

The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends
March 2022



Auckland
Botanic Gardens
40th
anniversary



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**Contributions to the
newsletter are welcome**
Material for the June 2022
issue should be submitted by
3 p.m. Friday 20 May
2022 to the Editor
ross.ferguson@
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Images

Front cover:
Reservoirs by Richard
Mathieson.
Opposite page, from top:
Sowing new grass over the
top dam, Bedding Trials,
Bottom left: Formal Garden
February 1982 and the start
of the African Garden.
Inside back cover:
Aerial photos 'then and now'.

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40 years on ...

Auckland
Botanic Gardens
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The official opening of the Auckland Botanic Gardens to the public was on 23 February 1982. A function had been planned for this February to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening but the onset of the Omicron pandemic ruled this out.

It is to Auckland's shame that we have had a botanic garden for such a short time whereas the other major centres in New Zealand have had botanic gardens for a century or more. However, a compensatory advantage is that many of us have seen the transition from farmland to the Gardens we know today.

We tend to forget the progress that has been made since the changes have been continuous. A quick look at the historical photographs on the Gardens website reveal just how much has been achieved.

This issue of the Newsletter starts with a series of reminiscences by long-serving staff members, but first, it is important to congratulate Jack Hobbs, who in January completed a remarkable 45 years as a member of the Gardens staff. Jack has therefore been here almost from the very beginning. He knows that achievements don't just happen; they are the result of hard work by many people, of whom he is a very good example.

Ross Ferguson



Jack's journey

My overriding recollection of the opening of Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens on 23 February 1982 is how busy it was. The weeks leading up to the event were hectic, with paint or stain splashed on everything that was not a plant and a seemingly endless list of things to do. The highlight for staff was meeting the Botanic Man, David Bellamy, who was probably the most famous botanist of his time. He was an engaging man with boundless energy and very easy to be with. It was Phil Jew's idea to bring David to the opening to attract media and public attention, and it was a masterstroke.

The day of the opening event drew thousands to this new and long overdue botanic garden that in the

previous few years had been the exclusive domain of the staff. We were so busy on the day of the opening we did not see much of the ceremonial stuff, but it was clearly a success, and the Gardens was not only open, it was on the map.

Visitor numbers in the first year were around 98,000, officially, but I recall thinking this number was inflated. To be honest there was not much to see, although we planted vast numbers of annuals in spring and autumn to at least provide visitors with lots of colour. There were rudimentary plantings near the carpark in what today we call the Auckland Border. The native plantings had started, and I was fortunate to be given responsibility for these.

David Bellamy at the opening of the Gardens



Everyone working at the Gardens was a horticulturist, nearly all male, and I loved that our time was almost exclusively devoted to developing new gardens. We seldom had a plan to work from, usually marking out the beds and paths on site then getting on with development. I was delighted when in 1981 it was decided to create a collection of Southern African plants, my favourite flora at that time.

A rock garden was planned, the site identified, and we sourced numerous large boulders from quarries in Wiri. Then, to my great frustration, the rocks sat in a paddock for about a year while we awaited permission to begin work. I finally decided just to build it, ordered some large machinery including a digger, and over a couple of weeks had great fun forming paths, placing boulders and eventually creating the bones of the garden. I knew I would be in trouble

when Phil found out, and sure enough he almost exploded when he saw what I had done. By then it was too late to stop, so I weathered the storm and when it passed, we got on with planting. It was certainly easier to seek forgiveness rather than permission back then.

My fondest memories of those early years are of the wonderful people who supported the Gardens. Brian Buchanan was Superintendent and my manager, a quiet and very pleasant man who Ross writes about elsewhere in this issue. Despite our occasional differences, I have huge respect for Phil Jew, the Manager of Parks. He was the master of managing the political environment, a visionary who understood the value of botanic gardens, who could convince even sceptics to his way of thinking. My inflated opinion of my own abilities sometimes led me to openly oppose some of Phil's



plans, but in hindsight his wisdom exceeded mine at the time.

Then there were the three J's. Joan Dingley was a celebrated female scientist, a rarity in her era. She was particularly passionate about fungi and plants, and a great support to Brian. Jean Veal was a formidable and colourful personality with a vast plant knowledge, and the relatively quiet Joy Amos loved nature and in her subtle way influenced so much of what happened. I must also mention the indomitable Sue Davison who was telling me what to do back then and continues to do that today. Sue has the longest association of anyone with the Gardens, and she is esteemed by all who know her.

The Gardens would not be what they are today without the Friends. I have worked with some notable presidents including George Rainey

who supported me when I first became manager. Rod Bielecki, Terry Hatch, Dianne Glenn, Bill Burrill, Terry Becher and Graeme Hauer are others who made significant contributions. None, however, has been more dedicated and effective than our current president, Liz Powell. As with Sue Davison, Liz has made a habit of telling me what to do, but in the most endearing way.

We have been fortunate to have strong political support over the years, especially when Dianne Glenn and Bill Burrill were councillors on the Auckland Regional Council. Both were steadfast in their support, both for ongoing developments but also when times were tough.

Many others have contributed to the Gardens as we know it today. Amongst my most fulfilling times was working with Dr Keith Hammett

Native Plant Evaluation Panel

From left Graeme Platt, Joan Dingley, Brian Buchanan and a young Jack Hobbs



on various breeding projects, mainly dahlias. I learned so much from his scientific and structured approach and clarity of vision. Graeme Platt was our main contributor of native plants and trees to the arboretum. Terry Hatch contributed numerous plants, expertise and humour in his disarmingly modest way, and his son Lyndsay is now doing the same.

Bev McConnell has been a huge influence on me and the Gardens in her quiet way too. It was through visiting Ayrilies that I realised great gardens are great art, and that the Gardens could remain a true botanic

garden and be beautiful at the same time. Bev was the connection to the architect, John Austin, who designed the visitor centre Huakaiwaka, and she has generously financially supported projects including funding the Supreme Award for Sculpture in the Gardens since its inception.

I learned so much from and been inspired by these wonderful people whose company I have thoroughly enjoyed. I feel privileged to have known them and to collectively contribute to this wonderful garden.

Jack Hobbs

Remembering Brian Buchanan

As we celebrate the Botanic Gardens being open to the public for 40 years, we should remember Brian Buchanan. He was appointed Superintendent of the Botanic Gardens in 1974. The first plantings were made that year and early photographs show just how open the site was then. The initial eight years from 1974 were spent with him overseeing the transformation of farmland into the Gardens that were opened to the public on 23 February, 1982.

