

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 - 3.00 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

Christine Volker - President
Nao Hampton - Secretary
Krysia Grant - Treasurer, Newsletter
Amanda Hall - Scholarships Co-ordinator, Library
Jenny Dey
Cindy Munn

Contact

waiherbs@gmail.com

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A note from our President

Greetings dear WHS members

Autumn is well upon us even though the temperatures are still mild. It has been a strange growing season and reports from gardener friends around the motu have confirmed that. Dahlias flowered early, while tomatoes stayed green on the vine for a long time and vegetables went into overdrive during the hot days we experienced.

So it seems we have to get used to these changes and adapt accordingly. Most herbs are very adaptable and did well even in very dry conditions. At our last working bee in the WHS Community Herb garden, we could see that all was well even though we have hardly watered the garden over the last few months.

What was also noticed this past summer were that there were more viruses and flu illnesses. So it was after probably twenty years of staying clear of infections using my wellness routine that I came down with a hefty virus. With that, I remembered the advice of an American doctor/researcher who became a herbalist and listed the following must-use antiviral herbs and remedies when faced with a critical virus infection. They are ginger juice (use a garlic press; you need a lot of ginger) cayenne, lemon, Chinese skullcap (tea), liquorice, yarrow and elder. The turnaround for me came when a herbal friend delivered elderberries (dried) which I made into a hot drink. Medical mushrooms called cordyceps, which level the immune response, are also highly recommended.

So let's look into a healthy future and with that I would like to remind you kindly to please reread and rethink my email to all of you concerning the wellbeing of our WHS and the input we current need. I know it's not easy to set aside extra time for community work but it's very rewarding.

With best wishes
Happy Easter holidays
Christine

Welcome to new members

A warm, herby welcome to our new members, Alan Butler and Lorraine Erith, Lauren (Pea) Mathewson, Susan Nikolaison and Steve Vine.

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

Upcoming meetings

15 April, 1.30pm

Odette Rowe will talk about calendula for our general health, and guide us through some gentle (seated) yoga.

20 May, 1.30pm

Cindy Munn will talk us through herbs for our digestive system.

14 June, 11.30pm

Our AMG will replace our monthly meeting - details to be advised.

Upcoming outings

12 April, 1.30pm

Parkvale Gardens and Nursery. 349 Moreton Road, Parkvale. A naturalistic garden, surrounded by open pastureland. Entry \$10.

May, 1.30pm

Details for our May visit to be confirmed. Please keep an eye on your inbox.

June - August

There are no outings during the winter months.

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.

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.

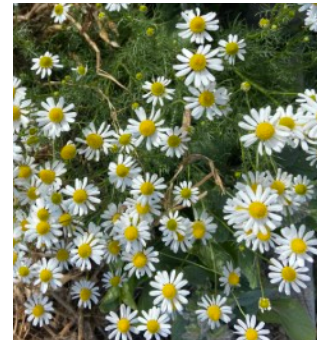
2025 Herb Awareness Month

March is Herb Awareness month, so during our March meeting we took a closer look at two herbs - Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) - the International Herb of the Year, and Globe Artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*) - selected this year by the Herb Federation of New Zealand for closer study.

Chamomile

by Nao Hampton

Chamomile has been cherished for centuries due to its calming effect and gentle nature. A native of Europe and Asia, it is now grown throughout the world. It has a lot going for it - for a little daisy looking flower it packs a punch. It is filled with vitamins (A, C, niacin), minerals (calcium, iodine, magnesium, iron and potassium) and has phenols, glycosides and tannins.



It is said to be calmative, antispasmodic, antiseptic, a mild sedative, anti-allergic, a digestive tonic and has wound healing properties. WOW!

So in practical use: if you have a big meal or eat too quickly and feel your belly rumble - a cup of chamomile tea with the addition of a little peppermint and lavender (if you like the taste), and those rumbles may well settle with the bonus of a better sleep too. If you don't like drinking the lavender, use it in an oil burner.

End of day sore feet? A foot soak made with chamomile and rose petals, a good book and you're sorted!

