

Close to Home

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It's ours now!



The long-term dream of home ownership came true for Hastings couple Michaela and Jamie, and what's even better is that they were able to buy the state rental home they've lived in for the past five years.

Michaela, and husband Jamie are the first tenants to own their state house since the tenant home ownership programme was launched last year. The Hon Phil Heatley was there to congratulate them on 29 January, the day of their purchase.

"We are over the moon about buying the house we rented, because we love the area," says Michaela.

Michaela describes how a long term dream of home ownership came true.

"We are market renters and had received a letter from Housing New Zealand

offering us the opportunity to become home owners. We asked our tenancy manager if we were eligible for a Welcome Home Loan.

"What appealed to us was the very small deposit needed. For example no deposit is needed for a loan under \$200,000. We got the loan from TSB who made it pretty easy for us."

Since Michaela and Jamie's happy day, another couple in Christchurch have become proud owners of their state house. [+](#)

Welcome!



Although it's already March, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year.

The opening section of our first issue for 2010 highlights the different ways Housing New Zealand can give a helping hand to those in need.

The change in seasons reminds us of the need to immunise against the flu for better protection over the winter. Check out the article on page 7 to see if you're eligible for a free flu vaccination.

We have included something new and exciting in this issue – especially for kids. Housing New Zealand has nearly 25,000 homes with children 10 years of age and under, so we've decided to introduce a special two-page spread just for them with games, puzzles and pictures. This is our first go at it. We'd be really interested to hear what you think and if you have any other great ideas for the kids.

Editor

Close to Home



Proud new home owners Jamie and Michaela.



AUTHOR
Marie Winfield

A warm welcome home

A tight-knit Panmure community is enjoying living in warmer, healthier homes thanks to the first Tamaki Transformation Programme project under way in Auckland.

Nine families in Coral Crescent and Matapan Road are the first to have their homes modernised under the programme.

Work on their homes included renovated interiors, new floor coverings, insulation, new heating and lighting, improved landscaping and fencing where required, and better indoor-outdoor flow.

Charles and Carla have been living in their Housing New Zealand home for 17 years, raising their four children there.

“Our eldest daughter has asthma, and she came over the other day and commented on how warm the house felt and how easy it was to breathe,” says Carla.

She says, while moving out of their home for a few months wasn’t easy, it was all worthwhile.

“Coming home was great – and what a home it is! It was well worth it. It was good to be able to pick the colour scheme – I was always going to go with neutral.

“And the section has been fenced so it is a lot safer for my grandchildren to run around in,” she says.

Carla says she missed her neighbours while their homes were being worked on. “We’ve all lived here for so long, and we help look after each other. Our kids all grew up together. Everyone is



Charles and Carla are delighted with the improvements to their home.

so pleased to be home – and we’ve all been comparing colour schemes.”

The programme will be modernising 111 more homes in Tamaki over the next two and half years. The modernised homes will be healthier and warmer and have better living areas for tenants to enjoy and spend time in. Each home will be assessed individually to determine what improvements need to be made.

The Tamaki Transformation Programme is one of New Zealand’s largest urban renewal projects and is being driven by a unique partnership between central government agencies, local government, the Tamaki community and the private sector. All are striving to achieve ambitious housing, infrastructure, social services and economic performance goals for the area by working together in new ways. 



Home ownership opportunity for Māori

Māori who want to build on their ancestral land will now have an opportunity with a new home loan product called Kāinga Whenua*.

