

McRAE'S MAIL



OUR NEWS

This month our apprentices will start their training through an RTO rather than TAFE. This change means they will have more on the job training as well as being more closely monitored with their theory work. We hope that this will result in better training for the apprentices resulting in an even more highly skilled and competent horticulturist that McRae's Gardens are known for.

FEATURE PLANT

Daphne Odora



The Winter Daphne (*Daphne odora*) is a 1.5m tall evergreen shrub is native to China and Japan. Its flowers, which are very fragrant, open from mid-winter and are ideal for cutting as indoor posies to lift the gloom of the colder days.

Winter Daphne is not a long-lived plant. It typically thrives for 8-10 years then declines. It is often propagated by cuttings and after a few generations of this viral

diseases tend to build up in the stock. For this reason it is best to buy only tissue cultured plants or first generation cuttings from such stock.

Daphne odora thrives in moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil with shade from the hottest summer sun. Repeated frost of -6C or colder will destroy the flowers and probably damage the plant. Surprisingly, the variegated cultivars seem slightly hardier than the green leafed forms.

McRAE'S GARDENS IS GOING GREEN!!

We are proud to announce that the entire team here at McRae's gardens has made some serious improvements into becoming a more environmentally and sustainable work place. Both in the office and out in the field.

Our office has implemented several strategies to help reduce our paper usage. By emailing all of our invoices, staffs pay slips and documents, this has cut our paper use by half, and we have reduced the need to print our documents by checking them more thoroughly before printing them. We have also made sure that we are printing on both sides of the page when the need to print out documents is unavoidable.

We have placed several signs around the office and factory to remind all employees to switch off lights when they are not needed, and to turn off all appliances and tools requiring power such as air compressors, and also all computers and kitchen appliances in our office.

Water usage and conservation is also an area that we have made considerable adjustments to. We have fitted water saving nozzles to our taps; we have encouraged

people to use the half flush on all our toilets and we only wash up dishes once a day.

Our vehicle and machinery wash bay uses a filtration system that allows us to reuse the grey water produced and this is in turn used for several different applications.

As well as the environmentally friendly approach we have adopted in the office, we have also shifted the focus to our field operations. Over the last 12 months McRae's gardens have implemented several sustainability procedures in an effort to reduce our carbon footprint. In conjunction with all our suppliers we have found new and innovative ways to help reduce our impact on the environment we work and live in.

Listed below are some of the changes that we have implemented.

All of our tyres on our vehicles and machinery, batteries, and engine oil is recycled through our servicing provider.

All of our unleaded vehicles are fuelled using E10 unleaded fuel. Our diesel truck fleet are using a combination of bio diesel and normal diesel fuel.

We have completed negotiations

with Stihl power equipment. As one of our major suppliers, we have arranged for them to adjust the warranty cover on their tool range to include the use of E10 fuel in their engines, as they do in Europe and America.

We have for some time been recycling all of the green waste that we remove from all of our sites. This green waste is fed through our chipper and turned into mulch or it is sent away to a larger facility where it is screened and run through a tub grinder and used for various horticultural and landscape use.

All general waste collected from our sites is brought back to our yard and is separated into plastic, papers, etc and collected and recycled at an approved waste management facility either in Newcastle, Central Coast or Sydney.

It has become a paramount importance to our company that we continue to find ways to be as sustainable as possible in every facet of our daily operations. This is a commitment that all McRae's gardens employees have made and one that we intend to implement as a way of doing business.

**By Rachel Thomson
and Will Prehn**

THE YARD— JUNE GARDENING

Despite the arrival of Winter the garden continues to flourish!

- Vegetables to sow— as long as the soil is well drained you can plant broad beans
- Flowers to sow— its still not too late for sweet peas
- Prune now— asparagus spears. Also Winter is a good time to prepare all your pruning tool
- Feed now— World Environment Day is in June—try using some environmentally friendly fertilisers this month like blood and bone
- Pest Watch— loom out for aphids, scale and mites this month