# **PreeMatters**

#### THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND ARBORICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

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# **PRESIDENT'S BRANCH**

#### **Howell Davies**

Tēnā koutou Katoal hope you and your whanau are safe and well. Firstly, I would like to thank all who attended or were involved in the NZ Arb 2022 annual conference. The national museum, Te Papa, was an awesome venue and Wellington turned on the weather for a truly memorable event.

The 2022 conference was the largest conference the association has held, with both attendees and the number of exhibitors being at an alltime high. It's a great result for the association following on from the lockdowns and conference cancellations of 2020 and 2021.

The feedback we have received from the conference survey has been very positive. A big thank you to all who completed the forms. It really helps the association to develop the conference and build upon the successes to date. We really value your feedback so please take the time to complete the survey at this year's conference.

On behalf of NZ Arb, I would like to recognise and thank Niki van Asch (OnCue) and Richie Hill (NZ Arb Executive) for presenting the NZ Arb bid for the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) international conference 2025. I understand they did an awesome job at the ISA headquarters in Atlanta last November with the pitch for NZ. We should all be super excited and proud of the fact that NZ Arb are going to be the host country for the ISA in 2025.

NZ Arb is hoping to host well over 600 people for the conference and the International Tree Climbing Championship (ITCC). We all need to work together to provide the best hosting efforts we can. As an NZ Arb member you can join the ISA at a reduced rate. Membership of ISA gives you opportunity to come to the 2025 conference at a reduced cost and it is well worthwhile joining for the benefits and access to further education tools. The association is going to host the biggest arboricultural event on the planet in 2025 and it's the greatest opportunity that NZ Arb will have to put our country on the map. We hope that as many members as possible will get involved. Please look out for further details in the coming months on how you can register to help.

After the AGM 2022, the executive has grown to 10 members and it's great to see the enthusiasm of those who have joined. We have started work for 2023 and will provide an update on efforts in Monthly Mulch over the next few months. You will get to know the executive as they introduce themselves in Monthly Mulch so please check out their details.

The new executive and conference committee is working hard to make the NZ Arb annual conference in Invercargill 2023 another awesome event. This event will be the opportunity for those wanting to get onto the ladder for the national TCC and to start towards qualification for NZ ISA 2025. This year we see Jeremy and Steph heading off to the internationals at the ISA conference 2023 in Albuquerque USA and we wish them both all the very best.

Lastly I was involved in the recent emergency disaster response because of two significant weather events in Auckland. The first brought more rainfall in one day than we normally get in two months of summer and in the following week we along with most the North Island were visited by cyclone Gabrielle, an ex-category 3 tropical cyclone, and the biggest to hit NZ since cyclone Bola in the 1988.

If you can, please volunteer to help in the cleanup or reach out to people you know who might be affected. There are a lot of people who have been impacted by these events and we can all do our bit to help support. I would like to recognise the efforts of all of our emergency response teams. Arboricultural contractors have played a key role in helping to restore normality to a huge number of residents who were affected across the North Island. A big thanks to all of you who have been involved in the efforts to clean up.

I know there are a lot of people that have been impacted by these events and the damage across the east coast of the North Island is extensive. In my local community, because of a landslide, we lost two fire fighters who were trying to save a member of the community's house. There are people in our community who won't be able to return to their family homes. I would like to dedicate my few words in the president's branch, to these two men who sacrificed their lives to save others in my community.

Please stay safe and help to support those who need our help. Kia kaha.

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# YOUNG HORTICULTURIST OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2022

## **By Craig Lamb**

Since 2020 the New Zealand arboriculture sector has had the opportunity to be represented at the prestigious Young Horticulturist of the Year competition. Unfortunately, due to Covid it wasn't until 2022 that we could have an in-person appearance at the event.

The competition is for competitors under the age of 30 and covers seven different sectors of the horticulture industry. Each individual sector has their own competitions to crown a national champion which then gains them entry to the Young Hort. competition. For the arboriculture sector, entry is gained through winning the New Arborist of the Year competition. The other sectors include NZ Winegrowers, NZ Plant Producers Incorporated, Amenity Horticulture, Registered Master Landscapers NZ, Florists & Flower Growers NZ, and Fruit & Vegetable Growers.

The 2021 New Arborist of the Year winner, Solomon Caldwell, was given the opportunity to compete and was very excited about the opportunity. Solomon is a tree preservation specialist at Arborlab in Auckland. The event was held over two days at the NZ Bloodstock Centre in Karaka, Auckland, on 8 and 9 November 2022. The competition included demonstrating leadership skills, developing a business plan, plant identification, financial management knowledge, small engine trouble-shooting, botany and soils, weed management, and speech development and delivery.

I was honoured to be invited to watch the events and attend the awards celebration dinner, and to be there in person to support Solomon. Being the first in-person opportunity at the event it was a big learning opportunity for Solomon and myself, as we were both a little bit unsure what to expect. After the event Solomon said that it was a fantastic opportunity with a lot to learn and some great experiences gained. There will also be a professional development day for Solomon and the other finalists in the new year. I came away from the experience with a better understanding of the competition and how we can help our future representatives to gain the most from the experience.

Image above: Solomon Caldwell (centre) with his mother Antoinette van der Weerden and his employer Karl Burgisser of Arborlab at the awards dinner for the Young Horticulturist of the Year Competition 2022.

