

The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends

June 2019



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Front cover image: Neville Haydon's *Camellia* 'Transpink' Photo: Jack Hobbs

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The
Auckland Garden
is the quarterly
newsletter of the
Auckland Botanic
Gardens and Friends

Auckland
Botanic Gardens
102 Hill Road
Manurewa
Auckland 2105

Jack's update

After more than a decade of planning, securing funding and construction it will be time to celebrate the opening of our new Pacific Pathway.

The history of the pathway goes back to our Botanic Gardens Master Plan that was adopted in 2010. The Master Plan stated the purpose of the Pacific Pathway is to "harmoniously unite the various and complex components of the Botanic Gardens in a manner that optimizes visitor enjoyment, way finding and understanding of key messages. Emphasis is placed on clear orientation that provides visitors with an unambiguous and seamless journey through the plant collections."

I feel it is important to revisit this original purpose now as we will shortly know if the pathway delivers on these objectives. Recently many of our volunteers had a sneak preview of the pathway on a guided tour with Renton, Julia and other staff. The feedback received was extremely positive, so we feel reassured that it is going to be a wonderful enhancement of visitor experience.

We are now embroiled in the fun part of the project, the planting. The planting has been designed to reinforce the "distinctive South

Pacific character" of the pathway. Pohutukawa and the Chatham Island nikau will be planted at regular intervals, the same two signature trees that feature around our visitor centre Huakaiwaka.

The Pacific Pathway widens at regular intervals into nodes which feature rocks, seating and themed plantings where visitors can pause and decide where to go next. The intention is that visitors only enter our plant collections from the nodes rather than by randomly stepping off the path that connects them. To achieve this the pathways are being densely planted on both sides, mostly with native plants that will provide dramatic contrast of texture and form. Where the pathway traverses the Perennial Garden, it will be lined with a *Camellia sasanqua* 'Paradise Helen' hedge on one side, and a display of perennials on the other.

The visitor services team are working on signage that will further assist visitors with their decision making and way finding. Additional seating in the nodes will be gradually provided. A limited number will be dedicated seats available for people to fund and have a plaque attached. As the seats will be made of stone the dedication will be permanent, unlike our wooden seats which are renewed every 10 years. If

interested, please enquire at our visitor centre.

Recently, Tony Carson celebrated 40 years of service to the Gardens at a lunch with his colleagues, a very happy occasion. Just a few weeks later Tony was in hospital after collapsing at work. Our staff responded professionally and with great compassion, and their regular visits and support have been of great comfort to Tony. Fortunately, Tony was quickly found by his team leader, Shaun Rice, and treated in hospital, and we are delighted and relieved to report he is making a good recovery.

Autumn foliage colour in Auckland is distinctly subdued in comparison to cooler parts of the country. Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a notable exception that is always a blaze of colour as winter approaches.

Otherwise we depend mainly on flowers rather than foliage to brighten our autumn, such as the silk floss tree (*Ceiba speciosa*) which stops visitors in their tracks with its profusion of pink blooms. Autumn-flowering camellias such as *Camellia sasanqua* are autumn mainstays. Although they are mostly grown as shrubs and hedges, many make wonderful small trees once mature with interesting trunks that are ideal for smaller gardens. We have several mature specimens in our Camellia Garden along the pathway nearest the Rose Garden that are worth checking out. Emma and I are currently evaluating



our autumn camellia collection and will publish our findings next year. In the meantime, we can confidently recommend 'Paradise Helen' (white), 'Paradise Belinda' (rose pink), 'Paradise Pearl' (formal double pink and white), the compact 'Paradise Little Liane' (white double) and the vigorous upright 'Yoi Machi' (white flushed pink).

Salvias are also great value at this time of year. Stars of our autumn garden have included *Salvia madrensis*, *S. iodantha*, and *S. leucantha* which is a mass of velvety purple spires for many months.

Jack Hobbs

Visitor Services updates

New team members:

The Visitor Services team have two new members following the retirement of Nicky Gordon and Kate McGee completing her maternity cover contract.

We welcome Sabion Pivac to the role of Visitor Services Representative. Sabion joins the team with some horticultural experience having spent time on an organic farm and more recently working with libraries and a museum. She enjoys connecting with people of all ages and undertook guided tours in her most recent role at a museum. She is looking forward

to learning more about our gardens and sharing stories with the public.

Greg Meylan is our new Projects Officer and will be working with the team to develop our ability to capture people's interest in plants through our storytelling. Greg has worked as a content writer for Auckland Museum and more recently overseas. His experience with translating complex information into something visitors can connect with will be invaluable to achieving our engagement objectives.

Micheline Newton



Biosecurity trail launched at the Gardens:

We recently launched a biosecurity trail here at the Gardens in collaboration with Better Border Biosecurity (B3), funded by Plant and Food Research. The trail aims to give locals and overseas visitors a chance to learn about New Zealand's flora as well as the role they play in protecting it. Brief information about pests and diseases that threaten New Zealand's flora and primary industries, including brown marmorated stink bug, myrtle rust and kauri dieback, is displayed at each of the 12 check points along the path.

Visitors can scan the QR code at

The installation of the biosecurity trail by Plant and Food Research scientists Vicky Davis (left) and Manoharie Sandanayaka (right) and myself.



each check point to be directed to either a video or website for additional information on the pest or the disease and how to prevent its spread. While locals are encouraged to experience the trail, the project team wants to raise biosecurity awareness amongst overseas visitors too. Try the 1.8 km trail and let us know what you think!

Upcoming events:

Our calendar of gardening workshops for the year is in full swing, with a wide range of seasonal topics being covered by our staff. Visit the "What's On" section of our website for upcoming events such as fruit tree pruning, rose pruning and tool sharpening.

Volunteer update:

In May we enjoyed a "sneak peek" behind the scenes tour of the new Pacific Pathway (set to open later in 2019). It was a great afternoon with a large contingent of volunteers in attendance, and the walk led by Renton (team leader Assets) was inspiring and enjoyed by all. Afternoon tea was followed by a research talk by curator Bec Stanley on a wide range of research projects undertaken at the Gardens. Our next volunteer get-together will be later in the year – please email julia.watson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz if you would like us to cover any subject you are interested in with regards to the Gardens, we would love to hear your feedback.

Julia Watson

From the President

As the leaves fall gracefully off my liquidambar, I realise my time as President of the Friends is also ending in September. This report is going to focus on opportunities for people to be a Friend of the Auckland Botanic Gardens, and like me, be involved in whichever way you choose – in governance, as a volunteer, a supporter of any of our programmes, a sculptor for the upcoming exhibition of Sculpture in the Gardens, a patron or sponsor and above all, a frequent visitor of the Gardens to witness the change of seasons and changes to the journey through the Gardens.