The beauty of Kāinga Whenua is that Māori will be able to borrow from Kiwibank to build their first house. In the past, banks have been reluctant to lend money to Māori wanting to build on multiple-owned Māori land. This is because Māori land cannot be

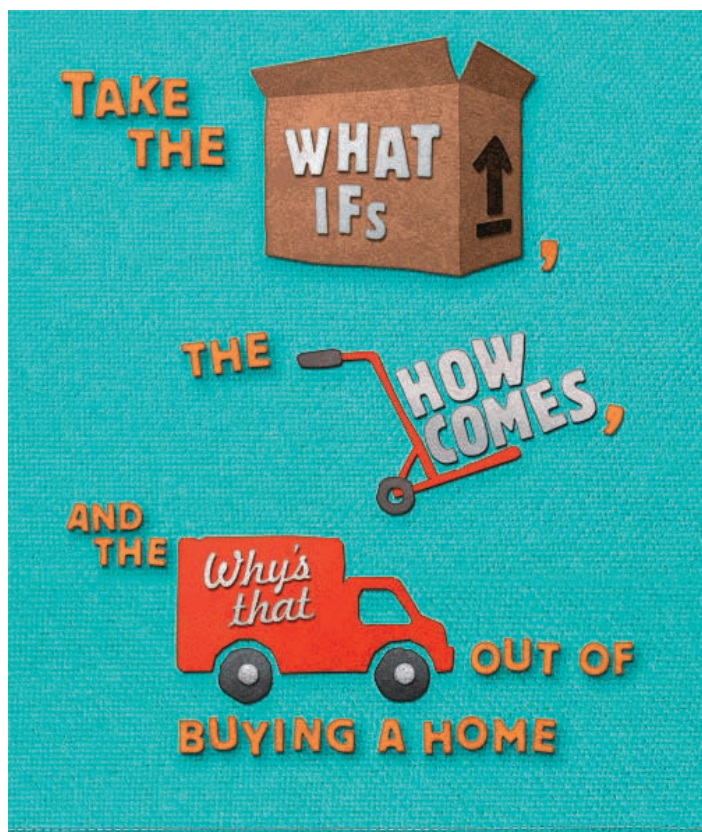
sold if the borrower can no longer pay the mortgage.

However, with the new loan agreement between Kiwibank and Housing New Zealand, Kiwibank will lend up to \$200,000, with no deposit needed.

The borrower must earn under \$85,000, or three or more borrowers can earn a combined income under \$120,000.

To find out more about this exciting new product, visit www.hnzc.co.nz or call 0508 935 266.

* This name combines the concepts of home/homestead (kāinga) and attachment to the land (whenua).



Much-loved friend receives award

Many tenants in the Porirua community will remember fondly Norma Te'o who passed away in October last year.

Norma worked tirelessly for the Pacific community helping families achieve the dream of home ownership. Last December, she was awarded the Outstanding Achievement in Social Housing award at the Australasian Housing Institute Conference.



Norma, loved and respected by the communities in which she worked.

Tina Simcock, Welcome Home First Steps Product Coordinator, says that she felt Norma deserved to be nominated and recognised for her efforts. "She helped so many families manage their own circumstances and move away from their reliance on the rental market, and Housing New Zealand."

"Norma has been an inspiration to the many Pacific families and communities she has worked with. Over the years, she and Pasefika Pulse have successfully transformed what many Pacific families thought was an unattainable dream into reality – ownership of their own home."

LEARN ALL ABOUT IT THROUGH THE FREE WELCOME HOME FIRST STEPS EDUCATION COURSE.

If you're dreaming of owning your own home but you're unsure about what to do, we can help. Our education course will tell you what you need to know about the home buying process. You can study online or at face to face workshops across the country.

Call **0508 WELCOME** (935 266), or visit welcomehomefirststeps.co.nz for more information.



newzealand.govt.nz





AUTHOR
Elizabeth Goodyear

Southern Region's SuitAble Homes Service

Did you know that Housing New Zealand is able to help people with physical disabilities to find housing that is suitable for their needs?

You don't have to be a tenant to ask for our help – we are also able to offer advice and assistance to people who are privately renting or who own their own homes. Case managers – Kate Lam, who looks after Dunedin, Oamaru, Central Otago and Southland, and Julie White, who looks after Timaru, Ashburton and the West Coast – provide this service.

Recently, we were able to help a family into a property that is just right for them.

