



*Bush Camp photos: Victoria Morris*

# Centennial Park Bush Society Newsletter



Newsletter No. 89

April 2020

## Our Fourth Successful Bush Camp

Excited anticipation came to a head at 2pm on Saturday 29 February, with the start of our fourth family bush camp. More than 70 happy children and parents set up tents, greeted old friends, made new ones, were welcomed and, while enjoying afternoon tea, were given an outline of proceedings.



Some were new to camping, others were old hands but all were challenged, captivated, educated and entertained – within Centennial Park, our wonderful urban taonga.

Four years ago a fruitful collaboration between Parks and Reserves staff and Bush Society volunteers resulted in the inaugural bush camp. Since then we've gathered impetus and our success has encouraged other Auckland groups to follow suit.

The goals were – and are – to promote awareness of the natural environment, to encourage everyone to get out and enjoy it, to understand the inter-connectedness of all living things and to protect what we have. With these aims in mind Anna and Paul led bush walks, Fiona and Paula engaged families in stream monitoring, Om led a karakia before harvesting and using flax in innovative and crafty ways, Peter demonstrated predator control and Richard gave a tree talk.

Following free time and a barbecue dinner, Om narrated while the children acted out the legend of Maui stealing fire. Toasting marshmallows proved popular and the much anticipated bug hunt with torches was a fitting finale.

Another successful Bush Camp concluded with friendships established, connections made and more friends for Centennial Park.

*Liz Goodwin*



## PLANTING DAY

We are planning to plant a huge number of plants this year on the edge of Park Rise Bush near the very top of Park Rise. We will need lots of help to do this so please make a diary note for

**Saturday 4 July at 9am.**

Please tell as many people as possible and bring friends, family, children and grandchildren. We will have a few spades but bring your own if you can. Rain day will be Sunday 5 July.



*Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary*

## Restore Hibiscus & Bays

Restore Hibiscus & Bays is a new organisation, formed in late 2019 to unite a variety of ecology action groups already operating in the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board area.

Groups such as Centennial Park Bush Society, Pest Free Hibiscus Coast, Northcross School, Friends of Long Bay, Okura Bush, Awaruku, Saddleback Reserve and Bush Glen have been informally sharing successes and nutting out problems together for some time. Restore H&B brings these groups under one umbrella, with the shared goals of healthy natural spaces, clean water, a safe place for wildlife and fewer environmental weeds. Our mission is Ngahere Tupu Tonu – Thriving Nature – and we're here to help strengthen and grow our thriving network of community groups.

Restore Hibiscus & Bays has a steering committee of volunteers, Council and Department of Conservation representatives which is chaired by Richard Hursthouse and which meets monthly. Two employed staff members, manager Rachael Randal and restoration advisor Kane Kvasnicka, are working hard behind the scenes, building the organisation's capacities. Kane is already helping Centennial Park Bush Society's Stream Savers Project.

Make contact via [info@restorehb.org.nz](mailto:info@restorehb.org.nz) or sign up to the Restore Hibiscus & Bays Facebook page.

*Richard Hursthouse*

## Streaming Live

A pilot project to restore a kilometre of the northern branch of Campbells Bay Stream has reached stage two. Local community group Stream Savers are visiting around 25 participating stream-edge properties between Beacon Avenue and lower Beach Road, to identify weeds and assess the condition of the stream banks. They are working with CBUS and Restore Hibiscus & Bays advisor Kane Kvasnicka to help form a weed-removal and planting plan. Funding is being applied for and the group feels positive that work to support property owners in clearing weeds and maintaining their stream will start in the next couple of months.

Stream Savers volunteer and stream-side resident, Paula Arkensteyn says most of the stream has good upper canopy cover, so shade is well-supplied but some stretches have large infestations of ginger, tradescantia and other weeds

which stifle native plants. "Once you remove the weeds the natives come back but we need to be careful because we don't want the banks becoming unstable. The ultimate aim is restore the whole northern branch of the stream, which will involve more than 60 properties. But for now we are finding out how this will work and what the buy-in will be," says Paula. Stream water levels have remained good despite the long drought and Paula still sees the eels which live in the stretch bordering her garden. "We are also seeing more wood pigeons, as a result of predator control in the area, and they often bathe in our stream. I am very passionate about our bit of stream and its surrounding bush. The whole stream could be just as beautiful."

