



Since the nature trail was first described in the 1980s many changes have taken place in the bush. A number of the colonising species have gone, the trees are taller and more mature.

The numbered pegs on the trail are to draw your attention to plants identified in this guide.

The nature trail starts at the grass clearing below the pine tree car park, below the tennis club on Morton Way, off Rae Rd. This is the Tui Track.

On the left of the entry point is a large karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*) with its grayish leathery leaves.

1 On the other side of the stream are three forms of tree fern. Can you identify their differences?

On the left is a tall wheki or rough tree fern (*Dicksonia squarrosa*) which can grow to 7m. It has the smallest fronds, very rough to feel, and orange-brown dead fronds. Unlike other tree ferns they often grow in clumps, sending up suckers.

The largest and most handsome of our tree ferns is undoubtedly the mamaku or black tree fern (*Cyathea medullaris*) with large arching fronds and black stipes (black frond stems). It can grow to 20m.

The most common tree fern in the park is the silver fern (*Cyathea dealbata*), recognised by the silver stipes and silver underside of the fronds. It can grow to 10m and is one of New Zealand's national emblems.

Note also the silt on the ground. Flooding is common in the stream due to rainwater run-off from the housing development on the surrounding ridges.

2 This grove of trees is mahoe or whiteywood (*Melicactus ramiflorus*) – there are many around here. Note white-patterned trunk, fine-toothed leaves, and flowers (Nov/Dec) sprouting directly from quite thick branches.

3 Pigeonwood or porokaiwhiri (*Hedycarya arborea*), a female tree with large orange berries in season – compare leaves with finer toothed whiteywood on opposite bank.

4 Tall straight kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), with threadlike leaves and eventually up to 40m tall. Young pigeonwood with black stems and mahoe with silver stems. Compare the leaves again.

5 Tangle of supplejack (*Ripogonum scandens*). Four metres on the right is the glossy fern *Asplenium oblongifolium* and young pigeonwood.

6 Large mapou (*Myrsine australis*) – a frequently occurring tree. The twining lianes growing up it are characteristic of the native jasmine (*Parsonsia heterophylla*). The foliage can just be seen from a few metres further up the track growing over the top of the mapou. Native jasmine flowers during Nov/Dec and is sweetly-scented.

7 Small-leaved shrubs are the divaricating coprosma (*Coprosma rhamnoides*). On the opposite side of the track is the prickly mingimingi (*Cyathodes juniperina*). Opposite the mingimingi the tall tree is kumarahou (*Pomaderris kumeraho*) with rough wrinkly leaves.

8 Tanekaha or celery pine (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*), a familiar tree in the park and one of the most beautiful, especially in the young stage. Dwarf cabbage tree is a cross between *Cordyline pumilio* and *C. australis*. It acquires a trunk from the crossing, but keeps its narrow leaves and wide-spreading flower spike, sweetly-scented. Pure *C. pumilio* is becoming rare in Auckland, but it is present in the park.

The small grasses (sedges) with grooved leaves are *Carex dissita* and *C. lambertiana* (distinguishable by their flowers in early summer). Here also is the light grey-green of the invasive South African iris (*Aristea ecklonii*). Ideally it would not be there.

9 Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*), have come in here in a light well. They are becoming rare in this maturing bush. Large manuka have now died – many large trunks are rotting and providing nourishment for the next cycle.

Down the steps to the left, onto the Kohekohe Track.

10 The sedge on the left is *Carex dissita*, with a large old manuka in the background. The taller sedge opposite is a native cutty grass *Gahnia lacera*.

Keep left at the bottom of the steps.

11 Grove of kahikatea or white pine (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) – juvenile form with feathery leaves and many young adults acquiring threadlike leaves.

12 Hook grass (*Uncinia uncinata*) with a flower spike like a black pipe cleaner with hooked seeds that hitch a ride on passers-by. The large pigeonwood on the left is a female, with numerous vertical black epicormic shoots.

13 Kahikatea adult form but more branching than characteristic of the genus. It is thought to be more than 150 years old, and to have grown in a more open environment with little competition. Fortunately, this is a female kahikatea, hence the great number of younger ones growing throughout the park. The ladder fern, opposite, is *Doodia australis*, a common ground fern. New fronds have a pink colouring.

Continue over the bridge and resume track left.

Note the many young adult kahikatea and pigeonwood here.

14 The ferns are *Blechnum novaezelandiae*, kiokio, large fronds with wavy segments. Lady-fern or gully fern (*Pneumatopteris pennigera*) with toothed segments is nearer the stream. From the bridge the giant sedge is *Gahnia xanthocarpa*.