The mother, Margaret, who has physical disabilities, and her seven-year-old son Tony, were living in a very small flat in a block of mainly elderly people. There was no ideal space for Tony to play, and he had to remember to play quietly.

The flat was too far from Tony's school. He couldn't walk there and back on his own.

Margaret contacted us for help last year and a couple of months later was able to move into a Housing New Zealand home just down the road from the school.



Room to play makes life much more fun for Tony.

After they moved in, Julie (Margaret's case manager) worked with an occupational therapist who recommended that the front steps be replaced with a ramp. Margaret was eligible for help through the Ministry of Health. The property now has a ramp, which makes it so much easier for her to get in and out.

Margaret and Tony are happily settled in their new home – it has plenty of room for Tony and his friends to play and even enough space in the yard for a trampoline. 🏡

Greys Avenue upgrade makes huge difference to tenants' lives

A major upgrade of apartments at Greys Avenue, Auckland, is having a very positive effect on tenants' lives.

Denise Fink, Central Auckland Regional Manager, says, "Tenants are simply amazed at the transformation." The apartments are now much better suited to modern living.

"Kitchens and bathrooms have been fully upgraded. Tenants now have showers instead of baths, and all the building's old infrastructure has been fully replaced.

"It makes a big difference to tenants having their own laundry facilities rather than sharing a communal laundry and having simple things like all the cabling concealed, something we all take for granted in a more modern home," says Denise. 🏡



Greys Avenue apartments when they were opened in 1947.



Greys Avenue apartments in 2010 after the upgrade.



Sew good

Former refugees reap what they sew

A group of tenants living in Porirua, Wellington, who came to New Zealand as refugees, are improving their English skills along with their sewing ability thanks to a recently formed sewing group.



Seng ironing her pattern pieces.

The Refugee Women's Sewing Group was the brainchild of several of the participants, but they struggled to get things off the ground. So they approached Lyn Hollands, an eastern Porirua Community Renewal team member for help. She thought it was a great idea; it didn't take long before the group was up and running. The women have been meeting since September 2009, with Lyn providing help and mentoring.

Lena originally from Indonesia says, "We sew, but not only this, we learn English and [also] learn professional skills to help us."



Khinaye shows us the shorts she made.

The group is enthusiastic about learning new skills and becoming involved in different projects helping themselves and the community. The group has shown great interest in enrolling in a small business course once they've finished the sewing programme.

Most importantly, friendships have grown within the group. Burma-born Bawk Mai says, "We are all friends – everyone can do a little bit, and we learn by helping our friends."

Lyn is also looking at ideas for a similar project for the former refugee men in the community. Potential topics include home maintenance, handyman skills and machinery repair. [H](#)



Mana Tane: neighbourhood men make new friendships

Otangarei in Whangarei is a growing neighbourhood thanks to Housing New Zealand's new community office and Neighbourhood Improvement programme.



“

If we can prevent one violent offence, it's one less problem our community has to deal with.

”

Richard Pehi
Community Development
Coordinator

A few of the men enjoying sunshine and fellowship during the February breakfast (pictured left to right: Alfred Moreland, Iniea Eruera, Maru Brown, Me Keeling, Martin Kiapo, Adam Edmonds, Paul King).

Designed to help the community and strengthen neighbourhood relations, the new Otangarei office currently runs several community-driven projects. One is the Mana Tane breakfast, open to all local men. This monthly programme is being hosted in partnership with the Tai Tokerau (Northland) Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy and Te Ruarahi Hau Ora, a traditional Māori health provider in Otangarei.

The breakfast helps men reconnect and build friendships within their community. Neighbours who previously may have done little more than nod to each other in passing can now sit down and talk.

“Most of the time, we walk or drive past each other and don't have the

opportunity to chat,” says Whare Hauwai of Te Ruarahi Hau Ora.


The men have got to know one another better and feel more connected to their community. Respect and support for each other has grown.