Foot Soak



Equal amounts of Epsom salts, sea salt, dried chamomile and dried rose petals (a spoonful of baking soda is skin softening and a sprinkle of citric acid optional too).

Maybe start with a 1/4 cup of each.

Keep it dry and air tight it will last up to a year.



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.

Globe Artichoke

by Christine Volker

Being a wonderful tall and strong plant, the Globe Artichoke is often used in landscape design. It is also known for its culinary use and members got to taste some artichoke heart, which in this case was a commercially preserved product. Used fresh, the immature flowers (chokes) are steamed or boiled and eaten with a mayonnaise or butter sauce.



The herbalist recognises that the whole plant is nutrient rich. It contains volatile oils, amino acids, vitamins (A, B1, B2 and C) folic acid, minerals, calcium, iodine, iron, magnesium, zinc, flavonoids and sugars.

The therapeutic action however lies in the leaves and stem. A tincture or infused vinegar or cordial are recommended by the herbalist Maria Noël Groves in her book *Body Balance*. It is one of the bitters she highly recommends to take to clean the liver and help in all aspects of the digestive system. The tea is very bitter and I only use it in small amounts together with other herbs like lemon verbena. It is important to taste some of the bitter for the therapeutic action to work.

You can read more about the herbs [here](#).

Review of previous meetings

Summer teas and drinks - 18 February 2025

Report by Amanda Hall

The day was hot, so we all enjoyed our delve into summer teas. They were cold, fizzy and pretty. Delightful to see and taste, it was a fun meeting.

We made and tasted three teas/drinks:

Blackberry Fizz

Inspired by a Nicola Galloway recipe, this drink was quick and easy, but looked and tasted quite special!

Take a glass, smear honey inside the glass, add soda water, a squeeze of lemon juice and several berries. Mix/crush berries slightly. We used blackberries, but any berries would work.



The drink is a gorgeous reddish/pink colour. It was slightly sweet and very refreshing and summery. This could be adjusted with more/less honey/lemon to your liking. This was my favourite of the day.



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 five life members and 53 members.

Three 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 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](#).

Red Tea

This recipe was inspired by a book we have in our library: Body Balance by Maria Noël Groves.

This is a tasty and nutritional tea. All the ingredients are high in anti oxidants. It can be made hot in winter, but it can also be enjoyed with ice in summer with a slice of lemon as decoration:

- 1 tsp hibiscus
- 1/2 tsp rose hips
- 1/2 tsp of dried berries, e.g., elder berries, *hawthorn, blueberries, goji berries
- 1/2 tsp rooibos tea

Brew and steep for 20 min, add some honey as a sweetener.

*Please note that people on heart medication should avoid hawthorn.

Pomegranate Iced Tea

This was another pretty coloured tea, which we tried as a hot tea as well. Some liked it iced, others preferred the hot version. The hot version re-used the ingredients remaining in the pot from the iced tea. The hot tea was also a pretty colour but not so vibrant, and still tasted good!

- Mash or blend 1 cup of pomegranate seeds
- Brew green tea in teapot with 2 cups of water
- Add one tbsp honey as it cools
- Add all together with 1 tbsp of lime juice

Serve with soda water and garnish with mint.



We also enjoyed a summer platter of tomatoes, cheese, cucumber 'crackers' with hummus and chives on top, and a lovely lemon cake. It was all very pleasant.

Subscriptions now due

Many thanks to our members that have promptly paid their subs for the coming year. If you've overlooked making your payment, we'd appreciate it you could pay your subs now, or alternatively, let us know if you wish to resign from the Society.

Our account is 03 0687 0361573 00 and subs are \$20 for an individual or \$30 for you and a family member.

Latvian Spa Rituals - 18 March 2025

Report by Amanda Hall

Indra, one of our scholarship students spoke about sauna culture in Latvia, which is centuries old. Indra is from Latvia and shared her experiences with us and the exciting news that her husband is making a sauna and it's almost finished!



Indra played a [video](#) for us. Wow, it was really something different! The whole experience is relaxing and cleansing for the body, mind and soul and takes 3-4 hours.

