

NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC

NO. 10

WINTER 1992

ACTIVITIES

The talk presented by Dr Roy Taylor, Director of the Chicago Botanic Garden on 23 March had an excellent attendance. Roy Taylor and his wife Janet shared a meal with about 30 of the Friends in the Information Centre before moving on to the meeting held at the Canterbury Horticultural Society. He gave a well illustrated talk on the history and current activities of the Chicago Botanic Garden.

A great deal has been achieved in the 25 years since this Garden was opened. It is located 22 miles from the city of Chicago on a 300 acre site. Some features are - 60 acres of water surrounding islands - ten conservatories - 15 acres of hand planted prairie which took 5 years to establish and which is burnt off each year - a marsh prairie of 3 acres - a naturalistic garden 15 acres of prairie of Illinois - a sensory garden - and several theme gardens including an English wall garden and a Japanese garden. Native grasses are included as a feature of the parking lots.

Transport systems provide a ready link between the city and the Gardens and these include a bike trail. A plant information service is offered by volunteers who are trained master gardeners. Their Information Centre covers 60 000 sq. ft. Many educational programmes are operated within the garden and in the community. This is in conjunction with the Green Chicago Programme, where underprivileged neighbourhoods have had 26 community gardens established under the guidance and expertise of the Chicago Botanic Garden. These community gardens have had tremendous benefits within the communities and for individuals, and are used as fulcrums of change for the communities. As plants in gardens are dependent on care by people this reverses the dependency factor and creates an incentive to improve the quality of life. Many children's activities give them early contact with and knowledge of plants.

When considering the scale of activity of the Chicago Botanic Garden we need to remember it serves as a public garden for 8.6 million people within a 40 mile radius. The Garden has 500 active volunteers who support its activities. Roy Taylor's talk provided many ideas which could be adapted to promote the use of the Christchurch Botanic Garden and its value to the community. We should be grateful to David Given for making the contact that led Roy Taylor's talk.

Our Vice President and lecturer in the Horticulture Department at Lincoln University, Roy Edwards, gave an excellent insight on how to use plant keys in a talk on 15 April. This talk was preceded by a ceremony in which Councillor Buist turned on the lights leading to the Information Centre which were erected with the assistance of funds raised by the Friends. Roy's talk gently led those attending who were not familiar with keys into the skills of identifying newly encountered plants, and for the professional botanists attending it was a good refresher course. Roy is keen to show the Friends the facilities of the Horticulture Department at Lincoln and will be giving a presentation on propagation at the University in September.

The walk with Kevin Garnett on 3 May to see the Autumn colours in the Garden was well attended. Kevin's enthusiasm,

knowledge

and humour always make for an enjoyable occasion. The sale of cover plants that followed brought in \$ 350 on the day and Chris O'Sullivan has sold more plants since then through the Information Centre. Chris was employed for the reception duties at the Information Centre while Averil Biddick was overseas. Now that Averil Biddick is safely back, Chris will continue her involvement as one of our volunteer receptionists in the Information Centre. Friends now help on Fridays and Saturdays with these duties.

Almost 40 Friends attended the social function centred on the screening of the film Green Card. Those who attended were intrigued by the intricacies of the plot and all agreed that an environment of plants provided a very romantic setting. The efforts of the Friends who provided a delicious selection of soups and otherwise organised this social event also benefited the Friends by adding \$ 175 to their funds.

The presentation given by Dr Peter Wardle of images and descriptions of the vegetation of southern South America was a pleasant reward for those who braved going out in the unpleasant weather of the evening of the 17 June. Peter's presentation highlighted the similarities, and differences, of the plants and vegetation of southern Chile and Argentina to those of New Zealand. While some of the scenes he showed looked distinctly foreign, others could easily have been mistaken for mountains and beech forest in the South Island. Peter's wish to revisit southern South America was echoed in the interest he prompted in those attending to visit the region for a first time. Just how much we overlook this part of the world was indicated by Peter's observation that the Hudson volcano, which is in our own southern latitudes, probably has emitted as much debris into the atmosphere as the volcano in the Philippines which is often quoted as cause of our present winter of discontent.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

'AGM, and Floral Display by Patricia Proctor using Winter material' Sunday 26 July at 2 pm in the Information Centre. This will be followed by afternoon tea. Notice of the AGM is included with this Newsletter. We look forward to a good attendance and offers of involvement in supporting the programme of the society.

'Tree training with emphasis on preventing tree faults' Saturday 8 August 10 am starting from the Information Centre. This will be presented by Walter Fielding-Cotterell and Dieter Steinegg. Here the emphasis will be on "prevention is better than cure" following on from the presentation last year that highlighted the surgery needed by many of the notable trees in the Garden.

