

Expresso

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Rural Women
NEW ZEALAND
Ngā Wāhine Taiwhenua o Aotearoa



From left: Serena Lyders, Dianne Downey, Jody Drysdale, Amelia Dunbar, Sarah Martelli, Kate Cullwick, Dayna and Nicole Buchanan.



NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards 2022

This year's highly anticipated NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards were held at the Public Trust Hall in Wellington on the evening of Friday the 18th of November.

Each year, the RWNZ Business Awards showcases the best and brightest of rural women in business. Our 2022 entrants were fabulous examples of innovation, dedication to sustainable business principles, the joy of craft, commitment to community and building strong, resilient networks.

There was a record number of entries into the awards this year, and after rigorous judging and interview processes, RWNZ was pleased to announce the winners:

NZI SUPREME WINNER & Creative Arts: The Bitches' Box and Amelia Guild Art – Amelia Dunbar (sponsored by Public Trust Hall)

Love of the Land: The Limery – Dianne Downey (sponsored by MPI)

Emerging Business: Foxtrot Home – Kate Cullwick (sponsored by the Ministry for Women)

Rural Health and Wellbeing Excellence: Strong Woman – Sarah Martelli (sponsored by Access Community Health)

Innovation: Hopefield Hemp – Jody Drysdale (sponsored by Hynds Rural)

Rural Champion: Whānau Consultancy Services – Serena Lyders (sponsored by Jarden)

Bountiful Table: The Craypot – Dayna and Nicole Buchanan (sponsored by Havana Coffee Works).

It was a pleasure to hear from each of the winners – tales of their triumphs, their challenges, the support they receive from their loved ones and their teams, and the joy they all create in bringing their unique offerings to market.

The beautiful Public Trust Hall was the perfect venue to showcase our winner's successes, accompanied by delicious catering supplied by Nosh Catering, both guests and Members were entertained and inspired throughout the evening.

RWNZ would like to thank all of our sponsors, our suppliers and our contributors who assisted us in making this event an absolute success.



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



 **Manatū Wāhine**
Ministry for Women





Kia ora Members

It was so good to catch up with those who travelled to Wellington for the AGM and Business Awards recently. These face to face opportunities to come together are so valuable.

My sincerest congratulations to those who were presented with awards at our AGM. Thank you for all that you do for your communities in the name of RWNZ. You motivate and inspire us all. Congratulations also to our winners in the Speech and Short Story competitions. We admire your creativity and confidence in sharing a little piece of yourselves with us.

Our incredible Business Award winners are truly inspirational in so many ways including their business acumen, innovation, and contributions to their communities. This year's NZI Supreme Award winner, Amelia, is an outstanding example of what businesswomen are achieving in rural New Zealand.

The celebration and recognition of our winners at the Awards Gala Dinner and Ceremony is such a positive experience and a wonderful way to reflect on the year gone by and herald the end of 2022.

We look forward to hearing lots of great stories from you all in the New Year on our National Project, "Aotearoa New Zealand - Know your local Community. This is an opportunity for us all to expand our knowledge and understanding of the range of cultures that make up modern New Zealand and to celebrate where we come from. Strengthening, Supporting and Connecting People and Communities is what we are all about.

My very best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year. I hope you can spend some quality time relaxing with those who are important to you over the summer break.

Meri Kirihimete

Gill

RWNZ National Competition Winners

There were some close competitions for many of the RWNZ awards and prizes this year.

Here are the results of the National Awards:

Best Branch President's Report:

Verla Smith (Pelorus Sound Branch, Region 3)

Honora O'Neill Gong - Best Provincial Officer's Report:

Marg Verrall (Mid Canterbury Provincial, Region 2)

Lady Blundell Tray - Best Innovative Project Award:

Region 6 Greater Waikato - Charity Online Auction

We also had the opportunity to celebrate the creativity of our Members too. The Speech Competition theme year was "A Modern Rural Woman's Guide to Etiquette," and we welcomed two competitors for the Tarrant Bell and the Tutaenui Bell. The former was won by Lorna Crane (Murchison Branch, Region 3) and the latter by Frances Beeston (Winchmore Branch, Region 2).

