

# Haven emerges from weeds

By SUZY CLEPHANE

Purewa Valley was once home to plastic bottles, old microwaves and a wrecked car.

The rubbish was intertwined in a mass of weeds, gorse and New Zealand ginger.

That is, until the Purewa Restoration Group got their hands on it.

Since the group was formed in 2001, community members have cleared out the junk and are working to make the spot – behind the ASB Stadium and Selwyn College in Kohimarama – an urban oasis.

Most Sunday mornings, a small and dedicated group gathers to weed, replant and encourage native shrubs and trees like rimu and kowhai to grow.

They aim to regenerate the Selwyn bush and forge a pathway for the community and a corridor for birds.

And their dedication earned the group an Auckland Regional Council Weedbusters award this month.

Council weedbusters co-ordinator Su Sinclair says the award acknowledges the “fantastic job”



**Reviving the valley:** Purewa Restoration Group members Martin Heffer, left, Robyn Sinclair and Pat Northey spend many Sunday mornings weeding and replanting natives at Purewa Valley.

Photo: FIONA GOODALL

being done by the group. “With limited resources they are restoring this patch of bush. They are dedicated, they take advice and adopt methods, achieving a lot for the local community,” she says.

The award is given only once every two years by the regional

council, Auckland City Council and Conservation Department.

Group member Pat Northey says it’s a worthwhile project.

“We started because we got sick of looking at an awful bank of weeds.”

The valley is owned by the Education Ministry, and is one of the last

surviving urban forests in Auckland city.

The section of Selwyn Bush the group maintains is adjacent to Kapa Bush Reserve and St John’s Bush, all of which surround a section of the eastern rail corridor.

Volunteers from Selwyn College’s Refugee Education for Adults and

Families, or Reaf programme, have also contributed to the restoration.

■ The group meets at the site most Sunday mornings from 9.30am. More volunteers are welcome. Go to [www.purewa.webs.com/](http://www.purewa.webs.com/) for more information.