

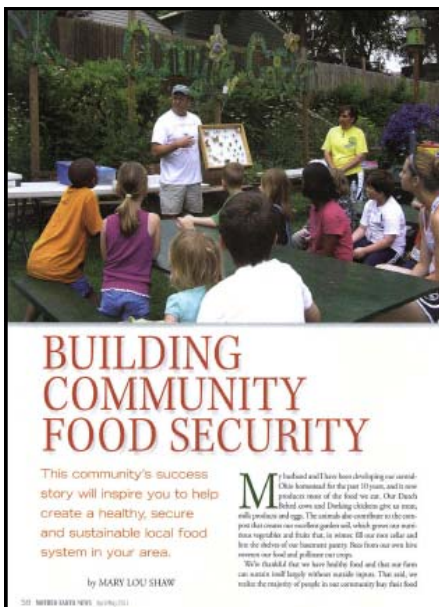


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# Environmental Goldmine in Kāpiti

By Stacey Gasson



Ever wanted to find out more about the Local Food movement? Or perhaps had a question about rainwater harvesting? Or South Korea? Or off-shore drilling? Or building a garden shed from recycled materials? When Rosemary McCarthy from the Paraparaumu Library sent me the link to the [Environmental Studies and Policy Collection](#) I took one look and wondered why I'd never heard of this before, and how I was ever going to manage in the future without it. I admit to being a big fan of libraries and information, so I'll try to limit the number of superlatives I use for the sake of those with other interests.

Provided by Gale Cengage Learning, the Environmental Collection covers almost 4.5 million articles on environmental issues and policies from more than 700 journals, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, reports, image collections, newswires, and dictionaries, spanning 1980 to today. And because you're a member of the Kāpiti Coast District Libraries, you too can access this treasure just by entering your card number! The collection is accessible through the library website under Services/Online resources/Gale databases.

Curious to see what this database had to offer, I typed 'local food' into the search engine and got back an amazing 299 academic journal references, 251 magazine articles, 522 news items and 9 multimedia resources. Some of these are abstracts or summaries, particularly the academic journals, but many are full articles in PDF format. These include *Building Community Food Security* from **Mother Earth News**, *By The Numbers: food miles* from **E**, *Classroom in the Field: students head to the source of local food* from **Farm Journal**, *Local Food for Sustainable Communities* from **ECOS**, and *Local Food: the economics* from **World Watch**. The video clips are available to view.

For those of us who love to ask "why?", this collection is Christmas come early, not only for its up-to-minute citations, but the fact that many of these resources just wouldn't be available to us here in Kāpiti (or New Zealand), even if we were able to spend long hours trawling the internet. While Gale is a North American company, they are considered a leader in e-research and educational publishing for libraries, schools and businesses. The sources they reference are international (including NZ publications) and cover a diverse spectrum of perspectives—including the scientific community, governmental policy makers, and corporate interests.

And then I rummaged a little further and discovered that the Environmental Studies and Policy database is one of several the library subscribes to via Gale Databases. The tip of a virtual iceberg! Who needs a TV?

If you're keen to take a look but need a few pointers, library members can book 30 minutes with a librarian at any of the Kāpiti libraries, to help with learning database and other related computer skills.

# Get Switched On Ōtaki and WIN

The Ōtaki Community Board has adopted the long-term goal of making Greater Ōtaki a net exporter of clean energy through energy conservation and development of local renewable energy sources. Pursuing this goal can build new local businesses and bring greater economic security for everyone in the area, as well as help protect the environment. But this grand initiative needs the help of Greater Ōtaki residents and business people.

We need people to vote for an official name for the initiative. We need people to help us build an energy meter for the town by giving permission to access their energy use data straight from their suppliers. And we need people to get involved to spark ideas and make connections that will help progress towards the goal.

Greater Ōtaki residents and business people can help with all these things and **go in the draw to win a mid winter stay for two in 'Little Greenie' an eco-lodge in Golden Bay and NZ's most energy efficient house**, by [filling in this online form](#). Forms must be received by 20 June to be eligible for the prize draw. We want the lucky locals that win the prize to tell us all about it when they get back. For more on Little Greenie see the article on [Page 11](#).