Brian had joined the Parks Department of Auckland City Council as an apprentice in 1961 and after 13 years transferred to what was then

the Auckland Regional Authority. His position was upgraded to Manager of the Auckland Botanic Gardens in 1993.

He was a quiet man, outwardly calm and apparently unflustered, who quickly demonstrated his organisational skills and with great patience and determination established the Botanic Gardens as "a regional centre for the display, study, conservation and enjoyment of plants", a role that continues today.

Brian was insistent that the Gardens were for the public to enjoy but he also considered it important to help

them choose the right plants for their own gardens. He encouraged comparative trials of cultivars, monthly rambles and the preparation of a whole series, 78 in total, of leaflets recommending plants suitable for Auckland gardens. He fostered links with the nursery trade and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens, set up in 1983.

He was a keen and knowledgeable plantsman. For many years he lived in an Epsom townhouse with restricted space for gardening. He therefore "limited" himself to pot plants, at times up to a thousand. He specialised in cacti, succulents and carnivorous plants. He completed his National Diploma of Horticulture with a thesis on the propagation and cultivation of stapeliads. In *Commercial Horticulture* of April

and July 1991 there is a revealing account of his home garden. It is revealing in that it makes clear his love of his plants, his awareness of the conditions that they required, his meticulous care of them and his determination that his plants be happy and grow well.

Sadly, Brian's time at the Gardens was limited. He died in 1996 after a long illness, aged only 52. That year he had belatedly been made an Honorary Life Member of the Friends, a Life Member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of New Zealand and an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. Brian is commemorated by the Friends Buchanan Award.

Visitors to the Gardens, "If you seek his memorial – look around you."

Ross Ferguson

From left: Jean Veal, Brian Buchanan and Holly Roach



Reflecting on visitor trends

In the first year of opening to the public in 1982 around 98,000 visitors visited the Gardens. Today we host over one million visitors per year. In those early days families enjoyed relaxing weekends with Saturday trading only legalised in 1980 and Sunday trading becoming legal in 1990. Gardening was a highly popular pastime with homeowners, many living on quarter acre sites. Commonly over 100 people attended the Garden Rambles held by Roger Price and the team. The 90s saw the advent of Maggie's Garden Show which was a "ratings" hit for over a decade and with Jack Hobbs as one of the presenters this provided added publicity for the Gardens. The Ellerslie Flower show began in 1994 and moved to the Gardens in 1998. Gardening was in its heyday.

In 2004, despite the popularity of gardening, we were only seeing around 450,000 visitors per year. When the Gardens first opened operational needs were put ahead of visitor experience, and key developments such as the "Loop Road" were created to assist with garden operations with the consequence that vehicles impacted negatively on visitor experience. A review of the collections in the early nineties led to a revamp in how the plant collections were arranged with more emphasis on ecological

combinations in the native plant gardens and elsewhere, more aesthetically pleasing designs.

When Jack Hobbs took over management of the Gardens in 1996 he knew we needed to be more relevant to the community and rallied support for some key developments. Along with a Council marketing advisor, Alesha Pangari, Jack commissioned research in the early 2000s that provided great insights into our visitors' preferences and offered ideas as to how we could change the perception of the Gardens amongst our community. Previously the Gardens were appealing to those our market researcher referred to as "fanatics", when in reality most people were visiting for leisure and feeding the ducks was more important to them than taxonomy. Comments were that we were too far away, mainly appealed to older people and not for children. We were not alive or exciting, certainly not an entertainment destination and we needed a wider offer if we were to appeal to the wider community.

This understanding launched a period of game-changing developments with the focus on improving visitor experience and engagement, raising awareness and attracting more visitors from a wider cross-section of the community. Our name was

changed from Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens to simply Auckland Botanic Gardens. We developed our own logo and strapline. In 2005 we opened the Potter Children's Garden and the Huakaiwaka visitor centre.

The visitor centre was located at the southern entry to provide a gateway to the Gardens where we could engage with visitors and share our messages and ideas and set the scene for the visitor experiences.

We decided to capitalise on using events to attract more visitors. Sculpture in the Gardens has brought huge value and new audiences to the Gardens. The Potter Children's Garden provided a space to inspire children and give them joyful connections with nature. Increasing the focus on children has significantly increased visitation by school children and young families. The Master Plan adopted in 2009 focused on developing the garden to make visitor engagement and the plant collections more enticing and more accessible.

So, has visitation grown and have we changed the perceptions noted in the early market research? The answer is yes, awareness has risen, visitation is now around one million visitors per year and the demographic of our visitors is more representative of our community. Our visitors understand more of what we do in conservation, research, education and recreation as well as still feeding the ducks.

Artistic designs resulting in beautiful gardens have increased the use of the Gardens for leisure. Opening the site to weddings and other events has given people an initial reason to visit, with high levels of re-visitation. It has also stealthily introduced them to ideas and information on plants. We have truly become a place "Where ideas grow".

The introduction of our own website enabled us to digitally present our information and ideas, and social media has enabled us to promote the beauty of the gardens, share gardening advice and advertise workshops and event activity.

Our relationship with visitors has strengthened through engaging with them not only on site, but also before and long after visiting. We use a variety of media to cater to our varying audiences and are constantly looking for ways to make our information more accessible and useful to novice and aspiring gardeners. COVID-19 has driven up the use of digital tools even more. We have seen large increases in both website and social media use and therefore are building up our body of digital information.

The old quarter acre blocks common when we opened 40 years ago are rare nowadays, and small back yards, balconies and therefore indoor plants more common. Whatever the size, we are seeing a resurgence in gardening and a greater awareness of

the contribution plants and gardens make to wellbeing. This is even more important during the pandemic with people seeking to reduce stress through visiting parks and gardens. Interest in sustainable approaches to gardening and the environment is also on the rise. Capitalising on these trends when planning our gardens and engagement programmes will help us remain relevant to future

visitors.

Where to from here? Our desire is to continue to use high quality information and work with partners to deliver experiences that increase awareness and appreciation of plants, and to continue enhancing the role the Gardens plays in people's lives.

