



# CHAMOMILE April 2014

## Notice Board

### April

**Saturday, 12th** Di Batchelor – Fungi Walk. Mount Holdsworth. (Details will be emailed later).

**Tuesday, 15th** 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.

### May

**Saturday, 3rd** Tidsfordriv Garden, 54 Cootes Rd., 1.30pm – \$5.00 pp entry. Bring small plate for afternoon tea. From Akura Rd., Masterton, turn left into Kibblewhite Rd., then bear right into Matahiwi Rd. Continue on Matahiwi Rd. to Cootes Rd. on right.

**Tuesday, 20th** 1.30 p.m. Senior Citizens Hall, Carterton.

### June

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>** Mid Winter Lunch, Gladstone Inn. Meet at Pub at 11.30am for drinks, lunch at noon. Choice of four dishes. Price between \$18.00 and \$20.00. Names taken at Tuesday meetings or ring Agnes by Wednesday 28th May (379-7241)

**The Trading Table** is a part of our income for the Society. It backs up our annual subscriptions and thus helps to subsidise trips etc. Please remember to bring items for the table (and also buy from it!) at both our Tuesday and Saturday meetings. At our first Tuesday meeting of the year we took in \$27, and at our last meeting \$17. At the AGM the sum was \$35.50. Items do not need to be herb related e.g. a lemon or two, fruit and veg. etc would be just great.

**Subscription** renewals are now due. A form for completion is attached to this newsletter.

## ***The Purely Earth Healing Clay***



*The following notes are from the talk Lyn Tomlinson gave at our February Tuesday meeting.*

This clay is available from the SELF HEAL shop in Carterton. It has healed two long-standing small skin problems of mine that would not heal. Quick results don't always occur and it is not unusual to need daily treatments for several weeks, or even a few months for long standing problems.

The clay assists with the removal of chemicals, rashes and infections from the skin and body.

To make a clay pack mix one cup of powder in one cup of warm filtered water in a large ceramic bowl and let sit for a few hours. Add more water if you think the clay mixture is too thick. The mixture may be stored in a fridge indefinitely.

The clay can be used for dry and cracked hands and feet, bruising, dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, itchy rashes, fungal and bacterial infections, ulcers, wounds, varicose vein pain, and joint pain and swelling.

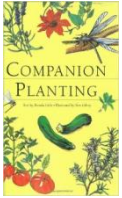
Both packing and bathing also work well for clearing heavy metals and chemical toxicity.

It can also be used as a clay face mask and as a toothpaste.



## ***Thank You Gail***

At our AGM on 29 March, we thanked Gail Edwards for her service as our Treasurer. She has looked after our accounts in her competent and no fuss way for ten years and is now handing over this job to Val Richardson. Gail will continue to be a member of the Society's committee.



**Book Review** (February: Agnes Jones) **COMPANION PLANTING IN NZ** - Text by Brenda Little, Illustrations by Ken Gilroy.

This attractive, useful little book was first published in 1982 by Reed Books Pty. Since then it has been revised, a colour edition made and has had several reprints. The front cover is beautifully coloured with flowers, insects and vegetables incorporated in the drawing. The title page of the book is also attractively illustrated with blackberries and on the next page a cottage door with plants on the steps. The contents are in three sections and the guide is in bold black letters.

In her introduction the author tells us what fun there is in companion planting, being able to outwit enemies. Much better than chemicals which can be expensive and destructive. She had many hints from her grandfather who was an 'untidy' gardener, but his cabbages squeaked with health, his beans snapped with a crack like a pistol shot and you needed a bib when you ate his apples.

The information needed is given alphabetically and it's easy to find what you want. She has a chapter on herbs which she says are happiest in the company of others and it's good to have a mixture. Annual herbs shouldn't be planted in the same spot two years in succession. There's a lovely illustration in this chapter of a cup of herbal tea. Also an interesting piece about nettles which most people want to pull out. Nettle is full of good stuff which gives strength and flavour to any crop planted nearby. It also protects against aphids, black fly and mildew.

Incorporated in this alphabetical list are creatures of the garden (good and bad). For instance the author says that happy is the garden that has lizards in it. They eat insects and the eggs of pests. Centipedes are okay and are useful because they live on decaying garden stuff not growing matter. Also don't rinse your empty beer bottles down the sink, as they are appreciated by indoor plants, plants in tubs and border flowers.

As an added bonus there are beautiful coloured illustrations throughout the book often giving vital information as a heading. For instance under the picture of a pot of basil is the inscription 'you can't have too much basil in a garden'. Also a drawing of a branch of apples which says 'apple trees are happier when grass is kept away from them'.

