

Issue 01, 2008

LeafTurner

In this issue



Free expert garden advice



Free gifts and discounts



The latest news on garden recycling



Welcome to the very first LeafTurner, bringing you all the latest news on green gardening and composting from the garden waste recycling industry.



Welcome
to LeafTurner
from the country's
best known garden
bug specialist
Ruud Kleinpaste.



He has featured in New Zealand newspapers, magazines and television shows since 1988 and lectures on Plant Protection at UNITEC. He is a trustee of Project Crimson, the Little Barrier Island Supporters Trust, Bank of New Zealand Kiwi Recovery Trust and the Zoo Charitable Trust, and patron of Keep New Zealand Beautiful.

It's simple, really...

I reckon this LeafTurner is read by a whole lot of keen gardeners with a healthy attitude to life.

If you look around, you will find all sorts of gardeners: organic ones, folk that adore permaculture or swear by Biodynamics. This last group follow Rudolf Steiner and practice hypnotising compost, I always say.

If you take a close look at some of these methodologies you'll find that they all differ in philosophy and techniques; some are based on holistic principles, others on self-sufficiency.

The labels we give these various forms of horticulture appear to have more bearing on the state of mind of the people that practise these techniques, than on the validity or success of the method!

They all have useful bits and pieces of information and handy tips for us gardeners who want to practise - for want of a better word - common sense gardening.

So do your own common sense thing: Weeding is a real bugger and you really need to be on top of it all the time. If your soil is friable and full of organic material, the weeds are easier to pull out.

If you cover the soil with lots of mulch (which will eventually break down into organic material) weed seeds will find it harder to germinate in such dark terrain.

See? A win-win situation; and can you hear the tennis court (or the beach) beckoning?


Elsewhere in this magazine you'll find a list of brilliant bugs that make compost - for free, I may hasten to add. If you're into "compostology", you'll find there are a zillion more species that are employed in that trade. Just like there are bugs that help to keep the balance in your garden by gobbling up pests that damage plants.

For those useful predators and parasites to turn up at your place, all you need to do is keep a few pests on your plants, grow a variety of flowers to feed the beneficials with pollen and nectar, before they hunt out the baddies.

As you can see: balance is about variety.

So: do your common sense thing and sit back with the love of your life (a book or good glass of wine) and watch it all happen...

It's simple, really.

 LeafTurner brings you all the latest news on green gardening and composting from New Zealand's garden waste recycling industry.

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Create your own Eden		www.createyourownden.org.nz

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On the run with Waikato Garden Bags

By Andy Kenworthy

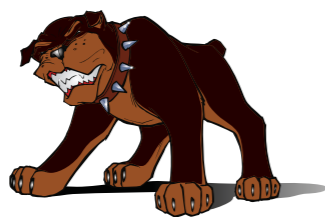


It's exciting catching up for a chat with a garden bag recycling team in full flow on their collection round. The truck advances like a mother insect down the street while her workers jog from house to house, skilfully avoiding the traffic, whisking the brightly coloured bins from the door.

Leon Close, from Waikato Garden Bags, explained what he has grown to like on his two years on the job. "It keeps me fit, and you meet all sorts of nice people," he said. Each team usually has two or three workers. They know their runs intimately, and grow to remember the exact location of each customer's bin or bag.

There's no need for hand sorting in this job, everything gets emptied into the back of truck, our customers are great at ensuring there's no contamination. There's just enough time to share a few words with customers out enjoying their gardens as the team moves down the street.

Every now and then, they also meet people's pets. "It's a bit of an occupational hazard," said Leon's son Richard, who also works on one of the teams, "There has been the odd occasion when I've had to put the trolley down and run for the truck!"



Roger van Groendall who works in the Waikato team alongside his wife, Leanne, said: "The accuracy with which we do things is our number one concern. Most importantly for customer satisfaction, but also because it is this which allows us to offer a cost-effective service." He explains how customers can help keep the whole thing running smoothly.

"We do ask that people put their bin in an easily accessible spot," he said. "We always do our best but it can make it a bit harder, and slow us down, if bins and bags are in really tight spaces. If in doubt, just give us a call and we can talk through the best arrangements."



How you can get the most from your garden bag service

Most garden waste recyclers pride themselves on running an almost invisible service – all you have to do as a customer is leave the bin or bag in the right spot. But remembering a few key points can help you get the best value for money, and help maintain a fast efficient service for everyone.

Keep us updated

It is important you tell your collection service as soon as you can if you:

- lose your collection calendar
- are on the four weekly scheme and want to skip the next collection
- want to know how to pay your bill
- move your bag or bin to another spot on your property
- need spare bags
- want to change between a bin and a bag
- move house
- get a new dog
- wish to discontinue the service
- have a complaint or compliment
- want to recommend a friend

Accessing your property

Cars - Collection staff won't risk damaging your car, so make sure it doesn't block access to where your bag or bin is kept.

Gates - If we need to pass through locked gates make sure we have a code or key.

Dogs - If you have a dog, tell us their name and where they are kept.

If you think your dog might not take kindly to the collection team being on the property, arrange for the bag or bin to be stored somewhere they can get at it without meeting the dog.

If in doubt, let your collection team know!

They will not collect if it means risking injury or damage to your property.

If they cannot collect they still have to charge as normal - They will still have incurred all of their costs except for the composting costs.

Plan before you plant...

