

What to watch for in the bush: *Fuchsia excorticata*

Kotukutuku; tree fuchsia. The small purplish-black, edible berry is called konini.

Every autumn I watch the native tree fuchsia on the edge of the bush near my house drop its leaves, and every year I am sure that this year it is surely dying, not just closing down for another winter. During the wait for it to burst into life again in the spring, I take advantage of its leafless state to admire the attractive pinkish brown peeling bark and the satin-smooth trunk beneath. As spring approaches, just before the new silver-backed leaves appear, flower buds burst out all along the branches, and I know that all is well for another year.

One of New Zealand's few deciduous trees, tree fuchsia is a favoured food of possums in some areas, such as the central North Island forests. But here in the Waitakeres I have never noticed possum damage. Perhaps there are more than enough of other species they prefer, such as kohekohe, rata, pohutukawa and five-finger.

The flowers are interesting to observe during the long flowering period, generally between July to November in the Waitakeres. Each flower has a bright yellow stigma (the female part) and while they all have male anthers (the shorter, pollen-bearing parts), in some flowers these are barren. When they are functioning, they have bright blue pollen (check out the visiting tuis' heads!)

You will notice that individual flowers may vary in colour between green, purple and red. They are receptive for fertilization only when they are green, so to send a signal to the honeyeaters that it's not worth visiting, they turn red and stop producing nectar. There is an excellent article by LA Sessions, with spectacular photos, on pollination of *Fuchsia* in *Forest & Bird* #299, Feb 2001, which



Image: Pool & Adams

is worth reading if you are interested to learn more.

Tree fuchsia are scattered throughout the Ranges, particularly near streams, and along roadsides and forest margins. There are a couple of nice specimens on the western side of the Scenic Drive near the Old Coach Road Track entrance, but perhaps a safer place to go looking is on the river bank on Auckland City Walk, Cascade Kauri Park.

Sandra Jones

Anawhata Hut tribute

"Hut and Headland" is the story of The University of Auckland's Anawhata reserve, the purchase of the land and the building of the hut in the 1920s by enthusiastic students, many of whom went on to become world renowned scientists and leaders in their fields. The stories of endurance and the enjoyment of the Anawhata hut by many contributors have been collected in a book by Lucy Cranwell Smith and John La Roche.



Unfortunately the hut is no longer in existence, having been burned down on Saturday 11 April 1998. Many of those most closely involved in the acquisition of the property, including Lucy Cranwell, are no longer with us. But the property remains, with the rugged landscape little changed since so many gained so much camaraderie and enjoyment from this wild and unique place.

The A5-size 84-page book contains approximately 75 black & white and coloured photographs spanning the time period 1929-2004. It is available from the School Registrar, School of Biological Sciences, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Email enquiries to s.jones@auckland.ac.nz or by phoning 373-7599 ext 87978. Price \$24 (if placing a mail order please add \$4.50 for p&p).

Meet your committee - Ann Poulsen

Ann is a long time Waitakere resident, having grown up in Titirangi in the 1950's and subsequently lived in Glen Eden, Waiatarua, Oratia and now Swanson. The diversity of landscapes and residents are part of Waitakere's special appeal for her.

As a trained social scientist, Ann is concerned to see the vitality of existing communities and lifestyles given priority in the city's planning processes. She has become involved in the Society's Oral History project, believing that preserving the history of this special region and the people who have worked to protect it is an important heritage that can usefully inform thinking about the city's future.

Ann has combined her academic training and creativity to pursue a career as an innovation consultant. She has worked at an industry level with the New Zealand timber and wine industries, and at a corporate level with clients such as Fletcher Challenge and Feltex Carpets. Valued by her clients for her strategic insight and practical project management skills, she hopes that this expertise will contribute to the Society's effectiveness.

Currently back at university full-time working towards a PhD, Ann is also actively involved in the arts. As part of the Go West literary festival, she curated and exhibited in a photography exhibition at the Corban Estate Arts Centre. It was the mixed membership of scientists and artists which attracted Ann to the Society, and she is delighted to have this opportunity to serve as an executive officer.