At the end of the book is a list of 'Good Companions' and 'Bad Companions' in alphabetical order. For instance garlic is good for roses, apples and peaches and pumpkins don't like potatoes planted near them. I also learned that one of the favourites in our garden, geraniums, do well if banana skins are tucked under the top soil.

A happy, useful, funny book. Another good Op Shop find.

## My Journey to Herbs

*The following notes are from the talk Lorraine Erith gave at our February Tuesday meeting.*

My journey to herbs started a long time ago when I was 28 years old. I decided to study Iridology. Herbs were used to treat the various symptoms that showed up in the Iris. While I gained knowledge of the medicinal power of the herbs I never knew what the plant looked like in its natural state as we used capsulated herbs.

I was intrigued and wanted to learn more about natural healing. I read book after book and one course lead to another giving knowledge in health and nutrition, Bach flower remedies, Bowen therapy, kinesiology.

After finishing a 3 month course on Homoeopathy and my desire to learn more took our family over to the UK for 5 years. I studied at Regents College in London for 2 years and 1 year at Devon. Towards completion of my final year our beautiful daughter was born. The family returned to NZ and once Emily started school I worked at Bethlehem Health food shop for the next 4 years.

All staff were qualified in various forms of healing. We treated our customers with consultation offering herbs, homoeopathy vit @ minerals. We used live blood analysis and kinesiology to select the right remedies for healing.



When one of my horses developed spinal problems it was time for me to learn equine Bowen. I trained with Brian Smart from Australia, using his method along with my knowledge of homoeopathy, herbs, Bach flower remedies. I was able to help many a horse and dog owner with pleasing results.

My love of horses brought us to the Wairarapa. I found our property for sale in the horse and pony magazine. Since moving here and living 30km from town I was not prepared to travel but I share my knowledge and help many a friend in need of advice or treatments etc.

Finally I get to forage weeds, plant herbs, watch them grow and harvest them making teas, tinctures and creams for family, the horses and friends. What could be better than that?

## The Life in the Soil



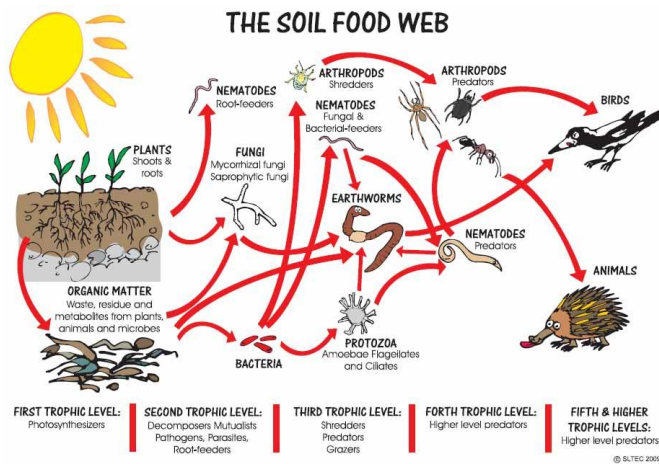
**Mike Palmers** M Appl Sci., PG Dip., NDH., Dip Hort. spoke to us at our March Tuesday meeting. He gave a survey of **the life in the soil** and some implications for gardeners. Mike grew up gardening, learning from his father. He now offers both landscape design services and garden maintenance services, and horticultural consultancy, specifically, organic approaches. He spent about 9 years on several boards within the organic sector, including Organics Aotearoa NZ and was chair of the education, extension and research task team.

Mike outlined some key principles that he finds are increasingly important in his work:

### Principles

1. First, do no harm.  
'Yes I borrowed this from the medical profession. As herb growers you know that plants are your medicine. So you don't want to add something to your medicine that will harm you or your family.'
2. The soil is the foundation  
One mantra that is heard is:  
Healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy animals and people.
3. Gardening and growing plants means working with a diverse and dynamic and living system. This is the cycle of life.

'As a child I wondered about the complexity of what I now know are called ecosystems and communities and webs.



More recently this understanding has expanded to include the soil. What is often referred to as the **Soil Food Web**.

My soil science lectures focused on the Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium model and the physical properties of the soil. I will cover neither of these. The NPK model I consider old 20<sup>th</sup> century science. I don't have the time today to talk about soil structure and texture. Soil biology was the third leg of the chair but seemed to have been cut off. Today it is gaining increasing significance.

The sad thing is that government gives

\$32m to the fertiliser industry to find solutions that the organic sector already know.'

The following is a brief survey of the life in the soil and some implications for gardeners.