In 2006 researchers in northern California discovered the world's tallest living tree. The redwood, named Hyperion, was measured at 115.5m (379.1ft) just over a third of the height of the Auckland Sky Tower.

Composting through history

Much of what we know about the past today comes from the study of the waste ancient civilizations threw away, and green waste recycling itself has a venerable history.

Deliberate and organised composting is known to have been a part of life in China, as far back as 2000 BC! And in the 1800s in England 'dustmen' collected the ash from coal fires, which in London at the time burned more than 3.5 million tonnes of coal a year. The dust was taken to dust-yards, where men, women and children sieved out the courser dust, some of which was used as a soil conditioner.



Research shows the value of customer choice



Recent independent research into the garden waste recycling industry underlined the value of customers being able to choose between roadside or on property collection.

The study, by the Cormilligan Group, was commissioned by Greenfingers Garden Bags and Waikato Garden Bags as part of a joint programme of continuous service improvement.

Murray McCaw, Cormilligan Director, said he was surprised at how few customers realised the firms offered an on property service, and was interested to understand why people still chose to take their bin to the roadside.

"Many of those that had their garden bin picked up from the roadside believed that they were helping the efficiency of their supplier," he said. "Their feeling was that if they could do something small to keep the cost down then everyone would benefit. They felt it would be cheaper and easier for Greenfingers or Waikato Garden Bags to collect from the road."

"For others they wanted to make sure their pets were not inadvertently let out when the bin was being collected. Some thought they kept their bin in what a couple of customers described as a 'difficult place' and thought they should take it out whilst others didn't want 'strangers in their garden'."

On the other hand, there were just as many reasons why customers liked their bin to be picked up from their garden. Customers said:

"if they didn't pick it up from my garden I would have to get my son to come around and pull it out for me"

"my bin would get tagged if it was on the street – and that would annoy me in my garden"

"they have nice reliable people and I know they won't damage anything. One day they even came to my door and asked me if I would shift my car a little so they didn't scratch it"

"it would get tipped over if I left it on the street and I would have to clean it up"

"I don't have to worry which day to put my bin out - they just come and collect it"

"we just couldn't get it up the drive so we would have to cancel"

The research also found that customers were not aware of the flexible payment options offered by Greenfingers and Waikato Garden Bags.

Mike Jones from Greenfingers Garden Bags responds *"On-Site Collection costs a couple of dollars more, but guarantees you get all the collections you pay for without the hassle of remembering which day to put out your bin or the effort of carting it about yourself. Of course, there are those who prefer to put their bin out on the kerbside, and that's just fine with us. If you are likely to forget to put you bin out twice a year or more the from property service works out cheaper per pickup - which surprises some people. For us it's all about the service - Our from Property Customers usually think we give better service."*



Turning over new leaves in the garden

Gardening should always be a pleasure, not a chore. Aside from hiring a quality garden recycling company, there's other ways to take the strain out of green gardening.

Keep it natural.

Careful planting and design, organic pesticides and regular pest hunts can remove the need for chemical pesticides which could potentially harm your health, the environment, and the animals which would otherwise help to control garden pests. You do need to give your garden regular attention to be successful, but that attention needn't be arduous.

Grow native!

A great way to improve New Zealand's environment is to have native plants in your garden.

Because they are adapted to deal with local conditions, they tend to need less pest control, fertiliser and watering. Whether it's the iconic kowhais, pohutukawas, kauris, or lesser known species, check out what you have the space and conditions for.

Storing water.

Help your garden to thrive through the dry months by soaking the base of plants early in the day or in the evening when things are cool, with rain collected from your roof and the remains of your bath. Avoid using sprinklers systems, as these tend to waste water and prevent that 'personal touch' of directing the watering yourself. If you have a large garden, think about placing water sources strategically, to keep the work you have to do to the minimum.

Great gardens don't have to be dug.

To build a garden bed which will not need digging over,

clear a sunny spot, build a 1.2m wide sturdy box about 40-45cm high from rot resistant timber, brick or concrete blocks. Add several thick layers of old newspaper to the bottom. Add a layer of clean, weed free straw up to about one third of the height of the box. Fill the rest with a mixture of good weed free soil and high quality compost. With small openings for your seeds, and a little care and attention you should get healthy plants, with very few weeds.

Get inspired!

Visit open gardens, garden centres and organic centres near you. Many of them have wildlife walks and cafes so you can make a day of it. Or join up with friends and neighbours who are green gardening and swap growing tips, recipes and food. This is also a great way to get to know your neighbours!

Have fun!

Make sure your landscaping and design includes plenty of spots where the kids can play and the family can relax.

Less lawn, more lunch.

Growing your own organic veggies can be so satisfying! Also, you can fill a handy tub or two with a kitchen herb garden to add a fresh touch to the family's food.

Useful Websites

www.kitchengardeners.org - Sharing ideas on organic vegetables, from the garden to the table.

www.bestgardening.com - Helpful hints for the New Zealand gardener.

Green waste recycling - it's a family affair!

The top garden waste companies in the business know the value of creating experienced close-knit teams. There can be no greater testament to that than having families on board.



Husband and wife team

Roger and Leanne both work for Waikato Garden Bags. Roger has been with the firm for more than six years, and has been driving trucks around since he was 17.

"Our customers have got used to a certain level of service," he said. "You get to be pretty good at this after a while, and other staff in the team offer a lot of support, which is good."

