



Weedbusters!

www.weedbusters.org.nz

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Tauranga and Mt Maunganui's iconic landmark, Mauao, ('the Mount') has now got its own special group of people dedicated to looking after it – and to getting rid of the weeds that threaten it.

Mauao gets weedfree makeover

Two groups of locals - and some not so local folk - keen to see the mountain's bush reserves preserved for future generations are tackling weeds that threaten to swamp Mauao.

First in the firing line are cotoneaster, hawthorn, privet, woolly nightshade, gorse, Japanese honeysuckle, and blackberry. A small patch of wild ginger at the top of Mauao has already been dispatched.

Next on the hit list is the serious infestation of climbing asparagus on the southern bush slopes. Other weeds invading Mauao include evergreen buckthorn, Mexican daisy, and brush wattle.

Mauao's volunteers are becoming expert in identifying weeds and recording the position and abundance of other pest species seen while weedbusting.

"This group has already made an impact on the bush on Mauao," says Tauranga City Council park

ranger Mark Ray, who, supported by Environment Bay of Plenty and Tauranga's Urban Greenspace project, helped get the project off the ground.

"We are hoping that volunteer teams will become independent, just signing in to get equipment, a safety briefing, and gear, before tackling the next patch."

Chris Dench, Urban Greenspace Project co-ordinator, says it's the 10th group that the Project has helped get up and weedbusting. "We're really pleased it has taken off so well".

Environment Bay of Plenty's regional Weedbusters coordinator Sara Brill is also supporting what she sees as a very worthwhile community project.

"It's great how people are starting to identify weeds and get weedbusting by themselves. It makes such an impact on weeds in other places in peoples' lives too," says Sara.



Mauao Weedbusters ready to hit the slopes.

Working together
to protect New Zealand

Getting ready for a Dirty Weekend!

Shake off your shoes,
Take off the tie,
Pick up a friend...
For a Dirty Weekend!

Get out in the garden,
Wrestle those weeds,
Give them the push,
From gardens and bush.

There's prizes galore
For your weekends of 'sin'
Let us know what you did
And be in to win!



October is traditionally the month when people shake off the winter blues, and start spring cleaning their gardens in preparation for a new growing season.

With this in mind, Weedbusters is launching an awareness campaign to run during the month of October, to encourage gardeners to check their properties for weedy species and replace them with non-invasive alternatives from their local garden centre: 'Have a Dirty Weekend in Your Own Backyard!'.

In **Whakatane** the district council is planning a weed swap, and Woody Weed will be appearing as part of the library's school holiday programme. The Council is also looking at how they can help gardeners physically deal with weeds on their property during this month. There will be a static Weedbusters display at the annual **Rotorua** garden competition, and then the Rotorua library.

Palmers Garden Centre in **Brown's Bay, Auckland**, will be putting up a static display around the 'What's a Weed' and 'Bad Berries' theme – a great idea, low effort and maximum impact especially over the Labour Weekend plant sales period! On **Waiheke Island**, residents can enter the draw for a 'Naughty Night' package at the City Life Hotel in Auckland by inviting a biosecurity officer to give them advice on weedy species in their gardens and how to remove them. In Auckland's **North Head** area, residents will be encouraged to remove five nasties from their garden, and help will be available for them to do this

In the Waikato, three areas are being targeted. In **Hamilton** there will be weed swaps and information stands based at Perry's Organic Recycling Centre, and in **Raglan** and **Kawhia** weed swaps are planned.

More weed swaps are going ahead in **Lower Hutt** and **Kapiti**, following on from other successful events earlier this year. **Golden Bay** Weedbusters will also be running a weed swap with plenty of weedy experts on hand to offer advice and information. This is one of the first events for the newly launched Golden Bay Weedbusters Group. Weedbusters will also be present at Garden Marlborough to answer weedy questions.

Gisborne is looking at discounted weed waste disposal in conjunction with a weed swap, with DOC and Gisborne District Council working together on this initiative. Weed experts at the **Dannevirke** Garden Expo will be providing a weed identification service and a weed swap scheme.

In **Tauranga**, another weed swap is being planned in conjunction with Palmers Garden Centre, while in Invercargill, a new *Plant Me Instead* booklet will be launched encouraging gardeners to pull out a weed and plant non-weedy species instead.

Throughout New Zealand, \$1000 worth of prizes are up for grabs in a national competition for those gardeners who want to spend their October 'dirty weekends' giving their gardens a weedfree makeover.

This competition will be promoted through garden centres, and along with other events during October's Dirty Weekend, will be advertised on www.weedbusters.org.nz.



In the thick of it...

When Weedbusters was launched in New Zealand in 2003, a conscious decision was made that this would be a truly interagency awareness programme.

