

The Friends of Maara Roa (the Long Garden)

invite you and your group to become

HUMAN BIRDS !

In our New Zealand native forests, our birds are the agents of most of the regeneration. This happens as the birds eat the ripe berries, fly elsewhere, and excrete the seeds – with a little fertiliser attached to help them grow. It works well!

In Maara Roa's Human Birds Programme, we imitate the birds – but we don't have to eat the seeds. Instead our programme involves three steps:

1. In the summer, seeds are collected from those species which are suitable.



2. In the Autumn, the seeds are mixed with a suitable clay, and some potting mix which includes fertiliser, then rolled into balls about the size of a golf ball. These are then left in a dry place to harden.
3. Once winter has come, and soils in the selected area are moist enough, the seedballs are thrown into area which need to be helped to regenerate - usually into steep, heavily gorsed, or otherwise difficult places not easy to plant by hand. Throwing is usually done with the help of a racquet, to ensure the balls are sent well into the scrub.

This activity is really fun for children, and adults enjoy it too.

Because it takes place over a period, it is great for a community group, a family, a children's club or school class, or any group which has an ongoing life of at least 6 months, and wants to assist native forest conservation.

How does the programme work?

- The Friends of Maara Roa will select a site in the restoration area with you.
- We will arrange for a knowledgeable person to help you collect those seeds which are suitable for our area. We can advise you on the best time to collect, and where best to collect them. A group collection day is arranged.
- Seeds need careful treatment and storage. We can also help you learn that - it's not too difficult to do at home.

Now for the seedballs.



- We supply the clay to use; you need to purchase a good quality potting mix. We give you the "recipe", and your group has a get-together to make the seedballs. Then you need to safely store and dry them.
- When it's time, the seedball-throwing activity can be arranged with the Friends at the Maara Roa restoration area. Make a picnic day and enjoy our beautiful bushy valley, which you are helping to improve!



Contact us at ph. (04) 237 4760 or sylvan@actrix.co.nz for arrangements.

***"Human Birds" is a Programme of the Friends of Maara Roa.
Come and enjoy !***