

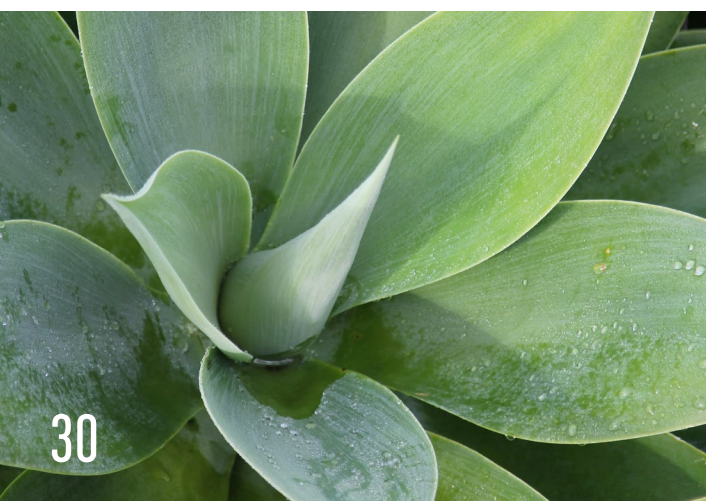
The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends

September 2021



The
AGM
Issue



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Auckland
Botanic Gardens
102 Hill Road,
Manurewa,
Auckland, 2105

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome

Material for the December 2021 issue should be submitted by 3 p.m. Friday 12 November 2021 to the Editor ross.ferguson@plantandfood.co.nz

Images

Front cover:

Puawhananga (*Clematis paniculata*) is a delightful evergreen native climber with abundant starry white flowers in spring. Female plants also produce gorgeous silky seeds.

Opposite page:

Clockwise from top left
Cabbage 'Space Saver',
Heirloom Pink Turnip
(*Brassica rapa*) by Jennifer
Duval-Smith, Kimchi (Korean
cabbage F1 Hybrid)
by Jennifer Duval-Smith,
Magnolia 'Arabian Nights'
(*'Sayonara' x 'Vulcan'*) and
Agave attenuata.

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Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens Inc.

2021 Annual General Meeting Notice

The 38th Annual General Meeting of the Friends
will be held on Saturday 30 October 2021 at 2.00 p.m.
in the Friends and Volunteers Building at the Auckland Botanic Gardens,
102 Hill Road, Manurewa.

Please note the change of date owing to lockdowns and that this year the format and timing of the AGM has changed: the meeting is in the afternoon followed by a talk and drinks and nibbles. There is no dinner. For catering purposes, if you are attending the AGM and the social event please RSVP by 22 October to friendsofabg@gmail.com or leave a message at the Visitor Centre, phone 267 1457.

All Friends are encouraged to attend the AGM and to nominate candidates for election to the Executive Committee. You may wish to stand yourself. Nomination forms are enclosed with this newsletter or may be obtained from the Administrative Assistant (email: friendsofabg@gmail.com)

Please remember that only current financial members may nominate or vote.

AGM programme

2.00 p.m.

AGM, Friends and Volunteers Building. Please bring this issue of *The Auckland Garden* with you as it contains the agenda and reports.

3.00 p.m.

Talk by Pippa Lucas "Garden ideas from abroad". Pippa was the recipient of the Buchanan Award. Followed by drinks and nibbles, concluding about 5.30 p.m.

Election of officers

The retiring 2020-2021 Executive Committee is as follows:

President	Liz Powell	Committee	Ross Ferguson
Vice President	Viv Canham		Barbara Harvey
Past President	Dianne Glenn		(co-opted)
Treasurer	Linda Christie		Heather Hine
Secretary	Laure Lamason		Kate Moodie
Committee	Bill Burrill	Ex officio	Jack Hobbs
	Cleone Campbell		(Group Manager, Botanic Gardens)
	Stella Cattle		
	(co-opted)	Administration	Irene Horton

The 2020-2021 Trustees are as follows:

Chair Liz Powell
Treasurer Linda Christie
Secretary Irene Horton

Two co-opted representatives:
Graeme Hauer
Barbara Myron

Two representatives from the
Friends Executive Committee:
Bill Burrill
Dianne Glenn

Auckland Council representatives:
Cr Daniel Newman,
Auckland Council
Anne Candy,
Manurewa Local Board

AGM agenda

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. President's introduction | 8. Appointment of Auditor |
| 2. Apologies | 9. Presentation of Friends |
| 3. Minutes of the thirty-seventh
Annual General Meeting held
on 31 October 2020 | Birthday Gift to the Gardens |
| 4. Matters arising | 10. Friends Buchanan Award |
| 5. Presentation of President's
Annual Report | 11. Trustees Report |
| 6. Presentation of Annual
Accounts | 12. Election of Officers |
| 7. Motion of thanks to the
Auditor | 13. Election of Trustees |
| | 14. Election of Life Members |
| | 15. Gardens Report |
| | 16. General Business |
-

2020 AGM minutes

From the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens Inc held in the Friends and Volunteers Building at the Auckland Botanic Gardens on Saturday, 31 October 2020 at 4.30 p.m.

- President's welcome and introduction:
President Liz Powell welcomed the 20 Friends present.
- Apologies:
Lorraine Butcher, Ross Ferguson, Graeme Hauer and Shona Pitcaithly.
Moved that the apologies be accepted - Liz Powell/Maggie Burrill -
Carried.

- Minutes from the 36th Annual General Meeting (held 28th September 2019). The minutes were circulated with the agenda and other reports as part of the September 2020 Newsletter. Moved that the minutes as circulated be taken as read and accepted as a true and correct record - Liz Powell/Dianne Glenn - Carried
- Matters arising:
There were no matters arising
- President's annual report:
The report had been circulated with the other AGM meeting material in the September 2020 issue of The Auckland Garden. Liz Powell acknowledged the passing of Phil Jew and Llew Summers. A memorial seat with plaque to Phil Jew has been donated. We were able to purchase Llew Summers' sculpture To the end of Love by fundraising. Thanks to Jean Lewis, Judi Hadfield, Maggie Burrill, Dame Adrienne Stewart, the Friends, and a substantial bequest from the Edgeworth Estate.

Liz Powell acknowledged leaders of the various activity and volunteer groups - Art Group: Lesley Alexander; Growing Friends: Bronwen Rowse; Wiri Rambler: Kate Moodie and John Yelavich; the Library Management Group; the Photographic Competition: Dianne Glenn and team; Newsletter: Ross Ferguson with the help of Kim Stretton.

