

Creating a botanic garden hub for collaborative engagement activity

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Modern day botanic gardens are in a great position to inform visitors of how they can create a healthier environment both for personal well-being and in support of nature and our changing climate. They offer opportunities for people to immerse in nature and undertake activities that support their ability to cope with life stress. Auckland Botanic Gardens welcomes around 1 million visitors per annum. With free entry, our demographic is broad and drivers for visiting varied. With a small team we have developed a layered approach to engage our visitors, enabling them to interact at a recreational level through activity that provides the ability to broaden knowledge, upskill and become involved in community environmental action. Recent disasters such as the pandemic, floods and disease incursions have raised increasing concern in the community and hence the public's appetite for knowledge and understanding of sustainability and climate change impacts has grown. We are using a variety of tools to support interpretation and engagement to intercept visitors with an idea or message throughout their garden visit. We derive great value from collaborating with environmental partners and the arts community to foster well-being and provide positive connections with nature through events and workshops and leveraging annual festivals and events to widen our audience reach. Increasing relevance with our community is being achieved through becoming an environmental hub.