

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views September, 2016

Web site: www.otariwiltonsbush.org.nz. For all 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 on the first Saturday of each month. Contact Wilbur Dovey, 499 1044.
Thursday 15 September 9am	Keep NZ Beautiful Cleanup Day. This project will leave Otari looking pristine for Open Day. Meet at the Information Centre 9.00am. See p 2.
Saturday 24 September from 10am	Otari-Wilton's Bush Open Day. Help needed. See page 4. Programme page 5.
Saturday 1 October 9.30am	Lichens, Mosses and Liverworts Can't tell a moss from a liverwort, don't know if it is a lichen. Learn by doing. Otari Trust members are invited to join the Wellington Botanical Society to learn about lichens, mosses, liverworts and hornworts. Details see page 6.
Sunday 23 October 2pm	The Waterfalls on Ferguson Creek A 2 hour walk with 30 minutes off track. Starting at the Information Centre we go to the picnic ground then up the side creek, on the Yellow Trail. We leave the formal track at the Pukateas and follow the stream up, admiring two waterfalls. Then continue up the stream and a short scramble to come out on the four wheel drive track, almost at the skyline. From here it is on track to the Flax Clearing and the Red Trail back to the picnic ground and thence to the Information Centre. Wear good walking shoes or boots. If it has rained you may get wet feet. <i>Leader: Rodney Lewington</i>
Sunday 27 November 2pm	The tricks of the trade: adapting to survive Plants grow on windswept coastlines, through lush forests, in waterlogged bogs, and on snowy mountains across New Zealand. Find out how they have adapted to survive on this one-hour easy walk through the Native Botanic Gardens at Otari-Wilton's Bush. Meet at the Information Centre. <i>Leader: Margaret Crimp</i>

Chairman's Message

Welcome to spring time at Otari-Wilton's Bush. We are now celebrating our advancement to a Garden of International Significance which rates 6 stars, the highest level on the NZ Garden Trust scale. This award is a credit to the team under the leadership of our curator Rewi Elliot. Together with our Green flag award we are rated amongst the best in New Zealand, all based on our native flora.



Even at this time of the year there are still visitors. These recently included Rotokare Trust members from New Plymouth, and Queen Margaret's College senior students who were guided around the collections at Otari.

On fine days in particular there are lots of people enjoying all the facets of this wonderful reserve for recreation. Almost always the comments are highly complimentary. Otari staff and the Trust volunteers can be justly proud.

Garden improvements are happening all the time; a wetland with boardwalk, a new entrance to the fernery with carvings, and new carpet within the information centre are almost completed. All good reasons to come along to our Open Day on Saturday 24th of September. There is a call for volunteers on the day elsewhere in this newsletter and you are most welcome to help. It is always a great day, bring the family and enjoy the plant sale, BBQ, coffee, walks, etc.

The Trust Board is making progress on a number of projects; these include new interpretation signage and specification of a platform to protect the oldest tree in Wellington, our 800 year old Rimu (it must be 850 by now!). We are also reviewing our web site needs with a view to a new host platform. We also made submissions to WCC with regard to several proposals to ensure that Otari retains its unique character.

We are also doing our annual cleanup in September so come along and help Keep NZ Beautiful, especially Otari.

Stay safe and look forward to seeing you on Open Day.

Cheers
Phil Parnell
Chair

Keep NZ Beautiful Cleanup Day

Thursday 15 September 9.00am

We are again joining in the annual Cleanup of NZ. We are going to clean up the boundaries and tracks of Otari. (In the summer when the water might be warmer and the water level lower we will clean up the stream.)

This project will leave Otari looking pristine for Open Day.

Meet on the deck at the Information Centre at 9.00am for a brief health and safety talk. Bags and gloves will be provided.

We look forward to seeing a number of enthusiastic volunteers

Otari Report

Kia ora koutou,

It's been a busy time over the last few weeks at Otari with a lot of planting, path changes and some construction work in the gardens. In the gardens below the Cockayne lookout we have finished a new boardwalk through the wetland garden, and hope to have some interpretive signs here before the end of the year. We have been working on a new lower entrance to the Fernery, removing a steep (and slippery) asphalt path and will be adding some sculptural elements to the lower entrance before Open Day.



