



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT SUMMER FEBRUARY 2023**

Welcome to the hot summer report! I'm writing this whilst trying to stay cool on a 30 degree day. I know that most Cantabrians will be looking at the volume of rain falling up north with a little envy, though not the terrible flooding that has gone with it. Our thoughts go out to everyone who has been affected by these ongoing flood events.

The Friends group had a busy last section of the year with talks from Melissa Hutchison on Lichens; Wolfgang Bopp on Flora of the Fynbos (South Africa); a visit to the Tai Tapu Sculptural Garden in November, including a talk from owners Peter and Annabelle Joyce, this garden was only started in 2012, and there has been some amazing growth since then.

We finished the year with our Christmas party in early December. It was lovely to catch up with many of you there. We hope to get a speaker for our end of year event this year.

We had the opportunity to hold a workshop at the end of January with Kenton Seth, who is the designer of our own Crevice Garden, (next to the Rock Gardens). Kenton was visiting from Colorado, America and so we were delighted to have the chance to hold a workshop with the man himself. He commented that he was very impressed at the way that our Crevice Garden has progressed over the last 2 years. Do go and check it out yourself if you haven't already. There is also a copy of Kenton's book on Crevice Gardening in the Botanic Gardens library, to which the Friends have access, and John Spurdle from the Star Group has very kindly shared the video he took when at the Crevice Garden workshop, this can be viewed by following the link below.

[Crevice gardening growing on locals | Star News \(odt.co.nz\)](https://www.starnews.co.nz/news/local/crevice-gardening-growing-on-locals)



Kenton Seth, designer of our Crevice Garden holding a workshop in January

Another event which is coming up soon is a talk by our very own members and volunteers, Marg and Geoff Allison at the CHS Garden Life event held in the Kiosk on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at both 1pm and 7pm. Marg and Geoff spend a massive amount of their time caring for the dahlia collection, which is looking wonderful this year, once again, so come and hear about how this bed has developed. Don't forget that as a Friend you can also attend the CHS events at a cost of \$5. A full calendar of these events can be found on their website or through their monthly newsletters.



Marg and Geoff Allison put many hours into tending the dahlia collection. They will be giving a talk at the Canterbury Horticultural Society's Garden Life event in the Kiosk on March 1st

Our hardworking teams of volunteers have continued to give a lot of support to the Botanic Gardens: the guides have been busy with increased visitors to the Gardens and many group walks being booked; the Propagating teams have done an amazing job keeping the plant stand filled with a wonderful selection of plants; and the volunteers who help the Gardens staff in the Gardens during the week. All of these volunteers contribute towards making the Gardens the beautiful place that it is — much admired and “one of the best gardens we have visited in New Zealand” according to an American couple who were part of a tour group that I was guiding in January. If you are interested in joining any of these teams, please get in touch via the Volunteering Page on the Friends website, or call Jane on 021 043 5342.

Sadly, we lost one of our members, who was not only involved with the Propagating team, but also was one of our Guides. Tatjana Parsons passed away on Christmas Day last year. As a former botanist, she gave so much information to both the groups she worked with in a quiet and unassuming way. She will be much missed.

