calder garden was ultimately established. There was a small but enthusiastic turn out and a decision to go ahead and formally set up the Society. Ron Mitchell took on the Interim Chairmanship, Olive Dunn the vice chairman's position, and Daphne Brown the secretary/treasurer's position.*

*Sometime later that year, probably around October/November, I took up the position as President. This would have been the inaugural annual meeting I would think. The membership of the Society grew quickly. Meetings took on the pattern of being a monthly event as has continued today. Each meeting had a Herb of the Night, a main speaker, question/chat time, and a sales table. We had a newsletter from the start and later a competition to name it resulting in the "Herbal Harvest" name that still stands. We busied ourselves with workshops, bus trips, garden visits etc to compliment what we did at each meeting. Great friendships and associations were formed and still exist today.*

*Early on, a decision to begin a library was decided and this started with members sharing their own books. However funds began to build up and we were able to buy books. We also exchanged newsletters with other New Zealand and overseas Herb Societies. We invited speakers from outside the province to come, notably, Bunny Rathbone from Dunedin, Gillian Painter from Auckland and Gillian Polson from Christchurch and these meetings were always well attended. However our own members also became skilled in speaking to the meetings and the learning we all did together was amazing. These speaking skills were soon being called upon from other community groups and we found ourselves in high demand. Herbs were the "new kid on the block".*



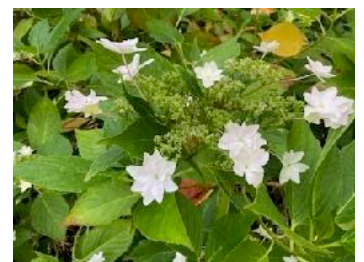
*Olive Dunn was the driving force in Southland. Her talent with flowers and crafts was a wonderful inspiration and her willingness to share was a true gift to the Southland members. She was also responsible for editing two editions of Dittany and many of the Southland members contributed to these.*

*Through initiatives such as the establishment of the Scented Garden at the Blind Centre, the Herb Festivals that drew hundreds of people to see them, the reporting of the huge meeting turnouts and lavish monthly programmes, membership peaked at nearly 400. This was unsustainable really and almost caused the Society to implode on occasions because of a few doing the work for many. However the spinoff was that Southland rapidly became a bit of a flagship of herbal innovation and by 1986 we were seen as the Society that could best host and lead the development of a National Herb Society. This came about in February of that year and the New Zealand Herb Federation was formed with a Southland lead executive (Adair Genge, Marilyn Pagan, Bev McDowell) to take it through its first two years.*

*Southland Herb Society has established a prominent place in its community and long may that continue.*

### A visit to Marshwood Gardens *Reported by Julianne Watson*

A small group of us accompanied Christine and Jane Wigglesworth to Adair and Geoff Genge's Marshwood garden. We had a wonderful tour that lasted three hours where we learned about their national collections of salvias and rhododendrons. We also were amazed by the hydrangeas especially the dark maroon one and the lacy ones. There were so many plants we hadn't seen before. The majority of their orders are online these days and Geoff said COVID was busy as people had time for their gardens.





*The placemats for the anniversary table settings.  
Created by Bill Snell*



## Library display for Herb Awareness Month *by Jane Jones*

Julianne, Jude, Jackie and I assembled our display at the Invercargill City Library on 12 April. (Southland is a month behind because we were unable to book the library display till this week!)

The display looks tremendous. Again well done to Julianne, but also the other two. The aim is to advertise the Society, but also to promote the four herbs in this year's Herb Awareness Month: Parsley, Lichen, Penny Royal and Makomako.

We included Betty's Potpourri, which smells amazing, and some of Christine's lovely embroidery, along with books, tea tray, plants and plant material, ie herbs and their flowers, some herb products.

This is on display until 27th April and is a must see for everyone. The display area is at the back of the ground floor, as you come in from that terribly dark, dingy car park off Leven Street..





**Herb of the Month: Lichen Usnea barbata & other species***Courtesy of the HFNZ Herb Awareness data sheet (one from of this year's four herbs)*

**Lichen of the Usnea species**, belong to the Parmeliaceae family and they grow all over the world. The most commonly known, as a medicinal herb is Usnea barbata, which is indigenous to the northern hemisphere; there are though, about 600 other related species indigenous to other places, which grow world-wide.

