

Chamomile



Objective

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

Charities Act No. C.C. 29074

Meetings and outings

Meetings of the Wairarapa Herb Society are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month from 1.30 – 3.00 pm at the Old Courthouse in Holloway Street, Carterton.

Outings and field trips take place on a Saturday during the warmer months of the year.

Committee members

Krysia Grant - Chairperson
Nao Hampton - Secretary
Alan Butler - Treasurer
Karen Rees - Communications
Jenny Dey - Library
Laura Hopkins

Contact

waiherbs@gmail.com

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A note from our Chairperson

What a privilege it is to take over the running of our Herb Society from Christine. Christine has guided our organisation for the best part of ten years, and she leaves me with some very big gumboots to fill! Thank you, Christine, for your tireless commitment and dedication to our Herb Society.

I've been a member of our Herb Society for more than 23 years. I'm not quite sure where all those years have gone, but I do know that during that time I've learned so much about many fascinating aspects of herbs. Together with our new committee, I look forward to ensuring we have an interesting and varied programme of speakers and visits over the coming year, covering medicinal, culinary, cultivation and craft topics, so that we can all continue learning together.

I'd also like to give a special mention to our wonderful and extensive herb library. I hadn't fully appreciated just how valuable it was until I recently completed the *Herbs and their Uses* course through the Herb Federation. It was easy to spend an hour or more simply browsing the shelves. I encourage everyone to borrow a book from our library and discover something new about herbs or herbal practices that sparks your interest.

As we settle into these cooler days, keep well - perhaps our Fire Cider remedy will help! Before long, Spring will be here, bringing the promise of fresh growth and new life in our gardens.

Krysia



2026 Committee L-R: Alan, Laura, Karen, Nao, Jenny, Krysia

Welcome to new members

A warm, herby welcome to our new members Therese and John Dennison, Bernadine Norman, Lynley Dawkins, Maurice van Liempd and Leslie Wilton.

It's great to have you as part of our herb community.

Upcoming meetings

18 August, 1.30pm

Assembling your own Herbarium/ Materia Medica with Nao Hampton.

15 September, 1.30pm

Planting by the Moon Maramataka with Anne Dodds.

20 October, 1.30pm

A session with Cindy Munn TBC.

Upcoming outings

5 September, 1.00pm

208 Morton Road, Carterton.
Garlic workshop with Anna Vallance and her father, Tom, followed by a walk through the garden.

31 October, 11.00am

Guided tour of Wellington Botanic Garden Herb Garden. \$10 per person, RSVP to waiherbs@gmail.com essential.

21 November, 1.00pm

Catalyst Fruit Wines

84006 State Highway 2, Eketāhuna
Tasting of fruit and herb wines with Sandra Timmins, and a walk through her garden.

Carpooling will be worked out closer to each out of town event.

If you have ideas for meetings or outings please send an email to us at waiherbs@gmail.com.

AGM - 20 June 2026

Report by Karen Rees

On a blustery day at the cusp of the Winter Solstice, the WHS Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Gladstone Inn.

Following protocol we reviewed the past year's mahi. Christine shared her President's report, Alan our Treasurer shared our financial performance over the previous year and our new committee was voted in.



We also celebrated our outgoing president Christine Volker, and her boundless contribution over her many years of service to our Society.

Christine has bolstered the herb society with her quiet fortitude, and deep herbal knowledge, by organising numerous speakers and places for us to visit and providing

continuous plants for sale.

Jenny Day presented Christine with a beautiful photographic artwork and a book gift voucher to much grateful genuine applause. Together we celebrated with bubbles and a tasty mid winter meal. We even had Christmas pudding!



Herbs and their uses - a certificate course offered by the Herb Federation of New Zealand

A reminder that we support our members to do individual papers of the Certificate Course. Please let us know if you are keen to do some study (waiherbs@gmail.com), choose a paper, sign up directly with the Herb Federation, and when you have successfully completed the paper let us know and we'll reimburse you. Individual papers cost \$50 (\$30 for HFNZ members).

Seed saving and potting up seedlings

While it's probably too late to be collecting seeds right now, it's a good time to pot up any seedlings that are coming up in your garden. Our annual herb sale is on 1 November; this is our annual fund raising event, so the more seeds and plants the better!



Herb garden tidy up

The Society's herb garden is located in the Community Garden at Haumanu House, behind the Police Station in Carterton. Everyone is welcome to visit and pick herbs.

Our next working bee will be advised via email.

Please bring your favourite weeding tool and something to share with a cup of herbal tea.

Marketplace

Do you have something to share, swap or sell, or are you looking to source a plant or seeds for your herb garden? Please send your request to waiherbs@gmail.com.

Seed saving

Spare seeds (labeled and dated) can be given to a Committee member who will send them on to the Herb Federation of New Zealand. The [Herb Federation](#) provides a useful summary on how to collect seed.

Almo Books discount

Support local! Herb Society members can enjoy a 10% discount at Almo Books and Cafe in Carterton.

Herbs of the month

Kawakawa - May 2026



Kawakawa or Pepper tree (*Macropiper excelsum*) has always played a significant role in the Māori spiritual and physical world, tracing the life cycle from birth to death.

Kawakawa is botanically related to the plants in the South Pacific where the kava plants, including their roots, are used as a powerful sedative.

Our New Zealand Kawakawa bush is used in many different medicinal ways, both internally and topically.

Myristicin is one of the bioactive compounds found in Kawakawa and is known to be a powerful antioxidant, reducing inflammation and relieving pain. It is a powerful healer and can be used as an antimicrobial or an insecticide!

The leaves can be used fresh or dried and are also used in culinary preparations - they have a peppery, basil like flavour.

For more information about this powerful herb refer to the Herb Federation [website](#).

Turmeric - July 2026

Turmeric, *Curcuma longa*, is a flowering plant belonging to the ginger family, Zingiberaceae. It is a native of India and Southeast Asia and likes warm, humid conditions and so we import most of our turmeric from Fiji.



Turmeric is an ancient spice herb going back to Vedic culture. It is a perennial herb growing up to a metre and all parts of the plant are edible. The roots/rhizomes are used medicinally.

Turmeric is a powerful antioxidant, anti fungal, anti-mutagenic and it is also known to cross the blood/brain barrier. Research is underway to use curcumin in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

It certainly is helpful as an immune building herb and therefore is a powerful addition to our fire cider recipe.

For a quick pick me up, a cup of golden milk or yogi tea is nice on a cold day. See recipe under [Recipes](#).

To get the best absorption results of curcumin, add a pinch of pepper and a small amount of oil or coconut milk.

Read more about turmeric on the Herb Federation [website](#).



Trading table

Our Trading Table at our monthly meetings is an opportunity to give and take (for a gold coin donation). Money raised goes towards subsidising our outings, as well as other WHS activities.

Bring along your excess fruit, vegetables, herbs and seeds, and you never know what you'll find to take home.

Membership and scholarships

Our membership currently sits at six life members and 44 members.

Two of our members and one community member are currently being supported with their study in the Herb Federation of New Zealand Certificate course in [Herbs and their uses](#).

Local publications

We aim to publish an article in the Carterton Crier and Midweek newspaper on a regular basis. If you don't receive these publications you can view current and back copies of the Carterton Crier [here](#) and for e-editions of the Midweek click [here](#).

Review of previous meetings

Kawakawa balm (pani), with Edith Rolls - 15 May 2026

Report by Christine Volker and Karen Rees, photos by Jenny Dey

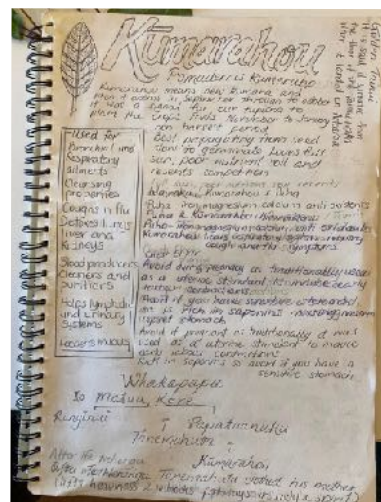
Another wonderful afternoon with the Rongoā practitioner Edith Rolls.

