



Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips December 2009

The Veggie Bed

Warm weather is finally underway, after a disappointing growing season. This means it's time to go for it in the veggie garden, whilst there are plenty of plant varieties to choose from:

- Planting now: herbs for the summer pestos and salads: parsley, coriander, mint, basil, and chives. These herbs are brilliant over summer if you get 3 things right, soil, sun and watering. Don't waste expensive fertilisers on them, just some *Living Earth* Liquid Compost to promote leaf growth.
- A good tip for organic gardeners: sprinkle flour (not self-raising though) around your plants – snails and slugs hate it!
- Continue to 'earth up' potatoes through this time – they produce their crops up the stems in moist rich soil.
- From now on the aphids and whitefly get serious about their food crops too – at your place! If you're not seeing enough ladybirds and hoverflies (aphid eaters) around, then use an organic insecticide such as Pyrethrum or *Yates' Confidor*
- Ensure the tomatoes have enough support (several canes or a stout stake) at a height of not less than 1.5 metres high. They become heavy with tomatoes and can break under the weight of the crop.
- **Watering** in summer is the most critical factor – it's become hot and we are seeing some very drying winds. 'Spits of rain' don't count, so water early in the day or in the evening for best results. Mulches work well if you've watered deeply, irrigated and then spread around, but not against the stems of your veggie plants.

Best Christmas Present: Give a novice gardener, young or old, one of our ***Central Landscapes'*** Garden Beds and ***Living Earth Garden Mix***. It's a great value present and keeps growing! Just call 0800TOPSOIL and we'll drop it off for you!

The Rest of the Garden

Before the silly season takes over, make an audit of the well established and the newly planted in your garden:

- Established but needy plants such as citrus and other fruits, gardenias and roses will benefit from a light top-dress of controlled release fertiliser or some ***Living Earth Outdoor Plant Food***.
- Water-hungry shrubs like hydrangeas, ferns and newly planted trees need a mulch with attitude – ***Central's Premium Mulch*** will ensure they spend summer in the sun, but their roots stay nice and cool.

- Signs of citrus verrucosis are around – scabby looking bumpy leaves on your lemon tree – this develops in wetter cooler springs such as we've just experienced. Spray with copper fungicide or the scabs will show up on the fruit.
- Planting seedlings of petunias, impatiens and salvias is good preparation for Christmas flowering, but be ruthless and 'pinch out' the tips of the stems. This encourages plenty of side growth for bushy plants and stops 'leggy growth'. Liquid Compost mixed up and watered around will establish them better at planting time.
- Plant a living Christmas Tree in a lightweight or plastic tub, so that it's light enough to carry indoors for December. For the rest of the year you can take it outdoors to grow on.

The Lawn

- With the wet and cold of winter becoming a distant memory we are now faced with the new problem of our lawn drying out. Historically the answer to this problem has been water and more water, however when the soil surface becomes water repellent or "hydrophobic" it requires more than just an irrigation system!!
- There are a number of reasons why your lawn may become water repellent but it is not impossible to remedy using the latest in wetting agent technology.
- **AquaTurf Max G** granules are one of the most effective tools in dealing with a wilting lawn. AquaTurf Max G is easy and safe to apply and can be used even in the hottest temperatures. This product will allow the water to penetrate and move down through the soil surface giving an even and deep wetting. AquaTurf Max G granules will then attract and retain moisture which will reduce the chance of the lawn re-drying.
- AquaTurf Max G granules can be applied by hand as they are non toxic, however because it is important to obtain even coverage applying with a hand spreader is recommended.
- AquaTurf Max G is available in a 4kg pack.

The DIY Holiday Project

If you're tired of soil spilling over paths and lawns or you want to make a raised garden border this summer Central Landscapes has the ideal solution. Our **Keystone** selection of blocks that fit together for decorative edging make perfect low walls for raised garden beds or sloping edges. Just measure the area and come in and discuss how high you'd like to build it.

Holiday Hours

Our yards are observing the following opening hours from Christmas to New Year:

CLOSED 25-28 December 2009 and 1-4 January 2010

OTHERWISE we are OPEN ALL OTHER DAYS

Check our website for exact hours (www.centrallandscapes.co.nz)

***Wishing you all a Happy & Safe Christmas from the
Team at Central Landscape & Garden Supplies***

0800 TOPSOIL - www.centrallandscapes.co.nz