

Collect seaweed and earn money

They say money doesn't grow on trees but it is virtually washing up on our beaches around New Zealand. With a global shortage of high quality agar (a seaweed-derived gelatinous substance that, among other things, are used by biologists to culture microorganisms) making headlines worldwide, seaweed processing factories in Opotiki and Masterton are reaching out to coastal communities along the east coast of New Zealand, including the Coromandel, to collect *Pterocladia* seaweed to help meet customer demand.

Found washed up on rocks and beaches along the east coast, the distinct red *Pterocladia* seaweed is the raw material which, when processed, forms agar. With worldwide demand far exceeding supply, a newly refurbished processing plant in Opotiki and newly built facility in Masterton are calling out for people to help collect this prized natural resource before it gets washed back out to sea.

"It's all pretty exciting what's going on here," says Kath Coopey, technical advisor at New Zealand Manuka Group, the owner of the seaweed processing facilities. "Our Opotiki plant has undergone a complete revamp and is now producing high-grade pharmaceutical agar. And in Masterton we have a completely new business which started as an empty warehouse space, but now has conveyors and teams of people sorting, drying and processing *Pterocladia*."

New Zealand Manuka Group purchased

the old Coast Biologicals factory in Opotiki in 2011 and opened their facility in Masterton earlier this year. The investment in pharmaceutical grade facilities and modern production systems, positions the business as a world-class processor and innovator of agar products.

Company founder Phil Caskey says the business is continuing to invest in new technologies, intellectual property and processing methods to add value to seaweed as a natural resource. "We are actively looking at new products for other types of seaweed in the future," he says.

Agar is an incredibly useful and important ingredient for the food industry as well as a wide range of industrial applications such as pharmaceutical products, medical research, dental prosthetics and biotechnology. Pollution and environmental conditions have impacted supply and product quality from some countries.

Coopey is asking people along the east coast of the North Island to help collect the red *Pterocladia* seaweed, "This is an opportunity for the wider community as well. It's a great way to earn some extra money or raise funds for your sports team or school," he says.

Anyone interested in taking part in a beach collection needs to contact New Zealand Manuka Group. The business will assist with the obtaining of a permit and further details about collecting red seaweed will also be provided.



Pterocladia (Agar) Seaweed Collectors Wanted

If you are interested in collecting and supplying *Pterocladia* Seaweed from your local beach, please call us now for supplier packs and information. **Earn \$3.00-\$3.40 per kg for clean and dried *Pterocladia* Seaweed.**

For more information and Fishserve permit required for collection, please call us at New Zealand Seaweeds on 07 315 7663.



www.nzmanukagroup.com

The Fire Siren By SSO Derek Collier Sponsored by Safety Safety + Apparel - tel 0800 726 726

May was another quiet month for the Whitianga Volunteer Fire Brigade with eight calls for assistance. We backed up Coromandel Town on two occasions, assisted the ambulance twice, were called to set up a heli pad for the Auckland and Coromandel Rescue Helicopter, were called to a private fire alarm activation, assisted Hahei at a large scrub fire they had at Cathedral Cove and were called to motor vehicle accident.

Although the call-outs have been relatively quiet, the brigade has still been very busy with our Road Crash Rescue team competing in the national challenge that was held in Ingelwood, Taranaki. The team has represented not only our brigade, but also Whitianga, to an extremely high standard for more than 16 years and although they would have liked to have been first in New

Zealand, fourth place was still a great effort out of 17 teams. Well done guys.

The weekend before last our Brigade had eight members competing in the Sky Tower Stair Challenge. I would suggest that most people would struggle to climb to the top of the Sky Tower in Auckland normally, but these fire fighters are doing it in full fire fighting kit and wearing breathing apparatus. A huge effort and for a great cause (a fundraiser for Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand).

It's starting to cool down, so remember to get your fire place cleaned. It might save you a visit from the Fire Brigade.

Remember, if you can't be good, at least be careful.
**Senior Station Officer
Derek Collier**



The scrub fire at Cathedral Cove last month.
Photo by Ken Hindmarsh of Cathedral Cove Scenic Cruises.

JUMP ON BOARD YOUR LOCAL DAILY SHUTTLE

Daily scheduled departures between
Coromandel Peninsula and Auckland Airport & City

WHITIANGA 7.30AM - AUCKLAND AIRPORT 10.30AM, CITY 11AM

AUCKLAND CITY 1.30PM, AIRPORT 2PM - WHITIANGA 5.15PM

Whitianga*Hahei*Hot Water Beach*Dalmeny Corner
Coroglen*Tairua*Hikua*Whangamata*Opoutere
Coromandel Town*Thames*Bombay
Manukau*Auckland Airport*Auckland City

HIP, HOP & VINES TOUR
Fab day out visiting MB Estate Winery,
The Pour House & Coroglen Pub

Door to door options available - No booking fees - No credit card fees
No changing buses (on Whitianga service) - straight to Auckland!

BOOK ONLINE www.go-kiwi.co.nz info@go-kiwi.co.nz 0800 44 65 49



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Would you like a fun day out in the bush?
Kauri 2000 Trust is looking for volunteer planters to help with planting kauri seedlings.

We will be planting Saturday 11 June at the Matarangi reserve (Kuaotunu)

Starting at 9am

Please make sure shoes and tools are clean to prevent spread of kauri dieback.

Sausage sizzle to follow planting.

Please contact the office or e-mail us for details.

P 07 866 0468 E info@kauri2000.co.nz

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www.kauri2000.co.nz

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