

SUSTAINABILITY NEWS

Enviro Committee



IN THIS EDITION:

OPERATION CLEAN UP WEEK

This year's clean up events are locked in and we're excited to share the details! [Read more](#)

LUNCH & LEARN '25

To make our 2025 programme as impactful as possible, the EnviroCommittee need your feedback! [Read more](#)

LEADING THE LOOP

Whether regulated, industry led, or council driven, material recovery initiatives are helping to drive New Zealand's circular economy. [Read more](#)

GROWING GREENER

Despite end of life challenges in the packaging space, compostable plastics are making waves in the sustainable horticulture! [Read more](#)

ASK EARTHA

Our Environmental Agony Aunt answers all your Eco Enquires! [Read more](#)

OPERATION CLEAN UP WEEK

Operation Clean Up Week is fast approaching, and we invite all Plastics New Zealand members to roll up their sleeves and get involved. From 11th to 15th November, we'll be hosting a series of clean-up events across the country aimed at recovering litter from our environment and preventing it from entering our waterways and, ultimately, our precious moana.

PROJECT WITH A PURPOSE

Pollution is a significant issue in Aotearoa New Zealand, posing a particular threat to our marine ecosystems. These clean-up events aren't just about tidying up our neighbourhoods - they're a reminder of the broader challenge faced. According to research, our coastlines have become the new frontline in the fight against plastic pollution. You can read more about the challenge of marine litter in this [key article from the University of Auckland](#).

BIGGER AND BETTER

This year, we are ramping up efforts to boost volunteer turnout by connecting with local business associations. It's a perfect opportunity to get your team involved and show your commitment to the environment, while also having some fun! In the spirit of friendly competition, we're offering spot prizes for the branches with the highest turn out and most 'unusual' find!

GET INVOLVED

To register to volunteer at one of the branch events in Auckland, Hamilton, or Christchurch, use the registration form [here](#).

If you are based in a location that does not have a branch event, and you would like to organise a clean up, contact Katy@plastics.org.nz for access to guidance and resources.

EVENT DETAILS

Wednesday 13th November:

- Auckland (Rosebank): 10 am, Saunders Reserve
- Christchurch: 2 pm, location TBC

Thursday 14th

- Auckland (East Tamaki): 10 am, Lady Fisher Place
- Hamilton: 2 pm, location TBC

Friday 15th

- Auckland (Albany): 10 am, Hooton Reserve

To sign up, follow this [link!](#)



LUNCH AND LEARN 2025

We want to hear from you!

As we commence our EnviroCommittee Planning for the coming year, it is time for us to put together our 2025 Lunch and Learn line-up. We are committed to delivering webinars that provide maximum value to our members by informing on the topics that matter to you. To ensure we hit the mark, we are keen to gather your insights!

This is your chance to highlight the types of Lunch and Learn sessions you would like to see in the coming year — whether it's regulatory updates, innovative technologies, or successful sustainability initiatives.

Our goal is to curate sessions that offer insightful knowledge and practical solutions that members can apply within their businesses. By focusing on the most pressing issues and opportunities within our sector, we hope to foster meaningful discussions and drive progress across the industry.

Your feedback is invaluable and we encourage you to engage with our quick (approx. 1 min) poll by following the link below.

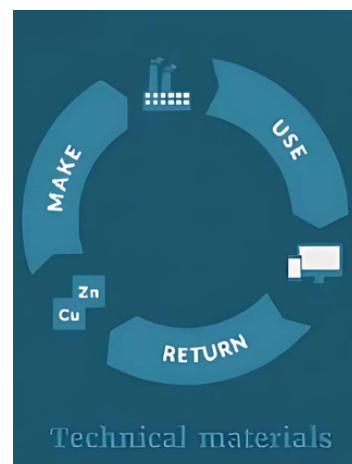
Poll: https://www.menti.com/al2jn1vazh4j_



LEADING THE LOOP:

THE INITIATIVES PAVING THE WAY FOR MATERIAL RECOVERY IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is making significant strides in the realm of material recovery, demonstrating a commitment to reducing waste and promoting sustainability. Through a combination of formal product stewardship schemes and targeted local initiatives, various groups are stepping up to address the challenges of waste management. Here's how three distinct efforts are making an impact with plastics.