Further details, the entry form and the competition rules can be found here: <http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Projects/Get-Switched-On-Otaki-and-WIN/>. Spread the word!



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## Snails: a good way to get rid of your unwanted beer

By Hannah Zwartz (Adapted from Dominion Post)

Wet weather has brought a plague of snails. Big, rasping holes in leaves accompanied by silvery trails are telltale signs of their nocturnal feasts. Get on top of them now to avoid a population explosion.

The current fashion for raised wooden planter beds provides slugs and snails with a great environment; a search along shady parts of the wood usually nets a few. They also lurk beneath large leaves, under bits of wood and piles of old pots; basically anywhere dark and damp. Tidy these away from your vegetable beds – or leave them as traps, checking every day or so.



The best snail control is their natural enemy, birds. A portable chicken tractor that fits over a bed can be used to clean up (and manure) an area before planting. Snails make excellent chicken food, combining protein with the calcium needed for making eggshell. If you don't have chickens, squash snails and leave them on the path for wild birds.

If drowning in beer seems a more humane way to die, make beer traps. These work best with something to keep the rain off, such as a plank, upturned pot or old bottle. One design involves cutting the bottom third off a plastic bottle, cutting vertical slits and folding them down inside the bottle as ramps, pouring in beer, then fitting the top of the bottle back on. (I'm told only the beer in the bottom half of a bottle or can is effective.)

Barriers, such as plastic pots or bottles made into tubes and fitted over seedlings, seem to deter, if not totally eradicate, snails. Cocoa husks or coffee grounds are also said to be good at this; I empty mine into corners of our raised wooden beds, though I have no scientific evidence whether or not it's effective.

One thing I'll never use are snail or slug baits containing metaldehyde or methiocarb, toxic to humans, pets and birds. Newer snail baits use iron compounds, claiming to be safer to pets and wildlife, but doubts have been raised by organic bodies overseas about another ingredient, EDTA. Personally, I'll continue to avoid using any baits until more is known about all the ingredients – and accept a few holes in my food.

# Introducing Anne: Water Conservation Education Advisor

By Stacey Gasson

Anne Brunt has recently been contracted as the Council's Water Conservation Education Advisor. A teacher by trade, with a background in biology and experience writing educational resources, Anne says she has always had an interest in conservation and related projects. Making the move into water conservation has been a natural transition.

As a new migrant to the Coast she'll be getting to know the area quickly as she assists our 17 primary schools and three colleges to develop learning programmes around water conservation and efficient use of water. Anne says that because water conservation is such a big issue on the Coast, "our aim is to have all schools operating learning programmes that focus on efficient use of water and water conservation at school and home."

"We take water for granted. The learning programmes will focus on young people learning where our water comes from, how we treat and use it, and why we need to value and conserve water. Ultimately if our young people value water and develop practices that consider how much water they use, then we'll have adults who will value water and use it efficiently."

In the meantime, as parents will know, learning isn't confined to the classroom. Students who are actively engaged in measuring water use may then seek to persuade parents and schools to make changes to their own water use - don't be surprised if there's practical experiments at home, or you're encouraged to use water more efficiently. In the day-to-day this could include fixing leaky taps, turning off the tap while brushing your teeth, putting a brick in an old-style toilet cistern or changing to a dual-flush model. Ideas could be as large as setting up rainwater storage tanks or installing rain barrels to collect water for gardening.



Raumati South students prepare an African keyhole garden as part of their award-winning sustainable, water-conserving garden design at the Sustainable Home & Garden Show 2011.

Three weeks into her role, Anne has held workshops with teachers from primary schools and the three colleges to find out what the Council can do to assist teachers as they develop learning programmes around water. She explains, "My work will be in close partnership with the teachers. It will be shaped by what they need to encourage students to relate learning about water to themselves, home, school and community." Some schools will approach learning about water use from environmental programmes they are already engaged in, for example in caring for a local waterway. Other schools who have gardens will extend that learning into how the amount of watering that is required can be reduced with good garden design and mulching and gardens can be watered using grey or waste water.