'The Gondwanan Legacy'. Wednesday 26 August 8 pm at the Canterbury Horticultural Society, South Hagley Park. Rob

Lucas of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and member of the Friends of the Wellington Botanical Garden will present this talk. It will tell of the links of the plants and animals of New Zealand with those of other regions of the world which millions of years ago were part of the great southern continent of Gondwana. Cover charge \$2.

'Plant propagation'. Saturday 12 September, 10 am at the Nursery, Horticulture Department, Lincoln University. A practical demonstration to be given by Roy Edwards, Merv Spurway and Brent Richards. If you can offer transport or need transport to Lincoln please phone Adrienne 3515915.

'Cottage Gardens and Cottage Garden Foods'. Wednesday 14 October 7 30 pm at the Information Centre. To be presented by Christine Dann who is well known for her advocacy of the cottage garden. Supper will be provided.

'Fuchsias'. Wednesday 18 November 7 30 pm at the Information Centre. Bob Jump will share his knowledge about this most attractive genera of ornamental plants.

'Christmas social function'. Friday 4 December at the Information Centre 4 - 6 pm. This event was a great success last year when the Friends and the Garden staff shared seasonal conviviality. The cost will be \$6. RSVP to the Secretary, Phone 3515915.

GARDEN WALKS - Max Visch reports

The Saturday afternoon walks continue to attract increasing numbers of members and their friends. It is pleasing to note the enthusiastic response of so many and especially on days when the weather is far from ideal.

An innovation for the coming winter months is the increasing number of Friends that have made themselves available to act as guides. We welcome them to the club and thank them for their willingness to share their expertise and enthusiasm with us.

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

July 4 - Tropical and subtropical plants - a walk through the glasshouses by Bill Sykes.

July 18 - Notable trees of the Armstrong Lawn - by Neil O'Brien.

August 1 - the Archery Lawn Trees - by Peter Mahan.

August 15 - Trees and shrubs of the Murray-Aynsley Lawn - by Chris O'Sullivan.

August 29 - The Garden treasures of Mona Vale.

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

HELPING WITH TEAS

If you are able to take a turn at helping with serving tea and coffee at our functions please contact Adrienne Moore. Help is needed to serve afternoon tea at the AGM.

PROJECTS

Funds raised by the Friends have been used to purchase a variety of equipment that serves to enhance the function of the Gardens.

We contributed \$2000 towards the lighting for the car park and Kiosk bridge to the Information Centre. This contribution was acknowledged in a most grateful and genial way by Councillor Buist on 15 April. Also present at this function was Mr Colin Perry who responded to the Friends efforts to raise funds for a sound system and audio loop in the Information Centre by giving these to the Gardens. This allowed the Friends to purchase a TV set and trolley and accessories for use with videos and education material in the Information Centre. Carpet for school groups to sit on during the presentation of this material in the Information Centre has been provided both from the Friends funds and a gift from a member. This member also gave kitchen equipment to add to that of a teapot and other items used in providing supper and other catering in the Information Centre.

Fund raising projects continue on several fronts. Continuation from the propagation of ground cover plants quantities of bulbs have been potted up by Friends using our own glasshouse. These will be sold when flowering and particularly during the Spring festival in September. Raffles continue as a steady source of income and we value the support given to these at our functions. Prizes of plants are generally donated by the Gardens or by members of the committee. Donations of prizes, not only plants, would be welcome from members.

The pot pourri project was an outstanding success and most of what was prepared has been sold. We plan to make more next summer. Volunteers and donations of ingredients are welcome. Great care in drying suitable material is needed to present the highest quality product. We are very grateful to Richard Doyle for suggesting the project, to Frank Harvey, to Virginia McNaughton, Maria Adamski, and other Gardens staff for their help, to Marilyn Garside for her art work, and to Chequer Packaging for supply of materials. Many thanks also to members who supplied materials from their own gardens and packed pot pourri. There are still supplies of Bay Leaves for sale at \$2 from the Information Centre.

A further opportunity for fund raising is offered in the way of freeze dried roses. Mrs Linda Simpson has set up a freeze drying business to preserve the beauty of flowers, and needs assistance with picking roses from our Gardens for this project. This will involve picking up to three times a week in summer. If any members are willing to help and by this gain funds for the Friends please contact Secretary Adrienne Moore.

To encourage people to become members we are endeavouring to keep the annual subscription at a low level and to use this to cover the administration costs of the Society. Consequently funds raised from the projects are necessary for that objective of the Friends which endeavours to improve the material facilities of the Gardens. The incoming committee will decide on the use of funds gained from projects and will be able to build on funds which are left after the purchases the Friends have made over the last two years.