Prior to the competition I received a variety of thoughts about arboriculture being represented at this event, with some people feeling that it was a great opportunity, and some people feeling that maybe it wasn't necessarily suited to arborists. Once I had attended the events, and spoken with administrators, judges, and leaders from other sectors, I believe this is a great opportunity for a young arborist to have. Not only to have the chance to win some amazing prizes, but also to gain relevant knowledge and grow in a professional sense.

During the competitor's speech presentations, I was surprised by how much the topic of trees, and the need for them, came up with allf the finalists. This confirmed to me that arboriculture and tree care professionals need to be represented here. And I'm sure we can all agree that in the light of climate change and increasing health and mental health issues (to name just a couple of issues), that the need for dedicated tree care professionals is absolutely paramount.

The speech topic was "The consequences of human population pressure on horticulture, both recreational and commercial". Here is a small portion of Solomon's speech, which he was happy for me to share, and the same sentiments came across in many of the other speeches too.

".....My role revolves around the managing of street trees outside these properties, but it is the devastation within the sites that really breaks my heart. So many sites, on a daily basis, are bought, levelled, and filled with high-density housing.

Long gone are the days of tree climbing, building tree huts, and backyard cricket for the kids growing up there. I'll make a very general assumption and say we all have fond memories as youngsters being outside AND learning in nature, SO I don't need to preach to the converted on how important that outdoor connection is, not only at a young age, but throughout our lives too. Do we want our kids growing up in treeless suburbs?

We cannot live in quarter-acre sections forever and we do not have infinite access to land. High-density housing is necessary for the future of our country, But we cannot do this at the cost of our urban forest or losing spaces for children to make memories like ours.

Let me remind you again, Auckland in 2016 had a canopy cover of 18%... Singapore is at 40% with a population of over 8000 people per square km... nearly seven times that of Auckland. Sounds to me like it's time we started looking after the trees we still have, and planting a few more to fill those gaps and bring our cover up to where it could be. If we want our children to have an experience like ours, we need to begin planning and implementing to create a world where high density and healthy living go hand in hand....."

Solomon's words were met with great applause.

I couldn't be more proud of how well Solomon represented the New Zealand arboriculture sector. He is a true professional and I wish him well for what will no doubt be a very exciting future.

I would like to thank NZ Arb for their support of Solomon at this event, and also Craig Webb, Andreas Ross (Rossy), and Chelsea Robinson for their assistance and support.



# Attention treelovers! We need your votes.

Now is the time to nominate your special tree. Tell us about a tree that is significant to you and your community.

Remember, Tree of the Year is not about the most beautiful tree, but about the stories and heritage that connects us to our trees.

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WHICH TREE WILL IT BE? RĀKAU O TE TAU / TREE OF THE YEAR AOTEAROA 2023



rākau o te tau tree of the year









# **IMPRESSED ONCE MORE**

## by Tiago Miranda



Otari-Wiltons Bush landscape / Credit: author

Driving up and around the winding roads of the Otari region, I can see only slip after slip since Hemi pointed them out from the car window. The reason is simple and isn't new: the high degreee of erosion is due to the combination of shallow greywacke, steep slopes and moderate rainfall. From my days of tree work, I recall very vividly cleaning fallen trees and shrubs from those hills, regardless of the weather.

Wilton Road is notorious for slips of all kinds, often dislodging sometimes decent-sized rocks and wet, almost soaked, light-brown mud that can take anything down with it. Gravity is also one of the issues in causing slips, but if native grasses, shrubs and trees were better preserved on the slopes, perhaps slips could've been avoided? Well, something to think seriously about.

The native bush near this area still amazes me, nostalgic for the time I was working there and appreciating it, and luckily never took it for granted. It is a place where it is rare to find so many natives compared to the rest of the country where deforestation wrecked a large portion of the natural forest after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, initiating a rapid expansion.



Otari-Wiltons Bush main entrance / Credit: author

In that spot, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, I won my first prize as the New Young Arborist of the Year. Rewarding? Absolutely. Memorable? Indeed, especially in the presence of friends.

In 1999, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush had about 80 hectares of mature and regenerating forest, with about 10 kilometres of tracks and two hectares of gardens. It has its microclimate, tending to be cooler and damper than Wellington. I often wonder how Ngati Tama and Te Ati Awa iwi collected and gathered their food. Thanks to the Kaiwharawhara stream, the area was well-valued by these tribes in pre-European times, where forest tracks were linked to coastal areas, allowing them to gather forest plants seasonally and cultivate crops such as kumara on north-facing slopes.



Otari's stream / Credit: author

Today we were exploring. Walking towards the sizeable ancient Miro tree (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*), we observed the forest below, looking down from the high walking platform. Before tracking down the hill, we saw a couple of kererus sitting still in a kōwhai tree while a tūī sang gorgeously in the background, letting us spot a kākā sipping on rewarewa flowers a few metres away. Tūī is my favourite bird, capable of producing more than 50 sounds in a single birdsong. They were also eaten by local tribes, and by animals such as kiwi and weka.



View from above / Credit: author

Part of this land was sold to settlers when they first arrived in 1840. The region was part of a 500-acre block set aside for Māori in 1847 and called Ōtari Native Reserve. Local Māori leased some of this block to settlers for farming; later on, it was included in the protected forests of Ōtari.

