

## OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH SUPPORT GROUP

NEWS and VIEWS JUNE 2000

### DIARY

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2000 at 10a.m. Conducted walk with John Dawson**

Getting to know the trees and vines around the deck and alongside the canopy walkway

A warm welcome to anyone interested in participating. Bring your own sandwiches. Tea and coffee provided.

Level of difficulty: Very easy.

No charge.

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30 p.m. General meeting of Otari-Wilton's Bush Support Group**

The main purpose of this meeting will be to discuss with members our future activities. We are very keen for members to express their ideas.

Members who attended the workshop about the Wellington City Council's Strategic Review for Open Spaces will report back.

There will be a report by the committee on progress with the constitutional changes agreed to at the last meeting. Copies of the updated constitution will be available at the meeting prior to the discussion. If you wish to obtain a copy before this, please contact Jock Fleming, Phone 475 8945.

**17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September Native Week at Otari-Wilton's Bush.**

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September Plant Sale and Open Day**

A full programme of daytime activities and evening talks is being planned for the following week. Details of this programme will be displayed at Te Marae O Tane, the Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre as soon as they have been finalized.

### OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH SUPPORT GROUP FORMED

An inaugural meeting was held in Te Marae O Tane, the Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.30 p.m. Thirty-nine people attended.

A motion to establish the Otari-Wilton's Bush Support Group was carried.

An interim constitution was distributed to all present. A motion to accept this was carried, on the understanding that the incoming committee be given power to make amendments for approval at a future General Meeting.

The following Committee was formed.

**President:** Jock Fleming 149 Wilton Road, Wilton Wellington. Ph 475 8945

**Vice President:** John Dawson 24 Winston Street, Crofton Downs, Wellington. Ph 4679 7369

**Secretary:** Margaret Crimp 167 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington. Ph 475 3263

**Treasurer:** Glen Denby 151 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington Ph 475 8438

**Committee:** Margaret Chetwin, Sandra Clarke, Gill Ross, Athol Swann, Helen Waugh.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** were set for the year April 2000 – April 2001.

\$10 single, \$15 double/family, \$5 unwaged or student.

Those who have paid a seeding donation only, are asked to pay an appropriate membership fee.

### **PERSONALITY:**

#### **Anita Benbrook, Assistant Curator, Otari-Wilton's Bush**

Anita began working for the W.C.C. Reserves Department in February 1987, and has spent the whole of her service at Otari-Wilton's Bush. She has had experience in gardening, running the nursery, data management and general management. In October 1995 she was appointed Assistant Curator when Carol Leach resigned.

Her qualifications include a Diploma in Horticulture (Massey), National Diploma in Horticulture (Royal N.Z. Institute of Horticulture), and Diploma in Botanical Garden Management (Kew).

Apart from her work, Anita's interests include tramping, hunting, outdoor activities e.g. kayaking and basketball. At home she enjoys spending time with her husband and 2 lovely dogs, reading and gardening.

#### **Anita's vision for Otari-Wilton's Bush.**

In the cultivated areas her aim is to add to the plant collections of N.Z. wide species to make them as comprehensive as possible.

For the forest areas, the main thrust is to reduce plant and animal pests. Mustelids (in particular stoats) and rats are the current target now that possums and magpies have been reduced in numbers. Tradescantia (Wandering Willie), Old Man's Beard, Darwin's Barberry, willows, bamboo and honeysuckle are plant pests that are being targeted at present. This financial year \$15,000 has been spent on weed control.

### **REPORT FROM THE STAFF AT OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH**

**Plant Labels** for the walkway have arrived this week. They will be positioned on the top of the horizontal rail of the walkway fence, at the back of the palings. A further 200 labels will be positioned in the gardens.

The Otari-Wilton's Bush Staff have been busy at Te Papa lately, working on Bush City and the surrounds. At present the soil in the swamp garden is being replaced and the garden replanted because of weed infestation.

During June, 3000 Texan teenagers will visit Otari-Wilton's Bush as part of their summer camp programme. Their visit will include a bush walk and a talk, and they will plant 2000 native trees in the area surrounding the Northern Picnic ground, beside Wilton's Bush Road.

