

December 2005

True Colours

Pōhutukawa and Rātā: New Zealand's Iron-hearted Trees

by Philip Simpson

This month, the much anticipated *Pōhutukawa & Rātā: New Zealand's Iron-hearted Trees*, was launched by Te Papa Press with support from Project Crimson.

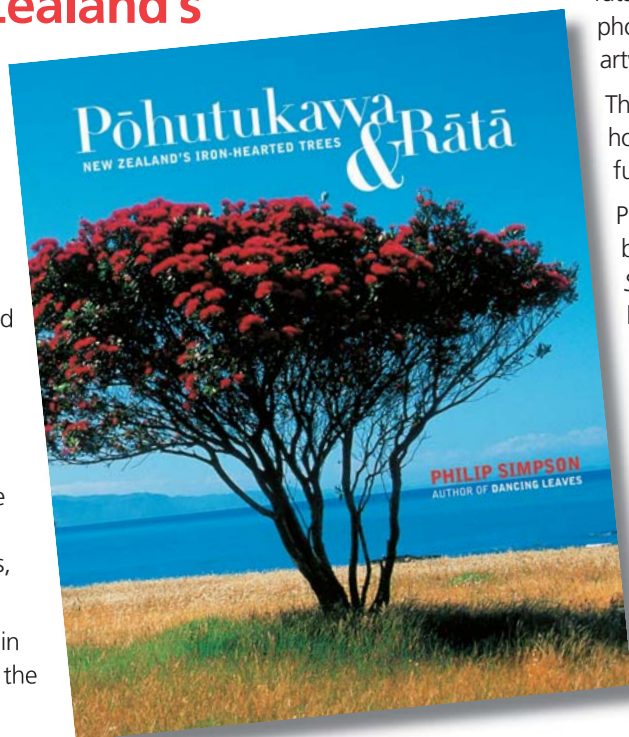
Pōhutukawa and rātā trees are among New Zealand's most beloved and recognisable national icons, symbolising summer, nationhood and our unique natural environment. The arrival of this book is a timely reminder of the importance of these trees to the cultural, historical and ecological backdrop of this country.

Pōhutukawa & Rātā: New Zealand's Iron-hearted Trees celebrates these unique trees – their place in the natural world, their importance to Maori, their role in symbolism, art, and design, and their many remarkable uses – as well as the threat they face today from possums, progress and people.

Part One of the book outlines the place of the rata and pohutukawa in the natural world: their ancient Gondwanaland origins, their place in the myrtle family and their genus, *Metrosideros* (literally 'iron-hearted', in reference to their extraordinarily strong wood.)

Part Two reveals the historical and cultural significance of pohutukawa and rata, exploring their role in Maori mythology, language and traditional life, and discussing important individual trees in Maori culture.

Containing a wealth of new research, this book really does contain everything you ever wanted to know about pohutukawa and



The price for the paperback is \$59.99 (inc.GST) and can be purchased now from booksellers throughout New Zealand.

rata, generously illustrated with over 400 archival and contemporary photographs, diagrams, maps and full-colour reproductions of New Zealand artworks.

This book is an essential resource for teachers and pupils, gardeners and horticulturalists, lovers of history and art, and anyone committed to the future of New Zealand's precious flora and fauna.

Philip Simpson is a member of the Project Crimson Trust, an expert botanist and the author of Montana Award-winning *Dancing Leaves: The Story of New Zealand's Cabbage Tree, Ti Kouka (2000)*. Here, he brings his characteristic insight, knowledge, and ecological passion to two equally iconic native trees.

Buy now for Christmas.

Project Crimson T's now on sale

\$30 (mens, womens & kids)

See details on www.projectcrimson.org.nz



Protecting Pōhutukawa & Rātā www.projectcrimson.org.nz



The Kawhia community and Project Crimson join forces *by Gordon Hosking, Trustee, Project Crimson*

About a year ago Project Crimson began considering potential areas for one or two major long term projects advancing the protection, rehabilitation and replanting of pohutukawa and rata. After much discussion two areas were chosen for special effort, one of which is the Kawhia/Aotea Harbour region. The project was supported by all Trustees, who recognise the great cultural significance of pohutukawa to the area, the extensive loss of pohutukawa and rata from this coast, and the enthusiastic support from the community.

Project Crimson is developing an over-arching plan for the initiative, beneath which will fit a number of individual projects on both private and public land. Projects currently under development include the revegetation of Te Maika, upper harbour edge plantings on two farms, and the Te Hinengaro O Kawhia Trust nursery itself. Already 1,350 one year old seedlings have been transferred from the Horizon2 Nursery at Te Teko in the Bay of Plenty, to the Trust's nursery at Kawhia, and around 2,000 more will arrive over coming months. These young trees will require another year of care, so the first significant plantings are planned for next winter.

