

NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC

NO. 9

AUTUMN 1992

ACTIVITIES

Our visit to the Sanitarium Gardens on the pleasant evening of Sunday 9 February was a good start to what will be a very full year of activities. The good number of Friends who joined Ian Godfrey in his guided tour of the Gardens obviously enjoyed renewing contact after the holiday break. Ian explained the planning and work that goes into preparing the magnificent display provided by the annual plantings and well manicured lawns. These Gardens are open to the public and attract bus loads of people on the tourist circuit. Sanitarium and Ian Godfrey can be justifiably proud of these Gardens for the very important contribution they make to Christchurch's reputation as the Garden City.

The Friends made very important contributions to events which were part of the Floral Festival. Thanks are due to Dick Bouman, Max Visch, Hendrik van den Bosch, Donna Moloney, Betty McGowan, Jane McArthur, Janet Moss, Margaret Norris, Pam Rabe, Mary Plunkett, Margaret Teague and Ngaire Wade for their help on 'Wear a Flower Day'. Many of the recipients of flowers were delighted overseas visitors. The public walks guided by Friends on two evenings were very successful attracting about 100 people on each occasion. Those who guided and encouraged the public were Max Visch, Dick Bouman, Neil O'Brien, Peter Mahon, Ross Lake, Chris O'Sullivan and Barbara de Lambert.

GARDEN WALKS - Max Visch reports

The Saturday walks during February were generally well attended suggesting perhaps that this time slot suits most Friends better than Wednesday afternoon.

On the first Saturday a visit was made to the Primula Garden and adjoining area with its interesting collection of trees. We noted amongst the many trees *Idesia polycarpa*, *Davidia involucrata*, *Diospyros lotus*, *Betula nigra*, *Melia azedarach*, *Acer griseum*, *Morus alba*, *Acer griseum* and *Magnolia acuminata*.

The next Saturday afternoon we much admired the magnificent collection of tuberous begonias in the Townend House. We had never before seen such perfectly shaped flowers or a range of colours - a tribute to the interest and competence of Greg Salton of the Botanic Garden's staff. After taking in that display we strolled around the Archery lawn enjoying and discussing the splendid array of stately Wellingtonians, Redwoods and Cypressess.

On the last Saturday of the month Maria Adamski of the Gardens' staff treated us to a guided tour of the Herbaceous Border. Throughout summer, this border presents visitors with an ever changing pattern of colours. Maria explained to us the various activities involved in the preparation of the border prior to planting, factors to be considered in planning the colour schemes, and general maintenance procedures. We are very grateful to Maria for giving up some of her free time to speak to us.

We have planned ahead for a series of walks over the next three months:

- March 14 - Poisonous plants in our gardens.
- March 28 - Japan's contribution to our garden flora.
- April 11 - Berried and other fruiting trees and shrubs.
- April 25 - The Taxodiaceae - a family of relicts.
- May 9 - The beauty of tree bark.
- May 23 - Trees and shrubs from bible lands.

Each Garden walk starts at 1 30 pm leaving from the Information Centre. For further information ring Max Visch ph. 3382273.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

A programme for the rest of the year has been planned. Following are details of events to the AGM on July 26.

'Chicago Botanic Garden: A Public Resource for the Greater Chicago Region.' Monday 23 March 1992 7 30 pm at the P.C Browne Room, Canterbury Horticultural Society South Hagley Park, 57 Riccarton Ave. Dr Roy Taylor, Director of the Chicago Botanic Garden, who will give this talk is recognised internationally for his inspired and innovative contributions to the development and management of public gardens. The cover charge is \$2. The meeting is open to everyone interested in gardens, so bring your friends and gardening companions. Tea and coffee will be provided after the talk and there will be a special raffle of the Readers Digest Gardener's Encyclopedia

Before the talk there will be the opportunity for Friends to meet Dr and Mrs Taylor when they will share a pot luck meal at the Information Centre on 23 March at 5 30 pm. All Friends are invited to bring 'finger food' to share for the meal. To indicate numbers, please RSVP to Adrienne Moore ph. 3515915 or the Information Centre 661701. *by 16 March*

Please note that parking will only be available in the car park beside the United Tennis Courts which has its entrance off Riccarton Ave. All gateways from the Gardens will be locked from 6 pm at this time of the year, and no parking will be possible for this function in the Armagh St/Kiosk parking area. Special arrangements will be made for those attending to exit only from the West Bridge to the car park off Riccarton Ave. The walking time from here to the Information Centre is 3-5 minutes and the location is more convenient for moving to the Horticultural Society Hall for the talk at 7 30 pm.

Please note especially this next event which was mistakenly omitted from the last Newsletter.

'How to Use Plant Keys' and 'Official Switch on of Lighting Provided by the Friends' Wednesday April 15 1992 at 7 pm at the Information Centre. Councillor Buist has been invited to take part in the switch on ceremony and we will also mark the gifting of a sound system and VDU to the Gardens. After this ceremony Roy Edwards will give a talk on how to use plant keys. Roy, our Vice President, and lecturer in the Horticulture Department at Lincoln University is generously providing the

Friends with a session of instruction which is usually the privilege of students enrolled in the horticulture courses at Lincoln.

