



Rare species takes root

By **HAMISH MacLEAN**

A species of native plants on the brink of extinction has been planted at a new nursery in the Bay of Islands.

Members of Hawke's Bay-based Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust brought north 46 of the rare wild kakabeak, reared by the trust.

The kakabeak were planted Saturday at Roberton Island, Motuarohia, by private landowner Andrew Kelly. He is keen to increase the conservation value of the "oasis" he bought into three years ago.

The northerly species *Clianthus puniceus* once thrived in Northland, though until now only one plant was known to exist in the wild.

Though kakabeak are common in Kiwis' gardens, unlike these *Clianthus puniceus*, they have no real genetic value, trust forest manager Pete Shaw says.

Attempts to reintroduce the

plants must start small, he says.

"You always come up against this issue of not being able to do things on a large scale," Mr Shaw says.

"The idea is to really go for gold, crank up the numbers and produce seed in bulk so that you overcome that first big hurdle and then all these other options start to open up to you."

Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust is converting 4000 hectares of pine forest back to native forest, it runs an established kiwi breeding programme for Cape Sanctuary at Hawke's Bay and has established a 600 hectare sanctuary in the trust's Maungataniwha Native Forest.

Department of Conservation programme manager for biodiversity in the Bay of Islands Adrian Walker says as community conservation efforts build momentum, projects

begin to connect.

The work of the Hawke's Bay trust could soon benefit the 20-plus conservation groups in the Bay of Islands, he says.

"It's likely in the future there will be species here that community groups running conservation projects in other parts of Northland will want and vice versa."

Roberton Island has been pest free since 2009 through the efforts of Project Island Song, a partnership between Bay of Islands conservation group Guardians of the Bay, Rawhiti hapu Patukeha and Ngati Kuta and the Department of Conservation.

there's more online

Go to baychronicle.co.nz for an extra page of pictures of the island planting.



Planting: Andrew Kelly, left, gets a hand from Forest Lifeforce Restoration Trust's Pete Shaw planting one of the first wild kakabeaks on Roberton Island. Once there was only one of this species of native plant left in the wild but today 46 species, reared by the Hawke's Bay-based trust, were planted at Mr Kelly's property overlooking Captain Cook's 1769 anchorage at Cook's Cove.