The Te Hinengaro O Kawhia Trust nursery is a cornerstone of this project and will lead the restoration plantings and raise pohutukawa and rata for the range of individual projects.

Although Kawhia is a three hour drive from Rotorua, I feel privileged to be the Project Crimson Trustee responsible for supporting this initiative. Tineke and I need little excuse to pack the kayak and mountain bike and head across country to their beautiful harbours. Project Crimson is committed to providing support for an initial five years, and welcomes new project proposals from individuals and groups.

For more information contact Alan RuBay or Sandra Drummond at Te Hinengaro O Kawhia Trust in Kawhia, or myself at 07 3456861 or 173C State Highway 30, Tikitere, RD4, Rotorua.



Te Hinengaro o Kawhia Trust Nursery.



Te Maika

We will keep you posted of progress and activities through this newsletter. Finally we would like to mention the outstanding support we have received from Waikato DOC staff, Environment Waikato, and Deborah Pilkington of Otorohanga District Council. This is a team effort and you the community are the team leaders.

Project Crimson awareness and attitude survey

A recent national survey of attitudes to Project Crimson showed 18.5% of respondents had heard of Project Crimson.

Of those who had heard of us, an astounding 81% could describe accurately what Project Crimson does (the protection of pohutukawa and rata).

84.2% of all the respondents perceived Project Crimson to be either important or extremely important in protecting the natural environment in New Zealand.

The reason most often offered for why Project Crimson is important was that it preserves and protects New Zealand's native trees.

Total sample = 507
 Nationwide survey – all respondents were aged 16+
 The standard margin of error (at the 95% confidence level) +/- 4.4%
 The survey took place during September 2005

Research undertaken by Mobius Research

Mazda NZ Foundation Aims To Foster Community Spirit

Mazda New Zealand has announced the establishment of the Mazda NZ Foundation, with a goal of providing for specific areas of community need.

With initial seed funding from Mazda Inc in Japan along with contributions from every new Mazda vehicle entering the country and support from Mazda dealers throughout New Zealand, it is envisaged there will be \$175,000 of funding available annually.

Funding will be awarded to people who are involved in projects and activities that have a unique quality with an emphasis on environmental, cultural and educational activities. Employment skills development and assistance in the arts with a view to promoting New Zealand culture are also key focuses.

Mazda managing director, Peter Aitken, believes the Foundation will see Mazda participate in the community well beyond any traditional role of an automotive organization.

“At Mazda we are strong believers in community involvement, and are already involved with a number of charity initiatives and sponsorships including the annual Mazda Artworks Charity Art Exhibition and Sale and Project Crimson. The Mazda Foundation enables us to further foster this spirit of community involvement while standing apart from our commercial operations.

“By launching the Foundation we are acting upon the firm belief that we can only pave the way for a brighter tomorrow by laying the groundwork today,” added Mr Aitken.

Four independent Foundation Trustees along with two representatives from Mazda New Zealand will be responsible for reviewing applications and the allocation of funds. These people are Murray Berkett, director First Assistance Rescue & Emergency Ltd; Liane Donovan, director Donovan Boyd Communications Ltd; Murray Nicholson, dealer principal, Waikato Motor Group and Connie Miller, business development manager Auckland Philharmonia. Mazda is represented by managing director Peter Aitken and general manager sales and marketing, Andrew Clearwater.

There are three closing dates in each year for the applications, 31 March; 30 June and 30 September. For further information or to register for a grant, information is available from www.mazdafoundation.org.nz

Coromandel Launches into Summer!

Summer is just around the corner and the Coromandel has a huge party planned to celebrate its arrival. It's all part of the Mercury Energy Pohutukawa Festival which runs from 25 November – 11 December 2005.

The festival is a celebration of the pohutukawa and its symbolic ties to New Zealand beach culture. For most Kiwi's the blossoming of these trees triggers fond memories of summers spent by the beach and family bach.

Over three weekends, some of New Zealand's top bands will be playing in stunning, pohutukawa lined coastal locations in Whangamata, Thames Coast and Whitianga. Crowd pleasers Goldenhorse and Greg Johnson are among those performing and each day will be accompanied with good wine and food.

Some of the dishes to be enjoyed include fresh snapper crumbed with locally grown macadamia and “Crimson” a Pinot Noir from Ata Rangi vineyard in Martinborough. Ata Rangi has produced the wine in conjunction with Project Crimson with proceeds from the wine going towards the Trust's pohutukawa and rata reforestation efforts.

For art lovers there is a visual feast of pohutukawa inspired creations at exhibitions, Art Trails and the 6th Pohutukawa Wearable Arts show.

Tourism Coromandel have once again team up with Mercury Energy and Project Crimson to take the Festival to a new and exciting level.

