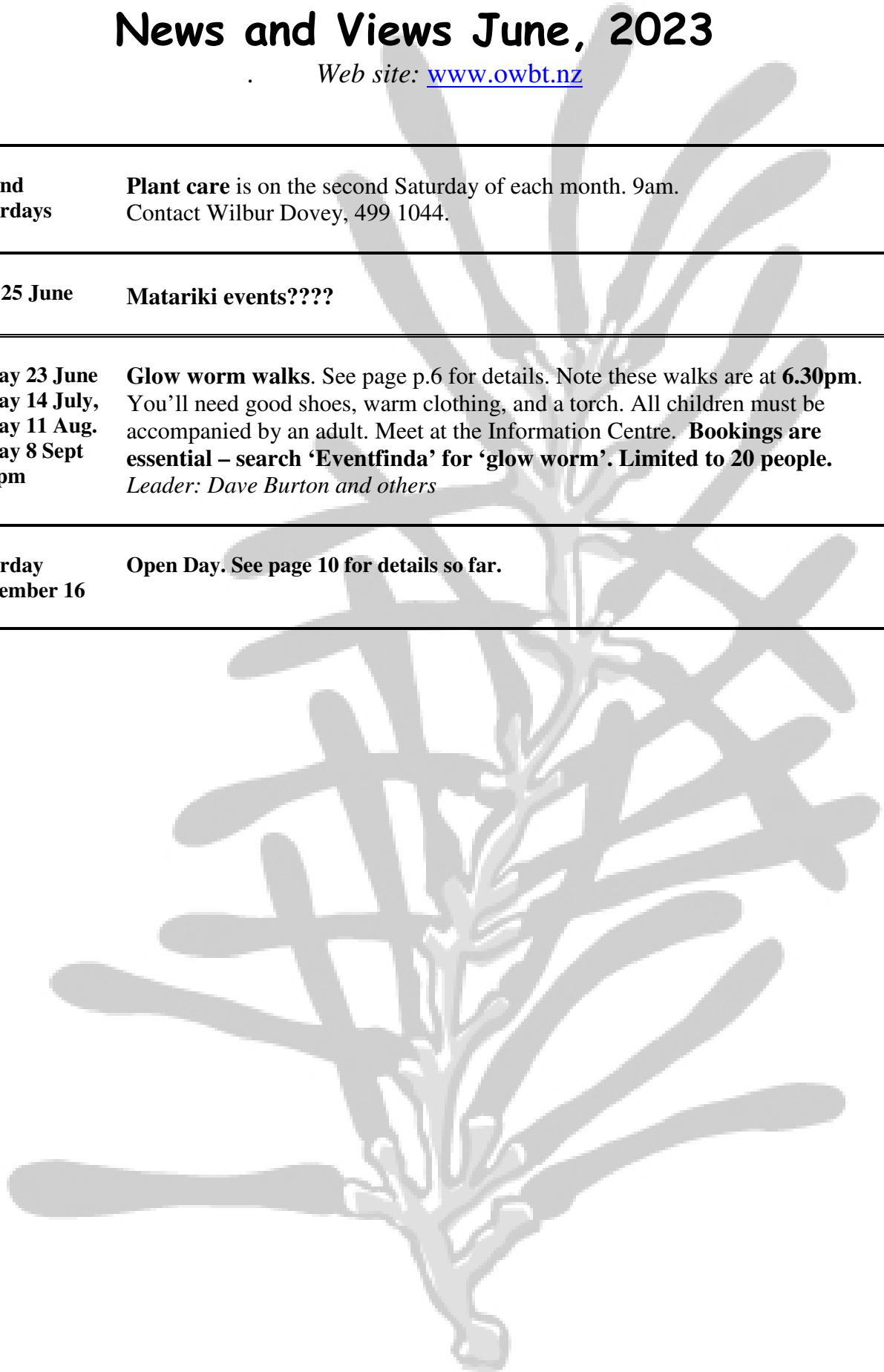


# ŌTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

## News and Views June, 2023

Web site: [www.owbt.nz](http://www.owbt.nz)

Second Saturdays	<b>Plant care</b> is on the second Saturday of each month. 9am. Contact Wilbur Dovey, 499 1044.
15 – 25 June	<b>Matariki events????</b>
Friday 23 June Friday 14 July, Friday 11 Aug. Friday 8 Sept 6.30pm	<b>Glow worm walks.</b> See page p.6 for details. Note these walks are at <b>6.30pm</b> . You'll need good shoes, warm clothing, and a torch. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet at the Information Centre. <b>Bookings are essential – search 'Eventfinda' for 'glow worm'. Limited to 20 people.</b> <i>Leader: Dave Burton and others</i>
Saturday September 16	<b>Open Day.</b> See page 10 for details so far.





