

Weeds and their management project

2019

Currently >5700 m of Waiwhetū Stream banks have been planted with >31 000 eco-sourced, native species by Friends of Waiwhetū Stream (FWS) volunteers.

Post-planting weed control is necessary to prevent plants being smothered or killed by tall, fast-growing exotic weeds.

Some of the most problematic weeds are tall grasses, wild radish, nightshades, bindweed, onion weed, blackberry, buttercup, wild celery, watercress, willow weed and dock. Weeds very quickly produce large numbers of seeds and these can remain viable in the soil for many years. Some seeds are carried by wind and some are transported by water.

Managing weeds is important to ensure native plants grow and thrive to fulfill their purpose; this includes stabilising the stream banks, providing shade and habitat for native aquatic species and improving amenity values.

Earlier this year (2019) Hutt City Council (HCC) wanted to conduct a trial to test the effectiveness and longevity of various mattings that are currently available. Friends of Waiwhetū Stream agreed that this could be carried out on a stretch of stream bank along Hayward Terrace that had previously been established as a planting site for 2019. This area was planted by FWS on 4 August 2019.

Two days later, representatives from HCC, Greater Wellington Regional Council and FWS put down various mattings to see how they would perform suppressing weed germination and establishment.

In total the trial itself covers 70 m of stream bank with seven variables, each covering 10 m:

1. Control – no matting or post planting spraying
2. Spray - weed suppressant spray used to inhibit seed germination
3. Non- woven spun polypropylene weed mat
4. Coconut fibre matting
5. Eco matting
6. Jute matting
7. Wool matting.

Weed growth will be assessed by an independent person over a period of two years.

It will be interesting to see the results over the next few months as we head into spring.