Members from Region 3 scooped both the Awards for the Writing Competitions. Lorna Crane won the Marlborough Short Story Competition and Liz Evans won the Olive Burdekin Prize for Advanced Writers.



RWNZ AGM 2022

The Rural Women NZ AGM was held at the Public Trust Hall in Wellington on Friday the 18th of November.

It was a welcome return to the collective format after the challenges of last year with over 50 members from across the regions attending in person at the AGM, the first event of the day.

After rousing renditions of Te Aroha and our National Anthem, the meeting was brought to order by Gill Naylor, National President. Following greetings from the Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro and the ACWW International President Magdie de Kock, we were fortunate to have an address from Claire Mahon, the RWNZ nominee for the position of Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee on the ACWW Board of Trustees. We all wish her well for the upcoming elections.

Moving through the programme, we celebrated our RWNZ National Awards:

- Olive Craig Tray - Member of Excellence: Liz Morgan (Region 6 Greater Waikato - Waitanguru Branch)
- Best Branch President's Report: Verla Smith (Pelorus Sound Branch)
- Honora O'Neill Gong - Best Provincial Officer's Report: Marg Verrall (Mid Canterbury Provincial)
- Lady Blundell Tray - Best Innovative Project Award: Region 6 Greater Waikato - Charity Online Auction

These are the results of voting on the Motions put to the Membership for resolution during the Annual General Meeting. They are the final results and are a combination of postal votes received and the votes in person on the day of the Meeting.

The results declared by the Returning Officer are:

The following were Adopted:

1. Minutes of the AGM held on Friday, 19 November 2021
2. Minutes of the Remits Meetings held on Thursday, 3 March 2022
3. Annual Reports for 2021/2022
 - Executive Reports
 - Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report
 - Annual Board Reports
 - Annual Regional Leadership Reports
4. Appointment of BDO Wellington Limited as Auditor for 2022/23
5. Bylaw Changes: Bylaws 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12

The following Motion was Not Adopted:

The National Board Resolution for an increase to the annual membership fee.

Congratulations to this year's awards winners.

Taking a moment to observe the contributions of the Members on our Roll of Honour and those that are no longer with us, we then moved into the AGM proper until lunchtime, after which the afternoon agenda included a thought provoking panel discussion regarding Rural Health Reforms with Te Whatu Ora Health NZ and Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Health Network, and our annual speech and writing competition. Congratulations to Frances Beeston and Lorna Crane, this year's winners of our RWNZ speech competition. And some further congratulations to Lorna Crane, winner of the Marlborough Short Story Competition and Liz Evans, winner of the Olive Burdekin Prize for Advanced Writers.

Our jam-packed AGM agenda was concluded with a Q&A session with the RWNZ board. We would like to take this opportunity to thank attending Members for their robust questioning and sharing of concerns and challenges that the Regions are facing. It is through your considered contributions that we continue to evolve and grow as an organisation, based on your honest feedback and participation.

Inspired and enlivened after the conclusion of the AGM, we begin to look forward as an organisation to a new year of Rural Women New Zealand, supported by our Members, new and old.

Postal voting

Thank you to those who contacted us about the delay in their report booklets being delivered. We have a tight deadline for these as we cannot have these printed until we have the signed off audit report. Although we do our best to build in contingency and have a strong commitment from the auditors to get the report to us as soon as practically possible, even a small delay has impacts through the production process. We do rely on NZ Post meeting their delivery targets and in some cases, there was a very efficient delivery but this is not consistent. We use a mailhouse service to give the reports the best chance of getting to you as speedily as possible.

There are still significant delays in the postal system that we cannot control. For example, some reports took more than 2 weeks to reach Members. Some Members dated the day they posted their voting papers back to us and there are cases of these taking two weeks or more whilst others arrived in a very short timeframe. We were encouraged that the total votes for this year's AGM was only slightly less than last year (just over 20 votes difference) and are therefore confident that delays did not impact on the outcome. We will continue to offer alternatives such as scanning and emailing and consider ways in which we can maximise participation in the voting process.



National Office Update

The National Office team wishes all our Members a very happy Christmas. The Office will close from Wednesday, 21 December and reopen on Monday, 9 January in 2023.

