



## Southland Express

Thursday 5/11/2009

Page: 36  
Section: General News  
Region: Southland Invercargill, NZ  
Circulation: 34000  
Type: Community  
Size: 146.16 sq.cms.



# slice

slicemedia.com

press clip

## Recession gets New Zealanders out in the garden

KIWIS struggling with the increasing costs of grocery items have returned to gardening, boosting sales in vegetable garden equipment and seeds.

Kiwi companies Masport and Yates have both reported growth of some product lines by as much as 30-33% annually during the tougher economic climate.

Masport marketing services manager Nadia Roberts said the recession was the driving force behind this gardening trend which was having a substantial impact on Masport's business.

"If we look at our top ten vegetable garden tool retailers, 70% of sales are currently derived from urban customers," Ms Roberts said.

The demand for home gardening equipment has even forced Masport to restart production on a previously deleted product, (the Masport 'Home

Gardener' that was at its sales peak in the 1970s.

Yates marketing manager Charlie Gray said his company's sales had also been boosted by city gardeners looking to save money.

Vegetable seed sales had increased by 60% over the past two years, Mr Gray said.

"It's interesting to note the growth in sales of baby or space saver varieties in the Yates range. This is probably an indicator of smaller section sizes and consumers who are growing in raised planter beds where there is a need to maximise yields from smaller spaces."

Traditional favourites such as beans and peas are becoming increasingly popular, as well as root vegetable staples, including carrots and beetroot, he said.

Kiwis are also becoming more sophisticated with their tastes, with

growth in rocket, culinary herbs and exotic lettuce varieties.

The move to home gardening is not only good for our pockets, but has obvious health benefits, according to one of the country's top nutritionists.

Nutritionist Jacquie Dale said home gardens provide a great opportunity for the family to spend time outdoors together away from the couch and the TV screen.

Growing your own produce and spending a few minutes each day out in the garden can also play a huge role in stress reduction, Ms Dale said.

"Home gardening is also a great low-cost activity for the children. They're also much more inclined to eat vegetables if they get to grow and harvest their own. Don't let a lack of space put you off. These days you can even grow vegetables in containers on the deck."