

The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park

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Photo David Medway

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From the Botanical Records Officer

Ian Hutchinson

The task of identifying and listing all the gardens and plant collections within Pukekura Park and allocating location codes, for example Fred Parker Lawn T4/PFPL (T4 Pukekura's identifier), which is needed for one of the fields in the database, is now completed with all the data loaded onto BG Base. With help from the Park's administration team this list has also been made up into a field version for staff in Pukekura Park. It includes a brief description of the collections to help them with future collection management, and guidelines for the selection of new plant material so that new plants fit in with the collections. The description for Fred Parker Lawn, for example, is "Ornamental shrubs, perennials and cycads with a focus on general spring to autumn display".

The accession book for 2012 has a record of all the collection plant material that has come into the Park so far this year. The plants have been given their accession numbers, which now total 155. All of these accessions are now entered into the accession table in the database and have been entered into the plant table as well. The plant table records where the plant is within the park, using a location code for the particular garden area, and whether or not it is alive. The information in the plant table includes the planting date which is relayed to me on the plant movement forms that the Parks Team are now using. This form is also to be used to relay back information such as the death, removal or relocation of a plant, or periodic collection censuses so that the database can be updated accordingly.

I have recently started creating retrospective accession lists. I have started with 2005 at this stage, simply because I think 2005 to 2011 will fit into the book I am using. These lists are a collation of information from plant supply inwards goods books and the outwards book system that has been in place up until now. The outwards books have performed a very similar function to the plant movement forms that we now have put in place. I have already given the 2005 entries accession numbers so they are almost ready to be entered onto BG Base. 2006 is written up and just needs its accession numbers and then it will be ready as well. The other project I have started is the formation of a labelling list for trees in the Park. At this stage the list will probably cover trees that are near walkways or are otherwise very accessible. This project will take time, being dependent on budgets. It should help visitors to the Park identify different trees and hopefully make the visitor experience even more enjoyable.

In my role I continue to receive enquiries regarding plants that we may or may not be holding in the Park collections. This sometimes involves quite a lot of research, but that is all very interesting and the information so obtained will undoubtedly be useful for some of the retrospective accessions.



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A Fleeting Venture - Pukekura's "Rheinland"

Ron Lambert
Senior Researcher Puke Ariki

The *Taranaki Herald* of 18 August 1875 reported that the Recreation Grounds Board had heard an application "from two Germans" to lease part of the Grounds (now Pukekura Park) for 21 years to establish a vineyard. The local official German interpreter, Gottlieb Roch, formerly the owner of New Plymouth's Taranaki Hotel, was on hand to assist the applicants whose English was, presumably, not extensive. The Board responded with the following: "That four acres be leased for a vineyard on these conditions: For the first five years free, and if terms are duly fulfilled the Board will grant a lease for the remaining sixteen years, at £10 per year. Lesees (*sic*) to lay out, plant, fence, and keep in good order their four acres; same to be open to the public at all times except when fruit is ripe, for one month, and then with special permission" (*Taranaki Herald*, 18 August 1875). The two applicants then, through their interpreter, asked for time to consider the offer. It was Gottlieb Roch only who was at the Board's next meeting to inform them that four acres was not considered enough to support two men, so one had withdrawn and the remaining one asked for the rental to be reduced to £8 per year. This was agreed to by the Board, which resolved that the lessee clear up, lay out, and fence in the four acres within two years (*Taranaki Herald*, 25 August 1875).

The "two Germans" of the report were father and son, Heinrich and Johann Breidecker. The family hailed from the small town of Schwabenheim in the wine-making Rhein (Rhine) Valley south-east of Frankfurt. They had arrived in Wellington on the *Lammershagen* on 11 July 1875 (Pobog-Jaworowski, J; *History of Polish Settlers in NZ*, 1990) and then transhipped to New Plymouth by coastal steamer, arriving there four days later (*Taranaki Herald*, 17 July 1875). The *Lammershagen's* passengers were 330 "German" immigrants; many of them ethnically Polish, as much of modern Poland was then part of Prussia¹. (One of them, indeed, was my great-grandfather, Feliks Wojciechowski.) Most of the Poles in the group were then shipped off to the newly-established settlement at Jackson's Bay. The isolated



Photo Derek Hughes

South Westland community failed miserably and four years later was abandoned. After arriving in New Plymouth, the Breideckers - Heinrich, wife Christiana, with sons Johann and Carl (Karl?) and daughter Marguretta - were, with 55 other adults and 46 children, installed in the old military barracks on Marsland Hill. Here, as new immigrants, they received free rations for six days until being "struck off" the list on 21 July (*Return of Free Rations*, ARC2002-138 Puke Ariki).