Many thanks to Melissa

Melissa Marler has recently had to resign from her position on the executive of the Society due to work and family commitments. The Society has accepted Melissa's resignation and wishes her well. Both Melissa and the Society are hopeful Melissa will be able to return to the executive at a future date.

The Society is run entirely by volunteers and we appreciate any practical assistance any of the Society's members can give us. If you'd like to be more involved please call John Edgar on 8128 555.

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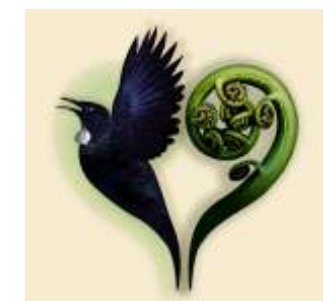
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Duffy Road Tip update

In our last newsletter we reported our investigation of an informal land-fill site on Duffy Rd, Waitakere, Rodney District. This tip was operated in the mid 1980's to 1990 and used to dump treated wood waste and other materials. This site is in the catchment of the Waitakere River and the Society has had a long term interest in this area.

In response to a request for information from committee member and water expert Dr Mels Barton we have been supplied with a bundle of documentation from Rodney District Council.

They confirmed that a notified consent application went before their hearings committee who resolved that the non-complying application to re-contour and cap the site was granted in December 2002. A number of conditions were imposed.

They also sent a history of the landfill site and its operation, plus previous consents & monitoring prior to the 2002 application.

Rodney has said their Environmental Protection Officer David James will carry out an inspection of the property as part of the monitoring of the consent & will let us know the results when he has done so. In response to the concerns that we raised they say that there are restrictions on where buildings can be constructed on the property, but that they are not aware of any restrictions with regard to growing plants or stock grazing for human consumption.

They have also provided a print out of the information they have on other potentially contaminated sites within the Waitakere Ranges.

So, we wait to hear the results of the Environmental Protection Officer's report but our main question remains - *why hasn't there been any monitoring of the site since the consent was granted?*

Image courtesy of Alan Esler, 2002 and ARC



Water Safety Signage

For the past couple of months a working party has been looking at new water safety signs at Piha. The issue came up through coroner's inquests into drowning on the West Coast. The coroner, Murray Jamieson, challenged local authorities to meet their duty to ensure there was adequate warning about dangers. Then in 2003 Standards New Zealand issued a new water safety standard (NZS 8690:2003) showing a vast array of potential warning, prohibition and permitted symbols for around water. In the same year Waitakere City Council commissioned an Aquatic Risk Consultant Report from Surf-life Saving Northern Region. This counted 138 existing signs on the beachfront and recommended the removal of many of these. This was also an existing policy in the Piha Coastal Management Plan for amalgamation of signs.

The report's recommendations caused a certain amount of consternation, especially the proposal to put symbols on rock platforms at Pakiti Rock, Lion Rock and north end of the beach.

Waitakere City Council called a public meeting on 13 June which was well attended. Locals expressed their concerns, including doubts about the effectiveness of signs and a working party of representatives of Piha R&R (Graham Caley), Piha Surf Club (Larry Rountree), United North Piha Surf Club (Chris Parsons), Piha Coast Care and Waitakere Ranges Protection Society (Kath Dewar), Auckland Regional Council (Bruce Andrell and Sandra Coney) and residents Mary Mead and Vicki Pomeroy (Vicki since resigned). The group was chaired by Rob Taylor for WCC and Warren Ogilviewas the council officer for WCC.

The group met five times, including twice on-site and recommendations were drafted about positions and types of signs. These go from single round symbols about the size of a dinner plate, to four large roadside signs at key locations (three of these replace existing signs). Largish pedestrian signs will be located at major accessways, such as by the boat ramp at Piha and by the new toilet block on mid-Beach, in nearly all cases in carparks. None are located on sand dunes or beach and care has been taken not to impede views. Many of these replace existing signs. As well there will be signs at other formal accessways but these will wrap around posts which in most cases already exist.

Apart from one discreet sign a little way up Lion Rock to warn of unstable rocks, no signs are planned for rocky platforms. While the symbol sizes and colours are set by Standards NZ, the shape, material and background colour of the signs is flexible. The working party is looking for recessive colours that don't clash with the colours of beach, water and sky. Recommendations from the group will go to the Piha R&R before going to the Waitakere Community Board for final approval.

Sandra Coney

Canyoning restricted

In September the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and the Auckland Regional Council signed an agreement by which the consent issued to AWOL Adventures canyoning operators was suspended. This allowed the consent to be amended so the company can no longer take clients through the chute above the Kitekite Falls, a site where the presence of the rare moss *Fissidens rigidulus* var. *pseudostriatus* has now been confirmed. To avoid the potential adverse effects on the rare mosses, the consent is being amended to require canyoning to stay out of the wetted channel (pools and chutes) above Kitekite Falls and abseil down the true right of the Falls, again avoiding the wetted channel.

Should AWOL Adventures fail to comply with the consent conditions, ARC may now suspend or cancel the consent. The ARC have agreed to provide copies of the annual photo point monitoring reports to the Society within one week of receiving these reports from AWOL Adventures and will then meet with the Society within 2 months of providing the reports, to discuss them and review the need for any changes to the Regional Parks Management Plan.

The ARC has also agreed, in undertaking any review of the Regional Parks Management Plan 2003 (expected between 2006-2008), to draw upon the following: the Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland Visitor Study (28 July 2004), State of the Park Reporting, to commence in 2005/06, other relevant research and monitoring undertaken within the Waitakere Ranges, Community consultation and the outcome of consultation with the Society.

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society has withdrawn its proceedings against ARC, which were before the Environment Court.

Whiteheads Release

Congratulations to the Ark in the Park project on the release of 55 whiteheads into the Ranges on August 27th 2004. The release marks the return of a species which has been absent for over 120 years. The Society hopes the birds will successfully establish themselves in the area, demonstrating the importance of pest control projects in the Ranges, such as the Ark in the Park, to the current and future biodiversity of the region.

Botanical cards or kids' designs!

These cards make a great, local alternative to traditional Christmas cards - and are a great way to support the Society. You can choose:

A set of five botanical cards, with envelopes, featuring flowering plants of Spragg Bush, **Or**



A set of five postcards featuring winning entries in the Waitakere Ranges Postcard Competition, including this one by Jeremy Roberts of Henderson Valley Primary.

Time for a new T-shirt!

Summery weather is here so a new T-shirt never goes amiss! Time to order a Waitakere Ranges Protection Society T-shirt!

Printed front and back they are NZ made in striking turquoise cotton. T-shirts cost just \$30 each (including postage & packing).

Please order your cards and T shirts on the form on the back of this newsletter.



The Hon Judith Tizard with a T-shirt!

Agapanthus, phoenix palm and English ivy proven invasive in the Auckland Region

The Society welcomes the recommendations of a recent report by Alicia Crow of Auckland Regional Council. The study investigated and documented the naturalisation of three weed species, designated as Research Organisms under the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2007 (RPMS):- Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis* and cvs), phoenix palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), and English ivy (*Hedera helix* subsp., and cvs).

The report found the species to be invasive and recommended they are designated as pests, which, if implemented, will result in the species being banned from sale, propagation, and distribution. The following information is reproduced from the ARC report:

Methodology

Agapanthus study sites were located in the Waitakere Ranges, focussing on the Piha and Anawhata areas. Planted, dumped, and naturalised plants were located and their position recorded using a handheld GPS receiver.

English ivy study sites were located in the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges. Mature source vines were located, and the extent of each infestation recorded using GPS.

Phoenix palm study sites were located near and within Duder Regional Park, Waiwera/Wenderholm Regional Park, and at Laingholm. Original parent trees and naturalised seeded plants were recorded using GPS.

Further information at each site was recorded by hand, such as habitat type and native vegetation, and area (m²) of infestations or the number of individuals present at one GPS location. The GPS data was downloaded and plotted onto a GIS map using ArcView software, and used to produce maps displaying such information as spread of the plants, area of infestations, and numbers of individuals.