Liz Powell also thanked the committee: Linda Christie as Treasurer, Laure Lamason as Secretary and Irene Horton as Administrator. She also thanked the Gardens staff for their work and support over the year. Moved that the President's report be accepted
Liz Powell/Bill Burrill - Carried

- Annual accounts:
Linda Christie as the Friends Treasurer reviewed the content of the annual accounts, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. Peter O'Brien, auditor, although not present at the meeting, confirmed that he had audited the accounts and that everything was in order. We were lucky to receive \$250,000 bequest from the Edgeworth Estate. We purchased a new tractor for the Wiri Rambler and a defibrillator to be taken on Friends events.
The finalised reports will be on the Charities website.
Moved that the annual accounts be received - Linda Christie/Laure Lamason - Carried

- Motion of thanks to the auditor - Linda Christie/Bill Burrill - Carried
- Appointment of auditor:
Moved that Peter O'Brien be reappointed as auditor subject to his acceptance - Liz Powell/Sue Davison - Carried
- Presentation of Friends Birthday Gift to the Gardens:
Bill Burrill had suggested an increase to the annual Birthday Gift to bring it to \$20,000.00 each year. This was approved by the Executive Committee and the Trustees in September. It has been suggested that the funds be used to improve fencing in the Edible Garden following the removal of the totara hedge.
- Friends Buchanan Award:
Staff have been attending Zoom Conferences this year, so have not used funds. It is hoped that staff will be able to attend two conferences being held in Australia in 2021, COVID-19 permitting.
- Trustees report:
The Trustees report had been circulated with other AGM reports as part of the newsletter. Thanks to the Trustees for their commitment. Moved that the Trustees report be accepted - Liz Powell/Dianne Glenn - Carried
- Election of officers and Executive Committee members:
The list of nominations was shown on the whiteboard.

President	Liz Powell
Past President	Dianne Glenn
Vice President	Viv Canham
Treasurer	Linda Christie
Secretary	Laure Lamason
Committee	Bill Burrill
	Cleone Campbell
	Ross Ferguson
	Heather Hine
	Kate Moodie
- Moved that the nominated committee members as listed be approved - Dianne Glenn/Bill Burrill - Carried

Ex Officio	Jack Hobbs
Administrator	Irene Horton

- Election of Trustees:

Chair	Liz Powell
Treasurer	Linda Christie
Secretary	Irene Horton

Two representatives from the Friends Executive Committee:

Bill Burrill
Dianne Glenn

Two co-opted representatives:

Graeme Hauer
Barbara Myron

Auckland Council representatives:

Cr Daniel Newman, Auckland Council
Anne Candy, Manurewa Local Board

- Moved that the members as listed be confirmed as Trustees - Heather Hine/Cleone Campbell - Carried

- Election of Life Members:

Dianne Glenn

Bill Burrill introduced Dianne and spoke about all her volunteer work in the community as well as the Gardens. She was a member of the Focus Group and Hearing Panels established to develop the Auckland Botanic Gardens Master Plan 2010-2050. Dianne is and has been a valued member of the committee for nearly ten years and during her time as President she was responsible for many new initiatives including an efficient Health & Safety Policy and making submissions to the Council, and securing funding for Sculpture in the Gardens for five years. Dianne has committed much time and energy to her "love affair" with the Gardens despite her many other responsibilities. We are pleased to nominate her as an Honorary Life Member.

Moved that we accept Dianne Glenn as an Honorary Life Member - Bill Burrill/Liz Powell - Carried

Heather Hine

Liz Powell introduced Heather Hine. Heather is happy to work "behind the scenes" and get stuck in when needed. She joined the Friends in 2012 and since then has become a diligent volunteer - dead heading roses, meeter and greeter for exhibitions, Wiri Rambler guide, assisting the Eye on Nature programme, helping with school holiday programmes and being a member of the Library Management Group. She has organised the library volunteers roster for many years and

helped with cataloguing the books to integrate with the Auckland City Libraries. Heather is an excellent example of valuable contribution made by volunteers to the continued success of the Gardens. Today we honour her for her sustained efforts over many years.
Moved that we accept Heather Hine as an Honorary Life Member - Liz Powell/Viv Canham - Carried

Flowers were presented to Dianne Glenn and Heather Hine.

- Gardens Report:
Jack Hobbs presented his report as published in the September 2020 issue of The Auckland Garden, giving an overview of the numerous and noteworthy activities that the Gardens had been involved in over the past year. There were well over a million visitors even though it was closed through lockdown. There has been a resurgence in gardening with lockdown. The Pacific Pathway is looking amazing now that the plants have had a year's growth and it is good to see both carparks in use especially during the school holidays. Sadly, Nursery Manager Wayne Dymond left after 40 years of service. We had a highly successful Sculpture in the Gardens with sales in excess of \$412,000, the Friends commission being \$83,253. It was great to purchase *Entwined* by Chris Moore and *To the end of Love* by Llew Summers.
- General Business:
A reminder of the Photographic Competition

The meeting closed at 5.25 p.m.

Signed as a true and correct record
.....

Date
.....

Trustees AGM Report, 2021

The Trustees did not have occasion to meet as a group during the 2020/21 year, however, necessary business was conducted via email.

A proposal was made to the Friends Executive Committee in September 2020 to increase the annual Friends Birthday Gift to the Gardens from

\$10,000 to \$20,000. The role of the Trustees of the Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens (Inc.) is to determine the overall policy and be responsible for the finances of the Society. As they must approve spending over \$15,000 we needed their permission to do this. I am pleased to report that the majority decision was in favour of the increase and confirmed that gift could be granted at the increased amount each year without the need to seek further Trustees' approval.

The Trustees are kept informed of Friends activities and decisions through Executive Committee minutes, financial reports and the quarterly newsletter.

We thank the Trustees, Bill Burrill, Dianne Glenn, Linda Christie, Barbara Myron, Graeme Hauer, Jack Hobbs, Anne Candy and Daniel Newman for their ongoing interest and support and service to the Friends.

L. Powell, Chair

Friends President's Report 2021

The 2020/21 year for the Friends was smoother sailing than the previous year had been. We were able to hold our monthly meetings as usual except for August when the lockdown meant meeting via email again. After the previous year's email experience this worked smoothly and all the necessary business was completed.

Friends activities also returned to normal with the spring bus trip in the South Auckland area which took us to Puriri Lane, Jack and Sandra Hobbs' garden in Patumahoe, historic St Bride's Church in Mauku and Wrights Watergardens. In April the autumn bus trip ventured further south to Taitua Arboretum and Hamilton Gardens. Both enjoyable days were expertly co-ordinated by

Kate Moodie.

The staff appreciation morning tea which had to be cancelled in 2020 was held on 6 May this year and gave the Executive Committee a chance to demonstrate their culinary skills and thank the Gardens staff on behalf of us all for the wonderful work they do.

