

Grow your own. Natives

About 70% of New Zealand plants are found nowhere else in the world. That's because our plants have evolved for so long in isolation from other land masses. Because they naturally belong here natives are adapted to local conditions and need less looking after.

Exotics

Exotics and introduced plants will also enhance your garden but be aware - many of them compete with natives, strangling them and invading the nearby bush and forest.

Locals are Best

Use seeds, cuttings or plants that originate from Waitakere and replant them here (eco-sourcing). Waitakere born and bred plants are generally more resilient and better suited to our conditions and as well keep this area distinctive. Ask for local varieties and support local nurseries if they have local plants. Please don't take plants from the local bush or reserve. If you would like to source seeds from Waitakere City parks contact Council's Parks section.

Parochial and Proud of it!

Many Waitakere suburbs have retained some natural gems - special features distinctive to the landscape of that neighbourhood. Here are some highlights;

Massey - has kowhai, kanuka, puriri and pied shags.

Green Bay - habitat for an unusual orchid (*Bulbophyllum tuberculatum*)

Henderson - has a rare maidenhair fern (makaka).

Henderson - has magnificent mangroves

Henderson Valley - has kahikatea, totara and titoki trees and the water dwellers kokopu and eels!

Waikumete - home to the green gecko.

Toxic to Toddlers

Be aware: tutu, ngato and kowhai seeds and poroporo and karaka berries are poisonous!

A Word about Weeds

Weeds will undo all your hard work! Surround your plant with mulch (grass clippings, bark chips, compost) to keep weeds down and out. Among the worst weeds in Waitakere are ginger, climbing asparagus, Japanese honey suckle and (non native) jasmine. Deal to weeds before they become a big problem. For advice on how to control these invaders call our Environmental Weeds Adviser Ph 8368000. Other 'baddies' are Mexican datery willows, some bamboos and banana passionfruit (all invasive), pampas (competitive with and easily mistaken for toetoe) and privet (a health hazard).

When to Plant

Plant trees and shrubs in autumn or early spring. A grey overcast day is best or plant first thing in the morning or in the evening.

Planting Tips

- Plant shrubs and trees about 1-2 metres apart - give them room to grow.
- Mix plants - for variety of shape, size and colour. Group new plants together in clusters.
- Plant hardy ones first - they shelter more fragile ones.
- Put lower or smaller plants on the edges.
- Layer plants for visual interest - use ground covering trailing plants, low ferns and grasses, human sized shrubs, and small trees (as well as larger specimens if you have room).
- Use natives as you would exotics - eg a row of cabbage trees, mapou or toetoe down a drive way.
- Plant across the natural contours of the land - it's easier and it minimises erosion.
- Plant tree species when they are about waist high.

How to Plant

1. Clear weeds and grass from around the planting site.
2. Dig a hole deeper and wider than the root bundle.
3. Add compost to the hole. Put plant in hole, press loose soil around it.
4. Water!
5. Surround with mulch (compost, bark or grass clippings). This keeps the weeds out, the moisture in, and enriches the soil.

The Green Network

Links green and natural areas to each other - creating a network of gardens, parks, streams, reserves, roadside plantings and coastlines. The Green Network gives you more places to play, connects you with the country-side and encourages birds and other wildlife to make their home here.

Help is at Hand

Free advice and guidance on landscaping and planting is available if you are wanting to contribute to the Green Network eg using native planting on streambanks. Talk to the Green Network Co-ordinator Ph 8368000.

Useful and free information

- A Guide for Planning and Restoring the Nature of Waitakere. Waitakere City Council (WCC)
- Slip Sliding Away ... Facing Erosion Problems? (WCC)
- Streamside Planting (WCC)
- Gardening with Water - Sustainable Home Guidelines (WCC)
- Friendly Plants and The Good Plant Guide - Auckland Regional Council (ARC)
- Weed Guide - (ARC)
- For more information on edible and medicinal gardening read: A Field Guide to Native Edible Plants of New Zealand by Andrew Crowe or Medicinal Plants by S. Brooker, R. Camble and R. Cooper available at Waitakere Libraries.
- If you'd like to green your street by planting a tree talk to Keep Waitakere Beautiful Co-ordinator Ph 836 8000.

