

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views September, 2020

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 & children under 15, otherwise \$5. Web site: www.owbt.nz

The second Saturday of each month. 9am	Plant care is on the second Saturday of each month. Please note there is no plant care in January; resumes in February Contact Wilbur Dovey, 499 1044.
Sunday 27 September 4 October 11 October 2pm	Otari Tours: Wellington Gardens Spring Festival Tours are planned for Sunday 27 September, Sunday 4 October, and Sunday 11 October at 2 pm each day. They will be for 60 minutes duration and will be limited to 20 people for each tour at a cost of \$5 per adult, children and Trust Board members free, as is our usual policy with the Sunday walks. Bookings will need to be made beforehand through EventFinda. The tour will be advertised as “Treasures of Otari-Wilton’s Bush” .
Sunday 18 October 2pm	“Miocene Flora of Aotearoa” Learn about the trees that dominated the subtropical forests of Aotearoa more than five million years ago. What was that forest like? What elements of the flora were yet to evolve? <i>Presenter: Dr Carol West</i> Free to Trust members otherwise \$6
Sunday 22 November 2pm	“The Birds of Otari” If you missed this very popular walk in 2019, here’s another opportunity to join Dr Hugh Robertson, Principal Science Advisor at the Department of Conservation. He is a local resident and often does bird counts at Otari Wiltons Bush. This will be a one to 1.5 hour easy walk with Hugh, learning about the birds that inhabit Otari. <i>Numbers limited to 30.</i> <i>Leader: Dr Hugh Robertson</i> Free to Trust members otherwise \$6

Message from the Chair

Kia ora koutou

Spring is well and truly here, with puawānanga and the other usual harbingers flowering in the bush and gardens. A special place to sit and enjoy the ambience of Otari is the new seat dedicated to the memory of Dr John Dawson that is appropriately located in front of the *Metrosideros carminea*-clothed wall below the Lookout.



The strategy meeting held by Board members in late July was successful and we have more work to do. Tim Foote facilitated the discussion and he remarked on the healthy state of our Trust. We reaffirmed that the Board's most important relationship is with Trust members and we'd like to know more from you about what your expectations are, what the Trust does that you like and what you don't like. To that end, we may develop a questionnaire for members but in the meantime, please send in your views.

Please note there is no Open Day this year. The decision was made by WCC during lockdown when staff were prevented from undertaking the necessary preparations. Instead, we have decided to contribute to the Spring Festival by offering a guided walk at 2 pm each Sunday from 27 September – 11 October. These walks will be advertised on Eventfinda (sorry about the confusion created in the last newsletter where we weren't actually using Eventfinda – a gremlin crept into the system!)

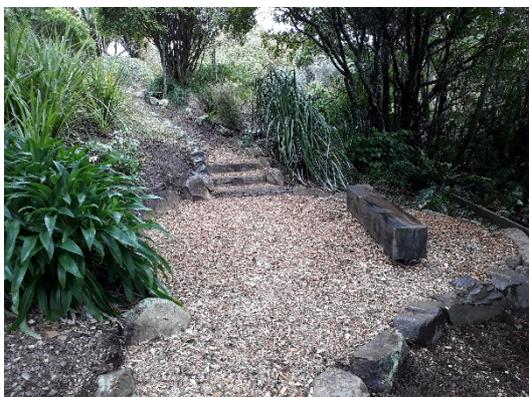
Speaking of walks, in July a large group of 30 or more members enjoyed learning from Dr Lara Shepherd about the characteristics of the eight endemic species of *Sophora*, all of which are in the gardens. The large crowd didn't deter the kereru intent on devouring kowhai foliage, one leaflet at a time! Unfortunately, Jane Humble's August walk on using native plants in your garden was cancelled – another casualty of COVID-19.

The latest report from Jim Tait from Project RAMBO shows a continuing steady rat, possum and mustelid tally. Catching these pests is good news as it enables flowering, pollination, seed dispersal, seed germination and establishment of seedlings of many of the native plant species at Otari.

Enjoy the springtime and thank you for your contributions to Otari. We look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you sometime.

Carol West

Chair



Photos of the new Kauri Colonade seating area. Taken by Finn Michalak. See mention in Otari Report.

Otari Report



Kia ora koutou,

The team have been cracking into clearing out the old and planting in the new throughout the gardens. A notable addition currently is the lovely wee seating area created at the very bottom of the gardens on the way to the Troup Lawn under the kauri trees there. Looks like there will be plenty to see over the next few months as nga tipu in both waenga and ngahere erupt with this year's putiputi.

