

Our Environment

Christchurch City Council's Environmental Newsletter

KERBSIDE RECYCLING A BIG HIT WITH CITY RESIDENTS

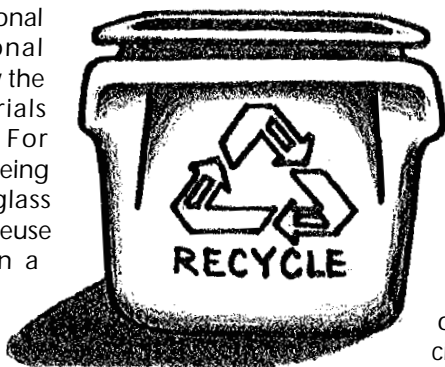
Glass, plastic containers, newspapers and aluminium cans are pouring in to the Parkhouse Road Transfer Station recycling site from households all over Christchurch.

Since 1 July all householders, except those in the central business district, have been able to leave commonly used domestic items at their gate in Christchurch City Council's new kerbside recycling scheme.

The volume of recyclables soared to about 188 tonnes per week when the last of the three sectors was included in the scheme. Bottles and cans comprised almost half the total.

Recycled and sorted materials are being processed and sent to various local, national and international markets sourced by the Recovered Materials Foundation. For example glass is being sent to a new glass crushing plant for reuse as glass powder in a number of different industrial applications while many wine bottles go to local wineries.

"The response on the whole has been absolutely terrific," says kerbside contracts spokesman Peter Falconer. However, introducing a large scale recycling scheme to cater for the needs of 320,000 people city wide has not all been plain sailing. "We've had a few teething troubles to start with, mainly because some collection times and routes have changed, and of course some keen folk have been stockpiling items in anticipation of the kerbside collection," he says. One crate found in Halswell recently had recyclables stacked to a height of almost two metres!



Not surprisingly, due to the higher than anticipated participation rate, new contractor Onyx has been under some pressure to get through the recycling collection before mid afternoon. Collection times and methods are being fine tuned, particularly on steeper hill lanes.

Peter Falconer says kerbside recycling has been a real learning curve for all three participants - the City Council, RMF and Onyx - in the recycling partnership. "To ensure all 120,000 crates are safely delivered and every resident satisfied with the service is quite a task," he admits.

With the Bottle Lake landfill under increasing pressure over the last decade, the Waste Management Unit has been seeking solutions to the City's steadily growing waste disposal problem.

Kerbside recycling had been successful in other New Zealand cities and after extensive research and intensive trialing of the service among a small but representative group of 20,000 residents for two years in the early 1990s, it was time to stop talking about kerbside recycling and actually do it!

Feedback has already been very positive, even from elderly residents often considered more resistant to change. According to Peter Falconer, most of the older residents who phoned in congratulated the Council on its efforts. Most appreciate that recycling makes their refuse bags last longer.

Julie Eyles

Waste Management Unit

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CONTENTS

Kerbside Recycling A Big Hit

Water Expo Competition

Heating Conversions Incentives

Kids Edible Gardens

Draft Plan For Quarry Park

Sister Cities Garden Park

Avon River Scenic Drive Launch

Waterways Conservation

Excelsior Hotel

Cream Of The Dairies

Spinifex - Silvery Sand Grass



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WATER EXPO COMPETITION AND WEB SITE



As part of the Water Expo programme to schools, a competition is being held for students on 21 and 22 October. This is a wonderful way for teachers and students to display some of the follow-up work they have done on their studies on water. The venue for the competition will be in the Christchurch Convention Centre.

Details of the competition have been sent to the principals of all schools, and to teachers in charge of science,

social studies, English and information technology in intermediate and secondary schools. The information is also available on the Water Expo web site:

<http://www.waterexpo.org.nz>

The competition is divided into three age groups: school year 6, school years 7 and 8, and school years 9 and 10.

Within each age group, students have the opportunity to present their work or studies about water by making a video or poster, or presenting it using a computer multi-media programme. Prizes in the form of class visits have been donated by Aquarium of Discovery, Science Alive, and the International Antarctic Centre.

Teachers have been asked to register their interest in the competition by phoning Craig McGregor on (03) 372-2417 or

just completing the on-line entry form at the Water Expo web site. Entries must be received by 11 September.

The web site has been under a long process of development with a web designer and graphic artists. It provides valuable learning experiences for students and a wealth of information for teachers intending to teach on a water theme. The interactive learning modules have been designed to guide students through the Canterbury water system, study the ecological habitat of the eel, look at the use of water in the home, and study the issue of rural to urban development and its effect on water.