The saunas are heated with fire, causing the body to sweat profusely. 'Whisks' are made from twigs of silver birch, juniper, oak, linden and herbs such as chamomile and lavender. The plants in the whisk provide healing properties, essential oils and energy. The lucky person having the treatment, lays on a bench and is 'swatted' with the whisks. The swatting opens the pores and increases circulation. The body is then massaged and rubbed down with a blend of herbs and runny honey, relaxing the muscles.

After the hot sauna you are immersed into cold water. And you finish off the sauna ritual sipping a hot herbal tea.

Even today, most rural people in Latvia have a sauna on their property. If you have a sauna by yourself, you can use the whisk on yourself.

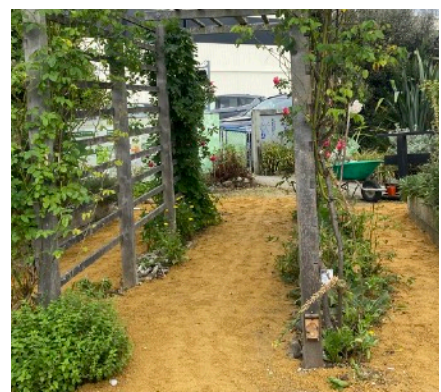
In the summer solstice families gather in the meadows to collect herbs for the sauna. The families sing folk songs while gathering the herbs.

We also watched a video of a ritual with a young baby; we saw how the herbs were an important part of the ritual, the baby was bathed in a special bath with the herbs. It was a relaxing experience for both the parents and the baby. This ritual highlights the importance of the sauna culture in Latvia.

Indra also shared with us that her favourite herb is dill (*Anethum graveolens*). It's a very European herb, used in pickles and preserves, with fish and in salads. Indra tries to grow it all year round, either in her garden or on the window sill inside.

Community Herb Garden

We had a working bee in mid-March to weed the paths and lay down some new lime. Many thanks to [NZAgLime](#) who kindly donated a trailer load of lime. And many thanks to our volunteers who worked hard to get this job done and to those volunteers who regularly visit to weed the paths. What a difference the lime has made.



Review of previous outings

Mangaroa Farm - 1 February 2025

Report by Amanda Hall

A lot was covered on this tour. My take away message of the day was the importance of mulching. It is one of the best things we can do to improve soil and plant health. And it's so easy!

The garden beds were completely mulched, there was no bare soil to be seen. They use cover crops (crop and drop), wool, baleage and green waste from the garden. Increasingly they are using green waste directly on the garden as a mulch, rather than taking it away to be composted and then bringing it back again. I love the simplicity of that!

Mulching tucks up the plants and soil nice and snug. It helps to feed the soil and retain moisture. If soil dries out, it takes about 2 weeks for the living organisms in the soil to recover. The plants and soil organisms work closely together, so keeping them both happy is key.

An expert in the field, who visited Mangaroa farm recently, said that mulching, above all else makes the biggest difference to soil health even compared to organic methods vs. conventional methods.

So get cracking and get mulching! Healthy soil = healthy plants = healthy people

Along with mulching the farm make liquid teas and compost. They carry out soil tests and try to amend compost or teas to address any issues highlighted e.g. low nematodes. They also test the plants. To check plant health they use a refractometer to measure the brix or sugar content in the plant. A brix reading of above 10 indicates a healthy plant. A reading of under 10 indicates poor health. Unhealthy plants are attractive to pests, who find the high sugar content of healthier plants unpalatable.

The soil in the paddock next to the garden is slowly being improved in case the garden is extended. It has been minimally worked and an assortment of salad greens were grown. This growth will help improve the soil. Stock will happily graze this crop soon. But we were lucky to get in first and pick a fresh salad for our dinner. It was a nice way to wrap up our visit.