While the plan was to make a kawakawa balm, Edith introduced us to another powerful and highly regarded herb in te Aō Māori - Kumarahou (Pomaderris elliptica).



Edith explained that Kawakawa is not good for pregnant women, and that Kūmarahou is a safer, more gentle healing plant that was also useful for the winter season (as a healing chest rub). It is also known to be anti inflammatory, and just like Kawakawa, is good for soothing itchy skin and insect bites. Edith brought all the ingredients needed, including her own harvested beeswax complete with wings and body bits!

Under Edith's instruction we made the pani/balm.



Basic pani recipe for a 50g container

(you can soften your balm by adding more oil but you'll need a bigger container)

Ingredients

5g beeswax
45ml infused oil (in this case Kūmarahou).

Method

Gently heat the ingredients in a double boiler, (Edith brought special equipment for this but a glass bowl over a pan of simmering water will work).

Stir with a wooden stick (not plastic or aluminium) until the wax is melted and carefully fill the clean dry glass container to set. It is best to wait for the balm to harden before securing the lid.

Fire Cider Immunity Workshop with Lorraine Erith - 21 July 2026

Report by Karen Rees

Our July meeting was packed to bursting for the workshop led by Lorraine, our resident herbalist. Everyone was excited to learn about the traditional 'fire cider' remedy known for strengthening the immune system; fire cider is one of those magic drinks that you can grab when you feel a cold coming on - "it hits it hard and gives it a punch to get rid of the symptoms".

The room was filled with the sweet spicy aroma of ginger and rosemary, onion, garlic and lemon, and with the sounds of chopping and the clinking of jars, as we all prepared our mixture.

The bright colours of the chillies and turmeric, red onions and rose-hips, was like an artist's palette as we shared chopping duties and made sure we each had all the ingredients contained in our jars.

Lorraine gave an in-depth description of each plant material needed for the mixture:

- Red onion (high in sulphur and quercetin for inflammation)
- Red & Green Chilli peppers (thins mucus, vitamin C, supports immune system, brings down fever)
- Ginger (enhances blood flow, anti-viral, cleanses mucus)
- Horseradish (antioxidant, good for sinus, and congestion)
- Turmeric (can shorten sickness duration, curcumin is anti-inflammatory)
- Black pepper (helps absorption of curcumin in turmeric)
- Elderberries (antiviral, reduce infection and sickness duration, full of vitamin C)
- Rose-hips (vitamin C, bioflavonoids)
- Lemon grated rind and pith (vitamin C, bioflavonoids, fights infection)
- Garlic (fights pathogens)
- Thyme "a great cough buster", & rosemary - working together (anti microbial, antiviral, warming, stimulant, reducing fever and muscle pain).

We filled our jars a 1/4 full of these wonderful roots, herbs and berries, and topped them up with apple cider vinegar, which is an ideal menstruum (solvent) to soak up all the active compounds. Then we labelled our fire cider with the date and ingredients.

Next steps

After two weeks of shaking daily the liquid is filtered into a clean (preferably dark) glass container and it can start to be used - a good spoonful mixed with a small glass of warm water and honey to sweeten (also a natural antibacterial). Or take a straight spoonful if needed!

This magic mixture is best kept in the fridge but would be ok in a cupboard, and can last up to 6 weeks.

Due to the powerful combination of these plants we were warned to check for contraindications if we were on any medications.



Member Profiles

We have introduced a new section to the newsletter as a way of getting to know some of our members a bit better. Our first interviews are with Catherine Graydon and Karen Rees.

Catherine Graydon - Life Member

Interview by Karen Rees

What first drew you to the Wairarapa Herb Society? What year was that?

The Society was formed in September 1982 following a series of 4 lectures "Introducing Herbs" by the Community Action Programme at Purnell House in Masterton. It was much like Wairarapa REAP today. There was a lot of interest in herbs at the time and we decided to start the Society, with evening meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. I think I'm one of the last ones still alive!