On-line activity sheets allow the students to formulate their ideas and print a return sheet to their teacher with replies to

the questions studied. These can then be used by the teacher for further planning to fill gaps in learning, or as assessment examples in assessing curriculum objectives.

Further inquiries can be e-mailed to:

Craig.McGregor@ccc.govt.nz

He is also willing to come to schools and speak to staff or groups of teachers about the Water Expo programme.



INCENTIVES FUEL HEATING CONVERSIONS

More than 350 open fires and coal burners were permanently sealed or removed in the first two months of the City Council's latest anti-pollution drive.

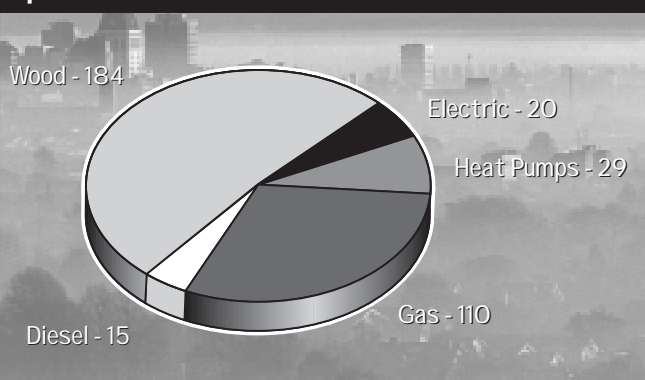
Its Clean Air and Energy Efficiency Incentives Programme, which aims to help more than 7000 households make conversions and energy efficiency improvements in the next four years, began on 30 April.

Clean burning wood fires were the most popular replacements for the 358 open fires or coal burners sealed or removed. One hundred and eighty four wood burners were installed compared with 120 gas appliances, 29 heat pumps, 20 electric heaters and 15 diesel appliances.

As a result \$175,000 worth of clean air grants were made available to householders, said programme administrator Mike Gaudin.

Ceiling and underfloor insulation worth another \$24,000 was installed in 83 homes in May and June. The Council has sought an additional \$200,000 grant from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority for insulation subsidies available until the end of June next year. Customers must replace an appliance under the clean air incentives programme before they can be eligible for the subsidy, said Mr Gaudin.

Approved replacements for sealed or removed open fires and coal burners



Fifty companies are now involved in the programme offering Christchurch residents discounts on installed costs of cleaner heating appliances and insulation products. Incentives are paid to suppliers and installers who provide corresponding discounts to their customers.

For further information about the programme contact Mike Gaudin, phone 372-2433.

Jennie Hamilton

kids edible gardens

Vegetable gardens will soon be flourishing in Christchurch primary schools as a result of the Kids' Edible Gardens project launched by the Organic Garden City Trust.

Kids' Edible Gardens is being promoted to teachers and parents by the Trust's education team, who say the project will benefit both the children and the schools. The Organic Garden City Trust will provide a garden facilitator who will oversee the setting up of the garden, work with small groups of children and provide activities for them.

"Learning how to grow vegetables, flowers, herbs and fruit organically teaches children important life-skills and increases their self-esteem," says Trust education team spokesperson, Jenny Henderson. "It also creates pride in the school environment and ties in with the science, health and social studies curricula."

Students can learn to:

- grow vegetables, herbs, soft fruit and edible flowers using organic principles;

- look after worm compost bins and make compost;
- create no-dig mulch gardens using newspaper, pea-straw, hay, manure, seaweed and compost;
- practise seed collecting/saving - including heirloom varieties;
- take plant cuttings and propagate plants;
- use natural pest control and explore companion planting;
- use vegetables and herbs in nutritious and economic recipes.

The gardens are designed around no-dig raised beds which require very little maintenance. With the pea-straw and compost being continually added there is no digging, just a little weeding. The garden beds can be placed on top of turf or even concrete!

Visits can also be arranged to other schools where edible gardens are growing, the compost plant at the Metro Transfer Station, and organic community gardens in Christchurch. Edible gardens are already growing in several Christchurch schools including Wainoni, Addington, Opawa, Kirkwood and Rudolf Steiner.

"We hope our offer of practical support to schools will see many more organic gardens set up throughout the city," says Jenny Henderson. "We are also keen for children to take their knowledge home and create edible gardens there too."

