



WHAT WE HAVE BEEN READING AND WATCHING.

The Resilient Farmer.

Doug Avery. Very inspiring read, looking at business and life through a different lens.

The Martian. Andy Weir.

A fun read about a man left on Mars accidentally and his fight for survival. Humorously written and thoroughly enjoyable.

Old Tasman Bay. JD. Peart

A story of early Maori of the Nelson District and its association with European prior to 1840

No Ordinary Sheila. By Hugh Macdonald

A wonderful and inspiring film about Sheila Natusch, a NZ documentary writer and illustrator whose wit and charm will delight you. She was 90 when the film was created and as sharp as a tack.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEU41PuWXA>

NEW TOOLS.

The Loggers Shop in Brightwater in Brightwater has recently expanded. We acquired a new Oleomac 755 through them at a very good price and the new harness system and ease of changing the handle positions is a dream.

Issue 4. January 2018.

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year. What an interesting summer so far in terms of weather. Mad rush to get the pool operational when the thermometer hit 30 degrees and then watching the water tank daily as the level dropped to rather critical and Christmas was only just round the corner with lots of visitors. Thankfully the rain over the last two weeks has filled the tanks, replenished the ground water so the paddocks are nice and green and we are not bucketing water to plants daily.

While working on a project in the Wakapuaka River north of Nelson, we have found over 70 native species in the narrow riparian strip. This has been really good to see as there is a very high weed burden in the area so it is encouraging to see such diversity.

We are very pleased to see the plant growth in some of the areas we planted over the winter. It is quite inspiring despite the drought conditions. The heat has obviously been good for them.

Planting Time and Early Preparation

As we have been doing some of the maintenance work on last season's plantings it is clear that the areas that were planted early (April) have a distinct advantage over the later plantings in terms of plant establishment. They have the advantage of getting some root growth in late autumn so when the spring flush occurs they are ready to go. Even in the drought conditions that have occurred this summer they have continued to grow. As soon as soil moisture levels allow, it is worthwhile getting plants into the ground as early as possible.



Enjoying Gladioli from our garden.

“The climate of the locality, the season, soil and other circumstances may render deviation expedient. The intelligent person will however have no difficulty in adopting such modifications as his particular case may require.”

Brett's Gardening Guide 1951.

WAR ON WEEDS.

We have been doing more work in some lovely covenanted areas. These are always so interesting as are the weed species we seem to find in some the the areas.

The latest find was a weed *Mahonia japonica*. It is another garden escapee. Native to Taiwan. Medium sized bush 2-3m high. Part of the barberry family. Pinnately compound bright green leathery leaflets with a spiny margin, borne on upright stem. Course textured and prickly. Fragrant yellow flowers in spires in late winter-early spring. Produces small oval purple fruit in clusters reminiscent of grape clusters. Seed palatable to and spread by birds. Grows in a range of soil and climatic conditions and prefers shade. Forms thickets which exclude other understory vegetation and grows in forest margins and shrublands. (Miller, S. 2013) The best method of control is physical removal. Seedlings will pull out of damp soil. Otherwise cut and paste with a glyphosate based gel or drill and fill larger plants.



Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). A deciduous tree up to 20m tall. Smooth grey bark and hairless green shoots. Large buds have pinkish inner scales. Bluish green 5 lobed leaves in opposite pairs on reddish stems. Prolific seeders with seeds having “wings” so are able to be wind spread over a wide area. Thrive in shady areas and this is where the greatest threat to native bush comes from as they will germinate in dense shade and eventually dominate the canopy. Drilling and filling with a glyphosate mix is one method of control if manual pulling is not an option. Basal spraying with an appropriate herbicide also works well if the site allows this.

Sycamore however is a highly-valued timber particularly for fine furniture. The Centre for Fine Woodworking exhibition at the Refinery Gallery over the Christmas period had some beautiful furniture made from sycamore. Much of this timber is imported from America as it requires particular and careful treatment at the point of harvest as it is hard to season because it tends to hold water. If we are to look seriously at the threat of sycamore to our native forest areas then there is perhaps an opportunity for the harvest and use of the timber for high end furniture and architectural use. https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/wood-archives/wood-products-magazine/american_sycamore_127689238.html

Drone Demonstration.

In mid-December, we were lucky to be involved in a demonstration of Drone technology for weed control. Annette Litherland from Landcare Trust organized a demonstration by Cameron Baker of the Sky Division of Yamaha Motor NZ, showing how drones can be used for spraying in areas that are difficult to deal with on foot or by larger units like Helicopters.

The drone looks like a small helicopter and is radio operated by a controller with line of site to the area being worked on. The drone is able to carry 16 litres of spray at a time and it takes approximately 5 mins from loading to empty to spray out the tanks. It was very precise in terms of where the spray landed.

We experimented with it on an area beside the Wakapuaka river that is very infested with old man’s beard and other weeds. The consent for spraying required a 5 m buffer from the river and this was very accurately done.



<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/weed-killing-drone-new-weapon-against-agricultures-1-7-billion-pests>

ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY PLANT GUARDS UPDATE.

We are very excited to say that we have just taken delivery of the first 5000 environmentally friendly plant guards (the EM-Guard) that we have been working on for the past 2 years. These are still in the final trial phase and have been put at a few of our planting sites to confirm that they will do the job. They are looking very good to date. We have a couple sited in our pond also to see how they stand up to constant saturation. They are easy to handle, coming in bundles of 25, easy to install and robust.

If you would like to trial some we have a special offer of 50 for \$57.50 plus GST for this initial delivery.



Figure 1. Plastic plant guard in outer sounds.

Photo courtesy Sam Speight.



Figure 2. EM guards in the field.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK OR CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE.

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