Results

All three species were found to be naturalising and spreading into vulnerable native ecosystems. Agapanthus is naturalising not only down roadside drains, but along the margin of roadside bush, into pasture, beach front vegetation and dune systems and onto coastal and inland rocky cliffs. Phoenix palm is naturalising in native bush, pasture, estuarine environments, mangroves, coastal cliffs and gardens. Ivy is spreading readily into mature native forest, and is very common in gardens and landscaped areas.

Conclusions

The three species are indeed invasive, spreading and naturalising over large areas and long distances. All three species are impacting upon ecologically important and vulnerable native habitats and plant species.

An amendment to the Auckland RPMS should be made, designating these three species as pests, and banning them from sale, propagation, and distribution.

Prompt control measures should be undertaken to completely remove these species from vulnerable areas where practical, and management of seed sources should be of priority, i.e. dead-heading of agapanthus before it sets seed, removal of phoenix palm fruits in areas containing vulnerable habitat, and eradication of sexually mature ivy vines.

The community must be educated on the threat that these species pose to our natural environment. It is important to enlist public support in the control of these species, by encouraging people to remove plants, or remove seeds before they are dispersed.



Agnew, Robyn
Austwick, PKC
Baker, DG
Baylis, Geoff
Beever, Jessica, Ross & family
Bieleski, Rod
Blokland, BG & LG
Bradstreet, JS & EM
Butler family
Cameron, Ewen & Cheryl
Cogle, Helen
Colbert, AJ
Cumming, Fergus & Barbara
Dart, Margaret
Davidson, Geoff
Davis, Professor Brian
Deeley, Ms Chris
Dellow, Ronald
Edgar, John S
Ferguson, AR
Ferguson, Lynn
Fisher, Lady Joyce
Fowlds, David & Val
Frank Lloyd Astley Estate
Godley, Dr Eric
Goodwin, PC
Gribben, Trish & John
Gruzelier, GE
Hadwen, John R & Eileen
McGrath-Hadwen
Hanna, Denis

Harrington-Chamley, Elizabeth
Hart, Rosemary
Harvey, CF
Haslett, Kay
Hepworth, Mrs MD
Horton, Bill
Jones, Sandra & Bryn
Karekare Ratepayers & Residents Trust
Kell, Frances
Lewis, Joy & Owen
Mather, Glenys
McSweeney, Carol
Newhook, Marjorie
Parke, Stephanie
Patterson, MV
Paykel, Maurice
Pemberton, Mrs Mary
Percy, Eleanor
Pilcher, Colleen
Planning Consultants Ltd
Presland, Greg
Rattenbury, JA
Rhode, Birgit
Roberts, Christine
Robinson, Ann
Robinson, PF & J
Rothschild, L & R

Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, Waitakere Branch
Sheng Hsiung & Huang Pi Yueh Hou
Simmonds, Chris & Judy
Simmonds, RN & LM
Smith, Anne
Sporli, Hanni
Spragg, Anne Therese
Spragg, Christopher Robert
Spragg, David
Spragg, Dr Griffith
Spragg, John F
Spragg, LD
Spragg, Miss KH
Taylor, Dr & Mrs Michael
Taylor, H & EA
Thomas, Mrs Haruko
Tompkins, AB
Topzand, Margaret
Trubuhovich, Marilyn
Turner, AR
Ussher, Bob
van der Voort, Pim
Wright, Anthony

71 Turanga Road joins Regional Park

At 6pm on Monday 15 November the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society will formally gift 71 Turanga Road to the Auckland Regional Council for inclusion in the Regional Park. We are honored to be able to do this at the first meeting of the newly elected Council.

Our deepest thanks to those who made the purchase of this land possible; including Waitakere City Council, who sponsored the purchase with a donation of \$25,000 and an interest free loan of \$17,000 (which will be fully repaid by May 05), over 100 other donors to the purchase fund (listed below) and many members of the Society and the wider public who bought Spragg Bush cards. Dr Jessica Beever was instrumental in the campaign to secure this land for the public domain.

If you have made a contribution to this appeal and your name is not included in the list of donors below, please accept our apologies. If you send us your details we will add them to our records and acknowledge your kind contribution in our next newsletter. Our thanks go to:

