

Have we reached the end of the golden weather?

Well if we have, we can hardly complain, can we? Being forever the optimist, I think we have plenty of pleasant weather to come, and looking at the numbers of bookings I have made for this term, there are plenty of others who obviously share my optimism.

Last term was an extremely busy and varied one for me. It was a privilege to have the chance to be out and about with so many of you. I never tire of the sound of great excitement, glee or surprise when children discover some new animal or plant or do something that surprises both themselves and others. Certainly the many rock pool, Pukeiti and river excursions were great fun and my thanks go to the teachers who organized them.

Bookings for this term are filling fast so please get in contact ASAP if you have some environmental education programmes in mind. Our policy of 'first in first served' remains, as it is the fairest for everybody. To achieve the best results, it is very important that classes arrive at the designated venue on time, whether that happens to be out of school or within it.

After its launch in February, the Taranaki Schools Environment Facebook Group is in full swing with a steadily growing following. Some of the recent posts to the group have been about the success of the North Taranaki Forest and Bird's Kiwi Conservation Club who won a Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Award last year. Other posts are of the Council Scientific Officer Dr Emily Roberts explaining Project Hotspot and how it is helping rare animals in our region. If you haven't joined the group, here is the link for you to do so: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/813010165441586/>. It will be great to see you there!

Finally, I know contacting me can be a bit of an issue at times, especially by phone. My preferred method of contact is through email. I am in the office before school every day and again at the end of each day, unless I happen to be on holiday of course. I aim to respond to any email within one day, if it is at all possible.

Kevin Archer

Tupare Riverside School and Hollard Gardens Woodlands School

We have been delighted with the fantastic response we have from schools using the Rainforest School at Pukeiti. Over eighty school groups in the last three years have visited that wonderful place with many schools now on their second and third visits. As a result of this positive outcome, educational study units have been developed for schools visiting our other regional gardens, Tupare (New Plymouth) and Hollards Gardens (Kaponga). In keeping with the school naming theme, the study units have been named the Tupare Riverside School and the Hollard Gardens Woodlands School. Information on the study units and the activities available at each venue can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.



Above: one of the water features at Tupare. Below: expansive lawn area at Hollard Gardens.



Tupare and Hollard Gardens

General information for schools

🕒 Hours:

School visits are welcome at any time in the school year, between 10am and 2pm.

💰 Cost:

Entry to both gardens is free to all visitors.

👤 Adult student ratio:

The Council's policy is a 1 to 5 adult:student ratio for Council-led field trips, including those to our regional gardens. Some flexibility can be used with high school groups.

👥 Group numbers:

In the study units, each activity has a recommended maximum number of students.

📄 Risk Analysis Management (RAM) sheets:

These must be emailed or faxed to the Council's Education Officer before the day of the visit. kevin.archer@trc.govt.nz or fax 06 765 5097

📄 Names:

A list of all the names of students/teachers and accompanying adults must be given to Kevin Archer or the resource person hosting the visiting group at the start of the visit.

🚗 Vehicle access:

Parking for cars and buses is available at each venue. There is no vehicle access to either garden for school groups.

🔄 Programme rotation:

Depending on the activities chosen, it is possible for school groups to cover up to four activities in one visit, as some activities can be combined with others. The actual programme for the visit needs to be finalized well in advance as other garden staff may be involved.

📊 Activity levels:

Each activity has a suggested class level range but most activities can be adjusted to meet other levels.

📖 Bookings:

It is suggested that bookings be made months in advance to avoid disappointment. For initial enquiries please contact Kevin Archer Ph 06 765 7127 or kevin.archer@trc.govt.nz

☹️ Cancellations:

Several activities at both venues are weather dependent. Cancellation arrangements can be arranged between the schools and Kevin.

Activities available to schools

Teachers need to allow for morning tea and lunch breaks and consider carefully what activities will give the best value in the time available. Approximate times of the activities are shown.



All lessons are suitable for classes of up to 35 students unless otherwise stated.



Activities available at both the Tupare Riverside School and the Hollard Gardens Woodlands School.



1. Guided walk (45-60 minutes)

It is highly recommended that teachers include a guided walk when visiting either venue. Both walks are not difficult for students at any level and of an average fitness level. There are several stops along the way, where students learn many facts about each garden, why each was so named and parts of their respective histories. Students will learn the names of many New Zealand native trees and interesting facts about them. And lots, lots more.



2. Managing animal pests (45 minutes)

Students will learn about the Council's pest animal management strategy, animal pest categories and methods of control or eradication. Various trapping, monitoring and poisoning methods will be covered. This lesson is more suited to upper primary levels and higher.



3. The garden rally (60 minutes)

This activity is based on the same principles as a car rally. Each group will be given the same set of instructions and questions, some simple and some more complex. This lesson is more suited to upper primary levels and higher. However, younger groups visiting the Hollard Gardens Woodlands School could include a scavenger hunt as their garden rally activity.



4. Birds of Tupare and Hollard Gardens (45-60 minutes)

Students learn about many of our native bird species including some that regularly live at or visit either of our gardens. The lesson includes native bird photographs and interesting facts about them, a bird game, a bird sounds group activity and if time permits, a short walk observing the bird life at each venue. This lesson is suitable for all year levels.

In addition to activities 1-4, the following activities are available at the Hollard Gardens Woodlands School.

The development of Hollard Gardens – one couple's beautiful world (20 minutes)

This lesson is based in the Visitor Centre and covers the development of Hollard Gardens from its beginnings as a fenced-off area of bush full of undesirable trees and weeds, through to its position today as a Taranaki treasure. The lesson is suitable for upper primary classes and above.

Bernie's Home Garden (20 minutes)

This lesson outlines how Bernie Hollard developed his garden using his knowledge, his skills and his ability to involve others and their thoughts and ideas. It is suitable for all age levels.

