

TRUE COLOURS



Bridget Abernethy

Trail blazing in Rotorua

Protecting the pohutukawa and rata in New Zealand is what we do at Project Crimson.

While most of our effort goes into funding community groups and propagating eco-sourced stock for projects, we are also focused on encouraging New Zealanders to love these trees, which will ensure their protection well beyond our own capability.

Getting people to love pohutukawa and rata trees is easy. Through our Crimson Trails we encourage New Zealanders and visitors to our country to visit the best stands of these native trees, and then the trees do the rest! Magnificent stands of pohutukawa and rata are literally all over New Zealand.

In 2001, Project Crimson and local residents from Golden Bay pooled their knowledge to identify and develop the first Crimson Trail, which was designed to celebrate the rata in the area. This has proved to be a great way to get locals and visitors to the area to see the beautiful trees, and to understand their importance to the eco-system.

Since that inaugural Trail, Project Crimson has launched five more in Mount Maunganui, Otago-Southland, Auckland, the South Island's West Coast, and Wellington. These range from a gentle two hour walk to trails that require transport between sites and could take days to complete.

Last month, on Saturday 22 November, we unveiled Project Crimson's seventh Crimson Trail, the Rotorua Crimson Trail. The new trail is in six sections, spread from the eastern shores of Lake Rotorua to Kawerau.

The pohutukawa stands you'll find in the Rotorua Lakes region are quite peculiar in that they are the only truly inland stands of this traditional coastal species. They are also special in that 'pure' pohutukawa grow alongside northern rata and pohutukawa that have hybridised. It is not surprising to find pohutukawa in this district that are often more upright in form, and with flowers that range from typically crimson to a 'pinkish-orange' colour.

Finding magnificent examples of pohutukawa and rata does not have to be a random experience. With Crimson Trails around New Zealand you can see for yourself some of the best, hand-picked spots for viewing these special natives.

See our website for the entire range of Crimson Trail information www.projectcrimson.org.nz and we'd love to hear your feedback.

Bridget

Give Crimson for Christmas

The new Project Crimson website, hosted by Oxygen Business Solutions, has proved incredibly popular. During October, the first month of the new site, we had 2,700 new visitors log on and browse.

With the flowering and holiday season approaching, what better time to send a Project Crimson electronic postcard? Brighten up the day of friends and family overseas with an image of New Zealand's native Christmas tree. E-postcards mean there is no worry about missing the last Christmas posting date, and there are three great postcards to choose from.

Find them in the Resources section under Knowledge & Resources at www.projectcrimson.org.nz or follow the link from the Home Page.

Remember, if you have a community event happening, be it a planting, weeding or nursery day, let us know and we will list it in our Upcoming Events section



'Big Red' Has Arrived! (21 November 2003 to 29 February 2004)

In time for summer and the pohutukawa flowering season, the Big Red exhibition opened at the Rotorua Museum on November 21.

The exhibition was opened by Ruud 'the bug man' Kleinpaste. Ruud is an authority on conservation and creepy crawlies in particular, and is well known in New Zealand as a columnist, author and TV personality. In between giving lectures, planning eco-tours and supporting several conservation groups, he is also an enthusiastic Trustee of the Project Crimson Trust.

Big Red celebrates the pohutukawa with an eclectic mix of historical and contemporary art, photography, poetry, literature, audio-visual presentations and objects.

The art on display includes works from 48 artists and a number of important national collections, from an

engraving by Sydney Parkinson dating to Cook's first voyage 1768 – 1771 to a photographic image by Eric Lee-Johnson and an abstract work by Colin McCahon.

The less conventional art form of painted fibreglass cows is represented by the 'Pohutu-cowa', designed by Kathy Reid for the 'Heart of the City' cow parade in Auckland in 2002 – 2003. It is decorated from its horns to its hooves with pohutukawa blooms!

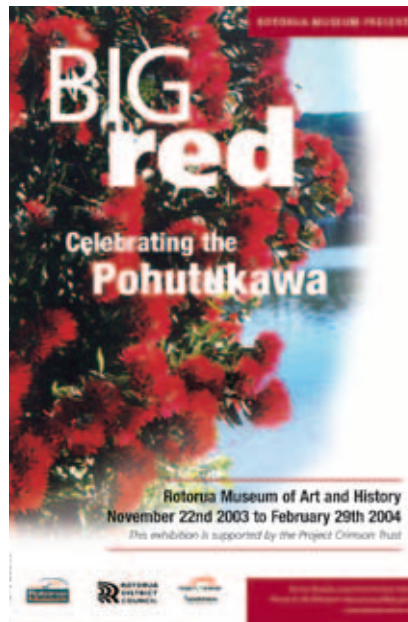
If art isn't your thing, there are plenty of other things to see and do over the duration of the exhibition, which is on until 29 February 2004.

And look out for the brightly coloured street banners, designed and painted by Rotorua school children, around Rotorua from mid-December.

