



**RICHMOND COMMUNITY
GARDEN TRUST
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**





SUMMARY

2019 was a magical year for the crew at the Richmond Community Garden Trust. We really made the garden space a place our community can be proud of. The level of engagement with our volunteers, groups, locals, and visitors was simply amazing and our profile has been raised so much that we have featured in the Press lifestyle magazine, Cuisine magazine and we even got a visit by the world's most famous environmentalist, Jane Goodall.

After years of advocating and putting in submissions for the Avon Otakaro Regeneration Plan and the global settlement, these were signed off at the end of the year and we are happy with the outcome. We look forward to being able to further develop our part of the world, create a world class community space and to freely plant more native plants around the site.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

SPACE

Develop our 2 acres of Red Zoned land as an exemplar of a safe community space.

Incorporate food resilience, education and nature play.

Combat social isolation, poverty and limited access to healthy food.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

By creating a circular economy with our own resources and waste.

Explore relevant commercial opportunities to earn our own income through our produce, location and ecotourism activities.

VOLUNTEERS

Recruit, nurture and retain volunteers.

ORGANIC ETHOS

We have a documented and thorough ecological practise and are committed to working towards organic certification.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Increase the amount of fresh food we distribute to our immediate community.

Build on the number of community groups we regularly engage with and facilitate and appropriate regular community events and actively contribute to the wider food resilience network.



WHAT DID WE DO?

SPACE

2019 was the year of cementing the projects in the original 2 acre plot. We had the help of a University of Canterbury intern, who looked at all the things on our site and researched how we could turn them all into an interactive kids trail. As a result, we have installed a number of nature play areas, the Riverlution community gathering space with help from the Green Lab and the Avebury House Mens shed. Thanks to Paddy from the Pump House, we fixed up our road and footpath to make it safer for people walking through and extended our orchard with heritage apple trees courtesy of the Food Resilience Network.

At our annual Gala we judged the letterbox competition and our winner Andrew Powell, installed his design shortly after. The sculpture now has a plaque and plantings and has been seen by 1000's of people. Andrews sculpture is called "Letterbox Love" and he describes it as " people's lives were turned upside and nature has taken over" the upside down letterboxes and plantings reflect this.

It wasn't all about the installation of fun things, our volunteers dug trenches to reticulate our water out to the community gathering space via the orchard, Orion installed power to the new cafe site, we installed cameras to protect our shed and round house and moved a tunnel house, prop house and shed into our space to share with the Delta friendship group.

Over the winter, we worked with Green Lab to landscape the Riverlution Community space in preparation for a container Cafe, this is planned for installation in 2020. Green Lab spent time talking to our community to gather ideas about what they wanted before we started the work. The project brought together a large number of volunteers, commercial sponsors and help from our local businesses. It truly is a community space.

The plantings and human spaces have increased the number of birds, bugs and humans using the site. There are now spaces for families to gather and spaces like Ashley's serenity seat for people to sit with wonderful views of the river and contemplate the world or listen to the increasing number of bellbirds and fantails.

During the year we signed another lease with LINZ for the land across the road from our current site, this is called the Garden of Curiosities and will be a space for our local artisans to work and focus on the arts and a create a garden filled with curious plants that grow in Canterbury but people may not necessarily see. We have another intern starting in 2020 to start the business plan for this project. This will include surveys and data around the number of people using the river trail.



WHAT DID WE DO?

SELF SUFFICIENCY

Our drive for greater financial sustainability continues, our little shop is open on Wednesday's and Saturday's and we take our shop to regularly attend events supporting our sister organisations around the city. This year we went to Meet in the Middle, Duck Down the River, the Foragers Walk among others. Along with our own olive oil, preserves, jams and hand creams, we have extended our range to include herbal teas, balms and salves, lip gloss and worm wees. Our own earnings now make up 15% of our total income.

As well as producing our own compost and using everything on our site, we have repurposed plants, planters, seating and equipment from the CCC stores and discontinued projects in the central city.

Our volunteers have had talks and workshops from the Department of Conservation workshop waste, Colin Meurk on invasive weeds and native plantings, composting, pruning and making seed bombs.

