



CHAMOMILE October 2013

Notice Board

November

Saturday, 9th 2.00pm. Tour Carrington House Garden 285 High Street North, Carterton. (On left hand side of SH2 as you leave Carterton. There is a 50 mph road sign near a gate which you can drive through.) Cost \$10.00 (tea and coffee included).

Tuesday, 19th 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.

December

Saturday, 7th 12 noon. Bring and Share Christmas Lunch, Christine & Vaughan Paul's home (Paulownia Estate) 243B Mania Rd, RD 5, Homebush, Masterton.

February

Saturday, 8th. Visit to Helen Wilson's lavender farm, 1453 Castlepoint Rd., with afternoon tea at Rosa Vallance's home, Te Kanuka Station.

Living with Herbs

Herbal Day Seminar 28 September

Cooking with Wild Weeds

Our Herbal Day Seminar went very well and all enjoyed the day, including the herbed soups, rolls and cakes provided for lunch by Diana Hamen. As Catherine said, "It just goes to show what can be achieved with a great committee who all volunteer for certain jobs so no one is loaded with all the organisation. We could not have managed without May's knowledge and for planning. The ground work she had done meant we could all manage when she had to bow out. I feel we can all feel satisfied with the day". We *almost* made even financially!



Anthony North, Chef de Cuisine, Wakelin House, Greytown, presented the session on **Cooking with Wild Weeds**. He asked participants to identify several weeds and then proceeded to use one of them, three cornered garlic (commonly known as onion weed), for a pesto which he made in a blender with a little oil and a few walnuts. He used both flowers and leaves, warmed up the mixture and added some cream. This pesto was to be served with gnocchi, along with a sauce made from Parkvale's Portobello mushrooms, chopped onion, garlic, some Wairarapa white wine and cream.

The gnocchi were made with very hot cooked potatoes (Agrida, put through a mill) plus seasoning, grated (with a Microplane grater) Kingsmeade parmesan cheese, egg yoke and flour (to dry the mixture). We then had a hand in making the gnocchi balls and shaping them with the back of a fork. Boiling water was salted for the gnocchi which were briefly cooked. The gnocchi were then pan fried to crisp them. We were told the gnocchi could be frozen for later use by refreshing them in iced water and adding some olive oil to stop them sticking. The gnocchi would be reheated in boiling water.

Anthony presented the finished gnocchi on a square white platter, together with spoonfuls of the pesto and the mushroom sauce. He decorated the dish with some wild weeds and their flowers. We then all had a taste of the gnocchi together with some pesto and mushroom sauce. A yummy combination!

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Herbal Ales, Wines and Liqueurs



Ian and Marilyn Wightman, owners of the Fragrant Garden, Fielding, presented the session on **Herbal Ales, Wines and Liqueurs**. They demonstrated the processes and then treated us to tastings of a variety of their products. We were provided with a range of recipes, including those for Elderflower Champagne, Rose Bubbly Fizz, Orange Mint Wine, Blue Berry & Lemon Balm Wine, Elderflower Wine, Parsley Wine, Irish Cream (tasted just like a well-known commercial product!), Kahula, Lemon Verbena Liqueur, Melissa (Lemon Balm) in vodka, Tarragon Liqueur, Sage Liqueur, Angelica Liqueur and Lemoncello. That for Parsley wine is as follows. It looked a pretty green in the demi-john on the demonstration table.

600gm parsley
10gm ginger root
3 lemons
3 oranges
5 l water
1.5 k sugar
1/2 packet white wine yeast

Put the parsley, ginger, and thinly peeled lemon and orange peel in a pan with the water and bring to the boil. Simmer 20 minutes. Strain on to the sugar and stir well to dissolve. When lukewarm add yeast and squeezed juice from the citrus. Stir, cover and leave for 24 hours. Put into demi-john and ferment out. Bottle, leave for 6 months before drinking. Improves with keeping.

Making a Gardening Hand cream

Claire Bleakley, Homeopath, Herbalist, Featherston, presented the session on **Making a Gardening Hand cream**. It was a great morning session by Claire. We all enjoyed it and came away with a small jar of cream. Most of the ingredients had already been prepared so it was very interesting to see how they were mixed to make the cream, and to also find out the properties of calendula and comfrey. Calendula has antiseptic qualities and is a sun plant. It tracks the sun throughout the day and closes up at night. The best time to pick calendula is in the morning in Spring. Comfrey mends tissues but make sure that the wound is clean when you apply the cream and that a scab has formed. Calendula stops bugs, while comfrey heals.



