



# CENTRAL

## LANDSCAPE & GARDEN SUPPLIES

### Digger Dan's Monthly Garden Tips September 2009

#### *The Veggie Bed*

- Spring's arrived and so has the warmer weather! We now have macrocarpa and treated pine garden beds in store and combined with the *Living Earth* Garden Mix you are ready to go. These simple and easy to assemble kitset beds mean you can have a great range of food coming on for the spring season! We choose sustainable macrocarpa for our garden beds, it's a hardwood without any chemical treatments and it 'silvers' nicely over the years to come. We also have the Tan E Pine which is chrome and arsenic free.
- The range of veggies just got a while lot wider with the warm spring weather: there are plenty of colourful lettuces that look really good in the veggie plot, plus rocket or mesclun mix, varieties that you can pick as you go. Or sow some Chinese snow peas – they cost a fortune to buy at the supermarket and fresh from the garden, the taste is unbelievable.
- Don't forget the spuds – they'll need a few weeks to sprout before you plant, (just store them in a dry place 'til the 'eyes' are a couple of cm long). And you can plant yams, parsnips and pumpkins now too.
- School holidays start later this month – Grab a few hours with the children and get some seeds going, so they can have their own garden experience. Any leftover *Living Earth* Lawn Mix is an ideal seed-raising mix, with its fertiliser and free-draining texture.

**Phone: 0800 TOPSOIL; [www.centrallandscapes.co.nz](http://www.centrallandscapes.co.nz)**

Successful seeds for kids include carrots, peas, and radishes (most children won't eat radishes, but they give a quick result through the holiday fortnight and honestly, they're excellent sliced through coleslaw). Do not forget giant sunflowers, or if you're limited by space order Sunflower 'Teddy Bear' or 'Incredible Dwarf' from [www.kingsseeds.co.nz](http://www.kingsseeds.co.nz).

### *The Rest of the Garden*

- Soil Conditioning: It's important to get the soil right for both established plants and new additions you'll be adding to the garden. A good soil has excellent structure and nutrients and you can add this by digging in plenty of our 100% weed free *Living Earth* Compost. Come summer, it will aid water retention too. As you do this, work in our favourite fertiliser, GTi Garden Supreme or some sheep pellets for an organic alternative. (What to add to existing beds of garden mix in place for a couple of years? More *Living Earth* Compost of course – treat it like renovating ordinary garden soils).
- Planting: Once your soil's ready there are plenty of trees, shrubs and annuals available now. Just remember that from now on plants in small containers and planter bags dry out very quickly, so soak every plant in a bucket of water until the bubbles stop rising. That way you can be sure the roots are nice and moist before they go into the ground.
- Climbers: It's a great time to establish climbers against an existing wall, or a climbing frame. Choose from big flowered hybrid clematis or our NZ beauty, *Clematis paniculata*, or there's the showy pandorea or the Chinese star jasmine, *Trachelospernum jasminoides*. If you're into growing food, climbing edibles include passionfruit, grapes, cocktail size kiwifruit, as well as berry fruits such as loganberry and boysenberry.
- Plant a hedge: Low hedges such as buxus, corokia or lavender can go in now, as can taller pittosporum, Eugenia (lillypilly) and griselinia. (Griselinia needs some trichopel in the planting soil to ward off its enemy, the pathogen Phytophthora). After planting, all of these varieties would benefit from a light trim, to get them even and start them growing together as a hedge.

### *The Flower Garden*

- Much has been written lately about the need for more natural gardens. Increased numbers of flowers attract beneficial insects that will keep the numbers of garden nasties at bay. It's true that, on balance the more flowering interest you can provide over the spring through to autumn, the better chance you have of attracting the pollinators and the predator insects. So choose a wide range of flowering plants this year (add some salvias and lavenders for late season blooms) and be selective about deadheading – if a cluster of garden friendlies is showing interest long after the flowers have gone to seed, leave the spent blooms on a few more weeks...

**Phone: 0800 TOPSOIL; [www.centrallandscapes.co.nz](http://www.centrallandscapes.co.nz)**

## *The Garden Project*

- Have you seen our range of 'faux rocks'? Honestly they look so real you won't realise they're not! These light UV proof fake boulders are a great idea for adding to your bog garden with some water-loving plants or around the edge of a new pond or water feature.
- Design Tip: Digging the rock down into the soil by a quarter or a third is much more realistic and it looks as though it has been there forever. Just resting rocks on top of the garden makes it look as though they've been recently dumped there.

## *The Lawn*

- With the weather warming up and hopefully drying out you will want to turn your attention to your lawn. After a long winter even existing lawns need some TLC and the sooner you do this the better it will look for that all important BBQ season. If your lawn is looking tired, yellow, full of weeds or just a little thin then it's time for a spring renovation.
1. Fertilise with *Turfmaster Gold* or *Garden Supreme* to encourage strong growth.
  2. Spray weeds with a broad range weed killer such to control broadleaf weeds.
  3. About 3-4 weeks later scarify the lawn heavily to remove thatch and create a good seed bed. Thatch is the accumulation of dead leaves, roots and organic matter that clog up the surface of your lawn making your fertiliser and watering less efficient. Scarifiers or dethatchers as they are also known can be hired from most hire companies.
  4. Oversow bare or weak areas with the appropriate *GTi Prolawn Seed Blend* and fertilise with *Turfmaster Starter*.
  5. Lightly cover the seed with a good quality lawn soil mix, water when rain is not present and within 4-6 weeks your lawn should be fully recovered and looking great.

**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.**

**"DOWN TO EARTH SERVICE"**

**Phone: 0800 TOPSOIL; [www.centrallandscapes.co.nz](http://www.centrallandscapes.co.nz)**