



**Title:** “Dutch Vibrance”

**Description:** Orange tulips, Southland.

**Photographer:** Henrik Moller

**Where, when:** Triflor tulip farm, Edendale, Southland, October 2021.

**Sustainability?** A visit last month to Triflor tulip farm in Edendale, southland, threw me into sensory overload. They produce 60 million tulip bulbs there every year and ship them around the world for people to grow on. The tulips are splashes of colour to mark their life’s milestones, annual festivals, loves and griefs. Gratitude and a sense for the beauty of life in all its forms sustain us for the lifetime journeys, including acting more sustainably and lovingly to each other, to plants and animals, and to our place in the planet.

I think photographs can help secure our future simply by reminding us of nature’s beauty. The orange tulips lifted me the most - no wonder the Dutch have orange as their national colour. Many countries use a plant or animal to symbolise their national identity – for us it’s usually the kiwi, for Dutch, we think of tulips. National pride can be a powerful motivator to care for our ecosystems, our people and our economy. Joining our identity symbolically to a particular species shows just how close our relationship with our own plants and animals can be for us as a collective and thereby galvanise action. It’s always going to be easier to find money and resources to save kiwi than to save a small dull colour invertebrate, even if the latter is by far the most important for ecosystem functioning.

Some indigenous knowledge owners use sight, touch, smell and sound as the key *tohu* (a Māori word for indicators or signs) to decide if a place is healthy. They speak of listening the ‘language of the forest’ and knowing from its smell and sound if it is healthy and the way it looks (... enter sustainability photographers!). Ecologists like me have tried to boil the indicators down to numbers to measure ecosystem health and our progress in healing it. Combining the approaches gets the best of both

worlds. Most of us will rejoice if we can restore the dawn chorus of birds in our New Zealand forests which are being silenced by rat and stoat predation.

**Photo notes:** I used focus-stacking to maximise depth of field and a polarising filter to maintain the vibrant colour (it was real!) and reduce flare from morning dew). Three focus stacked images were then joined to form this panorama. It was low light at dawn, but I was lucky that there was no wind, so I could expose the shots for 1/6s and open the aperture reasonably wide (f/10). I used a wide angle (18 mm focal length) to give a sense of the expanse of colour (it was surreal!), and ISO-100 to ensure detail.

This is one of six photographs of the Triflor tulip farm presented in this gallery (HM#022 – HM#027).

**Digital specs:** 9,692 x 4,292 pixels (41 MP).

**Key words:** Farming, rural landscape, tulips, flowers, orange, Dutch, Holland, national identity, Henrik Moller, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

**Price:** \$150 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

Visit [www.ecosystemsphotography/sales](http://www.ecosystemsphotography/sales) for details & to order, and to get a quote if you want a high-quality print.

**Donation:** The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for the *Forest Hill Trust* based in Gore, Southland [https://www.facebook.com/forced\\_account\\_switch?next=https%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com%2FForestHillFoundationTrust%2F&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/forced_account_switch?next=https%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com%2FForestHillFoundationTrust%2F&_rdr).

I recommend that the donation goes to the *Forest Hill Trust* because it is a not-for-profit coalition of local volunteers who are working to restore the 578 ha (1430 acre) Forest Hill Scenic Reserve. Forest Hill is the most significant remnant of forest surviving in the Southland Plains area. It is ideally suited to becoming a mainland island and would be an outstanding sanctuary for threatened species on the mainland. Forest Hill is surrounded by farm land making pest eradication and possible predator proof fencing a practical and cost-effective option. The vision for the project is: "To remove forever all introduced mammalian pests and predators from the Forest Hill Scenic Reserve and restore the forest to a healthy diversity of indigenous flora and fauna, many species of which have not been seen in the area in our lifetimes."

**Image Ref:** HM#023 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence)

**Henrik Moller**

29 November 2021.