

FRIENDS OF MANGEMANGEROA: Report on 2014 Planting Season

2014 has been a highly successful season at Mangemangeroa. A plentiful supply of healthy plants raised in the nurseries at Somerville Intermediate School and Jim Duckworth's, supplemented by collections produced by individuals in their home gardens, was matched by the number of volunteers who arrived when needed to get those plants into the ground. Besides the Friends, community groups, schools and Council staff and contractors lent a hand over the planting period in May and June.

Contributing community groups were Forest and Bird, Howick Tramping Club, Howick and Somerville Rotary Clubs, Pakuranga Chinese Association, Chinese Conservation Education Trust, All Saints Youth Group and Howick Sea Scouts. School groups came from Howick College, Pakuranga College, Bucklands Beach Intermediate, Somerville Intermediate, Cockle Bay and Elim.

As usual planning and preparation involving a number of committee members had been under way for more than a year under Allan's guidance, starting with seed collecting and sowing, and continuing with nursery surveillance by James and Jim, through to Sally's calendar chart ensuring that the schools were suitably included. Auckland Council Parks gave solid support through Stephanie McLeod, who arranged for contractors to carry out effective site preparation, deliver plants and equipment to the various planting sites and assist with directing school groups. On hand to manage school groups were Warwick and Rebecca.

An increasing proportion of the plants coming out of the nurseries now is made up of canopy trees, especially kahikatea, taraire and titoki, numbering about 400 this year out of the total 4,500. Since these consume more nursery space as well as time in care and planting than the pioneer majority, they account for a falling overall total of plants. They also signal to Council that we are in urgent need of additional nursery space.

Not everything ran smoothly. Two days before the first public planting we were informed that our intended site was off limits, requiring a Resource Consent for any proposed planting. Alternative sites were hastily found and prepared, and we appreciate the co-operative response of Parks administration in making a further site available for the second public planting. Further encouragement was found in observing how vigorously the planting of earlier years has progressed, including the sites that have survived the last two seasons of summer droughts.

Graham Falla

1 August 2014