Looking from above, I can see different shades of green that only nature is capable of crafting. The native New Zealand subtropical rainforest isn't like any other: a mix of ferns, vines, trees and shrubs, showing its forest layers very clearly to the interested eye. Forest like this only proves how survival is a tool that living organisms have built to progress as species. And plants know very well how to do it. As we walk through the middle of a lively green tunnel, vines and plants of different shapes demonstrate visually and strategically how they have survived over millions of years.



Ancient Miro tree / Credit: Nicole Freeman

Their morphology signifies how they position their flowers, leaves and limbs to guarantee survival through propagation, sometimes with the help of winds and other animals. A place like this forest is a learning hub, and humans can only be part of it if they remain silent, letting ears and eyes lead the way.

And that was what we did. Scoping for signs of ground activity, I followed Hemi and Fabi through a dense cluster of kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), clinging rātā (*Metrosideros perforata*), rangiora (*Brachyglottis repanda*) and small ferns, shuffling leaf litter and carefully looking for popping heads. Those popping heads were signs of fungi. The one that interested us the most was the endemic weraroa (*Psilocybe*) *weraroa),* often found as a solitary plant or crowded on decaying wood buried in forest leaf litter.



Forest floor / Credit: author

It has also been found on the rotting branches of māhoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), rotten cabbage trees and associated with decaying tree-fern fronds. I wonder why Hemi knew where to find those among these species with such precision. As a member of the Psilocybe subject to blue bruising, it contains the psychoactive compounds psilocin and psilocybin, considered a special magic toadstool.

Due to its humidity and low temperatures, New Zealand accommodates a large variety of fungi. Even though the season for some species has ended, some fruiting bodies still want to spread their spores.

It didn't take long to find one of the oddest: a snow fungus (*Tremella fuciformis*). Its jelly form that is soft to the touch is often found on hardwood logs after heavy rains. With its graceful gelatinous lobes, it is nearly transparent and relatively large, interesting mycologists through its intertwined life cycle with another fungus, most possibly an Ascomycete in the genus *Hypoxylon*.



Forest floor / Credit: author

Researchers still find it unclear whether snow fungus parasitises *Hypoxylon* or if there is a complex symbiosis. Its characteristic is more linked to being parasitic on the mycelium of *Hypoxylon* archeri and closely related, or potentially saprobic on the deadwood of hardwoods. That's why we found it there, glued to this piece of wood chucked in the forest.

However, the most gratifying finding, which is information that we got from the herb museum in California, is that this fungus has medicinal properties. According to molecular studies, it contains compounds that stimulate the immune system to fight infections, demonstrating antitumour activity and lowering levels of low-density lipoprotein. It also seems to protect the liver and fight inflammation. What else do we need from the forest? Probably a handful of those jelly-healing buddies and some weraroa to keep chilled, I presume.

Not far away from them, I scoped for more and found a polypore, like animal ears sticking out of the wood. Initially, I thought they were True Turkey Tail (*Trametes versicolor*), a common species worldwide. But up close, I realised it was an imitation. The false description is just the name, but Stereum ostrea mimics the authentic version. It has a colourful, somewhat fuzzy cap that displays zones of brown, red, orange, buff, and green colours (here are the green tones again).



Forest floor / Credit: author

Often known as saprobic on the dead wood of hardwoods, it grows densely and gregariously, without fusing, in bark gaps, causing white rot in the heartwood (removal of lignin, leaving a soft white consistency to the wood). It also serves as a host to algae, sometimes parasitised by jelly fungi, and some often say associates with *Phlebia incarnata*.

Much more could have been explored during this two-hour walk, but the time was running out. The weather couldn't be any better for a few steps full of mud and a bit of inclined walk with the company of long-time friends. I wish time could stop, even though I did my best to enjoy that moment. I am sure many more walks like this will come, and I guarantee the landscape won't be the same, and I mean in a good way.



# NEW ARBORIST OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2022 By Craig Lamb

With this year being the 10th running of the New Arborist of the Year competition, I feel that the event is gaining in strength every year and I give huge thanks for the ongoing sponsorship from Greencycle.

We were lucky enough this year to be able to commission a perpetual trophy for the competition which includes the names of the previous winners and has enough room for another 20 names. Thanks to lan Lawson of Lawson Tree Wood Art in Gisborne for delivering a special piece, which I'm sure the winners will feel proud to receive. Ian says the trophy is designed to symbolise the features of a juvenile New Zealand kauri, with the new arborists at a similar point in their careers having that potential to flourish and grow into giants.

This year we have also put together a committee to help with the running and growth of the New Arborist of the Year competition. This now gives us a dedicated coordinator for each region, with fresh ideas for developing events. It brings together a group of people who are passionate about the industry and giving our new arborists as much exposure, guidance, and encouragement as possible. A huge thanks to Chelsea Robinson, Anu Muller-O'Neill, and Alvar Del Castillo for your assistance and enthusiasm. We were all very excited to meet in Wellington and put together a memorable event for our 2022 finalists.

On 4 November 2022 the eight New Arborist of the Year finalists gathered anxiously in the trade zone of the NZ Arb annual conference awaiting their first event, with a series of trials to follow that would test their skills and knowledge across a wide range of arboriculture-related topics.