Open Day this year falls on Saturday 24 September. We will be having the plant sale kick off the day at 10am followed by some interesting walks from our volunteer guides, bees in the Leonard Cockayne Centre and we are running an open science lab in the Information Centre. The open science lab is a chance for people to get up close to plants and other organisms under the microscope. There will be knowledgeable people running the lab to help out visitors, talk about what they are looking at under microscopes and pass on some knowledge about the plants, insects and other organisms they have on show.

Our GIS team has recently completed a piece of work that allows great online access to our plant collections. You can link to our new Otari StoryMap on the Visitor Services page on the Otari webpage on the Wellington City Council website. Once in the StoryMap you can scroll down the side panel to explore the Garden. Map links can be clicked or tapped to focus on specific points of interest in the map.

The last page as you scroll down details the plant collections. No garden details or images have been added yet, but you can click the links on the left side panel that lead you to a pdf. list of plants in each garden. It's not a complete picture yet, and there is still some information to add. You can't search for a plant on the website unfortunately, but you can perform a *ctrl-F* search on the pdf. Press *ctrl-F* once you have a pdf. plant list open and then type the plant you want in the search box that appears. This allows much greater public access to what we have in our gardens than was previously available.

Karin Van der Walt, our Conservation and Science Advisor has been getting up to speed with our flora and its conservation requirements since arriving from South Africa a few months ago. Next week Karin and Finn our Curator are travelling to Whanganui with DOC staff to help restore *Pimelea actea*, a Nationally Critical endangered plant, to the region. This is just one of the endangered plants we hope to be working with over the coming years. Look out for a quick introduction to Karin and her important work in this newsletter.

Kind regards,

Rewi Elliot
Team Manager

Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve

Email: rewi.elliott@wcc.govt.nz

Trust Board 2016 - 2017



The Board of Trustees for the current year is:

Chairman Phil Parnell	93 Amritsar St, Khandallah. Phone: 479 2239	landy@xtra.co.nz	
Secretary: Margaret Crimp:	167 Wilton Rd., Wilton. Phone: 475 3263	m.crimp@xtra.co.nz	
Treasurer. Jocelyn Hoskin	14 Warwick St, Wilton. Phone: 475 8696	jocelynhoskin@clear.net.nz	
Bev Abbott	40 Pembroke Road, Northland	bevabbott@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 475 8468
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Wilbur Dovey	40 Warwick St., Wilton.	cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 499 1044
Jane Humble	16 Iazard Road, Khandallah	jhumble16@gmail.com	Phone: 971 6970
Ian Stockwell	2 Paisley Terrace, Karori .	stockwellian@hotmail.com	Phone: 476 3630
Cathy Wylie	43 Huntleigh Park Way, Ngaio.	Cathy.wylie@nzcer.org.nz	Phone: 938 6498

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 938 8207. davee42@clear.net.nz

HELP!

Otari-Wilton's Bush Open Day, Saturday 24 September

We need your help in different ways:

_We need help to man the refreshment table and the barbecue.

_We also ask you to help by providing cakes, muffins, loaves, biscuits etc to sell

The Cake stall/ refreshment stand and barbecue are our great fundraisers but they can only be successful with your help. Contributions can be left in the meeting room of the Information Centre on Friday afternoon, 23 September, or delivered to the cake stall on Saturday morning

For any questions or to volunteer please contact:

Jocelyn Hoskin, 475 8696, jocelynhoskin@clear.net.nz

or Margaret Crimp 475 3263 m.crimp@xtra.co.nz

Otari-Wilton's Bush Open Day

Saturday 24 September 10am – 3pm

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS



- **10am Native plants for sale** on the Cockayne Lawn
- **11am-2pm Open Lab in the Information Centre.** Get a chance to work with real-life lab equipment in the Open Lab. Investigate what creatures are out there on a microscopic level.
- **11.30 Free guided walk through Otari-Wilton's Bush.** Join our Otari guides to hear stories about New Zealand native plants. Meet at the Information Centre. 1 hour
- **12.30 Opening of the lower Fernery entrance.** A new installation of pou (posts) carved from local timber will mark the renewal of the Fernery entrance.
- **1.30 pm Free guided walk through Otari-Wilton's Bush.** Join our Otari guides to hear stories about New Zealand native plants. Meet at the Information Centre. 1 hour
- There will be stalls and displays from community groups.
- Refreshments available all day.

See you there!

Right; Clematis paniculata from Otari plant sale flowering in Khandallah recently.

Photo: June Parnell



Help needed with the Trust website

If there is a member with the expertise in building and maintaining a website the Board would love to hear from you.