Leanne joined four years ago, becoming a full time team member as the business continued to grow. She said: *"I really like just getting out and about across the countryside. What is also good is if Roger comes home and talks about work I know what he is talking about, and vice versa, whereas I suppose there can be times with partners when you really have no idea!"*



Jason is an experienced hand in the industry, a true industry professional who worked for several other garden bag collection services in the area (including 7 years managing Daisy Garden Bags before moving to Hamilton Garden Bags before joining the Greenfingers team about a year ago. As well as enjoying the knowledge he has of the job, he enjoys its physical aspect and the chance to work outside in New Zealand's world famous sunshine.



Sisters at work

Wendy, Davina and Lucy Ngaropo all work in Greenfingers' Auckland office.

Sales Manager Wendy joined first, and is coming up to a decade with the firm. Davina joined part time, but has gone full time as the company has expanded and is now a telemarketing team leader. Customer Services Manager Lucy was headhunted last year for her skills as a customer service specialist.

All of the sisters have experienced the benefits of working for a family-orientated organisation.

Wendy: *"When we have had time off to have children it hasn't disadvantaged us in any way. The bosses say 'good for you!' and make sure there is work back here for you when you are ready to return."*

"It's a great team," said Lucy. "We've made a lot of changes, but everyone has been there for everybody else."



Father and son duo

Richard and Leon have both been working with Greenfingers and WGB for more than two years. Driving different trucks keeps up some professional friendly family rivalry, and there is no sign yet of Leon slowing down to give way to the next generation.

LIVING EARTH



The garden waste in your bag or bin is not rubbish, it is the main ingredient that Living Earth use to make the premium grade Compost and Garden Mixes that improve your garden.

Living Earth is a greenwaste recycling company dedicated to improving the environment of your community, and your home. The relentless growth of Auckland has seen dramatic increases in the volume of rubbish disposed into landfills. Historically more than 50% of household rubbish was recyclable greenwaste, which created harmful greenhouse gases such as methane and polluting leachates. We use a modern and scientifically proven composting process to solve the problem of Auckland's greenwaste. We reduce waste and create products to satisfy customers gardening requirements.



Greenwaste processing at Puketutu Island

Just like nature, or in a compost bin at home, our compost is made by decomposing a range of plant material, and blending the completed product with the ideal combination of additives to produce our trusted range of growing mixes.

Living Earth Limited was formed in 1994 at Pikes Point, Auckland, and has grown into one of New Zealand's largest composting businesses. Although better known for our gardening products, Living Earth is also respected for their lead role in a number of national waste reduction initiatives.

Living Earth has its own research and technical laboratory which is innovative in developing new products and providing technical support to commercial customers. Our commitment to quality ensured our inclusion in the development of the 'Compost Standards' for the New Zealand Nurserymen's and garden centre industry.

Since January 2008, Living Earth has operated at their purpose-built composting facility on Puketutu Island. This displays our long-term commitment to the garden bag customer, and the regular user of our quality products. This site will allow Living Earth to grow beyond the 50,000 tonnes of green waste that it annually turns into rich compost based products that Auckland uses to make friable soils and beautiful gardens.

Living Earth products are available in bulk loads or convenient bags. You will find them at Garden Centers, Landscape Supply yards or from our own **0800 COMPOST** home delivery service.

Information on our products, gardening advice and useful gardening links can be viewed on our website www.livingearth.co.nz.

Living Earth, Greenfingers, and your garden bag; reducing waste and making quality gardening products.



General Manager George Fietje proud of the finished product



LIVING EARTH'S RANGE OF PREMIUM PRODUCTS

GARDEN MIX



ESSENTIAL FOR HEALTHY PLANT GROWTH

100% WEED FREE

PLANT DIRECTLY INTO GARDEN MIX

CONTAINS FERTILISERS

40 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Garden Mix is a blend of Living Earth Compost, bark, pumice, and a unique fertiliser formulation. Garden Mix is the complete nutrient enriched weed - free alternative to topsoil and it will produce superior plant growth. Use Garden Mix for trees, shrubs, flower beds or vegetables.

COMPOST



IMPROVE SOIL STRUCTURE

100% WEED FREE

REDUCE THE NEED FOR FERTILISERS

IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH

40 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Compost is a premium quality weed - free product made from the natural composting of recycled plant material. Regularly adding Living Earth Compost to your garden will improve the friability of your soil and increase the soils ability to retain moisture. Compost creates a healthy soil for healthy plants.

VEGGIE MIX



ORGANIC

IDEAL FOR ALL VEGETABLE TYPES

100% WEED FREE

IN GARDENS OR CONTAINERS

40 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Organic Veggie Mix is a special blend of compost, bark, organic fertilisers and pumice. For further soil nutrition a sachet of Organic Liquid Compost is included. Use Veggie Mix as an alternative to soil or add it to an existing garden. Sow seeds or plants directly into Veggie Mix for an organic garden.

MORE THAN MULCH



AN ATTRACTIVE GROUND COVER

CONSERVES SOIL MOISTURE

SUPPRESSES WEEDS

WITH ADDED COMPOST

40 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth More than Mulch is a 100% weed-free attractive ground cover which conserves the moisture in the soil and reduces the need for irrigation. Living Earth More than Mulch suppresses weed growth and the added compost improves soil health and promotes earthworm activity.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

Ordinary garden soil and products like Compost, may contain a variety of living micro-organisms, some of which, on rare occasions can cause illness in humans.