I joined the Friends Executive Committee following my time as an Auckland Regional Councillor because I wanted to continue to be part of the future development of the Gardens – to be part of the evolution as the Auckland Botanic Gardens 2010 Master Plan for the next 50 years was to be realised. The Pacific Pathway was an important element of that Plan and is gradually being developed to draw visitors in to plant collections rather than just walk around the service road. The overflow car park has also been recently completed, but one of my great regrets is not being able to build the planned epiphytium – it has been designed as a magnificent structure, a world first – but alas the

cost has escalated and the Auckland Council has found other priorities to fund!

One of my greatest delights is having secured a decade of secure funding for the next five Sculpture in the Garden exhibitions. A great team effort must be acknowledged – Councillors dedicated to the Gardens and the exhibition as a draw card, Manurewa Local Board, the Friends Executive, management and staff of the Gardens, the SitG Organising Committee members, Patrons and Sponsors who supported us through the 2017-18 exhibition and now are supporting us for the future.

These are opportunities taken up at a grander scale but there are many ways Friends can be involved – just as essential but maybe not recognised so publicly. Many Friends assist as volunteers in the Gardens themselves, such as the Growing Friends – a passionate group who propagate and sell plants to the public, with all proceeds going into the Gardens through the direction of the Executive Committee. Others turn up after the roses have finished blooming and remove the dead-heads, others work with the Education and Partnerships Co-ordinator or assist in the Visitor Centre. Volunteers are rostered to manage the Wiri Rambler, which

provides a guided tour on wheels to allow more visitors to explore and enjoy the Gardens; other volunteers are rostered to assist the Records/Research staff in the Friends Library which has one of the largest selections of horticultural books, journals and reference materials in the country. Many gardening periodicals are available to the visiting public to read.

Not all opportunities mean “work” – but if painting is your pleasure, join the Painting Friends on the last Saturday of each month, with tutors invited to lead and support the group every second month. The focus is botanical but members are encouraged to explore other subjects and a variety of media. Each year we host a Soup Day whereby the Executive members cook and serve a range of soups to the Friends; there are two organised bus trips – one spring and one autumn; there are other organised events with speakers of horticultural interest and invitations to celebrate the opening and to view the Sculpture in the Gardens or other exhibitions. Friends are invited to demonstrations and to enjoy the workshops provided by a visiting artist. Friends receive this free quarterly newsletter – full of interesting news and helpful advice.

Overall, the objectives of the Friends are to:

- promote and support the development of the Auckland Botanic Gardens;

- co-operate with the staff of the Gardens in promoting and supporting the interests of the Gardens;
- foster public interest in New Zealand in horticulture and gardens plants particularly those suitable for the Auckland area;
- assist in acquiring funds for special projects associated with the development of the Gardens’ facilities and services for the benefit of the public;
- raise funds for the development of the Gardens;
- conduct such activities as will promote membership of the Society and support its objectives.

The Friends encourage staff to undertake further training and bring ideas back to benefit the Gardens – we frequently assist staff financially to attend conferences and we manage bequests and awards that benefit the Gardens and/or staff. One such award – the Buchanan Award of \$10,000 – is offered every second year for a staff member to undertake professional development -- frequently but not always – to experience international horticultural/botanical trends, through travel to one or more countries. In alternate years, the funds go towards more local activities, such as attending conferences in Australia or New Zealand.

This is a snapshot of several activities where the Friends and the Gardens

management work in progressive partnership – as a Friend reading this we trust you take opportunities offered but please encourage your friends and family to join us – we do rely on financial and physical support to undertake our roles. Programmes, projects and facilities are waiting to be developed – we are looking for photographers to re-establish our Photographic competition with a perpetual cup on hold. Visit our renewed website to get more news

and to download a membership application form for new members – www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/about-us/friends-of-the-auckland-botanic-gardens/, collect one from the Visitor Centre (a growing friendship) or contact the Friends' administrator on friendsofabg@gmail.com.

See you at the AGM on Saturday 28 September.

Dianne Glenn ONZM JP

Growing Friends report

Mild weather, and a little rain, has made for great growing conditions and our stock is looking very tidy. We have an excellent line of camellias at \$8.00, these sell as soon as they flower, so come in and see for yourself on any Thursday morning. We are stopping Sunday sales for the winter months, so our next Sunday sale will be in September.

Our May Sunday sale took over \$800. We also had two great days at the plant sale at Ayrilies. It really is a great garden and an amazing place to live and work. We had one sunny day, and one cloudy day and it was so good to see the moods of the garden in different conditions. The event will happen again next year so look out for it.

Bronwen Rowse

Wiri Rambler report

We have been unable to operate since February 2018 owing to the construction work at the Gardens. With the work progressing well, we are hopeful of starting up again in September. In the meantime our drivers will be having a refresher practice around the new car park when it is not in use. This will be followed by a run through the new route for which the guides will be updating our notes. The team is eager to be working again with all the people who join us on the Rambler.

Kate Moodie

Friends Soup Day

Note:

The time for getting booking slips in is very short, so please don't wait!

Beat the winter wet and chill - join the Friends for Midwinter Soup Day and enjoy a delicious lunch. So much more than just soup!

This year Gardens Manager, Jack Hobbs, will be talking to us about his recent trip around and through Australia by boat and train – a look at parts of the big red land that few of us will have seen.

So, join us for great food, good company and a fascinating talk. Numbers are limited so get your booking slip in to the Friends early to be sure of a ticket. Friends members only, please.

To Book

Please complete and post the enclosed booking slip to Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens, 102 Hill Rd, Manurewa, 2105.

Payment can be made by:

- enclosing a cheque with your booking slip;
- cash or eftpos at the Visitor Centre. Please either post or leave your booking slip with the staff;
- direct deposit to ASB 123011 0757619 00. Please ensure your name and "Soup Day" are on the bank transfer and the booking slip is posted.

Any questions, phone Liz Powell, 09 6301 259.

When: 12 midday,
Sunday 7 July 2019

Where: Friends Building,
Auckland Botanic
Gardens

Cost: \$15 per person

Book by: Tuesday 25 June

Friends membership subscriptions

Membership subscriptions for the Friends 2019/20 financial year are now due. For those members who hold individual, partner, student or affiliate memberships a renewal form is included in this Newsletter. Members who joined within the last two months will have their subscription carried over into the new financial year.

Subscriptions can be paid by cheque, eftpos or cash at the Visitor Centre or by direct deposit (ASB 123011 0757619 00. Please put your name on the bank transfer and indicate that this is a membership renewal). Thank you.

