

# GARDEN BIODIVERSITY

## 1) What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity can be simply defined as the variety of living things.

Divided into two words:

Biological = living things

Diversity = is similar to the word variety.

## 2) Describe some of the different kinds of biodiversity.

There are 3 main kinds of biodiversity:

**a) Genetic diversity** is all about the diversity in the genes of a species. For example the kākāpo has very little genetic diversity due to its small population size and the flow on effects of generations of in-breeding. Thus they are vulnerable to disease which could potentially affect all of the remaining birds.

**b) Species diversity** refers to the different species in an area. For example animal (x) may eat plant (h) but if plant (h) dies out it may cause animal (x) to also die out. Were all connected but some species more than others so it is important to have high species diversity.

**c) Ecosystem diversity** is about the diversity of ecosystems (rainforest, wetland, cloud forest, grassland etc.) in an area. The greater the diversity of the same kind (i.e. wetlands) and different kinds of ecosystems the more intact areas will be and resilient to manmade or natural disasters.

## 3) Why is garden biodiversity important?

In urban environments the total area of private gardens is greater than that of parks or reserves. Gardens are important green spaces particularly in urban areas as a habitat for native plants and animals. In addition New Zealand has a responsibility to protect our unique native species many of which are threatened or endangered.

Biodiversity is at risk from a variety of human activities including increasing subdivision of land, chemical use and the uncontrolled removal of native trees.

## 4) How can people increase biodiversity in their gardens?

- Plant a variety of native plants and trees so they can provide nectar and fruits throughout the year for native wildlife.
- Set aside wild areas in your garden so animals (e.g. lizards) are less likely to be disturbed.
- Create lizard hiding places by stacking up or laying out pieces of wood (untreated) or rocks in certain areas in the garden.
- Put some pest traps in your garden to target introduced predators i.e. (mice, rats, hedgehogs and possums)
- Stop using herbicides and pesticides

Gardens are a valuable habitat for native plants and animals. Growing more native trees will create habitat for native wildlife in home or school gardens. Research also shows gardens are important places to spend time in for peoples' health and well-being.