Heinrich obviously wasted little time in making plans for the future. We don't have many details of the miniature "Rheinland" enterprise but the plantings were made on the hillside between Stainton Dell and the Racecourse.

The area was “carefully prepared, being deeply trenched, and choice vine cuttings, some from Australia, were planted” (*History of Pukekura Park*, 1929). A single struggling plant grows there still, but about 2001 Fernery manager Ken Davey propagated several cuttings from the survivor so two vines can now be found behind The Gables at Brooklands (Ian Hutchinson: September 2012, *pers comm.*).

At least one of the Breideckers - it may well have been Carl - kept the wolf from the door by renting a house from the Board and being employed weeding the flower beds in the Park (*Taranaki Herald*, 3 January 1878; *History of Pukekura Park*, 1929). A news report in 1907 indicates that the family also tried strawberry growing while their vines were establishing (*Taranaki Herald*, 25 October 1907). That the enterprise did not proceed without its trials is revealed by a claim for £6 brought by Heinrich against neighbour, Robert Snell, “for damage done to his vineyard and garden by the trespass of defendant’s cows on several occasions” (*Taranaki Herald*, 12 August 1876). He was awarded a mere 10 shillings. In 1878, the Board resolved to ascertain C(arl) Breidecker’s intentions regarding the lease held by him (*Taranaki Herald*, 25 May 1878).

About 1881 the Breideckers upped-stakes in New Plymouth and moved to Auckland where Heinrich briefly opened a “First-class Dining-rooms” in Customhouse Street West serving, “A good meal for 9d, including bottle of Schwitz Herb Beer” (*Auckland Star*, 2 December 1881). Soon after, the family moved to Kohukohu on the northern shore of the Hokianga Harbour where they established a 0.8 hectare vineyard growing mainly the Isabella variety (*Auckland Star*, 8 February 1901). By 1884 Heinrich and Johann were producing a Rhein-



style wine, supplemented with wild grapes gathered from nearby abandoned gardens and mission stations (Scott, Dick; *Winemakers of New Zealand*, 1964). Heinrich Breidecker’s enterprise at Kohukohu is now acknowledged as one of New Zealand’s first truly commercial vineyards. After his death in 1907² his son Johann³ maintained the winery until the mid-1920s (Harrison, Eric; *Kohukohu*, 1983). The old Rheinlander’s vintner expertise was, though, passed on to his son-in-law, John Lees, who married Marguretta. The Lees’ continued the family tradition on the Hokianga until the mid-1950s (Harrison, 1983). The younger son, Carl, visited New Plymouth after his father’s death when “Mr and Mrs Breidecker were renewing old associations”. It appears that Carl⁴ left New Zealand for Australia in 1886 (Australian Immigrant List - www.ancestry.com) to establish himself as a musical artist who “has travelled to all parts of the world” (*Taranaki Herald*, 25 October 1907).

The Breidecker name is now perpetuated in a Müller-Thurgau derived grape variety, and in the Marlborough-based Hunter’s Wines (NZ) Ltd German-style white wine Breidecker (www.hunters.co.nz).

The rear of The Gables framed by the grapevine.

1. As well as the official immigrants, a crew member of the *Lammershagen*, Peter Hinrik (Harry) Peters - also from Germany - jumped ship and later settled in Taranaki to become a well-known resident of Kaimiro and mountain guide.
2. Heinrich Breidecker died on 13 October 1907 at Kohukohu, aged 79 years (*Taranaki Herald*, 25 October 1907).
3. Johann Baptist Breidecker died in mid-1942 at Waiuku, South Auckland (Microfische New Zealand Deaths, Puke Ariki).
4. Carl Breidecker died in Sydney in 1938 (Australian Deaths - www.ancestry.com).

