

Pukeiti welcomes school visits

Pukeiti is one of the world's largest rhododendron collections uniquely nestled in rainforest between Mt Taranaki and the coast, just south of New Plymouth. Thanks to the efforts of countless volunteers since it's creation 60 odd years ago, we all have the opportunity of experiencing its huge diversity and beauty. The Taranaki Regional Council assumed ownership and management of Pukeiti on 1 July 2010, to secure its future. The Council also owns and operates Tupare (New Plymouth) and Hollard Garden (Kaponga), on behalf of the people of the region.



Information for schools

Hours: School visits are held between 10am and 2pm.

Cost: Entry to Pukeiti is free for all visitors.

Weather: Pukeiti is a rainforest so raincoats are essential.

Adult: Student ratio. The Council's policy states that a 1 to 5 adult - student ratio is required with school visits to any Council gardens.

Group numbers: In general groups of up to 40 can be catered for. Larger groups tend to be difficult to manage and much of the value of the visit is lost if students cannot hear what the group is being told.

Risk Analysis Management (RAM) sheet: This needs to be sighted by either the Council Education Officer, Kevin Archer or the Council officer in charge of the visit on any day preceding the visit.

Road access: The road has been improved in recent years, however, it is a winding road and should be taken very slowly and carefully.

Months available: School visits are welcomed in any month apart from October and the first half of November.

Programme rotation: Depending on group numbers and staff availability, it is possible to rotate groups doing similar activities or have different groups doing totally different programmes. The actual programme for the day needs to be decided on prior to the visit.

Activities available to schools

With up to three and a half hours available, allowing time for morning tea and lunch, teachers need to consider carefully what activities will give the best value. Approximate times of the activities are shown.

Walks

There are three walks available and teachers need to take into account the age and fitness levels of their students and adults before deciding the most suitable one.

The Deep Rainforest Walk

One hour 15 minutes

This walk involves many stops to identify the structure of the forest, the forest ecosystem and the interdependence of the elements in it. Students will study a typical mountain stream, as well as some iconic Pukeiti plants and their uses, origin and history. The session includes the history of Pukeiti, its future and students will have a chance to break the record currently held by Urenui School for the Giant Rata and its temporary human inhabitants. Students will also be encouraged to look out for, and collect, certain seedlings for later plant potting.

The Light Rainforest Walk

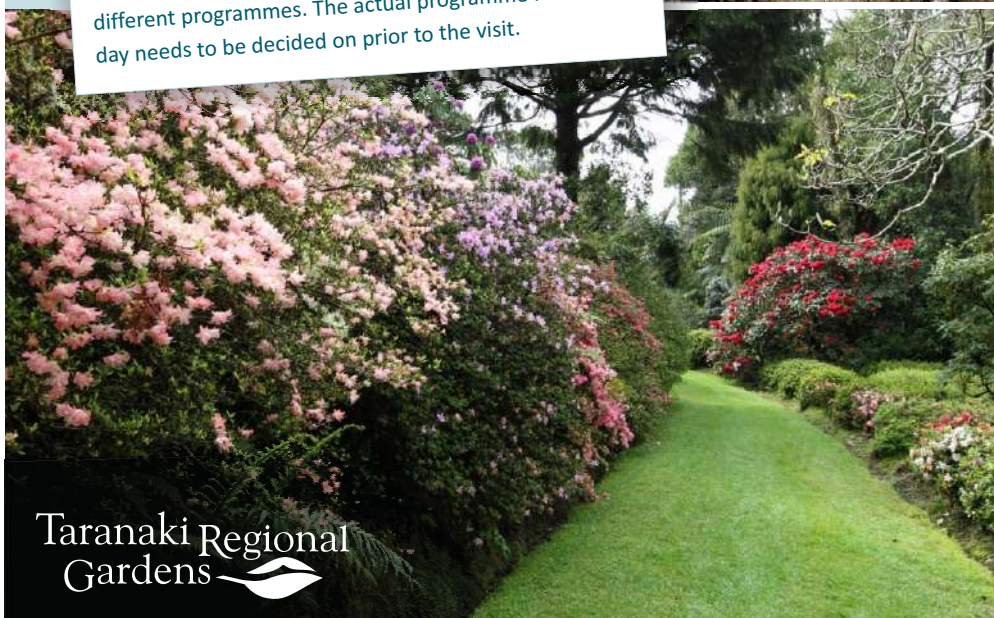
45-60 minutes

This is similar to the Deep Rainforest Walk. It is shorter, with fewer plants identified, but still provides an opportunity to break the Giant Rata record. As in the longer walk, students will be encouraged to look out for and collect seedlings for later plant potting.