Recipe
300 ml Calendula Oil
300 ml Comfrey Oil
60 gm Beeswax
60 gm Cocoa Butter
1 tsp Borax
Hand Mixer

Preparation of Ingredients

Steep Calendula in oil for up to 2 weeks. Grate 2" Comfrey root and leaves in 300 ml of water. Bring to boil, steep for 3 hours, cool and strain.

Making the Cream

Place strained Calendula oil in a bowl, stand it in boiling water.
Dissolve the Cocoa Butter and Beeswax in the oil and cool to blood temperature.
Warm Comfrey decoction, add Borax and dissolve, cool to blood temperature.
With an electric hand mixer slowly drizzle the warm Comfrey decoction into the oil mixture until thick and creamy.
Pour into clean sterilized jars. Arthur Holmes is a good outlet for these jars.

Information on Method:

The borax is needed to bring the cream together.
Cocoa butter - store in a cold place - and melt the beeswax in one container and the cocoa butter in another.
Pack the calendula flowers and leaves into a jar and then fill it with grape seed and/or almond oil.

At Claire's afternoon session, she also provided participants with a recipe for a washing liquid:

Ingredients

½ Bar Sard Soap – grated
250g Borax
125 g Washing Soda Crystals
3 L Boiling Water

Method

Dissolve ingredients.
Add a further 8L Water.
Mix and let stand overnight.
Mix again and bottle.
Use ½ cup dissolved in boiling water per load of washing.



Member Travels: (Val Richardson) *Well Dressing*

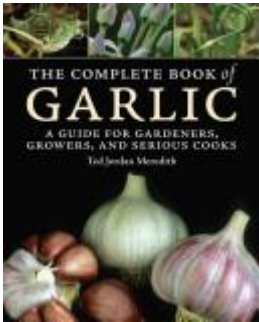
Val Richardson spoke to us at our September meeting about Well Dressing. She had come across this ancient custom while in England when visiting a friend in Wirksworth, Derbyshire. The custom is thought to originate in pagan times when the well – the source of water for a village or town, was decorated with flowers as a thanksgiving for the water supplied. Subsequently when the Romans conquered Britain the custom continued, as the Romans worshipped many gods – including water gods and goddesses. The Christians, who later inhabited Britain, adopted many of the pagan festivals and customs – Well Dressing being one of them.

The first recorded well dressing event was in 1758, in Tissington in the white peak area of Derbyshire. In other areas the village tap or pump would be decorated with floral wreaths or garlands to celebrate the arrival of piped water to the village. The custom is now part of the Christian year in Derbyshire in over 80 towns and villages. Throughout the summer each village takes it in turn to decorate their

wells or springs which are then blessed by the local clergy. The original simple floral decorations have been superseded by intricate floral icons, many with biblical themes, but some with modern topics or anniversaries.

Large boards are covered in moist clay, and the stems of flowers, or petals are inserted in the clay. The design is drawn on full-sized tracing paper and the wooden frame is taken to the local stream/village pond where it is submerged for several days. The clay is puddled (mixed with water and trampled upon to obtain the right consistency). Clay is pressed firmly in place and smoothed down and 'keyed in' with nails. A paper template of the design is pricked out onto the wet clay, paper removed and the design carefully outlined with alder cones (only naturally found items are used in producing the display).

The design is built up using seeds, cones, flower petals, lichens and bark. Overlapping the petals is called 'flowering'. Finally boards are erected near the village well, spring, water tap or pump. The display is blessed by the local clergy, then roped off and a collecting box for a local charity placed near. Dressings usually stand for about a week, watered daily to keep fresh.