Serious infection is rare. However for older people or those with reduced immunity, can be serious. We recommend the following precautions:

- Avoid opening bag in enclosed areas
- Avoid inhaling the mix
- Always wear gloves and wash hands after use
- See your doctor if you develop a high fever, chill, breathlessness or cough



Every Living Earth growing mix uses specially blended components and unique fertilizer formulations which provide the essential nutrients and minerals for sustained plant growth. Living Earth products are reliable and make gardening easy and rewarding so make Living Earth compost and growing mixes a part of your garden.

0800 COMPOST

www.livingearth.co.nz



POTTING MIX



ESSENTIAL FOR HEALTHY POTTED PLANTS

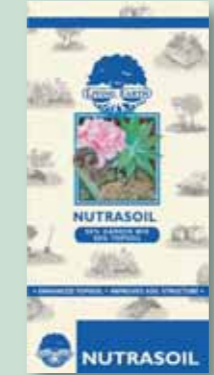
100% WEED FREE

CONTAINS SLOW RELEASE FERTILISERS

40 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Potting Mix is a blend of Living Earth ingredients, trace elements and slow release fertilisers which supply your plant with nutrients over a 5 to 6 month period, giving your potted plants strong controlled growth. After this period apply a plant food such as REWARD indoor liquid plant food.

NUTRASOIL



**50% GARDEN MIX
50% TOPSOIL**

PLANT DIRECTLY INTO NUTRASOIL

IDEAL FOR TREES, SHRUBS, AND FLOWER BEDS

25 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Nutrasoil is a unique blend of quality loam soil, compost, bark, pumice, and fertilisers. It provides a balance pH, and excellent soil structure. It is the complete enhanced topsoil for your garden. Nutrasoil can be put on top of existing soil or planted directly into. It promotes excellent root growth and earthworm activity.

LAWN MIX



TO ESTABLISH NEW LAWNS

TO REPAIR PATCHES ON EXISTING LAWNS

SLOW RELEASE FERTILISER

25 LITRE BAGS

Living Earth Lawn Mix is a special blend of Living Earth Compost, bark, pumice, washed sand and fertilisers, ensuring rapid establishment of strong, healthy and attractive lawns. Use Living Earth Lawn mix to repair existing lawns or establish new lawns.

10 LITRE BAGS



CONTAINER MIX:

For pots and containers, with added slow release fertilisers

LAWN RESTORE:

For patching small or damaged areas of lawn

COMPOST:

Soil food for small gardens

For small projects, or just for the convenience of lightweight bags, Living Earth has Container mix, Lawn mix, and Compost in 10 litre bags. They contain the same high quality garden products but in a smaller bag, with a built in handle for easy-lifting. They are available in good supermarkets, hardware and garden centres.

REWARD LIQUID PLANT FOOD



INDOOR Makes 275 litres of plant food suitable for all indoor plants NPK 7.3.6.

OUTDOOR Makes 330 litres of plant food for vegetables, trees, shrubs, or flowering plants. NPK 8.3.6.

LAWN FOOD Makes 300 litres of food to produce strong healthy green lawns NPK 12.3.6.

LIQUID COMPOST Makes 100 litres of ORGANIC solution for improved soil health

Living Earth REWARD is the ideal liquid plant food for all vegetables, flowering plants and trees and shrubs. REWARD's unique 2 way action feeds the plants as well as improving soil structure. REWARD promotes faster nutrient uptake for vigorous growth. Using pure New Zealand deep sea fish concentrate REWARD retains enzymes and beneficial micro-organisms while the natural formulation of chelated nutrients and valuable amino acids work within the soil ecosystem, to supply all the nutrients required by nature.

Living Earth is the producer of premium compost and compost-based products and has set stringent specifications for reliable and effective growing mixes. Testing ensures consistent products that you can trust to be safe and effective. To ensure that their high standards are maintained Living Earth is committed to continuous quality testing of all of the products. Living Earth maintain their own laboratory facility where physical, nutritional, germination, and actual plant growth tests are performed.

Living Earth is committed to satisfying the needs of customers by undertaking market and consumer research, as well as research and development into new products and services. Living Earth's continual development has led to the introduction of the Living Earth's REWARD range of liquid fertilizers and organic options for growing media.

In addition to the ongoing research carried out, Living Earth have also commissioned Hort+Research (a Crown research institute), Landcare Research, and Environmental and Scientific Research Ltd to undertake various projects including product comparisons and product development. Details of a Hort+Research trial may be viewed on our website.

Living Earth has extensive technical experience with field trials and was also involved in the establishing of New Zealand standards for compost. Living Earth quality growing mixes for quality gardens.



GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT



The difference between light friable soils that are easy to dig and hard soils that produce disappointing plants is the amount of Compost in the soil.

Nature makes compost by decaying fallen leaves and dead plants but this takes a long time. Living Earth follows nature's example and makes compost by decomposing plant material, yours. Your garden bag is processed with other greenwaste and the result is a range of growing mixes that will help you produce healthy soils and beautiful gardens.

However, what goes into the composting process also comes out of the composting process. As the saying goes, garbage in, garbage out. While greenwaste is made into a rich compost anything that doesn't decompose becomes ugly and potentially dangerous contamination.

Although all rubbish in greenwaste bags is bad, certain items are worth particular mention.

Third place : goes to general rubbish including chocolate bar wrappers (I know gardening makes you hungry) cans (and thirsty) and old gardening gloves

Second place : goes to plastic: pegs, plant labels, old plant pots, plastic bags, plastic packaging and plant strings.

