

Summer was short and sweet, then we headed straight into winter with the southerlies and the snow. Spare a thought for our producers when you struggle to work hugging your coat around you – they are often outside all day in their weatherproof gear, so that we can have a good stock of vegetables.

The cold snap had an amazing effect on the Autumn colours this year. Have you noticed how the food so often mirrors the colours of the seasons? Think vegetable soup – the orange of the pumpkins and carrots, the brown of the kumara, the green of the cavolo nero – I'm getting quite carried away by my own lyricism...on to more mundane things...

HUTT SHOP

The Hutt shop is going from strength to strength. Catherine has moved the stock so that the baby products and the tinned food are more visible. Baby products are a fast growing area in our shops. If there are items you need and don't see on the shelves please let the staff know and we'll order them in for you from the Wellington store.

KAPITI SHOP

The Kapiti shop has a new manager. Paul Pearson joined us at the beginning of April. He has an organic orchard in Tauranga, a background in retail and he's also involved in the Steiner school in Raumati. He has heaps of ideas and has already put up new shelves and experimented with new ways of displaying stock.



Paul Pearson in Wellington shop

PLASTIC BAGS

Thank you to all who responded to us about paying for plastic bags. Our decision to move to biodegradable shopping bags was supported by all but one of those who replied.

We believe, as a leader in sustainable business, we need to live out our values. So we have sourced cornstarch shopping bags that are fully biodegradable – they will break down in your compost heap. Until supermarkets start using these bags they will be a lot more expensive than plastic shopping bags, so we will charge 10c each for them and absorb the rest of the cost ourselves. At first they will be optional and will be provided alongside our green plastic shopping bags. But we will gradually phase out the non-renewable green bags. We will continue to offer recycled plastic bags – please keep bringing them in – and we also sell jute bags from Trade Aid, cotton bags from Eco-Store and other permanent shopping bags.

The other exciting news about the Kapiti shop is – we're moving. Not very far – into a new custom-built shop which will be a little larger than the one we're in at the moment. We may actually be able to fit in a filing cabinet – something we can't do in the current shop. But more importantly we'll have more shelves for more products, so we'll be expanding our range. Now is the time for Kapiti customers to let Paul know about products you'd like us to stock.

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Commonsense Organics

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WHAT'S NEW?

- Have you noticed our new shelf talkers? We've simplified the information to organic/non-organic and gluten-free. As we introduce them around the shops (Wellington first, then Hutt and Kapiti) individual items will no longer be priced – so just check the shelf talker.
- We have a new nappy provider – **Mother-ease**. Marion has been researching different options after feedback from some customers that our current nappies take a long time to dry and are not as absorbent as other brands. So far the feedback on Mother-ease products is very good.
- Have you tried the new **Rush Munroe ice-creams**? We've been hearing for 2 years that Rush Munroe was going organic – and finally they're here! And they're so-o delicious – Irish crème, Coffee and Gingerbread, and Persimmon.
- We also have 2 new **Pitango soup** flavours – **Seafood Gumbo** and **Moroccan Chicken**. They've both shot to the top of the soup favourites list – except for our own fresh soup of course.
- Talking of soup – we have two new tinned soups – **Lobster Bisque** and **Clam Chowder**.
- We now stock **San Remo gluten-free pastas**. They're not organic, but they do add to our gluten-free stock and were requested by customers. They're proving very popular.
- Bakeworks have a new **gluten-free breadcrumbs**. They're crispy golden and toasted.
- We have some great new **Animal Cookies** – chocolate and vanilla. And the vanilla ones are gluten-free.
- We have a new meat supplier – **Tahi meat**. The cuts are bigger than our other butcher – but check out the prices. The rump steak is only \$15.20kg. Get it home, cut it up and it will do at least three meals for a household of two. If there's no fresh in stock, try the freezer.
- We have new **rice cakes** from Lundberg and they come in sesame tamari or mochi sweet – good for a change.
- We now have **unsalted butter** – we keep it in the freezer

