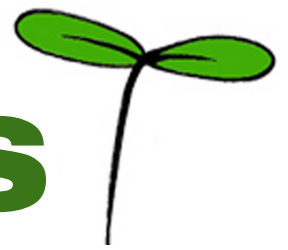


NOGS News

VOL 2: SPRING 2023



WOW! OUR KITCHEN RULES!

Wow.. pop the bubbly corks!

NOG has a fancy new kitchen which is summery, clean and dry thanks to community donations and the power of volunteering. A new kitchen will provide opportunities for NOG members to socialise now that summer is coming. It will be a clean and happy space for our workshops and other activities.

NOG members and supporters have contributed both their time and skills to the kitchen refurbishment. Josie and Kerry worked hard on fund raising applications. Holly has kept us going throughout the process and has been an unofficial project manager giving up her time to co-ordinate next steps along with our tireless and energetic chair, Kerry.



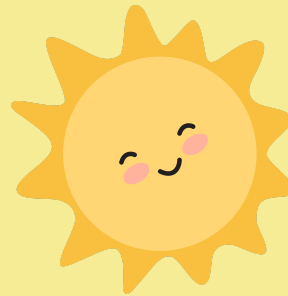
Murray and Bob, part of the big team that made it all possible, having a quick break from giving it all they've got.

The renovation process was started by Murray and Bob who cleared away rotten wood and built in new framing. Ben and Lisa did a fabulous job installing the gib, re-instating the door and undertook all the gib-stopping as well as fixing new skirting boards. Kerry and Holly sealed the floor with undercoat paint and laid and glued the new vinyl with help from Judy. Holly, Kerry and Judy painted the walls. Kerry, as a master of DIY restored some of our electricity and we've had both plumbers and electricians, including Laser Electrical, involved.

Bunnings donated much of the kitset kitchen cabinetry which was assembled by Holly and husband, Peter. The dishwasher was deemed to be beyond its time and the fridge has been cleaned and the fridge sealings demoulded by Murray. Our donated stove is fairly new.

The new kitchen will be officially opened at a shared lunch on September 17 and we hope you can all come and celebrate its completion. We'll be popping the corks!

THE GOODIES...



Thanks to two generous donors NOGS had funds to redo our kitchen. We ask NOGs members to support both Bunnings Glenfield and the Devonport Community Recycling Centre when we can, as a way of saying thank you.

Bunnings Glenfield donated framing, timber, gib-board skirting and vinyl flooring to the tune of approximately \$8000. NOGs also received a \$5000 grant from Global Action Plan Oceania who run the Devonport Community Recycling Centre. The grant was spent on helping to pay for the electrician and the plumber and on the bolts, nails, sealer, extra gib-board, and a new under the sink cabinet. NOGs chair Kerry and committee member Josie wrote and submitted the successful funding applications



Holly and Julie in the brand new kitchen.

IT'S ALL ABOUT COMPOST

Composting is a “lifelong journey”, says Pip Beagley from the Composting Collective (Auckland Council).



Pip (above) spade in hand and (right) explaining some of the finer points of composting.

Pip talked about her love of composting and how each composting system was different at a workshop held in the NOG hothouse with 11 enthusiasts on a winter's Sunday in late June, 2023. While traditional compost systems can range from individual bins to collective ones, there is a surprising rule of thumb for the ratio of content material. The ratio of green matter (nitrogen) to brown matter (carbon) is about 30/70 per cent, she says.

Green matter includes food scraps, non-invasive weeds, trimmings and clippings plus food scraps including coffee grounds. Kelp collected from local beaches when it is wet is regarded as green.

Brown matter includes dry grass clippings, dry hay autumn leaves, untreated sawdust, paper and cardboard, minus sellotape and other wrappings. Dried kelp would be regarded as brown.

Current thinking is layering and leaving compared with older thinking which involved turning the compost. Pip says there is now better understanding of the networks in compost, just like in soil.

Trouble-shooting tips from Pip.

