



EAST GIPPSLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT



nowa nowa bottling

THINK LOCAL / FOOD & AGRICULTURE / COMMUNITY

**Old-fashioned bottling sessions help
rediscover the joy of backyard apricots,
preserving and 'many hands'.**

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‘There’s a Vacola jar on my windowsill covered in white silt from the legendary, but now rare, Snowy River floods. This one had been in a friend’s garage since the 1971 flood.’

Helen Sheil, Nowa Nowa

Freezing, you see, has become more common over recent years, and bottling rarer. But this summer, a few Nowa Nowa folk rediscovered the joy of Vacoloe jars and ‘many hands’.

‘Whenever word went out that someone had ripe fruit on their trees, or someone had purchased a case of seasonal fruit at a bargain price, our bottles, clips and rings were gathered at one or other’s home for a morning of collective peeling, slicing, chatting, prodding and simmering.

At first we planned for fortnightly gatherings. But the weather and birds took little heed of our planning, so instead, word of ripe fruit was sent out by email for more spontaneous bottling sessions.

We began meeting at Elizabeth’s house where everything was on-hand and beautifully presented (and solar powered). Bottling instructions are pinned to the cupboard door to remind the newbies of the sequence of events - essential reading!). A later session was on the riverbank at the Nowa Nowa Caravan Park - bottling plums outdoors - a perfect setting for cooking and bottling the ‘golden globes’.

On my kitchen shelf there are now nectarines, apricots and plums - the tangible side of these gatherings. We learn a lot on these days. There are discussions about quality and taste of produce changing over time. Then there is the friendship, laughter and reflective conversations as memories of past preserving experiences are shared.

