

Gorge Gazette - January 2024

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and streams



Abbreviations:

WCC	Wellington City Council	GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council
DoC	Department of Conservation	GG	Gorge Gazette
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	WW	Wellington Water
S to S	Sanctuary to Sea (Zealandia)	F&B	Forest and Bird
BotSoc	Wellington Botanical Society	OWB	Ōtari Wilton's Bush

Evil spawns beauty

Behold the delicate flower of our arch enemy *Tradescantia fluminensis* (alias wandering willie)!



Photo: <https://www.jaxshells.org/forestd2a.htm>

This ecological nightmare grows from stem fragments and spreads as a thick carpet, preventing native seedling emergence. It also causes eczema in some of our off-leash dogs.

Manual clearing of tradescantia – What have we learned over the decades?

Pull it out by hand or rake it into a heap in the shade on the ground. Leave any remaining broken and half-buried fragments at your peril: reincarnation is assured. The heap should be formed into a plateau, then compacted by jumping up and down on the top (also good for venting

angst). A black plastic cover stops spread from the heap and aids breakdown. After a couple of years, the heap turns into beautiful compost.

Revisits are recommended every year or two to capture escapees.

WCC recently provided enormous weed bags as a trial to house the removed tradescantia instead of under black plastic. The jury is still out.

Chemical control - WCC's contractor Kaitiaki O Ngahere spray some of the larger swathes in the park.

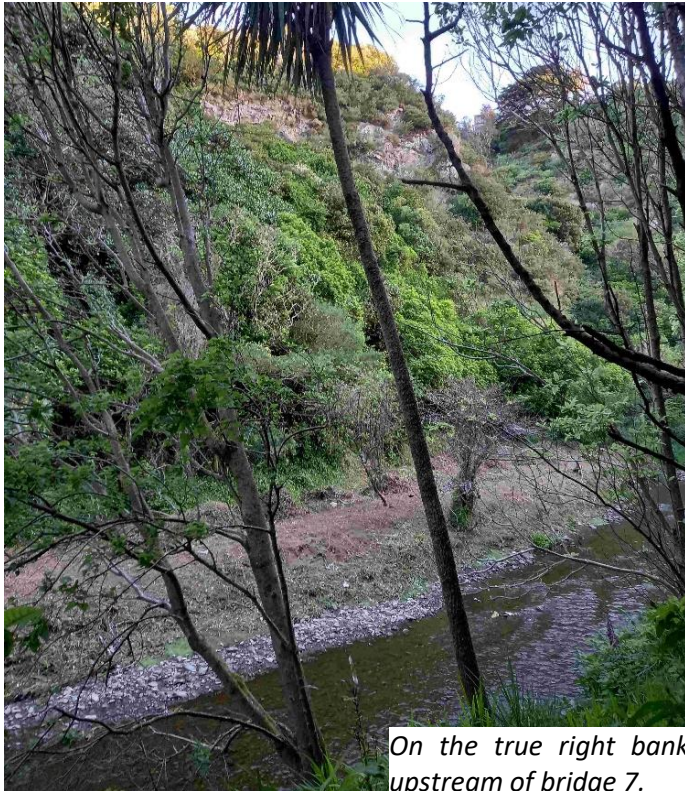
The jewelled gorge

There they were from the train window in spring magnificence: white-flowering cherry trees. But a few days later, armed with a camera for spotting, they had vanished! How do you locate cherry trees from distant vantage points in a sea of green? Oh well – next spring or autumn, perhaps...

WCC's Illona Keenan has arranged with KiwiRail for access to deal with cherry trees bordering the line.



Our 'jewels' were like this



On the true right bank upstream of bridge 7.

The grove starts

Jonathan Anderson is planning a 'podocarp grove' next to Kaiwharawhara Stream.

Early in November Applied Biosecurity Solutions removed the blackberry covering the site (photo at left). The contractor will kill regrowth later.

Jonathan says that we should be able to plant the podocarps and other canopy species in 2025. He was thinking of planting at 2m x 2m centres. The area is about 300m², so about 60 trees. He will interplant with karamū and *Hebe stricta* to provide shelter and suppress weeds. These can be thinned or removed later.

It's strange world

The Wellington SPCA has recently been harbouring rats, rescued from hoarders. More than 100. How sweet they look.

Meanwhile, Bill Hester's animal pest team report no shortage of rats killed in traps and bait taken.

2023 plantings (excluding grasses at Ngaio Gorge Road layby)

Nearly 1,000 from WCC, F&B and home nurseries for:

- Trelissick Crescent, Waikowhai and Hanover Street verges
- Streamside under and downstream of bridge 7
- Entrance 6 and west of the magazine building
- Bordering Wightwick's Field
- Between bridges 4 and 5
- Slopes below Oban Street
- 51-trees spot for Interfaith Group
- Jonathan Anderson's podocarps.



The Hanover Street entrance

Inspired by Marilyn Hester's amazing verge on Trellissick Crescent, Anne Tuffin has mulched and planted native grasses along the narrow verge on Hanover Street, Wadestown, and started the first metre or two beside the track. Her aim is to plant the sides of the track, at least for the first 20 metres.



Christmas again



This rimu near bridge 6 was planted in 2006 and is decorated annually by somebody.

It says: 'Volunteers keep Trellissick Park beautiful'



On Trellissick Crescent. Thanks to artist Lorraine Tyler.