Interested in other Green Network projects?

You are invited to participate in the:

- Clean Streams Project** - neighbourhood planting by streams projects.
 - Trees for Babies Project** - planting trees for our new residents.
- For more information contact: The Green Network Co-ordinator Ph 836 8000.



Waitakere City Council
Te Taitao o Waitakere

Glen Eden, Glendene, Green Bay (inland), Henderson, Kelston, Massey, New Lynn, Ranui, Sturges Road, Sunnyside, Te Atatu (inland), Waikumete, Western Heights



WAITAKERE GARDENING GUIDE

for people living in urban Waitakere



Waitakere City Council
Te Taitao o Waitakere

Establishing a new garden, or transforming or extending an existing one? Here are some ideas and suggestions that might help. There is no right way to create a garden but taking cues from nature often ensures the survival of your plants. When deciding what to plant where, check where plants like to grow, and their natural neighbours. Assess your site for sun, shade, shelter and soil and choose plants for those conditions. Natives look great in city gardens providing colour, scent, shelter, shade and soil enrichment. They are generally hardy, they reduce erosion and activate biodiversity. Have fun and be creative!



Damp or boggy bits

Don't drain - just plant! Plants absorb water from the soil, naturally draining damp and boggy areas. Select plants which flourish in these conditions. Cabbage trees, flax, kiokio, pigeonwood, kanono, putaputaweta, manuka, and pukatea will grow in boggy conditions. In damp conditions lacebark, karamu, kawakawa, wineki, ponga and akeake will do well.

Windy and Dry Places

Some plants are especially adapted to living in windy or dry places. Usually they are hardy plants that have furry or hairy leaves (pohutukawa), have thick or waxy leaves (puka, karaka) or tiny leaves (mingimingi and manuka). These plants often grow as bush edge plants or on exposed ridges (kowhai), or on coastal cliffs (pohutukawa, karo). Plants that are flexible bend in the wind, and make good wind breaks eg cabbage trees, kanuka, toetoe, akepiro, and flax. Other plants suited to these spots are mapou, toru, kumararahou, astelia, tuturu, houpara, and renga renga lily.

Shady Sites

In shady sites (often on the south side of the property) grow species that normally live in the forest under the umbrella of tall trees for example: pigeonwood, makomako, ponga, hen and chicken fern and tuturu. Other plants that like shady sites are rewarewa, rama-rama, houhere, turepo, kotukutuku, kanono, hangehange, most ferns and forest iris.

Paths

Paths made from shell and gravel are permeable ie. they drain more readily and reduce puddles and flooding. Bricks, paving stones and turf blocks also work well because they allow water to drain between cracks.

Pots and Planters

Put frost sensitive plants in pots, so you can move them to suitable conditions as the seasons change. Terracotta pots soak up heat and moisture and dry out plants so either paint the inner surface of the pot, or plant in a plastic container then place in a terracotta pot. Puka, West Coast kowhai, oleania, toetoe, cabbage tree and taurepo all grow well in pots. The renga renga lily grows well in hanging baskets.

Hedges

Consider a hedge instead of a fence - it still provides privacy, shelter and shade and provides a home for the birds (and it doesn't need re-painting, re-staining or anti-graffiti treatment). Try mahoe, mapou, taupatia, karo, hangehange, korokio, toetoe, or flax.

Welcoming Wildlife

- There are lots of ways you can add life to your garden.
- Trees and shrubs provide a home to birds and insects.
- Use mulch or leaf litter on the ground around your plants and birds, insects and your plants will benefit.
- Grow plants that birds like, for example: kahikatea, karaka, tanekaha, pigeonwood, rewarewa, tioki, mamangi, kowhai, ramarama, nikau, astelia and flax. The birds will help your garden grow by spreading seed, pollinating fruit etc. Native birds need a year round supply of nectar, pollen, seeds, insects and fruit from native trees. Exotic plants also offer bird fodder for example the bottle brush, which provides nectar when few natives are in flower.
- Link your plantings to your neighbours, to a street tree or a next door park or stream if you can. Birds prefer and need large clusters and linking corridors of trees.
- Make a hanging bird-feeder or bird-house (a safe haven from cats).
- Plant swan plants, and hebes, to attract butterflies.
- Bees are beneficial to your garden - fruit trees and vegetable crops rely on their labour to cross pollinate and set the fruit. Bees love lavender and rosemary.
- Welcome worms to your compost heap and garden and they'll help aerate your soil.
- Birds, stick insects and lady birds all help control insect pests.

