



April 2022 Newsletter

President: Gary Beecroft gary.beecroft@xtra.co.nz

Secretary: Geoff Mills secretary@tawabush.org.nz

Monthly working bees: 2nd Sunday and 4th Tuesday

- **Coordinator Sunday:** Richard Herbert: herbert.r@xtra.co.nz
- **Coordinator Tuesday:** Andrew Liley: acfhilley@gmail.com

Website: <https://tawabush.org.nz>



1. FOTBR receives Tawa Community Civic award

FOTBR was one of the recipients of this award in the 'Heritage and Environment' category. Owing to Covid-19 restrictions, an awards ceremony will not take place, but people have been notified and recipients listed on the Tawa Community Board Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/tawacommunityboard>

The voluntary work undertaken by FOTBR, included: the development of a new walking track in the Forest of Tawa/Te Ngahere-o-Tawa; the removal of exotic cherry trees in reserves; the establishment of a new propagation nursery; propagating and planting out hundreds of tree seedlings in the reserves; ongoing liaison with Tawa schools; the regular programme of pest control in the reserves and increased community awareness of FOTBR through upgrading the website.

It is also noteworthy that the **Willowbank Reserve Care Group** also received a similar award for the extensive work that they have undertaken in maintenance, weed clearance and expansive tree planting in this reserve. Such awards by both groups affirm the effective volunteer work undertaken by so many people in the Tawa community.

2. FOTBR AGM 2022 and Information Evening both deferred

In light of the much wider spread of Covid-19 infections in early March, it was decided to defer these two meetings. Actual face-to-face gatherings are preferred, and members will be notified once dates are finalised, in light of the changes outlined by the government in recent days.

3. Changing of the guard



Denise Clements our current WCC Park Ranger has recently been promoted and our new local Park Ranger is **Frank Williams**. We have appreciated the excellent work that Denise has undertaken in her time working with FOTBR in the Tawa reserves. Always helpful, willing and supportive, we wish her well in her new role beyond Tawa.

A family man, Frank comes from wide-ranging experiences and a practical background in engineering, security work and more recently with WCC as a weed control officer and as a Park Ranger. Welcome on board Frank!



We look forward to working alongside you as we continue our varied tasks in Tawa's native bush reserves.

4. Irrigation now set up in the nursery

Thanks primarily to **James Wright** and **Joanne Youthed**, this important part of the nursery is now in operation. It has been a busy few months and the propagation of new seedlings and potting on has seen a boom in the number of seedlings in the nursery. This promises well for the proposed winter planting.



James joins up the technical parts.



Planted bank is well established with natives after recent mulching.

5. Kākāriki frequently heard and sighted in Redwood Bush

Kākāriki or red-crowned parakeets are one of three species of endemic parakeets found in NZ. The name means 'small green parrot' because of their predominantly green plumage. They make a loud rapid chatter in flight and also chatter and babble when feeding. Such sounds have been regularly heard, especially at the north end of Redwood Bush but they have also been sighted off track.

Kākāriki feed on seeds, fruit and insects among trees but will also forage for food on the ground among the leaf litter. They generally nest in holes in trees.



6. Cat Clown Collars

WCC are concerned about cats preying on wildlife and have made colourful fabric collars for cats. Whereas bells around cats' necks have proven ineffective, research has shown that brightly coloured collars will reduce cats' natural camouflage and therefore reduce their ability to catch birds and lizards. Cats wearing these clown collars will also demonstrate that their owners are concerned about their cats' natural hunting instincts and their effect on NZ's wildlife.



Helen Challands one of our FOTBR members has used these anti-predation collars for the past 3 years, and in fact made it herself.

Clown collars slip over and sit on top of normal collars. The collars have a



reflective strip around the outside which makes cats more visible at night. If you would like to trial these collars, WCC are offering 15 of these collars free to FOTBR members. A questionnaire will be sent by WCC to these cat owners at the end of the trial period to gauge the effectiveness of the collars.

If you wish to be part of this trial, please email Geoff Mills, FOTBR Secretary, secretary@tawabush.org.nz

7. Test your knowledge!

Question 1

The fruit/seed to the right were found below a tree in Redwood Bush by the Editor on 19 March 2022. Trees have separate sexes, and female trees bear small orange-red fleshy parts below the purple-black seed. Birds eat both parts, therefore enabling seed dispersal. Young seedlings are nearby. (See photo).

