



The Naturally Smarter Garden Display

North Shore Home and Garden Show 17-20 April 2009



We hope you enjoyed our Naturally Smarter garden at the Home and Garden Show. If you didn't get there, we hope this publication will convey some of the ideas and connections we shared, to help you in your garden.

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We know that New Zealanders love gardening - with a passion. More and more families are realising that a productive garden is an asset in the current financial climate. A home garden saves you money, provides entertainment (especially if you have chickens) and yields nourishing food.

North Shore gardeners and city council staff created display garden to show how North Shore gardeners a better city through gardening, at the North Shore Home and Garden Show.

We put together some fantastic, easy, and fun ways that people create. For example:

- Heirloom chooks in a permaculture chook dome
- Vegetables herbs and flowers to grow for winter
- Brews and teas to keep your garden healthy
- Fruit trees that grow well on the North Shore
- Garden materials that have less impact on the environment
- Locally sourced, organically grown seedlings - from seed that is grown and saved in our region (Running Brook Farms)



The Naturally Smarter Gardening Team

Left to right: Geoff Tisch, Stephen Ferguson, Kate Jackson, Darren Millington, Dee Pigneguy, Linda Tisch.



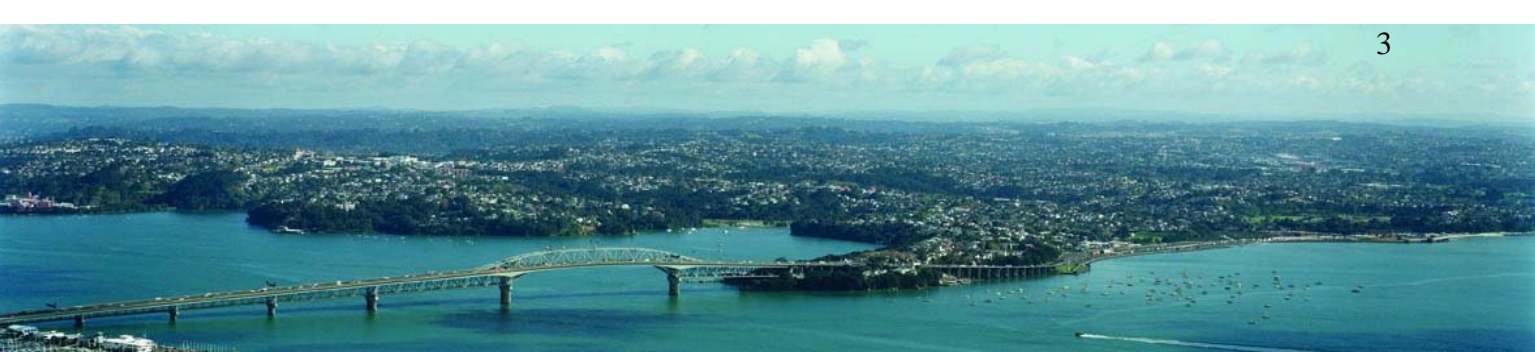
Geoff Tisch is a retired builder/carpenter, outdoor educator, and good keen man. With wife Linda he has co-created a backyard food garden including chooks and is learning heaps about compost and organic methods. Geoff has a keen interest in designing and custom building infrastructure to suit individual gardening needs. Geoff built the composts, chook house, and the shed and is able to work with you on yours. **You can call Geoff on 418 2971.**

Stephen Ferguson is a landscape designer who uses and advocates sustainable products and processes. He is passionate about productive and edible landscapes with great design, residential lifestyle block clients. Well-qualified with over 25 years experience in landscape design, consultation, and all aspects of installation and maintenance. Stephen felt it timely to initiate the set up of an organic community garden/education centre in Devonport, at the Mount Cambria reserve. **Contact Stephen to discuss your garden or lifestyle requirements, or Cambria Gardens on 446 0641 or 027 223 8459.**

Kate Jackson coordinates environmental education programmes at North Shore City Council, such as the EnviroSchools programme and local sustainability initiatives. She provided the opportunity and resources for this collaborative project. Kate enjoys her organic home garden and a couple of adventurous chooks. **You can contact her on 486 8600, extension 7964.**

Darren Millington of Urban Abundance is a qualified gardener specialising in food gardening. Darren has over seven years experience and skills in horticulture, permaculture, organic gardening and biodynamics. Darren works with people to set up an organic food garden, for example, designing and setting up garden beds for food production, advising on fruit tree and orchard design, soil and composting systems. **Contact Darren on 480 8602 or 021 1859 395 or email him at urbanabundance@gmail.com**

Dee Pigneguy manages a backyard organic garden in Glenfield that provides most of the vegetables, eggs, honey and some of the fruit she and husband Mike need. Dee believes gardening is the single most effective action you can personally take to help the planet, so most of her work is at a grass roots level teaching organic gardening. Dee uses her very bio diverse garden for classes throughout the year, and also works in schools helping staff and students to set up and maintain organic gardens. Dee provided the happy hens, potted plants and lots of helpful advice. To book into one of Dee's sell-out courses, or to organise a talk, you can call her on 444 9342.



Choose chooks!



