

The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends

December 2019



Contents

GARDENS NEWS

- 3 Jack's update
- 6 Visitor Services updates
- 7 New faces
- 8 Assets updates

FRIENDS & VOLUNTEERS

- 9 From the President
- 10 Friends Painting Group - review of 2019
- 12 Growing Friends report
- 12 Wiri Rambler report
- 13 Photographic competition
- 14 Shona Pitcaithly, Life Member
- 16 Friends spring bus trip
- 17 Body adornment
- 18 The Visiting Artist Programme
- 19 Introducing Cleone Campbell

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK

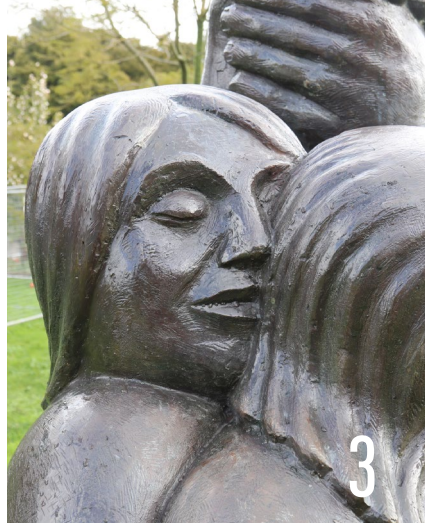
- 20 Summer seasonal activities
- 22 Garden plants from China
- 26 Redeveloped gardens now open!
- 27 Outgrowing the mowing
- 29 Three new books in the Library

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Front cover image: Chris Moore's *Entwined*
Images this page: Llew Summers' *To the End of Love*,
Tagetes 'Durango Mix' and Olivia Rooke-Devoy.
Photos: 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

The seventh edition of Sculpture in the Gardens was formally opened by Alexa Johnston on Saturday 16 November to positive acclaim. With such a high-class array of artworks on display there has been no shortage of opinions as to which work should be added to our permanent collection, and which should win the Supreme Award.

The McConnell Family Supreme Award was won by *Contained and Protected* by Marte Szirmay. The exquisite bronze disc is fastened to its base by a beautifully crafted bronze cord. The work expresses the artist's concerns for the abuse of nature, and therefore it is ideally

located near the entrance to the Threatened Native Plant Garden.

Entwined by Chris Moore was selected as the work to be purchased by the Friends for permanent display at Auckland Botanic Gardens. The flamboyant tangle of large-leaved



Marte Szirmay's *Contained and Protected*

Bev McConnell and Alexa Johnston at the Sculpture in the Gardens opening function



plants depicts human endeavours to control nature. This large steel work is painted with a product containing copper filings, producing an intriguing patina. Chris trained as a blacksmith, and he has been a fulltime designer and artist for twenty years. We plan to relocate the work once the exhibition is over.

Throughout the exhibition visitors can vote for the People's Choice Award, so make sure you support your favourite.

I should also mention that *Font*, the Friends acquisition from the last exhibition, has been relocated into our Edible Garden.

The Friends have also commenced a campaign to purchase *To the End of Love*, the magnificent bronze sculpture by Llew Summers currently located near the Rose Garden. Llew, who passed away earlier this year, is widely regarded as one of our great artists. If you are interested in supporting this campaign, please contact the Friends or our visitor centre.

We still have volunteer opportunities available for those who wish to help out with the exhibition. These include meeting and greeting visitors, helping maintain the sculptures and new Sculpture in the Gardens ambassador roles. If interested contact Julia at Julia.watson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

At the preview opening of Sculpture in the Gardens on the afternoon of Wednesday 13 October we took the opportunity to also formally open the Pacific Pathway. Hero Potini performed a rousing karakia, the perfect blessing for what is a milestone in the Gardens history. The ceremony was attended by workers from Seger Construction, landscape architects from Isthmus, and Terry and Pam Hatch from Joy Plants who supplied most of the plants. Members of the Friends and staff from the Gardens were also in attendance, and it was great to share this moment with so many who have supported the project.

The Pacific Pathway actually opened to visitors in late October just in time for Labour Weekend, and the response has been hugely positive. One visitor stopped to tell us he had been coming to the Gardens for more than thirty years and that the recent improvements are remarkable, truly international class. Moments like that make all the hard work and inconvenience seem worthwhile.

It was a relief to have the Wiri Rambler operational again on Labour Weekend after a long hiatus while the Pacific Pathway was being constructed. We are grateful to Kate Moodie and her team for being so patient, and I know our visitors will love having this wonderful service returned.

In October eight staff attended the biennial Botanic Gardens Australia New Zealand (BGANZ) congress at Te Papa in Wellington, with five staff attending as recipients of the Friends Buchanan Award. The congress was a great success with thought-provoking presentations and invaluable networking opportunities. A report on the congress will appear in the next newsletter. As always our staff were wonderful ambassadors for the Gardens, and they made the most of their networking opportunities.

Immediately following the congress, the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH) held a one-day symposium, also at Te Papa, that included the prestigious Banks Lecture by Ross Ferguson. I was delighted to be there for the presentation of awards to some major contributors to our industry. Two we have worked closely with are Malcolm Woolmore (Lyndale Nurseries) who became a Fellow of the RNZIH, and Ian Duncalf (formerly of Parva Plants) who received the Plant Raisers' Award. Annemarie Endt, widow of the late Dick Endt, received the Award in Garden History.

Danielle Cipperly has resigned from her role as collection curator edibles and herbs. Danielle progressed well in her role but has decided to take a new direction that is not so physically demanding.

Vari Kree commenced work in early November as our new casual trial gardener. Vari is a trained horticulturalist, her most recent gardening role being at the Domain Wintergardens.