VOLUNTEERS

We have achieved our goal of over 150 hours of volunteer time per week, this is in 3 volunteer days per week and other groups who attend weekly or monthly, they include the Delta Friendship Group, Dementia Canterbury, the Linwood College Gateway Group among others.

To celebrate and nurture our volunteers, we have special occasions where we have celebrated and shared a meal, these include volunteer 'thank you' days, our 2 year birthday with Pizzas from Winnie Bagoes and a huge cake from the Food Factory, national volunteer week where we foraged from our site and cooked up a storm together. Our team was awarded a certificate for International Volunteers Day, our head of production Julie Crook received a CCC volunteers award and our garden and volunteers cleaned up at the edible garden awards.

We have arranged a number of outings with our volunteers, these include to the BHU for their annual apple harvest, hazelnut gathering in Tai Tapu and olive picking in West melton.

Among our visitors we have had Mayumi Hori Therapy post disaster recovery, Jaks Hamilton local food expert, and of course Dr Jane Goodall.



WHAT DID WE DO?

ORGANIC ETHOS

Writing up our Organic Ethos is a work in progress, we continue to encourage our team to talk around issues that arise from time to time in order to make collective decisions on what invasive or dying plants needs to be removed and what can stay.

Because our site is open and we encourage foraging, we no longer count our harvest, we count what we plant and the products that we make. This year we have planted over 2000 native plants, vegetable seedlings, ornamentals and herbs and flowers for our teas.

All of our berms have been removed of grass and replaced with native plantings. This is to attract bugs and wildlife as well as do our bit to reduce our carbon footprint.

We are grateful to Colin Meurk for helping us with our native planting plans to ensure we put the plants in the right spot for their long term success. Colin helped us to identify invasive weeds and regularly comes to talk to our team on different topics. All in all, we have had a number of large planting days, including Arbour day, a massive day with volunteers which included plants from Waiora Trust and a pop up BBQ from the Richmond Residents & Business Association team. The Bunnings crew came down with manpower, plants, and materials to get our sign up and paving done at our Vogel Street entrance. The garden we planted is to highlight the wide range of native plants that are available to encourage pollinators.

We gratefully received the Trees for Canterbury great spring giveaway to further plant out our berm with native plants.

Seed saving is an important part of what we are doing, we save seeds, as well as dry seeds and hang them over our understory to allow them to disperse naturally. This has resulted in a great crop of parsnip, fennel, herbs and brassicas in our understory resulting in it looking lush and abundant.

With the generosity of Zealandia and The Maiden Group, we have planted our 4 maidens again this year this garden comprises of Corn, Sunflowers, pumpkins and beans, we did this without the fencing to see if it makes a difference to our beans, the food from this will go towards community events in 2020.

Bee Awesome installed another hive on site in the spring, this hive swarmed which resulted in 3 hives now in situ.

A number of our team completed a DOC run trapping course in the winter. LINZ kindly supplied 4 traps which have been installed and we are regularly catching rats.



WHAT DID WE DO?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2019 we delivered 4 key events, many workshops, hosted other volunteer organisations, out-reached to our suburb and ran school holiday programmes. The amount of people enjoying the space for their private events and meetings is increasing.

We kicked the year off with our annual Gala collaborating with Avebury House to fill the whole site with stalls, kids activities and entertainment. We had over 80 stalls and over 1000 people came to the event. At the gala we displayed all the entries to our sculpture competition and our judges declared the winner and the public deciding our people's choice winner, with whom we supported to do a deputation to the CCC to see if we could get it installed in our playground.

Matariki in June was a collaboration with Avebury House and Avon Otakaro Network. Each year this event gets bigger and better and this year we installed lighting across Avebury Park and into the garden, our Hangi fed around 700 people and there were kids activities across the whole site, including fairy doors, marshmallow toasting, weaving and wood carving.

In September we worked with the CCC, Wishbone and the Breeze to deliver Dogs Day Out in the Zone. This was a fantastic day all round, the weather was perfect. The walk around the Red Zone was an adventure and the stall holders engaged with dog owners from all around the city.

In collaboration with ACE Training and Avebury House, we delivered a week of workshops for the Festival of Adult Learning. Workshops included composting, seed bombs, earth building, soil food web, creating a worm bath and a weaving workshop

We finished the year with another collaboration with Avebury House to be a stallholder at their annual Christmas market. This event was so successful all of our food vendors sold out.