First prize goes to glass bottles. Broken bottles are a danger for the greenwaste bag collector and the Living Earth staff and would stop some



Fed up with the rubbish put in the greenwaste bags.

products from being able to be sold.

Your greenwaste bag or bin is not a cheap rubbish bag. It is an opportunity for you to assist in responsible greenwaste disposal, to minimize our landfills, and a chance for you to join in genuine recycling.

Remember, a little bit of the compost that you buy was once your greenwaste, and I'm sure that you don't want pegs and broken bottles in the compost that you put on your garden.

The Science of Composting



You may know a bit about what happens to the outside of a compost heap, but what is happening in there?

The decomposition, also known as stabilization, of organic matter by biological action has been taking place in nature since life first appeared on Earth.

Generally speaking there are two processes that create compost.

- Aerobic (with oxygen) decomposition and stabilization
- Anaerobic (without oxygen) decomposition

The both cases the decaying organic matter (your garden waste) is fed on by a host of organisms and micro-organisms, including bacteria, fungi and moulds. In the later stages of decomposition these creatures are joined by mites, millipedes, centipedes, springtails, beetles and earthworms, which help to break down the waste further and enrich it.

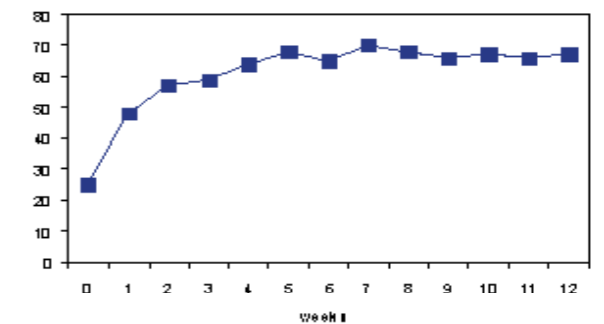
Anaerobic decomposition takes place in nature, for example, at the bottom of marshes where oxygen does not reach, and is carried out by living organisms which do not require direct access to it. When intense, this process is usually accompanied by unpleasant smells.

This form of decomposition can happen in poorly constructed compost heaps, where there is a lack of ventilation to the pile or turning. This process also produces methane, and to a lesser extent carbon dioxide, but generates less heat than composting in the presence of oxygen.

This lack of heat means that potentially harmful pathogens and parasites (as well as weeds) may survive for a long time, another reason why it is far from ideal as a method of composting garden waste material.

Aerobic decomposition, as used by commercial composters, is akin to what happens naturally on the forest floor, where droppings from trees and animals are converted into a relatively stable layer, which is rich in nutrients. It is also carried out by living organisms, which work in 'waves' as the temperature inside the compost heap increases to up to 70°C.

Temperatures during composting



As long as the heap is kept properly aerated, these high temperatures destroy the potentially harmful pathogenic bacteria, microscopic one celled animals and weed seeds. The key to getting it right is in ensuring the correct balance of air, moisture, particle size is maintained, along with sufficient sources of carbon and nitrogen.

Professional garden waste collection services use commercial aerobic composting companies like Living Earth to turn your garden waste into nutrient rich, useful compost, free from potentially harmful organisms. You can pick up a bag at stores like Bunnings Warehouse or Mitre 10.

Living Earth Home Delivery

0800 COMPOST



Call **0800 Compost** and order a home delivery of Ultra-Soil and receive a **FREE** pair of gardening gloves valued at \$15

*Promotion valid until August 31st 2008 • Deliveries only available in Auckland and Wellington





Useful ideas for a less wasteful and more beautiful garden.

Garden and kitchen waste is a valuable resource that is wasted if we bury it in a land fill, burn it, or send it down a waste disposal to the sewer. Instead we can return the nutrients back to our soils. Making your own compost can mean you don't need to use commercial fertilisers and pesticides as often or at all. Save money on rubbish disposal and grow your plants bigger, faster and stronger!

Call your local council for information on home composting, some Councils even offer free composting courses or subsidies when purchasing compost bins or worm farms.

Check out the Create your own Eden website for all the information you need on home composting and sustainable gardening. Download your 'how to' composting guide as well as your guide to smart gardening.

www.createyourowneden.org.nz

Lets get Composting!

There are three home composting methods to try, these are:



Traditional composting using a heap or bin

Using nature's recipe for recycling - easy steps:

- choose a site in a warm, shaded location with good drainage
- build your own bin or buy one
- layer food scraps, garden clippings, and paper to speed up the process
- keep compost slightly moist and mix it once a month
- when the compost is dark and crumbly it is ready to use



Vermiculture or Worm Farming

If you don't have a garden try worm farming. You don't need much space, they are ideal for apartments, and small backyards. They can even be located inside, as they don't smell. Feed worms with vegetable and food scraps, tea bags, eggshells and small amounts of paper.



Bokashi

This consists of a two-bucket system with one nested on top of the other. The top bucket has a tight fitting lid and holes in its base to drain to the lower bucket. In addition there is a bag of Compost-Zing made from wheat-bran and untreated sawdust mixed with molasses and water and Effective Micro-organisms. Food waste is added to the top bucket in layers with the Compost-Zing. You can make your own system as long as it is airtight.

Smart gardening tips

Smart gardening uses techniques that are beneficial to the environment and will also save you time and money.

