

TRUE COLOURS

DECEMBER 2000

10TH ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH TRIGGERS NATIONWIDE INTEREST

Praise has been heaped on Project Crimson for our official 10th Anniversary launch celebrated on 9 October. The function was attended by Prime Minister Helen Clark, Green Party Co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons, MP for Titirangi David Cunliffe, Sir Hugh Kawharu, Sir Wilson Whineray and many Department of Conservation and Project Crimson volunteers who have been involved over the years.

It provided a great opportunity for Project Crimson supporters to network with old friends, and meet new colleagues. A highlight of the evening was Helen Clark's presentation to longstanding Project Crimson volunteer Ted Wilson. Ted has given willingly of his time throughout most of the Trust's history and we were delighted to be able to honour him at the function.

We've achieved a lot over the past 10 years – as demonstrated in Dr Gordon Hosking's research earlier this year that showed a remarkable turnaround in the pohutukawa's fortunes. There is still much to be done to protect pohutukawa and rata, but the progress to date has been heartening.

Our 10th Anniversary and Gordon's research featured on the TV One news on 9 October and this has generated considerable new public interest in the Trust's work. Importantly, the news item informed viewers what they personally can do to conserve pohutukawa and rata in their area.

This is a positive message to give people as we go into the summer season. Already crimson flowers are starting to appear around the country – a reminder that Christmas nears. On behalf of the Project Crimson Trust, I wish you all Season's Greetings and all the very best for the New Year.



Chris Liddell
Chairman



Hugh Logon (Director General, DoC)
Chris Liddell, Ted Wilson and Helen Clark



Project Crimson Trustees
Ruud Kleinpaste and Dr Gordon Hosking

STUCK FOR XMAS PRESSY IDEAS?



Looking for a great Christmas present for yourself or for a loved one? Then look no further for the ideal decorative, yet practical, gift: a Project Crimson calendar. This attractive 12 page calendar depicts pohutukawa and rata in a range of urban and rural settings, with photos drawn from some of the best received in this year's Project Crimson photo competition. You can see the calendar in more detail on our web site.

Available for \$25 (including GST, postage and packaging) from Project Crimson, PO Box 34 214, Birkenhead, Auckland.

PROTECTING POHUTUKAWA & RATA

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PROJECT CRIMSON
Carter Holt Harvey
In partnership with the Department of Conservation

THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS

Project Crimson relies heavily on the generosity of individuals and companies nation-wide who provide their services at little or no cost. Recently we've accepted two particularly generous offers from Holden New Zealand and Colenso BBDO.

Holden has donated two Rodeo utilities for our use. Debbie Teale, our Executive Director, is now proudly driving one for Project Crimson work around the North Island. Already she has received comments from members of the public who have noticed the vehicle and its distinctive branding and wanted to know more about Project Crimson. Dr Philip Simpson, Trustee and South Island Co-ordinator, will be using the other for Project Crimson's work in the South Island.

We have also been stunned by the generosity of advertising agency Colenso BBDO which is undertaking all of our advertising and graphic design work at material cost only. Colenso is responsible for the new look *True Colours* newsletter, and the Project Crimson advertisements and café cards now appearing throughout New Zealand.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank John Ringer and his team at Paradigm for being Project Crimson's graphic designers for more than seven years. We have appreciated the extreme efforts you went to for the Crimson cause.



Graeme Coverdale, Holden New Zealand Managing Director, presents the second Holden Rodeo to Dr Philip Simpson

TO CHOP OR NOT TO CHOP? THAT IS THE QUESTION

From time to time Project Crimson receives enquiries from people wanting to cut down or remove branches from pohutukawa or rata on their property. We have even received – and promptly turned down! – a request to supply free trees to a landowner who planned to mill the trees once they were mature.

Project Crimson aims to protect pohutukawa and rata, rather than cut them down. But we have no legal powers so *True Colours* surveyed five local bodies around New Zealand to find out their guidelines for felling or modifying pohutukawa and rata. We found considerable variation around the country, so the best advice is to talk with your local city or district council before picking up the chainsaw. Some of the people we spoke with felt tree protection provisions in their area were inadequate. Increased urban development – and the money to be made from property development – had increased pressure on some councils to allow protected trees to be removed. Some council employees felt their district plan did not do enough to protect trees, while others expressed frustration at the difficulties in bringing about a successful prosecution under the Resource Management Act.

Potentially severe penalties under the Resource Management Act

All local bodies have powers under the Resource Management Act to prosecute people who cut down trees that are protected under their district scheme. A criminal case must be lodged with the Environment Court, which has the powers to award a maximum penalty of \$200,000 or two years in prison. Some councils also issue Enforcement of Infringement Notices for 'moderate' offences, which are \$300 instant fines.

Project Crimson's position

Mike Lee, a Project Crimson trustee says the Trust's position is simple.

"Our aim is to protect pohutukawa and rata - not just from possums and browsing stock - but sometimes also from people. This means we want to see trees planted, rather than cut down. We recognise not just the ecological value of pohutukawa and rata but also the strong sentimental value New Zealanders place on these special trees."

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Auckland City Council (Ph 09 379 2020 and ask for the Planning Help Desk)

All native trees with a height above six metres, and girth circumference greater than 60 cm (at 1.4 metres above ground level) are protected and may not be cut down or modified in any way without the council's prior consent. The Auckland City Council has successfully prosecuted a number of people for infringements, with the biggest penalty being around \$30,000.

Roger Sharpe, Council's Incident Management Co-ordinator, says Aucklanders tend to act when someone cuts down a tree: "We are inundated with phone calls as soon as someone starts up a chainsaw."