As the days grow longer, the sunshine is streaming into our new home at 175 Victoria Street. We are just waiting on the last of our furniture so we can fully unpack and be completely settled in by year end. If you are visiting Wellington and would like to visit our new space, please let us know as we would love to welcome you for morning or afternoon tea.

There has been quite a bit going on in our policy work in the last few weeks. After surveying Members on Pricing Agriculture Emissions and the Independent Electoral Review, RWNZ has prepared and lodged written submissions on both. Members can view these submissions on the RWNZ website or phone National Office to request that a copy be sent out to them.

Gabe accompanied Gill to Fieldays in late November / early December. They embarked on a very full schedule of appointments, meetings, activities and events during their two day stay. Felicity has been working on membership renewal reminders. Please do not hesitate to contact National Office if you have any questions regarding your membership.

As well as overseeing the audio-visual components and online marketing and publicity for both the AGM and Business Awards, Mia continues to produce Black Heels and Tractor Wheels. She has also been working on the Communications Survey which accompanies this Expresso. We would very much appreciate your feedback so that we can continue to

refine and update the news and communications that you receive from us.

There is some new collateral in production. Look out for a range of brochures which will have versions for each Region highlighting the activities and members particular to those areas. Kylie and Lisa are working on these and hope to have them out in circulation early in the new year. Kylie is also supporting the Triple F Organising Committee which is preparing a fabulous North Island event for late April next year.

Marianne is a busy member of the Membership Working Group. She has also been working with Lisa on building connection with and new programmes for our Activators, as well as South Island regional activity.. Lisa continues to work on a potpourri of projects including the Activator programme, a business directory for rural women and various centennial plans.

Angela continues to recuperate from an operation on her leg and will return to us in the new year. We will be saying farewell to Alison and hello to Janet this month. Alison has been with us on a temporary contract basis since June in the accounts role. A permanent appointment has now been made for this role and the Office team look forward to welcoming Janet Ziegler in mid-December.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact the Office by phone or email with any questions or comments you might have. Thank you for your support and many kindnesses throughout this year and we look forward to working with you again in the new year.

Rural Women New Zealand would like to thank:

Premier Partner:



Partners:



Supporters:



National Project Update



In November 2020, Rural Women New Zealand passed two remits creating National Projects in relation to gynaecological health and wellbeing.

The purpose of the National Projects was to raise awareness about the five kinds of gynaecological cancers affecting women. These are often “silent” cancers that no-one talks about and there is very little information available in the public domain. The Project also raised funds for three charities working to educate and inform women about these cancers, lobby for and raise funds for research on them and promote the development of a diagnostic test for the early canine detection of ovarian cancer.

These three charities were:

- Talk Peach
- Cure Our Ovarian Cancer
- K9 Medical Detection

The project was originally going to run from March 2021 until the end of February 2022. However, the ongoing response to COVID-19 with lockdowns, travel restrictions and limits of gathering sizes meant some planned events had to be postponed. The end date for the National Project was extended to the end of June to allow opportunities for these events to be re-scheduled.

Several Regions held workshops and seminars and invited representatives of our three charities to speak at them. Our sincere thanks to the women who shared their experiences at these events. Because the early symptoms of these cancers can be mistaken for other conditions, it was invaluable to learn the signs to look for and how this can impact outcomes.

These cancers are not discriminating – they affect women of all ages, ethnicities and situations. The lived experience of our speakers left us no doubt that being straightforward and unafraid and breaking the silence surrounding gynaecological cancers is a powerful tool in preventing further loss of life.

The total raised by all the events and projects held around the country during the Project was \$44,771. One of the events that had twice been re-scheduled was originally an in-person auction in Region 6 Greater Waikato. With some innovative thinking and incredible goodwill from lots of sponsors, the event was converted to a hugely successful online auction which raised \$27,116.05 for the National Project.

Thanks to all the Members, speakers, attendees and sponsors who made this project so successful. Creating opportunities to lift the cloak of silence and empower women about their health is a magnificent achievement. Several other organisations, including Soroptimists International, have now picked up this campaign and more women will be reached with this vital information.

