

Whenua and Onetangi Reserves which Project Crimson has supported through the supply of pohutukawa for plantings.

Motuihe Island

Motuihe is a very popular island for day trippers and in summer there's a regular ferry service (less frequent in winter). On Motuihe you can swim, walk, picnic, camp if you wish, and watch out for two threatened bird species, the New Zealand dotterel and the variable oystercatcher.

You can also see first-hand the extraordinary damage that can be inflicted on an environment by rabbits. Rabbits were destroying the ecology of the island, damaging historical sites and making farming very difficult. In July and August 2002, Motuihe was closed so that the Department of Conservation could begin an intense rabbit eradication programme. Within the year it is expected that Motuihe will be rabbit free and the Motuihe Trust will be able to embark on a comprehensive restoration project that will truly reflect the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the island. This project will be supported by thousands of seedlings grown by Project Crimson.

Today pohutukawa form a coastal fringe for the island.

Kawau Island

Another popular day trip is a visit to Kawau Island. To get there you need to take a ferry across from Sandspit which is one hour's drive north of Auckland. The island has many pohutukawa in its bays and coastal forest and has a small number of permanent residents and holiday homes.

A popular haven for boaties is Bon Accord Harbour with some magnificent pohutukawa framing the shoreline. There are a number of easy walks from Mansion House Bay through native forest to beaches and the old copper mine.

Tiritiri Matangi

Tiritiri Matangi lies four kilometres off the coast of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula and is one of the most successful conservation projects in the world. Since 1984 Tiritiri Matangi has been transformed by a community-based habitat restoration programme.

Unwanted predators were eradicated, and the once-pastoral island was, over ten years, replanted with more than 280,000 native trees. These trees, including pohutukawa, have been grown from seed collected on the island, and today most replanted areas are well established. And now that Tiritiri Matangi's forest and wetland habitats are restored, several rare and endangered birds have been introduced or returned to the island, including saddleback, takahe, kokako, little spotted kiwi, stitchbird and the brown teal duck. Restoration of the island has returned the dawn chorus from the bird life.

The island's sanctuary status allows a limited number of visitors to walk the island's tracks and enjoy its special flora and fauna. Fullers run a

ferry service to Tiritiri Matangi from Auckland city, Thursday to Sunday. It's a full day trip, including travel and exploration time. You should take food and good walking shoes. The island is an excellent example of a regenerating coastal forest with a few stunning remnant trees. When you step off the wharf a ten-minute walk to your left takes you to some lovely old pohutukawa that have been a great seed source for the replanting work.

A highlight of your visit will be discovering the ancient 'Queen' of pohutukawa – one of the largest in New Zealand.

Great Barrier Island

Ninety kilometres to the north-east of the City, in the outer Hauraki Gulf, Great Barrier Island is remote, rugged and very beautiful. Great Barrier Island is in many ways how New Zealand used to be.

Here pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*), northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) and southern rata (*Metrosideros umbellata*) flourish, along with other rare native flora and fauna, in the absence of predators.

This is a unique location in the Crimson Trails. Unusual in two ways: first because it's the only place in the world where natural hybrids between pohutukawa and southern rata are known to occur. And second, it's the only place in New Zealand where you can take one walk and see pohutukawa as well as northern and southern rata together.

'Must walks':

1. Walk from Windy Canyon to the top of Mt Hobson and then drop down toward Post Fitzroy to view all the species together. You'll need plenty of water, good walking shoes or boots and allow two hours if you are really fit or four hours for a great walk.
2. Walk along Medlands Beach and look back to see, silhouetted on the foredune, two magnificent pohutukawa trees that have featured widely in Project Crimson brochures and literature over the years.

Access to Great Barrier Island is by sea or air and we recommend you research the island before going.

