

Chamomile



Objectives

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 - 3.00pm at the Old Courthouse in Holloway Street, Carterton.

Outings are normally organised on the first Saturday of the month.

Committee members

Carolyn Peterson - President
Jenny Dey - Secretary
Kryisia Grant - Treasurer, newsletter
Amanda Hall - Library, scholarships
Nao Hampton - Sales table
Cindy Munn - Communications
Christine Volker - EnviroSchools

Contact

waiherbs@gmail.com

Keep connected

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A note from our President

Greetings to our Herb Whanau

Nga mihi o Matariki (Happy Matariki)

As we ease into the winter months with our fires alight, woolly hats and gloves at the ready and slippers our favourite footwear, we are mindful that the official New Zealand Matariki celebration is nearing us on Friday 28 June. Check out the Matariki cluster (not a constellation) to the East, early morning, just before dawn. This is the time of remembrance, joy and peace, also of gratitude for the harvest, and sharing in the bounty with family and friends.

The variety our seasons offer can be embraced! Enjoy the peace of winter, the slowing down, and seek out simple pleasures over the winter months. Bask in a hot bath on a cold wet day and enjoy your favourite essential oil burner, candles, soothing music, and total relaxation. Sit by the fire with a real hot chocolate drink or your favourite herbal tea and read. Add turmeric to your winter mash. Make your own stock for hearty soups and add more raw garlic to your diet; maybe clean out the cupboards and catch up on indoor wet-day tasks, and don't forget to don your waterproofs, grab your brolly and go for a bracing walk in the elements as there's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.

It's that time of the year to pot up seedlings, propagate cuttings or rescue the self-seeded herbs springing up around your own garden for our annual fundraiser. Plants need to be labelled with their common and botanical names. The plant sale will be held on 3 November in the Memorial Square, Carterton.

We'd love to see you on 22 June at our AGM to be held at the Gladstone Inn, as it involves voting to re-register our Society, which will lead to a review of our Constitution. The AGM will be brief as you will have all had a little reading to do prior, and we will then enjoy a mid-winter Christmas lunch.

Ng mihi

Happily with herbs, Carolyn

Welcome to new members

A warm, herby welcome to our new members, Irma Milburn, Suzanne Cudby and Jamie Watkins.

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

Upcoming meetings

The June meeting is replaced by our AGM and lunch:

22 June, 11.30am

AGM followed by mid winter Christmas lunch.
Gladstone Inn, 571 Gladstone Road.

16 July, 1.30pm

Nalini Baruch will talk about adding flavour(s) to a mid winter dish.

20 August, 1.30pm

Details to be advised.

Upcoming outings

Over the winter months we take a break from our outings.

Outings will resume in September and we are working on an exciting programme of places to visit.

September

Aston Norwood, Kaitoke.

We are working on organising a visit to see the Cherry Blossoms. More details to be advised closer to the time.

If you have ideas for meetings or outings please send an email to us at waiherbs@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you.

Changes to the Incorporated Societies Act

The Incorporated Societies Act has been reviewed and has implications for us as a current incorporated society.

At our AGM on 22 June we will vote on whether to continue our status as an incorporated society or not. The main advantage of being an incorporated society is that it means that we have a separate legal status i.e., Committee members are not personally responsible for any obligations of the Society.

We will be proposing to re-register under the new legislation, which will in turn mean that we will need to review our Constitution to make it compliant with the new Act.

If you would like to find out more about the changes to the legislation you can read [here](#). And if you have any feedback on our current Constitution, please send this to waiherbs@gmail.com.

Herb Awareness

Each year the International Herb Association selects a herb to be the International Herb of the Year. The Herb Federation of New Zealand selects a further three herbs, and the four herbs become the subject of study.

This year the International Herb of the Year is Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*, which we wrote about in our last [newsletter](#), and the three herbs chosen by the Herb Federation are California Poppy, Rongoa NZ Cabbage tree Cordyline species and Salad Burnet. You can read more about these herbs on the Herb Federation [website](#).

Seed saving and potting up seedlings

A reminder to save seeds and pot up any seedlings that are coming up in your garden. We have an annual herb sale later in the year; this is our annual fund raising event, so the more herbs the better!