What is the name of the tree?



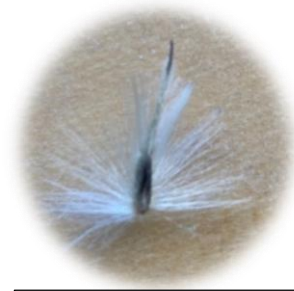
Question 2

The seeds shown below left were found under a large tree in Redwood Bush between Achilles Close and Peterhouse Street. The seeds are well adapted to enable their dispersal by wind with their feathery attachments. Young seedlings are close by. (See photo to right).

What tree are they from?



Clumps of seeds.



Single seed with feathery attachments.



8. FOTBR working bees

When the Editor recently led bush walks in our reserves, participants from beyond Tawa frequently commented: *what well-managed native bush; they are so clean with well-defined tracks and no rubbish; you are privileged to have these reserves for recreational purposes at your doorstep.*

These positive comments are a tribute to the combined work done through WCC with FOTBR over many years. This has been enhanced through the regular monthly FOTBR working bees. Members are encouraged to participate in them. Each month **Richard Herbert** sends out the details of these to members that are scheduled for the second Sunday afternoon and fourth Tuesday afternoon of the month. With the forthcoming winter planting season, your practical assistance will be valued.

9. Knowing the native trees in the Tawa reserves

a. *Geniostoma ligustrifolium* var. *ligustrifolium*, Hangehange, Māori privet

A common shrub up to 3m high, it is commonly found at the edge of bush and along the tracks. Leaves are oppositely positioned along the slender, brittle stems. The oval, elongated and soft, shiny lettuce-green leaves have 'drip tips' at the end.

Sources of name:

Genus: *genio* = hairy and *stoma* = mouth. The corolla (petal) tube has a hairy throat.

species: *ligustrum* = 'privet', *folium* = 'leaf', meaning 'privet-leaved'.

Flowers and fruit:

In Spring, the creamy-green-coloured flowers have a musky smell, while nearing Autumn, green seed capsules form and eventually turn black. When mature, the dry black capsules burst open to reveal black seeds that are compressed in an orange gel. Nectar and seeds are consumed by birds such as hihi (stitchbird) and tauhou (silveryeye).

Māori use

To increase the flavour of food, Māori used leaves of hangehange wrapped around food (such as roots of kumara and tī kōuka) prior to steaming them in the hāngī. Crushed leaves were boiled in water and applied to skin to ease itchiness, while bark was beaten to produce a black dye.



Hangehange flowers.



Immature green fruit and mature black fruit with seed already shed.

b. *Asplenium oblongifolium*, shining spleenwort, huruhuru whenua

An endemic fern to New Zealand it has a range of habitats from coastal to bush. It is easily sighted on the ground along the edge of the tracks, but it also grows as an epiphyte, perching from the branches of trees.

Source of name:

Genus: *Asplenium*: from the Greek = 'without' and splene = 'spleen'. It was once believed to be a cure for diseases of the spleen.

species: *oblongifolium* = oblong leaves

'huruhuru whenua' has a range of meanings, but in this case it means 'altogether glowing' which describes the fern's tightly-packed, glossy, bright green-coloured fronds.



Leaflets are pointed with fine teeth. The distinctive brown herringbone pattern on the underside of mature fronds contain sori, that produce sporangia where spores are borne and released.

Young fronds were traditionally eaten fresh by Māori.



Underside of frond with herringbone arrangement of sori.

10. Young Ngahere gecko spotted

Stephen Challands' eagle eyes recently noticed a large, obviously pregnant Ngahere gecko near Redwood Bush. Sometime later, his Dad, **Keith Challands** spotted a young one basking in the sun on the trunk of a tree fern. It's great to see these geckos are reproducing in our reserves. This is further credit to the pest control undertaken by our volunteers.



Baby Ngahere gecko on a tree fern.

Answers to 6. Test your knowledge!

Q1. Kahikatea *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*. **Q2.** Pukatea *Laurelia novae-zelandiae*.

Did you get these right?

Gil Roper, Editor
FOTBR Committee

