



Low maintenance, water conserving gardens

STRATHALLAN LIFECARE- TIMARU

Creating a welcoming and aesthetically- inviting environment for retirees is important for retirement villages and care facilities. Gardens are a big part of this and it is evident at Strathallan Lifecare, located in Timaru, that they take great pride in their attractive grounds. As summer is now in full swing, Strathallan has had to comply with water restrictions that have been put in place by Timaru District Council. Watering of lawns is a restricted activity that everyone in the complex adheres to.

Strathallan Lifecare has villas and apartments as part of the retirement village. They also have residential care facilities which include a hospital, rest home and dementia care unit. Three maintenance men are employed to keep on top of looking after the grounds. Watering only occurs when needed via an automated system. Sprinklers are spread throughout the flat lying gardens, while drip irrigation has been installed along the fence edges and steeper areas of the grounds to make the most focused use of water.

Whilst having a tour around the grounds with Tania Buchanan, the village co-ordinator, it is evident that hardy, robust species have been the priority as “they use a lot less water and do not require full time care,” explains Tania. Bark chips are used as mulch which, while they can be a nuisance to keep tidy, are a great option to improve water retention in the soil and help control weeds.

Throughout the complex, the gardens vary depending on how much input the residents have. Roses are much-loved by the residents so it is difficult to restrict these from being planted. Therefore as plants are being replaced when villas and apartments become vacant, Strathallan staff have consolidated as many roses as possible into a particular purpose made area to allow easy watering of them. This has been a good compromise to still give the residents the experience of having beautiful roses around the village but controlling where they are to ensure watering is efficient as possible.

