



FIREWOOD ART

Robert was recently inspired by a book, “Norwegian Wood, Chopping, Stacking and Drying Wood the Scandinavian Way” he bought from Volume, a wonderful new bookstore in Nelson.

Robert has always had a love of wood and art so was inspired to combine the two. We often joke about how firewood warms you at least 7 times by the time you cut it, stack it, restack it, move it and finally burn it.

The result of the book’s inspiration is shown below.



Firewood Fish 2017 by Robert Fryer

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

Well, summer did eventually arrive for a couple of weeks at least so we hope you made the most of those gorgeous days. The season we have had has certainly promoted some growth of plants but also weeds. The old man’s beard has certainly loved the season this year, judging by how much is around. We have been involved in some interesting and challenging projects and certainly enjoy the satisfaction of seeing sites emerging from a weed burden or restored to something benefitting the biodiversity of the region.

We have been doing some interesting reports and work on wetlands and have been inspired by those who have taken an interest in protecting and funding the enhancement of these important areas.

Wetland Identification

The local Councils have been working on the identification of significant natural areas (SNA’s) for the past few years. Tasman District Council is currently focusing on wetland areas and the identification of these within the region.

There appears to be a leaning towards the Clarkson Method (2014) for identifying and delineating wetlands. This method was developed in conjunction with Landcare Research and Meridian Energy and uses a system developed by the US Army Engineer Corps, a vegetation based tool to delineate wetlands. This method classifies New Zealand wetland species according to fidelity to a wetland to create a wetland indicator status rating. There are 5 classifications: OBL - Occurs almost always in wetlands; FACW- Occurs usually in wetlands; FAC- Equally likely in wetlands or non-wetlands; FACU- Usually in non-wetlands and UPL- Almost always in non-wetlands. The species are then integrated based on abundance and wetland indicator status based on a score to set a threshold for what could be considered a wetland by meeting the hydrophytic (wetland) vegetation threshold.

Landcare cautions however that this tool, while useful, needs further supporting data based on hydrology and soils where vegetation cover is sparse or has been disturbed or in sites of less than 2 hectares.

*FRESHWATER IS INTEGRAL TO
THE HEALTH, WELLBEING,
LIVELIHOOD AND CULTURE
OF ALL NEW ZEALANDERS
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
(2004)*

Clarkson et al also developed another method for assessing wetlands in 2004, which looked at developing a set of wetland condition indicators to assist in developing a consistent monitoring system for NZ wetlands. This tool was designed to

monitor a wetland over time and looked at indicators like change in hydrological integrity, change in physiochemical parameters, change in ecosystem intactness, change in browsing, predation and harvesting regimes and change in dominance of native plants. A numerical scoring system is then applied at both a broad wetland wide scale and at an individual detailed plot scale. These scores are then reviewed to give an overall wetland pressure score and index. This is a comprehensive process and provides a good baseline to assess a wetland and provide for ongoing monitoring.

*“Swamps” said Joseph Banks,
“marshes” said James Cook in
London 1771 when describing the
lowlands of New Zealand.
Interestingly the Maori did not use
the word wetland either but rather
“repo” which means swamp.*



WAR ON WASPS AND WEEDS.

Robert has been using the chemical Vespex and is an accredited user in the war on wasps that we continue to carry out each year. Jan stood on a wasp nest in her early 20's and remembers the only way to stop the attack was to run and jump into the river and totally submerge herself. It was the most pain she has ever experienced in her life so she is an avid wasp warrior. This is the time of year, when wasps convert to eating protein, that Vespex is most effective. Baits are placed at regular intervals and wasps carry it back to the nest. This is an ideal solution when it is not clear where nests are. If the nest is obvious, Robert uses a product called “Dust to Dust” which he puffs directly into the nest. The effect is almost instant and very satisfying. We dealt with 2 large nests only this morning using this method.

The old mans beard seems to be thriving this year and has been very obvious when in flower. It is probably one of the greatest threats to our forests as it is so persistent and so dominating in its cover of vegetation. The most effective method of control we have found is manual cutting and pasting of the stems with a herbicide. In the early phase of its growth it will respond to a spray of glyphosate, but you must be careful of this method once the plant has covered other species. It is something that must be continually attacked if we are to keep it at bay. By the way sheep love it so if it is possible to keep an area grazed, they will certainly assist with its control.

The other weed we have been waging war on is tradescantia (Wandering willy). It grows very well in shady areas and basically covers the ground, rooting down wherever it touches. We have been working in a QEII covenant area that is the home to three very threatened native species. The tradescantia is running rampant in this area. We have again found the best method of control is manually pulling it out and removing it from the site as again, if any small piece is left it will root down and start a new plant. It is easy to pull out and satisfying to see the results of clearing an area. It is then easy to go through and to spray any remnants in a month or so after the initial sweep. This method also effectively eradicated this weed from Stephens Island in the late 1990's.

**Massive old mans
beard stem.**





GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

With the weather cooling down it is time to be thinking of planting plans for the winter. Have you ordered your plants from the nurseries as they tend to run out of the popular species. Plants should be hardening off at the moment ready to cope with the winter conditions. Robert was over in Blenheim last week and noticed they had a light frost. That is a real worry for the wineries so early in the season.

If you are planning planting near walkways, make sure you plant flaxes and grasses at least a metre from the edge of the walkway and further back for large flaxes. We were working in a walkway area a couple of weeks ago and spent considerable time cutting flax back. It makes for lots of ongoing maintenance if plants are too close to walkways.

Contact Us

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We are lining up planting projects for the winter months and have some interesting and exciting projects coming through. If you have any projects in mind please make contact soon so we can programme them in.

Jan recently did the Banks Peninsula Walkway and thoroughly recommends it for anyone interested in some wonderful scenery, interesting plants and enough challenge to feel like you have earned your wine at the end of each day.

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