Puawānanga are flowering two weeks early this year and you can spot them easily from the Cockayne Lookout. Yes, it's Māori language week! Need to look up a new word? Try www.maoridictionary.co.nz

While you are online looking up new words in te reo Māori, check out our social media channels on Facebook and Instagram in late October. We will be promoting a 'Raranga Wānanga' that will primarily be displayed via digital channels (courtesy of COVID-19). Led by Matthew McIntyre-Wilson several top weavers will be using harakeke supplied by Otari to create a range of beautiful items (check out his fine talents at: https://www.fingers.co.nz/exhibitors/matthew_mcintyre-wilson.htm). If you're not subscribed to our social media channels you can get to them using the links at the bottom of our contact page at www.wellingtongardens.nz.

If you are visiting Otari while in COVID-19 response Level 2 please do remember to sign in if you are visiting the Information Centre, keep your social distancing up, and avoid as best you can coming into contact with those items you usually would such as handrails and seats.

Stay safe ,

Rewi Elliot

Team Manager – Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve

Wellington City Council

Mobile: 021 227 8169

Website: <https://wellingtongardens.nz/>

President – New Zealand Plant Conservation Network: www.nzpcn.org.nz

Trust Board 2018 - 2019



The Board of Trustees for the current year is:

Chair: Carol West	9 Mamari Street Rongotai	carolwest@xtra.co.nz	
	Phone: 387 3396		
Secretary: Wilbur Dovey	40 Warwick St., Wilton.	cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 499 1044
Treasurer: Tim Mason	54 Cashmere Ave, Khandallah.	timmason429@gmail.com	Phone: 479 0544
Bev Abbott	40 Pembroke Road, Northland	bevabbott@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 475 8468
Peter Buxton	3 Ngaio Road, Kelburn, 6012,	pebuxton@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 475 3848 027 4723455.
Jane Humble	16 IZARD Road, Khandallah	jhumble16@gmail.com	Phone: 971 6970
Phil Parnell	93 Amritsar St, Khandallah.	landy@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 479 2239
Ian Stockwell	2 Paisley Terrace, Karori .	stockwellian@hotmail.com	Phone: 476 3630

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. veeanddave93@gmail.com

2020 Calendar

With the loss of Open Day this year and the general loss of sale opportunities, it has been decided not to produce a calendar this year. We would like to thank all of you who have sent in a wonderful range of photos, and assure you that they are not lost and gone forever, but a selection of them will be used for next year's calendar.

Otari-Wilton's Bush Trail Review 2020

Prepared for Wellington City Council by the Kennett Brothers Inc.

In late June, the Trust was made aware of a report that Jonathan Kennett was commissioned to write about the tracks at Otari.

The Board has been assured that the report is in draft, and that the ban on cycling and mountain biking in Otari under the Wellington Botanic Gardens Management Plan 2014 remains.



In the short-term, the report will help staff and managers identify urgent priorities for track maintenance, e.g., upgrading the directional signs and addressing some safety issues. (The likely budget for track maintenance in 2020/21 is about \$10,000.) Decisions about other possible work will be factored into the development of future Long Term Plans.

The report is very comprehensive (220 pages) and provides a wealth of information about the condition of each of the significant tracks at Otari. The standard format for each assessment includes a coloured photo, a comment (positive or negative), and a recommendation as shown in this example from the Blue Trail.



Photo by Jonathan Kennett with permission from WCC

Comment: *Several steep sections of the upper Blue Trail have roots exposed by erosion. People are walking around the bigger roots to find an easier/safer route.*

Recommendation: *Install steps (140mm risers, 420mm treads to be consistent with other new steps) or realign on gentler terrain, which would be easier to maintain.*

The Board plans to discuss the report with staff in the near future, and will include updates in future newsletters as more information becomes available.

Bev Abbott

Kōwhai at Otari-Wilton's Bush

Lara Shepherd, Te Papa

Kōwhai is one of New Zealand's most widely recognised native plants and is our unofficial national flower. But did you realise that there is more than one species of kōwhai in New Zealand? New Zealand has eight endemic kōwhai species and is the global hotspot for *Sophora* sect. *Edwardsia*, a group of 19 species mostly found around the Southern Hemisphere oceans.