Neville Haydon QSM, 1926 – 2019

Neville Haydon was one of New Zealand's most distinguished horticulturists and he was acknowledged as a giant in the world of camellias. He was an Honorary Life Member and sometime Patron of the New Zealand Camellia Society, a Life Member of the Friends, Auckland Botanic Gardens, and in 2006 was elected an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. In 2010, he received one of the two inaugural President's Medals for outstanding service to the International Camellia Society, an award for those who make extraordinary contributions to the world of camellias. In 2015, a pavilion in the Auckland Botanic Gardens Camellia Garden was named in his honour. He was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 2016 for his services to horticulture.

Neville was born in Auckland and brought up at Southdown, where his father was head stockman at the AFFCO freezing works. Secondary schooling was at Auckland Grammar but he left school at the age of 15 to take up office work (at a starting salary of £1 a week) and night school to study for his accountancy qualifications. Accountancy was to keep him busy for the next 30 years apart from six months off in 1954/5 to watch his then obsession (his



Neville Haydon with his camellia 'Festival of Lights' (*Camellia pitardii* hybrid).
Photo Jack Hobbs, 2011.

words), football (soccer), in England.

Neville was long associated with association football mainly through the Mt Wellington Club (which later amalgamated with the University Club to form Unimount). He had

style. One report described him as "...a brainy player, sound, light and tireless. He was small, even by the standards of the day, at a touch over 5' 6" and less than ten stone in weight. His special talent came at left half where he gathered up the loose balls by guile and sprayed them to his team mates. It was classic stuff in a time when halfbacks were often chunky, hard men who rattled their opponent's teeth in tackles."

Neville had a very successful career as a player – as an Auckland representative 1947-1952 and as a North Island representative in 1949. In 1959 he was Auckland Football Association Sportsman of the Year and in 1963 Mt Wellington District Sportsman of the year as well as being elected a Mt Wellington AFC Life Member. From 1967 to 1973 he was Club President, and he was then Patron for many years. He was also an enthusiastic tennis player.

Neville moved into his own home when he was 30 and "...commenced gardening as a counterpoint to chasing soccer and tennis balls". As one of his nephews remembered, Neville believed that in sport, there was only one winner; in gardening, everybody could be a winner. He "quickly gravitated to majoring in camellias". He had first seen camellias ('Aspasia Macarthur' and its sports 'Anemoniflora' and 'Helenor') at his grandmother's garden in Devonport but became completely hooked after visiting one

of the first Auckland camellia shows. He liked to specialize. At the age of 47, he left accountancy to found a nursery, Camellia Haven at Takanini, South Auckland. Neville told me that he was at a meeting of accountancy and business colleagues, looked at them and thought, "How boring – I don't want to end up like them!" Camellia Haven soon became the best specialist camellia nursery in the country. Neville quickly learnt "...the differences between hobby and commercial horticulture". The business expanded to the stage of having four employees, all of whom had joined as teenagers and were still with him when he sold up and "retired" in 2000.

Neville introduced many valuable species and cultivars from overseas. He also bred some outstanding camellia cultivars, particularly camellias that were suitable for smaller gardens. He had a special liking for the small-leafed, mass-flowering species and the hybrids developed from them. He selected for plant form, leaf shape and colour, plant size, flower characters and number of flowers. Amongst his notable successes were 'Baby Bear', an outstanding miniature camellia plant with an extremely dense dwarf habit; 'Takanini', which has deep red anemone-form blooms and a particularly long flowering season; 'Baby Willow', another dwarf but one with a weeping habit, a cross between *Camellia rosaeflora* and a *C. tsaii* hybrid ('Mother Bear');

'Sunsong' with formal pink blooms; 'Transpink', a *C. transnokoensis* hybrid; 'Dr Colin Crisp', with white semi-double flowers and a large boss of golden stamens; and 'Peggy Burton', a pink semi-double, a *C. pitardii* hybrid, a seedling of 'Nicky Crisp'. In 1991, he was awarded the Plant Raisers Award of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture for his work in developing new camellia cultivars.

Neville was a member of the New Zealand Camellia Society for nearly 60 years as well as the Australian, American, Southern Californian and International Camellia Societies. He was an active committee member of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Camellia Society for 35 years, was Treasurer of the Branch for many years, and Chairman for seven years. He was a generous donor of plant material to meetings of the Auckland Branch. As a commercial camellia nurseryman, he did not participate in the affairs of the national Camellia Society, to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. However, he was an accredited national camellia judge for more than 30 years, judging at both national and local shows, as well as being a guest judge for shows in Australia and California, and he assisted with the organisation of at least four of the national camellia shows held in Auckland. He was made an Honorary Life Member of the New Zealand Camellia Society in 1989.

He served as Director and membership representative for the ICS (International Camellia Society) New Zealand region and then as treasurer for 13 years. He was appointed Camellia Registrar by the ICS from 1990 to 2015 and completed the monumental tasks of preparing the second supplement (480 pages) and transferring the existing International Camellia Register (more than 30,000 entries over 1900 pages) to digital form and adding newly registered cultivars.

Neville's support of research on camellias, particularly on ways to combat camellia petal blight, is amongst the most important of his contributions to the world of camellias. For many years he was a trustee of the New Zealand Memorial Camellia Trust, the most significant funder of camellia research internationally. His expert advice was freely given, as were large amounts of experimental plant material. One research programme alone required some 300 plants, all strictly standardised – all of which he presented to the Trust. For many years he was also the inaugural Chairman of the International Camellia Society Otomo Fund which sponsors camellia research. In 2016, he made a donation of £30,000 to the Otomo Fund and when thanked, said in his typically understated way that he was glad that the cheque was "... a pleasant surprise, which was the intention" – and that now

he could "... enjoy watching how you use it".

Neville was also particularly generous in donating his professional skills as an accountant: as well as serving as Treasurer of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Camellia Society, he acted as Treasurer of two trusts of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, the RNZIH Gardens Trust and the RNZIH Education Trust. He was also Treasurer of the Friends, Auckland Botanic Gardens, for more than ten years.

In recent years he was a keen supporter of the work of the Auckland Botanic Gardens. He provided hundreds of camellia plants, particularly *Camellia* species, which resulted in the Gardens being named as one of 27 International Camellia Gardens of Excellence. He provided much advice and guidance on the plantings in the camellia garden and he encouraged breeding programmes for resistance to camellia petal blight. The Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Camellia Society and the Friends, Auckland Botanic Gardens, each contributed \$10,000 to establish a fund, named in his honour, to encourage and support research into combatting petal blight. He stressed the importance of breeding using cultivars of the species that had been identified as having resistance. Until very recently, Neville was actively involved in advising and assisting staff and students and we look forward to

seeing the progeny of these crosses when they start flowering. In March of this year, the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Camellia Society made a further generous donation of \$9000 to the Haydon Fund and this has been again matched by an equal sum from the Friends, Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Neville was a quiet man, reserved and rather shy. In his days as a nurseryman, he was certainly no glib salesman and would often cross-examine those who wanted to buy his plants. He wanted to ensure his plants went to good homes. Under a seemingly gruff exterior was a remarkably gentle and kind man who proved himself as a very good friend. We will remember Neville as a distinguished horticulturist: more importantly, we will remember him as a loyal and generous friend.

