



Welcome to Issue 36 of the Awhitu Peninsula Landcare newsletter. Thanks to everyone who attended the opening of our native plant nursery on the Council Domain at Matakawau, next to Awhitu School.

This has now been in operation for three months, and all is going well. With volunteer help, we aim to keep our

doors open every weekday morning.

We welcome visitors, do come and have a look around.

From our base there, our work with pest control continues and has moved up a notch in recent times. Every year in this country a whopping 26 million native forest birds perish to mammalian predators. Scary, but true.

## Why eco-source?

The Landcare nursery will propagate eco-sourced plants grown from seed collected from established, healthy, naturally occurring local plant stocks. Why?

Because those old, healthy Peninsula plants have developed over many generations to have the plant characteristics most likely to flourish in our unique Awhitu environment.

Eco-sourcing is not about re-creating a frozen portion of time like a snapshot of natural history.

It's an attempt to protect biodiversity and kick start natural processes such as natural selection, seed dispersal, succession.



It's about moving forward, using the past as a reference point to get started.

Above: Eco-sourcing requires careful selection of seed.

Why should we care about biodiversity? Biological diversity, or 'biodiversity' for short, describes the variety of all biological life - species of plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms - the genes they contain and the ecosystems on land or in water where they live. It is the diversity of life on earth. Our very existence depends upon it. We should care.

## Tax reform encourages conservation planting

Riparian plantings by farmers can now be deducted as an operational expense rather than classified as capital expenditure after recent amendments to the Income Tax Act.

Conservation Minister Dr Nick Smith says: "The key change is that it now explicitly allows deductions for plantings to prevent or mitigate discharges into water courses or water bodies. It also extends the provision from just trees to shrubs and other plantings. Farmers are practical stewards of their land who know the benefits of riparian planting for reducing nutrient and sediment run-off. My challenge to the farming sector is to use this tax change to pick up the pace of riparian planting."

Below: There are many benefits to planting waterways.



## Accept a gift and protect our birds!

Cat Collars save Birds



We have the opportunity to give away some quality cat collars to Waiuku RD3 and RD4 residents, in a bid to protect Awhitu's native birds. Studies have found bell collars can cut bird kills by 50%.

The one-size-fits-all, vet-approved collars have two bells and a safety release in case of snagging. They are reflective, which is even more of a 'danger signal' to birds. Two bells are necessary as some cats learn how to silence one!

A Landcare spokesperson says: "We put a great deal of effort into pest trapping but the cat collars could be even more beneficial for wildlife. It's a really simple thing people can do to protect a lot of birds and help solve the problems we're facing."

We don't want to get rid of cats. We realise cats are part of people's lives. We advocate responsible ownership."

Unfortunately the statistics are shocking. New Zealand's 1.4 million domestic cats are estimated to kill about five million native birds a year.

Contact Landcare for your free cat collar - while stocks last - and help save our birds.

## Awhitu Landcare Plant Nursery benefits all



We have committed to the major undertaking of our own native plant nursery with the simple objective of making revegetation on Awhitu Peninsula land, especially water catchment areas, as easy and affordable as possible. Our volunteers hope to produce up to 20,000 eco-sourced native plants a year once we are in full production.

We aim to work with landowners to provide an 'in ground' cost for plants - ie Landcare supply both the plants and the labour at an affordable cost.

The objective being to assist busy landowners carry out revegetation projects, to recover any costs incurred in raising the plants and perhaps provide some local employment. So the cycle becomes self-

funding and hopefully everybody benefits - but most especially the land and waters surrounding our Peninsula, and the wildlife therein.

We will not be making door sales from the nursery, rather we will work with landowners and grow plants for identified projects, with each site being individually assessed. It is certainly not our intention to compete with any Peninsula nurseries.

Volunteer planting projects on public reserve land, for the benefit of the community, will continue as before. Monthly potting sessions are proving very popular (we have fun while we work) - contact us for details.

Above: Volunteers worked hard to establish the plant nursery.

## Manukau Lighthouse now surrounded by native plants

The planting session at Manukau Heads Lighthouse saw Waiuku College pupils under the direction of teacher Jane Patterson in action. Essential guidance was given by Anna McNaughton and other Landcare volunteers.

In Anna's words: "Successfully dodged some VERY heavy weather to complete flax, pohutukawa planting, flax trimming, wattle clearance, garden tidying, prism cleaning etc. Have begun harvesting baby flax plants from car park water table. Great plants. There will be gaps to fill next year or two."

"But, basically the whole lighthouse surround is planted now".

Everything achieved on the day was gratefully re-



ceived by Lighthouse Trustees, who will always have room for volunteers keen to keep this magnificent site looking its best for its many

visitors. Above; Waiuku College planters tackle one of the steeper ridges below the lighthouse.

## Community plantings successful again

Another season of Landcare community plantings has come to an end. Loyal volunteers have turned up in all weathers, working to improve the biodiversity and natural environment on public reserves on the Peninsula. Thanks to them, thousands more native plants are in the ground after this winter.

Five community areas; Hamilton's

Gap/ Waimatuku, Awhitu Central Reserve wetland, Awhitu Central Social Club, Manukau Heads Lighthouse, and Pollok Wharf Reserve - have been tended to by volunteers, who were delighted to see last year's plantings thriving, as a testament to their prior labour. Something they can show with pride to their children and grandchildren alike.