

Monthly Newsletter

Gardening for Planet Earth

What's happening?

Biomimicry.

Megan Schuknecht from the Biomimicry Institute in the USA, supported by colleague Sam Stier and a diverse and dynamic panel of young professionals get together to discuss growing a rich, sustainable future for our grandchildren using nature and its long proven processes as our design mentor .

When:

Thursday 8th Dec 2011
7:00-9:00 pm. Informal follow on till 10pm

Where:

University of Auckland
(Room details to come)

RSVP:

Watch this space

Cost:

Koha to help future events and growth

For more information;

www.feedmeright.co.nz
www.papawai.co.nz

All over the world people are searching for better ways of growing food and sustaining life.

By now you know the importance of getting at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Growing fruit and vegetables seems overwhelming to most people, but it's actually much simpler than it sounds. All you need is a few square feet of the great outdoors, a water source, and a little time. Your grandparents did it, and so can you.

Now to inspire you to sustainability and improved nutrition, Dee Pigneguy and Papawai Press have released her latest book for everyone.

Sonja's Kitchen is beautifully presented with photographs from the Pacific Island of Aitutaki. The tasty recipes, courtesy of **Sonja Raela**, within **Sonja's Kitchen** are based on ingredients available in most supermarkets and Asian specialty stores. These delectable dishes can be made in your own kitchen with very little effort and great nutritional rewards for everyone.

Sonja's Kitchen is a book for the whole family. Accurate and easy to follow recipes will ensure that this book is not just another recipe book for the kitchen shelf, it can be used every day to ensure variety and well balanced food choices for all.

It is also a book that takes the reader on a walk through the lush vegetation of the Cook Islands, while explaining the importance of each plant to the survival of the islands and the role that they play in island culture.

Foodie or Greenie, **Sonja's Kitchen** will take you on an adventure to explore the delicious food of Aitutaki and the Cook Islands.

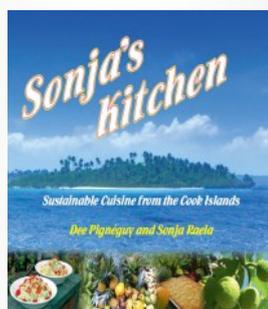
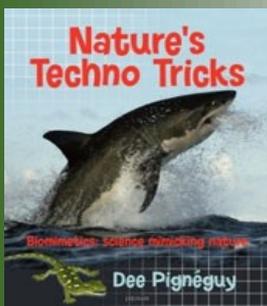


"Sonja's cooking takes all the best ingredients from her and Tauono's Garden of Eden –where custard apple really tastes like custard apple and banana really tastes like banana – to create food that reminds you how good fresh, organic produce can be. For me, Tauono's is the taste of the Cooks."

Visitor to Aitutaki from Melbourne.

Dee's Books Available Now

www.papawai.co.nz



Sheet Mulching at Murray's Bay Intermediate School

Dee recently introduced the gardening students to Sheet Mulching. When putting in a new garden, sheet mulching is the best option. This method of 'No Dig' gardening encourages microbial activity and worms. Sheet mulching reduces garden maintenance. The plants are vigorous and have improved resistance to pests and diseases. Sheet mulching allows gardens to store nutrients and slowly release them for the plant growth. Sheet mulching requires less water, fertilisation and work and can be used anywhere.



At Murray's Bay Intermediate the area selected was covered in weeds. To prepare the area for planting the following steps were taken;

- The materials were collected—newspaper, cardboard, sacks of seaweed fresh off the beach, hay, leaf mould, dried grass clippings, coffee grounds, worm tea, worm farm compost, bags of zoo doo, compost, and lots of garden material and weeds.
- In the garden area, existing plants were covered with the old garden material. We applied some compost from the worm farm, and some worm tea to get the microbial activity underway
- Newspapers and cardboard were used to provide a weed barrier and more worm tea applied.
- On top of the newspapers we stacked carbon rich sources—dried grass clippings, chopped up garden material, seaweed, hay, and coffee grounds.
- The bags of zoo doo covered the whole area, along with compost donated from a neighbour made from years of grass clippings.

Sheet mulching occurs naturally in nature.

The garden area is now ready to plant and the students have been growing seeds in punnets.

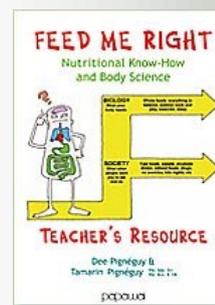
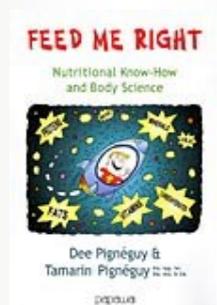
Hopefully the teachers have looked after the seedlings during the holidays.

Once the seedlings are planted we will mulch them again.

Sheet mulching occurs naturally in nature. Next time you walk in the forest observe the nutrient rich layer of decaying leaves that are teeming with insects, fungi and microbial life. For a series of photos showing the process of sheet mulching check out this website.