Planting order from WCC for 2024

Ground-cover - Sorely needed, so we have included various grasses suitable for part-shade, along with *Dianella nigra* and *Astelia fragrans*. We are also experimenting with uprooted hound's tongue fern from a nearby garden.

Jonathan Anderson's wish-list – He says we don't have enough of these in the park:

- *Coprosma lucida* - karamū
- *Coprosma rhamnoides* - mingimingi
- *Fuchsia excorticata* – kōtukutuku (tree fuchsia)

- *Pennantia corymbosa* - kaikōmako
- *Piper excelsum* - kawakawa
- *Schefflera digitata* - patē (seven finger)
- *Sophora microphylla* - kōwhai
- *Beilschmiedia tawa* - tawa
- *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides* - kahikatea (white pine)
- *Laurelia novae-zelandiae* - pukatea
- *Rhopalostylis sapida* - nīkau

The inanga project



Photo: thestyx.org.nz

In 2011 a team from OWB planted 300 riparian species on DoC land on the true right bank of Kaiwharawhara Stream downstream of the Hutt Road bridge. It is proposed to add riparian plants on the opposite bank (next to Spotlight), funded by much of the donation to TPG* to encourage inanga spawning. The planting site is below a concrete wall, normally submerged to about 0.5m depth and subject to destructive flood flows. Following a recent site visit by S to S, DoC and TPG, Nate Rigler of S to S is investigating protection methods and talking with interested parties, e.g. Taranaki Whānui.

[Inanga: Freshwater fish \(doc.govt.nz\)](http://doc.govt.nz) says that 'inanga (*Galaxias maculatus*) are the most common native fish species caught as whitebait.

'Inanga begin life as eggs laid in vegetation beside streams in late summer and autumn. When the eggs hatch, they are carried downstream as larvae and spend the next six months at sea. In the spring they migrate upstream as whitebait and grow into adult fish.

'Inanga live in lowland freshwater habitats. Unlike other migratory galaxiids, they don't travel long distances inland as they have difficulty swimming through swift-flowing rapids and cannot climb past waterfalls.

'A few days before a full and new moon from February to May, inanga migrate downstream to the place where fresh water meets sea water coming upstream. They congregate there, waiting for a very high spring tide.

'As the tide rises, shoals of inanga work their way along the bank, pushing into the flooded vegetation at the edge of the water. They choose the base of tall, dense vegetation to lay their eggs. Each female can release up to 13,000 eggs, which are 1.2mm in diameter.'

Our site will be ideal for this.

*See GG October 2023.

The weed slayers

Weeding is not glamorous, but the reward is a glow of satisfaction. And so it was over the past three months with groups from CVNZ (two visits), S to S, KPMG, Kiwibank, the Allegis Group and our regular bi-monthly working bees.

Unhindered planting later this year awaits.

Scroll through our Facebook page to see the rest of the happy workers.



Allegis Group



CVNZ



CVNZ

The final solution?

All the stormwater from the vast Kaiwharawhara/Korimako catchment ends up in our streams. The banks are in peril. Finn Illsley-Kemp worries about his spot above the true right bank, downstream of the new bridge 7. He says that the grasses at his spot have been doing fantastically and are protecting the bank very well and quickly spreading, especially when combined with cabbage trees. He thinks it's a winning

combination for the riparian areas that frequently flood.

So, Richard Grasse, who volunteers at the F&B nursery, has offered 20 cutty grasses (*Carex geminata*) and 20 cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*), to be planted optimistically later this year.

Cutty grass is a vigorous wetland grass and cabbage tree roots plumb the depths.



Cutty Grass

Photo: Jeremy Rolfe



Cabbage trees

Photo: blogspot.com

Pohutukawa or northern rātā?

Wellington in summer is graced with the spectacular dark red of flowering pohutukawa trees. Unfortunately, it is non-endemic, and there

are a few in the park, or next to it. One was recently planted next to the grassy slope below Trelissick Crescent entrance 3. While planted with best intentions, it would be better to replace it with the equally spectacular northern rātā (photos next page).



Underside of pohutukawa leaves. Photo: Jon Sullivan via Inaturalist



Northern rātā leaves. Photo: Phil Bendle

The flowers of northern rātā (*Metrosiderus robusta*) are more scarlet than those of pohutukawa (*Metrosiderus excelsa*). Look at the underside of a pohutukawa leaf: it will be covered in a mat of short white hairs – like fur. Rātā leaves are smooth underneath. They sometimes have a notch in the end of the leaf, but not always.



Jonathan Anderson took the photo on the left of one of our better northern rātā, basking in full sunlight on the southern edge of Wightwick’s Field. It could grow to become a 25m giant.



The recently planted (but unwelcome) pohutukawa below entrance 3

Hope reigns (near the park)



Ngahere gecko



Kererū

For more...

Scroll down our Facebook page, or read a wealth of information on our website, updated by Bill Hester.

Contacts

trelissickgroup@gmail.com

[Trelissick Park Group website](#)

[Trelissick Park Group | Facebook](#)

WCC: (04) 499 4444 or [WCC Fix-It](#)

GW pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Thanks to all our volunteers, supporters, WCC staff and weed control contractor Kaitiaki o Ngahere.

Membership drawn from Highland Park Progressive Association Inc., Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents’ Association Inc., Onslow Historical Society Inc., Private Landowners’ Group, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc. (Wellington Branch), Wellington Botanical Society Inc., Wadestown Residents’ Association.