

## **Adopt a spot guidelines**

(Updated 05 January 2023)

The objective of the adopt-a-Spot scheme is to restore Trelissick Park to a natural wilderness providing a safe habitat for native flora and fauna and a freely accessible place to visit and enjoy.

Your role as a “spottee” involves weed eradication, rubbish collection, reporting of damage and pollution in the park, and planting locally sourced native trees and plants and preferably caring for them for about the next 3 – 4 years.

You are welcome to manage your spot yourself or share the responsibility with others. The Adopt-a-Spot coordinator can help you during the first few months, if you wish, by arranging a one-off blitz with volunteers or finding more plants if you need them.

Everyone who walks through the Park will appreciate your efforts. If you wish to expand your knowledge of native flora and fauna, you may find joining the Trelissick Park Group on weed-busting or planting sessions helps you learn to distinguish unwanted exotics from endemic plants.

### **Contacts and Further Information**

A few suggestions are mentioned in these guidelines to assist you with managing your spot. For more information see [Environment - Restoration planting guides - Wellington City Council](#) and [Trelissick Park Group: Weeds](#).

If you come across any damage to the Park, such as washed out tracks, fallen trees, or large amounts of rubbish, please contact Wellington City Council at [Report a problem - Wellington City Council](#) or on 04 499 4444. If you see pollution in the stream, call the pollution hotline for Greater Wellington on 0800 496 734.

If you have any questions about your spot, or another site you think needs attention, please contact [trelissickgroup@gmail.com](mailto:trelissickgroup@gmail.com).

### **Some Weeding Tips**

Some weed control spraying in Trelissick Park is carried out by the Wellington City Council (WCC). Manual weed control is carried out by the Trelissick Park Group (TPG) in collaboration with WCC.

As a member of the public, you are not permitted to use sprays of any sort in the Park. Some members of the TPG hold GrowSafe certificates which authorize them to apply Vigilant, Triumph or Cut’N’Paste gel. They welcome your request for assistance to poison specific weed on your spot.

The public are also not permitted to use power tools, like weed-eaters or chain saws in the park, but you may use hand tools. Loppers, grubbers, spades are all useful.

When clearing planted areas, pull weeds from around the base of the young trees. If there is no danger of the weeds re-growing when in contact with the soil, spread them back under the trees and over the exposed ground as mulch. Alternatively, bag the weeds or suspend them off the ground in the elbow of a tree branch.

### **Supply of Plants**

We will provide plants that are the most suitable for the conditions for your spot. These come from a variety of sources, but all are eco-sourced from the Wellington ecological district. These have the best opportunity to thrive, being adapted to the Wellington climatic conditions.

The plants also are endemic to the area and true to type, to avoid "alien" species taking over or hybridisation. Trelissick Park contains some areas of original forest remnant (below Ngaio Gorge

Road and Trelissick Crescent). Pest weed and planting programmes help preserve and enhance the remnant and restore the park to a native bush wilderness.

Consequently, WCC requires that plants are eco-sourced and endemic to the area/true to type.

If you wish to provide your own plants, you must ensure that they are eco-sourced from the Wellington ecological district and endemic to the area/true to type. Plants from garden centres may not qualify, as these centres have a primary interest in "the bottom line". Note that a permit is required from WCC for collecting seed from the park. The following species should not be planted, even though they exist in the park:

- Pohutakawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) - propensity to hybridise with northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*)
- Karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) - not endemic
- Karaka (*Cornynocarpus leavigatus*) - not recommended as prolific seeder (was planted in earlier centuries in selected areas for food)
- Houpara or coastal five-finger (*Pseudopanax lessonii*). This is indigenous in northern New Zealand but hybridises with lancewood (*Pseudopanax crassifolius*). We are trying to rid the park of these invasive hybrids.