Mich Newton

40 years of plant records

Plant records underpin a botanic garden – it's a documented living collection that supports education, research and conservation. Our history with records is important because it tells a story of the plants we had and people involved in plant breeding and propagation. Over the years, the changes and access to technology has certainly changed the accuracy and efficiency of our records.

Our first records we kept in notebooks which started in 1980 (Jack's handwriting is throughout the books). They were brief but captured plant names and provenance information which are two of the most important pieces of information we keep. These records were given accession numbers later on when we started entering records into a database. You might see some accession numbers on the

black labels with an "E". We had to estimate when some plants arrived in the Gardens so this is indicated on very early records.

In 1990, we started a standardised way of capturing information in the accession books and we still use the same books today. This is almost the only element of plant records that is still done by hand where we create the unique number (accession number) to which we tie all information about a plant. Our accession books have been photocopied and archived with the Auckland Libraries.

Our first database in the 1990s was InMagic. Steve Benham was the records officer at the time. He had a couple of volunteers who would help him with taxonomic verifications and census work in the Garden. InMagic did a good job of storing data and creating accessions, however

because it was not developed to be used for plants, it was difficult to pull out information. There was no taxonomic hierarchy system in the database so keeping track of name changes was challenging and time consuming.

In 2008 we got our first living collections database, specifically designed for use in botanic gardens called BGBase. BGBase is an incredibly powerful system with lots of tables and endless fields to store information. Yvonne Baker had the massive task of transitioning our data from InMagic to BGBase. There was a lot of standardisation of fields required and processes set up of how information was entered, as well as resolving taxonomic issues. This database served us well for about 10 years but we were needing something that was more user friendly, engaging, publicly accessible and stored a different type of dataset that was not possible with this system.

After my trip to the USA, thanks to the Friends Buchanan Award, and hours of researching databases, we installed IrisBG in 2019. This was a smooth and easy transition into the new system. It was done entirely by the company and required some verification and checks from me. Within a few days, we were up and running, creating new accessions, adding GPS locations, seeing our maps in the database and adding thousands of photos. We now can

update our records from mobile devices, researchers can see what is in our collections themselves, we can create diverse and useful reports and create our labels with just the click of one button (something that would have taken days to do before).

Today our collections hold 275 families, 2135 genera and over 19,000 taxa. We have almost 20,000 accessions which is equal to 50,000+ plants. 1700 plants have individual GPS locations and 3,000+ taxa have photos associated with them.

I've been involved in selecting a database for BGANZ (Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand) over the last three years, and one important thing I've learnt, is that technology is changing rapidly, even in a specialist area such as botanic gardens, that allows us to answer questions about our collections and see gaps in our conservation collections with such ease. A database might be something we have for 10 years and as our needs change, the requirements we need from a system will change. The future of living collection databases will not simply be for storing accession information, but enable us to better manage our collections and prioritise plants that are important either in a conservation context, the only specimen in our garden or historically significant cultivars.

Emma Bodley

My story - 20 something years in the making

They say “first impressions last” and this is true for me. The day I met Jack and Senior Gardener Stuart Robertson, they simply introduced themselves as Jack and Stuart. No titles or roles. I had come to the Gardens to meet Julie Steele to sign my year-long contract as a trainee. Julie had gone off site food shopping for a staff celebration that afternoon and I ran into Stuart at the Nursery.

Twenty-two years later and Jack is still the calm, relaxed manager that he is, and Julie is still usually running late. Those first few minutes with Jack, Stuart and Julie with their warm, friendly, and down-to-earth approach set the tone of the Botanic Gardens for me, and it is what working in the Gardens is all about. Julie sent me down to the Northern Depot office where my contract was and invited me to join the farewell celebrations for two trainees ending their contracts. This is typical of our pure-heart-of-gold Julie.

My plan was to gain as many horticultural skills and as much knowledge as possible by soaking up the knowledge of the highly qualified collection curators. One year turned into three, by when I gained my National Certificate in Horticulture Level 4. It was my horticultural tutor at Manukau Institute of Technology, Alistair Gordon, who encouraged



me to apply for the traineeship. I had contemplated applying for the Diploma programme at MIT when I was awarded a scholarship at our end of Prize Giving for achieving the Level 2 Certificate in Horticulture, but fate got me back on the right path.

I gained the role as Collection Curator Herbs, Salvias and Dahlias in March 2003, three months after I completed my traineeship. I loved being a collection curator managing plant collections. The research, the practical side, planning, bed designs and plant combinations and working with the very talented propagator Jane Wright was what I most loved. After three years and much encouragement from certain colleagues, I applied for the Senior Gardener position, a new role created from a restructure of the

Gardens that had been undertaken in 2006.

My responsibilities included assisting our trainees achieve their National Certificate in Horticulture Level 4, and in this capacity I reconnected with Alistair Gordon when he joined the National Institute of Horticulture as a Trainee Adviser.

The senior gardener role provided an opportunity to manage people and oversee the horticultural programme. Although this was all new to me, I was comfortable in the role and saw it as a challenge. My experiences as a more mature horticultural trainee and as a collection curator helped. I would like to say this workplace has contributed the most to my personal growth. I can look back and see that my style of management has changed over the years. What I have learned most is connecting with people on a personal level, and that caring about people and taking them on a journey with you is important. Collaboration has always been a key focus for us at the Gardens. Everything we do, including strategic planning, we involve staff and this I believe contributes to this being a great working place.

The Gardens is where I met my future husband Neil Brewer who worked as a nursery assistant when I started. Neil and I started going out in October 2000, got engaged in December 2000 and we married on 23 February 2002. We will be

celebrating our 20-year wedding anniversary when the Gardens celebrates its 40th anniversary. Our beautiful, headstrong daughter, Jade, the bossy queen of the playground as she is known at school where she keeps the boys in line, was born two weeks early on 19 July 2007. Jade was diagnosed as Trisomy 21 (Down syndrome) at 20 weeks. She was loved and given her name as soon as I was pregnant. Jade spent a few days in NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) when she was born because of a hole in her heart valve. Julie was the first visitor to visit Jade, Neil and me in NICU. I did have to tell Julie not to go round looking at other babies in their units, but as I mentioned Julie has a heart of gold and will go out of her way to help anyone, including stray cats and other creatures.

Neil mentioned that the Gardens was where he found himself, and his passion for plants. The one thing that stood out was the people who work here and their passion. He mentioned collaboration and how things always get things done, anything was achievable and supporting each other was key to making his time here special. Neil was speaking for both of us because this is how I feel about the Gardens.

