Otari-Wilton's Bush is the only botanic garden in New Zealand dedicated solely to native plants. This unique plant sanctuary and forest reserve consists of 100 hectares of native forest and five hectares of plant collections.

Otari-Wilton's Bush was originally covered with dense podocarp broadleaf forest. Maori used the forest for hunting and the name Otari means ‘Place of Snares’. Following European colonisation, some of the large trees were removed for timber and others were burnt off for farmland. One of the early landowners, Job Wilton, preserved seven hectares (17 acres) of the original forest and fenced it off. This became known as Wilton’s Bush.

In 1906 the forest was gazetted as scenic reserve. In 1926 and fenced it off. This became known as Wilton’s Bush. In 1926, the New Zealand government gazetted the forest as a scenic reserve. In 1926, the New Zealand government gazetted the forest as a scenic reserve.

Otari-Wilton's Bush consists of 100 hectares of native forest and five hectares of plant collections. The plant collections contain approximately 1200 species, hybrids and cultivars from the subantarctic islands in the south to Cape Reinga and offshore islands in the north. Almost all of the plants have been raised from cuttings or seed collected from the wild. Details of each plant are documented and kept on a computer database. The plant collections represent and describe New Zealand's native flora for the purposes of:

• Events and venues

Learn about our events and venues online at Wellington.govt.nz or at our main entrance map boards. Guided tours are available for groups. Bookings are essential. The Leonord Cockayne Centre can be booked for meetings and events. Email treehouse@wcc.govt.nz or ph 04 499 1400 for venue or booking enquiries.

Visitor information

The Information Centre – Te Marae O Tane – is open 8am–4pm daily and contains displays and seating for visiting groups. Next to the Information Centre, a 75-metre Canopy Walkway soars 18 metres above the forest floor. It provides a fully accessible tree-top experience between the two garden areas.

Barbecues

Two electric barbecues are available at the Troup Picnic Area. These are free to use.

Nature Trail

A self-guided Nature Trail starts at the Information Centre. Pick up a brochure for the Nature Trail at the start of the Canopy Walkway.

Wheelchair access

Paths are fully accessible to wheelchairs from the Wilton Road car park to the Information Centre, over the Canopy Walkway to the lookout and along the Wilton Walkway to the viewing platform.

How to get there:

Take the No 14 bus from Lambton Quay to Gloucester Street, outside Otari-Wilton’s Bush.

Car – the main public car park is on Wilton Road. Additional car parking is available on Churchill Drive.

Events and venues

Learn about our events and venues online at Wellington.govt.nz or at our main entrance map boards. Guided tours are available for groups. Bookings are essential. The Leonor Cockayne Centre can be booked for meetings and events. Email treehouse@wcc.govt.nz or ph 04 499 1400 for venue or booking enquiries.

Visitor information

The Information Centre – Te Marae O Tane – is open 8am–4pm daily and contains displays and seating for visiting groups. Next to the Information Centre, a 75-metre Canopy Walkway soars 18 metres above the forest floor. It provides a fully accessible tree-top experience between the two garden areas.

Barbecues

Two electric barbecues are available at the Troup Picnic Area. These are free to use.

Nature Trail

A self-guided Nature Trail starts at the Information Centre. Pick up a brochure for the Nature Trail at the start of the Canopy Walkway.

Wheelchair access

Paths are fully accessible to wheelchairs from the Wilton Road car park to the Information Centre, over the Canopy Walkway to the lookout and along the Wilton Walkway to the viewing platform.

How to get there:

Take the No 14 bus from Lambton Quay to Gloucester Street, outside Otari-Wilton’s Bush.

Car – the main public car park is on Wilton Road. Additional car parking is available on Churchill Drive.
Otari-Wilton’s Bush
native botanic garden and forest reserve

Key
- Wilton’s Bush forest reserve
- Stream
- Circular Walk - 30 minutes, steep in some places, via the Troup Picnic Lawn
- Kaiwharawhara Track - 30 minutes, gentle walk from the Troup Picnic Lawn
- Forest trails - these tracks have some steep gradients with steps. Good walking shoes are required.
- Nature Trail - 20–40 minutes, a self-guided trail with an information pamphlet, starts at the Information Centre
- Blue Trail - one hour, past mature rimu trees, through kohekohe-dominated forest
- Yellow Trail - 40 minutes, cross over streams running through a steep forest valley
- Red Trail - 40 minutes, through tawa-dominated forest and past the Flax Clearing
- Information Centre
- Car parking
- Native botanic garden enlargement

Wilton’s Bush

Key
1. Plants for the home garden
2. Brockie Rock Garden
3. Wellington coastal plants
4. Grass and sedge species
5. Threatened species
6. Hebe species
7. Rainshadow Garden
8. Flax garden
9. Kowhai garden
10. Adaptations garden
11. Daisy garden
12. Orchids
13. Dusgate collection
14. Gymnosperm (cone) collection
15. Fernery
16. Alpine Garden
17. Tree fern garden
18. 38° garden
19. Dr Leonard Cockayne’s grave
20. Waharoa
21. Wheelchair access
22. Circular Walk - 30 minutes
23. Nature Trail - 20–40 minutes
24. Secondary paths
25. Wilton’s Bush
26. Lawn areas
27. Garden areas
28. Streams
29. Wilton Walkway - wheelchair accessible
30. Bus stop
31. Toilet

Keep dogs on a lead at all times and remove faeces
Keep to the formed tracks
Take your rubbish home or place in the bins provided.
No open fires
Do not pick, damage or remove plant material
No camping allowed
Do not ride bicycles

Native botanic garden enlargement