“If we can prevent one violent offence, it's one less problem our community has to deal with,” says community development coordinator Richard Pehi.

Every month, speakers from the business community or local council are invited to come along and offer advice and support, encouraging the men to ask questions and get involved in group discussions. These speakers help create a bond between the men and their town, giving them

a greater sense of what being part of a community feels like.

The programme has now been running for four months with attendances averaging between 12–25 individuals. The success of this programme can be recognised through the many community activities that have taken place because of the breakfast.

This is just one of the many positive reactions being passed along the neighbourhood grapevine, which is encouraging many more men to get involved. The success of this programme and its rewarding changes will help bring a difference to all residents of Otangarei, turning it into a community that everyone can be proud of. 



Don't let the flu get you

Influenza or 'flu' can be a serious illness – it's more than just a 'bad cold'. Anyone can catch it, even fit and healthy people, and can get very sick.

Some people may end up in hospital, some may die because the disease can make other existing conditions, such as heart or breathing problems, even worse.

So what can you do to keep yourself and your family/whānau safe from flu this winter?

- Get a flu vaccination – it's **free** for many people. Talk to your doctor or nurse about whether a seasonal vaccination is free for you.
- Wash and dry your hands often.
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Stay away from work if you're unwell.
- Keep your children away from school if they're unwell.

The 2010 seasonal flu vaccine will include protection against three types of flu, including the swine flu (Pandemic H1N1 Influenza).

Vaccinations are free from March to the end of June for:

- people aged 65 and over
- anyone under 65 years of age (including children) with long-term health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory disease (including asthma), kidney disease and most cancers.

In addition, for this year (2010 only), the Government is providing free flu immunisation for:

- pregnant women
- severely obese people.



"There, it didn't hurt a bit!" Photo: courtesy of the National Influenza Strategy Group.

Babies from six months old until the time of their fifth birthday may be free under certain circumstances. Check with your doctor.

If you don't qualify for a free flu vaccination, you can get it through your general practice for a small charge.

For free health advice, call Healthline 0800 611 116. For advice about influenza immunisation visit www.fightflu.co.nz or text FLU to 515.



Fantastic decorations!

Thank you so much for your fabulous entries in our Christmas decoration competition.

Santa's judging panel chose the following winners from each of the categories. Each winner receives a \$50 voucher from The Warehouse.

5–9 years old: Anne Wetere-Harris, Manukau; Karena Garland, Waitakere.

10–15 years old: Benjamin Tuala, Christchurch; Josiah Tuala, Christchurch.

16 years and over: Rakapa Sturm, Lower Hutt; Erin Buchan, Blenheim; Charlotte Thompson, Napier.

Look out for the colouring competition on a separate sheet in this edition!



4
KIDS

TREEHOUSE IS THE
'KIDS ONLY' ZONE FOR
CLOSE TO HOME.

TREEHOUSE!



TOO COOL!!

Creative children from Cadness Street having great fun on their home-made waterslide.

Hey kids, one more month of summer to enjoy. Water slides are great for dry grass and fun for you but don't forget to turn off the hose. To find out more about water check out Wai-wise.

Want us to use your photo in Treehouse? Just choose your best one showing you and your friends having fun, tell us who's in the photograph, who took it, what you were doing and when it was taken. Please ask your parents for permission to use it. Email it to closetohome@hnzc.co.nz, and we'll be in touch. 📧

FUN FACTS

About H₂O

Water is made up of two elements - hydrogen and oxygen. Its chemical formula is H₂O.

1. The human brain is two-thirds water.
2. Pure water has no smell and no taste.
3. The longest river in the world is the Nile River, reaching 6,650 kilometres in length.
4. Water covers around 70 percent of the Earth's surface.
5. You can become an agent for the environment by signing on at www.ecokids.co.nz



Why did the Little Mermaid ride a sea-horse?

Because she was playing water polo!

Why do fish live in salt water?