## Message from the Chair

Kia ora koutou katoa

As flagged in the last newsletter the AGM was held on 10 May, and we welcomed two new Trustees as two long-serving Trustees retired. Both Wilbur Dovey and Jane Humble completed terms on the Board of Trustees: Wilbur's duties as Secretary had already been taken on by Maggie Bayfield. He will continue as leader of the Revegetation group as well as Tour Manager though we're hoping this task can be passed on before too long. Some of Jane's duties have been passed on to Kathy Ombler and Maggie, but she will continue to lead the Plant Propagation group and be the Board's contact for the Thursday Weeders group. We thank Wilbur and Jane for all the time and effort they have put into their roles as Trustees and thank them, also, for their ongoing roles with the Trust.



Our new Trustees are Susan Timmins and Annie Yeates and you will have seen from the bios of nominees sent out before the AGM that both women bring great skills and experience to their Trustee roles. Some of you may have had the opportunity to meet Annie at the AGM.

Also, at the AGM two Otari Awards were given out – one to Tim Mason our Treasurer, who looked very startled hearing his name called out, and one to me that also came as a shock. Both of us are grateful for the recognition and neither of us feel we were yet deserving of the Award, knowing just how much so many of you do and have done for the Trust and Ōtari.

The March Seminars were popular this year and we ran out of seats at one of them! I heard from a number of people that they enjoyed the topics and the speakers. Stand by for next year's star-studded line-up, yet to be determined.

The Autumn Walks have also drawn good numbers except, inexplicably, the two about managing pests at Ōtari. Jim Tait and Kathy put a lot of work into preparing for the first walk only to have no one turn up. The second one was cancelled because there were no bookings! These talks have been well supported in the past, as people have been keen to hear about the pioneering predator control work in Ōtari. However, with community groups everywhere now working towards predator control, perhaps this knowledge has become widespread. And that's a good thing!

Meanwhile, the work of the RAMBO team continues to be vital to the health of Ōtari's ecosystems: low numbers of, or no pests at all, means more birds and invertebrates which means more pollination and seed dispersal for the plants. And, it means we still have glorious northern rata in the reserve! These trees would be skeletons now if possum control hadn't started several decades ago – RAMBO continues to keep possums out of Ōtari.

Turning to social media, we now have 535 followers on Instagram and over 1000 followers on Facebook. Thanks to Kathy Ombler for keeping the posts coming and keeping our website up to date. Don't forget it's an easy place to find old newsletters and information about the trust: <https://www.owbt.nz/>

We hope to see you at Open Day on 16 September. We'll be calling for volunteers to bake cakes, slices and biscuits for the cake stall. This year we thought we would add preserves to the stall as well. I, for one, often end up making more jam and chutneys than I can use or give away when dealing with produce from my fruit trees. If you find yourself in this situation too, please consider donating some of your surplus to this stall. As I mentioned previously, we will also be launching plant sales at Open Day. Jane and her team are already ramping up production in the new Trust nursery behind the Leonard Cockayne Centre. Thanks to Tim Park and his team for making that possible.

Keep an eye out for Matariki events at Ōtari-Wilton's Bush. The format will be slightly different this year with fewer events to fit in with the overall programme across the city. Thank you for your support of the Trust and Ōtari-Wilton's Bush. Enjoy the kohekohe flowering!

Carol West

Chair

## Ōtari Update



Kia ora koutou,

We are relieved to finally have some cooler weather, as it feels like we have had nine months of spring growth! It seems we have had periods of rain and sun every week, which has resulted in unprecedented growth and unfortunately loss of some specimens that are not used to extended wet soil conditions. I fear that this sustained 'warm and wet' weather will soon become the 'new normal' for Pōneke as our climate changes.