“Ovarian cancer is the leading cause of gynaecological cancer death in New Zealand yet most women are unaware of the symptoms and there is no government funding for awareness and most years none for research. The support of Rural Women NZ and their community has helped us shine a light on this overlooked cancer to educate women and fund vital research to improve ovarian cancer survival.”

- Jane Ludemann of Cure Our Ovarian Cancer.



Member of Excellence

One of the highlights of the Annual General Meeting is the opportunity to recognise the incredible work undertaken by RWNZ Members. The nomination process for these National Awards is often conducted by stealth so that the announcement that they are the recipient of an honour comes as a complete surprise to the winner.

This year's recipient of a Member of Excellence Award was definitely taken aback. Liz Morgan from Region 6 Greater Waikato was left speechless as she was called to the stage to receive her certificate and badge.

Chief Executive Gabe O'Brien read the citation which described Liz' service in many roles and on many projects for her Branch, Provincial, Area and Region over the years. Of special note was the role that "Aunty Liz" has played in mentoring others who have been inspired, in the face of challenging decisions, to ask, "What would Aunty Liz do?"

Congratulations Liz!



Bursaries & Grants

Congratulations to the following recipients of bursaries and grants recently made by the Education Bursaries Committee:

Audrey Reid Education Grant - Alison Gale from Region 7, *Post Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management and Development*

Secondary School Boarding Bursary - Kaeden Garvey from Region 6 Taranaki

Secondary School Boarding Bursary (2 recipients) - Max King from Region 3 and Jayla Tata-Jones from Region 6 Greater Waikato.

Year 12 & 13 Boarding Bursary - Amanda Jephson from Region 4.

Three grants have recently been made from the Adverse Events Relief Fund to support people impacted by the devastating flooding in the Marlborough region.

Applications are currently open for a number of grants and bursaries including the:

- Korokipo Branch Agricultural and Horticultural Tertiary Bursary
- Tararua Provincial Education Grant
- North Taranaki Provincial Holiday Cottage Investment Fund
- Region 5 (Rimau) RWNZ Norma Evans Education Award
- Adna Poppe Memorial Bursary

For more information on the eligibility criteria and application forms, please visit our website at: www.ruralwomennz.nz and click on the Our Funds and Grants tab.

Centennial Committee

The Committee met in early November via Zoom to review progress to date on the larger projects that have already been identified and will be widely supported. The Committee was also really encouraged with the creative and innovative ideas that it continues to receive from Members. There is still plenty of scope for more celebratory projects and initiatives as we look to plan a timetable of events for the year so please send ideas to any one of the Centennial Committee members listed below.

The centennial commemorative rose project is on track. Thanks to our Region 4 Members for managing this fabulous initiative. The soon to be selected rose will need a name and we will be calling for suggestions early next year.

The centenary book project is also progressing well. The sub-committee reported back on their work to date and the Committee reviewed the proposed content and scope of the book. Work is now underway on quoting some options for the production of a book worthy of RWNZ's rich and vibrant history. We will be launching a centennial writing competition early next year to gather Members stories and anecdotes to enrich our very special story.

At the AGM in November, National President Gill Naylor introduced another of the centennial initiatives – our very own RWNZ Ancestry Project. The aim of this project is to trace the descendents of the Foundation Members of the Women's Division of the Farmer's Union in 1925. Bronwyn Main has already traced and met with the granddaughter of one of these original fifteen Members. One of the aspects that makes this a little tricky is that women of that time were always referred to by their husbands' initials and surnames. How times have changed.

The Centennial Committee Members are:

Back in 1925

Mrs D. B. Naylor
Mrs K. R. Macaulay
Mrs L. W. Bagrie
Mrs J. J. Clark
Mrs D. Perkins
Mrs R. E. Townshend
Mrs R. K. Vickers
Miss Thompson

Today in 2022

Gill Naylor
Pat Macaulay
Bev Bagrie
Emma Higgins
Julie Perkins
Bronwyn Main
Margaret Vickers
Lisa Thompson

