

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views March, 2015

Web site: www.otariwiltonsbush.org.nz. Walks meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane unless otherwise stated. Walks with talks first will start at the Leonard Cockayne Centre. Unless otherwise stated walks are free to Trust members, otherwise \$5. For information re walks and seminars contact the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

The first Saturday of each month. 9am	Plant care is usually on the first Saturday of each month. Contact Wilbur Dovey, 4991044.
Tuesdays in March 7.30pm	The March Seminars are back. Keep Tuesday evenings free for this popular series. See page 4 for details
Sunday 22 March 2pm	The Treasure Trail is a walk designed by Dr. John Dawson to showcase the “treasures” of the NZ flora. An easy, mainly flat walk. <i>Leader: John Dawson</i>
Sunday 26 April 2pm	Fungal Foray An easy wander along the tracks searching out the many fungi found at this time of the year. Meet at the Leonard Cockayne Centre. <i>Leader: Geoff Ridley</i>
Wednesday 13 May 7.15pm	Trust AGM
Sunday 24 May 2pm	Visit the neighbours - Trelissick Park Meet at the Crofton Downs Railway Station car park at 2pm for a 2 hour walk through Trelissick Park. The walk will be along parts of the Korimako and Kaiwharawhara Streams and through forest sections of the park. It will involve short climbs with numerous steps so sturdy foot-ware is required. <i>Our guide will be Peter Reimann of the Trelissick Park Group.</i>

Chairman's Message

We are now in the very busy part of the summer season and Wellington has turned on the weather for the large part too.

The gardens and bush reserve are being well used by visitors every day and Rewi and his team have been working hard on keeping them in top shape.

I recommend our March seminars to all Trust members and get there early as they are normally very popular. We have a wide range of speakers and I am certainly looking forward to hearing them. There are challenges every day in an environment like Otari and these seminars give us food for thought on how far we have come in New Zealand and the road ahead to conserving and restoring our native vegetation.



Rodney and his team have been busy with guided tours and early next month the round the world cruise ship passengers will be shown around Otari and given an introduction to the wider New Zealand landscape.

Our Rambo team has been active in pest eradication within Otari and there are now spin offs happening in the neighbourhood which is great.

The Trust has been running the normal monthly walks and these are a great learning experience to participate in as a Trust member. Some of these have used the facilities of the new Leonard Cockayne Centre as it is better suited to these smaller groups.

The Trust Board this year will be looking at further support for the activities of Otari. The most recent one of these was the attendance by our curator/manager at a plant conservation conference in Hobart late last year.

Remember this year it is the 150th anniversary of Wellington becoming the capital and Otari has a long and proud history as part of this achievement.

Hope you all enjoy the summer season and look forward to seeing you at the March seminars.

Phil Parnell
Chair Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust

A reminder from the Treasurer

Subscriptions for the next financial year fall due in March. If you pay early you won't be plagued by reminders

The Trust Annual General Meeting

This important meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13 May at 7.15pm

At this meeting there will be the election of Trustees. We would be delighted to hear from any member who is interested in becoming a Trustee. See nomination form on page 10.

For more information contact Phil Parnell or Margaret Crimp

Otari Report

Kia ora koutou,

The summer dry is starting to hit us hard now as we enter water restrictions. If you have been walking in the forest at all you will have noticed many of the smaller shrubs wilting. Any planting is out of the question until we receive a bit more rain. At least the growth of weeds has also been slowed by the dry spell. In April we plan to carry out some changes to the garden area below the lookout. This will implement some recommendations from our 2010 landscape development plan to develop the area into a more usable and aesthetically pleasing space than it is currently.



This is the time of year we begin to collect seed and cuttings material for both the native botanic gardens and other areas around Wellington. We have already collected plants in partnership with Greater Wellington Regional Council and ZEALANDIA this month. Both collections will help restore species that are absent or very sparse in the forest at Otari and will in the future be able to supply seed for the places they were collected from. We hope this year to also make several collections that will contribute to the New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seed Bank in Palmerston North.