Chooks are the ultimate naturally smarter garden companions. They love weeding, and gobble up the garden bugs you hate. Their manure is rich in nitrogen. Combined with straw or sawdust it's a wonderful fertiliser. It's free to keep them! You can have up to 6 hens in North Shore city. And of course, they will lay fresh, healthy eggs for you nearly every day.

Keeping happy, healthy chooks

Chooks originate in Malaysia where they foraged on the rainforest floor and slept in the branches of trees.

Their needs are simple:

- Shelter
- Shade
- Fresh clean water
- Food
- A roost off the ground
- Somewhere to scratch
- An enclosure to keep them away from your silver beet and safe from dogs

Further resources and advice about chooks:

Our chook housing was built by Darren Millington and Geoff Tisch (See page 2)

Urban Chook Seminar, June 20th at the Sustainable Living Centre New Lynn
www.ecomatters.co.nz

The Permaculture Home Gardener Linda Woodrow

Heirloom hens in NZ www.rarebreeds.co.nz.

Our heirloom hens were a Golden Wyandotte a Barnevelder, and came from Raewyn Norton - ph 09 810 8690, email raemar@vivid.net.nz.

Organic chook food www.biograins.co.nz

Straw hay and food - RD1 Albany www.rd1.co.nz

North Shore City Council's chook bylaw – check www.northshorecity.govt.nz



Saving for a rainless day

Rainwater is free – so make the most of it!

You can use almost any container to collect raindrops for your garden. A few buckets dotted around the garden, rain barrels connected by hosing, and large commercial rain tanks like this one will all help a thirsty garden in the middle of summer.

Remember to cover containers when it stops raining, to prevent mosquitoes.

Whichever you use, you're saving rain for the sunny days when you need it.

Further info on Rainwater Harvesting

Our rain tank came from tanks a lot, which source corrugated iron tanks.

www.tanksalot.co.nz

Other useful places to look are: The sustainable living centre, New Lynn – they have a range of rainwater collection ideas and seminars.

www.ecomatters.co.nz

<http://www.northshorecity.govt.nz/?src=water/stormwater/>

www.marley.co.nz

www.rainsaver.co.nz





Heirloom Plants



Many of the herbs, vegetables and flowers we have here – and the chooks - are **heirloom varieties**. This means they were common sometime before 1951, but are not used in today's industrial scale farming and agriculture.

Since 1920, we have lost around 90% of our vegetable

seed and around 85% of the fruit varieties in NZ, as only a limited range of plants have been grown commercially.

Heirloom plants are “open pollinated” which allows the same cultivar to be grown simply from seed for many generations. Of course, none of these plants are native to NZ, but many were brought by early settlers and have adapted to local conditions. Nourishing a diversity of plant varieties is smart and delicious. Use your home garden to try out some of the amazing heirloom varieties– for example, white and orange beetroot, purple potatoes and beans, pink green and black tomatoes!

Many frugal gardeners have saved seeds and cuttings from their favourite plants throughout the years. Modern commercial plant varieties are often selected for transporting and keeping qualities at the expense of flavour and texture – we're lucky that we don't need to worry about this in our home gardens. Plants grown locally have gradually adjusted to the soil and climatic conditions – so it's smart to grow from seed that is raised close to where you live.

Rob Velseboer and his Northtec students grew all the plants for the raised beds in the Naturally Smarter garden. Rob grows seedlings for Weathersfield Organics as well as running sustainable land use courses through North Tec. Rob is involved in many community initiatives. Rob may be running courses on urban land use in North Shore City later in the year – fingers crossed! You can find out where to buy similar organic seedlings at www.weathersfieldorganics.co.nz

Many of the plants we displayed were grown from Running Brook Farms – for a catalogue, send a self addressed envelope and \$5.00 in stamps to Stella Christiansen, 34 Cooper Road, Waiuku, RD4 Auckland or phone 09 235 9138 evenings.

Heirloom plants and seeds are also available at garden centres, from Kings Seeds, and Koanga Gardens.



No dig no fuss

If you want a smaller, more manageable garden and lots of goodies for your table, **raised bed gardens** are very smart.

They produce 1.4 to 2 times as much vegetables and flowers per square metre as conventional garden plots. The aerated soil structure of the garden allows plants to develop strong healthy roots.

Raised beds tend to warm up sooner in spring and cools slower in the autumn than conventional beds. It's also easier to use cloches in raised beds, to extend growing seasons. And they can reduce aches and pains from kneeling or bending over a conventional garden plot.

How to make a raised bed garden: Even if your back yard is mostly concrete surface with little space for growing, it is still possible to plant a growing bed on top of it, as long as it gets sunshine. Form any convenient shape with a wooden (approx 200 mm x 2 mm or heavier macrocarpa timber), recycled brick or concrete frame no wider than you can reach across without walking on it. Then follow the method below:

Esther Deans raised bed method (can also work well on a soil base).