Meridian Energy is New Zealand's largest generator of electricity. The partnership with Project Crimson reflects our commitment to Keeping New Zealand New by using only renewable forms of generation, such as wind and hydro. We are privileged to live and work every day amongst New Zealand's awe-inspiring natural environment, at Manapouri, the Mackenzie district, and Te Apati. We feel equally privileged to be able to support the Trust's goal of renewing the splendour of pohutukawa and rata for future generations.

Find out more about northern and southern rata at www.projectcrimson.org.nz

Why Project Crimson?

Over the past 16 years the Project Crimson Trust has worked with and funded many service organisations throughout the country. These include councils, schools, iwi, and environmental groups, Auckland projects have included possum and wallaby control on Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands; weeding, propagating and planting on Browns Island; and the supply of thousands of eco-sourced young pohutukawa trees for Waiheke, Motutapu, Great Barrier, Rakino, Motuora, Pakatoa, Rotorua and Motuihe Islands.

Through a wide range of programmes to educate and inform, through community partnerships, widespread planting and possum eradication programmes, Project Crimson works throughout New Zealand seeking to enable pohutukawa and rata to flourish once again in their natural habitat.

This Crimson Trail collection is one of a series of Crimson Trails to be identified by Project Crimson throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. Each Crimson Trail is unique to its region.

What the Crimson Trails share is that special time of the year when glorious crimson blooms cloak the trees and the wind blown stamens carpet the ground all around.

Crimson Trails can be explored in the following areas:

North Island (Te Ika a Maui)

Auckland
Coromandel
Mount Maunganui
Rotorua
Wellington

South Island (Te Waipounamu)

Golden Bay
West Coast
Otago Southland



Brochures for each Crimson Trail can be downloaded from Project Crimson's web site.

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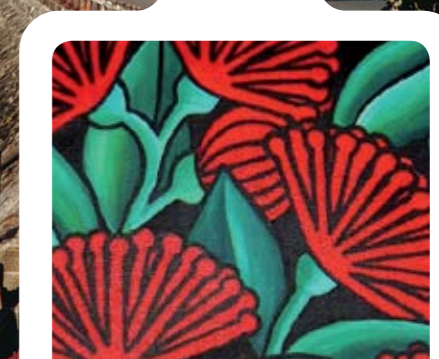
Summer in Auckland is one long lazy day of sun, sea and sails. It's also the perfect time and place to explore the city's Crimson Trails. In Auckland – you will discover a series of Crimson Trails that take you into some of the most magnificent pohutukawa stands Auckland has to offer.

You can take advantage of the shade the pohutukawa offers throughout summer, but it's the spectacular crimson canopy that makes a summer expedition in Auckland even more vibrant through the months of November to after January.

There are 'must sees' in the central city, but if you choose to move beyond the city then you'll find the Crimson Trails will take you far and wide. These are just some of them.



Tamaki Drive



The Pohutukawa

It is frequently referred to as the 'New Zealand Christmas Tree' and, for many New Zealanders, the pohutukawa dominates favourite landscapes and childhood memories.

It belongs to the genus *Metrosideros*, the iron-hearted myrtles, which is a reference to its hard, very heavy, dark red heartwood. There are two native pohutukawa (mainland and kermadec).

Growing

The pohutukawa has a massive spreading crown. It's wider than it is tall. Roots form out of trunks and branches and the roots are able to grow in air over surfaces as they search for crevices, pockets of soil and moisture.

Living

Dormant leaf and floral buds are protected against damage from cold, salt and abrasion by bud scales. Leaves are hairy when young, but once mature the hair on the upper surface is replaced with a tough, shiny coat of wax, protecting leaves against drought and salt.

Flowering

Pohutukawa trees crimson our coastline between November and January. Individual flowers are arranged in dense clusters, each of which has around 14 large, red 'brush' flowers that stay open for around seven days.