Ross Ferguson

This obituary is largely based on citations published in *The Auckland Garden*, newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends, the *New Zealand Camellia Bulletin* and the *New Zealand Garden Journal*, journal of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (Inc.). I also acknowledge information provided by the late Dr Rod Bielecki. The quote comes from *From the Farm to the Mountain, The History of the First 75 years of the Onehunga Mangere Association Football Club, 1921 to 1996* by Trevor Rowse.

Rod Bieleski seat

A new seat has been installed in the Camellia Garden and dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Rod Bieleski.

At a gathering held on Wednesday, 6 March, Jack Hobbs, Auckland Botanic Gardens Manager, spoke of Rod's many contributions to the Gardens and acknowledged in particular the strong personal support that he had received from Rod over many years. He mentioned his sustained interest in the Gardens and his efforts as a trustee, a member and President of the Friends, as a curator of photographs and his many years as editor of *The Auckland Garden*. Because of Rod's interest in

camellias, it was a very appropriate setting for a seat in his memory. Ros May of the New Zealand Camellia Society pointed out that it was fortunate that one of the *Camellia* species nearby was already in flower (*Camellia puniceiflora* with its small pink flowers). Karen Bieleski, speaking on behalf of Val and sister Lisa Clements, spoke of Rod's commitment to the Gardens and how much the family appreciated the opportunity of meeting some of his longstanding friends and the staff of the Gardens who knew him well. Over morning tea many of those present reminisced happily over Rod's activities and the important part he had played in their lives.

Lisa Clements, Val Bieleski and Karen Bieleski
Photograph by Julia Watson



Friends Visiting Artist Programme

The Friends Committee is delighted to announce that this year's Visiting Artist is Brenda McCallum, a member of the Friends and accomplished jeweller.

Benda, who presents her jewellery under the name Brenda Hart, will be working in the Visitor Centre Gallery and around the Gardens and demonstrating her jeweller's skills and techniques from June to October and preparing work for an exhibition and sale towards the end of the period.

Brenda has trained in the United States, at the Hungry Creek Arts and Craft School at Puhoi and at UNITEC. She works in silver, copper, bronze and resin using traditional methods and traditional tools, e.g., lost wax casting and repoussé. She gets much of her inspiration from nature and spends time in the Gardens sketching and collecting interesting seed pods, leaves, twigs and flowers which inspire her work. She enjoys the research and history involved in developing an idea into a work of art. She has exhibited in and supplied work for sale to a large number of galleries including Te Papa and Auckland Museum.

This year is the 250th Anniversary of Cook's voyages to New Zealand. The Gardens will be celebrating this

event in a number of ways, focusing in particular on the work of botanists Banks and Solander. Brenda's work fits in well with this theme – celebrating New Zealand's unique indigenous flora.

Details of Brenda's days working at the Gardens and any specific demonstrations will be available on the Gardens website www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz

We look forward to an interesting and exciting time watching an expert at work creating beautiful and desirable objects – save up, they'll be hard to resist!!

Liz Powell



Sculpture in the Gardens

The upcoming exhibition is the 7th one held and it is good to know that "some things never change". The exhibition will still be on all summer, still be free, and still be a 1.8 km trail through many of the Gardens' highlights. The event will also again feature the indoor gallery guided walks, entertainment and workshops.

Still unchanged too is the hard slog for the budget - but good news is that generous support for the next 10 years has been provided by Auckland Council, the Friends once again have contributed, and staff support is strong from the Gardens. Kind patronage again is key, and in-kind engineering services provided by Airey Consultants, Beca, Structure Design and Envivo is invaluable. The McConnell family are again our wonderful sponsors of the Supreme Award. However, key funding partners have been lost this year

due to ever increasing competition for funding and honing of their funding objectives. The operational side of the exhibition is funded - but the fundraising continues as we are determined that the community engagement component of the event will be great!

Even those who think they've "seen it all before" will know that the exhibition has a unique flavour every year, and this year many of the twenty artists are new to the exhibition. The artists collectively range from some of New Zealand's most experienced, to some just new to public art. The Curatorial Panel of Linda Tyler, Rachel de Lambert and Brett Graham specifically sought out works that spoke to and of the Gardens' location, many having

The Sculpture in the Gardens team for 2019-20 including our artists, engineers and curators at the recently held Artists Working Day.



environmental related messages, and some even with reference to the Gardens' teams.

Perhaps the biggest change to this exhibition will be new locations. Many paths, lawns and gardens that have hosted sculptures now no longer exist. The new Pacific Pathway will be like a new outdoor gallery with its serpentine paths leading visitors from the Huakaiwaka visitor centre towards the Rose

Garden, providing a new exciting landscape for the sculptures.

It's still a way to go, but the call for volunteers to assist is now open - and that is one thing that definitely never changes - the need for our wonderful volunteer's help!

Sculpture in the Gardens 17
November 2019 - 1 March 2020.
www.sculptureinthegardens.nz

Kim Stretton

Friends autumn bus trip to Whitford

A 28-seat bus had been booked for our group but a 52-seat bus arrived at the Gardens. With all on board, the sun shining on a beautiful autumn day we set off. Ten minutes into our trip the bus decided it was not going any further. After the driver contacted the depot another large bus arrived and we continued our journey.

We first visited Huntingwood. Our driver skilfully manoeuvred us through the gateway with an inch or two clearance. Doreen Follas welcomed us and guided us on a tour of her English-style garden. We started with the gardens that had been horse paddocks when she moved there. The area is clay soil, wet in winter and opens up with cracks in summer. To overcome this problem, Doreen uses large amounts

of mulch that will rot down. Along a fence she built boxing to raise the level with soil for her roses. Among the trees and various gardens there was an eye-catching snake-shaped bed of bush white camellias and purple *Salvia leucantha*.

When we reached the kitchen garden Doreen's dog, Meg, joined us. She was a great hit and had a lot of attention, persuading one of our group to repeatedly toss her ball for her to fetch. The front garden is formal with box hedges. Doreen has her own way of managing box hedge blight. In September she cuts out any dead or diseased branches, does not cut again during the year. If any blight shows she sprays this and about April gives all the hedges a spray.



We all gathered on the terrace behind the Virginia creeper fringe for morning tea. Doreen is an amazing and energetic woman who alone created and cares for 99% of her four-acre garden which is a great credit to her. We were invited back for a spring visit when her many roses will be in bloom.