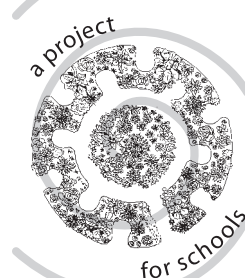
Kids' Edible Gardens is being supported by Crown Public Health and by Christchurch gardeners through Canterbury Soil & Health. Volunteers are already collecting seeds and plants, and taking cuttings for children to use in their school gardens.

If you are keen to have Kids' Edible Gardens at your child's school, contact your principal or PTA and let them know. A pamphlet with an application form explaining the project in more detail, will be arriving at schools shortly.

The project is also looking for seeds, plants, potting mix, garden tools, compost and untreated timber. If you have any that you can donate, please call Frankie Dean, project co-ordinator, phone/fax 339-8775 or email Kids.edible.gardens@clear.net.nz



kids edible gardens



Promoted by the Education Team
of the Organic Garden City Trust

FUTURE OF QUARRY PARK DEFINED IN DRAFT PLAN

Plans for six sister city gardens and a Canterbury botanical collection are features of a new draft management plan for the 55 hectare Halswell Quarry Park.

A large area of farmland next to Kennedys Bush Road and Cashmere Road has also been retained in the plan now open for public comment. Submissions close on 11 September.

Halswell Quarry, which played a major role in the development of Christchurch, ceased production in 1990 after 140 years of quarrying. Its fine blue-grey stone can be seen in many of the city's prominent buildings including the Canterbury Museum and Provincial Council Buildings.

The recently released management plan updates a 1991 plan which has guided development of the quarry this decade. An extensive area of native vegetation has been planted to form a natural backdrop to the park, while a lake and open grassland have been created in the quarry. Tracks, viewing points and two car parking areas have also made the park increasingly popular for walking and other recreational activities.

Redefined priorities for the development and management of the park are:

- Continued promotion of Halswell Quarry Park's rich historical resource and the part it has played in the formation of Christchurch;
- Preservation and enhancement of the quarry's rural character, open space and its value as a place for passive recreation;
- Continued emphasis on native revegetation plantings to provide a framework for the site, including a native wetland and kahikatea forest;
- Creation of a sister cities garden park.

With the Christchurch Botanic Gardens now "full", Halswell Quarry Park has been identified as a suitable site for a satellite botanic garden. Its varied micro climates and growing conditions can support botanical plant collections from many other countries. The concept of establishing gardens representing Christchurch's six sister cities, and a Canterbury botanical collection, has now been adopted as a millennium project.

Council landscape architect Dennis Preston supports the concept. "It will enhance one of our major metropolitan parks and provide additional educational and recreational opportunities," he says. However he points out that all exotic botanical

collections must recognise the park's rural context and should be naturalistic rather than highly "manicured".

Exotic plants, which will also form central cover around buildings, car parks, picnic areas and other events areas, will cover about nine per cent of the park.

To the left of the main park entrance the Canterbury-New Zealand collection will feature original wetland native vegetation. The damp, low-lying areas, once covered in toetoe, fern, flax and raupo, were part of the "Great Swamp" at the foot of the Port Hills from Cashmere to Lake Ellesmere. This will be recreated in the valley floor through forming a wetland basin which will collect most of the valley's run-off.

Additional farmland now incorporated in the plan is recognised as an important stormwater retention basin. A tree-enclosed oval or village green setting added to the plan can be used for a wide range of events, as well as overflow parking.

New housing has been approved at the top of Kennedy's Bush Road on the south-eastern boundary of the park. The subdivision's reserve contribution will include linkages up to Kennedys Bush Track, plus walking and cycling tracks to the park.



FINANCIAL BACKING FOR GARDENS

Millennium plans to establish a sister city garden park have received a \$250,000 boost from The Community Trust.

That is half the estimated cost of the Turning Point 2000 project featuring plant collections from Adelaide, Christchurch in England, Gansu Province in China, Kurashiki in Japan, Seattle, USA, and Songpa-Gu in Korea.

Each botanical collection proposed for the Halswell Quarry Park has been allocated an area of about 1,000 square metres of land suiting the plant type from each sister city region. Sister cities will receive a landscape plan of their site and will be invited to liaise in its development.

Chairperson of the Sister Cities Garden Park Committee, John Taylor, says the proposal provides a unique opportunity to enhance the goodwill and close relationships which already exist with our sister cities.

"At the same time it provides the opportunity for a satellite Botanic Garden to be developed on a multi-soil, undulating and elevated site with vast opportunities for botanical and horticultural development."