#### The 2022 Finalists:

Auckland - Dylan Butler-Ellis & Murray Stapleton Waikato/Bop - Liam Sellick & Jason Gwynn Wellington - Zac Jacoby & Max Collins South Island - Alex Jane & Harry Mason Before the events begun the competitors were introduced to many of the trade zone exhibitors, where they were generously given merchandise from many supporters of the competition, including Clogger, Husqvarna, and Stihl. They then faced off in an icebreaker competition at the Treetools exhibit.

The first event was the Tree I.D. test where the competitors had 30 tree samples to identify. Points were scored on family, genus, species, and common name. Samples included *Cedrus deodara, Knightia excelsa, Ginkgo biloba, Metasequoia glyptostroides* and *Fagus sylvatica* to name just a few. Liam, Murray, and Max were the top three respectively in this event.



For lunch the competitors were invited to the Student Mentor Lunch, generously put on by Treetech, where they had the opportunity to talk with experienced arborists and experts in their fields from all areas of the industry, including managers, consultants, business owners, trainers, and more. A huge thanks to the mentors that gave up their valuable conference time to talk with the finalists about their journeys and experiences.



The afternoon saw the finalists competing in the final two theory tests which included a written test about ropes and knots, with questions testing their knowledge on topics like cycles to failure, bend ratios, and gear inspection. This was followed by the Quick Fire Quiz held in the NZ Arb stand at the trade zone. In this event the competitors face off against each other to be the first to correctly answer the question shown on the screen. Here there were 60 arboriculture-related questions covering tree biology, safe work practices, codes of practice, electric lines, well-known NZ arborists, and tree assessment to name just a few categories. Murray, Alex, and Jason were the top three respectively in this event.



Day 2 had the competitors doing their practical events at the Wellington Botanic Gardens, where they were also able to watch and soak up the atmosphere of the NTCC Masters event. The first event was the Aerial Rescue, where a victim had received a large laceration to their forearm from their chainsaw after losing control of the branch they were cutting. The competitors were required to apply first aid measures in the tree and to lower the climber safely to the ground. It was clear that all the finalists were well versed in aerial rescues, and this showed in the final scores. Harry placed first with an exceptional performance. Zac and Dylan had equal scores for second place. A huge thanks goes to the rescue staff and judges Chelsea Robinson, Anu Muller-O'Neill, and Tom Crawford.

As part of the ropes and knots component of the competition the finalists were also required to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in tying a complex list of knots and describing applications for each. With the scores combined from the theory and practical elements of this event, Jason, Murray, and Liam had the top three scores.



The final event was the Hazard Assessment event where the competitors were given a complex job scenario and are required to complete a Job Safety Analysis (JSA), describe the hazards involved with the job and what controls they would use to manage the hazards, and describe a work plan that they would use to complete the job. The competitors showed some great skill in hazard assessment and management along with some great knowledge about technical work practices. Liam and Murray placed first and second, with Max and Dylan tied for third in this event.

I was thoroughly impressed by the high level of knowledge and skill shown by all of the competitors, and this was shown when it came time to tally up the scores. With only one point separating the top three competitors, there was the need to double check the marking and the scores to ensure that it was all correct and to acknowledge the hard work that these finalists had done.

Third Place – Liam Sellick Second Place – Murray Stapleton First Place – Jason Gwynn

Congratulations to every one of the finalists, you can all be incredibly proud of your efforts.





# **FATIGUE AND TREE WORK**

### **By Matt Sadgrove**

Arboriculture is clearly complicated work requiring expertise in an ever-different environment. Just as every tree is unique, so too is every person working in this diverse and physically demanding occupation. Recognising this uniqueness is vital if we are to understand the causes and effects of fatigue. Broadly we know fatigue affects task control, planning and preparation, physical output, and mental focus.

Fatigue is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, and the causes can be more than just physical. As a professional working in the arboriculture industry, you may be challenged daily with very real life-changing or life-taking risks. To survive, not only do you need to manage and understand fatigue at a personal level, but you need to be able to recognize it in others.

Certain steps can be taken at work and at home to minimise and manage fatigue in the workplace.

1. Friends and relationships. Having strong supportive friendships at work and healthy family relationships at home has been shown to increase personal resilience, reduce internal worry, reduce personal sickness, and improve sleep.

2. The restorative power of sleep. A hygienic sleep environment which is dark, guiet, and cool has been proven crucial to maximize rest and recuperation. This is most probably the best mechanism for restoring yourself from both mental and physical fatigue. Good quality sleep can also lessen the effects of depression, anxiety, and stress.

3. Human resources. Having the appropriate number of people with the appropriate skills at a job is key. When working in a physically and mentally demanding job and/or working in a demanding environment (noise, climate, risk, ergonomics) there need to be enough people on site to allow for the rotation of tasks.

4. Good planning. Having a plan for the work activity which is clear and understood by the work party helps reduce some of the mental burdens of the work for you and those working around you. Planning helps people stay mindful during tasks, especially those which require absolute focus and attention.



The four points above are little and not-so-little things that can be done to help manage fatigue. We need to recognise that people are not robots who switch from work to home mode, our home life affects our work life, and our work life affects our home life.

Fatigue is complex and future research is needed. However, if you only take one thing away from this article it should be to ensure you have good quality sleep as it is your foundation for good health.