“Traditional compost shouldn’t be too wet. If you hear it going ka-thump in the tumbler then it doesn’t have enough brown matter. If you have ants and spiders in your compost, it is probably too dry and you can moisten brown material when it is added.”

Participants also learnt about different forms of composting such as Bokashi, which was new for some. Pip brought a full Bokashi bucket to demonstrate what it looks like and put it in a NOG plot once the sun came out during the workshop.

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COMPOST CONT...

Bokashi is an anaerobic system so it doesn't smell and is great for people who do not have the space for traditional composting. Anyone can make a 'DIY' Bokashi caddy or purchase one, for example, from the Compost Collective.

Bokashi involves fermentation of food scraps before they go into the soil using the fermenting agent EM. Firstly, the Bokashi contents are held in a stable process that you can add to over a period of time, while the second part is to turn it into compost by adding water. There is no smell and no break-down of the scraps because it acts like a stomach pre-digesting. Those using Bokashi can divert up to 95% of food - a lot more than traditional composting - including meat scraps, and cooked and processed foods. Big bones or half a pumpkin are the exception as food scraps should be no bigger than a golf ball. No liquids, oils, fats or soft dairy products egg yoghurt but cheese rind is okay. The EM sawdust has to be kept dry and a tablespoon added once a day. Then dig it into the garden and, after two weeks, seedlings can be planted on top. Pip says the results are especially good for the garden's heavy feeders.

Pip and those enthusiasts who attended also looked at some of the current systems around the NOG garden.



The possibility of establishing a composting collective at NOGS was also discussed and members will have seen the large bins donated to NOGs by the Recycling Centre recently. A Composting Club is being set up. Pip talked about the Auckland Council's Food Scraps initiative which will take Auckland's scraps to Rotorua to a biodome with gas production as a by-product. So lots of opportunities to see 'food waste' as a 'food resource'!

Thanks to Pip for her composting expertise and her enthusiasm for composting opportunities at NOG. She has offered her time and expertise if there is further interest in Bokashi or further workshops on traditional composting or Worm Farming.

Kerry's Corner

We have had a terrible wet Winter with very little growth happening. We keep hoping for a warmer Spring and the wet weather just continues on, all very depressing from a gardener's point of view. We can only hope the real Spring arrives soon and we see a burst of energy across the garden. Do consider planting some flowers in your plot this year to keep Pete's bees happy. There has been limited turnover of plots over the last few months but a few new members have joined us as some plots have become available with a few members leaving. We still have a waiting list, although it is not large. We have finally established our website (see it at <https://nog-garden.com>) which means that people can find us and

contact us more easily and see more about what we do and how we work. The really good news has to be the refurbishment of our kitchen as noted in this newsletter. This will provide us with a very congenial meeting space and facility. Thanks to all those members who have volunteered and contributed to this project. We are also about to proceed into new territory in establishing a lease with Auckland Council. This will give us security of tenure at the site but will also bring some additional costs and place some extra requirements on us. We will have more information on this once the lease is established. Please remember to pass on any interesting stories about NOG, gardening tips, unusual plants, or any other matters of interest to the NOG community to Judy, our newsletter editor. We welcome your input.



PURPLE IS THE NEW BLACK

There's a purple vegetable revolution afoot at NOGs. Despite the buckets and buckets of rain absorbed by allotments purple vegetables appear to be thriving. Purple (red) cabbages, purple cauliflowers, dark purple mizuna, and purple sprouting broccoli are on show if you walk around the plots. Purple sprouting broccoli seemed to take an age over winter to sprout (we ate many of the leaves in stir fry while we waited) but in the first week of meteorological spring we started to pick the beautiful royal purple sprouts. It turns the water purple and goes green when cooked. It has a more distinctive, nuttier flavour than green broccoli. Many of the purple sprouting broccoli seedlings in allotments came from one packet of Kings Purple Sprouting Broccoli seeds and they appeared to be hardier than other seedlings eaten voraciously by pests. So all in all a winner!