We have recently joined an initiative with other local environmental attractions from the Wellington region. Known as Nature Connections, the project will explore and celebrate the way in which our fantastic Wellington eco-assets work together to protect, preserve and showcase the region's unique environment. Funded by the Wellington Regional Amenities Fund, Nature Connections is led jointly by Wellington Zoo and ZEALANDIA and includes Staglands Wildlife Reserve, Pukaha Mount Bruce, Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Nga Manu Nature Reserve and the Harbour Island Kaitiaki Boards & DOC on behalf of Matiu/Somes Island. You can visit the Nature Connections website at <http://natureconnections.org.nz/>.

There are several people conducting research in Otari at present. Ellen Irwin, a recently-graduated university student from the US, is currently conducting research to determine where juvenile kakariki go to after they leave the ZEALANDIA Sanctuary. Some of them will likely end up in Otari. Her project is supported by ZEALANDIA, WCC, Victoria University of Wellington, and has funding from the James P. Reynolds Scholarship. If you see a kakariki (our small native green parrot), or a large totara tree where the birds often feed, please let Ellen know by recording your observations on NatureWatch: <http://naturewatch.org.nz/projects/kakariki-totara-in-wellington>.

If you are walking through the Blue Trail over the next few weeks you might come across contractors reworking a section of the track. We are installing a new boardwalk and rerouting the track away from a section where tree roots have become exposed.

Take note of the March seminars at Otari, as usual they promise to be very interesting.

Kind regards,

Rewi Elliot
Curator/Manager
Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve
Email: rewi.elliott@wcc.govt.nz

March Seminars 2015

Where: Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre

Time: 7.30pm. **Gold coin donation**



Tuesday, March 3

"Uncovering the secrets of New Zealand's supernatural potato orchids (Gastrodia)".

Carlos Lehnebach

Tuesday, March 10

"The travels of a Wellington entomologist".

George Gibbs

Tuesday, March 17

"Special plants of Otago and the challenges in conserving them".

John Barkla

Tuesday, March 24

"How we assess the conservation status of our flora and fauna".

Rod Hitchmough

Tuesday, March 31

"Woefully weedy Wellington - the challenges and what Wellington City Council is doing about it".

Illona Keenan

Otari reserve wins international Green Flag Award

Otari-Wilton's Bush, New Zealand's National Native Botanic Garden, has won an international Green Flag Award, given to only a small number of the world's best parks. The Green Flag judges singled out the reserve's dramatic Canopy Walkway for praise, saying it gives visitors a unique experience walking through tree canopies and vines over the protected forest floor. "The Canopy Walkway could be further promoted as a unique and novel experience for tourists."

The judges also praised the way Council staff and Otari volunteers work together to manage the collections, to control pests and host visitors.

Mayor Celia Wade-Brown says the judges have recognised the importance of Otari to New Zealand's biodiversity because of its work in propagating endangered plants and as an important resource. "In our Capital, with our strong urban-nature connections, Otari-Wilton's Bush is a jewel," says Mayor Wade-Brown. "Otari contains some of Wellington's oldest trees, including an 800-year-old rimu. We can get a rare glimpse of what our forest was like before humans came, and it inspires us to protect and restore our vegetation for the city and for New Zealand as a whole.

"Otari staff are experts in conserving native plants," she says. "Many threatened species are grown here and some are returned to the wild in recovery programmes. Otari-Wilton's Bush is a national showcase for Aotearoa's extraordinary endemic biodiversity and is well worth a visit.

The Council's Natural Environment Portfolio Leader, Councillor Helene Ritchie, was delighted with the news of the award. "Otari is not just vitally important from a historical perspective - its plant conservation work is very much about protecting our future. "We can be proud of the excellent working relationship between the Council and Otari volunteers, which has put Otari on the world stage."