The Christchurch England garden, formed around the existing stone homestead, will contain formal, herbaceous and woodland garden styles, according to the Sister Cities Garden Park Proposal.

Native sedges, grasses and terraces are likely to be used to create an authentic, arid Gansu landscape. Plans for the Kurashiki garden include details such as an enclosed gravel garden, stone lanterns and rock sculptures.

A south-facing slope will be planted with western red cedars, Sitka spruce and other species growing on Seattle's Cascade Mountains. A small Korean pavilion, arched



bridge and stone water channel using stone from Halswell Quarry have been suggested for the Songpa-Gu garden.

The Adelaide site is well suited to the eucalypt and blackwood species of vegetation. Existing rocks will add to the image of a hostile south Australian landscape.

AVON RIVER SCENIC DRIVE LAUNCH

The Council will launch its Avon River Scenic Drive in August. Starting at the city centre, this latest scenic drive enables the tourist to follow the Avon River as it winds to the sea at New Brighton. The route then returns to the city centre via QEII Park, Travis Wetland, Merivale and Hagley Park.

Like the Garden City and Port Hills Drives, the route guide brochure highlights ecological, historical, recreational and scenic points of interest on the way. The drive takes about two and a half hours to complete.

This drive is the last of three to be developed and it is hoped that it will match the phenomenal success of the first two. So far 75,000 brochures have been produced and distributed for the Garden City and Port Hills Drives and a further 25,000 have been printed for the Avon River Drive.

The scenic drives were developed to enable visitors to explore and encounter, at their leisure, the City's best features and attractions. They were also developed to encourage tourists to stay a day or two longer in the city, thereby boosting our tourist economy. Furthermore, the attractively produced and colourful brochures would act as ambassadors in that visitors would take them home and promote the city as a desirable destination worth spending time in. So far all the signs indicate that this is working very well.

To ensure that people do not get lost, each drive guide is supported by scenic route signs. The next step will be to enhance the routes by upgrading them, where necessary,



and by placing interpretative signage that explains in more detail the significance of features and attractions.

Finally, this is a good opportunity to thank everyone who worked very hard behind the scenes to help produce the brochures by supplying information, text and graphics. Also, thanks to all those in the City Streets Unit who identified sign locations and helped with production and placement.

Andrew Craig

Landscape architect

CONSERVING AND RESTORING WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS: TWO HELPFUL RESOURCES

How can land along waterways and wetlands be protected for the future? How do you develop a stream restoration project, especially one where there are so many issues to resolve?

Two resources are now available from the Christchurch City Council to help local authorities, community groups and others interested in conserving and restoring waterways and wetlands. The Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund helped fund both resources.

Conservation Covenants

Conservation Covenants is a working guide to assist local authorities and others to conserve waterways, wetlands and other natural areas on private land. The small booklet



provides a summary of methods to legally protect land. It also describes some key differences between methods, including conservation covenants, reserves, esplanade strips and esplanade reserves. There is a full outline of the process for establishing conservation covenants, and two examples demonstrate how the Christchurch City Council developed covenants. One example is a

conservation covenant with a school within the city, and the other is with a deer farmer on the outskirts of the city.

The booklet provides a blueprint of a standard conservation covenant which is also available on the Council's World Wide Web (<http://www.ccc.govt.nz>) and lists useful resources should further information be required.

Restoring Avoca Valley Stream: a community model

This model comprises a report, guidelines, video and a streamside planting brochure. It is available as a package of information to help local authorities and any group or individual to develop a stream restoration project.

The aim of the project is to develop a community-based model for the restoration and sustainable management of waterway ecosystems which could be used anywhere in New Zealand. The video was filmed over a two-year period (1996-98) showing a Stream Care Group and tangata whenua working together, describing their issues and vision for restoration, and providing some of the results and direction of where the project was heading in 1998.

As well as landscape design concepts, the report provides guidelines to help with other stream restoration projects. These detail how to create habitat for birds, fish and insects, as well as information on hydrology and soils. There are broad guidelines derived from working with tangata whenua. There is also a review of how the process developed with the Stream Care Group.

For more information on these resources contact: The Waterways and Wetlands Team, Water Services Unit, Christchurch City Council, phone 371-1660



An **International**

3 Day
Symposium

28
29 September 1998
30

Christchurch
New Zealand

A symposium on the **science and practice of ecological restoration** in urban and rural environments for practitioners, policy-makers, planners, landscape architects, researchers, environmental engineers, nurseries, community groups, corporations.