It was with sadness we heard of the passing of Phil Jew on 10 November. Phil was one the great parks figures of his generation, and instrumental in the founding of both the Regional Parks and the Gardens. Sue Davison remembers seeing Joan Dingley and other DSIR staff setting off in the mid-sixties to inspect the Manurewa site that was to become home to the Gardens. The site report was favourable, and it then fell to Phil to win over the politicians of the day. At his funeral Sandra Coney commented that successfully convincing her father, Tom Pearce, to support the project was quite an achievement as he had no interest in gardening. Tom was chair of the Auckland Regional Authority, and he turned the first sod in 1972. After retiring in 1993, Phil retained a keen interest in the Gardens, and he gave me much advice when I assumed the Manager's role in 1997. Phil was 90 years old. His legacy lives on in our much-loved Regional Parks, and of course the Gardens that he was so very proud of.

Jack Hobbs

Visitor Services updates

Epic Voyages exhibition a success

Our *Epic Voyages* exhibition in early spring showcased stories of the first people to discover, settle and garden in New Zealand who arrived here after incredible voyages over the Pacific Ocean. The exhibition coincided with the 250-year commemoration of Captain James Cook's arrival in New Zealand, and also featured a beautiful display of artworks from the touring exhibition *Paradise Lost* from the Solander Gallery. *Paradise Lost* commemorated the contribution that naturalist Daniel Solander made to New Zealand's history.

In *Epic Voyages* visitors discovered how New Zealand's Māori ancestors carved waka hourua (double hulled canoes) from trees, how their sails were woven from leaf fibres and how they arrived laden with plants

for their new land. Visitors were then encouraged to explore the garden along a trail where they could view the plants used for these great ocean journeys. We partnered with the Te Toki Voyaging Trust (who are a key part of the national Tuia 250 celebrations) for this exhibition and showcased one of their training waka in the Visitor Centre. The Te Toki Voyaging Trust also provided cultural input on the content of the exhibition. It was a well-received exhibition with great feedback from our visitors on the cultural lens we took on commemorating the 250 years since Cook had arrived in New Zealand. Content from the exhibition has been requested by local schools for including in their teaching and will be shared with a wider audience, thereby making it a very effective use of time and resources.

Julia Watson

Volunteer update:

As we approach the end of the year, I would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for their help here at the Gardens. It has been especially appreciated during what has been a busy, productive and exciting year full of big projects and garden developments. From a new overflow carpark to the Pacific Pathway opening and the seventh

biennial Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition, all the hours of hard work, support and friendship have made a huge difference to us.

Volunteers played an important role in ensuring the Pacific Pathway was looking great and ready for its opening in October. All the help made a significant difference and we couldn't have done it without you!

Visitors are loving the new pathway and we are getting positive feedback on how good it looks. The opening of the new pathway also meant that the Wiri Rambler team was back in operation after a long hiatus, and our visitors are enjoying being able to access this important (and fun!) service again.

Sculpture in the Gardens is another highlight of the year, and we've got a wonderful team of volunteers helping with a range of roles

from meet and greet to sculpture cleaning, administration and garden ambassadors. It's a lovely time of year and all the help we receive from volunteers has a notably positive impact on the experience for our visitors.

We wish you a wonderful festive season and a happy new year – stay safe on the roads and we look forward to working together with you again in 2020.

Julia Watson

New faces

Angela Anstis joined the Collections team in mid-September. She comes with 30 years of experience in amenity horticulture, 13 years as gardener in charge at Waikumete Cemetery and 14 years managing the grounds at Rainbows End. She has also managed a high-profile private property and worked in a retirement village, so has experience and skills in formal gardens, annuals and shrubberies. Currently Angela is curating Urban Trees, the Harakeke Collection and New Zealand Native Plant Identification Trail, previously curated by Kerry Gillbanks.

Scott Denham was recently elevated into an amenity gardener role after spending most of the last three years as an apprentice. With his studies now concluded, Scott will turn his focus towards managing the

new garden beds along the Pacific Pathway.

Andrew Currey has also recently joined the field team as a new trainee. Andrew comes from a background installing and maintaining vertical gardens. He is very much looking forward to spending time working outdoors with a different palette of plants.

Sadly, we had to say goodbye recently to Rosie Rolls who has accepted a position as an environmental educator at Auckland Zoo.

Shortly two students will start their summer stints at the Gardens. We look forward to having Zara Skuse and Meg Spittal in the team for the best part of three months.

Assets updates

Stage two of the Pacific Pathway was completed this month. The new path starts at the *Turn* sculpture and passes through the Perennials, Native Plant Ideas, past the new picturesque lake lookout, and it terminates at the Rose Garden entrance. This project has taken 13 months to complete, but what a great outcome!

The Glade (pictured below) is the new name for the lush secluded area that has been recently developed alongside the structure that was once in the Perennial Garden. It provides a beautiful private setting for gatherings and ceremonies, and a relaxing area for visitors wanting some time out. The addition of a semi-circular bluestone rock wall and synthetic turf are significant features that complement the sub-tropical planting.

A new bridge and roads have been

installed between the Northern Depot and the Trials area to allow service vehicles to avoid the Pacific Pathway. This will allow far safer movement of vehicle to and from the southern collections.

A 20,000-litre water tank has been installed to capture the rainwater from the Classroom and Logan Campbell buildings. This automatically tops up the Threatened Native Plant Garden pond as water evaporates. Previously we had to manually top up from mains water, so over time this will result in savings to ratepayers.

The Rose Garden is undergoing considerable redevelopment to remove a historic drainage issue and landscape a new centre garden bed using macrocarpa sleepers as bordering. The work is expected to be completed in December.

Renton Campbell



From the President

Thank you to all those members who attended the 2019 AGM on 28 September. We welcomed Cleone Campbell as a new member to the Friends Executive Committee and confirmed Linda Christie, who had earlier been co-opted, as Treasurer.

