

chance to broaden our knowledge of the overseas flora and gain an insight into how other botanical societies operate.

UPDATE ON OKAREKA MISTLETOE RESTORATION PROJECT

Paul Cashmore

Since the last newsletter the RBS has run two weed control work days – on Saturday 26 July and Saturday 22 November 2003 at Okareka. The 26 July workday was not well attended by RBS members. Only a few turned up but thanks to some good networking with DoC a selection of the regular DoC volunteers showed up. As a result we managed a record turnout of approx 15 people. We spent most of the day in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve still tidying up around the big jasmine patch that was started back in March. We moved on from here and finished off the cherry infestations in the vicinity and moved into some of the more difficult-to-find jasmine under heavy kiokio opposite the Okareka store. Meanwhile John Hobbs and DoC volunteer Brian Law who had chainsaw gear continued felling cotoneaster, strawberry dogwood and other weedy trees and shrubs up the road in the DoC marginal strip.

DoC staff have followed up this great initial RBS effort by spraying what's left of the jasmine infestation, the wandering jew and ivy infestations. Working with council staff some of the larger exotic Japanese walnut, wattle, cherry and eucalyptus trees near roads are progressively being removed. DoC has also placed official signage at several points around the marginal strip and scenic reserve instructing locals to protect mistletoe by not dumping garden refuse or rubbish. This will hopefully make the job of RBS (and DoC) easier in the long term by appealing to a minority of locals to stop adding their garden rubbish to reserves as fast as we control it!!

Our November workday moved a hundred metres along the road from the store to start work on the next two jasmine infestations. Again we had a good turnout of approx. 15 people this time with a good mix of RBS, DoC volunteers and some members of the local Okareka community. With the number of people present (and electric hedge trimmers!!) we cut through the two jasmine infestations relatively quickly. This allowed people to move onto Himalayan honeysuckle and a dense patch of wattle and cherry further up the road. We got half way through this before knocking off for the year.

Summary and Future

I personally think we are making really good progress with the three days per year we are spending on project. We are certainly progressing the removal of weed infestations in both areas we are working on at a rapid rate and it is very easy for the local community to see the positive changes being made to their local environment. Aiming for approximately three workdays per year spaced out in spring, autumn and winter working around our field trip schedule seems to be a sustainable number of workdays where we can make demonstratable progress. Assistance from DoC volunteers and locals is appreciated as we struggle to get a large attendance solely from RBS members.

Environment BoP Environmental Enhancement Fund Application Success

Finally some really good news just to hand!! In August I put together an application to the above fund on behalf of RBS to fund some aspects of the Okareka Mistletoe Restoration Project. We have just been notified by Environment BoP that our application is one of the thirty or so successful applications out of a total of 82 applications submitted from around the BoP for this years funding round. We will receive a total of \$6581 from the Fund for the following activities/materials:

- Design and production of an interpretation panel on the project (in conjunction with Forest and Bird, DoC, EBOP).
- Cost of buying plants (mainly mistletoe hosts) to revegetate the open weedy area within the marginal strip
- Purchase of some equipment – e.g. herbicide gel, gloves etc

-Growsafe Certification Course for 2 weed sprayers (required for use of herbicides).

This small amount of funding should ensure that these additional aspects of the project that RBS could not have funded, and would have been unlikely to receive in-kind assistance from DoC over and above what we are already getting in terms of loan of equipment, can now be undertaken and progressed.

The committee will discuss and plan for the allocation of this funding to the project at the next committee meeting in the New Year.

CORRECTION

J.F.F. Hobbs

In my article Vascular Plants of the Lake Okataina and Waione Block Scenic Reserves (Hobbs 2001) I noted that I had found oioi (*Apodasmia similis*) in the mire surrounding Lake Rotongata. This turned out to be in error as a wrong identification. The specimen was initially identified by a well known botanist with extensive New Zealand knowledge and although I was not overly happy with the identification I accepted his superior knowledge. I questioned Chris Ecroyd (not the original identifier) several times re the identification and eventually when it came to mounting the specimen he realised that it was not what it was initially thought to be.

REFERENCE

Hobbs J.F.F. 2001. Vascular plants of the Lake Okataina and Waione Block Scenic Reserves. *Rotorua Botanical Society Newsletter* 36: 5-31