

UPDATE ON OKAREKA MISTLETOE RESTORATION PROJECT

Paul Cashmore

We have had a fairly busy 6 months working at Okareka and on other associated work. Our workday on 17 July was completely washed out (like most of the rest of the Bay of Plenty that weekend!!!). However two more workdays over winter saw the huge area of blackberry, Japanese honeysuckle and convolvulus and other species in the marginal strip area completely cleared back to bare earth. In removing this amount of vegetation several decades of rubbish thrown into the area was also revealed. Thanks to John Hobbs who took 2 uteloads of it away to the landfill.

In September we planted approximately 500 plants – mostly five-finger and tree lucerne (*Tupeia* mistletoe host trees) along with lesser amounts of wineberry and karamu. This was a very successful morning with a good turnout of 14 people – many non-RBS people included. An unplanned truckload of mulch from RDC that ended up at the site proved very useful and we got the job done in good time. The final workday for the year was held in November and focused on releasing the rampant spring weed regrowth around the plantings, virtually all of which was convolvulus. Our small group of volunteers also spread the remaining mulch around the plantings. Survival rates at this stage are estimated to be about 80-90% but summer will be the real test.

On the public relations front we have had some success with publicising the work we have been doing and the RBS in general. A press release was put out to the media following the planting day with a good article and photos in the Rotorua Review. This has recently been followed up with an article in Environment BoP's December issue of the Guardian. There was also a brief discussion on the RBS project at Okareka on National Radio on 17th December as part of an interview that I did on mistletoe and its threats.

I also took time to submit applications for the project to three awards in 2004- the newly established DoC Conservation Awards, Environment BoP's Environmental Awards and the Trustpower Awards. Unfortunately we were not awarded any of the major prizes in these competitions but did receive certificates of achievement for entering the DoC and Environment BoP awards (see Figures 1 and 2 below).



Figure 1. Department of Conservation award.

Environmental Awards 2004

Community category
Acknowledgement of Achievement

Rotorua Botanical Society

For significant work in the Okareka Mistletoe Restoration Project.



Chairman



Date



working with our communities for a better environment

Figure 2: Environment Bay of Plenty award.