

# TRUE COLOURS



**Bridget Abernethy,**  
*Executive Director  
of Project Crimson.*

Once a year, the Project Crimson Trust distributes funds to support important local projects all over New Zealand.

All of these projects have one thing in common – they aim to protect and/or restore the New Zealand Christmas tree (pohutukawa and rata).

Some of the projects are small and are run by only one or two people. In some areas, the projects are vast and involve planting thousands of trees, setting up nurseries and protecting hundreds of acres of native trees from pests.

With the 2004 funding round now complete, and over 60 new or continuing projects funded for the year ahead, the work really begins. Over the next 12 months we will share lots of these project stories with you by way of the newsletter and the website.

This year, 61% of the project funds went to pohutukawa projects and 39% to rata (southern and northern). Only 8% of the total number of trees distributed was northern and southern rata which is a disappointing number.

The lack of demand from community groups and individuals leads to a lack of available stock in nurseries. Project Crimson is working on both generating interest in

rata and increasing nursery supplies, and it is our aim that by 2005 there will be much higher stock numbers to support a great many more rata projects.

When you are thinking about your restoration or protection work for 2005, and if it is appropriate, consider the northern and southern rata. They are beautiful members of the *Metrosideros* family.

Please share your project stories with us. We find our newsletter readers enjoy reading about other projects and can learn a lot from them.

*Bridget*



## *Pohutukawa Tree of Aotearoa*

In the March issue of True Colours we offered three copies of the out-of-print book 'Pohutukawa Tree of Aotearoa'. Thank you to all those who emailed us with your thoughts about what pohutukawa and rata mean to you.

Our winners, all drawn out of a hat, are from across the country; one is a long-time supporter, one a funding recipient and one a new supporter of the Trust.

Congratulations to:

- The Emanuel Family, Auckland
- Deane Keir, Westport
- Barbara Rendle, Hamilton



We hope you enjoy your new book.

Thank you to everyone who responded and for allowing Project Crimson to use your words (anonymously). Here is a taste of what people think and feel about these most loved trees:

*"As the bright red flowers of the pohutukawa burst, wrapping New Zealand's coastline in red ribbons, I know it's time to cheer, take a break, and enjoy the summer holidays in our very special place."*

*"The pohutukawa never ceases to amaze me with its ability to grow into the huge specimens some of them are, from seed no bigger than a small human eye lash."*

## Project Crimson is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2004 funding round:

Ecological Region	Location	Organisation /Individual	Funding provided in 2004 for:
Aupori	Kaitaia	R & M Hale	Trees from Stock
Aupori	Kaitaia	Pukenui School	Trees from Stock
Western Northland	North & South Hokianga	Plantscape Hokianga	Propagating/Growing Materials
Eastern Northland	Ruakaka	Paradise Shores Residents	Trees from Stock
Eastern Northland	Whananaki	C Anderson	Trees from Stock
Eastern Northland	Tutukaka Coast	Pacific Rendyvons	Trees from Stock
Kaipara	Baylys Beach	I & A Lupton Family Trust	Trees from Stock
Kaipara	Kaipara	Glinks Gully Protection Society Inc	Planting Misc
Kaipara	Muriwai Beach	Muriwai 5 Mile Planting	Trees from Stock
Kaipara	Birds Beach	G Blair	Trees from Stock
Kaipara	West Northland Coast & Bay of Islands South	Department of Conservation	Purchase Trees/Possum/Pest Control
Auckland	Birkenhead	Uruamo Ecological Society	Trees from Stock
Auckland	Henderson	Birdwood School	Trees from Stock
Auckland	Whangaparoa	Waitemata Fish & Game Association	Trees from Stock
Auckland	Motuora Island	Motuora Restoration Society	Propagating/Growing Materials
Auckland	Rakino Island	Rakino Ratepayers Association	Trees from Stock
Auckland	Rotoroa Island	The Salvation Army	Trees from Stock
Auckland	Awhitu Peninsula	B Clarke	Propagating/Growing Materials
Auckland	Awhitu Peninsula	Waiuku/Awhitu Community Board	Purchase Trees
Coromandel	Kennedys Bay	Horua - Te Ra Trust/Harataunga Marae	Purchase Trees
Coromandel	Port Charles	Barlow Family Trust	Purchase Trees
Coromandel	Port Charles	Harriet Kings Coastal Block Restoration	Planting Misc/Possum Control
Coromandel	Port Charles	P Whiting-O'Keefe	Purchase Trees
Coromandel	Port Jackson	A Ward	Possum Control
Coromandel	Te Kouma	Te Kouma Farm	Purchase Trees
Coromandel	Coromandel	Tararu Valley Conservation Trust	Propagating/Growing Materials/Possum Control
Coromandel	Hikuai	Hikuai - Wharekawa Community Possum Control Scheme	Possum Control
Coromandel	Thames	Thames Coast Protection Society	Propagating/Growing Materials/Possum Control

