



Centennial Park Bush Society Newsletter



Newsletter No. 74

November 2012

The Next Step

The Centennial Park Bush Society has been toiling away in Campbells Bay for more than 35 years. The society works to control invasive pest plants such as ginger, wattle, privet, arum, and acmena; to plant the right native species in the right place, so the bush retains its natural character and to control predators such as rats, possums and stoats, which make meals of our native birds and lizards. We also create and improve walkways, provide interpretation in the form of *Just Scrub* or the Nature Trail guide and raise community awareness of issues which affect the park. The Bush Society is healthy financially and has good community support. About 2000 hours of hands-on volunteer work is done in the park each year. Judging by the enthusiastic comments we get when out working it seems most of you are happy with what we are doing.

The society's bush restoration work has extended beyond Centennial Park's main valley and now includes bush blocks on the golf course, All Hallows Church and Greville Reserve. Park Rise Bush at the top of Park Rise was the first of these and now boasts far fewer invasive weeds and a well-used 600m track to Kowhai Road. We are tackling bush blocks on the golf course as funds and volunteer time allow. We have also been working in Greville Reserve, by Forrest Hill skate ramp, where invasive weed species such as monkey apple were wreaking havoc. Devonport-Takapuna Local Board has

funded a contractor to control ground weeds in this block and we will plant more native species.

Campbells Bay is a vital link in the green corridor known as North West Wildlink – a network of green spaces linking the gulf islands with the Waitakere Ranges, through which birds spread. Now that Rangitoto Island is predator-free, it is only a matter of time before bellbirds establish in Centennial Park. To prepare for this we must reduce predator levels in the bay. Rats, possums and stoats destroy nests, and kill newly-fledged birds. We are working with Auckland Council to establish a network of secure rat poison stations through the park to control rats. We need volunteers to monitor and restock these stations. When the park is covered, we will offer bait stations and bait to residents so we can create a grid covering the whole catchment. The risk of a cat or dog eating a poisoned rat and becoming sick is very low, as rats usually disappear to die. However in the very unlikely event of this happening your vet can supply an antidote. Cats predate birds. As a responsible cat owner we urge you to keep your cat indoors at night and bell its collar. With your support we can turn Campbells Bay into a real urban sanctuary. If you would like to help please add your email to our working bee list and come along to find out what we do. Even an hour a year makes a difference. If you are time-poor please consider a donation – every dollar helps.

Richard Hursthouse, Chairman

Masthead photo: kohekohe flowers



Park Rise Bush Track to Kowhai Road

Did you know you can walk from Campbells Bay beach to East Coast Road using Park Rise Bush Track to Kowhai Road? Walk to the top of Park Rise and dip down into a piece of remnant bush which, with a lot of hard work, has been changed from an unused jungle of invasive weeds into a delightful and rapidly-changing area of regenerating native bush. The 600m track takes 15 to 20 minutes to walk and it is possible, just, to take a buggy through. Opening certain areas up to light has resulted in a huge natural growth of native seedlings and a great deal of planting and weeding is speeding this process. At the bottom of the dip the Bush Society has planted two puriri trees in honour of former patrons, the late Pat and John Morton. From this spot it is possible to hear the stream burbling along, to see and touch moss-covered tree trunks, to hear a variety of birds including grey warbler, rosella, silver eye, tui, kingfisher, fantail, blackbird and, at this time of the year, chaffinch and greenfinch.



The track rises steadily, skirting the edge of the golf course and winding its way through and under very tall pine trees. On windy days you can hear the wind sighing in the tree-tops. The track emerges onto Kowhai Road just above the playcentre. From here it is a short walk up to the intersection of Kowhai Road and East Coast Road.

Liz Goodwin

Stan's Top Tips

Ask Stan Knight -- Bush Society's plant propagator -- about his eco-sourcing adventures and he'll entertain you with each native plant's unique seed story. For instance, to capture kauri seeds at their freshest Stan bags the ripened cones on the tree, watches daily for the moment they collapse, then rushes the released seeds like neonates to the nearest pot of seed mix, because "you've only got 10 days to get them in". He'll go to great lengths, including leaning out over deep water, to beat the possums to a crop of precious kohekohe fruit and patiently traps rats under rare-to-seed rimu. He understands the slowness of nikau, the hardness of old kowhai seeds -- they need a good soaking to get them going -- and the unashamed profligacy of toe toe and kahikatea. He nurtures them all with unflagging optimism and the support of Jan -- who's a park volunteer and Hospice fundraiser-gardener in her own right.



If you'd like to give eco-sourcing a whirl, Stan's top picks for seed success are slippery black flax seeds, the orange berries of karaka "which grow like mad", the fine dust that manuka produces and the seed tassels on carex which germinate easily. Try planting fresh kowhai seeds while they're still soft, or have a go at sure-to-grow sticky black karo seeds.

Stan and Jan raise thousands of eco-sourced natives (around 4000 individual plants in the last three years) in their small productive backyard. So many in fact that excess plants are sold to Forest & Bird. They're Centennial Park's real seed success story.