Big Red Activities:

On Mokoia Island, guided tours and pre-Christmas activities will take place on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 December. The pohutukawa walk with Mokoia Island Hunga tiaki (Guardians) will focus on the Island's history, culture, flora and fauna. Special water transport, access and landing fees apply for this weekend and reservations are essential. Phone 07 346 8332 or 0800 Mokoia, Fax: 07 348 8436, Email: mokoia.island@xtra.co.nz.

Project Crimson Trustee Gordon Hosking will be giving a talk at the Museum on 18 January at 2pm entitled 'Pohutukawa - more than just a pretty face'. Dr Hosking has spent most of his working life in our indigenous forests as a researcher and outdoor enthusiast. He considers his association with pohutukawa research and Project Crimson to be amongst the most rewarding of all his activities.



Northern Rata Recovery



Volunteers planting rata on Mana Island

Project Crimson and DOC have a very active partnership that dates back to the start of the Trust 13-years ago. The Northern Rata Recovery Project on Mana Island is just one example of this working relationship.

Mana Island is off the north-west coast of Wellington. It has a long history of Maori and European occupation and was farmed from 1832 until 1986, when it was set up by the Government as a 217ha Scientific Reserve.

Human habitation on the Island caused severe degradation of the forest cover and just one very poor remnant of northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) remains.

The Northern Rata Recovery Project is a part of DOC's 20-year planting programme to restore the vegetation and habitat of the island to a similar environment to what existed prior to human intervention on the Island.

Project Crimson has been funding rata on Mana Island since 1997 and to date, 1,200 northern rata have been planted. Altogether, around 380,000 of a planned 400,000 trees have been planted during the first 15 years of the revegetation programme.

Visitors arriving by private or charter boat are welcome on Mana Island between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm. To book transport to Mana Island contact Les Flowers on (04) 237 4728 or mobile 025 418 803.

To participate in the planting programme you can call Sue Chesterfield on (04) 233 8314 or chesterfield@zfree.co.nz

To contact Project Crimson: Phone (09) 414 0466

The Coromandel Pohutukawa Festival – GET THERE

Project Crimson is about inspiring individuals and community groups to take on pohutukawa and rata protection projects. The Trust provides "seed" funding to help get projects started then relies on the drive, determination and commitment of individuals and groups to continue the work.

Since 1990, Project Crimson has provided approximately \$56,000 and 4,000 ecologically-sourced trees to various pohutukawa and rata protection and planting projects in the Coromandel region, and has worked on these projects with local groups and individuals.

Jan Blake from Carter Holt Harvey Woodproducts, Kopu, is one of the many champions to stand out for their great work with Project Crimson. Jan's dream was to see pohutukawa celebrated on the Coromandel Peninsula, while promoting the region, its talented people and businesses, and highlighting the need for protection and restoration of pohutukawa.

In 2000, the Coromandel Pohutukawa Festival was born with a weekend of events between Thames and Coromandel townships. It has grown to become a 10-day festival, with a programme of over 35 events across the Coromandel, Thames, Paeroa and Waihi townships. Events include the popular Kopine Creative Couture (wearable art) Competition, a multicultural festival, art exhibitions, the Thames to

Coromandel Crimson Classic Cycle/Run, guided walks and of course Santa Parades in each town.

This is a great example of a community taking the initiative and ensuring a future for the pohutukawa in our environment and in our hearts.

If you can get to the Coromandel Peninsula, come to the Festival! From 28 November to 7 December there's a wide range of events - something for everyone. For full programme details go to the Festival website:

www.pohutukawafest.com or visit a local information office.



Wearable art at the Pohutukawa Festival 2002

QEII National Trust Open Space Covenants

Do you have a native forest remnant, wetland native forest or section of coastline on your land that provides a home for some of our unique plants and animals? Maybe it is a site of historical significance or a rare or beautiful landscape feature?

Whatever is unique about your land, QEII National Trust can help you protect it with an open space covenant, creating a legacy strengthening and preserving New Zealand's heritage into the future.

QEII National Trust is a statutory organisation independent from government and managed by a board of directors. The Trust helps landowners protect natural features including landscapes, streams, wetlands, coastlines, forests, lakes, geological features and cultural and archaeological sites.

For more information on how to protect the special nature of your land, contact the QEII National Trust on (freephone) 0508 732 878.

Source: Auckland Regional Council Spring 2003 edition of Pohutukawa Post

Going Crimson in Golden Bay

When is planting native trees not a good idea? DOC employee Shirley Haywood can tell you - in her spare time she works in the Golden Bay area educating people about the need to plant the right kind of trees for their area.

Since 1999, Project Crimson has been helping Shirley get northern rata into the ground around the Golden Bay area. Shirley had noticed that people were planting pohutukawa, which grows well in the area, but which does not naturally occur there.

