

## Kym and Sharon's food garden at Woodside

March 2015

Kym and Sharon already had a great permaculture garden set up in their back yard at Woodside. They'd cleverly used the available space around their suburban home to grow fruit trees and veggies and to house a few chooks.

They contacted Vital Veggies to help with digging some deep holes in their rock hard soil so they could plant some additional fruit trees. These holes needed some Vital Veggies soil, and so did a few other garden beds.

We also discussed how to renovate an area in their back yard to allow their chooks to roam. We worked out an ingenious CMS (Chicken Management System).  
Read on to find out why...

### Front yard



*Front (before)*



*Front (after)*

These images show the garden bed along their front side fence.

First we removed the agapanthus and other bushes, then used the digger to make four deep holes in the rock hard clay soil, then filled the holes with Vital Veggies special soil (second image). After this we covered the entire area with weed control mat and then a thick layer of compost. Sharon and Kym will now be able to plant four fruit trees along here, knowing that they'll get off to a good start in their nourishing little beds of soil.



*Compost being delivered to Sharon and Kym's front yard. The right hand mound is Vital Veggies super soil.*

### **Back yard**

Roger removed the old soil from 4 of Sharon and Kym's existing garden beds and topped them up with Vital Veggies super soil. Even a minimum 10cm layer of special soil will provide extra nutrients and live biology to brighten up the next crop of plants.

Using the motorised wheelbarrow to fill an existing bed with new soil.





*Dropping soil from the digger into 3 small beds*

### **Chicken Management System**

Chickens love to roam around and feast on a variety of plants. This in turn produces extra nutritious eggs. But chickens can also annihilate all plant life in a large area very quickly if they aren't managed correctly.

When Sharon and Kym asked us to renovate the area by their back fence for the chickens to roam in we designed a system which easily rotates the chickens' grazing areas so that each area is given time to recover and be replenished with green chook food.



*The back area before renovation*

As they wanted to plant more fruit trees we used the digger again to make some large holes for the new trees and filled them with our Vital Veggies soil. The ground here felt like rock and it would have been impossible for Kym (or us!) to dig the holes with a shovel.



*After digging the holes and filling them with soil.*

Weeds were removed from this area, then a layer of soil and a layer of compost were thickly laid over the rocky ground. Green chook food seeds will be scattered around and left to grow wild.

After laying down the mulch we constructed the Chicken Management System. This is comprised of simple mesh fencing and steel mesh gates. The ingenious interconnected system allows for the gates to be opened one way or closed another way, thereby opening and closing off different areas of the chook run. Magnets on the gates make them effectively simple to open and close.

There are five separate grazing areas now - the chickens will have access to one area at a time for approximately 2 weeks. The gates will then be opened and closed in a different conformation, giving the chickens access to another area and restricting their access to all other areas so they can grow lush new green chook food undisturbed by pecking beaks and digging claws.



*The finished chook run*