I owe a big thanks to my team (with the support of our regular Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust organised volunteers) who have

worked hard to keep on top of the what feels like record weed growth and pruning to keep the gardens looking tidy. It is only with the support of our regular volunteers that we are able to keep Ōtari maintained to a high standard. Hopefully by the time you are reading this, work to reinstate our service drive will be nearing completion and we will again have vehicle access to our workshop, which we have been without since a slip in February 2022. Contractors are making good progress with the retaining protection. We are also working through paperwork to remove the slip material from the Kaiwharawhara Stream and hopefully that will also be completed soon so we can revegetate the area this winter.

Tom Belworthy and I were fortunate to be invited back to Rēkohu (Chatham Islands) to assist with a Mori-lead ecological restoration project in the south-eastern corner of the main island. Bart Cox and I pulled together a group of keen people to visit the island over Easter, where more than 20 of us planted more than 13,000 plants in a kawenata (covenant) overlooking Rangihau (Pitt Island). We were again given permission to collect from the landowners to bolster our collection of Chatham Island plants, so keep an eye out as we further develop the Rēkohu Garden over the coming years. The Rēkohu Garden is located below the boardwalk (below the Wetland Plants) and features two prolifically flowering nikau palms.

Megan Ireland (Ōtari Team Leader) has been leading our Collections Review which is a detailed reconsideration of each of the more than 30 collections which make up Ōtari Native Botanic Garden in its entirety. Each collection has a description which the team work to toward realising/sustaining through horticultural practice. As a part of this work we are assessing each collection and planning future changes to some of the collections. If you want to understand more about the collections have a look at our website where each collection has a brief, species list and also a link to a map: <https://wellingtongardens.nz/our-gardens/otari-wiltons-bush/#otari-collection>

Karin and Jenn have been busy in the Lab, especially with the native Orchid project, where they have been having some great early success germinating *Drymoanthus* (epiphytic orchids). Jenn recently attended the Fungi Foray in Rotorua, learning more about the species that support the natural establishment of our native orchids. Karin is continuing with collecting Ramarama seed for further storage and germination research. Also, both are still both working to understand some other difficult species to germinate, such as the local Cook Strait endemic *Melicytus orarius* and hīnau.

Myrtle rust has been found recently on a wider range of species in the garden. We are looking to adjust timing of pruning our native myrtles to help them to survive infection. One thing you could consider doing at home this winter is to prune your myrtles as early as possible in winter (preferably June but as late as August is ok) as this is when Myrtle rust is less likely to take hold. Myrtle rust does not like cold or hot and dry weather - but it loves high humidity. A common garden Myrtle in Wellington is Lily pily, which is known to be highly susceptible to Myrtle rust, which you may want to consider removing altogether as it can also become a weed in our native forest.

Ma te wa,  
Tim Park

Kaiwhakahaere Ōtari | Manager Ōtari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve  
Ngā Māra o Pōneke | Wellington Gardens.



## Trust Board 2023 - 2024



### The Board of Trustees for the current year is:

Chair: Carol West	9 Mamari Street Rongotai	<a href="mailto:carolwest@xtra.co.nz">carolwest@xtra.co.nz</a>	
	Phone: 387 3396		
Secretary. Maggie Bayfield	67 Weld Street, Wadestown	<a href="mailto:bayfield@xtra.co.nz">bayfield@xtra.co.nz</a>	
	Ph: 027 545 4333		
Treasurer. Tim Mason	54 Cashmere Ave, Khandallah.	<a href="mailto:timmason429@gmail.com">timmason429@gmail.com</a>	
	Phone: 479 0544		
Justin Nacey	100 Curtis Street, Northland	<a href="mailto:justinnacey@gmail.com">justinnacey@gmail.com</a>	Ph: 021 211 3019
Kevin O'Connor	48 Ngatoto Street, Khandallah	<a href="mailto:oconnorkevin170@gmail.com">oconnorkevin170@gmail.com</a>	Ph. 027 270 9787
Kathy Ombler	9 Rutland Way, Wadestown.	<a href="mailto:kathy@ombler.co.nz">kathy@ombler.co.nz</a>	Ph: 027 275 5152
Susan Timmins	<a href="mailto:Stimmins@xtra.co.nz">Stimmins@xtra.co.nz</a>		Ph: 027 516 2979
Annie Yeates	<a href="mailto:annieontour74@hotmail.com">annieontour74@hotmail.com</a>		Ph: 027 440 0129

The trustees welcome individual communications from members on any matters relating to Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve or the Trust, particularly from those who would like to assist and participate in our activities.

