

Queensland kauri in Auckland – additions

E. K. Cameron

Since my writing of the article a year ago on the Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*) around Auckland (Cameron 1999) the Diocesan School tree in Epsom has been saved, one large tree on private land and eight smaller ones on “public land” have been added, 12 trees have been remeasured, one removed, and additional information about the Warkworth trees has been published.

Diocesan School tree – an excellent outcome

Earlier this year Diocesan School withdrew their resource consent application to cut down their splendid Queensland kauri, saving Auckland City the need to hold any hearings. The lower branches are now supported with black ties (Cobra System, hard to see) to the upper main trunk and no branches have been removed. The area is now fenced off around the tree and signs are present (“Danger falling branches”), and an attractive bark garden with rengarenga lilies surrounds the tree (Fig. 1). This new garden will aid the health of the tree by not allowing compaction of the soil around the surface feeder roots of the kauri. The school has obviously spent a considerable amount of money on their tree and they are to be congratulated on improving the tree’s immediate environment rather than wanting to have it removed. Old male catkins (42-60 mm long) were common on the ground on 15 November 2000 and the DBH = 153.8 cm, an increase of 0.3 cm in 15 months.

Orakei Road

The addition to the list of sizeable Queensland kauri in Auckland City by Cameron (1999: appendix 1) grows at 100 Orakei Road, Remuera: diameter (DBH) = 116.0 cm; height = c.23 m; and planting date unknown (19th C from its size). This healthy tree has a lean to the north, but the upper fifth of the trunk is vertical. This is most likely because there used to be another tree close to it on the south side, forcing the kauri to lean to the north for light. When the neighbouring tree was removed, died, or was overtopped the kauri straightened up. The ground around the tree was covered with male catkins (41-65-(70) mm long) that had shed their pollen when I measured the tree on 28 October 2000.

Sacred Heart College, Glendowie

On the western side of the access road down to the school’s new swimming pool; on the western side is a straight Queensland kauri: 58.8 cm DBH, c.16.5 m tall; measured 2 November 2000 (Robert Cameron pers. comm.).

Henderson

Three trees either side of the entrance to the

Henderson Recreation Centre. From north to south they measured: 29.3 cm DBH, c.9 m tall (north side of entrance); 21.4 cm, c.8 m; and 21.2 cm, 7.5 m (both on south side of entrance). The first two trees are straight, the latter is on a slight lean; all measured 5 November 2000.

University of Auckland

1. South side of the Law School, between Waterloo Quadrant and Eden Crescent, north-facing slope: 14.6 cm DBH, c.8 m tall, planted 1993 (Tony Palmer pers. comm.), many of the lower leaves were very wide (up to 60 mm); measured 30 October 2000.

2. By the Engineering School, corner of Symonds Street and Grafton Road, in a large (3 m x 3 m) raised concrete tub: 7.4 cm DBH, c.4 m tall, planted 1996-97 (Tony Palmer pers. comm.); measured 4 November 2000.

Auckland Domain

On 8 August 2000, three species of *Agathis* were planted in the Auckland Domain, c.100 m south of the duck pond, to mark the year 2000 by the Royal Institute of Horticulture. The three trees are about 6-8 m apart and are just on the south side of an existing 6.5 m tall hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) on the edge of a grassy bank (its top was blown out many years ago, now with a new apical shoot). The four trees form an ‘Araucariaceae group’ with a plaque in the centre. Queensland kauri is the eastern one, 3.0 m tall; New Zealand kauri (*A. australis*) the southern, 2.4 m; and *A. lanceolata* on the west side, 2.0 m tall. This later specimen was supplied by the Auckland Botanic gardens, provenance: New Caledonia, Riviere Bleue Provincial Park, on serpentine, 700-800 feet asl, collected July 1986 (Steve Benham pers. comm.). All heights were estimated on 31 October 2000.

Auckland southern motorway

Eleven Queensland kauri trees were recorded from the side of the southern motorway in the previous article (Cameron 1999). There is now only one tree 2 km south of the East Tamaki Road bridge – the damaged tree has now been removed. The 9 trees immediately south of the bridge were remeasured on 30 October 2000 and had the following DBHs (the diameter increases since 5 November 1999 are recorded in brackets): 100.0 cm (2.1 cm) (has twisted trunk), 67.5 (2.0), 70.0 (0.6), c.3 gaps, 60.9 (1.4), 61.8 (1.9), 58.5 (1.9), 101 at 0.5 m from the ground (not comparable), 74.0 (1.0), 2 gaps, and 52.4 (2.0) cm. There is also a single Queensland kauri on the north side of the bridge (not recorded last year) just north of the of the northern motorway entry road: c.25-30 cm DBH, c.5-6 m (estimated



from the motorway 30 October 2000).

Warkworth

Maureen Young (2000) commented on the history and possible planting dates of the two Queensland kauri at Carran Road Warkworth, referred to in my original article. The possible planting dates are connected to Sir George Grey while he was on Kawau Island: 1862-1888. Maureen also recorded their DBH as: 88 and 113 cm – the latter a double trunked tree; measured January 2000. Maureen remeasured the DBHs of these trees for me on 5 November 2000: 89.1 cm, and 114.5 cm - the trunk of this latter tree starts to divide at breast height (where measured), but fully divides further up (M. Young pers. comm.).

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References

Cameron, E. K. 1999: Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*) in Auckland. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 54 (2): 32-34.

Young, M. E. 2000: Still more on Queensland kauri. *Auckland Botanical Society News-sheet* February 2000.

Fig. 1. Saved and made safer: the Diocesan School Queensland kauri and my assistant Robert Cameron, November 2000.



***Araucaria heterophylla* (Araucariaceae) and its relatives**

Rhys Gardner, Graeme Hambly & Justin Kneijber

From any of Auckland City's vantage points one can see all around the distinctive shape of our noblest exotic tree, the Norfolk pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) - tall and spire-like, regular but varied in detail, like sculpture by some artist set on affirming the Vibrant Spirit of the Individual Down Under. The abundance of these trees means that they could almost serve as landmarks for an out-of-town botanist, who might then be able to confirm his or her route by the less frequent occurrences of the tree's closest relatives, Cook's pine (*A. columnaris*) and hoop pine (*A. cunninghamii*), and its not quite so similar cousins, bunya-bunya (*A. bidwillii*) and monkey-puzzle (*A. araucana*).

Suited to all but wet ground, Norfolk pines are true subtropicals, able to take anything in Auckland's weather (except, as was proved this August in Southern Cross Road, for an oversize bolt of lightning). Tellingly, in Britain the species is seen outdoors only as a single old individual at Tresco Abbey on the Scilly Isles, although it is otherwise common in Britain as a pot plant, under the ignominious appellation "house pine" (Mitchell 1994).

This article concentrates on the identification of the three commonly cultivated species of section