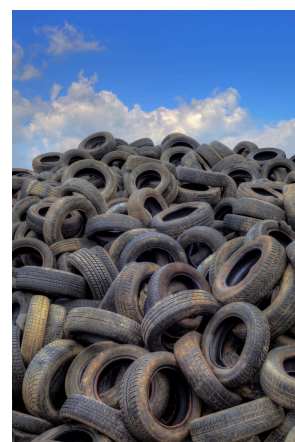
EPS is compressed in hot melt compacters for more efficient transit to offshore reprocessors.

EPS PACKAGING - PALMERSTON NORTH

In Palmerston North, local council are working with E-Cycle to make it easier for residents and businesses to recycle expanded polystyrene (EPS) packaging, a material often deemed problematic due to its bulky, lightweight nature. The scheme, which operates on a 'user-pays' system, provides a dedicated drop-off point and where EPS is collected. The material is then compressed by E-Cycle and sent for recycling, reducing the volume of waste sent to landfills. This localised effort demonstrates the crucial role that municipal governments can play in facilitating recycling solutions for materials that are otherwise challenging to manage. For more information on this scheme, visit: https://www.pncc.govt.nz/Services/Rubbish-and-recycling/Palmy-recycling/Polystyrene-recycling_

TYREWISE

Tyrewise recently became New Zealand's first regulated product stewardship scheme! With around 6.5 million tyres imported to New Zealand, the introduction of a regulated framework ensures that all parties—from manufacturers to consumers—play a role in recovering and recycling significant volumes of material. By creating a clear structure for collection, processing, and reuse, Tyrewise not only mitigates the environmental impact of tyre waste but also sets a precedent for how regulation can drive industry-wide change. The scheme reflects the necessity of regulatory support in tackling more challenging waste streams. For more information in Tyrewise, visit <https://www.tyrewise.co.nz/about-tyrewise/>



CAPS AND LIDS

The new Caps and Lids scheme is an industry-led initiative focused on diverting caps and lids from landfill. After all caps and lids were excluded from nationwide standardised kebside recycling, this programme aims to provide a circular pathway for these items. Caps and lids make up around 10% of packaging in the FMCG space - representing a significant volume of valuable material. By bringing the industry together to tackle this specific waste stream, the initiative underscores how targeted actions can address issues quickly while longer term solutions are sought. To find out more about this initiative, visit: <https://capslids.recycling.kiwi.nz/>

These schemes highlight that material recovery can a range of initiatives can be beneficial in supporting enhanced material recovery. Whilst regulated stewardship may be the ultimate goal, industry led and local initiatives can have huge impact!

GROWING GREENER

THE DILEMMA

Plastics have become indispensable in the horticultural sector. From vine clips and netting to seedling trays and mulch films, plastics improve crop yields, conserve water, and protect plants from pests. However, once the harvest is complete, many of these plastics pose a significant disposal challenge. Small items like vine clips, netting, and twine are often cut away during harvesting and left on-site. These tiny pieces are hard to recover, and pose a pollution risk. Items that are recovered are typically too contaminated to recycle and are not retained within the circular economy.



EFFECTIVE COMPOSTABLES

'Compostable Plastics' are often controversial. Without proper infrastructure in place to manage compostable plastics at end of life, many compostable claims amount to greenwashing. However, compostables in the horticultural space are proving effective as a means of reducing waste and adding nutritional content back into the earth. A truly circular solution!

INDUSTRY RESPONSE

To overcome this challenge, innovators in the industry are turning to compostable alternatives that break down naturally after use, eliminating the need for tedious clean-up and helping to prevent plastic pollution.