Book Review (October: Val Richardson) *The Complete Book of Garlic (A guide for Gardeners, Growers & Serious Cooks)* By Ted Jordan Meredith

This book certainly lives up to its name; I would never have believed that there was sufficient information about garlic to fill a 300 page book. How wrong I was!! This American book is painstakingly researched, yet written in an easy-to-read style, enlivened with anecdotes such as the time in 1963 when helping his mother in the kitchen the author daringly, at the time, added *three* cloves of garlic to a batch of home-made spaghetti sauce, which was surprisingly tasty. His consumption of garlic since then has changed. Now he would use three heads.

Detailed chapters cover natural history, the history of garlic in cultivation, the nuances of cuisine and culture, therapeutic benefits, plant structure, how to cultivate, curing and storage, taxonomy, pests and diseases and chemistry. Information is summarised in the final chapter – Quick Guides. I particularly like the advice on buying garlic "Avoid purchasing garlic from your local supermarket.....Support speciality garlic growers.....at farmers' markets."

This book contains illustrated profiles of about 150 garlic cultivars – beautiful photographs – works of art in themselves – making this a coffee-table browsing book as well as a reference book. The advantage of crushing garlic as opposed to chopping, using raw as opposed to cooked and delaying adding acid to garlic for 10 seconds is clearly explained in the context of the chemistry of garlic.

As this is an American book, the Garlic Sources, Organizations, and Newsletters are not useful to us here in New Zealand. (We will have to compile our own!)

I recommend this book to all members. Take it out of the library, but don't keep it too long, as I want to have it on my coffee table again soon.

NEWS FLASH: The Committee has decided unanimously to confer Life Membership on Agnes and Bob Jones, in recognition of the outstanding contribution they have made to the Wairarapa Herb Society over many years. More details in the next Newsletter.



Herb of the Month (October: Agnes Jones) Chamomile – the Friendly Herb

A well known, popular herb. Just mention to people that you can't sleep and eventually someone will say 'Have a drink of Chamomile tea'. So Chamomile is a soothing, sedative herb.

It is also an insect repellent. A healing herb, it promotes good health in other plants when it is propagated nearby. With its lovely, fresh scent it makes a good ground cover round BBQ areas. Some gardeners make wooden seats with a box where they plant chamomile.

When sat upon the lovely scent rises, giving a relaxing atmosphere.

When combined with tansy, mint and witch-hazel, chamomile can be used as a flea spray for pets. If you're in the habit of taking your dog in your car, you can spray your vehicle with this mixture. Surprisingly, chamomile is also a sedative for birds. Calming for us and our animals.

As a companion plant it has excellent properties, having a profusion of flowers and elegant feathery leaves. Other plants enjoy its company. It makes mint tastier and makes flagging plants revive. It is an encouragement to other plants to increase their essential oils which makes them taste better.

Chamomile lawns are well known. There are two types of these. Artemis was once popular because it stayed green and kept insects away. But its flowers are too profuse and it takes work to keep the lawn in trim. Now more popular are the Treneague strain which never need cutting.

The golden flowers are used for Chamomile Tea and this can be made by soaking a handful in cold water for a day or two. Sickly plants can also be given a dose of this brew.

If you want to look beautiful you can use chamomile with yoghurt, honey and oatmeal to make a face mask. This clears up blemishes. It can also lighten and condition your hair.

German, or annual, chamomile can grow up to 20 ins. and has fine feathery foliage. It can be propagated by root division or cuttings. Sown in early Spring it needs a sunny position but kept from the mid-day sun in very hot climates. This herb is very effective around containers of flowers. It is lovely for pot-pourri, a soothing foot bath and for herb pillows.

The healing powers of chamomile are manifold and recent research has verified this claim. They range from skin healing, baby teething troubles and help with allergies, cramps and digestive troubles. If used as a compress it can speed up the healing of ulcers, burns and wounds.

Its generic name comes from the Greek anthos (meaning flower) and the specific name noble a tribute to the excellence of the plant. Chamomile is one of the sacred herbs of Saxon times and was strewn over bare stone floors. In Tudor times, chamomile lawns were very popular but now are not so fashionable. However, there is a chamomile lawn at Buckingham Palace. In one of Beatrix Potter's books, Peter Rabbit was given chamomile as a sedative after his adventure in Mr. McGregor's garden. It was written in a Pastoral that it was also good for fish as in this little verse:

Another from her banks in sheer good will
Brings nutriment for fish, the chamomile.