We farewelled two long-standing members – our Treasurer, Judy Williams who had put in five years of sterling work taking care of the accounts and Graeme Hauer, a member with many strings to his bow – a past President and coordinator of the Growing Friends for many years. We are pleased that Graeme will remain on the Trustees. We also farewelled Stella Cattle who was a Manurewa Local Board representative and Trustee and who has been a great supporter of the Friends and the Gardens during her time in office.

We were delighted to present a Life Membership to Shona Pitcaithly who is a past Committee member and has put in a huge number of hours as a volunteer in the Gardens, particularly with the Growing Friends.

This year's Buchanan Award was granted to fund five staff to attend the BGANZ Conference in Wellington in October and the Birthday Gift will contribute another \$10,000 towards the purchase of an art work for the

Gardens. The hope is that we will be able to raise sufficient funds to purchase the sculpture *To the End of Love* by the late Llew Summers which was part of the 2015/16 Sculpture Exhibition and which we have been lucky enough to have enjoyed in the Gardens since that time. A generous private donation has also been received for the potential purchase.



The meeting was, as usual, followed by dinner in Cafe Miko and then by an entertaining and informative talk by Bec Stanley on her Buchanan Award trip to Europe – Ukraine, Germany and Switzerland – to attend plant conferences.

There has been much activity in the Gardens over the winter. The Pacific Pathway should be well completed by the time this newsletter is published which will allow the Wiri Rambler to get on the road again – they've had a long and patient wait to get rambling again. New lighting has brightened up the main car park and the entry to the Friends Building.

We have received news that the Clivia Club is winding up and that their remaining funds will be made over to the Friends for a designated

future clivia project. The demise of these plant societies seems a sad reality of the present day.

By the time you receive this newsletter the 2019/20 Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition will be well underway and many of you will have had a chance to enjoy the twenty major works on display and the works in the indoor exhibition. Many of you will be participating as volunteers in a variety of different ways. Without your help the exhibition would not be the great success it has always been, so warm and grateful thanks for your work and enthusiasm.

Thank you, too, to Friends members for having the confidence in me to elect me as President for the second time. I'm looking forward to an enjoyable and productive year.

Liz Powell

Friends Painting Group - review of 2019

The Gardens Painting Group have had another exciting and busy year, with good numbers of new members joining up and coming along to our monthly meetings.

In Memory of Banks and Solander, our annual exhibition, was a great success, with the high standard and variety of work being commented on by the many visitors and staff who came to view. The longer duration of the exhibition – five weeks rather

than our usual two allowed for many more visitors to enjoy the art, again showcasing the beauty of our native flora.

Our exhibition for 2020 is already in the planning stage. It will be taking place in May, incorporating the now officially recognized *World Day of Botanical Art* on 18 May. So watch out for news of workshops/ demonstrations that will be part of our new exhibition timetable.

We were thrilled to have one of our members, Brenda Hart (McCallum), selected as Artist in Residence at the Gardens this year. This allowed her to showcase her truly exquisite jewellery, paying tribute to Banks and Solander with all her work based on our native flora. She delighted visitors while working in the gallery, allowing them to gain an insight into her art practice.

We are very fortunate to have members keen to share their talents and passions with us and in April, Maureen Conquer delighted us with tales of her hunter/gatherer lifestyle, foraging, basket making and bee-keeping. She inspired us with her hedgerow and sea-baskets made from foraged material, many members keen to take one of her workshops.

Another member, Jennifer Duval-Smith gave us a delightfully amusing talk of her trip to Europe earlier in the year to attend two workshops run by the very talented Turkish artist, Isik Guner and French artist, Sandrine Maugy. I'm sure a few of us have added "Botanical art course in Europe" to our bucket lists!

As usual, our bi-monthly artist demonstrations have been very popular, with a good variety of topics covered. We started off the year with printmaker, Val Cuthbert showing us simple lino-cut techniques, all of which could be done at home on the kitchen table – no expensive

equipment needed at all.

Our next demonstration meeting took us into the realm of nature journaling, a relaxing way of recording nature around us without the pressure of producing a fully rendered drawing or painting.

Marie Sanders, pastel artist, encouraged us to use a brighter range of colours, each of us producing a vibrant pastel still-life painting and Bernadette Parsons finished the year delighting us with her large watercolour landscapes, demystifying 'wet-in-wet' with very large brushes for the more cautious of us in the group who are used to tiny '000' brushes and magnifying glasses!

Our last meeting of the year was our usual shared Christmas lunch, but this time we squeezed in a very informative demonstration by Jenny Haslimeier, a very talented member who now lives in Edinburgh. Jenny, took us through blending and layering with colour pencil, a popular medium by many of our members.

Next year looks to be another busy and exciting year for us, so why not come and join us! Complete beginners to professional artists all welcome. Contact me, Lesley Alexander – 021 161 7070 or lesley.alexander.smith@gmail.com for more information.

Lesley Alexander

Growing Friends report

We are really enjoying having the lower carpark open to the public at our sale times; it makes our life so much easier and wheelbarrow trips are shorter with a downhill load. Our sales are up as well, or is that just because it's spring with fine days?

Several of our group recently took the opportunity to be trained to use the defibrillator and to update their CPR skills.

We have a good range of plants of good quality available each week and are working hard propagating to keep our stock numbers up and to be ready for the two-day plant sale at Ayrlires in April of next year.

Bronwen Rowse

Wiri Rambler report

With the opening of our new Pacific Pathway we are now operating again to the delight of our volunteer crew. We are looking for new members to join the team. This would involve you for only about four hours a month. For information please phone Auckland 09 2977234.

Kate Moodie



Photographic Competition

The Photographic Competition which is open to all visitors to the Auckland Botanic Gardens has been reconstituted after an absence over the past year. The Friends have obtained the services of Aliah Jan, a professional photographer and tutor, to assist with the competition in partnership with the Friends Past President Dianne Glenn, members of the Friends Executive and the Manukau Photographic Society. More details will follow at a later stage, but start snapping now!

