

## UPDATE ON OKAREKA MISTLETOE RESTORATION PROJECT

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The September workday focused on further planting at the existing two planting sites in the marginal strip. A reasonable turnout of members and locals put in a good morning's work. A small number of plants sourced from Treeline Nurseries were planted in the remaining gaps. In Tikitapu Scenic Reserve DOC has closed the informal 'driveway' leading through the edge of the reserve. RBS offered to replant the driveway if it was first ripped and DOC provided the plants. About 150 native plants consisting of karamu, fivefinger and kohuhu were planted along one lane of ripped driveway. RBS will tend these plantings until they are established as part of our restoration plantings.

In November focus turned to controlling a myriad of spring weeds. Mike Goodwin and Brian Law spent most of the morning poisoning larger cherry and willow trees further up Okareka Loop Rd in the reserve. Other RBS volunteers spent time manually releasing plantings followed by spot spraying at all 3 planting sites, in particularly on the marginal strip. A number of tree lucerne were moved up the hill from the Landcare plantings to marginal strip RBS plantings as they were no longer needed in the Landcare area. Volunteers also spent time tackling some remaining jasmine and blackberry along Okareka Loop Rd. A fair bit of knapsack spraying was required with two knapsacks working full time most of the morning.

While certainly the mistletoe in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve is looking pretty healthy and abundant unfortunately the same cannot be said about the plants in the marginal strip. While many of the plants are looking unhealthy the saddest news is that the large tree lucerne containing 50++ mistletoes which has provided a great seed source for the neighbourhood for the last 10 years has finally succumbed to old age and died. A sad loss of such a key seed source but hopefully the progeny will grow to take its place.