Working on a Saturday movie night with Micheline before we had the overflow car park was an example of the "can do" attitude at the Gardens. Managing all the traffic in the dark

was a challenge, but we got through it. Due to such high visitor numbers, the Visitor Centre toilet system was overwhelmed as the water supply could not cope with the constant flushing. When I came into the Visitor Centre, there was Mich filling up watering cans to flush the toilets and so I joined her. People had a lovely time and went away happy, unaware of what was happening behind the scenes.

I have really valued the opportunities to be involved in a variety of projects such as creating the Potter Children's Garden, and workshoping our vision

for the Gardens. I would not have had such opportunities elsewhere. The support of the Friends for staff development and their general support for the Gardens makes this workplace special, and we are always thankful to the Friends for this.

Twenty-two years later, the spirit of the Botanic Gardens remains true to the day I started. The caring and collaborative management style led by Jack, the passionate staff and the attitude that we can achieve anything still exists.

Mere Brewer

Shelley's memories

I was 17 and fresh out of high school when I started as a horticultural apprentice at the Gardens in October 1990. As I recall, there were eight apprentices at varying stages of their apprenticeship. There were three separate work crews, the Nursery managed by Wayne Dymond, the Top Crew (based in the shed next to the nursery), whose foreman was Shane Everett and another crew based at the Depot, the foreman being Alex Gardener. An apprentice spent a year working with each crew, which was a good way to see how the plants in each collection changed over four seasons and how the nursery operated during this time.



Brian Buchanan was the overall manager and Jack Hobbs was the Curator of the Gardens. I started in the Top Crew and spent the first three months of my apprenticeship working with Marion Jones in the

Herb Garden. I remember being at work for only a couple of weeks when I helped Marion cut back some salvias. That night I had an allergic reaction to one of the plants and ended up covered in large red welts from head to toe, not a particularly great way to start off my horticultural career!

The Gardens were quite different then to what they are today. The Visitor Centre was based where the records/curator office is now, with the actual library building not being added until 1992. Roger Price had his office here and there was a roster of willing volunteers who would help with any enquiries from the public. The Café was situated in the covered courtyard and was always popular with visitors. The Rose Garden was where the Visitor Centre sits today and in front of this on the lawn were the large annual beds which were changed twice a year. Planting these used to take the Top Crew days of backbreaking work, getting the soil level just right before planting hundreds of tubes of seasonal annuals (all grown on-site at the nursery) spaced out correctly and in specific patterns to show them at their best.

There were cattle and sheep grazing where the dog-off-leash/events site is now and most of the hard landscaping was done by the Gardens staff and in some cases the "Landscape Crew" who were based at Mount Smart Stadium.

I remember having to spray the Trial Rose Garden (where the Rose Garden is situated today). This was the worst job! It used to take two staff, dressed up like astronauts in the heat of the summer, most of the day to spray the roses with a concoction of evil-smelling chemicals. There were some very happy staff (and insects!) when this was eventually phased out.

It wasn't all hard work though; our staff social events were the stuff of legends! Thank goodness there was no such thing as WorkSafe back then!

In 1994 when I had completed my apprenticeship I applied for and got the job as curator of the Herb Garden, staying in this role until I left the Gardens in September 1998. I loved the hands-on, practical aspects of the job and over the years I met many passionate, like-minded plant people.

My second stint working at the Gardens came about in 2012 when I heard about a part-time position being advertised in the Visitor Centre. I'd visited on many occasions since leaving and enjoyed seeing the progression of the Gardens over the years. I'd always thought it would be fun to work here again so when the opportunity arose, I went ahead and applied for the role. I was lucky enough to be hired.

One of the first things I noticed

when I started back at the Gardens, was the massive increase in visitors, now over a million per year. These numbers were unheard of back in the 1990s when I first worked here. We have many regular visitors, some of whom have been visiting almost daily for many years. I've enjoyed getting to know some of them on

their trips through the Visitor Centre. The Gardens have changed a huge amount over the years and have become one of Auckland's most popular attractions. I'm proud to have worked here for some of that time and look forward to seeing what the coming years bring.

Shelley Small

From sheep farm to world class gardens

From a working sheep and cattle farm to a botanic garden, Auckland Botanic Gardens has come a long way in a short period of time. Two staff, Tony Carson and Alan (Hippy) Mathews, have been here for significant portions of that time - 43 years and 38 years respectively. They have witnessed the transformation from stockyards and paddocks to plant collections, conservation and a wonderful landscape that is now a top destination for over a million visitors per year.

Beginnings – the early days

Tony started in 1979 and in the early days, before the official opening of the Botanic Gardens, he recalls jumping over stock fences to catch lambs. The Botanic Gardens site was "virtually all farm paddocks and gates to open and close when you did a circuit of the Gardens". The top carpark was thick, coarse metal, the Auckland Border was being

developed, there was a small herb garden, the nursery unit was a lot smaller than today and "there were not a lot of trees around the place". The staff base was at the Nursery and the main staff base today (the Northern Depot) was then the site of a barn and stockyards.

The Puhinui Stream back then was reasonably narrow, and you could jump across at some points, and sometimes, Tony reminisced, you missed and went in. As the area was farmland and intensively grazed, most of the original vegetation had been removed so the streamsides were devoid of vegetation.

For Tony, the early days were spent in the Nursery, propagating, and there was always a lot of bagging up to do. He also planted a lot of agapanthus and tōtara and toiled away at brush cutting and spraying.



Tony Carson and Alan (Hippy) Mathews

Alan started in 1985 as a gardener in the Landscape Crew who were based at the Botanic Gardens and worked around Auckland planting and landscaping at council facilities like the new (then) Refuse and Recycling Centre on Constellation Drive. Alan recalls that they “used to run around with wheelbarrows of mulch and joke that they could eat anything and never put on any weight. There was a guy with bobcat who would fill four barrows at once with mulch and then they would run around and empty them”.

Relics of a bygone era

Māori traditionally used the Botanic Gardens site as a base for their camps, eels would be caught from the Puhinui Stream, dried and smoked. One of the early finds, as the grounds were being developed, was a kō (9 ft long, uncarved)

found by Tony in a swampy area below where the magnolia/camellia collection now is. The kō would have been used by Māori as a garden tool for digging gardens and post-holes.