Then after a short drive to Ayrilies, Jacqueline, Bev McConnell's daughter, greeted us at the lychgate entrance and took us on a tour ending up at the gazebo by the swimming pool. Bev was there, she gave us a warm welcome and interesting talk about the garden. Amongst which was advice on how to achieve a

garden like Ayrilies: "... marry the right man and make sure he is rich".



After lunch there was time for people to explore where they chose. The garden is filled with a huge collection of trees, shrubs and plants as well as interesting features.

It was time well spent in a wonderful tranquil green oasis which we were privileged to visit. We boarded the bus to drive down to the wetland

area. Two energetic members of our group had earlier walked there. After a walk around one of the lakes we set off back to the Gardens. On the way we passed our first bus still sitting on the roadside where we left it. As one person said to me it had been a memorable day.

Kate Moodie

Photographs by Heather Hine

Friends Painting Group - A day at the Museum

A Day at the Museum with Banks, Solander and Fanny

Sandra Morris, one of our art group members, arranged a visit to the Auckland War Memorial Museum for some of our group. We were going to see the herbarium specimens collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander in 1769 during Captain James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific. We had our annual art exhibition to think about and were hoping this visit would give us inspiration regarding our choice of native plant to paint for our entries.

We were met by the Botany Collection Manager, Dhahara Ranatunga, and after declaring all bags free from food and drink and donning visitor stickers we were taken to the herbarium. For those of you who have never been there before, and I hadn't, it was a huge temperature and humidity controlled room with rows and rows

of shelves full of boxes of dried botanical specimens. A few were laid out on the bench for us to look at. We saw *Cyathea dealbata* (silver fern), *Knightia excelsa* (rewarewa), *Astelia banksia*, *Metrosideros excelsa* (pohutukawa), as well as *Hedycarya arborea* (pigeonwood, porokaiwhiri), *Clematis forsteri* and *Ficinia spiralis* (pingao) all collected on those voyages. We came away with even more admiration for those botanical artists who can produce lively looking plant drawings with only dried-up specimens to work from.

We were then taken to the main working area, a larger, brighter room to see what I thought would be more specimens but was thrilled to find that we were being shown some botanical paintings by Fanny Osborne (1852 – 1933), a botanical painter who lived on Great Barrier Island. This was particularly exciting for me

as I had chosen Fanny as my artist to research when working towards my Botanical Art Diploma and really loved her work so to see her actual paintings was very special. Fanny was born in Auckland on 29 January 1852, the second of 13 children of Emilie and Neill Malcolm, and when aged seven moved to Great Barrier Island where apart from the last three years of her life she stayed. Although Fanny Osborne painted on and off all her life, most of her botanical work was done once her children, all 13 of them – yes, she had 13 too, had grown up. Her husband, Alfred Osborne was a keen naturalist and encouraged Fanny by bringing specimens for her to paint which gives us a great insight into the flora of Great Barrier at that time. Fanny's work showed a critical eye for the structural detail of the plants she painted and between her husband finding rare plants and Fanny painting them, unusual specimens found only on Great Barrier were documented. In particular she noted that the flowers of local specimens of *Hoheria populnea* (Lacebark) had blue stamens, after which it became known, horticulturally, as *H. populnea* 'Osbornei'. Alfred continued to send rare specimens to Thomas Cheeseman, keen botanist as well as first director of the Auckland Institute and Museum (from 1874 until his death in 1923) adding to the wealth of knowledge being collected at that time.

Probably most of her paintings were

done between 1911 and 1916 once she was in her 60s, when she was producing sets of flower paintings for tourists who came to Tryphena. The Auckland Museum received two albums of Fanny's watercolours, which included the ones we saw. They were hand labelled with botanical names and may have been examples of the sets she put together for sale at Tryphena.

The paintings were smaller than I expected but that made her delicate and detailed work even more astounding. She must have had a very steady hand, no evidence of wobbly lines or edges! The colours of the paintings we saw were still brilliant – the red of *Clianthus puniceus* (kakabeak) was still intense – no sign of fading and the yellow of the *Sophora microphylla* (kowhai) shone as brightly as if it had been painted just recently! There was a lot of "foxing", brown marks on the paper, and signs of fading on others which were to be expected, but they were really well preserved, and any more deterioration will be minimal now they are stored correctly. Apparently, many of her other paintings haven't lasted as well.

Interestingly, Fanny painted shadows in her work. When I initially came across her work in various books, I always thought the shadows looked dingy and detracted from the overall delicacy of the images, but they were in fact very sensitively painted, giving another dimension to her work

– quite literally in fact as the flowers and leaves "popped" off the paper.

Fanny's work is still relevant today not only as an example of a very fine botanical artist but because she is one of only a very few artists to have actually painted the now extinct *Trilepidea adamsii* or Adam's mistletoe as it is more commonly called. Others are Georgina Hetley, Matilda Smith, Audrey Eagle and more recently Sue Wickison. In 2007 Sue was commissioned to paint the mistletoe and only had these paintings for colour reference as Cheeseman, who first described the plant, was colour blind and so left no colour notes. Sue mentioned that she found the paintings confusing as the colours were very different to each other, wondering if that was due to geographical distance between the specimens used, or due to the level of expertise of the artist. I was pleased to see that Sue's colours are very similar to Fanny's. The New Zealand

Plant Conservation Network must also think her painting is accurate as they use Fanny's painting as their logo. The article about Sue Wickison painting the extinct mistletoe can be seen on page 3 at <http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/publications/Trilepidea-070227b.pdf> or on her website - https://www.suewickison.com/blog/article_2007.htm

If you wish to know more about early New Zealand botanical art, here are a few books I recommend. They are in the library at the Gardens:

- *Fanny Osborne's Flower Paintings* – Jeanne H. Goulding, 1983
- *Lady Painters – The Flower Painters of Early New Zealand* – Bee Dawson, 1999
- *Early New Zealand Botanical Art* – F. Bruce Sampson. 1985

Lesley Smith

(Congratulations Lesley on recently being elected President of the Botanical Art Society of New Zealand)



Call for volunteers

We are looking for help in the following area – please contact Julia Watson if you are interested in this position or would like to find out more:

Pest control

We have updated our pest control system and now bait and trap on a "pulsing system". We are therefore looking for volunteers _ with a reasonable level of fitness who are able to walk bush tracks and are willing to help for four hours twice a week in January, April, August and November.

Sculpture in the Gardens

The call is now open for volunteers for the upcoming exhibition. Can you help with welcoming visitors, helping on workshops, or assisting with sculpture maintenance? The exhibition runs 17 November 2019 till 1 March 2020. You can volunteer throughout the whole exhibition, or for just a few weeks.

Congratulations - Dr Mike Wilcox

Congratulations Dr Mike Wilcox on being awarded an Auckland War Memorial Museum Medal.