Christine has made a great start with potting up seedlings and propagating plants from cuttings.



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.

Regular working bees are organised on the third Thursday of the month at 1.00pm. If you would like to help please call Carolyn on 027 404 0739.

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 Carolyn who will send them on to the Herb Federation. 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.

Herb of the month

*Calendula **Calendula officinalis***

Written by Cindy Munn

"Here's flowers for you:

Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,
The marigold, that goes to bed wi'th' sun,
And with him rises, weeping."

Shakespeare The Winter's Tale, Act 4 Scene 4

Calendula is a herb that has had centuries of use, and widespread use. Also known as Pot Marigold, it is a member of the Asteraceae family; it has many healing uses, as well as being edible.

Calendula is native to Mediterranean countries but is now grown as an ornamental plant throughout the world. However, it is not the same as the annual marigold plant that is often grown in gardens. Calendula grows easily in Aotearoa, and is a great ready to use plant. The dried petals of the plant are used for medicinal purposes, and the fresh petals can be sprinkled on food or salads.

Calendula has high amounts of flavonoids, plant-based antioxidants that protect cells from being damaged by unstable molecules called free radicals. It appears to fight inflammation, viruses, and bacteria. Traditionally, calendula has been used to treat stomach upset and ulcers, as well as relieve menstrual cramps, but there is no scientific evidence that calendula works for these problems. Today, calendula is often used topically, meaning it is applied to the skin. Calendula has been shown to help wounds heal faster, possibly by increasing blood flow and oxygen to the affected area, which helps the body grow new tissue. It is also used to improve skin hydration and firmness.

The dried petals of the calendula plant are used in tinctures, ointments, and washes to treat burns, bruises and cuts, as well as the minor infections they cause. Calendula has also been shown to help prevent dermatitis or skin inflammation in people with breast cancer during radiation therapy.

The use of herbs is a time-honoured approach to strengthening the body and treating disease. Herbs, however, can trigger side effects and can interact with other herbs, supplements, or medications. For these reasons, you should take herbs with care, under the supervision of a health care provider. Calendula is generally considered safe to use on your skin. DO NOT apply it to an open wound without a doctor's supervision.

People who are allergic to plants in the daisy or aster family, including chrysanthemums and ragweed, may also have an allergic reaction to calendula (usually a skin rash). Pregnant and breastfeeding women should not use calendula.





Trading table

We have a Trading Table at our monthly meetings - 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 five life members and 59 members.

Six of our members are currently being supported through 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 each month, usually the week before our monthly meeting. 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

Holistic animal care - 19 March 2024

Report by Christine Volker

We enjoyed a very interesting and knowledgeable session with Dr. Heidi Ward-McGrath, or just Dr. Heidi as she likes to be called, as she took us on a journey of natural animal care.

There is no denying that our pets suffer from allergies, skin irritations and other conditions like some of us humans do and Dr. Heidi, a specialist surgeon, entrepreneur and researcher has made it her life's mission to help animals regain health and strength.



In her clinic Dr. Heidi treats animals after accidents and uses her own products for wound healing.

Dr. Heidi has developed many products herself and has done extensive research using ingredients and components of natural origin, including many herbal remedies.

Totarol, derived from our very own totara tree has been proven as an almost magic product in clearing up infections and is an amazing natural disinfectant.

Dr. Heidi owns and works from Vetcare; one outlet is in Masterton and one in Greytown.



Mr B was a very well behaved token dog at our meeting. He chose a couple of items to help with his health: a putty smelling of rosemary to dab on aging elbows and an antibacterial spray made from the New Zealand totora tree.

Calendula balm - 16 April 2024

Report by Christine Volker



The wonderful healing properties of the calendula flower are captured well in a salve which can be easily made at home.

In our demonstration we used calendula infused almond oil as our base. Almond oil is a great base oil and penetrates deep into the layers of the skin.

Our salve was inspired by a recipe in Jane Wrigglesworth's book "The Everyday Herbalist", which we have in our library.

Recipe

15g grated beeswax, or use sheets which melt quicker
100 ml herb infused oil (we used calendula infused oil*)
20 drops of essential oil (camomile will enhance the healing properties of the balm)

In addition, I used 2 tablespoons of coconut oil.