<http://www.feedmeright.co.nz/schools.html>

www.papawai.co.nz



What's Happening in My Garden

I grow four crops a year and the winter garden has been very prolific producing lots of kohlrabi, broccoli, silverbeet, broad beans, spinach, rocket, Florence fennel, pak choi, kale, beetroot, Swedes and cabbages. A spring planting of broccoli are starting to head up along with the winter cauliflower.



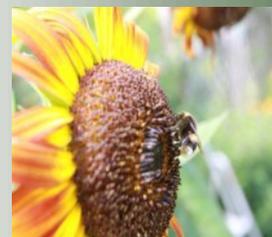
Mike has set up a "plastic house" for me by covering one of the sheds down the back. So I have been sowing seeds madly—beans, peas, pumpkins, zucchini, celeriac, sunflowers, onions and beetroot. I have some early tomatoes under cloches to protect them from cold nights and passing cold fronts.

The peaches are flowering and the beneficial insect garden full of flowering borage and calendula is bringing in the bees. I have planted more phacelia, alyssum, cleome and chamomile.

I grow lots of nettles for making compost, nettle tea (both for the garden and for us) and today I saw the first yellow admiral in the garden. With all the swan plants, the monarchs are already in abundance, which is just as well as their early larvae should be hatched before the wasps arrive in any numbers.

Seeds - Learning from Nature is a Lifelong Education

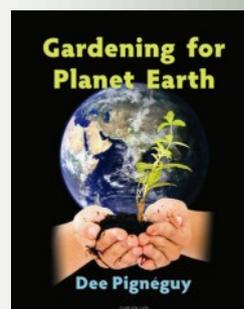
All our food crops were once wild plants, so when we save seeds we are continuing an ancient tradition. Heirloom seeds have been passed down as family favourites for generations. They are seeds with a history and stories to tell. Seeds contain concentrated nutrients—proteins, starch and minerals and when touched by moisture, warmth and air, seeds will swell up with life. The seeds contain all the information for the plant to grow and develop.



Now is the time to be planting seeds and raising seedlings for the backyard and school gardens. Teachers can integrate the seed sowing process into the curriculum.

Some ideas:

- Gather a variety of seeds, observe shapes and sizes. Identify them.
- Plant seeds in punnets and think about the depth of soil they need to cover them.
- Put some of the punnets in direct sunlight and cover others with wet newspaper.
- Once the plants emerge what do they need to survive?
- Find seeds in fruits and vegetables.
- Make a list of seeds we eat.
- Not all plants have seeds for reproduction.



For more information:

www.feedmeright.co.nz or www.papawai.co.nz

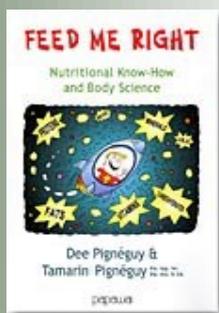
Feed Me Right

Dee has a spirited interest in Food Security and the way it is challenging our everyday lives.

As 75% of all calories in the western diet come from dairy, processed cereals, refined sugars & flours, vegetable oil or alcohol, it is interesting to note that none of these 'foods' were consumed before agriculture was taken up less than 10,000 years ago.

Previously man survived on plants and meat harvested from the wild. With the high incidence of diabetes, cancers and other life threatening diseases in our society, we are in danger of becoming as extinct as the plants species that previously nurtured our co-evolution.

For more information: www.feedmeright.co.nz



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Upcoming Events:

Nana-technology

Another series of Nana-technology courses has begun through the Kaipatiki Project. <http://www.kaipatiki.org.nz/>

Tuesday 8th November

Keeping Chickens For Beginners

Tuesday 6th Dec 7-9 pm

Herbs--Natures Medicine Chest

Tele 482-1172 or email admin@kaipatiki.org.nz

Saturday 5 Nov & 19 Nov

10am—3:30 pm

Gardening without Pesticides

Come along to a Seasonal gardening course and learn how to develop a productive urban organic garden without using pesticides. Safe for you. Safe for the beneficial insects and the bees in your Home and Garden.

Course will cover:

- ◆ What to plant in season for fresh organic produce
- ◆ Keeping your garden producing through the summer
- ◆ Composting, Worm Farming, Organic Liquid Manures
- ◆ Recipes for making safe and effective insect spray
- ◆ Introduction to the plants for a Beneficial Insect garden
- ◆ Seed sowing & transplanting
- ◆ Mulching & Tricks for conserving summer water
- ◆ Planning for Self Sufficiency
- ◆ How to use all those vegetables

Courses are held at Dee's Place in her Productive Backyard Urban Garden. Plenty of Examples of how it all works.

Come to 203 Manuka Road Glenfield Auckland.

Courses suitable for Teachers responsible for developing school gardens. To Book Contact Dee on 09 444 9342 or email mikedee@clear.net.nz

Cost\$40

Including morning tea and fresh garden salad for lunch.