For schools and kura that are Enviroschools, learning about the efficient use of water will be part of the school's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The first two partnerships are underway with the senior Geography teacher at Ōtaki College as the students do NCEA studies around water, and with the Technology teacher at Paraparaumu College as Technology students design a product that assists efficient water use. Meanwhile primary schools can look forward to using local resources about water collection, treatment and use that will be prepared this year. Parents and wider school communities will have plenty of opportunities to see what the students have been doing.

## **Resources:**

**Water conservation tips** from the Council can be found [here](#). This page also has links to other websites providing further information on NZ drinking water standards, water use and sustainability.

Other water conservation initiatives provided by the Council include:

**Green Gardener:** sustainable gardening advice for local residents, community groups and schools through workshops and visits. Contact details, advice and FAQs can be found [here](#).

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**Green Plumber:** a Council service for residents who want to improve how they use water without changing their lifestyle. You will get a helping hand with small leaks and professional advice on water conservation. Services available and contact details are on the Council website [here](#).

## Green Plumber

Have you called the Green Plumber? Free washers changed on most taps, toilets and showers.

He also can help install seismic restraints.

Call 04 296 4700 and make your booking today.



**Community workshops:** Council's Water Use Coordinator can provide workshops showing you and your group a simple model for installing small scale rainbarrels to collect rainwater for gardening. Contact Ben [here](#).

**Loans for raintanks:** from July 1, 2011 (subject to decisions made in the 2011/2012 Annual Plan Process), Council will be offering *interest free loans* to residents to purchase and install on-site water supplies for outdoor irrigation.

The following four options will be available: 5,000 litre tank installed; 10,000 litre tank installed; refurbishing an older rainwater tank; greywater diversion device. Currently the Council proposes loaning a maximum of \$5,000 to purchase and install the device.

## Potatoes beat prunes in 2011 Unpackit Packaging Awards

A compostable take-away container made in Blenheim from waste potato starch has won the 2011 Unpackit Award for New Zealand's best packaging. The award for the worst packaging sold in New Zealand stores has been won by Sunsweet Ones, individually wrapped prunes imported from America.



The awards were decided by nearly 9,000 public votes. The winners were chosen from a shortlist of eight examples of the best packaging in New Zealand, and a shortlist of eight examples of the worst.

Unpackit spokesperson, Sophie Ward, said "Potatopak is at the forefront of a new way of thinking about packaging. The company is turning a waste stream, potato starch, into a valuable product. At the end of its life, the Potatopak container provides nutrients back into soil, or can be fed to fish, birds or worms. It's a winner whichever way you look at it." Potatopak is made from starch which collects in water when potato chips are cut up.

Potatopak owner, Richard Williams was rapt to win the award, saying he had strong competition from the other finalists in the Best Award, but thought that his sustainable manufacturing process had given him an edge. "The whole concept of using waste to create an alternative product which doesn't go into the landfill is hard to beat."

Mr Williams said his company has been working with scientists from Biopolymer Network in Lincoln for the last five years to produce a food-grade, 100% compostable coating for Potatopak which will make it suitable for meat and hot/wet foods. The products will then be microwaveable and be able to hold coffee. He expected the product would be ready to launch at the end of the year. Ms Ward said Potatopak meat trays could solve a big packaging problem in New Zealand. "Currently meat from supermarkets is sold on polystyrene meat-trays which can't be recycled because they're contaminated with blood, so a huge number end up in rubbish bins every week. A meat-tray made out of compostable potato starch could reduce that waste stream."

Runner-up in the Best Packaging Awards was a Swap-a-Crate from Speight's, and third place went to the humble egg carton.

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Ms Ward said the both the swap-a-crate and egg-carton had been around for yonks, and showed that good packaging didn't need to be ground-breaking or expensive. She said the eight finalists in the Best Packaging Awards showed that many small to medium sized New Zealand businesses are passionate about sourcing minimal, recyclable or compostable packaging which reflects their commitment to looking after the environment.

On the other side of the coin, Ms Ward said big multi-national companies who are pumping out "convenience" foods such as single-serve snacks were well-represented in the Worst shortlist. "We also had a couple of examples of the ubiquitous blister pack used for small consumer items: Brother Ink Cartridges and Oral B Toothbrush Heads. Not only are they impossible to get into, they're not labeled for proper recycling either – just a bad design all round."