What is your fondest memory from your time with the Wairarapa Herb Society?

Oh there are lots of happy memories of our outings to the Herb Federation of New Zealand conferences (HFNZ), we had lots of fun at garden visits and I'm grateful for all the friendships I've made over the years.

How has the Society changed over the years?

In 1985 the Society planted a Herb garden around the Talents cottage shop, an old colonial cottage on the corner of Bruce St. and Dixon St. Grants from local businesses and groups helped to establish the garden. It was divided into distinct areas such as medicinal herbs (sun-loving and shade-loving), culinary herbs (sun-loving and shade-loving), dyers' herbs, fragrant herbs, bee plants, herbs for teas, cosmetic herbs, pot pourri herbs, moth and insect repellants, NZ native herbs. A rosemary hedge provided a boundary onto Dixon Street.

That sounds wonderful! What happened?

That garden lasted until 2000 when the museum gallery Aratoi was built on the land. Some of the plants were moved to the sunken garden across the road. Now we have a herb garden at the Carterton community garden. I don't get to many meetings these days; I have a clash on my busy schedule!

Do you have some practical advice for beginners with herbs?

Start growing herbs you like to use, like the culinary herbs, parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, and learn about them. Then move onto the medicinal, there are crossovers. Thyme is good for colds!

Which herbs thrive best in our area or in your garden?

I started with comfrey and horseradish, but they completely took over so out they came. I loved my lemon verbena tree and would make teas with that.

What is your favourite or secret way to use a common herb?

I used to grow horehound and made cough lollies for the children when they had a sore throat. They were disgusted! They never seemed to get sick after that!

My favourite herb is garlic chives. I love to throw them in an omelette.

Why should the next generation care about preserving herbal knowledge?

There are so many advantages in nature, it is very helpful, it keeps you going, plants are very valuable, we must remember that.

If you could pass on one piece of advice?

Start simply. Plant herbs you've noticed, like lavender and rosemary, the scented plants are so giving, you can run your hand through them to experience them through your senses. They uplift you, make you feel good!



Member Profile

Karen Rees

Interview by Krysia Grant



Where did you grow up and what is your first memory of using herbs?

I grew up in Wales, at my Grandmother's house with my Dad. My grandmother had a beautiful garden with lots of flowers: roses, pansies, lavender, peonies, etc.

My first memory of using herbs is from when I was about six years old - I used to make mixtures and balms - taking lavender and rose petals and plant material from my grandmother's garden, and experimenting with my classmates! There were always queues out the door for my "medicines".

How did you come to live in Eketāhuna?

I came to New Zealand in 2000, after meeting a guy with a guitar who serenaded me with Māori songs! I didn't know New Zealand existed!

About ten years ago I was living in Pahiatua and used to walk my dog on the Cliff Walk, where I came across huge bay trees, and horipito bushes in alleyways off the main street, and even rowan trees, which I used to forage from... so I was attracted to this place. Some land came up for sale and we decided to settle here. I have an acre with my partner, Horowai, and we are slowly developing the land by building up the soil, gardens, and building our organic house!

What first drew you to the Wairarapa Herb Society? What year was that?

I saw a writeup in the Midweek - Nao was going to be running a workshop on flower printing - I already knew about the WHS and had read some of the newsletters but decided to come to the workshop in February 2024 - I joined up at the meeting.

Tell me about your garden .. what brings you most joy?

We have been building up the soil and planting as many flowers, herbs and trees as possible with the aim of bringing in the birds and insects. We started with just plovers and magpies in the paddock but now have bellbirds, tūī, kerurū, and lots of bees and insects. Watching the wildlife enjoy the garden as much as I do brings me immense joy. And then there are the colours in the garden and growing food to nourish us is a huge bonus.

Which herbs thrive best in your garden?

Calendula, mullein, motherwort, lemon balm, comfrey (German and Russian varieties) and mint - they are everywhere! French lavender does well, while English lavender not so much; heavy frosts mean that frost tender plants need a bit more care.

