



**Title:** *"Flowers & Forest"*

**Description:** Tulips and kahikatea forest, Southland.

**Photographer:** Henrik Moller

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

**Sustainability?** I was struck by the contrasts in this view – a stunning array of pinks and cream from Holland at my feet, leading my eye to a New Zealand icon – the muted greens and greys of lowland kahikatea forest in the background. The first speaks of radiance, light and temporary bloom, the latter of permanence and solidity.

What a mix of habitats now find a place in New Zealand's ecological landscapes. We have over 19,000 species of introduced vascular plants in New Zealand, of which over 2000 are naturalised. This contrasts with an entire indigenous flora of little more than 2000 species. So about half of our plant biodiversity is from elsewhere in the world.

Sometimes those introduced species are useful economically (think of the pasture grasses and legumes), and we benefit from some amazing introduced 'ecosystem engineers' like earthworms (the species that create ecological opportunity and habitat for other species). However, sometimes the introduced species become pests – around 240 introduced plants have become invasive weeds. We can think of the latter as space invaders – they are quietly taking over our place and squeezing out the native species.

But just once in a while, the introduced species are beautiful, like these tulips, and most of can agree that they are welcome newcomers in our ecological communities.

A few remnants of that once expansive southland forest persist. The native species also have flowers of course, but they are most often small and white. The latter is thought to be an evolutionary adaptation – the white is more effective at attracting moths for pollination (moths are colour blind) whereas bright colours attract day-flying insects and birds for pollination.

New Zealand stands out on a world scale as having a spectacular diversity of moths and very few butterflies. Ecologists refer to moths as providing the "supporting" ecosystem services by pollinating our native species and thereby helping the forest to naturally regenerate and persist. Everything has an ecological place and role – we have just mixed things up a bit!

**Photo notes:** I took this photo at Triflor, a tulip farm near Edendale in Southland. It's a a stitch of 52 images each exposed for 1/160s using a zoom lens at 100 mm, f/11 and ISO-200.

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

**Digital specs:** 24,730 x 6,568 pixels (162 MP).

**Key words:** Farming, rural landscape, tulips, flowers, white, pollination, moths, introduced biodiversity, weeds, Henrik Moller, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

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

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**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#025 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence)

**Henrik Moller**

29 November 2021.