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MAY 2015 Newsletter

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Next Meet

Monday, 11 May,
7.30pm
Milford Primary
30 Shakespeare Rd
Milford

**Workshop: Shoe
deodorisers
Herb: Thymes**

Last meet

During our meet last month, members tasted different honeys and discussed how to make herbal honey, how honey is used in the home, and the UMF standards for M a n u k a h o n e y .

There was also talk around vanilla and how it is grown.

Of course, honey and vanilla make for a fantastic pairing—in food and in cosmetics!



Honey & Vanilla Poached Pears

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tsp best quality vanilla extract
- 4 pears (Beurre Bosc)

Method:

Place the honey and vanilla with 1 cup water in a saucepan and stir constantly over medium heat until boiling. Add peeled and cored pears and simmer on a reduced heat until the pears are soft and tender (around 10-12 minutes).

Honey & Vanilla Bubble Bath

Combine 1/2 cup of almond oil, 1/4 honey, 1/2 cup mild liquid body soap, white of 1 egg and a tablespoon of vanilla extract. Pour a 1/4 to 1/4 cup under running water. Store in refrigerator.

<http://www.sbelterness.com/>

In the Garden

Sowing and Growing:
In sub-tropical Auckland, there is quite a number of herbs that can be sown or propagated still (e.g chicory, chives, garlic, parsley).

Early winter tasks:
Clean out dead annuals to minimize overwintering insect and disease problems.

Remember to mark the areas where deciduous plants like tarragon and stevia grow so that you don't inadvertently dig over the resting root system in the months the plant lies dormant.

Apply a light mulch.

2015—The Year of Soils

<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/en/>

Soil is a non-renewable resource, and with the current rate of soil degradation, working towards the future of healthy soils is in everyone's interest.

Good healthy soil is:

- > The basis for healthy food production
- > The foundation for vegetation (feed, fibre, fuel, medicines etc)
- > Supportive to the earth's biodiversity and home to over a quarter of the earth's living organisms
- > Important in combating climate change by playing a key role in the carbon cycle.
- > Essential for water storage and filtering.



2015
International
Year of Soils

healthy soils for a healthy life

“After two years of intensive work, 2015 has been declared the International Year of Soils by the 68th UN General Assembly (A/RES/68/232). The IYS aims to be a platform for raising awareness of the importance of soils for food security and essential eco-system functions.”

-Wikipedia.org

Microgreens and Micro-herbs

Plating up

Microgreens and micro-herbs have been in use by top chefs in fancy restaurants since the late 1980's to add a touch of finesse, and a subtle flavour to dishes.

But microgreens are so much more than a delicate garnish on a plate.



Little big shots

They may be tiny plants, but they pack a huge punch when it comes to nutrition! Some sources cite that microgreens are between five and forty times as nutritious as their fully grown counterparts, making them worth growing and adding to your weekly menu.

Sprouts > Microgreens > Baby Leaf

Sprouts are partially germinated seeds, generally containing the seed, a rootlet and a stem. They are sprouted very densely in a soilless environment and eaten as a whole.



NOTE: There are some concerns regarding pathogens when sprouting.



Microgreens in contrast are grown in a soil or peat medium and are “ready” when the first set of leaves have expanded. They are generally grown quite densely to create a mat of small seedlings. They are snipped off just above soil level.

Baby Leaves are normally leafy greens and herbs grown in a standard way, but harvested when the leaves are still young and smaller than fully grown.



Herbs suitable for microgreens

Almost any culinary herb or salad can be grown as a microgreen. Often sharp tasting or bright coloured plants are chosen. E.g. amaranth, arugula (rocket), basil, beet, celery, coriander, cress, endive, lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach, etc.

How to grow microgreens

Easy to grow, microgreens can be cultivated the year round—In spring and summer and warmer days of autumn, you can have a dedicated garden bed for them

outside, or in the middle of the cold winter, you can just as happily grow them on a sunny windowsill in almost any container.

At the most basic they will only need a bit of soil, some sunlight and to be kept moist.

1. Fill a container almost to the top with a good quality seed raising mix (or fine growing



- medium) and smooth down.
2. Liberally sprinkle your seeds across the soil.
3. Cover the seeds with a very thin layer of growing medium (or a paper towel).
4. Keep the soil moist by spritzing regularly with a spray bottle with a fine spray nozzle.



To have a continual supply, sow regularly in smaller containers.



Permaculture



Permaculture

Permaculture is fast becoming a popular concept in ecologically aware communities that want to create sustainable systems.

Here follows a short and quick introduction to what permaculture is and how herbs can form part of this growing trend.

What is Permaculture

A definition put forward by Permaculture in NZ states that Permaculture is:

“...the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems.”

In simple terms it means that through careful planning and taking naturally occurring features into consideration, an efficient and regenerative landscape can be created that produces a great yield without day to day human intervention (work or meddling).

Permaculture Principles

The twelve Principles of Permaculture as per David Holmgren, co-

founder of the permaculture concept, is:

-  1. Observe and Interact
-  2. Catch and Store Energy
-  3. Obtain a Yield
-  4. Apply Self Regulation and Accept Feedback
-  5. Use and Value Renewable Resources and Services
-  6. Produce no Waste
-  7. Design from Patterns to Details
-  8. Integrate rather than Segregate
-  9. Use Small and Slow Solutions
-  10. Use and Value Diversity
-  11. Use Edges and Value the Marginal
-  12. Creatively Use and Respond to Change

[Read more at Permaculture NZ](#)

Herbs in Permaculture

Adding herbs to your permaculture effort makes a lot of sense. Not only will the herbs produce an abundant yield of edibles and medicines, but they also contribute to the whole by fertilising, and providing mulch, attracting pollinators and beneficial creatures, and deterring pests. They increase the biodiversity of any given land-

scape.

Some herbs specifically mentioned in relation to permaculture, and which might prove exceptional in any permaculture based garden design, include:

- Comfrey
- Yarrow
- Dandelion
- Chamomile
- Lemon Balm
- Alliums (garlic, chives, onions)
- Lavender
- Rosemary

Herb Spirals, Mandala Gardens, and Keyhole Gardens

The herb spiral, keyhole garden and mandala garden layouts take at least some of the permaculture principles into consideration, and are often installed in permaculture landscapes.

More on each of these in future newsletters.



<http://www.saturdayeveningpost.com>

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