3 days of keynote presentations, field trips, workshops, posters, displays and a videolink to an international restoration conference in the United States.

For further information and registration brochure
visit the conference web site on:

<http://www.landcare.cri.nz/conferences/ecore restoration.htm>

or contact:

Mrs Petra Palmer, Conference Organiser,
Landcare Research, PO Box 69, Lincoln, 8152, New Zealand.
Phone: (+64 3) 325 6700, Fax: (+64 3) 325 2418
Email: PalmerP@landcare.cri.nz



THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL

On 27 December 1879 The Press reported on "one of the most disgraceful outrages that has ever taken place in Canterbury". On Boxing Day a "peaceful procession" of members of the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society was attacked as it marched past Barrett's Borough Hotel on the corner of Manchester and High Streets. According to The Press, hotel patrons sailed forth and "commenced striking indiscriminately with a number of pick staves". Four men were seriously injured and the Governor's consent to immediately close the hotel was sought.

Subsequently, the hotel's owner, John Barrett, lost his liquor licence for two years. However, Barrett claimed that he was no more responsible for the violence than "a child unborn". His hotel had a large Irish Catholic clientele and the Protestant Society's decision to march past it was a r g u a b l y inflammatory. Clashes between Orangemen and Catholics had also occurred in Timaru on Boxing Day 1879.

W h e t h e r responsible for the violence in Christchurch or not, Barrett found himself the owner of an hotel which had the unhappy reputation of bringing the sectarian violence of Northern Ireland to the streets of Christchurch. He soon decided to rebuild his business and, in the process, his hotel building. His licence was temporarily taken up by Michael McGoverin.

The hotel Barrett built on the site of the original Borough, now known as the Excelsior (1881-2), was indisputably the most impressive in nineteenth-century Christchurch. The building is a monumental Italian Renaissance palazzo, an architectural form popularised by Charles Barry's Travellers' (1829-32) and Reform (1837-41) Clubs in Pall Mall, London. Barrett's earlier hotel was a comparatively simple (and notorious) colonial pub. In its architectural allusions, the Excelsior, by contrast, has all the respectability of the fashionable gentlemen's clubs in England.

The architect was William Barnett Armson, one of New Zealand's leading commercial architects in the decade or so before his death in 1883. He had previously, in 1876, designed the Devonshire Arms for Barrett. It survives as the Durham Arms (on the corner of Durham and Peterborough Streets) in much modified form. On the whole, however, fate has been unkind to Armson's buildings. Of the 14 major contracts he carried out on Hereford Street only one survives - Fisher's Building (1880).

The Excelsior Reopens

It is therefore entirely appropriate that the Excelsior, one of Armson's few remaining works, has now become a focus of preservation efforts in central Christchurch. On 15 June 1998, the hotel reopened - with an entirely peaceful gathering - as the first purchase of the Christchurch Heritage Trust. The Trust was launched last year to assist preservation of Christchurch's heritage buildings and is concentrating on conservation of privately-owned commercial properties. Initially it intends to buy, upgrade and re-tenant buildings as an example to others. In the longer term, it hopes to create a large, inner-city residential precinct. Purchase of the Excelsior is the first step in achieving this wider vision. The Trust has bought the building to generate funds to help finance its activities.



In keeping with the Trust's strategy of leading by example much of the Excelsior has been restored. Strengthening work begun in 1988 was completed in late 1997, and damaged plaster ornament has recently been repaired and reconstructed under the Trust's guidance. Although previously painted black in a

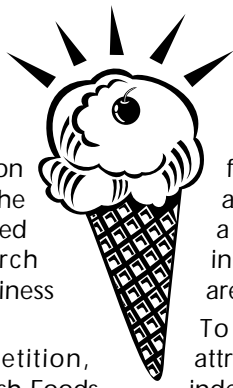
misguided attempt to create a distinctive visual image for the hotel, the facades have now been repainted in a more muted colour scheme which allows the architecture to be better appreciated. A cafe has been fitted out on the ground floor and the first floor bedrooms now house the Excelsior Backpackers' Hostel.