Purple vegetables contain anthocyanins which are anti-oxidants that prevent and repair cellular damage. They are natural plant pigments that causes red and blue colours in certain plants. According to the literature on health benefits there are overall positives from purple vegetables such as helping to prevent heart disease, strokes and cancer. Another coloured beauty that went well was Red Dragon Carrots, again from Kings Seeds. The Food Revolution Network blog says that purple carrots have special genes that orange carrots don't and are more resistant to diseases and pests. Purple carrots originated in the Afghanistan region and it was only in the 1500s that orange carrots emerged.

The following photos show off purple and red vegetables growing and grown at NOG.



TANKS VERY MUCH💧

A drought in summer? Hard to imagine given the rain in Auckland in 2023.

NIWA predicts that summer will offer us “unseasonable warmth and humidity”. Summer is when we need to water our allotments by hose or watering can to keep plants nourished and growing. A 3000 litre Slimline tank has been donated to NOG by incoming Devonporters, Dave and Robyn George. It will help with any extra water demands over summer.

The tank was at the back of an old 1880s Anne Street cottage that the Georges have lifted and are renovating. Ben Gundy kindly lent his ute and he and a group of NOG allotment lifters transported the empty tank from Anne Street to NOG.



Now it needs to be positioned and used. If you have any ideas about which is the best location for the new tank please let a committee member know. Currently the tank is sitting just inside the gates but summer is coming.....

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW YOUR ONIONS?

We've been eating onions for over 7,000 years and we still can't get enough! If you think you know your onions, read on. These oniony facts might just blow your mind...not to mention your taste buds.

- Bronze-age humans **loved** onions and used them regularly, well before they were farmed.
- The ancient Egyptians **worshipped** the onion as a symbol of eternity.
- In the middle ages, onions were used as a form of **currency** to buy anything...even onions.
- Athletes in ancient Greece used onions to **build strength** before taking part in the games.
- While **dogs** may be wo/man's best friend. Dogs, and peoples other best friend, the onion, don't get on so well. Onions can **weaken** a dog's blood cells and lead to **anemia**.



CROSTATATA DOLCE DI BIETOLE – “BELLISSIMA”

This unusual Tuscan tart is not overly sweet, but sweet enough to serve for dessert with a glass of Vin Santo. (Recipe courtesy of Holly)

For the filling:

- 1/3 cup Arborio rice
- 1 and 1/3 cups of whole milk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup rum or Anisette
- 1 pound (450g approx) Swiss chard (Silver beet) leaves, washed thoroughly
- 6 large egg yolks
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1/16 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg or ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the dough

- 1 and 1/3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cubed, plus extra for greasing the pan
- 1 large egg

Make the filling:

- Place the rice, milk, 2 table spoons of sugar, and 1/8 teaspoon of salt in a quart pot and bring to the boil. Cook over a medium-low heat, uncovered, until the rice is soft and has absorbed the milk, about 30 minutes. Cool.
- Meanwhile, soak the raisins in the rum for 30 minutes. Bring 4 quarts (3.7 litres approx) of water to a boil. Drop in the Swiss chard and cook for 10 minutes.
- Drain, rinse under cool water, squeeze dry, and chop coarsely. Mix with the rice, egg yolks, Parmigiano, pine nuts, lemon zest, nutmeg, the raisins with their soaking liquid, the pepper, and the remaining 1/3 cup sugar and 1/8 teaspoon salt in a large bowl; refrigerate 2 hours.

Make the dough:

- Process the flour, sugar, salt, lemon zest, vanilla, and butter in a food processor with quick pulses until the ingredients resemble course meal. Add the egg and process again, with quick pulses, until a dough forms. Turn out onto a counter, gather into a ball, and shape into a flat disk. Wrap and refrigerate 30 minutes to 2 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 375F (190C approx)
- Roll out the dough on a lightly floured counter until it is 1/8 inch thick. Line a buttered 9-inch fluted springform pie pan with it, cut off excess dough, and spoon in the filling. Level the filling with a spatula.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 40 minutes, or until the crust is golden and the filling is set.
- Cool on a rack, unmould onto a platter, and serve, cut into wedges.
- Serves 8.



Crostata Dolce di Bietole. A firm favourite with Holly's Mom.