

My Backyard Garden Project

Since May 2016, over 60 families in the Waitakere region have had help putting edible gardens into their back yards and it is all from donated goods and services. The My Backyard Garden Project aims to build organic edible gardens with families who have little gardening knowledge to then share and learn from each other.



West Auckland resident and keen gardener Brent Mags from MixitLive TV is the convener of My Backyard Garden Project and collaborated with Maclaren Park Henderson South Community Trust (MPHS) in Henderson to roll out the project.

Through building relationships with local suppliers, Brent and staff at MPHS managed to source materials to ensure there was no cost to families wanting to start their own garden.



"In 17 weeks, this project has recycled 15 tonnes of timber from the Waitakere Refuse and Recycle Station, moved over 20 tonnes of mulch, and around 30 cubic metres of topsoil and distributed it to family gardens" says Mr Mags.

"Growing vegetables has many health and cost saving benefits. I recognise that vegetables are not cheap so I am encouraging people to become part of a growing community through edible gardens" says Mr Mags.

Families are involved right from the start by constructing planter boxes through to unloading soil and planting spinach, kale and lettuce seedlings. During winter, MPHS became a temporary construction hub where mums and dads used tools to break down recycled crates and saw pieces of wood to size to create planter boxes for their own garden.

Brent, staff from MPHS and volunteers supported families throughout the process.



"The goodwill – pay it forward nature of the project meant other families and their children began joining in as well. The project has a TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) focus so that people feel empowered to create their own garden", says Mr Mags.

Word of mouth has kept Brent and his team very busy and he has also helped Kelston Boys High School and Kelston Community Hub to get edible gardens up and running. He has also presented to families involved in Sport Waitakere's Active Families programme and one family now has their own edible garden allowing them to further their lifestyle change to eat healthier together.

Active Families Coordinator Charmaine Baker was delighted to integrate My Backyard Garden Project into the programme to inform and inspire families to grow their own vegetables.

"Brent's enthusiasm and passion for his work is infectious. I am looking forward to receiving updates from the families who have put their hand up to be a part of this inspiring educational project" says Ms Baker.

The project team hopes that this movement could be done on a larger scale and offered throughout the greater Auckland area where other refuse stations have the potential to do something similar.

To find out more about the My Backyard Garden Project, visit their [Facebook page](#).