Barrett may have been wrongly held responsible for the sectarian violence which took place outside his bar as long ago as 1879, but his hotel is now fully implicated in the conservation 'battle' in central Christchurch. With the facades sympathetically restored, the structural securing work completed, and the interior fitted out for new uses, the Excelsior is well-placed to earn funds to help preserve Christchurch's heritage buildings. Whether for pecuniary or aesthetic reasons, Barrett and his architect W. B. Armson would surely have approved of the Trust's efforts to shore up the future of Christchurch's heritage buildings by "propping up" their bar. As the Christchurch Heritage Trust realises, destruction of the remarkable precinct of Victorian and Edwardian buildings centred on the Excelsior in High Street, no less than the violence of Boxing Day 1879, would be "one of the most disgraceful outrages... in Canterbury".

Peter Richardson

Assistant Planner (Heritage)

CREAM OF



THE DAIRIES

The Lettuce Inn Dairy has won the inaugural Cream of the Dairies Competition organised by the Keep Christchurch Beautiful Campaign's Business and Industry Committee.

The idea for the competition, sponsored by Meadow Fresh Foods, was mainly to encourage dairy operators to help stem littering around their business.

Winners Rod and Heather Mabey thanked their litter conscious customers for helping to keep The Lettuce Inn clean and tidy. Their dairy, on the corner of Kidbrooke Street and Linwood Avenue, met all the criteria and stood out as a unique dairy in the Garden City.

Not only did it maintain a litter-free frontage but went that extra mile as a community dairy. It had an attractive exterior, tidy and well stocked interior,

flowers and fruit under a canvas awning, neat grassed area with a picnic table, community notices in the front window and even an area to tie up dogs.

To find Christchurch's most attractive and litter-free dairy, an independent assessor visited about 100 dairies judging them on factors such as parking facilities, footpaths, rubbish bins, beautification, building maintenance, interiors and environmental health.

There were 11 dairies on the highly commended list - each of a very high standard and with its own special features. Two which deserved a mention were the Ilam Centre Dairy, Wairakei Road, and the Pantry Dairy, Milton Street.

Shirley Christensen

Keep Christchurch Beautiful Campaign

SPINIFEX - SILVERY SAND GRASS

Spinifex is a tough coastal plant that can cope with salt spray, drought, extreme temperatures, strong winds and shifting sand. It is even more tolerant of sea spray than the exotic marram grass.

Spinifex sericeus is a type of grass that puts out strong, creeping runners or stolons across sand dunes. The plant catches sand as it blows up from the beach. Although the sand falls on to the dune and partially buries the plant, the spinifex grows through it. This is how it helps to produce sand dunes. It also stabilises the dunes by holding the sand together with its

roots and stolons.

Spinifex is dioecious because it has male and female plants. The female flower looks like a big, spiky ball. It is made up of spikelets which have the seed wrapped at their base. The balls of seed are blown across the dunes on windy days, as a way of seed dispersal.

Spinifex has been introduced at the toe of the dunes in Taylors Mistake by CoastCare. After two seasons the plants are well established and spreading.

Kay Holder

Coast Care Co-ordinator

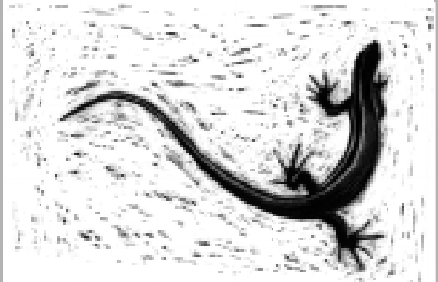


Rodney Chambers from Coast Care shows the male and female plants of spinifex at Taylors Mistake.

A GREEN LIST

OUR LIVING TREASURES

New Zealand is a land full of living treasures, from its unique flora and fauna to the rich diversity of its landscape. Why not explore some of these treasures through the many wonderful books and videos available at your local library? Here's a small selection to get you started.



Nga uruora - the groves of life: ecology and history in a New Zealand landscape by G. N. Park (577.0993 PAR)

Wild South's living treasures of New Zealand by Rod Morris (591.993 MOR)

Moa's ark: the voyage of New Zealand by David Bellamy (508.93 BEL)

Wild New Zealand by Gerald Cubitt (578.0993 CUB)

A tramper's guide to New Zealand's national parks by R. Burton (796.51 BUR)

A guide to the identification of New Zealand native trees by Andrew Crowe (582.16 CRO)

Lost world of the Poor Knights. A Wild South video (591.993 WIL)

Rare and endangered New Zealand birds: conservation and management by P.D. Gaze (598.042 GAZ)

Hoki: the story of a kakapo by Gideon Climo (598.71 CLI)

Kiwi: against the odds kiwi have survived. A Wild South video (598.54 WIL)



Canterbury Public Library
Te Whare Pukapuka Aa Iwi O Waitaha