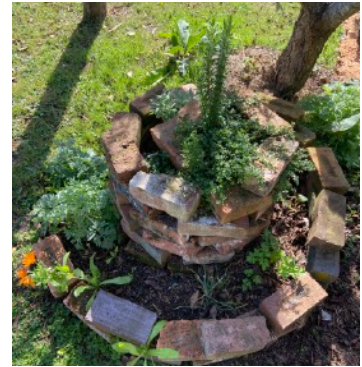
House of Straw - 15 March 2025

Report by Nao Hampton

We huffed and we puffed but Krysia's House of Straw stood strong when a group of 10 visited. The sun shone and while the wind at times had us holding our hats in place, it felt like Summer was trying to have a final hurrah and Autumn said ok.

Krysia gave us quick history of the property and house, her learning curve with gardening, the speed with which trees planted as shelter belts grow, running stock and discovering a love of flowers. We walked through the spray free orchard, which is toward the back of the property, under the watchful eyes of her flock of chickens. Several people generously offered to taste test various varieties of apples; the chickens tried to volunteer too!

Back out through the gate and over the ramp we wandered arriving at the little brick herb spiral. Krysia was required to make a spiral for one of the papers she is completing through the NZ Herb Federation. We learned the herb spiral is based on a permaculture design and creates different microclimates that suit each plants' needs in a small space. Herbs that like drier sunnier environments are planted at the top, while those needing more shade or moisture filter down the spiral. Krysia's spiral is made of bricks; this has the added bonus of helping with heat retention. She said that the thyme has to be harvested regularly as it has thrived in its spot in the spiral.



After discussing the vegetable gardens and this year's growing season we peeked into the potting shed (and had a raid of the berries beside the door), then moved over to the main herb garden which semicircle around a seating area, outside the kitchen door. With a view over the paddocks and the native trees we finished the afternoon with a lovely cake made by the host and a selection of teas and coffee all seated around an outdoor table - it was hard for us to leave. Thanks Krysia.



New Committee members needed

Are you keen to become more involved in our Society? We are looking for members to take over the roles of Secretary, Treasurer and newsletter editor, or just to come on to the Committee.

This is a great opportunity to have a say in what we do at meetings and where we visit on Saturdays, as well as ensuring the smooth running of the Society.

Christine would love to hear from you about opportunities we'll have available from mid June (after our AGM. Please get in touch on 027 280 673.

Recipes

Herb Scones - baked by Susanne Skuce for our our visit to Mangaroa Farm

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose flour	1/4 cup cold salted butter (divided)
1 tablespoon baking powder	1 cup 0% fat Greek Yogurt
1 teaspoon kosher salt	4 cloves minced or grated garlic (divided)
60 grams grated cheese	2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley and thyme

Method

1. Combine dry ingredients with a fork.
2. Cut 2 tablespoons of the butter in with a pastry knife or use 2 forks if you don't have one, until no longer visible.
3. Add the yogurt, cheese, half the garlic and mix with a fork.
4. Then, using your hands knead the dough until it holds together and becomes tacky and smooth. Form it into a flat ball and cut into 8 equal pieces. Roll each into a ball, then place it on the prepared baking sheet, slightly flattened, 1/2 inch thick.
5. Bake for about 20 to 24 minutes or until golden. Once done, let them rest 10 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, melt the remaining butter in a small frying pan, add the remaining garlic and sauté on low heat about 1 minute until fragrant. When the scones are ready, brush them with the melted garlic butter and top with parsley.

Black Doris Shortcake - made by Kryisia Grant for the visit to the House of Straw
adapted from a recipe in Ladies, A Plate by Alexa Johnston.

Ingredients

115g butter
160g sugar
1 egg
170g flour
2 tsp baking powder
Black Doris jam and fruit cut into pieces or any fruit of your choice

Method

1. Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, then beat in the egg and mix well.
2. Sift in the flour and baking powder and mix to a smooth paste.
3. Take about half of the mixture and press it evenly into the base of the lined tin with floured fingers. I use a 20cm round tin. Note, this is a very soft dough, so rolling it out has never worked for me.
4. At this point I normally put a layer of jam on the base, and then top with fruit, or just put your fruit filling directly on top of the dough.
5. Arrange pieces of the remaining dough onto the fruit and push together with your fingers.
6. Cook for about 30mins at 200°C, rotating half way through. Cool for at least 10mins in the tin and then turn out.
7. Sift icing sugar and serve warm or cold.