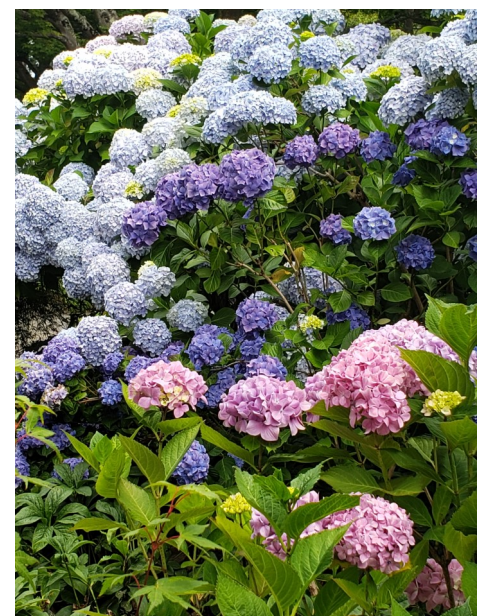
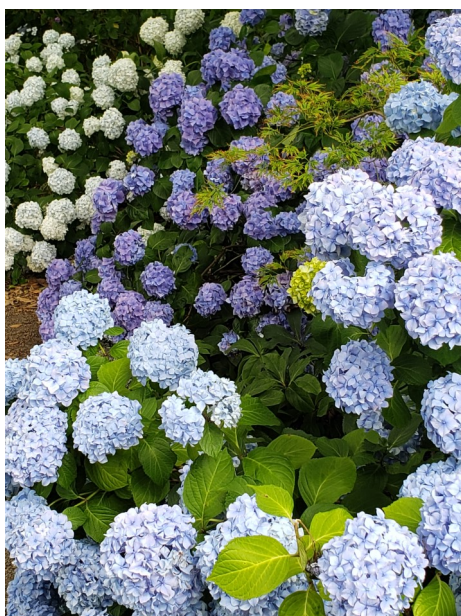
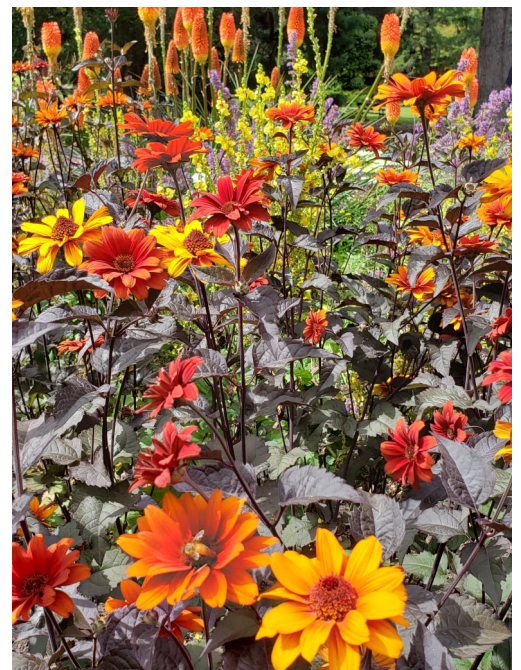
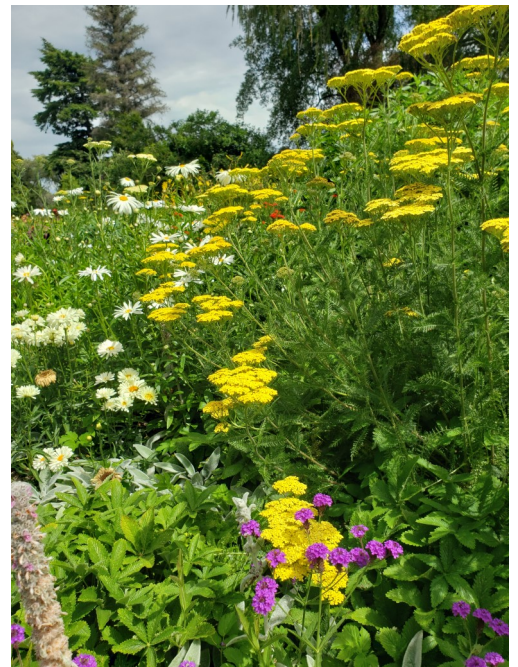
Meantime, another very important event is coming up soon! Jeanette and the planning committee are working very hard to prepare for the Mona Vale Edwardian tea party on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March. A huge amount of volunteer time is involved with this undertaking. It is being held as a fund raiser for renovation of the Bathhouse at Mona Vale.

The Bathhouse was built by Annie Townend in the period when she owned the house. (1905 –1914) The Bathhouse will be restored so that visitors to Mona Vale can wander through and enjoy the semi tropical plants which will be housed here once more.

The Council had moved back the date for repair from 2017 to 2029, but we hope with some additional funding raised from this event, that there will be support to repair it sooner than 2029. If you can't come yourself, please make sure that you let friends and family know. It promises to be a great event.

**Jane Cowan-Harris,**  
**President of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens**

The gardens have been a riot of colour this summer. The two photos to the right were taken from the perennial border in January, and the three hydrangea photos underneath were also taken in January, adjacent to the perennial border, growing in the dappled shade of the maple trees.