RAMBO Update

Now that the year has ended it's a chance to have a look at what RAMBO (Rat and Mustelid Blitzing in Otari) has achieved. This is also an opportunity to mention an interesting predator control program on Crofton Downs that has implications for what we do.

The RAMBO volunteers check the 70 odd traps on different five trap lines that are in Otari-Wilton's Bush. These traps are primarily targeted at mustelids (stoats and weasels) and hedgehogs with rats a very good by-catch. The poison bait stations that are looked after by the Regional Council are the primary method of control of both opossums and rats.

So how did we do? In 2014 RAMBO caught 57 rats, 10 stoats and weasels and 14 hedgehogs. Half the stoats and weasels and about two thirds of the hedgehogs were caught on the trap line that runs on the edge of Otari along the Skyline while most of the rats were caught either along the Kaiwharawhara stream or close to little streams feeding into this main stream. By way of reference in 2013 the catch was 61 rats, 9 stoats and weasels and 10 hedgehogs. Over the last few years the numbers of stoats, weasels and hedgehogs caught has been fairly consistent but the numbers of rats has gone up a bit. Since RAMBO began in mid-2007 the totals caught are 344 rats 56 mustelids (26 stoats, 23 weasels, 7 unidentified) and 74 hedgehogs. Our traps have also caught a number of rabbits.

Regional Council monitoring continues to show low levels of rat sign and no mustelid sign and this is in marked contrast to some of the other reserves in the Wellington region. A Masters student from Victoria University is this year commencing a study on the rat population in Otari-Wilton's Bush so hopefully it will help us know more where they are and how they behave in a low density population.

One way rats get into reserves such as Otari-Wilton's Bush is from surrounding housing areas – in particular rats breeding in compost heaps. The predator control people in Trelissick Park, downstream from us, are focusing a lot of their resources along their boundaries close to housing. The residents of Crofton Downs have decided to make Crofton Downs a “predator free suburb”. With the assistance of the Morgan Foundation they have purchased traps and now have 110 trappers, mostly trapping around their homes, but also they have a trap line along the SilverSky track which runs all the way up from the end of Silverstream Road to the Skyline access road from the substation. This trap line has, in addition to a couple of rats and mice, caught four weasels and two hedgehogs. In their first 100 days the Crofton Downs group caught 63 rats and 46 mice. Ngāio residents are already participating, including a buffer zone on the northern side of Huntleigh Park. Removing this reservoir of rodents must ultimately make a difference to both our work and the work of the Trelissick Park people. For more information, or to join this group, the contact is Kelvin Hastie at kelvinhalo@gmail.com.

Right: Taken on The January walk with Phil Garnock-Jones when they looked at Hebes and Speedwells.

Photo by Phil Parnell



Trust Board 2014 - 2015



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The trustees welcome individual communications from members on any matters relating to Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve or the Trust, particularly from those who would like to assist and participate in our activities.

Newsletter: Vera Burton. Phone 9388207. davee@paradise.net.nz

Wellington Parks Week 2015

We love our parks so much Wellington City is dedicating a whole week to them. From 7 to 15 March, there'll be a whole range of events celebrating these little pockets of paradise within our city. See more at Wellington.govt.nz/parksweek

Relevant to Otari is:

Rambo: Rodent and Mustelid Busting - Parks Week, Otari Information Centre, 160 Wilton Road, Wellington. Saturday 7 March 2015 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Nature by Twilight - Parks Week, Otari Wilton's Bush, 160 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington. Saturday 14 March 2015 7:00pm – 9:00pm



Plants from Arapawa island; Tory Channel coast.