How Hatchery Lawn got its name

David Medway

The trout-rearing ponds in Pukekura Park

A member of the Taranaki Acclimatisation Society (hereafter called “the Society”) at its annual meeting in New Plymouth in May 1902 considered that the liberation of trout fry needed careful attention as the big trout and eels ate the fry. Putting fry in the rivers as was then in vogue was not as successful as it would be if the fry were kept until they were bigger and stronger. He suggested that ponds should be established and the fry kept for a time before being liberated. A committee was appointed to enquire about and arrange for the creation of ponds for fry in the Recreation Grounds (later Pukekura Park), and to make arrangements for the custodian to feed the fish (*Taranaki Herald* 12/5/1902, p.1).

The necessary approvals of the Recreation Grounds Board (hereafter with its successor the Pukekura Park Board called “the Board”) must have been forthcoming shortly after the Society’s annual meeting because, in late October 1902, 5,000 Rainbow Trout (*Salmo gairdnerii*) fry were liberated in the ponds that had been established in the grounds “in the low-lying piece of land near the middle lake. They have been covered over with wire netting, and patent meshes have been placed at the ends to prevent



the fry being carried out by the running water. Mr C. Edgecombe, the custodian of the grounds, will attend to the fry, and will feed them daily on mashed liver, etc. When the fry attain a certain length – they are now about an inch long – they will be taken out and liberated in the streams of the district” (*Taranaki Herald* 24/10/1902, p. 5). At the time of the Society’s annual meeting in April 1903, some 400 of these fry, between four and six inches long, had been liberated in the Te Henui and Mangorei streams and the remainder were to be placed in the Waiwakaiho River (*Taranaki Herald* 27/4/1903, p. 2). The Board at its meeting in May 1903 resolved that the allowance of £10 offered by the Society for the care of the fish fry in the grounds be paid direct to the Board, and that £7 be allocated to caretaker Edgecombe and £3 to assistant caretaker Mace (*Taranaki Herald* 6/5/1903, p. 2).

The continuing hot, dry weather in January 1904 was having “a disastrous effect on the young trout in the nursery ponds in the Recreation Grounds. These ponds are necessarily small and somewhat shallow; and the water has become so heated that a large number of the young fish has been killed. This morning Mr Edgecombe, the custodian of the grounds, took over 100 dead young rainbow trout from the ponds. These fish, which looked fine and healthy, averaging about 3 to 4 inches, were put in the ponds as fry last September.” (*Taranaki Herald* 22/1/1904, p. 4). It was reported at the annual meeting of the Society in April 1904 that “A good many young fry escaped into the small lake, known as the “Lily Pond”, and it was discovered that a leak had taken place in the walls of one of the ponds allowing eels to enter freely. It will therefore be necessary to concrete the sides and bottoms of the ponds to get better results” (*Taranaki Herald* 25/4/1904, p. 3). The contractors engaged to do this work “found great difficulty in getting a sound foundation owing to the swampy nature of the ground, and with the continued wet weather the walls of some of the ponds gave way, and it was found necessary to stay them with concrete arches, which added to the expense The next difficulty your Committee had to contend with was from eels travelling over the ground and entering the ponds through the wire frames. The frames were then covered with a half inch mesh wire on top of the original wire, which has checked the ingress of all eels of a dangerous size, though eels of a small size still manage to find a way in” (*Taranaki Herald* 15/5/1905, p.3).

The annual meeting of the Society in July 1909 was advised that a large number of Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Rainbow Trout fry had been purchased “which were placed in the Society’s ponds in Pukekura Park under the care of the curator, Mr W. W. Smith, and to this gentleman the thanks of the society were due for the care and attention bestowed on the fish, for finer trout had not been placed in our rivers, some fish being over half a pound in weight. ... During the hot weather early in March a number of young fish were netted out of the ponds and placed in the pool into which the water falls, and there was such a marked difference in the growth and vigour of the fish as compared with the fish in the concrete ponds that it had been suggested by Mr W. W. Smith that two new ponds should be prepared and pipes led from the inflow, so that there would be a good fall of water into them, thus providing the needful aeratum”. A deputation was appointed to wait upon the Board regarding the erection of a hatchery (*Taranaki Herald* 10/7/1909, p. 3).