- Making and using compost in your garden
- Planting native plants or ground cover
- Using mulches and drought tolerant plant species
- Replacing lawn with low ground cover or grass-cycling
- Reusing rainwater and landscaping materials in the garden
- Avoiding the use of harmful pest and weed control materials
- Green purchasing for gardening requirements



The Create your own Eden Smart Gardening Guide will give you ideas for creating a beautiful, native garden that is easy to maintain for any size or type of section. You can use some of the techniques outlined here on your vegetable garden, fruit trees, exotic and ornamental gardens. The guide can be downloaded from the Create your own Eden website or requested from your local Council (if you live in the Auckland region).

For more information visit www.createyourowneden.org.nz and click on the 'contact us' link.



Here's some ideas on what you can be doing in your garden right now!

Fertilising

Autumn is a time when things slow down, but you don't have to slow down in the garden. The work you do now can prepare your garden for the coming winter, and will pay you back big time in the spring and summer.

Autumn fertilising can be done when the soil is still warm and relatively moist to assist with plant health and vigour for the coming spring. You can tidy up flowering plants which have become tatty or are dying back. Removing dead stems, leaves and blooms from flowering plants can prolong their beauty for a while, and save a huge job later on.

If the garden is wet, try to avoid walking on the beds as this can compact the soil, damaging soil structure and reducing drainage. You can use a long plank to spread your weight.

Thinking about frost

If you have frost vulnerable perennials such as fuchsias, cherry pie {Heliotropium}, Impatiens and pelargoniums in your garden, it's a good idea to take cuttings of them now, to ensure you have fresh new plants in the spring.

Of course, if you have them in pots, you can move them to a warmer, more sheltered spot. Frost damaged plants should not be pruned back until spring, when no more frosts are expected.

Rose tips

If you want prize winning rose beds, now is the time to assess your roses and replace those which are no longer coming up with the goods.

You should have stopped dead heading your roses by now. This will ensure they have a dormant period, which will improve growth in the spring. But continue to remove any dead, diseased or distorted canes from your plants - this will make winter pruning a lot easier.

Native seed sowing

May is a good month to sow seed of any native plants collected over the past few months. Depending on species, seed sown now should result in plants around 30 cm tall by this time next year.

Planting Bulbs

Many kinds of spring flowering bulbs can be planted from March through to May.

Planting a bulb early gives it more time to develop roots, which in turn makes for a healthier plant. Tulips, for example, need to be planted by the end of May, and generally prefer free-draining, fertile soil in a sunny position. Bluebells (Hycanthinoides) or snowflakes (Leucojum) can tolerate a more shaded, damp position.

Plant your bulbs at a depth roughly equivalent to twice the bulb's diameter.

Cuttings

Cuttings of many perennials can be taken now. Generally it is best to take cuttings of eight to nine centimetres in length from the tips of healthy shoots, and from mature growth that is not woody or too soft.

Strip foliage from the bottom third of the cutting, insert it into the cutting mix to this depth, and firm it in with your fingers

Ruud's LeafTurner Lifestyle test

LeafTurners must be common sense gardeners; if one or more of the following statements vibrate within your inner self, then you can join our club:

- my motto of gardening is "how I get to the tennis court"
- bare earth is decidedly ugly
- a perfect garden is not necessarily a healthy one
- healthy gardens start with healthy soils
- compost is alive and worth its weight in gold
- the right plant for the right place
- the earth rotates, and so do the crops in my veggie garden
- a perfect-looking plant has all sorts of wildlife on it
- minimize the use of chemical sprays and artificial fertilizers
- good gardening is creating a balance



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 Swanson 598 Swanson Road, Waitakere. Ph: 09 833 4093
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*Promotion valid until August 31st 2008 • promotion only valid with presentation of voucher

Manage your garden at the touch of a button

Garden waste collection is all about the most natural and rustic materials. But the top operators know how cutting edge technology can make all-important improvements to the service, whether in computer controlled route planning for drivers, or in state of the art customer call centres.

Recently a number of firms have made the switch to secure online account handling, which makes managing your garden even easier. If your local collector hasn't, it's easy to find one that has. These new simple-to-use systems are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How you can log in to save money and time

- Go to your garden waste collector's website

For the companies featured in Leafturner these are:

Greenfingers Garden Bags - www.greenfingers.co.nz

Waikato Garden Bags - www.waikatogardenbags.co.nz

- Click the **Account Login** Button on the menu
- Input your **Account number** in the first box
- Input your **PIN** (Personal Identification Number) in the second box.
- Click the **Click Here To Log In** button.

Now you can:

- check when your bag/bin will be collected
- get extra pickups
- have a pickup skipped/postponed
- request a calendar
- check your account balance
- tell your garden waste collector your latest email address
- tell them how to get your bag or bin from your property

Why not try it now?

If you don't have an account, you can set one up by calling Greenfingers Garden Bags on Freephone 0800 82 00 00 or Waikato Garden Bags on 07 847 1877.

Be into WIN a year's garden waste collection!