The most common New Zealand kōwhai species, *S. microphylla*, is found throughout the country. The other seven species have restricted distributions with some only growing on particular substrates e.g. the limestone kōwhai (*S. longicarinata*) on limestone and marble in northwest Nelson. Three kōwhai species occur in the Wellington region: *S. microphylla*, the Cook Strait kōwhai (*S. molloyi*) and the coastal kōwhai (*S. chathamica*).

Otari Wilton's Bush provides a great opportunity to compare and contrast the features of New Zealand's kōwhai species because six of the eight species are planted in the gardens (the other two species are currently in the nursery). Otari Wilton's Bush also has one of the largest and most impressive Cook Strait kōwhai (*S. molloyi*) trees I've ever seen.

The article at this link discusses the taxonomy of New Zealand's kōwhai and how to distinguish the species:

https://ref.coastalrestorationtrust.org.nz/site/assets/files/5351/sophora_fabaceae_in_new_zealand_taxonomy_distribution_and_biogeography.pdf



One of the most distinctive of New Zealand's kōwhai species, the prostrate kōwhai (*Sophora prostrata*) on the Port Hills. This species is recognised by its small leaves with few leaflets, and its divaricating habit.

Field Trip to Patitapu Reserve, 16th September



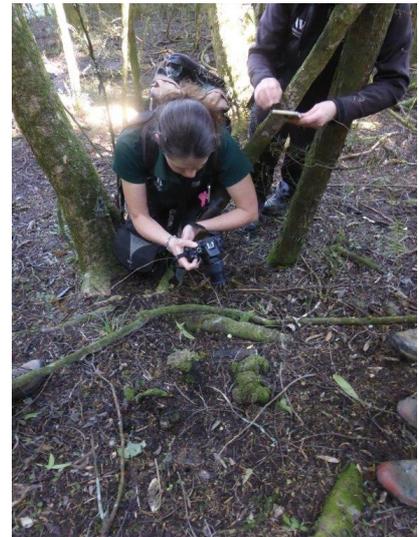
Karin van der Walt, Jayde McIlroy-Wattam, Fleur Speedy and Eleanor Burton met up with Tony Silbery, David Mudge and Jaime Fitzgerald for a trip to Patitapu Reserve which is in the northern Wairarapa near Alfredton, if it can be said to be near anything. The Reserve is about 30 hectares of bush remnant partially fenced, though obviously with a lot of deer in it.

From left: Jayde (David behind), Karin, Fleur, Tony (Jaime behind)



There is a population of *Dactylanthus taylorii* in the reserve, and the intention of the trip was to see how the *Dactylanthus* are doing, and whether we can usefully do conservation work with this population, which is the nearest population of *Dactylanthus* to Wellington. We found quite a number of *Dactylanthus* plants, but no sign of reproductive activity and no recruitment (no young plants).