I remember there was a fair bit of scepticism about this from the rank and file, and I imagine management of the various organisations had some doubts as well; after all, each organisation had its own mandates, legislation to work under, and physical boundaries to work within.

In some cases, basic philosophies behind decision-making were so different it was hard to see how truly 'interagency' efforts could be achieved.

But these efforts have been achieved, with Weedbusters becoming the umbrella under which collaboration on weeds awareness efforts occurs.

At the end of the day it has worked 'top down' and 'bottom up' - from management making a decision to participate, and from staff making the time to take the 'coffee and muffins' approach has seen them building bridges, relationships, and sometimes even friendships, with other weedy folk both in their areas and around the countryside.

This October's national launch of the Weedbusters Dirty Weekend campaign is a case in point. Almost every event during this month has been planned, supported, and will be implemented, by at least two organisations working together to get the message of weeds awareness out to gardeners.

Hopefully those to whom this message is directed will recognise the gravity of an issue that can unite central, region, and local government, industry organisations, and community groups under the one banner. It is a very powerful statement indeed.

Carolyn Lewis
National Weedbusters Coordinator

Golden Bay Weedbusters write...

Golden Bay is launching itself into weedbusting mode, thanks to some determined individuals and a community that cares about its environment.

Funding has been secured through Taskforce Green for a "Mr Weedbuster" to help clear weeds from reserves and to work with adjoining landowners to get rid of weeds growing in their gardens.

The first Weedbusters group has been formed, made up of residents around a particularly weedy reserve who want to make a difference. There are sure to be more to follow.



Golden Bay weedbusting stalwarts Peter Williams, Jo-Anne Vaughn, Nigel Mountfort, and Woody Weed.
Photo: Hayley Gale, Marlborough Express

Blenheim's Blind Creek Battlers

All over the countryside there are areas that at first glance would be considered weedy wastelands.

Locals around Blind Creek, near Blenheim, didn't want their waterway to be seen this way. Over the last several years they have been tackling weed issues, replanting natives, and helping transform the riverbanks from eyesore to natural asset.

A joint effort has seen the Marlborough District Council putting up fencing to keep out sheep and clearing the infestations of large weedy trees, while volunteers dealt with other weed and pest issues in the area, as well as replanting with natives.

The Tuamarina Landcare Group that was formed to deal with this is now affiliated with the Tuamarina/ Waikakaho Residents'

Association, and more recently with Weedbusters.

The overall project to transform the Blind Creek riverbanks has been planned in three stages over six years.

Regular weedbusting and planting maintenance is done by a core group of Blind Creek Road residents, with around 200 Tuamarina households kept in the loop with a twice-yearly newsletter.

Locals have also been helped by volunteers from the wider Blenheim community and Outward Bound.

Thanks to their efforts, several hundred native plants now grow on the Blind Creek riverbanks - something for present and future generations to enjoy.



WEEDBUSTERS: Sina, Jenny and Josefa Leo, Philip Hunnisett, Trish Nicholls, Margaret Peace and Vern Addie.

Why Weedbusters?

In 2006, when the Nelson Tasman Pest Management Strategy was being revamped, a number of people in our community were shocked to realise that some invasive weeds were being dropped off it altogether, not because they were no longer pests, but because they had become 'out of control'.

Having travelled extensively in the North Island and seen the weed problems that other communities have learned to accept, we were determined that Golden Bay's natural beauty, which we depend upon for our lifestyle and tourism industry, not be shrouded in ugly weeds.

But it is happening. Take a close look some time at where old man's beard and banana passionfruit have spread to. Imagine these infestations 1000 times worse if we don't do anything.

Forest and Bird and others realised that neither Department of Conservation nor Tasman District Council could maintain control alone, and recognised that managing spreading weeds had to come from an aware and informed community.

Four thousand pairs of eyes and willing hands to see and deal with weeds constitutes a formidable army. TDC and DoC on the other hand have only a few people working on weeds in Golden Bay.

Hence, one potential solution is the Golden Bay Weedbusters Group, available to support people and groups to manage weeds infesting public land in their own community or on private land. They also hope to encourage our community to become aware of what is happening and to recognise which are the weeds that are becoming 'wicked'.

- Jo-Anne Vaughn, Golden Bay Forest and Bird



DOC's Pete Brady with banana passionfruit and Japanese honeysuckle. Photo: Marlborough Express

Want to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand gift card?

To go into the monthly draw to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand gift card, enter the 'Name This Weed' competition at

www.weedbusters.org.nz



Strawberry dogwood
(*Dendrobenthamia capitata*)



Elaeagnus
(*Elaeagnus x reflexa*)



Smilax
(*Asparagus asparagoides*)



Common pampas
(*Cortaderia selloana*)

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FEDERATED FARMERS OF NEW ZEALAND



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New Zealand
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NZ Landcare Trust
Landcare action on the ground



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

and all regional councils and unitary authorities

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