Soup Day in July was another opportunity for the Committee to demonstrate their cooking skills. Once again we enjoyed a variety of delicious soups and "befores" and "afters" prepared by the Committee ensuring a great experience for those members who attended. The talk by Jack Hobbs and Emma Bodley on the staff visit to the Gardens Trust Conference in Christchurch and the

photos of stunning gardens they visited during the conference were both enjoyable and informative.

Other activities on the calendar over the 2020/21 year have included two exhibitions in the Visitor Centre gallery – the Friends Art Group “Creativity Unlocked” in June and an exhibition by members of BASNZ (Botanical Art Society of New Zealand), “A Big Show of Little Botanical Works”, in September. We were delighted to welcome Jennifer Duval-Smith as the Friends Visiting Artist for 2021. Jennifer’s focus on edible plants meant that she spent time in the Edible and Herb Gardens during January, experiencing and recording and developing works for an exhibition during February and March. During her time in the Gardens, Jennifer ran workshops for adults, children and the Friends Art Group and set up a popular work station in the gallery for visitors to try their hand at botanical art – much enjoyed by children of all ages!

The exhibition of works selected from entries to the Photo Competition was held in March this year. The works displayed showed many different aspects of the Gardens at different times of the year. The winners were announced on 28 March and prizes presented. Thanks to Dianne Glenn and her team for a successful event and their perseverance in making it happen in spite of COVID-19 setbacks.

The other major art event in the wings is, of course, Sculpture in the Gardens. This is scheduled to run from 20 November 2021 to 6 March 2022. The curators, Linda Tyler, Catherine Hamilton and Ioane Ioane, made their selection of 20 works from the 88 submissions in February and the successful artists were invited to the Artists Working Day on 14 April. On the day, artists had the opportunity to meet each other, the curators, the Organizing Committee, the engineers and Gardens staff and to sign their contracts. It was an enjoyable day and many of the artists expressed their thanks for the opportunity and for the support they receive as part of SITG. Thanks, too, to Kim Stretton for her exemplary management of the whole event. On a sad note, two of our regular and respected participants in Sculpture in the Gardens, Brian Verey and John Edgar, died during the year. Their loss will be deeply felt by their families and friends and by the arts community.

In March this year the Friends made a submission to the Council’s 10 year Recovery Budget under the Community Investment category requesting funding for the completion of the Gardens Pacific Pathway and for the development of a traditional Maori Garden in line with Botanic Gardens Master Plan. Acknowledgement of the submission was received in April but there has been no further response as yet.

In May, the Friends were delighted to receive a very generous donation of \$7,000 from Laurence Taylor, following the successful staging of "Dinofest" in the Gondwana Arboretum. Laurence requested that the funds be directed to engagement activities for families. They will provide a welcome boost to the provision of family activities over the year and in particular during the Sculpture Exhibition.

Following the last AGM the Executive Committee had unfilled vacancies. I am very pleased to report that two Friends members, Barbara Harvey and Stella Cattle, have been co-opted onto the Committee. Barbara is a long-term volunteer in the library and Stella a former Local Board representative on the Committee. We welcome their support and the experience they bring.

New Gardens staff have also been welcomed. We took the opportunity at the July meeting to hold a pre-meeting morning tea to welcome new Curator, Barbara Wheeler, replacing Bec Stanley, and Senior Gardener, Education and Partnerships, Paul Swift, replacing Julia Watson, and to give them an opportunity to meet the Committee.

There have been some changes regarding two of the annual awards given by the Friends to the Gardens and staff. The Buchanan Award which would have been granted to a staff member for overseas travel

and study was held over from 2020 to this year. As overseas travel was not possible it was agreed to grant the Award to a group of staff to allow them to attend the Gardens Trust Conference in April in Christchurch. A proposal to increase the annual Birthday Gift to the Gardens from \$10,000 to \$20,000 was put to the Committee in September and approved by the Trustees. The fund allowed the construction of the entry gates in the new fencing in the Edible Garden and the purchase of a small "bees" sculpture for the Garden by sculptor Jane Downes. Jane won the People's Choice Award for her work *BeeHaven* in the last sculpture exhibition. The small work will be an attractive addition to the Garden.

Honorary Life Memberships were presented at the 2020 AGM to two hard-working Friends members, Dianne Glenn and Heather Hine. The citations presented with their awards were published in the December 2020 Newsletter. The awards are well deserved recognition for the contribution each has made to the Friends and the Gardens over the years. Congratulations again to you both.

I would like to thank the coordinators and participants of the Friends groups for their work strengthening the Friends support of the Gardens - Bronwen Rowse and her team at the Growing Friends, Lesley Alexander and Helen Gunter with the Art Group, Kate Moodie, John

Yelavich and their team with the Wiri Rambler, the Library Management Group and Heather Hine for her management of the volunteer roster, Dianne Glenn and her team for the successful Photo Competition and Ross Ferguson, ably assisted by Kim Stretton, for the production of the newsletter.

Thanks too, to the Executive Committee for their work on promoting and supporting the development of the Gardens, fostering public interest in horticulture and in the Gardens, supporting staff

and staff development and organizing successful events for members. I am grateful for their efforts and for the work of our efficient administrator, Irene Horton, and the work of those with specific responsibilities – Linda Christie, Treasurer, Laure Lamason, Secretary, and Viv Canham, Health and Safety Officer.

And finally, sincere thanks to Jack Hobbs and his team for their support and help during the year, to the Trustees and members of the Friends for your support and interest.

Liz Powell, President

Auckland Botanic Gardens Annual Report 2020/2021

This annual report covers Botanic Gardens activities
from 1 July 2020 until 30 June 2021.

General

Auckland Council adopted an Emergency Budget 2020/2021 on 30 June 2020. The Gardens budget for the financial year was similar to that of previous years. However, the \$50,000 allocated to Sculpture in the Gardens was removed.

Visitation

Annual visitation at Botanic Gardens was 988,825. This was a decrease of 9.1% on the previous year's total of 1,029,03 recorded visits. Factors in the decrease were COVID-19 lockdowns and event cancellations also due to COVID-19.

COVID-19

Following the announcement on Tuesday 11 August that COVID Level 3 restrictions would apply from midday on Wednesday 12 August the public carparks and visitor centre were closed. Staff were temporarily stood down while a return to work plan was developed and approved. The gardening teams returned to work on Monday 17 August.

Following the commencement of COVID Level 2.5 restrictions on Monday 31 August the carpark, visitor centre and toilets were reopened to public, and the Visitor Services team returned to work.

The Growing Friends resumed their Thursday plant sales on 17 Sept with clear physical distancing protocols for customers to ensure they could continue the plant sales whether or not the government reduced the Level 2.5 restrictions down to Level 2. Many volunteers returned at Level 2.

We returned to COVID Level 1 restrictions on Thursday 8 October with all facilities open and business as usual in most areas including volunteering.

