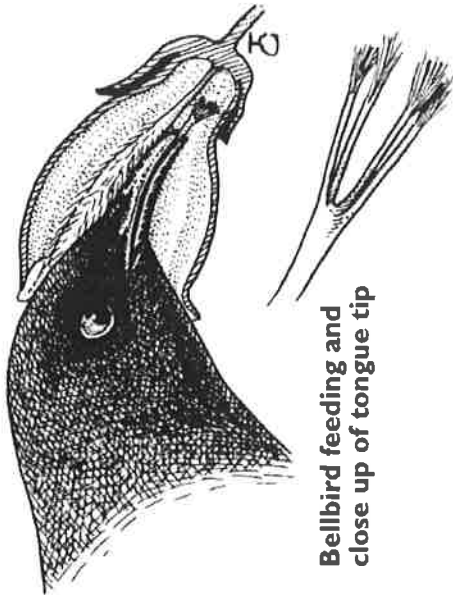


Food for bellbirds

Bellbirds eat nectar, fruits and insects. Their food requirements change throughout the year. For example, during the breeding season (spring and summer) the birds need high-energy foods such as nectar to help them cope with breeding and raising their young. While in the nest the chicks are fed exclusively on insects.

Bellbirds have a specially adapted tongue for collecting nectar. The end of the tongue is like a fine brush and is used to mop up the nectar and honeydew.



Bellbird feeding and close up of tongue tip

As well as visiting big showy flowers such as flax and kowhai, bellbirds also harvest nectar from plants that have small insignificant flowers, such as fivefinger and kanuka.

Some exotic species such as eucalypts, proteas and grevilleas are known to provide major nectar sources for bellbirds, especially in the autumn and winter months, when there can be a lack of flowers or fruits on native plants.

Bellbirds are important flower pollinators and fruit dispersers for a large number of New Zealand's native plants. Native plants also create habitat for the insects that bellbirds eat.

Plants for your garden to attract bellbirds



Scientific Name	Common Name	Max Height (m)	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>	Wineberry	8												
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	Marble Leaf / Putaputaweta	12												
<i>Cianthus puniceus</i>	Kaka beak	3												
<i>Coprosma</i> spp.	Coprosma species	8												
<i>Coralyline australis</i>	Cabbage tree / Ti kouka	17												
<i>Corokia cotoneaster</i>	Corokia	3												
<i>Dacrydium dactyloides</i>	Kahikatea	60												
<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	Rimu	50												
<i>Elaeocarpus dentatus</i>	Hinau	20												
<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>	Pokaka	14												
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>	Tree fuchsia	12												
<i>Fuchsia perscandens</i>	Scrambling fuchsia	scrambler												
<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	Broadleaf/Kapuka	17												
<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>	Kanuka	16												
<i>Melicope ramiflorus</i>	Mahoe	10												
<i>Metrosideros</i> spp.	Pohutukawa / Rata	25												
<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	Pohuehue	scrambler												
<i>Myoporum laetum</i>	Ngaio	8												
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	Mapou	7												
<i>Myrsine divaricata</i>	Weeping mapou	4												
<i>Neomyrtus pedunculata</i>	NZ Myrtle / Rohutu	5												
<i>Pennantia corymbosa</i>	Kaikomako	12												
<i>Phormium</i> spp.	Flax/Harakeke	3												
<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>	Karo	10												
<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>	Lemonwood	13												
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	Kohuhu	10												
<i>Podocarpus totara</i>	Totara	30												
<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>	Matai	40												
<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>	Fivefinger	8												
<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	Lancewood	13												
<i>Pseudowintera axillaris</i>	Horopito	8												
<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	Bush lawyer	climber												
<i>Sophora microphylla</i>	Kowhai	10												
<i>Sophora prostrata</i>	Prostrate kowhai	2												
<i>Streblus heterophyllus</i>	Milk tree/Turepo	12												
<i>Abutilon</i> spp.	Chinese lantern	3												
<i>Banksia</i> spp.	Banksia	4												
<i>Callistemon</i> spp.	Bottle brush	4												
<i>Chamaecytisus palmensis</i>	Tree lucerne	7												
<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.	Gum trees	20												
<i>Grevillea</i> spp.	Grevillea	5												
<i>Kniphofia</i> spp.	Red hot poker	1												
<i>Malus</i> spp.	Apple	5												
<i>Protea</i> spp.	Protea	5												
<i>Pyrus</i> spp.	Pear	5												