Producer News

- Sad news – **Clean Greenz** have shut up shop. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Steffan Browning for providing us with beautiful quality greenhouse grown Bio-Gro certified vegetables over the last 14 years.
- Good news – Glenn Cant has picked up the vacuum left by closure of Karuna Gardens and is providing us with a consistent supply of salad greens, which he is growing on his own account, leasing land from Common Property in Te Horo. The salad mix is fabulous – and it keeps for ages. We are trying to persuade him to pick up the growing of the greenhouse winter vegetables – and wouldn't it be nice if we could find a regular source of mushrooms...
- While the demand for organic produce continues to rise, the supply does not. We are constantly on the look-out for new suppliers to keep up the range and quality of produce. Jim and Marion will be visiting producers this winter to talk to them about our needs. If there are particular vegetables or fruit you want to see us stocking, talk to Nicola, our produce manager about it.

WHAT'S BACK IN?

- Yay – **persimmons**. I have to admit I'm not a fan of the astringent ones, though the connoisseurs tell me these are the real persimmons. But I do love the sweet ones. Easy impressive dessert – blend 3 very ripe persimmons. Gently stir through 250mls plain yoghurt, so that the dish is a combination of white and red swirls. Looks great and you don't tell them how easy it is...
- **Commonsense soup** is a legend in its own lunchtime – and it's available every day except Sunday. Every so often Selamawit tries out a European soup – but mostly it's a combination of herbs and spices and vegetables that are inspired by Ethiopian flavours.
- Black **beluga lentils** are the Rolls Royce of lentils – elevating the humble lentil to a whole new level. Try them in your puy lentil recipe for a change.
- **Jerusalem artichokes** are a great warming food. Great as a soup and they're also really good mashed with potato on top of a shepherd's pie or fish pie.

WHAT'S NOT AVAILABLE?

- Pine nuts
- Avocado oil
- Oxfam Fair Trade Hot Chocolate – Trade Aid will have another shipment arriving mid-June

Our Wellington naturopaths have recently researched learning and behavioural difficulties in children for a presentation to teaching advisors.

LEARNING/BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES IN CHILDREN – DIETARY FACTORS

Studies have shown that dietary factors are implicated in behavioural and learning problems in children and young adults. There are a number of essential nutrients which are often deficient in children with ADHD and this can precipitate or aggravate symptoms.

To ensure the child is receiving optimum nutrition, the diet needs to be based on whole-foods and contain a wide variety of fresh fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole-grains. Deep sea or oily fish such as salmon, trout and tuna should be eaten regularly to boost essential fatty acids. Nuts and seeds* will also provide valuable oils and protein. Enzyme and nutrient-dense foods such as sprouts, grasses and seaweeds provide great fuel for the brain as well as improving digestion and nutrient absorption. Dairy is best limited to organic yoghurt, as sensitivities to unfermented milk products are common in children with behavioural problems. Iron is important for brain development: small amounts of lean red meat will help to boost iron stores, as will dark green vegetables and kelp. Lecithin or fermented soy products (tofu, tempeh and miso) can be included to help protect nerve membranes.

Many children are fussy eaters and will be reluctant to change their diets. Make the changes subtle and gradual with healthy alternatives to the previously consumed foods. A high-potency children's multi

vitamin/mineral supplement may be required to address deficiencies during the transition period.

Food allergies and dietary sensitivities are also frequently seen in children with behavioural difficulties. A marked improvement is often observed when the offending foods are removed from the diet. It is vital to limit or avoid sugars completely, while artificial flavours, colours, preservatives and aspartame should be eliminated from the diet. These ingredients have been found to have a direct, negative impact on learning and behaviour for these children. Allergy testing may be advisable, as many other foods such as wheat, eggs and those containing salicylates** can also be trigger foods.

A probiotic supplement may be indicated in cases of repeated antibiotic use. This will rebalance intestinal flora which should improve digestion, nutrient absorption and resistance to allergies.

