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## New Amphitheatre takes shape at Awhitu

Work is progressing on the new stage for the amphitheatre at Cheryle Gail's Awhitu property.

The amphitheatre was designed by guests of Cheryle's who have their own amphitheatre in Hawaii, and is constructed of local materials to give it the appearance of having grown out of the earth. Eight gum tree trunks unloaded last week at the site in Boiler Gully Road will be positioned to give the appearance of supporting the stage. Limbs from a neighbour's puriri tree will form stage arches, with giant bamboo acting as flagpoles. With a pond in front of the stage, and an area for a firepit, the stage will be a work of art in itself, even when not in use for cultural events.

"Seating is on seven grassed earth terraces where people can sit on blankets and bring a picnic basket and a bottle of wine," says Cheryle. "The amphitheatre has been three and a half years in the making so far, to provide a centre where local people can attend affordable, accessible cultural events."



**Local people are pitching in to help Cheryle realise the vision of an outdoor amphitheatre at Awhitu. Terry Atchinson, pictured with Cheryle, is one of the local residents helping with materials for the stage.**

Cheryle is in the process of forming a trust to bring in arts and cultural funding to complete the amphitheatre. It is planned to stage theatre festivals with patrons bussing in from Waiuku.

"I am looking for local people who have the time and energy and a desire to see more events happening in the area," Cheryle says. "Until it's built, events will continue to be held in the art studio and ballroom."