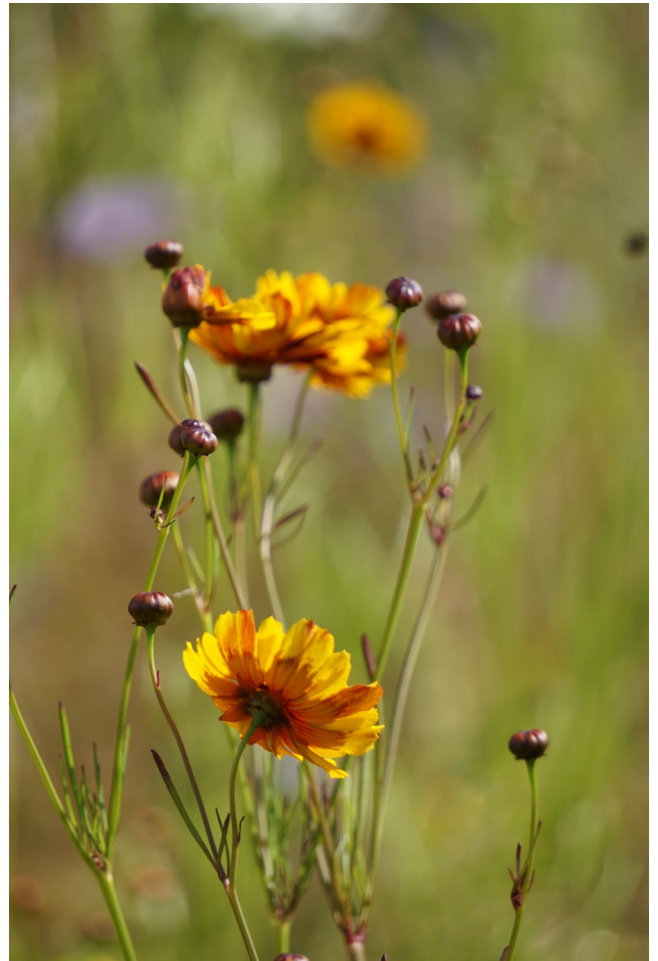




## CONTENTS

- 1) Jane Cowan-Harris: President's Report
- 3) Contents
- 4) Jeanette Christensen: Mona Vale Update
- 5) Mona Vale Garden Party Flyer
- 6) Alan Jolliffe: Forgotten Native Trees of Christchurch: *Hedycarya arborea* (porokaiwhiri, pigeonwood)
- 7) Juliet Nicholas: Book Review: New Zealand Gardens to Visit
- 8) Gardens Curator Profile: Ben Lay; Collection Curator of Mona Vale Garden
- 9) Friends Contacts

To the right and below: Wild flowers being trialed in North Hagley Park (Near Carlton Corner), making a pretty picture, attracting the bees and helping to make a 'greener foot print' are set to be rolled out in more parks around Christchurch City.





### **MONA VALE UP-DATE**

From 2021 the Friends have become more involved at Mona Vale, which is administered under the Botanic Gardens. Guides have been busy leading visitors twice a month; volunteers have been working with the staff to help maintain the gardens; and a sub-committee was formed to support Nicky Brown (Council Garden and Heritage Parks Operations Manager) and her team.

### **Mona Vale belongs to the citizens of Christchurch.**

In 1962 Mona Vale was to be cut up and sold for sections. This was when the people of Christchurch stepped in to save Mona Vale from demolition.

A Civic Trust was set up to mount a public campaign to purchase this historic garden. The citizens of Christchurch raised \$55,000 with the Christchurch City Council and the Riccarton Borough Council paying the remaining \$79,000. It has become one of the most visited public Gardens in Christchurch.

### **Edwardian Garden Party**

Once again, a fundraising initiative is underway to help the Christchurch City Council repair the historic Bathhouse within Mona Vale. We are confident that with public contribution we can have the Bathhouse renovation brought forward from the proposed 2029 date.

The Friends are beginning a fundraising campaign with an **Edwardian Garden Party** which will be an 'event not to be missed'. Advertising is in full swing, and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to a letterbox drop of flyers, or offered help on the day, this is much appreciated.

We have chosen an Edwardian theme to match the era of the Bathhouse so dress up if you wish, bring a group of friends, enjoy a fun game of croquet, take a punt ride and stroll in the beautiful grounds to the strains of music while you sip your bubbles and enjoy an assortment of canapes. The Homestead will be open to view with a botanical art sale on the first floor.

We guarantee you a fun afternoon. Formal proceedings will begin at 3.30pm with a welcome from our President, Jane Cowan-Harris, followed by an address from the Mayor, Phil Mauger who is attending with his wife Chrissy.

