

Backyard Mistletoe Project

– boosting our city's biodiversity

1. What is this project about?

This is the second year of our project to bring back native mistletoe to urban Christchurch. Our goal is to grow 500 plants. We need your help to get there.

2. Why bring back mistletoe to the city?

Native mistletoe has all but disappeared from urban Christchurch. Encouraging the growth of mistletoe will not only boost biodiversity, it will also attract native birds like bellbirds/korimako, silvereyes/tauhou, and insects back into the city.

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

Native mistletoe are hemi-parasitic. They need to take nutrients and water from another plant (their host), but they still photosynthesise and produce flowers and fruit. This project focusses on green mistletoe, *Ileostylus micranthus*.

4. What are the benefits for my backyard?

As well as attracting native birds and flowers, *Ileostylus* is beautiful. It forms an evergreen ball of lush leaves on its host. This mistletoe is dotted with small green flowers in summer and vibrant yellow fruit through colder months, brightening winter gardens.

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 successful was the 2017 mistletoe sowing?

Really successful! 330 people participated and we now have over 350 baby mistletoe germinating around the city. Our citizen scientists have helped us figure out which host species work best in Christchurch, so 2018 should be even more successful.

8. How do I get involved?

Fill in the online form at ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoeproject. If you previously registered in 2017 then you don't need to register again. Even if you don't end up picking up seed, we will keep you up-to-date with a regular newsletter.

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

When: June/July. Once you've registered, we'll email you with the exact dates.

Where: The Christchurch Botanic Gardens old Information Centre.

10. Where and how do I sow the mistletoe seed?

Sow the seeds in your backyard on shrubs or trees. Mistletoe grows on over 200 different native and exotic species. We'll give you a sowing guide when you pick up the mistletoe seed.

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

If you don't have suitable tree, you can take part in one of our two community seed-sowing days in a public park space. The dates of these will be promoted closer to the time. You can also join our mailing list and just follow the project to stay informed about progress.

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!

12. If I took seed in 2017 but it didn't germinate, can I try again?

Yes of course. There are lots of reasons why seeds didn't germinate. In science, failure gives us just as much information as success.



For more information:

Email: backyardmistletoe@ccc.govt.nz

Website: ccc.govt.nz/backyardmistletoe