**The main groups of soil organisms** go from the microscopic to burrowing mammals.

1. Bacteria  
Rhizosphere, fix nitrogen (root nodules), cycle nutrients like sulphur  
Aerobic bacteria also help with composting
2. Archaea (not shown in the diagram above)  
Discovered in the 1970s, a new form of life  
Live in the most inhospitable places, extremophiles, heat, chemical  
Look like bacteria  
Play a big role in carbon cycling (cows' methane & climate change)  
Chemoautotrophic and photoautotrophic  
Like bacteria they are decomposers
3. Fungi  
Many fungi are not visible to the human eye – a teaspoon of good garden soil contains several metres of fungi hyphal strands. They compose the harder to breakdown stuff in your compost. There is a special group of fungi (mycorrhizal) that either encase or enter plant roots – they swap carbohydrates from the plant for moisture and nutrients from the soil to feed the plant.
4. Protozoa  
For example amoeba  
Feed on bacteria so control their populations, and nematodes  
They help mineralize nutrients for plants

5. Nematodes
  - Feed on plants, bacteria, fungi
  - This releases nutrients that have been locked up in the bodies of bacteria and fungi
  - Sense soil temperature to locate their prey
  - Transport bacteria
6. Arthropods
  - Bugs, beetles, flies, spiders (segmented bodies and limbs)
  - Many have the key role of shredding larger organic matter to open it up for decomposition
  - Being larger they help transport smaller microbes that hitch a ride on them
  - Some tunnel – ants & termites, so open up the soil for root penetration
7. Earthworms
  - A hectare of good soil will contain up to 6-7 million earthworms
  - They eat bacteria and other microbes and organic matter
  - Vermicast is 50% higher in organic matter
  - The bacteria in its gut make available nutrients
  - Burrowing to open the soil up – air/water, plant roots
8. Algae/slime molds
  - They have a role but arguable not as significant as the other groups

### Plant Root Systems

Think about the plant root system

How much of the soil volume is it in contact with? Not much

So how is this limitation overcome? By establishing relationships with bacteria and fungi in the soil. The plant controls this by releasing carbohydrates/exudates into the soil that bacteria and fungi feed on within the Rhizosphere (1-2mm).

Too many gardeners don't understand this critical relationship and too often interfere with it. One of the best ways to interfere is to use artificial fertilisers. Synthetic fertilisers are junk food. They give a quick fix.

### Compost Teas

Active, aerated

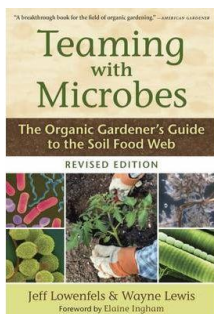
Anaerobic risks – toxic chemicals like alcohol, toxic microbes, if you do it the old way with a sack of stuff soaking in a barrel of water

Not a compost leachate

Use de-chlorinated water - why? Chlorine kills microbes

Do not apply in the middle of the day – UV light kills microbes

- Different plants prefer either a fungi or a bacterial dominant soil
- Bacteria produce nitrate nitrogen and this suits vegetables, annuals, grasses
- Fungi produce ammonium nitrogen and this suits trees and shrubs
- Bacteria supported by
  - Green and fresh compost materials
  - Wet, small particle size
  - Sugars - molasses
- Fungi supported by
  - Brown compost materials
  - Drier and larger materials
  - Humic acids, kelp, rock dust
- Using compost teas will build the microbe populations in your soil
- AACT (aerated activated compost tea) also can inoculate your plants and out compete the disease causing microbes
- Choosing the compost will enable you to create a fungi or bacterial dominant AACT
- If you use a chemical then follow up with a compost tea treatment
- Soil cultivation destroys the soil food web – kills many microbes and arthropods and earthworms
- Better to add compost to the soil surface rather than dig it in



*We are buying this book for the library. It is one recommended by Mike Palmers when he spoke to us as reported above.*

**WAIRARAPA HERB SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM 2014-2015**

**Name**.....

**Address**.....

**Postcode**..... **Telephone number** .....

**E-mail (please print clearly)**.....

**Are you an individual member of the Herb Federation? Yes/No\***

**Delete as appropriate:**  
**I do/do not wish my details to be published on the Membership List.**

**I do/do not wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail.**  
**(To help keep costs down we will send the newsletter by e-mail unless you let us know. A copy in the mail will be sent out to those who prefer to receive by post or do not have a computer).**

**\*If you are an individual member of the Herb Federation of NZ you are entitled to a \$5.00 subsidy on your fees. Please indicate on this form if you are a member.**

**Please attach your cheque for \$20.00 individual or \$30.00 family and hand to Val at the 15 April meeting or forward to: The Treasurer, Wairarapa Herb, PO Box 42, Masterton.**

**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 are 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, Debbie Dittmer, Bill Edginton.

**Officers:** Chairperson: Lyn Tomlinson; Secretary: Agnes Jones; Treasurer: Val Richardson; Publicity: Andra Bramwell; News/Library: Bill Edginton.