Lichens are a symbiosis; of fungus and algae and Usnea generally grow on the bark of trees, often dead trees, resembling wispy grey-green hair, hence its common names, which include; old man's beard, woman's long hair, beard lichen, trees' dandruff, bear's beard, beard moss, oak moss and tree moss; sometimes called Spanish moss, but that is another family; Tillandsia usneoides. Song Luo is the Chinese common name for Usnea longissima. (Usnea: Melissa Hutchison)



Usnea barbata is a soft greyish green, other species are similar. Identification is confirmed if there is an 'internal cord' or cortex, running from the attachment point, down into the strands; when wet, it stretches like elastic. There are other lichens which look similar; this is the 'Usnea key signature,' as with chickweed (Stellaria media). They look the pretty much the same right through the year (unlike many other lichens), apart from the orange hue in summer to autumn – this indicates higher levels of usnic acid, making it an ideal time to harvest it.

**Cultivation:** This lichen grows where it likes! The spores land on tree branches and if it is a 'suitable environment,' it will grow, attached to tree branches, though, it is slow growing. Usually they grow hanging down, hence the name 'old man's beard' etc (there are many differing lichens and mosses called this name though). The more conducive the climate the better and longer they grow; from 2-3 cm up to 20 cm in ideal environments. Some of the trees Usnea prefers to grow in are; fruit trees (if not sprayed), oaks, pines, Douglas fir and other forest trees. Lichens are parasitic (they live off the host tree); this can be detrimental to the host. Air pollution is its enemy; Usnea species are particularly sensitive to chemicals, especially to sulphur dioxide.

**Harvesting:** If harvesting living Usnea, it is advised to 'snip off' the thallus (growing parts) and leave some, to regrow, rather than tearing off the whole plant. Fallen branches with Usnea on can often be found, after windy weather, harvest from these.

**Constituents:** Polysaccharides, anthraquinones, a wide range of amino acids, mucilage, and carotene, vitamins; including high levels of Vitamin C. Acids, including usnic acid, fatty acids.

**Therapeutic actions:** Anti-fungal, antibiotic, anti-bacterial (gram+), inhibitor of biofilm formation, antiviral, antiseptic, mucous membrane tonic, antiinflammatory, antioxidant, expectorant, demulcent, wound healer, laxative, digestive stimulant, immunostimulant, and immune system tonic. Analgesic, antiparasitic, antiprotozoal, antineoplastic, anti-proliferative, antimitotic and antipyretic. As a bonus, for treating *Helicobacter pylori*, *Usnea* potentiates the drug clarithromycin's function.

**Part/s Used:** The aerial parts. Harvest at any time of the year though in autumn are the highest levels of Usnic acid, which is a major therapeutic constituent.

**Medicinal uses:** For internal and external treatments; a very useful herb for treating respiratory (upper and lower) and urinary tract infections, colds and flu's and respiratory infections including tuberculosis (TB), bacterial infections (internal and external) e.g. impetigo, ringworm, athlete's foot and ulcerations, acne, cellulitis, conjunctivitis, mastitis, sore and strep throats, sinus infections. Digestive problems; gastric ulcers, diarrhoea, dysentery, 'digestive weakness/atony.' Fungal infections, including candida, tinea. For trichomonas, SLE, also, to assist healing for burns and after plastic surgery. It can be used a dressing for wounds if no sterile dressings are available. Parasite and protozoal infestations, even has been effective for treating infection in fish raised in ponds or aquariums. The German Commission E has approved *Usnea* for "mild inflammation of the oral pharyngeal mucosa". In 'Hager's Handbook, a German reference for medicinal plants, *Usnea* is recorded as being an effective treatment for mucous membrane conditions and gastric dysfunctions, including stomach weakness, diarrhoea, dysentery, and haemorrhage.

**Dosage:** Infusions or decoctions. Tincture up to 70 mls per week. For vaginal infections, use as a douche.

**Other Uses:** *Usnea* species have long been used for dyeing; depending on the mordant/s used, the colours which can be obtained include; tan, yellow, orange, blue, green or purple. In the cosmetic industry, *Usnea barbata* has been used for following uses; deodorant, preservative and both anti-fungal and antimicrobial properties



To see a full copy of this data sheet <https://herbs.org.nz/news-events/events/herb-awareness-month-2021/>



## A beautiful harvest from Stella, Stanley and Monty

*by Maggie Elford*



**Stella** was first. This year Stephen made an excellent job of covering the tree in early November - in time to beat the birds. The crop looked good but we underestimated just how good. Stephen thought it would take him an hour to strip the tree before we headed away to family for Christmas. Three hours later he had most of them safely picked. A rough weigh showed we had at least 20kg of beautiful cherries. It was lovely to share them with family and friends over the festive season.