From June 1942 to July 1944 the USA Military also had camps onsite – one a marines’ camp where the main carpark is now and a GIs’ camp down at the northern end of the Garden. Military memorabilia have been both dug up when cultivating the land and found washed up on the banks of the Puhinui Stream – bottles, helmets, fired machine gun bullets, meal trays and brass case first aid kits are some that Tony recalls.

The area where the Palm Collection is now was the site of a flour mill for about a year. Tony explained that it is not known if it was ever a

working mill, but it was dismantled once it closed. The water wheel was restored, and it is understood to now be at Howick Historic Village.

The first superintendent

The nerve centre of the Gardens was the Nursery where the late Brian Buchanan was based. Tony and Alan remember Brian as a quiet and very humble person. Brian would take Unitec classes after work and helped staff who were working towards their qualifications. The passion that Brian had for horticultural training was recognised by the Friends when they established the Buchanan Award that supports the professional development of Botanic Gardens staff.

Garden development begins

As the Botanic Gardens started developing, both Tony and Alan remember the huge formal beds where the Visitor Centre now is, filled with colourful annual bedding like celosias and begonias. They would take about three weeks to plant the beds out each time – “it was fantastic” Tony recalled. In the same area and equally vibrant was the long rose arbour and rose garden beds. The creation of the new Information (now Visitor) Centre in 1982 was a huge change as it displaced all the formal beds and the rose gardens. They do not recall much of an uproar about this at the time, but Tony recalls more of a public uproar when a grove of casuarinas was removed

from the area where the orchard is now.

The lakes appear as if they have always been here but in fact all are manmade. The top lake was a swampy area, so it was dug out in 1981 and the fill laid on the ground to dry and then dispersed around the new lake edges. The lower lake was developed in 1990 from a depression in the ground which was increased to its current size. If you make it down to the far northern end of the Botanic Gardens, you will see a small pond which was made for an Ellerslie Flower Show exhibit.

When the Ellerslie Flower Show first came here it really took off. Tony remembers driving along the motorway and seeing the light emitting from the Show, “it was like a small town”.

Working at Auckland Botanic Gardens for much of its history has meant both Tony and Alan have been a huge part of the Gardens’ evolution. Alan said in his years with Council he has “learned a lot about plants, the use of machinery, hard landscaping, carpentry – all sorts of skills”. Tony reminisced that “It has been an amazing time and taught me a lot about life”. They have both seen extensive change, seen staff come and go, and their hard work and dedication has been a large part of the transformation of the Gardens.

Barbara Wheeler

Rex Clark

Several long-term visitors to the Gardens have become local identities and firm favourites with the staff. Rex Clark has been visiting the Gardens since before the opening, so when I recently spotted him on one of his strolls I asked him to share some memories.

Rex first began visiting when he was advised to take up jogging following minor surgery. He remembers back then it was farmland but says “it has come together well”. He loves the green open spaces and absence of traffic, a complete contrast to the urban situation with roads and houses.

Rex’s regular walks are “a beautiful start to the day”. He takes several routes, sometimes walking through the Gardens from the northern end to Hill Road, and when he does it in the other direction, he sees completely different things. He also loves the staff who he says are so helpful, especially mentioning Denise and Shelley who both know him well from his regular visits. The



café is another favourite stop, and he says Dereck runs it well.

Rex was a senior engineer at Manukau City Council and one of his projects was the residential development to the east we now know as The Gardens. Today if he spots an engineering issue such as a footpath repair, he will seek out Shelley so she can get it fixed.

Rex says that one of the things Council has done really well is the Regional Parks network, and the Botanic Gardens is the highlight!

Jack Hobbs

Hear more from Jack...

Watch the *40 Years of Growing Ideas 1982-2022* video on the Gardens website for more on the history and development over the years.
<https://www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/about-us/40-years-of-growing-ideas-1982-2022>

Jack's update

The main focus of this Newsletter is highlighting the 40 years since opening to the public on 23 February 1982. That is certainly one day I will never forget. The Gardens have been transformed since then, and several contributors, including me, share some of their most poignant memories.

It has been a very different Sculpture in the Gardens thanks mainly to COVID. The outdoor exhibition has evoked a mixed response which is not unusual for an art exhibition, but those who have walked the trail have enjoyed their experience.

Cheryl Wright has done an outstanding job of curating the indoor exhibition in the visitor centre Huakaiwaka with many superb artworks artfully presented. If you have not visited this exhibition there is still time, or alternatively you can view it online.

On Friday 10 February we held a small outdoor gathering in The Glade to announce the winners of the Sculpture in the Gardens McConnell family Supreme Award and the Friends acquisition for permanent display at the Gardens

The presence of Bev McConnell (right) to present the McConnell Family Supreme Award made this

a very special event. Bev and her family have sponsored this award continuously since our first exhibition in 2007, and we are so grateful for Bev's support.

The winner of the Supreme Award was The Indigenous Clay Collective for their work: *Tāiki e! United in Purpose!* The sculptures feature works by Rhonda Halliday, Dorothy Waetford, Alix Ashworth and Todd Douglas with expert glazing and project management by Karuna Douglas.



We are delighted that the acquisition is Richard Mathieson's *Reservoirs*, a typically exquisite bronze work located in the Perennial Garden. This is the first time Richard has been an exhibitor as he previously excluded himself owing to his close involvement with all the previous exhibitions. The work is beautifully conceived and crafted, and we think it sits perfectly in its setting.

The major recent news for the Gardens has been undertaking responsibility for the horticultural services (excluding sports fields and mowing) for the Domain/Pukekawa from 4 April. This follows the sale of AIM Services by Council to Programmed (an Australian company). The 14 staff currently based at the Domain will effectively become part of the Gardens team.

The Gardens will be primarily responsible for the horticultural outcomes at the Domain. These include the Wintergardens and nursery glasshouses, the Fernery, all planted gardens including annual and perennial display beds and bush and natural areas. It generally excludes hard assets that will remain the responsibility of Community Facilities with non-plant related assets maintained by their full facilities supplier.

It is expected that synergies arising from the alignment of the Domain horticultural services with the Botanic Gardens will deliver

improvements in the curatorial management of the plant collections, lead to benefits in staff training and development and improve career opportunities. As resources become available further improvements are anticipated in the documentation of the plant collections, enhanced marketing, event management and revenue generation, and an all-round improvement to visitor services.

