



Saunter in Stoke

Stoke has many attractive green areas with interesting plants to discover. Early European settlers left a lasting legacy by growing some fine heritage trees, which have been enhanced with later plantings. Enjoy the peaceful beauty of this walk.

More free walks are available from Nelson City Council, or download from nelson.govt.nz/heritage-walks.



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The huge **Monterey Cypress** **1** by the bus stop, is a Stoke landmark that dwarfs historic St Barnabas Church. See the graves of early settlers in the church grounds. A Yew tree once stood guard here, but today charming flower beds enhance the graveyard. **2**

Walk on through the entry gates to Isel Park. An information board notes other trees to see within the park. A short way inside the gates find a 25-year-old **Paper Bark Maple** **3** whose peeling red bark looks like dripping blood. These dramatic trees were much loved by Victorians in cemeteries.

Some attractive New Zealand natives are found nearby. The fine oil from pounded seeds of the **Titoki tree** **4** was used by Maori as a hair gloss. Near to historic Isel House a distinctive group of **Cabbage trees** **5** sit in front of a huge **Corsican Pine** **6**. The trunk of the Cabbage tree is so fire-resistant that early European settlers used it to make chimneys for their huts. Maori used cabbage trees as a food, fibre and medicine. The root, stem and top are all edible, a good source of starch and sugar.

Marsden Valley, Jenkins Hill and the Barnicoat Range form a backdrop to Isel House, and have many biking and walking tracks to entice the energetic. Return to the Main Road through some recent extensive **Rhododendron** **7** plantings which add to the attractive spring flower show in the Park each year.

Across the Main Road by Stoke Fire Station see a reminder of the original vegetation of this area with two tall native trees, a **Beech** and a **Totara** **8**. A wonderful stand of native beech can still be found up Marsden Valley.

Behind the library, in the carpark, are Pin Oaks and several young deciduous **Ginkgo trees** **9**

with foliage reminiscent of the maidenhair fern. The tree is known for its longevity with many 1,000–2,000 year old Ginkgo trees to be found in China planted by Buddhist monks near their temples.

Turn into Andrew Street and see four large historic trees dominating the view. Mount Campbell, often snow capped, and with a distinctive radio mast, can be seen in the distance beyond. The trees, a **Californian Big Tree**, a **Cedar**, a **Lombardy Poplar** and **Tasmanian Gum** **10** are in the park by Broadgreen Historic House in Nayland Road. This area has been prone to some freak easterly storms which have felled or damaged a number of significant trees in this area. See the plaque next to a **Turkey Oak tree** **11** grown from the acorn of a huge tree destroyed in the Cyclone Alison storm of March 1975. Nelson's largest Turkey Oak is in nearby Devon Street.

Next to the house is the **Samuels Rose Garden** **12** established in 1968. It contains 560 named varieties and over 3,000 plants. The collection includes Slaters Crimson China which was the first variety of rose grown in New Zealand.

Another large stand of trees can be seen from the track by the creek beside Broadgreen Intermediate School. Three **Bunya Bunya** **13** and a tall Californian Big tree with its classic pyramid shape are about 150 years old. These could have been planted by Charles Rayner who built Otumarama c1892. The track meets the Railway Reserve shared pathway lined with Pin Oaks and Liquid Ambers which are spectacular in autumn. Between the Andrew Street and Songer Street exits, spring flowering **Camellia**, **14** are a Rotary Club memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales.