

Preventing the spread of wilding trees



The threat from wilding trees

Wilding trees (wildings) are exotic trees that are fast growing and prolific producers of seed.

They were first introduced with good intentions to shelter homes, protect livestock, attempt to prevent erosion, and establish forestry.

Sadly, these wildings are now rapidly spreading over the hillsides, smothering the tussock grasslands, invading the beech forests (some are shade tolerant), and even altering water catchments.

Although many will have pleasant associations of these trees from their native ecosystems and the alpine look reminiscent of northern hemisphere countries, these are invasive weeds in New Zealand. They are already destroying our beautiful and ecologically diverse landscape.

If left uncontrolled these trees will spread to form a single, dense mono-culture at much higher altitudes than our native forests.

They will destroy our unique vistas and kill what remains of our native plant, insect, and birdlife.

Other problems include the loss of high country pastoral land and an increased intensity of dangerous wildfires.

STOPPING THE WILDING SPREAD

The long-term goal will involve not just the removal of wilding species, but reintroduction of a mix of locally sourced native plants for biodiversity and selective non-spreading exotic trees to enhance Arrowtown's brilliant autumn colours.

The wildings are being eradicated around Arrowtown mainly through hand cutting. Over time these dead trees will rot and decompose into the soil. This is unsightly at first, but return to these mountains in the future, and you will find that the beech forest and golden tussock grasslands have prevailed alongside Arrowtown's autumn colour.

Arrowtown's natural panoramas will be retained and New Zealand's unique wildlife will be saved.

You are welcome to help by pulling out any exotic conifer seedlings you see growing within the native vegetation.

The Arrowtown Wilding Group (AWG)

is a community-run group working with local landowners, businesses, local government, and other important parties such as the Wakatipu Wilding Corridor Control Group (WCCG) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) to remove the wilding threat from these hills, providing an excellent example of community cooperation for conservation.

The AWG welcomes donations. Contact: chairperson@arrowtownvillage.nz.

If you wish to help out further, join the **Arrowtown Choppers** (check them out on Facebook) - the volunteer arm focused on removing wilding trees from behind the town.

For further information visit the wilding trees page at: www.arrowtownvillage.nz



Stopping the wilding tree spread. A volunteer group to help remove wilding trees from the Arrowtown hills. The long-term goal is not just the removal of wilding species, but reintroduction of a mix of locally sourced native plants for biodiversity and selective non-spreading exotic trees to enhance Arrowtown's brilliant autumn colours.

Details

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Website

www.facebook.com/arrowtownchoppers