Method

Place the infused oil and beeswax in a double boiler and heat on low until the wax is melted.

You can check the consistency by putting a drop on a cold plate. If you need it softer, add more oil, if you need a thicker consistency, use a little more wax.

Add drops of essential oil before you fill a glass jar with the mixture.

Keep the jar open until completely cooled.



*How to make calendula infused oil

Take one bottle of almond oil - you can use olive oil, but almond is more neutral in smell and as mentioned above, penetrates deeper into the skin.

Collect two to three handfuls of calendula flower heads (you can normally pick some at the Community Herb Garden throughout the year). You can use either dried or fresh flower heads; ensure fresh flowers are as dry as possible.

Take a jar with a wide opening and put the flower heads in.

Pour the oil in and make sure the flowers are well covered.

Leave for two days in a sunny spot and then two weeks in a dark spot.

Decant in clean jar and label.

Perfume making - 21 May 2024

Report by Christine Volker and Carolyn Peterson

Our afternoon session could be detected with the beautiful smell of Rose Geranium *Pelargonium graveolens* var. *Roseum*, used in an aroma lamp.

Aromatic plants and oils have been used for thousands of years as perfumes. Papyrus manuscripts dating back to 2800BC record the use of 'fine oils and choice perfumes'.

Today, the choice of perfumes can be overwhelming and confusing. Most manufacturers use synthetics to make their scents and few use essential oils. One reason for this is because it takes a lot of natural ingredients to make oils. For example, it takes about 5,000kg of rose petals to make one litre of rose oil.

In the nineteenth century, a Frenchman called Piesse instigated a new approach to perfumery. He started classifying odours according to the notes on a musical scale. The idea was to bring musical harmony into the realm of fragrance. And still today this idea to divide and construct a perfume of top, middle and base notes gives inspiration in perfumery work.

During our meeting we covered the origin of rose geranium herb which comprises 830 species in 5-7 genera and we talked about the perfect blend of a perfume which contains three complimentary notes:

- Base notes (20%) - these are the fragrances that last longer, lingering throughout the day,
- Middle notes (50%) - these are what tie the top and bottom notes together, and
- Top notes (30%) - the lighter fragrances; the notes that your senses will pick up on first, then will fade into the deeper base and middle notes.

Our practical session, where members took home their own roller perfume, used Rose Geranium together with three essential oils: Orange, Lavender or Bergamot; a more experienced person might combine more oils.

The Jojoba oil and bottles were purchased from [Pure Nature](#) and the recipe and the list of oils on the handout sheet was from [Go Native](#) September 2022.

Recipe

For a 10ml blend you use approximately:

- 2 drops of base note
- 5 drops of middle note
- 3 drops of top note

Method

1. Count out the drops carefully into your perfume bottle. Write down what you use so you can recreate it again.
2. These can sit for a little time, or up to a day, for you to smell periodically and consider if any small adjustment may be desired.
3. Add your carrier oil. We used the Pure Nature Jojoba oil which is the closest to our skin's natural oils.
4. Name your bottle and label it.



Review of previous outing

Waiawa Botanicals - 6 April 2024

Report by Cindy Munn and Carolyn Peterson

On an absolutely beautiful autumn day, a group of about 16 of us herb and plant enthusiasts made the trip to Waiawa Garden, about 15 minutes north of Masterton. Lovingly cared for by Tracey Kereopa and Trev Thompson, Waiawa is a sanctuary for native bush and endangered plants such as the native mistletoes.

Trev and his whānau have been kaitiaki of the whenua for the last 50 years. As a whānau, Tracey and Trev acknowledge the haukāinga, Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa. In her introduction to the bush and rongoā, Tracey emphasised the importance of karakia in her relationship with the plants. This added an element of respect and gratitude to the plants, that would also be infused into the making of Tracey's botanical products.



Trev is on a mission to help with bush recovery, as much as is humanly possible. He spoke to us about the importance of saving endangered plant species, and it was clear how much that meant to him. It was inspiring to listen to his kōrero.

