



Solar panels supply all of the power for lighting the garden centre during the day. The globe light fittings are a feature through the building and visually lower the ceilings



Outdoor display area stretches the length of the building, completely under plastic cover



Above: local artists can display and sell their creations in a New Zealand Designer Showcase section of the garden centre, with 100 percent of the profits being returned to the artist



Above: an unusual and somewhat Spartan design for the checkouts Below left: the childrens' play area near the cafe entrance was a popular spot on a Saturday morning. Below right: many of the display fittings inside the building are made from timber and were built locally

Kings open a new concept garden centre in Auckland

THE KINGS Plant Barn chain opened their new architect-designed garden centre in Stonefields, near Mt Wellington Auckland, in July.

The 2,800sq m site is certainly a garden centre with a difference. "Stonefields is the first major step in a project of continuous re-invention for Kings," says Nat Cheshire of its designers Cheshire Architects, "a project turning garden centres into urban epicentres supporting, and delighting in, the reconciliation of humanity and nature."

A high-ceiling building stretches along the front, carpark side of the site, and houses the indoor plant categories, accessories and gift lines, a childrens' play area and a large café.

The remainder of the site has a crop cover-type roof and houses a wide range of outdoor plants, plus there is a drive-thru area for garden mixes and landscape supplies.

The garden centre is near the

older suburbs of Mt Wellington, St Johns and Glen Innes but also close to one of Auckland's biggest recent residential subdivisions, Stonefields, in the former Mt Wellington quarry.

Here there are hundreds of new apartments, stand-alone houses and terraced houses, none of which have much land for gardening and this is reflected in the ranges offered by the new garden centre.

Endless ideas

Its plant displays, with input from landscape designer Xanthe White, are exceptionally good, attractive and well thought out, and everywhere there are small displays of gift lines, knick-knacks and ideas for customers to take home.

In one section local artists are invited to set up displays and sell



Multiple displays of large-leafed indoor plants give the garden centre something of a tropical feel



their products, keeping the profits. They can be on hand to talk with customers and are changed each month. The one pictured on

the page opposite was featuring kokedama. There is another section devoted to materials for creating terrariums.

Below: the unprepossessing entrance facade gives no hint of what lies within. Above: small constructions help visually break up the big spaces in the store Below right and right: more tidy displays



A variety of display benches and fittings are used through the outdoor area. These steel modular tiered displays were supplied by Primehort