The competition will run from 1 December 2019 until 20 September 2020. This seems a long time but it provides opportunities throughout the Sculpture in the Gardens and the four seasons. Next time this will be later to include more of Spring but we need to display in the Visitor Centre Gallery and the dates of 3 – 17 October are available in 2020, closing with Award Presentations.

There are two age groups – Adults of 18 years and over, and Child/Youth under 18 years of age. Entries are free. There are four categories but each entrant is allowed to enter only two images in total. Categories are:

- A. Gardenscape – Capture your favourite season and/or favourite part of the Auckland Botanic Gardens.
- B. Creative Angles – There are plenty of features and elements in the Gardens, such as sculptures, fixtures or the flowers/plants themselves. Play with the light/shadow or using the key elements of design that you can find through creative angles.
- C. Friends of Flowers – Who would you consider Friends of Flowers? This category focuses on individual flowers and plants and could include insects/butterflies, birds, people who nurture them or rely on them. We are keen to see your interpretation.
- D. Youth - Through the Eyes of a Child – this is an open category for all children and youth to show us what they see in our Gardens.

Image Rules

JPEG file format, with a file size no larger than 5Mb. Image format should be taken with a 4:3 ratio. All images submitted will be printed in 8" height x 6" width (portrait) or 6" height x 8" width (landscape).

More information including Terms and Conditions of Entry can be obtained by emailing friendsofabg@gmail.com with the subject line ABG Photo Competition or visiting the website www.aucklandbotanicgardens/aboutus/friends-of-the-auckland-botanic-gardens

Shona Pitcaithly, Friends Honorary Life Member

The Auckland Botanic Gardens has over 100 volunteers who donated 5880 hours to the Gardens over the past year. This corresponds to at least three full-time staff members. Volunteers assist in many ways, such as in the Library or the visitor centre, in the nursery, as rose deadheaders, or as a member of the Growing Friends. It is encouraging for the staff (and local body politicians) to see how so many people are prepared to dedicate so much of their time, and the volunteers themselves benefit from being involved in activities they consider worthwhile. Today we honour an outstanding volunteer with more than 20 years of dedicated service.

Shona Pitcaithly joined the Friends some time before 2000 when she was elected to the Friends Executive. Since then she and her husband Bruce have been active and hardworking volunteers, often working together. One of the earliest ways in which she helped the Gardens was in assisting with Bruce set up the worm farms which continue to flourish, partly because of their regular diet of horse manure for many years.

Shona became involved with plant sales around the time she was a member of the Executive Committee. In those days The Friends plant sales



were held in the courtyard and they were very big events, requiring much planning and even more work. All the plants had to be taken from the nursery to the courtyard and set up on the many tables. There were queues of people waiting for the doors to open at 10.00 a.m. Bill Ward did a Saturday morning radio show with Ruud Kleinpaste and they would always give the plant sales a big push.

After the first sale Friends members were given first rights – a committee member manned the door and only those with membership cards were allowed in for the first half hour. At 4.00 p.m. when the doors closed the job of getting the unsold plants back to the nursery began. As an

afternoon volunteer I well remember Bruce driving trailer-loads of plants back to the nursery; he had brought them over early that the morning.

My own involvement with the Growing Friends began in 2004 and I can bear witness that Shona is probably the most consistent worker in the group. She lives adjacent to the Gardens so is always there early to open up and often is the last to leave. It is the same for the “First Sunday of the month” sales – first in and last out.

One of the major problems the Growing Friends used to encounter during summer was keeping the plants watered between Thursday morning work sessions. Although we had a roster system, Shona would come across to check that all was well. She often had to do an extra watering if conditions had been very hot or windy (or when someone forgot). When the automatic system was first installed there were some teething problems so again Shona would come to check that all was well.

Shona did not restrict herself to the Growing Friends. Learning Through Experience (LTE) programmes, which are curriculum-based education sessions, were offered at Regional Parks throughout Auckland to year 0-13 students. Shona volunteered to help – she looked after the gardens around the teaching area and assisted one

teacher, Lockie Carmichael, with his classes at the Botanic Gardens and at Ambury Farm Park. The final day of the “Young Horticulturist of the Year” competition is held at the Gardens. Gardens staff, volunteers from Cornwall Park, and, of course, Shona, spend a long and busy day helping with the event.

She also helps with planting events at the gardens. Recently volunteers were asked to help plant an area near the new Pacific Pathway. Heavy rain saw the planting day postponed until Thursday. Shona spent the morning with the Growing Friends then raced off to help with the planting. I am sure if anyone had been counting over the years, Shona might well hold the record for the number of plants put in by a volunteer.

I have much pleasure in moving that Shona Pitcaithly be elected an Honorary Life Member of The Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Sue Davison

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The nomination was passed with acclamation at the recent Annual General meeting. Mention was also made of the sustained efforts over the years of her husband, Bruce. The nomination was originally planned as a joint nomination, but Bruce declined, much to the regret of the many who have worked with him. Sue would like to thank fellow Friends and staff members for helping with information for the nomination and Ross Ferguson for editing.

Friends spring bus trip

On 2 November we drove north visiting two beautifully designed, planted and maintained gardens. The Paddocks at Warkworth was a colourful array of David Austin roses, perennials and trees. In contrast Omaio on the Takatu Peninsula was a tranquil green oasis along a cliff top. Here shade-loving plants flowed seamlessly from the formal garden under very old native trees.

A totally enjoyable day added to by the warm welcome and tour with our hosts Penny and Rowan Wiggins and Liz Morrow. Thank you to them.

Kate Moodie



Scenes from Omaio (above) and Two Paddocks. Photos by Heather Hine.



Body adornment

Brenda Hart recently completed her period as Artist in Residence at the Botanic Gardens, funded by the Friends. Here is a report of her activities.