SPRING IS HERE 1992 FESTIVAL

Last year we put a lot of effort into supporting the Spring is Here Festival and will continue this support this year although in a different way. The days on which we will be involved are 6, 13, and 20 September. Guided walks will be offered to the public and Friends on each of these Sundays leaving from the Information Centre at 2.30 pm. The Friends will have a stall near the band rotunda on 13 and 20 September to publicise our activities and to sell potted bulbs to raise funds. These involvements will be less demanding than last year and Friends who are able to help with the stall and the walks should notify Adrienne, Phone 3515915.

Other garden related festivals coming up are Conservation week from 2 to 9 August, Trees and Forest Week from 8 to 14 August and Japan week from 11 to 22 August. Richard Doyle will be mounting special displays in the Information Centre for these festivals, and in spring on a bulbs, buds and birds promotion.

BOTANIC GARDENS NEWS

Averil Biddick is back from her overseas and will be happy to see you at the Information Centre to tell you of her travels and visits to gardens in the United Kingdom.

The new propagating shed is a wonderful asset which will greatly improve staff working conditions and make it easier for educational programmes. Stage II of the project will see covered walkways to five of the eight glasshouses and Stage III will complete the walkways to the glasshouses and provide new concrete paving. About 70 000 bedding plants are prepared annually in the potting shed for use in the Gardens and Mona Vale. Seed sowing, propagation from cuttings and repotting work are ongoing activities.

The Botanic Gardens Lecture series continues. Unfortunately this Newsletter will reach you after David Given has presented his lecture on 'Plant Photography' on 4 July. To relate to David's book 'Photographing Nature', written by Peter Harper, was the prize for a raffle raising funds for the Friends which was drawn at the lecture.

The lectures are held at the Information Centre at 10 am on Saturdays. Friends can attend at the lower charge of \$2.

Two to come are :

Saturday 1 August: Gardening on a low budget - Warwick Scadden.

Saturday 5 September : Techniques for a low maintenance garden - Kevin Garnett.

A TRAM IN THE GARDENS

Most Friends will have heard of the proposal to run a tram through the Gardens as part of the extension of what has already been run up Worcester Street. The proposed route of the tram through the Gardens was shown to the President of the Friends by Councillor Dennis O'Rourke who is a strong promoter of the idea. The proposal would bring the tram across a bridge where the present Kiosk Bridge is, along the river side of the Information Centre, along the path on the south side of the

Australian section, on the path which is on the Christ College side of the perennial-herbaceous border, and along the side of the Museum to link up with Worcester Street. The President indicated that the Friends would wish to have their thoughts about the proposal heard. Councillor O'Rourke has indicated that he would be pleased to present the proposal to the Friends at a meeting early next year.

GINKGO NUTS

Many Friends may be vaguely aware that the fruit of the female ginkgo tree is edible. It is sometimes mentioned that male trees are more commonly found in gardens because they do not provide the inconvenience of having to clean up messy fruits. Member of the Friends, Saeko Izuta, has written the following notes telling how the nuts can be put to good use.

Ginkgo nuts are jade green when they are fresh and gradually change their colour to yellow in a few months. In autumn when the ginkgo trees turn to bright yellow, the fruit borne on the mature female ginkgo trees ripen and falls to the ground. We can see plenty of them strewn on the ground especially after windy nights.

Ginkgo nuts have a mild flavour and quite attractive colour. They are indispensable for some recipes, e.g. Savory Cup Custard and in other steamed dishes. They are also skewered in twos or threes and grilled, or deep fried. They may be used as garnish, in most cases skewered by pine needles.

Ginkgo nuts are covered by three layers which must be removed before use. The spongy yellowish outer covering is quite smelly. They are usually soaked in water for a couple of weeks and then with rubber gloves to protect hands, this covering is washed away. The middle layer is a hard, thin, smooth, white case, that can be easily cracked with a nutcracker. The inner, thin brownish skin is removed by dropping the shelled nuts into boiling water for a few minutes after which it can be peeled off. The nuts also can be kept for later use by deep freezing.

This year I picked up some ginkgo fruit in the Botanic Gardens and simply roasted the nuts and offered them to my Kiwi friends. I am pretty sure they enjoyed them.

FERRYMEAD

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens also have a tendency to be Friends of other organisations. Fay Halliday, one of our members has contributed the next item.

As most of us know Ferrymead Historic Park runs on half a shoe-string. The site manager, Graham Holloway really is a Jack-of-all trades and therefore a man on the run. The Park covers 120 acres and an increasing amount of the space is becoming gardens - with no gardeners. Graham has the idea of individuals or groups "adopting" gardens. I have already taken on the responsibility for two of them. Graham and volunteers prepare and plant the plots and all that is required is weeding and maintenance. There is a lovely herb garden in front of Kinsey Cottage which needs weeding and pruning. Ferrymead is a lovely place to work in, and to be part of its development is quite

exciting. So please consider "adopting" a garden and helping to enhance the environment of Ferrymead. For more information phone Fay Halliday 3844876

W.E.A. COURSE

The W.E.A., 59 Gloucester Street will be holding lectures which may interest the Friends. Subjects include Propagation of Native Plants, Reserves of Banks Peninsula, Trees of Canada and other topics. For further information Phone 664 530 or call at 59 Gloucester street. The course commences on 21 September 1992.

