

Rhododendron Sir Robert Peel.

Rhododendron Sir Robert Peel ^{has} ~~is a hybrid with a special~~ reputation ^{NZ for great size} ~~well represented in this specimen~~ ^{This specimen is} great in ~~trunk diameter & canopy height~~ ^{trunk diameter & canopy height} that it is seldom recognised as a rhodo when not in flower.

~~The hybrid~~ ^{The hybrid} was registered by J. Waterer in England in 1871, parentage unknown, ~~and when growing in an open~~ ^{extremities} it has a tendency for branches ^{to be somewhat} pendulous and when growing in an open space, any ~~tips~~ ^{radiating} that touch the ground are likely to self-layer, creating a thicket. (Perhaps the best ^{such} example is found in St Stephens Church grounds ~~just~~ just off SH1 at Tamahere between Hamilton & Cambridge. The church was built in 1883 and it is thought that the rhodo was planted about 1885.

When measured ~~in~~ 4/1/98 the ~~total~~ height was 11.6m only but the thicket comprised 45 trunks, the diameters of the largest six being between 38.8 ~~and~~ and 43.6 cm. The drip-line diameter was 27m. ^{can this be considered to be} ~~is this~~ a single specimen? If so is ~~it~~ it the 'largest' in the country?

If not, one measured on 6/12/95 at Tikoranga on a property then owned by the late Daryl Hicks may well be.

Height. 12m.

Branches into four leaders ~~at~~ just above ground level.

Diam. at g.l. 1.337m.

" of leaders ~~50,~~ 46.8, 44.3, 55.1 cm.

Canopy spread 17m.

These are included to give some indication of the difficulty in deciding just which is 'the largest specimen' ~~of a given species or hybrid~~ of a given type of tree.

The planting date of the Pukekura Park tree is not recorded. Medburn suggests that it may have been by W.W. Smith and gives a date of '1930s' which is not possible since he left in 1921. The Park was founded in 1876 & extensive planting occurred ^{there} in the 1880s & 90s. Rhod. Sir Robert Peel was being planted in N.Z. from the 1880s.

Rhodo Sir Robert Peel.
Pukekura Park.

~~At~~th. end of Fountain Lake.

Height 16.459 (1973).

Diam. at ground level 1.051 m

" " 0.300 0.914 m

Divides into two at 0.5 m.

Dbh. of lakeside fork. 0.5 m.

" " northern 0.595 m.

A.F. 7/12/95.