



CENTRAL

LANDSCAPE & GARDEN SUPPLIES

Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips August 2009

The Veggie Bed

- Create a veggie bed ready for spring. Order a cubic metre or more of our *Living Earth* Garden Mix from our yards and layer it over an existing bed, or buy one of our great kitset beds – everything's provided, you just nail it together!
- Ask the family what they want to eat and get some veggies going. Unless you've got a cover over the veggie bed, or a glasshouse, it's too early for tomatoes, basil and peppers etc, but here's some easy greens for now – spinach and silver beet, mixed varieties of lettuce and cabbages and pak choi.
- If you don't get frosts, plant potato varieties such Rocket, Swift or Cliff's Kidney – you'll be eating them in late spring. And any leftover Garden Mix is great for 'earthing them up' – that's layering the soil up to the neck of the plants as they grow.
- Get the kids out to help – they can grow strawberries (really good in raised containers), give them a small watering can and they can water in all new seedlings and get them to hold the stakes while you build a tee-pee of bamboo stakes. They can poke seeds of sugar snap or snow peas around base of the tee-pee. Peas are veggies they'll eat straight from the garden!

The Rest of the Garden

- Prune roses and hydrangeas. Take out any skinny or dead wood and thin out the centre of both shrubs. Good air circulation through the bushes prevents the spread of disease. For bush or shrub roses cut back by up to one half of the size of the bush, making the cut just above an outward facing new growth shoot on the branch. Hydrangeas are cut back to a pair of leaf buds, unless there's a sharp point of tight leaves still at the end of the stem – leave this on as it's the first new bloom in spring.

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Get a load of our *Living Earth* Compost (weed-free and organic) and fork it through the soil around both shrubs. It's all they need at the moment and it gives them great friable soil for their roots to move through.

- Copper spray citrus trees after you've harvested the fruit. This prevents verrucosis, the scabby disease that mars the leaves and inhibits the growth of good fruit. (Copper is also good now on dormant fruit trees and your roses after pruning). Feed your citrus – yes it's early, but young citrus trees need a boost back to life after a particularly cold winter.
- Wage war on tenacious weeds. Both onion weed and oxalis are in full leaf and the best eradication is digging out with the bulb attached. You can spray with herbicides, but use ones that specifically say they deal with your weed; otherwise it's a waste of time and money. Oxalis is a bit more of a problem, but it's said that repeated sprays of *Round-up* finally inhibit leaf growth. If you spray, careful to be specific in application, even the lightest drift can ruin prized plants. Once you've cleared the unwanted weeds, layer around some of our Premium Mulch and give yourself a pat on the back at how much better the area looks!

Planting

- All the new season's deciduous trees and shrubs are around now, including lots of great fruit trees. At our yards we've got great soils for you plant them straight into, such as *Living Earth's* Garden Mix. Or, if your soil needs some conditioning, dig through our *Living Earth* Compost just before planting and it'll improve the soil structure for the roots of the new plants and bring the earthworms over to your place!
- In the flower beds you can plant new season's dahlias (very fashionable) and poppies and lavenders. (Always pinch out the tips of the lavender at planting – you get a better shaped bush at the expense of only the very first flowers of the season). Plant roses now, but remember to change the soil if you're planting new roses in place of old ones.

The Leisure Areas

- Renovate your existing lawn by digging out or selectively spraying existing broadleaf weeds. It's important to get rid of them before you over-sow the grass, otherwise they'll compete for space and ruin the look. If you've used an herbicide to kill weeds, check the withholding period before sowing new grass. Fill bare patches and slight dips with either Screened Topsoil or Lawn Mix. Later in August, when overnight temperatures are at 7 plus then you can sow grass seed.
- Turn muddy paths or difficult planting areas into attractive pebbled walkways or seating areas: At our yards we have great range of attractive stones and pebbles that you can take away in bags or by the trailer load or we can bring to you in our trucks. (And we'll help you work out how much you need: simply measure the area and estimate how deep you want the layer of pebbles). You can either compact unwanted cardboard cartons (recycling is good for reducing Auckland's landfills) and layer them at least two thicknesses deep over the area you want to cover or use our Geocil weedmat. Alternatively you can put down a layer of fine basecourse or SAP7 scoria and compact. Cover with a layer of our decorative pebbles, or even crushed shell, and enjoy the new look!

All of the above products are available from your local *Central Landscape & Garden Supplies* yard – bulk and bags, pickup or delivery as well as free loan trailers.

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