



Zone committee role reinforces need for smart watering

SMART WATERING CASE STUDY: KYLEE GALBRAITH

Kylee Galbraith is rapidly coming up to speed with being part of the team charged with sorting out South Canterbury's water woes. The mother of two is a reasonably recent addition to the Orari-Opihi-Pareora Zone Committee; one of ten committees set up under the Canterbury Water Management Strategy to develop a community vision for water management. It's a big ask. The Orari-Opihi-Paerora zone is recognised as one of the most water-short in Canterbury. That's why this summer's SMART Watering campaign – being piloted in Timaru alongside Ashburton, Selwyn and Waimakariri Districts – appeals.



Last summer Kylee and husband Morgan moved into a new home in Timaru. Located in a new subdivision, the couple had to start their garden from scratch and the weather was against them. Staring down the worst drought in South Canterbury for 50 years, Kylee says they made the right decision deferring planting a lawn until autumn.

"We couldn't have done it any earlier because it was so dry and because of water restrictions."

The rest of their garden, a huge vegetable plot, natives and other small plants, took shape incrementally relying on hand labour and regular, light watering.

Kylee says it's been a revelation to learn how much water a new garden needs during its establishment but the couple have worked out how to be more judicious with their use.

"I guess I would be an amateur gardener because I was a bit blasé about how much you have to water things."

"The new lawn has to be watered quite frequently. We do most of it by hand because that saves water. We've got lots of hoses and sprinklers and when I do put a sprinkler on the lawn we keep moving it around every five minutes. So watering the lawn takes about an hour and we only have to do this every three days or so."

This approach is not always fool-proof. When Kylee's two and a half year old son insists being part of the watering-fun, hosing takes a lot longer.

Kylee and Morgan planned their garden in advance setting up a relatively high maintenance cottage garden and vegetable garden featuring all edible plants at the back of the section, and a lower maintenance native area at the front.

"It's got lots of natives because it's next to a reserve and because we thought it would be easy care." Bark chips have helped keep weeds out and are also important in conserving water. "They keep the moisture in."

Watering in the mornings and evenings avoids the windy periods of the day. "I don't like wasting water so I don't water in the wind. It's just pointless. I also don't like seeing water going onto concrete."

The planning consultant by trade, who has done some work for Dairy Holdings, recognises that the farming community has a big role to play in promoting water-efficient behaviour.

"The biggest gains for water efficiency will still come from within farming areas."

SMART
WATERING

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