Lichens, Mosses and Liverworts

Saturday 1st October, 9.30am.

Can't tell a moss from a liverwort, don't know if it is a lichen. Learn by doing.

Otari Trust members are invited to join the Wellington Botanical Society to learn about lichens, mosses, liverworts and hornworts.

We will take an exploratory walk in Otari Wilton's Bush for about two hours collecting a few and getting a feel for their various habitats. Rodney Lewington, Carol West and Peter Beveridge will guide and assist us. The rest of the morning will be spent in the Leonard Cockayne Centre with microscopes, looking to identify our collections to genus and even species level. Depending on the weather we may take another walk in Otari or continue until about 3pm on identification. Bring a hand lens, a note book and pen and your lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.



Karin van der Walt



Newly arrived from South Africa, Karin van der Walt has been appointed as Conservation and Science Advisor for Wellington Gardens. Karin started her lifelong conservation career as a wilderness trails ranger in the Kruger National Park. In 2006 she exchanged her walking boots and rifle for an office and nursery to take up a position as Threatened Plant Project Manager for the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, Nelspruit. This position created an opportunity to do a Master of Science Degree on the ecology of threatened plants in South Africa.

Having gained valuable experience in threatened plant management, Karin was invited to participate in South Africa's response to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020, and also served as an expert on the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Non Detriment Findings for cycads from South Africa. Lessons learned from global congresses, international partnerships and qualifications enabled Karin to author and co-author 8 publications on threatened plant conservation.

In April 2016, Karin took up the position as Conservation and Science Advisor for Wellington Gardens (Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari). In this newly created position, one of the main purposes is to ensure that Wellington Gardens become a world leader in *ex situ* plant conservation. Good progress has already been made; Wellington Gardens are registered with the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) including many of its conservation activities such as the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens to address the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Global Seed Conservation Challenge and Global Tree Campaign. In addition, science and conservation work at Wellington Gardens are formalized through the Conservation and Science Strategy, which consists of three main sections namely, research, conservation and invasive species.

If you would like to get involved in the conservation work at Wellington Gardens, or just pop over for a cup of coffee, you can contact Karin at: Karin.vanderwalt@wcc.govt.nz.

Regional Council predator reports and cat monitoring for Otari-Wilton's Bush

Opossum control in Otari was first carried out in 1993 using cyanide and baits containing brodifacoum. Then the bait station network of 82 bait stations using brodifacoum cereal pellets was established in 1997. This bait is also attractive to rats. Our RAMBO trapping program supplements this poison bait program and began in 2007.



I receive from the Regional Council – either direct or via Rewi – their reports on predator monitoring in Otari-Wilton's Bush. Two recent reports are *Small Mammal Monitoring Report for Key Native Ecosystems Feb 2016* and *Possum monitoring in Wellington West Forests (Otari)*

The Feb 2016 monitoring the results were rats 5% (i.e. 5% of the 64 monitoring tunnels showed rat activity), mice 7%, hedgehogs 10% and stoats and weasels 0%. The rat activity has been below the 10% target since 2010 which is good for the flora and fauna. The 2015/16 opossum monitoring showed no opossums detected.

This was also as a study carried out by the Regional Council to see how far into Otari-Wilton's Bush cats penetrate - *Cat Monitoring Otari Wilton's Bush Case Study*.

Very simply a transect line was set up through the middle of Otari-Wilton's Bush starting roughly below Otari School and with seven bait stations, one every 100m, up towards the Sky Line. These were baited with fresh chicken and there was a camera set up to cover each station. Each station was checked weekly and the trial ran for one month.

Several cats were photographed at the first site both day and night – some many times – but the only other cat photographed was at the top camera and that was only photographed once.

In addition kaka were photographed as were two stoats, a weasel, rats and a couple of dogs running free. No cats were photographed deeper than 100m in the bush, but it was thought that with the Kaiwharawhara Stream between sites 1 and 2 this acted as a barrier.

It was annoying to see the stoats and the weasel as it shows they are still around despite not showing up on the Regional Council monitoring – and not getting caught in our traps.

Jim Tait

Otari Predator Free

In the middle of June I started giving out free rat traps to Wilton residents. This program is an extension of the Crofton Downs Predator Free Community initiative and is also now operating in Ngaio, Khandallah and Wadestown.

