

UPDATE ON OKAREKA MISTLETOE RESTORATION PROJECT

Paul Cashmore

This season we have had two workdays – one in September and a combined planting day with Landcare Okareka in August.

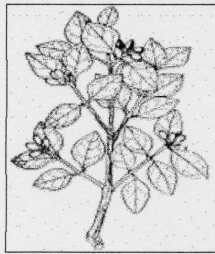
Our late August programme was to assist Landcare Okareka with their planting programme for two areas along Okareka Loop Rd near Benn Road where they had earlier cleared weeds and prepared the site for planting. A good turnout of locals planted over 500 plants in little over two hours, with assistance from a few of our members. Our September workday was very well advertised as it was part of the Conservation Week programme once again. Despite the free advertising we got another poor turnout with only four people in total, probably as a result of the extreme spring weather – regular showers and gale force winds and a lot of other conservation week activities on at same time. With no planting this year there was probably also less of an attraction as well.

With a light work schedule it allowed me to show those who did turn up mistletoe in its spring flush and discuss a bit of background about the programme. We also spent time releasing some of the smaller plantings at both Tikitapu Scenic Reserve and Lake Okareka Marginal Strip and searching for weeds, finding some newly established ivy and some regrowth of jasmine amongst others. The morning finished with searching the plantings at the Okareka Marginal Strip, looking for and marking newly established mistletoe plants. Close to 50 young *Tupeia* and one *Ileostylus* mistletoe plant were found on approximately 10-15 tree lucerne in the reserve. All the tree lucerne had been planted and some of the mistletoe was probably from seed placed by us on tree lucerne plants in previous years, with the remainder being bird dispersed. While most mistletoe plants are still very young, this was the best indicator we have had that we are having success with this project and meeting the objectives we set at the start, to increase mistletoe population numbers by reducing threats and increasing the area of suitable host species.

Despite a wet start to spring we had a very dry October and November. The exception was the one weekend in November scheduled for our workday, forcing us to cancel it. We popped back when the weather was better to do the essential releasing work of the few younger plantings that needed it.

Next year we will reduce the number of workdays as the bulk of the work is done and it's really a matter of staying on top of the continual reinvasion of weed species into the areas we are managing.

**OKAREKA MISTLETOE
RESTORATION PROJECT**



**WEED CONTROL/MISTLETOE HOST PLANTING
WORK DAYS FOR 2011**

**“Come and join Rotorua Botanical Society
to control weeds threatening mistletoe sites and plant new host trees. Activities
will involve hand-pulling, cutting, sawing
of vines, climbers and small trees.**

When: SAT 16 APRIL – Weed control /Plant releasing day
SAT 19 NOVEMBER – Weed control/Plant releasing day.

MEET: Cnr Summit and Loop Rds (lake end), Okareka at 8:45 AM
GRADE: MEDIUM-HARD - ACTIVITIES SUITABLE FOR ALL
AGES AND ABILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED

Please contact organiser Paul Cashmore 07 348 4421 (hm)
or 07 349 7432 (wk) to RSVP.
Equipment to bring will be advised.