- Start with a thick layer of wet newspaper (one supermarket bag-full per square metre)
- Then 20cm deep 'pads' of pea straw or lucerne hay (these have more nitrogen in them than cereal straw)
- Dust with 'blood and bone', seaweed meal or another organic fertiliser (about 250 g/square metre)
- Layer with 10cm of dry grass clippings or loose pea straw (you will need a few wheelbarrow loads)
- Sprinkle more fertiliser on top
- The final layer is fine compost (about one cubic metre), into which your seedlings can be planted.
- It will need regular watering, as it sits above the soil water table and will drain quickly.

These people can work with you to design and install raised bed gardens:

Urban Abundance – Darren Millington, ph 021 1859 395, 480 8602,
urbanabundance@gmail.com,

Urban food Project – Keith Thomas, ph 8456525, 027 712 7529,
keith@urbanfoodproject.co.nz,

Patch from Scratch - Sarah Davies 021 334 603 09 525 7897
sarah@patchfromscratch.co.nz, www.patchfromscratch.co.nz



Nature's way

The plants in our raised gardens beds were grown organically. That means that they grew without the use of synthetic or oil-based chemicals.

Organic growing simply means working with nature and its cycles to create productive healthy gardens. Some of the strategies organic growers use are:

- select a good north-facing site
- build up the soil
- fertilise using seaweed, manure or worm tea
- intercrop and plant beneficial insect plants
- mulching
- grow green manure crops)
- rotate crops
- squish or trap bugs, or use sprays made of products like garlic and chilli

An easy way to get rid of your toxic garden chemicals is at the Hazmobile – on June 20th at Smales Farm. Then just say 'no' to synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides!

Here are some of the reasons people choose to grow organically:

- Save money
- Feels better
- Reduce toxic load on their land and family
- Cleaner waterways and habitats
- Less risk to people and the environment... the worst industrial disaster of all time, at a pesticide plant in Bhopal, killed 8000 people. Just last month, 31 containers of fertiliser were lost at sea off Australia, threatening coastal ecosystems.

The raised bed gardens were made from renewable, untreated NZ sourced macrocarpa, and the chook tepee was made from giant reed, a local pest plant. The crushed brick was recycled from demolition bricks.

Wooden and corrugated iron raised beds are now widely available for sale and installation –or you can make your own from materials you have at home.

Further information on sustainable materials www.ecobob.co.nz



Fruit for the family

We included apples, crab-apples, feijoas, pears, mandarins, persimmons, mulberries, limes, strawberries, passion fruit, mountain pawpaw, and bananas. All of them can grow beautifully in North Shore gardens. While our clay soils are heavy, they are well suited to apples and plums. All trees grow even better if you build up mulch and compost. The key to success for most fruit trees is a sunny spot. If you only have a small wall, try an espaliered fruit tree. If you have only a balcony, you could grow a vine or a dwarf citrus.

We didn't have room for peaches, raspberries, rock melons, grapes, oranges, cherimoya, avocados, quinces, tamarillo, babaco, grapefruit and cocktail kiwifruit which also grow here successfully.

Loquats and guavas are delicious, but we aren't so keen them - they are very pesty and invade deep forest around Albany.

Fruiting plants have many other functions in a garden – privacy, shade and shelter, autumn colour, spring blossom, climbing frames for kids, fragrance, nectar for bees, and canopy for smaller plants.

Further information on growing fruit trees

Growing, maintaining, and varieties www.treecrops.org.nz

Courses and heirloom fruit trees - www.koanga.co.nz/pages/fruit_trees.htm

Citrus - www.copperfield.co.nz

Many people loved the mulberry trees and buddha's hand citrus we had on display – if you ask your local garden centre they will often varieties you want to grow.



Where to next?

Go to www.naturallysmarter.co.nz – gardening – more info for great gardening fact sheets and links

Further resources and advice about organic growing:

The gardening section of your local library, and gardening magazines such as *Growing Today*, *NZ Gardener*, *Organic NZ*. Friends or family who garden. Gardeners often enjoy sharing tips and ideas.

Places to visit - local productive gardens.

Palmers, 26 Anzac Road, Browns Bay. Palmers has partnered with the Salvation Army to teach five families are learning how to grow organically using raised bed allotments in the garden centre. You can see their progress, as well as browsing seeds, organic seedlings, compost systems, fruit trees and raised bed frames. This is a wonderful example of a local business partnering with a local community organisation to work provide for local people's needs.

Devonport Organic City Farm at 4/27 Lake Road, Devonport – this is a fantastic example of organic community gardens and produce is available for a donation.

Courses and workshops

Dee Pigneguy, www.feedmeright.co.nz Glenfield ph 4449342 or email mike.dee@clear.net.nz

Sustainable Living Centre - numerous organic growing courses

4 Olympic Place, New Lynn ph 826 0557

http://www.ecomatters.org.nz/05_SLC/documents/SLCworkshopprogrammeAprilMay09.pdf

CCS Disability Action Community Gardens, 14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak

http://www.northern.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/Services/CCSDisabilityActionCommunityGardens/WelcomingAutumnSeminar/tabid/1032/Default.aspx#Master_gardener

Rainbow Valley Farms, Matakana www.rainbowvalleyfarm.co.nz

Koanga Gardens, SH1 Kaiwaka, <http://www.koanga.org.nz>

Free composting courses – phone 482 1172 or visit

www.createyourowneden.org.nz