



Releasing vital to native restoration

Please release me!
When we announce our public planting and releasing dates we are often asked, "well we know what planting is all about but what is releasing?"

Sadly this does not mean the liberation of kiwi or bellbirds (at least not yet!).

Although not as glamorous, it is just as vital to the restoration of our native environment.

Releasing is a term used for clearing weeds from around young plants to avoid competition for water, light and nutrients — this competition is one of the primary causes of plant failure.

The planting we undertake is often in an area previously grazed or neglected and is usually ridden with various weeds. The areas are generally sprayed before planting but

any gardener will know that this is only temporary reprieve from the onslaught of kikuyu and its friends.

Regrowth can be controlled by mechanical or chemical releasing.

Hand Releasing — best practice but labour intensive — that's why we need YOU!

Weeds are removed from around the root of the plant and laid back around it to form a natural mulch (unless they are invasive, such as asparagus fern, in which case they need to be removed from site).

Usually hand releasing just requires gloves and a healthy back/knees but if the weeds have grown tall then a weedeater or brush cutter can be used with care.

The weeded area need not be too extensive as remaining

weeds, which are not competing, can actually provide wind protection and welcome shade to young desirable plants.

Chemical Releasing — Although the use of herbicides (such as Glyphosate) seems a simple solution it is not ideal and presents a few problems.

Areas that have been sprayed become bare and regrowth is often of different weed species which are more resistant to herbicides.

The other major problem is spray drift onto the plants we are trying to protect. (How often do we have windless days?)

Native plants, particularly grasses, are very susceptible to herbicides and any overspray is likely to result in disaster.

The following methods can reduce but not eliminate this

problem: · use of a drift guard on the sprayer; · place a bucket over the native plant and spray around it; · use of dyes when spraying.

Timing Releasing will be needed twice a year (usually November and February) for most plantings and will probably be needed for two to four years from planting or until the plants have their heads well above the weeds.

At this stage they will begin to shade out the competition. They can then be left to fend for themselves and we can have a rest and a well earned cuppa.

Next releasing dates — please join us, we need you:

Saturday 6 November, 10am at Pollok Wharf

Sunday 21 November, 10am at Kemp Road, Awahitu Central Reserve



Above: All you need is a strong back!

Below: then it's time for a rest



Look out for the lookout!

Driving up the Peninsula it is easy to get distracted by the inspiring coastal views and land-forms.

Cochranes Gap is one such spectacle and the new lan Craig Reserve will provide views for visitors to our region.

Landcare volunteers and members of the Craig Family recently started the planting of this area which once bordered the path of the old Awahitu Road.

Care was taken to avoid planting anything that would grow to block the stunning views out to the West Coast breakers. Land Transport and the Council will be devising a plan for a safe road access and parking area and when completed this will become a great asset for our region.

Left: The magnificent view from lan Craig Reserve. Many hands made light work of planting out this inspiring spot.



The end of an era

Kia ora at the end of an era

To all in ARC and FDC who have supported Awahitu Landcare's efforts over the years with practical advice and on-the-ground assistance, funding and friendship.

Without you our organisation could not have survived.

We hope to be able to work with you again under the new Council structure, or perhaps in some other guise.

Relationships built over many years are hard to replace and we can only hope that Awahitu's fragile biodiversity is as well served in the future as it has been in the past by you.

Kia ora

What animal has recently been sighted on a sign in Waikuku, and in large numbers on the Manukau Harbour?

Answer at www.awahitu.org.nz

West Coast Walk on Labour Monday

West Coast Walk. Pa site visit — Labour Day Monday 25th October

Thanks to the generosity of a number of private landowners, our next Landcare walk promises to be a real treat for the whole family, and ideally placed on Labour Weekend Monday, it's a chance to make a real day of it.

This is a walk with a difference, and as well as the spectacular scenery, there's a few special features that make this a trip not to miss.

Join us for the opportunity to see remarkable views of the wild west coast, walk to an airstrip in the middle of nowhere, have the chance to visit a remote Pa site on private land very few have been privileged to access, and descend down a winding track through stands of native bush to the valley floor. (And don't worry, the walk back up again isn't too demanding!)

So if you feel like getting active, accompanied by a dose of Maori and Pakeha history, a visitation with native flora and that invigorating Tasman air — here's what you need to know:

Head 34km up the Awahitu Peninsula to the corner of Jirwin and Manukau Heads Roads (signposted paddock parking).

Be there by 1pm — that's when the walk starts, and it's expected to take approximately two hours

We are mostly following four-wheel drive

tracks so the walk, although hilly, is a relatively easy grade — an average level of fitness required, please wear sturdy footwear.

Tea and coffee will be available on return back by the carpark.

Below: Remarkable views are revealed when walking in Awahitu