Newsletter: Vera Burton. Phone 938 8207. [veeanddave93@gmail.com](mailto:veeanddave93@gmail.com)

### From the Treasurer

Thanks to those many members for their prompt payments and often for their generous donations. It would be helpful if those who have not yet paid could do so soon to save us sending out too many reminders, and if those who do not wish to renew could let us know and we will stop hassling you. Payments can most easily be made on line to the Trust's bank account, 03 0518 0005712 00 noting your surname and what it is for if you don't have the invoice number, and queries can be sent to [treasurer@owbt.nz](mailto:treasurer@owbt.nz).



## RAMBO

Our predator pest volunteers continue their vigilance throughout Ōtari, also in neighbouring pockets of bush and on the Skyline Ridge, where we share the monitoring of a WCC trapline, targeting possums, with other local predator control groups.

In his report to the AGM last month RAMBO coordinator, Jim Tait, shared the following observations.

- We have gone from 6 trap lines and 73 traps in 2019 to 10 trap lines and 160 traps in 2023, including our section of the Skyline possum line.
- While the rat catch has gone up this could well reflect the higher number of traps now being used – especially alongside the Kaiwharawhara Stream. So far in 2023 almost 45% of rats caught have been alongside the stream compared with about 30% in 2022.
- Our stoat catch has dropped relative to our weasel catch. Last year one stoat was caught in Karori Cemetery and one by the north end picnic area – both probably attracted by rabbits that inhabit those areas.
- The weasel catches were not in Ōtari, but close by in Izard Park, the Horse Paddock and track from there to the skyline, and above the cemetery.
- The hedgehog catch fluctuates. So far in 2023 three of the four hedgehogs were caught in the Skyline possum traps.
- After zero possum catches in 2022, the RAMBO portion of the Skyline possum line (21 traps) is off to a good start this year with three possums.

To put the RAMBO results into perspective in 2022 the whole Skyline trap line (86 traps) caught 41 possums and in the first quarter of 2023 the whole line caught 20 possums.

As a final note on mustelids, I do receive reports of sightings, in both Ōtari-Wilton's Bush and in neighbouring suburbs. Most people call every mustelid a stoat but I would suspect a fair number of sightings would be weasels.

Finally I would like to thank the RAMBO team of 15 volunteers who regularly check their traps, and also thanks to Robert Thomson who continues to service and recondition our DOC200 traps.

RAMBO Co-ordinator  
Jim Tait

*Here's one possum who won't be eating Ōtari trees. RAMBO volunteers monitor possum traps along the Skyline Ridge, to protect reinvasion of Ōtari*



*Jim Tait at work*





At the Trust AGM in May, we celebrated two new, worthy Ōtari Award recipients: Carol West and Tim Mason.

Trust treasurer, Tim Mason, was recognised for his work in improving the Trust's financial management systems, also for his outstanding

contribution to the commissioning, financing and publication of our book, *Ōtari: Two hundred years of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush*.

Trust chair Carol West was recognised for guiding the Trust through strategic planning consultation, her strong support for Trust members in all their various roles, backing all aspects of the publication of our book, and for her years of tour guiding in Ōtari, sharing her extensive knowledge of plant conservation with myriad school, garden group and cruise ship tours. Thanks Tim and Carol

## Glow Worm Walks at Otari

**Friday 23 June 6.30pm.**

**Friday 14 July 6.30pm.**

**Friday 11 August 6.30pm.**

**Friday 8 September 6.30pm.**

Glow-worms are alive and well and living in Otari – they prefer a moist, vertical bank, dark and sheltered from the wind so that they can hang their sticky-thread nets and light their tails as a lure for midges. You'll need good shoes, warm clothing, and a torch. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Walk is 1 hour and 10 minutes. Meet at the Information Centre. Each walk limited to 20 people. Free to Trust members and their families, & children under 15, otherwise \$6 (includes \$1 booking fee).

