



Down the water spout

An Auckland Flower Show design finds a sustainable and economy friendly way to use storm and rain water as nature intended.

Words **Lucinda Diack** Photography **Kirsten Sach**

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH Auckland Regional Council in 2007 to create the Gold award winning 'Raingarden' for the Ellerslie International Flower Show, Kirsten Sach found herself back in partnership with them for the new Auckland Flower Show in 2008. Falling into the 'Kiwi backyard' category for the Auckland Flower Show, the garden had to be "sustainable with a DIY feel to it that most importantly had to be achievable". Driven by these design factors, Kirsten set to work and created an economical and sustainable stormwater practice within the average 'kiwi backyard' which has seen a wealth of interest, during and since the Show. "There has been a lot of interest from people generally, but particularly those that require some kind of stormwater solution or those that have water tanks with overflow issues".

The garden demonstrates how rain is collected off a roof and then directed to stormwater planter boxes via a pond. The water plants in the pond help oxygenate and purify the water. When the pond is full, water overflows into raised garden planter boxes with plants and soil medium designed to treat and filter contaminants. In heavy rain the stormwater planter box is designed to pond for no longer than 24 hours. Some rainwater overflows to the garden below where subsoil drainage takes away the remaining water.

Kirsten talks about the sustainable benefits of reducing erosion, litter, engine oil and heavy metals being washed



into our waterways and destroying important eco systems: "collecting the rain in your own garden will not only cleanse the water but help reduce the volume of unfiltered stormwater reaching our beaches".

Making a move towards sustainable gardening and landscaping practices, Kirsten is looking forward to incorporating some of these ideas into her future designs and seeing people create their own stormwater gardens. ■

For more information on getting your own raingarden started please contact **Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd** 09 818 2827