Engagement

The Gardens website received 760,096 page views, an increase of 60% (up from 473,437 last year). This increase reflects the enthusiasm for our Plants for Auckland database (which received 220,905 page views since counting began in October 2020).

Facebook followers rose from 11,486 to 14,543, up 26% on the previous year.

Twitter followers rose from 1260 to 1659, a rise of 31% in the year. Instagram followers rose from 2080 to 2761, a rise of 32%.

Sculpture in the Gardens

The curators for the next Sculpture in the Gardens are Linda Tyler, Catherine Hamilton (landscape architect) and loane loane (practising artist). Cheryl Wright will curate the indoor exhibition.

The call for artists was sent out by Kim Stretton in November, 2000.

The Sculpture in the Gardens artists working day was held on 14 April.

Events

“Eye on Nature” school days took place Monday 22 March–Thursday 25 March. The family day was held on Saturday 26 March. The event was held for the first time on the lawns near the visitor centre and beyond the ornamental lakes.

Dinofest ran from 2 January until 1 February with 22,000 visitors attending the 49 sessions which were all fully booked.

The visiting artist Jennifer Duval-Smith began on Monday 11 January and continued until Easter Monday 5 April. An exhibition of her works opened on Saturday 13 February.

Te Whakaoratanga i te Puhinui | Puhinui Regeneration: Partners and Community wānanga (discussion) was held at the Gardens on 11 November to present on and discuss the Puhinui Stream regeneration strategy. The Puhinui Stream display was in the visitor centre for two weeks.

The Puhinui Stream clean-up organised by Manukau Beautification Trust took place on Saturday 8 May. It was attended by several hundred volunteers including the mayor, Phil Goff.

Volunteers

Total Botanic Gardens volunteer hours for 2020/21 were 4988.

Plants and Gardens

The review of Plant Collection Guidelines was completed with the new version printed.

Due to water restrictions garden plants were irrigated using watering cans until restrictions eased to allow the use of trigger nozzles.

Edible Garden changes included removing the totara hedge around the Culinary Courtyard, re-purposing the Jeff Thompson sculptures as raised planters in the Kiwi Backyard, and building an asparagus raised planter.

Three new beds were developed in the Plant Trials.

The Native Plant Identification Trail was changed with a new circular

route developed. Entrance to the trail is now from Node 3 in the Pacific Pathway.

The Etherington Aloe Collection was relocated from behind the conifer collection to a new bed adjacent to the Rock Garden lake on 25 May 2021. Basalt rocks were placed at the lake's edge to retain topsoil being added to the new bed.

Assets & Renewals

In October the Friends agreed to differential pricing for stone seats with the smaller rectangular seats priced at \$8,500 and \$10,000 for the larger square seats.

The Visitor Centre roof was renewed in winter 2020 with weatherproof membrane cleaned and coated.

The Threatened Native Plant Garden salt marsh was revamped to return it to a more authentic state.

Re-sealing of pathways was

Aloe murchii



completed in the Rock Garden, Urban Trees, Palm Garden entrance, Event Site path near the Northern Depot and the new maintenance path. Pathways in the Camellia and Magnolia Gardens were resealed in winter.

A new maintenance entrance into the Edible Garden was installed.

The Rose Garden Trial Beds stage 2 were revamped as the “Rose Gallery” to showcase some of the best roses from our trials. Topsoil mixed with compost was reintroduced to the beds to replace old soil that had been excavated a couple of months earlier. New roses were planted.

The fence replacing the totara hedge in the Edible Garden Culinary Courtyard was installed in summer. The new archways and gate funded by the Friends birthday gift were installed in autumn.

A new greenhouse was constructed in the nursery to replace the two greenhouses that previously served as the propagation house and display house.

The sculptures *Entwined* (Chris Moore, purchased at the most recent Sculpture in the Gardens) and *Topiary* (Jeff Thompson, donated by Gary and Judi Hadfield) were installed in autumn. *Entwined* will be the focal point in the new *Leptospermum* beds and *Topiary* is in Urban Trees.

Education

5980 school children participated in “Learning through Experience” programmes over the year at the Botanic Gardens.

Conservation & research

The Friends committed \$10,000 to support the next stage of the wildflower research to be undertaken by PhD student Oliver Rooke-Devoy supervised by Bruce Burns (University of Auckland).

The joint pollination project for Bartlett’s rata progressed with seed being successfully collected. 42 plants of *Metrosideros bartlettii* and several hundred cuttings were returned to Ngati Kuri for translocation back to the wild.

Pimelea eremitica was returned to its rohe with Te Roroa and an ex situ collection was planted in the nursery for long-term seed collection and propagation to support in situ conservation.

Five papers were published in various journals on trials and research, as well as three papers submitted for review in international journals.

Nursery

The nursery produced 54,293 revegetation plants ready for planting plus 1,850 in tubes and 35 trays of seedlings for volunteer nurseries to grow on. Production was affected by COVID-19 disruptions and staff shortages.

Staff

Doug Ward commenced as Nursery Manager on Monday 20 July, 2020.

Kara Lockman and Melveen Sam commenced work as fixed term nursery assistants in October.

Kimberley Strempele joined the amenity team as a horticultural apprentice on 18 January.

Vari Kree returned as our Trials Gardener in February after almost 12 months away due to recruitment issues caused by COVID-19.

Bec Stanley resigned from her role as Curator with her final day on 2 April. She has joined Environmental Services as Principal Advisor – Conservation Partnerships.

Julia Watson left her role as Senior Gardener Education & Partnerships on 24 April.

Barbara Wheeler started as Curator on 28 June. Most of her career has been spent at Dunedin Botanic Gardens where she has been Plant Collections Supervisor since 2002.

Paul Swift was appointed in late June to start as Senior Gardener Education & Partnerships on Monday 5 July.

Karah Lockman was appointed in late June to commence as a horticultural apprentice on Monday 5 July.

Lenny van Heugten and Ashleen Prasad started as Visitor Services Representatives, replacing Joanna

Fieldes and Sabian Pivac. Yvette Heke resigned from her casual visitor service representative role in January.

Conferences

Several staff attended the NZ Gardens Trust conference in Christchurch from 16–18 April. Jack Hobbs spoke to the Nelson Botanical Society on Monday 19 April.

Owen Newson attended the International Plant Propagators (IPPS) conference in Hamilton from 6–9 May.

Emma Bodley attended two virtual records conferences: the 2020 Plant Records Conference and the PlantNetwork's Plant Records Meeting - "Mapping and new technologies".

Other

Gardens staff completed their 20th annual volunteer day working in the Ayrliies wetland on Thursday 10 June. The first volunteer day took place in 2001 and the only year they missed since then was 2020 due to COVID-19.

