

KEPA BUSH RESERVE – MISSION BAY

A SUBURBAN SURPRISE!

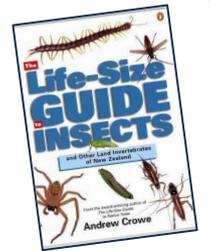
Who would have thought that you could find such a beautiful bush walk right next to a bustling shopping centre?

Kepa Bush is a perfect place for outdoor adventures with children without needing to drive out to a regional park. The looping forested track provides some welcome shade in the summer months and includes surprising views from the lookouts and a stream that flows down to a creek.

Print and laminate the fabulous *Leaf Bingo* and *Beaut Bugs* resources from www.otataralandcare.org.nz/lets-explore that are great for exploring the bush with kids.



ACTIVITY IDEAS



- Look for invertebrates e.g. ants, hoppers, millipedes and earwigs under old logs. Bring a container and magnifier to help you take a closer look at what you find. The Life-Size Guide books by Andrew Crowe are easy for children to use.
- Search for cicada exoskeletons on the tree trunks and check out YouTube “Cicada Life Cycle”.
- Sit quietly on one of the lookout benches – how many different sounds can you hear?
- Use a colour wheel to see how many different colours you can match on your walk.
- Look for tiny caterpillars that nibble holes under heart-shaped Kawakawa leaves. Kawakawa is safe to eat and is used medicinally – what do the leaves smell and taste like?
- Search for interesting leaves on the forest floor including spiky rimu and ‘skeleton’ mahoe. Hold both ends of a rimu branch and use it to comb your hair!



TOP TIPS + FACILITIES



Nearest toilets in Eastridge Shopping Centre

- To access the reserve, park at Eastridge Shopping Centre then turn right onto Kepa Road.
- In theory it takes 30 mins to walk around the main loop track but I’d allow at least an hour for exploration with children. You could walk along the central track and one half of the main loop.
- Take insect repellent to avoid being bitten by mosquitos along the stream.
- Pack a suitable container for collecting feathers, dead leaves and other treasures you might find along the way. Remember to return any living animals you find back to their forest homes.



WHICH PLANTS AND ANIMALS DID YOU SPOT TODAY?



Kawakawa



Mahoe Leaf Skeleton



Silver Fern
(lower side of the frond)



Smiley Tree Fern Stump
(on Thatcher St track)



Fantail



Spider Web



Cicada Exoskeleton



Puriri Caterpillar Hole



I ALSO SPOTTED:



FOLLOW LITTLE FERNS ON FACEBOOK

I'm always adding resources and activity ideas and would love to see photos of your trip to the Keka Bush Reserve if you'd like to share them 😊