Tracey took us on a walk down to the Ruamahanga river that forms part of the land's boundary. The energy at the river was amazing; strong, clear and making a beautiful sound on its way to the ocean. Trevor mentioned the lowering of the water level this year, and that he was concerned about that. Tracey showed us a lichen, amongst many other plants, that she uses for her products. The vitality of the bush was like a tonic, and we enjoyed the cool environment. Tracey and Trev have so much to share; it was a great gift to spend time with them.

We then visited Tracey's workshop, used for her production, storage and bottling of the various herbal rongoā preparations.

One of Tracy's products is Tātarāmoa Tincture/Glycerite, or Bush Lawyer. When enquiring how she harvests this prickly native (the hooked barbs line the underside of each leaf and should it snag your clothing in the bush, you'll be working hard to free yourself), her answer was "slowly". Tataramoa teaches one to s l o w d o w n. This may indicate its benefits which are for sleep and anxiety.

Tracey prefers to infuse her oils for a generous period of time ie, up to a year. Her processes also includes distillation to produce heating, evaporating, cooling and condensing, where the steam returns to its liquid form. When collected, the E.O.s rise to the top, or sink to the bottom and are extracted. The remaining water is hydrosol. We ended our visit with a shared herbal tea, nibbles and chatter, and members were inspired by more learning of the natural medicines around us.

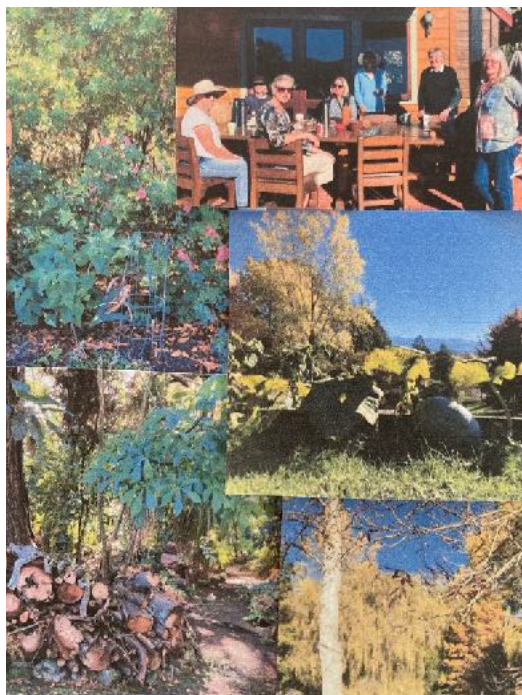


Review of previous outing

Visit to Stan and Jenny Braaksmar's garden - 4 May 2024

Report by Nao Hampton

We had a beautiful autumn day for our visit to the property of Stan and Jenny Braaksmar; the views from the house were clear to the hills - 'of course it's always like this' said Stan!



The one acre property is on Castlepoint Road, about 10 minutes drive from Masterton. Stan and Jenny bought the land and built the house when their sons were small in the late 1980s.

The soil is limestone rich and the elevated site misses the frosts that most of the Wairarapa gets at this time of year.

Over the years Stan and Jenny have gradually added gardens, vegetable beds and fruit trees around the house. There were a number of large native trees on the property which survived original clearing and below these trees regeneration of natives is really starting to show.

Jenny discussed pruning the roses she has below tree canopies that can make them grow 'leggy' - many were original plantings.

We discovered a peppermint geranium, a low growing shrub with soft velvety leaves and a strong peppery/minty scent. I noted it does well in frost free environments so for

those of us on the flats, our little cuttings may do well under cover!

We were also treated to a sample of the last few blood oranges on a tree - super juicy and delicious! I am sure I can find a spot for one of those at my house.

Recipe

Calendula cookies - baked by Amanda Hall for our March meeting.

Recipe from *Miss Calendula Saves the Day*, by Lynn Kirkland. This book is available in our Library, as part of a set of four children's books.

Ingredients

115g butter, melted
1 cup of raw sugar
1 cup of plain flour and 1 cup of wholemeal flour
1 1/2 tsps of baking powder
1/2 cup sunflower seeds
1 1/2 cup of sultanas and raisins
1 tbsp of sesame seeds
1 egg beaten with 1/2 cup of milk

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Mix all ingredients together and add the petals of 6-8 calendula flowers. Stir well and put small spoonfuls onto a greased tray. Bake for 10 -15 minutes.