



Taranaki rhododendron gardens tour

TRF18ITIN171117



5 DAY ITINERARY

Commences Auckland Wednesday 17 October 2018.

Explore the beautiful gardens of Taranaki on this round trip from Auckland.

Day 1: Auckland - Piopio - New Plymouth

Departing Auckland we travel south through the lush Waikato farmlands to Te Kuiti, stopping for lunch in Piopio. Continuing through the limestone country of the Awakino Gorge we drive out to the Tasman coast. We enjoy a special hosted lunch at Carmel farm before we visit Ann Walker and Vince Naus' riverside garden which features traditional, formal and modern plantings surrounding their 100 year old villa. Our New Plymouth accommodation is at a hotel near the seafront, Len Lye's Wind Wand kinetic sculpture and the waterfront boardwalk. Our included welcome dinner tonight is at the hotel.

Day 2: Pukeiti Gardens, New Plymouth Gardens

Our first stop is at Hirst Cottage (built 1862), where the garden has a green and white theme and then to renowned Te Kainga Marire, a native garden of Global Significance. After lunch we visit the Len Lye Centre before continuing to Pukeiti where we wander the enchanted landscape of one of the world's greatest collections of rhododendrons planted in lush rainforest on the lower slopes of Mt Taranaki. Buggy transport is available but needs to be prebooked.

Day 3: New Plymouth - Cairnhill Garden - Hawera gardens – Whanganui

We visit Pukekura Park then drive to the start of the Forgotten World Highway to Cairnhill Garden to stroll in the large rhododendron and viburnum garden. We continue to Hawera to visit Gravetye Garden, a formal garden with sweeping lawns, hedges and topiary. We explore Tawhiti Museum and Puketarata country garden with magnificent rural views before driving on to Whanganui.

Day 4: Whanganui - Cross Hills Garden - Taihape - Ruapehu

We drive to Kimbolton in the Manawatu region to discover another gem on our New Zealand garden tour. Cross Hills garden boasts 7 hectares of park like grounds with a renowned collection of over 2000 rhododendrons, plus azaleas, tree paeonies, candelabra primulas and perennials. Continuing north we stop for lunch at Taihape then head into the Central Plateau and around Mount Ruapehu to Ohakune, Whakapapa village and the famous Chateau Tongariro Hotel.

Day 5: The Chateau Tongariro - Aramatai Gardens - Auckland

After a leisurely breakfast at The Chateau, we (weather permitting) take a drive up the mountain road to the Top of the Bruce for a close up view of Mt Ruapehu and panoramic views of the region. Then we head for Taumarunui and Aramatai gardens before continuing to Kio Kio in the King Country to visit Crosshills. After lunch we drive back north through the Waikato farmlands and reach Auckland in the late afternoon.

Includes meals as per final itinerary: B = Breakfast, D = Welcome and other designated dinners.