The Gardens received the Recreation Aotearoa Healthy Park Award of the Year 2021 in June. To win this award, a park must display innovation, community engagement, excellence, and sustainability in an efficient and effective manner.

The Gardens received Carbonzero

certification in late May. This is an internationally recognized programme delivered by EnviroMark Solutions, now known as Toitū Envirocare.

The licence for Café Miko has been awarded to the incumbent, Spotless, for 5 years + 2 x 1 year renewals.

Qualmark gold certification was awarded.

Jack Hobbs, Manager

Library Management Group Report 2020/2021

It has been another busy and productive year in the library with not too many COVID-19 related disruptions.

Carolyn Stringer as the Friends representative replacing Roger.

The “Little Sprouts” programme continues successfully.

We were, however, unable to hold the thank you morning tea for our volunteers in 2020 but this was possible again in 2021. At our get-together in April, we farewelled Roger Price who stood down from the Library Management Group at the end of 2020. Roger’s involvement with the library, both as a Gardens staff member and chair and as a Management Group member following his retirement goes back to its development in the late 1980s and its opening in 1992. His knowledge of the Library’s history and his ongoing support has been valued by us all.

Maintenance work has been necessary on the roof after leaks developed in the storeroom and the main library and some of the window blinds needed attention – now, thankfully, completed.

Postal disruption caused by COVID-19 has meant that a number of local and overseas journals have either arrived very late or not at all. Thanks to Heather Hine and Graham Robertson for taking on the somewhat thankless task of trying to track these down or obtain replacements.

Other personnel changes have occurred over the past year. Julia Watson’s move from the Gardens to a position with the Council in the city meant her leaving her role as the staff representative on the Management Group. We welcomed

We continue to receive requests for books to purchase; 34 were approved last year. A list is available from me. The library has a wide ranging and valuable collection of horticulture-related works which are available for research and enjoyment.

On behalf of the Management Group I'd like to thank our wonderful volunteers who keep the library open

and accessible for the staff, Friends and the public.

Liz Powell
lzp21@windowslive.com

Friends Art Group 2020-2021

The past year has been another great year of creativity and companionship and despite COVID-19 rearing its ugly head again a couple of times, all our meetings went ahead as planned.

Our usual bi-monthly artist demonstrations from local artists were thoroughly enjoyed – we tried our hands at painting bugs and vases of flowers using soft pastels. From our own group, talented artists Jennifer Duval-Smith, Jan Leonard and Brenda Hart delighted us with nature journaling, calligraphy and life as a jeweller respectively.

We are eagerly awaiting our October meeting as we have world-renowned botanical artist Sue Wickison coming to talk about her work, share a few tips and tell us about her latest project, "Plants of the Qur'ān" which looks amazing.

"The Art of Healing – medicine, myth and magic", our members' exhibition for this year, was to run in the Visitor Centre gallery from 4 September until 17 October. Check website for new dates. Come along, it's going to be a feast for your eyes and lots of interesting fact/myths to learn about. However, try any potions at your peril! We do not endorse or recommend unsupervised use of these plants medicinally, as many have unproven efficacy or may be actively harmful in untrained hands.

New members are always welcomed, beginners to practicing artists alike. If you would like to learn more, please get in touch with me – 021 1617070 or email me – lesley.alexander.smith@gmail.com

Lesley Alexander

Growing Friends August 2021

It has been good without Sunday sales as we have caught our collective breaths and have reasonable numbers of plants in production for Spring.

We welcome donations of cleaned pots (no punnets) with no branding labels on them. Currently we have for sale a delightful line of hellebores retrieved from the Gardens.

Sales generally are on the increase.

Bronwen Rowse.

Jack's update

We were delighted when the Botanic Gardens received the Recreation Aotearoa Healthy Park of the Year Award 2021 in June as it aligns perfectly with our aspirations. This award recognises our innovation, community engagement, overall excellence, and sustainability. An example of our innovative approach is displaying collections in a non-traditional manner that is aesthetically pleasing but still enables accurate documentation. Also recognised

is the array of excellent events we deliver and support including our flagship Sculpture in the Gardens.

The judges noted our sustainable horticultural practices such as spray-free gardening, extensive use of organic matter, and our minimal mowing techniques including researching meadows. Another feature of the Gardens is the extensive range of sustainable water design devices and practices that have been implemented over the past 20 years.

A highlight of a seemingly long winter was spending an early June day with the Gardens team completing our 20th annual volunteer working bee in the Ayrilies wetland. Our first volunteer day took place in 2001 and the only year we have missed since then was in 2020 owing to COVID-19 lockdowns.

It has been remarkable to see the change in the wetland from mainly bare paddocks and banks around newly formed ponds to the magnificent luxuriance of the vegetation today. We love making our small contribution to realising Bev's vision and spending time with her wonderful small team.

It is always a joy when spring blossoms and nectar-eating birds



sweep away winter. As usual, magnolias have been a highlight over the past few months. One that attracts much admiration is 'Deryk', a small tree with masses of deep purplish flowers that belies its unimaginative name. Our own 'Arabian Nights' again made a wonderful display.

Several vegetable cultivars have also been attracting attention for their ornamental qualities in our Edible Garden and some of our display beds. *Brassica rapa* 'Kimchi Red' (F1) has been featuring in the bedding display along the Pohutukawa Walk alongside pansies and parsley. This dark purple cabbage is a culinary favourite in Korea and although bred for pickling the leaves it makes a wonderful ornamental in the cooler months.

Several years ago we were bequeathed a comprehensive *Aloe* collection by the late Geoff Etherington of Richmond. Much of this collection was originally planted behind the Rock Garden near our conifers where they were overlooked by many visitors. Recently many of these aloes were relocated into new beds in the Rock Garden in a sunny high-profile spot adjacent to the lake. Prior to planting basalt rocks were placed on the lake's edge to retain topsoil being added to the new bed.

This collection includes many outstanding garden subjects such as *Aloe andongensis* and *A. murchii*

that we will feature in other display gardens and eventually release to the public. I believe aloes have potential to become even more prominent fixtures in Auckland gardens. Their bright flowers attract nectar-loving birds, many flower in winter when bright colours are most welcome, and unlike some other succulents they do not die after flowering. Importantly they are easy to grow, require very little maintenance, and withstand long dry periods.

In early August Jane and Mario Downes delivered *BeeHaven*, a smaller version of their wonderful sculpture that won the People's Choice Award at our last Sculpture in the Gardens. This work has been installed on the pergola in our Walled Garden in the Edible Garden. We are grateful to the Friends for funding this artwork that we know our visitors will love.

We are delighted to now have on permanent display *Fantail*, a sculpture by renowned corrugated iron sculptor Jeff Thomson that was exhibited at our first-ever Sculpture in the Gardens in 2007. Fantail was purchased by Garry and Judi Hatfield who have gifted it to the Gardens, and it now sits beautifully in our Urban Trees area.

