



October 2020 Newsletter

President: Gary Beecroft gary.beecroft@xtra.co.nz

Secretary: Carol Andrews secretary@tawabush.org.nz

Monthly working bees: 2nd Sunday and 4th Tuesday

- Coordinator Sunday: Richard Herbert: herbert.r@xtra.co.nz
- Coordinator Tuesday: Andrew Liley: acfhilley@gmail.com

1. Planting trees at St Francis Xavier School

On Thursday 27 August, Gil and Helen Roper, Richard Herbert and Fiona Drummond represented FOTBR in working alongside several 5 and 6 year-old children in planting nearly 40 native tree seedlings on a raised bank in the school grounds. These were propagated at FOTBR's Tawa College nursery and donated to the school.



FOTBR was invited to help in the process and the children were instructed how to remove trees from the plastic bags and plant them in pre-dug holes, place soil around them and firm the ground beside the young trees.

Senior students, staff and parents ably helped in the planting.



2. Fraser Jackson, an icon of FOTBR, moves to Auckland

The founding Chairman of FOTBR in 2002, **Fraser Jackson** was instrumental with other Larsen Crescent residents in ultimately saving what is today, Larsen Crescent Reserve, especially with its huge matai trees, at a time of housing expansion in the area.

Significant negotiations by the group ultimately led to an Environmental Court decision to preserve the area and for the developer to be allocated alternative land. This was the founding of FOTBR which subsequently expanded its work to Redwood Bush and then in other native bush reserves in Tawa.

Prior to departing for Auckland, Fraser was invited to the September FOTBR committee meeting where longstanding members, **Wayne Pincott** and **Richard Herbert** gave him warm tributes for his selfless service to the community, especially in his role in the preservation and expansion of work the native bush reserves that we are privileged to have in Tawa today.

3. Māhoe and leafspot fungus

i. Tree, flowers and fruit

Māhoe (whiteywood or *Melicytus ramiflorus*) is one of the most common native tree species in the Tawa bush reserves. Dark green leaves are finely serrated at the edge. The abundant yellowish flowers are pleasantly scented in summer, while the violet-coloured fruit provide food for tūi, kererū and gecko lizards in autumn. Flowers and fruit grow directly from the branches.



ii. Leaves infected by fungus

Commonly, the surfaces of the leaves are infested by a mycorrhizal leaf spot fungus called *Cephaleuros lagerheimii*. While the spots look unsightly, it is considered that this fungus does little damage to the tree.

By definition, a mycorrhizal fungus is a mutual association between the fungus and a plant, often called symbiosis.

iii. Location

In the Tawa area, accessible examples of this fungus can be seen in Willowbank Reserve alongside the stream near the entrance to Takapu Road railway station, and along the Ara Tawa pathway in the bush area opposite Outlet City.



Fungi photos and research on fungus: Doug Miller

4. New book to be published. *Tawa, its recreational parks and reserves*

This book will be launched at 6pm on Monday 12 October 2020 in the Tawa Library. Tawa resident and author, **Gilbert (Gil) Roper** is a member of the 'Tawa Historical Society' and 'Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves' and the launch will be sponsored by these groups.

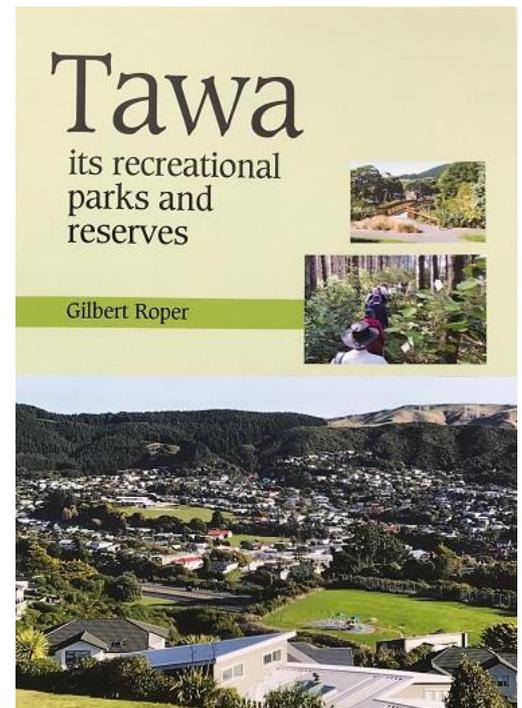
Cost of book

Up to and including the launch evening on 12 October, books may be ordered for \$30, then paid for and collected at the launch. From 13 October onwards, books will be \$35 each. Although published through the Tawa Historical Society (THS), FOTBR has donated money to assist in the cost of printing. In setting the price, THS has sought to just cover the cost of printing, with no profit intended.

Orders

Orders can be placed by email with Ken Woodgate, Secretary, Tawa Historical Society: ken.woodgate@xtra.co.nz

When placing an order, please indicate the intended method of payment to be made to the historical society. Ideally, payment can be made by direct credit into the society's bank account: BNZ Tawa 02 – 0552 – 0033337 – 00



5. Guided native bush walk for the community, 2pm Sunday 15 November

Did you know that Tawa has some of the biggest tawa and mataī trees in the Wellington area? To provide an opportunity to view these and other native bush, FOTBR is hosting a guided bush walk in Redwood Bush and Larsen Crescent Reserve.

Please meet at the Brasenose Place entrance of Redwood Bush at 2pm. The walk will take approximately 2 hours and conclude in Peterhouse Street and then return to Brasenose Place by footpath.



The walk is open to anyone, but to determine the numbers participating, please email FOTBR Secretary, Carol Andrews by 8 November.

secretary@tawabush.org.nz



6. Pate (seven- finger) or whauwhaupaku (five-finger)?

Pate (seven-finger or *Schefflera digitata*) and five-finger (whauwhaupaku or *Pseudopanax arboreus*) are common trees throughout the Tawa native bush reserves. Though similar in appearance, they can be especially distinguished by their leaf texture and their leaf margins. Although the names imply seven or five leaflets respectively, this number can vary.



The texture of five-finger leaves is thicker and leathery with a glossy appearance and well-defined teeth at the edge.

However, pate leaves are soft and thinner, not as glossy, with very fine serrations at the edge.

Photo: Chris Moore



Both trees provide food for native bird species

These trees are regarded in the top bracket of natives that provide food for bird species. Both endemic to New Zealand, they attract tūī, bellbirds (korimako), hihi (stitchbird) and waxeyes. The male flowers of the five-finger (whauwhaupaku) produce abundant nectar for birds, whereas female flowers produce less nectar and instead attract mainly insects. The purple-coloured fruit is also consumed by birds.

Seven-finger (pate) bear small green to cream-coloured flowers, followed by white to purple coloured fruit. As for five-finger, both the nectar and fruit are eaten by similar birds.

Gil Roper
FOTBR Committee