

Autumn 2012

My family and I have been at Eastwoodhill for a year now. We have experienced the changing vistas and arboreal delights that the four seasons offer in this unique environment which is undoubtedly the most beautiful place we have ever lived.

Watching my children racing around like 'crazy critters' through the arboretum makes me realize just how lucky the Gisborne region is to have a place like this. Children need experiences in the outdoors and over this year I have talked with both young and the 'young at heart', who have had memorable experiences enjoying nature at Eastwoodhill. One 'young at heart' man told me about the time he spent living in the Canadian Cabin while working here. That was in Douglas Cook's day but his memories were still as clear as yesterday. The stories and relationships with this place I have come across still amaze me, perhaps it is because this is a living collection supported by so many people. Eastwoodhill historically has an average rainfall of 1065mm, with 1218mm in the 2011 calendar year. This has been a fantastic growing season with regular rainfall spread over the summer most of it has soaked in and not ended up in the streams. Everything is looking lush and visitors often comment on having never seen so many shades of green.

The 3900 oaks and alders planted for erosion control are doing well thanks to the rain, and we plan to continue planting high risk areas this winter. Luckily we have had no 'weather bombs' descend upon us lately so what slipped in the 2010 floods is well on the way to being stabilised.

Development is underway on Little Flat preparing the site for the new full scale planting of 'The Abbey'. We won't be ready to plant this year as some earthworks are required next summer. The area has been pegged out and, at 160m long and 80m wide, it will be a sight to behold.

Propagation has begun this summer of selected species with the help of Appletons Nursery of Nelson and Andrew Norfield of Motueka. The focus at present is on single species within the collection with the aim of securing this plant material by increasing individual specimen numbers in the arboretum and where appropriate, in other collections throughout the country. This also ties in with the geographical plantings derived from the master plan.

The New Zealand Gardens Trust re-assessed Eastwoodhill on its three year rotation. Thanks to the team at Eastwoodhill and the considerable work by the amazing Homestead Garden volunteers, we continue to be a Garden of National Significance.

As we gear up for autumn, I am wishing for cool clear days and starry nights. I hope to see you all here to enjoy the plethora of colour that Eastwoodhill has to offer.

Danny Frazer

Curator