



# CHAMOMILE June 2013

## Notice Board

### June

**Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup>** 12.30 for 1p.m. Mid Winter Luncheon at Te Whiti Homestead, 523 Te Whiti Road, Masterton. Nibbles will be at 12.30 and lunch at 1 p.m.

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup>** 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.

**Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup>** 11.30 a.m. visit Mt Holdsworth to join Di Batchelor on a fungi search. Bring your own lunch and sturdy shoes.

### July

**Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup>** 2 p.m. Visit Martinborough Manor Country Retreat, 29 Cromarty Drive, Martinborough, the makers of handcrafted jams, preserves. Cost for adults \$15 for a farm tour, afternoon tea and tastings – takes about 1 and ¼ hours. If you do not want to do tour, will cost \$13.50 for tea and tastings.

**Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup>** 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.

### August

**Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup>** 1.30 p.m. Visit Fantail Grove, 179 Bidwills Cutting Road. (old Moroa Road) Greytown. This is an owner operated growing business, producing olives, olive oil, hazelnuts, table grapes and horseradish. There will be tastings and a tour. Tastings \$2 per adult, complimentary with any purchase. Tour \$5 per adult also complimentary with any purchase. **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup>** 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.



### **Our New Chairperson (Lyn Tomlinson was asked to talk to us, at our Tuesday meeting in April, about her background.)**

"In my early years I trained as a Primary School Teacher and taught at several schools. As often happened in those days I also tried my hand at other things and trained as a Weather Observer at the Meteorological Office. In this job I was based at Wellington Airport where on the day of the Wahine Storm all the weather recording instruments were blown away – and never found again.

I was a Reading Recovery Teacher for many years before I also became a Special Needs Teacher and worked in both these roles in the Newlands and Porirua areas.

In 1995 I went into retail and ran gift shops in Paraparaumu, Wellington City and Tawa for seven years. This led on to a thriving business with my husband, selling animal models, jewellery and other items at cat, dog and general shows around the North Island. Many of our lines we imported ourselves to directly match what our customers were looking for.

I have always been interested in herbs but they became more important to me when I had a health scare nine years ago. I came out in hives/spots and had a huge weight gain. After several visits to the doctor and a specialist and being told by them that my condition was 'not incompatible with insect bites' I went, in desperation, to a Pharmacy Herbalist who gave me a diagnosis of an underactive thyroid – he was right. He put me on a herbal remedy and the problem was corrected quite quickly.

About eight years ago I noticed an advertisement in a newspaper for an open day at 'Cottage Hill Herbs' run by Donna Lee, a Medical Herbalist at Akatarawa. I joined Donna's Herb Club and it has been really good for me. Donna has given talks on many things about herbs. Attending these taught me how to make tinctures and herb capsules and creams, and most importantly, how to choose and grow herbs that I would find useful. It became clear to me that one's knowledge of herbs is never complete and we are all involved in ongoing discussion, swapping of ideas, and learning about herbs.

Soon after arriving in the Wairarapa I saw an advert for the Wairarapa Herb Society and after attending one meeting it was clear to me that you could not wish for a more friendly, co-operative group. And so I am here and hope to assist the Society to further its aims and maintain its character."



## Herb of the Month (April: Lyn Tomlinson) Cayenne

Cayenne is a common kitchen spice in its dried form (not cooked). It is a wonder herb with a huge range of uses. Let's look at some of the things Cayenne can help with.

### Bleeding

To stop external bleeding simply sprinkle a light coating into and over cuts and wounds.

### Heart Attack / Emergency Situations

Obviously one must seek medical help in these cases, but until help arrives a pinch of Cayenne on the tongue is said to be most effective for both humans and animals.

### Blood Builder

Cayenne is a blood building tonic herb, helpful in improving iron levels and blood circulation. It is one of the main ingredients in 'Circulo' (supplied by Pneuma Health) for the support of a healthy heart and circulatory system. It gently dilates capillaries and increases body warmth and blood flow. This is good for varicose veins, haemorrhoids and other poor circulation conditions. Enhancing circulation increases the blood's ability to flush through joints, organs and other body tissue.

### Colds and Flu

Cayenne can clear stuffed up sinuses and head colds by flushing toxins out of the system.

### Gum Problems

A small amount on your toothbrush stimulates circulation to oral tissues, especially the gums. Used regularly it can help prevent bacterial build-up. Cayenne tightens loose teeth and dramatically improves gum health when used daily. Your mouth will tingle and sting when you first try this but there is improvement in mouth health with Cayenne.

### Throat

Cayenne is a very potent throat gargle by clearing toxic mucus from throat tissues, and increases circulation to the area, which helps flush out infection. Using 1/8 tsp of Cayenne in 1/2 cup of pineapple juice makes a good mixture for a throat gargle.

