

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST

Mount Burnett – Wakamarama Range

Pass the Collingwood turn-off, then turn right to cross the Aorere River. The mountain slopes directly ahead feature northern rata, with southern rata near the top. From December it is possible to see progressive flowering up Mount Burnett and the slopes of the Wakamarama Range.

The Kaituna Track

You'll find many huge rata in a beautiful bush setting a short distance up the track.

Whanganui (Westhaven) Inlet

Northern rata grows along the estuary. Southern rata and the rare Parkinson's rata are found up the Knuckle Hill Track. Go to the Anatori River and discover an overarching grove of rata just before the descent to the river.



Why Project Crimson?

Despite their prominence, rata face serious challenges. Over many years rata have been cleared from the lowland flats and slopes for farmland and now are mainly found in the hills away from easy access.

Many of the old trees left are declining from exposure. Former logging has destroyed their host trees. Ongoing harvest for firewood has also had an impact. Possum browsing in the southern rata forest has decimated whole forests. Scale insects are causing canopy die-back.

Through a wide range of education and information activity, through community partnerships, widespread planting and possum eradication programmes, Project Crimson and the Department of Conservation seek to enable both rata and pohutukawa to flourish once again in their natural habitat. In Golden Bay alone over 1,000 rata have been planted over three years – trees grown from cuttings taken from local wild seedlings.

This Crimson Trail is one of a series of Crimson Trails being identified by Project Crimson throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

Each Crimson Trail is unique to its region, presenting either pohutukawa or rata (northern and southern) or both, according to location within New Zealand.

What the Crimson Trails share is that special time of the year when glorious crimson blooms cloak the trees and the wind-blown stamens carpet the ground all around.

Crimson Trails can be explored in the following areas:

North Island (Te Ika a Maui)

Auckland
Coromandel
Mount Maunganui
Rotorua
Wellington

South Island (Te Waipounamu)

Golden Bay
West Coast
Otago Southland



Brochures for each Crimson Trail are available from Department of Conservation offices, local Information Centres and can be downloaded from Project Crimson's web site.

For further information about Project Crimson and the Crimson Trails:

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The magnificent northern rata, with its beautiful crimson flowers can be seen in all its glory in Golden Bay. The Trail leads from Takaka to the Grove Scenic Reserve, where massive trees sprout from limestone outcrops, then past the spectacular cliffs at Pohara to the beaches of the Abel Tasman National Park.

This Crimson Trail will lead you to outstanding examples of this New Zealand native tree as well as guide you through some of the best scenery the South Island has to offer.

RATA TRAIL GOLDEN BAY


PROJECT / CRIMSON

renewing pohutukawa and rata

with  Meridian Energy

Photo: Sharon Langridge



THE LIFE CYCLES

Northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*)

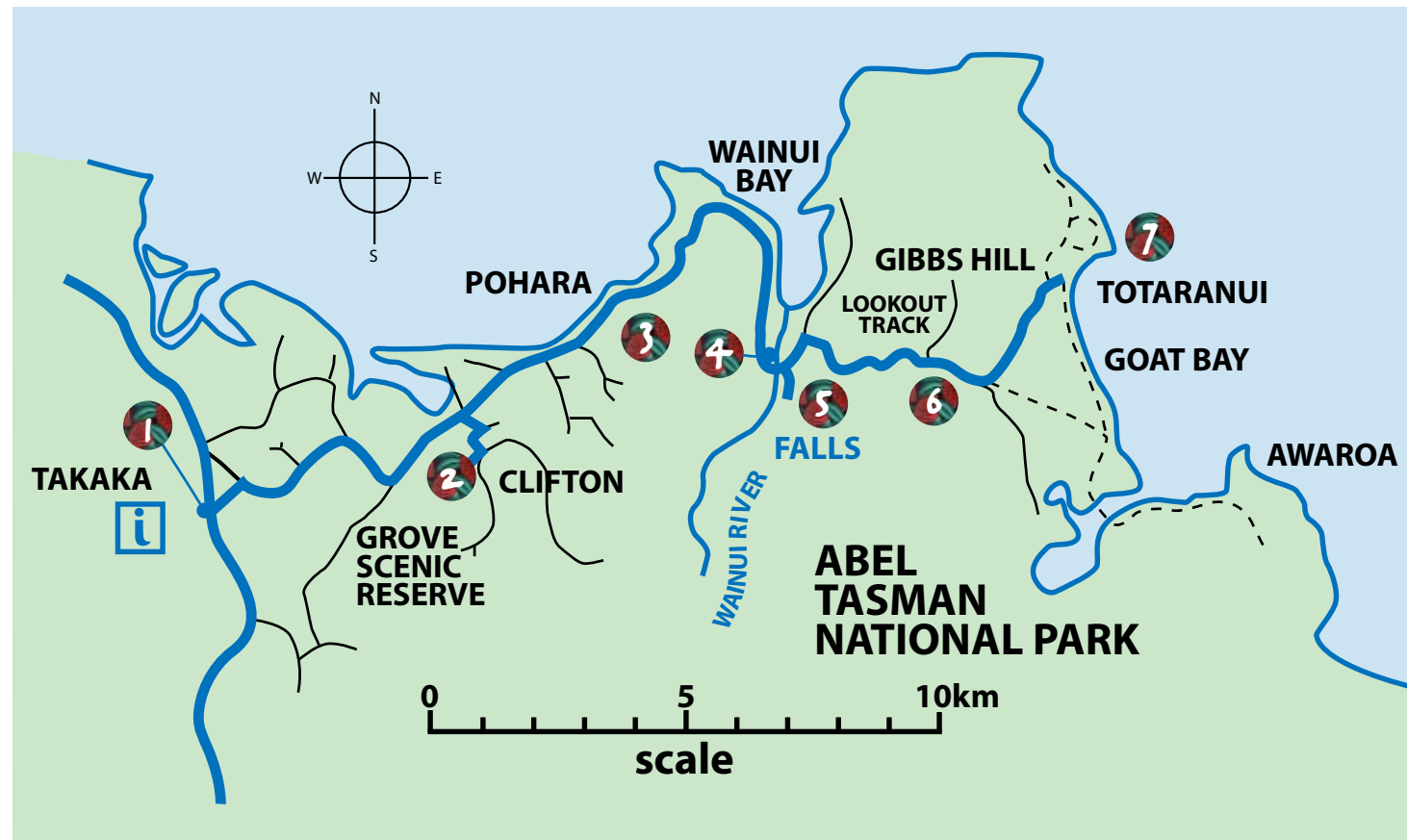
The tiny seeds of this tree, blown by the wind, come to rest high above the ground, in the humus-filled forks of pukatea or rimu trees, or occasionally on rock outcrops. Germinating, the seedling draws nutrient from the humus while sending one aerial root, or more, on the long journey to the ground.

As the rata grows, the thickening roots send encircling bands round the host tree's trunk, much like the tropical strangling fig. At the same time, the rata's crown, now rapidly expanding, begins to overshadow the host tree's canopy. Hundreds of years go by. The host, robbed of its supply of light and with its tissues disrupted by the tightly gripping aerial roots, weakens and dies. The rata's roots, now merging to form a single massive trunk, continue to grow as the host rots away, leaving a hollow core to mark its passing. From this beginning the tree can go on to live for over a thousand years, each year sending a new batch of tiny seeds away on the wind.

Southern rata (*Metrosideros umbellata*)

This tree has its stronghold in the South Island where it favours the cold wet Westland forests and coastlines and Stewart Island. It even grows as a tangled shrub on our sub-Antarctic islands. Unlike northern rata, southern rata prefers to start life on the ground. Northern and southern rata can be distinguished by their leaves: if it's sharp it's southern; if it's notched it's northern. In Golden Bay, southern rata is found at higher altitudes where the climate is cooler, and can be seen at Hawkes Lookout on the Takaka Hill.

Meridian Energy is New Zealand's largest generator of electricity. The partnership with Project Crimson reflects our commitment to Keeping New Zealand New by using only renewable forms of generation, such as wind and hydro. We are privileged to live and work every day amongst New Zealand's awe-inspiring natural environment, at Manapouri, the Mackenzie district, and Te Apiti. We feel equally privileged to be able to support the Trust's goal of renewing the splendour of pohutukawa and rata for future generations.



The Trail begins in Takaka at the Information Centre



1 A tree planted over 80 years ago grows in the main street opposite the Telegraph Hotel.



2 The Grove Scenic Reserve is characterised by massive northern rata growing on curiously shaped limestone outcrops. There is an easy 20-minute walk passing some impressive roots over large limestone blocks. Look for the rata starting to encircle the host tree's trunk, on your left some ten metres after the start of the return trail.



3 From the Pohara Store, northern rata dominate the-limestone cliff skyline for about one kilometre. This-is the only old-growth coastal forest left in the district. Current die-back is caused by drought. Mid-December is the peak flowering time.



4 In Wainui Bay note the three mature rata on the left by a small turn-off and picnic site before the Wainui Bridge.



5 Wainui Falls Walk (look for sign to carpark on right after the bridge). A grove of northern rata, mainly growing on pukatea, are on the left after the first loop track sign. On the left, above the swing bridge, is a magnificent specimen of a fully mature rata, from which the dead rimu host is falling away. Many rata grow on bluffs around the-falls.



6 Pigeon Saddle, the highest point on the road to Totaranui, has many northern rata, mainly on the left and along the Lookout Track. This is a species-rich area and boasts several massive trees along the track. Late December is the best flowering time for rata here and all the way to Awaroa turn-off.



7 From Totaranui Beach, large northern rata can be seen on the headland. At the top of the Headland Track are several massive northern rata and the shorter Pukatea Walk also passes some magnificent specimens. A walk to Goat Bay in the south passes through groves of rata.

Find out more about northern and southern rata at www.projectcrimson.org.nz