

Wally's Weekly News 22nd NOVEMBER 2008
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GARDENING PRESENTS FOR XMAS

With Christmas quickly looming, ones mind starts to turn to what gifts to buy for family members and friends.

With the downturn in the economy, people will not expect the lavish gifts that may have been bestowed in the better times of the past, instead we should be more practical and personal in what we give.

Likely there will also be many more people staying at home over the holiday season, which means they will look to do short outings and things around the section and home. With the tremendous up surge in people turning back to growing their own fruit and vegetables as a buffer against harder times ahead, as well as for health reasons, then practical gifts in the gardening range of products are going to be very welcome gifts. Garden centres will still have a few deciduous fruit trees left over from the winter intake and likely a better range of evergreens such as citrus trees, feijoas and tamarillos. These three fruiting types are perfect gifts and are all suitable to grow in a 45 litre plastic container (or larger) but 45 litres is ideal to start with.

I have a number of citrus trees along with a Feijoa (Unique) and a Tamarillo all growing very successfully in containers and producing a good crop of fruit every year, now that they are established.

The Feijoa variety called Unique surprised me as it gave a nice small crop of good sized fruit in the first 12 months.

So for an excellent fruiting gift, pick up a fruit tree and a 45 litre container and pot up using a purchased compost to which you have added animal manure or sheep manure pellets plus blood and bone and a gift is solved, that will give years of pleasure and fruit. Practical gifts include bags of compost, blood & bone, sheep manure pellets and packets of vegetables seeds.

You may like to also throw in a few natural products such as the **Neem oil or Neem Granules, Magic Botanic Liquid, Rok Solid Mineral dust** etc. These will enhance the gardening activities of both the novice and seasoned gardener and even if they are already using a product you buy for them they will appreciate a replacement, when theirs runs out.

For those that have concerns about their health you could always buy them a Wheat Grass Juicing kit.

Wheat grass grown with all the natural minerals that come in the kit make for highly mineralized grass when juiced, through the manual juicer that comes with the kit. Taken daily the juice will greatly assist in their health.

Gardening books must rate high on the gift list for both novice and seasoned gardeners and copies of my own two very popular books are available by mail order from Garden Gloves of Geraldine. They are Wally's Down to Earth Gardening Guide and Wally's Green Tips for Gardeners.

Inexpensive and I am told by some, that they are bibles for gardeners that want to grow naturally and have wonderful gardens.

Garden Vouchers are also always appreciated and these can be included with a Xmas Card or added to another gift.

Vouchers from timber merchants are also ideal as the money can be used to build raised gardens for growing crops of vegetables.

A nice non food line is to pick up some colour spots, a rose or suitable shrub and pot them up into a suitable, decorative container to grow on and then give nicely wrapped up for Xmas.

Poinsettia with their lovely red flower bracts bring indoors a Xmas feel and they also make wonderful inexpensive gifts.

Xmas lillies are also another symbol of Xmas and you maybe able to find some that are potted up and coming into bud.

I spotted individually potted Xmas lillies in a garden centre about 3 Christmas's ago and purchased half a dozen which I repotted together into one larger container.

They have flowered for me every Xmas since, and saves buying them as a cut flower every year.

There are also larger ticket items that can be great assets to the gardeners such as a Worm-a-Round worm farm, a tumbler or Earth Maker compost bin, a Mulcher for turning clippings and trimmings into garden mulch, which would also include lawn mowers with the mulching shoot.

There are also garden nicknack's that some people like to place around their gardens to enhance areas.

Statues can look nice, bird baths and feeders are practical, water features are great value and so the list goes on.

If you are handy with tools and wood you could make for someone a raised garden or a chook run.

I had a lady inquiring recently if I knew of anyone she could employ to build her a chicken house and run.

I suggested that as the building industry was not so busy now, that an advert in the local paper would produce some results.

A lot of you are handy with tools and could very easily do a relative or friend a great favour by putting the wood together for them. That costs you nothing but your time and saves the person a great deal of money.

Likewise why not set up a vegetable garden for a family and assist them in its care.

It is in times like these that we need to cooperate with others to improve our welfare as a community.

If we are able to do this then a lot more people will have a happy Xmas after all.

Problems ring me at 0800 466464 (Palmerston North 3570606)