### Heart Tonic

Cayenne helps strengthen and tone the heart, increases stamina and improves circulation.

### To Use Cayenne

Start with a pinch in fruit juice or water. Gradually increase dosage to 1/2 tsp in a glass of juice or water 2 to 3 times daily. Tolerance increases slowly. One may also use Cayenne capsules - starting with 1/2 a capsule and slowly increasing to 2 capsules twice daily. I make a tincture of Cayenne and take a tsp a day plus one capsule at lunch with food.

### Note

Do not take with blood thinning medications. Check with your health care professional for other prescription medication interactions.

## Herb of the Month (May: Christine Paul) Allium



The term "allium foods" refers to the family of vegetables of the genus Allium, which includes garlic, onions, shallots and leeks, among others. Garlic is the superstar in this category, and has been shown to have antibiotic, antifungal, and anti-inflammatory properties, in addition to antioxidants, which may help prevent cancer. Garlic is well known for its potential benefits to heart health, especially lowering high levels of lipids in the blood. Some evidence indicates that garlic may relax smooth muscles and dilate blood vessels.

Most of the vegetables in the allium family have similar properties, but in varying degrees. All are considered helpful in lowering "bad" cholesterol, preventing atherosclerosis, lowering blood pressure, and reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke. There may even be a link between consumption of allium and a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease. While any consumption of allium foods may be beneficial, the best way to get the nutrients they have to offer is to eat them raw. Caution may be needed when consuming some of the allium family, especially garlic. Bad breath can be a problem. If you suffer from irritable bowel syndrome garlic could set this off.

For onions, sow seed or plant seedlings 8cm apart. Water seeds in and mulch with compost to conserve soil moisture. Plant a 6-9m long row of the long-keeping types, about half that for the others. You can plant the short-keeping types in batches. Plant long-keeping onions from autumn to midwinter. Start spring onions and those not meant for storage any time except where frosts are sharp. Keep the soil moist and feed plants every few months with low-nitrogen complete plant food. Stop watering long-keeping onions as they approach maturity.

Garlic must be propagated from the cloves. Plant in autumn or spring, 8cm deep and 15cm apart. Keep the soil moist and feed plants every few months with low-nitrogen complete plant food. The bulbs are ready to harvest about six to eight months after planting when the top growth becomes dry and falls over. Pull out mature bulbs and leave to dry in a cool, airy place.

Leeks are usually grown from seedlings which need to be in the ground before autumn. Drop each seedling into a 15cm-deep hole so the tops just protrude. Don't fill in the holes but water well. This method helps develop the long, white stem. Make holes every 15-20 cm along a 2-4m row (stagger the plantings for a longer season). Soil must be enriched with compost and well-

rotted manure. Keep the plants evenly moist and feed every two months with a ration of complete plant food. As the stems grow, mound soil around them to keep them white.

For shallots, push individual cloves just beneath the surface, pointy end up, and about 20cm apart. Do this in late autumn or winter. The bulbs form clumps like garlic. Plant into any well-drained, reasonably fertile soil. Keep the soil moist while the plants are growing but stop watering when the plant is fully mature and the leaves are beginning to yellow.



### At our April meeting Rosa Vallance spoke on The Art of Seasoning.

There are some general guidelines to using herbs in food – mainly you want to enhance the natural flavour of foods rather than dominate them. In understanding seasoning, it is essential to know that much of the best flavour and aroma comes from aromatic oils contained within the plant and that ingredients in these oils dissipate with time (or heat). Leaf herbs have the most aromatic oil and the best flavour when fresh. In their dried, whole form, the more delicate and refined qualities in the flavour have been lost; and the dried, finely chopped or powdered forms have the least flavour of all because more surface is available from which the volatile oils can escape.

Herb seeds are generally used in their dried form but even here it is preferable to grind, powder or mash them instead of buying the ground form. A simple example of this would be peppercorns, coriander seed or cardamom seed pod. Quite a few herbs are best used fresh – the more common herbs at their best fresh include: marjoram, rosemary, tarragon, thyme and lemon verbena – but these all reconstitute quite well in some form of liquid used in your recipe. Chives, parsley, basil, coriander, mint and dill or fennel leaf can be almost grass-like when used from a dry state. Sage imparts a totally different flavour when used fresh versus dried.

On average, in a dish with 4 to 6 servings, use 1/3 powdered, 1/2 teaspoon dried coarsely chopped or 1 tablespoon fresh chopped herb. Dried herbs require less because of their more concentrated form and less delicate flavour. Use your common sense – taste and smell to judge which herbs are stronger than others and adjust these to your liking.