**Stanley**, my prune plum was next.

Stanley didn't perform quite as well as in previous years but still gave me enough fruit to dry in my new dehydrator. As well as suitable for drying Stanley plums are excellent as fresh fruit which I love to eat straight from the tree. The trick is to leave them as long as you can just before they drop to the ground and before the birds or wasps get them.



**Monty Surprise** out performed all the other trees we have with what I estimated was 70 kg of fruit. The largest apple weighing in at 514g. Unfortunately much of the fruit fell to the ground and was infested with codlin moth despite our best efforts to try and beat it. That fruit went straight to the red rubbish bin and went nowhere near the compost. There were however still plenty to use!! Next season it will be all out war against it. The first step is practising good hygiene and all fallen apples have been collected and disposed of. There are many home remedies of which I have tried but will try again. We also had a spraying regime using Organic Bio Control but the timing is critical and we must have missed the window. If anyone has a tried and true remedy I'd love to hear from you.



## Oatmilk

I was browsing through some of my saved files (to be used for fillers when I have a spare page) and I came across this article. I had gone looking for it some time ago, as with all this interest in oatmilk I had this memory of my grandfather having a drink made from oatmeal. I remember it being made to be taken out into the paddock during harvests. I never had a recipe and this came up in a google search. Maybe when you are looking for an alternative for dairy, oatmilk might be a good alternative to some of the other non dairy products we have (I am not sure they are all that sustainable or good for you) and maybe a good choice especially with the oatmilk factory being built at Makawera: a locally sourced and hopefully ethical choice for us. *(Editor)*

The following is Dr Parker's recipe for making an oatmeal drink :—"The proportions are a  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb of oatmeal to two or three quarts of water, according to the heat of the day and the work and thirst; it should be well boiled, and then 1oz or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz of brown sugar added. If you find it thicker than you like, add three quarts of water. Before drinking it, shake up the oatmeal well through the liquid. In summer, drink this cold; in winter, hot. You will

find it not only quenches thirst, but will give you more strength and endurance than any other drink. If you cannot boil it you can take a little oatmeal, mix with cold water and sugar, but this is not so good; always boil it if you can. If at any time you have to make a very long day, as in harvest, and cannot stop for meals, increase the oatmeal to  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb, or even  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb, and the water to 3 quarts if you are likely to be very thirsty. If you cannot get oatmeal, wheat flour will do, but no so well."



# Message Board

**Thursday 29 April, 7pm  
Blind Centre Queens Drive**

## **April - Workshop: crafts for the festival**

### *The workshops are:*

**Betty** putting together her PotPourri.

**Christine** completing felted and embroidered small animals.

**Rosemary** making roses from egg cartons;

**Jane** decorating candles with hessian and dried herbs. She has 50 candles!!

### *What to bring:*

Coloured egg cartons and some dried flowers  
Rosemary asks that some of you also bring a glue gun please.

a pair of scissors, perhaps some needles for Christine and your reading glasses!!

Plus enthusiasm. It's also a time for a catch up with those you have not seen for some weeks!!

**Herb of the night** - Wineberry/Makomako

**Team:** Jane (ph 027 245 9656) Adair, Annette, Betty.

### **Footbalm**

Please let Christine know if you would like to order Jane Wigglesworth's footbalm.

Jane will make up the order and send it down for Christine to distribute.

### **\$35 single or \$50 family**

Payment by direct banking

03 1746 0002322 00

Please include your name as the reference.

*(Cheques no longer accepted by the bank)*

or with cash to Gillian Knarston

### **Notes from the 'Festival of Spring' Committee**

- Start potting up herbs and plants now
- Please save green square plant pots
- When you are going through your cupboards or jewellery box think of our bric a brac stall at the festival. Bring these to the April or May meeting and give to Jane.
- Bring items for pot pourri you have been drying for the 29th April meeting.

### **Looking ahead in 2021**

May - Antiques Road Show with Nicol Macfarlane  
Herb of the Night - Tea

### ***Next Committee Meetings***

*Monday 3rd May, 5.00pm followed by  
a Festival Committee meeting.  
Julianne's place, Lornville.*

### ***Herb Embroidery Group***

Wednesday 28th April

**Hostess:** Christine Whitaker  
182 Ritchie Street

10.30 am onwards  
Bring food for a shared lunch.

Contact Christine for further details phone 2174563



**The Southland Herb Society** accepts no liability for any ill effects resulting in the use of information printed in this newsletter. Every effort has been made to ensure that all details are accurate. If in doubt consult a qualified herbal practitioner. Opinions and views expressed in any article are not necessarily those of the editor or the committee.

**From the archives: The fragrant gardens February 2011**



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