Since June I have given out 160 traps to 152 households. To date 78 rats and a number of mice have been caught. The catch pattern has been uneven with many households catching nothing, some catching only one or two rodents, but a couple of hotspots have been identified where larger numbers have been caught – the record being eleven rats at one site. What is pleasing is the numbers of rats caught where they may have access to Otari-Wilton's Bush via streams and culverts. If you want a trap contact Jim on otaripredatorfree@gmail.com



Above: a good sized Norway rat

Jim Tait

Heritage Trees Wanted

Do you have or know of a heritage fruit tree? The Council's Community Networks team are leading a heritage fruit tree programme to learn about and spread the legacy of Wellington's oldest fruit trees (fruit trees over 60 years old). Council gardeners are currently tending to 12 small grafts that will one day become fruit bearing trees for the public to enjoy – and so far we've had positive results.

We're keen to find out more about the historical trees in our city. The oldest fruit trees we know of are in the Willowbank Reserve, planted on the Earp family orchard around 150 years ago. We are asking residents who know of suitable trees and are willing to offer cuttings to get in touch.

If you know of any old fruit trees with an interesting history then you can read more at: <http://wellington.govt.nz/services/environment-and-waste/environment/urban-agriculture/our-fruit-tree-capital/heritage-fruit-tree-program>

To let us know about a heritage tree email citycommunities@wcc.govt.nz



Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust Visit to Otari Wilton's Bush

During the weekend of 2 - 3 July a group of staff, supporters and volunteers from Rotokare visited Wellington on a research field trip. The group visited the Pauatahanui Wildlife Reserve and Zealandia on the first day and then Otari Wilton's Bush on Sunday 3 July where they were taken on a tour by Rodney Lewington and his team. There were many questions and a ready exchange of information and experiences between the two groups.

In the Rotokare 'Bush Telegraph' August newsletter, Julie Larcom reported on their visit to Otari Wilton's Bush as follows:

Our final day in Wellington included an informative botanical tour through Otari Wilton's Bush. Here we ambled through rock gardens, over treetop walks and onto epiphytic viewing platforms; all adding new dimensions to observing nature. Overall it was a great educational weekend giving us lots to think about as we came back to our very special piece of New Zealand nature.

In a separate message to Ian Stockwell, who is a member of both Trusts, Tricia Jamieson commented that:

Our visit to Otari Wilton's Bush, for many of us turned out to be the highlight of our field trip. We felt a real affinity to the place, as it reminded us in many instances of Rotokare and our own journey. The raised observation decks were a particular talking point on the way home.

Ian Stockwell

Website link

In the June newsletter when giving the link to our newsletters held by the Wellington Regional Heritage Protection Society I mistakenly put the email address not the website.

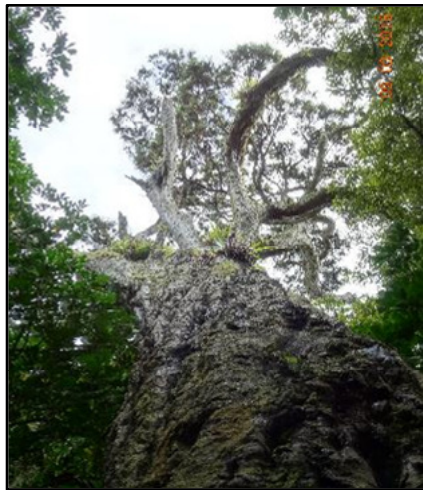
The website is www.wrhpc.org.nz

(Kate was awarded funding for the trip from the Friends of RBG Melbourne.)



Since becoming Curator for the New Zealand Collection in January 2014, I have focused my efforts on removing over-represented specimens, improving presentation and developing new planting schemes. It's been great getting to know the plants individually and the Collection as a whole but there comes a time when it's good to visit them at home and I'm fortunate to have had two opportunities to do so in the past twelve months. Serendipitously, the news of my award came just before I attended the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network Conference in Dunedin last October, a trip kindly sponsored by Meg Bentley, and, while making new contacts, I began to make plans for this study tour.