So far, 2019 has been a wonderful creative journey for me. Previous work for museums and galleries has usually been inspired by New Zealand plants - form followed by function. So when Liz Powell asked if I would like to be the Friends Visiting Artist for the 250th anniversary of Cook's voyage, I was thrilled.

I started reading all I could about the voyage but soon realised my design process was going in the wrong direction. In February I visited Ewen Cameron at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, and when I opened and viewed the specimens collected by botanists Banks and Solander in 1769, I experienced the excitement they must have felt finding new plants. Now I know it to be a New Zealand native, I will never look at the yellow-flowering oxalis growing in my garden in quite the same way.

The creative process began. I was able to design and make the 40 pieces necessary for a body of work, making more as they sold. It has been stimulating to see the connections people have made with

my work - each piece has a narrative: bought for special anniversaries, birthdays and reminders of a happy visit to the gardens by locals and overseas visitors.



Pixi Parasol, forged sterling silver, with enamel.

I have enjoyed conversations with so many people - an Island princess, encouraging her family to resurrect old crafts to supplement their income, a grieving widower who decided, after a chat, to go home to

his workshop and make presents for his family - so many more I have had the privilege to discuss and share my knowledge with.

I would like to thank the Friends for a residency that has brought me out of retirement and opened so many doors in the future, Mich and staff for their support and contribution in making this exhibition a success, Ewen Cameron for sharing

Banks and Solander's herbarium, and Kirsty MacDonald, documentary film maker, for a video that has been viewed within New Zealand and so many other countries, creating interest in my work and the Botanical Gardens.

I have come to the conclusion no other art form will replace the excitement I feel working with metal - thank you.

Brenda Hart

The Visiting Artist Programme

A Gardens perspective

The Visiting Artist programme supported by the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens is a popular biennial activity. It provides artists who work in various media an opportunity to explore the garden and convey stories through their art, sharing their journey with the public. Staff also enjoy spending time with the artists as they get to see the garden through different eyes and grow a wider appreciation of nature.

We were excited this year to see how Brenda Hart, a jeweller would respond to the 250th commemoration of Cook's voyage in her work. At our first meeting it was clear how inspired and passionate Brenda was having been to Auckland Museum and viewed the plant specimens Banks and Solander

collected in 1769. Brenda explained how she created her jewellery and it was clear a lot of the production work needed to be undertaken in her studio. Previous artists have included painters and a photographer where their work has been on a large scale for visitors to enjoy as they worked; for a jeweller working on a smaller scale this was more of a challenge. We had the opportunity to visit Brenda's studio and realised that creating a video of her conveying her ideas, inspiration and working in the studio would enable us to provide visitors with an insight to the art of jewellery, complement the display cabinets of jewellery and tools and provide a deeper insight into Brenda's artistic journey.

Three videos were made, one providing an overview of her residency and two showing techniques she

uses to create her jewellery. During Brenda's time at the Gardens we also had two other displays: the main atrium presented *Epic Voyages* where we explored how plants



Necklace from sterling silver repousse leaves, with sterling and copper raised acorn.

enabled us to travel and the travelling exhibition of *Paradise Lost* which was based on Solander's activities. Brenda also agreed to come in to the centre and demonstrate the techniques she uses to create her jewellery. Brenda's passion and enjoyment of talking to our visitors and sharing her work led her to be at the centre most weekends.

The Gardens staff and especially the Visitor Services team thank Brenda for inspiring our thinking about our unique native flora and also the Friends for supporting the Visiting Artist programme.

Micheline Newton

Introducing Cleone Campbell

Cleone is the newest member of the Friends Executive Committee.

She summarises her interests, inspirations and aspirations as:

- flora, fauna and fitness;
- leisure – reading books, viewing art and performance, listening to music;
- outdoors and tramping;
- urgency and participating in the rat race only in moderation;
- rewarded and boosted by her volunteer work;
- impassioned about the environment;
- sunshine, sea and vistas;
- health and wellbeing.



Summer seasonal activities

The weather is warming up and there is an extra spring in our step as we look forward to the festive season. Summer is a great time to be out in the garden, especially first thing in the morning before it gets too hot or late in the evening when there is time to admire and enjoy the results of our hard work during spring.

Planting

In the Edible Garden we have planted a mix of herbs, edible flowers and vegetables. Plantings include sage, thyme, safflowers, *Amaranthus*, *Nasturtium*, French marigolds, beetroot, *Agastache*, rhubarb, sunflowers, lavender, fennel, basil, *Asperula*, *Tagetes lucida* (Texas tarragon), various lettuces, tomatoes, sweet peppers, chilli peppers, aubergines and tuberous begonias. Tuberous begonias (*Begonia x tuberosa*) are edible as well as beautiful, with leaves, flowers and stems used in various ways. Add the citrus-flavoured petals to salads and use them as garnish. Stems can be used in place of rhubarb. Stems and leaves contain oxalic acid, so use sparingly. *Tip:* plant garlic chives to draw aphids away from your precious vegetables.

There is still time to plant heat-loving annuals such as sunflowers, *Begonia*, *Zinnia*, French marigolds, *Salvia* and *Celosia*. This year we



are displaying a few *Gomphrena* cultivars that met the criteria of our 2018-2019 summer trial. They are planted in the Visitor Centre display bed and along Pohutukawa Walk.

General plant care

Plants have different water requirements, but in general water plants first thing in the morning while the weather is cool, this will allow the water to evaporate thereby reducing the onset of diseases. Evening is also ideal for watering. Watering deeply will keep the plants happy for a few days, much better than frequent light sprinklings. Mulch and compost will help retain moisture so apply in generous layers. Stake plants such as tall perennials and sunflowers before they get too tall and wide to handle. Remove dead plant material and thin out over-crowded garden beds to ensure good airflow is maintained.