Ecological Region	Location	Organisation /Individual	Funding provided in 2004 for:
Coromandel	Pauanui	Pauanui Parks & Reserves Committee	Purchase Trees
Northern Volcanic Plateau	Rotorua	Te Kuku o te Manawa Maori Reservation	Purchase Trees/Pest & Weed Control
Whakatane	Whakatane	Department of Conservation	Trees from Stock
Whakatane	Whakatane	Whakatane District Council	Trees from Stock
Whakatane	Whakatane	D Gosling	Propagating/Growing Materials
Central Volcanic Plateau	Taupo	Waipahihi Botanical Society	Purchase Trees/Pest & Weed Control
East Cape	Hicks Bay	Ngati Porou Conseration Corps	Fencing/Pest & Weed Control
East Cape	East Cape/Central Hawke's Bay	Department of Conservation	Purchase Trees/Planting Misc/Fencing
East Cape	Tikapa Beach	Te Marae Opokai ki TiKapa	Propagating/Growing Materials
East Cape	Whangara	Paikea-Whitireia Trust	Purchase Trees
East Cape	Wainui Beach	Tuahine Point Ecological Trust	Purchase Trees/Pest & Weed Control
Manawatu	Kapiti Coast	Friends of Waikanae River	Purchase Trees
Manawatu	Raumati	Simes Family Trust	Purchase Trees
Manawatu	Wanganui	Hospice Wanganui	Purchase Trees
Aorangi	Karori	Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park	Purchase Trees
Sounds - Wellington	Tawa	Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves Inc	Purchase Trees
Sounds - Wellington	Porirua	Friends of Maara Roa	Purchase Trees
Sounds - Wellington	Wellington	Forest and Bird	Propagating/Growing Materials
Sounds - Wellington	Wellington	Southern Environmental Association	Propagating/Growing Materials/Planting Misc
North-West Nelson	Golden Bay	S Hayward	Purchase Trees
Hawdon	Otira	Department of Conservation/Otira Village Society	Propagating/Growing Material/Weed Control
Canterbury Plains	Darfield	Tom McElrea	Weed Control
Lakes	Lake Wakatipu	Wakatipu Islands Reforestation Trust	Purchase Trees/Planting Misc/Weed Control
Otago Coast	Dunedin	Otago Salmon Hatchery Trust	Purchase Trees
Otago Coast	Dunedin	University of Otago	Research
Otago Coast	Kaka Point	WG & AJ Kitto	Fencing

To contact Project Crimson: Phone (09) 414 0466

## Visit our website

The Project Crimson website, [www.projectcrimson.org.nz](http://www.projectcrimson.org.nz), continues to grow in popularity. In April alone we had a total of 3,800 new visitors, which does not include those who have already found our website and go back to it from time to time.

So if you haven't already had a look, now is a good time to do so.

With the planting season coming up you'll find information on our home page about events happening in your area. You can mark it as one of your favourites and keep an eye on it for ways you can help protect pohutukawa and rata.



## Preserving the view at Port Ohope Scenic Reserve

In 2001, the Port Ohope Scenic Reserve near Whakatane wasn't very scenic. The flat, low-lying harbourside land on a spit between the Pacific Ocean and the Ohiwa Harbour was being used and abused by illegal campers and reckless drivers, and was desperately in need of some TLC.

Since then, and with the help of local and visiting volunteers, DOC staff have been managing a project to restore some areas of coastal vegetation at the reserve.

Pohutukawa from Project Crimson's local contract grower Derek Gosling planted in the high areas, and coastal vegetation such as manuka, coprosma, cabbage tree and flax in the lower areas are doing well, with a low mortality rate. In June, a further planting by a group from Fonterra will add 60 more pohutukawa as well as several hundred cabbage and other trees.

Nick Doney, DOC's Programme Manager Visitor Assets, says that the help from volunteer groups has been invaluable: "There is no way we could have done it without their input." He makes particular mention of volunteer Chris Caillard, who has grown hundreds of plants from seed for the project, at her home in Kawerau.

Nick is delighted with the way the project is progressing. "We were fully expecting further damage to the area, and that hasn't happened at all. The regeneration seems to have had the desired effect so far."



*New seedlings take root at the Port Ohope Scenic Reserve.*

## Coming Up...

Do you live on coastal property between Whitford and Matingarahi, including Beachlands, Kawakawa Bay, Orere Point or inland as far as Paparimu, Ararium or Hunua? Are you interested in planting pohutukawa and ensuring its health and survival?

Project Crimson has ecologically sourced pohutukawa plants that need to be planted this year and the planting season is almost underway.

We welcome applications from interested people who fit the criteria above.

You can either email us on [info@projectcrimson.org.nz](mailto:info@projectcrimson.org.nz) or phone Denise on (09) 414 0466 or Bridget on 025 224 7018.