In April I attended the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Banks Memorial Lecture while in Christchurch for the New Zealand Gardens Trust conference.

Delivered by Professor Paula Jameson, it was entitled "Plant breeding, before and after genetic engineering – a perspective from a plant biologist". It provided a fascinating insight into gene editing (CRISPR).

Derived from a bacterial defence system, it takes mutated genes and splices them in the correct sequence. It may be used to relieve people of the consequences of diseases such as Alzheimer's.

CRISPR has been used to develop transgenic insulin (New Zealand has been one of the first adopters), and the Pfizer COVID vaccine also used transgenic microbes.

The developers received the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and it is considered one of the greatest innovations of our time. Potential uses include increased resilience to climate change, less fertiliser use, improved disease resistance, and altering fruit and flower colours.

It seems the world is still coming to terms with this new technology. It is currently not allowed in New Zealand, and it is also prohibited in the European Union although the European Commission has recommended that gene editing be reviewed.

Professor Jameson considers New Zealand regulations on this



the century, and that we are out on a limb amongst first world countries. She concluded with the statement, "Legislation and fear may mean New Zealand joins Europe as the death place of agricultural innovations".

I do not profess to be an expert on gene editing and am still formulating my views. It is clear it has the potential to be immensely beneficial to humanity and our environment, but there are fears it may also be misused. However, there will be no escaping it.

Jack Hobbs

Visitor Services events

Exotic Blooms

25 & 26 September 11 p.m. – 5 p.m. Join us for a stunning drag performance as they present their interpretation of some of our spring flowers.

CANCELLED

will feature a different activity to join in with as well as a range of family-friendly trails to help you get outside, connect with the plants and explore the Botanic Gardens.

Spring School Holiday Fun

4 October - Friday 15 October 10 a.m. - midday Join us for a range of free children's activities at the Botanic Gardens every weekday. Each day

To be confirmed

Celebrate Spring

Experience Chinese New Year 16 & 17 October 2021 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Enjoy the festival of the new year whilst learning about Chinese cultural practices and traditions at a weekend of demonstrations and activities.

CANCELLED

Introducing our new staff

Welcome to Lenny

Recently we welcomed Lenny van Heugten to our visitor services team. Lenny was brought up with a conservation background, as a youngster setting traps, planting vegetables, and playing in the bush. Her interest in plants led to a double degree in biology and environmental science she completed in 2015.

Lenny then spent more than three years at Zealandia Horticulture where her duties included supervising production and despatch with a "great team" of up to 18 staff. In spring they produced 50,000 trays of plants per week, but although she enjoyed the challenge it eventually



became second nature and she decided to look for something more challenging.

Fortunately for us Lenny applied for our Visitor Services Representative role as she thought "...the Gardens would be a cool place to work".

Throughout her time at Zealandia Lenny undertook a part-time pest control role, supplying private property owners with materials such as baits and traps, conducting

practical demonstrations and education programmes, and producing five newsletters each year. Lenny is continuing this role while working part time at the Gardens.

Lenny is not sure what the future holds but will be happy in any role where she can influence positive change. She enjoyed her conservationist father's stories as she was growing up, and feels it is now time to make her own stories.

Welcome to Paul

Paul Swift has been appointed to replace Julia Watson as our Education & Partnership Specialist and started with us on Monday 5 July. Paul is well known to us from his previous position with the Sustainable Schools team. He has a passion for engagement and believes that plants, gardens, and open spaces are essential to wellbeing and the community.

Paul started his career in museums before taking on educator roles, and he also worked as a software developer in the UK before emigrating to New Zealand in 2008. He initially worked as Leisure & Learning Educator at Auckland War Memorial Museum and then as eLearning Producer. In 2011 he became Education & Exhibitions Manager for the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) before taking on his role as a Sustainable Schools

Advisor for Auckland Council in 2014. Most recently he worked for Council as Sustainable Schools Team Manager.

Paul brings a wealth of experience to the role, and our many dealings with him over the years have always been productive and pleasurable. We feel very fortunate to welcome him to the Gardens team.



Introducing Stella Cattle

Stella Cattle has long been very active in community service in Manurewa and the wider Manukau district. She decided to retire from the Manurewa Local Board in 2019. Fortunately for us, she has agreed to become a co-opted member of the Friends Executive Committee, and her knowledge of South Auckland communities (and politicians) should be a great asset.



Stella writes:

"I first visited The Botanic Gardens just after it opened. It was nothing like it is today, but it still held a beauty which has been enhanced over the years. I love beautiful gardens even though I can't profess to be a great gardener. In my job as Civic Events Executive, I used the Gardens many times to host events and to bring overseas visitors to enjoy the space and beauty. We are incredibly lucky to have the Gardens in Manurewa, it is, indeed the jewel in the crown. Like many people who come to New Zealand I was brought up during the war and flower gardens were not the norm, it was vegetables. After the war my parents changed the garden to include beautiful flowers and one of my special memories is my mother being able to pick her flowers that she had planted and watched grow.

I am honoured to be part of the Friends Executive Committee and hope to be a useful member."

Sculpture in the Gardens volunteers needed

With over 400,000 visitors to be welcomed, outdoor sculptures to be maintained, an indoor gallery to be kept tidy and various admin tasks - we have something for everyone! If you can volunteer every week or just once and a while we would love you to be involved. To express your interest or find out more contact Paul paul.swift@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Eleanor and Dick Lane

Eleanor Lane began as a volunteer at the Gardens in 1997, the same year I became manager. The kids had finished school and she was "... a bit bored" when she noticed an advertisement for volunteers in a Council magazine.

Eleanor was promptly snapped up by our Botanical Records and Conservation Officer, Steve Benham, who put her to work entering records into our database. One day she proudly stated she had completed 100 records, to which Steve replied it was about quality not quantity.



Entering data can be repetitive, but Steve made it interesting by varying things such as using Eleanor to assist with plant census and she "... loved foraging around finding stuff." When Steve departed after eleven years working together she helped Roger by entering Library visitor numbers into the computer. Then she moved on to working in the Edible Garden with Nicky Reynolds where she learned lots as Nicky was so particular. Working with other curators was also enjoyable, especially deadheading the roses although that was only for six months of each year. Today Eleanor still works in the Edible Garden, Potter Children's Garden and Rose Garden. Dick is a more recent recruit to volunteering at the Gardens, but he enjoys his role welcoming and informing visitors to Sculpture in the Gardens. When the couple heard that Sculpture in the Gardens needed financial support they generously donated, a gesture that really impressed the organizing committee.