The Wonderful Waterwheel

15-20 minutes

This short walk is best suited to very young students. It provides an opportunity to see some of the weird and wonderful plants in the Covered Exhibition Walks and to discover and learn about the historic waterwheel.



Tall Tree Tales 40 minutes

This is a fun activity, using different manual methods to assess tree heights. Students will hear a story or two about some special trees at Pukeiti and around the world.

Terrific Trees 40-60 minutes

Learn about plant life cycles, the parts and functions of trees, adaptations to their environment, the part trees play in the forest ecosystem and how humans and other organisms depend on trees for survival. The DOC website <http://bit.ly/11vEeGH> provides some terrific information for teachers and students before or after a trip to Pukeiti.

Flowers and Rhododendrons

45-60 minutes

Learn about the life cycle of plants, the parts and functions of a flower and seed dispersal (where to/how/what for). Students are encouraged to bring their own unique recycled container to sow their own seed from Pukeiti in e.g. ice cream container, old boot, old teapot etc.

Pukeiti - Encounter the Mystery

30 minutes

Students will learn the history and stories of Pukeiti - local iwi, pioneers, garden makers, plant-collectors, rhododendrons and other exotic plants, conservation and biodiversity, rainforest. Also learn about other special properties owned and managed by the Taranaki Regional Council - Tupare and Hollard Gardens.

Creepy Crawlies 60 minutes

A chance to find out about the worms, slugs, spiders, bees, centipedes and weta that live at Pukeiti and the crucial role they play in the garden and rainforest ecosystem. Hear how you can encourage them to live at your place and assist your garden to grow well. You might even learn how to build a weta house for your school or home.



Pot a Plant from Pukeiti

30 minutes

This activity usually follows one of the walks and often involves potting seedlings students have collected during their walk. Students will discover what is so wonderful about these plants, their place in the forest ecosystem, and how to look after them once they are taken back to school or home. Labelling will include the seedling's common, Maori and Latin names. Students will also learn about plant maintenance and the best time for planting.

River Study

Discover the Invertebrates - One hour 15 minutes

There is an ideal site at Pukeiti for a river study in an unnamed stream not far from its source on the mountain. Students can discover and identify the invertebrates that live there and use their presence to assess the water quality. This data could be used to compare results recorded further down the stream's course or with another stream closer to the coast.

Birds at Pukeiti 45 minutes

Long ago, many birds lived at Pukeiti and here is an opportunity to observe some of the ones that live there now. Find out about habitat restoration, biodiversity, seed dispersal, pollination and pest control at Pukeiti. Learn how to encourage birds to your garden at home.

Pioneer Camp 60-90 minutes

Learn how the bush pioneers made shelter and fire, co-operated with each other and how they adapted to the environment. There will be an opportunity for students to try to emulate the bush pioneers themselves.

Strange Plant Adaptations

40-60 minutes

Learn a little about the extraordinary lengths some plants go to to survive. Find out about some of the more unusual organisms at Pukeiti such as fungi, ferns, epiphytes, climbers and the largest moss in the world!



Nocturnal Fish Observation

60 minutes

This night-time activity is best suited for classes involved in a school camp or for those studying freshwater native fish. Students will need torches to spot some of our native freshwater fish, including with luck, the banded kokopu which is regarded as one of New Zealand's most endangered freshwater fish species.

Along the Way

There are many stories to tell as students take part in the various activities on offer. They are likely to hear interesting information about some of the weird and wonderful plants and animals that play a part in the ecosystem at Pukeiti, such as northern rata, hen and chicken fern, nikau, miro, giant himalayan lilies, king ferns, tree ferns, rhododendron and other exotic plants, filmy ferns, giant moss, widow makers, keruru, bellbirds, tui, skink, weta, puriri moths etc.

Bookings

For initial enquiries please contact:
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