

**van der Weerden, Antoinette**

Session: Our wetland biodiversity

***Integrating indigenous wetland flora into the urban ecosystem***

No matter where we are, who we are and the time we lived in, a garden Represents the relationship between humankind, and nature. It is an expression Of a particular culture at a particular time. Wetlands have long been valued by Tangata whenua of the Waikato area and were a major economic and cultural Resource; they were the productive wild gardens of Haumia. The importance of Wetlands as part of landscape identity and ecology is magnified when the loss is So extreme. Once we interacted with these systems as part of our everyday life, And their significant decline has the potential to reinforce a disconnect with People and their natural world. The decline of wetlands throughout New Zealand Requires a new approach to promoting this ecosystem. Environmental education Assumes familiarity with the subject, and so we argue that there is an Opportunity to enhance reconnections with these incredible systems by reevaluating Our approaches to what 'wetland restoration' could mean in terms of Private garden design and implementation. Bringing wetland flora into the urban Garden matrix allows urban dwellers the opportunity to be closer/ touch/ Commune and familiarise ourselves with these plants. Not only does the plant Move into the garden but the whole wetland aesthetic becomes familiar. This Presentation looks at the plant range indigenous to the wetland soils of Hamilton City and discusses and explores opportunities for it to be integrated into local Gardens.

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