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# June/July 2016 Newsletter



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## Last meet

During our June meetup, we had delicious bliss balls and a healthy brain chocolate bar snack! Thank you Helen!



The topic last month was brain herbs. Minette also did a little presentation and discussion on the different preparations that can be made from herbs.

## In the Garden

Finally we had some real cold this winter! Some of us even had a good frost for a few days in Auckland early in July. But winter is not a time to sit still in the garden—there's still lots to do (besides looking at next season's seed catalogues!).

If you have not managed to get your **garlic** in before or on shortest day (21 June), you still can set out your garlic through July. Sow, or plant **vegetable seedlings** of globe artichokes, broad beans, beetroot, broccoli, cabbages, cauliflowers, lettuce, peas, shallots, spinach and silverbeet. **Herbs** such as coriander, chives, dill, fennel, parsley, oregano, and rocket can be sown while hardy rosemary, sage, bay and thyme can be planted out. **Edible flowers** such as dianthus / sweet willies, calendula, violas and pansies can be sown or planted out. As can chamomile, feverfew, cornflowers and Sow poppies and sweetpeas. Lift and divide **rhubarb** corms. Plant **berries**—strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, blueberries, boysenberries and blackberries. Deciduous **fruit trees** and citrus can be planted now too. Mulch! And protect from frosts where necessary.

## Next Meet

Monday, 11 July, 7pm

Milford Primary  
Helen: 479 7344

## Herb Trivia Night

## Chilling requirements



If you have been pottering about in your garden, you may have noticed the “funny season” we’ve been having so far—summer roses are still budding and flowering even, some spring bulbs have already sent up flowers, and I know of deciduous fruit trees that have not yet dropped their leaves. The weather bureau has warned that it was an above average warm winter, and climate scientists believe the results of global warming are here to stay—and could even get worse in years ahead. Which has quite a lot of gardeners and permaculturists in a spin.

Winter chills are quite important in the garden. Not only do the cold snaps deal to many pests and diseases that could run rampant if not checked in somewhat during winters, but many fruit bearing plants have a chilling requirement to develop fruit properly in the coming growing season. Some seeds, and bulbs also need a cold period before they will come out of dormancy to sprout up in early spring.

Chilling requirements for a plant is the minimum period of cold weather after which a fruit-bearing tree or shrub will blossom. This is often expressed in chill hours, and a lack of adequate chill hours can result in the trees having delayed or substandard foliage, flowering and fruiting in the next growing season. (Wikipedia)



## Herbs for Brain Health

## Recipe

The brain, in all its complexity, helps us make sense of our increasingly fast passed and complex world. Well studied, and still enigmatic in many cases, it is the centre of our nervous system, and allows us to think, move, feel, see, hear, taste and smell.

Despite it being well protected, as with the rest of our body systems, the human brain is susceptible to damage and disease.

Some herbs have been used for many years in traditional medicines to maintain the health and functioning of the brain to its optimal capacity, and today studies have confirmed the efficacy of many of these — whether it is protecting our brains from the build up of chemicals, chelating metals, or increasing oxygen and blood flow, or helping brain functioning by reducing stress and anxiety, and increasing memory functions.

### Brahmi

Listed as one of the top herbs for brain health, waterhyssop (*Bacopa monnieri*), is said to help in all aspects of mental functioning—learning, retaining and recall of new information. It also supports the whole nervous system, reducing anxiety and minimising the effects of stress.



### Ginseng

Both Asian and American Ginseng are given as brain boosting herbs, helping brain functions, and protecting the brain cells against damage and toxins. As Gotu Kola (below), they are also adaptogenic, mitigating the negative effects of stress.

### Gotu Kola

This creeping herb is given to balance the brain, and support general brain function and increase memory. Gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*) also improves blood circulation to the brain and is adaptogenic.



### Ashwaganda

Ashwaganda (*Withania somnifera*) is another Ayurvedic herb that is hailed as a wonder for brain health. It reduces nervous exhaustion and protects the brain against cell deterioration.

### Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) are highly antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, improving circulation to the brain, and protecting brains cells from protein build up and toxins.



### Rosemary and Sage

Both these common culinary herbs are associated with better brain health too— antioxidant, increasing circulation, protecting against infection and increasing memory. Rosemary is for remembering after all, and use of rosemary may increase concentration, as well as the speed and accuracy of recall.

### Other herbs

Other herbs listed for their specific positive actions for brain health include Rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*), Reishi mushroom, Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Chinese club moss (*Huperzia serrata*)

and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*).

Superfoods for the brain further include nuts and seeds, berries, cacao (good quality dark chocolate), green tea, cayenne, and red grapes.

A good healthy lifestyle is still your first defence against brain function problems, and optimum brain health—get enough sleep, relax (through mindfulness and meditation), enjoy physical exercise and healthy time in the unpolluted outdoors, and foster balanced and nutritious eating habits.

Lastly, keep your brain working— studies have shown that people who engage in cognitive exercises show less inclination for brain health issues, mental fatigue, brain fog or dementia later in life.

### Recipe

#### Dr Libby's Brain Balls

Ingredients

- 2 cups walnuts
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup coconut, shredded
- 2/3 cup cocoa powder
- 8 fresh dates, pitted & chopped
- 1/4 cup of water
- Pinch of salt
- 1 to 3 drops peppermint oil (opt)

Method

Combine the walnuts, sunflower seeds, dates and coconut in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse for 30 to grind the ingredients..

Add the cocoa powder, salt, water and the peppermint oil to the bowl and process until the mixture forms a paste. Form the paste into medium sized balls by rolling a portion of the paste between your palms. Place the finished balls on a tray lined with waxed paper and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.