From above left, clockwise:

Disphyma australe (native iceplant)

Coprosma rotundifolia (purple leaves)

Euphrasia cuneata (eyebright)

Clematis forsteri (with seeds)

Lagenophora pumila (small daisy)

Ulex europaeus (gorse, shaped into a chicken by a goat)

Veronica parviflora (small tree) (syn *Hebe parviflora*)

Raukaua edgerleyi

Photos; Eleanor Burton



55 - 85 Curtis Street Development Update



The Creswick Valley Resident's Association (CVRA) reports that there are now five separate appeals with respect to the Curtis Street site and these are currently expected to be heard by the Environment Court in May 2015. In addition to the appeals by the CVRA, the developer (Prime Property Group) and Michael Gibson against Plan Change 77, there have been added two appeals by the CVRA and Kindercare Learning Centres against the grant of resource consent for earthworks on the site.

The CVRA said that Wellington City Council sponsored mediation took place from 12 May to 15 October 2014, until at the beginning of the 5th mediation session, when Prime Property Group withdrew from the process. This was in response to the position of CVRA and other interested parties that acceptance of filling the site to level with Curtis Street could not be a condition for agreement on an amended version of the proposed District Plan Change 77 put forward by the Council.

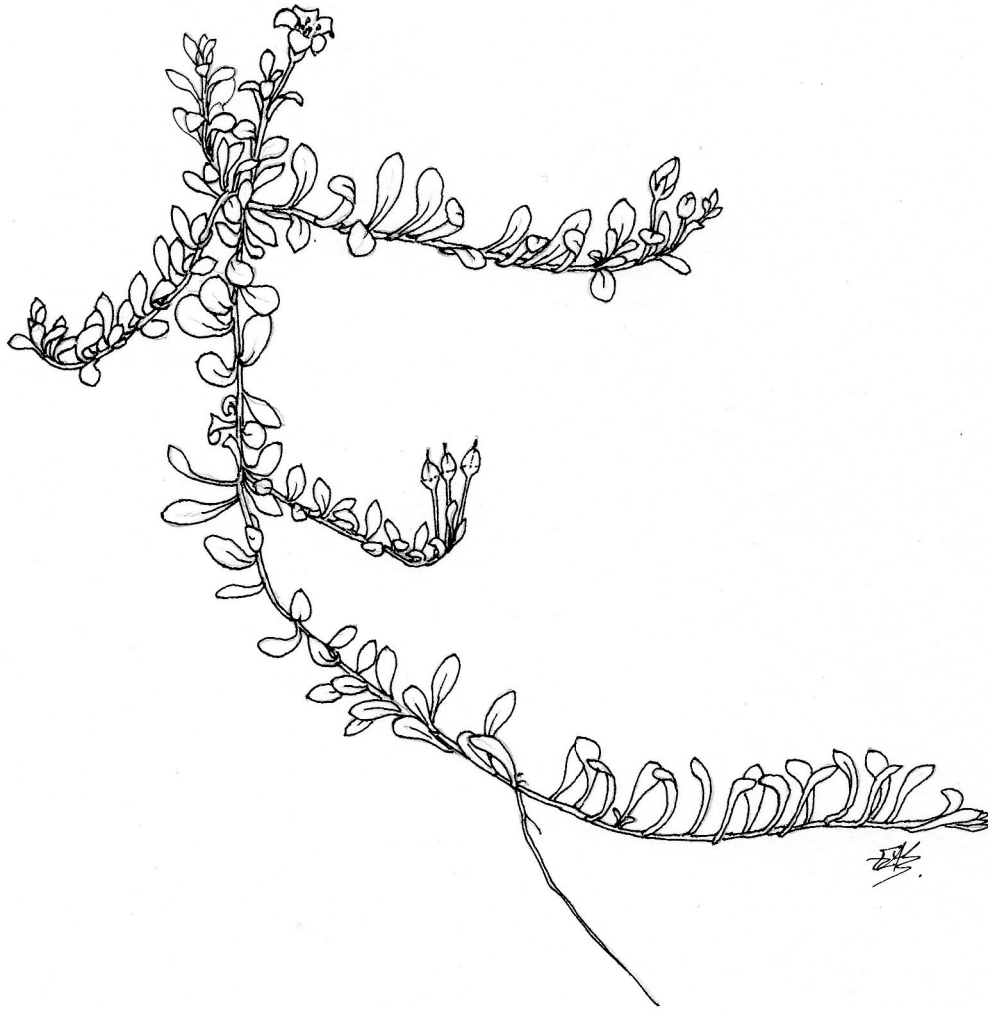
In the meantime, Prime Property Group (PPG) reactivated the earthworks consent application that had been suspended since April. PPG had lodged a resource consent application under the existing residential and open space zoning for earthworks to place 40,000m³ of fill on the site. At around 7.5 m³ per truck load, the application was for more than 5,000 truck loads of fill. PPG sought a blanket permission to carry out this dumping activity for up to 10 years. As well as the obvious traffic and ecological effects, the earthworks would completely pre-empt any proper consideration of the zoning changes still before the Environment Court.

