

Report to the Environment Committee
from John Holmes, Section Leader, Policy Advice

Wellington Regional Plant Guide

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the completion of the *Wellington Regional Plant Guide*.

2. Background

In 1998 Councillors asked that officers consider the preparation of a regional plant guide. The Guide has been prepared as part of our implementation of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS). It gives effect, in part, to Ecosystem Method 15, as well as to the policy direction encapsulated in Ecosystem Policy 10 which seeks:

To encourage the planting of native vegetation, and particularly, regionally appropriate species.

It also helps meet a number of other underlying RPS objectives, such as:

- the restoration and enhancement of indigenous ecosystems;
- increasing indigenous habitat and developing wildlife corridors;
- raising awareness of some relevant ecological issues, by encouraging homeowners and others to consider using natives plants with “ecological advantages”; and
- discouraging the establishment (and potential liberation) of pest plant species.

The Guide is based on the Council’s ‘ecological domain’ identification and mapping and has been prepared with the help of botanical consultants.

3. **The Guide**

In summary, our aim with the *Wellington Regional Plant Guide* has been to produce a concise and user-friendly document that identifies ecologically useful plant species for the Wellington Region.

A copy will be tabled at the meeting. In A5 format, and using a mix of full colour and black and white illustrations and photographs, the 32-page document has an introductory section that explains why the Guide has been prepared, who can use it, and what the benefits are from planting native species.

A list of nurseries where native plants can be purchased is followed by information for 15 distinctive zones. Readers are able to identify their zone by way of a map and a list of places that are within a particular zone. Data about the distinctive climatic and environmental characteristics of the zone lead on to a selected list of recommended plant species. A more comprehensive list of plants is provided at the back of the Guide where readers can find appropriate plants for their local conditions by using a system of picture symbols.

4. **Communications**

It is our intention to launch and distribute the Guide through nurseries and plant shops in time for spring planting (August). This will present significant opportunities to promote the Council and its ecological initiatives. A strategy for maximising these opportunities will be prepared.

The document has not yet been printed because we are currently working with potential sponsors/advertisers. Sponsors' names and logos may need to be incorporated in the artwork. Printing will be carried out as soon as possible after these arrangements have been finalised.

5. **Recommendation**

That the report be received and the contents noted.

Report prepared by:

Approved by:

JOHN HOLMES
Section Leader, Policy Advice

GEOFF SKENE
Manager, Environment Co-ordination

JANE BRADBURY
Divisional Manager, Environment