Pruning

Our wonderful rose deadheading volunteers are back, and they will be deadheading roses until end of March. This will encourage the roses to continue flowering until early autumn. Deadhead perennials such as *Penstemon*, *Ageratum*, *Dahlia*, *Scabiosa*, *Achillea*, *Coreopsis* and other daisies for repeat flowering until autumn.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs once they have finished flowering. Remove old flowering stems or cut them back to a strong side shoot or healthy bud. Spring-flowering shrubs such as *Forsythia*, *Deutzia* and *Philadelphus* produce most of their flowers on the new young growths made in the previous summer or autumn.

Mere Brewer

For more pruning tips:

Visit the garden advice
section of the
Auckland Botanic Gardens
website:

[aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/
garden-advice/garden-tips/
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Garden plants from China

E.H. Wilson, in 1929, titled one of his books, *China, mother of gardens*, because of the many garden-worthy plants successfully introduced from China. While most of the plant collecting in China occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries, even members of some of the first formal embassies to the Chinese court over 200 years ago became aware of the garden potential of some of the plants they saw.

In the expansive years immediately following the third and final voyage by Cook, with the official account published in 1784, Britain embarked on another epic encounter with new countries and cultures. An embassy led by Lord Macartney set out in 1783 to visit China, the first of its kind by Britain, and met with the Qianlong Emperor in Peking (Beijing) and at his summer palace at Jehol. This momentous visit has been long viewed as one of the most significant in culture clashes, whilst being unsuccessful in its attempts to open up China for British trade. In the terms of Macartney's valet Aeneas Anderson, who published his narrative of the mission separate from the official accounts "...we entered Peking like paupers; we remained in it like prisoners; and we quitted it like vagrants."

There was no naturalist on the

mission, though the Secretary, Sir George Staunton, was something of an amateur botanist, and many specimens were collected (still in Kew and the British Museum), with four lists of species given in his official account of the mission. The genus *Stauntonia* with its purple edible fruit is named after him. Two other plants have names associated with the mission. One is the Macartney rose (*Rosa bracteata*), now a pest in some parts of the world, and the other the Chinese mint (*Elsholtzia stauntonii*).

There were also two physicians on the embassy, and a man of science in Dr James Dinwiddie, who was a mathematician and astronomer and whose job was to look after, assemble and ensure the working of the elaborate astronomical and scientific instruments that were part of the embassy's gifts – the Chinese however were unimpressed.

About 20 years later in 1816, a second embassy led by Lord Amherst, set forth with similar intentions, and was even less successful, Amherst not even getting an audience with the Jiaqing Emperor, largely due to protocol arguments over kowtowing. This time, Sir Joseph Banks had recommended a naturalist be included, and Clarke Abel, a surgeon taken on as chief medical officer, also took up the role of naturalist.

To assist in this, he was able to take with him a Mr Hooper, a “botanic gardener” from Kew Gardens, and his brother-in-law, a Mr Poole. Abel wrote an account of his travels, published in 1818, a year later than the official account by Henry Ellis, the 3rd commissioner on the mission. Abel, with Hooper, collected plant specimens and seeds and made many observations of plants both in China and SE Asia (he was also the first Westerner to describe the orangutan, and there is a splendid hand-coloured engraving of one in his book).

On his journey back, his ship, the *Alceste*, was wrecked on a reef off the Indonesian Island of Pulau Liat on 18 February, 1817, and the crew was under siege for two weeks by Malay pirates. Abel lost all his collection, and among the live specimens lost were tea plants smuggled as part of a plan by Banks for the East India Company, a plan fulfilled later in the century by Robert Fortune and others. He almost saved his seeds from the wreck, but records that “... after leaving the wreck of the *Alceste*, I had the mortification of hearing that the cases containing these [300 packets of seeds collected by Hooper] had been brought upon deck and emptied of their contents by one of the seamen, to make room for some of the linen of one of the gentlemen of the Embassy.”

Fortunately, duplicates of some plant specimens had been left with

Sir George Staunton (secretary to the earlier Macartney embassy) at Canton (Guangzhou), and these were returned to Abel in due course. He was later made a Fellow of the Royal Society and became surgeon-in-chief to Lord Amherst when the latter was Governor General in India. However, he died there, at Cawnpore, in 1826, aged just 37.

Amongst the China specimens that survived with Staunton, three new species were described by Robert Brown, botanical secretary to Sir Joseph Banks, and published in Abel’s account as an Appendix, including drawings. The specimens are now in the British Museum, originally part of the Banks herbarium bequeathed to Brown.

Where did these three species come from? Returning from Peking, the Amherst mission took the inland route by canal and river, essentially travelling by water all the way to Canton.

Hamamelis chinensis. In October 1816, the embassy reached the major city of “Nankin” (Nanjing). The city walls seemed to provide rich pickings and it was here amongst abundant *Ficus*, and “resembling it in habit”, Abel collected what Brown classified as *Hamamelis chinensis*, the Chinese witch hazel. When Brown published his description of this species in Abel’s book, he noted that it might be better placed in the *Loropetalum*

genus. This was accordingly taken up by Prof. D Oliver in 1883, and has been known as *Loropetalum chinense* R.Br. (Oliver) ever since. It was collected in the same region in 1879 by Charles Maries for Veitch & Sons. Wilson (1913) also observed it in Hubei "On the tops of the cliffs, amongst loose conglomerate and limestone boulders, it forms a well-nigh impenetrable scrub. The bushes are seldom more than three feet in height, very much branched, and when in full flower, look like patches of snow at a distance." The plant is a densely branched shrub, growing up to about 3 m. The flowers grow in clusters of about four individuals, and vary from white to greenish white to pale yellow, with some varieties pink to purplish red. In the Botanic Gardens, the white form is in the Camellia Garden and there are also some splendid trees, not shrubs, on the edge of carpark near the Friends Building.