### **Some Planting Tips**

Ensure your spot is free from weeds before you plant. Think about who will be using the site and for what purpose. Do the majority of your planting in the wetter months or late autumn or winter, during which time the roots do most of their growing. Plant in clumps rather than rows. Often it looks more natural if a few of the same species are planted together and this aids pollination.

Generally, work toward establishing a canopy with fast-growth trees, which will shadeout unwanted exotics. Then, plant heritage trees (e.g. rimu, tōtara, mataī, miro, pukatea and rātā) amongst the recovering bush. Facilitate natural regeneration from seeds by keeping the underbrush reasonably clear of weeds (eg tradescantia). The bush is ever-changing. The most efficient restoration is natural regeneration.

Plant most trees 800cm to 1 metre apart, to establish an effective canopy and minimize weeding. Grasses can be closer together. However, heritage trees must be planted further apart, eg. between 3 to 5 metres, or more. However, kahikatea can be planted closer together - there are many stands of kahikatea growing densely in damp areas around New Zealand.

### **Planting Procedure**

- Remove weeds from the area
- Plants should be at least 30 cm high
- Pots or bags about 1 litre (eg pb3 bags)
- Water the plants
- Volume of hole = twice the volume of bag/pot
- Depth so that the surface at the plant should be level with the ground surface
- Ease all around the side of the pot/bag to allow easy withdrawal
- Turn the plant in the pot/bag upside down (stem pointing vertically downwards), with fingers of one hand through the stem (to hold the potting mix, which might be loose)
- Withdraw the plant (e.g. by getting hold of the folds at the bottom of the bag) with the other hand If any plants are root-bound, tease out the roots before planting
- Quickly drop the plant into the hole
- Fill around the plant and firm the soil down, not too hard.

If planting cabbage trees, toetoe or flax, keep them at least 1 ½ metres from the track edge and lawn boundaries, so they do not interfere with WCC Parks & Gardens mowing machines and pedestrians. Any trees planted within 1 metre of the track are at risk of being cut back or sprayed. The lower branches of trees established close to the track can be trimmed to keep access clear for track-users. Their top branches will eventually provide a canopy over the track, above the heads of pedestrians, and discourage weed growth.

Frosty areas occur near the areas close to the stream. Be careful to plant frost tender trees close to or within the vegetation boundary and in warmer areas.

Help yourself to mulch, if available. It helps to keep the moisture in and suppress the weeds temporarily, so apply when soil is wet.

Piling mulch around the base of the tree is preferable to laying carpet pieces and is appropriate in all planting situations. It slows weed growth and deters evaporation of moisture from around the tree roots. Mulch nourishes the soil as it decomposes. Keep the mulch away from the stem, to avoid the stem rotting. Make sure the ground is damp before applying the mulch. For a few years, TPG tried the use of carpet squares in place of mulch but found that they created problems in the long term. We now advise against using them. Evidence showed that plants rooted shallowly under carpet and adhered their roots to the underside of the carpet or intertwined with the material. Weeds also established their roots in the carpet and became impossible to release from around the plant. The carpet pieces did not disintegrate as was expected, because one side was made of non-organic material, which was almost impervious to light rains. However, permeable degradable squares are an alternative to mulch in remoter areas.

### **Riparian Planting**

Planting close to the stream requires specific species of plants to allow for flood conditions, to protect against erosion and to provide habitat for fish to spawn and shelter. Within the flood zone, plant only long-leafed plants, such as toetoe, grasses and sedges. These plants are less likely to be pulled out by high swift flood waters, if securely planted. Flax should be planted out of the flood zone - it is bulky and easily bowled over.

The stream environment also needs trees to cast shade over the water, to ensure the health of invertebrate and fish habitats. Trees suitable for growing on the banks have deep rooting systems and exceptional root spread, ideal for preventing erosion. Some of these trees include ribbonwood, cabbage trees, kōhūhū, and karamu.

Remember that the stream will move over time as part of a natural process. Avoid planting on shingle beaches, as these are nice places for children to play, and plants may get washed away or buried in debris or gravel when flood waters change the path of the stream.