PRIVATE GARDENS OF NEW ZEALAND

Photographer Steve Parker, a member of the Friends, expects his book 'Private Gardens of New Zealand - Christchurch' to be available in October. Some of Steve's photographs have been used for the postcard series on sale in the Information Centre.

NEWS FROM OTHER FRIENDS AND GARDENS

The Wellington Botanical Garden has recently published a book 'A Celebration of a Garden'. This provides a Guide to the garden and gives an historical account of the Garden's first century.

Mrs Lynne Trafford Chairperson of the Trustees of the Friends of the Auckland Regional Gardens visited on 3 May and encouraged us to make greater efforts to attract and keep members and to ensure that our group and the benefits of membership are more widely known. Two people visiting our plant sale that day joined, and another was encouraged to volunteer for committee nomination. All our members are urged to talk about our Society and join up new members. A leaflet drop to cars in the Garden's car parks is planned as a suggestion coming from a member after Lynne Trafford's visit. The Auckland Regional Garden Friends were founded ten years ago even before the appointment of the staff who established the Regional Gardens at Manurewa.

The new Horticultural Library at the Auckland Garden was opened in April this year. Lynne Trafford and her team were responsible for raising the considerable sum required to build the library. This wonderful asset was financed and completed within 12 months of the project launch. The Auckland Friends number over 500. Their monthly Sunday Garden rambles attract 150 to 200 visitors with Friends making tea and coffee and running the sales table. In May our President Warwick Harris and his wife Deirdre visited the Auckland Gardens and met with the Friend's President Holly Roach, the Superintendent Brian Buchanan, and Curator Jack Hobbs. The Auckland Gardens has several functions distinctly different from Christchurch and provides a very different garden experience.

Peter and Beryl Appleby, Friends of the Liverpool Botanic Gardens, Neston, Wirral in Cheshire, England visited Christchurch earlier this year. We have received a letter from them welcoming any visitors from our Friends. Adrienne Moore can provide further information about the renowned Nessgardens.

TOP PRESS

Copies of the new Botanic Gardens Calendar are available at \$10 each from the Information Centre.

The list of Perennial border plants for sale will be available at the AGM

HONOURS

Two of the Friends committee members, Ron Proctor and Bill Sykes, have been made Associates of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. This includes them amongst an elite band of men and women as there are never more than 60 persons holding this honour in New Zealand at any time.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD (Warwick Harris)

From the first Newsletter which was issued in May 1990 there has been a steady increase of content from a few paragraphs to increasing cramming in of news on both sides of a single A4 sheet. This issue sees a doubling of size as well as a supplementary sheet on *Pinus wallichiana* and *Syzygium*. Secretary Adrienne Moore has been a steady contributor of much of the copy and increasingly we have received welcome material from other Friends. As the founding President I saw it important that the Friends had a Newsletter and have done an editor's job of stitching it together. Dawn Ross while with DSIR Lincoln has made a valuable contribution in setting out the Newsletter to improve its readability. With the disestablishment of DSIR both Dawn and I have moved in to one of the ten newly created Crown Research Institutes. This is Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd which has its headquarters at the Canterbury Agriculture and Science Centre at Lincoln. There is considerable scope to develop this newsletter further. This provides an ideal opportunity for a Friend with realised or latent journalistic skills to become editor and to spread the news of the Friends.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As a quick reference to events until the next Newsletter it has been suggested that there needs to be a calendar of events.

- 4 to 12 July Kids Fest
- Saturday 18 July Notable Trees walk 1 30 pm
- Sunday 26 July AGM and Floral Display 2 pm
- Saturday 1 August 10 am Gardening on a low budget
- Archery Lawn trees walk 1 30 pm
- 2 to 9 August Conservation week
- Saturday 8 August Tree training General Meeting 10 am
- 8 to 14 August Trees and Forest week
- 11 to 12 August Japan week
- Saturday 15 August Murray Ainsley lawn walk 1 30 pm
- Wednesday 26 August Gondwanan Legacy CHS 8 pm.
- Saturday 29 August Mona Vale walk 1 30 pm
- Saturday 5 September Low maintenance gardening 10 am
- Sunday 6 September Opening Spring is Here Festival
- Saturday 12 September Plant Propagation at Lincoln University General Meeting 10 am.

We continue to welcome new members and value old 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.

SUBS are now due

Please fill out both sides of the enclosed card, to update our records, and mail as soon as possible.