Ms Ward said the competition for the Worst Packaging Award had been close, but it was a well-deserved win by Sunsweet's individually wrapped prunes. "Ken Garmonsway who imports Sunsweet Ones into the country, claims they are individually wrapped so people can take them with them without getting in a sticky mess. Come on. I can't see there being a great number of pocket prune-carriers out there. It's great if people want a healthy snack, but I'd encourage them to make it healthy for the environment too by taking a few unwrapped prunes in washable container. Individually wrapped prunes are one of the all-time examples of excessive, unnecessary packaging."

The Unpackit team have written to all the finalists on the Worst shortlist to explain why their packaging had been shortlisted, and offered to talk to them about how to improve their packaging. "I know Sealord has said publicly since the shortlist was announced that they are looking to improve their packaging, and we really welcome their positivity. We don't want to get down on these companies, we just want to show them that the public does notice and care about packaging, and encourage them to do better," said Ms Ward.

### Resources:

**Unpackit.org.nz: demystifying packaging** provides information on good packaging; doing without packaging; greenwash; and product stewardship. The site also provides sample letters to help you take action on excessive or non-recyclable packaging.

**Rubbish Free** is another great sources of ideas (and useful products, like reusable lunch packaging, bamboo toothbrushes, produce bags and non-disposable razors) for reducing your waste.



"... enriching the lives and cultural experience of our community"

[\*Invisible connections: why migrating shorebirds need the Yellow Sea.\*](#)

By Jan van de Kam, 2010.

An alternative title could have been 'In praise of mud and distant fliers'. Here is an eloquent sequence of photographs that show the beauty, strengths and vulnerability of shorebirds that migrate between Australia/New Zealand and Asia/North America (including our champion tagged godwit E7 who, in eight days from Alaska to New Zealand, logged the longest 11,700 km non-stop migratory flight ever documented).

The mudflats, many of them close to industry and cities, on the borders of the Yellow Sea provide the refuelling stopover between the breeding grounds further north and the moulting and recovery shorelines in the south. While emphasizing the crucial role of the Yellow Sea and depicting the New Zealand mudflat scene as less industrialized the book alerts us to the protection the avian visitors need when they rest and replenish their fat reserves on New Zealand shorelines; alerts us too to the possibility of other connections that we haven't realized yet.



# May and ahead in the Organic Garden



By Hannah Zwartz, Green Gardener

Looking at the rain falling outside the window, it's hard to believe we have a water problem in Kāpiti. We don't, of course – there's plenty of rain over the course of a year, enough to grow most plants we could choose. What we gardeners need to do is to even out that rainfall over the course of a year, and make use of winter's rain when we need it, in summer.

The first way of doing this is to build up the soil to hold more water, so rainwater is available to plants for longer. Sandy soils dry out quickly and, once dry, get to the point where the soil particles actually repel water. That's why even after a downpour, or a heavy watering, you can sometimes scratch the surface and find the soil below still dry and dusty, with the water only penetrating a few centimetres.

Organic matter - be it fully broken down humus, semi-rotted compost or raw grass clippings/wood chip – is what holds moisture in the soil. Adding plenty of organic matter means your soil can last longer between drinks.

This time of year often brings an abundance of leaves, weeds and prunings. Composting them is best but failing that, pile in a heap or simply lay onto your garden beds as mulch. Unrotted, it's not doing much for plant nutrition but it will help retain moisture over next summer's dry spells.

A pot boiling on the stove will boil dry without a lid, but retain the water if a lid is put on. Mulching – laying organic matter on top of the soil – is a bit like putting that lid on to stop evaporation. On vege beds, a 10cm mulch of hay or straw can keep summer watering down to a job that's done weekly - or in some cases not needed at all.

The other thing to consider at this time of year is a rain tank. All that water disappearing down the drain could be liquid gold over summer. A series of rain barrels can be joined by hoses so that each part of the garden has its own individual water butt. The council is considering assistance in the form of interest-free loans to install rainwater systems - watch this space.

## Tips for May

**Sow:** It's getting too cold for most seeds but you can sow broad beans, and onions in trays. Microgreens sprouting on a sunny windowsill also help with providing winter vitamins.

