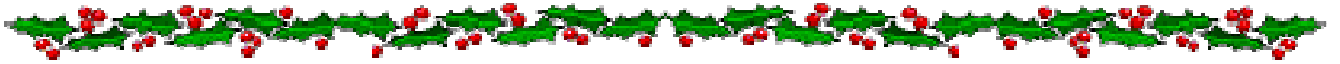




Waikanae Estuary Care Group Inc.

Christmas Newsletter



Chairperson's Report

What a busy year it has been for the Care Group!

Through your efforts we have planted over 8,500 trees this year, developed a shadehouse/nursery operation with more than 3000 trees well advanced for planting next winter, and weeded our plantings through the spring growth period.

Those broad achievements have been supported by several publicity/membership initiatives, securement of funding for three years, new shadehouse and storage shed, liaison with the Department of Conservation regarding site preparation for 2008, planning for 2009 plantings, and regular committee meetings and newsletters.

So thank you all for your contributions and support. Have a great Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year at working bees and other planned Care Group activities. We may also need your assistance with emergency watering of our trees if this dry weather continues.

Jeff Eaton

Shadehouse update

Despite having some good turnouts for working bees, we're a bit behind with getting plants potted up in time to survive over the dry summer months so they will be ready to plant next winter. We're now meeting weekly on Thursday mornings. Phone Deb on 905-1396 for more information if you're keen to help, thanks.

Moving Mulch

On Saturday 24 November keen workers moved mulch on the north side of the Waikanae River to project young plants, planted by Waikanae School students, over the summer months. Many thanks to Arthur Gibbs (a local white baiter) for the kind offer of his quad bike which made the job a great deal easier.





Plant of the Month – Toe toe (*Cortaderia*)

By Deb Finn

Toe toe was once one of the most common plants found in the estuary, and it is one of the main plants the Estuary Caregroup is planting. There are still some original plants to be found, but by far more numerous is the introduced South American pampas grass – commonly mistaken for native toe toe.

South American pampas grass flowers in autumn (rather than spring), has fluffy cream or pink flower plumes, and is easily identified by having just one main midrib on each leaf. It was introduced to New Zealand around thirty years ago primarily for being a good wind break with an aggressive leaf/root system, however it is also a heavy seeder, and has since spread and displaced our native toe toes in many areas – very much so in our estuary. Another undesirable trait of pampas grass is that their huge leaf clumps and curled dead leaves which ultimately decay to a state resembling wood shavings at the base of plants, make a very suitable environment for rats.



There are five native species of toe toe in New Zealand. One way to differentiate them is by when they flower - from spring to early summer. I think we have two species growing naturally in our estuary – *Cortaderia fulvida* which is the smallest and flowers late spring/early December, and *Cortaderia toetoe* which flowers in January. Their leaves are distinct from pampas grass by having more than one longitudinal vein on each leaf. The toe toe is a hardy plant which is just as well given the current drought!



Up-coming Working Bees and Celebrations

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Saturday 26 January 2008 | Working bee (possibly watering and weeding) followed by...
Meet at the Manly Street entrance (opposite Hadfield Place) at 9am
BBQ lunch at the new container shed / shade house |
| Saturday 16 February 2008 | Working bee (possibly watering and weeding)
Meet at the Manly Street entrance (opposite Hadfield Place) at 9am |
| Sunday 9 March 2008 | Sea Week Celebrations
Annual beach clean-up and working bee |

Contact Details

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www.gw.govt.nz/waikanaeestuary