Our thanks go to **Eleanor Burton**, staff member at Otari-Wilton's Bush for providing the plant profile for this issue. The red berries of Kohia, the N.Z. Passion Fruit (*Passiflora tetrandra*), are a very visible feature at Otari-Wilton's Bush at present.



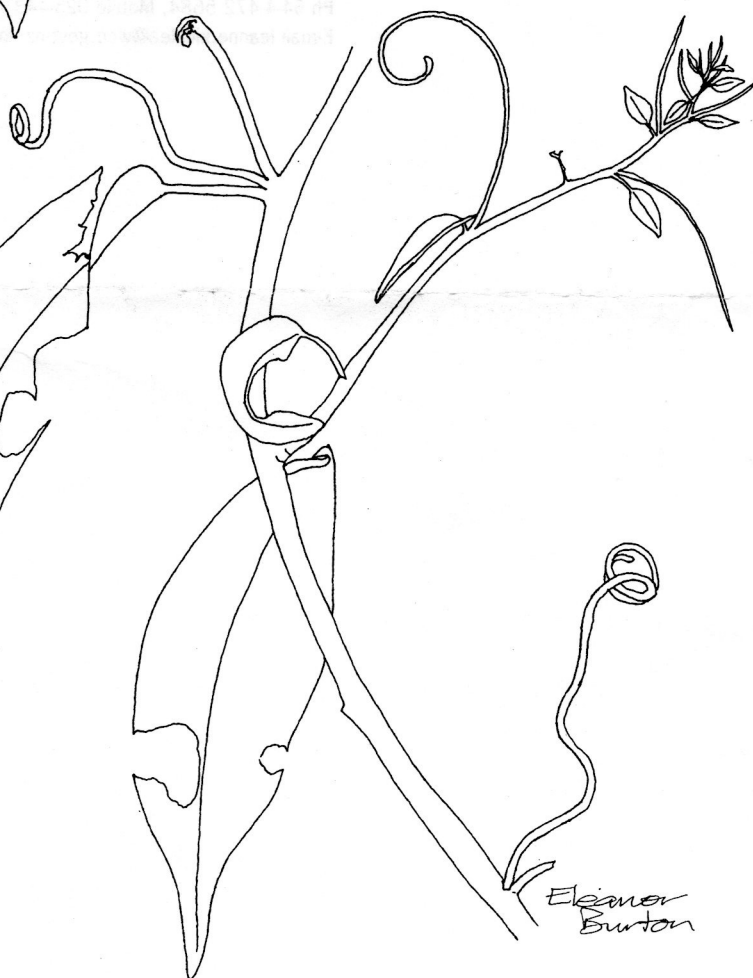
*Passiflora tetrandra*  
kohia, New Zealand passionfruit

Kohia is the only endemic species in this genus, which includes passionfruit.

This plant is a vigorous climber, climbing easily into the tops of canopy trees. The plant can live to a considerable age, possibly up to 200 years, with vines reaching a diameter of up to 14cm. It is found from Northland to Canterbury in lowland and montane forest. It has small white scented flowers in spring, followed by large orange fruits in autumn. These are a food source for birds. Male and female flowers are borne on separate plants.

The pulp of the fruit was eaten by the Maori, who also extracted a fragrant oil from the seeds. They used this as a body oil.

This plant is grown in cultivation. It likes shade for its roots, and needs lots of room to climb! Two plants are necessary for fruit.



Eleanor  
Burton

## OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH HOST GROUP

A very encouraging response was received earlier this year when volunteers were called for to host visitors to Otari-Wilton's Bush. Thirty nine people trained and are now part of a roster to look after Te Marae O Tane, the Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre during the weekends, and to respond to visitor's needs and questions. Their presence gives weekend visitors the opportunity to enjoy the Centre. The hosts are also providing on-going feedback to the staff about the use of the Reserve and the questions people ask, which is proving helpful for future planning.

Further volunteers will be called for in August to augment this group, and another training session will be held.

If you are interested in assisting in this worthwhile way, please contact Leanne Killalea. Contact details are shown on her card below.

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL



**Leanne Killalea**

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Treehouse Visitor Centre, Wellington Botanic Garden

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