



## December 2022 Newsletter

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Monthly working bees: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday

- Coordinator Sunday: Richard Herbert: [herbert.r@xtra.co.nz](mailto:herbert.r@xtra.co.nz)
- Coordinator Tuesday: Andrew Liley: [acfhilley@gmail.com](mailto:acfhilley@gmail.com)



### 1. Guided native bush walk, 2pm Sunday 4 December 2022



Andrew and John complete the sign installation.

The new signed botanical walk in Redwood Bush was opened in mid-October 2022. Signs feature 20 of the trees for interest to walkers and provide an educational purpose for the groups who walk in Redwood Bush.

The public is being given an open invitation to participate in this walk on Sunday afternoon 4 December 2022 at 2pm. Please meet at the Achilles Close entry, off Oriel Ave at 1.50pm. Initially, some historical details will be given as to how Redwood Bush was saved when the Redwood subdivision began making inroads into the native bush for housing development in the 1970s. Overall, the walk, including the return to Achilles Close by road will take about an hour and a half. Depending on time, Larsen Crescent Reserve will also be included in the walk. It will proceed whatever the weather and firm shoes are recommended.



Gil explains the content of a sign.



Some of the first to view the signed walk.



John points out a weta motel.

### 2. Plants for Greenacres School

On Friday 21 October, the FOTBR nursery provided harakeke (flax), makomako (wineberry), tī kōuka (cabbage tree) and kōtukutuku (tree fuchsia) seedlings to the KETE group, for planting out in the school grounds. Organised by Sue Lum, Joanne Youthed, the project was assisted by Andrew Liley.



Joanne helped Sue to transport the plants and lay them out at Greenacres School, while Andrew worked with the staff and students to complete the planting.



Native tree seedlings planted out at Greenacres School, with the plants supplied from the FOTBR nursery.

### 3. Why are mustelids pests?

Weasels, stoats and ferrets are carnivorous mammals in New Zealand and are collectively known as mustelids. Voracious feeders, they are a major threat to the survival of New Zealand's native birds and animals. Flightless birds such as kiwi, ground nesting birds such as New Zealand dotterel, and birds that nest in holes such as kākā, are particularly vulnerable. These mustelids were introduced into New Zealand in the 1870s and 1880s to control rabbits. However, all have become pests.

The recent introduction of 11 North Island brown kiwi into the Mākara region of Wellington by the Capital Kiwi Project has only been possible by the work of volunteers, including recreational mountain bikers. More than 4500 traps have been cleared, resulting in 800-plus stoats being culled since 2018 in preparation for the arrival of the kiwi. This is a most commendable task! Perhaps in future years, with ongoing pest control, kiwi may be eventually heard in the Tawa area.



### 4. Replacement tree planting in Wilf Mexted Reserve

With the need to fell some large trees earlier this year for safety reasons, on part of the slope, a working bee on 14 October 2022, saw replacement tree seedlings being planted in this location.





Plants were again provided by the FOTBR nursery. Thanks especially go to **Joanne Youthed, Richard Herbert, Ross Denton, John and Paul Peters** for this conservation work undertaken.

Part of the group doing the planting.



### 5. DOC Creative Spaces Team Community Services Day

A community service day for the DOC Creative Services team (Head Office publishing, graphic design and website team led by **Claire Gibb**) took place in October. They planted about 600 trees in the area between the Spicer pine forest and the Meridian Road (near the junction of the Forest of Tawa track) and were assisted by FOTBR volunteer **Andrew Liley**. Trees were donated by WCC.



Some of the staff walked and biked up to the planting site through the Forest of Tawa from the Kiwi Crescent entrance and others travelled to the site via the private road from the Porirua Landfill. This was the third planting day attempt by this group of volunteers as two previous dates were cancelled due to unsuitable weather, demonstrating the younger generation's enthusiasm for restoring our natural environment.

FOTBR acknowledges with thanks this effective restoration work undertaken by members of this group from the DOC Creative Services Team.



### 6. 'Redwood Bush, Tawa' book launch

This book, published by FOTBR, was launched on Tuesday evening 18 October 2022 in the Tawa Community Centre, with over 70 people present. **Gary Beecroft**, President FOTBR chaired the evening. Following refreshments, **Andy Foster** (Patron of FOTBR) spoke on the extensive restoration of native flora and fauna undertaken in the wider Wellington region and how Tawa's Redwood Bush has also shown significant development and recovery with work done by WCC and FOTBR.

Author, **Gil Roper** shared his motivation in writing the book that stemmed from the time of the Redwood subdivision when in the 1970s, incursions were being made into the native bush for housing development. Many Tawa residents objected to the destruction of the pristine native bush.



Subsequently, the Tawa Borough Council secured a loan from Treasury to purchase the area as a reserve.

Recollections by residents of changes in Redwood Bush over time are portrayed in the book, and with careful pest control and maintenance, this has resulted in the resurgence of the native flora and fauna. Photographic details of the trees and birds are given, as well as the lizards, lichens and fungi present. There is also information on the new signed botanical walk that has just been installed.