# **TREE COACH - 3 STAKES AND THE TRUTH**

## **By Mark Roberts**

Tree Coach, the thing that everybody needs. Manufactured from recycled kerbside waste it's packed full of GrowFlex technology. Tree Coach is an all-inone planting and watering system, with improved bio tree development. But wait there's more, Tree Coach has ground-breaking flexible staking innovation with waterwell systems that enable faster planting and natural healthier tree development... Tree Coach, is it, just do it, now was yesterday, buzz word buzz word buzz word, you'll never have better and you won't go back. Or, as one might say in NZ, 'it's worth a crack'. Or is it?

When Nick from LGS came down to Dunedin with the Australian brother's Rob and Tim Bumuna to demonstrate their better-than-nature system, I was so far from convinced that I was unconvinced. I had already discounted the system and had better things to do, coffee to drink, wordle to complete. And then I saw it, Tree Coach comes as a flat-pack, assembly required. My suspicions were confirmed, this was clearly nothing but green-wash marketing. Wooden stakes have worked well for the last 300 years, why change now?

But the boys had come to town, the least I could do was let them entertain me for a few minutes. Out of the flat-pack came the pieces and like some Ikea bookshelf or a Kinder-surprise toy it started to take shape. All the pieces came together and there before us was a free-standing three-pronged thing. A thing that made sense. Maybe I was a tad hasty. Tree Coach consists of a base frame and three stakes, and when assembled it looks a bit like a giant shuttlecock. The base frame has two rings (with the bottom ring made of completely compostable recycled card). You dig a hole, plonk in the Tree Coach, place the tree. The hole has to be wide enough to fit the system, the depth of the hole is set by the base frame. The planting hole is the right size. I was beginning to like this. With the tree centred the hole is backfilled and the three-pronged thing that seemed rather flimsy starts to firm up; the stakes don't need to be hammered or driven into place. The logic of this system began to appeal.

We used hessian tree ties\* to loosely connect the tree to each stake; set at about 1/3 the height of the tree as per standard practice. The stakes angle away from the planting hole and are not designed to be cut back – the length creates strength. The stakes flex, when the tree moves the force is absorbed - the system is dynamic. With the soil returned into the hole\*\* and firmed down the top ring of the base frame sits slightly above grade. Add the mulch and the top ring becomes a retainer to stop the mulch from spilling out. This was clearly well thought out, but there was more. The stakes, which are V-shaped and slot into the base frame create a water channel (in fact three water channels). Run water down the stake and it goes right to where the roots are. How good could this get?

In a matter of 30 minutes I had gone from being a complete sceptic to being almost convinced. Rob and Tim then started to pull and poke at their newly installed system, and it just bounced back tree and all. It's not going to stop a car or intentional vandalism but it held its own, and the stakes are hard not to see. The system seemed to have merit, I was becoming a potential believer. At that point, I had to go, but I had time to think up something nasty; less than 1km from the planting site was a park that sits between three schools. Nothing survives in this park. Let's try it there – so they did.

Tree Coach is being used and evaluated by 85 councils across Australia and has been installed at eight councils in NZ. Only time will tell if works, but I think Tree Coach is worth a crack.

\*\* In keeping with current best practice adding fresh or new soil into the planting hole was not done







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Base Frame with planting & level guide

<sup>\*</sup> Unless you are holding something very large in place, always use hessian or some other biodegradable tree tie

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# **WWOOF-ING UP THE** WRONG TREES

## **By Dominic Williams**

A couple of years ago, we took an opportunity to rent out our house and head off with the kids for six-months of wwoof-ing our way around the UK, France and Spain. It was superb. We'd do it again in a heartbeat. The WWOOF organisation (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) pairs volunteers to work with organic farmers.

On the way over, we booked a 10-day stay at a randomly chosen Malaysian island resort for a spot of sun, sea, great food, and drinks with wee umbrellas in them.

The place we found was paradise; palm trees, grass huts, great surf and diving - and no phone or internet.

The resort was established by a couple of ex-pat UK dive masters in the 1980s. Their son Richard was raised on the island and is now the operations manager, boat skipper, dive master and beach party fire-poi legend. We got on well and it turned out he knew a lot about New Zealand he comes here to get his dive masters ticket revalidated by diving in flooded mine shafts at Huntly.

The island was perfect to just relax and do nothing – but arborists on holiday are still arborists and I couldn't help but notice the included-to-hell, timebomb Casuarinas all around. Just one limb through a beach hut could end it all.

Richard wasn't thrilled when I pointed out the issues, but he understood that ignoring it wasn't an option. The problem was they couldn't afford to bring in arborists from the mainland.

I told him there was bound to be a way to get it done affordably, we'd just have to work out the logistics. One option was to run an advanced rigging course on the island for Singaporean arborists where they would do the

work and their fees would offset the costs. Once back in civilisation I made some enquiries, but it was soon clear that wasn't going to happen.

About three months later we were in rural Spain and still getting occasional messages from Richard. In one, he said he was heading back to Huntly to dive in the dark with enormous eels again. That sparked a bit of a plan.

I told him if he bought all the gear we'd need in Malaysia while he was in NZ, we'd come back to the island on our way home and deal with the worst of the trees during their January maintenance shutdown in return for food and accommodation (and plenty of drinks with wee umbrellas in them...).

It was a win-win. We'd get an all-expenses trip back to paradise, and Richard would get the worst of his timebomb trees de-fused, and be left with the gear, skills and knowledge to deal safely with the rest of the problem trees himself.

