

U3A PEGASUS GARDENING GROUP

JUNE NEWSLETTER

Greetings everyone.

No doubt you are busy in your gardens these days cutting back perennials and hauling out old annuals; looking at the roses to see if they are healthy or really need to be dug out and replaced. After five weeks away my garden was a wilderness of rotting vegetation, weeds and forlorn plants. I am steadily working my way around the place and the results cheer me no end. I envy those of you who have been beforehand with your garden maintenance and a coffee with your feet up is your reward.

JUNE Meeting

We will be visiting Penelope Jameson's art studio at 1.30pm at 267 Ashgrove Terrace, Somerfield followed by coffee across the road at Zeroes Café in Cashmere Road. There is plenty of street parking at the front of the house and over the road on the riverside. Numbers needed beforehand so email Gaynor to let her know if you are coming.

Penny advises that her house is not very big with furniture, plants and art but if we don't mind a cosy environment we should be fine. Penny usually prepares a textile painting board to do a demonstration on and then encourages visitors to have a go themselves – she has a few aprons for those who do and gloves. No one needs to be an artist to do this just love colour and as we are in a garden group she is sure we are creative as well. If you want to "have a go" perhaps BYO gloves and old apron would be in order.

MAY Meeting

Our May meeting was held at Eileen Ballard's home which is tucked away down a long driveway off Main Road, Redcliffs. What a lovely oasis under the hill. We enjoyed a good chat and hot drink and then got down to the business of the day – scarecrow making. What fun – who knew!?! The Linwood Community Garden (April's excursion) expressed a desire for some scarecrows for their gardens – hence our mission at Eileen's. We stuffed them with pea straw and tied their extremities with string and painted their faces and gave them button eyes. We ended up with two very handsome creatures – one a jean-wearing fellow and the other a Halloween character (as requested).





APRIL Meeting

(Just in case you haven't accessed Gaynor's report online)

The Garden Group meeting on 22nd April was at the Smith Street Community Farm. This community garden is a 2 - 3 acre farm opposite Eastgate Mall and Linwood Swimming Pool car park.

Four years ago this was a CCC Depot/dumping ground for excess materials. Now it is a work in progress but evolving as a flourishing garden of organic vegetables available for the community.

Trees were thinned to let more light into the garden. No carbon material is allowed to leave the premises and this wood has been cut up and used for borders, piled high in huge mounds for a "hugelkultur bed" composting system or mulched and used on the foraging paths. A shed has been moved and bushes culled for safety reasons. Fruit trees have been planted along the foraging path for the neighbourhood to enjoy.

Everyone who volunteers or visits is welcomed and valued as part of a stronger community. The labour force is all volunteers who work half of the garden area by growing vegetables to feed up to 30 families twice a week (i.e. 60 families) with a week's supply of fresh vegetables for a token koha to pay for the chicken feed.

The other half is for plot holders who lease 10m X 2m plots to grow their own vegetables and the occasional flowers. They share their knowledge and skills with each other. Plot holders get given free compost every year as no artificial fertilisers are permitted.

Volunteers work hard and now and then get free eggs from the chickens and ducks along with some left-over vegetables. The chicken manure, vegetable waste and weeds are all used for part of the "hugelkultur" beds.

Our members were amazed at the wide range of vegetables - leafy greens, root vegetables and herbs, which feed so many people from such a small area. Impressive too was the progression planting and succession planting to keep the supply of vegetables available for most of the year.

There are plans afoot for a new building with a toilet block and development of the nursery, tunnel house and seed club area.

The application of an organic/permaculture style of gardening difficult to do on such a grand scale is managed well by Georgina Stanley (Manager). She has great horticultural skills and enthusiasm. Along with her team of volunteers, the Smith Street Community Farm has won many awards in the short time they have been there. Watch this space on Facebook or at smithst.nz for what is next at Smith Street. Following our visit, a number of our group made our way to “Leeves” at Portstone to enjoy a cup of tea.



Programme update (tentative)

- July 22 Fruit tree grower – pruning demo TBC
- August 26 Zealandia Nursery visit
- September 23 Bonsai Magic – Dirk will introduce and share the joy of bonsai growing (to be held at the Clubhouse at Streamside Court which is off St John Street, Woolston)
- October 28 T&C Marg McCarthy 18 Hilltop Lane
- November 25 Christmas Lunch – TBC but probably Cedar Park Gardens and also a visit to two other Rolleston gardens beforehand

In December our garden group does not usually hold a meeting, however there is the opportunity to join with Somerfield Garden Club and go to lunch on 9 December at the historic house and garden – Ambrosia House. More details closer to the time.

Ideas for 2025 - a visit to Adrienne Pavelka’s new home in Amberley, Rhodo Direct in West Melton, Hintons Garden/Winery in Harewood, Casa Rosa Garden in West Melton, a garden designer to give a talk on simple garden design principles, a photographer giving an interactive session on phone photography – fun and simple

Do you have any ideas for the garden group?? The committee would love to hear from you.

U3A Website

Our newsletters are available on the website <https://u3apegasus.org.nz/garden-group/>

Gardening Tips for June – courtesy of Carolyn Dixon – Somerfield Garden Club

We are well and truly into winter after a cold and frosty May. The frost we had May 10th saw the remainder of any tender plants and flowers blackened overnight. Despite this, life in the garden continues quietly onwards and if we look hard enough there are still plants to be found that will bring us joy. I found snowdrops poking through the ground under the magnolia tree, where the soil, dry as a chip over the summer, now has enough moisture for the bulbs to break ground whilst buds on the old japonica camellias are fattening up at a rapid pace.

Indoors on the coldest days, I have been reading Kath Irvines 'The Edible Backyard'. Her blog is full of advice for growing vegetables and fruit in the NZ home garden www.ediblebackyard.co.nz

Our efforts can always be improved by making changes. Some I have already implemented and include mulching any garden waste directly on the bare soil of my vegetable patch instead of putting into the green bin. The material will break down over the winter enriching the soil ready for spring. It will be an interesting experiment to see if the soil structure is improved and there is less weeding to do.

In the vegetable garden it's time to plant Garlic to ensure a supply when there is a gap in the NZ grown harvest at the end of the year. Buy Garlic bulbs from a reliable source - at a Garden Centre not the supermarket - as garlic you buy to use in the kitchen is often treated to stop it sprouting. It is one of the few annual crops that requires a long growing season from planting to harvest and needs a reasonable level of fertility and good drainage to do well, plus full sun.

Usually by late June, early July, Roses have lost their foliage and gone dormant so you can begin their annual prune. Follow up with a spray of copper to keep fungi in check. There are usually rose and fruit pruning demonstrations at Garden centres and community gardens; if you are unsure of the correct technique attend one of these.

Make a start on pruning hydrangeas aiming to leave about 12 stems per bush if they are established plants. Prune to a pair of fat buds and remove stems that are crossing over or weak. The remainder of the ornamental garden can have a general tidy up and cut back now. Most perennials can be cut to ground level apart from Penstemons, Gauras and the shrubby Salvias. Leave some cover on these to protect their lower growth until Spring.

As we have had very little rain, water plants as required particularly shrubs that were planted last season. It is almost time to start scrolling through the seed catalogues for next summer and start planning for the next growing season or enjoying a good 'gardening' read.