*Greenfingers and Waikato Garden Bags have agreed to give one lucky customer a year's FREE collection of their Garden Bin or Garden Bag.**

Simply logon to either Greenfingers or Waikato Garden Bags' online account access, answer the simple questions and you are in the draw. If you are not a customer yet, register online now, or fill in this form, and send it to: 'Garden Bag competition' Cormilligan Group Ltd, P O Box 3513, Wellington

For the statements below please circle how you feel about them

I am well informed about the benefits of composting for my garden
strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

Because of the size of my property I am unable to compost now
1 2 3 4 5

I would like to have my green waste collected weekly
1 2 3 4 5

I would like to have my green waste collected fortnightly
1 2 3 4 5

I am happy having my green waste collected monthly
1 2 3 4 5

I like someone else doing my composting for me
1 2 3 4 5

My current green waste collection is (tick one)
 by Bag by Wheelie Bin not collected at all

Your Details
 Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 Email _____
 I'm already a Greenfingers customer
 I'm already a WGB customer
 Customer Number _____
 I'd like to become a customer and enter the draw to win

*Terms and conditions apply. Please contact us at either address provided for written details or view online under account access.

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Just a bit of fun for when it's too rainy to garden

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 r d v p d r k o d e e a i a l
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 r i h s e v a e l l n b s u b
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 p o s s u m s t r e e r n t a
 m h s i d a r o s g d o a e c
 f o r k g n i r e t a w l r b
 v j w e z b u r h s p e q f u
 c e l e r y h a o m s l g l s
 e o h e r b s c w o r m s y h

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| bush | hose | slugs |
| butterfly | landscaping | snails |
| cabbage | lawn | spade |
| carrot | leaves | spiders |
| celery | mower | sprinkler |
| compost | pohutukawa | tomato |
| dig | possums | tree |
| flower | radish | trowel |
| fork | shears | tui |
| gardener | shovel | watering |
| herbs | shrub | weeds |
| hoe | silverbeet | worms |

Saying it with flowers...very quietly

The world's smallest flowering plants belong to the genus *Wolffia* - minute rootless plants that float at the surface of quiet streams and ponds. An average individual plant of the Asian species *W. globosa*, or the equally minute Australian species *W. angusta*, is small enough to pass through the eye of an ordinary sewing needle, and 5,000 plants could easily fit into thimble. A bouquet of a dozen would easily fit on the head of a pin.

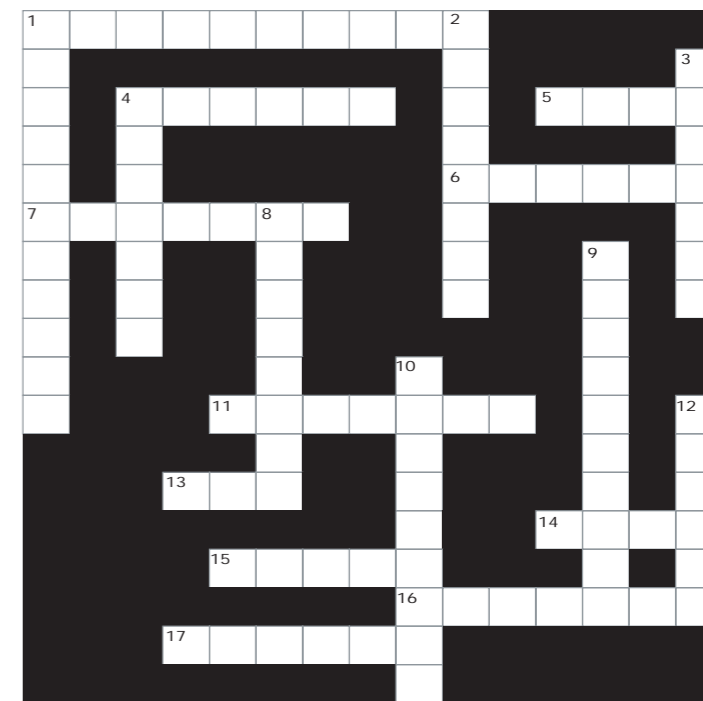


Zeke the Composting Sheik

Timothy Dundon and his alter ego Zeke the Sheik live in a tropical wonderland on a 9m (30ft) tall, pile of compost he has built up since 1976 on his ordinary suburban house lot in Altadena, California.

Local authorities have queried the potential health hazards of Tim's endeavour, especially after an incident in which the pile caught fire, and made various attempts to have the pile reduced or removed. But Tim remains defiantly positive about his unusual enterprise.

"A better tomorrow for us all starts with living better today by converting waste into something that restores, not destroys, life on the planet," he said.



ACROSS

- bullies small plants to death
- the weapon of mower and grass
- if money grows on trees, this tool brings it in
- helps rabbits see in the dark
- Japanese for 'compost'
- cutting back is good for regularity
- neat line of vegetables
- plant food made from bones
- you have to sort the wheat from the ...

DOWN

- two handed mobile bucket
- Macintosh, but not computerised
- that Scottish girl smells nice
- kicking this can be fatal
- you can be sure this will keep those arguinhg neighbours out
- national emblem
- half of this is for sport, half for eating dinner
- keep friends and vampires at bay

This is an encrypted quote on gardening, by Charles Dudley Warner – can you unscramble it?

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
13				15														24							

A	A	E	S	E	E	S	A	E																	
26	25	13	6	13	21	15	3	24	22	17	17	15	15	18	24	12	17	1	13	3	18	15	17	12	17

S	A	A	S	A															
1	12	24	13	2	13	24	6	12	3	22	17	4	13	2	23	26	12	6	25

A	E								
13	25	12	17	1	15	12	17	12	6

Are you OBSESSED with gardening?

Ask yourself the following questions. If you say yes to more than five of them, you have really gone to seed!