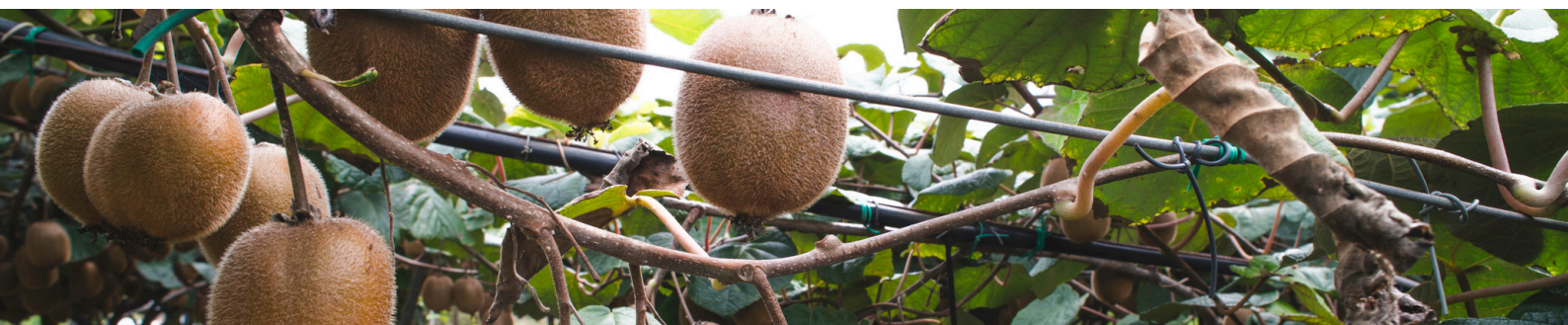
SCION, EPL, AND POLBIONIX

Scion have supported businesses in making exciting strides in this space. Over recent years, they have worked with companies in the plastics sector to develop biodegradable horticulture products such as vine clips (EPL) and plant pots (PolBionix). These items, which are designed to break down naturally over time, offer a promising alternative to the traditional plastic options widely used in the sector.

Rigorous testing has been done to ensure that the products will break down in the conditions they are likely to find themselves in at

end of life. In addition, by adding bio-fillers to the products, they ensure that degradation results in nutritional content being added to the earth.

By exploring new materials and processes, these trailblazers are paving the way for more sustainable practices within this space!



EXTRUTEC

Extrutech are another trailblazer in this space. In response to grower demand for sustainable options, they have developed and now manufacture a range of compostable and soil degradable twine and clips.

To ensure that these products are indeed better than the conventional plastic version, it was imperative that functional and environmentally beneficial specifications are met. Their process therefore involved a strict approach of thorough testing and trialing in the field while tracking and analyzing material performance. Extrutech work closely with large growers in New Zealand and Australia, and research entities like Lincoln University and the University of Auckland's Advanced Materials department to ensure positive outcomes.



Extrutech's product development is very much customer led, meaning they develop new products to specifically address pain points identified by customers. They also work closely with their customers throughout the development process to ensure that they find a solution that works for them in their environment. They have been successfully supplying a range of biodegradable products to NZ growers since 2018!

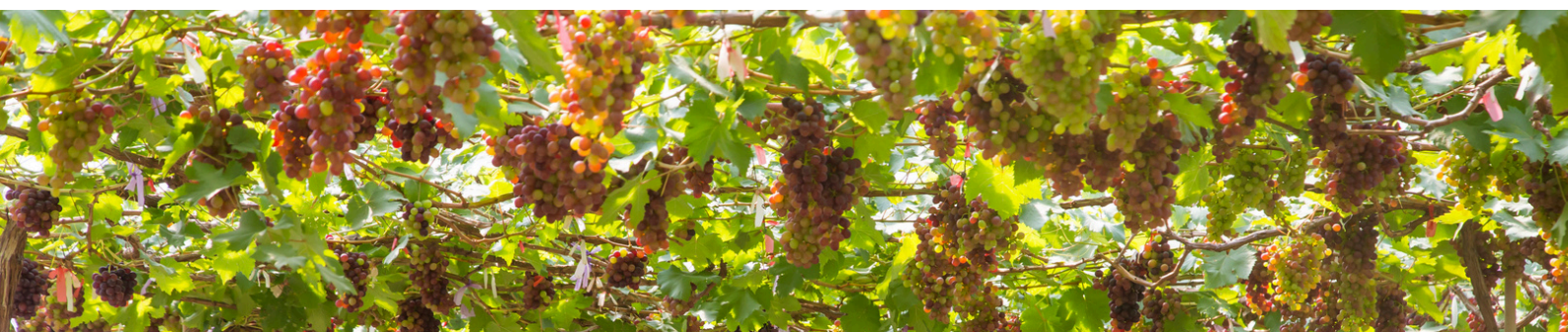
The result has been a range of growers twines suited to specific growing environments and the options to either compost these on farm, or make use of ambient soil biodegradation to return them to the soil safely. They have recently added a range of compostable clips to complement hothouse and orchard growing requirements and are continuing their development of more solutions for this sector.