Dr Wilcox is a member of the Friends and a noted botanist. Originally a forester with the New Zealand Forest Service, he moved to Auckland in the 1990s and worked as a forestry consultant. In more recent years he has been working with the Auckland War Memorial Museum as an Honorary Research Associate in the Botany Department curating marine algae and identifying trees in Auckland city. A book,

Auckland's Remarkable Urban Forest, was published in 2012. Last year, the result of many years' work was published, *The Seaweeds of Auckland*. A signed copy of this is held in the Library.

The Museum Medals are awarded to recognise innovation and to celebrate scholarship including outstanding contributions to the generation of new knowledge drawing on the Museum's collections and research resources. Mike is a very deserving recipient.

Ross Ferguson

Soup day is coming up on 7 July. See page 10 for details...

Note:

Time is short for booking for soup day. Book in quick!

Winter seasonal activities

Gardening in winter can be enjoyable when the weather is mild and the soil not too wet. This is the time we assess our gardens, plan for spring and tackle small or large garden bed renovations. We are currently planting, pruning, dividing, composting and tidying garden beds. We are also busy planting along the new Pacific Pathway beds and in the nodes. Topsoil stripped from the new pathway was screened and used to build up the new garden beds, and Botanic Gardens-made compost added. Nikau and pohutukawa planted in the nodes and in garden beds are the two iconic trees that accompany you along your journey. These trees are

supported by other natives such as *Astelia chathamica*, *Carex testacea*, *Coprosma virescens*, *Libertia ixioides*, *Chionochloa flavicans*, *Muehlenbeckia astonii*, *Pittosporum divaricatum*, *Pittosporum turneri*, *Leptospermum* cultivars and *Pseudopanax ferox*.

Now is the time to plant ornamental trees for colour and structures. Fruit trees are also now available at garden centres. Work ample amounts of compost into the soil before planting. Check out our website for the Top 10 fruit trees for Auckland. aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/media/2076/fruit-trees-web.pdf

Left photo, Jeff Jones and Pippa Lucas planning Pacific Pathway plantings.
Right photo, new beds ready for planting.



In the Edible Garden we've planted Florence fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* var. *azoricum*) 'Zefa Fino', *Allium fistulosum* 'White Welsh' (onion), Kohlrabi 'Azur Star', *Brassica* 'Scarlet' (kale), silverbeet and winter annuals such as *Viola* "Edible Flower Mix" and *Calendula*. Plant garlic now before the frosts arrive. Work compost into a well-drained garden bed and plant cloves about 10 cm into the ground. Garlic bulbs are available at garden centres and supermarkets. It is best to buy New Zealand-grown garlic. Add compost and sheep pellets to garden beds before planting new roses. Planting in winter allows roses to get established before the warmer drier months of summer.

Winter is the ideal time to prune roses and fruit trees. When pruning roses, we usually start with removal of the three D's – dead, diseased and distorted canes. The desired

look we want after pruning a rose is an open, vase-shape. This allows light into the centre of the plant and helps stimulate the growth of new buds and canes. Fruit trees such as apples, pears, fejoias and figs can also now be pruned. The main purpose of pruning fruit trees is to control the size of the tree, allow light and air flow circulation, increase fruit production and to remove any dead, diseased and distorted limbs. Choose a nice sunny day to prune to minimise the onset of pest and diseases.

Now is the time to lift and divide herbaceous perennials. Add ample amounts of compost when replanting divisions to help support soil structure and help condition the soil. Perennials are divided every few years to control their size, rejuvenate for floral abundance and of course to increase the number of plants.

Mere Brewer

Nursery happenings

It's all go in the nursery at the moment, waist deep in seed cleaning at the start of the new re-vegetation cycle. It's not the most glamorous job but worth it when we can sow seed of revegetation plants on our rangers' wish lists that they work so hard to collect.

At the same time we are at the end of the current cycle of dispatching

the 60,000 plants that have been produced over the past year in our nursery. Plants are now being loaded onto the truck for regional parks, their final destination. Look out for the volunteer planting dates on the OurAuckland website for a park near you.

With curators busy finishing up planning for the next planting season

we are busy fulfilling their wish lists for cuttings and annual seed sowing. Always pushing the boundaries with propagation research, Emma and I are seeing if it is possible to grow *Metrosideros parkinsonii* in Auckland. This species is found only on Aotea (Great Barrier), Hauturu (Little Barrier Island) and the western side of the South Island. We were lucky enough to receive some plant material from our friend Robyn Simcock (Landcare Research) all the way from the Denniston Plateau, Ngakawau. Watch this space to see

how this one goes.

We are well on our way to returning some endangered *Pimelea eremitica* to their rightful place at Mauganui Bluff, Northland. This is a great collaboration between the Gardens and the Northland local Te Roroa Iwi Group. It is the small steps that can make a huge difference and propagating this little native daphne, roimata o tohe, is one of those small steps.

Billie Elliot
Propagator

Leaps and bounds with plant records

I started reviewing plant databases in 2016 on my Buchanan award trip to America. I wanted to explore all our options and talk to database experts to get a good understanding of what we would like to replace our old database (BGBase). I also wanted see what other Botanic Gardens considered when future-proofing their databases. We had budget available from 2017 to replace our old database but it has taken a couple of years to make it a reality. What I didn't expect was the amount of internal work it would take to get a new database up and running, and the number of teams that would need to support the project. After deferring the project for a year and unfortunately missing our scheduled booking for the install, we finally

received the product in March 2019.

Our new plant collections management database is called IrisBG. IrisBG has been around for a long time. It was first developed in 1996 and in 2007 was offered to the global market. Since then the number of users has been steadily increasing. Taranaki Council made the switch to IrisBG about 18 months ago, so I closely followed their progress with the transition. Over the ditch, Sydney Botanic Garden has been using IrisBG as well and I have found useful contacts with their records team.

I am very excited that our new database is up and running very quickly. All staff have learnt the

basics and the curators are back to updating their own records. I think it is safe to say all staff have found IrisBG incredibly simple and user friendly. Information about each plant is displayed in one easy-to-navigate window with a tab for images, references and parentage information. Parentage information is going to be very helpful for tracking propagation history, something we previously would have had to do by hand. Images can simply be dragged and dropped from our existing file system. Conducting searches is straightforward and the database can easily be interrogated with complex queries.