Eleanor says that she "...really likes the people at the Gardens, they are all a really nice lot and free with their knowledge. It's a really beautiful place too." Eleanor and Dick are true supporters of the Gardens, we love having them in our team too.

Jack Hobbs

Pterodactyls provide a nest egg

The Friends have received a very generous donation of \$7000 from Laurence Taylor, organiser of the wildly successful DinoFest in the Botanic Gardens earlier this year. This saw dinosaur favourites such as *Tyrannosaurus rex* and a life-size *Triceratops* amongst the trees of the Gondwana Arboretum. Mr Taylor suggests that the money be spent on activities for families.

Friends Spring Bus Trip

Four very different gardens

At Te Toro:

- Ngahere Farms. A farm garden with sculptures
- Angrason. Features palms and bromeliads

At Waiau Pa:

- Glenys Laing's garden. Flowers, roses and more roses.
- Margaret and Robert Flanagan's garden. Large shade houses with many unusual and rarely-seen plants.

Bring your picnic lunch and drinks for the day, and money if you want to buy plants. Before making a payment you must book your seats by phoning Kate Moodie (09) 297 7234. Friends are welcome to bring a friend. We will not be posting tickets to you.

Any queries, phone Kate Moodie and please remember to phone for seats before you pay.

When: Saturday, 6
November 8.30 a.m.
Returning 4.45 p.m.

Where: Meet outside the
Visitor Centre,
Auckland Botanic
Gardens.

Bring: Bring your lunch and
drinks for the day.

Cost: \$40 per person
which includes entry
charges.

Payment options:

- We prefer you to pay online 12-3011-0757619-00 indicating bus trip and your name.
- Or pay at the Botanic Gardens using the enclosed slip.

If these payment methods are difficult for you alternatives can be discussed when booking your seats.

Sculpture event and subs reminder

Sculpture in the Gardens – Friends Preview

Members of the Friends of the Gardens are invited to preview this summer's Sculpture in the Gardens. Meet some of the sculptors and the curatorial panel and have a tour of the works before the exhibition opens to the public. Wine, non-alcoholic drinks and nibbles will be served. Friends members only.

Wednesday, 17 November

4.00 – 7.00 p.m.

Meet in the Visitor Centre at the Botanic Gardens.

If you are attending, please RSVP either by phoning the Visitor Centre 09 267 1457 (make sure you give your email address) or by emailing friendsofabg@gmail.com before Wednesday, 3 November.

Please advise if mobility assistance is required for the 2 km trail.

Note COVID-19 Level rules will apply. Please see www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz for updates closer to the time.

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Membership Subscriptions

There are still a number of outstanding subscriptions for the 2021/2 financial year. Notices for these were included in the June Newsletter and we rely on members to pay within a reasonable time. If your subscription is outstanding and you wish to renew, please pay this promptly. Members not currently financial in November will be considered to have resigned and this will be your last Newsletter.

Subscriptions may be paid by 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.

Seasonal activities

Signs of spring are everywhere. Cherries are flowering, birds competing for nectar are abundant, and spring-flowering bulbs delight us with their colourful displays. For gardeners spring is the time to

harvest, plan, prepare and plant.

In the Edible Garden we are harvesting winter crops. Cabbage 'Space Saver' is the best cabbage for a small garden. It yields well

and does not take up too much space, great bang for your buck. Harvest medium-sized Florence fennel bulbs for best flavour. Broad beans are ready to be harvested from mid-spring and some varieties will continue producing beans until summer. Continually harvest sprouting broccoli to encourage sprouting, and beets will keep providing your leafy greens until the warm weather slows them down. The fun part of growing your own vegetables is cooking them in new and different ways. Pinterest is full of interesting recipes uploaded by home cooks and professional chefs.

Now is the time to plan your summer vegetables and determine numbers and design for planting. We prepare garden beds by removing plants that have finished, then adding compost and natural-based fertilisers such as blood and bone, seaweed, or fish-based fertiliser. Compost worked into the soil will help retain moisture and nutrients.

Sow seeds of pepper, tomatoes, eggplants, lettuces, leeks and beetroots. Cucurbits (pumpkin, squash and zucchini) can be sown but ensure they are kept in a warm protected place. Herbs such as parsley, thyme, mint, sage and rosemary can be planted when they are ready. Plant new subtropicals, perennials to add colour in summer and autumn. Add mulch to garden beds to help suppress weeds and retain moisture in the soil.

Other garden tasks to attend to now include cutting back those frost-tender plants that were severely frosted by the frosty days in winter. Stake perennials that need support before the warm weather encourages new vigorous growths. Hedges and topiary can be pruned and shaped before the weather warms up.

If you have not done so already prune hydrangeas to keep them compact and promote abundant flowering by completely removing all dead, diseased and damaged, weak or straggly stems. If too many healthy stems remain some can be cut back to a pair of plump buds but try and leave intact any stems that did not flower last year. Camellias can be pruned in late spring before new growth emerges. The ideal look is an open, airy plant that a bird could fly straight through. Visit the library for references on how to prune trees and shrubs or come in and have a chat with us.

Mere Brewer

Book these in!

- The Friends AGM
Saturday 30 October.
See page 4, RSVPs requested.
- Spring Friends Bus Trip
Saturday 6 November.
See page 27.
- The Friends Sculpture in the
Gardens Preview.
Wednesday 17 November.
See page 28.

Agaves – once bitten twice shy!

One of the first plants that I evicted from a new garden some thirty plus years ago was *Agave americana* 'Variegata'. It really didn't stand a chance - those awful marginal teeth and sharp terminal spines were not gardener-friendly, it didn't fit the style of garden I wanted and I'm not a huge fan of variegated plants. The final nail in the coffin? Unpleasant memories of agaves in public gardens with graffiti-etched leaves.

Of course, the brute didn't go easily, inflicting a painful parting shot, through leather gloves, on its final journey to the dump (oops, I mean Recycling Station).

I remembered that close encounter when I took over curatorship of the Rock Garden at the beginning of last year. To be honest, I would still never have an agave in my home garden but, in the appropriate landscape, I believe that agaves provide dramatic structural forms that are in a class of their own. I must also point out that not all agaves have spines, including *Agave attenuata*.

A native of Mexico, Central America, the West Indies and the arid western United States, the agave was so revered by the Aztecs as a source of food, drink, clothing and shelter that they deified it in the form of the goddess Mayahuel. Today, the

agave still provides Mexico and the world with tequila, sisal and various other products.

Agaves are monocarpic, i.e., they only flower once, producing a single flowering stem that can reach heights of 12 m. Their survival is secured by the production of pups (offshoots) as the original rosettes of foliage die after flowering. Some agaves start to produce pups years prior to blooming.

