

## Public plant places

The opening of The Taranaki Botanic Garden (or Pukekura Park) of some 39 acres (15.6 ha) in the town of New Plymouth was not complete without another grand Victorian ceremonial planting of trees, that seem to have been originally planned for "*Her Majesty's birthday ...observed as a general holiday...*", on the 57th birthday of Queen Victoria [24 May, 1876]. The weather seems to have caused a postponement of the original opening date, for 6 days later, on Monday 29 May, 1876, "*Shortly after two o'clock a large number of persons had congregated on a hill just facing the entrance, in readiness to see the ceremony of planting the first tree gone through...*". During the speeches the Superintendent the Hon. F A Carrington said he had surveyed the town, and, when doing so, had set apart land for a wide belt around it. He had, also, laid out a spot for Victoria Park and another for a Botanical Gardens; besides reserves for other purposes. "*His Honour, accompanied by his eldest daughter, was then taken to the spot prepared for the planting of the first tree, a British Oak*". She was then taken to the north side of the mound, "*where a Puriri, as representing New Zealand, was planted in the same manner. The same ceremony was gone through on the west side, where a Norfolk Island Pine, representing the South Pacific Islands, and on the south side a Pinus Insignis (sic), representing America were planted...*"

The ceremony concluded by a band playing the National Anthem. The authorities then announced that "*anyone could plant trees*". This action was described as an opportunity for future visits as "*their grand - children or great-grand-children will be able to point with pride to the trees which then will be of large size, and say they were planted by their ancestors...*". (The Taranaki Herald, 31 May, 1876).

Tar. Herald. Sat. 27/5/1876. Puke Ariki files.  
(Published Weds. & Sats.)

Queen's Birthday. Incessant down pour of rain  
Tree planting ceremony postponed.