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NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC

NO. 5

AUTUMN 1991

EDITORIAL

The Friends are moving into the final part of the first year that the Society has been in existence and so it is time to begin to sum up what has been achieved and to make plans for the second year. Later in this newsletter there is a notice of the first AGM and when this is held there will be a need to obtain new members for the Society's committee. To begin the Society, the Committee was established by nomination and appointment and quite a number of the people on the committee have had, and continue to have, heavy involvements in other voluntary groups supporting community activities. The Society was fortunate to have the services of these people in the establishment of the Friends. However now that the Society is well established the hope is that people will come forward from the membership to serve on the committee and advance the objectives of the Society. There remains many unexplored ways by which the Society could assist the objectives of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and to provide rewarding activities for its members.

Nomination papers for the Committee and the office bearers will be sent out with the Winter 1991 Newsletter and it is hoped that many people will put their names forward for election to these positions.

ACTIVITIES

Warwick Scadden had to rush back from annual leave in the Nelson-Bays region to demonstrate the Bedding Plant Trials to an appreciative audience of Friends late in January. Each year the Gardens receives samples of seed of new bedding plants for evaluation and these are grown in a way that exposes their short comings to disease and other stresses encountered in home and public gardens. The evaluation involves the scoring of a range of characters at two dates to give information on whether the plants are worthy candidates for wider use in gardens, particularly those of Christchurch. Warwick pointed out the limitations of the trial site caused by shading from trees and soil variation, and acknowledged that the testing could be more thorough if more space and staff time for observing and analyzing the results were available.

Early in February the Friends were favoured by a talk on "Mountain Plants in European Gardens" by Mrs Ursula McHardy a consultant to the Palmengarten in Frankfurt. To do this she took time off from a busy schedule of collecting seed from plants of the mountains of the South Island and purchasing plants from nurseries to add to the collection of mountain plants in the Palmengarten. Several Friends assisted her and her husband William in obtaining plants she was interested in. The slide show she gave was very educational and presented with great

enthusiasm. Familiar plants were featured in her slides and many new ones were introduced. A list of the plants shown in her slides is available on request from the Secretary. The McHardys became the first overseas members of the Society and through them we can expect ongoing contact with the Palmengarten.

A recent article in the New Zealand Listener commented that the list of cancellations on radio on a particularly wet Sunday provided a useful snap shot on how New Zealanders amuse themselves during weekends. The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Garden featured in the list of activities given with the article but unlike most other groups that day we did not postpone or cancel but instead moved our venue from the Perennial-Herbaceous Border to the Information Centre. Maria Adamski who has special responsibility for the Border, showed her experience and knowledge in managing the Border and how colour, form and texture is used to create its dramatic effects. A list of herbaceous plants from the western end of the border is available. Members orders will be taken for plants they would like to obtain for purchase in spring, subject to availability. Please return lists to the Information Centre or P.O. Box 237 Christchurch (marked Friends of the Gardens) by the end of April.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

'Riccarton Bush'. Sunday 7 April at 2pm. Meet at the Deans' cottage. If wet the meeting will be held at Riccarton House. Friends are assured of a very interesting afternoon as Dr Brian Molloy has gathered a book-full of information about this remarkable area of native vegetation in the heart of Christchurch.

'At Home Soup plus Lunch'. Sunday 5 May at 12 30pm. A social meeting at the Information Centre. Please bring your own soup cups. Cover charge \$4.00 to meet catering costs. It would help to notify the Secretary of your intention to attend to assist catering arrangements. Garden walks with guides will take place after lunch. This event is bound to be as enjoyable as the Breakfast Meeting last year and at a more wakeful hour!

'An Herbarium - What is its significance to a Botanic Garden'. Saturday 15 June at 2pm. Meeting at the DSIR Land Resources Botany Institute Herbarium, Lincoln. Dr Murray Parsons, Herbarium Keeper will talk about the work of the Herbarium and will make special mention of the Armstrong Herbarium that originated at the Botanic Garden. It will also be an opportunity to see the theme plantings at the Botany Institute and various displays including those on traditional use of plants by Maori and Pacific Islanders. The Herbarium can be found by turning left by the roundabout at Lincoln University and the

Herbarium building is by the road about a half km in the direction of Lincoln village. Afternoon tea will be provided. We will endeavour to arrange the sharing of transport to this meeting closer to the date.

'Annual General Meeting' Sunday 14 July at 2pm. Botanic Gardens Information Centre. Afternoon tea will be provided together with a tour of the Show Houses after the formal business is completed.

