

ARC tree planting at Ambury Regional Park (14 June 2004)

The weather fully co-operated at the recent tree planting in Ambury Park, and so did those who came to support the Auckland Regional Council rangers. Aucklanders were invited to pick up their spades and help plant native trees. Not only in Ambury Regional Parks, but also in Shakespear Regional Park (Whangaparaoa) and Whatipu (Waitakere Ranges Regional Park).

Ambury Regional Park is run by ARC rangers Stan, Janine and Heather. Today they were joined by Anne who provides support to several ARC parks. Before everyone set off, Stan explained that tree planting at Ambury Regional Park will provide shelter and windbreaks for visitors and animals as well as roosting places for shore birds.

So what made people turn up to help? Clevedon Venturer Unit leader Sez Corney came with husband and several Scout group members. Scouts have to carry out community service and what better way to earn their certificates than to clear the grounds, plant manuka, mulch the new plantings and erect shade cloth as wind breaker.

Plantings took place on the west side of the ARC camping ground, but several planting days are planned each year so if you missed out on last Sunday, you may be able to assist another time elsewhere in the park.

Craig and Ilona, local Mangere Bridge residents, came out with their young children. They enjoyed their morning in the winter sun, and were happy to help out. Clive is a regular at tree plantings. Having travelled New Zealand in his motorhome, he has happily settled again in Ellerslie, and feels at home in Ambury park which he loves.

Like Clive, and Craig and family, everyone has their own reasons for being there on Sunday. Susan, another local who regularly drops off food scraps for the farm animals, enjoys meeting people and getting some exercise.

While Stan and Anne were planting with lots of community support, Janine was milking the cows and getting ready to prepare lunch for the workers. Stan's main responsibility is running the farm aspect of Ambury Regional Park and Hamlins Hill (Mt Wellington). Janine and Heather assist with farming but also spend 50% of their time on education.

Education is a big part of the park: "We get about 8,000 children through Ambury Regional Park each year, and that are the booked visits". In addition, school groups use the park for their own activities but Janine suggests they contact the ARC first so their will be no clashes for resources.

Ambury's biggest events is the Open Farm Day which has attracted more than 20,000 people. Recent Farm Days has seen that number drop due to poor weather so the organisers have decided to move the event back to October. Mark 17 October on your calendar!

If you can't wait that long, the cows are milked every day at about 10:30am during the season (June-November). Lamb feeding is done at 8am, 12 noon, and 4pm and everyone is welcome to help. The lambing season normally starts at the end of August.

Finished helping feed the animal, have a look at the new interpretation walks which will be opened soon. Explanations along the route will cover volcanic activity, European farming, Maori history and restoration projects.

Where else would you find this, almost in the middle of the city. Ambury Regional Park, a magic place!

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