

Resources – enhancing habitat for lizards

Auckland

Kaipatiki Project Environment Centre
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<http://www.kaipatiki.org.nz/lizards.htm>

Tony Whitaker, Forest and Bird, number 294, November 1999

10 ways to encourage lizards into the garden

- Get rid of the cat and dissuade other cats from visiting the garden
- Encourage thick plant growth on banks, in borders and along hedgerows
- Mulch heavily and encourage a build-up of deep leaf litter.
- Place logs, planks, or bits of corrugated iron where plants can grow around or over them.
- Make rockeries with many loosely placed stones (not firmly embedded in soil) or create stone heaps
- Use dense ground-cover plants
- Leave numerous cracks when building stone or block walls
- Plant berry or nectar producing species, especially native divaricating shrubs (such as *Coprosma acerosa* and *Muehlenbeckia complexa*)
- Allow vines on buildings to reach the roof (but get rid of vines if they're weeds!) so geckos can easily get in and out
- Minimise or eliminate pest spraying so that insect populations increase
- Don't keep a cat!!



‘Onduline’ roof sheeting in the garden provides habitat

Canterbury - habitat enhancement and pest problems

A letter from Martin, August 2008

I remember an abundance of common gecko under dense vegetation and in a gravelly and stony substrate at Birdlings Flat Beach southeast of Christchurch.

Thoughts on some recent "habitat" enhancements regards mammal predators and cats in particular is that they work initially until the cats work out how to use the new "habitat enhancement" for their own advantage. That is, they tend to concentrate the population of herps then the cats patience enables them to focus on the entry/exit aspect to take their pick for dinner as eventually the lizards no longer perceiving danger stick their heads out for a look or wander out to meet the patiently waiting cat. So maybe some "habitat enhancements" do more long term damage, outweighing short term gain. Tony's idea of tight bushes and rocks makes more sense as there would be multiple, less channelled, entry/exit points?

I, too, feel the rubbly, low dense shrub idea would be best too, for the reasons explained. I remember at Kaitorete spit, Banks Peninsula, where there were heaps of common gecko under a dense cover of pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia complexa*) which overlaid a loose rubble of sea-worn stones of indeterminate thickness.

Tahaki Reserve Auckland

Under the Radar: Tahaki Reserve Lizard Assemblage

This project works with the physical ecology of lizard habitat. Like all creatures lizards associate themselves with a particular combination of environmental conditions. In so doing they form part of a biotic community that includes plant, animal, insect and bird species as well as themselves. A biotic community is an assemblage of organisms living together and interacting.

<http://www.artweb.co.nz/ur/ur-tahaki.html>

Nectar feeding by geckos: Douglas A. Eifler^{1, 2}

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Abstract Geckos in the genus *Hoplodactylus* visit flowers to feed on nectar. I examined the patterns of flower visitation exhibited by two gecko species (*H. maculatus* and *H. duvauceli*) having access to two plant species: pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*: Myrtaceae) and flax (*Phormium tenax*: Agavaceae). Individual geckos were not observed to visit both plant species; individuals visiting flax tended to revisit the same plant. Geckos visiting pohutukawa were larger than those visiting flax and exhibited an early night peak in plant visitation, while lizards on flax displayed a more even pattern of activity throughout the night. On flax, geckos were more likely to be found on plants with a greater number of male flowers. Male flax flowers were of greater diameter than female flowers and produced nectar at higher rates and with greater concentrations of sugars. Experimental manipulation of pohutukawa nectar volumes suggested that the distribution of geckos is influenced by the pattern of nectar availability.

Key words Foraging - Lizard - Nectarivory - Gecko *Hoplodactylus*

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/r31k038g277102x6/> Pollination and nectar