

Spring 2011

My first winter at Eastwoodhill was one of ever changing vistas and surprises. Winter flowering plants such as *Hamamelis virginiana* Virginian witch hazel, *Chimonanthus praecox* wintersweet and *Daphne odora* winter daphne gave us beautiful sights and of course some exquisite scents. Always a pleasure to this kiwi lad is the amazing forms of deciduous trees in winter. It is rare in NZ to find this treat to the extent that Eastwoodhill has to offer and it reminds me of my time wandering through European woods in winter.

I have been grateful for the quieter winter period to begin to get familiar with Eastwoodhill and the multi-faceted challenges I will face in the curators role. My time however has not been idle and projects such as an erosion planting of 4000 oak and alder trees was planted in Turihaua to arrest slips that either began or progressed in last October's floods.

We now have two duathlon events under our belts which has eventuated from a partnership with Eastland Triathlon Club. The events were a success and fun was had by all who participated even if they all came over the finish line swathed in mud and gasping for breath.

As we launch into spring, other projects and partnerships are coming to fruition such as the new planting in Little Flat of Westminster Abbey. It builds upon Douglas Cooks original theme with the historic Cathedral in Cabin Park but will be an accurate full scale planting spanning nearly 160 meters in length. I am really excited about the abbey project and when it matures, it will be a highlight at Eastwoodhill for many years to come as well as a popular venue for weddings and functions.

EIT/Tairawhiti will be running a pilot programme over a number of weeks at Eastwoodhill. The programme will involve students from the National Cert in Horticulture Level 3 in a restoration project within the arboretum. The project targets the Cedar Garden and students will draw up a proposal to begin the initial clean up of the formal garden and submit a plan for ongoing restoration. The Cedar Garden is another of Douglas Cooks more formal areas within the arboretum that the newly launched master plan identifies as a rejuvenation project. Tertiary organisations are an integral part of meeting Eastwoodhill's vision which has a strong emphasis on education and we will continue to enhance existing and develop new connections with education providers.

Looking forward with the collection, we are focusing on developing a propagation programme which will help us to secure the rarer plant material we have at Eastwoodhill and identify other collections throughout the country where we can deposit material in climates suitable to their natural environment. No one organisation can achieve this mammoth goal alone so a network of specialist propagators and nurseries is being created to handle the diverse skills and resources needed to get the job done.

Winter is a time for inward reflection for humans and nature alike. Spring is a time when the flow reverses, nature awakens it calls us out to play and adventure. The *prunus sp.* are flowering, the tui are racing through the arboretum like mischievous kids and the place is bursting into life. so I hope to see you all here soon to enjoy the beauty this spectacular season has to offer.

Danny Frazer

Curator