### Planting Day - 18 July

Navy Training Centre, Whangaparaoa Peninsula  
9.30am start

Continuing the forest regeneration on this Navy-owned land, this planting day aims to plant 650 young pohutukawa around the coastline, and a few hundred young flax and other native species in earlier planting areas.

The coastal planting will be fairly challenging, so fit, healthy people able to walk significant distances and negotiate hills and low scrub are needed. Those who prefer the less challenging planting will be able to help out with the flat land plantings.

What to bring: Water bottle, stout footwear, a good sharp spade suitable for digging small 20cm wide holes, a bucket.

You can park in the Army Bay car park at the very end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. The Navy will provide security for volunteers' cars.

The planting is expected to conclude around noon, refreshments will be provided.

Please note: All tunnels, gun emplacements and bunkers are off limits. There will be no need for anyone to negotiate dangerous terrain, all planting is to be done no closer than 10 metres from any bluff or cliff face. Please supervise youngsters and do not take any risks when choosing planting locations.

If you need any further information please contact Dennis Geerkins Ph (09) 4807872, (0274) 970 217.

For further information on upcoming plantings see the Events section of our web site [www.projectcrimson.org.nz](http://www.projectcrimson.org.nz)

## Trustee Dave Bartram on Seed Collecting



Dave Bartram is a Project Crimson Trustee and has worked in forest health for almost fifty years. He first came into contact with Project Crimson in 1993 while he was setting up a major conservation project at Cape Brett. Dave is one of New Zealand's top forest health experts and has advised major companies in New Zealand and overseas on a wide range of forest health issues. He is also a passionate fisherman.

Dave's practical advice for seed collection: After a prolific flowering season, such as occurred in the summer of 2003/2004, large mature pohutukawa set an abundance of seed. This may be harvested as early as February and through to May.

Seed can be easily accessed on the lower branches. It is not necessary to collect a lot of seed, as it is incredibly tiny - like fine spice. Place a plastic or paper bag around a seed cluster, then tap or shake the branch. Large quantities of seed will fall into the bag. Eye protection may be needed, as the seed can cause eye irritation.

Store seed in a dry paper envelope or packet. To grow seedlings, sprinkle the seed on the surface of a standard seed-raising mix. Germination should occur within 5-10

days. Protection from slugs and snails will be necessary. In cooler conditions some cover such as newspaper will assist germination.

Rata seed is easily captured in a small spread of plastic, such as a car cover, or newspaper laid beneath the branches. Also check wind-fallen branches for useful seed heads. Store the seed yield in a dry paper container, as plastic may cause the seed to sweat. Rata (northern) may take a little longer to germinate and the seedlings generally are less hardy than pohutukawa.

Finally, if you are considering collecting seed from any conservation site or land that is not managed or owned by you, you must get permission first, and in some cases permits are required.

## A South Island story

Described as "a pocket of paradise where moa once roamed", Washpen Falls is a conservation project that started 80 million years ago with a major volcanic blow.

The eruption created a deep canyon and gorges at Washpen Creek at the southern end of the Malvern Hills. Local history has it that the blind ravines within the canyon were once used by local Maori to trap and kill the giant flightless New Zealand bird, the moa.

The canyon forest was burnt off in the early part of last century in order to farm the land. Sixty years later native trees are regenerating all over the land including an extraordinary number of regenerating southern rata - possibly the most to be found in one place in New Zealand.

"Only a couple of years ago, Project Crimson Trustee Dr Philip Simpson, visited the site and counted up to 600 young rata before he lost count" said Tom McElrea, co-owner of the Washpen Falls project.

Around the same time a renowned Canterbury botanist described Washpen Falls as having the greatest concentration of native plants anywhere in the area.

Husband and wife team Tom and Jen McElrea initially spent all their time working the 1,200 acre farm. When they realised the treasure they had, they made the area designated reserve land in order to protect the lush native bush and bird life which flourish there. With farm work now taking a back seat, Tom and Jen have dedicated themselves to developing the reserve for others to enjoy, building tracks, boardwalks and function areas for keen walkers.

Possums on the land have damaged the young rata and much of the McElreas' effort goes into reducing their numbers. Project Crimson contributed to pest control again this year to help control the possums and protect the fabulous



Washpen Falls

stand of young southern rata. The money will also go toward getting rid of introduced pine on the property.

"In five years time it will just be a picture when we get on top of all the vermin" said Tom of the pest control work.

- Washpen Falls is located once hour from Christchurch (80 kms) and a 20 minute drive from Methven.
- Situated at Windwhistle, it is only five minutes from the Rakaia Gorge.
- The walk takes two hours and bookings are essential. There is a charge for the walk and various options are available.
- Unlike most walks in New Zealand, walkers are given a manuka walking stick, a bag of scroggin and a pamphlet before setting out on their adventure.

Happy Trails!