The Food Forest (20 minutes)

This lesson covers how the gardeners at Hollard Gardens have developed a food forest incorporating many of the principles which Bernie Hollard used when he first established the gardens. It is suitable for all age levels.



welcome school visits



In addition to activities 1-4, the following activities are available at Tupare Riverside School.

Autumn leaf fall

(30-40 minutes, only during autumn)

This lesson outlines the importance of this natural process to the Tupare garden landscape. Points covered include why some leaves change colour in autumn and why some don't, why some leaves fall off trees in autumn but others don't and how autumn is in many ways a preparation for winter. There will be a choice of three practical activities for students to end the lesson. This lesson is more suited to primary groups of up to 15 students.



Composting tips for all *(20 minutes)*

This lesson would especially suit classes that are interested in starting a composting programme at their school. It covers how composting is an integral part of the sustainability programme at Hollard Gardens, what role micro-organisms play in compost production and how worms and chooks also play key roles. It is suitable for all age levels.

Beneficial insects and animals *(20 minutes)*

This lesson describes in detail how bees (both honey and bumble bee species), insects, worms and chooks have been brought into Hollard Gardens to carry out specific tasks to benefit plant production. In some cases other insects have appeared of their own accord and have also been used to benefit plant production. It is suitable for all age levels.

Seed Collecting *(60 minutes)*

This lesson explains what seeds are and the important role they play in plant production. Seed dispersal by wind, gravity, water, animals, birds and insects are mentioned. The lesson has a practical component with students

The development of Tupare – an urban history. *(30-40 minutes)*

This lesson is really a guided tour of Tupare House. Points covered include the house's original design, the purchase and use of its furniture and what the house was used for, including normal family living and other activities. This lesson could be an important component for groups studying New Plymouth's history and the massive contribution made by some of its former citizens. For safety reasons, the maximum number of students taking this lesson is 20. If numbers exceed 20 students, the class can be split, with one half taking this activity while the other half does a separate activity, then they swap over.

Soil health and soil conditioning *(30 minutes)*

This lesson is suitable for special interest groups from year 7 and higher. It is limited to 15 students and could be combined with the 'Helpful hints for budding gardeners' lesson. The lesson covers how the gardeners at Tupare nurture the soil to produce the best possible results. It focuses on their move away from chemical fertilisers to more organic ones.

River study *(60 minutes)*

For this study to have greater value, it is recommended that the TRC Education Officer take a classroom lesson about Taranaki rivers/water quality monitoring etc on a day preceding the visit. There is an ideal site at the Tupare Riverside School for a river study of the important Waiwhakaiho River. In addition to assessing the river's water quality by using their senses (except taste), students will also take water clarity and water temperature readings and use the presence of certain invertebrates to improve the accuracy of their findings. This data could be used to compare results recorded at other sites on the river or with another stream altogether.

Helpful tips for budding gardeners

(45 minutes or up to an hour, if combined with the 'Soil health and soil conditioning' lesson).

This lesson covers gardening techniques such as pruning, watering and plant husbandry. Herb gardens and the use of perennials are also discussed. Where possible, there will be a hands-on component to add to the students' understanding and enjoyment. Numbers are limited to 15 students from special interest groups from Year 7 and 8 and above.

involved in collecting some suitable seeds for sowing at home or at school. Students will be given some useful tips for successful sowing. The lesson is especially suitable for primary classes.



How can we help

- You can enrol for either or both of the upcoming teacher professional development sessions at the Tupare Riverside School (Wednesday 11 May) or the Hollards Gardens Woodlands School (Thursday 12 May) – see the insert for details.
- Contact Kevin to book a date for a visit to either garden.
- Download the study units or request a hard copy of each from Kevin.
- If you are unable to attend either of the professional sessions but are interested in learning about either venue, invite Kevin to a staff or syndicate meeting to discuss possibilities. Or, if nobody from your school was able to attend either of the professional sessions but you would have liked to have seen what is on offer, contact Kevin to arrange your own visit.

Black fingered crabs, a white rock shell, half crabs, cushion stars, whelks, sea slugs and Neptune's necklace were some of the species in the pools at Bayly Road. All classes from Rahotu School spent some time at the rock pools and everyone had a fine time. However, it seems nothing is secret these days and they somehow found out that one of their visits coincided with my birthday, resulting in a mass singing of 'Happy Birthday' which was particularly touching, if slightly embarrassing for me! Thank you very much Rahotu School!



This and That

I know many of your students enjoy the activities on the Junior Environmentalist Page. But in order to feature the Tupare Riverlands School and the Hollard Gardens Woodlands School, we need to use both pages two and three.

Pukeiti – Sunday 5 June

Explorer Day - Pukeiti annual bird survey
10.00am-3.00pm

Learn all about the sounds of the forest and the food that birds love to eat.

Take part in our annual survey and compare birds at Pukeiti to help monitor and protect them.



Riagan Woods (Moturoa) looks to be happy with his follow-up work following a visit to Kawaroa rock pools in February.



On consecutive days, two groups of Eltham Primary pupils had fun exploring the Kawaroa rock pools in March. As is always the case, the students were totally focused on using their time in a productive and purposeful manner.

Makahu School studies the Mangaehu Stream

A couple of weeks ago, I spent a morning with the delightful pupils and staff from Makahu School studying their local stream. Summer-like conditions made for a great study with all of the students showing plenty of expertise when capturing and identifying the wide range of invertebrates in the stream. Thanks Makahu School for a terrific time.



Stratford Primary go camping

The classes in the middle team at Stratford Primary enjoyed some camping time in February with one of their many activities being a river study. The students really enjoyed the invertebrate sampling as shown in this photo.

For assistance or information on environmental education contact:

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