RWNZ Ancestry Project

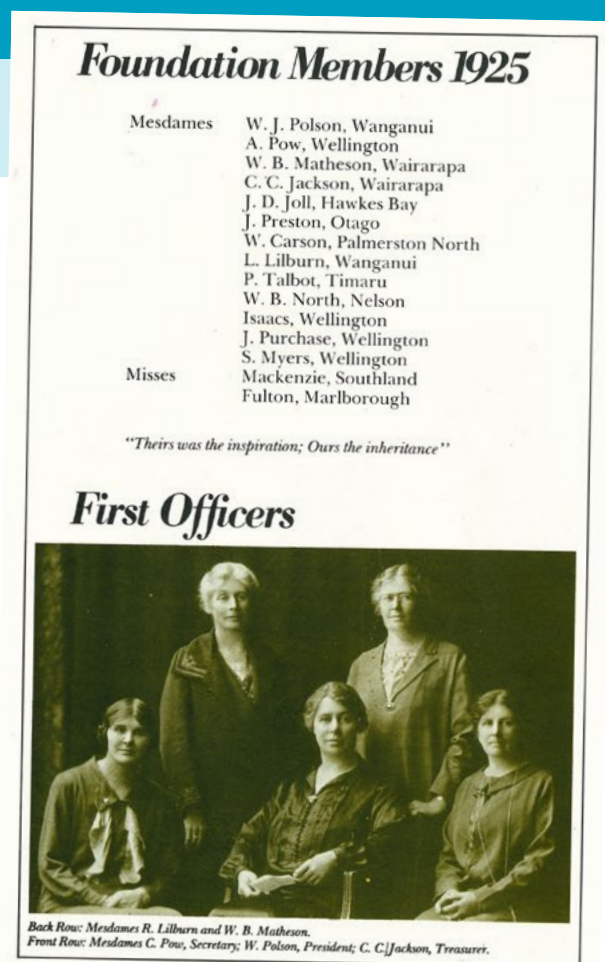
Calling all genealogy super sleuths and local historians –
We Need You!

As part of preparations for RWNZ's centennial year celebrations, we are undertaking a search for the descendants of the Foundation Members.

This remarkable group of forward-thinking and innovative women came together for afternoon tea in Wellington in July 1925 and from there a movement was born. We want to trace the DNA of our organisation by finding and reconnecting with the descendants of our Founders. We know where these women came from to attend that event and we know the proper names of some of the attendees. For others, we only know their married names (with their husband's initials) or their maiden names. So, we want to draw on your expertise and local knowledge to help us identify and reconnect with relatives of our Founders.

The mission, should you choose to accept it, is to get out your detective toolkits, dust off your family trees and use your special agent sleuthing skills to help us locate and reach out to their families.

Here is the information recorded in Service Simply Given which was produced to celebrate the Golden Jubilee in 1975.



Marlborough Short Story Competition

This competition is open to all amateur writers who are Rural Women New Zealand Members and who have not won this competition in the previous two years or had their writing published – apart from contributions to newspapers or in the RWNZ Express magazine. The theme for this year’s competition was Gardening and our winner is Lorna Crane (Region 3).

Our Secret Garden

By Lorna Crane (Region 3)

Brat is the name given to children brought up on military bases overseas and the dandelion was chosen as the symbol for the Brats because dandelion plants can put down roots anywhere, they adapt easily and are hard to destroy. I am an Army Brat.

As a child, growing up on military bases, a verdant garden was a strange and wonderful thing, only learned about in Frances Hodgson Burnett’s book – “The Secret Garden”.

Concrete parade grounds and arid deserts formed my surroundings in the compound of mud houses where we lived in Fayid, Egypt. Later, in Cyprus, olive trees and pomegranates were the dusty green backdrop to my childhood games.

It was only when we went on leave back “home” to Dublin that I experienced a backyard garden. Our hospitable relatives must have been relieved each afternoon when children were sent out to play in the garden. Small as it was, there were plenty of places for hide and seek in the bushes and somersaults on the tiny patch of lawn.

I was the youngest of the extended family and the only one not attending school, so I had the good fortune to accompany my aunt and Mother on daily walks. It was on one such outing that we encountered a real gardener! Our return route from the Ranelagh shops bordered the allotments. I was excited to see a man tending his plants and stopped to ask him what he was growing. In his broad Irish brogue, he informed me “For sure, t’is Rhubarb” and without hesitation he bent and plucked some sticks of rhubarb and presented them to me. Rhubarb has been a favourite for me ever since!

