

New Zealand's favourite plant in 2006

Brachyglottis huntii – rautini, or the Chatham Island Christmas tree was voted New Zealand's favourite plant for 2006 in an annual poll run by the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. This Nationally Endangered aromatic woody tree, which grows up to 6 metres is endemic to the Chatham Islands. It beat a range of more high profile native plants to become this year's favourite.

Rautini, *Brachyglottis huntii*. Photo: John Sawyer



Some comments made by people who voted for rautini include:

I remember it as a child flowering around Christmas time at Otari Botanic Gardens.
—Melissa

We have an amazing flora of 2300 odd taxa, most unique to this country—we need to celebrate this by profiling new parts of that flora each year—so I agree go Rautini, never heard of it before, now I wish I get the chance to see it, flourishing in the wild. —Julian

I grew it once and it was very beautiful (till Phytophthora got it anyway). Surprised but delighted to see people voting for something a little different. —Carolyn

Well I like the Southern Hemisphere attitude to Xmas trees—none of those pine needles getting in your hair, just beautiful, flowering trees to gawp at. I reckon the Chatham Islanders picked the best of the lot for their pagan totem. —Jeff

Well having read the fact sheet and what other people have said I feel a need to vote for a tree I never knew existed. That's the point really, get in and learn something about the flora. We already know all about cabbage trees, pohutukawa, nikau and kauri. I reckon our flora is so much more than this. I hope Rautini wins. It'd be good for the tree, the Chatham Island people and world views on plant conservation. —Ernie

Favourite plants, clockwise from top left:
#2 Poor Knights lily (Gillian Crowcroft);
#4 bamboo rush, (Jeremy Rolfe); #5 Bartlett's rata
(Peter de Lange); #8 Northland horopito (Jeremy Rolfe).

The rest of the top ten were:

2. Poor Knights lily, raupo-taranga
3. Parapara
4. Bamboo rush, giant wire rush
5. Bartlett's rata
6. Burr grass, devil grass, owie grass, owee grass
7. Surville Cliffs kohuhu
8. Northland horopito
9. Adams's mistletoe
10. Scarlet mistletoe, korukoru, pirita, roeroe

Missing from the Top 10 in 2006 were the silver fern, the pohutukawa, the cabbage tree and the kowhai. For more information about all these plants, the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, and its annual vote, see the Network website www.nzpcn.org.nz