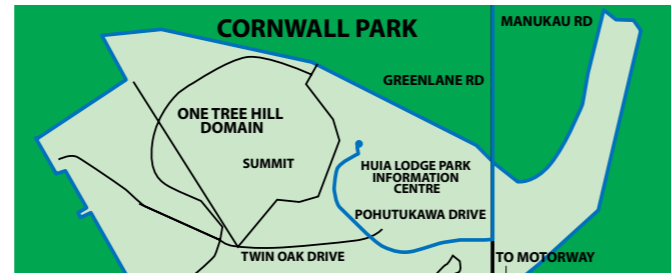
Parnell Rose Garden

AN ABSOLUTE 'MUST SEE'

In Auckland's Parnell Rose Garden you will discover a truly awesome pohutukawa. Broad, low and exceptionally majestic, this is a 'must see' specimen. If you continue to walk through the gardens and down to Judges Bay you can see more majestic old trees and look out beyond Tamaki Drive to Rangitoto Island.

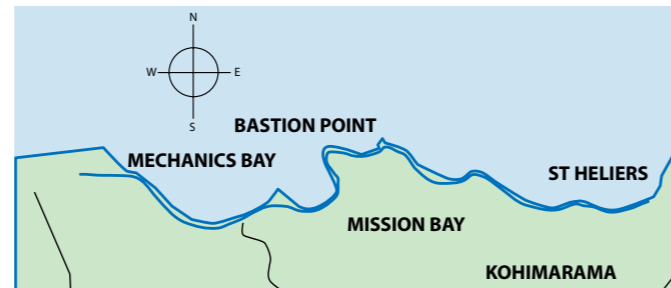
LET'S EXPLORE ...

Crimson Trails in the heart of the City



Cornwall Park

Cultivated pohutukawa flourish in Cornwall Park as groves and avenues, starting with Pohutukawa Drive at the main entrance to the park off Greenlane Road. At the end of Pohutukawa Drive you can make your way to the Huia Lodge and discover an exceptional specimen which dates back to 1800. It's a five-minute return vehicle trip, but it's worth parking and taking a leisurely half-hour walk.



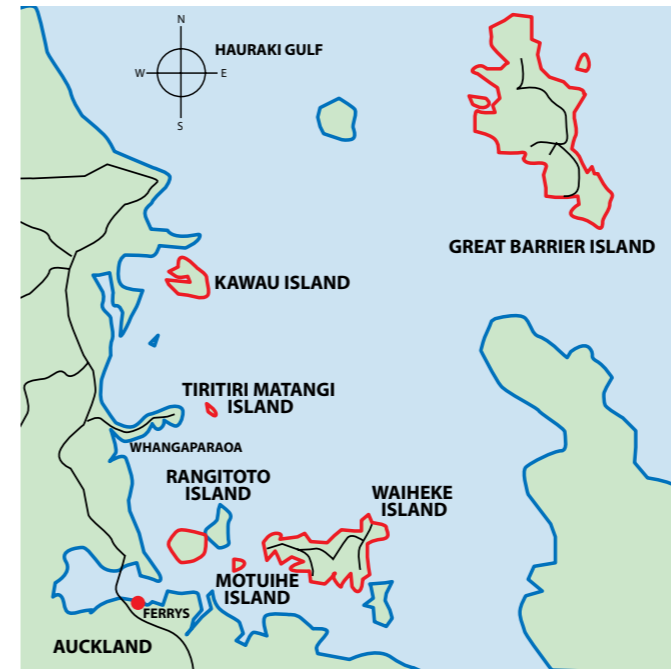
Tamaki Drive

Tamaki Drive runs east of the city along the coast to the seaside suburb of St Heliers.

Starting where The Strand joins Tamaki Drive, this eight kilometre (one-way) Crimson Trail is a busy road and a broad pavement enjoyed by walkers and joggers year round. Driving or walking, this Trail, that offers broad views of the city and the harbour, is a perfect way to experience Auckland.

From Hobson Bay to Okahu Bay, through Mission Bay and Kohimarama to St Heliers, pohutukawa line Tamaki Drive. Pohutukawa fringe the beaches; while, on the other side of the road, they cling, precariously to cliffs and bow low over steep banks.