As a Brat I learned to move house and change school every three years, or even more frequently. In Cyprus large terracotta pots on the front porch displayed bright orange-red geraniums, but there were no fences around the houses and no gardens to speak of. So it was that neither my father, nor mother, sister or brothers ever learnt the art of gardening. In fact, years later, having ceased Army service and living in civvy street, maintaining a tidy garden was considered a chore. Our house was the least tidy in the street as it took a lot of chivvying from my mother to entice any family member to push the lawnmower, let alone to pull out weeds!

It was not until I was married that I truly understood what

a magical thing a garden can be. Our first home was on a quarter acre and, instead of lawn, my keen spouse filled the backyard with vegetables. Being of Germanic heritage his planting was measured precisely in parallel rows. The sweetcorn stood proudly waving its fronds at the beans and peas that grew in equally regular lines. There were furrows for potatoes, lettuce and tomatoes, radish, lettuce and even onions. Along the front fence he planted Japanese Cherry Trees, his only concession to growing something we could not eat. I looked on with admiration. I was there to harvest and preserve but the results were all due to his diligence and sense of purpose. We were able to supply our family and friends with produce and never had to buy vegetables.

Our family grew in number so the quarter acre suburban section was traded and replaced with a small country farm.

This Army Brat gradually morphed into an ardent Earth Mother, nurturing our babies, feeding calves and piglets, tending a flock of sheep and actually grinding the wheat to make the flour to bake the stone-ground wholemeal bread. Self-sufficiency was the game and I revelled in it! But I was still not a gardener.

The garden grew. The lawn was dotted with swings, sandpit, climbing frame and, as the children grew older high jumps, long jumps and even a pole-vaulting area were included. A pony dwelt in the paddock and mini-bikes zoomed alongside our access lane.

The vegetable garden was enough to feed the village and dignified shelter belts framed our self-sufficient domain. Our sons became champion gymnasts and all the children played musical instruments and sang and danced in shows and competitions. For an army brat it was all too good to last.

The storms came and, in the chaos, this dandelion seed blew away.

The ensuing years factored in frequent change, absolutely suited to an army brat and true to the dandelion’s nature I adapted and survived.

After travelling the world, I returned to New Zealand with a husband who, having had a career in the Royal Navy, understood my love of change.

In Australia we had been constantly on the go at the beck and call of ships at sea, power station, chemical plants and other industrial operations. There were no gardens to be seen on our daily round.

Along the coast of Central Queensland there were mangoes, banana palms and citrus trees, but inland the terrain more often resembled the surface of the moon. Even so there is something about the outback of Australia that lodges an imprint deep in the soul of those lucky enough to have experienced it.

In our mid-sixties my husband and I both started to long for a place to put down roots. We yearned to experience the four seasons once again and the desire to grow potatoes grew stronger; somehow, we ended up in Murchison.

We found an old cottage on a three-quarter acre section and started to establish our retirement, “forever” home. From what was a rough paddock we now have an orchard with a variety of fruit and nut trees. The vegetable patch keeps us supplied with all the greens we need and the rose bushes delight us with their brilliance for months throughout the summer.

We have been here for nearly eighteen years. We know this is too good to last, but, in the meantime, this dandelion is firmly rooted around the roses and under the trees in our own tranquil, wonderfully verdant, secret garden.

Olive Burdekin Short Story Competition

This competition is for RWNZ Members who are not eligible to enter the Marlborough Short Story Competition as they are either previous first place winners from the past two years, or have had articles or books published. The length of the story must be between 1000 and 1500 words. The theme for this year’s competitions was Gardening and the winning story was submitted by Liz Evans (Region 3).

Spike’s Community Garden - All Welcome!

By Liz Evans (Region 3)

Hi, I’m Spike, the young buck.

Last year I was a timid fawn. Now I’m a teenager out on my own.

But I do have friends - you will meet them in my garden.

Well, strictly speaking it is not my domain, it really belongs to a nice human called Marigold. She tends the garden with me.

We share.

