

Author- Kate Vercoe, General Manager, Otago Farmers Market

As the days get a little shorter and the leaves start to turn it is time to think about provisioning for the winter months.

Home vege gardens are reaching their most bountiful and sometimes it is hard to keep up with eating all that produce. At the farmer's market it is the most glorious time. Fruit and vegetables seem to glow with the summer sun they have sucked up and everywhere you look there are mounds of wonderful produce.

Autumn is the time to cut back your garden and replenish the goodness that the summer plants have depleted. I like to think of this time as putting my garden to bed – everything cut back and the ground cleared of weeds and old leaves etc, some good quality animal manure dug in , along with some blood and bone and compost if you have it, all capped off with a layer of pea straw. A very happy garden ensues with the ground wonderfully friable in the spring when it is time to wake the garden up, dig it over and get planting.

As a way of basking in the gloriousness of this mellow season the Otago Farmers Market is having a Harvest Celebration on Saturday 29th April. This will be a fun day with activities for children such as apple bobbing, a scarecrow competition and apple pressing with golden juice to taste and take home.

We welcome you to bring your excess apples for the press and clean jars to take your juice away in. The apples don't need to be perfect but it is helpful if you can make sure they are clean. Vendors will have last season's spare apples available at bargain prices so if you've a hankering to make apple cider or apple cider vinegar this is your opportunity!

There will be several community organisations giving advice on growing edible gardens and what grows well in our climate.

Our very own market chef will be demonstrating various recipes and techniques for preserving food with plenty of free samples to whet your appetite!

To cap off this celebratory day we will have live country, folk and bluegrass music and a Best Dressed Vendor competition. Expect to see cowboys and girls, pumpkins, scarecrows and lots of high jinks.

Contact Kate on 021 1482 116 if you would like to be involved.

Good Food Dunedin is a Dunedin City Council-led initiative, supported by individuals, communities, organisations and businesses who share a vision to transform Dunedin into a thriving, resilient, and food-secure city.