

# Backyard Mistletoe Project

## – boosting our city's biodiversity

### 1. What is this project about?

The Backyard Mistletoe Project aims to bring back native mistletoe to urban Christchurch. It is a chance for our community to help boost biodiversity and be part of an on-going citizen science project.

### 2. Why bring back mistletoe to the city?

Native mistletoe has all but disappeared from urban Christchurch. Native birds, needed to spread mistletoe, are rarely found in the city. This means mistletoe isn't returning naturally and needs our help. Encouraging the growth of mistletoe will boost biodiversity – and attract native birds and insects.

### 3. What is native mistletoe, and what type are we planting?

Native mistletoe are hemi-parasitic. This means they need to take nutrients and water from another plant (their host). But they still photosynthesise and produce flowers and fruit. For this project, we are focusing on one of the green mistletoe, *Ileostylus micranthus*. This species grows on over 200 host trees and shrubs. It is currently found on the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula.

### 4. What are the benefits for my backyard?

*Ileostylus* grows on shrubs and trees, forming an evergreen ball of lush leaves. This mistletoe produces small green flowers in summer and bright yellow fruit through autumn and winter. During winter when your deciduous trees lose their leaves, the mistletoe will brighten your garden. Green mistletoe is also known to attract native birds, and insect pollinators such as bees.

### 5. What's my role in the project?

You will become a citizen scientist! We provide the mistletoe seeds and you sow them in your garden. You keep track of your mistletoe seeds and report on their progress via simple online surveys.

### 6. Can I collect my own mistletoe fruit?

No. For this project, we will collect and provide you with mistletoe seed.

### 7. How do I get involved?

Fill in the online form at [ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoeproject](http://ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoeproject).

### 8. When and where do I pick up the mistletoe seed?

When: Late May 2017. We'll email you with the exact dates.  
Where: The Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre.  
Parking available near the Armagh Street bridge entrance.

### 9. Where and how do I sow the mistletoe seed?

Sow the seeds in your backyard on shrubs or trees. We'll give you a sowing guide when you pick up the mistletoe seed.

### 10. What if I don't have any shrubs or trees in my backyard?

We are only giving seeds to people who can plant in their own backyard. You need a landowner's permission to sow seeds anywhere else. You can still join our mailing list if you want to follow the project and stay informed about any future volunteer seed-sowing opportunities.

### 11. What if I don't have native plants in my garden?

Green mistletoe can grow on both natives and exotic host species. Check our website for a list of common host shrubs and trees.

### 12. Will my backyard be taken over by mistletoe?

Highly unlikely. Only 5% of mistletoe you sow will get established on your host plant or tree. Nature is a complex business and mistletoe is not a weed!



For more information:

Email: [backyardmistletoe@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:backyardmistletoe@ccc.govt.nz)

Website: [ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoe](http://ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoe)