

Trelissick Park adopt-a-spot news

Kia Ora Volunteers,

March was a great month for raising publicity in Trelissick Park, as a result we have had a number of new people join our mailing list, and a few new spotees too! Please remember to pass this newsletter on to others who might be interested. I attended two community fairs this month with our chairman Peter Reimann. Both were fantastic events and raised our profile some more. We had a number of people from Wadestown show interest in the project, which is fantastic as areas of the park near to Wadestown are in great need of some TLC. Please let me know if you are keen to adopt a spot near to the Hanover St entrance.

We have had a few nights 'fishing' in the Kaiwharawhara stream recently. This involves using a torch and a net to catch the fish, which we release after identifying and measuring. It was great to find such a range of native fish species including inanga, red fin bullies, common bullies, and giant kokupu living alongside trout and fresh water shrimps. This indicates that fish are finding some habitat to live in the lower reaches of the Kaiwharawhara Stream. It is still important for us to provide overhanging riparian vegetation. There was an obvious lack of wildlife in the channelled and tunnelled sections of the stream, but even in the industrial areas where there was overhanging vegetation and variations to the flow of the stream we found fish!

I have spent most of March ordering plants to be planted this season – we have two main sites to be planted by corporate, or other groups this year. These are the two 'reveg sites' between Wightwicks field and the Tararua Tramping Club spot. We will not be able to plant all of the two prepared areas this year as we do not have enough plants. I plan to plant the areas most likely to be quickly re-colonised by weeds. At the upstream reveg site we will plant the 'forest' site on the right as you step off the bridge (approximately 1200 plants). At the downstream site we will plant the riparian strip between the track and the stream (approximately 1000 plants). It is planned that the rest of the 'reveg sites' will be planted in 2008 using GW Take Care funding.

WCC have also been busy clearing wattle from the Magazine site over the last week.

Spotees will have access to plants supplied by Otari Wiltons Bush. Some spotees have indicated how many plants they require, others I have made an estimate based on the size and current vegetation at your site. Seedlings are currently being held by various members of the group. I will distribute these to you in early May. At the moment we have a larger demand than supply, so if you are able to donate seedlings from your garden etc. that would be greatly appreciated.

Plan of the month

Kawakawa, pepper tree

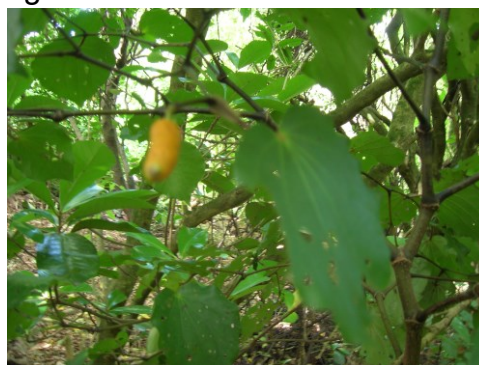
Macropiper excelsum

The kawakawa's characteristic heart-shaped leaves are almost always full of holes. Sometimes 30% or more of the leaf surface is eaten away by the native looper caterpillar (*Cleora scriptaria* Walker).

Kawakawa is also known as pepper tree because of the aromatic and spicy chemicals contained in the leaves, no doubt a defence mechanism against browsing pests. The looper caterpillar is really the only invertebrate that can hack the heat and recent studies indicate that the caterpillar's chewing activities result in increased levels of these defence chemicals, so that the plant may look a bit tattered, but has a much better chance of warding off other foliage feeding critters.



This plant copes well with moist shade, sheltered conditions under the canopy, or full sun. Female flowers become a bright orange 'candle' of berries which are edible, but peppery if you chew the seeds! Kawakawa can be propagated by seed or cuttings.



Weed of the month:

Ivy

Hedera helix

Ivy is a scrambling vine with dark green variegated leaves. Leaves are alternate and vary in shape but are usually shallowly lobed. The Ivy vine attaches itself to objects and other plants with short aerial rootlets. Flowers are insignificant and greenish-yellow, followed by black to purple berries in March-May which birds easily spread. Also spread through dumping of garden waste. If ivy is left it will quickly establish and becomes a very aggressive weed, smothering growth at ground level, and climbing larger trees where it can destroy epiphyte habitats or break branches. If you have ivy in your garden, make sure it remains in a controlled habitat. If you find ivy in the park, the best way to control it is to dig it out by hand. Use a garden fork, and remove as much root and plant matter as possible. Place in a black rubbish sack and carry to an entrance of the park. Be careful when removing ivy from near the stream as broken plant matter can reshoot if washed downstream. Please contact me if you would like help to chemically control ivy in your spot.