Probably the most exciting capability is the mapping feature. Previously we had drawn maps and anything that has GPS points had to be stored in separate spreadsheets. Every garden bed has now been given a GPS location. When staff are looking at records they can see roughly where a plant is located. This is even more valuable for the Visitor Centre team when directing visitors to a specific plant they are interested in viewing. Over time, our priority is to have accurate GPS locations for long-lived plants. We have already mapped fruit trees in the orchard, Gondwana trees, magnolias on the lawn, trees around the central lawn and the *Aloe* collection from Geoff Etherington. Mapping plants before IrisBG was a long and involved process where I had to take the GPS to mark the trees outside, download

the information on the computer and add some fields and then send the data to another team for a visual map to be created. Although I would end up with a map, there was no simple way of updating it when changes occurred, and the original information had to be stored in a spreadsheet. Now I can take my phone with IrisBG on it, find the record, drop a marker where the tree is and with the click of a button send the information back to the computer. It's an incredibly efficient way of working (this morning I marked the locations of 30 trees in half an hour and could see them on a map straight away).

The database is accessible on two mobile devices for updating of records. We are trialing how these work for us on a phone and tablet. Often while out in the Gardens we get queries that require checking on the database so being able to respond straight away gives real time information that previously would not have been possible without a phone call or logging into a computer. At the moment only I can check the database remotely, but very soon there will be an online version of the database available to anyone. Staff and visitors will be able to find locations of plants with ease while wandering around the garden or in the comfort of their own home. For me the mobile app has significantly reduced the amount of data handling I have to do, enabled quick detailed responses to staff and visitor queries, and locating of plants

in the field made more accurate with the map.

The customer service from the team at IrisBG has been fantastic. They've answered emails promptly and provided skype meetings to answer my questions. There is a range of online resources from video tutorials, user manuals, discussion forums and FAQs to support our learning of the new system. We've even

had an update of the system since installation. Updates for the database are driven by what the users like me require to best manage our plant collections so the responsiveness is going to be very valuable.

Keep an eye on our website for the new Garden Explorer page coming soon.

Emma Bodley

Pukekura Park internship

I am currently a horticultural apprentice in my last year in a three-year apprenticeship at the Auckland Botanic Gardens (ABG).

For two weeks from 29 October – 9 November I completed a short internship at Pukekura Park in New Plymouth. This was planned to coincide with the Taranaki Garden Festival and Fringe Festival from 26 October – 4 November.

The New Zealand division of BGANZ granted me \$500 for the trip: this is an annual grant open to anyone in the horticultural industry pursuing personal and further development.

This experience helped me to fulfil a goal in my Personal Development Plan (PDP) to gain experience working in different gardens and environments around New Zealand to further broaden my knowledge

and skills for my apprenticeship.

To make the funds stretch I opted to stay at the Fitzroy Beach Holiday Park in my little van kitted out for camping. Dreams of scorching hot sunny days camping within a few steps of the beach were thwarted by an increasingly wet and stormy forecast for the whole two weeks! Driving down the last hour or so on Highway 3 from Mokau to New Plymouth, the westerly winds were so strong the van was being blown halfway across the other side of the road! It was a slightly hairy experience, but I made it safely although the same could not be said for my bike rack which snapped at some point along the way!

The Fernery

I spent the first few days in the Fernery and was instantly impressed with the team's attention to detail,

and how much ground was covered by a team of just 3 full-time staff. The morning routine consisted of deadheading and picking through the plants and flowers, sweeping the floors, then hand watering everything. The watering even extended to the clay walls of the tunnels, which would crumble if not watered every day in summer! It would take one person all day to water all the houses.

When deadheading they wouldn't just cut off a spent flower head. If there were still enough viable petals they would just pluck out the slightly grey/brown ones and leave the rest in the cluster! I found it hard to do without clumsily destroying the whole flower head; their deft fingers have been trained through a lot of experience.

Pukekura Park

I was impressed by how much space is looked after by so few staff at Pukekura Park. They have 52 hectares with six full-time staff and one apprentice. Two work full-time on track maintenance with the other four looking after the park and gardens. This is drastically different to our ten garden staff with three apprentices for 64 ha. Each garden's design is very different, however, with our more high maintenance collections warranting the need for more staff. I loved the feel of the older trees and age of the park, compared to ours which is still really in its infancy.

Their depot area is very small compared to ours, and is shared with nine Brooklands Zoo staff. There are strict MPI controls in place around the depot, with gates needing to be shut for animal security. They have a small porta-cabin to take their breaks in, and all your bags must be removed after break to allow space for the zoo staff to have theirs. This made me feel very fortunate to have the generous facilities we have at ABG. They have so few staff that they can also have their own vehicles allocated, and cleaning, fuelling up etc. is all done by the user which saves a lot of time at the end of each work day as their tools can just stay on and any un-emptied green waste can stay on the trailers. We differ in that all our vehicles are shared and must be booked in advance, with all tools cleaned and returned to the toolshed at the end of the day.

We covered a thorough health and safety briefing where I learnt about their version of a risk assessment and JHA (Job Hazard Analysis) sheets and I have since talked through these and their process with our Health and Safety coordinator at ABG. I found these easier to follow than our risk assessment sheets, as they are set out in a simpler format.

They tend to use a large variety of herbicides at Pukekura Park, some selective and some fungicides, mainly due to not having the staff levels to be able to hand weed areas to an acceptable standard, it is just

so much faster with spraying. This is different to our approach at the Gardens where we now only use glyphosate when and where it's really needed and hand weed at every opportunity to reduce the amount of chemicals we, our visitors and the gardens are exposed to. They were also trialing the new foam-stream method of weed control while I was down there, but were put off by its large usage of water and the cost of the imported foam agent.

When there is wet weather, there would be planned indoor tasks for the staff to complete including potting and bagging up, propagating cuttings and seed sowing in the Fernery. Owing to their low staff numbers this works well, however at the Gardens the nursery would be too packed full of gardeners to get anything done, which is why we usually keep working on in the rain.

Volunteering

At Pukekura Park they work with volunteers but not to the extent that we do at ABG. Similar to us they

have the Friends of Pukekura Park who look after the "The Gables" which is a colonial hospital building built back in 1847 that was moved into the Park in 1907. It was restored in 1985 and now hosts the Taranaki Arts Society gallery. The Friends and volunteers order plants through the park, and bags of fertiliser, topsoil etc. are dropped off by the staff for them to use.

We are very lucky at ABG to have such a great volunteer system as we get thousands of hours of work from them throughout the year, and it's great to meet and chat with different people all the time. We just couldn't maintain the gardens to the same standard without our volunteers; this is something Pukekura Park could improve on in the future to aid their small team's workload, and slim down on the use of herbicides.

Compost System

Pukekura Park doesn't have a compost system, all their waste is transported to a local refuse centre, and compost is purchased when





New Plymouth concept garden near Pukekura Park

needed. At the Gardens we recycle our green waste, creating our own compost and using it back on the garden beds.

Mulch comes from their on-site arborist team which is very handy; they are also just a call away if any tree work is needed. The Gardens on the other hand need to book in with a contractor which could take a couple of weeks if they are busy, and we must buy in our mulch if we haven't had any tree work done for a while.