The growth of a flower stem is fascinating to watch. As energy is passed from the rigid, succulent leaves into the stem, the stem rockets skyward and then flowers. There may be hundreds of individual flowers on one stem and these may last for months. Completely exhausted after such rapid growth, the leaves then deflate and the plant dies.

The longevity of some agave species gained the genus its common name of the century plant. It was a popular misconception that it took 100 years for the plant to flower. In fact, different species mature at different times. Flowering time is often between 8 and 20 years but some agaves may take over 50 years to flower.

Agaves generally thrive in warmer

subtropical areas that have seasonal dry periods. They prefer a sunny, well drained location, and, once established, can go for long periods without watering.

So, worried about the cost of turning on your garden tap? Perhaps its time to have another look at agaves.

Me? Well, some years back my Texan neighbours introduced me to the pleasures of a frozen margarita after a long day in the garden. My pick of the bunch therefore is *Agave tequilana* Weber, which is being grown in Golden Bay. Cheers everyone!

Paula Lollback

Herbarium visit

We were fortunate enough to be able to take a behind-the-scenes-look at the herbarium at the Auckland War Memorial Museum in July. Although the herbarium isn't open to the public, they are currently scanning and uploading images of the collection to several websites. You can view herbarium specimens on their website <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/about/natural-sciences/botany>

This is happening through the assistance of volunteers, who can scan up to 100 images an hour. These tell a history of the flora of Auckland since the herbarium was established in 1870, with the oldest specimens being collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander, two botanists that were aboard Captain Cook's first voyage to New Zealand. The Museum herbarium holds over 500 specimens collected

by Banks and Solander during their voyage between 1769 and 1770.

The Museum herbarium holds 450,000 plant specimens, including: 30,000 lichens, 30,000 algae, 20,000 liverworts, 27,000 mosses, 32,000 ferns and lycopods, 5,000 gymnosperms, and 306,000 flowering plants (angiosperms). Approximately 200,000 are New Zealand native plants.

The Museum herbarium holds a specimen of Adam's mistletoe (*Trilepidea adamsii*) that was collected in 1954 from Sanitorium Hill (Maungakawa) in the Pakaroa Range, east of Cambridge. Adam's mistletoe was last seen around 1970 and is now classified as extinct.

The Adam's mistletoe was never photographed; however a painting was produced by Fanny Osborne, who lived on Great Barrier Island.

Auckland Botanic Gardens contribute to the collection held at the Museum, with Emma Bodley delivering specimens during our trip as part of the ongoing record of Auckland's flora. This is as much about monitoring of potential weed species as those that are desirable.

When collecting a plant specimen, it is important to collect as much information as possible, including the date of collection, geographic location, climate, etc. Before mounting the specimen must be completely dry. The plant specimen must be positioned with the leaves, flower and fruit spread apart. The specimen is placed in a press and set in a drying device.

Once mounted on acid free paper, the samples are stored at an optimum temperature of between 18 – 20

°Celsius (64 – 68 ° Fahrenheit) and 50% humidity.

If a plant specimen is received where the name or origin of the sample is not known, a process of elimination is used. The Museum has a wide range of reference books, with the process being easier if the plant family and location is known. From there, leaf and flower shapes are used to narrow down the options.

We would recommend making use of the online resources that are available. The number of specimens that can be viewed is increasing as the volunteers work through the process of scanning the extensive collection of specimens that are held.

Andrew Currey, Angela Anstis,
Joanna Mason, Karah Lockman,
Kim Strempe



Jennifer Duval-Smith

Visiting Artist, Jan-April 2021

Every two years the unstoppable Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens put some of their hard-earned funds into a visiting artist position. Their goal is to enhance the visitor experience by being able to observe an artist working in the Gardens, highlighting a specific aspect of the plant collections. As a working botanical artist, for this opportunity to work in the gardens was, for me, a dream come true.

Why focus on edible plants?

As an artist, edible plants offer immense visual interest, colour and structure. But what could be more important than food, especially in worrying times? Edible plants start conversations about food security, water use, land use, climate change and biosecurity. And given the incredibly diverse group of people who benefit from the Botanic Gardens, food plants provide a focal point where all generations and cultures can come together in common appreciation and shared memory.

The incredible growing art table

I began the residency in January, working in the lovely light-filled Huakaiwaka gallery. People would come in and chat and watch me draw

artichokes and okinawa spinach. But as my not-so-secret mission is to get everybody drawing, and noticing plants, I set up a table for people to draw with me. Pretty soon we had a queue and some sad little faces. So we added more tables until we had the giant drawing table and between 20 and 70 visiting artists per day. With the generous permission of the talented Edible Curator Angela Anstiss, and wielding my rockstar ABG lanyard, I would snip some foliage or flowers and create a living tableau for our aspiring artists. Art went up on our Wall of Champions to create a mural of artistic and scientific observation.

Whole families drew alongside scientists, garden group members, groups of adults with developmental delays, business people sneaking "me-time" in between meetings and an entire Philippino wedding party. Many people did not initially recognise the plants their food comes from. One gentleman decided to test the concept by personally sampling all the edible flowers(!).

During the residency I ran three nature journaling workshops in the Culinary Garden for three different groups, Children and Carers, Adults, and Friends of the Gardens Art Group.

My overwhelming observation from these activities is that most people crave to express their creativity, but many fear to do so. I noticed that taking a prompt-based approach* such as "I notice ...", " ... wonder ...?" and "This reminds me of ..." helped participants get beyond fear of drawing. Most people are confident in their ability to "notice", and as a side benefit they started seeing and recording aspects of plants that they had never previously observed. Participants enjoyed sharing their observations that, for example, an opium poppy seedhead looks quite a lot like the Death Star.

Work from the residency

My solo exhibition *Feast your Eyes-celebrating the colour and beauty of edible plants* opened on 14 February, just before the lockdown but received a generous extension as we went in and out again. Sales were very gratifying and cards and prints from the exhibition are still available in the foyer of the Visitors Centre.

Teamwork makes the dream work

Aside from the opportunity to really focus on my work, what made the whole experience really joyful was the wholehearted support from the ABG team at all levels, and especially Liz Powell of the Friends and Mich and the Visitor Experience team. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everybody who found me a fruit tree, took photos and video,

helped me with the digital displays, or bought me a coffee when I forgot to have lunch (and yes, coffee counts as an edible plant).

Jennifer Duval-Smith
www.jenniferduval-smith.com
[@jenniferduvalsmithart](https://twitter.com/jenniferduvalsmithart)

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*Ref: John Muir Laws: The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling.

Artichoke image on following page copyright Jennifer Duval-Smith.







Camellia 'Adorable'

A compact shrub producing masses of double pink flowers each spring

Photo: Jack Hobbs



Auckland Botanic Gardens: botanic.gardens@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Friends: friendsofabg@gmail.com