15 A mass of kiekie (*Freyinetia baueriana ssp. banksii*) – a scrambling climber with aerial roots, with interesting arum-like flowers in late spring. Closely related to the tropical pandanus, it is said to flower only every 5 or 10 years.

16 A metre back on the other side of the track, at the base of twin tree ferns, is the flax-like *Dianella nigra* or New Zealand blueberry or turutu – panicles of white flowers followed by blue or white berries. Three metres on from the marker is the native broom (*Carmichaelia australis*), with flat leathery leaves.

17 Look across the stream to conical shaped emergent kahikatea, tanekaha on the ridge and kiekie.

18 The large tree is kohuhu (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*), with small leaves, a relatively common tree in the valley. The large overhanging tree opposite with long leathery leaves is houpara (*Pseudopanax lessonii*).

19 On both sides of the track is hangehange (*Geniostoma rupestre var. ligustrifolium*), with soft light-green leaves. Also mahoe or whiteywood with luxuriant growth of climbing fern (*Blechnum filiforme*) on its trunk. Note its variable leaves: shorter near the ground, long sickle-shaped where climbing, and the narrow, linear fertile fronds.

20 The nikau palms (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) were transplanted from Awaruku Reserve in 1980. They take a long time to get established. Along the sides of the track is the drooping panicles of bush rice-grass (*Microlaena avenacea*) with wide flat leaves.

21 By the seat – a good station for filmy ferns on tree trunks here and on the other side of the stream. Hounds tongue fern (*Microsorium pustulatum*) climbing on trunks to left.

22 Swamp maire (*Syzygium maire*) planted. It has reddish light green “opposite” leaves.

23 The scramblers, supplejack with larger leaves, and the smaller leaved pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia complexa*).

24 On the silver fern trunks, the small protruding fern is *Tmesipteris elongata*. All four species of *Tmesipteris* are present in the park. The publication *Just Scrub*, which describes this bush in more detail, has a key.

25 On the other side of the track is an example of a small five finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*) growing in the trunk of a silver fern. It starts off epiphytically and envelops the fern. This is quite common in the park and doesn't seem to kill the tree fern.

Keep straight ahead up the steps onto the Putaputaweta Track.

26 Prolific sedge is *Carex lessoniana* with tasselled seed-heads – a swamp sedge, and important fighter against erosion. Feel the triangular stems. Feel also the two species of karamu, here together on opposite sides of the boardwalk – note the thicker leaves of *Coprosma lucida* on the right, with raised mid-rib. Run your fingers across the top of the leaf and compare with flatter leaved *C. robusta*.

27 Dwarf cabbage tree (*Cordylone pumilio*) again. Note trunk of kahikatea ahead on the right. It is easy to recognise trees by their bark when their leaves are high up in the canopy. This is a good one to start with.

28 Five metres ahead on the left is an old putaputaweta (*Carpodetus serratus*) – mature ones have larger marble-patterned adult leaves, hence the common name of marble-leaf.

Note the holes in the trunk made by grubs of the puriri moth, a large pale green furry moth (female 15cm, male 10cm). Eggs are laid in flight and the caterpillars crawl on the ground until they find a tree to their liking. They eat live wood during their five-year life cycle, boring vertical tunnels near the centre of the stem, concealing the opening by incorporating pieces of chewed bark into a web curtain. The tree got its Maori name because of weta which often live in the abandoned holes of the puriri moth.

29 On the left a five-finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*) with large waxy leaves. Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) started out life epiphytically on silver fern. More kiokio and mapou are along here too.

30 An old putaputaweta with good moth holes – be careful not to break the curtain. Also a tall cabbage tree (*Cordylone australis*).

31 The small tree with beautifully patterned veining of the leaves is *Olearia rani* or heketara. It will have numerous heads of daisy flowers in time.

32 Note the way the stream goes underground and reappears. It often happens in the hard clay of the park. It could be called a miniature 'tomo' as in Waitomo.

(At the track junction you have an option of turning left and then right after 35m up onto the 14th tee of the golf course for a good view down the valley. Then retrace your steps.)

Turn right onto the Mamaku Track.

33 Numerous naturally occurring putaputaweta thriving in a light well. Nikau palm (planted). Erosion visible on the left.

34 Note the change in vegetation as the track climbs. This is gumland scrub, an endangered habitat because it is considered so expendable when development options are being considered.

35 The long threadlike sedge is *Schoenus tendo*, the common bracken is *Pteridium esculentum*. Many Hangehange are here and also *Coprosma lucida*.

36 The thick-trunked tea-tree is kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) – longer-lived than manuka. Kanuka is a large tree which could live to 200 years.

