

# Rare Coastal Plants Replanted On Offshore Island

The future is looking brighter for some of New Zealand's threatened coastal native plants, according to the results of recent monitoring on Whale Island/Moutohora in the Bay of Plenty. Since 1999, a range of threatened native plant species have been re-introduced to Moutohora, near Whakatane, in an attempt to establish self-sustaining populations of species that would have previously occurred there.

Plant species being reintroduced to the island include pingao, hinarepe (sand tussock), tawapou, Cook's scurvy grass, New Zealand cress, sea spurge and spinach, mawhai (native cucumber), and two species of *Pimelea*.

The threatened-plant restoration and monitoring

project is part of a wider programme to restore ecosystems on Moutohora, so that it resembles what was there before grazing and animal pests were introduced, and vegetation was removed by fire.

It is a joint initiative between the Department of Conservation, Wildland Consultants Ltd who have been involved in all aspects of the project, and Naturally Native NZ Plants Ltd which has donated the plants, and Ngati Awa, the local Maori who have an ongoing involvement with the island.

Derek Gosling from Wildland Consultants, who was involved in initiating the project, says 'This year's work has continued with monitoring of growth and survival rates from previous years' plantings as well as

establishing more plants of some of the species that initially struggled. We are gradually refining the habitat preferences for the threatened plant species we have been establishing. We seem to be having more success with some of the recent plantings of species such as mawhai and *Pimelea tomentosa*.

Approximately 80 plants were established this year to add to the several hundred individuals planted in the three previous years. Species planted this year include Cook's scurvy grass, sand tussock and mawhai as well as establishing some new sites for more established species such as tawapou.

'The project is progressing well. It's very long term but we are pleased with the survival and growth rates we're seeing so far for some of the species,



Ngati Awa, along with Department of Conservation and Wildland Consultants staff, planting *Pimelea tomentosa* above Boulder Bay on Whale Island/Moutohora. The island, off Whakatane in the Bay of Plenty, is being restored as a haven for threatened coastal plants.

especially with sea spurge, pingao, sand tussock, New Zealand spinach and coastal forest tree species,' says Derek Gosling.

— PAUL CASHMORE, Department of Conservation.

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