Trees and shrubs

Imitate nature - plant trees that are natural neighbours and group them together for shade, shelter and survival. Plants on the edge of a grouping provide wind shelter and the taller ones in the middle provide shade for the smaller plants underneath. Explore the middle of a tree/shrub cluster by sitting still and quiet. Watch for birds perching, preening, nesting and feeding.

A cluster of trees and shrubs suitable for a Waitakere back garden might include these combinations: rewarewa, konekone and ponga or manatu, cabbage tree, and ramarama. Other shrubs and trees that grow well locally are: tioki, rangiora, kumararahou, five finger, houhere, heketara, mapou, karamu, mahoe, cabbage tree, turepo, West Coast kowhai, lancewood, and koromiko. Alternatively, plant nurse crop species, manuka, kanuka, makomako, and toetoe, to bring in birds and help natural regeneration to occur.

If you have a large section you could plant bigger trees suited to Waitakere conditions like puriri, pohutukawa, kahikatea, kauri, matai, totara, and rata.

Climbers and Vines

Climbers normally attach themselves to tall trees and grow between levels in the forest. So give them something to climb on: a tree, trellis, water tank, or garden shed. Climbers can also help create shade so plant them around a pergola or arch. Native climbers include: New Zealand jasmine and clematis, rata and kohia (passion vine).

Feature Trees

A feature tree enhances the view, acts as an extra play room for children, offers shade from the sun, a retreat from a busy household and provides a special place for just sitting and enjoying your garden. Some families plant special ceremonial trees to mark the birth of a baby, to remember a loved one or to celebrate an event. Feature trees are usually shaped for their special character eg bright flowers or berries or distinctive shapes or sizes. Recommended feature trees are: puriri, karaka, ititiki, mairehau, or exotics: jacaranda, magnolia, gleditsia or tlesia.

Flowers and Perfume

Flowering plants provide colour and fragrance and some are even natural insecticides. Flowering and scented plants are probably best appreciated if planted by doors and windows and along paths. Try planting the Waitakere forget-me-not, New Zealand clematis and tree daisies (white flowered), kowhai (yellow), and rata (red). If its perfume you're after try planting karaka, hangehange, kohuhu, toropapa, mahoe, pigeonwood, putaputaweta, karo, mairehau, clematis and New Zealand jasmine. Non invading scented plants which will brighten your life include: gardenia, boronia, carnation, frangipani and lavender.

Edible and Medicinal Gardening

Herbs are usually best planted near the kitchen door or window, or beside the barbecue for easy access when cooking. Many herbs can be grown in pots or in window boxes. Try parsley, mint, rosemary, chives, and basil.

Plant fruiting species that you can snack on - plums, apples, grapes etc - they taste best straight from the tree. Fruit like oranges and lemons can be used in cooking but are also medicinal. Here are some other "useful" plants to have in your garden:

Native spinach, celery, mint, and puha - for eating.

Kanuka - drink tea from the leaves.

Ngaio - use juice from leaves as sandfly repellent.

Aloe vera - use juice from leaves to soothe cuts and mild and small burns. Prone to allergies? Avoid wind pollinating plants like pines, grasses, willow, maples, and poplar. Choose bee pollinated plants with large bright scented flowers eg rhododendron, camellia, and cabbage.

Waitakere Specials

Waitakere has some unique plants, found naturally only in this area. These very special species include the Waitakere forget-me-not, the West Coast kowhai, and the Huia hebe. Help them survive by planting them in your garden. If your local nursery doesn't stock these varieties ask them to order them for you.