The application was heard before an Independent Hearing Commissioner on 4 - 6 November 2014. On 3 December 2014 the report of the Commissioner was released, granting approval for the earthworks to proceed subject to 57 conditions being met. The CVRA Committee has concluded that, although the consent does provide detailed and specific measures to address issues that were raised by the Association and many others, it fails to address the fundamental fact that the earthworks do not comply with numerous objectives and policies within the District Plan.

For this reason the CVRA has lodged an appeal against the decision with the Environment Court. The CVRA has sought to have the separate but related matter of District Plan Change 77 for a proposed Curtis Street Business zone, also currently before the Environment Court and due to be heard in May 2015, combined with the hearing on the resource consent relating to the same site. This is primarily on the grounds of efficiency for the Court process and considering the resource management matters on the site in an integrated manner. It currently appears that the two hearings will occur back-to-back.

The CVRA has contended that the ecological values identified by the Wellington City Council's independent technical assessments are not in dispute for the hearing on the plan change. Rather, it was the failure of the Council, in the view of the CVRA, to have due regard to those expert assessments and the identified regionally significant values within the valley, that is a central issue for the hearing.

Ian Stockwell



Samolus repens

This creeping herb is found throughout the country and on many of the offshore islands. It is a coastal plant found in salt marshes and rocky places, and is a member of the primrose family. The small flowers are white. In cultivation it needs a sunny well drained spot. It can be seen at Otari in the Wellington Coastal border near the steps to the lookout.

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

160 Wilton Road,
WELLINGTON 6012

NOMINATION FORM FOR THE ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

(To be completed by the nominator)

I (please print full name) _____

being a financial member of Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, wish to nominate as a
Trustee:

Name of person being nominated: _____

Nominee's address:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

DECLARATION

(to be completed by the person being nominated)

I (please print full name) _____ being a
financial member of Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, agree to being nominated as a
Trustee.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

We are delighted to welcome new members - whatever your interest in Otari-Wilton's Bush - from a desire to participate in active friendly volunteer support and educational activities, or just the satisfaction of being associated with this wonderful native plant reserve. Our membership year is from 1 April to 31 March. New members joining after 1 January will have the membership accredited to the following year.

Yes, I would like to join/renew my membership of the Trust.

Name (s):

Postal address:

.....

.....

Telephone contact number/: ()......

E-mail address:

Billing Name and Address:

(if different from above)

Subscription	Corporate	\$30	\$
	Double/Family	\$15	\$
	Individual	\$10	\$
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	\$
Donation*			\$
Total payment	(please enclose cheque**)		\$

*The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 qualify for a tax rebate to individual taxpayers. (annual limits apply) We will provide a donation receipt to support your tax rebate claim

**We regret we cannot process payments by Credit Card.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please indicate the areas of interest to you from the following list:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work parties | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting at the Information centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Research | |

Please send this completed form with your cheque to:

The Treasurer, Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, 160 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington 6012

Or pay by internet banking:

Westpac Bank 030518: 0205713:00 :50. Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. Please add your name for a reference.