The deputation met the Board a few days later and asked for permission to establish a fish hatchery in the Park. The Society “was already very much indebted to the Board for being able to establish rearing ponds in the ground. Now it wanted, if possible, to go one better. The society found it could do with a very great number more fish than it was at present able to accommodate in the ponds and wished instead of getting the fry from other societies to get the ova and rear the fry itself. If they were able to carry out their idea it would enable them to liberate very many more thousands of fish each year. ...The board had in Mr Smith a gentleman who understood a very great deal about fish, and the society recognised that in allowing Mr Smith to take charge of the fish it had in the grounds under the present system the board was allowing the society a very considerable concession”. The deputation was advised that the curator could not assume any responsibility for the care of the hatchery if it was established. The deputation also asked for permission to construct further rearing ponds. The Board decided to meet representatives of the Society in the Park (*Taranaki Herald* 16/7/1909, p.1). The permissions sought by the Society must have been given because four additional ponds were completed by late September 1909. The Society “hoped to have the hatcheries in full swing for next season. They will be erected in the fern glen, which at present holds the rearing ponds” (*Taranaki Herald* 21/9/1909, p. 4; 29/9/1909, p.3).

The annual meeting of the Society in May 1910 was informed that the Society, after making arrangements with the Board, had “built four new ponds for rearing the fry and supplied the water to them from the race by means of a flume supported on tressels giving a fall of from seven to eight feet into each tank. As soon as these alterations and additions had been completed some 40,000 brown and rainbow trout fry were placed in the ponds. For the first time since the Society started these ponds for rearing the young fry did not turn out at all satisfactory. The phenomenally hot and muggy weather which the whole district experienced militated against the fish thriving. The continued dry weather caused the water to foul in a remarkable manner and the result was disastrous to the young fish, many thousands of which died before they could be placed in the Waiwakaiho River”. The meeting was informed that a plan and prices for a fish hatchery had been obtained, but the cost was considered to be more than was advisable for the Society to undertake at that time. The Society recorded its special thanks to the Board for facilities granted for setting up new rearing ponds, and for permission to erect a hatchery (*Taranaki Herald* 11/5/1910, p. 4).

The annual meeting of the Society in April 1911 was advised that, because of the cost involved, the proposed fish hatchery building in the Park was abandoned. It decided to erect a small building with the necessary troughs and trays on the property of a Society member on the bank of the Mangaotuku Stream where that member would look after the hatching of eyed ova. A large number of eyed ova were purchased. Although the hatching was only moderately successful, a good number of fish were hatched and supplies were sent to various rearing ponds, the balance being placed in the ponds at the Park where they were under the care of a member who volunteered to look after and feed them. Until this time, the Society had been paying £10 per annum to the Board which sum went to the curator for feeding and otherwise caring for the fry in the ponds. The Society contemplated setting up a permanent hatchery with ponds (*Taranaki Herald* 29/4/1911, p. 4). Shortly afterwards the Society turned a building which it leased at the old Frankley Road tannery property into a hatchery, with all the necessary appurtenances for fish culture erected therein (*Taranaki Herald* 16/4/1912, p.7). The hatcheries were closed down owing to the 1914-1918 war (*Taranaki Herald* 18/4/1921, p.5).

The trout hatchery in Pukekura Park

In August 1920, the Board considered a request by the Society for permission to resume use of the old trout-rearing ponds in the Park: "Some years ago the society was permitted to make a series of concrete-lined ponds near the upper end of the lily pond. The writer was unaware why they were vacated. Since, they had been used as receptacles for rubbish. With very little labour they could be made as good as ever. The ponds would be a great convenience to the society and an attraction to the public. No structure which would in any way impair the beauty of the park would be erected". The Board granted permission for the re-establishment of the ponds, subject to approval of details and to neither the Board nor the curator having responsibility. It also gave the Society permission to erect a trout hatchery on the site (*Taranaki Herald* 4/8/1920, p.5; 19/4/1921, p.3). By the time of the Society's next annual meeting in April 1921 "an up-to-date building in the form of a Maori whare" had been completed. The best thanks of all sportsmen were due to the Board for the generous manner in which it had met the Society, and also to the host of willing helpers who had assisted with donations and free labour including a member who donated pongas and lent horses to get them out (*Taranaki Herald* 19/4/1921, p.3). The total cost of the hatchery was £180 "which of course is very much under its true value, but thanks to donations of material and labour as well as of money the cost of erection was small" (*Taranaki Herald* 20/4/1922, p.6).