Some of those present at the book launch.

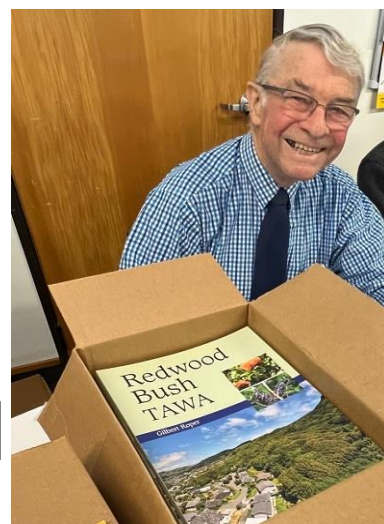


Andy Foster, Gil Roper and Greg O'Connor.

### Purchases

Sales have been well supported with just under 20 copies remaining unsold. People still wishing to purchase copies can obtain them from 'Tawa Books & Post' for \$30 cash per copy. This valuable service to the Tawa community by 'Tawa Books & Post' is appreciated.

Gil signs copies of his book.



## 7. Young kākārīki sighted in Redwood Bush

Four juvenile kākārīki were heard and then sighted in Redwood Bush on late Monday morning 14 November 2022. Members of the U3A Botany group saw them near the two huge pukatea trees, beside the stream that crosses the track in the gully between Achilles Close and Peterhouse Street.

As these birds were much smaller than adult birds, with their green plumage and a red top notch on their heads, it is an indication that they have recently fledged from a Spring nesting in Redwood Bush. Although adult kākārīki are frequently heard and seen in Redwood Bush, it is heartening to see the young birds. Their presence is an indication of the effectiveness of the regular pest control being undertaken, plus the suitable nesting locations and food available in the bush.

In Māori, kākārīki means 'small green parrot'. The birds feed on berries, seeds, fruit and insects, and generally nest in holes in trees.

Kākārīki are very attractive endemic forest birds in New Zealand. Abundant at the time of European settlement in the Tawa region in the 1850s, they soon became scarce with bush clearance in colonisation.



Photo: Paul Bouda (adult kakariki).



## 8. Redwood Bush included for WCC guided summer walks in Wellington

With the recent publicity of the book: *Redwood Bush, Tawa* published by FOTBR as well as the newly installed signed botanical walk from Achilles Close towards Peterhouse Street, Redwood Bush has been placed on the list of guided summer walks offered to the public by WCC.

These will be at 10am on Saturday, 3 December, Tuesday 6 December at 6pm and then in the new year, on Saturday 14 January 2023 at 10am. Guided walks will depart promptly from Achilles Close through to Peterhouse Street and although led by WCC, members of FOTBR will also be present to provide support for these groups.

## 9. Knowing the native trees in the Tawa reserves

### *Brachyglottis repanda*, Rangiora

#### a. Source of names

Rangiora is a member of the Aster family of plants (Asteraceae) and includes asters, daisies and sunflowers. *Brachyglottis* means 'short tongue' and refers to the small size of the ray florets within the flowers. The species name *repanda* means 'undulating edges' and refers to the margins of the broad leaves. The Māori word 'Rangiora' is from rangi = 'sky' and 'ora' = living or health. The other name often used is 'pukapuka', which is a similar word for paper and could refer to the paper-like quality of the underside of leaves where a biro can be used to write notes.

#### b. Recognition features

##### Leaves

Endemic to New Zealand, rangiora shrubs are easily distinguished by the very large, leathery leaves with the undulating and scalloped margins. The green upperside has well-defined dark veins, while on the underside, leaves are distinctively white, soft and furry and the petioles are distinctly grooved.

##### Flowers and seed

The large white inflorescences that are clearly visible, have fragrant creamy-coloured flowers that develop seeds which produce 'parachute-like' attachments to assist their dispersal by wind.



Branch of rangiora shrub, with leaf buds and the large wavy leaves.



Upperside of a mature leaf.



Contrasting underside of a mature leaf.



Abundant white and cream-coloured flowers within the inflorescences.



Individual flowers.



Parachute-like attachments on seeds help their dispersal by wind.

All parts of rangiora plants are toxic due to pyrrolizidine alkaloids that are concentrated in the growing tips, flowers and the sap.

### c. Uses

Māori used leaves as an external antiseptic when these were applied to wounds and ulcerated sores. Leaves were also wrapped around food in preparation for a hangi. The soft white underside of leaves could be used as notepaper and toilet paper (often called the 'bushman's friend'). With the distinctive white underside of leaves, these, like the silver underside of the ponga/silver fern fronds, could be used to provide guidelines for tracks in the bush to avoid becoming lost. Exuded gum from plant tissue was chewed for foul breath but not swallowed.

### Thanks

The committee wishes to thank the many people associated with FOTBR for their help and ongoing service given in so many different ways over this past year. It has been valued and appreciated.

Gil Roper, Editor  
FOTBR Committee

