



**Community Newsletter from the Committee of the Mahurangi East Residents
& Ratepayers Association (MERRA)**

February 2026

www.scottslanding.org

Daring Rescue of runaway boat



Saga of this morning's activities. By Roger Harvey

Scott's Landing (near Warkworth) a paradise

A close knit community, people are nice

Jan 19th was a blustery day

The wind was howling on Anderson Bay.
8am was a grey rough morning
A rather large yacht had come free from its mooring.
As we watched it drift it swung in the swells
Headed out of the bay past Burton Wells
A forty foot craft with no-one on board
It spelt chaos for many boats closely moored.

Craig and Roger together with Stu
Made a rather motley crew
Motored out in the worsening weather
The plan was to tie the two boats together

Thirty minutes battling the waves and the weather
We finally rafted the two boats together
We tried to steer it but were stuck on the spot
When Stu used the rudder on the yacht
We turned slowly upstream to seek a mooring
By now the gale was really roaring

It took six tries the tide was confused
We tied the yacht to a buoy that wasn't being used.

Dog owners warned to beware of karaka berries



Karaka trees are currently fruiting around Scotts Landing, and dog owners are reminded to keep their pets well away from the berries. The large orange berries of the karaka tree are feasted on by kererū, but they are highly toxic to dogs. Sadly, a young dog on the peninsula died last year after eating karaka berries.

Karaka trees fruit between January and April. Dogs that eat the fruit when it has dropped to the ground could suffer respiratory failure, impaired neurological function, and, in extreme cases, even death.

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, reduced appetite, abdominal pain, paralysis of the back legs, loss of balance, convulsions, and reduced breathing.

Early treatment is best, so if you think your pet may have eaten the berries you should call a vet straight away. Owners should also keep their dogs on a lead around karaka trees.

Reset your rat traps



Tips for backyard trapping (doc.govt.nz)

Choose the best bait

This is a widely disputed issue, with some trappers swearing by peanut butter, while others buy rodent bait from specialist retailers.

Researchers at Victoria University of Wellington have put the different baits to the test, and found that wild rats prefer cheese, milk chocolate, Nutella and walnuts to standard peanut butter.

Offer some 'free' bait

Put a bit of 'free' peanut butter in the tunnel in front of the trap – this encourages the rats and mice in. It helps attract more rodents too, as they'll return to their nest with the first haul of peanut butter, and then bring their family back to the trap for more.

Put your trap in a prime location

It might be tempting to put your trap into the middle of your garden. This isn't necessarily the most effective position though, as rodents tend to avoid big open spaces. Rats and mice prefer to run close to walls, plants and fences where they're hidden from keen cat eyes. So the best place for your backyard trap is beside a wall or fence where the rats might be running.

And if the first location fails, try again

If you don't have a wall/fence to put your trap beside, or you're not catching much, think about where in your garden the rats and mice might be hanging out.

Rodents will be attracted to places where they can find food and water. If you have a compost heap or trees that drop fruit on the ground your resident rats will probably be spending some time there, so that's a good spot for your trap. Another good place is beside a waterway if you have one as rats and mice tend to run alongside streams and creeks.

Easter Pest Weed Bin



MERRA is once again making it easy to dispose of your pest weeds. With support from Northland Waste and Chris and Helen Russell, a skip will be available to take your pest weeds this coming **Easter weekend 2nd -7 April**.

Pest weeds are those considered to be invasive and a threat to our environment if not controlled. We are particularly targeting Wild Ginger and Woolly Nightshade (tobacco plant). You should also be on the lookout for monkey apple, cotoneaster, agapanthas (flower stems only please), Chinese privet, tradescantia, moth plant, gorse, and jasmine.

Look out for Wild Ginger (weedbusters.org.nz)

How does it spread?

Seeds are spread by birds and possibly possums. Rhizomes spread slowly outward from clumps, and new plants are established from rhizome fragments spread in dumped vegetation and fill, and by soil movement, flooding, and contaminated machinery.

What damage does it do?

Dense rhizome beds replace all other species, and are shallow rooted, so when they become heavy with rain they can slip on steep sites and streambanks, causing erosion. Succeeded only by weedy vines.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Most habitats except dry rocky areas: damp forest and margins, stream sides, river systems, shrub lands, fern land, and inshore islands.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Cut and paste stump (all year round) - Cut above pink 'collar' at base and metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (1g /L) or metsulfuron gel. Leave stems and leaves on site to rot down. Chris on the MERRA committee has paste available.
2. Physical removal - Dig or pull out small plants (all year round). Don't compost, leave on site to rot down or hang rhizomes in trees, as they survive indefinitely. Dispose of rhizomes at a refuse transfer station or by drying out and burning or mulching small with a lawn or flail mower.

MERRA has a supply of paste to use if you are cutting and pasting your weeds. Please give Chris Russell a call on 027 4933881. Chris can also provide advice on how best to treat and dispose of weeds. Start cutting your weeds now for Easter.

MERRA AGM



The MERRA AGM is on the 17th of May at Scotts House at 10.30am. The committee is looking for a new Treasurer this year. We send a big thank you to Debbie who kindly agreed to be treasurer again this year. So if there are any keen accountants out there we would love you to hear from you. Morning tea is provided at the meeting.

MERRA Picnic



Please RSVP for the Picnic before the 22nd of February and thank you to those who have already done so. This is a big help for catering purposes. The committee sends a big thank you to New World Warkworth for continuing to sponsor the picnic. Please support New World.