- Do you breathe extra deep around fresh grass cuttings?
- Do you find it hard to throw away a seed catalogue, even when you have absolutely no intention of ever ordering from the company? (extra addition points if you have developed a filing system for these.)
- Can you walk out of do-it-yourself stores without at least glancing at the garden section?
- You believe the following statement – you can never have too many decent pairs of secateurs.
- Have you ever eaten a nasturtium?
- Have you ever mourned the loss of a plant?
- Do strangers ask you for advice when you're in the garden centre, because they see you every time they are there and think you work there?
- The names of your cats or children include Lily, Posey, Rose, Daisy, Fern, Violet, Poppy, or Iris.
- Did you choose to buy a larger vehicle so you could haul more plants home in the back of it?
- Have you ever planted something really obscure, just so you can wait for friends to ask what it is?

The Organic compost sector's *other* team



Armies of volunteers are working on turning your garden waste to compost as we speak, and they only require temporary room and board to do their work. Meet the team doing some of the real dirty work.

Bacteria

Although tiny - 20,000 laid end to end may span no more than 2.5cm - they are the most important organisms in the breakdown process. During decomposition, the bacteria population will change - some will multiply rapidly at first and then dwindle, while others are more able to thrive under varied conditions inside the compost. Since each type of bacteria is suited to particular conditions and organic material, they complement each other's activity to break down the compost as a whole.

Actinomycetes

While most bacteria are found in the top 30cms or so of soil, this higher form of bacteria may work metres below the surface, converting dead plant matter to a peat like substance. While they are working to decompose the plant matter they release carbon, nitrogen and ammonia, all of which are useful in growing new plants.

Protozoa

Protozoa are the simplest form of animal. A gram of soil may contain up to one million of these single-celled and microscopic organisms, in the compost heap, where there are far fewer, they work like bacteria, breaking up the organic matter.



Mites

These little critters are related to ticks, spiders and horseshoe crabs. Some mites are small enough to be invisible to the naked eye, while some tropical species are up to a 1.5cm long. They reproduce very rapidly and attack plants. Some also eat fly larvae, springtails and other mites.

Fungi

These guys live on dead organic matter, and usually take over the pile in the final stages of composting.

Millipedes

The mysterious life cycle of the millipede is not well understood by scientists. Eggs are laid in the soil in springtime, hatching into small worms. Young molt several times before gaining their full complement of legs, and can grow to one or two inches long when adult. They help break down plant material in the compost by feeding directly on it.

Centipedes

These carnivores feed entirely on other insect and spiders, making them one of the top predators in the compost eco-system.



Slugs and snails

These guys will help break down fresh garden waste, but must be carefully contained if they are not to spread into the garden for their favoured living plant meals.

Springtails

About half a centimetre in size, these guys are white to blue-grey or metallic in colour and are usually noticeable because they jump when disturbed. They help in the compost heap by chewing decomposing plants, as well as pollen, grains and fungi.



Explosive growing season sets new challenges for garden waste recyclers

This summer's exceptional growing season has meant garden waste recycling firms have had to pull out all the stops to keep up with increased demand for their services. The intermittent rain and hot sunshine has been a boon for gardeners, and increased collection rates dramatically.

With 17 out of 83 Metservice weather stations topping 30 degrees this summer, Roger told LeafTurner: "Talk about making hay while the sun shines! For every 100 bags we would normally collect in this period we have been collecting 140! With a weather dependent sector like this, things are naturally difficult to forecast, and we always have resources in reserve. But this year has been exceptional by anyone's standards."

We were able to bring additional resources to bear on the issue as soon as it became apparent, but even then an already hardworking staff had to muck in for

extra hours to clear the backlog. The unusually heavy workload and extremely high temperatures also put extra pressure on staff and machinery, increasing the rate of stoppages for maintenance and safety checks.

"Trucks and staff were at risk of overheating on some days," said Roger. "Sunburn and sunstroke became a real issue for the teams. We responded by putting on a completely new team and a new truck. Obviously an investment like that can't be done overnight, it's usually a 10 week process to get a new team on the road. Luckily we were able to speed things up, and we have also been able to employ some really experienced operators."

We will now continue with maintaining the newly expanded team, and growing it further where needed.

This way they will now go from their new found strength to strength, whatever the weather.

"Bring it on!" said Roger. "We like a challenge!"



Garden Waste Collection *- Looking after the world's best back yard*

Signing up for green waste collection not only helps keep your garden in top condition. It also makes an important contribution to safeguarding New Zealand's great outdoors.

Concern for New Zealand's environment is the driving force behind the domestic garden waste industry.

In New Zealand 3.4 million tonnes of waste ends up in landfills each year. Organic waste, which includes kitchen and garden waste, makes up more than a third of that total. Aside from the amount of resources needed to remove and store this waste, this material can produce methane as it breaks down, a gas which makes a large contribution to climate change.

Almost none of this material needs to be put in landfill, and we think that burying our waste in the ground is an extremely short-sighted and primitive way of dealing with it.

This country believes innovation is the correct response to problems like these, and since the 1980s New Zealand's independent garden waste recycling companies have been working with their customers to remove valuable green resources from the ordinary landfill waste stream. The compost this makes delivers our garden riches back to our native soil.

Today, pioneering Kiwi-owned companies continue to offer this green, convenient and reliable service to their customers. We also support all government and community initiatives which reduce waste and improve our environment.

Thank you for supporting independent garden waste collection companies - a great way to help keep our country clean and green.