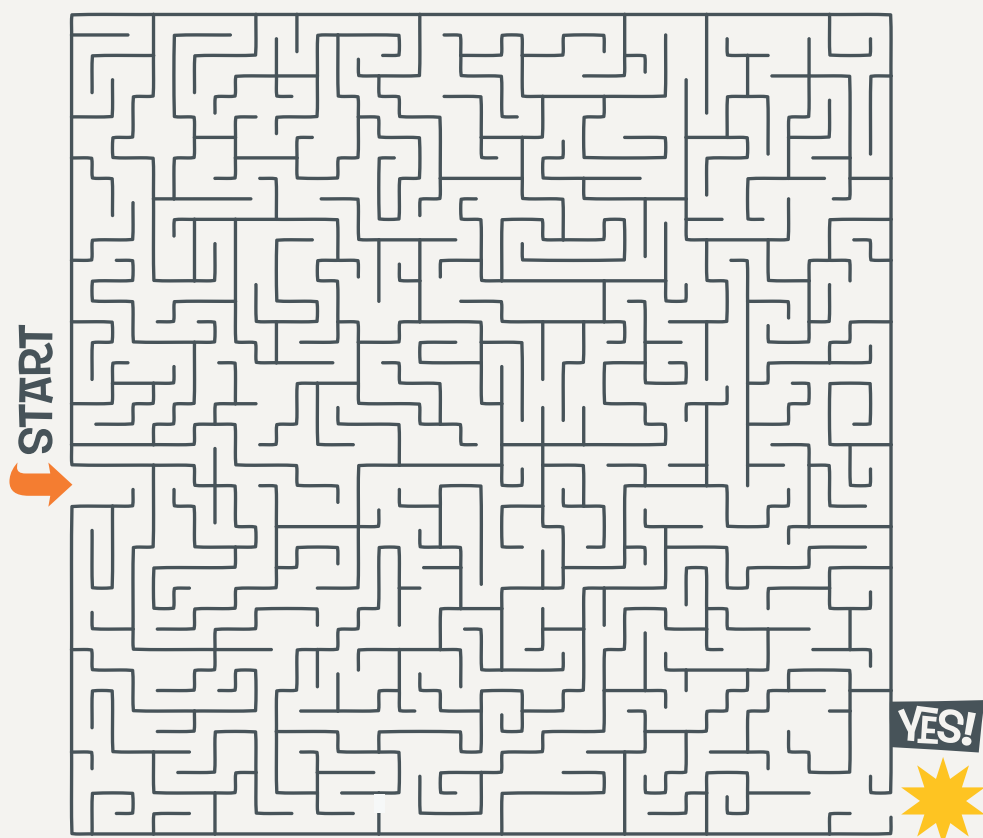
Because pepper makes them sneeze!

Where do fish get their money?

Riverbank!

MEGAMAZE

A labyrinth has only one path that you must follow the whole way. A maze has forks and a lot of different paths going different directions. Try this maze out.



START A CRAFT BOX!



Keep a craft box in the house for rainy days. Recycled knick-knacks are good to add to your craft box, such as:

- old computer CDs – decorate them and make mobiles hanging from driftwood
- buttons and shells – decorate old picture frames with them
- old magazines – cut out pictures and paste on old clean flowerpots – varnish them, then they can be used outdoors
- old Christmas and birthday cards – cut out pictures and stick them on cardboard to make new cards.

WORDSEARCH

See how many words you can find from the list below.