New entrance signage has been installed for the plant collections. Re-branded signage has been installed on the concrete wall in front of the visitor centre.

Despite the dry conditions the gardens have been colourful and attractive. I have especially enjoyed the displays in the Edible Garden where the sunflowers always bring a smile to my face, as does the tapestry of colours and textures in our Perennial Garden.

Later in this issue we profile two newcomers to our team: Harpreet Singh who commenced as the Nursery technician on 20 December, and Jodie McDonnell who commenced as a horticulturist in the Amenity team on 17 January.

The delightful Ashleen Prasad is departing from her role as visitor services representative to undertake her "dream role" as an air quality technician at Air Lab.

Jack Hobbs

New staff - Harpreet Singh

The Nursery team has been rounded out with the latest appointment of Harpreet Singh who started in December 2021. Harpreet's background is in farming and growing vegetables in India, then he spent five years in Whangarei as fertiliser and irrigation technician at Poroti Growers and most recently worked for AIMS Services as a gardener undertaking extensive tree planting around Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. Harpreet's experience is rounded off with a Diploma in Horticulture.

We welcome Harpreet to the Botanic Gardens and to the Nursery team and know he will bring much to the role with his experience in irrigation systems and his high work ethic. Harpreet is keen to grow further in his new position and he will certainly be kept on his toes outside of work as he and his wife recently welcomed

their first child, a son, born at the end of January 2022.

Doug Ward, Nursery Manager



New staff - Jodie McDonnell

New staff can of course bring new ideas and skills into the workplace, and some do wonders in reinvigorating a team. That is certainly the case with our new horticulturist, Jodie McDonnell.

Jodie came on board in January, having spent the last few years working for a landscaping company carrying out commercial garden maintenance. Prior to that, she obtained a Level 4 Certificate in Horticulture (Landscaping) and had



spells in the cut flower and market gardening industry, amongst various other roles. In cricketing terms, she is definitely an “all-rounder”.

In the brief time that she has been with us, Jodie has done well getting to know the staff and our work systems, and has already shown that she will bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and enthusiasm to the horticultural team. We are really looking forward to seeing how she continues to grow and develop in the years ahead.

Shaun Rice

From the President

The new year has started with less disruption than we experienced in the latter part of 2021 – the Friends Executive Committee has been able to meet in person, most volunteering programmes, with the exception of the Wiri Rambler and the Library, are up and running again. Some events will not go ahead as hoped – the Autumn Bus Trip for example, but others have got off to a good start.

We are sorry to report that Bill Burrill has decided to stand down from the Friends Executive Committee after many years: we are pleased to welcome Deidre Barry as a co-opted member.

The eighth Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition was opened on Friday 10 December, 2021 with a blessing ceremony. Although the installation of some artists' works had been held up by COVID-induced delays there was a varied and interesting selection of outdoor works for the public to enjoy and a lovely variety of works in the indoor gallery. Sales from the indoor gallery have been particularly successful and it is really pleasing to see such interest and support.

A ceremony to present the McConnell Family Supreme Award and to announce the Friends

Acquisition Award was held on Friday, 11 February. This was well attended by artists, supporters and Gardens staff. There was a high level of approval for the choices made – the McConnell Award going to the Indigenous Clay Artists Collective's work *Taiki e! United in Purpose!* and the purchase by the Friends of *Reservoirs* by Richard Mathieson. This will remain as part of the Gardens permanent sculpture collection.

We were finally able to hold the 2021 AGM – on Saturday, 22 January, 2022, after three postponements. The AGM was well attended by members. The new format of an early afternoon meeting, followed by a very interesting and beautifully illustrated talk by Buchanan Award recipient Pippa Lucas and then a social hour with drinks and nibbles, catered by Café Miko, found favour with all those attending. AGM

business included the presenting of Honorary Life Memberships to Kate Moodie and John Yelavich for their work with the Wiri Rambler and a farewell presentation to Bill Burrill, long-time Friends member and former President who has stood down from the Committee. The Friends Birthday Gift to the Gardens is the designing and building of a platform and shelter for the Harakeke weavers and the Buchanan Award will allow four staff to attend the BGANZ Conference in Melbourne in October. Full AGM minutes and citations will be published in the newsletter.

Sad news during the year was the passing of horticulturist, David Brundell, respected former Friends President, Terry Becher, former Wiri Rambler Coordinator, Jill Groves, and Claire Jew. All have made significant contributions to the Friends and the Gardens and will be missed.



One of the Friends most significant contributions to the Gardens is through the Volunteer Programmes. These have had a number of disruptions over the last few months, from complete shutdown to gradual reintroduction except, as noted above, for the Library and the Wiri Rambler.

Volunteering by Friends members has a venerable history. In the Friends history, *The First Twenty-five Years, 1983 – 2008*, Roger Price (former Education Officer and Volunteer Coordinator) wrote:

"From the beginning, volunteers have played a very important support role to the Gardens and staff. Most of the volunteers come from the Friends and were most eager to get stuck in and assist this new Botanic Garden. Fund raising was one of the objects of the Friends so things like plant sales quickly became a regular event.

... Another group was keen to assist in the Information Centre. Sue Davison organised the roster for many years so members were able to assist Roger Price in managing the Centre. Many did the front desk on a regular basis...

... in April 1988 a very enthusiastic band of volunteers planted 1000 daffodil bulbs in the Spring Blossom Valley. Later in the year they planted roses for the first stage of the New Zealand Rose trial ... another group became eager to help and became

known as the "Rose Deadheaders" [they are still active!]

... in the 1980s ... Wayne Dymond had his extra help in the nursery.

... Garden Rambles and Plant sales became a regular monthly event during the eighties and nineties ... From the plant sales grew the Growing Friends.

As the membership grew so did the need for more newsletters to be posted out - the "Elmwood ladies" (from Elmwood Rest home) took this on for many years.

... Following the opening of the Friends Horticultural Reference Library in 1992, it was necessary to have the library staffed. There was no shortage of willing volunteers who made themselves available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays ...

... In 1999 The Friends applied to the Wiri Licensing Trust for funding for carriages and to the Lion Foundation for the tractor ... and by August 2000 Judith Tizard cut the ribbon on the Wiri Rambler."

All these groups are still in action supporting the Gardens staff and/or raising funds for the Friends which go back to the Gardens in a variety of ways – for example, funding the annual Birthday Gift, the Buchanan Award, and purchasing books for the library. Other groups work with the Curators, field and maintenance staff keeping everything in spick-and-span order.