We arrived back in Malaysia in early January to 38°, 80% humidity and intense bright sunlight. Quite a shock after weeks of freezing rain and gloom in the UK.

The first couple of days were spent going through the gear and waiting for the jet lag to pass. Fortunately Richard had followed the shopping list to the letter - two full climbing kits, rigging gear, safety gear, chainsaws, spare parts and the all-important camel backs. The only slight disappointment was the two pairs of beautiful new Andrew chainsaw boots, both in Richard's size 11 (I take a 9...).

Back on the island, everything looked fantastic – apart from the trees; they seemed bigger than when last seen...

I'd never climbed in the tropics before. I had no idea if there would be bats, rodents, reptiles or insects to contend with. And then there was the small matter that we were on an island, 40 minutes by boat to the mainland and a further 60km drive to the nearest town. There was no rescue helicopter, and even if there was, there was no phone to call it in...

So there I was; holiday-fit, jet lagged, overheating (just putting my boots on raised a sweat), with big heavy trees, unknown bitey things, loads of expensive stuff to miss, and a complete novice ground crew! Yikes.

Fortunately, Richard and Parmin (his 2-IC) were smart guys. We spent the first morning going over how the climbing systems worked and tying knots. By the end of the day they were both ascending, re-roping and descending. After two days they were selecting anchor points, setting lines and branch walking. By the third day, they'd nailed a number of rescue scenarios. I've always said you want your mate to be way better at aerial rescue than you are. This had never been truer than right there and then.

In spite of everything, the job went perfectly. The trees were dense and ugly with nasty leans and an unhelpful onshore breeze came up at 11.30 every morning. But nothing bit or ran or flew at me. Nothing got broken, and most importantly, no-one got hurt. A definite result in my book!

We got the three worst trees down in seven days and had a further five days of very contented R&R at the end of it.

Richard is still running everything on the island - and now has a successful operation doing tree work on the mainland.

Love it when a plan comes together!



# **DUTCH ELM DISEASE**

## By Simon Cook, Arboriculture and Tree Health Specialist

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is a voracious killer of elms and has been found in the Auckland Region since the summer of 1989/90. Various organisations have been involved in work attempting to eradicate and control the spread of this lethal fungal disease, with Auckland Council managing the programme as it stands since 2006. The programme includes visual surveys, pheromone trapping of the bark borer vector (Scolytus multistriatus), pruning and removal of infected trees, plus new additional tools over the last couple of seasons. We continue to remove infected trees as soon as possible (in the tens rather than hundreds over the last couple of seasons), with hygiene measures critical in slowing the spread of the disease.

The Auckland Region still has several thousand elm trees on private and public land, the most obvious being the golden yellow cauliflower shaped Golden Elm (Ulmus glabra 'Lutescens').

The last couple of seasons have become important milestones for the disease in New Zealand.

The first significant change is really positive, with the introduction of DutchTrig into our arsenal of disease control. DutchTrig contains a Verticillium sp. wilt fungus that when injected into elms creates an immune response against the DED fungus (Ophiostoma novo-ulmi). With the help of Thilo Beeker (and Ron Schraven), Proclimb & SPS Biosecurity we have injected over 1000 elms with DutchTrig this season (November 2022). The results appear to show a huge reduction in disease incidence in sites that were previously severe hotspots.

The second major change is really sad for Aotearoa elms, with the positive identification of a number of diseased trees in and around Te Kauwhata, Mercer, Pokeno and Huntly. Rapid response is being carried out to delimit and remove the disease, with the hope that spread can be stopped in its tracks. Waikato District Council, Waikato Regional Council and Hamilton City Council are coming to grips with the likely impact, especially around the practicalities of how containment and eradication will be achieved. The Hauraki, Waikato, Matamata Piako, and Waipa are home to huge populations of elm trees, almost exclusively in sites of human habitation, and their loss would be significant. As we have seen with the disease's presence in Auckland, it continues to be expensive to remove and manage, not to mention the major amenity and ecological loss from this disease.

We certainly hope the spread can be reversed.



This tree is a Meadowbank favourite and the impact of the disease is rapid and fatal. This is a tree that's survived 30 + years of close contact with Dutch Elm Disease; imagine the impact on Waikato elms.



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# **THE BASICS OF PLANTING NATIVE FOREST**

#### **By David Bergin and Michael Bergin**

Planting nursery-raised seedlings is the most widely used option for the establishment of native forests to meet many objectives. It allows control of the species mix and density of planting, and with appropriate after-planting care, can be highly successful. Planting is, however, an expensive and labour-intensive method for establishing natives so getting the basics right is important especially when planting at large scale.

#### **Scope for natural regeneration**

Before considering planting, determine if there are opportunities for Nature to assist in establishment of native forests. Many native ecosystems have a remarkable ability to regenerate naturally.

The factors that may be limiting natural regeneration are likely to be the same factors that will reduce



animals are controlled and there are nearby seed sources of native trees and shrubs, as well as birds to assist in seed dispersal.

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planting success, such as grazing by domestic stock, pest animal browsing, persistent vigorous weeds, presence of bird predators. Mother Nature can often do it better and certainly a lot cheaper than planting, so encouraging natural regeneration will lessen the need to plant, especially if seed sources and birds are present to assist in supply and dispersal of seed.