I manage the growing and harvesting, she runs the supply side and financial investment. This summer has been unusually hot up in the hills - global warming, I believe, is being held responsible. That’s my excuse, anyway. My excuse for frequent nocturnal visits. With not much tucker in the usual places up the hill, we have to seek it elsewhere- no? Marigold is the daytime gardener, I run the night shift.

So actually, Marigold and I are more like friends on Messenger rather than in person.

Here’s what I like best about plants, trees and lawns-

I aim to keep garden grass closely clipped when working at night. So the lawn is what I tackle first.

Not much juicy grass there now, though - and weedy.

However, the lawn is a handy place for the depositing of natural fertiliser. Marigold is so pleased with this that I see her collecting it on a spade every morning.

Trees - we like a nice, shady tree but often the leaves are too high up to be of much use for munching.

Having said that, this trend towards planting bulk pine and indigenous tree seedlings everywhere has been an absolute bonus for the whanau. Not quite as tasty as our garden vegetables, but handy in a drought and easily accessible.

Plants - I consider myself an authority on roses. Roses are by far the best garden plant and Marigold agrees with me totally.

There are three types of roses in our garden - bush, climbing and ground cover - lots of them are pink, our favourite colour - including my choice, “Deerest.”

They are all acceptable in their own way, although I would choose the higher growing varieties rather than the ground cover because - prickles - and grazing convenience. There is always something to pick off a rose at any time of the year. In spring it is delightful to see all the tender green shoots and buds appearing (and disappearing). The full blooms in summer tempt us with their perfume and Marigold is pleased every morning to see that I have kept her bushes in check by regular sampling and cutting back.

Autumn sees even greater pruning opportunities, and the rose hips - mmmmmm! Lovely.

There are not many flowers I don’t like - even the driveway agapanthus got a lot of attention this summer because of the dry conditions.

Luckily, Marigold doesn’t have a lot of rhododendrons (poisonous).

I have investigated the hydrangeas round the back - but leaves not the best (chewy) and flowers tickly. She likes them dried and, strangely - hanging upside down in bunches.

Hollyhocks - we have them in the round garden.

One time, Marigold went away for a week and was really looking forward to seeing the hollyhocks in full bloom on her return.

I was just over the bank at dusk when out she came, all excited. "What are all these sticks here in the garden?" she screeched. Not a flower in sight. Just many black, upright sticks looking like something out of a nuclear explosion.

I blame Uncle Staghorn Fern for that. He came to stay and went completely over the top - seduced by the beauty of the hollyhock flower. Ate the lot.

But such rash actions inevitably have consequences and after that Marigold got angry. The round garden is now circled by a really high, former wallowing pool fence - which, although painted party Green, is rather inconvenient access wise.

And, not only that, Garden Art is the latest fad. I'm not sure about it. Many roses are now covered with chicken-wire artistry and other ugly wire sculptures.

Garden Friends - "stand by your beds" here comes that fool, Pea Pod Possum. Pea wouldn't know a pear from a pumpkin. Not a connoisseur of plants at all. All the same to him and his huge family. If you touch my roses again tonight, dude, you will regret it. Go back to the bush and juggle a few native bird eggs.

But at least Pea Pod couldn't be blamed for the great Christmas peas debacle.

That was down to Petunia the house cow and took place in the old days when frozen vegetables were not fashionable - and milk didn't come in plastic bottles on the mail truck.

I heard this story from Marigold's friend when he was reminiscing with his brother one summer night, and I was hiding nearby checking the gooseberries for ripeness.

They were drinking some brown liquids. I stick to our super pure mountain stream water myself.

But anyway, about the peas - when the man and his brother were fawns, their stag and hind had a big, enclosed food garden.

But the gate had a wonky catch. Similar to Petunia who had only one horn.

People say animals are dumb, but they didn't know Petunia.

She worked out how to open the gate latch with her one horn. Left it till they'd all gone off to town for Christmas shopping, of course. Not only one year, but two or three.

No peas for Christmas dinners.

You would have to wonder why some deer didn't fix the catch, wouldn't you?

Petunia was also famous for her ability to play cricket- but that's another story. I found an old red ball in a tussock once, but it wasn't tasty. Tussock not bad if really hungry.