Please help us spread the word and join us for this great event.

**Tickets \$120 or bring a party of ten for \$1000.**

Go to our website: [www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz](http://www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz)

**Jeanette Christensen**

**Phone: 021 263 7229**



The historic Bathhouse at Mona Vale, fundraising is in progress for it's restoration. The 'Hot Garden' beside it although looking colourful, is also due for a re-vamp

### **Call for Volunteers to help at Mona Vale**

With the resurgence of tourism, Mona Vale is having an influx of tourists; there can be as many as 5 buses at one time which puts pressure on the staff in many ways. If anyone can spare a morning to help the small team at Mona Vale to maintain the gardens please get in touch with Rachel Woods, our committee Garden volunteer coordinator.

[clemmie96@gmail.com](mailto:clemmie96@gmail.com)

THE FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INVITE YOU TO

tickets  
**\$120**

# An Edwardian GARDEN PARTY

at Mona Vale Homestead

Sunday 12 March 2023  
from 3-6pm

Enjoy bubbles,  
canapés, music  
and croquet on  
the lawn along  
with a special  
botanical art  
sale



Proceeds to help restore  
the historic Bathhouse to  
its former glory



Dress for the occasion  
Edwardian-inspired fashion encouraged

tickets **\$120** per person  
*or bring a party of ten for \$1,000*

secure now from [www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz](http://www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz)

Donations towards the restoration of the Bath House are welcome



**Friends** of the  
Christchurch Botanic Gardens

Telephone: 021 263 7229

Email: [monavalefundraising@gmail.com](mailto:monavalefundraising@gmail.com)



## 'FORGOTTEN' NATIVE TREES OF CHRISTCHURCH

### *HEDYCARYA ARBOREA.*

#### POROKAIWHIRI, PIGEONWOOD

Alan Jolliffe

*Hedycarya arborea* flowers in late spring/early summer through to December and it can be recognised by its branched and hairy flower clusters. There are male and female flowers on different trees.

Male flowers are up to 12 mm wide, yellowish green, fragrant, saucer shaped, quite hairy and filled with many stamens and anthers to produce a lot of pollen for transfer to female plants. Female flowers are a little smaller at 7 mm across with 8-12 carpels (fruiting parts) with a reddish brown stigma. The fruit is a drupe (a single seed surrounded by a hard fruit wall). Up to 10 can be produced from a single flower and these are about 1.2 cm long, ovoid in shape and quite crowded. The fruit is described as red, but it is often seen as various shades of yellow, orange and red. Red is the final ripe colour.



Porokaiwhiri flowers late spring through to December

Once believed to be a favourite food of kereru hence its name Pigeonwood. It is naturally abundant in lowland forests in North Island and in the South Island south to Banks Peninsula, throughout the West Coast and on Three Kings Island. It ranges from sea level to about 700 m.

I have seen it in a few places around Christchurch. Observations in iNaturalist show 10 observations in Christchurch and many on Banks Peninsula. In 1935 Arnold Wall noted many plants in bush areas on the Port Hills. It is also known in Riccarton Bush.

It is a handsome tree with opposite, shiny dark green leaves lighter underneath with a reddish midrib. Leaves are about 5-12 cm long and 2-5 cm wide. Young stems are black and young branchlets, stems and leaves are hairy. Leaf margins have small teeth.

It's growth habit is as a small to medium sized, erect evergreen tree of nice shape and proportions growing up to about 6 metres. It is shade tolerant and prefers good soil and a reasonable amount of moisture. Heavy frosts may damage the soft growing tips.

If fruit is required a male and female tree must be present therefore group plantings should be considered. Ideal for parks, small reserves, catchment areas, conservation areas and even street trees in the right location. It should be planted a lot more.

Propagation is easiest by seed. If a particularly good form is found propagation can be achieved by semi-hardwood cuttings.

*Hedycarya* is a small genus of tropical trees and shrubs mainly in New Caledonia and Polynesia. We have just the single species in NZ. Discovered by Sir Joseph Banks and Dr Daniel Solander at 'Tigadu' now called Anaura on the east coast of the North Island.