**Plant:** Lettuce, fennel, land cress and Chinese greens in warm spots. Garlic in a sunny, well drained bed with lime and compost added to the soil.

**Leaves on the lawn?** Run over them with the mower to get a great mix of shredded leaves and grass clippings in the catcher. Perfect for composting; where pure grass clippings go slimy, the leaves add air along with carbon, needed for the breakdown process.

Plant **broad beans**, if you haven't already. These can germinate in low temperatures. As well as a spring crop of beans, their stalks are great for the soil – simply cut them down and you've got ready-made beanstraw mulch into which to plant next summer's hungry plants like tomatoes, zucchini or corn.

**Mulch** citrus and feijoas with good compost. After fruit has dropped is also your chance to trim feijoas. Pruning isn't essential but a light yearly trim helps keep fruit within pickable reach.

Get on top of the **snail** population early in the season and save yourself later grief. Hunt them down, early mornings, in any dark crevice – pots, old sacks, sides of beds, under logs....

Look around for any **gaps in your shelter** and plant now. Especially in a windy spot, small plants (20-30cm) soon

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Bok choy, beetroot & spinach tucked up for winter

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catch up in growth with larger specimens which, as well as being more expensive, will experience more transplant shock.

Look for any places you could fit more **fruit trees or bushes**, and plan for winter plantings.

*The Green Gardener can help make your garden bloom with less impact. Hannah offers sustainable gardening advice to local residents, community groups and schools through workshops and visits. You can contact her via our [Water Use Coordinator](#). Other green gardening tips, information sheets and answers to frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).*

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## From the Pukeko Plot

By Nicky Craig



*I'm not sure I should admit this for the second time - but there appears to be a fine crop of weeds in my garden again. With the recent flush of rain I am sporting a lovely crop of nettles.*

The advent of this lovely weed has reminded me of a wonderful memory I have. I must have been really small - as my grandparents left their farm when I was five—but I remember being out in their garden as they worked, a large vegetable garden surrounded by large macrocarpa hedges to protect it from the southerly (and any other type of wind for this was in Southland, you understand), watching in complete fascination as Granddad (with what seemed like huge strong hands) picked handfuls of nettles to take in for Grandma to make soup. In the broad scheme of learning to identify plants, stinging nettles must surely be one of the first plants anyone learns to identify - closely followed by the antidote, dock leaves. So I watched with complete absorption as this man was able to handle these leaves that had caused me so much torment.



Nettles are an indication that your soil is rich in nitrogen - and mine certainly is. Usually a good flush comes through in spring - but I have found a lot in my garden (and I use that term broadly) at the moment. There are different ways to use nettles in your eating. A friend of mine up the road regularly makes tea from them - expounding their nutritional value (they are said to be rich in iron, calcium, Vitamins A and C) and value as a great tonic for the blood and liver, and body cleansing generally. She very simply strips some leaves off the stalk, about a third of a cup worth, then pours over a cup of boiling water and leaves it to steep. This tastes leafy and grassy as you would expect - not at all unpleasant.



I can recommend throwing them into your soup as you cook up your vegetables so it will be blitzed in with the rest of your vegetables before your final seasoning and serving, just as my Grandma did many moons ago. I have also read of nettles being used much like spinach, which gives us all wide scope for use.

Apparently the way to pick them is with confidence—just as Granddad did, firmly - as it is with the brushing by of the leaves that the sting comes. However I leave that in your hands - I have yet to be that brave....

*Editor's note:* According to an article in The Telegraph's gardening magazine, nettles are a magnet for beneficial wildlife, they make great plant food, and they're just the thing for kicking your compost heap into action. 'Nettles: bad guys come good' details 10 uses for nettles [here](#).

And you can read about the important role nettles play in providing food and habitat for New Zealand's endemic Red Admiral butterfly (*Bassaris gonnerilla*) [here](#).

## Enviroschools: Paraparaumu Playcentre watches their waste

By Nicola Easthope, Kāpiti Enviroschools Coordinator

Children and parents of Paraparaumu Playcentre recently got close and personal with the contents of their wheelie bin. With two day's worth of rubbish, they conducted their first ever waste audit, providing a detailed snapshot of their waste disposal practices.