**Bookings are essential – search 'Eventfinda' for 'glow worm'.**

*Leaders: Dave Burton and others*



## Welcome to our new Trustees

Further to Carol's Message from the Chair, we want to welcome and introduce our new Trustees,

Annie Yeates and Susan Timmins.

Annie is well known in Wellington's world of ecological restoration, she's chair of the Southern

Environmental Association (which cares for Tawatawa Reserve, near Ōwhiro Bay), on the komiti of the Manawa Karioi Society at Tapu Te Ranga Marae and coordinates numerous predator pest

trapping lines. She also helps with penguin protection around the south coast and on Matiu I Somes Island.



*Trustees Annie Yeates (left) and Susan Timmins ready to meet visitors at Otari*

Susan has worked for 40 years as a weed ecologist and science manager for the Department of Conservation. Recently retired and a long-time Wadestown resident, she's keen to use her new spare time to help care for Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, where she's enjoyed many happy adventures with her family over the years.

And as we welcome Annie and Susan we also acknowledge the huge efforts of Wilbur Dovey and Jane Humble. Both are recent retirees from the Trust but continue their immense good works – Jane in the garden collections and the Trust's new plant propagation project, and Wilbur overseeing the Kaiwharawhara Revegetation and tour management roles.

Caption (image attached): Welcome to our new Trustees Annie Yeates (left) and Susan Timmins

## Trust Plant Nursery

There's been a hive of activity behind the Leonard Cockayne Centre, with the development of the Trust's own plant nursery. The plan is to propagate native plants for sale. The project, in its early days yet, is being overseen by Jane Humble, with support from Ōtari's garden staff and the help of volunteers. After much preliminary work, a limited selection of plants will be available for sale at Open Day.

## Guided Walks 2023 – what we did

Insects and bugs, lichens and liverworts, fungi and more fungi, cutting edge orchid research, defensive mechanisms of our native plants and how to deal to our dreaded weeds – these were all topics explored by our expert guides, in our well-attended, recently-completed Sunday guided walks programme.

Instead of being held once a month throughout the year, this year's programme was compacted into Sundays in the late Summer/Autumn months of March, April and May. Better, warmer weather was one consideration for this change. This approach seems to have been popular, we attracted better numbers than on last year's programme so will potentially look to do the same again next year.

The feedback we received from this year's programme was very positive. About 75% of our attendance was by non-Trust members. I personally think this is helpful in raising awareness in the wider community of both the values of and challenges faced by Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, which are key reasons for the establishment of the Trust.

We set the limit for each event at 20, most were fully booked and some ended up with a few extras, for a range of reasons, and that worked out fine. Too many more would make it difficult for the presenter to have everyone gather around close enough to hear the discussion, so we'll look to keep to that number next year.

Meanwhile, we'd be happy to hear your thoughts about our guided walks programme, to help uplan for next year. You'll find Trustees' contact details elsewhere in the newsletter.

And for the record, here are the events we hosted this year:

Discovering the insect life of Ōtari, with entomologist Eric Edwards;

Tiny plants that are everywhere: mosses, liverworts and lichens of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush with Leon Perrie, Te Papa Curator of Botany;

An introduction to the cutting-edge research at the Lions Ōtari-Plant Conservation Laboratory, with Dr Karin van der Walt, Ōtari Conservation Scientist;

Birds of Ōtari, with ornithologist Hugh Robertson,

Fungi Kingdom, with mycologist Geoff Ridley;

Discovering how the plants of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush defend themselves, with evolutionary biologist Lara Shepherd;

The 'wonderful world' of Wellington weeds, with WCC weed specialist Illona Keenan.

*Kevin O'Conner*



*Big kids and little kids joined entomologist Eric Edwards in a discovery of insect life of Ōtari, - Wilton's Bush, on one of our Sunday Guided Walks. [Photo: Jane Humble]*



## Fungi forays



Left: On a fungi foray: Geoff Ridley mycologises on his popular guided walk. [Photo Jane Humble]

Two consecutive Sunday walks with mycologist Geoff Ridley, searching for the fungi life of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush were quickly fully-booked. Geoff has been doing these walks for about 16 years and since 2011 has been recording the results on his blogs: Spores, Moulds and Fungi. Trust members are welcome to take a look; you'll find Geoff's blogs if you make an online search for [sporesmouldsandfungi.wordpress.com](http://sporesmouldsandfungi.wordpress.com). His latest Ōtari walks are clearly labelled. Geoff's also given us the go ahead to feature some of his recent Ōtari discoveries. Here's four to admire.



