

Otari- Wilton's Bush

native botanic
garden and
forest reserve



**Absolutely
POSITIVELY**
ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

Forest reserve areas

There are 100 hectares of forest made up of original and regenerating podocarp broadleaf forest. Large conifers (podocarps) such as rimu, totara, miro and matai can be viewed from the Canopy Walkway or the Nature Trail. About 150 species of flowering plants, conifers and ferns can be found in the forest.

Epiphytes or perching plants sit high in the branches of mature trees. Climbing plants, including the New Zealand passionfruit, supplejack and rata occur throughout the forest. Kohekohe, rewarewa, tawa and mahoe trees dominate the upper slopes and merge with forest remnants of old rimu and matai. In the wetter areas, tall pukatea can be seen with their buttressed roots.

On the high south-facing slopes, scrub is dominated by introduced gorse and Darwin's barberry with colonising native plants such as mahoe and rangiora.

Native birds include tui, kereru, fantail, silver eye, kingfisher, grey warbler and morepork.

Management of the forest involves:

- **Possum and rat control:** This is necessary to allow further regeneration of the forest and to ensure native birds have adequate food and nectar.
- **Weed control:** Aggressive weeds such as old man's beard, ivy, jasmine and tradescantia are controlled.
- **Revegetation:** Plants are grown from seed collected in the forest and planted back in selected areas each winter.



Native botanic garden

The plant collections contain approximately 1200 species, hybrids and cultivars from the subantarctic islands in the south to Cape Reinga and offshore islands in the north.

Almost all of the plants have been raised from cuttings or seed collected from the wild. Details of each plant are documented and kept on a computer database.

The plant collections represent and describe New Zealand's native flora for the purposes of:

- **Education:** The plant collections are labelled so visitors can learn about the use and cultivation of native plants. Many school groups visit to learn more about New Zealand's environment.
- **Conservation:** The collections contain many threatened species. Seedlings grown from these plants are planted back into the wild as part of plant conservation recovery programmes.
- **Research:** Scientists use the plant collections for research into such things as plant structure and form, economic uses of native plants and their extracts, and classification and naming.
- **Horticulture:** The collections showcase landscape design and the ornamental uses of native plants.



Otari-Wilton's Bush is the only botanic garden in New Zealand dedicated solely to native plants. This unique plant sanctuary and forest reserve consists of 100 hectares of native forest and five hectares of plant collections.

Otari-Wilton's Bush was originally covered with dense podocarp broadleaf forest. Maori used the forest for hunting and the name Otari means 'Place of Snares'. Following European colonisation, some of the large trees were removed for timber and others were burnt off for farmland. One of the early landowners, Job Wilton, preserved seven hectares (17 acres) of the original forest and fenced it off. This became known as Wilton's Bush.

In 1906 the forest was gazetted as scenic reserve. In 1926 the Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum was established by Dr Leonard Cockayne and JG McKenzie. Their vision to conserve the native forest, cultivate plants from all over New Zealand, teach people about native plants and advocate their use in horticulture remains the blueprint for Otari-Wilton's Bush today.



Events and programmes

Guided tours are available for groups.

Tours are lead by experienced guides and tailored to suit your needs. Bookings essential – phone 499 1400.

Visitor information

The Information Centre – Te Marae O Tane – is open 8am–4pm daily and contains displays, information and seating for visiting groups. The small lecture room can be booked for horticultural and educational purposes. Next to the Information Centre, a 75-metre Canopy Walkway soars 18 metres above the forest floor. It provides a fully accessible tree-top experience between the two garden areas.

Barbecues

Two electric barbecues are available at the Troup Picnic Area. These are free to use.

Nature Trail

A self-guided Nature Trail starts at the Information Centre. Pick up a brochure for the Nature Trail at the start of the Canopy Walkway.

Wheelchair access

Paths are fully accessible to wheelchairs from the Wilton Road car park to the Information Centre, over the Canopy Walkway to the lookout and along the Wilton Walkway to the viewing platform.

How to get there:

Take the **No 14 bus** from Lambton Quay to Gloucester Street, outside Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Car – the main public car park is on Wilton Road. Additional car parking is available on Churchill Drive.

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