Tipping the contents of their green bin onto a tarpaulin on the back lawn was too much for some of the children, who delighted in eewwwing and ahhhhing to maximum effect. So parents got stuck in - with gloves - separating out different types of rubbish, then weighing and recording the data on a Waste Classification Sheet.



Along with Kāpiti Enviroschools Facilitator, Nicola Easthope, parents discussed the origins of the waste, and the environmental effects once disposed in the landfill.

“Nearly a quarter of what we found in our wheeliebin, weighing 7.7 kilograms, could have been recycled or composted”, says Rebecca Morley, an organising parent. “A lot of it just needed rinsing, which only took a few seconds to do.”



“Most of our general waste was made up of invasive weeds, which we only have to clear a few times a year, and home made Play Doh, which is too salty to compost. With the weeds, we would like to investigate making a bio-digester, which can turn toxic and invasive plants into fertiliser for our vegetable gardens.”

While cloth nappies are becoming more popular, the disposable varieties still make a significant contribution to the waste stream. “Disposable nappies take around 450

years to biodegrade”, says Rebecca. “So our children’s dirty nappies will still be in the world when our great-great-great-great grandchildren will be around. I wonder what kind of nappies they will use.”

Apart from the wheeliebin, the Playcentre separates paper, metal, glass and plastic for recycling. Over the two day period, 4.3 kilograms of waste was destined for curbside collection. There is also a thriving wormery, living on kitchen and lunchbox scraps, and the Playcentre has plans to create a compost bin system.

The waste audit marks the beginning of the Playcentre’s commitment to the Enviroschools Programme, and will be carried out once a year as a tool for their waste minimisation goals.

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To see what Kāpiti Enviroschools got up to at the *Sustainable Home & Garden Show 2011*, [click here](#).

If anyone would like copies of the photos of the Raumati South School winning garden, or activities in the Enviroschools’ tent, contact Nicola.

For more information on the Enviroschools programme, contact Nicola Easthope, [nic.e@paradise.net.nz](mailto:nic.e@paradise.net.nz). Many thanks to Kāpiti Coast District Council for funding Enviroschools on the Kāpiti Coast.

# Greenest Streets update: the downhill run

By Stacey Gasson (Adapted from Paekakariki Xpressed)

The end is nigh! On Sunday 26 June we'll find out just who is the Greenest Street of them all. Four streets - Kakariki St of Paekākāriki (an alliance of Haumia and Te Miti Sts and Tilley Rd), Rainbow Court in Raumati South, Avion Terrace in Raumati Beach and Te Roto Rd of Ōtaki - have been competing in the *Kāpiti Coast's Greenest Street* competition since October 2010. From the initial tour of the streets to the judges' final walk-through on 25 June, they will have put in nine months of collective effort in an attempt to reduce their combined ecological footprint.



Bring back daylight savings: Ben demonstrates rainbarrels at Avion Tce in the dark

And as someone who could be expected to have insider information, even I wouldn't like to be making predictions of the outcome right now. Community spirit, creative thinking and green DIY have been rife. Most recently we've seen a rash of rainbarrels in Kakariki St and Avion Terrace, [an outbreak of edible plants courtesy of judge Joy Darke](#), electricity monitors doing the rounds, a spate of [insulating](#), Ecobulbs multiplying [here](#) and [here](#), serious [solar cooker trials](#) and a right royal wedding party.

From the outset, it's been a fascinating journey and the pilot project has begun to attract attention beyond Kāpiti. It seems that the holistic emphasis on neighbourhoods, rather than households, and ecological impact, rather than just carbon is a first for New Zealand.

So what happens after 26 June? For some of the Streets, it'll be business as usual as they continue with long-term projects – Kakariki St's 'Closing the Loop' greenwaste recycling project and Rainbow Court's community garden, for example. Te Roto Rd intends to go a step further, continuing their journey towards becoming a self-sufficient community. On an individual level, participants have told me the competition has led them to make permanent lifestyle changes, not least of which are the increased sense of community between neighbours and the fun that they have had developing projects and cultivating these friendships.



Solar oven components—Te Roto Rd

It's not over yet, but the Council is pleased to be sponsoring a second round of the competition, commencing in October 2011. We currently have a display up at the Paraparumu Library that outlines the competition process, ecological footprinting and other key elements. Judging

criteria, links to the Streets' blogs and other articles and resources relating to the competition can be found at <http://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/Projects/Greenest-Street/>. Registrations of interest will be taken from July. Interested streets or individuals are invited to [email](#) me.

[Happyzine](#) blogs by *Greenest Street* coordinator, Stacey Gasson, since last month have been:

- [Vic Young](#) from Avion Terrace and eco-downlights; and
- [Tere Harris](#) from Te Roto Rd on finding her green roots.

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## Lost in cyberspace

*This month's pick of sustainability on the internet....*

### Transport

<http://www.grist.org/article/series/bikenomics>

A US series about how bicycling will save the economy... if we let it. In the Bikenomics series, Elly Blue explores the scope of that impact, from personal finance to local economies to the big picture of the (US) national budget. In the grassroots and on a policy level, the bicycle is emerging as an effective engine of economic recovery.

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## Waste

<http://www.recycled.co.nz/whatsup.htm?x=whatsup>

Important lessons learned cutting pallets for firewood and a link to some stylish ideas for reusing said pallets.

## Energy

<http://www.eeca.govt.nz/efficient-and-renewable-energy/renewable-energy>

Everything you wanted to know about renewable energy and then some. Includes downloadable copies of EECA's fact sheets and brochures and some interesting technical research and reports, such as:

- A study of alternative energy supply options for remote communities
- Consumer information on biofuel
- Regional Renewable Energy Assessment—Wellington (includes Kāpiti)
- EECA Biofuels & Electric Vehicles Conference 2010 presentations
- Wood boiler feasibility studies for a range of institutions
- Options for electricity generation from biomass.



## Biodiversity

<http://www.weedbusters.co.nz/>

Provides an excellent A-Z weed guide for finding out more about the threat posed by specific weeds on your land and the best methods for dealing with them. Weedbusters is a weed awareness and education programme that aims to protect New Zealand's biodiversity from the serious and increasing threat posed by pest plants.

## Gardening

<http://www.nzgardener.co.nz/page.asp?id=53>

*Get Growing* is an initiative of *New Zealand Gardener* editor, Lynda Hallinan, following her year-long quest to live self-sufficiently from her city backyard with a supplementary grocery budget of just \$10 a week. She did it and this free email newsletter is part of NZG's campaign to get New Zealander's growing food.

Coming out every Friday, it includes hints, tips and weekend tasks - whether you're a beginner gardener or an expert grower. It also includes competitions, recipes, events, requests for particular plants or seeds and answers to your vege growing questions. To receive *Get Growing*, sign up via the *NZ Gardener* [website](#) or send an email to [getgrowing@nzgardener.co.nz](mailto:getgrowing@nzgardener.co.nz). An archive of past newsletters can be found on the *NZ Gardener* website.

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## MOA Community Orchard

After much hard work, the MOA Community Orchard (More Organic Awareness) is happening at the Jeep Rd Reserve in Raumati South!

While the group steering this project initially had plans to create a community garden, the need to lease the land and take full responsibility for its care led them to change their goal to the creation of a community orchard. As 'Friends of the Reserve' they will be working with the Council to care for the area.

It'll be a big weekend on 29-30 July with 30 or so bare-rooted fruit trees arriving. If you would like to support this initiative, a working bee will be held on **23 July** (or 24 July, if the weather is bad) to dig big holes in preparation. They would also appreciate any cardboard you can bring along to put under the mulch.

Cree Hatfield, a member of the group says, "I can think of nothing better than families being able to go to the reserve in the future to pick fruit. A lot of work and background meetings by many, have gone into getting the project to the point we are at today.

Many thanks to those that are helping with this fabulous community project: Daniel Cooper for all his lovely mulch and offer of equipment for the working bee and to all those that have got on board to make this happen.

Happy gardening!



Varieties being planted will

# Green Building Inspiration

If you're looking for inspiration for your eco-home, take a look at these two projects:

The **Meridian First Light eco-house project**—led by a team from Victoria University—has been created as an entry in the US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon later this year.