David Mudge



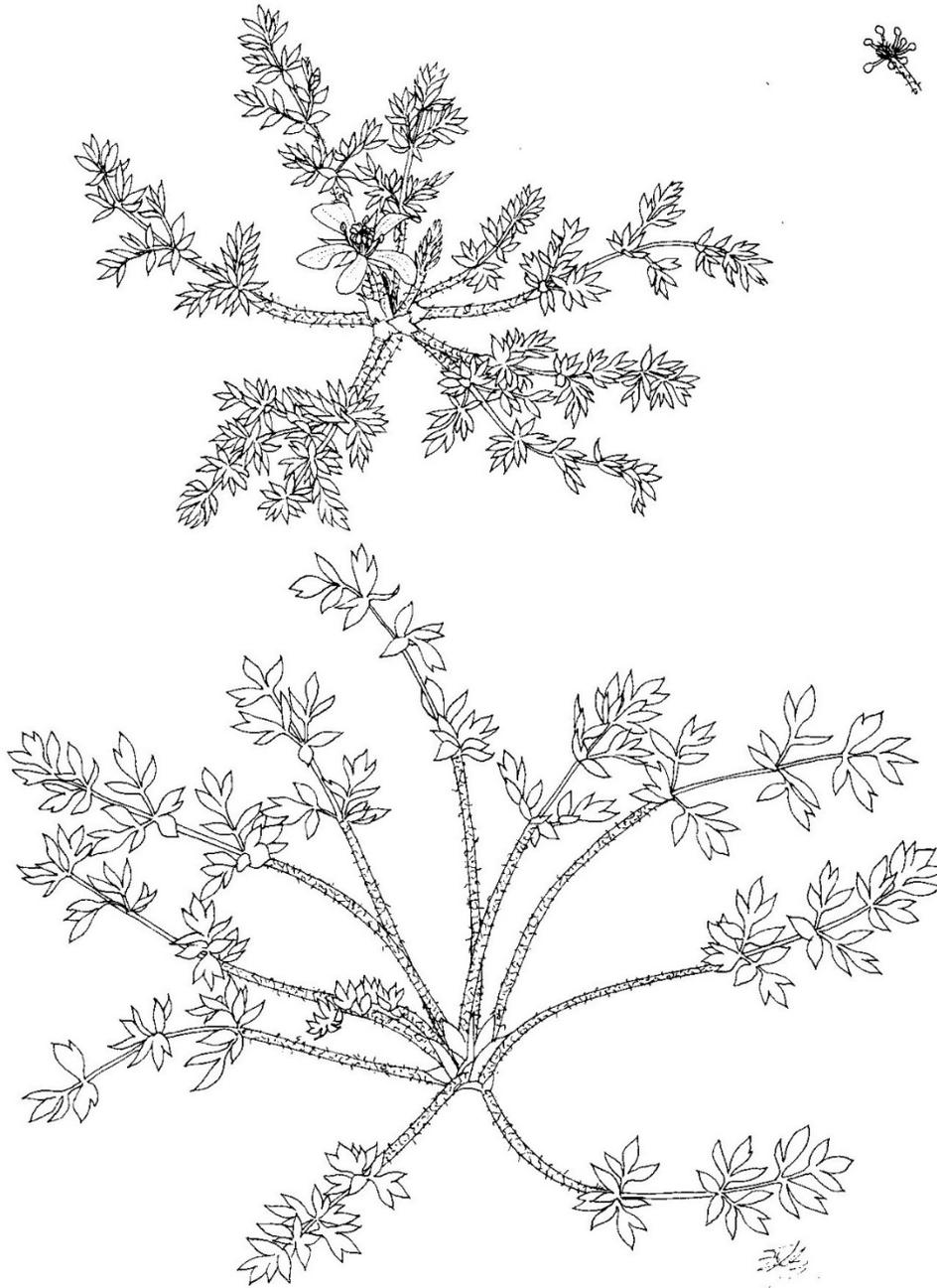
Karin van der Walt

After yesterday's site visit we will determine relevant conservation actions, this will need to include some form of fencing, ideally around the entire bush but if that is not possible in the near future, perhaps we can look at protecting the individual plants. Then a visit during flowering time to see if any of the plants are still trying to flower. If not, then a discussion/decision about reintroduction of fresh seed from Pureora or I guess the other option is to do nothing as the population is too far gone (David felt it is). In an ideal world, we would like to secure germplasm from the population in the



Wairarapa, but after yesterday's visit I am not sure that is going to be possible.

Dactylanthus, and, right, with a wood rose. Photos Eleanor Burton



Ranunculus gracilipes

This is a plant of higher montane to subalpine grassland and herbfield, found in the South and Stewart Islands. I collected the illustrated specimen (as seed) two years ago from the Remarkables, as *Chaerophyllum colensoi*, and it happily masqueraded as *C. colensoi* in the nursery until recently when it flowered.

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

(Supporting Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve)

Membership Application Form

We are delighted to welcome new supporters and there are a number of ways you can help us to preserve this internationally significant native botanic garden and bush reserve for future generations. 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. Please fill out the form below.

YOUR DETAILS		MEMBERSHIP	\$
Name(s):		Individual \$10	\$
Address:		Double/Family \$15	\$
PHONE Number(s):		Corporate \$30	\$
Email Address:			
*Donation			\$
Billing name & address: (if different from above)		Total Payment:	\$

<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque enclosed (Please make out to Otari Wilton's Bush Trust.) Please post to: The Treasurer, Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, 160 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington 6012	Paid electronically (please mark DONATION & your NAME in reference.) <input type="checkbox"/> Westpac account # 030518 0205713 000
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*The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 qualify for a tax rebate to individual taxpayers. (annual limits apply). Unfortunately we are unable to process payments by Credit Card.

I would like a receipt for my donation.

• VOLUNTEER

We have over 100 volunteers who are active regularly at Otari. It's up to you how much time you commit – and you can choose how you would like to get involved from a range of activities, from hosting and guiding tours to working in the Otari nursery, pest control and forest restoration.

Please contact Secretary Wilbur Dovey cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz