



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AUTUMN 2024**

Welcome to our autumn newsletter, and the glorious colours of autumn, possibly more intense this year with the dry summer we've had.

The Friends have been busy over the last few months with not only the normal propagating, guiding, Gardens ambassadors in the Kiosk and garden support work, but also with our online auction of the beautiful High-back Welsh stick chair donated to us by chairmaker, David Laird. As the auction did not meet our reserve at the end of March, we extended the end date until 30<sup>th</sup> April. The Communications Team at the Council have helped us with putting the auction onto Facebook to extend the reach. We look forward to successfully passing the chair on to the top bidder and the money from the auction will be put towards our new trainee support programme. *(Editors note, the chair has now successfully been sold, see the contacts page (P12) for the story)*

The Friends have also been advocating for action to be taken around the amount of bird poop around the Phoenix Palm tree just in the front of the Kiosk, mainly from pigeons nesting in this tree. The other big bird problem I'm sure you're all aware of is the Canada Goose problem. As a result of this, which appears to be a worldwide issue, some metal jackals have been placed around the Gardens, and these are moved around regularly so the geese don't get too used to them! One way of controlling numbers is to prick a number of their eggs to stop them hatching but more permanent action may be required to keep the numbers down.

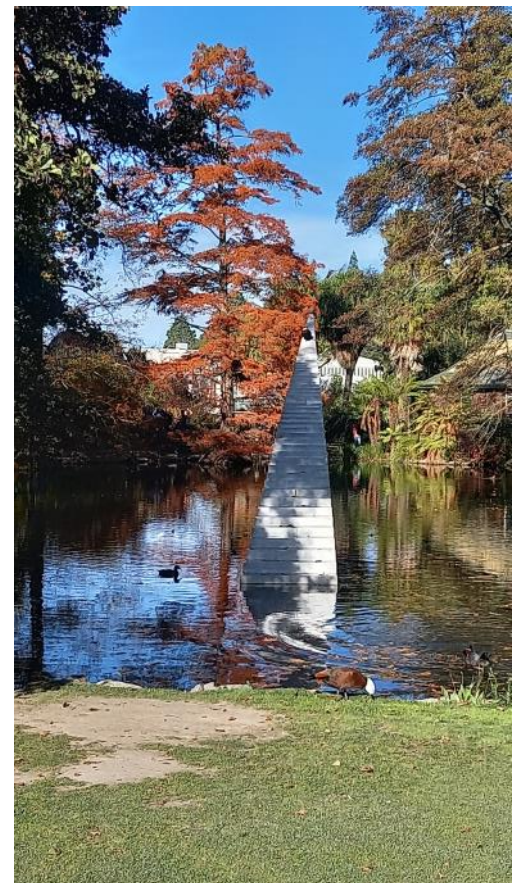
One of our other challenges with predators, sadly, is of the human variety. You might have heard our own Susan Lawrence on the radio on Checkpoint and then Wolfgang Bopp (Gardens Director) talking on Seven Sharp about the plant thefts at Mona Vale. Plant theft has also been a big problem in the Botanic Gardens. It's sad that people are taking away the right for everyone to enjoy the plants here, and to destroy the hard work of the gardeners. If you would like to volunteer at Mona Vale or walk through on a regular basis to discourage any plant pinchers, you would be most welcomed by the staff there.

We've been very busy with guiding over the summer with plenty of visitors arriving at the Kiosk for our free talks. Finding their way there from the Rolleston Avenue front entrance can prove a bit of a challenge, so we have been in touch with the Visitor Experience Team in the Council to find out how we can make the journey to the Kiosk easier for visitors. This is a work in progress.

We're looking at eventually getting a second donation board, similar to the one near the Kiosk, to be placed near the front entrance to the Gardens, near the Peacock Fountain. If you've used the donation board yourself, we would love to hear any feedback on this. We are currently investigating whether to use a QR code, where you use your phone to take a photo of the QR image and then donate through a site this takes you to. Again, any feedback on this is welcome.

If you've visited the Gardens yourself over this summer and autumn, you may well have experienced some difficulty in finding a car park. This is very frustrating if you are coming in to volunteer in the Gardens or to attend a talk. You'll be aware that we have additional parking at the old Petanque Courts next to Lake Victoria when we run our Sunday and Friday meetings. We now have access to this area for all volunteers, with use of a key to unlock the padlock to drive into this area. Talk to the person who coordinates your volunteer area if you are going to need this facility.

The talks this summer and autumn have included a visit to Ohinetahi





Gardens in Governor's Bay, Chris Beardsley on plant variety rights and Ric Acland on Medicinal Cannabis. A big thank you to the speakers and our organisers. If you have anyone who you think would give a great talk, we're always open to ideas. Contact us through the Friends email, [friendsofthegardens@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthegardens@gmail.com).



We've been very lucky over the last few years to have Annette Burnett as our wonderful newsletter editor. However, Annette is finding the combination of work and being available to assist family with young children, is limiting her time for the editor job. We're therefore looking for someone who could help us out in this role. Annette has a clear description of the job, timewise it involves about 4 or 5 afternoons, or evenings, 4 times a year, and having some knowledge of the programme Publisher, would help. Annette has moved to this recently and says it makes her job much easier. This is a job which has support from others to proof read and could be shared with another person. So, if you are interested, please contact us via the Friends' email address.

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

### **MONA VALE UPDATE**

Good news. The Friends' sponsored glass house has been delivered and assembled at Mona Vale in time to winter-over delicate species. It will also be used to house semi-tropical plants which Nicky and her team are collecting to be displayed in the renovated Bathhouse. This glasshouse is a very welcome addition to Mona Vale.

The Bathhouse project continues to move forward as Selina (Project Manager) finalises the paper work and puts the renovation out to tender.

Around the gardens, Mona Vale is under-going its winter clean-up as Ben and his team work hard to get on top of trimming and weeding before the rains come.

The new bedding is in and looks very happy after the recent rain.

Staff have been on hands and knees weeding the Fernery. It was looking very tidy and is an interesting and very tranquil place to visit. The large koru design in the newly laid paving outside the house is a splendid additional feature.

Ben has had very welcome help from the Botanic Gardens' Tree Team, who were spotted cutting back and tidying the Blue and White Border at the end of the internal car park. There are plans for this area which includes additional pathways and shifting the border over so that the plants don't crowd the existing path.

With only two permanent garden staff and one trainee at Mona Vale, extra help is always welcomed with open arms.

*If you can give any time to volunteer at Mona Vale please get in touch with Rachel Woods who coordinates Garden volunteers. Phone: 022 049 1788*

**Jeanette Christensen**



Nona Milburn, Nicky Brown (Deputy director Botanic Gardens and Mona Vale), Mary Carnegie and Susan Lawrence from the Mona Vale sub-group, inspecting the new glass house.



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It was so sad to read in Janes report about predators of the 'human variety' at Mona Vale. I listened to Radio New Zealand's Checkpoint interview with Susan Lawrence in which she lists the stealing of tulip flowers by the hundreds, rose bushes, ferns and other plants. Although the media have reported on plant theft at Mona Vale, it is also a big problem at the Botanic Gardens. It is so disappointing that the hard work of garden staff and volunteers can be upturned so quickly by one or two people. I do hope that the culprits can be found, and that some workable solutions are found to protect the plants at Mona Vale, as they give so much joy to so many people. On a brighter note, Mona Vale itself seems to be bustling with activity as described in Jeanette's update, in particular, the new glasshouse there has been quite a cause for excitement!

The Friends sponsored a trip to the Melbourne Flower and Garden show for some of the Gardens' staff and Tracy Kells reports back on some of the beautiful creations that they saw.

Jane has visited a number of places from North Canterbury to Wellington, and writes about some of the initiatives to care for the wide and wonderful variety of our native birds.

After visiting Florida last year, Mum and I stopped by in Hawaii for a couple of days. It is a most warm and welcoming place and the flora there is diverse, much of it bearing a resemblance to native New Zealand flora. I have shared a little of what we found there.

This will be the last Friends' Newsletter that I put together. My young grandson Oliver has just turned one, and although I do enjoy the newsletter work I find that I want more time to enjoy being with Oliver and the rest of my family, and so I am doing some 'editing' on my extra curricular activities. So for the time being I am hanging up my pen, or should that be keyboard? Jane and the committee would be very pleased to hear from anyone that is able to help out whether with proof reading, editing or formatting.

**Annette Burnett**  
Newsletter Editor



Mum and I pausing for a photo, with tropical palms waving in the background, before boarding the flight from Hawaii back to NZ



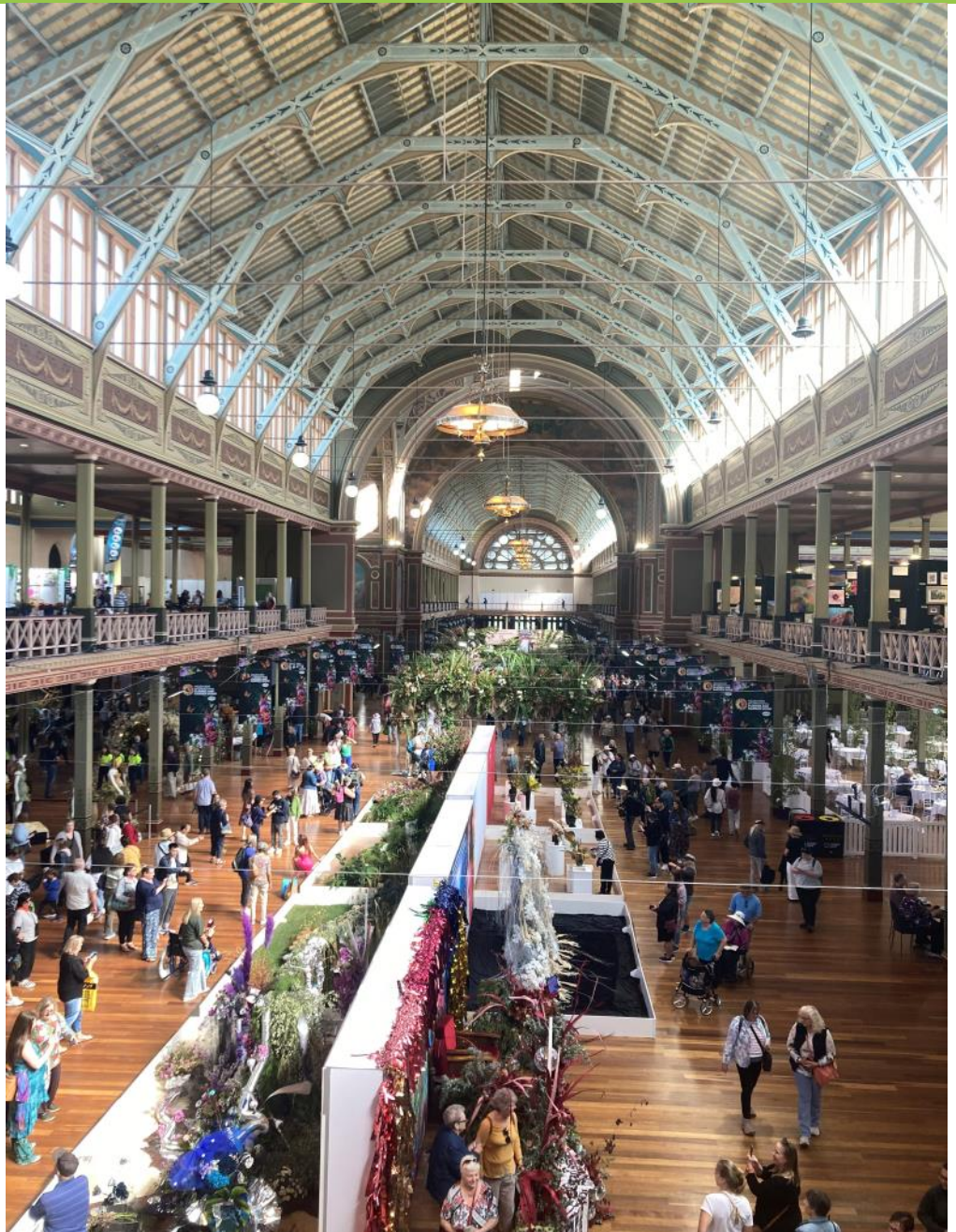


### **GO TO WORK ON A FLOWER**

Huge thanks to The Friends who facilitated Tracy Kells and Heidi Connolly's trip to the **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show**. Neither of us having been there, we were unsure of what to expect and we were certainly not disappointed, from its grand venue in the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens to the vast array of talent, design and innovation showcased!

The winning garden 'Through the looking glass' was a rural garden highlighting the need to plant bio-diverse spaces for the health of our ecosystem. With a strong emphasis on water, our most vital and often neglected resource, the garden exhibited a beautiful pond landscaped with locally sourced materials for aesthetic attraction and habitat for wildlife (a glass panel enabled you to see into the pond). It was carefully planted with native grasses and indigenous Australian plant species creating ecological balance and adaptation to our ever-changing environment.

The Royal Botanic Gardens' display garden was also an eyecatcher, again planted with indigenous species and honouring rare, threatened and culturally significant plants from pre colonization times in Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country, we also loved the quirky use of black umbrellas to represent ravens sitting in the trees above.



Inside the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show 2024

Highlights in the floral displays were a beautiful bedroom complete with moss carpet, hydrangea head rug and pillow and an eiderdown painstakingly designed from Livingstone daisies and *Stachys byzantina* making it soft to the touch, the attention to detail absolutely sublime! The kimono also deserves a mention, exquisitely decorated with dried pressed flowers, one cannot imagine how long this took to create!

There were many other wonderful exhibitors, a competition for hanging baskets, great ideas for garden borders and, of course, plants, plants and more plants, the only regret is not being able to bring them home with us! But we came home brimming with ideas and inspiration for the Gardens.

We also had the opportunity to meet the team at the Botanic Gardens and Cranbourne Gardens during our trip. Once again thanks!!

**Tracy Kells**





Clockwise from the top:

Winning garden 'Through the looking glass';

The kimono', beautifully decorated with dried pressed flowers;

Royal Botanic Gardens display with umbrellas representing ravens;

A beautiful bedroom, complete with moss carpet and hydrangea pillow;

Heidi Connelly (Collection Curator), Jo (Park Ranger) and Tracy Kells (Parks & Gardens Maintenance Officer), with a friend at the Melbourne Flower Show.







**BOOK REVIEW:**

**THE JOY OF GARDENING BY LYNDA HALLINAN**

Almost anyone interested in gardening has read Lynda Hallinan's gardening advice or heard her speak. This book is not about advice but how gardening is therapeutic, as Lynda recalls different experiences and the people who surround her. An easy to pick up and put down book which both experienced and novice gardeners will relate to in personal ways.

As Lynda says; *"Pleasure comes from discovery not knowledge"* (p12).

To this end she shares her journey of discovery in delightfully written short paragraphs across a variety of gardening topics. Chapter one 'Learning and Discovery' is a warts and all rendition of creating her first garden from a bare piece of land.

All gardeners will relate to Lynda's experiences as the titles of chapters suggest.

The chapters range from 'Making Memories' to 'The Joy of Letting Go' and 'The Joy of Having a laugh' as Lynda brings a personal touch which incorporates sound advice while encouraging the reader to see gardening in a therapeutic way.

We, the reader, get many tips on specific species as Lynda tells it as it is in chapters about Hellebores, heirloom fruit trees, old fashioned fragrant roses, homegrown tomatoes, and wild fennel to name a few.

She sees the positive in 'The Joy of Weeding', and 'The Joy of Making Mulch', but my favourite chapters are: 'The Joy of Making Buttonholes' which brings back childhood memories; 'The Joy of Royal Mistakes', a light hearted telling of her visit to Highgrove as a gardening journalist; and a longer chapter on 'Love and Loss' when Lynda names many plants which are *'instuments of grace'*, (a term taken from a quote by American author and poet May Sarton (1912 -1995))

Quotes by different writers cleverly introduce the sentiment within each chapter, some very profound and some humorous, 'Winter Respite' begins with the words of American author Robert Byrne (1930 -2016); *Winter is nature's way of saying "Up yours"*

I recommend this book as a 'dip into' if you need a pick me up or have time to sit back and relax. If you would like to borrow my copy I am happy to lend.

**Reviewer**

**Jeanette Christensen**



## **AN ABUNDANCE OF BIRDS**

### **Island Hills Track**

I always feel that a garden is not a garden without birds or insects – the presence of these helps you to feel that there is a balance of nature. As you will be well aware, in New Zealand we have a surfeit of predators which we are trying to tackle with the Predator Free 2050 programme. I've had the chance to experience the hard work of a large number of people recently when walking on the Island Hills Track in North Canterbury. Island Hills Station has the largest area of QEII covenanted land of any farm in the South Island. As a result of the fencing off from stock and good predator control, the land has regenerating bush, which is mainly beech, manuka and kanuka trees. Walking through this area on our tramp, it was alive with bellbirds and honeybees enjoying the honeydew on the beech trees.

### **Zealandia Bird Sanctuary**

Then a few weeks ago I visited Zealandia Bird Sanctuary in Wellington. This is a 225-hectare area in the middle of Wellington which was originally a dammed stream and lake to provide water for Wellington City. It has beautiful native bush and many tracks leading through it, as well as the bonus of a huge range of native birds, protected by a predator free fence. If you haven't been yet, do go, as it's a stunning place for both bush and birdlife.

### **Kapiti Island**

The other adventure I had this autumn was to visit Kapiti Island and stay overnight. This is another fabulous bird sanctuary, kept predator free, with planning for this from the late 1890's so someone had enormous foresight back then. Again this has many tracks to wander along, and the most amazing array of birds including tuis, bellbirds, saddlebacks, kokako, kaka, stitchbirds and takahe. If I could add in a video so you could hear the birdsong whilst you read this, I would, but I believe the file is too big for our newsletter! The stitchbirds are very shy and not found anywhere on the mainland. Also, they can't always get enough food for themselves, so sugarwater stations have been set up for them. The bellbirds can also fit through the small holes to allow them to get in, so they are often there first, but if you sit for long enough, you get a chance to see the very pretty stitchbirds. I wasn't quick enough to be able to capture one of them on my phone camera but have included some images here from the Inaturalist, (which have permission to be shared). The kakas were cheeky enough to land on your shoulder whilst waiting for an evening meal and would have taken any food away had they had the chance! Both the care taken by the Department of Conservation who manage this reserve alongside the family who own the island, have created an extraordinary place to visit, so, if you haven't been, make sure you put this on your 'places to visit' list. It was a glorious sound and felt miles from anywhere. Look up Kapiti Island Nature Reserve for more information.

Back home in Sumner, we are lucky enough to have plenty of bellbirds/korimako and fantails/piwakawaka in the garden at this time of year. However, this is only sustained by ongoing rat bait setting and possum traps. Doing these things has really helped to increase the bird population, but you must be persistent!

Likewise in the Gardens, we know that the staff are vigilant in setting traps in certain areas to keep pests at bay and in the native garden section you'll often see bellbirds, kereru and fantails. You may have noticed the 'jackals' around the Gardens on the lawns which are there to deter the Canada Geese which are proving to be a messy and destructive pest. This is an ongoing challenge which, as Friends, we have been keen to encourage the Council to take action on, along with the pesky and messy pigeons who nest in the palm tree in front of the Kiosk.

In the meantime, take a seat for a few minutes and just enjoy the birds in your own garden and in the Botanic Gardens.

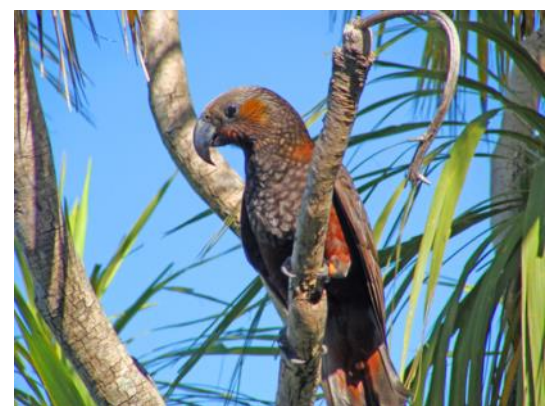
**Jane Cowan-Harris**



Jon Sullivan [North Island Saddleback](#) CC iNaturalist NZ



Jeremy Clark [Stitchbird \(Notiomystis cincta\)](#) CC-iNaturalist



Phillipa Capper [New Zealand Kaka \(Nestor meridionalis\)](#) CC iNaturalist

Top: Island Hills Walking Track. Photo by Jane.  
Descending: saddleback, the very pretty stitchbird and the cheeky kaka



## FLORA OF HAWAII

After our trip to Florida last year, Mum and I enjoyed a brief stopover in Hawaii. This was my sister's idea, who thought it would be wise to break up the long-haul flight as well as capitalising on our trip by visiting another American state – and she wasn't wrong!

Botanically speaking, Hawaii is a fascinating place. These Islands became established from a series of volcanic eruptions eons ago and, although thousands of miles away from any land mass, a selection of flora made the long and seemingly impossible journey across the Pacific Ocean to settle in Hawaii. These plants are known today as Hawaii's native plants and unfortunately many of them are now either extinct or endangered. Pressure from environmental changes made by humans, including cities and plantations have pushed the native species further into the few remaining wild spaces, where they are further threatened by introduced species.



A close up of Hawaii's only native palm tree—the loulu, (*Pritchardia glabrata*), this one is part of the collection of Hawaiian natives at the Ho'omaluhia visitor centre



There are seven hibiscus species native to Hawaii, and over thirty introduced species. (this one was photographed on the boundary of a private property near Diamond Head), The yellow hibiscus flower is the official state flower of Hawaii

### Native Plants

The number of plants originally arriving from faraway lands, carried by the wind, the ocean currents and by birds, were in the mere hundreds. Numbers of them are related to our New Zealand native flora; for example the ōhi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) has a clear resemblance to our pohutakawa, the seeds of which are very light weight and were likely blown across the Pacific using islands and atolls as stepping stones. And the Hawaiian māmane (*Sophora chrysophylla*) is an unmistakable relative to our kowhai tree, the seeds of which can survive in seawater for over three years. Interestingly a great many of the world's plant families are absent or minimally represented in the native flora spectrum. For example, only three species of native orchid, one type of palm tree (the loulu - genus *Pritchardia*) and nothing from the conifer family made it to Hawaii. As Mum and I had spent time in Florida, which is on a similar latitude, and where there is an abundance of native orchids, I found it surprising to learn that there were so few native orchids to Hawaii. It is also interesting that, although Hawaii is geographically closer to North America, most of its native flora appears to derive from Asia.

### Canoe Plants

Hawaii's second wave of flora arrived with the Polynesian settlers from about the fourth century. There was very little that was edible amongst Hawaii's native plants, and the Polynesians brought with them plants that they needed for survival; plants that we might think of as quintessentially Hawaiian, plants like the banana, coconut, taro, and sweet potato. There were about 24 of these plants, and they are often referred to as 'canoe' plants.

### Introduced Plants

Europeans arriving from the late 1770s brought sufficient new plants with them to result in a botanical explosion. Hawaii's warm climate and mountain ranges create a great variety of microclimates, and made it possible for almost anything that doesn't require a hard winter freeze to grow, so many of the plants that the settlers brought with them soon made their way into the wilderness areas of Hawaii.

Today the streets and gardens of Hawaii are filled with flowering and shade trees from both tropical and temperate parts of the world, and forested areas have been planted with a range of trees including eucalypts and conifers; some being planted as an experiment for wood production, and others as a conservation effort, to provide cover for places that had been stripped bare.



Display board in the visitor centre with photos of Ōhi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) flowers, a native plant of Hawaii which is closely related to our own pohutakawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*). The flowers are used in lei making



## Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden

Mum and I stayed in Honolulu, on the Island of Oahu, probably the most tourist dense part of Hawaii, the streets were bustling from early morning till late at night, full of colour, life and vendors selling their wares. The ocean was a ten-minute walk from where we were staying and from the shore, we could see the iconic Diamond Head which the cameras pan in on for the opening scene of Hawaii five O. On our third day in Hawaii, we took an Uber eastward to Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden, one of five botanical gardens on Oahu. The drive there was through the spectacular Ko'olau Mountain ranges which form part of the backdrop for the Garden. Ho'omaluhia means 'peace and tranquillity' and the Garden, a 400-acre expanse of rainforest trees and shrubs from the tropics of the world certainly provided this contrast from the bustle of Honolulu. It was formed in 1982 in conjunction with the USA Army Corps of Engineers who designed and built the 32-acre lake and dam that form part of the garden for flood protection for the local community.

The garden is divided into sections showcasing plants from Tropical America, India, Polynesia, Africa, and other tropical regions of the world, and naturally there is an emphasis on Hawaiian natives and the canoe plants. The visitor centre had a very interesting display of large seeds, many from palm trees, and all very beautiful to look at. I was particularly taken with the 'coco de mer' seed, known to be the largest and heaviest seed in the plant kingdom. Its botanical name is *Lodoicea maldivica*, it is part of the palm family and hales from the Seychelles. The seed collection was an 'interactive' one and it was a privilege to be able to pick up and handle a seed from the coco de mer palm.

Hawaii, like almost every other country on the planet, not only has its introduced pest plant problems, but also its introduced pest animal problems. The photo board in the visitor centre included a picture of a mongoose. Introduced to Hawaii in the late 19th century to control the rat population in the sugar cane fields, the mongoose population grew to large numbers and, without controlling the rat population, greatly diminished the population of native ground nesting birds, snails, and palms, as well as preying on the rare and endangered Hawaiian sea turtles. That is the kind of story we are all too familiar with here in New Zealand!



The spectacular Ko'olau mountain range serves as a magnificent backdrop to the Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden

**Annette Burnett**

### **A SELECTION OF SEEDS FROM THE HO'OMALUHIA DISPLAY**



Coco de mer seed (*Lodoicea maldivica*), the largest and heaviest seed in the plant kingdom, native to the Seychelles



Baobab seed (*Adansonia digitata*), a distinctive tree of Africa, with a large swollen barrel shaped trunk



Seeds from the palm *Metroxylon vitiense*, the endangered Fijian sago palm

## **Bibliography:**

Tropical trees of Hawaii by Paul Wood (Island Heritage Publishing, 2004. ISBN:0931548411)

Flowers and plants of Hawaii by Paul Wood (Island Heritage Publishing, 2005. ISBN-10: 093154839X)

[Hawaiian Plants • Manoa Heritage Center](#)

[Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden brochure](#)

[Ho'omaluhia web page](#)



## **BOTANICAL PLATE WORKSHOP**

Tuesday 4 June: 10am – 12.30pm

At the Kiosk in the Botanic Gardens



# BOTANICAL PLATE Workshop

### **Create a gorgeous ceramic leaf plate**

Join ceramicist Jane McCulla for a hands-on practical workshop at The Kiosk in the Botanic Gardens. Jane will demonstrate how to imprint botanical textures onto clay and hand-build a ceramic plate. You'll also learn how to add a circular foot ring and smooth the edges. Jane will take care of the glazing and firing and two weeks later you'll collect a glazed leaf plate imprinted with botanical patterns and suitable for everyday use.

\$52 Friends & CHS Members  
Includes all materials, glazing and kiln firing!