Native plants

Introduced plants

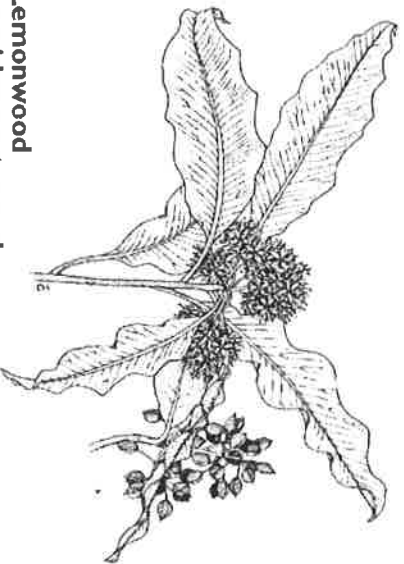
How can you help?

Bellbirds prefer to breed in forest, or shrubland, that has five or more preferred plant food species. For the bellbird population on the Port Hills the loss of forest has meant a reduction in the size and amount of their prime habitat, both for breeding and gathering food. Although bellbirds nest on the Port Hills, many of them visit Christchurch City and other areas of the Canterbury Plains in winter.

How to help the bellbird population

There are a number of native plants that you can have in your garden as food sources for bellbirds and other birds, such as silvereyes. Flax, kowhai and pohutukawa are rich sources for nectar, while coprosma, fivefinger and cabbage trees provide fruits for the birds. There are also a number of exotic plants that bellbirds use as nectar sources, such as eucalypts, grevilleas, proteas and red hot pokers.

Plant a variety of plants so there is continuation of food supply throughout the year. Existing tall trees, both native and exotic, can also provide essential roosting and nesting sites. By improving the habitat in your garden and neighbourhood you can enhance bellbird survival.

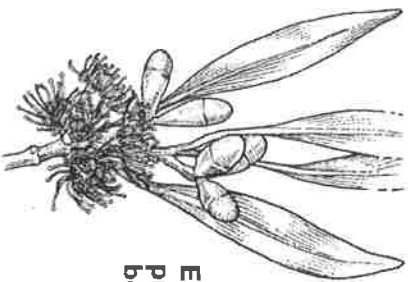


Lemonwood
provides nectar and
fruit for bellbirds

What is the council doing?

Parks and gardens can provide new habitat for bellbirds, as well as other native birds. The Christchurch City Council (CCC) has a number of revegetation programmes underway. There are replanting programmes on the Port Hills and riparian strips along rivers and in wetland areas. The Port Hills CCC Rangers and volunteers annually plant around 8000 native seedlings on the Port Hills, and have been doing so since the 1980s.

If you would like to know more about volunteering for planting days on the Port Hills contact Anne Liggett, Beckenham Service Centre, Ph 337 4513.



Eucalypt flowers
provide nectar for
bellbirds

Pamphlets in this series are:

1. Bellbird identification
2. Bellbird in Canterbury
3. Bellbird predation
4. Bellbird food sources

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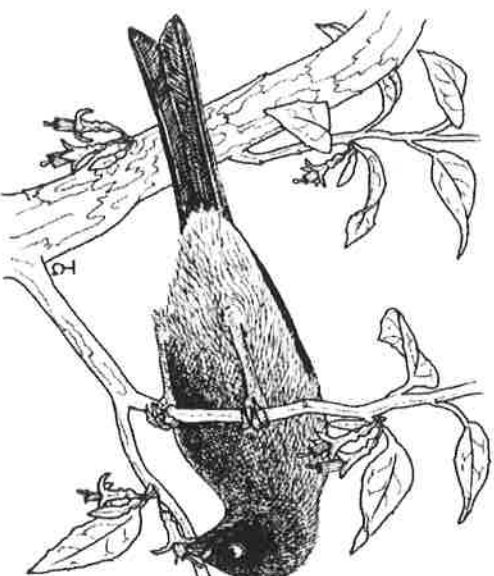
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Bellbird

(Korimako)

Food Sources



Bellbird visiting fuchsia flowers