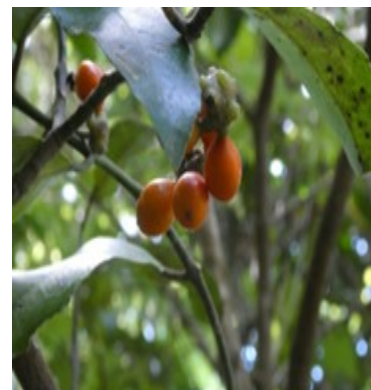
It would be great if we increased the number of porokaiwhiri planted in open spaces around Christchurch and its environs. I suspect that there may be a number of young trees in some conservation plantings that have yet to reach flowering size but that does not stop the planting of more!



Porokaiwhiri leaf showing the reddish midrib



Immature Porokaiwhiri fruit



Ripening Porokaiwhiri fruit

## **'NEW ZEALAND GARDENS TO VISIT'**

**Juliet Nicholas & Rosemary Barraclough**

Rosemary Barraclough phoned me one Sunday afternoon in June 2020, in the midst of the Covid pandemic and asked me if I'd like to collaborate on a book with her, about NZ gardens that were open to visit. We discussed the broader concepts and without hesitation, I agreed. We were living in very uncertain times and knew that international travel was going to be restricted for some time, so a book celebrating the rich diversity of New Zealand gardens, was not only overdue, but indeed timely. Two years later, our book, 'New Zealand Gardens to Visit' was published by Penguin Random House. It features over 50 outstanding gardens from throughout NZ, both private and public, that welcome visitors.

We wanted the book to be both inspirational and useful, strongly visual with engaging, informative text that would not only guide the active traveller around the country but also inform and inspire the armchair traveller and keen gardener.

We divided Aoteroa/New Zealand into ten regions and have featured 4 to 10 gardens within each region. With so many wonderful gardens to choose from, curating such a selection was always going to be challenging, but we were guided by a desire to reflect the enormous diversity of gardens, from the Far North to Southland. Loose and lovely naturalistic gardens, gardens full of trees, or those using natives in inventive ways, places filled with sculpture and mosaics, gardens that speak of Aotearoa/New Zealand's history and traditional Maori gardening, along with Chinese, Indian and Japanese gardens that reflect our cultural diversity. And also a range of gardens built on passions for particular plants – palms and bamboo, rhododendrons or roses, and of course edibles.

Science is increasingly informing us that spending time in nature lowers stress levels, washes away sadness and anxiety, and lifts our spirits. We gardeners have long known the restorative benefits of gardening and I'm happy to report that visiting and photographing gardens are similarly beneficial. I feel truly privileged to have spent the last 30 years photographing gardens for magazines and books, accruing all these benefits in the course of my daily work.

**Juliet Nicholas**

**Photographer for 'New Zealand Gardens to Visit'**

**and a member of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens**



## GARDENS CURATOR PROFILE

**Ben Lay: Collection Curator of Mona Vale**

### ***Tell me a bit about yourself and what brought you to this role?***

My name is Ben Lay and I have recently been appointed Collection Curator of Mona Vale Garden. I have been working in this very garden for nearly 4 years now.

One could say that I have had a varied background, firstly born in the City of York, in the UK and raised by my devoted Grandparents. We lived in a lovely garden village called New Earswick built by Joseph Rowntree for his workers just 5 miles out of York City centre. This is where my passion for gardening started; helping my grandfather attend the veggie patch, the many perennial borders, and his beloved rose garden. My grandparents would take me to many great gardens around Yorkshire such as York Gate Garden, Museum Gardens, Nation Trust Beningbrough Hall Gallery & Garden, Castle Howard Garden and Harwood House. I remember as a young person being in awe of the extensive displays of flowers with manicured lawns.

I went to boarding school briefly at Netherside Hall in the heart of the stunning Yorkshire Dales. The nearest village was Grassington where there were many sandstone-built houses and walled gardens from the 16th & 17th century. If there ever was a quintessential fairy tale cottage garden, then it would be here.

After my grandfather retired from what is called Nestlé Chocolate Factory now, they decided to buy a house in the inner Hebrides of Scotland on the Isle of Tiree. While phoning my grandparents from a red phone box in the village, as I often did to catch up with their progress, I found out that I would be joining them, finishing off my final two years at Tiree High School. This move would prove not only life changing but influential in years to come. At age 13/14 I started helping

the neighbouring aging Crofters (small land holders). As word got out in the area that there was a young boy willing to work, I started working after school and weekends with the brothers, John & Alistair MacFadyen on the farm. It was here I was brought up and taught the hard lessons on the art forms of the fussy old fashioned farming methods. I loved working on the land. There were 3 acres; mostly potatoes, 120 acres of corn or silage and miles of open common grazing for the cattle and sheep to graze upon. At the age of 18 I decided to get some horticultural qualifications at Oatridge Agricultural college in Edinburgh.

