



MY GARDEN

Above you see three photos. The first is where I started in Nov 2011—by Feb 2012 I was growing some veges. I didn't expand further until 2013—now look at my garden!

Hi! I'm thrilled to share with you some of my own gardening journey, and some great ideas to get YOU growing! At the end of 2012, I decided to set a goal to grow 1000 kgs of food in my back yard in 2013. I didn't know if I could do it, but figured I'd give it a try as I needed to feed my family better and cheaper. As of 30th Sept 2013, I've so far harvested over 655 kgs of food from my section! If I can do it, with little money or time, then you can grow food for your family too!

See more photos of my garden, harvest totals, recipes, hints and tips on my blog at www.KiwiUrbanHomestead.com.

In this booklet you will find some hints and ideas to get you started.

Happy Gardening! Love, Cynthia



PLEASE VOTE!

FOR CYNTHIA HANCOX
in NZ Gardener of the Year
Competition. Go to
www.nzgardener.co.nz
and click on "Vote for NZ
Gardener of the Year."

The answer to Q2 is Pg 98.
Voting closes 29th Oct.

WHY GROW FOOD?

Save your money, save your health, save the environment!

SAVE MONEY!

- ◆ Food prices keep going up. Wages aren't keeping up.
- ◆ Food quality has gone down—we pay more for less.
- ◆ Grow your own food, save money, eat better.
- ◆ And maybe even make some extra money.
- ◆ A family of four in California grows almost ALL their food on 1/10 of an acre AND sells to local restaurants!

IMPROVE HEALTH!

- ◆ Commercially available Fruit & Veges have only about 20% of the nutrition they had 50 years ago.
- ◆ Foxtton residents visit the doctor on average twice as often as the rest of the country.
- ◆ Industrial food is full of pesticides, additives, contaminants and other poisons that are killing us.
- ◆ Grow your own! You will benefit from better food, exercise and fresh air. And you'll know just what is in your food!

SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT!

- ◆ The chemicals used in industrial food production are destroying our environment.
- ◆ Food packaging produces phenomenal waste materials, further damaging the environment.
- ◆ Shipping food huge distances burns fossil fuels and causes pollution.
- ◆ Grow your own food—and reduce your part of all of the above.

Send an email to kiwiurbanhomestead@gmail.com to be notified of details of new Foxtton gardening group so you can receive regular help and encouragement.

INSTANT GARDENS

3 ways to create a garden, fast!

NO-DIG METHOD

1. Choose a location for your garden bed. Ideally, full sun, north facing, sheltered from westerly winds.
2. Cover the patch with a thick layer of newspaper or cardboard, making sure edges overlap by at least 10cm, then wet it down with a hose.
3. Create an edge for the bed using driftwood, timber, bricks or other materials, laying them down so the paper underlaps them.
4. Fill the new bed with a mixture of topsoil & compost, or whatever you can get hold of. You will need at least some good soil, but could also include old sawdust, animal manure etc.
5. Plant your new garden bed.

DIG UP A PATCH

1. Select a site as above. Mark out with string.
2. Cut edges with a spade.
3. Starting at one end of the bed, turn over a spadeful of soil at a time, cut off the turf and lay aside, then chop up the rest of the soil.
4. Edging is optional; helps to hold grass /weeds back.
5. Add compost or rotted manure if available; plant.

BUCKETS & TUBS

If space is at a premium, or you just want to get started fast, gather some buckets, tubs, planters, an old bath or anything you like, make sure there are holes for drainage, fill with potting mix or even compost and soil, and plant! Voila—instant garden!

EASIEST VEGES

10 of the easiest veges to grow.

These veges are super easy to grow and great for the beginner:

- Beetroot—leaves and roots are edible both raw and cooked.
- Leaf lettuce—many varieties; pick outer leaves as needed for an instant salad. Plant keeps growing for months.
- Zucchini—mix old manure into soil before planting, and it will produce abundantly.
- Spring onions—plant around your lettuce bed and they will also keep the snails away.
- Silverbeet—hardy and easy to grow. Pick leaves from outside for continuous harvest.
- Dwarf beans—no staking needed, pick regularly to keep them cropping.
- Pumpkin—needs space to trail, though can also be grown up a fence or tree.
- Buk choy—this Chinese cabbage is fast growing and hardy, though white butterfly may be a problem in summer.
- Carrots—sow directly in deep, loose soil. Do not add manure to soil or carrots will fork. Both leaves and roots may be eaten.
- Radish—almost a no-fail crop. Fast growing. Spicy tasting.

GARDEN TOOLS

3 must-haves, and others you will want to collect in time.

