



Gnarled with age, but magnificent: 40m across and 10m high

The parent

If the pohutukawa is the most magnificent of New Zealand's flowering trees, then *Metrosideros excelsa*, Parnell must rank close to number one in the land.

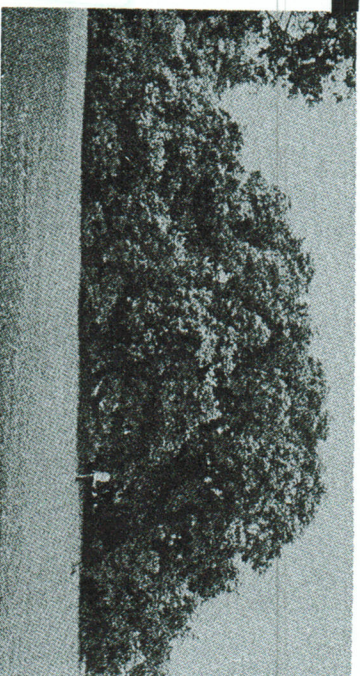
This giant among pohutukawa giants can be seen on the seaward side of the Parnell Rose Gardens reserve at the bottom of Gladstone Rd, Parnell, overlooking Meehan Bay, Auckland.

It is over 40 metres across and 10 metres high. Its huge arching branches spread and sprawl over the ground, rooting where they touch the soil. It covers almost 1600 square metres (4/10 of an acre) and basks in the sun, spread-eagled like a prehistoric dinosaur.

A visit to the tree is a must. It is inspiring. It is one of those trees that is so large it goes unnoticed. Folk rest on a park bench on its northern side never realising its magnificence. It is only when a comment is passed that they gaze into the centre of the tree and exclaim.

of Parnell

Here is a closer look at the parent of the cultivar discussed by native plant expert, Graeme Platt, in our December 1989 issue — *Metrosideros Parnell*



Metrosideros Parnell, the original as it is today, growing near Auckland's Rose Gardens. Below: Some of the flowers which smother the tree



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