The hatchery soon more than justified its existence (*Taranaki Herald* 20/4/1922, p.6), but by the time of the Society's annual meeting in April 1925 it was considered that, while the hatchery was able to cope with half a million ova, "the demands of the district would in a very short space of time assume proportions very much in excess of this number, and, what was more, the water supply was limited, with the possibility of it being cut off altogether as the town increased in size. These points only went to stress the importance of an effort being made to construct a more commodious and up-to-date hatchery elsewhere" (*Taranaki Herald* 16/4/1925, p.8). Accordingly, the Society searched for and eventually found a site at Durham Road near Inglewood where there was a good supply of water, the land could be bought freehold, and the site was also suitable for game bird rearing (*Taranaki Herald* 26/4/1928, p.10). A new hatchery on that site was constructed and officially opened in April 1930 when it was mentioned that the hatching operations of the Society had previously been carried on in a "picturesque little punga whare in Pukekura Park" (*Taranaki Herald* 29/4/1930, p.5). The last time the Park hatchery was used was in the 1929 season (*Taranaki Herald* 30/4/1930, p.11). At its meeting in August 1932, the Board considered a suggestion by the Society that the hatchery building be purchased from it. The Board did not consider the building to be of any value. Many of the pongas were decayed at ground level, the only real value being the few sheets of iron that formed the roof (*Taranaki Herald* 10/8/1932, p. 5).

An early view of the Lily Pond,
now Hatchery Lawn.

From George Fuller's collection.



Park spring update

Sheryl Clyma
Assistant Curator Pukekura Park

Hello from Sheryl Clyma. In mid-July 2012 I was released on good behaviour from New Plymouth Prison after serving 14 years as an Horticultural Instructor. Two days later I was privileged to return to where I started my horticultural career back in 1981 as an apprentice, this time in the position of Assistant Curator Pukekura Park.

Early spring has been a challenge for the Parks Team, with the staff frequently having their heads down and tails up with their wet weather gear and gumboots on. However, it's been a great time for planting. The Pukekura Park Tennis Club entrance garden has been simplified and replanted with *Arthropodium* 'Avalanche'. This cultivar is said to flower for longer and the foliage is stronger and broader. More *Sophora* 'Dragons Gold' have been added. The planting at the List Street entrance has been tidied and bulked up. We have utilised *Arthropodium* 'Matapouri Bay' and *Libertia ixioides*, along with the ferns *Asplenium bulbiferum* and *Blechnum discolor* to infill this area. We have planted three *Rhododendron* 'Cornubia' in List's Garden which will provide some dashes of red colour in future seasons. We have worked on maintaining a view through to the terraces, relocating some small Tree Fuchsia (*Fuchsia excorticata*) and dividing Hostas. Back in 2002 we lost the Weeping Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium floribundum*) from the top terrace. Fortunately, Ken Davey of the Fernery took cuttings from the stump regrowth. One of these cuttings has been replanted as a specimen tree close to where the original grew.



Arthropodium 'Matapouri Bay' and *Libertia ixioides*, along with the fern *Blechnum discolor* at the List Street entrance.

Photos Derek Hughes

From the Garden cont'd

In Goodwin Dell we have planted a new area under the Pine trees with some large leaved Rhododendrons, *Rhododendron macabe anum* and *Rhododendron nuttallii*. Deciduous Azaleas 'Cecile' and 'Double Damask' have been grouped in front of them. Azalea 'Peach Kirin' has also been planted to compliment an existing group. In Stainton Dell we have been bulking up the existing woodland planting. Come along in summer to view some of the new additions! *Vancouveria hexandra* has made a return to the Park collection along with *Podophyllum emodi* and *Iris setosa* 'Variegata'. *Dicentra formosa* 'Alba' has been planted next to the water, and *Tigridia* (Jockey Caps) will give a range of colour from white through to red with yellow spots and yellow with red spots. *Rhododendron* 'Cornubia' and *Rhododendron* 'John Bull' have been planted on the Tea House bank. They should look spectacular in future seasons. *Clivia caulescens* has been planted along Smith Walk. This species is a new addition to the Park's *Clivia* collection. Its blooms are similar to those of the common salmon-orange Clivias except they hang gracefully downwards and have contrasting green tips.

At the time of writing, we are renovating and replanting in the Traffic Islands garden at Brooklands. At the nearby Gables, *Rosa* 'Mutabilis' has been planted beneath the old Grape (*Vitis vinifera*) vines and *Magnolia* x 'Arabian Nights' will be planted in this area. The Volunteers of the Friends of the Park have done a wonderful job maintaining the plants and weeding and mulching the gardens at The Gables. The knowledge within the Volunteers team and the good old-fashioned laughter and ribbing creates a very interesting work atmosphere! It is a pleasure to get my hands dirty on an occasional Thursday morning with them.



Photo Derek Hughes

Fernery upgrade

**Donna Christiansen
Technical Officer Fernery and Display Houses**



It has been a very busy and exciting few months at the Fernery and Display Houses. The redevelopment project is well under way. After years of planning and meetings the earthworks started on 20 June 2012. It was a great day for our team who have been dreaming and planning for the last four years to hear the sound of the graders as they worked on the widening of Racecourse Walk to allow access for vehicles, and on construction of the building site compound with an office and storage for the builders. The diggers and large dump trucks to clear the site were the next stage, demolishing the old buildings and removing soil to level the building site. This was a slow process because of the restricted access into the site. The initial earth works took about three weeks then the builders started on the foundations of the staff offices

and facilities. They poured the concrete floor on 17 August after a week's delay because of wet weather. The brick layers then started on the external block walls. The earthworks are still continuing on the upper level with excavation of soil from the area where our new potting, implement, and chemical shed will be situated. We have



been told they have removed 600 cubic meters of soil from the site and there is still a lot to be removed.

Every day it is exciting to see what will happen next. On 14 September, a team of roofing specialists was here first thing in the morning and started laying thin metal panels on the roof of the main structure covering the whole roof in one day. Then the builders will pour concrete over this and it will be the roof of the lower building and the floor for the glasshouses that will be built on top. The next few weeks will be very busy with the construction of the sheds, pouring of the concrete roof, and the re-roofing of the Fern House. Heating units that will run off a new boiler will be installed in the next couple of months and more heating pipes to increase the winter temperatures in the heated areas, increasing the minimum temperature from 8°C to 15°C, will provide a better environment for our cold tender plants which struggle or sometimes die over the cold months.

While all this construction is happening there is no access from the Fred Parker Lawn but we are pleased that a steady stream of visitors have still come via the Horton Walk entrance. Spring has kicked in and the plants are starting to grow rapidly. We are now planning for the Garden Spectacular in late October.



**Fernery redevelopment
August – September 2012.**

Photos David Medway



Brooklands Zoo's Aquatics

Anna Willetts
Keeper Brooklands Zoo

Brooklands Zoo's collection of aquatic species is small, but fascinating! Our Red Devil Cichlid (*Amphilophus labiatus*), named Simon, originates from Central America. This species is what you call a rogue fish. They are very territorial and aggressive so tank mates are not an option for Simon and he has been housed alone for most of his life. He has razor-sharp teeth and a powerful jaw, so we have to make sure he doesn't get too close to anyone! He is big, fast, and loves to defend his home, which usually means ramming the glass of his tank. Visitors to the Zoo call him the "kissing fish" so we try our best to educate children and parents alike that this is Simon behaving aggressively and he is actually trying to attack. He is mostly carnivorous and has a diet of live, dry, and quality frozen foods, with the addition of fresh greens to help the digestive system.



Our lovely African Clawed Frogs (*Xenopus laevis*) originate from South Africa. We have one female and four males but the female, which is larger than the male in this species, is the dominant one and has to always eat first. This is a fully aquatic species of frog, and they only come to the surface for extra oxygen. They like dark places and are nocturnal. Thanks to a "built-in" sensor that runs in a line down their body, they can sense movement in the water, and they use their hands to find prey and the claws on their feet to rip food apart. We feed them live bugs as well as wholesome frozen food.

Last but not least is our Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*) and Bristlenose Pleco (*Ancistrus* sp.) tank. The Guppies, which originate from the West Indies-South American area, are brightly coloured, the males more so than the females, and are active little fish. Guppies are the most commonly kept aquarium fish in the world as they are a hardy species, making them a good pick for beginner aquarists. They are fed flake food, fresh greens, and insect larvae. Guppies, which are also known as "Millionfish", give birth to up to 50 live young at a time. Our Bristlenose Plecos, which originate from South America, have powerful sucker mouths which keep their tanks nice and clean as they eat most of the algae and left-over food. We have a male and seven of his offspring at the Zoo. He is a great dad having fathered more than 150 offspring during his five years!