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'First of August' celebrations

Although the most traditional way to celebrate the 'First of August' national day is by watching fireworks displays and bonfires, out in the countryside and up in the mountains, farmer's brunches are becoming a popular way to start the day off.

The 'all you can eat experience' is filled with local, and mostly homemade traditional foods, treating your taste buds to a sumptuous smorgasbord, where your eyes are bound to be larger than

your stomach. Buffet's at most venues will include freshly baked breads, jams, honey, cheese, cold meats, farm grown fruit, rösti and other 'house' specialities.

Most farms will offer entertainment and fun games for children and adults alike. Things like pig races, horse and carriage rides, blowing the alphorn, petting animals or hand milking a cow. To add to the festivities, there is often live music on offer, cheese making or a cooking demonstration or two to complete the real

rural farm life experience. Brunch is usually set up in the middle of the cow barn, or outside with the cows surrounding you, together with any other pets who want to join in the party.

So this 'First of August', why not create your own Swiss brunch feeling at home here in New Zealand? Invite some friends or family, make a fresh loaf of zopf, some jam and a rösti, get out your Swiss decorations and think of some fun games.

Sonja Werder

Nature nook | Natur Ecke

Spring delivers delicate snowdrops

Welcome to this corner. Hopefully over the coming months you will find something of interest in this little patch.

As I write this it is a beautiful winter's day; just a light breeze with the warm sun shining out of a near cloudless sky. Our Taranaki mountain stands proudly above us. By the time you read this spring will be on the horizon – one of first flowers of spring is usually the gallant little Snowdrop (although this season I have daffodils blooming ahead of the snowdrops).



The Snowdrop (*Galanthus Nivalis*) came originally from Switzerland and Austria. The botanical name means 'milk-white flower' and is a symbol of hope, new beginnings, beauty of spirit and consolation so no wonder folk are pleased to see them blooming, especially after a cold snowy European winter. Even the great poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, wrote a poem 'Ode to the Snowdrop'.

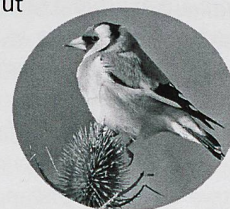
If you love snowdrops you are a generous-spirited person who likes to bring hope and gladness to everyone around you. Despite your quiet demeanor you have great courage and are often the first to try something new. Yours is a sensitive soul so you need to take care that your kind nature is not exploited.

And remember our little feathered friends at this time of the year. They often find food sources scarce so if you enjoy their company

and comical antics as I do, here is a relatively cheap bird food for you to make and put out on their feeding table.

RECIPE FOR BIRD PUDDING

2 litres of water
1 cup of cheap margarine
1 cup of cheap peanut butter
4 cups of cereal (rolled oats, bran etc)
Chopped apple, sultanas, raisins, dates, sunflowers seeds and/or wild bird seed



Bring water and margarine to the boil, slowly add cereals and cook stirring constantly until mixture thickens. Remove from the heat, add peanut butter and other ingredients of your choice. Serve by the spoonful on their feeding table. The mixture freezes well but I can assure you does not last long once they know it's there.

Margie Bishop