Areas where volunteers were active

in the past were with the bi-monthly Plant Group and with maintaining the Plant Data Base. New groups include the Botanical Painting Group set up in the late 1990s by Maggie Burrill with Sri Benham as tutor, and those associated with Sculpture in the Gardens since the first exhibition in the summer of 2007/8.

My personal involvement with volunteering is in the Library, the Growing Friends Sunday Plant Sales, Sculpture in the Gardens and with

the Painting Group. It's a great way to meet and work with a wonderful group of people, have fun and at the same time, make a contribution to this special place.

Jack Hobbs has calculated that the hours worked by the volunteers involved in the field are equivalent to around five additional staff - and that's not counting the hours put in by the Friends Committee and others working behind the scenes - a huge contribution!

Liz Powell

Honorary Life Memberships

Honorary Life Memberships, Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens - Kate Moodie and John Yelavich.

Life membership of the Friends is for those who "have given service to the Gardens over a period". This is a rather inadequate description of why our Life Members have been honoured. All of them have had a sense of civic duty, a commitment to the Gardens and an enthusiasm for sharing with others the pleasure they get from plants and from gardening.

Today, I would like us to honour two of our members who have been involved for many years with the Wiri Rambler. Together, Kate Moodie and John Yelavich form a team that leads

the Wiri Rambler volunteers.

The main reason, originally, for the Wiri Rambler was to ensure that older people or less able people could still get around the Gardens. The Rambler has since proved to be of much wider appeal with passengers often comprised of children, their parents and grandparents. When it is able to operate without constraint, the Rambler does provide the Friends with a healthy income. Much more important, however, is the pleasure it can bring to many visitors. This makes the work of the volunteers so satisfying.

The Wiri Rambler is now officially of age - it was born in October 2000. It therefore celebrated its 21st birthday

in seclusion during the extended lockdown of last year. Of course, not all the components are original – Nellie, the new tractor, arrived in 2020. The important thing is the continuing concept, the contribution that the Rambler makes to the Gardens.

Kate Moodie

Kate believes that the Auckland Botanic Gardens are a vital part of the community and this is why she willingly gives her time to support them. She joined Wiri Rambler team in January 2015, took over the role as coordinator in November of that year and joined the Friends Executive Committee in 2016. Kate has undertaken her role as coordinator with enthusiasm and persistence. This involves rostering staff, taking bookings for specials trips, recruiting and training staff ensuring they meet health and safety requirements, and many other tasks involving the maintenance of the Rambler. She has also spent over a hundred days acting as a guide. She enjoys meeting many diverse people and sharing with them the Gardens as they change throughout the seasons. More recently, Kate has also taken on the responsibility of organising the bus trips that are enjoyed by so many. Four of these trips have proved most successful but two have had to be cancelled because of COVID lockdowns. Like the rest of us, Kate is looking forward to more “normal” times.

John Yelavich

Kate freely admits that she could not do her job without John. He can’t remember when he first started with the Rambler – at least ten years ago. It was something different, it was meeting other people, it was providing a service that appealed to him. In that decade he has taken over responsibility for maintaining the Rambler, both the tractor and the carriages. Public safety is, of course, a top priority and this involves many bureaucracies. He arranges for the two-yearly inspection by WorkSafe, the yearly licensing by Auckland Council, and the six-monthly maintenance of the tractor by an independent qualified mechanic. He undertakes the cleaning and maintenance of the carriages which have recently been sealed and repainted. He is also is a driver, at least once a month in pre-COVID days.

Kate and John are a team, working well together. We hope that their team continues to operate for many years yet. It is fitting that we should recognise their long service together by electing them Honorary Life Members of the Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Ross Ferguson

Photographic competition

April 2022 – February 2023.

The next biennial Friends Photographic Competition needs to reflect the moods of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and be identifiable as having been taken in the Gardens. A theme “Capturing the Mood of the Gardens”, could include people using the Gardens, early morning or evening light, a stormy sky or a specific season as each one brings its own mood. The dates for the competition will provide opportunities to reflect autumn colours, winter starkness, spring surprise, summer glory. Photographs may reflect the way people use the Gardens, walking or picnicking, volunteers interacting with the Gardens, staff working ... or a particular structure. The photograph can be titled whatever you wish.

There will be two age groups, one for adults of 18 years and over, and one for children/youth who are under 18 years. Prize money will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each age group. Adults (\$500, \$200, \$100) and child/youth (\$250, \$100, \$50) with the Supreme Winner overall being awarded the Rod Bieleski Cup and a miniature to keep.

Please note that because of COVID regulations there may need to be a

change to these dates. Any entries received will be notified and revised dates will be published through *The Auckland Garden* and the websites.

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Key Dates are:

- Entries open:
2 April 2022 – 5 February 2023
 - Last day to email your entry:
Midnight 5 February 2023
 - Photographs will be on display:
18 February 2023 – 5 March 2023
 - Public Vote period:
18 February 2023 – midday 5 March 2023
 - Prizegiving event:
2 p.m. on 5 March 2023.
-

For more information and copy of the rules and entry form:

- friendsofabg@gmail.com
- Mobile #021 122 7418
- www.aucklandbotanicgardens/whatson
- www.aucklandbotanicgardens/aboutus/friends-of-the-auckland-botanic-gardens (There will be a link to the Photographic Competition.)

Dianne Glenn ONZM JP.
Life Member of Friends of the
Auckland Botanic Gardens

Latest news from the Friends Art Group

We started the year with our postponed end-of-year shared morning tea and trading table. Twelve of us braved COVID and had an enjoyable morning of good conversation and friendship. It was so lovely to catch up again after many months apart and discuss up-and-coming events.

The bi-monthly visiting artist talks and demonstrations are always very well attended, but owing to the uncertainty of COVID, we have, understandably, had invited artists postpone or pull out altogether. We have now decided to rely on our own members to share their art practice and expertise with us.

Our February get-together saw us out in the Gardens working in our sketchbooks. Jennifer Duval Smith introduced the group to the holistic benefits of Nature Journaling last year and we have decided to try to run a session each season so that we can discover more about the seasonal variation in the Gardens.