Am pleased to welcome back Hyacinth to my garden though.

Cinth was once a pet lamb who was raised in this garden long before I took over. She knows every inch of it and every year she brings in her latest offspring on a field trip.

So tonight, Hyacinth has Daisy with her. But it's a hot evening and Marigold has all the windows open. She can hear munching and soon looks out to see Mother instructing daughter on how to tend the roses and where the champion ones are situated.

Poor Hyacinth is chased out accompanied by noisy oaths.

Most undignified for an elderly, loyal gardener.

Not all our garden visitors are super confident, and some can be fussy and picky. One such is Wizz (aka Sylvan Wisteria) who is delicate, silver and grey. Wizz is shy and flighty - due to being, allegedly, a "show pony" and "very well bred." LoL!

Wizz prefers the best quality hay which is not found in the garden, although sometimes there is ordinary stuff laid out over my flower beds which is called mulch.

Wizz is not a frequent visitor but will appear over the back fence if Marigold chucks over some plant prunings and bread. I make do with the mulch.

Others - the male that hangs round with Marigold is not really into gardening.

I know more about it than he does. I don't trust him. I've often seen him with a shooting thing he calls his 'rifle'.

Sometimes he tries to compete with me over control of the lawn. He has a another noisy machine which is kept in a shed over the garden fence. Accessed by a gate. He uses this to interfere with my grass.

He is also the so-called "wire artist".

Funny thing happened the other evening. He left the garden gate open (learnt this off his father- see above) and in came Kowhai the cow and her calf, Kanuka. Well, you should have heard the kerfuffle as those two went on a garden walk to steal cuttings.

Or more like a tramp really.

Cows know no boundaries when it comes to garden etiquette. If they can't cut daintily they just pull up the whole plant and drag it.

But more fertiliser delivered - bonus.

I've always believed that most animals are competitive.

I compete for food and status in the wild. And I tussle domestically with Marigold - especially over our joint love of roses. Sometimes she wins. But only when I am not there - in my garden.

Sun is on the rise, so it's over the fence and out,

Cheers,
Spike.



Contestable Fund

Region 4 recently held a fantastic and hugely successful Spring Fling at Kawhatau, near Mangaweka. Members were invited to join the festivities for the weekend or just for the very special lunch on the Saturday. As part of the event, the Organising Committee wanted to provide an outreach opportunity for local women to get off farm and get together.

They successfully applied for a grant from the Contestable Fund to host a wonderful lunch and invite women from the district to come and learn more about RWNZ and to build connections in an area where there are no RWNZ Members. Possible invitees were identified through the daughter of one of our Region 4 Members who lives in the area and over 30 invitations were sent out to local rural women.

Many of these women are time poor with work, family and farm commitments leaving little opportunity to get together. The distances between many of the invitees meant that many were not even in contact with each other and experiencing isolation and loneliness.

The lunch was a huge success with over 60 attendees, half of whom were local to the district and many had never heard of RWNZ. Guests listened to a very entertaining guest speaker, Kelsey Smith, from the Hunterville Village Bookshop. Kelsey's hilarious speech was peppered with anecdotes about the role that her business plays in a small town.

Two excellent outcomes have come from the event. The first is that the local women who were invited for lunch are now in contact with each other (which they weren't previously) and that RWNZ has some new Members.

The event was such a success that Region 4 are hoping to undertake another outreach project in the new year.



R4 INVITE YOU TO OUR
SPRING FLING



14th - 16th October

KAWHATAU OUTDOOR CENTRE
94 UPPER KAWHATAU VALLEY ROAD, MANGAWEKA.

On Saturday 12.00 a special lunch will be provided by Chef Scott Gibbs, and 2 guest speakers Sophie Hurley, Honest Wolf and Emma Shannon, Moomaa Café & Design Store.

OR you are welcome to just come for the day
Accommodation is bunk style or campervans welcome,
\$20.00 per night

RSVP by 8 October to Jean Coleman: ngaios@farmside.co.nz or 06 327 7014
Bank details Tutaenui account: 03 0683 0017900 00
Further details will be sent on receipt of RSVP



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