37 Narrow leaved shrub is the other mingimingi (*Leucopogon fasciculatus*) on both sides of the track. This is another edge plant requiring more light.

38 The row of pines here are *Pinus elliotii* – the slash pine – planted as a boundary tree under the original golf club lease. Feel the softer fine leaves of this kanuka – “kind kanuka” is the mnemonic. Compare with darker pricklier leaves of manuka further on.

39 Umbrella fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*) – also common in dry places. Note kauri (*Agathis australis*) – 50 of them were planted in 1985 in this area. They do well in the umbrella fern – it gives them the sideways support and top light they like. Opposite, a fine patch of hard or scented fern, sometimes called pig fern (*Paesia scaberula*), with another 30 kauri planted in 1999.

Turn right at the top of this track onto the Baylis Track.

From the corner looking down the valley is a medium sized totara (*Podocarpus totara*), probably planted in 1940 to celebrate Auckland's centenary. People remember planting lines of trees in knee-high scrub. They have not done well in all that time, a factor being the condition of the ground after the demise of kauri. Kauri leave a legacy of hard infertile (podsolised) clay of very low fertility. It takes a long time to accumulate enough leaf litter to support young trees.

40 Planted kauri

41 Dragonleaf (*Dracophyllum sinclairii*) with erect fine leaves – getting increasingly rare as this type of habitat disappears. There are a number of them on this track and the umbrella fern *Gleichenia* is in great abundance. The wiry fern is club-moss (*Lycopodium deuterodensum*), with erect candelabra branching. Note that the karamu on this track is mostly *Coprosma robusta*, probably because of the more open conditions.

42 Pohutukawa – planted 1940s.

43 Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) – planted 1940s – with more dragonleaf. The ubiquitous aristeia is very thick on this track, inhibiting the growth of native species. The smaller *Carex* has just about given up.

44 Felled pine. Pines growing in the bush have been ring-barked and left to die. Whether they fall to pieces or are felled later, they do much less damage to the surrounding bush if they are bare-branched and light. This practice is no longer permitted and wild pines must now be felled or left. Pines can repress regenerating native forest.

45 Totara, planted. They do particularly well in the park and are now self-seeding.

46 Titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*) – planted – leaning over the track, and fern kiokio. Keep going, big rimu on your right, then straight ahead at next junction. Pass the rimu with twisted trunk.

47 Over to the right, a large columnar rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) – New Zealand honeysuckle (planted) alongside totara from 1940 planting.

Now test yourself: Over the next 100m or so the following plants or trees you have met on this trail are listed in the order in which they occur. See if you can recognise them.

- Totara ■ Tanekaha ■ Karamu ■ Five-Finger
- Manuka ■ Hangehange ■ Rimu ■ Kauri ■ Silver Fern
- Mapou ■ Pigeonwood ■ Cabbage Tree ■ Kumarahou

Stand under the big kohuhu and count up.

How did you do?

And on to the last three pegs on this trail.

48 Koromiko (*Hebe stricta*) – an edge plant, very characteristic of gumland scrub. Also seedling totara (1999) and small kumarahou – large panicles of yellow flowers in spring.

49 Bush lawyer (*Rubus cissoides*) – a climber with coarsely toothed leaves, panicles of white flowers and yellowish fruit. It has hooks for climbing.

50 A good bush of prickly mingimingi. Opposite is the tree daisy, *Olearia furfuracea*, with thick leathery wavy-edged leaves

Now that you have reached the end of the trail and are back where you started, we hope that you enjoyed yourself!

As you exit, you will notice a large sedge, *Gahnia setifolia*, with tan seeds, and flax, harakeke (*Phormium tenax*) guarding the right.

If you are inspired to get to know more plants in this northern gumland scrub, the Centennial Park Bush Society has produced a booklet entitled *Just Scrub* – published by North Shore City Council, and available through the society. This booklet describes and illustrates the plants of the bush area helping readers to become very proficient in recognising them.

To explore the park further, venture up the full length of the Kohekohe Valley and explore the world of the mamaku under the pine plantation. The more park-like area with picnic tables lies between the bush and Beach Rd.

The Centennial Park Bush Society is actively involved in the whole catchment: promoting weed control, planting native trees, doing track work and generally acting as guardians of the park.

If you would like to be involved in the care of the bush, the society would welcome your help.



**VOLUNTEERS
AT WORK**

If you are interested in volunteering in one of the North Shore City's parks, please contact the citywide parks officer on 486 8600.

North Shore City Council
1 The Strand
Private Bag 93500
Takapuna
North Shore City

Actionline: 486 8600

www.northshorecity.govt.nz

Centennial Park Nature Trail

Experience a

*regenerating native
forest environment*



kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*)