

Branford Park Edible Walk 1

For those who enjoy some energetic walking, with the opportunity to harvest some fresh fruit along the way, try walking up the hill in Branford Reserve. Enjoy the view at the top, and look down into the Maitai Valley. This land was once the Richardson farm and stories of earlier days in the Maitai Valley can be found on the information panel marked on the map.

Nelson City Council has a range of easily downloadable walk guides on www.nelson.govt.nz. See Branford Park *Edible Walk 2* for more fruit varieties on the river side of the road.





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This land was once part of extensive land holdings by the Richardson family who first started to acquire land in the Maitai Valley in 1840.

Sheep proved to be the most financially rewarding produce of the Maitai Run, but dairying was also profitable. Shearing sheds were built near to the family homestead which can still be seen further up river. Milking sheds were sited on family land closer to the city.

The Richardson's relied on water from the river to keep the farm irrigated, particularly to grow plant crops. Dennes swimming hole was the once the site of an irrigation pump. Many Nelson schoolboys learnt to swim there, and wanted to continue to do so, however this conflicted with the activities of a working farm. Eventually the land was bought by Council and became a well used public recreation area.

Walking tracks to the Centre of New Zealand and cycling tracks up the valley attract the energetic, and large areas of the Park are dog exercise friendly. A flat area has picnic areas, children's playground, BBQ and toilet facilities.

The fruit trees planted here are part of the Open Orchard initiative and fit well with existing landscaped areas. Trees are marked in fruit varieties, and within those groups there will be variance in harvesting times affected by the weather as well as the soil and plant variety. Local goats, birds or possums are also often interested in doing a little harvesting themselves, so visit often to beat them to the ripe fruit.

For other locations of open orchards visit the Top of the South Maps website. Nelson's community gardens are a great resource to inspire and teach you how to grow your own food. Visit the Waimarama Community Organic Gardens, the Victory Community Centre and the Apple Lane Orchard Reserve Community Garden. **Remember the food is there to share so please just take ripe fruit.**

- AP** **Apple** (*January - April*). Wind fall fruit on the ground show the fruit is ripe and ready to pick. When picking try to leave the stalk on the apple. A healthy sweet treat where the fruit fibre helps good digestion.
- F** **Fig** (*March / April*). Figs don't produce flowers - the blossom is inside the fruit, and it's these blossoms with their little seeds that produce the crunchy texture. The fruit is rich in complex carbohydrates, fibre and minerals: including potassium, copper, magnesium and calcium. Fruit is delicate, handle carefully.
- O** **Olive** (*May / June*). The fruit of this plant is initially inedible and must be treated before it can be eaten. Process unripe fruit to produce "green olives", or when ripe, to produce "black olives". The oil has many health benefits
- CR** **Carob**. After boiling and de-seeding pods, and grinding to powder, this can be used as a tasty chocolate substitute. Used since Biblical times for sweet treats and eaten in famines.
- W** **Walnut** (*April / May*). Collect fallen nuts. The nuts are rich in oil and are widely eaten both fresh and in cookery. Reputed to be good in a low cholesterol diet.
- M** **Macadamia** (*May - October*). Nuts should be husked soon after picked and kept dry. Ripe nuts float in water so test one before picking a lot. The shell is extremely hard to crack but the nut is delicious.