I finished my apprenticeship and spent a few years farming and fishing until moving to mainland Scotland. Here I managed to get a job with British Waterways as part of the team reopening the Forth & Clyde Canal after it had been closed for 45 years. Finally, before leaving for New Zealand, I was working for a few years as an estate worker at Palacerigg Country Park – a 1000 acre Scottish rare breeds park run by North Lanarkshire council.

In 2007 I came to New Zealand on a working holiday visa for 23 months, travelling around both islands, Australia, and Asia before settling into working in Christchurch for City Care land drainage as a seasonal temp. I stayed there for 11 years working up the ranks quickly until I wanted to get back to my roots in horticulture and applied for the Parks and Garden officer role at Mona Vale in 2019.

I knew Mona Vale well and the original gardeners for years as my staff at City Care would undertake maintenance in the rivers through the grounds 2/3 times per year. I always thought the garden was something special but never thought that one day I would actually work there.

There are lots of similarities in skills and experiences between my time farming or in industries I have worked in over the years. This has put me in good stead to becoming a gardener here. Mona Vale is a way of life not a job, not work either but a I have a real passion to drive the garden forward and stay relevant for visitors into the future.

### ***How did your interest in horticulture come about and do you have a particular area of interest?***

Horticulture has always been in my life in one shape or form and my relationship with the grounds I am involved with has changed as I have got older. I love the challenges in growing, planting and designing perennial borders. Maximising longevity in visual impactful borders while creating wildlife havens for the bees and insects. I think having a good understanding and knowledge of the history of what's in the soils and ground we are literally standing on is one of the key corner stones of a healthy garden.

Personally, I am enjoying the journey of learning each day and being flexible enough to not to be too disheartened when things fail, but to have the energy to experiment and give ideas a go.



Ben Lay; Collection Curator of Mona Vale Garden taking a moment to enjoy the roses



**Describe a typical day working at Mona Vale –its challenges and its rewards.**

Well, there is always some kind of maintenance being carried out every day on the grounds but of course the day really depends on season, weather and what is planned on the agenda. For example, in the summer months there will be lots of irrigation, weeding and mowing. I suppose the rewards could be looking back at the end of the day or week and over-hearing guests' reaction to the garden for the first time of being in Mona Vale. Seeing the place in full bloom, tidy and freshly striped lawns. You learn very quickly to enjoy these short-lived moments before mother nature decides otherwise, sending heavy winds to cause a riot in the garden.

**Tell us about other interests and hobbies that you have outside of horticulture.**

My partner and I enjoy biking around town and going swimming once a week. We do have a quarter acre section of a mature garden that keeps us busy, too. I enjoy the relaxation of a long walk on the beach to unwind the mind.

**What inspires you?**

That's a hard question to answer; lots of people and natural things inspire me. It can be quite basic from the smallest green shoot from a seed or cutting or from good humble genuine humans making their life's work to make others better than their own. I think some of the late English/French/Italian Landscape architects inspire me to be visionary to plant not just for the 5-10 years' time frame but also for the long term with legacy developments that we might never see in our lifetime.



**FRIENDS CONTACTS**

**Committee**

President	Jane Cowan-Harris	021 043 5342
Secretary	Graham Chick	385 9264
Treasurer	Carol Halstead	
Webpage queries	Jane Cowan-Harris	

Jeanette Christensen, Vicki Steven, Susan Lawrence, Ray McTeigue, Rachel Wood, Ric Acland  
Margaret Metherell.

**Other Contacts**

Guides Co-ordinator	Susan Lawrence	021 120 6258
Group guided walks:	Pat Whitman	384 3475
Newsletter editor	Annette Burnett	<a href="mailto:dananbur@outlook.com">dananbur@outlook.com</a>

**Enquiries About Membership.**

**Phone:** Jane Cowan-Harris 021 043 5342

**Email:** [friendsofthegardens@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthegardens@gmail.com)

**Post:** PO Box 73036  
Orchard Road  
Christchurch 8154  
New Zealand

**Gardens enquiries:** Information Centre 03 941 7590

**Website:** <https://friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz/>



### Outdoor Propagation

**Tuesday 21 February 7 – 9pm**

Create multiples of your favourite plants and turn your home garden into your very own garden centre.