Many of the Coromandel's environmental groups are involved in the festival, giving visitors the opportunity to interact with projects restoring

the populations of pohutukawa, kiwi and kauri. A dozen close up kiwi encounters will run throughout the Festival. It's a unique opportunity for many New Zealanders to see and hear kiwi in their natural environment. Kicking the festival off is a Comedy Debate in Coromandel town on Friday 25 November with kiwi icons Gary McCormick, Cocksy and Ewen Gilmore among those vying for the most laughs.

Over 50 fun filled family events including fun runs, swims and bike races will be taking place between 25 November and 11 December. It's the perfect excuse to come and visit the Coromandel at a laid back, cruisy time of the year and reflect on how lucky we are to live with paradise right on our back doorstep.

www.pohutukawafest.com



New Project Crimson Trustee

Sean Goddard, the newly appointed Auckland Conservator for the Department of Conservation, has joined the Project Crimson Trust replacing the former conservator, Rob McCallum.

A keen trumper and kayaker, Sean became involved in conservation as a volunteer on summer volunteer programmes for Mohua (yellowhead) and Whio (blue duck) run by Southland and West Coast conservancies.



Sean and friend

This led to a career change and study at Lincoln University for a Bachelor in Resource Studies followed by postgraduate environmental studies at Victoria University.

He started at DOC's Head Office in 1995 initially working in the international unit in the Estate Protection Division and Introduced Animals Policy Division under the late John Holloway.

Working first as senior policy analyst and later as principal policy analyst in the conservation policy division, Sean was involved in the development and implementation of New Zealand's biodiversity and biosecurity strategies. This led to him representing the department internationally, including biodiversity negotiations at The Hague in the Netherlands.

The Auckland Conservancy, with its large and diverse urban community and offshore island sanctuaries poses a unique set of challenges and opportunities.

"Auckland has changed significantly since I lived here, and conservation has also changed. I look forward to leading the Conservancy and working with a wide range of players to achieve the best outcomes for conservation in the Auckland region," said Sean. "One of those players is the Project Crimson Trust and I am looking forward to working with this highly effective conservation organisation."

HORIZON2 KIRI'S GROWING TIPS

Germination can be the most treacherous part of the process of growing pohutukawa and rata. Sometimes there are factors that you cannot control, like the viability of the seed. However, there are things you can do to improve the germination rate of your seed.

- An ideal condition for germination is to keep the seed tray at around 21-22 degrees Celsius. This will make the germination process quicker and more successful and the best way to do this (in my experience) is to provide bottom-heat.
- Bottom-heat does not have to be expensive or labour intensive. A cheap and efficient way of providing under-floor heating (and we use this in our commercial nursery) is using heated wire. This can be purchased at any handyman store for a very reasonable price.
- Start with a large tray or bench with 5-10cm sides. Place a layer of polystyrene over the base, and lay the heating wire on top to evenly cover as much of the tray as possible (you may want to use wire stakes to hold it in place). Overlay this with approximately 5cm of propagation sand (this is also sometimes called river sand. Beach sand cannot be used for germination as there is too much salt.)
- When you are ready to sow the seed, mix together a 50:50 peat and perlite media, and place around a 5cm layer in a propagation tray. Peat has excellent water-holding properties and perlite is a sterile, inorganic component that provides good drainage, so in combination they create an ideal growing substrate that is not too wet and not too dry. Perlite is not a trade name but a generic term for naturally occurring siliceous rock. Do not add fertiliser to the media at this stage, as it may burn the delicate new germinants. Ensure that the surface of the media is as flat and smooth as possible, but be careful not to compress the media too much.
- Sow the seed, spreading it as evenly as possible over the entire surface of the tray. Put a very light layer of propagation sand over the seeds. Place the trays on the heated bench, and

cover them with a layer of plastic to seal in the moisture, and with a second layer to ensure that the seed is in darkness.

- Wait 5-7 days. The shoots will be tiny so look closely. If they have begun to emerge take the dark cover off. Leave the plastic cover on for 14 days to ensure moisture stays in.
- After 14 days, remove the plastic cover and mist twice a day for 6-8 weeks. This keeps the humidity up. Monitor the seedlings closely, and remove any weeds that might germinate. Pohutukawa and rata germinants are tiny and grow slowly to start, so any weeds that could compete with the germinants for moisture or light must be removed as soon as they can be identified as weeds.
- Plants will be ready for pricking out into root trainers at around four months, depending on your climate. A better guide is to use a minimum height for pricking out of 10mm. Anything smaller than 10mm's can be left in place and pricked out at a later date.

Good luck.



Kiri Armstrong works at Horizon2 Nursery and has a Bachelor of Forestry Science (Hons) and a Master of Forestry Science (Hons) specialising in biological statistics. She has 4 years experimental plant science and 7 years horticultural growing experience. Horizon2 houses thousands of Project Crimson's pohutukawa and rata plants.



Photo of shoots (ready for pricking out)