### Old 'Rule of Thumb'

1/4 tsp. dried, finely powdered herb = 1 tsp dried

1 tsp. loosely crumbled dried herb = 1 tsp. fresh chopped

1 tsp. dill seed = 1 flower head fresh

1 tbsp. dried onion flakes = 1 med. Sized raw onion

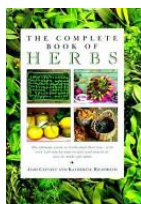
1/4 tsp. garlic pwr. (not garlic salt) = 1 clove fresh garlic

One of the most distinctive classic blends, Herbes de Provence was put together at the meeting and samples distributed to be tried as a rub on poultry, meats or fish. It can also be used to season sauces, stews and fillings for summer vegetables.

Ingredients and method as follows:

1 tbsp. whole coriander seed; 1 tsp. fennel seed; 1-1/2 tbsp. of each of dried: thyme, rosemary, basil, savoury, oreganum; 1 tbsp. powdered dry bay leaves (use an electric coffee grinder); 2 tsp dried lavender flowers. (Makes about 1/2 cup)

Using a mortar put in about 4 tbsp. coarse salt with the coriander and fennel seed and crush all coarsely; reserve. Combine remaining ingredients and crush or process briefly, just to reduce any coarse pieces (do not grind to a powder). Add coriander and fennel mix and blend well.



### Book Review (April: May Brown) *Complete Book of Herbs* by Andi Clevely and Katherine Richmond

I have had this book for many years now and it is the first place I look to identify herbs. It was printed on 1994 and reprinted in 1995.

It is set out into five sections: an introduction to herbs; growing herbs; A-Z of herbs; cooking with herbs; herbs in the home; and has a really excellent index. It has absolutely beautiful coloured photographs and is a real pleasure to leaf through.

The A-Z section is where I go first to identify a herb. You get a coloured picture and description of the herb, information on cultivation, and the parts used. Under the cooking with herbs section there is a great variety of recipes and before listing the recipe you get a little interesting information. For example:

- *Stuffed Parsleyed Onions* – “Although devised as a vegetable dish, these make a wonderful accompaniment to meat dishes or an appetizing supper dish with crusty bread and a salad”;
- *Angelica Liqueur* – “This should be drunk in tiny glasses after a large meal. Not only will it help the digestive system it tastes superb”.
- *Elderflower Sparkler* – “The flavor of elderflower is becoming popular once again. The recipe produces one of the most delicious drinks ever concocted. Many prefer it to real French champagne because of its light and refreshing taste”.
- *Tansy Skin Tonic*– “Tansy leaves smell fairly strong, but this tonic will invigorate your skin especially if you keep the bottle in the refrigerator. Splash on this herbal liquid to start the day.”

I quite often pick up this book just to look through some of the super photographs. (*A copy of this book has now been bought for our library. Ed.*)

## Stock Pot Herbs



Winter cooking is great with bay leaves and thyme, and French sorrel can be added to soups just before serving, or as the base for retro-exquisite sorrel soup. But have you considered par-cel aka Chinese celery (*Apium graveolens*)? The pencil thickness stems have a good celery flavor and pleasing crunch. Par-cel leaves don't impart bitterness when simmered in soups or stocks. Another celery is lovage. This herb has a particular affinity for chicken, imparting a nutty flavor suggestive of celery, nutmeg and fenugreek. Ever tried wild fennel? It packs a powerful punch of flavor!



### **Book Review (May: Diane Grant) *The New Zealand Herb Calendar – A Season-by-Season Guide* by Beatrice Hale and Elizabeth Hinds. First published in 1986 by Reed Methuen.**

Despite being published back in 1986 and with pencil drawings rather than the lavish illustrations often found in books about gardening today, this book is still relevant as a season-by-season guide to gardening with herbs, especially for comparative beginners - like me. In fact, in their Introduction, Beatrice Hale and Elizabeth Hinds write, "We are not writing for full-time gardeners but for enthusiasts who, like ourselves, have to share their free time among many activities" which probably describes many of us Herb Society members. This intention has been, I think, beautifully carried out.

To start with, they have adopted a more flexible definition of a season by considering hours of light and sunshine, temperature, rainfall and presence or absence of frost. In addition they note differences in climate between the northern and southern parts of NZ, and where relevant have mentioned temperature requirements or other special conditions for individual herbs in particular areas. However, they also warn that this book is a guide and that gardeners should be aware of local weather patterns and experiment for themselves with their chosen plants.

Some may find it disappointing that the authors restrict the book to culinary and aromatic herbs. But it seems it was important to them to write from their own knowledge and experience, and medicinal herbs deserved their own book.

Each seasonal section begins with 'Garden Tasks' for the season such as, in winter, tending the soil, cutting back, shelter, potting and garden planning. Then follows ways in which the herbs can be used as appropriate for the season, such as storing and drying herbs, recipes, and a checklist with additional notes for each herb on stages of growth and cultivation. Also included in the book are chapters on basic gardening techniques for herb growers including propagation methods, compost making and soil mixes, plus one, divided seasonally, on scented pelargoniums, a speciality of Elizabeth Hinds.

To finish, there are eight pages of Garden Chart with details of each herb under the headings of type (biennial, annual or perennial), habit, conditions needed, propagation and uses, then quite an extensive, if a little dated, bibliography. As a publisher, I am also delighted to report that it has an excellent index, is very well and clearly written and has a hard cover which is not always to be found on books today because of the extra cost! As for the drawings by illustrator Wendy Pilbrow - I am sure they are the work of a botanist! Every spread is liberally and beautifully illustrated with each drawing annotated with relevant information. This is a How-to book with a difference which I'm sure all would enjoy and find useful, especially beginning 'herbies'.



### ***At our June meeting, Rosa Vallance spoke about the aims and objectives of The Herb Federation of New Zealand***

Founded in 1986 to be the 'spokesperson' and provide cohesion for the various individual Herb Societies throughout New Zealand - the Herb Federation works on behalf of all those interested in any aspect of herbs and in the protection of individual rights to continue the use and manufacture of complementary medicines as seen through the period of the Therapeutics Medicine Bill with its possible changes and regulations.

#### The Aims and objectives of the Federation

- - to promote greater interest in herbs and an appreciation of the value of herbs and their safe use
- - to increase knowledge through education
- - to assist in maintaining the diversity of herb collections
- - to protect and promote the use of herbs, now and for future generations
- - to encourage accurate identification of plants and the use of botanical names

Activities they promote include Herb Awareness Week events, establishment and maintenance of herb gardens and plant collections, seed and plant exchange, workshops and booklets on specific topics, visits to interesting gardens, nurseries and garden centres, exchange of newsletters and a comprehensive and extensive library for use at minimal or no cost. Long-term aims include the possibilities of a national garden and support for recognized herbal qualifications.

A new quarterly publication of **herbnews** was first published in 2005 and it eventually replaced "Dittany - Annual Journal of New Zealand Herb Societies" first published 1979. The last publication of Dittany was in 2010. I personally regretted its demise as for thirty years it extended my knowledge of both New Zealand and European herbs through the practical experience of others.

National Executive Committee members meet periodically for discussions using Skype from the comfort of their own homes whereas up to a few years ago, there was much travelling and long distance telephoning involved, as those that volunteer their time and effort are located both in the North Island and South Island.

Membership subscription to the Herb Federation is \$35.00 for individuals or \$40.00 for a family. The Wairarapa Herb Society and other herb societies donate \$1.00 to the Herb Federation for each of their members. These membership fees help the Herb Federation to: sponsor a biennial conference which alternates between the North and South Islands; publish and distribute **herbnews**, Herb Awareness Week posters and information; and run their website. Much information and contacts can be gleaned from this site at [www.herbs.org.nz](http://www.herbs.org.nz). I urge you to have a look. Whilst looking at the website, give consideration to attending the 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference being held in Nelson starting November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013. It looks an interesting and varied programme with great food, like-minded people and fun learning in warm, sunny Nelson.



### **Saturday Visit in May to Yebo**

Members were joined by a couple of carloads of members of the Kapiti Herb Society at 'Yebo', Zelda Bruce's property in Tauherenikau, South Wairarapa. Zelda, a member of WHS, is an artist, potter and sculptor with a special interest in creating mosaic works. Huge pots, some filled with herbs, and interesting pieces of art dot the property. The afternoon began with 'high tea', Zelda bringing out lovely retro glasses, china and cutlery, with posies of flowers completing the setting. Wairarapa people supplied fancy cupcakes and sandwiches in keeping with the theme. Zelda then demonstrated the art of mosaic work. Those interested were instructed in the technique of breaking crockery with a special cutting tool. The broken pieces were then used to decorate the surround of a large mirror.

## **The Wairarapa Herb Society (*Estab. September 1982 and registered under the Charities Act No. C.C. 29074*)**

**P O Box 42 Masterton.**

**Objective:** To promote and share knowledge of herbs, their cultivation and use.

The Society can accept no liability for any ill-effects resulting from information presented in this newsletter.

**Meetings** held on the third Tuesday of the month at the Senior Citizens Hall, High Street North, Carterton (opposite Wild Oats Café).

As far as possible, Saturday meetings will be held on the 1st Saturday of each month.

### **Annual Sub:**

Individual: \$20\*

Families: \$30\*

\*\$5 reduction on subscription if paid up member of Herb Federation

### **Quarterly Newsletter**

**Executive Committee:** Lyn Tomlinson, May Brown, Agnes Jones, Gail Edwards, Val Richardson, Andra Bramwell, Christine Paul, Bill Edginton.

### **Officers**

Chairperson: Lyn Tomlinson; Secretary: Agnes Jones; Treasurer: Gail Edwards; Publicity: Andra Bramwell; News/Library: Bill Edginton.