My first stop was Otari-Wilton Native Botanic Garden & Forest Reserve in Wellington; the only botanic garden in New Zealand dedicated solely to native plants. I was shown around the five hectares of garden and plant collections by the manager, Rewi Elliot, who related some of the area's history and introduced me to the staff. 'Otari' means "Place of Snares" and the dense podocarp broadleaf forest must have been a rich source of food for local Māori. The "Wilton" element of the title comes from Job Wilton, an early landowner, who preserved seven hectares of the original forest and fenced it off. At the time, this was an unusually far-sighted action; more conservation than colonisation, as the arrival of Europeans had seen farmland burnt off, many large trees removed for timber and the introduction of pest plants and animals. Two other visionary men were Dr. Leonard Cockayne (botanist and plant ecologist) and J. G. Mackenzie (Director of Parks) who established the then Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum in 1926 with the aim of conserving the native forest and teaching people about native plants. Over three days I walked some of the trails through the 100 hectares of forest, paid my respects to the 800 year old Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), took photos, helped with some maintenance work, asked questions, collected and cleaned donated seeds and gave a presentation to staff about the New Zealand Collection in Melbourne.



Left: The 800 year old Rimu (Dacrydium cupressinum) at Otari-Wilton

After weekend visits to Te Papa Museum and Zealandia Ecosanctuary, I was up at 'silly o'clock' on Monday to catch the 6.00 a.m. sailing of the Interislander Ferry to Picton on the South Island. Rewi had invited me on a seed collecting trip for the New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seedbank based at Massey University in Palmerston North. After a stunning trip on thankfully calm waters we headed to Blenheim to pick up supplies and the rest of the party. Joining us were David Bidgood from Otari-Wilton; Kate Caldwell, Native Plant Curator at Dunedin Botanic Gardens; Lucy Parsons, ex-Nursery apprentice at Dunedin and her father Will, who runs Driftwood Eco-Tours in the Marlborough region. With his deep knowledge of the local area, flora and fauna, Will proved to be a great asset to the venture. Over the next few days, I

felt as if I'd gone from widescreen TV to IMAX cinema as we tramped through river gorges and up mountains, stayed in huts, looked at plants, chatted and enjoyed spectacular scenery. We went from Sawcut Gorge near Ward to Mt. Arthur Hut in the Kahurangi National Park and on to Cobb Valley and The Grove Scenic Reserve near Takaka. We encountered rare plants such as *Traversia baccharoides* and *Pittosporum dallii* and I marveled at majestic Nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*), the world's most southerly palm, and the 'girdling' roots of huge Northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) as they clung to host trees or melted Salvador Dali-style down huge limestone boulders. "How can I replicate this fantastic epiphytic world with less than half their rainfall?" I thought with envy! All too soon it was time to say farewell and head back to the North Island, my mind and senses still processing and appreciating everything I had seen.



Left: Sawcut Gorge



Right: Plant paparazzi, Rewi, Dave and Lucy get up close and personal with *Traversia baccharoides* at Mount Arthur, Kahurangi National Park
Below: Girdling roots of *Metrosideros robusta*



After a weekend in the Wairarapa, I flew up to Auckland and spent two days with Kerry Gillbanks, Native Plant Curator at Auckland Botanic Gardens. Of particular interest was the Harakeke or Phormium Collection which is harvested for weaving by local Māori women. Kerry has a Bachelor of Maori Visual Arts Degree majoring in weaving and showed me how the 'muka' or fibre is stripped from a leaf blade and then spun to create an extremely strong strand which is then woven into all kinds of basketry, matting and clothing. I also spent a fascinating day in the nursery with Billie Elliot, the Senior Propagator; eight hours was nowhere near enough to plumb the depths of her plant knowledge as she helped me clean and process some donated seed to bring back home.

Below: 'Seed pod' basket made from muka by Kerry Gillbanks of Auckland Botanic Gardens



Thank you so much to the Friends' for making possible this unforgettable trip and to all those I met in New Zealand for being so generous with their time, knowledge and company. I'm sure our New Zealand Collection here in Melbourne will benefit from everything I have learned for many years to come.



Brachyglottis kirkii

This is a small shrub to 1.5m, usually epiphytic (grows high in a tree). It is found locally throughout the North Island, and is classed as 'At Risk – Declining'. It is a palatable species, and not tolerant of being browsed.

Leaves are slightly fleshy, and lack a tomentum (so are green underneath). Flowers are white daisies with yellow centres, with several in an inflorescence. Being a daisy, seed is wind dispersed. It is a difficult species to maintain in propagation; Otari has a few scattered around the gardens, we have found the best way to keep them growing is to plant them in a ponga log rather than into the ground. They can be seen growing in the Main Cultivar Border next to the Cockayne lawn, and in the Fernery.

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

(Supporting Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve)

Membership Application Form

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 the Trust.

Name (s) :

Postal Address :

.....

.....

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

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: 000 Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. Please add your name for a reference.