There is a huge range of garden tools on the market today, but we only need a few to get started. Below is a list of the most useful garden tools, with their approximate new prices. The first three on the list are ones I use all the time and would find it hard to do without. The rest sure come in handy, but you can manage without them at first.

- ♦ **Spade** \$30-\$40
- ♦ **Hand trowel** \$7
- ♦ **Secateurs** \$25
- ♦ **Metal rake** \$30
- ♦ **Garden fork** \$30
- ♦ **Torpedo (push) hoe** \$12-\$20
- ♦ **Pull hoe** \$15
- ♦ **Leaf rake** \$10
- ♦ **Bypass loppers** \$15-\$60
- ♦ **Watering can** \$14
- ♦ **30m hose** \$15
- ♦ **Seed trays** \$5

Shoe-string hints:

- Look for good second-hand tools at garage sales and op-shops, or try Free-cycle or Trade Me.
- When someone asks you what you want for Christmas or your birthday, name a garden tool you don't yet have.
- Take care of your tools—plunge into a bucket of river sand to clean, then wipe over with a slightly oily cloth. Store in dry place.

TOP RESOURCES

3 free tools to help you become an expert gardener!

A Garden Diary I keep a detailed garden diary in a ringbinder, divided by month and with pages to record the weather, what I planted and harvested, and general notes. A Garden Diary is an invaluable resource for keeping track, and learning how the seasons affect plant growth and pests in your area. More info on my blog: www.KiwiUrbanHomestead.com

Moon Calendar I experimented with planting by the moon this year and found it made a big difference to crop success. It's also a handy way to decide what to focus on at different times. Get a free printable from <http://nzgardener.co.nz/category/free-stuff/downloads/>

Free NZ Regional What To Plant Each Month Guide To view or sign up to get it via email, visit www.GardenGrow.co.nz. Includes links to growing information.

COLLECT FREE STUFF!

The frugal gardener is always on the look out for things that can be used !

Gardening does not have to cost a fortune. In fact, by keeping one's eyes open, you can easily collect most of what you need absolutely free! Plus, when you reuse things that would otherwise be thrown out, you are also helping the environment. Here are some things that can be found and used, and some ideas of what to do with them:

Leaf litter/grass clippings/pine needles - mulch/compost

Drift wood - garden edging/art/construction/fences & gates

Weeds - compost. If a noxious weed, kill it first by leaving in a black plastic bag in the sun.

Manure/animal pen waste/fish heads - compost/manure tea/garden booster/worm food

Branches from trees, vine prunings, bamboo - garden edges, construction, trellises

Scraps from households/businesses/egg shells - chickens, worms, compost

Old/moldy hay - compost, mulch

Seaweed - compost, seaweed tea

Newspapers/cardboard - compost, mulch, weed barrier, worm bedding

Toilet rolls - seed pots

Plastic bottles - mini cloches, plant pots, seed containers

Icecream/yoghurt containers - seed containers etc

Net curtains - cover seeds or plant beds

Old windows - cold frame, glasshouse

Bicycle wheel rims - trellising

Urine - compost stimulator, fertiliser

Carpets - mulch, ground prep

Sheep wool or dags - mulch, compost, worms

Sawdust/bark - mulch, compost, paths

Old bricks/blocks - paths, edges, heat sink

Firewood/rocks/broken concrete - make a herb spiral, garden edges

Pallets - build compost bins, vertical gardens, seats, tons of other projects on the web

Hints:

- If wishing to collect materials from someone else's property, ask! A smile and "Please may I have.....for my garden?" usually nets positive results.
- Let your friends and contacts know what you're on the look-out for.
- Don't be afraid to politely enquire about possible materials—eg scraps from a café, or pallets from a business

BUILDING YOUR SOIL

The health of your crops depends on the health of your soil!

In order to have a productive garden, we must always be thinking about building our soil to increase its fertility and nutrient density. There are several ways to do this. Ideally, use all of the following as appropriate:

Compost: Ready-made compost can be purchased, and may be a good option when getting started, but it can also be home-made for free. A compost bin keeps it contained and makes it easier to develop a deep stack, aiding the process. A simple compost bin can be made by standing four pallets in a square and tying the corners together, leaving one corner open so the front pallet can be opened like a gate. Fill with alternating layers of materials, aiming to have 1 part nitrogen-rich (green) materials to 25 parts carbon-rich (brown) materials. Turn the pile from time to time.