Tupare

I also spent two days working for Taranaki Regional Council at Tupare, quite possibly my favourite garden in Taranaki. What a beautiful place! Working here also gave me a new-found appreciation for the flat terrain I work on at the Gardens. Tupare is steep! Deadheading some *Acanthus* 'Hollard's Gold' on what was a near vertical slope, I felt like I should be hooked into a climbing harness! I was also impressed

with the minimal equipment they use to maintain the gardens, using old wheelie bins to transport green waste to the compost, and one small Kubota tractor the only work vehicle, compared to our plethora of tractors!

Summary

I had a really valuable time down in New Plymouth, it was great to see how popular the Garden Festival was, and how many home gardens are kept up to an incredibly high standard. I loved working with the various staff and sharing stories and ideas. The main message I brought home with me was how lucky and proud I am to work at Auckland Botanic Gardens and the direction we are going in. We have a great team and a really interesting place to work, and I'm looking forward to the last year of my apprenticeship. Thanks very much to BGANZ for funding me on this Internship and for the support of Jack Hobbs, Bec Stanley and my team leader Shaun Rice.

Scott Denham

NZGT Conference - Queenstown 2019

In April this year we were funded by the Friends to attend the New Zealand Gardens Trust conference in Central Otago. After a false start and our flight being turned back to Auckland due to bad weather in Queenstown, we tried again the next day. Unfortunately, this meant that we had to miss the first day of garden visits in the Maniototo.

The first garden we visited was Jo Wakelin's Pisa Flats rain garden, or lack thereof as it is in a gravel riverbed that receives annual rainfall of just 250-400 mm. Jo's approach to gardening is a response to the current change in global climates. She plants only what will grow without irrigation, and if the plants do not survive, they are not replaced, and she will try something else. What she has created is a stunning garden along the lines of Beth Chatto's dry garden.

Next, we visited Alphaburn Station garden, in Glendhu Bay, Wanaka. This is a farm station garden surrounding a century-old homestead recently taken over by Allanah McRae from her mother-in-law. Allanah has added a large vegetable garden but retained the essence of a farm homestead with the large trees and rhododendrons. Many delegates were happy to see a large garden being taken on by a "young" person.

The last garden for the day was the autumnal splendour of John and Kate Coe's Queenstown garden. This 30-year-old garden is planted with many deciduous trees that were just at their colourful peak. The garden contains an extensive plant collection built up while the couple owned the Wanaka nursery. It was a pleasure for Pippa to visit this garden after weeding it for pocket money as a teenager.

On our second day, the first garden we were treated to was Chanticleer, a garden created on 12 acres by Mike and Maureen Henry. Over the past decade they have developed an expansive garden that consists of a meadow garden, an oriental garden, a paeony garden, a native garden, a Tuscan garden, a formal garden and a rhododendron dell, not to mention the very well-built treehouse!

Lake Hayes Homestead was our next stop just along the road. This is one of the oldest homesteads in Queenstown, built in 1906. Kirsty Mactaggart and Justin Crane have renovated the property over the last few years and are now landscaping the garden. The driveway is lined with beautiful heritage trees, the sequoias are over 100 years old. Situated with a view over Lake Hayes, they are currently in the process of clearing willows growing

on the edges of the lake to restore the habitat.

Ursula and Andrew Davis kindly let us wander around their Paeony garden while they were on holiday. Planted originally in the 1980s by a nurseryman who assembled a large collection of paeonies, both tree and herbaceous types. Unfortunately, it was not a great time to see either. However, the garden also had great structure with large conifers flanking the paeony lawn. One particularly striking specimen was the *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'.

The morning of Saturday 13 April consisted of four interesting talks from guest speakers.

First up was Penny Cliffin who is the president of the Garden Design Society of New Zealand and a member of the executive of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. Previously she was a senior lecturer in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Unitec for many years, and now has her own garden travel business called Hikoi Garden Tours.

Penny talked about what the RNZIH is currently involved in including the RNZIH Facebook page, and the National Register of Significant Collections. Penny talked about who is on the national executive and the various trusts associated with RNZIH, including the Education Trust, the Notable Trees Trust and

the NZ Gardens Trust.

Then Penny talked about her new venture - Hikoi Garden Tours, which organises tours for garden professionals both in New Zealand and overseas. The tours have a focus on gardens, architecture, art, landscapes and culture and aim to inspire, inform and enrich young professionals. Some of the overseas tours have been to Japan, Italy, United Kingdom and France and Penny showed amazing photos of some of these tours.

The second engaging speaker was Steve Newell, a New Zealand amateur botanist whose fascination with alpine plants led to an interesting life collecting seeds in remote parts of NZ and overseas for large international seed company Jelitto. He has also done lectures in Europe on rare buttercups.

While living in Fiordland National Park for 10 years working on the avalanche-prone road, he developed an interest in vegetable sheep (*Raoulia rubra*) and other alpine plants which are highly sought after in the UK and Europe where seeds are priced at £1 per seed. A profitable hobby developed, supplying viable *Raoulia rubra* seed to such individuals. He was then approached by Jelitto to supply their wholesale seed business. He now lives in Clutha and collects seeds around New Zealand (both natives and exotics including some weed

species, e.g., *Acanthus mollis*) for Jelitto and spends six months every second year in America collecting seed there.

Kate Coughlan, owner and editor of NZ Life & Leisure magazine was the third speaker who captivated attendees with her informative talk on trends in garden tourism. Ecotravel and sustainability is a strong trend, with people mindful of the cost to the planet of their travel. People take shorter breaks, avoiding mass destinations, preferring off-the-beaten-track options in-cost effective destinations. Everyone wants an experience that makes them feel something and learning is part of that. Volunteering or working holidays are becoming popular and community gardens

are especially interesting to younger urban audiences. Younger people like to Instagram their holidays, showing where they've been in real time. Marketing gardens is vital and updating and refreshing content of websites and social media is very important.

Sally Brown from Blueskin Nurseries was the final speaker talking about her life growing up in a garden centre and then starting her own nursery. Her gardening philosophy is that gardening is an artform. The combinations of form, colour and foliage creates a picture. Her advice was to have a dream and create a plan, that house to garden connection is important, and to garden with the climate and create seasonal appeal.

Andrea Wright and Pippa Lucas

Left, Jo Wakelin's rain garden. Right, Alphaburn Station garden





**Seasonal
highlights
at the Gardens**

Clock-wise from top left:
Camellia sasanqua 'Paradise Belinda'
Salvia leucantha 'Purple Glow'
Purple sprouting broccolis
Ceiba speciosa
Calendula



Nyssa sylvatica Photo: Jack Hobbs



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