We have worked with a large number of organisations at our site throughout the year for workshops and working bees. These include the Youthtown holiday programme, St Margarets College, Riverbend Refuge volunteer day, Earth Building workshop, Conservation Volunteers and Riverlution.

We had school holiday visits from the Hagley College ESOL school, we hosted the edible schools hui, planted the river bed with Christs College year 10 students, hosted Conservation volunteers to do our Eveleyn Couzins berms, Earth building workshops and invited the Banks Avenue School children to give us feedback on our proposed interactive trail.

We haven't just been working at our space we have actively got out and about with our outreach programme to share our knowledge and expertise, including planting planters in Stanmore Road, weaving demonstration at Kaiapoi garden, Earth building, Nature play workshops, we teamed up with Annabel Langbein at Bunnings, members of our team went into bat with deputations on both the regeneration plan and Global settle deputations, we celebrated National garden week down at Di's Heritage Garden, worked with other community gardens to reinstate the garden at the Deans Ave Mosque and organised working bees with local Youths at Riverbend refuge.





CHALLENGES

Water continues to be a challenge. We have reticulated our hose attachments to a number of areas but there are spots that aren't able to be reached and it is not automated.

We attempted a meadow again this year, but once again it was somewhat of a failure, however we will not be deterred and before 2020 spring we will research it and try again.

The downfall of our success is balancing our resources and capacity, the more people that come to the site and the more volunteers we attract, the more resources we require which in turn requires more funding. Our cafe plans will assist with this but we are a long way off being truly self sufficient.

We have continued to address security issues by installing another camera and by attracting more people to be guardians for the site and growing enough food so that what is harvested is quickly replaced.

Signage is a constant challenge as funding often doesn't allow for it, but we have come up with creative ways to prepare signs for our events using recycled corflute. There are some areas where we wish to get more permanent signage so we can help to help with educating people who visit the site.



WHATS NEXT?

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The Community Cafe plans are well underway. The cafe will use foraged food from our site, be a feeder for the Shirley Trust Barista training school and to provide work experience for the likes of the friendship group and it will give us the ability for our organisation to earn our own money in order to be more self sufficient.

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Housing New Zealand has garden beds going into the Eveleyn Couzins site and we have expressed our desire to help take care of these with the residents as well as work with them on the Swanns Road site.

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The Richmond part of the river corridor has come alive with projects and proposed projects we wish to collectively work together under the Riverlution umbrella to attract people to this part of the corridor and trails. This includes the opportunity that 46a Vogel Street become a hub for all these organisations working the corridor.

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As part of the Heritage trail we have identified the corner of Swanns and River Road as a great location for Wayfinding signage coupled with a forest planting, as this location sits high on the landscape and is the gateway to all the activities down our side of the river.

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THANK YOU

Our Trustees, Coordinators, Partners, Volunteers, Locals, Christchurch City Council, Rata Foundation, DIA, COGS, The Maiden Group, Avon Otakaro Network, Avebury House and Mens Shed, Food Resilience Network, Canterbury Community Gardens Association, Tui products, Delta, John Rhind Funeral Services, Yates NZ, Trees for Canterbury, University of Canterbury, Avon-Otakaro Forest Park, Evan Smith, Treetech Limited, Bryan and Colleen Fairburn, Ouruhia Nursery, Enliven Spaces, Winne Bagoes, ReKindle, Mary Tingy, Dementia Canterbury, Kiwi Care, New World Stanmore Road, Peter Langlands, Butler Automart, Zealandia, The Pump House, Steve Brailsford, Youth Town, Green Lab, Bee Awesome, Rotary, Volunteering Canterbury, Conservation Volunteers, Colin Meurk, Mike The Seat Guy, Bunnings Warehouse, Christchurch International Airport Fund, Shirley Trust, Mike Downs, Woodland Escape, Piko Wholefoods, Four Seasons, Casa dei Bambini, The Food Factory, Vegeland, Richmond Pharmacy, Happy Gardener, Wishbone, Placemakers Antigua Street, Kerry Mulligan and Orion Networks.

Sorry if we left anyone out we are very blessed to have so many amazing supporters.