'Autumn colours in the Botanic Gardens' Sunday 3 May at 2pm starting at the Information Centre. Kevin Garnett will lead us through a walk to reveal the splendour of autumn foliage and back to the Plant Sale emphasising ground cover and shade plants that will start at 3 30pm. Max Visch has kindly prepared information on ground cover plants to enhance the success of this sale (see below).

*Potting up day for this sale on 21 March **

'THE GREEN CARD - a Social and Fund Raising event' Saturday 6 June at 4 pm at the Information Centre. An opportunity to enjoy Peter Weirs' romantic comedy set in New York and featuring a fabulous greenhouse. This will be followed at about 5 30 pm by soup and crackers. Cost inclusive of refreshments \$5. Please RSVP by 3 June to Adrienne ph 3515915 (best before 9 am or after 5 pm) as seating is limited.

'The Vegetation of New Zealand and southern South America' Wednesday 17 June at 7 30 pm in the Information Centre. A talk by Dr Peter Wardle.

'AGM and Floral Display by Patricia Proctor using Winter material' Sunday 26 July at 2 pm in the Information Centre.

PROJECTS

'Teaching programme on Trees and Garden Features'

It is planned to arrange teaching sessions for members to learn about trees and then share their knowledge and research with others. This will be in preparation of people helping to guide the public. Those interested please contact Max Visch ph. 3382273 or Adrienne 3515915.

'Earthday Eco Fair at Motukarara' 12 April 1992. The theme for the day is Peninsula and Plains. The DOC nursery will be selling native plants raised from seed collected in this region. Stalls, displays and workshops will be held in the Motukarara Domain. The Friends will help the Botanic Gardens with a stall and helpers are welcome. If interested phone Adrienne 3515915.

PREPARATION OF GROUND COVER PLANTS FOR OUR SALE

Our plant sale last year was successful both for the funds it raised and the opportunity it provided for the sharing of plant material and knowledge about the plants provided. The sale planned for 3 30 pm on Sunday 3 May at the Information Centre is to focus on Ground Cover Plants. These are a very versatile group of plants with many uses in the garden. They are the problem solvers to be planted where few plants will grow as on steep, hot and dry clay banks or where their presence will either enhance the appearance of some garden feature or reduce overall maintenance.

Ground cover plants are valued for their ability to spread rapidly, grow close to the ground and produce a dense, low maintenance cover that chokes out weeds. By trapping leaves and other litter ground covers create a mulch that provides a cool root run for the trees and shrubs under which they grow.

Ground covers include a wide variety of plants. Low prostrate shrubs, trailing and scrambling vines, creeping and rhizomatous

perennials which hug the ground as well as taller tufted species with broad spreading leaves such as the Hostas.

Many ground cover plants grow well in shade and are used to provide a splash of colour by their flowers or variegated leaves in dark corners. Others can be used to cover up tree stumps, fill in cracks between pavement stones or act as a substitute lawn requiring little maintenance. Ground covers may also be planted to cover up the bases of specimen trees and shrubs in lawns keeping down weeds and avoiding the need to maintain a lawn edge. Many grey-foliaged dwarf shrubs are ideal for covering dry, hot clay banks, adding colour and variety and reducing the chance of erosion of unstable soils. The number of plant species suitable as ground covers is very large.

Friends are requested to pot up the plants they wish to bring to the sales table in plenty of time so that specimens will be well rooted when being offered for sale. They should be named if possible and priced. Plants not priced will be sold for \$2 each. For further information phone Max 3382273.

BOTANIC GARDENS NEWS

The Townend Begonia display continues until the end of March. It has been acclaimed far and wide as something not to miss. The display features 400 varieties, 2/3 of these being hybrids bred by Greg Salton, Nursery Charge Hand with the Gardens.

There is still time to enjoy the herbaceous border and to note any special plants you may wish to order this spring. This year the Museum end of the border will be lifted and plants divided. Last year the Friends helped bag up border plants for the spring sale. If you are interested in helping with this around August contact Adrienne ph 3515915.

Botanic Gardens Saturday lectures from 10 to 11 am can be attended by Friends at the concession rate of \$2.

4 April Home garden landscape planning and design - Dennis Preston.

2 May Pruning trees and shrubs - Kevin Garnett.

6 June Pressed flowers for gifts and pleasure - George Fairless.

BITS AND PIECES

Pot pourri and bay leaves prepared by Friends as a learning, social and funding raising activity will soon be available at the Information Centre.

The Friends have gifted a VDU to the Gardens and this will be used to show the 'Green Card' on 6 June.

Gavin Halliburton has been generous in giving enthusiastic help with computer printing of our members lists and mailing address labels.

The training session and refresher course for Information Centre helpers is still being arranged. Those wishing to take part should contact Adrienne 3515915.

We continue to welcome new members. Ask your friends to join to help Christchurch's greatest asset and to share the enjoyment of activities organised by the Society. The subscription is \$10 single, \$15 double or family membership.

Plants to be sold at our 3 May sale. Enquiries to

** STOP PRESS We invite Friends to a 'Potting up Ses' on Sat 21 March in the Friends' Glasshouse at 1.0pm. Please bring your own plant material - ground covers etc. plus trowel & marking pen.*