Worms: A worm bin is a great way to turn your household scraps or lawn clippings into nutrient-rich vermicast! Commercially available bins can be pricey, but you can make your own out of stackable bins, a barrel, old bath or a wooden raised bed. The key elements are good drainage (so the worms don't drown), a warm position (but not too hot in summer), escape proof, protection from excess rain, airflow, bedding to get started (eg shredded newspaper), some tiger worms (regular earthworms don't do well in a worm bin), and then feeding regularly in small quantities, and keeping damp but not soaking wet. Collected liquid can be diluted 10:1 and watered into the garden. Look online for lots of ideas.

Mulches: Soil should not be left bare. Mulching around plants protects the soil, retains moisture, and adds nutrients. See previous page for various possible materials to use for mulch. Take care to keep fresh grass clippings or manure away from the stems of plants, lest they get burned.

Manure: Well rotted manure can be added straight to garden beds. Fresh animal manures can be made into a "tea" by filling a porous sack with the manure, and suspending it in a barrel of water. Once "brewed," use to water plants. Noxious weeds, fish-heads etc can also be broken down in a water barrel, then used to feed plants.

Soil additives: There are a number of organic products that can boost or amend soil—including Gypsum, Rok Solid, lime or dolomite, blood & bone.

HERBS & FLOWERS

Healthy, edible, attractive & beneficial!

Being short of cash and keen to grow food for my family, I started out majoring on veges and didn't bother much with flowers or herbs apart from chives and parsley. But I have come to realise the very important role flowers and herbs play in the productive garden—they have many benefits both to us humans, to the food plants we are growing, and to the beneficial insect population. Many flowers are edible and tasty, but nearly all flowers also feed bees and other pollinators—without which we would have few veges or fruits. Many flowers or herbs are great companion plants—increasing the yield of their neighbours by repelling pests or chemically benefitting them. So make room in your garden for a variety of herbs and flowers. Most can be grown from pieces given to you by other gardeners, or seeds that are shared. The following are great to start with, and all the flowers are edible:

Parsley, chives, calendula, marigold, borage, geranium, pansy, rosemary, nasturtium, sunflower, dill, lavender, camomile, basil—and any other flowers you like for picking and attracting bees.

BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Your helpers in the garden!

Pesticides should have no place in the home food garden! Not only do they leave harmful residues, but they also kill all the good bugs as well as the bad ones. Beneficial insects pollinate your fruit and veges, as well as prey on pest insects. Do all you can to encourage ladybirds, preying mantises, small spiders, bees, bumble bees, dragonflies, hoverflies, parasitic flies and wasps, ground beetles and predatory mites. Get a good book out the library and learn to identify friends and foes in your garden. Consider building a "bug hotel" by stacking driftwood, shells, hollow bamboo, pieces of clay pipe etc in an artistic and practical "sculpture" in your garden. Try to plan your garden so that there is something flowering all year round, and think about leaving a corner of your garden "wild" to shelter over-wintering ladybirds and other good bugs.

COMING SOON!

Planned speaking engagements and hands-on classes with Cynthia

Wednesday 23rd October, Te Takere: Cynthia will have display tables, seedlings for sale and be available to chat and answer questions from 2-3pm, then will give a FREE talk from 3-4pm in the open space of the Levin library. From 6-7:30pm there will be another talk in the Open Media Room, gold coin entry.

Coming soon: **A series of classes** for the beginner productive gardener. Times, cost and topics yet to be confirmed, but will probably include: Getting started/seed sowing & propagation, building a compost bin/worm farm, caring for your plants, growing veges, herbs and soft fruit, how to use or preserve the harvest. Classes may be held in Levin and/or Foxton, depending on interest. To express your interest or for more info contact Cynthia by email kiwiurbanhomestead@gmail.com, put your name down at Foxton library, or check out the Chalkle website www.chalkle.co.nz

WHERE TO BUY AT GOOD PRICES

Local vendors & businesses with cheap prices and/or great products

These are the places I frequent for my garden purchases:

Simon Broad's Plants & Preserves, 62 Avenue Road, Foxton. \$3 herb, flower and vege plants - first purchase \$2.50 per plant (no limit) with flyer.

Natural Bark & Compost, SH1 Foxton—great compost, sand, bulk dolomite and more.

Bertsbrook, 45 MacDonald Road, Levin—great \$2.50 plants, mostly ornamentals but also herbs etc. Take cash for honesty box.

Grower Direct, 25 Lindsay Road, Levin, open Thurs-Sun 9-3. All sorts!!!! From 40c

Foxton Hammer Hardware, Main St, Foxton. A handy place for many things.

The Warehouse, Levin or Palmy. "Veggie Essentials" \$1 seed range (limited varieties), seed raising trays \$4.99.

Foxton New World carry Awapuni seedlings, seeds and a range of garden items.