The Kiosk, Christchurch Botanic Gardens  
**\$40** (\$50 Non-Members)

### Growing Seeds to Save

**Wednesday 1 March 6 – 8pm**

Learn how to save seed for sustainable food production. Ōtākaro Orchard Urban Farm, 156 Peterborough Street.  
**\$40** (\$50 Non-Members)

### Garden Organic

*An introduction to organics in the home garden*

**Tuesdays 7-9pm & Saturdays 9.30am – 1pm  
21 March – 18 April**

Our popular Garden Organic sessions tutored by the experts from the Organics College and the Canterbury Permaculture institute return this March and April. Expand your general gardening knowledge with these pick and mix sessions including new topics of Organic Weed Control and the Soil Food Web taught at the Kiosk and Richmond Community Gardens.

Individual sessions from \$44 or signup for all and receive one session free!

**All 8 Sessions: \$375**



### Precision

### Pruning

**When, Why & How with tutor Ryan Young**

**Wednesday 8 March 7 – 9pm**

When should you prune which plant? Learn the basic principles of pruning ornamentals (perennials and shrubs) for general plant health, future flowering, shape and regeneration.

The Kiosk, Christchurch Botanic Gardens  
**\$20** (\$26 Non-Members)

### Garden Life March

**Wednesday 1 March 1pm and 7pm**

**Marg and Geoff Allison**

*The NZ Dahlia Collection at Christchurch Botanic Gardens*

**“Dahlias are the supreme summer and early autumn flowers. They sparkle in soft light. It is only in the last decade that more gardeners have come to appreciate their charms.”** The Garden RHS, September 2022

Marg and Geoff Allison, as volunteers under the umbrella of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, have taken responsibility for the dahlia collection for the past five years. Both retired, Marg has a health sector background and Geoff with the Ministry of Agriculture. Between them they can spend up to 30 hours a week working with the collection. In addition time is spent at home networking, researching and maintaining records.

In their illustrated presentation Geoff and Marg will outline their five year journey of recovering and reimagining the New Zealand dahlia collection and including the species dahlias; the guidance and encouragement of Dr Keith Hammett and other New Zealand dahlia raisers and experts; the successes and challenges of developing and maintaining a collection in a public gardens.

**The Kiosk**, Christchurch Botanic Gardens  
**\$5** CHS Members & Friends  
Tea, coffee and biscuits included



### Sustainable Floristry

**Tuesdays 7-9pm 28 February | 7 March | 14 March & Saturday 11 March 12.30 – 2.30pm**

A four session foundation floristry course Tutor Claire Maetzig's philosophy is one of 'slow flowers' – field grown flowers that bloom in harmony with the seasons. Moon River flowers are natural, beautifully scented and have a whimsical cottage garden aesthetic. **\$550** All materials provided

*Friends of the Gardens are eligible for all CHS Member discounts!*

*When you make an online booking for a course or workshop just remember to select 'CHS Member' as the rate.*



**Friends** of the  
Christchurch Botanic Gardens



**Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Summer  
Talk Series**

**Life in a Transitional Red Zone**

**Zane Lazare (MSc Ecology)  
Ranger, Residential Red Zone, CCC**

**Sunday February 19 in the Kiosk**

Zane will talk about life in the Christchurch transitional Red Zone. He will present upon what being a ranger in the Residential Red Zone entails, comparing the highlights and challenges. Zane will discuss the changes in the red zone landscape since CCC began managing the space in 2020. These changes include ecological restoration, naturalisation, and some of our larger development projects.

- Venue:** The Kiosk  
**Date:** Sunday 19 February 2023  
**Time:** 4.00pm (Afternoon tea provided)  
**Cost:** Members and CHS members \$5.00; Non-members \$10

If you can bring a contribution of food for afternoon tea, it would be appreciated. Please let Rachel know if you are bringing something ([clemmie96@gmail.com](mailto:clemmie96@gmail.com) 03 355 8614)



*Veronica lavaudiana* is endemic to Christchurch

[friendsofthegardens@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthegardens@gmail.com)  
[www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz](http://www.friendschchbotanicgardens.org.nz)