WARWICK AND WARWICK

People who attend the Society's meetings may well be excused if they feel they are suffering from double hearing at the frequent mention of the name 'Warwick'. Indeed there are two of them and the following is a guide to how they can be distinguished.

Warwick Scadden Curator of the Christchurch Botanic Garden since 1982, has been interested in horticulture from an early age and commenced training in 1961 as an apprentice with the Christchurch City Council Parks Department. Here he found an interest in New Zealand plants, particularly alpinists. Warwick pursued National Diploma of Horticulture studies through the apprenticeship and gained the National Certificate in 1966. In December of that year he was awarded a Winston Churchill Scholarship to study at the College of Park and Recreation Administration in the United Kingdom and in 1968 gained a Diploma from that College. In 1969 and 1970 he was employed as Technical Assistant with the Coventry Corporation in the Parks Department and later in the Department of Architecture and Planning where he was involved in many large city developments and horticultural projects. Returning to New Zealand, in 1971 he was appointed Landscape Officer with the Christchurch City Council Parks and Recreation Department which involved him in city parks developments, roadway beautification and housing scheme landscape work. As Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Warwick has a strong interest in retaining the heritage of the Garden, while moving it to a true scientific garden.

Warwick Harris, first President of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Garden, began life on a farm on the muddy shores of the Kaipara Harbour in North Auckland. In 1958 he came to Canterbury University and completed a PhD in botany in 1968 on the ecology, variation and cytotaxonomy of the introduced plant *Rumex acetosella* (sheep's sorrel) which then covered large areas of the high country and was viewed with the same concern now directed to *Hieracium*. Warwick went to Palmerston North in 1964 as a pasture ecologist at Grassland Division DSIR and continued in that position until 1982 when he returned to Canterbury to be Director of Botany Division DSIR. His research work with Grasslands Division included studies of the change of genetic structure of sown populations of pasture plants, competition between pasture plants and the effect this has on botanical composition, and the effect of defoliation and grazing management on pasture production and composition. His pasture work took him to the University of New England at Armidale

NSW as an Australian Wool Board Post Doctoral Scholar in 1971-72 and to the Welsh Plant Breeding Station, Aberystwyth, UK, as a Nuffield Scholar in 1977-78. While with Botany Division Warwick started research on the genetic variation of the New Zealand tea trees, manuka and kanuka, and their Australian relatives, and from this developed interest in the sustainable economic uses of native plants and their traditional or ethnobotanical uses. In 1989 he spent eight months in Europe, mostly in Angers, France, studying the adaptation of New Zealand native plants, particularly their cold hardiness, in that part of the world. Since the disestablishment of Botany Division in 1990 as part of the restructuring of DSIR, which also is soon to be disestablished, Warwick has been able to concentrate his efforts on research on native plants.

GARDEN SEMINARS

The Gardens are running a series of lectures on Saturday mornings from 10 to 11 am. The charge to attend is \$3 50 but Friends can attend at the concession charge of \$2 00.

- 6 April: Home garden, Landscape planning and design- Denis Preston.
- 4 May : Pruning requirements of trees and shrubs in the home garden- Marty Bennetts.
- 1 June : Rose culture and requirements- Brent Smith.
- 6 July : The home vegetable garden- Warwick Scadden.

As well there is to be a full day seminar on 'The Christchurch Home Garden' on Saturday 20 April from 8 45am to 5pm. Enquiries for this are to be directed to the Information Centre. The cost is \$20 and registration is required by 12 April.

FRIENDS GLASSHOUSE

This has been erected within the nursery area and as ^{and} ~~soon~~ as work benches are installed, it will be available for use by Friends. Please contact the Secretary if you have not already indicated that you wish to take part in propagating classes or use the glasshouse facilities to work with your own plants.

TRAVELLING FRIENDS

We are building up a file of information on Gardens and Friends activities in other New Zealand and overseas cities. If you are planning to travel, or can help us by bringing back such material please contact the Secretary.

A recent visitor to the Gardens was Mrs Judy Evans President of the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, Seattle, Washington, USA. Details of the Bellevue Garden were left with the Secretary including development plans for a new garden to be opened in September 1991. Any Christchurch Friends travelling in this area are welcome to make contact with the Bellevue Garden. Other Gardens of interest in the same part of the world are the Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, the Van Dusen Botanical Garden, and the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, both in Vancouver, British Columbia.