Abelia chinensis. The embassy crossed into "Kiang-si" (Jiangxi) province on the 13 November, travelling from the Yangtze River into Lake Poyang, the largest freshwater lake in China. There, amongst other plants, such as pines, firs and tallow trees, Abel found "... a straggling shrub with pendant branches. Its flowers were, for the most part, faded when it was found; but its permanent pink calyces, clustered into thick heads, gave it a beautiful appearance." Brown created the new genus *Abelia*, named after Abel

"... with friendly partiality". The first live specimens were brought back to Kew by Robert Fortune in 1844, though classified as *A. rupestris* – now known as a synonym. Wilson (1913) records it near "Ichang" (Yichang, on the Yangtze in Hubei province). *Abelia chinensis* was transferred to the genus *Linnaea* in 1872 as *Linnaea chinensis* (R.Br.) A.Braun & Vatke, although the former name saluting Abel is still used. It is a compact shrub belonging to the honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae) with oval dark green leaves with clusters of white tubular or trumpet-shaped flowers with pink calyces that remain after the flower has dropped. *Abelia x grandifolia* is a common nursery and hedge plant in New Zealand, with white, pink or red flowers.

Eurya chinensis. Coming out of the southern end of Lake Poyang, the embassy visited the substantial city of "Nan-chang-foo" (Nanchang, now the capital of Jiangxi province). Beyond the city, they "... entered a country highly ornamented with useful and beautiful plants." There he described camellias, the tallow tree (Linnaeus' *Croton sebiferum*), and in the rocky environs of the northern end of the Meiling mountains, where "... the hills were rich in rare and beautiful plants", he collected what Brown described later as the new species *Eurya chinensis* R.Br. It is a small to medium dioecious shrub, with fairly insignificant flowers, and small purplish black fruit. The leaves

are sometimes used as a substitute for (or to adulterate) tea. It seems to be of little horticultural interest.

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Ian Ferguson

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Redeveloped gardens now open!

The Gardens team were excited to have the Pacific Pathway open to our visitors just before Labour Weekend. Much of the Gardens has been closed while the work has been carried out. During this period collection curators Pippa Lucas and Jeff Jones have been working hard to redesign and replant the collections that they manage that were affected by the development.

As you walk down Pohutukawa Walk into the Perennial Garden, you will notice new and familiar features. The entrance to the Perennial Garden has shifted, along with the Hugh Redgrove Arbour. The area of Perennial Garden beds is almost the same as previously but with a reduced lawn, creating an intimate experience when you are surrounded by the summer floral display. The Perennial Garden still maintains its focus on the use of colour and texture combinations to

provide visitors with ideas for their home garden.

To the left of the Perennial Garden is a new garden for functions we have called The Glade. With a subtropical theme and lush, strongly textured plants, we have seen visitors congregating here already. The space will be bookable for events and weddings and as the *Camellia sasanqua* 'Paradise Helen' hedge becomes established, it will create privacy for those using the space. The ever-popular dinner plate fig, *Ficus dammaropsis*, which you will have seen in the Children's Garden, has also been incorporated into the plantings. There will be seasonal plantings to provide colour. This summer you will find pockets of begonias.

As a result of the new pathway, the entrance to Native Plant Ideas has moved to the opposite side of the



garden from where it previously was. This meant that the old entrance area required new plantings and view shafts down into the collection. Jeff kept in mind how our visitors would experience the garden and used clever, attractive plantings to draw visitors further into the garden. There are even some of our favourite threatened plant, kakabeak or *Clianthus puniceus*, tucked into the border, providing pops of red along the way.

One plant that is being highlighted as part of the redevelopment, is the totara, *Podocarpus totara* 'Matapouri Blue'. Jeff has applied a Japanese style of cloud pruning called niwaki. This pruning technique is related to bonsai but applied to trees growing in the ground, rather than pots. It creates a sculptural element to the plant's habit so keep an eye out for this. It will no doubt be an impressive feature in a few years' time.

Emma Bodley, Jeff Jones
and Pippa Lucas

Outgrowing the mowing

Encouraging low-cost, biodiverse lawns in Auckland.

Is it a true New Zealand Sunday if you can't hear a lawnmower? As adults, we spend countless hours maintaining our (and sometimes our neighbours') lawns. Despite this, how often do you genuinely notice the vast areas covered by grass in our cities?

Throughout 2018, I completed my Honours research project, which investigated urban lawns in Auckland. You may have seen me mowing down the back of the Gardens, or working in the visitor centre on weekends. I would like to sincerely thank the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends of the Gardens for this opportunity. Without their

funding, advice and use of space and equipment, this project would not have been possible. I am greatly humbled by the ongoing interest shown by such a dedicated group of people!

Urbanisation and the modern lawn "Urban biodiversity" refers to the range of living things found in populated, developed areas. Auckland is the largest city in New Zealand, with a population of approximately 1.4 million people and rising (2013 Census). Space is a hot commodity: Auckland section sizes are decreasing, and house sizes are increasing. Therefore, it is critical that lawns, as one of Auckland's most common green spaces, are investigated. Tied to New Zealand's history, lawns are cultural symbols

that provide a “sense of place” to communities. However, lawns also incur high environmental and financial costs. My research aimed to investigate whether we can reduce these costs by changing how much we mow. Ultimately, my research seeks to answer the following question: how can we encourage attractive, biodiverse lawns in Auckland?

Project results

My research project was comprised of three components: a household questionnaire, a lawn field study and an experimental mowing plot. Together, these components provide insight into why Aucklanders mow, what we have growing in our lawns and whether we can influence the plants present in our lawns by changing our lawn upkeep.

Household Questionnaire

A mail survey of Auckland households revealed that lawns are abundant within private residences (over 90% of properties have lawns). These lawns are most commonly maintained with a petrol mower every two weeks. This questionnaire revealed that lawn maintenance is extremely expensive; Aucklanders spend approximately \$131 million a year on lawn maintenance! Participants listed “aesthetics” as the most important reason for mowing, meaning Aucklanders like the look of a well-kept carpet of grass. Perhaps we treat our lawns as extensions of our living rooms! As well as this,

over 80% of participants reportedly notice if their neighbours do not mow. Ecological misinformation played a surprisingly large role in participants’ opinions about their lawns, showing efforts must be made to communicate the benefits of reduced lawn maintenance on the environment.