*Jenny Chamberlain*

## Branching Out

Former Bush Society committee member Jan Knight credits skills gained during years of helping at Centennial Park working bees for her ability to

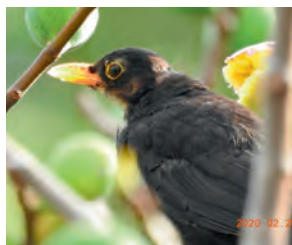


*Photo: Trish Viall*

spearhead the Barbados Reserve restoration scheme – an ambitious restoration project based at Greenwich Gardens retirement village. Jan, together with former CPBS committee member Bob Fairbairn and George Jones (pictured here, George is on the left) are taking care of a long stretch of land near the Alexander Stream which has been intermittently planted by students from Westminster Christian School. The site is being cleared of gorse, wattles and pampas and planted with more natives – thus far close on 1000 plants have gone in. Jan herself has barrowed huge amounts of mulch to protect the young trees – she says she paces herself and just does a few loads at a time. Jan says the area's mature tree ferns make it very beautiful and in stormy weather she can see the stream itself from her apartment. "The water roars through it after heavy rain. It would be easily three metres deep."

Jan still volunteers in Centennial Park when possible, helps deliver our newsletters and grows succulents for Hospice plant sales. Jan, you're a champion.

*Jenny Chamberlain*



*Photo: Julius Yang*



*Campbell's Bay Urban Sanctuary*



## Your Donation Makes A Huge Difference

Extending environmental work through pest plant and animal control, run by specialist community groups who provide knowledge, experience and support to residents, is a key priority for Hibiscus and Bays Local Board. Here in Campbells Bay that's us. Our labour is wholly voluntary but our specialised work costs money.

While we greatly appreciate our Local Board grants we need additional funds from community donations.

We are a registered charity so your donations qualify for tax refunds where applicable.

We no longer process cheques so please credit our Kiwibank account 38-9001-0816766-00 and include your name in the particulars.

Alternatively give the cash to a committee member to pass on to the treasurer. Please email [bushsoc@gmail.com](mailto:bushsoc@gmail.com) and give us your name and address, so we can give you a tax deductible receipt. If you would like your receipt by email so you can send it direct to the IRD, please tell us.

By the way, your donation entitles you to membership of the Centennial Park Bush Society and annual donations are voluntary, so you are not committing to donating every year. Thank you!

*Max Thomson*



Puriri Berries

*Photo: Richard Hursthouse*

## Pests

In the November 2019 newsletter we mentioned it was a 'mast' year, when trees bear prolifically, leading to an abundance of rats and other pests. The rat bait eaten during the rest of 2019 exceeded previous years. In November, to counter the effects of the mast, we started three new bait lines out to the north and east of the park, bringing the total number of bait stations to almost 200. It will be interesting to see whether analysis of the February 2020 pulse data, plus rat tunnel results, reveals a fall in rat numbers.

On the initiative of willing volunteer John Kinloch, and thanks to Council support and funds from many generous supporters, we have reactivated our possum trapping programme. In January, John installed 30 Trapinator possum

traps in a ring around the park's central valley. Attached to trees, and sited 1 to 1.5 metres off the ground, the traps, located by GPS, are both inconspicuous and safe from children and dogs. Instant success. Seven possums have already been dispatched on their way into the park where they damage trees (already suffering in the drought) and, later in the year, prey on birds' eggs and chicks. The next step will be to extend this successful trapping programme into the avenues of bush to the north of the park and the islands on the golf course.

The rabbits are beyond our ability to control. The initiative here belongs to Auckland Council and Pupuke Golf Club, which, as notices warn, is currently laying bait.