F A R P U R P L E F D I K W X C D F
 Y E P L X C G U L O B Q I A C A L K
 A W S P I X P Z B E A N B S U R J E
 B I K E L C A L Y L N B S K I P W N
 V G S E Q E D V O S A P Z T B A E A
 W R U G B Y D F C Z N A J O N R O L
 K L I G H T L S I P A R T P T K S P
 W T S L D Q E U N X W C U G A M E K
 B O J E K N P R K M E E H L T R U E
 D V K I W I M F P O X L B J U M P T
 W O R L D S J S B I R E A D Y S E D

- PURPLE
- CARPARK
- APPLE
- SKI
- LIGHT
- PARCEL
- BEAN
- KIWI
- RUGBY
- FIX
- TRUE
- READY
- BIKE
- SURF
- PADDLE
- SKIP
- GAME
- WORLD
- BANANA
- PLANE
- TOP
- JUMP



Living with Eczema



Eczema can cause a lot of discomfort. We share advice from health professionals and a parent.

What is eczema?

Eczema is a word used to describe an inflammation of the skin, causing loss of the skin barrier. The skin is then unable to retain moisture so the result is a dry and very troublesome rash, which may occur on almost any part of the body.

What causes eczema?

Because the skin has lost its barrier, environmental irritants can enter and cause the eczema to flare. The skin can react to many different triggers such as wool, skin infections, dry skin, low humidity, heat, scratching, sweating or emotional stress. Eczema can also be triggered by allergens such as dust mites, pollen, moulds or foods.

Young children may react to certain foods, most commonly egg, milk, wheat, soy, peanuts and fish.

Consultation with your doctor may be helpful in identifying the triggers. Salicylates, a natural chemical found in some foods, and some preservatives can also trigger eczema.

It is important not to withdraw foods from your child's diet without advice from a health professional.

Can eczema be cured?

Eczema cannot be cured, but in some people, it improves naturally, especially as children get older. It can be controlled with consistent treatment and avoidance of trigger factors, and protecting the skin from irritants.

How is it treated?

The main treatment is to moisturise the skin, which helps restore the skin barrier.



Bathing in special moisturisers can help reduce discomfort. Photo courtesy of Allergy New Zealand.

Other ways to help reduce discomfort from the symptoms of eczema include:

- daily bathing in moisturisers and cleansing the skin using moisturisers
- identifying the triggers and avoiding them
- minimising skin bacteria – disinfectants during a bath/shower may be needed
- reducing inflammation – topical steroids may be needed.

There are a number of options which can be used as moisturisers, such as ointments, creams, lotions and combination cream/ointment preparations. It is important to find a product that will suit your skin and not cause further irritation or an allergic reaction.

Your doctor can also prescribe treatment or recommend other health providers.

AUTHOR
Michelle Williams

A parent's experience

After six years of trying pretty much every treatment and cream available to relieve my two boys' eczema, I keep coming back to two of the things I started with – steroid cream and emulsifying ointment.

Both are available on prescription from your family doctor, making them much cheaper than if you bought them from the chemist.

I use steroid cream (usually hydrocortisone) twice a day – first thing in the morning and last thing at night. You don't need much – just a small smear on the red, scaly areas. You should continue to use the cream for seven days, even if the eczema seems to have cleared up. This makes sure that it really has gone! After a week I stop using the steroid cream to give the skin a rest.

The emulsifying cream, however, is a moisturiser that can be used as often and as for long as you like – in fact, the more the better!

Just apply it as you would any other moisturiser – at least twice a day, but more often if you can. This will prevent the skin from drying out, treating the eczema that is there and preventing more from developing. The ointment is pretty greasy, but don't worry if you get it on any clothing – it washes out easily. I also use emulsifying cream instead of soap in the bath or shower. It cleans and moisturises at the same time. If the eczema is really bad, you can melt a handful in a microwave-safe bowl and then pour into the bath.

Baths rather than showers are best for kids who have eczema as the skin can absorb more water, keeping it moist.

For more information, visit Allergy New Zealand's website www.allergy.org.nz or call 0800 34 0800 to request a free information pack. 



AUTHOR
Ros Fogel

Mussel power: can't be beaten on the barbecue

Want a quick and easy barbecue meal?

See our basic method below. Try using your own variations!



Method

1. Place the shells on a hot barbecue grill and wait for them to open (approx 5–10 minutes). As they open, take them off the barbecue and snap off the top part of the shell with a pair of tongs leaving the mussel still attached to the lower shell. Careful, they'll be hot! Discard any mussels that have failed to open.
2. Place about ½ teaspoon of garlic butter mixture on the top of each mussel. Do not over fill.
3. Return the half mussel shells to the barbecue and cook for a further 2 minutes or until sizzling.
4. Remove from the barbecue, season with cracked pepper and salt as preferred and serve with a fresh, crisp green salad and crusty French bread.
5. You can also try adding tasty variations to your garlic butter mixture. Chilli, parmesan cheese, grated lemon zest or chopped parsley can all add a delicious new zing to the flavour!

LOW-DOWN ON MUSSELS

A 100 gram serving of mussels provides one-quarter of the daily protein needs for an adult.

Mussels are very high in beneficial Omega 3 and 6 oils.

Mussels are rich in iron.

Mussels are very low in calories (85 calories per 100 gram serve).

Mussels are very low in cholesterol.

Female mussels have orange meat, while the male meat is paler. There is no difference in taste.

BEST METHOD FOR STORING MUSSELS

01 Place them in a container with drainage holes in the bottom.

02 Cover them with a thin material that will allow water through, such as gauze.

03 Place a layer of ice on top of the material.



INFORMATION

What are mussels?

Mussels are a popular seafood worldwide, and there are many different species.

Mussels are an excellent source of protein, low in calories and fat, contain a number of vitamins and minerals and are easily digested, not to mention they are also inexpensive and good value for money.

New Zealand waters are home to the native green-lipped or greenshell mussel. They are cultivated extensively here. The most common farming method is to attach mussels to ropes that are hung from a rope backbone supported by large plastic floats.

Sticking out from between the two shells is a mass of tough brown fibres known as 'the beard'. The mussel uses the beard to cling and attach itself to other objects in the water and then it stays in that position while it grows, ready to be harvested for eating.

Mussels are best cooked live, which means that they must be bought live. The most important thing to check when buying mussels in the shell (live) is that the shell is closed or that they snap shut when tapped with your finger. This means they are alive and edible.

Like most seafood, they don't take very long to cook – especially when cooked on the barbecue. They can be added to soups, stews or rice dishes or are simply delicious steamed in stock, garlic and parsley. 🍴

Garden diary

March

- March is the time to plant seedlings of beetroot, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, spinach and silverbeet.
- Sow seeds of carrots, parsnips, radishes, lettuce, spinach, silverbeet, beetroot (mild climates only), swedes and turnips directly into the garden.
- Seeds of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and brussel sprouts are best sown in trays for planting out later.
- Plant herbs in pots or the garden. Parsley can be grown from seed now. Perennial herbs like chives, mint, thyme, rosemary, sage and marjoram can be divided and replanted. Basil should be harvested before the cold weather, and dried or frozen.
- In the flower garden, it's time to plant spring bulbs.



April

- April is the time to tidy up summer flowering annuals.
- It's also a good time for planting trees and shrubs.
- Plant primulas, cinerarias, nemesias, Iceland poppies, calendula, stock, pansies, violas, polyanthus, penstemon, snapdragon and hollyhock.
- Harvest late-summer veges like pumpkins, marrows, potatoes and onions. Sow seeds of beetroot, broccoli, broad beans, cabbage, carrots, onions, radishes, spinach, swedes and turnips.
- Sow vacant areas of the vegetable garden with green crops such as blue lupin or mustard for digging in later.
- Rhubarb can be divided and replanted into compost-enriched soil.



May

- May is your last chance to plant spring bulbs.
- It's also time to dig up dahlia tubers and gladioli corms and store in a dry place.
- In the kitchen garden, plant seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, silverbeet, spinach and spring onions.
- Plant garlic and shallot bulbs, and strawberries.



Contact Publication enquiries should be made to closetohome@hnzc.co.nz www.hnzc.co.nz

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