Right: *Rhizocybe albida*. Growing on wood, Waterfall track. Note that there are white rhizomorphs at the base of the stem and these penetrate the wood on which it is growing. [Photo Geoff Ridley]



Left: *Amanita nothofagi*. Growing under *Fuscospora (Nothofagus) solandri*, in the southern beech grove. [Photo Geoff Ridley]



Left: *Armillaria novae-zelandiae*. Growing on fallen dead tree across tributary of Kaiwharawhara, in broadleaf / podocarp forest, on the Circular Track. [Photo Geoff Ridley]

Right: *Volvopluteus gloiocephalus* growing on mulch in the Fernery, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush. [Photo Geoff Ridley]



## Open Day

Mark the date: Open Day 2023 will be held on September 16th. There'll be a bit of the old, and a bit of the new, this year.

Some members will recall the cake stalls of earlier Open Days – they were so popular you had to be there early to ‘catch’ the cake! There was rather a lot of disappointment last year that we didn't have one so it's going to be re-instated. Not only that, preservatives and chutneys and all that kind of amazing home-made goodness will also be on the table this year. So please come along, also feel free to contribute! We know there's so many of you with your wholesome, maybe secret recipes and we'd love you to share and contribute, with all proceeds going towards the work of the Trust in supporting Ōtari-Wilton's Bush. We'll send out more details closer to the time.

The Plant Sale – you ask. We're doing things a bit differently now and there won't be the huge number of plants on sale as in previous Open Days. However, as mentioned in the article about our fledgling Trust Nursery, we will have a small selection of native plants for sale.

We'll also be running some guided walks, led by our very knowledgeable and experienced Ōtari-Wilton's Bush experts. Details will be posted in the next newsletter in early September.

Ōtari-Wilton's Bush garden staff and management will be offering 'behind the scenes' tours of their native botanic garden nursery, and talking about the cutting edge work being achieved in the Lions Ōtari Plant Conservation Laboratory.

Your Trustees will be there, selling our beautiful book and cards, raffle tickets, and chatting about Ōtari-Wilton's Bush and the various activities we get involved in to help protect, maintain and raise awareness of this very special place. And of course, it wouldn't be an Open Day without Jim Tait and his RAMBO cohorts on hand, discussing the amazing pest predator control that's been carried out throughout Ōtari and surrounding areas since 2007.

See you there!

*Trustees Jane Humble (left) and Maggie Bayfield,*



*ready to greet visitors at Open Day 2022.*

***Muehlenbeckia australis*,**  
Pōhuehue

This is a native climber found throughout the North, South, Stewart, Three Kings and Chatham Islands, though the Chatham Islands one may be a different species. It is also found on Norfolk Island.

It grows from sea level to montane habitats, where it likes disturbed places, forest margins and shrubland. It can be a nuisance in revegetation plantings where it can smother the plantings; this is unfortunately a habitat that it seems to really like. Fruit is a nut, surrounded by the perianth which is quite fleshy, attractive to birds and lizards. It is a big vigorous climber, and a frequent volunteer in gardens, so if you decide to let it grow make sure it has plenty of room.





## Membership Application/Donation form.

Please note there is also one on the website which can be completed and submitted electronically or downloaded and printed and sent by post or email.



Supporting Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve

### MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

#### YOUR DETAILS

NAME/S

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBERS

EMAIL ADDRESS

BILLING NAME & ADDRESS (if  
different from Above

NEW MEMBER OR RENEW \$

INDIVIDUAL \$20 \$

DOUBLE/FAMILY \$30 \$

CORPORATE \$30 \$

NEW MEMBER

#### DONATE

\$20 \$50 \$100 Other \$

I would like a receipt for my donation

P

Paid electronically to account 030518 0205713 000 (please mark your NAME and MEMBERSHIP and/or DONATION in the fields

#### COMMENTS