What is your favourite or secret way to use a common herb?

I make a comfrey and tutu leaves (foraged) balm - used for deep muscle ache, knitting torn muscles, and can also be used as a chest rub. While it can't be used all the time it does seem to provide good relief. I was given the recipe by Donna Kerridge of Titoki Education, she is a wonderful Rongoā Māori practitioner.

If you could have one thing in your garden, what would it be?

Kawakawa ... we are working on a native area where it can be protected by the trees but they're not big enough yet so it gets hit hard by the frost. It's known as the King of the herbs in Rongoā Māori. I make a condiment pepper from the dried berries, cordial with the ripe orange berries and use it in a tea (mixed with other herbs), as well as using it in my herbal healing balms.

Recipes

Golden Milk (Haldi Doodh)

A comforting Ayurvedic remedy to boost immunity. It's a great anti-inflammatory bedtime drink to aid sleep and soothe colds.

Combine the following ingredients in a saucepan and simmer on low for 5-10 minutes.

Strain to serve.

Makes one cup.



- 1 cup milk (dairy or plant-based)
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder (or 1 tsp grated fresh turmeric root)
- 1 pinch of freshly ground black pepper (for the piperine which helps curcumin absorption)
- a drop of almond oil or melted coconut oil (traditionally ghee)
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup to sweeten

Optional: 1/2 tsp grated ginger, a pinch of cinnamon, a cracked cardamom pod.

You can experiment with these ingredients to create your unique tasty decoction.

Another variation using water as the base:

- 500 ml water
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 2/3 small pieces of ginger
- 3/4 cloves
- 5/6 peppercorns or a sprinkle of ground pepper
- 1/2 tsp crushed cardamom
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp oil
- 1/2 cup of milk of your choice (oat milk, soya or coconut milk, or dairy)

Boil water, add ingredients without the milk, simmer for 10 minutes, add milk and warm up again but don't boil.

Health warning: Consuming excessive amounts of turmeric may cause stomach upset or interfere with blood-thinning medications. People with gallbladder issues should consult a doctor before drinking it regularly, as turmeric stimulates bile production.

From Jekka McIver's book: *Jekka's Complete Herb Book*

Turmeric is important in Hindu and Buddhist ceremonies, being associated with fertility and prosperity and brings good luck if applied to a bride's face and body as part of the purification ritual before a wedding. The roots may be given as a present on special occasions, such as a visit to a pregnant woman. The use of turmeric is prohibited in a house of mourning.

From the Reader's Digest: *The Complete Book of Herbs*

Buy plump, firm clean rhizomes. They should have a warm, mild aroma and an earthy, musky flavour. Turmeric can be used fresh or dried and ground and adds a brilliant yellow colour to foods. It is used in curry powders and pastes, pickles and chutneys, vegetable, rice and lentil dishes (especially in India where it often partners with potatoes and cauliflower), and with poultry, fish and shellfish.

Recipes

Baked by Laura Hopkins and enjoyed by everyone at our July meeting.

Gingerbread

Mix 225g plain/standard flour
 2 tsp baking powder
 3 tsp ground ginger
 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Melt 100g butter
 100g soft brown sugar
 170g marmalade, preferably seville orange
and add to the flour mix.

Beat 1 egg
 3 tbsp milk
and add to the flour mix.

Pour into a lined 20cm loaf tin and bake at 170c for 40 to 50 mins.
When still warm, glaze with warmed marmalade.

Fruit loaf

Boil for 3 mins
 250g cake fruit
 200g brown sugar
 250ml water
 50ml oil
 2ml (just less than 1/2 teaspoon) nutmeg
 5ml/1 tsp cinnamon
 2ml (just less than 1/2 teaspoon) ginger

Cool

Add 50g chopped nuts (optional)
 260g plain or wholemeal flour

Beat 125ml plain yoghurt
 1 beaten egg
 5ml bicarbonate of soda

and add to fruit and flour mix

Fold in 5ml/1 tsp baking powder
 5ml/1 tsp vanilla

Pour into a greased and lined loaf tin and bake at 150c for 40 mins