*Peter Aimer*

## Birds Need Water Too

Meteorologists and scientists are predicting the North Island's summer droughts will become the norm and are advising householders to install water tanks, or upgrade to bigger ones. While you're planning how to save winter's rainwater for the summer garden, consider installing a bird bath for the park's birds, who get a bit desperate when streams, puddles and ponds dry up. Birds need to drink and bathe daily just like us. They need to splash, beat their wings and dip their heads in the water and afterwards perch somewhere safe to preen and oil their feathers to keep them smooth and in good flying order. Starlings can spend up to 30

minutes perfecting their glossy shine. A bird bath will attract Centennial Park birds to your garden all year round, particularly if it has nearby branches or a fencetop for perching. The water should not be deep – 25mm is about right – and the bath must be clear of shrubbery so lurking cats are visible. Place a large stone in the middle for small birds to balance on. Change the water daily as it soon gets mucky.

*Jenny Chamberlain*



Spotted doves in an Aberdeen Road birdbath

*Photo: Julius Yang*



## Fabulous Fig

As summer slides into autumn it's worth taking a walk along the Aberdeen Track to where the large fig tree on the park's boundary is fruiting. If you stand very still for a few minutes a variety of breakfasting birds will fly back into its branches – blackbirds, finches, starlings, tui, waxeyes and small flocks of grey warblers. It's quite special to see mixed flocks in these numbers.

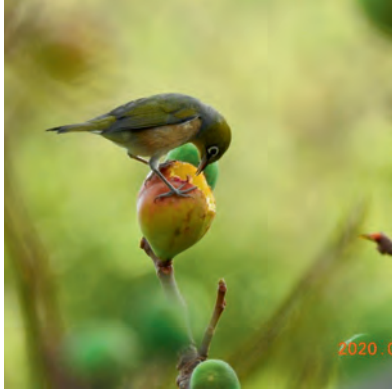


Photo: Julius Yang

Bird photographer Julius Yang took this superb photo of a feasting waxeye. The common fig, *Ficus carica*, is not native to New Zealand but is easy to grow, doesn't mind poor soil, is non-invasive and easily trimmed to shape.

Jenny Chamberlain

## Contact Us

**Chair:** Richard Hursthouse 021 216 1296  
**Secretary:** Jenny Chamberlain 478 6385  
**Treasurer:** Max Thomson 479 1681  
**Committee:** Peter Aimer, Liz Goodwin, Joe Greig, Sue Rawstron, Dick Downing, Victoria Morris, Fiona Davies, Jo Broad and Stuart George.

**Centennial Park Bush Society Inc.**

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Find out more and **sign up to our mailing list at**

 [www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz](http://www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz)

 [www.facebook.com/campbellsbayurbansanctuary/](http://www.facebook.com/campbellsbayurbansanctuary/)

## Marvellous Mapou

Mapou, or red matipo (*Myrsine australis*), is a very useful, somewhat underrated plant – one of 11 *Myrsine* endemic in New Zealand. It is not too big for urban gardens and can be trimmed and shaped. It has attractive light green leaves with undulating edges, reddish-brown twigs and its small black fruits provide food for birds, insects and reptiles.

It's not a showy plant but is widespread and can survive in almost any soil or location. It makes a brilliant hedge or small specimen tree. Seedling mapou pop up all the time in Centennial Park, especially along track margins.



Mapou in Centennial Park

Photo: Sue Rawstron

Sue Rawstron

Please come along to our AGM on

**Wednesday June 17 at Campbells Bay School staffroom at 7.30pm.**

We will have a great speaker and we can guarantee a short interesting AGM and a wonderful supper and good company.

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## We acknowledge the support of:

**Devonport Takapuna Local Board** for funding weed control at Campbells Bay School.

**Auckland Council Parks Department** for supplying plants, track metal, rat bait, herbicide gel and equipment for volunteers.

**Hibiscus & Bays Local Board** for funding weed control



Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary