

Saunter in Stoke



The huge Monterey Cypress **1** by the bus stop is a Stoke landmark dwarfing the nearby historic St Barnabas Church. The graves of early settlers by the church door are graced by a Yew tree **2**. Yew trees were planted in ancient times to mark sacred sites and the tradition has continued today in Christian graveyards.

Walk on to the entry gates to Isel Park. An information board there tells you about other trees to see that are listed on The Isel Park Tree Walk. 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 Māori 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. Māori 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 are some listed native Beech trees **8**. A wonderful stand of native beech can still be found up Marsden Valley, remnants of the original vegetation of this area.

In Putaitai Street are several young deciduous "Chinese Temple" 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. Straight ahead in Neale Avenue, opposite the library is a gnarly Pepper tree **10**. The tree is loved by artists for its red wood and intricate grain patterns. The trees struggle in Nelson's climate and often look like they are about to die in November only to revive dramatically in January.

Turn into Andrews Street and see four large historic trees dominating the view with the often snow capped Mount Campbell with its radio mast in the background. The trees, a Californian Big Tree, a Cedar, a Lombardy Poplar and Tasmanian Gum **11** 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 **12** 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 **13** established in 1968. It contains 560 named varieties and over 3,000 plants. A special pink rose called *Adeline of Broadgreen* was specially developed by Tasman Bay Roses to mark Broadgreen Historic House's 150th anniversary.

Another large stand of trees can be seen from the track by the creek beside Nayland Intermediate School. A Bunya Bunya **14** and tall Californian Big Tree with its classic pyramid shape are about 150 years old and these were often planted together by the Victorians. These could have been planted by Charles Rayner who built Otumarama c1892.

The track meets the Railway Reserve shared cycle and pedestrian walkway lined with Pin Oaks and Liquid Ambers which are spectacular in autumn. Between the Andrew Street and Songer Street exits the camellia, which flower in spring, **15** are a Rotary Club memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales.



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Stoke has many attractive green areas with interesting plants to discover. Early European settlers have left as a lasting legacy some fine heritage trees which have been complemented by more recent plantings. Enjoy the peaceful beauty of this walk. For the historic focus on the same area see the **Stoke Settlement Trail**.

The **Isel Park Tree Walk** focuses on the heritage and important specimen trees within Isel Park.

For all heritage trails plus information on these sites and images of the plants go to www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz (search phrase *heritage walks*).