From an ecological perspective, it's preferable to propagate trees in their natural growing area (which for pohutukawa is in the top half of the North Island), so Shirley set about sourcing and distributing northern rata for planting instead.

Each year, about 350 to 500 trees are planted in 20-30 different locations. Preference is given to planting projects on public land such as Council Reserves, DOC-managed land, riparian revegetation projects and covenanted land, but revegetation projects on private land may also benefit. A few of the trees are also given to people for ornamental plantings, including private gardens as well as motel and motorcamp plantings. It all helps encourage use of the local northern rata instead of pohutukawa.

The trees are grown at Titoki Nursery in Nelson and then planted by groups including Keep Golden Bay Beautiful, Forest and Bird, Onekaka Biodiversity Group, and other informal groups which get together for planting.

In some cases, creativity is required to help avoid threats to the young trees of possums, hares, droughts and even poor soils. One ingenious solution to deter animals is the use of gorse mulch around the trees.

We admire Shirley's dedication - all this work is done outside of her 'day job'. Project Crimson is pleased to be working with her on such a worthwhile project to turn Golden Bay crimson!

Rata Restoration in Southland

As you might imagine, growing plants costs money. The Southland Community Nursery, run by Chris and Brian Rance, offers an innovative way to propagate native plants for local restoration schemes at minimum cost – the work is done by volunteers.

Southland Community Nursery was established in 1996 on the Rances' property, and is available to anyone in Southland who wants to use it. Funding is used primarily to pay for potting mix, pots and nursery costs (weedmat, shade cloth, irrigation etc).

Individuals, groups and organisations volunteer their time to pot up seedlings grown at the nursery, or provide their own seedlings from the area, and help with nursery maintenance. It's a clever way of producing hundreds of locally sourced native plants at almost no cost.

In 2001, Project Crimson granted assistance to one of the Rances' nursery projects – a four-year rata awareness and restoration scheme at two sites near Invercargill – Otarara (a suburb near Invercargill) and Bluff.

With just one small stand of rata left in Otarara, the project focussed on expanding the rata population and raising awareness of the plight of this native beauty. This was achieved partly through propagation and planting locally sourced rata in Otarara and through publicity and awareness raising work at the Southern Community Nursery.

Restoration planting was also undertaken on the marae grounds at Motupohue Scenic Reserve in Bluff.

Finding propagation material and growing new seedlings from the existing local trees, is not an easy task, and scientist Graeme Elliot and his climbing equipment were 'roped' in to help collect cuttings from far up local trees! About 65 rata seedlings are now potted up and growing for the Otarara part of the project and cuttings are still rooting for the Bluff project.

In the long term, the area will once again bloom crimson around the Rata Road neighbourhood in Otarara, and in Bluff thanks to the persistence and hard work of Chris and Brian Rance and all the volunteers at the Southland Community Nursery.



Fashion Icon



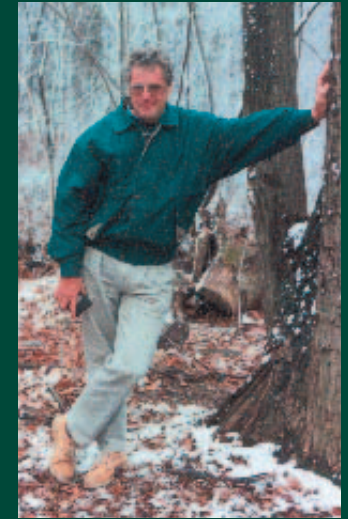
Wear your pride for our national icon on your chest. Cool new Project Crimson t-shirts are available for purchase – black T's in men's, women's and teens' sizes \$35.00 each. Also available in a red singlet for women and teens.

A perfect gift for friends and family at any time of year.

Send a cheque to Project Crimson (PO Box 301027, Albany, Auckland) or purchase online at www.projectcrimson.org.nz.

Project Crimson Trustee

This month we introduce you to Project Crimson Trustee Dr Gordon Hosking.



Gordon Hosking

Gordon has been a Trustee for ten years and in that time has made an enormous contribution to the intelligence of the organisation and the action it has taken in the protection of pohutukawa and rata.

He has over 30 years' experience in forest health and bio-security research management and over that period has been a researcher and research manager for Forest Research working on introduced exotic insects, beech forest decline, cabbage tree death and pohutukawa decline.

Gordon is anything but your average forest man.

He has established his own technology company, put together a joint venture company to advance new initiatives in environmentally acceptable quarantine treatments and has designed an indigenous forest health assessment package which is delivered in a joint venture with Forest Research.

He came away from the University of Maine, USA, with a doctorate of Forest Entomology, and has authored over 50 formal publications in the field of forest health and bio-security.

And if that isn't enough, he would give most young gung-ho mountain bike riders a serious run for their money on the mountain bike trails around New Zealand.

Project Crimson is very fortunate to have Gordon's continued support through his role on the Trust and his ongoing research into the health of the pohutukawa and rata in New Zealand.