Warm dry homes needn't be a luxury - it is possible to build houses that are not only stylish, energy efficient, and cheap to run, but are also affordable, says Mike Underhill, chief executive of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA).

"The Meridian First Light eco-house project -- led by a team from Victoria University - is an opportunity to see what is possible to achieve in sustainable housing, using the latest technology and design. This prototype should inspire New Zealanders to think about the kinds of energy efficiency investments they can make when building or renovating that will make a difference to their on-going energy bills, and their impact on the environment. Explore the house online at <http://firstlighthouse.ac.nz/>



'First Light' eco-house at Frank Kitts Park, Wellington

A recent report confirms why **Little Greenie**, an ecolodge in Golden Bay, is New Zealand's most energy efficient house and how easy it is for future renovations and new builds to follow its principles. Liana Stupples, Executive Director of the Hikurangi Foundation (and a *Greenest Street* judge), says this is the idea of one kiwi who has now outclassed all the experts and built a home that costs as little as \$69 a year to heat.

*Little Greenie – Get the Facts* is now available [here](#). Independently prepared for Hikurangi, EECA and Little Greenie Design & Build by Verney Ryan, the report provides invaluable advice if you're thinking of building your own home or renovating.



Little Greenie, Golden Bay © [goldenbayhideaway.co.nz](http://goldenbayhideaway.co.nz)

Hikurangi is investigating replicating Little Greenie in Ōtaki, and the Council and others in the town are currently working with them to find a way to make it happen. To support this, a stay in Little Greenie is being offered as a prize. For more information see [Page 2](#).

**building new?  
renovating?  
want a more  
sustainable house?**

**Ring Richard, the Eco Design Advisor  
on 04 2964 651 and arrange a free  
2 hour consultation today.**

*Satisfied customers of the Eco Design Advisor:*

"This process was very worthwhile. There are lots of small things you can do to your home to save you money and create a better living environment. Richard is very knowledgeable and not to forget very entertaining. I would highly recommend a visit".

*Blair*

"I would highly recommend Richard's service. We found his suggestions practical and well informed. We will be implementing many of Richard recommendations".

*Corrine*

## Events - What's Coming Up?

**Whareroa Farm, Sunday 29 May, 9am—noon.**

Join the Friends of Whareroa Farm as planting season begins at the Ti Kouka Stream. Bring spades or grubbers and wear garden gloves and strong boots/shoes. Access to Whareroa is from MacKays Crossing, then walk across the picnic area on the new path and along the main race to the site - follow the flags. Morning tea provided and hotdogs afterwards.

**Kāpiti Coast's Greenest Streets on Beach FM,**

*10.30am, Tuesdays: 7 June & 21 June.* Listen to 106.3 to hear from Jake and Stacey as they update Kāpiti on the Streets' final exploits on the 7th; Jan Logie from Otago University's Centre for Sustainable Cities will discuss the benefits of collective approaches to increasing sustainability on the 21st.

**Nga Uruora Working Bee—planting at**

**Carrad's Farm, Saturday 25 June, 1pm—5pm.**

Details will be posted on NUKP's website [here](#).

**Kāpiti Coast's Greenest Streets Prizegiving &**

**Wrap Party, Sunday 26 June.** Watch local newspapers and the Council's website for details of the results in the week following.

**Ōtaki Transition Town's produce stall** has finished for the winter.

**Regular environmental working bees:** details of venue, contact person and what to bring can be found on the calendar at [www.kapitibush.org.nz](http://www.kapitibush.org.nz)

**Mondays:** Waitohu Stream Care Group, 9am—10.30am.

**Tuesdays:**

- Greendale Reserve, Otaihanga, 9am – 12.00pm.
- Keep Ōtaki Beautiful, 9am—12.00pm

**1st and 3rd Tuesdays of month:** Waimeha Lagoon & Waikanae Dune Restoration Group, 3-5pm

**Wednesdays:** Friends of the Ōtaki River, 9.00 - 10.00am

**Thursdays:** Kapi-Mana Forest & Bird: Kaitawa Reserve Project, 8.30am—12.00 noon

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### Feedback

To remove your name from the mailing list, please [click here](#).

Email questions or comments to [ontoit@kapiticoast.govt.nz](mailto:ontoit@kapiticoast.govt.nz).