Planting is also likely to be a component of most restoration projects, even those focussing on encouraging natural regeneration. Protecting and enhancing any existing remnants of reverting shrublands through promoting natural regeneration, and supplementary planting of natives as required, should be a priority before launching into widescale planting of nearby new sites.

Given a chance, modified landscapes including marginal land have a remarkable ability to regenerate naturally especially where pest

#### **Planting new sites**

There are many sites where planting of natives to restore a native forest and associated ecosystems is the only option. Planting will be influenced by the objectives and resources of those undertaking the project as well as the local climate, and various site characteristics including altitude, soils, and drainage. Knowledge of local ecology and in particular the likely original forest types that existed in your area before forest clearance will assist in determining the main species to target in your restoration programmes.

The scale and timeline of planting proposed, resources required, and a commitment to longterm maintenance must be considered in planting plans. Planting is just one action within a package of tasks including fencing, animal control, good site preparation and post-planting weed control, the latter often required for two or more years after planting. It is easy to underestimate the time and cost of planting so good planning and resourcing is essential.



Large-scale planting requires good forward planning, such as this recent mixed species native planting on marginal hill country recently retired from grazing, Hawkes Bay

#### Avoid the legacy of poor planting

For over a century, hundreds of thousands of native tree and shrub seedlings have been planted to re-establish native forest but many have underperformed or failed. Surviving plantings often show evidence of one or more factors reducing early performance such as poor site preparation, not taking into account successional processes in selecting species, and often poor post-planting maintenance, particularly weed and pest animal control. The underperforming and failure of many planting programmes have resulted in widely held perceptions that native trees are difficult to establish and are slow growing. Historically, while prime sites have been used for horticulture and pasture, natives were often planted on poorer and less accessible sites and then neglected.

Applying planting practices developed for the exotic pine forest industry to the establishment of native tree plantations may have also contributed to the relatively poor performance of early plantings of native trees – natives are not radiata pine – they need different management and a higher level of care!

#### **Realistic expectations**

Matching expectations with resources, good site preparation, monitoring and maintenance, and having the flexibility to modify approaches and practices as work progresses are the key requirements for improving planting performance. Successful establishment of native trees results from a combination of many factors including:

- Protection from domestic grazing stock and control of pest animals
- Good site preparation in managing existing vegetation cover
- Following natural ecological and successional processes in selecting the right species to match the site
- Choosing the appropriate planting pattern and density
- Adopting good planting techniques
- Timely monitoring and maintenance.

While we all like planting as part of community volunteer events, there is a limit. Professional contractors are often a more practical option especially at scale for site preparation, planting large remote areas and undertaking weed control.

#### **Start small**

As the cost of native forest planting programmes is high (\$20,000 per ha depending on the site and planting regime adopted) and the commitment to managing planted areas is easily under-estimated, we recommend starting with a small pilot trial. Only prepare and plant a small proportion of the site in the first year, particularly if planters do not have experience or do not have the input of local expertise. Small-scale planting allows assessment of site-specific factors influencing early performance, e.g., the problem of weeds and animal pests may only become apparent after planting.

A modest approach will avoid possible large-scale failure and provide an opportunity to determine optimum species selection (including nurse crops), nursery seedling grades and plant spacing. Within a year or two, knowledge gained from small pilot plantings will provide planters with confidence to expand planting in subsequent years with a greater certainty of success.

#### What can nature tell you?

Locally regenerating shrubland and secondary forest will provide insights into early successional processes and species selection. The ecology of local forest remnants is a valuable guide to assist in identifying the composition of high-forest tree species across a planting site. This gives insights into varying soil types, topography and other site conditions including the local climate effect on species selection and how to approach a restoration project.

Inspection of nearby restoration sites and existing native forest and other native ecosystems will also assist in identifying any pest animal and weeds issues that will need to be addressed before planting. Where practical, try to mimic nature's successional pathways in the restoration of native forest and associated ecosystems.

# Learn from other restoration sites

Talking to others who have already restored a native forest or are well down the track with their plantings can provide valuable local knowledge. Inspecting such sites will help plan plantings, particularly if a history of planting and management is available.

Essential information includes what the site looked like before planting and in particular what was growing on the site, how were browsing animals managed, what site preparation was undertaken, what was planted and at what spacing, and what monitoring and maintenance programmes were undertaken since planting.

# Order plants early and strategise selection of species

Native plant nurseries typically require a minimum of 12 months lead-in time to supply the common hardy native shrub species and two years or more for the common tree species such as totara and kahikatea to get them to a reasonable plant height of 50cm. Start planning 1-2 years ahead of planting to ensure that good-quality stock raised from seed collected from locally appropriate species will be available.

Initially at least, we recommend using only a limited

number of the hardiest and more commonly grown, early successional shrub species for the bulk of your planting area, often mimicking early natural reversion processes. These hardy shrubs provide shelter for inter-planting a smaller proportion of tree species which are often more expensive. Depending on the region and natural species distributions, there may only need to be 6-10 species of both shrub and tree species for planting, and on some sites there is merit in using even a smaller number of species such as a dominance of manuka and kanuka.

Most nurseries will be growing a small range of the common species where it is easy to collect seed and raise seedlings using standard nursery raising practices. Keeping in mind the appropriate local species for the target planting sites; these often include native shrub and tree species such as manuka, karamu, kohuhu, ti kouka, harakeke, akeake, broadleaf, five finger, kanuka and totara. Species diversity can be increased by allowing natural regeneration or interplanting the more difficult-to-raise, less commonly occurring species. These species may benefit from more shelter if you target preferred microsites planted at a smaller scale one or more years after the bulk of the planting area has been planted.