Astrologically, chamomile is under the dominion of the sun. It is the birthday flower for 17th December and symbolises energy in adversity and love in austerity.

If there was a competition, I think Chamomile would be 'Personality of the Year' and it is such a Good Samaritan of a plant.

Olive Leaf Extract (Talk given by Lyn Tomlinson at October meeting)



Historical Uses of Olive Leaf Extract

The earliest known use of olive leaf for medicinal purposes appears to come from the ancient Egyptians. In their culture, the olive leaf was regarded as a symbol of heavenly power. Consequently they used the extracted oils from the leaf as a part of mummification rituals of the kings.

Numerous other cultures have used olive leaf (and tree and fruit) for nutritional and medicinal purposes. Especially in Mediterranean cultures, the olive leaf was used for a variety of health conditions, including infections, fever and pain.

Olive trees are able to survive for thousands of years due to a very powerful defence system - the bitter tasting compounds in their leaves that fight disease, bacteria and decay.

The oldest olive trees with continuous historical records are growing in the garden of Gethsemane near Jerusalem, and they are almost 2000 years old, although there are even older trees in parts of Greece that are said to be more than 3000 years old.

During this time, the olive branch was used as a symbol of peace and goodwill. This may be partly due to the fact that in early cultivation of the olive, it took decades to bear fruit for harvest. People believed anyone who planted olive groves expected to have a long and peaceful life. So treasured was the tree that in ancient Greece a person could be fined for digging up too many olive trees, even on their own land.

The olive branch is still a symbol of peace. When the Apollo astronauts landed on the moon, in 1969, they left an olive branch made of gold on a plaque which read: "We come in peace for all mankind".

A List of Olive Leaf Health Benefits

Olive leaf is used to:

- fight colds and flu
- maintain healthy blood pressure
- prevent the progression of other forms of heart diseases
- help relief of arthritis, especially rheumatoid arthritis
- improve symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome
- eradicate a variety of parasites
- improve energy levels in the body
- heal skin infections
- support the immune system

Forms of Available Olive Leaf

- Olive leaf tea – loose
- Olive leaf tea – bags
- Olive leaf liquid extract (tincture)
- Olive leaf powder
- Olive leaf skin care

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(Olive Leaf Extract continued)

Olive leaf is not a drug, nor does it cure disease, rather it attacks microbes and directly strengthens the body's immune system to create healthy body functions.

In chronic conditions, or cases of serious immune problems around three months of regular ingestion is required before significant improvement is realised. Olive leaf works best in an alkaline environment and the drinking of three to four glasses of water between doses is highly recommended, especially to assist 'die-off'.

When 'die-off' happens toxins are released, the liver, kidneys, intestines and skin may become over burdened. One could feel ill or develop a skin reaction – this indicates that the olive leaf is working. 'Die-off' is only temporary and ends with enhanced well-being. 'Die-off' only occurs with some people. Other than this, olive leaf has no side effects and is very safe to use.

It is recommended to gradually increase the dosage of olive leaf to whatever dose gets to the base of the individual problem. This may be two capsules twice daily. For others this dosage may need to gradually go up to a total of ten to twelve capsules a day, divided up to three times a day. The same dosage does not work for everyone because we are all biochemically different, so listen to your body when taking olive leaf, you cannot harm yourself with it, even when taking large doses.

During clinical trials of this “wonder” herb, patients stated that olive leaf extract solved their tiredness and fatigue problems so that they felt a greater sense of well being and energy. One likely reason for this is that the body is now freed from fighting so many opportunistic invaders with a greater freeing up of energy.

Olive leaf may be safely given to children and animals.

Visit to Abbotsford Gardens 5 October



Above left: The house at Abbotsford. Above right: Our Secretary, Agnes Jones, and Chair, Lyn Tomlinson, at Abbotsford Gardens. Next page: Afternoon tea on the verandah at Abbotsford with May Brown, our past Chair, sporting her forearm in plaster.

We visited Abbotsford Gardens, Tim & Penelope Bunny's Garden & Nursery, Abbotsford, Masterton on 5 October. The garden was a delight with lots of spring blossom and a wide variety of interesting plants, particularly the perennials available for sale in the nursery. We all enjoyed afternoon tea on the verandah of the Bunny's home.



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.