These companies have demonstrated how industry can step up to meet key challenges. To find out more about these projects, follow the links below!

EPL Vine Clips: <https://www.scionresearch.com/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020-news-and-media-releases/biodegradable-vine-clips-win-outstanding-collaboration-award>

PolBionix Plant Pots: <https://www.scionresearch.com/about-us/about-scion/corporate-publications/scion-connections/past-issues-list/scion-connections-issue-42,-february-2023/scion-develops-r-and-d-solution-to-tackle-plastic-waste-for-nurseries>

Extrutech Twine and Clips: <https://extrutech.co.nz/earthtwine/>



ASK EARTHA

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL AGONY AUNT ANSWERS ALL YOUR ECO-ENQUIRES

By Eartha Green

Q. DOES IT HAVE TO COST THE EARTH?

'In the midst of a cost of living crisis, what can be done to show our commitment to sustainability, whilst also remaining competitive?

- Anonymous

A. INTERSECTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY!

This is a timely and important question, especially with the pressures we're all facing right now. First, it's helpful to recognise that sustainability is not just about the environment—it's about the intersection of three key factors: economic, environmental, and social sustainability. This holistic approach is what we call 'true' sustainability. While businesses might be inclined to focus solely on short-term economic survival during a cost-of-living crisis, a sustainable strategy takes the long view, aiming for balance and long-term resilience.



Smart environmental choices, such as optimising processes and material use, can result in immediate savings. Even opportunities that involve upfront costs often lead to significant long-term savings. For instance, investing in recycled materials, energy-efficient processes, or more durable products can result in reduced operational costs and fewer raw material needs over time. A circular economy model—reusing or recycling materials—can also protect your business from volatile resource prices. These moves not only help the environment but can improve your bottom line to keep you competitive!

There's also a paradox we need to consider: cheaper, short-lived products often end up costing consumers more in the long run. Cheaper products that don't last need replacing, while durable high-quality goods are maintained for longer. As a business, offering products that are more sustainable and longer-lasting not only supports environmental goals but also provides real value to your customers. This moves consumers up the waste hierarchy and helps to enhance brand reputation and loyalty.

By focusing on this balanced approach, your business can demonstrate its commitment to sustainability while staying competitive in the market. Long-term thinking may require short-term investment, but it ultimately helps create a stronger, more resilient business!

CONTACT US:

To ask Eartha a question, make a suggestion for an article, or for general enquiries and feedback contact:

Katy@plastics.org.nz



WHAT'S ON:

KEY EVENTS COMING UP

DDSP AUCKLAND: 10TH - 11TH OCTOBER

DDSP Polymers will be held in Auckland on 10th - 11th October

WEEK OF 21ST OCTOBER: GO-KARTING

Auckland go-karting social will take place during the week of 21st October.
More details to be announced.

DDSP CHCH: 22ND/23RD OCTOBER

DDSP Level 3 Processing will be held in Christchurch in October.

DDSP AUCKLAND: 7TH - 8TH NOVEMBER

DDSP Processing will be held in Auckland on 7th - 8th November

AUCKLAND F&P TOUR: 6TH NOVEMBER

A technical event will be held at Fisher and Paykel Healthcare in Auckland on 6th November.

OPERATION CLEAN UP WEEK: 11TH - 15TH NOVEMBER

Plastics NZ will lead a week of nationwide clean ups organised in partnership with the PNZ branch committees and environment committee.

DDSP AUCKLAND: 21ST - 22ND NOVEMBER

DDSP Design will be held in Auckland on 21st - 22nd November

SCION LUNCH AND LEARN: 26TH NOVEMBER

Scion will host the final lunch and learn of 2024 on 26th November to bring us more details regarding bioplastics!