Manukau City Council (Ph 09 262 5296 and ask for a Resource Management Planner)

Manukau City's District Plan protects some native and exotic species (including pohutukawa and rata) over 6m high and some individual trees. Resource consents are required for removing any of these trees or undertaking more than minor pruning or maintenance works on them. Resource consents are also needed for works or activity within the drip line of any scheduled tree or which may impact on its root system.

Dhirendra Singh, District Plan Enforcement Team Leader, says Manukau City residents are often quick to complain about tree removals and excessive pruning. While most of the cases are resolved through suitable replacement planting or remedial works, prosecution is not ruled out. During the last 12 months there were two successful prosecutions resulting in fines.

Anyone intending to cut down or carry out works on trees or within their drip lines should first check with Council. More detailed information about tree protection rules is provided in its *Trees* brochure.

Wellington City Council (Ph 04 499 4444 and ask for District Planning)

Christchurch City Council (Ph 03 371 1999 and ask for District Planning)

Whangarei District Council (Ph 09 430 4200 and ask for District Planning)

Protection is confined to trees named in the District Plan or in covenants, so check first with the council before cutting down or modifying any trees.

Walter Fielding-Cotterell, City Arborist at Christchurch City Council, says it can be very difficult to successfully prosecute someone for cutting down or damaging a protected tree.

"It is a criminal offence so you must have rock-solid evidence and the onus of proof is on the council. For example, it's not enough to have a photo of someone cutting down a protected tree – the photo must have a date on it too."

Christchurch City Council is probably not alone in finding itself compromising between conservation ideals and commercial reality.

"Money speaks and someone with a sub-dividable property worth millions will argue black and blue that it is not worth that amount of money to halt development because of one big tree on the property.

"It's a constant juggling act which requires compromise," says Walter. For example, consent may be granted to remove protected trees, subject to replacement planting or landscaping conditions.



QUESTION CORNER

Q. Will the lichen on my pohutukawa harm it?

A. Lichens are a symbiotic organism (a combination of fungi and algae) that live on the outside of a tree's bark, which gives them a good position for sitting and collecting some free sunshine for the algae to photosynthesise. Lichens don't harm trees unless they totally cover all the leaves, thus preventing photosynthesis (which is extremely rare). Rather, lichens are a sign of good, clean air; they don't penetrate the tree and are of no concern. In fact they are useful hiding places for beneficial insects!

Q. My pohutukawa's leaves are full of little holes and the tree appears to be stressed. What should I do?

A. This shot-hole damage on the new leaves is of no health concern to the trees at all. It is caused by a native weevil that has for millions of years used pohutukawa as its host. If your tree is under stress, it will be caused by something other than the weevil.

PROJECT CRIMSON JOINS FORCES WITH MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS TO MARK THE MILLENNIUM AND CONSERVATION WEEK

Conservation Minister Sandra Lee and Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harre did their bit to protect pohutukawa during a joint Project Crimson / Ministry of Youth Affairs event to celebrate conservation week.

At midday on 3 August simultaneous tree plantings were held at 78 locations around New Zealand. Perhaps the most dedicated effort was the Maitu/Somes Island planting in Wellington harbour which saw Christina Chase and David Wood row about four kilometres out to the island with a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion!

Christina, a Youth Corps project advisor, says the plaque to accompany the planting ceremony had missed the ferry to the island, so she and David borrowed a canoe from a colleague and set out with the plaque.

"We thought it would only take 20 minutes to get there but it ended up taking 50 minutes thanks to the choppy conditions, head wind and incoming tide."

Such dedication aside, this event was significant for Project Crimson because it was the first time we have held a combined event with the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

The plantings were undertaken by the Conservation Corps and Youth Service Corps programmes - youth development programmes administered by Youth Affairs - catering for

young people between the ages of 16 and 25. They have been running for 12 years and aim to help young people reach their full potential by helping them develop a wide range of life skills. Conservation Corps and Youth Service Corps programmes also involve young people in worthwhile community or conservation projects.

Most of the trees planted were pohutukawa and rata, but totara, kowhai and rimu were also planted.

For more information, see the media release Project Crimson joins forces with Ministry of Youth Affairs to mark the millennium and conservation week on Project Crimson's web site at: www.projectcrimson.org.nz/news.html



Conservation Minister Sandra Lee and Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harre.
Photo credit: *The Dominion*

A TRIBUTE TO ALAN FIFIELD

Project Crimson lost a good friend with the death of Alan Fifield in Nelson in July.

Alan worked with Carter Holt Harvey at Brightwater, Nelson, and took on the responsibility of being the company representative for Project Crimson in the Nelson/Golden Bay area. It was at 'The Grove', a DoC reserve near Takaka, that the Trust launched its initiative to include the tree rata of New Zealand under its protective umbrella. This is an area where mature rata, growing on spectacular limestone blocks, were severely threatened by climbing weeds.

A small group from the local community led by Shirley Hayward supported the Trust by adopting the reserve, joining the war on the weeds, and promoting Project Crimson to the community. Alan was the link

between the Trust's sponsor and the volunteers at Golden Bay. Shirley Hayward talked of Alan's commitment and enthusiasm for the work being done to protect rata. "He was a real conservationist with an enormous generosity of spirit and was always there to lend a hand in very practical ways," she said.

"It would have been tough getting the project off the ground without Alan's support. He involved himself in every way possible, turning up with the truck, spades, or whatever was required. He organised propagation of rata and came with me to talk to landowners about planting rata. I would often find him offering advice on their pine tree plantations as well. He visited schools, supported Project Crimson at school and community Arbor Day plantings, and was my mentor and sounding board."

Alan gave his heart and soul to his participation in Project Crimson and leaves a legacy of loved and healthy rata in Golden Bay - a legacy that is spreading to other areas of the country.

– *Alison Henry*, Trustee