Jenny Chamberlain



Tail Lights

At last we are able to report on the rediscovery of glow-worms in Centennial Park, a thrilling find on the Kohekohe Track an hour after sundown. We followed the Kohekohe Track from the Tui Track while there was still enough light to negotiate it safely and waited at the Mamaku Track intersection until it was dark. The night sky was clear so torches were not necessary. We walked quietly looking carefully for glow-worms and were delighted to find some on both sides of the track not far from the intersection. It was imperative we were quiet and negotiated the track by the night sky because glow-worm larvae are sensitive to flashlights and disturbance and will suddenly stop glowing as they retreat into their nests.

The glow-worm is the larval stage of *Arachnocampa luminosa*, a species of gnat. Glow-worms spin nests from which hang silk threads holding droplets of mucous. The larvae attract small insect prey by their tail-lights. The insects become entangled in the threads and are hauled in to be devoured.

Bob and Daphne Fairbairn

Rosellas Are Red

Our May AGM guest speaker was University of Auckland bird researcher Josie Galbraith whose MSc focussed on the ecology and impact of the eastern rosella – a native



Australian parrot which has become common in New Zealand. Josie talked about the effect of rosella competition for cavity nesting sites on native cavity-nesters such as morepork -- plus the implications for avian health of human feeding of wild birds.

The eastern rosella has a red head and chest and blue flight feathers and is sometimes confused with the far less common rainbow lorikeet -- a much smaller bird. If captured, lorikeets are usually repatriated because they are nectar-feeders and may compete with tuis and bellbirds. Rosellas are less of a problem.

Bird expert Alan Emmerson estimates Centennial Park has eight to 12 nesting pairs of eastern rosellas. They eat seeds, fruits, flowers, buds and insects and do not present a threat as they fill the ecological niche vacated by our own parrots, which cannot compete with introduced predators.

Jenny Chamberlain

Water Worries

How to manage surface-water run-off in the urban environment has long been a problem. Centennial Park and its streams are the natural catchment for the Campbells Bay valley. Letting stormwater run into the park seems to have been the philosophy, as it will eventually discharge into the sea.

Centennial Park is now suffering because of run-off from the bay's hard, man-made surfaces. Subdivisions and continuing infill housing increase the problem. The park's gullies are scouring; streams are being polluted, fish and plant life killed. Witness the huge muddy bog on the walking track by the park's biggest and oldest tree. Our huge kahikatea, mother of many, lies surrounded by mess. This makes riparian plantings carried out by the Bush Society even more imperative, but planting alone will not entirely control the problem. We are working with Auckland Council to identify hot spots and take urgent remedial action.

Joe Greig

Bruce Rogers

In our last newsletter you will have read about our wonderful lawn mowing contractor Bruce Rogers. Since then Auckland Council have contracted with large mowing and weed control contractors and Bruce has found himself minus the Centennial Park work he has been performing admirably for many years. We are indebted to Bruce for his dedication and care for so long. Bruce is available as a contractor to local residents to carry out control of invasive weeds on your property. Please call Bruce for a quote on 0274-993-211 or 473-5189 or www.tractormowingandgrassing.co.nz



Call for volunteers

Do you have time on your hands, love our wonderful environment and want to spend some time to keep it that way? Call us about joining our volunteer team.

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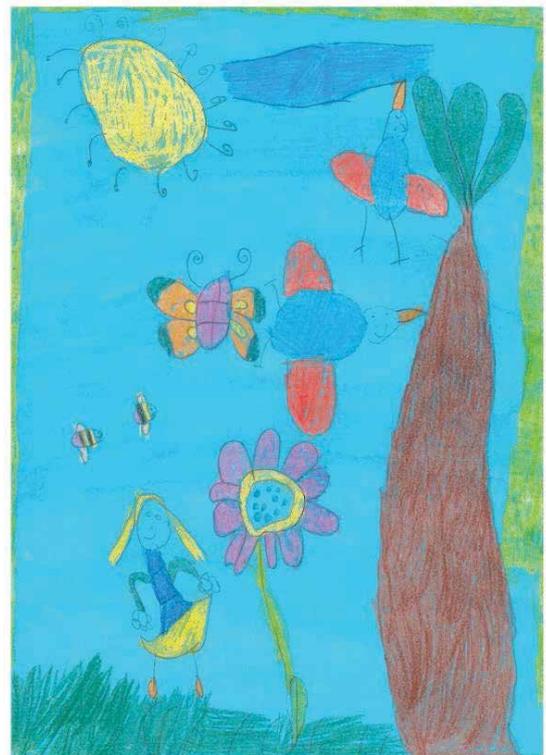
Rae Road Opening

In June the Rae Rd landscaping project was officially opened. We were delighted to host children and parents from Campbells Bay School, and enjoy the CBS Kapa Haka group which performed as part of the celebrations. We are delighted to publish the winners of the poetry and art competition in this newsletter.

Centennial Park

*Floor crunching from bark and twigs
 No cars, no poisonous fumes,
 Peace, but the birds are tweeting,
 Mr Weta hooked on my brother's finger,
 Who screamed in fright at a nippy bite!
 Shady trees keep you cool, as the scorching
 sun rises above the canopy.
 Centennial Park is my escape from
 the outside world, free and fresh.*

By Laura May Room 15, Campbells Bay Primary School
 Winning Entry Rae Rd Opening Poetry competition



Rae Rd opening winning artwork - Centennial Park by Alexa Chapman-Smith Campbells Bay School