* Allergies to nuts are common – avoid peanuts and beware of any reactions to others

** Salicylates are chemicals present in certain fruit and vegetables. They are found in tomatoes, capsicum, chillies, some apples, oranges, plums, grapes, berries, raisins and cucumbers. Avoiding/limiting these foods for a period brings positive results in some individuals.

Anya Nidd ND

LEARNING/BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES IN CHILDREN – ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS FOR BRAIN FUNCTION

Good fats (omega 3 & 6) are essential for brain and eye function. Sixty per cent of the brain is made up of these good fats – lipids. Studies have shown that children with learning and/or behavioural difficulties often have deficiencies of omega 3 and 6 essential fatty acids. This can be due to a dietary deficiency or poor conversion of short chain fatty acids into long chain fatty acids. When this happens transmission of messages between brain cells are slow and/or disrupted.

Omega 3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids are found in deep sea and oily fish (salmon, tuna, sardines).

Oily fish supplements must contain a high level of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) which is the most important omega 3 for the brain. Only quality Omega 3 fish oils that are high in DHA and are free of contaminants eg mercury should be used.

Good sources of omega 6 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids are found in sunflower oil, walnuts and evening primrose oil. The most important omega 6 fatty acid for brain function is GLA (gamma linolenic acid) which is

found abundantly in evening primrose oil.

WINZ may provide a Child Disability Allowance if your child has an ongoing disorder and requires subsidised treatment.

Meryl J Kirkham ND.

Anya Nidd and **Meryl Kirkham** are both qualified naturopaths and Anya is also a medical herbalist.

We are available for basic over-the-counter assistance in store but more complicated cases are best addressed in a naturopathic consultation.

This way we can assess each case more thoroughly and provide individualised treatment using practitioner-only remedies.

To book your appointment phone:

Anya – 021 257 6116 or

Meryl – 977 4895

In the autumn there is plenty to do in my organic garden; the leaves are falling and I am raking them up to put either in the compost, or on to the garden as a mulch. Over the summer months I revamped one of my compost areas and found a cute nest of hedgehogs living cosy and dry under the pallet that my compost bin was sitting on. So I really only half finished the job as I had to leave the pallet in place for the hedgehogs. Some people are really against hedgehogs because they do carry diseases but at night they scurry around eating your snails and slugs, so as long as you don't pick them up there's no danger and they are an effective organic eating machine. They have since left home and I can finish the job but now I have seen how they live I will be providing more pallets next year for them to nest under.

There is not much bug life around now but it's time to look around your plants and see where the cicadas and other pests have laid their eggs. Cicadas leave a distinctive v shape cut on branches so prune them out and burn them as they can be a perfect entry point for fungi and bacteria to enter and effect our plants. We stock a natural pruning paste made by Earthwise, which is good to use after pruning branches. Now is not the time for a full on prune - just get rid of any obvious pest damage. Pruning in late winter or very early spring is best for most trees.

Good hygiene is part of all gardening, to prevent diseases and fungi being transferred between plants. I wash all my pruning tools with pure soap and spray on a fungicide in autumn and spring. I use the fungal deterrent that we sell in our stores. I also clean up around the garden, with a final weed before my winter mulch goes on and a spray of the fungicide to catch any spores that could be lurking around just waiting for the right conditions to come back so they can attack again.

Lastly in my clean up mode I have planted out a green crop (lupins this year) in the areas where I will be putting my summer vegetables next season. It acts as a live mulch and adds nutrients to the soil. I dig it into the soil about 2 or 3 weeks before I plant any vegetables. This attracts the worms and adds organic matter that will break down and feed my next crop.

Our range of gardening products has grown lately with the introduction of corn starch products, including a black cornstarch ground cover (great for strawberries) and cornstarch doggie do bags to collect up the droppings, but you should put them in the bin not the compost. We also have cornstarch compost bags; these have been around a while and if you use them for compost bucket liners you can put the whole lot in the compost without having to touch the contents or have dirty old plastic bags to dispose of.

Happy gardening

Catherine

Commonsense Organics newsletter is written by Marion Wood with help from staff

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