

Living in the Bush



Titirangi, Laingholm, Waiatarua,
Upper Piha Rd, Scenic Drive Nth,
Waima, Woodlands.



Our own rainforest?

Much of the Waitakere Ranges area was burnt and logged last century. Gradually the scrub has been replaced by forest and now the cloak of bush lures many to make it their home.

The Waitakeres catch twice as much rain as Henderson or Auckland. The forest, nourished by these 'deluges' feeds a profusion of plants. Ferns are especially prolific in the ranges and grow in a variety of niches - on bare rocks, beside waterfalls and up in the trees.

About a quarter of New Zealand's flowering plants can be found here and there is a wealth of wild life. Bush birds frequently heard and sometimes seen include the fantail, kereru, tui, and grey warbler. The rare Hochstetters frog also lives in places along Scenic Drive.

Local Highlights

Puriri, karaka, nikau, and kohekohe are signs of fertile soils in Titirangi and Laingholm.

Waima has beautiful kohekohe glades on Exhibition Drive and a healthy mix of puriri, rimu, kauri, and kowhai.

Waiatarua is a tree fern haven and a favourite haunt of the ruru (morepork).

Living Lightly On The Land

The guidelines and rules administered by the Council aim to retain the character of this area. Homes which are tucked away in the bush, constructed on poles and made of timber blend in best. If you want to clear scrub or trees, build or move earth, please talk to the Council first.



Living in the Bush: making the most of it

- Want more light - skylights are usually the most effective way to bring light to bush surrounded properties and these often afford greater privacy. When building or renovating use large windows, and no eaves.
- Using the rain. Capture the water that falls for free. See *The Sustainable Home Guidelines* for advice on water harvesting.
- Attract the birds! Have flowering natives around your home such as kowhai, flax, and puriri, and birds are bound to visit.

Slip Sliding Away

Because of the high rainfall here, erosion and subsidence can be a big problem. The more vegetation you can keep on your section the less it will erode. For driveways use gravel or semi turfing surfaces and only tread wide tracks. These materials plus windbreaks or diagonal driveways can reduce flooding and erosion. Avoiding the "concrete jungle" but needing some concrete? Soften the look by colouring it with pigment.

Just Regenerate!

People who live in and around the bush can enjoy this lifestyle without putting too much energy into the section. If you have plants that birds like and keep weeds under control, your bush will regenerate naturally.

Born and Bred in Waitakere

Local plants are best - they are better adapted to conditions here and they keep the area special and distinct. You can grow plants from seeds collected from your own property or ask at nurseries and garden centres for seeds and plants "eco-sourced" from this area.

Bush Gardening

If you do want to potter with a garden, here are some plants well suited to the area: nikau, rimu, tauri, kowhai, makamaka, ponga, puka (Grisilena acida only) and pittosporum.

Shrubs and low ground plants: carex (grasses), NZ flax, flax, renga renga lily, coprosma and hebes.

If you have clay soils try planting on raised garden beds with plenty of compost.

Plants for your patios or decks or inside

You can grow puka, olearia or renga renga lilies in pots, and clematis and rata will crawl over your support or pergola.

Natives vs Exotics

Natives belong here and need less care. They are far less prone to rust and mould. Exotics can also enhance your garden but beware - many of them compete with natives, strangling them and invading the nearby bush and forest. Non invasive, colourful and aromatic exotics include carnations, lavender, gerdenia, vireya rhododendrons.

Fake Natives

Some nurseries stock varieties that sound familiar and seem to be native but are not. These varieties may merge with local stock and change the look, colours and textures of this forest.

Please avoid:

Pohutukawa from Tahiti and the Kermadec Islands

Kawakawa - Pacific and offshore island varieties

Tree Ferns - from off-shore.



Protect in perpetuity

If you would like your bush protected in the future you can covenant it. Contact Council or the QEII Trust. If you have a covenant you may be eligible for a special rates discount.

Battling Weeds

Ginger, agapanthus, asparagus, jasmine, honeysuckle and blue morning glory are among Waitakere's worst weeds so please don't introduce these to your garden. To identify weeds pick up a Waitakere's Worst Weeds ID sheet or call *Enviroline* (Ph 0800 806040) for a brochure.

Waitakere City Council offers some assistance for those battling weeds on their properties including:

- weed bins (free delivery and disposal)
 - weed bags (for ginger)
 - weed spray
 - rebates on weed control contractors
 - plants to replace the weeds
- For more information Ph 8390400.

P.S. Please don't dump your gardening waste - the weeds within it spread and the problem grows!

Pets, Pests & Predators

Possums! These pesky creatures can do untold damage - to your bush, your next door neighbours bush and beyond. The best tool is a Timms trap. Or you can support Forest Save, the Auckland Regional Council's (ARC) pest control programme. Note! Dogs and cats are bird predators. Give birds a chance - attach a bell to the collar of your cat.

Fire, Fire!

Fire threatens the very landscape that attracts people to this area. Please take great care when incinerating rubbish, or having barbecues. If planting near your house, plant fire resistant plants.

For information on fire restrictions and bans contact Waitakere City Council (Ph 839 0400).

To report a fire Phone 111

Free and Useful Advice & Information

- The Green Network flyer
- The Sustainable Home Guidelines, especially sections on: Gardening with Water, Using Rainwater, and Saving Water. Also available on www.waitakere.govt.nz
- Slip Sliding Away - preventing erosion
- Streamside planting
- Waitakere's Worst Weeds ID sheet
- QEII National Trust (Revegetation Guides)
- A Guide to Planting and Restoring the Nature of Waitakere City
- The District Plan Guidelines
- The Good Plant Guide (ARC)
- Weed Guide (ARC)
- Enviroline Ph0800 806040 (ARC)
- The Call Centre Ph8390400

Other Brochures in this series

- Living by the Manukau Harbour
- Living by the Waitemata
- Living on Waitakere's West Coast
- Living in the Waitakere Foothills
- The Waitakere Gardening Guide (for people living in Urban Waitakere)

Waitakere Welfare

Interested in the welfare of the Waitakere Ranges?

Find out about the work of :

- The Weed Free Waitakere Trust
 - The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society,
 - Royal Forest & Bird Society
 - Friends of Auckland Regional Parks
 - Keep Waitakere Beautiful
 - Project Crimson
 - Land Care Groups at Bethell's/Te Henga, Piha and Karekare
- via the Call Centre 839-0400



This is a Green Network Project

The Green Network joins natural areas to create a network of gardens, parks, streams, roadside plantings and coastlines. The Green Network gives you more places to play, connects you with the countryside, gives birds and other wildlife access to your neighbourhood and encourages them to make their home here in Waitakere.