

# Big (green) thumbs-up for Jo

Jo Duff is declared the best gardener in the Bay and could be crowned national supreme winner

'We wanted to reward and recognise gardeners at the grassroots'

**Vote  
Karen  
Cooper**



**HB District Health Board  
and  
HB Regional Council**  
*(Hastings Constituency)*

- Accountability
- Commitment
- Experience

**Craig Foss**  
**Your MP for Tukituki**  
*"Backing The Bay"*



Las Palmas Buildings  
Cnr King and Queen Streets  
Ph (06) 870 3480

CraigFoss@BackingTheBay.co.nz  
Office hours Monday-Friday 8.30-4.30pm



**joseph charles**  
menswear

**now open**

**J**o Duff, Poukawa's eco-friendly gardener, has walked away with the 2007 Hawke's Bay Gardener of the Year title — a big (green) thumbs-up to the organic and sustainability revolution in gardening.

The part-timer at Planters Seedling Nursery, Havelock North, says the award is more about her push for "communal gardening" in the immediate community, and less about "me and my garden".

"It's just as well, too. Mine isn't much to look at," she says and laughs.

*NZ Gardener* magazine announced Jo the winner last week, with chief judge Lynda Hallinan saying eco-friendly Jo was an enthusiastic and passionate gardener who "busts the myths that abound about hairy-legged greenies".

"We launched this competition to celebrate those unsung horticultural heroes who would never dream of putting themselves forward for public accolades. That's why we asked local communities to make the nominations for us — we wanted to reward and recognise gardeners at the grassroots," Lynda says.

One of 15 regional champions dug up by the magazine, Jo now has the chance to take

out the title of national supreme winner, taking home a \$10,000 prize package including \$5000 to spend at Bunnings Warehouse.

Jo also teaches part-time at the Environment Centre, Hastings, where she educates the community about sustainability and permaculture.

"My farm in Poukawa has been established using the guidelines of permaculture," a set of principles she explains as "more than just worm farming!"

"It's all about designing sustainable habitats — from your house, farm and garden, even the wider community. Functionality is one of big things. We take cues from nature, like mimicking a layered woodland setting and changing the layers of growth to suit human needs. For instance, we'd substitute some of the layers for either medicinal herbs, or edible roots."

Put another way, permaculture is a tool box; organics and biodynamics tools within the box.

"I like to think about gardening in communal terms. I'm not convinced that each family unit being self-sufficient makes sense. No one person is an island, we're all social creatures so I'd like to put the community back into gardening."

She says the fact there



**WE'RE DIGGING IT:** Permaculture teacher and part-time nursery worker Jo Duff was named Hawke's Bay Gardener of the Year.

were three or four other permaculture nominees in the finals was "really encouraging".

"People can participate in small ways, like starting 'close to the back door', planting perennial foods,

supporting local farmers and by eating seasonal produce. You can have productive landscapes even in small urban spaces"

■ Readers are able to vote for Jo online at: [www.nzgardener.co.nz](http://www.nzgardener.co.nz)