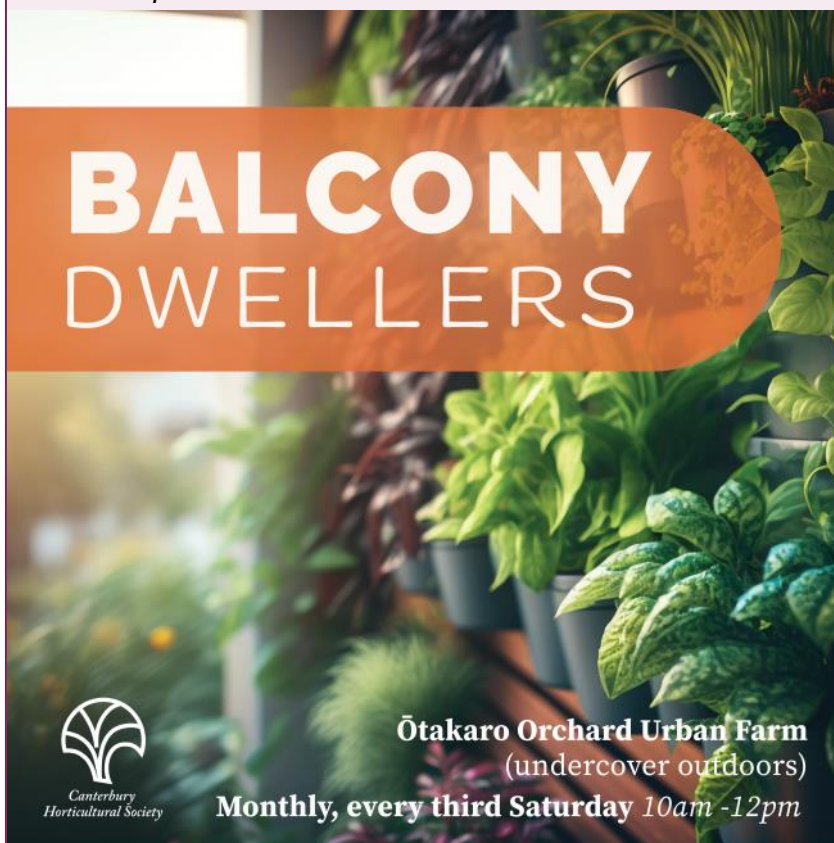
Book online: [www.chsgardens.co.nz/shop](http://www.chsgardens.co.nz/shop)

## **BALCONY DWELLERS**

Monthly on the third Saturday of the Month

At Ōtakaro Orchard 227 Cambridge Tce

10am – 12pm



# BALCONY DWELLERS

### **Explore the abundance of compact edible gardens**

Each month Canterbury Horticultural Society presents an edible-themed demonstration followed by a chance to exchange and collaborate with other balcony dwellers. At each session attendees can purchase a set of top-up plants/seeds – a seasonal combination of seedlings and/or seeds from the Southern Seed Exchange, or swap excess plants and seeds with others. Bring back your old pots or soil to be recycled by the urban farm.

\$20 Friends & CHS Members

Book online: [www.chsgardens.co.nz/shop](http://www.chsgardens.co.nz/shop)



Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Winter Talk Series 2024

# Gardening on the Wild Side

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 10.30am in the Kiosk**

Landscape designer Jill Simpson will tell us the story of her world famous garden at Fisherman's Bay on Bank's Peninsula.

Since 2005 Jill has gradually expanded the garden to over two hectares of spectacular planting, a beautifully curated mix of locally sourced native plants and exotics. Join us at the Kiosk for an illustrated talk on the creation of this wonderful garden.

**Cost: Members and CHS members \$5.00, non members \$10.00**

If you can bring a contribution of food for morning tea, it would be appreciated.







## FRIENDS CONTACTS

### Committee

President	Jane Cowan-Harris	021 043 5342
Secretary	Graham Chick	021 055 4111
Vice President	Margaret Metherell.	

Treasurer	Carol Halstead
Webpage queries	Jane Cowan-Harris

Jeanette Christensen, Vicki Steven, Susan Lawrence, Ray McTeigue, Rachel Wood,

### 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:** Ray McTeigue 027 569 9402

**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/>

### RESULTS OF THE WELSH HIGH BACK STICK CHAIR AUCTION

We are delighted to have successfully sold the High-back Welsh stick chair, donated to us by chairbler David Laird (a chairbler is a 17th century term for a craftsman who specialises in chairs)

David works from Amberley and makes his chairs using timber from trees that are fallen or past their prime. The donated chair includes European white ash from Hagley Park as well as four other timbers.

The successful bidder, Diane Dewhurst, came into the Gardens on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May to pick up her chair as well as meet David.

There is an article in the Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May issue of Council Newsline with photos, which can be found at the link below and makes interesting reading.

[Full life cycle of Hagley Park timber : Newsline \(ccc.govt.nz\)](#)

We are so grateful to both David and Diane for their generosity, which will help us to maintain support in trainee programmes for the coming years.



Diane Dewhurst trying out the High-back Welsh stick chair which was crafted by David Laird of David Laird Chairbler (standing). Photo taken by Kirk Hargreaves (Press photographer)