Lawn Field Survey

A field study of 30 sites reflected a broader trend towards homogenisation of lawns around the globe, meaning that, worldwide, lawns are becoming more similar. For example, plants found in Auckland are also likely to be present in British, American and Chinese lawns. The lawn sites were overwhelmingly dominated by exotic plants (49/54 plants), of which Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), kikuyu (*Cenchrus clandestinus*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*) were the three most abundant species. Also, twenty of the plants recorded are classed as “environmental weeds”, indicating that Auckland lawns may act as reservoirs for pest plants. Overall, this survey suggests opportunities exist to manage our lawns to advantage native species and reduce the number of weedy plants.

Experimental Mowing Plot

Throughout 2018 I maintained an experimental mowing plot located in the Magnolia Lawn at the back of the Gardens. From this experiment, I found that disturbance intensity (i.e.,

how often you mow) impacted the types of plants found in lawns. For example, infrequent mowing (once a year or never) favoured flowering forb species (i.e., herbaceous flowering plants other than a grass), such as creeping mallow (*Modiola caroliniana*) and Dovesfoot geranium (*Geranium molle*). On the other hand, higher mowing intensities (every two weeks or two months) favoured legume species, such as white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). These results are promising, as they show that reduced mowing may be used to promote attractive meadow-sited grasslands.

Where do we go from here?

I am thrilled to be continuing this research in the future and will embark on my PhD, supervised by Dr Bruce Burns of the University of Auckland, towards the end of 2019. Over the next several years, I intend to extend the field survey to explore

Auckland's grasslands further. I would also like to learn more about our lawn invertebrate communities, including bees and native insects. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate Auckland's soil fertility and how it impacts the lawn plants we have growing in our gardens. I would also like to establish meadow experiments (based at the Auckland Botanic Gardens) that attempt to bring colour and variety to Auckland grass landscapes. These experiments will hopefully be placed in the public eye, as I want your feedback!

Similar to my Honours project, I predict this research will be a large, multi-faceted undertaking. I welcome feedback, questions and volunteers, so please feel free to contact me via email: oroo263@aucklanduni.ac.nz or through my website: www.urbanlawnsproject.weebly.com

Kia ora rawa atu!
(Many thanks!)
Olivia Rooke-Devoy

Three new books in the Library

The Meaning of Trees: the history and use of New Zealand's native plants, Robert Vennell, 2019.

Robert Vennell is the Collections Manager for the Natural Science Galleries at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. While a student

at Auckland University, he started a blog on how New Zealand native plants have been used in traditional medicine, as food and in Maori art. This blog has now been turned into a book illustrated by paintings, prints from museum collections and photographs. In an article in

Ingenio (the Auckland University Alumni Magazine), Autumn 2019, Vennell is quoted as saying, "With all the cute fluffy animals about, we have our jobs cut out to make plants interesting, but that's what I try to do." The result is certainly an interesting and attractive book, but do be cautious if you are tempted to start eating.

Carnations and all Dianthus, Montagu Allwood, undated but possibly 1926.

This is clearly not a new book but new to the Library. It was donated by the family of the late Bert Blumhardt. Mr Blumhardt was for many years the Horticultural Officer for the Regional Council. I checked with Dr Keith Hammett, our leading specialist and breeder of *Dianthus*. He wrote: "Monty Allwood had a very high profile during his career. Allwood's stand at Chelsea was invariably visited by royalty every year and Monty would be there to greet them ... Personally I consider the book to have considerable merit both in terms of the sound practical horticulture expounded and from an archival point of view. Earlier and contemporary breeders are discussed. The standard of horticulture at the time the book was written was, in my opinion, much higher than it is currently and the book is vastly superior to the plethora of more recent books written by amateur exhibitors and journalists. Monty was a consummate and innovative plant breeder. His work

in combining pinks with carnations was ground breaking and the Allwoodii strain of pinks is the basis of the dominant Whetman material currently available ... I strongly advocate that it be retained and venerated."

Botanical Art. From Renaissance herbaria to the 19th century, A. Accorsi, G. Brillante, E. Percivaldi, 2018.

This book describes 24 botanists and the herbals and florilegia they produced. It starts appropriately with various editions of Discorides, often considered as the basis for botanical studies in European science. Then there is a jump to the 15th century. I particularly liked the illustrations from Hieronymus Bock (1498-1554) of plants and animals or people – an apple tree complete with serpent which "... Brought Death into the World, and all our woe, with loss of Eden ...". With time, the plants became truer to life, not just arranged to fill the page, even if sometimes they were characteristically formal and dignified as in the greatest, the work of Basilius Besler illustrating the collections of the Prince Bishop of Eichstätt, Germany. Particularly beautiful is Besler's cardoon and artichoke – and there is the fascinating additional note that their generic name *Cynara* comes from the nymph Cynara who was turned into an artichoke by Zeus for not succumbing to his charms. Hence all the spines and prickles. Those Greek gods could be vindictive.

To me, the most splendid images are those of Ehret, the Bauer brothers, William Roxburgh and those prepared for John Reeves – I don't really warm to Redouté. Of course, in this year commemorating Cook's first voyage, there is a special interest in Sydney Parkinson even if no New Zealand plants are illustrated. A delightful book.

Ross Ferguson



**Seasonal
highlights
at the Gardens**

Clock-wise from top left:

- *Rosa Princess Alexandra of Kent*
- James Kirkwood's *NEW Pavilion 2019*
- *Rosa Little Miss Perfect*
- James Wright's *Hand in the Dirt*





Salvia farinacea 'Victoria' Photo: Jack Hobbs



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