

EXOTIC TREE: 95

SPECIES: *Phytolacca dioica*.

COMMON NAME(S): Ombu, Bottle Tree.

B.B CATEGORY: Exotic Notable Tree - National Interest.

ORIGINAL READINGS

LOCATION: 48 Hobson Street.

DATE MEASURED: 1973

HEIGHT: 50 ft (15.3 m)

CANOPY SPREAD: 70 ft (21.4 m)

GIRTH AT 2 ft: 37 ft (11.3 m)

BURSTALL'S NOTES: A remarkable tree, dominating an old garden. The largest of this species recorded in New Zealand. Dbh of largest of 7 major leaders 24 in (61 cm).

CURRENT READINGS

UPDATED LOCATION: Church, corner of Hobson and Leach St, 5.2 m from the Hobson St side of the church and 13 m from the lower access gate to car park (**Figs. 158 and 159**).

DATE MEASURED: 23rd January 2002

HEIGHT: 16 m

CANOPY SPREAD: 15.6 m

DIAMETER AT 60 cm: 3.248 m; circumference = 10.2 m

REMARKS: Around 1980 an old and established garden that included notable camellias, rhododendrons and yews (EXOTIC TREE 126), was cleared for the establishment of a church. Because of the significance of the ombu tree it was one of the only species retained. At about the same time as construction on the church, several leaders and lower branches were removed, (explaining the decrease of the diameter and canopy). This has resulted in large epicormic shoots (from dormant buds) growing from the base and appearing throughout the lower canopy. Nevertheless the tree has good health, with the new growth on the canopy coming close to ground level.

The first 30 cm on the upside of the tree forms somewhat of a base that gives rise to 5 main limbs and a smaller branch. It is possible to stand in the centre of this base. From this position one can clearly view two large cavities measuring 45 x 40 cm and 41 x 35 cm. Both contain debris and measure 70 cm and 40 cm through to ground level.

Because of the unusual habit of this tree it is difficult to obtain consistent measurements, as evidenced by Burstall's illustration.

Bears a New Zealand Notable Tree Plaque.

~ Fuller, 1982: "...only three leaders remain, the largest of which has a dbh of 0.720m



Fig. 158



Fig. 159

"James Mitchenson's Caledonia Nursery in Lemon Street in the early 1860s imported most of the early rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias and specimen trees. The large nursery was an early tourist attraction for New Plymouth. Tom Boulton, gardener for Newton King, trained with Mitchenson and when the nursery closed, re-planted many of the large specimens of rhododendron, camellia and azaleas at Brooklands. A large Ombu Tree in Hobson Street marks the site today". - The Gardenmarkers of Taranaki. Susette Goldsmith and Verne Barrell, 1997

In 1984, Burstall stated that this tree could be more than 100 years old. This above information makes it fair to suggest that the trees origin could go back as far as the 1860s.

EXOTIC TREE: 96
SPECIES: *Picea abies*
COMMON NAME(S): Norway Spruce, Common Spruce.
B.B CATEGORY: Not categorised.

ORIGINAL READINGS

LOCATION: Curator's office, Pukekura Park.
DATE MEASURED: 1973
HEIGHT: 90 ft (27.5 m)
CANOPY SPREAD: -
DBH: 22 in (55.9 cm)
BURSTALL'S NOTES: -

CURRENT READINGS

UPDATED LOCATION: Pukekura Park, 10.5 m from the base of Horton Walk towards the Kiosk and 9 m in on the downside of the driveway.
DATE MEASURED: 31st January 2002
HEIGHT: 30 m
CANOPY SPREAD: 12.8m
DBH: 64.6 cm
REMARKS: In reasonable condition with a clear, straight and slender lower trunk, induced by competition. When looking up into the canopy it has a very symmetrical branching habit.
Exposed roots on the path side.

"This is the traditional Christmas tree in Europe and is widely planted for that purpose". - Botanica's Pocket Trees and Shrubs, 1999.

(*Medbury, 1986: Ht = 26 m; dbh = 60.5 cm.
W.W. Smith planting c. 1908 -1922. May be seen in early photographs of the Park. Loss of height may be explained by leader snapping off in wind).