The bays all provide safe, popular swimming beaches and in summer there's always a scramble to find relief from the sun under the shade the pohutukawa provide.



Crimson Trails in the Hauraki Gulf



Rangitoto Island

Today Rangitoto is the world's largest pohutukawa forest and every year, just before Christmas, the brilliant flowering pohutukawa turns the island red.

In recent times however the situation on Rangitoto had become desperate. By the end of the 1980s Rangitoto's pohutukawa forests were clearly dying – ravaged by possums and wallabies – both introduced species. At this time Project Crimson was still a very young organisation but it made Rangitoto one of its first large projects by supporting the Department of Conservation's campaign to eradicate these destructive browsers.

Ten years later, thanks to the Department of Conservation, Project Crimson and the Rotary clubs of Auckland, Rangitoto Island is possum and wallaby free and pohutukawa flourish once more. Now the major programme on the island is weed eradication.

The lava rock of Rangitoto is an inhospitable environment, yet over 200 species of native trees and flowering plants, more than 40 kinds of fern and several species of orchid inhabit the island. Pohutukawa are the first species to colonise basalt lava following a volcanic eruption.

As the pohutukawa grow they provide shelter and shade for species like mingimingi, koromiko and puka. Many epiphytes like astelia and Kirk's daisy, which normally clamber over the high branches of the trees, grow from the ground on Rangitoto.

To get to Rangitoto you can board a Fullers Ferry from downtown Auckland

continued over...

or from Devonport on the North Shore. It's a 35-minute ferry trip there and back. Allow two hours to climb to the summit, or take the train to the top. Information boards on Rangitoto tell you much more about the island, its volcanic origins and the life of pohutukawa on the island today. Do take water to drink, sturdy shoes to cope with the remarkable lava surfaces, sunscreen and a sunhat.



Waiheke Island

Fullers also have ferry services to take you to Waiheke Island, 40 minutes from Auckland City. Waiheke Island reflects many of the characteristics of Auckland's coastline. Waiheke Island, like Great Barrier Island, is possum free, so pohutukawa have always flourished. Here pohutukawa inhabit the main beaches and can be found almost anywhere on the island. Like the Auckland mainland coasts the northern and eastern coasts are more populated and there are fewer old stands remaining. The southern and western coasts are more heavily populated with dense bush featuring majestic pohutukawa. Pohutukawa are very much an important aspect of island life and part of the accepted heritage. There is a both a bay and a water-side avenue aptly named after the species.

If you have a day it's an easy and gentle drive around the island. It is a very rewarding bicycle ride if you have a number of days, and it's a walker's paradise if you're staying over.

We recommend you explore the western and southern parts of the island if you're looking for some truly magnificent stands and coastal forest environments.

Some Waiheke 'must sees' ...

At the end of Donald Bruce Road (where the Subritzky vehicle barge lands) head to Kennedy Point where you will see some magnificent trees with twisted gnarly trunks. Here you can also find a great picnic spot under a beautiful pohutukawa on the foreshore complete with a swing that hangs out over the water on a full tide.

Heading back up Donald Bruce Road, take a left-hand turn on to Kennedy Point Road and discover the Kennedy Point Reserve.

Access to the reserve is from the right-hand side of the road, it's not immediately obvious but worth looking out for. There is a small carpark area at the top of the reserve area.

From here you can walk down to the foreshore through the most magnificent stand of old and huge pohutukawa.

You might also head to Omiha, also known as Rocky Bay. From the little seaside village you can take a two-minute stroll along Pohutukawa Avenue that will have you clambering beneath an old tree, richly festooned with epiphytes, that spreads its branches out over the sea.

There are a large number of reserves and walkways on the island that should be viewed; for example, the Auckland Regional Council Whakanewha Regional Park, the Forest and Bird Society's Atawhai