Member Brenda Hart, who was artist in residence here in 2019, is having an exhibition of her botanically inspired

jewellery at Miranda Gallery – it runs until 11 March. If you missed out on owning one of her gorgeous pieces, then go along and have a look. You won't be disappointed! Brenda will be giving a talk at our April meeting – which I am very much looking forward to.

We now have new dates for our postponed annual exhibition, "Medicine, Myth and Magic" – it will open on the Saturday 23 April and run until 3 July. I am really looking forward to seeing what plants our members have decided to paint! The exhibition will run over the World Day of Botanical Art (18 May) and we hope to have artist demonstrations/workshops over that weekend as these have proved popular in the past.

If you would like to join us, get in touch with me, Lesley Alexander – 021 1617070 or email me: lesley.alexander.smith@gmail.com or pop in to see what we are up to, our meetings are held on the last Saturday morning of each month in the Friends Building.

Lesley Alexander

Sculpture invitation

Limited
spaces

Book
now!

Sculpture in the Gardens is currently on and running through until 3 April. We were unable to hold the usual Friends Preview event, so in place of that are now offering small guided walks with our artists.

To keep attendees and our guides safe, the groups are limited to 15 people (Friends members only) and we will need to sight vaccine passes.

Tours start at 10 a.m. and run for about 2 hours.

The tours are:

- Thursday 17 March
with Karuna Douglas
- Sunday 20 March
with Jim Wheeler
- Thursday 24 March
with Chris Van Doren
- Sunday 27 March
with Karuna Douglas

Please bring your sunhat, a mask and a drink bottle. Headsets for listening to your artist will be provided. To book please phone the visitor centre on (09) 267 1457 ext 1.

Email addresses

The disruptions caused by COVID-lockdowns over the last year have meant frequent programme changes, often at short notice. The easiest way of contacting members to let them know of such changes is by email but currently we have email addresses for only about two thirds of our members. Future subscription reminder notices will ask for email addresses but in the meantime help

us to help you by sending your email address to our administrator, Irene Horton, at friendsofabg@gmail.com. The addresses will be used solely for notices about Friends or Gardens activities.

If you are already receiving emails from us and you are not changing your email address, please don't respond.

Autumn bus trip cancelled

Owing to the inevitable increasing spread of COVID-19 Omicron we will not be holding our usual April bus trip. Kate Moodie

An unwanted intruder

Many members will be like me and on finding an unidentified plant or tree growing in the garden, wonder how it got there (was it something I had planted or did it just arrive?) and leave it to grow hoping to identify it soon and wondering if it could be useful.

In spring of 2020, a grass-like plant started growing and I left it to grow hoping it would turn out to have a use. It was definitely a member of the grass family, and had a lot of attractive leaves and eventually seed heads. I couldn't recognise it and none of my friends could either although many tried. The seed heads were small and seeds too small to consider as poultry food although I realise the local birds did enjoy them. However this started to concern me as I thought it looked as if it could be a potential weed. How right I was. Fortunately a friend, Steve Benham, called around and although he did not recognise it he contacted Mike Wilcox, a Research Associate at the Auckland Museum, who was experienced in plant identification.

Soon I got an email forwarded to me that warned me that it was Johnson grass *Sorghum halepense*, a notifiable weed, and I found out that Wikipedia lists it as being one of the 10 worst weeds in the world. Definitely not wanted. I immediately

cut off and bagged the seed heads, and sent messages to MPI (Ministry for Primary Industries) and Auckland Council. The next day Steve Benham came around to photograph and GPS the plant for herbarium records, after which we then dug up what we thought was all the plant. It was put into a box to dry out for the authorities and to make sure none went into the compost. I believe MPI was surprised Johnson grass had turned up in a suburban garden; agricultural land would be a more likely place. None had been identified in New Zealand for 10 years and they were planning on declaring it eradicated.

MPI is the lead agency for the national Johnson grass eradication programme. It contractsASUREQuality to undertake the field work for this weed species. AnASUREQuality officer arrived to check the area and collect the bagged seed heads and the plant I had dug up. We dug around the area again and found more roots which had already started regrowing.

In fact since then ASUREQuality has come once a month to check, and almost every time small pieces of root have resprouted. At present I have a 45x45x45 cm hole where this plant was, which will be left as is till the end of summer to make sure no more pieces sprout. Even tiny pieces

of root resprout, which I know definitely as I carefully shifted any soil and clay taken from the hole. It will not be spread in the garden until I am totally sure there is no Johnson grass left there.

Although I grow organically, and have not used glyphosate or non-organic weedkilling methods for over 10 years, knowing what I now know, I would seriously consider using a non-organic weedkiller if more than a tiny patch developed in my garden. Johnson grass has the potential to be a major pest as it has thick strong roots, that can grow to a metre underground and to significant distances, going through other plants in the same way that *Elytrigia repens* (twitch or couch) will grow through a potato or bulb. And any piece left in the ground will regrow. Although originally introduced to New Zealand as well as other countries as stock food, it can be toxic to stock if wilted. It can develop dense stands that prevent other more useful forages and crops growing. The time and cost of controlling this plant would be considerable.

Found growing 3 months after the plant was originally dug up.
Photo byASUREQuality Officer.

MPI has delivered leaflets to the area, to try and find any other plants that may be around.

If you do find something unknown growing in your land, do get it identified early and check it isn't something that will cause you a problem. MPI asks that you don't dig up the plants as it helps them to see it in situ. MPI will do the identification for you if you ring their pest and disease freephone.

Where the plant came from still hasn't been determined, but I believe it came via wild birds. It has previously been found as a contaminant in agricultural seed. I certainly didn't plant it, and it germinated under an apple tree, where a lot of the birds perch. I still look around the area, and with the ASUREQuality Officer have checked out similar grasses growing around, but we haven't found any more Johnson grass.

As the seed is known to remain viable for many years, I will have ASUREQuality coming and checking the area regularly for the next seven



years to ensure it has been eradicated from my garden- that isn't a problem. What concerns me is where the wild birds have distributed seed from my plant.

So do look out for this pest and make sure you don't have any growing in your garden. Call the MPI pest & disease freephone on 0800 80 99 66

if you think you have found Johnson grass or any other unusual plant you are concerned about.

Kathrina Muller

Source: TreeCropper, NZTCA.

For more information see:

www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/long-term-biosecurity-management-programmes/johnson-grass OR www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/johnson-grass





Iris x hollandica and *Echium* 'Blue Wings'
Photo: Jack Hobbs



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