Ordering seedlings from local nurseries 1-2 years ahead of planting will allow time to collect seed and raise high-quality seedlings of the native shrub and tree species you require for your planting project.

#### **Information sources**

A wealth of information is available on all aspects of planting natives via various sources including Tane's Tree Trust, Trees That Count, most regional councils and some district and city councils. Management of pest animals and weeds are available from council websites and Weedbusters. Contact details of native plant nurseries are also on council websites and the Trees That Count website.

For further information on the planting and management of natives to meet multiple objectives from environmental to sustainable management, check out the free resources on the Tane's Tree Trust website https://www.tanestrees.org.nz/.



Tane's Tree Trust has a wide range of free resources promoting best-practice planting and management of native forests for multiple purposes.

#### **TTT Native Forest Factsheets Series**

This article is based on information published in a new factsheet series on establishing native forest by Tāne's Tree Trust with funding from Te Uru Rākau's One Billion Tree Partnership Fund and The Tindall Foundation, with support from Trees That Count.

For more information contact Dr David Bergin <u>davidbergin.erl@gmail.com</u>, Michael Bergin michaelbergin.erl@gmail.com, or the Tane's Tree Trust office office@tanestrees.org.nz.



# **2022 NATIONAL TREE CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS 4 NOV — WELLINGTON BOTANIC GARDEN**

SILKY SAWS AERIAL RESCUE						
MEN'S WOMEN'S						
lst	Tiago Miranda	42.00 pts	Stephanie Dryfhout	39.00 pts		
2nd Troy Sircombe		36.00 pts	Nicala Ward-Allen	37.50 pts		
3rd	Jack Taylor	32.50 pts	Brianna Uivel	21.00 pts		

BELAYED SPEED CLIMB						
	MEN'S WOMEN'S					
lst	Callum Toms	19.12 sec	Stephanie Dryfhout	26.91 sec		
2nd	Troy Sircombe	21.99 sec	Samantha Fraser	34.56 sec		
3rd	Jonny Wake	22.81 sec	Nicala Ward-Allen	37.64 sec		
3rd	Jonny Wake	22.81 sec	Nicala Ward-Allen	37.64 se		

DONAGHYS ASCENT EVENT						
	MEN'S WOMEN'S					
lst	Troy Sircombe	11.78 sec	Stephanie Dryfhout	14.74 sec		
2nd	Tiago Miranda	12.30 sec	Samantha Fraser	18.34 sec		
3rd	Daniel Cambell	13.25 sec	Brianna Uivel	20.53 sec		

TREESCAPE THROWLINE					
MEN'S WOMEN'S					
lst	Jonny Wake	26 pts	Stephanie Dryfhout	17 pts	
2nd	Reuben Drew	18 pts	Samantha Fraser	16 pts	
3rd	Tiago Miranda	17 pts	Nicala Ward-Allen	7 pts	
lst 2nd 3rd	Jonny Wake Reuben Drew Tiago Miranda	26 pts 18 pts 17 pts	Stephanie Dryfhout Samantha Fraser Nicala Ward-Allen	17 pts 16 pts 7 pts	

TREEHUB WORK CLIMB						
MEN'S WOMEN'S						
lst	Tiago Miranda	58.50 pts	Stephanie Dryfhout	73.00 pts		
2nd	Sam Redmayne	54.67 pts	Nicala Ward-Allen	68.82 pts		
3rd	Callum Toms	53.37 pts	Brianna Uivel	43.47 pts		

WOMEN'S OVERALL PLACINGS	
st Stephanie Dryfhout 168.00 pt	S
Ind Nicala Ward-Allen 131.20 pt	S
Brd Brianna Uivel 82.68 pts	
th Samantha Fraser 78.42 pts	
Jerrica Larby 49.50 pts	

TREETECH MEN'S OVERALL PLACINGS					
st	Tiago Miranda	149.80 pts			
2nd	Troy Sircombe	123.48 pts			
rd	Reuben Drew	121.88 pts			
lth	Jonny Wake	120.55 pts			
ith	Callum Toms	117.82 pts			
ith	Kahu Mclean Robinson	110.47 pts			

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Treescope <sup>®</sup> Ltd	Wellington	central@treescape.co.nz	(04) 569 5813
Arb Innovations	Wellington	enquiries@arbinnovations.co.nz	(04) 2126 366
Wellington City Council Parks & Gardens	Wellington	treeteam@wcc.govt.nz	(04) 499 4444
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Armes Tree Solutions Ltd	Wellington	info@armestrees.co.nz	(04) 562 8907
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The Tree People	Christchurch	info@fourseasonstreecare.co.nz	0800 4 SEASONS
Fulton Hogan Christchurch	Christchurch	www.fultonhogan.com/contact-us	03 357 1400

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SA ITCC 2023	11 - 13 AUGUST 2023 / ALBUQUERQUE
SA CONFERENCE 2023	14 - 16 AUGUST 2023 / ALBUQUERQUE
NZ ARB CONFERENCE 2023	9 - 11 NOVEMEBER /INVERCARGILL
NZ ARB AGM 2023	9 NOVEMEBER /INVERCARGILL
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