



Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips November 2009

The Veggie Bed and Fruit Garden

- Pest Watch: Right now there's some serious eating going on in the veggie bed, before your plants even get the chance to grow!
 - Snails and slugs have bred happily in this iffy spring of warm, but wet weather. They can be voracious when it comes to young veggie seedlings, so build a covered snail bait station (up turned plastic pot or dish that they can crawl into) with your choice of snail bait. Or beer, yes they are attracted by its yeasty smell, but it's fatal to them!
 - Aphids colonise quickly on veggies, ornamentals and our lovely citrus trees. Squash them or spray with Yates' **Confidor** or **Bug Oil**.
- Weather Watch: An unseasonal bout of Southerlies will surely pass soon, but it has left its mark: stunted tomatoes and other veggies, mildewed strawberries and fungal leaf spots on fruit trees to name a few.
 - Try feeding up the tomatoes with **Tomorite**, a liquid tomato fertiliser and it'll work for the strawberry patch too.
 - Spray diseased leaves on pip fruit trees with Yates' **Fungus Fighter** and on stonefruit trees and strawberries with Yates' **Bravo**.
 - Stake any trees or tall bushes that are rocking in the wind to ensure the rootball stays anchored.
- Plant Now: Sow sweet-corn, chilli and basil seeds. Plant main crop potatoes and plenty of seasonal vegetables. This month sees the biggest range of the year on offer. Always water in with liquid fertiliser.
- Remember it's not too late to plant a veggie bed this spring and the Central Landscape & Garden Supplies beds come filled with *Living Earth* **Garden Mix** and ready to plant from only \$119.00 per layer. (That's lettuce on the Christmas table....)

The Rest of the Garden

- Weeding: After so much rain the weeds are racing away in gardens. Fortunately the extra wet season means the soil is soft, so they can be removed easily. After weeding, layer around our Premium Mulch to keep moisture in the soil, particularly around prized plants. This sets them up for the heat of summer.

- Hard to control weeds: Re-growth on stumps of privet, and other less desirable shrubs and trees can be a problem, especially where you can't easily remove the stump: Try cutting to ground level and dabbing **Vigilant** gel across the cut stump (remember, a little goes a long way). Apply in dry weather.
- Planting: A few basics for planting in warmer weather - Dig the hole and mix some *Living Earth Compost* with the soil. Fill the hole to the top with water and wait until it drains away. Soak the new plant in a bucket of water until the bubbles stop rising and place in the hole firming the soil around the sides and lightly over the top. Water every few days until established. This method works well for all the tempting shrubs and perennials that are around at the moment.

The Garden Project

Christmas Pots: If you're hosting Christmas, or just planning to be outside a lot over summer, now's a great time to get some festive colour going in the pots and baskets.

- Use good quality Potting Mix, or renovate your existing pot mixes by adding **Osmocote** and **Saturaid**.
- Select bright tones or cool blues and whites in the fantastic range of petunias, lobelias and nicotianas for sun and impatiens for light shade. Pinch out the plant tips after planting to make them bush out.
- Add some silver or green foliage plants such as ivies for contrast.
- Liquid Feed after planting and repeat every 10 days or so to get them underway.
- And if you're worried about your pots drying out over Christmas, Central Landscape & Garden Supplies has a superb range of decorative stones to place around the plants to keep their roots moist and cool!

The Lawn

- Fertilise, fertilise, fertilise. That's the key at this time of year. We are now finally starting to get spring growth in our lawns and with this comes a much greater demand from the plant for food, especially nitrogen.
- Poor nutrition is the single biggest factor for lawns failing. The reasons are not always understood because New Zealanders historically sowed their lawn and the only maintenance done from that day on was to scalp it once a week. When a lawn is hungry the plant has a reduced capacity to handle stress whether it is heat, draught, wear and tear or even pest damage and weed invasion. It is essential to have strong healthy plants that are robust and prepared for stress.
- The best way to fertilise a lawn is with a slow releasing fertiliser which will give you two major benefits. The first is that grass plants always want available nutrients and as slow release fertilisers supply a constant trickle of nutrients the plant always has that food when it needs it. The second major benefit is that slow release fertilisers can last up to 12 weeks which means that you do not have to worry about frequent applications. Slow release fertilisers are usually non-burning and safe to apply in any conditions.
- Turfmaster Gold 22-2-4 is high performance professional grade slow release fertiliser which is perfect for use on all lawn grass types.
- Turfmaster Gold is available in 4kg and 22.7kg packs
- Always sweep or blow fertiliser granules off any paths or tiled areas as they may stain. Apply fertilisers with a suitable spreader such as the GTi hand spreader. It is not recommended that you apply high quality fertilisers by hand.