

# Portstone

## GARDEN CENTRE

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# December

It's the beginning of summer and water restrictions are the hot topic. The council have issued us all with outdoor water tips, so here are some suggestions for products that follow their tips.

- Spread a layer of organic mulch around the garden to retain moisture. **Portstones composted deer manure** is not only an effective mulch, but will also feed your plants as the manure is rich in nutrient. The product is weed-free, unlike horse manure that has come from the paddocks and is full of an array of weeds.
- Another good product is **Tui 'Mulch n' Feed'**. Its attributes are much the same as deer compost, but it has a finer texture and smoother look.
- Finally, **'Magic Mulch'** is a product made from the fines of sphagnum moss with 'Ocean Organic' seaweed tonic mixed with it to add nutrient. This can be hoed into the top layer of your soil before covering with mulch, or more commonly it is mixed with potting mix and used in containers. Because this product holds so much moisture and nutrient, it reduces the number of times you need to water and feed, therefore saving energy and money.

To find out which plants are tolerant of dry conditions, come in and talk to us as there are so many. Here are a few colourful suggestions that won't break the budget.

- **Arctotis and Gazanias** are tough little chaps that have big daisy-like flowers in a wide range of colours, and they just continue to flower from spring to autumn and a few through winter as well. While *Gazanias* form a small clump, *Arctotis* can spread for quite some distance across the ground and down banks, creating a mass of colour.
- **Lavenders** also cope well in the dry and are not susceptible to pests or diseases, making them easy care plants. They can create an appealing hedge in your garden, being fragrant, edible and attracting bees. They have many other uses including in pot pourris, sleep pillows and antiseptic oil. There are varieties ranging in height from 0.3m to 1.2m.

In the **vegetable garden** you will have planted most things by now, eg. tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins and cucumbers, but I hope you have left room for successive plantings so you can harvest over a longer period.

Courgettes often succumb to powdery mildew, so plant more around Christmas time to take you through to autumn. Sow seeds of parsnip, beetroot, carrot, peas and radishes through December.

You can start planting vegetables for **winter harvest**, such as leeks, brassicas and brussel sprouts. Add lime to the soil and include plenty of compost. For better value from your garden space, interplant these winter greens with rapid maturers such as radishes and lettuces. Leaves from these plants also shade soil from the sun, retaining moisture and creating a better environment for beneficial soil micro-organisms.

Come in and see our extensive gift range



We now stock two excellent 'tunnel' products to protect your vegetable plot through various conditions.

One is a 'DIY' tunnel - you can select fibreglass rods of varying lengths to suit the dimensions of your planting area, add an appropriate covering depending on the function you require, eg. bird netting to prevent white butterfly or bird damage; polythene to retain humidity and warmth and encourage seedling growth; or shade cloth to protect emerging seedlings from the hot sun and domestic animals.

Alternatively we stock a **pre-packaged kit** to cover a 3m x 1m garden area. Made up of wire hoops with a choice of bird netting or insect mesh already attached, for the busy gardener, this may be more convenient.

Check out Portstone's  
**NEW** 'Sow Simple' Planter Kits.

All you need to get micro-greens started - a pot, potting mix and seed mat. You can select from Mesclun, Basil or Rocket.

Just add water - how simple can it be!

See our **BLOG** for lots of ideas and photos

[www.portstone.co.nz](http://www.portstone.co.nz)

